

**Town of Erie Landfill Task Force
Meeting #1
April 30, 2024, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Erie Town Hall (645 Holbrook St, Erie, CO 80516)**

Task Force Members in Attendance

- Geoff Deakin, Vista Ridge (virtual)
- Sheryl Ellis, Other
- Lisa Hough, Erie Highlands
- Michael Howard, Erie Highlands (virtual)
- Sherry Kuntz, Vista Ridge
- Christina Schust, Ranch Eggs
- Scott Wood, Vista Ridge
- Cassie Yehl, Vista Pointe

Project Team Members

- **Town of Erie:** David Frank (Director of Environmental Services), Eryka Thorley (Sustainability Manager), Gabi Rae (Director of Communications & Community Engagement)
- **Waste Connections:** Mark Adams (Engineering Manager), Randy Tourville (District Manager), Dalton Ellis (Region Engineer)
- **Weaver Consultants Group:** Jason Edwards (Principal), Chuck Marsh (Project Director)
- **Kearns & West (facilitation team):** Morgan Lommele (facilitator), Colin Johnson (co-facilitator/notetaker)

The **April 30** meeting was attended by **20** members of the public.

Welcome, Introductions, and Meeting Overview

Morgan Lommele (Kearns & West), the facilitator, welcomed members of the Landfill Task Force (LTF), project team, and public to the first meeting of the Town of Erie LTF. Representatives from the Town of Erie (Town), Waste Connections, and Weaver Consultants Group (Weaver), were asked to introduce themselves. Members of the LTF were invited to introduce themselves and share which neighborhood they were representing.

The facilitator reviewed the meeting agenda, meeting objectives, and meeting participation guidelines.

Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- Review Public Comment
- Daylight Individual Perspectives
- Review LTF Charter
- Review Landfill Operations
- Preview LTF Meeting Topics
- Look Ahead and Adjourn

Objectives

- Establish a shared understanding of the Landfill Task Force (LTF) scope and responsibilities.
- Understand the perspectives of each LTF member.
- Seek agreement on the LTF charter.

Participation Guidelines

- Preview the topics that will be discussed during the LTF process.
- Remain open-minded.
- Interact respectfully with all other participants, valuing all perspectives.
- Stay on track with the agenda, working on the issues at hand.
- Participate in an active and focused manner – commit to the success of the process.
- Share perspectives, values, views, and interests - not positions.
- Strive to listen actively, bridge gaps in understanding, and seek resolution of differences.
- Avoid repetition and revisiting resolved issues.
- Provide clear and specific recommendations.

The facilitator provided an overview of interest-based negotiation, an approach to addressing disagreement that aims to find mutually agreeable solutions. Interest-based negotiation seeks to move parties past their positions to focus on understanding their interests, values, and needs. Doing so creates an understanding of a topic and facilitates a process through which parties can understand one another and collaborate on solutions.

Review the Public Comment Process

LTF meetings are open to the public. There is no public comment period during the meeting. Members of the public can submit comments and questions through the [LTF website](#). These comments will be summarized and presented to the LTF members for review in advance of the next meeting. LTF members will then have time during each meeting to discuss the topics that were shared. In addition, members of the public who attend LTF meetings will be able to submit a comment card at the close of the meeting.

Daylight Individual Perspectives

Task Force Applicant Perspectives

The facilitator shared that nearly 40 individual applications were submitted by community members interested in serving on the LTF. Consistent issues and ideas that were raised in the applications were reviewed. These issues and ideas are considered input into the recommendations process and were highlighted during this first meeting as reflections from many of the most interested and invested residents.

Issues

- Increased traffic
- Roadway hazards
- Aesthetic impacts
- Litter
- Environment and health concerns
- Overuse and reliance
- Need for transparency and community engagement

Ideas

- Relocate the entrance
- Sufficiently clean and maintain the roadway
- Incorporate features and practices to improve aesthetics
- Increase community engagement

- Respond to community needs
- Reduce fees for nearby residents

Task Force Member Introductions + Perspectives

Each member of the LTF was invited to share:

- What was most important to them regarding the Front Range Landfill.
- What they thought was most important for Erie residents
- Where the LTF should focus its efforts
- What information was needed from Waste Connections

LTF members raised topics around visual impacts and quality of life for the surrounding communities, environmental impacts, and the partnership between the landfill and the Town. Members also asked Waste Connections about landfill operations, future planning, and revenue.

A consistent theme voiced by nearly all LTF members involved the visual impacts created by the landfill and the quality-of-life impacts on the surrounding communities.

- LTF members shared concerns about **litter and debris** that are spread by wind or dislodged from trucks entering the landfill, and the potential for this debris to cause **damage to vehicles** and present a **safety hazard** to residents.
- The **strong smell** from the landfill on certain days was also noted.
- The **high volume of truck traffic** was also said to make roadways unsafe and heavily congested, and high volumes of truck traffic have damaged roadways.
- Comments received before, and during the meeting, cited the **entrance location** as a significant topic of interest. LTF members wanted to know if the entrance would be moved, what the benefit of moving the entrance would be, and what potential relocation options existed.
- There was general interest shared in understanding the **long-term plans for the landfill**, including any potential plans for expansion. LTF members stated a desire to see no changes put in place that would harm the residents, their homes and property values, small businesses, and the community. Instead, they would like future changes to enhance the community while preserving the rural character of the area.

The environmental impacts of the landfill, and the efforts taken by Waste Connections to monitor and mitigate those impacts, were of significant interest to the LTF members.

- LTF members asked for more information on the **number of groundwater monitoring wells** in place and how deep the landfill was going in relation to the water table.
- Concerns were raised about the impacts of **diesel emissions** from trucks going in and out of the landfill. LTF members wanted to know how well emissions from the landfill were being monitored, how much methane was being flared, and how much methane was used for energy.

The relationship between the landfill and the Town was discussed.

- LTF members requested information about **how much Waste Connections contributes** to the economy of the Town, and whether there were any existing partnerships with the landfill intended to provide **direct benefits to residents**.
- LTF members questioned whether the revenue generated by the landfill **offsets the direct and indirect costs to the Town**.
- A **lack of transparency** regarding the landfill was also cited as a challenge. LTF members highlighted several historic overlapping and non-corresponding agreements made at different points in time regarding the landfill, and that documentation of these agreements was rarely available. This lack of documentation and accurate information about the landfill has allowed disinformation to spread easily.
- There are also no disclosures that new property owners need to sign regarding the landfill, and some community members have said that they felt **misled by realtors** when purchasing their homes near the landfill.

LTF members expressed a desire to work closely with Waste Connections and collaborate to develop mutually satisfying solutions.

Representatives from Waste Connections responded to several of the questions asked and acknowledged that others would be discussed and collaborated on as the LTF process progressed.

- The current wind policy requires the landfill to close to trucks if wind speeds are 40 mph or higher, and close altogether if speeds exceed 50 mph.
- There are currently crews that patrol the surrounding roadways daily to clean litter.
- Waste Connections has a permit to operate the landfill, the length of which is determined by function of permitted volume, the need, and ability to reach maximum density out of the permitted space. Current usage rates would allow the landfill to operate for several more decades.
- Expanding the landfill is a possibility, Waste Connections considers this process a chance to carve out a future business plan for the facility with community members.

A representative from the Town stated that some operations within the vicinity are not under Waste Connections' purview, such as the Redtail site, which is currently undergoing a capping operation to remediate the effects of illegal dumping in the 1960s.

Action Item: Maps will be displayed at all subsequent meetings to review sites of importance around the landfill.

Review the Draft Charter

The facilitator provided an overview of the draft LTF charter which outlines the purpose, protocols, roles and responsibilities, and logistics for the LTF. The draft charter was sent to the LTF members one week prior to the meeting for review. LTF members were asked to share any questions or concerns about the charter.

- LTF members asked for clarity on the policy regarding member absences and reaching group consensus.
 - The facilitator explained that the LTF is not a voting body, and the goal is to reach consensus on a set of recommendations through discussion and collaboration.

- If an LTF member is unable to attend a meeting, the facilitation team will make every effort to work with that member separately so that their perspective can be considered in the consensus process. However, if a member does not attend a meeting, and provides no advanced notice of their absence, the consensus process will move forward without them.
- LTF members also have the option to abstain from a consensus process, and if they choose to do so then the reasons for their abstention will be reflected in the notes alongside the recommendations.
- A representative from the Town explained that the **recommendations developed by the LTF will be presented to the Town Council**. While Waste Connections is not obligated to follow the recommendations, they are committed to a transparent and collaborative process that sees recommendations developed that meet the needs of the community. Waste Connections may incorporate those recommendations into a land use application, which would be voted on by the Town Council. A representative from the Town indicated that members of the public can comment on anything that goes before the Town Council.
- **LTF members shared agreement on the charter** but asked that:
 - The language around consensus and abstention be updated to reflect the group's discussion.
 - Opportunities for the public to comment on the LTF process and the draft recommendations be expanded beyond the website comment form (a public meeting and comment cards were proposed as potential options).

Action Item: *Members of the public who attend meetings will be offered comment cards at the end of the meeting to fill out.*

Landfill Operations Presentation

A representative from Weaver presented on landfill operations.

- The presentation provided an overview of the landfill site location, the permitted area of use, and land being considered in a potential swap with the Town.
- The current height of the landfill is likely the peak height and as trash is added it will create a wider slope.
- Trash is layered each day as it is deposited at the landfill site, and then a layer of dirt covers the trash at the end of the day, so nothing is left exposed overnight.
- The design and development of a landfill, including the layers of protection used to prevent leakage, were explained and diagramed. The protective layers collect liquids that seep through the trash, and that liquid is then pumped out and treated offsite. The gas extraction system sends removed gas to a flare facility or to a facility where it is recovered as energy.
- The landfill produces and captures about 3,000 standard cubic feet per minute of gas per day, primarily made up of methane and carbon dioxide. A methane capture system spans the landfill. Waste Connections owns an energy plant that has two engines powered by methane gas which in turn contribute about 3 megawatts of electricity to United Power's system per day. Currently this accounts for slightly less than half of the gas produced at the landfill; the rest is sent to flare on-site. There are plans to potentially expand this so

that more of the landfill methane gas is used to generate electricity. Waste Connections is looking into a carbon capture project to manage the carbon dioxide produced.

- The functionality of the groundwater monitoring system, which samples biannually, was also explained. Results of groundwater and surface emissions tests are publicly available. At present, groundwater tests have not revealed any seepage from the site.
- The presentation covered a potential plan to relocate Town of Erie water tanks, located on the landfill site, that currently store off-site water for provision into to the Town. The water in the tanks does not come from the landfill. The plan would relocate the tanks to another portion of the landfill property and could present an opportunity for the Town to increase its water tank infrastructure. The relocation cost would be paid for by Waste Connections if that plan moves forward.
- A potential expansion of the landfill within its existing permitted area of use was also reviewed. The potential expansion would focus on areas internal to the landfill. A map that outlined potential trails and other uses for the landfill site was also previewed.

Look Ahead and Adjourn

The facilitator thanked the LTF members, project team, and members of the public for their attendance and participation. The facilitation team will develop a draft agenda based on the meeting's discussion and finalize it with input from the LTF.

Subsequent meeting topics identified as being of particular interest include visual impacts, technical aspects of the environmental monitoring at the landfill, and the location of the landfill entrance.

LTF members are expected to speak with members of their respective communities, share information from the meeting, and gather topics of interest to be discussed at future meetings.