

PASCO COUNTY LANDFILL ISSUE



Pasco County's Current Waste Management Policy – It's A Good Idea

The Protectors of Florida's Legacy believes that the best alternative for waste management in Pasco County is the expansion of the existing Shady Hills Waste-to-Energy facility. The solution is NOT a new landfill in East Pasco County.

County officials have clearly stated their outlook in the comprehensive plan—a document that guides growth and county management.

According to Pasco County's Comprehensive Plan – 2025 (revised Dec. 5, 2006), the following goal and policy have been determined for the issue of solid waste:

GOAL 4: Dispose of Pasco County's solid waste in an economically efficient and environmentally sound manner.

Policy SWT 4.2.1 Expansion of Resource Recovery Plant

Pasco County shall plan for expansion of the resource recovery plant when the disposal volume reaches 80 percent of daily capacity.

-- Chapter 10: Public Facilities Element (Solid Waste) 10-25
<http://www.pascocountyfl.net/devser/gm/complan06/c10.pdf>

To accommodate this policy, the current Resource Recovery Plant (the Waste-to-Energy facility in Shady Hills) was specifically designed for future expansion.

Goal 4 in the County's Comprehensive Plan specifies two important factors necessary for waste management. It needs to be both economically efficient and environmentally sound.

Economically Efficient

Pasco County's current Waste-to-Energy facility generated \$15 million in revenue last year from the sale of electricity to Progress Energy. That's enough energy to power 15,000 homes in Pasco County. The proposed expansion to the facility would result in a 50 percent increase in the amount of electricity produced, and an estimated \$7.5 million in additional revenues for Pasco County.

The sale of energy, along with tipping fees, helps offset the cost of running this facility. That's definitely an "economically efficient" way to manage solid waste!

Environmentally Sound

Building a landfill at the headwaters of three watersheds – the Withlacoochee, Green Swamp and the Hillsborough – is far from "environmentally sound." What would happen if a sinkhole, other natural disaster or accident occurred at the proposed landfill? We would be jeopardizing the environment, health and safety of the entire region. The threat to the Green Swamp and the region's drinking water supplies are particularly disturbing.

And it's not just about water. According to the Harvard School of Public Health, landfills like the one proposed produce 115 times more greenhouse gases, like carbon-dioxide and methane, than waste-to-energy facilities.

For an economically efficient and environmentally sound solution to the county's waste management issue, expanding the current Waste-to-Energy facility is the right solution for Pasco County.