



**KENT COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC WORKS**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: May 3, 2023

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Kent County Department of Public Works breaks ground on final part of South Kent Landfill

DPW working toward ambitious landfill diversion goals

Grand Rapids, MI – The **Kent County Department of Public Works (DPW)** has begun construction of the final landfill cell, Cell 56, at the South Kent Landfill. Cell 56 will occupy last 6.1 acres of the 105.43 acres permitted for the primary municipal solid waste landfill.

A landfill cell is a single waste-holding unit within the larger landfill property. These cells are generally shaped as basins during excavation, with berms running along the sides and a liner system to contain leachate and other liquids.

The Kent County Board of Public Works voted in January to move forward with landfill cell construction.

“We are working hard to achieve our goals to divert landfill waste and create a community where we all reduce, reuse, repair, repurpose and recycle in order to protect our environment,” said **Dar Baas**, director of the Kent County DPW. “Breaking ground on the final piece of the South Kent Landfill is likely the last time the Board of Public Works will need to make the decision to construct more landfill, which is exciting.”

South Kent Landfill is the last active landfill in Kent County, and this cell could represent the last landfill cell built in the county if other waste diversion strategies and projects are implemented with the community. Kent County DPW currently oversees three closed landfills in Sparta, Kentwood and North Kent through monitoring and post-closure management in accordance with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and/or United States Environmental Protection Agency.

The first phase of South Kent Landfill opened in October 1982. The current phase began in 1987, and nearly 8 million tons of waste has been disposed of at this location since then. Last year, the landfill received over 306,000 tons of waste in addition to ash from the Waste-to-Energy facility. With this new cell, the landfill is expected to reach capacity in 2029.

The DPW has set a bold goal to divert 90% of Kent County-generated trash that goes into landfills by 2030. Building a Sustainable Business Park on acres previously acquired for landfill is an essential part of reaching that goal. If constructed, the Kent County Bioenergy Facility, a public private partnership between Kent County DPW and Anaergia, will be able to process a minimum of 400,000 tons of Municipal Solid Waste annually to produce renewable natural gas and a fertilizer product, as well as

reclaim recyclable material from trash. In June, The Kent County Board of Public Works will review the final project development agreement for the Kent County Bioenergy Facility, the proposed anchor tenant at the Sustainable Business Park.

“The Sustainable Business Park offers our community tremendous opportunities for job creation, innovation, new research and generating renewable energy. This will move us much closer to achieving our landfill diversion goals, protecting our natural resources and the quality of our water,” Baas said.

The Kent County Department of Public Works provides municipal solid waste disposal services to ensure the effective removal, storage and disposal of residential and commercial solid waste through various facilities and programs, including Waste-to-Energy, Recycling and Education Center, North Kent Transfer Station and South Kent Landfill.

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