



## **Frequently Asked Questions: Sustainable Business Park**

### **What is the Sustainable Business Park (SBP)?**

- The Sustainable Business Park is planned for 250 acres of land adjacent to the South Kent Landfill and is where businesses will sort and convert waste into renewable energy and new products, significantly reducing the amount of trash that would otherwise go to the landfill.

### **What are the benefits of the SBP?**

- Tenants at the Sustainable Business Park specialize in capturing materials from waste and creating new products and energy, such as renewable natural gas.
- This will drastically reduce our dependence on landfills while increasing recycling and more energy independence so we can protect our air, land and water.
- The project will create numerous spinoff benefits, including the development of new business in our community, creation of new jobs, reduction of stress on our supply chain, and the pumping of dollars into our local economy.
- Michigan’s Solid Waste Program requires counties to “map out a strategy for increasing recycling and diversion of materials from landfills.” The SBP would align with the goal and provisions of this newly enacted legislation.

### **Who is the anchor tenant for the SBP?**

- The anchor tenant is the Kent County Bioenergy Facility, which is a public-private partnership between Anaergia and the Kent County Department of Public Works (DPW).
- This will begin the first phase of the Sustainable Business Park.
- The Kent County Bioenergy Facility is a mixed waste processing facility that will process up to 600,000 tons per year of municipal solid waste and 175,000 tons per year of organic material to produce renewable natural gas and fertilizer.

### **Who is Anaergia and how will this all work?**

- Anaergia has a proven track record of success and owns and operates 12 facilities around the world, and its technology is used in thousands of facilities worldwide.
- Together, we will create a flagship facility that will position Kent County as a leader in managing waste and sustainability.
- Anaergia will build and operate the facility, and the DPW will retain ownership of the facility.

### **Is this type of facility in operation anywhere else in the U.S.?**

- Yes, there are mixed waste processing facilities operating successfully in several states, including Utah, California and South Carolina.
- The Kent County Bioenergy Facility is unique in that it will collocate mixed waste processing and energy production into one facility which improves efficiency by cutting down on trucking material from one site to another.
- Sometimes called eco-industrial parks or resource recovery parks, there are several communities across the nation developing similar projects to the Sustainable Business Park.

### **How much more will it cost for trash service in Kent County when new rates go into effect in 2026?**

- Our early estimates show an increased tipping rate of about \$3-4 per month on the average residential bill because of this new facility.
- Ultimately, individual waste haulers serving Kent County will determine what they charge their customers.
- For most of the county, commercial users may see a 10-30% increase in their trash bills at the end of 2026, and some may see a greater increase depending on their location in the county and their waste composition.
- The cost of doing nothing continues to increase as landfill fees climb, jumping 22% in the Midwest last year.
- Residents and businesses can drive down their costs for disposal by increasing recycling and separating food waste at their home or business.

### **How much will the Kent County Bioenergy Facility and first phase of the SBP cost Kent County?**

- There will be no tax rate increase to support the project.
- This initial phase requires \$23 million in infrastructure improvements like roads, utilities and site preparation, to be funded through grants and other sources. The State of Michigan has allocated \$9M for the Sustainable Business Park.
- The Kent County Bioenergy Facility is estimated to cost \$380 million, and Anaergia will contribute a large majority of that funding.
- Roughly 20% of the Kent County Bioenergy Facility will need to be funded through a county bond.

### **What other options do we have to reach our landfill diversion goals?**

- Over the past five years, the DPW explored and evaluated many options to reach higher diversion rates. The alternatives we found were not cost effective, would not result in significant progress, or could not be implemented before South Kent Landfill is full.
- In 2021, an evaluation team, with experts in this field and local partners, recommended to move forward with Anaergia to develop the Kent County Bioenergy Facility because they proposed the most comprehensive strategy for reaching our diversion goals.

### **What is needed to move forward on this phase of the Sustainable Business Park?**

- To ensure municipal solid waste is delivered to the Kent County Bioenergy Facility, the DPW is looking to update the flow control agreement that currently covers about two-thirds of Kent County's population.
- Under the current agreement, which expires in 2025, waste haulers operating in the metro-six cities are required to bring their waste to the DPW's Waste to Energy facility.
- The updated agreement would expand flow control to the whole county, allowing the costs and benefits of shifting away from landfilling to be shared by all Kent County residents and businesses.

### **Did you investigate alternatives to countywide flow control?**

- Yes, and the most simple, equitable and consistent option is countywide flow control.
- There are provisions in the flow control ordinance that allow for exemptions and common-sense adjustments, and the policy will be reviewed every five years to ensure it's working for our community.

### **What happens if we don't do this project?**

- Not completing this project, which has been carefully planned with experts since 2020, will result in long-term consequences for our county.
- The South Kent Landfill is expected to reach capacity in 2030, so we would need to immediately begin design, permitting and construction for a new landfill to be ready to accept material at that time.
- Kent County would continue its reliance on landfilling for generations to come and leave our children and grandchildren the responsibility of monitoring landfills to ensure there are no harmful environmental issues.
- We also know that landfill fees are increasing each year because of the long-term liabilities of burying trash. Adjusting for inflation alone, tipping fees will exceed \$65 per ton if a new landfill is needed in 2030.
- Going in this direction would run counter to the State of Michigan's new Part 115 Materials Management Plan.

### **Don't we need a landfill just in case this doesn't work?**

- The current South Kent Landfill is the last open landfill in Kent County, and it's projected to be full by 2030.
- After it closes, the DPW will continue to monitor it for a minimum of 30 years as required by the State of Michigan.
- DPW does not need to operate a landfill for the system to work because there are five private landfills within a 30-mile radius that have an average of 41 years of permitted capacity. Kent County DPW will continue to operate the Recycling and Education Center, Waste-to-Energy, North Kent Transfer Station and new Kent County Bioenergy Facility.
- The goal is to build an integrated waste management system that doesn't offer just one solution for disposing of waste and that can be adjusted as needed.

**What other options do residents and communities have to reduce costs for trash disposal?**

- Individuals can continue to make choices such as reducing waste, recycling and composting to decrease the volume of waste going into their curbside trash.
- Communities can also investigate unique partnerships with local waste haulers to work toward the best rates for their residents and businesses.
- We encourage everyone to periodically contact their waste hauler to ensure they are getting the best rate possible.
- We know that many people do not, or are not able to, participate in waste reduction activities, and the Kent County Bioenergy Facility has the processing technology to capture value from this waste as well.