



**KENT COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC WORKS**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Kent County seeks innovative sustainable business leader to help achieve landfill diversion goals

Request for Proposal issued internationally to identify anchor tenant at Sustainable Business Park

Grand Rapids, MI – The **Kent County Department of Public Works** today announced it has issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for an anchor tenant at the future Sustainable Business Park, which is planned for 250 acres adjacent to the South Kent Landfill in Byron Center, Michigan.

The RFP is the next step in implementing the Sustainable Business Park Master Plan, which was approved in the fall of 2018, and solidifying its progress toward reclaiming or converting a significant portion of the 2.1 million cubic yards of waste landfilled by residents and businesses in Kent County each year. DPW has been working closely with its advisory team including The Right Place Inc., Fishbeck, Gershman, Bricker & Bratton, Inc. (GBB), Sustainable Research Group and Byrum & Fisk Advocacy Communications.

“We are seeking a company that has demonstrated they can handle this volume of waste and be part of a public-private partnership with the Kent County Department of Public Works to assist in our goal of diverting 90% of trash from the South Kent Landfill by 2030,” said **Emily Brieve**, chair of the **Kent County Board of Public Works**. “We’ve issued the Request for Proposals and anticipate receiving responses from companies across the country and globe that have proven they can help us solve the problem of mounting volumes of trash. Landfills are not the legacy I want to leave for my children.”

The objective of the RFP is to identify innovative companies with proven track records who use technology to divert and process waste which is currently sent to landfills in West Michigan. The desired company will have experience with mechanically sorting materials from the mixture of waste currently delivered to landfills, including residential, commercial, and industrial solid waste. Following the mechanical separation process, the sorted plastic, wood, organic and other materials will be further processed into new products or feedstocks, such as engineered fuel, compost, building materials, aggregates, and other usable materials. This is not only better for the environment than landfilling, but it will also spur additional economic development activity and create more jobs.



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Kent County Department of Public Works recently completed a site and infrastructure analysis and has developed preliminary cost estimates of \$17.5 million and identified potential state and federal funding mechanisms for infrastructure improvements at the 250-acre property such as utilities, roads, and preservation of open space. The implementation schedule is dependent on responses to the RFP and review and approval by the Kent County Board of Public Works and Board of Commissioners. Kent County looks forward to responses and collaborating with the company ultimately selected

Kent County Department of Public Works aims to make the Sustainable Business Park a collaborative environment and encourages team responses by which an anchor facility could be supported by smaller secondary and tertiary tenants.

According to an annual report by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE), Kent County had a 2% increase in the amount of waste buried in landfills over the past year. Kent County DPW processes over 1 billion pounds of waste each year and estimates 75% of that waste could be reused, recycled or converted. Currently, only 6-8% of total waste is recycled.

“The Right Place, DPW, and GBB spent the past year evaluating waste processing facilities around the country to learn best practices,” said **Birgit Klohs**, president and CEO of **The Right Place Inc.** “These tours highlighted the need to focus on an anchor tenant facility as a first step. This anchor tenant will kickstart our landfill diversion efforts and move DPW in the direction of achieving 90% diversion by 2030.”

The RFP specifies that the anchor tenant facility will be designed, built, permitted, operated and maintained by the company. Kent County will be a partner in ensuring that there is adequate infrastructure, material available to process, and handle residuals that cannot be processed. RFP respondents must demonstrate that they have the capacity to convert at least 50% of the inbound waste materials.

The deadline for responding to the RFP is 2 p.m. local time, Sept. 9, 2020. Questions are due via email by 5 p.m., July 22, 2020. See the RFP for submission details and qualifications requirements, which is [available online](#) via the Kent County Purchasing Department’s website.

There is wide community and business support for this project.

“Steelcase believes the Sustainable Business Park proposed by Kent County is a better use of allocated land resources than a landfill,” said **Heidi Frasure**, Sustainability Leader at **Steelcase**, a West Michigan based furniture manufacturer. “The proposed Park would provide Steelcase, and other companies, local recycling options to divert more waste materials from landfill.”

For more information about the innovative Kent County Sustainable Business Park visit www.reimaginetrash.org, or to view the Request for Proposals, visit <https://www.accesskent.com/RFPWorkbench/LoadPublicTableAction.action>.

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