

# Monongalia County Solid Waste Authority talks recycling improvements

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MORGANTOWN, W.Va. - The Monongalia County Solid Waste Authority is taking a closer look at the county's recycling.

It presented a study done by Downstream Strategies to Monongalia County Commission during Wednesday's meeting, which was focused on ways to improve waste disposal efforts as the county as the population continues to grow.

Right now the Solid Waste Authority says the county is growing at a rapid rate and is near the limits of the amount of solid waste that it's permitted to deal with in the county.

The three phase study focused largely on ways to divert solid waste away from a landfill.

"The most common ways that our solid waste is diverted away from the landfill is recycling, but there's a lot of new technology and new possibilities," said Evan Fedorko, a Project Geographer with Downstream Strategies. "There's a lot of old technology and old possibilities like composting and things like that."

The Solid Waste Authority wants to discuss potential changes and improvements to recycling not only with County Commission, but also with city governments, West Virginia University and other community leaders in future meetings.

"The recycling rate in Mon County is quite low," Fedorko explained. "It's only about five percent across the county. Even in places with single stream curbside recycling that diversion rate is still only about nine or ten percent."

The national recycling rate is 26 percent.

Downstream Strategies concluded that one of the reasons for the low numbers could be access to curbside recycling.

"There's also large parts of the county that are simply not served by any kind of curbside recycling service and they have to rely on drop offs," Fedorko said. "Years ago there were more drop offs than there were now and the decline of those drop offs has hurt the availability for those people for recycling."

He added that trash haulers also save money when residents recycle.

Other methods the study looked at were technology like the gasification of solid waste, which creates a natural gas derivative for electricity.