

# Wadena County, MN Board Action Form

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<b>Action Requested</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Action/Motion	<input type="checkbox"/> Report
<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion	<input type="checkbox"/> Resolution
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Item	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
<input type="checkbox"/> Consent Agenda Item	

<b>Annual Solid Waste Department Update</b>	
Date of Meeting: January 13, 2026	Total time requested: 30 minutes
Department Requesting Action: Solid Waste Department	
Presenting Board Action/Discussion at Meeting: Chris McConn and Wade Miller	
<b>Background</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporting Documentation enclosed	
See Attached	
<b>Options</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Documentation enclosed	
<b>No actions are requested for this agenda item. There are some questions for the board that are not intended to result in board action or resolution.</b>	
<b>Recommendation</b> <input type="checkbox"/> The Wadena County Board of Commissioners approves the following by Motion:	
<b>Financial Implications:</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Funding Source:	
Budgeted: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Action	Voting in Favor	Voting Against
Motion:	<input type="checkbox"/> Noon	<input type="checkbox"/> Noon
Second:	<input type="checkbox"/> Winkels	<input type="checkbox"/> Winkels
<input type="checkbox"/> Passed	<input type="checkbox"/> Stearns	<input type="checkbox"/> Stearns
<input type="checkbox"/> Failed	<input type="checkbox"/> Kreklau	<input type="checkbox"/> Kreklau
<input type="checkbox"/> Tabled	<input type="checkbox"/> Kangas	<input type="checkbox"/> Kangas

<p><b>Signatures</b></p> <p>STATE OF MINNESOTA}          COUNTY OF Wadena}</p> <p>I, Heather Olson, County Auditor/Treasurer Clerk of the Board, Wadena County, Minnesota hereby certify that I have compared the foregoing copy of the proceedings of the County Board of said County with the original record thereof on file in the Administration Office of Wadena County in Wadena, Minnesota as stated in the minutes of the proceedings of said board and that the same is a true and correct copy of said original record and of the whole thereof, and that said motion was duly passed by said board at said meeting. Witness my hand and seal:</p>
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Solid Waste

Wadena County Transfer Station  
10542 170<sup>th</sup> Street  
Wadena, MN 56482  
(218) 631-2474

## MEMORANDUM

Date: January 6, 2026  
To: Wadena County Board of Commissioners  
From : Chris McConn, P.E., Solid Waste Director  
Cc: Wade Miller, Solid Waste Supervisor  
Re: Annual Update to Board

### 1. **Background**

The Solid Waste Department (Department) receives waste and recyclables from commercial and residential customers at the Wadena County Transfer Station and C&D Landfill (Facility). To operate the Facility, the Department utilizes an enterprise fund account. The Department does not utilize any funds from the General Levy.

### 2. **Service to Public**

The primary purpose of the Department is to manage solid waste and recycling. This promotes a healthy county, environmental protection and economic development. Many Greater Metro counties provide less services due to robust and competitive private markets. Rural counties provide typically provide more services because of lack of availability from the private market.

### 3. **Regulatory Mandates:**

- a. 35% recycling by 2030. Current rate in 2022 was about 35% (Appendix A).
- b. Maintain and execute a solid waste management plan (SWMP).
- c. Annual Reports for permitted facilities and SCORE (Recycling) reporting.
- d. Comply with Permit Requirements for the transfer station and C&D Landfill

### 4. **County Staff (4.5 FTEs)**

- a. Supervisor
- b. Three Full Time Operators (one currently vacant position)
- c. One Part Time Operator
- d. Director through management agreement with Otter Tail County

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Solid Waste

**5. Recent Accomplishments**

- a. Shingle Recycling
- b. Hook Truck Purchase
- c. Access Road Relocation
- d. Landfill Permit Modification Submittal

**6. 2025 Material Activity Reporting (See Appendix B)**

**7. Budget/Finances – Ended 2025 in the black**

**8. C&D Waste Management – Need Commissioner Input**

**a. Customer Distribution**

Recently, we reviewed who is bringing C&D waste to the county facilities. Below is a summary of the information:

**TABLE 1 – WASTE DELIVERY (2020-2024) BY VOLUME (Wadena County)**

Range	Total Load Count	Total Waste Hauled	% of loads	% of Waste
<=1	2,836	1,935	44.02%	7.20%
1<=3	1,554	3,136	24.12%	11.67%
3<=10	1,540	8,924	23.91%	33.19%
10<=40	495	10,175	7.68%	37.84%
40<	17	2,716	0.26%	10.10%
Totals	6,442	26,885	100.00%	100.00%

The table illustrates the need for a local transfer station to consolidate the waste if the local C&D landfill closes.



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### b. Disposal and Transportation Costs

At our last meeting, the Board asked about cost comparisons for different options. The following table is based on estimates prepared by Stantec as part of the regional C&D study:

**Table 2 – Disposal and Transportation Cost Estimates**

Landfill	Regional Group Cost	Wadena County Cost
Waste Management (Gwinner, North Dakota)	\$35.71	\$37.49
Dem-Con (Hawick, MN)	\$26.26	\$27.53
Regional Landfill at 70% Regional Collection (170,000 CY/year)	\$22.89	
Regional Landfill at 50% Regional Collection (130,000 CY/year)	\$33.29	

These are only estimates and actual costs will vary. Basis for calculation includes:

- Assumed Hauling Cost is \$3.40/running mile.
- Each County's facility improvements not included.
- Cost of purchasing trailers and equipment not included.
- Regional Landfill location has not been selected. For distances, it was assumed to be located in the middle of the region – about half way between Fergus Falls and Henning.
- 0.26 tons per cubic yard of C&D Waste.
- Tipping fees are based on \$48/ton (\$12.48/CY) for Hawick, \$52/ton (\$13.52/CY) at Gwinner and \$14.61/CY and \$19.12/CY at regional landfill (depending on volume).

Some Observations worth Noting:

- Numbers are estimates that incorporate many unknowns.
- Advantage of Third-Party Landfill is Convenience.
- Advantage of Third-Party Landfill is risk management.
- Advantage of Regionally Owned Landfill is control.
- Advantage of Regionally Owned Landfill is less transport costs.
- No one will know which option is more expensive until several years after deciding.

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## Solid Waste

### c. Draft Capital Improvement Cost

Stantec has not provided estimated costs for capital improvements to retrofit the Wadena Transfer Station to transfer C&D Waste to an off-site landfill. Below are some rough estimates that staff have put together:

**Table 3 – Estimated Capital Costs**

<u>Description</u>	<u>Unit Price</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Extended</u>
Building Expansion (50x80)	\$150/sq ft	1	\$600,000
Demolition, earthwork, etc. (LS)	\$250,000	1	\$250,000
C&D Transfer Trailers	\$90,000 each	2	\$180,000
Engineering, Testing, Permitting, Etc.	\$200,000	1	\$200,000
Contingency (~15%)			\$200,000
<b>TOTAL (2026 dollars)</b>			<b>\$1,430,000</b>

### d. Questions for Board

- Intend to continue providing disposal service to Wadena County after landfill closure?
- Need to advocate for filling County landfill?
- Preference for Third Party or Regionally owned landfill?

## **9. Waste Grinding and proposed ordinance – Need Commissioner Input**

Prairie Lakes Municipal Solid Waste Authority has been receiving shredded MSW from licensed haulers, including at least one licensed in Wadena County. Shredded waste is not processible. We have had limited success working with licensed haulers to solve this problem. After review with our waste designation attorney, Kevin Johnson, it appears the most effective solution is to revise our ordinance to prohibit licensed haulers from shredding the waste.

## 10. Future Goals –

- Menahga Permit By Rule Transfer Station
- Respond to anticipated C&D Rule Changes
- Updated solid waste management plan is due

## 11. Questions.....

# APPENDIX A SCORE REPORT

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# 2022 SCORE Report

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) annually publishes a report on the Select Committee on Recycling and the Environment (SCORE) activities that summarizes information submitted by all 87 counties and the Western Lake Superior Sanitary District (WLSSD) regarding their SCORE activities. The MPCA uses SCORE to detail trends in waste generation, management, and disposal. Data trends help the MPCA and local units of government develop sound policy and plans to manage waste in a manner that protects the environment and human health.



Jump to section:

- Reduction
- Reuse
- Recycling
- Waste to Energy
- Landfilling

Calendar year 2022: **Wadena (Statewide)**  
All rates year-on-year (YOY)

Municipal solid waste (MSW): **decreased -1.8% YOY**  
Combined recycling and organics rate: **35.4%**  
Change from **2021: -4.1% YOY**

The statewide combined organics and recycling rate **45.2%** is the highest rate in the history of the SCORE program.

Use the filters to the right to customize your view on this page and for the rest of the report.

- Region
- Statewide
  - Greater MN
  - Metropolitan Area

County  
Wadena

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# **APPENDIX B**

# **MATERIAL ANALYSIS REPORT**

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## 2025 Waste & Recycling Summary

### Wadena County

In 2025, Wadena County continued to see strong use of its solid waste and recycling services, reflecting both community participation and regional demand for disposal and recycling options.

### Municipal Solid Waste (MSW)

County residents disposed of approximately **1,180 tons of municipal solid waste** through uncompacted drop-off loads in 2025. An additional **670 tons of waste** was managed through scale-weighed transactions. These figures reflect steady household and small business waste activity throughout the county.

### Demolition and Construction Waste

Nearly **4,900 cubic yards of demolition and construction material** were received in 2025. This increase compared to prior years reflects continued building, renovation, and cleanup activity across the county.

### Regional Tipping and Transfer Activity (PLMSWA)

The Prairie Lakes Municipal Solid Waste Authority processed **more than 5,700 tons of Wadena County waste** in 2025. PLMSWA activity remains the largest contributor to overall tonnage and plays a critical role in regional waste management operations.

### Recycling Efforts

Recycling remained a strong focus in 2025, with **over 1,180 tons of material diverted from disposal**:

- **Single-sort recycling:** 779.37 tons
- **Corrugated cardboard recycling:** 405.75 tons
- **Shingle recycling:** Over 180 tons diverted from the landfill

These programs reduce landfill use and support responsible materials management.

### Household Hazardous Waste, Batteries, and Fluorescent Bulbs

Wadena County provided safe disposal options for household hazardous waste, batteries, and fluorescent bulbs in 2025. A total of **16,229 pounds of household hazardous waste** and **2,372 pounds of batteries** were safely managed. Proper disposal of these materials helps prevent environmental contamination and protects public and worker health.

### Appliances, Electronics, Scrap Metal, and Tires

The county also managed a wide range of special materials in 2025:

- **Appliances:** 787 pieces
- **Televisions and electronics:** 655 units
- **Scrap metal:** 174,860 pounds recovered
- **Tires:** 554 collected

These programs ensure regulated materials are handled responsibly and valuable resources are recovered.

### **Bulky Item Disposal**

Residents responsibly disposed of large household items, including:

- **194 chairs**
- **308 sofas and sectional pieces**
- **835 mattresses**

Tracking bulky items separately helps the county manage these materials efficiently and plan for future disposal needs.

### **Why This Matters**

Responsible waste management and recycling help extend landfill life, control disposal costs, and protect the environment. Proper handling of hazardous materials, electronics, appliances, scrap metal, and tires prevents pollution and allows valuable materials to be recovered. Strong participation in these programs supports long-term sustainability and responsible stewardship of county resources.