

Indivisible Bayshore Environmental Committee

The IB Environmental Committee visited The Ocean County Recycling Facility in Lakewood, New Jersey on October 17, 2017; and The Monmouth County Reclamation Center in Tinton Falls, New Jersey on December 5, 2017. They were very educational visits for us.

We learned that Monmouth County is one of only two counties in NJ that does not have its own recycling facility. The other one is Hunterdon County. Instead, Monmouth County (MC) has “transload centers.” The items that are collected for recycling in MC are dumped on the floor of the transload center and then scooped up and transported to a facility in another county, either the Ocean County facility in Lakewood or a facility in Passaic County. It costs \$35 - \$45 per ton just to move the material from the reclamation site in Tinton Falls to Lakewood. It then costs \$70 - \$80 per ton to process the material collected for recycling once it has been shipped to a recycling facility.

The people we met with at the Ocean County Recycling Facility estimate that Atlantic Highlands produces about 100 tons of material for recycling every month, Highlands about 60 – 70 tons per month and Middletown about has 500 – 600 tons of material per month.

Here are the estimated costs:

	Atlantic Highlands	Highlands	Middletown
Tons per Month	100	60 - 70	500 - 600
Shipping Cost per Ton	\$35 - \$45	\$35 - \$45	\$35 - \$45
Shipping Cost per Month	\$3,500 - \$4,500	\$2,100 - \$3,150	\$17,500 - \$27,000
Processing Cost per Ton	\$70 - \$80	\$70 - \$80	\$70 - \$80
Processing Cost per Month	\$7,000 - \$8,000	\$4,200 - \$5,600	\$35,000 - \$48,000
Total per Month	\$10,500 - \$12,500	\$6,300 - \$8,750	\$52,500 - \$75,000

MC used to have a recycling facility at its Tinton Falls site, but when recycling became single-stream, recycling became much more complicated. It would cost approximately \$15,000,000 to \$18,000,000 to build a good new recycling center.

Monmouth County has a Request for Qualification (RFQ) process underway to build its own recycling facility. It is a long process and the project is somewhat up-in-the-air currently.

We learned that recycled material is a commodity – it’s all about the money! - and the prices are very erratic. Right now, there is a down market for recyclables, primarily due to China refusing to accept many items. The US no longer has much infrastructure to reuse the material. Things that are not recycled end up in a landfill. Meanwhile, the MC landfill is filling rapidly.

We asked what our little environmental committee could do. The suggestions included:

- Educate our communities;
- Write manufacturers and ask that they stop using multiple layers in their packaging;
- Work towards bottle deposits.

We were positively impressed by both sites. The people at the Ocean County Recycling Facility are actively searching for new ways to use recycled materials. The Monmouth County Reclamation Center collects the methane produced in the landfill and sends it to a small electricity generating place just outside the landfill. And the MC facility has a falconer who flies her birds around the landfill to discourage large numbers of seagulls.

We can all help by using less stuff – straws, plastic bags, plastic bottles, etc.

We'll keep you posted about our next field trip!

Miscellaneous (in case someone asks):

The costs to process single-stream vs. sorted recycling balance out: One is less expensive to collect and the other is easier to process.

Landfills have a limited life because they fill up.

Some people believe that it should be the manufacturers' responsibility to take back the containers used for their products.

Per the people we met with in OC, MC should have its own recycling facility because:

- It already has a perfect site at its current reclamation site;
- The towns in MC would save money in transportation;
- The county could make money when the markets are good;
- The county has the opportunity to build a more up-to-date processing center;
- And it's the right thing to do.

The people we met with in MC also believe MC should have its own facility and that we could help by letting our freeholders know that we need a facility.