



CITY OF RAPID CITY

RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA 57701

Public Works Department

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Kooiker and City Council

FROM: Terry Wolterstorff PE, Public Works Director

TLW

DATE: October 3, 2014

RE: Public Works Committee recommendation to reopen the Fairmont drop off site (City Council Agenda – Consent Item #40)

The Public Works Committee, on a 3-0 vote, has recommended the Fairmont drop off site to be reopened. In general, the reasons stated at the meeting for reopening the site were the inconvenience and long wait times for the customers from the southeast area of the community and traffic safety concerns at the entrance to the landfill facility. **I strongly urge you to reject the Committee's recommendation for several reasons.**

The decision to close the Fairmont site was not entered into lightly. Public Works staff reviewed the costs associated with bringing the Fairmont site up to a condition that is safe for citizens and employees to use. I have attached photos showing the current condition of the former Fairmont drop off site. Please keep in mind that this parking lot was built over top of an old landfill. The old landfill trenches will continue to settle for years to come. A simple asphalt overlay would only continue to show settling in a very short period of time, and more costly geotechnical solutions are not guaranteed to succeed. In 2012 the decision was made to reallocate approximately \$450,000 set aside for these repairs into a new drop off location next to the newly proposed Citizen Campus at the Solid Waste Facility. This decision was discussed at Public Works Committee meetings on several occasions. Construction of the new Citizen Campus and drop off site was completed in the Fall of 2013 at a cost of approximately \$4.2 million dollars.

In addition to the repair costs associated with the Fairmont site, there are great efficiencies with the operation of the new 24 hour drop off site at the landfill. The elimination of numerous round trips to the Fairmont site for roll off trucks reduces our drive time and creates less wear and tear on our equipment.



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The convenience of the new Citizen Campus and 24 hour drop off site should not be overlooked. Residents on the southeast end of the community now have easy access to a drop off site for recyclables and yard waste 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, all year long. While we remove the yard waste containers at the other drop off sites, this site remains open year around. The scale house at the Solid Waste Facility is open 60 hours per week and staff does recognize that during the peak hours from 11 AM to 1 PM on Saturdays the traffic does occasionally back up causing a delay in accessing the drop off area. I believe that some public education on this will go a long to solving the problem of the traffic delays. Simply arriving prior to 11 AM or after 1 PM on Saturdays virtually eliminates any wait time at the facility.

Lastly, I do acknowledge the site distance at the landfill entrance can be difficult at times when traffic is backed up. We have reviewed the traffic accident records for the entrance/intersection at the landfill and there have been NO accidents reported at this location over the last 4 years. Having said that, I would rather spend funding on turn lane improvement at the entrance before wasting money on improvements at the Fairmont site.

Again, in summary I strongly urge you to reject the recommendation to reopen the Fairmont site and allow staff to review and pursue other options for improving the safety and convenience of the newly constructed 24 hour drop off site at the landfill facility.





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