



# Environmental Initiatives

June 2026  
Council Update

*Presented by Engagement & Communications Manager Josh Knight*



# What's been happening?

## Research & Discovery

- We have learned a lot talking to partners and other localities doing similar work
  - Internal Operational Audit (Public Works Capacity)
  - Community Partner Engagement (Shenandoah Green, Black Bear Compost, Staunton City Schools)
  - Regional Benchmarking (Harrisonburg, Waynesboro, Winchester, Town of Vienna)

# The Strategic Framework

A horizontal decorative bar composed of several colored segments: purple, olive green, blue-grey, grey, yellow, dark red, dark blue, tan, teal, and dark green.

## Logistical Optimization

Repurposing a trash truck to compact #1 plastics on-site, cutting hauling frequencies from 3x/week to once every 9 weeks.

## Ground-Level Education

Comprehensive digital, print, and on-site communication blitz to eliminate sorting confusion, stop contamination at the source, and shift “trashing” to the last option.

## Targeted Micro-Pilots

Low-risk, localized testing for community composting and downtown cigarette recycling (TerraCycle).

## Public Transparency

Launching a digital "Tonnage Tracker" and a physical gate scoreboard to display diversion impact.

# Logistical Optimization

- **The Problem:** Currently hauling loose #1 plastics 3x times per week at a low weight ("hauling air").
- **The Fix:** Repurposing a soon to be out-of-service trash truck to act as a dedicated on-site compactor for #1 plastics—mirroring our successful cardboard model.
- **The Impact:** Hauling frequency drops from 3x a week to once every 9 weeks.

A background image showing a large pile of clear plastic bottles (likely #1 plastics) in the foreground, with a recycling facility and a chain-link fence visible in the background.

**Enterprise Fund Savings:**  
Projected **\$3,500 to \$4,000 per month** in reduced hauling fees.

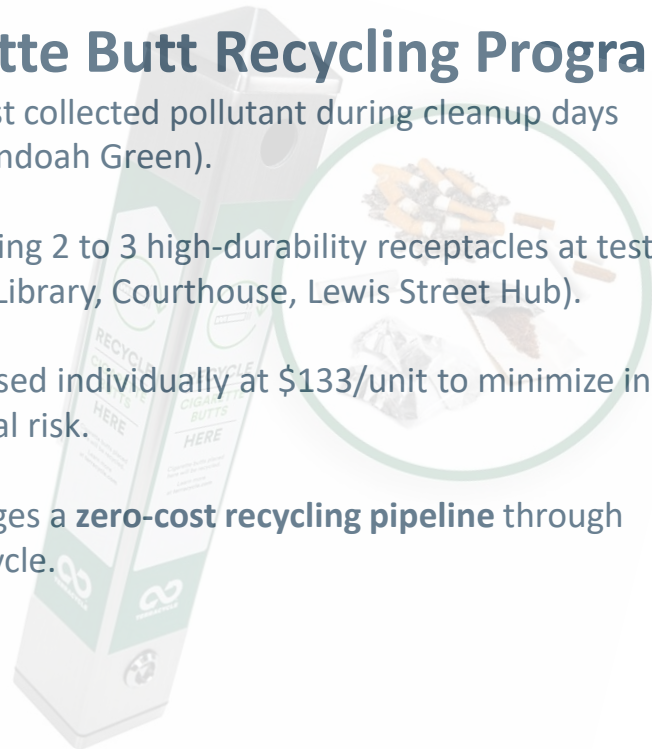
# Targeted Micro-Pilots

## Composting at Recycle Center

- Shenandoah Green has 9 bins across the city now.
- Highest volume occurs at the Recycling Center, but narrow volunteer windows cause public confusion and contamination.
- *The Strategy:* Meet customers where they are and deploy professional instructional signage at the center, and align student civic groups for Saturday volunteer sorting support.
- *Plan:* add 2 city-funded bins open during Recycle Center Hours (short-term to start).

## Cigarette Butt Recycling Program

- #1 Most collected pollutant during cleanup days (Shenandoah Green).
- Deploying 2 to 3 high-durability receptacles at test areas (Library, Courthouse, Lewis Street Hub).
- Purchased individually at \$133/unit to minimize initial financial risk.
- Leverages a **zero-cost recycling pipeline** through TerraCycle.



# Multi-Channel Education

## High-Impact Video & Social

- Produce rapid "How-To" shot on-site to tackle sorting traps (e.g., "Clear to Mountain Dew Green" plastics, metal magnet test).
- Publish consistent, visual social media posts detailing weekly diversion wins to keep momentum high.
- Explain why trash is so expensive

## On-Site Signage

- Design and print instructions at the Recycling Center on durable, professional, and clear instructional signs.
- Clearly explain the composting rules to eliminate contamination at the source.

## Direct-to-Resident

- Instructional utility inserts or QR codes on bills to educate residential recycling / compost opportunities, and ways to throw away less
- Distribute recycling stickers/magnets to people doing their part.
- Considering magnets featuring a quick-reference cheat sheet so rules live right in the kitchen.

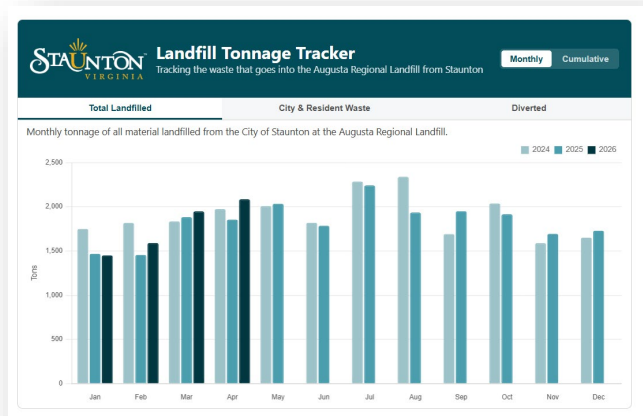
## Interactive Web Tools

- Launch the digital "Waste Wizard" searchable database on the city website.
- Clearer & cleaner website layout

# The Data Dashboard

## Web-Based “Tonnage Tracker”

Live, public-facing digital metrics on the city website various parts of the landfill tonnage year over year.



## The Gate “Scoreboard”

Installing permanent, frequently updated monthly metric signage at the Recycling Center entrance to provide immediate feedback.





# What Are We Tracking?

## All Waste Categories at Augusta Landfill:

Residents Household to Fill Area

Residents Public Use Site

Residents Mulch

Residents Woodwaste

Govt. Hauled Household

Commercial Hauled Household

Highland Clearing Account

Commercial Waste

Industrial Waste

Mulch

Woodwaste

Tires Heavy

Construction/Demo Debris

Recycled Glass

Crushed Concrete

GH Woodwaste

Biosolids

Dirt

## Some don't pertain to Staunton:

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Residents Public Use Site

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# What Are We Tracking?

## Total Landfilled:

Residents Household to Fill Area

Residents Public Use Site

Residents Mulch

Residents Woodwaste

Govt. Hauled Household

Commercial Waste

Industrial Waste

Mulch

Woodwaste

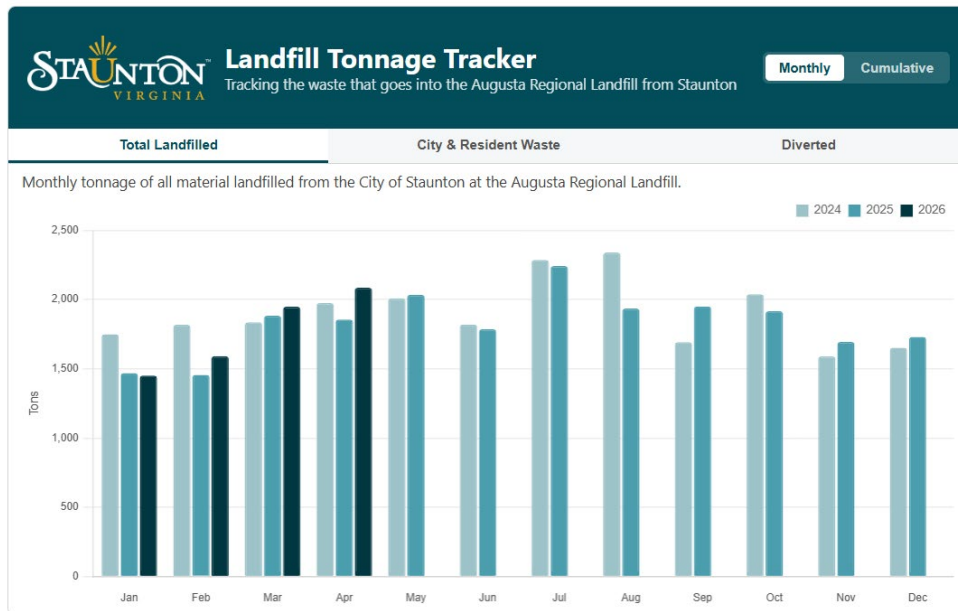
Tires Heavy

Construction/Demo Debris

Recycled Glass

GH Woodwaste

Total Landfilled





# What Are We Tracking?

## City & Resident Waste:

Residents Household to Fill Area

Residents Public Use Site

Residents Mulch

Residents Woodwaste

Govt. Hauled Household

Commercial Waste

Industrial Waste

Mulch

Woodwaste

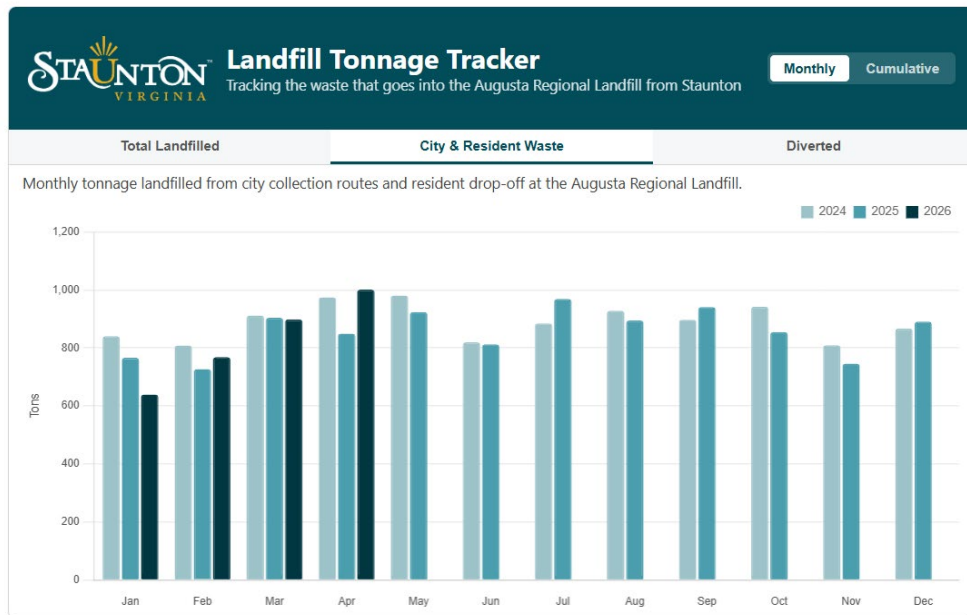
Tires Heavy

Construction/Demo Debris

Recycled Glass

GH Woodwaste

City and Resident Waste





# What Are We Tracking?

## Diverted:

Tonnage brought to the landfill but diverted from disposal.

This does not include items recycled at the City of Staunton Recycling Center.

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Residents Mulch

Residents Woodwaste

Govt. Hauled Household

Commercial Waste

Industrial Waste

Mulch

Woodwaste

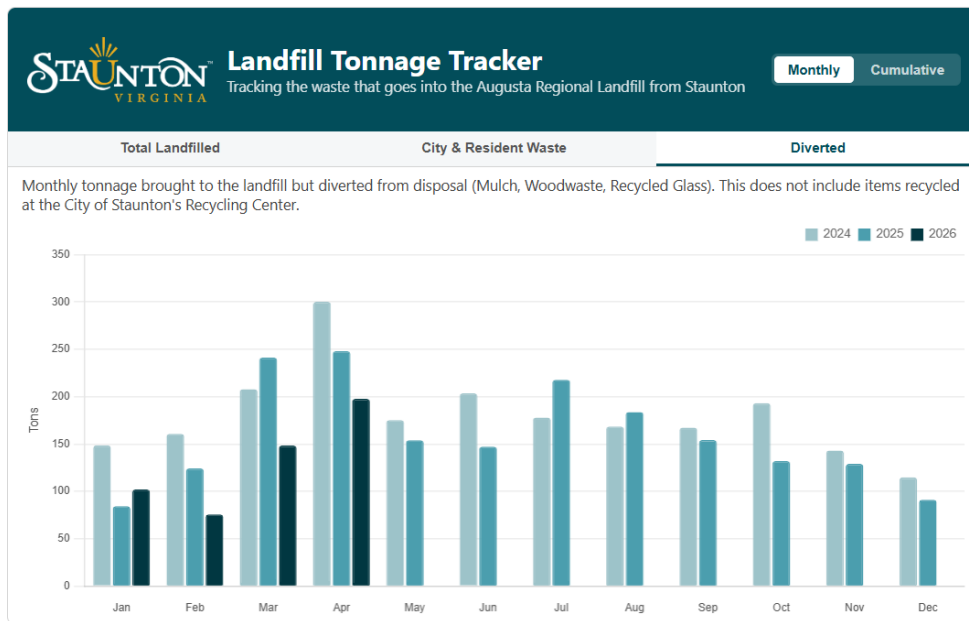
Tires Heavy

Construction/Demo Debris

Recycled Glass

GH Woodwaste

Diverted



## Annual City & Residential Waste

2024 – 10,663.7 tons

2025 – 10,278.2 tons    3.62% Decrease

*The Goal:*

Achieve a **5% reduction in city & residential landfill tonnage** over the next 12 months.



# The Launch!



## The Phase 1 Public Kickoff Event:

A community event in early August at the Recycling Center to unveil the new physical signage, distribute educational sorting guides, and explain the composting initiative with our partners.

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Questions?