

# City Council Agenda Item Memo

**From:** Charlie Kuhn, Solid Waste Manager

**Council Meeting:** January 27, 2026 / February 10, 2026

**Subject:** Ordinance 26-003: Revision to City Code of Ordinances, Chapter 70: Solid Waste

**Presenter:** Charlie Kuhn, Solid Waste Manager

## **Summary and Recommended Action:**

To promote safe and sustainable practices and extend the service life of the Brookings Regional Landfill, staff is introducing a new electronic waste (E-Waste) drop-off service and proposing an ordinance amendment which would prohibit the disposal of electronic waste and lithium batteries in the landfill. Instead, electronic waste will be collected and properly recycled. Staff recommends approval.

## **Item Details:**

As recommended in the 2023 Solid Waste Master Plan, the City's Solid Waste Division will be implementing an E-Waste recycling program at the Solid Waste Facility and banning E-Waste from being disposed of at the Brookings Regional Landfill. Currently there are no E-Waste regulations in the state of South Dakota; however, several municipalities throughout the state have E-Waste Recycling programs and ordinances which ban E-Waste from landfills.

Staff proposes to launch the E-Waste service in conjunction with the 2026 Spring Bulky Item Pickup, scheduled for April. To promote the new service, staff plans to begin a marketing campaign in February and offer a one-week free amnesty drop-off period during the 2026 Spring Bulky Item Pickup.

E-Waste will be excluded from the Spring Bulky Item Pickup; however, residents will be able to dispose of E-Waste at the landfill at no cost during the designated amnesty week.

## **Why Recycle Electronics?**

**Landfill Airspace:** Airspace is the lifeblood of any landfill. The more airspace which can be conserved, the longer the Brookings Regional Landfill will remain a viable disposal option for the Brookings area. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, E-Waste is the fastest-growing component of the municipal solid waste stream, and currently accounts for approximately 2.7% of all landfill waste. This equates to an estimated 1,620 tons of E-Waste disposed of at the Brookings Regional Landfill. As electronic production and consumption continue to increase, the volume of E-Waste entering landfills is expected to grow accordingly.

**Hazardous Materials:** Many of the components which make up common household electronics are comprised of hazardous materials. These materials, which are often heavy metals such as cadmium and lead, can have adverse effects on landfill employees, the landfill liner, and potentially the surrounding water quality. Recycling these products will ensure the hazardous materials will be handled and reused properly.

**Reduce Landfill Fires:** Landfill fires have increased nationwide over the past five to ten years, with the primary cause being the growing presence of electronics and batteries in the waste stream. When these materials are disposed of in landfills and compacted, damaged components can spark and ignite surrounding waste. Landfill fires can spread rapidly, resulting in significant damage to infrastructure and equipment. Removing electronic waste and batteries from the landfill will significantly reduce the risk of future fires, helping to protect employees, equipment, and public assets.

**Sustainability:** According to the EPA, over 98% of the components in electronic devices are recyclable. The process to create the raw materials needed to make these electronic devices can be incredibly expensive, require large amounts of energy, and use up valuable natural resources. Reusing the materials from the recycled electronics can help cut down on all these things while also making the end product more affordable for the end-users.

**Legal Consideration:** None.

**Strategic Plan Consideration:**

- Sustainability – The City of Brookings will meet environmental, community and economic desires and needs without compromising future generations' quality of life by strategically planning, implementing and maintaining infrastructure and facilities.
- Fiscal Responsibility – The City of Brookings will responsibly manage resources through transparency, efficiency, equity, and exceptional customer service.

**Financial Consideration:**

There is no general fund increase associated with the recommended actions. Funding for the program implementation is estimated at approximately \$10,000 and is budgeted in Fund 625 - Solid Waste Disposal.

A new fee of \$1.25 per pound will be established through a separate action prior to the launch of the electronic waste service. The fee structure will provide 100 percent cost recovery, ensuring the program operates on a cost-neutral basis.

Fee Breakdown		
Recycling Company Pickup Charge	\$1.00	Lb
Start-Up Recovery & Replacement Reserves	\$0.10	Lb
Administration (15%)	\$0.15	Lb
Total Fee	\$1.25	Lb

Staff estimates during the first year of service, up to 70,000 pounds of electronic waste may be collected, generating an estimated \$87,500 in revenue for Fund 625 - Solid Waste Disposal.

**Supporting Documentation:**

Ordinance - clean

Ordinance - marked

Legal Notice

Presentation