What happens when we close a landfill?

The Region’s Waste Management Division is responsible for several waste management facilities, both operating and closed. The Region continues to monitor and maintain closed landfills for decades after landfilling stops. Many closed landfills continue to serve as a location for the programs and services the Region provides. The Ayr and Cambridge Transfer Stations are examples of how we continue to use sites after landfilling. Other closed landfills with alternative uses include the Kitchener landfill, now McLennan Park.

A closed landfill is a landfill, or an area of an active landfill, that has reached its approved design height. At that time, closure activities can begin in the designated areas. Preparing a landfill for closure starts as soon as landfilling is finished in a specific area on the site.

When closing landfills, requirements for final cover materials, surface drainage, leachate control and methane gas must be followed. (For more information, see the Environmental controls and programs brochure). Both the surface and underground areas (including groundwater and gases) around all landfills are monitored after closure and the control systems are maintained. The Ministry of the Environment (MOECC) has approved the final closure plans for the Region’s landfills.

Waterloo landfill

The Region is already working towards naturalizing the completed slopes of the Waterloo landfill to blend with the nearby forest. Nine naturalized areas have been completed since 1997.

Each area is first prepared with final cover, in addition to a mix of soil, peat, compost and wood chips. Next, native species of shallow-rooted trees and shrubs are planted. These areas are evaluated on a regular basis and maintained as required. In total, the re-vegetated areas at the Waterloo landfill cover an area of 2.8 hectares and contain over 11,250 trees and shrubs!

These trees were planted in October 2010 at the Waterloo landfill site on a cool fall day.

After the landfill closes

The official “After Use Plan” for the Waterloo site was developed in April 1991. This plan evaluated options for what to do with the landfill once it is closed, and has been approved by the MOE for the final end use of the Waterloo landfill site. This final end use will allow for recreational uses such as hiking, biking and walking in an environment which blends in with the nearby forest.
**Cambridge landfill**

Opened in 1973 and closed in 2003, the Cambridge landfill consists of 137.6 hectares of land. Of this, 36 hectares were licensed for waste disposal and have now been closed, capped, and re-vegetated, with a post-closure maintenance and monitoring program in place.

While the landfill portion of the site has been closed, the remainder is a full-service facility and an integral part of our waste management operations. The site includes:

- public drop-off of waste
- waste transfer area
- extensive compost pads for leaf and yard waste
- waste diversion area
- landfill gas utilization, and
- an employee facility.

**Other closed landfills**

In addition to Cambridge, there are four other closed landfills in Waterloo Region that are monitored by the Region: Ayr, Cheese Factory Road, Kitchener and Woolwich.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Closed landfill (operating years)</th>
<th>What it is today</th>
<th>Area covered (hectares)</th>
<th>Approximate amount of waste in place (tonnes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ayr (1967 to 1987)</td>
<td>Ayr Transfer Station</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>70,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridge (1973 to 2003)</td>
<td>Cambridge Transfer Station</td>
<td>137.6</td>
<td>3 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheese Factory (1960 to 1987)</td>
<td>Passive open space</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchener (1958 to 1978)</td>
<td>McLennan Park</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>2 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woolwich (1965 to 1986)</td>
<td>Radio control airplane flying area</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>52,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**McLennan Park** (Kitchener landfill) is a 39-hectare site located at 901 Ottawa Street South, Kitchener. Landfilling operations stopped at this site in 1978. The City of Kitchener and the Region of Waterloo entered into a lease agreement to develop the former landfill into a city park. McLennan Park currently offers a number of amenities, including:

- accessible play-structure
- beach volleyball
- basketball courts
- BMX bike park
- larger lawn area
- leash-free dog park
- pedestrian trails
- picnic shelter
- skatepark
- splash pad
- toboggan hill

For more information about our programs and services, visit our website at [www.regionofwaterloo.ca/waste](http://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/waste), email [waste@regionofwaterloo.ca](mailto:waste@regionofwaterloo.ca) or call **519-575-4400** TTY **519-575-4608**.