

DEARBORN, MICHIGAN

Sustainable management for Ford's Rouge complex delivers coveted zero waste to landfill status



FORD ROUGE CENTER

“The longstanding teamwork between Veolia’s team and Ford’s environmental engineers made achieving zero waste to landfill possible for the 16 million square foot manufacturing complex.”

– Daniel Esch, Veolia Account Manager



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Scope

Ford Rouge includes six facilities covering 16 million square feet of production space, and is home to approximately 7,000 Ford employees.

With responsibility for managing virtually all waste streams at the Rouge complex, Veolia has six dedicated waste managers and 17 full time employees assigned to the Rouge. Additionally, Veolia provides 15 industrial cleaning staff to the complex. Both groups work together on site on a daily basis. They are collectively responsible for waste management activities, including moving waste, sorting and shipping recyclables, loading containers for off-site shipment, managing

the drum pad and drummed waste, and packaging wastes for shipment. Veolia's team also provides Ford with all the waste tracking and continuous improvement data it requires for its environmental reporting requirements.

As the facility approached its 100 year anniversary, Ford made the strategic decision to invest in achieving Zero Waste to Landfill (ZWTLF) status, and turned to its partners in Veolia to develop and execute a plan.

Challenge

Veolia was challenged by Ford to increase the facility's sustainability through a zero waste to landfill (ZWTLF) initiative that required substantial waste equipment and process changes.

Solution

To achieve Zero Landfill status for Ford Rouge, Veolia needed to build on the total waste management program already in place for Ford. This included integrating new solutions to address the most difficult waste streams, adding additional equipment to some facilities, and expanding sorting and transportation efficiencies to maximize recovery options.

Each facility within the complex has a unique manufacturing process and related waste streams. Some of the largest waste streams that had previously been designated for landfill disposal were wastewater treatment sludge, open-top dumpster waste, grinding wastes, and street sweepings.

Working in close partnership with Ford's environmental team, a landfill diversion strategy was developed for each stream, with solutions including everything from investing

in new equipment, to adopting additional sorting to ensure materials meet requirements for local recycling outlets and waste-to-energy facilities.

Veolia provided enhanced support to the Rouge complex's cardboard program and collects hundred of tons of waste per week to be recycled by local companies.

Veolia also implemented new hauling and disposal programs, partnering with the company's Canadian operations, including the Chatham, Ontario facility, to enhance and expand the recycling and disposal options available.

In total, more than 8 million pounds of waste generated by the Rouge complex every year was reviewed and is now actively managed by Veolia's on site team for landfill diversion.

Result

Some innovative and efficiency-gaining solutions developed by Veolia's team for Ford's difficult waste streams include:

- Changing to new filter media that allows for easier recycling
- Installing new compactors to significantly reduce cardboard bulk and transportation costs, and increase rebates
- Adding a solar compactor to reduce energy use and meet waste-to-energy acceptance requirements
- Adding new balers to improve the efficiency of sorting
- Investing in drum rotators to consolidate drummed wastes into bulk streams for maximum efficiency

One of the key challenges of the project was managing communication between vendors, the contract manager, clients and waste managers to ensure that everyone was on the same page to push forward the implementation. Veolia helped Ford overcome communication obstacles by holding multiple

weekly meetings to ensure that each line of engagement between Ford and Veolia was open and that all necessary information was being passed to each party.

Financial and logistical constraints were also mitigated by working in partnership with Ford to push for zero landfill status, which required additional investment on Ford's part to achieve. Because smart environmental stewardship is strategically important to Ford, and Rouge is a showcase complex, they chose to invest in the additional resources required to achieve and maintain landfill free status at the Rouge.

Since achieving landfill free on July 1, 2016, Ford has enjoyed an abundance of positive media and social attention related to diverting more than 8 million pounds of waste annually from landfills. Veolia's participation in helping Ford achieve zero waste to landfill has been recognized both publicly and within the Ford Motor Company as a finalist in the Ford 2016 Environmental Leadership award program.



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Contract Facts

2003-Ongoing
duration of project

16 million
square feet

+8 million
pounds of waste diverted

Landfill free
since July 2016

Ford saw their waste footprint at the Rouge complex and worked with Veolia to implement game changing initiatives that advanced the way that waste was handled and recycled. Pushing their operation to reach zero waste to landfill status added additional cost to Ford but it was the best path forward to meet their goals.

- Jon Neal, Veolia Site Manager

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