

IDAHO ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

Landfill Management for County Leaders

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Policy · Funding · Risk · Long-term planning

Let’s make this a working session

Which issue is most pressing in your county?

- 01

Capacity

How much permitted airspace remains—and when is the next cell needed?
- 02

Cost

Do rates recover the full lifecycle cost, not just this year’s operating budget?
- 03

Risk

What could interrupt service tomorrow: fire, equipment, staffing, water, or access?
- 04

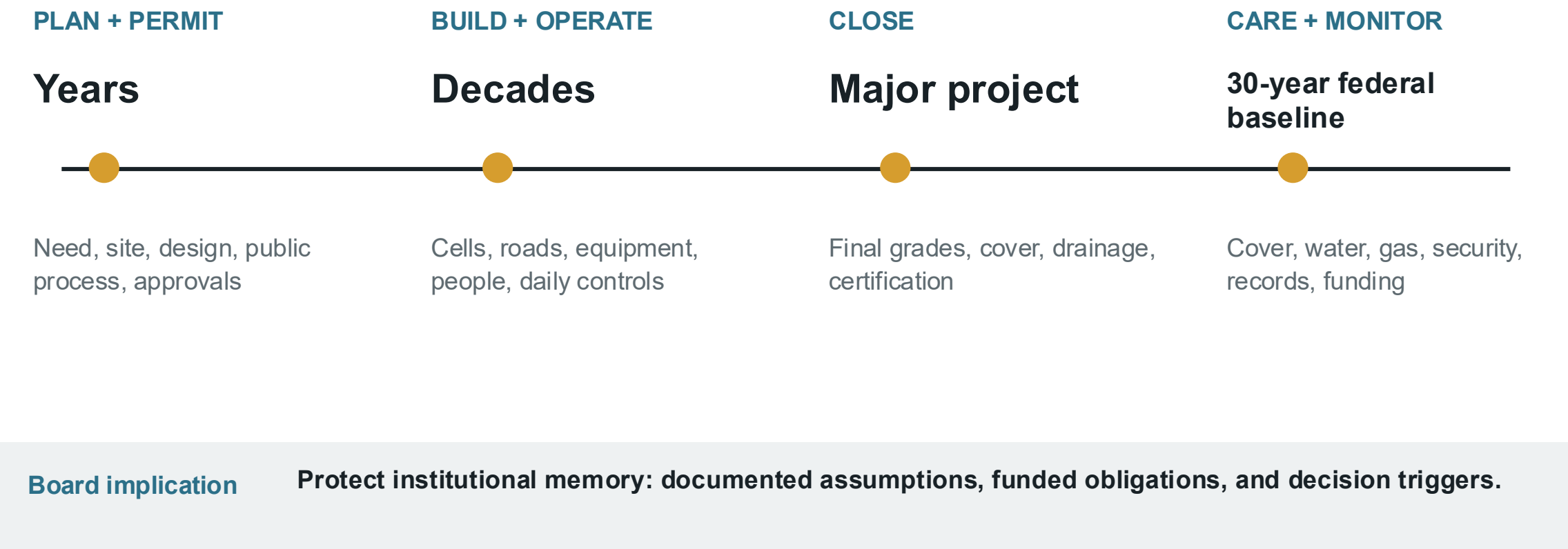
Trust

What do residents and neighboring landowners hear from you before a problem occurs?

DISCUSSION **Pick one. We will return to it during the session.**

A landfill decision can outlive its board

A single siting or funding decision creates obligations that can span generations.



Five outcomes matter to county leaders

01

SAFE

Protect employees, customers, neighbors, and responders

02

COMPLIANT

Meet permit, monitoring, reporting, and closure obligations

03

RELIABLE

Keep disposal service available through disruptions

04

AFFORDABLE

Use airspace and public dollars efficiently

05

FUTURE-READY

Secure capacity, funding, people, and public trust

The board governs outcomes; staff and contractors manage the daily work.

The role of governance—not daily operations

COUNTY LEADERS

Set direction.
Fund obligations.
Ensure Accountability.

01 Set policy

Define service levels, accepted risk, and long-term direction.

02 Fund obligations

Adopt rates and reserves that pay the full lifecycle cost.

03 Ensure Accountability

Review capacity, safety, compliance, cost, and major projects.

04 Build public trust

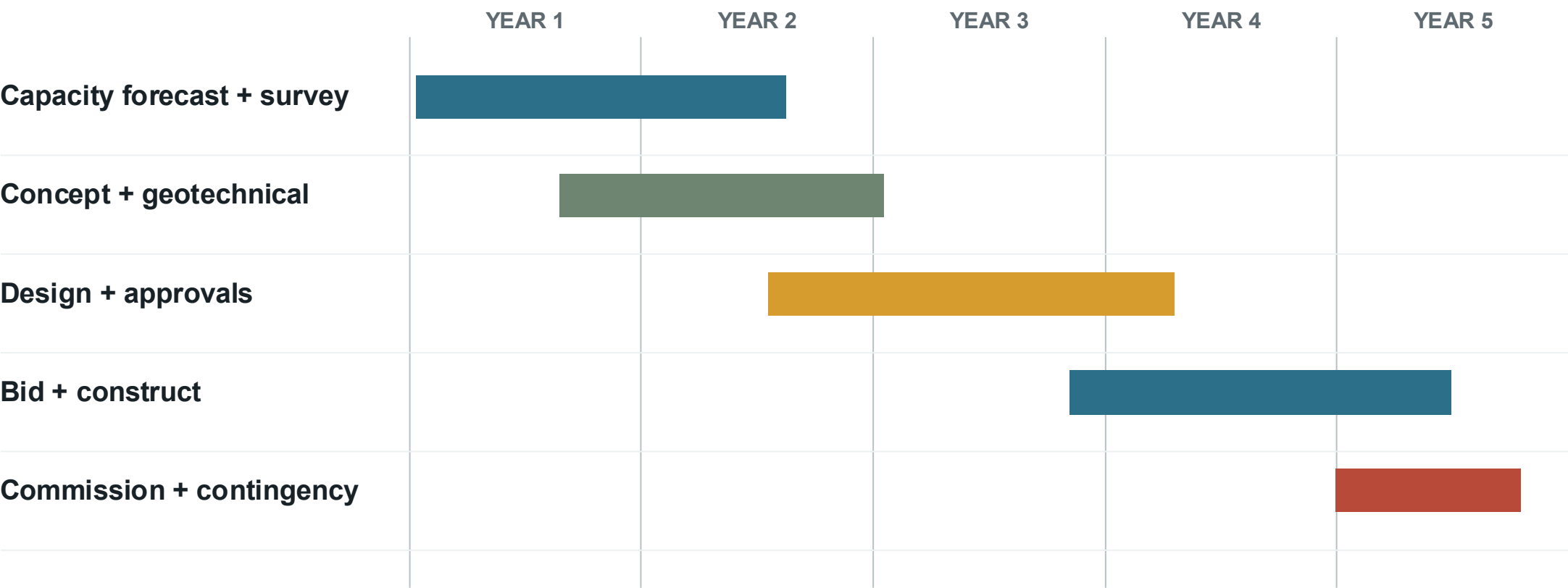
Explain decisions, disclose performance, and listen early.

DISCUSSION

Which responsibility is least clearly assigned in your county?

Short term is 5-years

The board’s job is to start early enough to preserve options and avoid crisis pricing.



Set a formal trigger: remaining constructed capacity, not remaining permitted capacity.

Rates must fund the full landfill lifecycle

A balanced annual budget is not enough: rates must also fund capital, closure, post-closure, and risk.

CURRENT OPERATIONS	Labor, equipment, fuel, cover, utilities, contracts
CAPITAL RENEWAL	Cells, roads, scales, buildings, gas and leachate systems
CLOSURE + POST-CLOSURE	Final cover, monitoring, maintenance, security, reporting
CONTINGENCY + CORRECTIVE ACTION	Failures, releases, emergency hauling, unplanned construction

A COMPLETE RATE MODEL

- Updates annually
- Funds future obligations
- Explains rates clearly
- Tests major decisions

Financial assurance is the floor. Deliberate reserves and rate policy are the operating plan.

A short dashboard keeps the board out of the weeds

Ask for trends, targets, and exceptions—not a pile of monthly data.

SAFETY

Leading actions closed + incidents

CAPACITY

Constructed years remaining + next trigger

COST

Full lifecycle cost per ton + rate gap

EQUIPMENT

Critical units available + backup plan

COMPLIANCE

Open findings + days to close

CAPITAL

Major projects vs schedule + budget

SERVICE

Interruptions + recovery time

WORKFORCE

Vacancies + succession coverage

DISCUSSION

Which metric would trigger a board decision this year?

Four trends deserve board attention now

Ask whether the operating plan, capital plan, and public message anticipate these risks.

		SIGNAL	BOARD RESPONSE
01	LITHIUM BATTERY FIRES	More fires in collection and disposal systems	Fund collection, screening, response, and fire-department coordination
02	WASTE TIRES	Disposal/Recycling methods changing	Take responsibility for volume produced in your county and ensure outlets
03	LANDFILL GAS	More enforcement and record scrutiny	Require sound monitoring, maintenance, calculations, and records
04	EXTREME EVENTS + DEBRIS	Volume spikes and service disruptions	Pre-plan access, power, staffing, contracts, and emergency airspace

DISCUSSION

Which trend is already changing your county’s risk or cost?

Eight questions reveal most landfill risks

Ask for a current, documented answer—and a named owner for the next action.

- 01

How many years of constructed capacity remain?
- 02

What decision must be made next—and by when?
- 03

Which single failure could stop service tomorrow?
- 04

Are safety and compliance findings closing on time?
- 05

Do rates fund capital, operations, closure, and post-closure?
- 06

Which system has the least redundancy?
- 07

What major decision is due in the next 24 months?
- 08

Who can run the system when key people are absent?

Turn the questions into a 90-day plan

Use staff and consultants to build the baseline; use the board to resolve priorities, funding, and triggers.

DAYS 0–30

BASELINE

- Capacity + next decision date
- Safety + compliance gaps
- Funding + service risks

DAYS 31–60

PRIORITIZE

- Rank by public consequence + likelihood
- Name owners, deadlines, and resources
- Set board decision triggers

DAYS 61–90

ACT + REPORT

- Close immediate risks
- Launch funded priorities
- Set the dashboard cadence

One completed decision builds more confidence than an unfinished comprehensive plan.

What decision needs your attention first?

01

Capacity

02

Funding

03

Risk

04

Public trust

What is one question you will take back to your county?