



Waste Less



Leading the way to a better future



Dakota County, Minnesota

2024-2044

Solid Waste Management Plan

September 23, 2025

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Acronyms and Initialisms

CLIF Closed Landfill Investment Funds

EAB Emerald ash borer

ELF Environmental Legacy Fund

GHG Greenhouse Gas

HHW Household hazardous waste

JPA Joint powers agreement

LRDG Local Recycling Development Grant

MDA Minnesota Department of Agriculture

MLAA Funding and Metropolitan Landfill Abatement Account

MLCAT Metropolitan Landfill Contingency Action Trust Account

MMCD Metropolitan Mosquito Control District

MNCC Minnesota Composting Council

MnDOT Minnesota Department of Transportation

MPCA Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

MRF Materials recovery facility

MSW Mixed municipal solid waste/municipal solid waste

Non-MSW non-municipal solid waste (industrial, construction and demolition waste)

PP Metropolitan Solid Waste Management Policy Plan

PSI Program and Service Inventory

REC Recycling Education Committee

SCORE Select Committee on Recycling and the Environment

SSOM Source separated organic materials

TCMA Twin Cities Metropolitan Area

TPD Tons per day

VSQG Very Small Quantity Generator

WTE Waste-to-energy



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the Dakota County 2024-2044 Solid Waste Management Plan (Plan) is to guide solid waste management activities in the county. This revised Plan replaces and builds on the strengths of the 2018-2038 Solid Waste Master Plan.

The Plan includes prescribed strategies to implement the Metropolitan Solid Waste Management Policy Plan 2022-2042 (Policy Plan) adopted by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency in January 2024. Minnesota statute requires Twin Cities Metropolitan Area (TCMA) counties to update county solid waste plans every six years with strategies that implement the waste management goals and objectives in the MPCA's revised Policy Plan. The Policy Plan includes key themes, policies, goals, strategies, and numeric objectives that guide counties in reducing unnecessary disposal of mixed municipal solid waste (MSW) to support improved waste management in accordance with Minnesota's Waste Management Act. The four key themes from the metropolitan Policy Plan include:

- Sustainable material management is a holistic and systematic approach to use and reuse materials more productively over their entire life cycle.
- There are potential greenhouse gas reductions to be found throughout the solid waste management system.
- The benefits and burdens of the waste management system must flow equally to everyone.
- Extended producer responsibility presents great opportunities for shifting the burden of management from the counties to the producers.

The Policy Plan also sets new county-specific plan focus areas for metropolitan counties, including:

- Increased emphasis on waste reduction and reuse to achieve the 15 percent target for reducing overall mixed municipal waste generation by 2042. Special emphasis is placed on food waste prevention.
- Sustainable building materials: Counties must focus on sustainable management of construction and demolition materials, which previously have not had state-established reduction targets.
- Wood waste: Anticipating a substantial increase in tree waste related to the Emerald Ash Borer, there is new emphasis on managing trees to delay the need for removal and on expanding regional capacity for handling wood waste. Counties must develop tree waste management plans.
- Organics (Food Scraps) diversion is not new to the Policy Plan, although expectations for implementation are more definite. The Policy Plan requires residential curbside organics collection to be available in cities with a population greater than 5,000 by 2030.

The following table lists the Policy Plan waste objectives in percentages through 2042 for the TCMA's MSW management system. These objectives are intended to maximize the upper end of the hierarchy, emphasizing product stewardship, source reduction, and reuse, and achieving the legislative goals for recycling and organics recovery.



	2022 7 Metro Counties (Actual)*	2022 Dakota County (Actual)*	2025 Goals	2030 Goals	2036 Goals	2042 Goals
Waste Reduction	--**	--**	2.9%	6.4%	10.7%	15.0%
Recycling	31.7%	24.5%	36.9%	47.4%	47.4%	47.4%
Organics Recovery	17.3%	30.2%	21.5%	27.6%	27.6%	27.6%
Resource Recovery	21.6%	2.2%	24.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%
Landfilled	29.3%	43.2%	17.6%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%

*2022 SCORE Report data as presented on the [MPCA Data Website](#). Total does not equal 100% due to rounding.

**Actual reduction and reuse measures have not yet been defined for measurement and reporting purposes.

Comprehensive stakeholder engagement informed the Plan update, with more than 2,000 residents, businesses, public officials, and others providing insights on solid waste issues, barriers, and potential strategies.

This Plan is intended to guide waste management in the county through 2044. However, the Plan is revised every six years, so most of the strategies focus on making progress toward the 2030 objectives established by the MPCA in the Policy Plan. Other strategies lay the foundation for achieving the long-term goals. The Plan is organized into two main chapters with multiple appendices:

- **Part One: Introduction** – consists of the Plan introduction, purpose, and framework.
- **Part Two: Solid Waste Management Plan** – consists of Dakota County’s solid waste vision and policies; specific strategies and tactics; and Plan implementation details. The Plan includes 62 strategies to meet MPCA requirements and manage waste more sustainably. Strategy types include:
 1. Policy Plan required strategies (32 strategies) that the MPCA prescribed must be included in all metropolitan county plans for regional consistency.
 2. Selected Policy Plan optional strategies (12 strategies, 82 points) were chosen from the list of strategy options identified as best management practices in the Policy Plan that counties needed to select from to reach a minimum of 75 points.
 3. Continuing county strategies (18 strategies) that are existing county programs and practices that will be continued and refined, as necessary, and are not incorporated under Policy Plan strategies.
- **Appendices** – consist of an overview of Dakota County’s existing waste management systems and programs; a Plan development summary; environmental justice information; performance and accountability details; strategy timing and implementation tables; and a checklist of statutory Plan requirements.

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

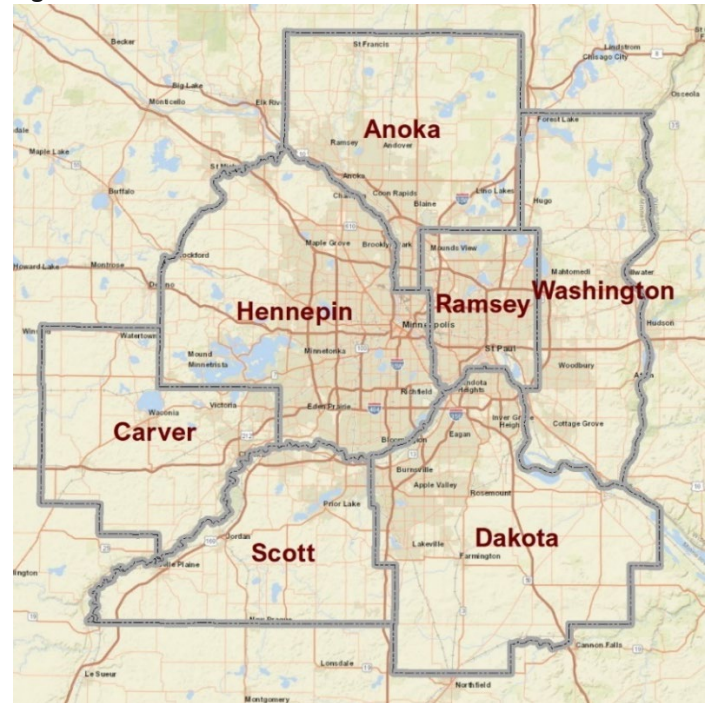
A. Introduction

The Dakota County 2024-2044 Solid Waste Management Plan defines Dakota County’s guide for managing solid waste. Dakota County adopted its first Plan in 1982 in accordance with Minnesota Statute (Minn. Stat. §§ 473.803 and 115A) and updated it five times since then. This revised Plan replaces and builds on the strengths of the 2018-2038 Solid Waste Master Plan and incorporates prescribed strategies in the state’s Metropolitan Solid Waste Management Policy Plan 2022-2042 (Policy Plan) as required by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA).

State statute requires Twin Cities Metropolitan Area (TCMA) counties (Figure 1) to update county solid waste plans every six years with strategies that implement the waste management goals and objectives in the state’s Policy Plan. The Commissioner of the MPCA adopted the revised Policy Plan on January 30, 2024, establishing the framework for managing solid waste in the TCMA through 2042. The Policy Plan includes key themes, policies, goals, strategies, and numeric objectives that guide counties in reducing unnecessary disposal of mixed municipal solid waste.

Comprehensive stakeholder engagement informed update. More than 2,000 responses from residents, business and industry representatives, public officials (city, township, school), and others provided insights on solid waste issues, barriers, and solutions and feedback on potential strategies. See Appendix B for information on engagement.

Figure 1: Counties in the TCMA



This Plan is consistent with Dakota County’s Strategic Plan goal: “A healthy environment with quality natural areas” and the Environmental Resources Department’s mission to “Protect, preserve, and enhance the environment for the health, enjoyment, and benefit of current and future generations.” This Plan will inform the 2050 Dakota County Comprehensive Plan and city comprehensive plans in Dakota County (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Relationship of Waste Plans to Local Plans



County Comprehensive Plan: Dakota County’s Comprehensive Plan establishes the long-range vision and high-level guidelines for key systems in Dakota County, including transportation, land use, environment and natural resources, and parks. The next major update to the Comprehensive Plan is due in 2028. The Plan provides the next level of detail for solid waste management.

City Comprehensive Plans: The Solid Waste Management Plan and Dakota County’s Comprehensive Plan serve as a framework to inform revisions to comprehensive plans for cities in Dakota County. City Comprehensive Plans are amended as needed and the next major update will be due in 2028.

Connections to Other County Plans and Key Initiatives: The Solid Waste Management Plan intersects with other Dakota County plans and county program areas (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Solid Waste Management Plan Connections to County Plans and Key Initiatives



The first part of this Plan describes the Plan purpose and framework, including statutory waste management goals and requirements. The second part presents the County’s vision, policies, goals, and strategies for solid waste management in accordance with the Policy Plan. Appendices at the end of the Plan provide an overview of the solid waste management system, the Plan update process and stakeholder engagement, environmental justice, performance and accountability, strategy timing and implementation, and a crosswalk of this Plan against statutory requirements.

The Plan is intended to guide waste management in the county through 2044, but most of the strategies focus on meeting the 2030 objectives established by the state in the Policy Plan. Other strategies lay the foundation for achieving the long-term goals. Implementation progress will be reviewed regularly, and revisions and new strategies will be developed as appropriate to continue progress towards achieving the primary outcomes.

B. Plan Purpose and Framework

1. Plan Purpose

The Plan communicates Dakota County’s vision, policies, strategies, and tactics for solid waste management over the next twenty years, with revisions every six years following Policy Plan revisions.

2. Plan Framework

Dakota County’s Solid Waste Management Plan provides a framework for county residents, businesses, municipalities, waste industry and others to properly manage solid waste; performance measures to assess progress; and reporting mechanisms for accountability. The Plan identifies Dakota County’s approaches toward Policy Plan objectives, the statutory 75 percent recycling rate goal, and achieving other statutory requirements.

The county’s Plan was developed to align with the Policy Plan. The MPCA’s Policy Plan that metropolitan counties must follow supports improved waste management in accordance with Minnesota’s Waste Management Act (Minn. Stat. § 115A) and puts more emphasis on the following:

- Pollution prevention
- Sustainable materials management
- Conservation of natural resources
- Reduced reliance on landfills and waste-to-energy facilities
- Reduced toxicity of waste
- Equitable improvement public health for all residents
- Supporting the economy
- Reduce impacts from climate change

The following key themes in the Policy Plan underlie all elements for TCMA counties to follow:

1. Sustainable material management is a holistic and systematic approach to use and reuse materials more productively over their entire life cycle.
2. There are potential greenhouse gas reductions to be found throughout the solid waste management system.
3. The benefits and burdens of the waste management system must flow equally to everyone.
4. Extended producer responsibility presents great opportunities for shifting the burden of management from the counties to the producers.

The state’s Policy Plan objectives (Table 1) are intended to maximize the upper end of the hierarchy, emphasizing product stewardship, source reduction, and reuse, and achieving the legislative goals for recycling and organics recovery. The objectives are percentages of total TCMA MSW. Percentages generated in 2022 by the TCMA and Dakota County are provided as a comparison and baseline. All stakeholders, including the MPCA, Dakota County, municipalities, waste generators, and system operators, will be held accountable for meeting these objectives. Objectives were not set for toxicity reduction or non-MSW, including construction and demolition waste.



Table 1: Policy Plan MSW Management System Objectives for the TCMA, 2025 - 2042

	2022 7-Metro Counties (Actual)	2022 Dakota County (Actual)	2025 Goals	2030 Goals	2036 Goals	2042 Goals
Waste Reduction	--*	--*	2.9%	6.4%	10.7%	15.0%
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Resource Recovery	21.6%	2.2%	24.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%
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2022 SCORE Report data as presented on the [MPCA Data Website](#). Total does not equal 100% due to rounding.

*Actual reduction and reuse measures have not yet been defined for measurement and reporting purposes.

The Policy Plan also sets new county-specific focus areas for metropolitan counties, including:

- Increased emphasis on waste reduction and reuse to achieve the 15 percent target for reducing overall waste generation by 2042. Special emphasis is placed on food waste prevention.
- Sustainable building materials: Counties must focus on sustainable management of construction and demolition materials, which previously have not had state-established reduction targets.
- Wood waste: Anticipating a substantial increase in tree waste related to diseases such as the Emerald Ash Borer, there is a new emphasis on managing trees to delay the need for removal and on expanding regional capacity for handling wood waste. Counties must develop tree waste management plans.
- Organics (food scraps) diversion is not new to the Policy Plan, although expectations for implementation are more definite. The Policy Plan requires residential curbside organics collection to be available in cities with a population greater than 5,000 by 2030.

3. Statutory Waste Management Goal and Requirements

The Waste Management Act (Minn. Stat. § 115A) was passed in 1980 to protect the state’s land, air, water, natural resources, and public health. It requires the county to reduce solid waste generation (Minn. Stat. § 115A.55). In 2014, State law was changed to require TCMA counties to achieve a 75 percent recycling rate goal (up from 50 percent) by 2030 (Minn. Stat. § 115A.551). Additional waste management statutory requirements for counties that are addressed in this Plan include:

- Ensure that residents have the opportunity to recycle (Minn. Stat. § 115A.552);
- Ensure at least one recycling center is available in the county to collect recyclable materials (Minn. Stat. § 115A.552);
- Provide information on how, when, and where materials may be recycled (Minn. Stat. § 115A.552);
- Develop a promotional program that publishes notices at least once every three months and encourages separation of recyclable materials (Minn. Stat. § 115A.552);
- Implement a Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) management plan including broad-based HHW education, reduction, separation from trash and collection, storage, and proper management (Minn. Stat. § 115A.96);
- Encourage building owners and managers to provide appropriate recycling services (Minn. Stat. § 115A.552);
- Ensure that materials separated for recycling are taken to markets for sale or to recyclable material processing centers (Minn. Stat. § 115A.553);

- Develop a solid waste plan to implement the Policy Plan (Minn. Stat. § 473.803);
- Develop and implement – or require political subdivisions to develop and implement – programs, practices, or methods designed to meet the state-established recycling goal (Minn. Stat. § 115A.551).
- Include in its solid waste management plan a recycling implementation strategy for meeting the state-established recycling goal (Minn. Stat. § 115A.551);
- Provide for the recycling of problem materials and major appliances (Minn. Stat. §115A.552);
- Develop and implement a permanent program to manage HHW (Minn. Stat. § 473.804);
- Include in its solid waste management plan a hazardous waste management plan with a public education component, household hazardous waste reduction strategy, and a strategy for separation and proper management of HHW (Minn. Stat. § 115A.96);
- Establish and revise ordinances, rules, regulations, and standards for solid waste facilities within the county and ensure compliance (Minn. Stat. § 473.811); and
- Submit an annual certification report to the MPCA (Minn. Stat. § 473.848).

Waste management in the TCMA is an integrated system of many public and private entities with varying roles and responsibilities, ranging from direct service provision to regulation. Dakota County does not provide direct waste management services but has regulatory oversight and waste abatement programs to protect the environment and public health, and support waste management at the highest and best use in accordance with Minnesota’s waste management hierarchy. A variety of private waste management facilities located in Dakota County play a significant role in managing waste for the region and supporting the waste management hierarchy, including two recycling facilities, an aluminum recycling facility, a lead and plastic recycling facility, a food waste composting facility, a food processing facility, six non-MSW landfills, and two MSW landfills. More information about each of these facilities is contained in Appendix A.

Substantial progress has been made since Dakota County issued its first solid waste plan in the 1980s; however, recycling is not at the level it could and should be. The MPCA conducted a statewide waste characterization study in 2013 to assist with planning efforts. Results identified diversion opportunities based on the largest quantities of recoverable materials found in the waste stream, including organics (31 percent), paper (25 percent), and plastics (18 percent).

This revised Plan focuses on providing the strong start needed for better resource conservation and environmental protection, and to achieve, or make significant progress toward, the aggressive Policy Plan objectives and statutory waste management requirements.

PART TWO: SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN

This section outlines Dakota County’s solid waste vision, policies, strategies, tactics, and timing. Policies, strategies, and tactics in the Plan are intended to implement the Policy Plan and advance the MSW management system objectives for the region (i.e., TCMA counties).

A. County Solid Waste Vision

The following vision defines Dakota County’s desired solid waste management system to be implemented by the public and private sectors through efforts identified in the Plan:

A comprehensive waste management system that protects, preserves, and enhances the environment and public health.

B. County Solid Waste Policies

The following policies define the position on specific issues, and roles or actions the county generally will take:

1. Prioritize waste management in preferred order: waste and toxicity reduction, reuse, recycling and organics recovery/diversion (prevention, consumable food rescue for people, food scraps for livestock, food for industrial uses, and then composting), resource recovery, land disposal.
2. Regulate waste in accordance with county ordinances.
3. Implement projects and programs toward achieving state laws, rules, and Metropolitan Solid Waste Management Policy Plan goals and objectives.
4. Employ multiple approaches including educational, regulatory, and financial to efficiently and effectively meet the Metropolitan Solid Waste Management Policy Plan goals and objectives.
5. Collaborate with the private and public sectors to address waste management issues.
6. Hold all persons, including waste generators and waste system operators, accountable for proper waste management and for following the Plan.
7. Advocate for practical State and Federal product stewardship laws that support producer-led toxicity reduction, source reduction, reuse, and recycling.
8. Seek external sources of funding to implement this Plan and for long-term and post-closure care of landfills.
9. Strive for just treatment, meaningful involvement, and equitable implementation of the Solid Waste Management Plan for all community members.

The vision and policies align with the Environmental Resources Department’s mission to “Protect, preserve and enhance the environment for the health, enjoyment and benefit of current and future generations.”

C. Strategies and Tactics by Topic

Strategies are steps that will be taken to meet Policy Plan and statutory requirements.

This Plan includes three types of strategies:

1. **Required Policy Plan Strategies** that must be included in all TCMA county plans. The MPCA’s Policy Plan identifies these 32 prescribed strategies as relatively simple to implement or have significant environmental benefit. All 32 required strategies are included in this Plan. Strategies are also referenced by their numbers in the Policy Plan.



2. **Selected Policy Plan Optional Strategies** that total a minimum of 75 points (of available 194 points) must be included in all TCMA county plans. The Policy Plan identifies 28 optional strategies for counties to select from with assigned point values based on level of difficulty and environmental benefit. This Plan consists of 12 selected optional strategies that total 82 points, exceeding the 75-point minimum. Strategies are also referenced by their numbers in the Policy Plan.
3. **Continuing County Strategies** are existing county programs and practices that will be continued and refined, as necessary, and are not incorporated under Policy Plan strategies. Appendix A provides detailed program descriptions about all county solid waste programs and practices. This Plan includes 18 continuing strategies.

Table 2 identifies the strategy topics, the number of strategies TCMA counties are required to include in each topic, and optional strategies included in the Plan with their corresponding point values.

Table 2: Policy Plan Strategies Incorporated into the Solid Waste Management Plan

Strategy Topics	# of Required Strategies	# of Optional Strategies Selected	Point Value of Optional Strategies Selected
1. Improve the Reliability of the Data	2	1	7
2. Education and Regional Planning	5	-	-
3. Waste Reduction and Reuse	8	4	27
4. Recycling and Organics Management with Collection Best Practices	8	2	14
5. Waste-to-Energy	1	-	-
6. Landfilling	1	-	-
7. Household Hazardous Waste and Toxicity Reduction	3	1	9
8. Sustainable Building and Deconstruction	1	2	16
9. Wood Waste	3	1	5
10. Cost and Finance	-	1	4
Total Strategies	32 (32 required)	12	
Total Point Value of Optional Strategies			82 (75 required)

Tactics are specific actions or activities that will be taken to implement strategies. Strategies include a range of tactics that vary in degree of specificity. This reflects the uncertainty in predicting future conditions often seen with a long-range plan. For example, a more specific tactic identifies how it will be implemented if the mechanism for implementation is evident (e.g., county ordinance update), while other tactics are written more broadly to allow evaluation and implementation of the most effective implementation method (e.g., a county ordinance versus new programs).

Projected timing is provided for each selected Policy Plan strategy and county-continuing strategy in Appendix E. Strategy implementation timelines align with the general timelines identified in the Policy Plan.

Implementation of a given strategy or tactic is subject to County Board approval through annual budgeting and work planning processes.

The implementation framework was developed to allow flexibility in executing the different strategies and tactics, and to provide options for the County Board to choose from when developing annual budgets and work plans. For example, some tactics would only be implemented if the funding and staff were available to execute. Non-county funds will be leveraged as much as possible through grants, fees, or other funding sources to support implementation.

The county will coordinate with state and regional partners to develop annual priorities and work plans, as appropriate. The MPCA and county will annually evaluate progress. Other influences, such as changes in industry and market conditions for materials, may also influence strategy timing and implementation. Therefore, the actual timing of strategy implementation may be different than presented in this Plan based on approved approaches, strategy phasing, future conditions, and interactions with other implemented strategies.

1. Topic: Improving the Reliability of the Data

The MPCA desires to “accelerate the availability of data and information in a self-service format.” One of the best ways to accomplish this is to ensure that data is consistently collected through the most reliable sources and that all waste and waste reduction be tracked.

Dakota County must include two Policy Plan strategies in this category, as listed below. The Plan also includes one selected Policy Plan optional strategy, worth seven points toward the 75-point total required minimum.

Required Policy Plan Strategies

1. **Increase compliance with hauler reporting per Minn. Stat. § 115A.93. (PP [Policy Plan] 1)**
 - a. Continue to implement county requirements for hauler reporting.
 - b. Inform haulers of reporting requirements at least once per quarter.
2. **Provide required county reporting. (PP 2)**
 - a. Continue to annually submit required reporting to the MPCA (e.g., SCORE, certification, annual reports).
 - b. Continue to collaborate with the MPCA, TCMA counties, and regulated parties to improve waste management data collection and reporting.
 - c. Collaborate with the MPCA and TCMA counties to identify and implement an effective measurement tool for source reduction and reuse.

Optional Policy Plan Strategies

3. **Improve recycling data collection at businesses within the county. (PP 4, 7 points)**
 - a. Continue to implement Dakota County Ordinance No. 110 requirements for commercial entities (e.g., business, schools) to annually report recycling data to the county to improve waste management data.

2. Topic: Education and Regional Planning

Counties are responsible to provide education to the public on how, when, and where materials can be recycled and promote activities to encourage recycling at least quarterly (Minn. Stat. § 115A.552). The Policy Plan states that it is practical to implement certain strategies at the regional level by collaboratively designing and modernizing a materials management system that will benefit all TCMA counties, and requires this Plan include five specific strategies for regional solutions, as listed below.

A continuing county strategy will support ongoing landfill waste abatement education efforts.



Required Policy Plan Strategies

- 4. Participate in an annual joint commissioner/staff meeting on solid waste. (PP 9)**
 - a. Collaborate with partners (e.g., MPCA, TCMA counties) to implement meetings with the MPCA, county staff, and a county commissioner to support effective solid waste policies in the region.

- 5. Commit to standardized outreach and education. (PP 10)**
 - a. Continue to provide information on how, when, and where to properly manage solid waste and encourage source-separation of materials to support management of materials and waste at the highest levels of the State of Minnesota's Waste Management Hierarchy and the EPA Food Recovery Hierarchy to all persons in Dakota County.
 - b. Continue to provide consistent, broad-based education to the community on proper waste management (e.g., solid waste, problem materials, household hazardous waste) using county-standardized educational, outreach, and communication resources.
 - c. Continue to collaborate with partners (e.g., MPCA, TCMA counties, Recycling Education Committee, recycling and composting associations) to leverage existing resources by incorporating state and regionally developed materials in county communications.
 - d. Update Dakota County Ordinance No. 110 to require haulers to provide customers feedback when they are not sorting recycling or organics correctly and provide standardized messaging to customers on a quarterly basis at minimum.
 - e. Continue to promote county programs and collection services (e.g., The Recycling Zone) and drop off opportunities (e.g., plastic bag and film recycling) to promote proper management of solid waste.
 - f. Promote the benefits of the use of compost.

- 6. Engage in efficient and value-added infrastructure planning. (PP 11)**
 - a. Continue to collaborate with the state, TCMA counties and the private sector on planning efforts for infrastructure development (e.g., organics, wood waste).

- 7. Develop plans for large facility closures to reduce landfill reliance. (PP 12)**
 - a. Develop plans for potential closures at large facilities (e.g., recycling facilities, food waste compost facilities, transfer stations) located in the county.
 - b. Continue to collaborate with the state, landfill owners/operators, and municipalities that host landfills to develop post-closure monitoring and mitigation plans.
 - c. Continue to enforce Dakota County Ordinance No. 110 requirements that prohibit source-separated materials, including recyclables and food waste, from being landfilled.
 - d. Continue to ensure facilities maintain closure and pre-closure plans and adequate financial assurance to implement those plans, as required by Dakota County Ordinance No. 110.

- 8. Participate with the Product Stewardship Committee under the Solid Waste Administrators Association (SWAA). (PP 60)**
 - a. Continue to participate in a regional product stewardship committee to develop and expand practical product stewardship initiatives.
 - b. Continue to provide data for legislative changes that improve product stewardship initiatives (e.g., for paint, electronics).



Continuing County Strategy

The following strategy is an existing county practice not incorporated in the above Policy Plan strategies. The strategy will be sustained and refined, as necessary.

9. Provide messages and education programs to all audiences using communication methods most effective for the intended audience.

- a. Develop engagement methods using innovative, evidence-based approaches proven to motivate behavior change.
- b. Deliver messages using mass communications methods (e.g., print, online, mobile) most effective for each intended audience.
- c. Use a variety of learning engagement methods (e.g., presentations, tours, multilingual/multicultural outreach).
- d. Require municipalities to use elements of county-standardized outreach, educational, and promotional program materials.
- e. Use the Recycling Ambassador program to engage more audiences (e.g., teachers, municipal staff) to increase waste management awareness and waste diversion actions in the community.

3. Topic: Waste Reduction and Reuse

Counties are responsible for advancing prevention and reuse along with other solid waste management strategies. Waste reduction means not generating any materials that require further recycling, composting, disposal, or other management. The Policy Plan Waste Reduction objective is 2.9 percent by 2025 and 15 percent by 2042 for TCMA counties.

Dakota County is required to include eight specific strategies in this category, as listed below. The Plan also includes four selected optional strategies, worth a total of 27 points toward the 75-point required minimum. Continuing county strategies provide ongoing support for existing residential, municipal, business and school reduction and reuse education and project efforts.

Required Policy Plan Strategies

10. Provide grants for access to software that can track food waste. (PP 13)

- a. Continue to provide support (e.g., funding, technical assistance, best management tools) for tracking tools and equipment (e.g., LeanPath, Phood) to schools and commercial kitchens to prevent food waste in their purchasing and practices.

11. Establish partnerships between food rescue organizations and restaurants/stores to increase food rescue. (PP 14)

- a. Provide support (e.g., funding, technical assistance) to organizations (e.g., food shelves, restaurants, grocery stores, schools) to improve collection, safe storage and transportation of surplus edible food to food rescue organizations.
- b. Collaborate with food rescue organizations to provide education to donors on donation opportunities, including donation liability protections.
- c. Provide resources (e.g., educational materials) to businesses and schools on food rescue options during county waste regulation inspections.

12. Launch bi-annual sustainable consumption challenges for residents. (PP 15)

- a. Conduct bi-annual sustainable low-waste living challenges (e.g., plastic reduction) for residents and provide tools (e.g., reusable containers) to reduce barriers to sustain low-waste actions.



- b. Continue to provide information on waste reduction and reuse opportunities for residents (e.g., donation, curbside collection, lending, renting, repairing).

13. Implement a formal county sustainable purchasing policy using MPCA guidance. (PP 16)

- a. Continue to implement standards and practices for environmentally preferable products and services in accordance with County Policy 2740 (Procurement) and educate employees on practices that reduce waste in county operations.
- b. Adopt and implement a county policy that allows donation of assets to non-profit organizations.

14. Participate in Responsible Public Purchasing Council meetings. (PP 17)

- a. Continue to participate in MPCA-led Responsible Purchasing Council meetings and host at least two meetings by 2030.
- b. Continue to provide resources (e.g., funding, technical assistance) to public entities to participate in the MPCA's Responsible Purchasing Council meetings and implement waste reduction and reuse in their operations.

15. Offer grants or rebates for organizations to transition to reusable food and beverage service ware. (PP 19)

- a. Continue to implement county business and municipal waste abatement programs that provide resources (e.g., funding, technical assistance) to improve waste reduction and reuse within internal operations, including for supplies and reusable service ware.
- b. Modify the existing school program to expand support (e.g., funding, technical assistance) to increase use of reusable service ware, including for infrastructure (e.g., washing and collection equipment).

16. Offer grants for waste reduction, reuse, and repair. (PP 20)

- a. Continue to provide resources (e.g., funding, technical assistance) through the business, school, multifamily, and municipal waste abatement programs to improve waste reduction within internal operations.
- b. Provide start-up resources (e.g., funding, technical assistance) to businesses and organizations to implement waste reduction with large-scale community-wide impact.
- c. Use non-county funding opportunities (i.e., grants or additional state funding) to research best practices and pilot opportunities to increase deconstruction and use of reusable building materials.

17. Implement a green meeting policy. (PP 21)

- a. Continue to implement standards for green meetings in accordance with County Policy 2740 (Procurement) and educate employees on green meeting practices.
- b. Explore and implement additional opportunities (e.g., food donation, reusable serviceware, select use of dishwashers) to reduce waste at county meetings.

Selected Policy Plan Optional Strategies

18. Work with health inspectors to educate restaurants and other establishments that have excess prepared food to donate. (PP 18, 7 points)

- a. Collaborate with the Minnesota Department of Health to educate state-licensed food establishments about food rescue opportunities.



- 19. Join and/or actively participate in a reuse network, like Reuse Minnesota, to provide county and city staff with learning opportunities to broaden their reuse expertise. (PP 24, 6 points)**
 - a. Continue to be a member of and participate in Reuse Minnesota and implement learnings in county operations.
 - b. Continue to provide resources (e.g., funding, technical assistance) to municipalities to participate in reuse networks and implement reuse in their operations.
- 20. Establish a Repair Ambassador program, like the Recycler/Composters (RCAs) Ambassador programs. (PP 25 – 7 points)**
 - a. Continue to implement the Fix-it Clinic Program with a volunteer base to support repair of broken household items.
 - b. Implement a repair ambassador program to recruit and provide trainings for new volunteers to support Fix-it Clinics.
- 21. Establish a reuse location for residential drop-off and pick-up (PP 26 – 7 points)**
 - a. Increase residential reuse opportunities using county collection facilities (e.g., Recycling Zone, Recycling Zone Plus) for household items that are challenging to reuse (e.g., household hazardous waste, problem materials, bicycles, and mattresses).

Continuing County Strategies

The following strategies are existing county programs and practices not incorporated in above Policy Plan strategies. These strategies will be sustained and refined, as necessary.

- 22. Implement residential waste reduction and reuse programs and opportunities.**
 - a. Provide food waste prevention education and resources (e.g., prevention tools) and information about food shelf donation opportunities to residents.
 - b. Promote existing building materials reuse opportunities and services for residents.
- 23. Implement municipal, school and commercial waste reduction and reuse programs and opportunities.**
 - a. Provide reuse opportunities (e.g., partnerships with non-profits for on-site collections) for multifamily residents.
 - b. Provide support (e.g., technical assistance, funding) to municipalities to increase access to reuse and repair opportunities for residents in their community, including reuse opportunities at clean up events.
 - c. Provide support (e.g., funding, technical assistance) and education through current municipality, business, and schools programs to increase reuse, food waste prevention, and food rescue.

4. Topic: Recycling and Organics Management with Collection Best Practices

The Policy Plan prioritizes recycling and organics management, along with collection best practices, to increase the recycling rates in the region. The Policy Plan Recycling objective is 36.9 percent by 2025 and 47.4 percent by 2042 for TCMA counties. The Policy Plan Organics Recovery objective is 21.5 percent by 2025 and 27.6 percent by 2042 for TCMA counties. The Policy Plan recycling and organics objectives are intended to achieve the statutory recycling goal (includes organics) of 75 percent by 2030 for TCMA counties.

Dakota County is required to include eight specific Policy Plan strategies related to recycling management, organics management, and collection best practices, as listed below. The Plan also includes two selected Policy Plan optional strategies, worth a total of 14 points toward the 75-point required minimum, along with several continuing strategies.



Required Policy Plan Strategies

24. Collect recyclables, organics and trash on the same day. (PP 30)

- a. Update Dakota County Ordinance No. 110 to require haulers to collect recyclables, trash, and organics (if collected) on the same day from residential customers.
- b. Provide resources (e.g., technical assistance, model language) for municipalities to update local codes.

25. Recruit a minimum of 12 commercial businesses a year to recycle at least three materials from their operations and promote the environmental and resource benefits. (PP 35)

- a. Continue to provide standardized resources (e.g., education materials, labels, training) and technical assistance to commercial entities through the business recycling program to improve recycling within their operations.
- b. Modify the business recycling program to focus funding support for recycling infrastructure (e.g., containers) on small commercial entities.
- c. Inform businesses about and enforce Dakota County Ordinance No. 110 commercial recycling requirements.

26. Establish mandatory pre-processing of waste at resource recovery facilities and landfills by 2030. (PP 36)

- a. Update County Ordinance 110 to require landfills to submit a license amendment to implement pre-processing. The amendment application must include materials, methods, and an evaluation of effectiveness for optimal upfront processing.

27. Provide assistance to multifamily properties to improve recycling. (PP 37)

- a. Continue to provide standardized resources (e.g., education materials, labels, training), funding support for infrastructure (e.g., containers), and technical assistance to multifamily properties to improve recycling within their operations.
- b. Continue to provide support (e.g., funding, technical assistance, educational resources) to municipalities to implement the county's multifamily recycling program.
- c. Continue to work with municipalities to ensure building planning and construction supports recycling and to develop multifamily mechanisms (e.g., rental licenses, inspections) consistent with city codes and County Dakota County Ordinance No. 110.

28. Make residential curbside organics collection available in cities with a population greater than 5,000 by 2030. (PP 40)

- a. Update Dakota County Ordinance No. 110 to make curbside organics collection available for residential customers in suburban cities (e.g., require hauler implementation plan, prohibit container delivery charge).
- b. Provide start-up resources (e.g., compostable bags, educational materials) to residents and municipalities to remove participation barriers.
- c. Provide support (e.g., funding, technical assistance, educational resources) to interested municipalities to research or implement best waste management collection practices (e.g., zoned contract areas, hauler franchise agreements).
- d. Continue food waste credits in county landfill host agreements to encourage adequate capacity for organics generated in Dakota County.



29. Expand backyard composting outreach and resources for residents. (PP 41)

- a. Continue to provide educational resources to municipalities to support residential backyard composting.
- b. Increase resident education about backyard composting and provide resources (e.g., compost spreading equipment) to reduce barriers to use of compost.
- c. Continue to provide incentives (e.g., discounts) to residents to participate in regional compost bin sales (e.g., Recycling Association of Minnesota) and provide distribution locations in the county.
- d. Provide compost bin sale opportunities at county drop off sites (e.g., Recycling Zone Plus).

30. Require management of organics from large commercial food generators by 2033. (PP 42)

- a. Continue to implement Dakota County Ordinance No. 110 requirements for large generators of organics.
- b. Modify the business recycling program to focus funding support for organics infrastructure (e.g., containers) on small commercial entities to improve back-of-house organics recovery within their operations.
- c. Continue to provide standardized resources (e.g., education materials, labels, training) to all interested commercial entities (e.g., businesses, schools) to improve organics recovery within their operations.

31. Require food-derived compost in county construction and landscaping projects. (PP 55)

- a. Collaborate with regional partners (e.g., MPCA, MNCC, TCMA counties) to revise MnDOT specifications for separate yard waste and food derived compost standards.
- b. Develop a county policy to use MnDOT specifications for compost to expand use of yard waste- and food waste-derived compost in county earthworks projects (e.g., transportation, stormwater, landscaping).
- c. Provide support (e.g., educational materials, compost product) to residents and community partners that participate in county landfill abatement programs to increase use of compost in earthworks projects.

Selected Policy Plan Optional Strategies

32. Collect recycling weekly by 2030. (PP 31, 7 points)

- a. Continue to implement Dakota County Ordinance No. 110 requirements for haulers to provide weekly recycling to residential customers and update requirements to include a variance for rural parts of the county if additional recycling opportunities are provided.

33. Establish additional organics recycling drop off sites. (PP 43, 7 points)

- a. Continue to provide drop off opportunities (e.g., drop sites) to collect organics from residents and expand to areas that will not be served by curbside organics collection (e.g., apartment complexes, rural areas).
- b. Continue to provide resources (e.g., compostable bags, educational materials) to residents to remove participation barriers.
- c. Continue to collaborate with municipalities and other partners and provide assistance (e.g., start-up funding, resident education, training) for residential organics drop-off sites.

Continuing County Strategies

The following strategies are existing county programs and practices not incorporated in above Policy Plan strategies. These strategies will be sustained and refined, as necessary.

- 34. Improve the consistency and accountability of waste materials collection.**
- a. Promote a standardized list of traditional recyclables with proven markets to be collected.
 - b. Provide research (e.g., economic, efficiency, GHG emissions) and funding for municipalities to consider best management collection options (e.g., zoned contract areas, hauler franchise agreements).
- 35. Support the collection of household items that are challenging to recycle.**
- a. Promote opportunities for residents to recycle challenging materials (e.g., mattresses).
 - b. Provide municipalities with implementation resources (e.g., funding, technical assistance, model contracts) to increase opportunities to recycle challenging household items such as mattresses through city collections events.
 - c. Support collection of waste agricultural and marina film plastic until private sector efforts are widely available.
- 36. Ensure the opportunity to recycle.**
- a. Provide a year-round drop-off facility/ies (e.g., The Recycling Zone) to collect recyclables (e.g., paper, plastic, metal/scrap metal, glass) from residents.
 - b. Require MSW haulers to offer recycling collection to their customers in accordance with Dakota County Ordinance No. 110.
- 37. Provide support to schools to improve recycling and organics recovery in their operations through the school program.**
- a. Provide resources (e.g., funding, labels, technical assistance, education) to implement best management practices to increase recycling and recover organics at schools including for outdoor recycling infrastructure.
- 38. Implement recycling and organics diversion at events.**
- a. Implement Dakota County Ordinance No. 110 requirements for recycling and back-of-house organics diversion and collaborate with municipalities on city code implementation of their event requirements.
 - b. Provide support (e.g., technical assistance, funding, educational resources) to municipalities to continue collection of recyclable and organics materials at events and enhance event check-out program for residents.
 - c. Provide a check-out container program and assistance (e.g., technical assistance, infrastructure, educational resources) to implement a uniform system of well-labeled and paired trash and recycling containers at community events.
 - d. Facilitate a group of volunteers to implement recycling, organics, and waste reduction best management practices at community events and document event diversion results.
- 39. Provide recycling and organics recovery/diversion opportunities in county operations, including in public and employee areas.**
- a. Use model contracts, such as resource management contracts, to manage waste from county operations.
 - b. Implement a uniform system of well-labeled, paired trash, recycling, and organics containers in county operations.



5. Topic: Waste-to-Energy

The Waste Management Act identifies that waste-to-energy (WTE) is preferred over landfills. The Policy Plan identifies that WTE recovers more materials and energy compared to landfills. The Policy Plan Resource Recovery objective is 24 percent by 2025 and 20 percent by 2042 for TCMA counties. Progress toward this objective will remain difficult until new capacity is reasonably available for Dakota County waste.

Dakota County is required to include one Policy Plan strategy in this category, as listed below.

Required Policy Plan Strategies

40. Counties must continue to support the implementation of Minn. Stat. § 473.848 Restriction on Disposal. (PP 58)

- a. Continue to support state efforts to maximize the use of existing resource recovery facility capacity serving the TCMA while considering geography and environmental impacts.
- b. Work cooperatively with the MPCA as the State enforces provisions found in Minn. Stat. § 473.848 while considering distance to resource recovery facilities, sustainable materials management principles, and related environmental impacts (e.g., facility air quality permits, GHG emissions/equivalent).
- c. Continue to annually gather and submit information and data for the MPCA's annual certification report.
- d. Continue to manage the lease for county-owned land in Empire to support transfer capacity to a resource recovery facility through 2027, with possible extensions available through 2037.

6. Topic: Landfilling

The Policy Plan includes system objectives to reduce land disposal to five percent of MSW generation within the next ten years, recognizing that some MSW is not processible. According to the Policy Plan, if MSW cannot be prevented, reduced, reused, recycled, or composted, it should first go to a resource recovery facility and only be landfilled if it is not processible. The Policy Plan Landfilling objective is 17.6 percent by 2025 and 5 percent by 2042 for TCMA counties. The Policy Plan does not have numeric targets for non-municipal solid waste (non-MSW). Non-MSW includes industrial, construction, and demolition debris.

Dakota County is required to include one Policy Plan strategy in this category, as listed below. This section also includes several continuing county strategies focused on regulation and proper management of non-MSW.

Required Policy Plan Strategies

41. Require waste composition study at least once every five years at all landfills that are located within your county. (PP 3)

- a. Review and update Dakota County Ordinance No. 110 requirements for MSW and non-MSW disposal facilities to conduct waste composition studies to be consistent with state law and MPCA implementation mechanisms (e.g., facility permit schedules), including a start date no sooner than 2029.
- b. Collaborate with the MPCA on the waste composition schedule and methodology at landfills.

Continuing County Strategies

The following strategies are existing county programs and practices not incorporated in the above Policy Plan strategy. These strategies will be sustained and refined, as necessary.



- 42. Regulate solid waste generators, haulers, facilities, and generators to achieve compliance and protect public health and the environment, in accordance with County Ordinances.**
 - a. Regulate solid waste generators, solid waste facilities, and waste haulers to achieve compliance with county licenses and ordinances.
 - b. Enforce waste and material bans and restrictions.
 - c. Prohibit licensed haulers from mixing source-separated materials with MSW.
- 43. Regulate hazardous waste generators and facilities to protect public health and the environment, in accordance with County Ordinances.**
 - a. Regulate hazardous waste generators and facilities to achieve compliance with county ordinance.
 - b. Continue partnerships with the County Sheriff’s Department and public entities (e.g., rural towns, townships) to reduce toxic releases caused by mismanagement of waste (e.g., burning waste).
- 44. Provide opportunities to recycle and properly manage non-MSW that is banned from disposal.**
 - a. Collect tires at county collection sites (e.g., The Recycling Zone) and encourage municipalities to offer tire collections at community clean-up events.
- 45. Regulate non-MSW haulers and facilities in accordance with County Ordinance.**
 - a. Regulate waste haulers that collect and transport non-MSW and work with the region to evaluate licensing of non-MSW waste haulers as part of the regional hauler licensing program and implement findings.
 - b. Regulate facilities that manage non-MSW.

7. Topic: Household Hazardous Waste and Toxicity Reduction

Household hazardous waste (HHW) facilities reduce the toxicity of the solid waste stream by providing households with an opportunity to bring pesticides, drain cleaners, mercury thermometers, stains, or varnishes, and other such products to drop-off sites. County HHW collection programs are statutorily mandated to remove hazardous materials from the solid waste stream.

Dakota County is required to include three specific Policy Plan strategies in this category, as listed below. The Plan also includes an alternative strategy as a substitution for one Policy Plan optional strategy, worth a total of 9 points toward the 75-point required minimum. The alternative strategy to build and operate a second permanent HHW and recycling drop off facility in partnership with Scott County will exceed the intended benefits of the original optional strategy to host monthly drop-off sites. A continuing county strategy is also included in this section for sustained HHW, problem material, and recycling services at The Recycling Zone.

Required Policy Plan Strategies

- 46. Encourage retailers to increase consumer awareness of responsible end-of-life handling for products containing lithium-ion batteries. (PP 61)**
 - a. Continue to promote safe disposal of batteries to residents including county and private sector HHW drop-off opportunities.
 - b. Collaborate and provide resources (e.g., funding, educational materials) to municipalities to provide tobacco retailers that are licensed by municipalities with information on county HHW drop-off options for responsible resident lithium-ion batteries management, such as from vaping products.
- 47. Continue participation in the reciprocal use agreement for HHW collection sites. (PP 62)**
 - a. Continue to use reciprocal use agreements to recover funds for HHW that is generated in other counties and managed by the county.



- b. Continue to participate in agreements, partnerships, or both with private and public sectors to reduce costs, liability for managing hazardous waste and problem materials, or both (e.g., Department of Agriculture, PaintCare, Dakota Electric, Xcel Energy, State).

48. Partner with cities to increase participation in HHW collection. (PP 63)

- a. Provide support (e.g., technical assistance, funding) to municipalities for education on county HHW drop off opportunities to their residents.
- b. Continue to collaborate with municipalities to provide interim collection opportunities for proper management of materials (e.g., pharmaceutical waste) as state and private sector product stewardship initiatives develop.
- c. Continue to collaborate with cities to provide year-round collection of limited HHW (e.g., CFL bulbs) and problem materials (e.g., string lights).

Selected Policy Plan Optional Strategy

49. In partnership with Scott County, increase drop off opportunities for problem materials, household hazardous waste management (HHW), and business hazardous waste at a second permanent county facility by 2029. (PP 64 Alternative Strategy, 9 points)

- a. Continue to collaborate with Scott County to develop a joint permanent year-round hazardous and household hazardous waste, recycling, and problem material collection facility (i.e., The Recycling Zone Plus).
- b. Provide opportunities for proper hazardous waste management for public entities, commercial entities, and hazardous waste generators.
- c. Work to secure additional state funding to assist with building and construction costs.

Continuing County Strategy

The following strategy is an existing county program not incorporated in above Policy Plan strategies. The strategy will be sustained and refined, as necessary.

50. Continue to provide year-round drop-off site (e.g., The Recycling Zone) to collect problem materials and hazardous and household hazardous waste from residents.

- a. Continue to provide consistent and cost-effective household hazardous waste, hazardous waste, and problem material management services.
- b. Continue to provide reuse opportunities at the county year-round drop-off site (e.g., The Recycling Zone) and household hazardous waste/problem material collections to reduce the amount of hazardous waste disposal.

8. Topic: Sustainable Building and Deconstruction

The Policy Plan notes that traditional demolition of buildings is wasteful and destroys usable, valuable materials and that better handling and preservation of existing materials reduces unnecessary waste. For example, materials like concrete, wood, and metals can be diverted for reuse or recycling.

Dakota County is required to include one specific Policy Plan strategy in this category, as listed below, focused on developing plans for Dakota County's buildings and projects. The Plan also includes two selected optional strategies, worth a total of 16 points toward the 75-point required minimum.

Required Policy Plan Strategies

51. Implement the use of a Building Material Management Plan. (PP 65)



- a. Continue to use the county’s High Performance Design and Construction Standards for county building construction, demolition, and remodeling projects.
- b. Share information regarding waste reduction, reuse, and recycling opportunities with public entities and encourage public entity adoption of such practices.
- c. Utilize existing resources to implement a building material management plan for county-owned buildings, and use non-county funding opportunities (i.e., grants or additional state funding), when available, to document the destination of materials in projects during and after project completion.

Selected Policy Plan Optional Strategy

52. Host a building material collection event or swap. (PP 67 – 8 points)

- a. Provide support (e.g., funding, technical assistance) to municipalities to partner with building materials reuse organizations to provide building material collection events for residents when non-county funding opportunities (i.e., grants or additional state funding) are available.
- b. Provide support (e.g., funding, technical assistance) to promote building material collection opportunities and events for residents.

53. Provide deconstruction training. (pp 69 – 8 points)

- a. Provide assistance (e.g., funding, technical assistance) to organizations to provide education (e.g., presentations, classes) to the deconstruction workforce (e.g., contractors, builders) to increase proper sorting and reuse of building materials.
- b. Participate in state and regional information-sharing and coordination for deconstruction training to the region.

9. Topic: Wood Waste

According to the Policy Plan, Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) infestation combined with more frequent, severe storms have led to large volumes of wood waste in Minnesota. The state projects a trajectory of five to ten years to reach peak volumes of wood waste in TCMA counties.

Dakota County is required to include three specific strategies in this category, as listed below. The Plan also includes one selected optional strategy, worth a total of five points toward the 75-point required minimum.

Required Policy Plan Strategies

54. Develop plans to prevent and manage wood waste in each county and throughout the region. (PP 45)

- a. Continue to license yard waste and wood waste processing facilities and require reporting of wood and yard waste received, managed, stored, and processed.
- b. Participate in the MPCA Wood Waste Task Force to plan for potential volumes of wood waste from diseased tree species in the county and to identify facilities and industries (e.g., mulch producers, tree care companies) that manage wood waste from county generators.
- c. Identify and implement opportunities to manage wood waste from county operations to the greatest environmental benefit (e.g., preservation, biochar).
- d. Collaborate with partners (e.g., state, municipalities, wood waste industry, SWCD) to promote information on existing tree management resources (e.g., tree care to prevent tree diseases, funding assistance for tree removal).

55. Promote existing programs that use EAB-affected wood for furniture, home goods, flooring and other purposes. (PP 46)



- a. Promote opportunities for residents and businesses to use products made from EAB-affected trees.
- b. Use EAB-affected wood in county operations as relevant.

56. Composting and mulching operations must continue to be supported. (PP 47)

- a. Continue to manage the lease for county-owned land in Empire to support regional capacity of yard waste and food waste composting through 2027, with extensions available through 2037.
- b. Provide public education on yard waste and wood waste management options, including drop off and pick up options.
- c. Update Dakota County Ordinance No. 110 to require haulers to provide customer education and labels on yard waste containers that follow county standardized messaging requirements.
- d. Continue to regulate yard waste and wood waste to ensure proper waste management in accordance with Dakota County Ordinance No. 110.
- e. Collaborate with partners (e.g., municipalities, private sector) and provide support (e.g., funding, technical assistance) to expand drop off opportunities for residents to properly manage yard waste and tree waste when non-county funding opportunities (i.e., grants or additional state funding) are available.

Selected Optional Policy Plan Strategies

57. Expand composting and mulching capacity beyond existing markets. (PP 52, 5 points)

- a. Allow the lease for county-owned land in Empire to support organics operations (e.g., source-separated organics, yard waste composting) and allow operations to include biochar production.
- b. Allow beneficial use of biochar at landfills through the county licensing process.
- c. Increase biochar generation in county operations and explore opportunities to use biochar in county earthworks projects (e.g., Transportation, Parks).

10. Topic: Cost and Finance

The Policy Plan does not include a numeric objective related to this category. This section is included because the county is committed to making effective use of public resources and allocating costs equitably to waste generators while ensuring environmental protection. This section includes one optional strategy, worth a total of four points toward the 75-point required minimum, in addition to several continuing county strategies for continued management of fees and use of county and external funding for abatement programs.

Selected Optional Policy Plan Strategies

58. Implement additional fees to better account for the externalities of land disposal. (PP 59, 4 points)

- a. Continue to implement a fee structure to fully fund regulatory hazardous and solid waste programs and activities.
- b. Continue to negotiate host fee agreements with waste management facilities to influence waste generators to manage waste in priority order: reduce, reuse, recycle, organics recovery, resource recovery, land disposal and support waste abatement activities, including to charge more for out of county waste in host agreements at MSW landfills.
- c. Continue to manage and use state funding (e.g., SCORE, LRDG) and other outside grant opportunities to implement waste abatement programs and practices.

Continuing County Strategies

The following strategies are existing county programs and practices not incorporated in the above Policy Plan strategy. These strategies will be sustained and refined, as necessary.

59. Collect and manage waste fees to implement waste management programs.

- a. Negotiate and collect host fees for MSW and non-MSW facilities during the operational life of the facilities to support waste abatement activities.
- b. Implement a fee structure to fully fund regulatory hazardous and solid waste programs and activities.
- c. Use state funding (e.g., SCORE, LRDG) to implement waste abatement programs.

60. Provide performance-based grant funding and resources to municipalities to implement landfill abatement programs within their operations and in the community.

- a. Annually provide funding, technical assistance, and infrastructure and standardized educational resources to support city and township recycling and waste abatement programs in accordance with Dakota County Ordinance No. 110, including education for residential organics curbside organics collection.

61. Institute funding incentives to divert waste from landfill disposal.

- a. Provide support (e.g., technical assistance) to encourage proposals from private and public entities to add or expand landfill diversion capacity in the county.

62. Implement long-term revenue sources for landfill abatement programs that encourage waste diversion.

- a. Evaluate non-levy revenue models (e.g., generator fees) that sufficiently support solid waste programs and support waste management at the highest and best levels, anticipating facility closures and resulting host fee reduction or elimination.
- b. Advocate that all collected Solid Waste Management Tax that is distributed to the State's general fund be redistributed to counties for landfill abatement.
- c. Advocate to fully fund the Metropolitan Landfill Contingency Action Trust Account (MLCAT) and Closed Landfill Investment Funds (CLIF).
- d. Advocate for continued funding from the Local Recycling Development Grant (LRDG).

D. Plan Implementation

1. Public Education

Public education will be critical in implementing each strategy in the Plan, whether it is a continuing, expanded, or new effort, as identified in Appendix E. Public education is shifting beyond traditional information-sharing to a more robust engagement that develops community awareness of solid waste issues and individual roles and responsibilities to properly manage waste. To move more waste up the waste management hierarchy, community outreach will need to leverage partnerships more effectively, use proven science-based educational messages and methods, enhance message delivery and consistency, and apply multiple communication methods that best reach the intended audience.

A communications work plan will be developed annually by the Environmental Resources Department and County Communications to identify priority messages and venues to promote waste messages to the community.

2. Environmental Justice

Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people as environmental laws, rules, and policies are developed, implemented, and enforced. This Plan establishes a framework to incorporate equity and environmental justice in solid and hazardous waste program areas upon which Dakota County can continuously improve. The Policy Plan requires this Plan be developed with an environmental justice review



lens. Environmental justice is incorporated into a policy in this Plan: *Strive for just treatment, meaningful involvement, and equitable implementation of the Solid Waste Management Plan for all community members.* See Appendix C for more details on Dakota County’s environmental justice review and plans for continued equity as Plan strategies are implemented.

3. Phasing and Collaboration

Collaboration between county staff and stakeholder groups will be fundamental for successful strategy implementation. Dakota County has a long history of solid waste service provided by private businesses and nonprofits. Therefore, the private sector, nonprofits, and other stakeholders play a significant role in implementing the Plan. County staff will build on stakeholder engagement approaches developed during the Plan revision process, continuing to nurture existing and develop new relationships so the county can consider additional tools to influence change. County staff will engage stakeholders on the Plan strategies to develop implementation approaches that are achievable, consider stakeholder perspectives, and help the county meet state objectives. County staff will apply multiple methods to engage stakeholders in a meaningful and equitable way, such as through local community cultural events.

County staff recognizes the need to phase in certain approaches over multiple years (see proposed timing in Appendix E). Collaborative efforts with interested stakeholders are anticipated to help develop time-phased approaches, refine, and strengthen existing programs, and develop new programs.

Stakeholders include:

State: The county will actively work with the MPCA on emerging technology efforts, recycling and organics market development approaches, continued waste reduction measurement, support for product stewardship initiatives, and efforts to improve Non-MSW management data and increase reuse and recycling of construction and demolition waste. The county will collaborate with the MPCA on work planning and annual priority setting.

Region: The county will work with TCMA counties to strengthen and refine regional programs (e.g., hauler licensing and reporting, HHW reciprocal use) and collaborate with interested counties on implementation phasing for similar program approaches. The county will actively look for stakeholder groups to participate in that improve regional consistency and advance the objectives of the Plan.

Waste Industry: The waste industry provides collection and management services. It will be essential to engage haulers and facility operators as new or expanded approaches are being considered to address potential collection and capacity issues, develop effective implementation approaches, and implement effective transitions in program approaches.

Municipalities (Cities and Townships): The county will actively work with cities and townships to explore strategy approaches and timing that addresses the needs of each community. The county will work to engage decision-makers to further identify roles and responsibilities that best align with municipal goals while also meeting county goals. The county will continue collaborating with municipal staff for waste abatement work planning, project implementation, and to share information.

Waste Generators: The county will engage underserved and interested waste generators (e.g., residents, businesses, public entities, multi-unit dwellings) to refine plans for new strategy approaches and implementation timing.

4. Performance and Accountability

Proper waste management and successfully meeting Policy Plan and statutory requirements requires new strategies and increased accountability. Because everyone makes decisions about and produces waste, the Plan

includes strategies to be implemented in whole or in part by various stakeholders, including the state, county, public entities, residents, businesses, non-profit organizations, and the waste community.

Performance evaluation is undertaken at the project/program level (e.g., pounds of materials reused and number of participants at a Fix-It Clinic; number of inspections and compliance actions). Formal performance evaluation and reporting is required annually at the program level (e.g., diverted tons, costs, participants in programs) to establish work plans and budgets, from regulated parties (e.g., hauler and facility reports) and through multiple state reports to measure progress on Policy Plan and statutory requirements. Appendix D describes the required annual reports, program reporting requirements, and contains tables with the Plan strategies, key entities for implementation, measures, and primary mechanisms for measurement.

Additionally, the county measures performance annually through Program and Service Inventory (PSI) reporting, which is an outcomes-based accountability framework. The county's PSI serves as a key component in providing transparency to the work carried out by providing a list of key county services key solid waste program and regulatory activities, serving as a reference point for staff, the County Board, and residents to understand the work of the county.

PSI reporting is used to assess the effectiveness of programs and initiatives by focusing on outcomes rather than outputs. It involves asking specific questions to determine the impact of actions taken, including for solid waste programming:

- "How much did we do?" refers to measuring outputs, such as the number of people served, pounds diverted, or people educated.
- "How well did we do it?" evaluates the quality and efficiency of county solid waste programs.
- "Is anyone better off?" examines the broader impact and outcomes achieved, assessing whether desired changes or improvements have occurred to meet the county's solid waste goals.

This framework provides a structured approach for Dakota County to measure and improve performance across our programs, leading to more accountable and impactful decision-making.



Appendix A: Existing Waste Management System and County Programs

This appendix identifies waste management roles and responsibilities, demographics, waste projections and composition, waste amounts and management methods, facilities, and Dakota County’s programs and activities.

A. Waste Management Governance, Roles, and Responsibilities

State and local government and the private sector all have roles in implementing solid waste policies and operating the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area (TCMA) waste management system. The public sector is responsible for establishing policies, quantifiable waste management objectives, and programs to conserve natural resources and protect public health and the environment. The private sector largely owns and operates the TCMA solid waste service provisions and infrastructure. The extent and complexity of the TCMA’s solid waste system has required coordination among the following groups:

State – Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA): The MPCA regulates solid waste facilities and sets solid waste policy through the Metropolitan Solid Waste Management Policy Plan (Policy Plan) to meet goals and requirements prescribed in State law. The Policy Plan establishes waste management objectives and the framework for TCMA counties and municipalities to follow. The MPCA reviews and approves county plans to ensure the Policy Plan is implemented. The MPCA also distributes State funding to TCMA counties for solid waste abatement activities.

Region: Joint Power Agreements between TCMA counties continue for household hazardous waste (HHW) reciprocity and regional hauler licensing. The TCMA counties staff gather informally to discuss program and policy issues and share information to build on successes, reduce redundancy in the system, and maximize capacity.

County: In accordance with State law (Minn. Stat. §§ 115A and 473), county governments play the primary role in planning, implementing, and maintaining solid waste programs for proper management of waste generated within their jurisdictions. Dakota County collaborates with the state, region, public entities, residents, businesses, community groups, and the waste industry to develop the Plan and programs to meet state goals. Dakota County licenses and regulates haulers and facilities for collection, management, and related services and waste generators for management. Dakota County does not own or operate waste management facilities; however, it does lease out county-owned land in the City of Empire for waste management purposes. Unlike some counties, Dakota County does not exercise general land use authority such as zoning and has a limited role in other areas such as rural shoreland and floodplain permitting.

Municipalities (Cities and Townships): Cities and townships play an integral role in implementing local waste management programs and providing education to residents and businesses. Minn. Stat. § 115A.551 allows political subdivisions within the county to develop and implement programs and practices designed to meet Plan requirements. Dakota County Ordinance No. 110 Section 16 requires cities to implement programs and activities for local abatement and to report on achievement of performance standards. Municipalities are required to comply with the Plan, ensure solid waste collection in their community, and have authority to license waste haulers for collection of waste and recycling.

Rural Solid Waste Abatement Grant Program: Because the rural area of the county has unique needs, Dakota County established the Rural Solid Waste Abatement Grant Program in 2019 to support waste abatement projects that align with the Plan. County-coordinated services provide rural residents with standardized waste abatement education and a collection event for non-traditional recyclable materials.

Public Entities: State laws hold public entities, including counties, cities, townships, and public schools to a higher standard in managing their waste. Public entities are responsible for carrying out proper waste reduction, recycling, and disposal activities as part of business operations. Public entities are required by statute and county ordinance to recycle.



Waste Industry (Private Sector): For decades, State law has included a preference for private-sector waste management and waste facility operation. In Dakota County, the private sector is primarily responsible for the collection, processing, and brokering of waste and materials. The private sector establishes fees for these services.

Waste Generators (Residents, Businesses, and Organizations): Residents, businesses, and organizations generate waste either as private individuals or as contributors to business, industrial, construction, or demolition activities. Waste management choices reflect various influences and situations, including having the opportunity for waste management options, cost, knowledge, and responsibility. Residents and businesses drive the amount of waste that is generated and discarded, and thus needs to be managed.

B. Demographics

With a population of 444,985, as estimated by the Metropolitan Council for 2022, Dakota County remains Minnesota’s third most populous county, growing by approximately one percent since the 2020 Census (439,882). Between 2020 and 2022, cities in Dakota County with the largest population increases were Lakeville (4,338 new residents, 6.2 percent growth), Rosemount (1,293 new residents, 5.0 percent growth), and West St. Paul (554 new residents, 2.7 percent growth). The State Demographer projects Dakota County’s population will exceed a half million by 2040.

Because this is a long-range plan, it is important to recognize demographic changes that are underway and consider their potential implications for waste management. Dakota County’s waste management system and programs will need to respond to projected growth and changes in population.

Demographic Summary (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates)

Land Area:	587 square miles
Land Use:	1/3 urban/suburban, with 96 percent of the county population; 2/3 rural, with 4 percent of the county population
Median Age:	38.4 years, a slight increase over the 2010 Census
Populations of Color:	22.0 percent
Total Households:	169,404
Median Annual Household Income:	\$101,360

As the county’s population grows, increased waste generation will place additional stress on the waste management system, requiring a focus on waste reduction and reuse. Population changes include a shift from a young, family-centric population to an older retiree population. It is possible that waste composition could be somewhat different than projected (e.g., increased pharmaceuticals). Dakota County’s population is also becoming more diverse. For the 2022-2023 school year, the Minnesota Department of Education reported that 20.9 percent of students enrolled in Dakota County schools spoke one of 161 different non-English languages as their primary language at home. As the trend for growing diversity continues through this Plan horizon, it is important to understand audience language and cultural needs when developing effective communications on waste management.

C. Waste Projection and Composition

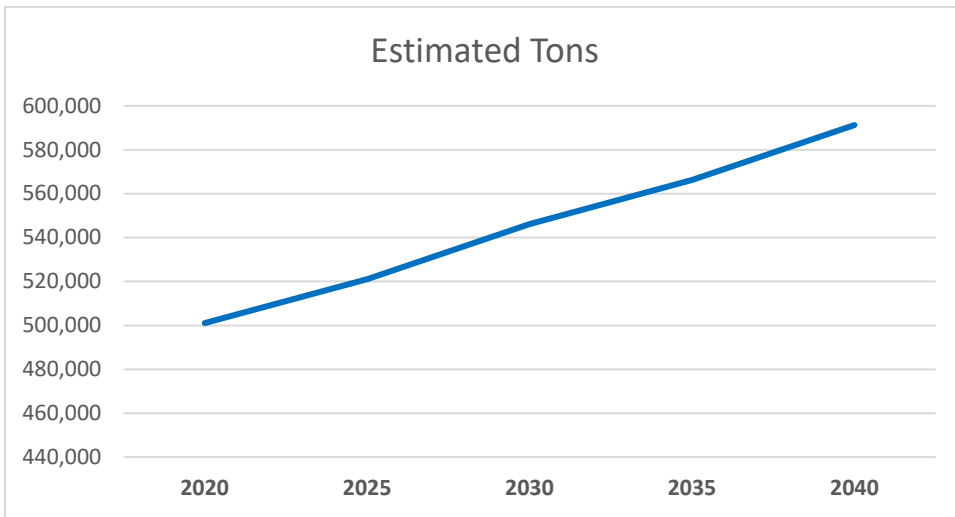
For this Plan, mixed municipal solid waste (MSW) includes garbage, refuse, and other solid waste from residential, commercial, and community activities, with exclusions as defined in State law. To effectively plan solid waste management to address the expected increases in waste generation, it is necessary to project the amount of MSW likely to be generated in the future. It is also important to have complete and current data on the types and quantities of waste for good planning, implementation, and evaluation of solid waste programs.

Projected MSW Growth: Dakota County’s waste projection is shown in Figure 4, with 2020 annual reporting data as the base year. Assuming the MSW per capita rate remains fairly constant with minor yearly fluctuations,



waste generation is expected to increase by roughly 18 percent from 2020-2040, driven by an anticipated population increase of 18 percent (from 439,882 to 520,980), based on Metropolitan Council population forecasts. In 2020, 501,060 tons of MSW was managed. MSW is projected to increase to 591,251 tons by 2040.

Figure 4: Projected Growth of MSW Managed in Dakota County 2020-2040

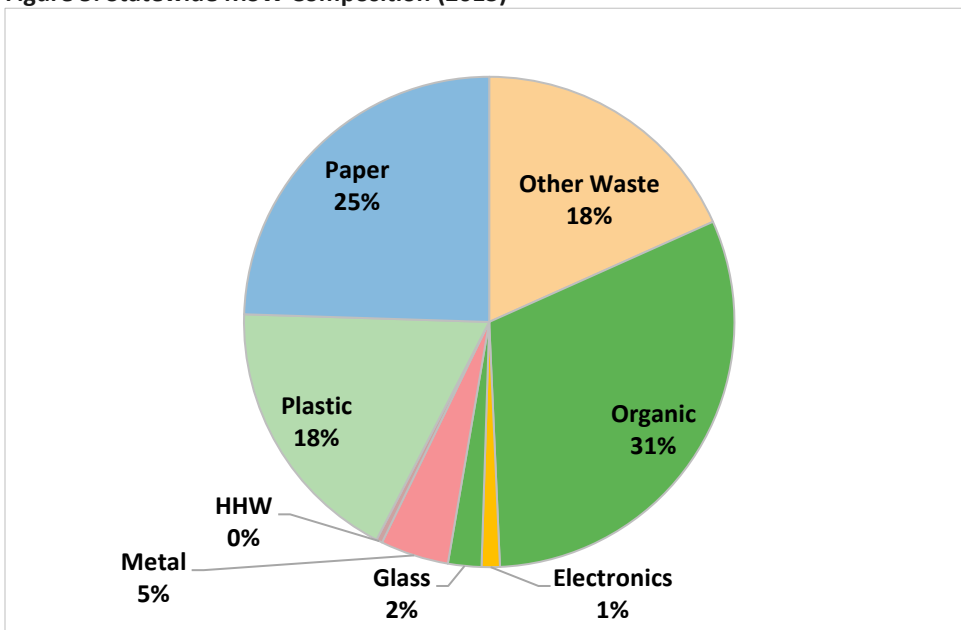


Composition of Municipal Solid Waste

The MPCA conducted a statewide waste characterization study in 2013 to assist with planning efforts for managing MSW. Results of the waste composition study are shown in Figure 5.

The study identified potential diversion opportunities based on the largest quantities of recoverable materials found in the waste stream, including organic waste (food, non-recyclable paper, yard waste), paper, and plastic.

Figure 5: Statewide MSW Composition (2013)



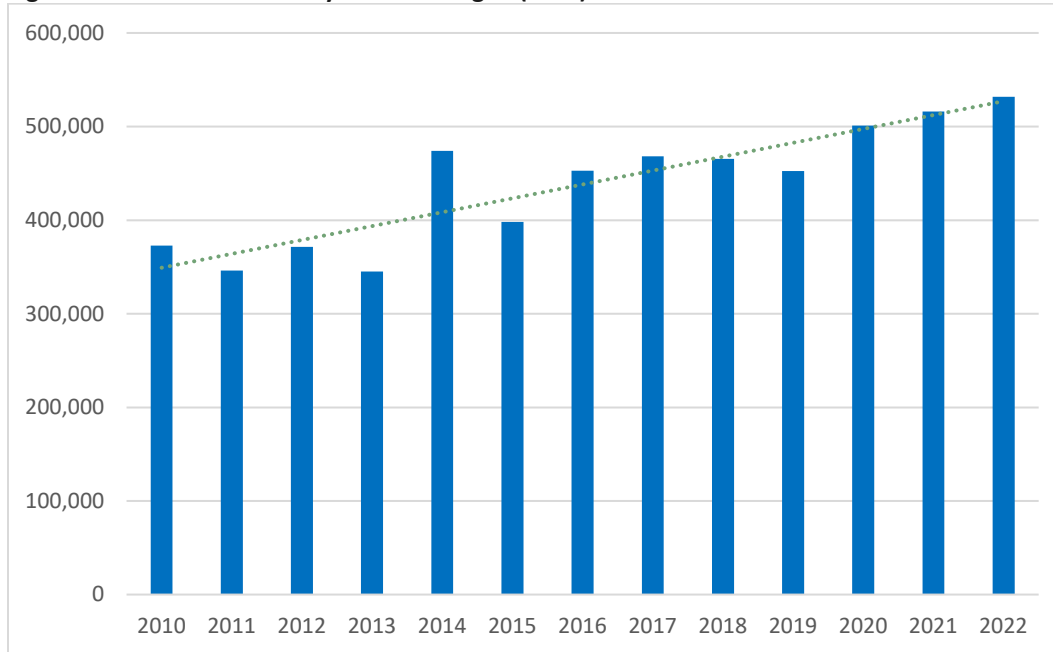
D. Waste Management in Dakota County

This section looks at the amount of MSW generated in the county from residents, businesses, and public entities over time and how it has been managed. Results shown in the graphs below are from 2014-2022. The MPCA has certified SCORE data through 2022.

Total MSW Managed

Total Dakota County MSW managed fluctuates from year to year and has increased over the past decade at a pace similar to population growth. (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Total Dakota County MSW Managed (Tons)



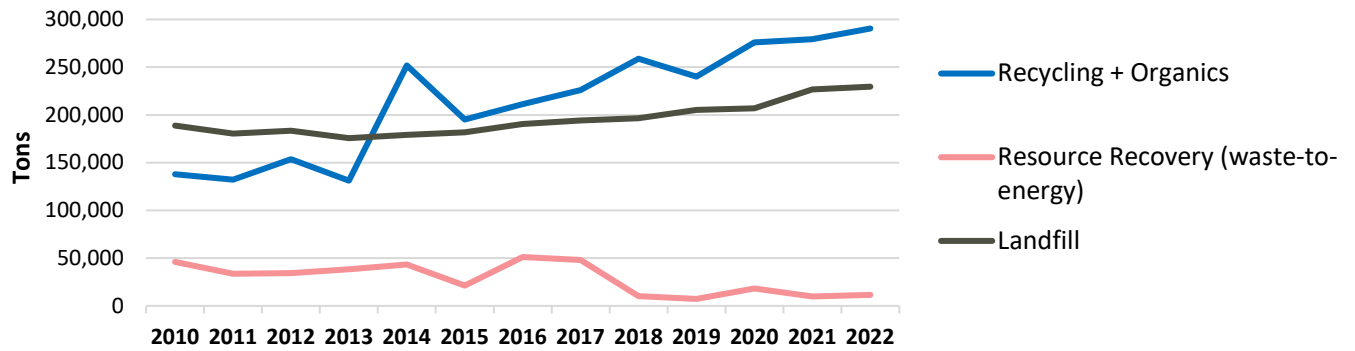
Data Source: MPCA Score Data, 2010 – 2022 as presented on the [MPCA Data Website](#).

Annual variations in the amount of waste managed may be due to several factors, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, prevailing economic conditions or reporting methods provided by haulers and facilities. The consistent increase in waste managed may be related to Dakota County’s nearly 11 percent growth in population between 2010 and 2022.

Waste Managed by Predominant Management Method

Dakota County tracks the amount of recycling, organics recovery, resource recovery, and land disposal. The amount of MSW managed by each method is calculated from data reported by licensed organics and recycling facilities, MSW landfills, and resource recovery facilities. Data accuracy relies on waste haulers properly claiming county-of-origin when they deliver waste to each facility. Figure 7 provides trend data over the past thirteen years for recycling (includes organics), resource recovery, and land disposal for waste generated in the county.

Figure 7: Management of MSW Generated by Dakota County Residents and Businesses (Tons)



Data Source: MPCA Score Data, 2010 – 2022 as presented on the [MPCA Data Website](#).

County Progress Toward Policy Plan Objectives

Waste management in the TCMA is an integrated system with many public and private entities having varying roles and responsibilities, ranging from direct service provision to regulation. Dakota County does not provide direct waste management services but has regulatory oversight and waste abatement programs to protect the environment and public health, and support waste management at the highest and best use in accordance with Minnesota’s waste management hierarchy.

Substantial progress has been made since Dakota County issued its first solid waste plan in the 1980s; however, recycling is not at the level it could and should be. The MPCA conducted a statewide waste characterization study in 2013 to assist with planning efforts. Results identified diversion opportunities based on the largest quantities of recoverable materials found in the waste stream, including organics (31 percent), paper (25 percent), and plastics (18 percent).

The following graphs show how waste generated in Dakota County was managed from 2014 to 2022 by management method.

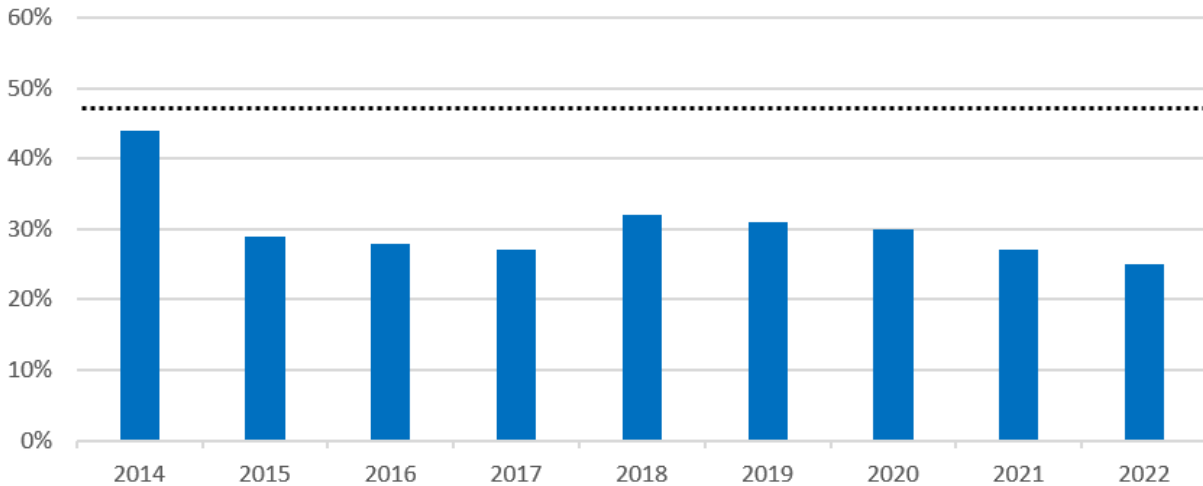
2042 Policy Plan TCMA Reduction and Reuse Objective: 15 Percent

A Policy Plan objective for the TCMA counties is to reduce waste fifteen percent by 2042; however, the MPCA has not defined actual reduction and reuse measures for reporting purposes. Measuring changes in the total amount of MSW managed is not sufficient in tracking progress for source reduction efforts because it does not take into account increases in the county’s population or trends in how much American households are purchasing.

2042 Policy Plan TCMA Recycling Objective (excludes organics): 47.4 Percent

Figure 8 shows that the county’s recycling rate (excludes organics) is not going in the direction needed to achieve the TCMA Recycling objective of 47.4 percent by 2042. The recycling rate is defined as total tons recycled divided by the total tons of MSW managed. Despite new technologies and processes that have improved the ability to handle, sort, and recycle materials, the recycling rate in Dakota County is declining. This is partly due to state changes in the recycling rate calculation methodology (e.g., removed source reduction and yard waste credits, no longer allowed to estimate commercial tonnages). It is also due to changes in the waste stream such as changes in material mix and packaging getting lighter. For example, recyclables such as plastics are becoming lighter so there is less weight being generated and less weight being recycled. In addition, less paper is being generated and therefore recycled as more information is consumed digitally. New approaches and greater system capacity are needed to maintain and maximize separation of recoverable materials from trash.

Figure 8: 2014-2022 Recycling Rate (Excludes Organics), Compared to 2042 TCMA Recycling Objective of 47.4 percent



Data Source: MPCA Score Data, 2010 – 2022 as presented on the [MPCA Data Website](#).

2042 Policy Plan TCMA Organics Recovery Objective: 27.6 Percent

Figure 9 shows that the county’s organics recovery rate increased from 2014 to 2022. Organics material includes food waste, compostable products (e.g., non-recyclable paper), and yard waste. Organics are currently managed in five different ways: food-to-people (donation of excess food); food-for-livestock (animal feed); source-separated for composting (source-separated organics materials for commercial composting or SSOM); yard waste composting; and fats/oils/greases (animal feed). The organics recovery rate has increased significantly from nine percent in 2014 to 30 percent in 2022. Since 2022, the county’s organics recovery rate has exceeded the TCMA Organics Recovery objective of 27.6 percent by 2042; however, this is largely due to the MPCA’s decision to allow counties to count yard waste composted at commercial composting sites toward the organics recovery rate beginning in 2014. The intent of the TCMA objective is to increase the amount of organics managed through source-separated programs (e.g., food-to-people, food-to-livestock, and food for composting). In 2022, thirteen percent of the MSW in Dakota County was managed through source-separated programs.

Figure 9: 2014-2022 Organics Recovery Rate, Compared to 2042 TCMA Organics Objective of 27.6 percent

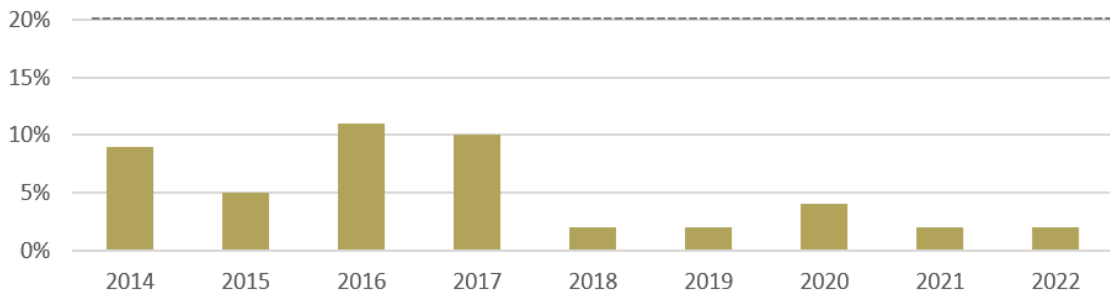


Data Source: MPCA Score Data, 2010 – 2022 as presented on the [MPCA Data Website](#).

2042 Policy Plan TCMA Resource Recovery Objective: 20 Percent

The county’s resource recovery rate (for energy recovery) remains low at two percent (Figure 10). The county is not on track to make significant progress toward the TCMA Resource Recovery objective of 20 percent by 2042. Progress will remain difficult until new capacity is reasonably available for Dakota County waste.

Figure 10: 2014-2022 Resource Recovery Rate, Compared to 2042 TCMA Recovery Objective of 20 percent (dotted line)

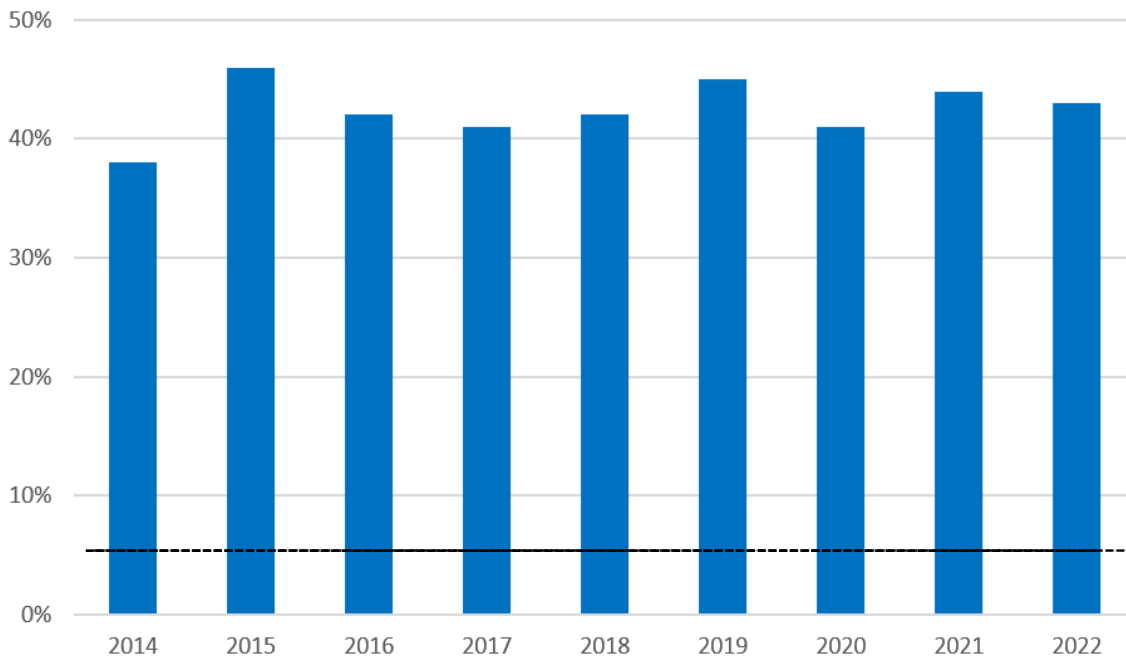


Data Source: MPCA Score Data, 2010 – 2022 as presented on the [MPCA Data Website](#).

2042 Policy Plan TCMA Landfill Objective: 5 Percent

The county’s landfill disposal rate is at 43 percent (Figure 11). Achieving the TCMA landfill objective of five percent by 2042 will be extremely challenging, unless aggressive, new approaches can influence and shift waste management to methods higher in the State’s waste hierarchy.

Figure 11: 2014-2022 Landfill Disposal Rate, Compared to the 2042 TCMA Maximum Landfill Objective of 5 percent (dotted line)



Data Source: MPCA Score Data, 2010 – 2022 as presented on the [MPCA Data Website](#).

E. Dakota County’s Waste Programs and Activities

Dakota County’s Environmental Resources Department has responsibility for developing and implementing waste management programs to protect, preserve, and enhance the environment and public health in the county. Department responsibilities include:

- Providing communications, education, and outreach on waste management with county, municipality, hauler, and community partners.
- Providing technical assistance to cities, partners, and the regulated community.
- Providing financial assistance, infrastructure, or both to support municipalities, schools, businesses, and non-profit community organizations.
- Coordinating the collection and management of recyclables and household and business hazardous waste at The Recycling Zone.
- Developing and implementing waste reduction and reuse programs.
- Establishing and collecting solid waste landfill host fees, license, and other fees.
- Leasing county-owned land as a transfer station, yard waste composting site, and a fully permitted source-separated organics composting facility that serves the region.
- Enforcing county ordinances covering licensing and disposal restrictions for solid waste facilities, hazardous and solid waste generators, and waste haulers.

1. Regional Solutions

Regional Resources Promoted by the County: County staff works with TCMA county peers, the Recycling Education Committee (REC), Reuse Minnesota, and the Association of Recycling Managers to share ideas, techniques, and successes. Members of these organizations have developed terminology for recycling and organics to provide consistent education across the TCMA, making it easier for residents and businesses to learn and understand the messages.

Reciprocal Residential Use: Convenience is inherent to a successful household hazardous waste (HHW) collection program. Although The Recycling Zone is within 10 miles of 70 percent of Dakota County residents, it can be more convenient to use another regional HHW facility during business hours. Dakota County maintains reciprocal use agreements with all TCMA counties to accept hazardous waste from TCMA residents at any TCMA facility.

Regional Policy Coordination: County staff are members of the Solid Waste Administrator Association (SWAA) which works on solid waste program information sharing and policies that advance statewide county solid waste goals.

County Hauler Licensing System: Dakota County participates in a regional hauler licensing program with Anoka, Carver, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington counties. Approximately 90 haulers are licensed to haul MSW in Dakota County. Of these, 35 are based in Dakota County, and the others are based in other metro counties.

2. Source Reduction and Reuse Programs and Activities

Dakota County's efforts in reduction and reuse have focused on reuse opportunities at The Recycling Zone, demonstrating waste reduction and reuse in county operations, and providing education and resources on reuse to residents and businesses.

Projects and Programs in the Community

Reuse at The Recycling Zone: Residents and businesses can drop off or take usable materials, such as paint, fertilizers, household cleaners, and other household items at no charge. Reuse reduces county costs by offering materials that would otherwise need to be managed through disposal methods.

Fix-It Clinics: Dakota County began sponsoring monthly Fix-It Clinics in 2016. The county offers them monthly at varying locations to improve access for residents. Residents bring clothes, small electronics, and other household items that need repair and receive free guided assistance from skilled volunteers.



Reduce and Reuse Business Locator Map: In 2021, Dakota County launched an interactive online map to help residents find locations to sell or drop off gently used items, rent or repair items, and to donate or buy used items. Items include clothing, household goods, building materials, books, furniture, tools and more. Users select filters for their specific needs to generate their own specific map of locations and can click-through for location hours and information.

Outdoor Gear Swaps: Since 2019, Dakota County Environmental Resources and Parks staff have partnered to provide residents with opportunities to take old gear they no longer need and swap for a new-to-them item. Gently-used items not claimed during Swaps are donated to local reuse organizations.

Food Waste Challenge: Food is the largest single component of waste delivered to landfills with typical households throwing away about a quarter of the food that was purchased. Wasted food costs consumers and wastes the water, fuel, land, and labor that went into growing it. In 2019, Dakota County launched its Food Waste Challenge to help residents understand what foods they throw away and why. Through this program, residents receive educational tools to simplify meal planning, shopping, food storage and kitchen inventories.

Projects and Programs in County Operations

Waste reduction and reuse are emphasized in county buildings and on county grounds, including:

- Promoting reuse as a first step in county asset disposal.
- Providing a green meeting toolkit, guidance, and resources to help reduce waste at county-sponsored events.
- Providing recurring reuse messages for employees on DakotaWorks (employee website).
- Promoting the Employee Reuse, Recycling, and Disposal Guide to educate employees on reusing office items.
- Using an Electronic Document Management System (EDMS) to convert many processes from paper-based to electronic-based applications. EDMS manages contracts, financial documents, employee benefits, and other types of documents.
- Using a Managed Print Service program throughout the county to reduce paper use and wasted supplies. MPS allows the county to define processes, run reports, and optimize supply and service fulfillment.
- Applying environmentally preferable practices: the county's Procurement Policy (2740) requires purchasing of environmentally preferable products beyond what State statute requires, including acquiring products and services that reduce waste or reduce toxins and pollution, reusing, supporting recycling markets, rewarding manufacturer responsibility, and reducing water and energy use. The county implements the policy through standards for recycled content products, contract requirements with vendors and other practices that minimize the use of virgin materials in products and supplies or service life cycle. Whenever practical, products and supplies with a specific minimum amount or percent of recycled content based on criteria established by governmental or widely respected third party authorities will be specified and procured.
- Dakota County auctions surplus county property. The county uses Public Surplus to sell surplus furniture and office equipment. Items are posted on an as-needed basis.

3. Collection Best Practices

Solid Waste Hauler Licenses: Hauling companies that collect MSW generated in the county or transport MSW within county boundaries must obtain an MSW hauler license. Dakota County participates in a regional MSW hauler licensing program.

Cost and Finance: Dakota County's waste abatement activities, including the Hazardous Waste and Solid Waste regulatory programs, are funded through a variety of programs. Specific amounts budgeted toward waste abatement activities within each of these funding categories can vary widely from year to year.



4. Revenue Sources

Dakota County's waste abatement and HHW management programs are funded by a combination of state grants, negotiated landfill host fees, waste-related fees, reimbursements, and property taxes.

- **Select Committee on Recycling and the Environment (SCORE) Funding:** SCORE funds are derived from a percentage of the State tax for MSW and non-MSW management services (Solid Waste Management Tax-SWMT). Services subject to this tax include collection, transportation, processing, and disposal of waste materials. Service providers (haulers and disposal facility operators) who directly bill generators or customers are responsible for collecting and remitting the tax to the State. Over \$70 million is generated annually through the tax statewide. SCORE funds are administered by the MPCA. In 2023, Dakota County received \$1,290,777 in SCORE funding and provided the required 25 percent match.
- **Local Recycling Development Grant (LRDG) Funding and Metropolitan Landfill Abatement Account (MLAA):** LRDG is a grant program (Minn. Stat. § 473.844) funded by the MLAA and used for landfill abatement projects in the TCMA. The focus of the program is consistent with the Waste Management Act, and it implements the policies and programs outlined in the Policy Plan. Funding for the MLAA program is generated from a \$2.00 per cubic yard (or \$6.66 per ton) surcharge on MSW disposed of at Metropolitan landfills. The MLAA funds the LRDG program, with grants offered to the TCMA counties. The LRDG Program is designed for planning, developing, and implementing new, enhanced, or more effective waste reduction, yard waste composting, and recycling programs for residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional generators of MSW. Counties must support and maintain effective municipal recycling as a condition of receiving LRDG funds and must match LRDG funds with an equal county contribution. LRDG funds are distributed from the MLAA and administered by the MPCA. In 2023, Dakota County received \$307,627.12 in LRDG funding and provided the required 100 percent match.
- **Landfill Host Fees:** In accordance with negotiated agreements, Dakota County collects host fees from the six landfills located in the county, including two MSW Landfills, an industrial waste landfill, and three construction/demolition landfills. Host fee revenues are deposited in Dakota County's Environmental Legacy Fund (ELF) along with Gravel Tax revenues. The ELF was established by the Dakota County Board of Commissioners on December 15, 2015, to protect, preserve, or enhance the environment (Resolution No. 15-663). ELF supports environmental activities related to brownfield redevelopment, environmental capital projects, Environmental Resources Department operations, gravel pit remediation, natural area and shoreland conservation, park and greenway management plan improvements, and implementation of the Natural Resources Management Plan and Solid Waste Management Plan.
- **Fees:** The county collects fees from solid and hazardous waste facilities and haulers that it regulates. Fees vary depending on the facility type, and the type and volume of waste managed. Additional fees are collected for specific services, such as electronics recycling and use of the business services at The Recycling Zone.
- **Reimbursements:** Reimbursements include payments from organizations for product stewardship initiatives (e.g., architectural paint) and through agreements with organizations (e.g., Excel Energy for fluorescent bulbs, Minnesota Department of Agriculture for pesticides, TCMA counties for HHW reciprocity).
- **Property Taxes:** Property taxes support essential County functions, including transportation and transit, safety, parks, libraries, and waste management programs all to support and improve the health of residents and protect the environment.

5. Recycling Management Programs and Activities

Dakota County launched its recycling program in 1988 to ensure that residents would have the opportunity to recycle.



a. Projects and Programs in the Community

Curbside Collection: Dakota County's residential curbside recyclables collection program began in 1989. Curbside recycling collection programs generally are provided by subscription service (e.g., open hauling system). Residents of Hastings and Farmington are served by a city/hauler contract-provided service (e.g., organized hauling system). In 2019, Dakota County Ordinance No. 110 began identifying a minimum list of recyclable materials that haulers must collect in single-stream recycling and generators must place into properly labeled carts or dumpsters. The designated list of recyclable materials includes paper, cardboard, cartons, metal cans, glass bottles and jars, and plastic bottles, containers and jugs with SPI Codes #1, #2, or #5. Residential curbside pickup of recyclable materials occurs in all cities and townships. Waste haulers must offer weekly recycling service to all residential customers (limited exemptions apply in rural parts of the county). In addition, waste haulers must provide standardized solid waste abatement messaging that is consistent with county standards to all customers. Messaging (print or electronic) must be delivered to each customer at initial service acquisition and annually thereafter.

Community Waste Abatement Grant Program: Dakota County partners with the 14 largest cities to advance Plan objectives through programs, practices, or methods designed to meet waste abatement requirements. Dakota County provides performance-based funding for waste abatement education and recycling infrastructure and enters into formal agreements with communities. These agreements require that a specified level of service be offered to residents, and that communities annually submit a work plan, itemized budget, and final report. The purpose of the Community Waste Abatement Grant Program is to help implement the Dakota County Solid Waste Management Plan objectives including to ensure that residents have the opportunity to recycle; and to develop, implement, and maintain projects, programs, practices, and methods to meet waste abatement objectives as described in the Plan. The program supports the County's efforts for broad-based education and implementation of local programs and projects for waste reduction, reuse, recycling, hazardous waste management, and organics diversion as described in the Plan.

Eligible activities relate to government leadership, operational needs, community education, and targeted priorities identified by the county. Dakota County provides waste abatement education to residents in collaboration with the cities and townships using electronic and print newsletters, websites, utility bill inserts, educational presentations, and pilot projects. The county also provides best practices guidance, assistance with measuring diversion weights and rates, and other types of technical assistance to support municipal waste abatement activities. In 2022 Dakota County distributed approximately \$494,000 to the cities and townships. Some communities also contribute their own funds to support their recycling programs and thereby increase the total amount spent on recycling programs.

Recycling at Municipal Parks: Beginning in 2014, Dakota County emphasized municipal park and public area recycling. The Community Waste Abatement Grant Agreement between Dakota County and each city requires use of a consistent set of best practices to help park visitors know what to recycle and to meet Dakota County Ordinance No. 110 requirements. As a result, 341 city parks, buildings, and other facilities meet Dakota County recycling requirements.

Recycling at Municipal Events: Dakota County enhances recycling at community events held on city property through technical assistance, education, and on-site support, in partnership with city staff and volunteers. Dakota County requires event organizers to provide recycling and implement recycling best management practices.

Multifamily Recycling Program: Since 2018, the Multifamily Recycling Program has assisted property owners, managers, staff, and residents with recycling and waste prevention at apartments, condominiums, townhomes, and independent senior living centers. Up to \$10,000 per location is available to eligible sites for containers, labels, signage, and training sessions. Dakota County requires multi-unit building properties to provide recycling and implement recycling best management practices.



Self-Service Checkout System: Dakota County offers free event recycling containers and educational resources to residents and community partners throughout the year to help reduce waste, increase recycling, and educate other. Resources include education kits, activities, and external recycling containers for events. In 2021, Pickup Point was introduced on the county’s website. Pickup Point is a designated shed located at the Western Service Center where resources can be temporarily housed awaiting pickup and return. An online platform was developed allowing users to request items, notifies them when items are available for pickup, and provides a keycode for access.

b. Recycling Drop-Off Locations

The Recycling Zone: As required by Minn. Stat. § 115A.552, the county provides for at least one recycling center – The Recycling Zone. At no charge, residents can drop off traditional recyclable materials such as paper, cardboard, cans, and bottles and non-traditional materials such as cooking oil, and holiday lights. Businesses can also drop off recyclables at no charge.

Hastings Paper and Cardboard Drop-Off: Since 2006, the waste hauler for the City of Hastings has provided a centrally located recycling container for businesses and residents to drop off paper materials, including cardboard, magazines, newspapers, junk mail, and box board.

Commercial, Industrial, Institutional (CII): CII entities include businesses, manufacturers, schools, and local governments. Private waste haulers serve CII entities and collect the county’s required designated recyclable materials.

Curbside Mattress Pickup: Mattress recycling is challenging for some residents who face transportation barriers or physical limitations that make it difficult to take these bulky items to drop-off events or recycling sites. Since 2020, Dakota County has collaborated with Certified Recycling and Bridging to offer affordable curbside pickups for Dakota County residents, making it more convenient and accessible for single-family and multifamily residents to recycle or reuse their unwanted mattresses at the curb.

Projects and Programs in County Operations

Recycling is emphasized in county buildings and on county grounds, including:

- Providing standardized, paired, and labeled containers. All recycling and trash containers on building grounds, both indoors and out, must be paired and properly labeled according to county labeling requirements.
- Providing recurring recycling messages for employees on DakotaWorks (employee website).
- Promoting the Employee Recycling and Disposal Guide to educate staff on what to recycle. Required waste abatement and recycling training is provided to new employees during onboarding and to staff several times per year.
- Providing campground visitors with a paper bag to collect recyclables during their visit. The paper bag includes standardized messaging, images of acceptable materials and preparation instructions.
- Dakota County’s Resource Management program allows collaboration between county staff and the county’s hauler to evaluate data and implement changes to reduce waste and increase diversion.

6. Organics Management Programs and Activities (Includes Programs Combined With Recycling)

The county’s primary roles in supporting organics recovery include regulation, providing residential organics drop-off sites, managing a lease on county-owned land for waste management purposes, education, technical assistance, and promoting and requiring recycling at all events and certain back-of-house food scraps collection at community events.



Organics Regulation: The county regulates source separated organic materials and yard waste management facilities. The county prohibits land disposal of yard waste, Christmas trees, and holiday plant decorations. Collected yard waste must be placed in a compostable bag, and yard waste self-hauled to a facility must be dropped off in a reusable container or in a compostable bag. The state and county prohibit mixing yard waste with MSW; however, yard waste can be collected by MSW haulers using separate collection vehicles or by special yard waste collectors, such as lawn services, and delivered to yard waste sites. The County requires large generators and certain events to have recycling and back-of-house food scrap collection.

Lease for Food and Yard Waste Capacity: County-owned land in the City of Empire is actively managed through a lease with a private firm to operate both source-separated organics composting and yard waste composting facilities. This lease was recently extended for another five-year period with extensions possible through June of 2037.

a. Projects and Programs in the Community

Composting at Home: Dakota County promotes residential backyard composting. The county website informs residents where to purchase a backyard composting bin or how to build their own, a recipe to create the right mix of materials, and how to use compost in home projects.

Compost Bin and Rain Barrel Sale: Each Spring, the Recycling Association of Minnesota partners with local governments and other organizations to provide quality compost bins and rain barrels made from 100 percent recycled materials at low cost to Minnesota residents. Dakota County supports these sales through promotion and by providing additional discounts to county residents.

Residential Organics Drop-Off: In October 2016, Dakota County launched its first residential organics drop site at Thompson County Park in West St. Paul. Since that time, the county and city partners have added an additional 10 drop sites throughout the county. The county provides education and compostable bags to participating residents. Collected organics are delivered to a local commercial compost facility.

Yard Waste Disposal: Yard waste, such as grass clippings, leaves, and twigs are prohibited from weekly trash collection. Residents have several options for managing yard waste, including composting, collection by a licensed hauler, or delivery to a yard waste compost facility.

Zero Waste at Public Space Venues: Dakota County was awarded an Environmental Assistance Grant through the MPCA for a zero waste pilot project at four municipal ice arenas and three high school stadiums to assess and implement organics collection; update containers, labels and signage following best management practices; introduce certified compostable food service supplies; and educate staff and patrons. The project concluded that school stadiums may have greater zero waste potential than arenas, as post-program diversion findings show that 37-56 percent of overall arena waste generated is true trash.

School Waste Prevention & Recycling Grant Program: In 2009, the County initiated an Enhanced School Recycling Program to improve recycling in public schools. In 2013, the program was expanded to include organics diversion and was extended to private schools. In 2020, the school program was updated to include outdoor recycling, waste reduction, reuse, and wasted food prevention initiatives. The new School Waste Prevention & Recycling Grant Program offers grants to public and private schools and provides technical assistance, infrastructure, and educational resources for schools to prevent wasted food, reduce waste, divert recycling and food scraps from the trash, and educate students and staff on proper waste management practices. As of 2023, 77 public schools and 12 private schools have participated, representing roughly 55 percent of all K-12 public and private schools in Dakota County. Dakota County hosts an annual free School Recycling Workshop inviting administrators, buildings and grounds personnel, kitchen staff, teachers, and Green Teams to learn about industry updates, best practices information, creative solutions, and free resources. The annual workshop is designed to assist all schools in improving their waste reduction, recycling and organics programs.



Dakota County Schools Receive Free Compost: In 2021, Dakota County began providing free compost to School Recycling and Organics Program participants. Quantities of one to five cubic yards of compost were offered to schools as a way to close the loop on organics composting education and raise awareness on the benefits of compost as a valuable soil amendment. Schools used the compost in vegetable and flower gardens, on-site plantings, potted plants, and turf topdressing.

County Fair Recycling and Organics Collection: Since 2003, Dakota County and volunteers have worked with fair staff to decrease the amount of material going into the trash at the County Fair, which attracts over 120,000 visitors each year. Organics collection was added for the public in 2014, but recent efforts engaged only County Fair food vendors. In 2022, all 63 food vendors received a recycling guide and were offered a green five-gallon bucket and compostable bags to collect food scraps from food preparation in their booth. Seventy-nine percent (79 percent) of food vendors chose to participate.

City and Community Events for Recyclables and Organics Collection: The county and cities make recycling resources available for small and large events, including free portable recycling and organics containers, bags, signs, and litter grabbers. The county works with the municipalities and haulers to collect event data.

Business Recycling Incentive Program: In August 2016, the county's first business recycling program launched. It serves commercial entities within North American Industry Classification (NAICS) Codes 42-81 that are required by state law to recycle a minimum of three materials. The program provides up to \$10,000 per eligible business to address the most frequently encountered barriers (e.g., up-front costs, lack of knowledge/information to develop successful program). Participants work with county staff to complete applications and identify and implement best waste management practices (employee training, placement of bins, consistent signage), and measure results. In 2022, the program served 58 businesses in obtaining over \$80,000 in funding to implement waste reduction and recycling initiatives. Food and beverage and grocery store/food processor sectors had the highest number of program participants, and they also had the highest volumes of waste, offering large diversion potential. A reported 257,783 pounds of new material was diverted from program partners in 2022, of which 172,985 pounds of organics and 4,160 pounds of food donations.

Large Events and Festivals: Beginning in 2024, certain large events are required to properly sort and collect food scraps from back-of-house areas, provided the event generates food scraps in back-of-house areas, has at least 300 attendees, and generates at least 1 ton (8 cubic yards) of trash per location. Back-of-house means pre-consumed food waste from the kitchen, food preparation, dishwashing and storage areas that are not accessed by members of the public. It does not include food waste generated from food that has been served to members of the public.

b. Projects and Programs in County Operations

Dakota County's internal recycling program covers all county buildings and grounds, including park facilities, libraries, service centers, and transportation facilities. Ongoing efforts include:

- Providing standardized, paired, and labeled (e.g., organics, recycling, and trash) containers in key conference rooms and employee areas. Many county buildings have organics collection bins in staff areas for food scraps, paper towels or napkins, and certified compostable products. Public restroom areas have organics collection bins for paper towels.
- Recycling confidential papers, non-confidential papers, glass and plastic bottles and cans, cardboard, library books, batteries, toner cartridges, fluorescent and LED bulbs, and computers and computer equipment.
- Providing recurring recycling messages for employees on DakotaWorks (employee website).
- Providing annual employee trainings on what to recycle in county buildings.
- Conducting periodic waste sorts at county buildings to measure progress and reporting findings to employees.



- Developing a Resource Management waste and recycling contract to provide building-specific organics, recycling, and trash services, evaluation, and service improvement recommendations.

7. Non-Municipal Solid Waste Programs and Activities

Non-MSW includes non-hazardous industrial waste, construction and demolition waste, materials banned from disposal with MSW, problem materials, infectious waste, and other waste streams that are not MSW or otherwise defined or regulated as hazardous waste. The county’s non-MSW program consists of regulatory oversight of non-MSW at facilities in the county and promoting reuse, recycling, and processing of non-MSW.

a. Non-MSW Regulation

Although some non-MSW is routinely recycled, a significant portion is landfilled. Dakota County’s primary role is regulating the three non-MSW landfills in the county that serve the region. The county issues facility licenses, collects fees, conducts landfill inspections, and provides technical assistance and enforcement as necessary to ensure compliance with Dakota County Ordinance No. 110. The county also works closely with the MPCA on non-MSW regulatory issues, including rule revisions and compliance.

b. Projects and Programs in the Community

Tire Collection Program: Proper tire management minimizes potential breeding habitats for disease-carrying mosquitoes. Dakota County and Metropolitan Mosquito Control District (MMCD) provides funding to townships and rural cities for waste tire collection events. This program provides an incentive for residents to easily recycle this problem material. Tires are also collected at The Recycling Zone and at community clean-up events.

Non-Traditional Materials: The county started seasonal collection of agricultural film plastic (e.g., silage and grain bags, bunker covers, and greenhouse film) in 2015 and added boat wrap in 2016, with 10 tons collected annually. Material is taken to processors that can recycle bulky plastic. The program is annually promoted to boat storage locations and about two dozen dairies and livestock farms.

c. Projects and Programs in the County Operations

High Performance Buildings: The Dakota County Design Construction Sustainability Standards are required in county capital building projects to reduce waste generation, increase reuse and recycling, and minimize the county’s environmental footprint. The Standards include guidelines for building deconstruction and demolition, construction waste reuse and recycling, use of sustainable building materials, native landscaping, restoring soil through compost, storm water management, and energy conservation.

8. Landfill Abatement

a. Communications, Education, and Outreach Programs and Activities

The county committed financial and staff resources to meeting statutory requirements for public waste education. Minn. Stat. § 115A.552, subd.3, requires counties to “provide information on how, when, and where materials may be recycled, including a promotional program that publishes notices at least once every three months and encourages source separation of residential, commercial, and institutional materials.” Additionally, Minn. Stat. § 115A.96 requires counties to have an educational component to their HHW management plans.

County Communications: An annual communications plan identifies target audiences, priority messages and outlets to promote waste management information. Ongoing resident education includes brochures, monthly e-news, mailers, website information, and classes. The Business Recycling Incentive Program provides brochures, bi-monthly e-news, employee posters, employee training, container labels, direct mailers, and website information. Students and staff are educated through the School Waste Prevention and Recycling Grant Program, waste sorts, posters, recycling guides, container labels, activity sheets, presentations, and training.



County-Funded Education through Cities: The county has annual JPAs with municipalities for local residential recycling and education programs. Each municipality must maintain websites, distribute county products, publish county messages, and provide in-person education and outreach.

Rural Newsletter: The county’s Rural Solid Waste Abatement Program provides standardized education for residents. Rural households receive an annual newsletter that informs them on various recycling options for materials like mattresses, electronics, tires and other items that can’t go in the trash. Information on proper pesticide disposal, agricultural film plastic recycling, and the hazards of illegally dumping or burning waste are also included.

Educational Tours: An annual Tour de Trash and the Recycling Ambassadors Program invites residents to visit a recycling facility, landfill, compost site, and The Recycling Zone to understand how waste is managed.

Technical Assistance: County staff provides technical assistance to residents through phone, email, and website inquiries. The Business Recycling Incentive Program provides resources and technical assistance for qualifying businesses. Public and private schools are eligible for the School Waste Prevention and Recycling Grant Program for help to increase waste diversion. Technical assistance is provided to municipalities through the JPA. Regulated facilities receive county recommendations for waste management improvements during facility inspections.

Recycler/Composter Ambassador Programs: Twice each year, Dakota County offers a six-week training course for residents on recycling and composting. After completing the course, graduates volunteer 30 hours to public outreach.

b. Education Resources for the Community

Recycling Guide: The Recycling Guide is an online resource on how to reduce, reuse, recycle, compost, dispose of, and properly manage more than 100 household items. Information includes pick-up and drop-off services available to county residents.

E-news: Electronic newsletters (e-news) are sent to six different audiences with regular information on waste reduction, recycling, and organics diversion. Monthly e-news is sent to 2,300 residents and nearly 400 businesses, including hazardous waste generators. Monthly e-news is also sent to 339 Recycling Ambassadors and 514 Fix-It Clinic participants. Quarterly e-news for schools is received by 767 teachers, administrators, custodians, and food service personnel. Timely e-news on the organics drop-off program is received by nearly 8,300 residents.

Education Kits and Displays: Resources for teachers, students, community groups, and other organizations are available for check-out and include displays, activity kits, learning kits, and banners.

Presentations and Booths: County staff and volunteers regularly present at schools, meetings, and events.

9. Solid and Hazardous Waste Regulation Programs and Activities

The county regulates waste haulers, generators, and facilities using ordinances, licenses, compliance inspections, technical assistance, and enforcement. Compliance inspections are conducted regularly to evaluate solid and hazardous waste facility operations for compliance with license conditions. Inspection frequency is based on the type of facility, potential risk to the environment, and compliance history. If a facility is found to be out of compliance, a range of actions ensue, typically beginning with formal notification of inspection findings and providing opportunities to correct the problem.

a. Regulatory Mechanisms: Ordinance and Licensing

County Solid Waste Ordinance: Dakota County’s solid waste regulation program began in the 1970’s with adoption of Dakota County Ordinance No. 110, which includes standards for regulating solid waste management and the operation of solid waste facilities, including infectious waste facilities; requirements for certain facilities



on a disposal site; and provisions for application and license fees, financial assurance, and penalties for lack of compliance with these provisions. New requirements in the ordinance as part of implementation of the 2018-2038 Solid Waste Master Plan include:

- **Residents** – recycle designated materials
- **Commercial entities (businesses, schools, municipalities, events)** – recycle designated materials following best practices (standardized labels, staff education, co-locating recycling and trash bins) and large organics generators must recover back-of-house food scraps.
- **Multifamily properties** – provide sufficient recycling service capacity for tenants and recycle designated materials following best practices.
- **Waste haulers** – properly label each customer container, provide annual education to customers, collect designated materials for recycling, itemize customer invoices, and provide weekly service to all residential recycling customers.
- **Collection sites and transfer stations** – reduced regulations for small-volume collection and transfer of materials (e.g., organics, construction and demolition waste, certain recyclables) and allowance to co-collect organics in durable compostable bags.
- **Landfills** – complete composition studies every five years, starting in 2025.
- **Municipalities over 10,000 population** – adopt a code consistent and no less restrictive than Dakota County Ordinance 110 and adopt and enforce the county’s multifamily and event recycling requirements.

County Hazardous Waste Ordinance: The county’s hazardous waste regulatory program began in 1977 with the passage of the Waste Management Act and County Board adoption of Dakota County Ordinance No. 111, Hazardous Waste Regulation (Ordinance 111). Ordinance 111 establishes standards for generating, storing, processing, or managing hazardous waste in Dakota County.

Solid Waste Facility Licenses: Solid waste management facilities must have a license from Dakota County to operate. The county licenses MSW, industrial, and demolition landfills; waste processing and recycling facilities; transfer stations; yard waste compost sites; and organics composting facilities. The county issues solid waste facility licenses for a two-year period. Dakota County regulates landfills that receive combustor ash, process residuals, and bypass from regional resource recovery facilities.

Hazardous Waste Generator Licenses: Dakota County annually licenses hazardous waste generators, with fees based on the amount of hazardous waste generated. Minimal generators, those that generate ten gallons or less of hazardous waste and no acute hazardous waste, are not required to have a license; however, are required to register with the county and obtain a Hazardous Waste Identification Number (HWID) from the MPCA.

Hazardous Waste Facility Licenses: Dakota County licenses hazardous waste facilities, including storage facilities, ten-day transfer facilities, storage and recycling facilities, treatment facilities, special hazardous waste storage sites, HHW and Very Small Quantity Generator (VSQG) collection sites, universal waste sites, and used oil collection sites.

The county’s role in MSW land disposal is regulating sanitary landfills and MSW transfer stations located in the county that serve the region. Landfills accept waste from the region, state, and surrounding states. Although landfilling is the least preferred management method, it is necessary in an integrated waste system. The county regulates acceptance of waste at facilities located within the county, including material bans and prohibitions.

b. Material Bans

Materials and wastes banned from disposal at MSW landfills located in Dakota County include:



- Recyclables (designated materials)
- Trees and branches, including Christmas trees and holiday decorations
- Tires
- Lead-acid batteries
- Major appliances
- Waste oil/used oil and used oil filters
- Yard wastes
- Mercury-containing waste as listed in Minn. Stat. § 115A.932
- Telephone directories
- Cathode Ray Tubes
- Other listed wastes exceeding thresholds (e.g., liquids, sludges, radioactive waste, etc.)

c. Prohibitions

Unprocessed Waste: Dakota County Ordinance No. 110 restricts the acceptance of processible waste at MSW landfills located in the County from metropolitan area generators, unless certain conditions are met.

Recyclables and Yard Waste: Dakota County Ordinance No. 110 requires source-separated materials, such as recyclables and yard waste, to be delivered to the respective facilities, and prohibits land disposal of source-separated materials and other banned materials.

Burning and Burying of Waste: Dakota County Ordinance No. 110 effectively prohibits burning and burial of solid wastes at unlicensed facilities. In 2009, the County Board eliminated the farm exemption.

Yard Waste Collection: Dakota County Ordinance No. 110 prohibits the use of plastic bags for yard waste collection. Yard waste must be collected in paper bags or other biodegradable containers, or placed in a container that can be reused.

Co-Disposal Program: requires all businesses and industries to evaluate their waste to determine if it is hazardous. Industries that “co-dispose” non-hazardous industrial waste with MSW must demonstrate proper evaluation in accordance with the law; comply with a state-approved Industrial Waste Management Plan; and, in Dakota County, comply with Dakota County Ordinance No. 110. County requirements ensure that accepted waste is below hazardous waste limits. The Co-Disposal Program also documents industrial waste characteristics and the types and amounts landfilled.

Landfill Cover Programs: addresses essential landfill cover requirements for daily, intermediate and final cover. The Alternative Daily Cover Program addresses daily cover requirements at MSW landfills and intermittent cover at the industrial waste landfill in the county. The Alternative Daily Cover Program makes it possible for landfills to meet essential requirements with materials other than clean soil, including contaminated soil for daily cover. Other approved alternative daily cover options include tarps and foam, which do not consume landfill space.

The county provides technical assistance, as requested, to the MPCA for its Land Management Plan, Closed Landfill Program, and regulatory efforts to address landfill contamination issues.

10. Household Hazardous Waste, Toxicity Reduction, and Problem Material Management Programs and Activities

The county’s HHW management services began in 1985 with Minnesota’s first HHW collection. County services have grown to include a year-round facility for residential and business hazardous waste and problem materials collection. Minn. Stat. § 115A.96 requires counties to implement a HHW management plan. Dakota County provides for collection, storage, and proper management of HHW and problem materials through collection programs at The Recycling Zone, at community collection events, and drop-off locations for select HHW wastes.



a. The Recycling Zone Services

Residential Material Drop-Off: Residents drop off HHW and problem materials at no charge, including: oil-based paint, flammable solvents, pesticides, automotive fluids, aerosols, propane tanks, fluorescent bulbs, and batteries. In August 2016, a fee was implemented for the collection of televisions and monitors. Other electronics, including small household appliances, remain free for residents to drop-off. The Recycling Zone accepts problem materials that aren't necessarily hazardous but can be difficult to manage in the normal solid waste stream, such as latex paint, household cleaners, used oil, sharps, and tires (for a fee). Additional materials collected at no charge include cooking oil, ink cartridges, lead fishing tackle, eyeglasses, alkaline batteries, and string lights.

Business Universal Waste, Electronics, and Fluorescent Lamp Collection: For a minimal fee, businesses can bring in universal waste, electronics, and spent fluorescent lamps to the Recycling Zone by appointment. Dakota County partners with Xcel Energy to offer businesses free disposal of up to ten bulbs per year, as part of Xcel Energy's compliance with State law (Minn. Stat. § 216B.241). Dakota Electric also provides funding for lamp disposal.

Business Very Small Quantity Generator (VSQG) Program: Because more than 90 percent of businesses in Dakota County qualify as a VSQG, the county offers a program to help businesses that produce small amounts of hazardous waste to comply with the hazardous waste rules. Technical assistance is provided, and businesses are required to make an appointment to participate in the program and pay a disposal fee.

Paint Collection: Dakota County accepts business and household architectural paint at The Recycling Zone, and HHW collection events, at no charge. Minn. Stat. § 115A.1415 requires that for architectural paint sold in the state, producers must implement and finance a statewide product stewardship program. PaintCare, Inc. was established to represent paint producers and operate the paint product stewardship program in Minnesota. Through an agreement, PaintCare provides funds to Dakota County to pay for collection, transport, and processing of architectural paint.

Pesticide Collection Program: Dakota County accepts business and household pesticides at The Recycling Zone at no charge. Minn. Stat. § 18B.065 requires the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) to establish and operate a waste pesticide collection program for Minnesota counties. The MDA enters into cooperative agreements with counties to fund collection of business and household waste pesticides.

b. Residential Collection Events

Dakota County has collaborated with municipalities to provide one to four HHW collection events every year since 1985. Under JPAs, the county provides equipment, staff, publicity outside the collection area, and HHW disposal. Information on the hours, location, and materials accepted at The Recycling Zone are distributed on event days. Cities typically provide event sites, staff, and local publicity. HHW collection events accept paint, pesticides, used oil, cleaning supplies, and other hazardous materials.

c. Residential Sharps and Pharmaceuticals Collections

Dakota County has collected residential sharps (e.g., needles, syringes, and lancets) at The Recycling Zone since 2007. In 2012, Dakota County piloted a program to collect pharmaceuticals at three law enforcement facilities, in partnership with the County Sheriff's office. The pilot program was a success and there are now 10 drop-off locations.

d. Projects and Programs in County Operations

Dakota County emphasizes proper hazardous waste management in its buildings and on its grounds, including:

- The Recycling Zone manages hazardous waste from county operations, such as fluorescent bulbs, paints, batteries and electronics.
- The Recycling Zone properly manages hazardous waste illegally dumped on county property.



- Online Employee Reuse, Recycling, and Disposal Guide to educate employees on proper management of hazardous waste at the office, such as cell phones and cell phone batteries.

11. Resource Recovery Programs and Activities

Resource recovery, or waste processing for energy, is part of an integrated waste system, but only one step above land disposal. In 1985, the Minnesota Legislature adopted a law requiring that all MSW generated in the seven Metropolitan counties that is not reduced, reused, or recycled must be sent to a resource recovery facility (Minn. Stat. § 473.848).

County Lease for Transfer Station: In the early 1990’s, Dakota County worked to site an incinerator on county-owned land. Although permitted by the state in 1992, the facility was not developed and the land is currently leased to a private firm for source-separated organics composting, yard waste composting, and transfer to a resource recovery if capacity is available.

Landfill Host Fee Incentives: Dakota County’s host fees are negotiated such that landfills pay a higher fee for accepting processible waste than they pay for non-processible waste and process residuals.

F. Collection and Transportation of Waste

In Dakota County, private-sector companies collect and transport residential and business waste to waste management facilities. The county does not collect or transport solid waste.

1. Hauling Systems in Dakota County

MSW, recyclables, organics, and yard waste in the county are collected and transported largely through an open hauling system (e.g., subscription service), where businesses and residents contract with a private waste hauler of their choice.

Municipal Ordinances/Codes: Dakota County municipalities have ordinances for MSW and recycling collection in their respective areas (Table 3). Municipal ordinances ensure the opportunity to recycle exists, and address residential services, including multifamily dwellings, and commercial services. With the exception of the townships and most small cities (under a population of 500), all municipalities license MSW haulers. Some municipalities have expanded ordinance requirements. For example, the city of Apple Valley has instituted hauling zones/districts and times that collection services can be provided.

Table 3: Municipal Solid Waste Ordinances and Codes

Municipality	Solid Waste Ordinances/Codes
Apple Valley	Title V: Public Works - Chapter 50: Garbage Title IX: General Regulations, Chapter 93: Prohibited Materials
Burnsville	Title 7: Health and Sanitation – Chapter 7-3: Waste Management , Chapter 7-4: Solid Waste Landfills , Chapter 7-5: Trash and Recyclables , Chapter 7-6: Construction Debris Disposal Fee , Chapter 7-7: Composting
Eagan	Chapter 10: Public Protection, Crimes and Offenses - Section 10.01 Storage, Deposit, and Disposal of Refuse
Empire	Ordinance 290 – Solid Waste Collection
Farmington	Title 7: Health and Sanitation – Chapter 1: Solid Waste Collections , Chapter 4: Sanitary Landfills
Hastings	Chapter 50: General Provisions – 50.06 Mandatory Solid Waste Collection Requirements , 50.07 Garbage and Refuse Haulers , 50.08 Recycling Haulers
Inver Grove Heights	Title 8: Water and Sewer; Public Services – Chapter 6: Solid Waste Collection and Disposal
Lilydale	Lilydale City Code , Chapter 10: Solid Waste Abatement
Lakeville	Title 4: Health and Sanitation – Chapter 2: Mixed Municipal Solid Waste and Recyclables
Mendota Heights	Title 4: Public Health and Safety – Chapter 2: Solid Waste Abatement



Municipality	Solid Waste Ordinances/Codes
Rosemount	Title 5: Health and Sanitation - Chapter 1: Solid Waste , Chapter 4: Composting
South St. Paul	Chapter 46: Solid Waste
West St. Paul	Title IX: General Regulations – Chapter 92: Health Provisions

Municipality Requirements: In November 2019, the Dakota County Board of Commissioners adopted a revised Dakota County Ordinance No. 110, Solid Waste Management to implement strategies in the 2018-2038 Solid Waste Master Plan to reduce waste going to landfills, improve the quality of materials recycled, and make progress toward the state's goal to recycle 75 percent of waste by 2030. The following is a summary of the requirements that impact municipalities:

City Hauling and Licensing Systems: Roughly 90 percent of county residents live in communities with open hauling for trash and recyclables, although some organizations such as townhome associations may develop single waste contracts for their members. Cities using open hauling require haulers to have city-issued licenses. The city determines the number of licensed haulers to allow, and some cities limit the number of hauler licenses to reduce wear on roads. The number of licenses for residential collection in open hauling cities ranges from four haulers (City of Mendota) to ten (City of Inver Grove Heights).

Under organized collection, a city provides or contracts for collection services. The City of Hastings uses an open bid process and contracts with one hauler to collect and transport residential MSW, recycling, and yard waste. Commercial sector waste in Hastings is managed through an open hauling system.

The City of Farmington has a one-hauler system for recycling and trash collection. City code requires that all residential and commercial properties must use the city's contracted hauler. An exemption to this code only exists in the event that the city-contracted hauler cannot service the user due to the waste characteristics. In 2022 both cities directed collected trash to resource recovery facilities.

Hauler Collected Fees: Hauler fees for trash and recyclables collection vary because the private sector establishes and negotiates rates with their customers. Dakota County Ordinance No. 110 includes the following requirements related to hauler collected fees:

Waste hauling fees must be weight- or volume-based and must increase with the volume or weight collected.

- Section 15.08 L.1: Charges for the collection of mixed municipal solid waste in Dakota County shall increase with the volume or weight of the waste collected.
- Section 15.08 L.4: Fees for service that are not based on volume or weight are prohibited.

Recycling cannot be penalized, i.e., waste haulers cannot impose a greater charge on residents that recycle than those that do not recycle.

- Section 15.08 L.2: Collectors of mixed municipal solid waste in Dakota County are prohibited from imposing a greater charge on residents who recycle than on residents who do not recycle.

Residential waste reduction is promoted by requiring haulers to offer a 35-gallon or less base unit fee.

- Section 15.08 L.3: Haulers shall offer a 35-gallon or less base fee for mixed municipal solid waste generated by a residential source. Incremental service levels shall not increase by more than thirty-two (32) gallons, with the exception of fees charged for bulky items.

Existing Rates and Charges in Dakota County: Dakota County conducted a non-scientific survey of haulers, customers, and cities with organized collection contracts, and found a range of published service rates for monthly residential MSW and recycling services (excluding State taxes and fees):

- 35 gallon: \$11.28 to \$15.72 (MSW) + \$7.69 to \$9.60 (Recycling) = \$20.88 to \$23.41 per month
- 65 gallon: \$13.20 to \$20.98 (MSW) + \$7.69 to \$9.60 (Recycling) = \$22.80 to \$28.67 per month
- 95 gallon: \$14.79 to \$25.76 (MSW) + \$7.69 to \$9.60 (Recycling) = \$24.39 to \$33.45 per month



In addition, several cities with open hauling markets published the following residential service rates for monthly MSW and recycling services (excluding taxes and fees):

- 35 gallon: MSW + Recycling = \$15.00 to \$44.68 per month
- 65 gallon: MSW + Recycling = \$15.00 to \$45.06 per month
- 95 gallon: MSW + Recycling = \$17.00 to \$47.79 per month

A survey of select haulers for commercial services found a range of published commercial rates for weekly recycling services (excluding State taxes and fees):

- 95 gallon (Recycling): \$25.00 to \$43.69 per month
- 4 yard (Recycling): \$89.00 to \$132.80 per month
- 8 yard (Recycling): \$124.00 to \$211.75 per month
- 95 gallon (MSW): \$92.50 to \$102.54 per month
- 4 yard (MSW): \$190.94 to \$235.94 per month
- 8 yard (MSW): \$304.46 to \$355.01 per month

Published hauler rates provide the best cost comparison, because charges vary with container size, location, and the type of materials being collected. Inconsistent city contracting methods and strong competition in the region result in diverse hauling charges that are not comparable across cities, businesses, or residents.

Obtaining pricing from private-sector facilities is difficult. Contracts are negotiated between the facility and their customers and it is considered private information. Contract pricing varies based on volume, location, and other factors. MSW land disposal facilities located in Dakota County allow for public drop-off of waste and are required to post a non-contract per ton fee or “gate rate.”

Pricing and rebates at the recycling facilities vary, in part, because the recycling markets vary. Pricing also depends on other factors, including whether the waste is from residential or business generators, composition of the materials, and the cleanliness of the materials. Contracts are negotiated between the recycling facility and the waste hauler and are not considered public information.

Consistent with Minn. Stat. § 473.848, Dakota County’s Resource Management contract requires the hauler to deliver trash generated from county libraries, service centers and parks to the Red Wing Waste Campus for waste processing. The 2024 tip fee at the Red Wing Waste Campus is \$118 per ton plus 17 percent Minnesota Solid Waste Management Tax. In addition, trash collected under city collection contracts in Farmington and Hastings is delivered to the Red Wing Waste Campus.

Table 4 identifies reported rates for facilities that accept Dakota County waste for disposal. Rates were gathered from annual reports to the MPCA or reported by facility staff to Dakota County.

Table 4: Fees for Facilities that Accept Dakota County Waste

Facility	Waste Type	Average Rate Per Ton	Source
Burnsville Sanitary Landfill, Burnsville	MSW	\$78.00*	Annual Report to MPCA (2023)
Burnsville Sanitary Landfill, Burnsville	Demo	\$78.00*	Annual Report to MPCA (2023)
Elk River Landfill, Elk River	MSW	\$220.00*	Annual Report to MPCA (2023)
Elk River Landfill, Elk River	Demo	\$130.00*	Annual Report to MPCA (2023)
Frattalone’s Dawnway Landfill, Inver Grove Heights	Demo	\$8.47/CY*	Annual Report to MPCA (2023)
Pine Bend Sanitary Landfill, Inver Grove Heights	MSW	\$63.79*	Annual Report to MPCA (2023)
WM Empire Transfer Station	MSW Transfer	\$138.00	Waste Management, Inc. (2023)



Facility	Waste Type	Average Rate Per Ton	Source
SKB Rosemount Industrial and Demolition Landfill, Rosemount	Demo	\$75.00*	Annual Report to MPCA (2023)
SKB Rosemount Industrial and Demolition Landfill, Rosemount	Industrial	\$75.00*	Annual Report to MPCA (2023)
SKB Rosemount Industrial and Demolition Landfill, Rosemount	MSW Ash	\$105.00*	Annual Report to MPCA (2023)
WM Empire SSOM Compost	SSOM	\$75.00	Waste Management, Inc. (2023)
Spruce Ridge Landfill, Glencoe	MSW	\$75.00*	Annual Report to MPCA (2023)

*Rates reported in the “average tip fee” column in Annual Reports submitted by the facility to the MPCA.

G. Waste Management Facilities

1. Waste Flow

Unless directed by the waste generator to a particular facility for processing or disposal, waste haulers determine where to deliver collected waste – to a recycling, organics, yard waste, resource recovery, or land disposal facility – based on a variety of factors, including the type of material collected, facility distance, tip fees, contracts, state law or permit conditions, and whether a facility is owned by a competitor or waste hauler’s company. Dakota County does not own or operate waste management facilities. It is anticipated that haulers will continue to select and deliver waste to the following existing facilities and to new facilities as business decisions are made.

2. Material Recovery Facilities (MRF)

Residential and business recyclables are delivered to MRFs (recycling facilities) in and outside of the county. Two recycling facilities located in Dakota County accept recyclables from haulers across the Region.

Table 5: Licensed Material Recovery Facilities in Dakota County

Material Recovery Facility	Owner
Allied Recyclery, Inver Grove Heights	Republic Services, Inc.
Recycle Minnesota, Lakeville	Recycle Minnesota, LLC

Allied Recyclery: The MRF was constructed in 1991 to manage recyclables collected from Republic Services and other waste haulers. The MRF was one of the region’s first private facilities designed specifically for recyclables. Now owned by Republic Services, Inc., it is located in Inver Grove Heights next to Republic’s Pine Bend MSW landfill. The MRF has been adapted over time to accommodate changes in recyclable sorting systems. The facility’s capacity is estimated at 6,000 tons of recyclables per month.

Recycle Minnesota: Recycle Minnesota, located in Lakeville, received a permit-by-rule from the MPCA and were first licensed by Dakota County in 2014. Recycle Minnesota has a permitted capacity of up to 200 tons per day and accepts less than 100 tons per day of residential, single-stream recyclables and less than 50 tons per day of old corrugated cardboard.

3. Organics Management Facilities

Organics recovery consists of food waste managed as food-to-people, food-for-livestock, source-separated organics composting, and yard waste.

Food-to-People: Food rescue for human use is poorly documented. A concerted effort will be made to improve data tracking methods for organics diversion through food rescue.



Food-to-Livestock: Without private-sector facility expansion (i.e., ReConserve), food recovery for conversion into livestock feed might not have the same expansion potential as source-separated organics composting. ReConserve, located in Dakota County, is the only facility serving the region and is often at capacity. Direct food-to-hogs programs have been used by schools and businesses in Dakota County, although the major hog operations that accept food waste are in the north Metro, distant from Dakota County.

Source-Separated Organics Composting: Organics programs are developing across Dakota County with significant interest in collecting source-separated organics from residents and in schools; and at large food-producing establishments, such as grocery stores and restaurants.

Yard Waste: Yard waste has increased substantially since Emerald Ash Borer was detected in the county in early 2015. Yard waste, not identified by county-of-origin, can be transferred into the county.

Residential and business organics are delivered to three commercial facilities in and outside of Dakota County. The three active facilities are used by haulers from across the region.

Table 6: Licensed Organics Recovery Facilities in Dakota County

Organics Management Facility	Owner
Reconserve of Minnesota, Rosemount	ReConserve of Minnesota, Inc.
WM Empire SSOM Compost, Empire	Waste Management of Minnesota, Inc.

Reconserve of Minnesota: Located in Rosemount, the facility was first licensed by the county in 1998 to recycle food waste and other organic materials into an adjunct ingredient sold in bulk to the livestock feed industry. The facility is licensed to accept 200 to 300 tons of food waste per day (no meat or meat by-products). This is the only food-to-livestock facility serving the region and is often at capacity.

WM Empire SSOM Compost: This facility is on county-owned land in the City of Empire that the county has leased to SET for organics composting since 2002. The County Board recently authorized a five-year lease extension with possible extensions available through June 2037. This facility is permitted as a source-separated organic materials (SSOM) compost facility, a solid waste transfer and processing building, and a yard waste composting facility. The compost facility is permitted to accept 300 tons per day (tpd) of material (150 tpd of SSOM and 150 tpd of yard waste). In 2023, the facility accepted 1,632 tons of SSOM.

Although not in Dakota County, in 2023, SSOM from the county was delivered to the Mdewakanton Sioux facility (929 tons).

4. Yard Waste Facilities

Residential and business yard waste is delivered to yard waste facilities in and outside of the county. Five yard waste compost facilities are licensed in Dakota County.

Table 7: Licensed Yard Waste Compost Facilities in Dakota County

Yard Waste Facility	Owner
B & D Composting, Greenvale Township	B&D Composting
Gertens RES Yard Waste Compost Facility, Eagan	Gertens Greenhouse & Garden Center, Inc.
South St. Paul Yard Waste Compost Facility, South St. Paul	City of South St. Paul
WM Empire Yardwaste Compost, Empire	Waste Management of Minnesota, Inc.
WM Burnsville, Burnsville	Waste Management of Minnesota, Inc.

B & D Composting: This facility has operated since 1996 in Greenvale Township. B & D manages yard waste, brush, and tree waste, and is licensed to receive up to 20,000 cubic yards per year. In 2023, it accepted 18,758 tons of Dakota County yard waste. Yard waste compost is sold to the public and tree waste is sawed for lumber, cut for firewood, ground for mulch, or sold to District Energy in St. Paul for fuel.



Gertens RES Yard Waste Compost Facility: Gertens Garden Center operates a yard waste compost facility on land owned by Gopher Resource Corporation. Gertens purchased an adjacent parcel in 2016 from the City of Egan, with plans to relocate its composting operations. The facility is licensed to accept greater than 40,000 cubic yards of yard waste per year, and in 2023 accepted 11,242 tons of Dakota County yard waste. The facility accepts yard waste that is loose or is in compostable bags, prunings, brush and tree waste. End-products include yard-waste compost, blended soils, and wood mulches.

South St. Paul Yard Waste Compost Facility: This small, city-owned and operated facility accepts only de-bagged yard waste or yard waste in paper bags. Brush or tree waste is not accepted. Residency is not required to drop off yard waste. Capacity is 10,000 cubic yards per year and in 2023 it accepted 1,100 tons of Dakota County yard waste. The facility generates 1,000 cubic yards of yard waste compost per year, offered to the public at no cost.

WM Empire Yardwaste Compost: This facility is located in Empire on county-owned land. All types of yard waste in compostable bags and loose material are accepted. Its county-licensed capacity is greater than 40,000 cubic yards per year and in 2023, it accepted 32,503 tons of Dakota County yard waste. The facility is also permitted by the state to accept 300 tons per day (tpd) of material, including 150 tpd of source-separated organic materials (SSOM) and 150 tpd of yard waste. End-products available for sale include compost, blended soils and several kinds of landscape mulches.

WM Burnsville: This facility has an annual capacity greater than 40,000 cubic yards and accepted 25,092 tons of Dakota County yard waste in 2023. Grass and leaves must be in compostable bags or reusable containers. The facility also accepts tree and brush waste. End-products include yard waste compost, blended soils, wood chips, and several kinds of landscape mulches.

5. Resource Recovery Facilities

Three resource recovery facilities serve the region, although none are located in Dakota County and not all can or will accept waste generated in Dakota County.

The Hennepin Energy Recovery Center (HERC): The HERC is located in Minneapolis and uses a mass-burn technology, producing energy for district heating and electricity. Hennepin County owns the facility and contracts for operations. The facility's permit capacity is 365,000 tons annually. HERC capacity is typically filled with Hennepin County waste; however, 2023 reports indicate 256 tons of Dakota County-generated waste was delivered to HERC.

The Recycling and Energy Center: The Recycling and Energy Center is a refuse-derived fuel (RDF) facility now owned by Ramsey and Washington Counties and operated by their contractor. The facility is in Newport and is managed by the Ramsey/Washington Recycling and Energy Board. MSW is delivered, shredded, and separated into three waste streams: RDF, recyclable metal, and residue. RDF is burned to generate electricity at Xcel Energy power plants in Red Wing and Mankato. Metals are recycled, and residue is landfilled. Permitted capacity is 500,000 tons per year. In 2023, 335 tons of Dakota County-generated waste was delivered to the facility.

Red Wing Waste Campus: The Red Wing Waste Campus is an RDF facility owned and operated by the City of Red Wing. Waste is sorted into RDF, recyclable metal, and residue. RDF is burned to generate electricity at Xcel Energy's power plant in Red Wing. The city's permitted capacity is 36,000 tons annually. In 2023, 11,372 tons of Dakota County-generated waste was delivered to this facility.

6. MSW Land Disposal Facilities

Residential and business waste is delivered to MSW land disposal facilities in and outside of the county. Seven landfills receive TCMA waste with a collective capacity of 10.2 million cubic yards. Two MSW landfills serving the region are located in Dakota County. Both operate methane gas-to-energy systems.



Table 8: Licensed MSW Landfills in Dakota County

MSW Landfill Facility	Owner
Burnsville Sanitary Landfill, Burnsville	Burnsville Sanitary Landfill, Inc.
Pine Bend Sanitary Landfill, Inver Grove Heights	Republic Services, Inc.

Burnsville Sanitary Landfill: This landfill is in a commercial area in northwest Burnsville, and is owned by Burnsville Sanitary Landfill, Inc., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Waste Management, Inc. The landfill was first permitted by the MPCA in 1971. In 2022, 24.2 million cubic yards of capacity remained with an estimated life span of 2072. In 2023, 117,906 tons of Dakota County-generated waste was delivered to this landfill.

Pine Bend Sanitary Landfill: This landfill in Inver Grove Heights is owned by Republic Services, Inc./BFI Waste Systems of North America, LLC., and was originally permitted in 1971. The landfill is currently permitted at 29.8 million cubic yards of air space. At the end of 2022, 3.5 million cubic yards of airspace remained, and it is estimated that landfill capacity will be consumed by 2030 - at current use rates and a permit capacity of 29.8 million cubic yards. Pine Bend is pursuing an 8,185,000 cubic yard expansion that will extend the life to about 2048 if approved. In 2023, 82,099 tons of Dakota County-generated MSW was delivered to this landfill.

In 2023, Dakota County-generated waste was also delivered to out-of-county landfills including Waste Management, Inc. Elk River Landfill in Sherburne County (379 tons) and the Advanced Disposal Seven Mile Creek Landfill in Eau Claire, Wisconsin (2,407 tons).

7. Non-MSW Land Disposal Facilities

The TCMA is served by nine Non-MSW landfills. Five Non-MSW landfills in Dakota County accept construction, demolition, and industrial wastes from generators in and outside of the county. The two MSW landfills in the county also accept non-MSW, generally industrial waste and contaminated soil within the MSW cells.

Table 9: Licensed Non-MSW Landfills in Dakota County

Non-MSW Landfill Facility	Owner
Burnsville Demolition and Construction Landfill, Burnsville	Burnsville Sanitary Landfill, Inc.
Frattalone’s Dawnway Demolition Landfill, Inver Grove Heights	Frattalone Companies
Pine Bend Sanitary Landfill, Inver Grove Heights	Republic Services, Inc.
SKB Rich Valley Demolition Landfill, Inver Grove Heights	SKB Environmental, Inc.
SKB Rosemount Industrial and Demolition Landfill, Rosemount	SKB Environmental, Inc.

Burnsville Demolition and Construction Landfill: This landfill is located in Burnsville and owned by Burnsville Sanitary Landfill, Inc., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Waste Management Inc. The construction and demolition waste cell is within the footprint of the Burnsville Sanitary Landfill. In 2022, the cell had a capacity of 2.75 million cubic yards and an estimated life of approximately ninety years. This facility is currently inactive.

Frattalone’s Dawnway Demolition Landfill: This landfill is a 51-acre facility on the border between Inver Grove Heights and South St Paul, within the footprint of a pre-existing sand and gravel pit that closed in 1980. The facility accepts demolition debris waste materials. No industrial waste is accepted. Originally developed to accept waste only from its owner, the landfill now accepts wastes from pre-screened contractors. In 2022, the landfill had a total capacity for construction and demolition waste of 1.33million cubic yards and remaining facility life is estimated at about seven years.

Pine Bend Sanitary Landfill: See description in previous section.

SKB Rich Valley Demolition Landfill: The landfill is in the City of Inver Grove Heights on property owned by SKB Environmental, Inc. The facility accepts only construction and demolition wastes but is currently inactive as operations were consolidated by SKB at the nearby Rosemount facility. In 2007, an expansion of the landfill was approved, but has not yet been fully constructed. In 2022, the landfill had a total capacity for construction and demolition waste of 2.3 million cubic yards and remaining facility life is estimated at nineteen years.



SKB Rosemount Industrial and Demolition Landfill: The landfill is located in Rosemount and accepts industrial waste, MSW incinerator ash, and demolition waste. The landfill was originally permitted to accept only industrial waste in 1992. In 1998 the MPCA permitted the acceptance of MSW incinerator ash at the landfill. In 2003 the MPCA approved a major modification to the facility for disposing of construction and demolition debris. A 2008 landfill expansion significantly increased demolition and industrial capacity. In 2022, the facility had a capacity of 13.9 million cubic yards for construction and demolition waste and industrial waste; and 1.3 million cubic yards for MSW incinerator ash. Remaining facility life estimates are four years for construction and demolition waste and industrial waste, and sixteen years for incinerator ash.

8. Non-MSW Processing Facilities

Two licensed Non-MSW processing facilities located in Dakota County receive TCMA waste.

Table 10: Licensed Non-MSW Processing Facilities in Dakota County

Non-MSW Processing Facility	Owner
Gem-Ash/SKB Rosemount Solid Waste Processing, Inver Grove Heights	SKB Environmental, Inc.
SKB Rosemount Processing, Rosemount	SKB Environmental, Inc.
Dakota Wood Grinding, Coates	Dakota Wood Grinding, Inc.
Dunham Brothers Shavings, Lakeville	Dunham Brothers Shavings Co., Inc.

Gem-Ash/SKB Rosemount Solid Waste Processing: This facility was licensed in 2014 to operate an ash recycling facility. The facility processes municipal solid waste incinerator ash and separates ferrous and non-ferrous metals for recycling. In 2023, the facility marketed 2,688 tons of ferrous metals and 3,913 tons of non-ferrous metals.

SKB Rosemount Processing: This facility is a multi-operational solid waste facility licensed for waste processing. The landfill sorts out recyclable metals, clean wood, and concrete and processes waste shingle materials (market dependent) from the construction and demolition wastes. Metals are also sorted and recycled from the MSW incinerator ash cell. In 2023, the facility recycled 14,773 tons of metals and 8,469 tons of concrete.

Dakota Wood Grinding: This facility was licensed in 2021 to operate a wood waste processing facility. The facility processes wood waste to be used as a biofuel at District Energy St Paul; providing heat and steam to downtown St. Paul.

Dunham Brothers Shavings: This facility was licensed in 1997 to operate a wood waste processing facility. The facility primarily processes untreated waste wood pallets into animal bedding used at farms and facilities in the Metro and beyond.

9. Hazardous Waste and Problem Materials Facility

The Recycling Zone opened in 1997 and provides a year-round location for residents to drop off recyclables, household hazardous waste, and problem materials and for businesses a Very Small Quantity Generator (VSQG) program by appointment.

Table 11: Licensed HHW Facilities in Dakota County

HHW Facility	Owner
The Recycling Zone, Eagan	Gopher Resource Corporation

Dakota County contracts with Gopher Resource, LLC (Gopher), to provide the site, facility, and most on-site labor. Since 1997, the County Board has approved contracts for services at the Gopher facility. In 2023, a five-year contract extension was executed with Gopher, extending operation through 2028. The contract includes:

- Thirty-six hours per week for residential HHW and recyclables drop-off, including two evenings.



- Facility rental space of 9,850 square feet.
- Recyclables drop-off for residents including mixed containers, mixed paper/cardboard, and scrap metal.
- HHW, electronics and problem materials drop-off.
- Dakota County is responsible for costs relating to collection, disposal, recycling, labor, supplies, and facility rental.
- Gopher increased fulltime staffing (2024) to manage the increased participation and waste. Gopher staff sort, pack, and store materials on-site until shipped to disposal and recycling facilities.

Dakota County maintains separate contracts with hazardous waste and problem material management companies to provide for proper recycling or disposal of materials collected at The Recycling Zone. Dakota County oversees the operations at The Recycling Zone and the management company contracts. To better serve the needs of residents and businesses, Dakota County is:

- A PaintCare collection site for residents and businesses to dispose of latex and oil-based paint (2015).
- Continues to expand the list of materials collected.
- Offers a Very Small Quantity Generator (VSQG) collection program to businesses.

In 2017, Dakota County staff conducted a needs assessment for countywide maintenance facilities, including whether a future maintenance facility could include a second HHW drop off facility. Findings indicated The Recycling Zone services and facility use are not compatible to share a site with county maintenance facilities. An independent assessment will be conducted to determine near-term needs and plan for future growth in the county.

Planning for a second household hazardous waste site

In 2021, Dakota County received two million dollars (\$2,000,000) in state funding for Phase I design and property acquisition. Dakota County purchased property in Lakeville for the proposed new regional household hazardous waste and recycling drop-off facility. Dakota County and Scott County entered into a Joint Powers Agreement in 2024 for the design and construction of the new Recycling Zone Plus. Dakota County was not successful in requests to the Minnesota Legislature for eight million dollars (\$8,000,000) for Phase II of the project for facility construction for Capital Assistance Program (CAP) funding in 2020, 2023, or 2024, but will seek funding again in 2025. The project has been postponed until Phase II funding has been granted.



Appendix B: Management Plan Development

Dakota County initiated its Plan revision process in 2023 to prepare for the anticipated release of a new Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Metropolitan Solid Waste Management Policy Plan (Policy Plan). The planning process included three technical phases (research, draft Plan development, and Plan review and adoption), with comprehensive stakeholder engagement throughout.

The Plan was prepared by Dakota County Environmental Resources and Planning Department staff with assistance from the Dakota County Planning Commission. Because Dakota County transitioned to a County Manager system in 2014, the Dakota County Board itself performs the duties and exercises the powers required of a solid waste management advisory committee under Minn. Stat. § 473.803.

Dakota County Planning Commission (Commission): The County Board appoints two members from each County Commissioner district to the 14-member citizen advisory committee. The Commission is charged with reviewing environmental and natural resources proposals and making recommendations to the County Board. The Commission meets monthly and meetings are open to the public. The Commission was engaged on the Plan revision. On September 26, 2024, staff requested Commission recommendation to the County Board on submittal of the draft Plan to the MPCA for review and approval.

Dakota County Board of Commissioners (County Board): The County Board is a seven-member Board, elected by residents in each commissioner district to establish county policy and funding for services. Written updates and presentations were provided to the Board throughout the Plan development process. Board meetings were open to the public and were attended by representatives from the MPCA.

A. Research Phase

1. Studies

Dakota County conducted the following studies on waste management issues and barriers to inform the development of the Plan:

a. Residential Reuse Behavior (Dakota County – Problosky Research, 2023)

Description: Statistically significant residential survey of residents' reuse knowledge and behavior to understand perceived and actual barriers to reducing waste at home.

Summary of findings:

- The vast majority, 95 percent of residents, say that it is important to recycle at home.
- In the last year 92 percent of respondents recycled household items, 76 percent used a refillable container for water, and 71 percent used a reusable bag while shopping.
- The most common phrase for respondents to use when describing secondhand goods is “used,” but the most desirable term was “gently-used.”
- There is high interest in both donating and buying second-hand goods, and most (95 percent) are aware of a store near them that sells second-hand goods.
- The biggest motivation listed by respondents for purchasing second-hand goods was that the items are cheaper.
- For respondents who don't purchase second-hand goods the most significant reasons for not doing so are safety/hygiene concerns and lack of choice in second-hand goods.
- The most common goods to donate (in order) are clothing, footwear, books, and household goods and the items that respondents would be most comfortable receiving or buying (in order) are books, household goods, clothing, and bikes.



- Compared to other types of items asked about, respondents were more likely to be willing to use national online reselling sites or social media for clothes. Trends were very similar among different types of appliances and tools, with the majority preferring to use local online exchanges or garage sales.

b. Residential Organics Collection Options in Dakota County (Dakota County – SCS Engineers, 2024)

Description: Overview and analysis of the economics, environmental impacts, and potential diversion rates for residential curbside organics (food scraps) collection systems within the county and recommendations for the county to develop one or more of the options identified.

Summary of findings:

- Organized weekly curbside organics collection using a separate dedicated cart with organized every-other-week trash collection provides the overall best annual performance in terms of costs, food waste diversion, emissions reduction, road miles and collection trucks needed.
- Co-collecting organics with trash is not currently available to Dakota County, and use of the Recycling and Energy Center (REC) in Newport for sorting is reserved for waste from Ramsey and Washington counties. Co-collecting organics with trash in Dakota County would require significant investment in a new waste sortation capacity able to recover co-collected organics from durable compostable bags.
- Everyone pays for organics collection services, whether they participate in the service or not. This 2023 determination by the MPCA clarified that residents cannot be billed more to participate in recycling (including source separated organics materials) than residents who do not recycle (Minn. Stat. § 115A.93.3c).
- There are currently 38 curbside organics collections programs in Minnesota. Of these programs, 71 percent have separate cart collection and 52 percent are in an organized hauling market where the municipality manages, contracts and coordinates residential curbside collection.

c. Wood Waste Study (Dakota County Office of Performance and Analysis, 2024)

Description: Information about wood waste management in Dakota County

Summary of findings:

- The study documents the regulations related to wood waste management, the volume of wood waste from sources around the county, where the wood is going for disposal or reuse, and how the municipalities within Dakota County are currently handling wood waste.
- Recommendations include: (1) publish more information and resources for tree contractors and residents on Dakota County’s website, (2) as feasible, divert larger wood products to local wood reclamation retailers, and smaller pieces such as undyed mulch to garden centers, (3) consider expanded use of on-site biochar kilns and use of finished biochar, and (4) look into feasibility/appropriateness of possible new regulations, such as banning open burning by commercial entities and licensing certain wood waste management companies to help determine inventory and amounts managed.

d. Compost Utilization Study (Dakota County Office of Performance and Analysis, 2024)

Description: Information about compost utilization in Dakota County and the region

Summary of findings:

- The study documents compost utilization in landscape, transportation, and other projects, compost utilization within the TCMA, existing county and external municipal guidelines and policies, and best practices.
- Recommendations include: (1) collaborate with regional municipalities and the Minnesota Composting Council (MNCC) to develop guidance on the utilization of compost in earth works projects, (2) utilize soil testing to help determine which projects will benefit most from application of compost, (3) incorporate Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) Grade 2 compost in Dakota County earth works

projects, (4) model county policy on leading State and local standards, and (5) address financial and other resource barriers to compost application in county earth works projects.

County staff also gathered additional information on regional lending libraries, regional reuse organizations, food waste prevention policies by state, opportunities and barriers to expand reuse stores in Dakota County, commercial recycling in Hastings, biochar initiatives in Dakota County and statewide, and regional building materials reuse organizations, services, and grant programs.

2. Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement during the research phase of the Plan update focused on identification of solid waste management issues, barriers, and solutions, including the new strategy topics presented in the draft Policy Plan.

Round 1 of public engagement (September 2023 – mid-October 2023) included audience-specific online surveys (available in English, Spanish, Russian and Somali for residents), meetings with waste industry and public entities, and intercepts (staffed events and unstaffed interactive displays). Table 12 summarizes participation counts (green), engagement methods (pink) and outreach (orange) used for each stakeholder group.

Table 12: Round One Participation, Engagement Type, and Outreach Methods By Stakeholder Group

Audience	Number Participating	Online Survey	Intercepts	Meetings	Newsletters, Emails	Social Media	Project Webpage
Residents	897	◆	◆		◆	◆	◆
Businesses and Schools	15	◆			◆		◆
Public Entities	23	◆		◆	◆		◆
Waste Industry	11	◆		◆	◆		◆
Food Rescue	-	◆		Offered	◆		◆
Deconstruction	3	◆		Offered	◆		◆
Reuse	2	◆		Offered	◆		◆
Tree Waste	4	◆		Offered	◆		◆

Nearly 1,000 stakeholders collectively identified the following barriers and opportunities:

- More frequent and clearer information is needed to ensure that resources are not being landfilled and waste is managed in environmentally beneficial ways.
- Convenient and cost-effective approaches can help motivate increased reuse and recycling of non-traditional items (e.g., mattresses, building materials).
- There is interest in curbside organics collection, although concerns included odors, pests, and educational needs to prevent contamination.
- Greater manufacturer and producer responsibility is needed to make more sustainable products and packaging, that are repairable, reusable, and recyclable.
- Information and assistance is needed to increase sustainable management of reusable building materials (e.g., construction materials and fixtures).
- There is a widespread lack of knowledge on proper care of trees to prevent wood waste and management of wood waste from diseased trees.

Results of stakeholder input were published on the county’s website and shared with stakeholders, the Planning Commission, the County Board, and used to develop potential strategies.

B. Draft Plan Development Phase

Policy Plan requirements and comprehensive stakeholder engagement informed selection of strategies.

1. Strategy Selection

The Policy Plan format allowed TCMA counties to select from a list of required and optional strategies. All 32 Policy Plan required strategies are included in this Plan. The 12 selected Policy Plan optional strategies in the county’s draft plan total 82 points, exceeding the required 75-point minimum. Optional strategies were selected that 1) align with the existing 2018-2038 Dakota County Solid Waste Management Plan implementation efforts (i.e., county initiatives currently ongoing) or 2) align with public findings from stakeholder engagement (Fall 2023, Spring 2024).

2. Stakeholder Engagement

Round 2 of public engagement (April 1 - 21, 2024) collected feedback on potential waste management strategies selected from the Policy Plan and included online (non-scientific) surveys for residents, businesses, and schools (in English and Spanish), two intercept events with Latino residents to collect survey responses in person, one in-person focus group with Latino residents, meetings with waste industry and public entities. Stakeholders were asked about their support for specific strategies to help prioritize strategy selection and about preferences and potential resource needs that could facilitate successful strategy implementation.

Table 13: Round Two Participation and Engagement Methods by Stakeholder Group

Audience	Number of Participants	Online Survey	Intercepts	Meetings/ Focus Group
Residents	1,326	Yes	Yes	Yes
Businesses and Schools	24	Yes	-	-
Public Entities	19	-	-	Yes
Waste Industry	9	-	-	Yes

More than 1,300 stakeholders provided input:

Residents rated the following actions as moderately to very helpful:

- More frequent education on recycling, organics (food scrap) collection, and reuse.
- Hauler feedback when materials are sorted incorrectly.
- Organics curbside collection available within three years, collected with weekly trash pickup.
- Curbside collection of reusable items, and more reuse drop-off options.
- Information about funding for diseased tree removals; options for tree waste drop-off; information on tree disease prevention.

Businesses and schools rated the following actions as moderately to very helpful:

- Frequent education on recycling, organics collection, and reuse options.
- Hauler feedback when materials are sorted incorrectly.
- Funding and technical assistance for recycling, food scrap management, and waste reduction and reuse; training for employees and tenants.

Municipalities identified actions to facilitate strategy implementation:

- Frequent education on food scrap collection, reuse, and trees waste.
- Technical assistance and information to help reduce waste; funding for waste reduction and equipment/infrastructure such as dishwashers and reusable service ware.
- Regarding curbside organics collection, opt-in resident participation for curbside organics collection with educational messaging focused on “food scraps;” minimize the number of organics trucks on the roads; expanded drop sites to provide multifamily residents options; and options to minimize costs on low-income residents.

- Promote tree care options; consider more disposal options for tree waste.
- Information about vendors available to reuse building materials and assistance for event/swap costs.

Waste Industry representatives identified actions to facilitate strategy implementation:

- More education on proper disposal of food scraps, tree waste, recyclable materials, and hazardous waste, especially lithium-ion batteries as a fire hazard.
- Provide pre-curbside organics program resident notification, promote opt-in participation, and provide educational messaging focused on “food scraps;” maintain organics drop-off sites; and some identified consideration of organized collection for more efficient and cost-effective organics curbside collection.
- More discussion in needed on approaches to implement the MPCA’s required pre-processing and disposal facilities; residents and businesses need to be responsible for improved sorting of their recyclables.

Stakeholder input was used to further refine potential strategies and their implementation. Findings were published on the county’s website and shared with stakeholders and the County Board.

An update on the Plan revision was presented at the May 25, 2024, Dakota County Managers/Administrators meeting to gather input from municipal leadership for further refinement on strategies and their implementation.

C. Plan Review and Adoption Phase

The draft Plan was presented to the Dakota County Physical Development Committee of the Whole on July 23, 2024, with a recommendation for a 21-day public review and comment period.

The public review and comment period was conducted from August 1 through August 21, 2024. Residents, businesses, schools, and waste industry representatives were invited to comment by email at wasteless@co.dakota.mn.us, mail or in person. Comments were requested using a variety of promotions, including:

- County website
- Press release
- E-newsletters (Residential, Haulers, Businesses, Parks, Recycling Ambassadors, Schools, Multifamily, Fix-it Clinic, and Organics Drop Sites)
- Social media platforms
- Emails to haulers and facilities, city administrators and recycling staff, rural city and township contacts, reuse organizations, food rescue organizations, tree waste organizations, and deconstruction organizations.

Staff also invited public comment at a display table in the Natural Resources building at the Dakota County Fair on August 9 and 10, 2024. Several dozen visitors stopped to talk about the Plan update and waste-related topics.

Twenty-two individuals representing the viewpoints of residents, municipalities, schools, and waste industry submitted written comments on the draft Plan. County staff considered all public comments and provided recommended revisions to the County Planning Commission on September 26, 2024, and the Dakota County Physical Development Committee of the Whole in September on October 22, 2024, with a recommendation for to submit the Plan to the MPCA for agency review and approval. The Plan was submitted to the MPCA on October 29, 2024, and the MPCA approved Dakota County’s Plan on August 22, 2025.

The County Board adopted the MPCA-approved Plan on September 23, 2025, Resolution No. 25-456. See Appendix G for the full resolution.

Appendix C: Environmental Justice: Review And Framework for Plan Implementation

A. Background

The Policy Plan requires counties to conduct an environmental justice review in developing their waste plans. The MPCA defines environmental justice as “the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.”

The MPCA Policy Plan identifies potentially affected communities in areas of concern for environmental justice. This is defined by the MPCA as census tracts using data from the U.S. Census and American Community Survey and meet one or both demographic criteria. These two criteria are defined as:

- Total population of people of color greater than 40%
- At least 35% of people reported income less than 200% of the federal poverty level

B. Engagement During Plan Development

The county conducted an extensive stakeholder engagement process during the development of this Plan, including multi-lingual online surveys, phone surveys, workshops, and meetings. Engaging people through a variety of formats created better opportunities for stakeholders of all backgrounds to provide feedback on strategies during two rounds of public engagement (Fall 2023 and Spring 2024). The county will continue inclusive engagement efforts for strategy implementation.

Since Spanish is the most spoken language other than English in the county, with over 8,700 households speaking Spanish as their primary language and 2,238 of those households having limited English-speaking members, the county sought to engage and solicit feedback from Hispanic and Latino residents and Hispanic and Latino-owned or managed businesses. The county hired a communications and engagement consulting company to provide culturally relevant and linguistically appropriate engagement to receive feedback on the strategies. The consultant identified areas with the highest concentration of Hispanic and Latino residents in Dakota County as specific areas for engagement. Methods to engage this audience included online (non-scientific) surveys for residents, businesses, and schools, in English and Spanish, promoted through the following:

- County social media posts in Spanish.
- Paid print and online ads in Spanish (La Voz) and a paid online ad in Spanish (La Prensa).
- Utility bill inserts in English and Spanish were mailed to 3,204 households in Apple Valley to areas with high populations of Spanish speaking residents.
- Flyers in Spanish distributed at Open Door mobile food pantry event in South St. Paul.
- In-person intercepts (staffed information tables at existing events and venues) with Latino residents.

One in-person focus group was held with Latino residents of a mobile home community to gather feedback on how strategies in the Policy Plan could work in Dakota County and to identify resources needed for successful implementation.

C. Plan Implementation

For county Plan focus, the MPCA Policy Plan identified waste-related facilities in areas of concerns for environmental justice, based on potentially affected communities defined by the MPCA as census tracts using data from the U.S. Census and American Community Survey and meet one or both demographic criteria. These two criteria are defined as:

- Total population of people of color greater than 40%



- At least 35% of people reported income less than 200% of the federal poverty level

The MPCA chose these two criteria because “research indicates that people of color and low-income people are disproportionately exposed to pollution, and bear disproportionate health impacts from pollution, regardless of other population characteristics.”

The priority of the Plan is to ensure the proper management of waste to protect human health and the environment. The Plan also supports reducing waste and increasing recycling. The strategies in the Plan are intended to reduce the environmental impacts associated with waste.

- 1. Impact and Assessment:** Dakota County is home to waste management facilities. Implementing the strategies identified in the Plan will divert waste from landfills to recycling and organics recovery facilities. When considering license renewals or new license applications in areas of concern, the county will:
 - Identify facility types that warrant additional actions based on potential for adverse effects.
 - Increase civic engagement to ensure that everyone can provide comment, particularly in cases when public notice is required.
- 2. Impact review.** Dakota County will continue to license facilities to minimize impacts to the environment and human health. Dakota County does not exercise land use authority outside the shoreland/floodplain area but will encourage municipal partners to site facilities in locations that minimize impacts to the environment and human health.
- 3. Engagement.** Dakota County’s Solid Waste Management Plan policy, “Strive for just treatment, meaningful involvement, and equitable implementation of the Plan for all community members provides direction for an intentional and equitable approach as Plan strategies are implemented. The goal is an environment where all people enjoy the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards and equal access to decision-making for a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work. This approach follows a public health model of prevention to protect people, their communities and the natural environment.

The county will build on the inclusive engagement efforts conducted during Plan development for strategy implementation. As this Plan is implemented and programs, ordinances, and efforts are initiated, the county will work to be intentional about engaging all populations, including stakeholders living or working in MPCA-identified areas of concern. Several strategies in the Plan would directly benefit communities in areas of concern for environmental justice. For example, the Plan includes strategies to provide resources to improve multi-unit dwelling recycling, including for hard-to-recycle items like mattress, and access to organics recovery through expansion of strategic organics drop sites. These efforts can lead to reductions in illegal dumping, a concern sometimes in lower income communities. Additionally, the Plan includes a strategy to implement curbside organics collection with tactics to provide resources to remove barriers for residents to successfully participate in the program, including providing education in a variety of methods to be inclusive of all residents. The county will continue inclusive engagement efforts for effective strategy implementation.



Appendix D: Performance and Accountability

A. Evaluating Progress

Dakota County is committed to identifying performance measures to monitor and evaluate progress on strategies identified in the Plan. These metrics apply to all aspects of the solid waste management system described throughout this Plan. Performance measures are important to ensure ongoing program improvement and to evaluate progress in meeting Plan objectives. More detailed progress measures will also be specified in the county's annual work plans, implementation projects, and in ongoing process improvement efforts.

Dakota County is accountable to the MPCA for Plan development and advancement, but all stakeholders – including all levels of government, waste generators, and operators of the waste management system – are expected to participate and have accountability in implementing this Plan. Dakota County will continue to monitor compliance of regulated waste generators and the waste industry to measure Plan progress.

The MPCA's Policy Plan acknowledges that the complexity of the TCMA solid waste system makes it difficult to measure how MSW is managed according to the system objectives. Some data is more verifiable, such as the waste amounts delivered to waste facilities, because material is weighed, and records are kept. Other data is not easily measured, such as the amount of material recycled by commercial establishments. Statute requires the MPCA to evaluate SCORE data collection and management and to make recommendations to the Legislature for its improvement. Continued evaluations will improve the reliability of measurement tools used to assess progress in attaining the Policy Plan's TCMA objectives.

B. County Reporting Requirements

Progress updates will be submitted to the MPCA through annual reports required by State law. Counties share data to account for waste that crosses county lines and also obtain data for waste that is sent outside of the region or state to ensure that data is as complete as possible. Reports summarize trends, project and program outcomes, and activities over the course of the previous year, including relevant data to identify progress. Annual reports submitted to the MPCA include:

- **SCORE Report/Survey** is an annual report that gathers qualitative and quantitative on recycling rates, waste reduction efforts, waste management data and practices, finance, and administration. The county will submit the report by the required deadline each year.
- **Certification Report** is an annual solid waste resource recovery and land disposal report. The MPCA reviews the report for consistency with the requirements of Minn. Stat. § 473.848 and the Policy Plan. The county will annually submit the report by the required deadline each year.
- **Local Recycling Development Grant (LRDG) Report** is an accounting to the MPCA of how LRDG funds were used in county programs and efforts. The county will submit the report by the required deadline each year.
- **Household Hazardous Waste Report** provides the MPCA with data on the amount and type of HHW collected during the previous year. Financial data and the number of county and out-of-county households served are reported. The county will submit the report by the required deadline each year.
- **Annual Report** provides the MPCA with a progress report on Plan implementation, including timelines for implementation and partners involved. Information submitted includes work and activities completed and priorities planned for the following year. The county will submit the report annually by the required deadline.

C. County Oversight of the Private Sector, Municipalities, and Program Partners

The solid waste management system serving Dakota County is comprised of both public- and private-sector services. State law includes a preference for private-sector ownership and operation of solid waste facilities (Minn. Stat. §§ 473.803 and 115A.46). Therefore, the private sector (both public and not-for-profit



organizations) plays a critical role in carrying out solid waste functions within the county and directly influences the ability of the county to achieve Policy Plan objectives and meet statutory requirements.

Minn. Stat. § 473.803 indicates:

A county may include in its solid waste management master plan and in its plan for county land disposal abatement a determination that the private sector will achieve, either in part or in whole, the goals and requirements of sections § 473.149 and § 473.803, as long as the county:

(1) retains active oversight over the efforts of the private sector and monitors performance to ensure compliance with the law and the goals and standards in the metropolitan policy plan and the county master plan;

(2) continues to meet its responsibilities under the law for ensuring proper waste management, including, at a minimum, enforcing waste management law, providing waste education, promoting waste reduction, and providing its residents the opportunity to recycle waste materials; and

(3) continues to provide all required reports on the county's progress in meeting the waste management goals and standards of this chapter and chapter 115A.

The tools Dakota County uses to hold the private sector, municipalities, and program partners accountable include:

1. **Regulation** – through assuring compliance with county ordinances and, as appropriate, state laws that relate to solid waste management.
2. **Monitoring and reporting** – by gathering information from entities to monitor actions related to the solid waste system and Plan implementation.
3. **Contracts/Agreements** – through assuring compliance with voluntary agreements entered into between Dakota County and other entities.

The county implements oversight of the private sector providing waste management services, municipalities implementing waste abatement programs, and program partners receiving funding or services to implement projects through the following:

- **Solid waste facilities: license and reporting requirements.** All landfills, transfer stations, yard waste, and organics management facilities provide data on the amounts and types of waste they receive as part of their annual reports to the county. All waste management facilities in Dakota County are privately-owned. Through regulation and reporting requirements, facilities are accountable.
 - The county establishes and collects host fees from MSW landfills and to support landfill abatement programs.
 - Dakota County Ordinance No. 110 requires licensing and reporting for all landfills, recycling facilities, special waste storage facilities, energy recovery facilities, transfer stations, infectious waste facilities, and compost facilities. It also requires all commercial generators to report recycling and municipal solid waste data.
 - All solid waste facilities are licensed to monitor compliance with environmental and public health requirements. Landfills, recycling facilities, and compost facilities are inspected for compliance. The county has authority to issue penalties for non-compliance.
 - Landfills and transfer stations report waste sources by municipality. Materials recovery facilities (for recyclables) report the amount of incoming waste and how much waste is separated for recycling. The county will update facility report forms, as necessary, to ensure relevant and accurate data is submitted.

Standard for approval of licenses and reports: The county will approve solid waste facility licenses and reports if they meet Dakota County Ordinance No. 110 requirements.



Procedures:

- **Required License and Report:** The county will provide a license application and report forms and notify regulated facilities of license and reporting obligations and submittal deadlines, as specified in Dakota County Ordinance No. 110. The county provides the forms and instructions for completion.
- **County Review and Approval:** The county will review and approve applications and reports if they are determined to be accurate and meet Dakota County Ordinance No. 110 requirements. If applications or report forms are incomplete or inaccurate, the county will work with the facility on a complete submittal or can deny them.

- **Waste hauler license and reporting requirements:** Haulers must report the amount of residential and commercial recyclables hauled and the number of accounts that they serve, by city. Haulers are accountable to Plan objectives through Dakota County Ordinance No. 110 and licensing. Dakota County Ordinance No. 110 establishes standards for collection and transportation of solid waste and recyclable materials in the county. Standards include requirements for licensing, reporting, providing the opportunity to recycle, record keeping, collection fee structure, equipment and operations requirements, standardized customer education, standardized billing, and a prohibition for mixing MSW and source-separated recyclables. The county enforces Dakota County Ordinance No. 110 by licensing MSW haulers. The license requirement includes a checklist to report which recyclable materials each hauler accepts and the frequency of collection. The county provides the application form and instructions for completeness that outline the information and communicates to waste haulers on the required submittal dates. In addition, licensed haulers are required to report information about collection and processing of recyclable materials. Effective 2017, haulers report residential and commercial waste collection data directly to the MPCA. The county will work with the MPCA to ensure accurate data is submitted. In addition, Dakota County Ordinance No. 110 has long-required haulers to submit collection data to the county. County forms require the number of accounts per city and total tons collected by material. The residential form also collects the number of multifamily accounts. The county will monitor the ongoing need for haulers to continue to submit data directly to the county given the change in the MPCA collection of hauler data. Licensing and reporting holds haulers accountable for Plan objectives to implement recycling programs.

Standard for approval of licenses and reports: The county will approve hazardous waste hauler licenses and reports if they meet Dakota County Ordinance No. 110 and regional hauler licensing requirements.

Procedures:

- **Required License and Report:** The county will collaborate with regional partners, as appropriate, to annually develop a license application and notify haulers of license and license obligations specified in Dakota Ordinance No. 110. The County will notify haulers of reporting obligations specified in Dakota County Ordinance No. 110 and will collaborate with the state to compare state and county data submitted by haulers. Application and report forms outline information and data that is required to be submitted.
- **County Review and Approval:** The County will review and approve applications and reports if they are determined to be accurate. If applications or forms are incomplete or inaccurate, the County will work with the hauler to complete an accurate submittal or can deny the application/reports.

- **Hazardous waste generators and facilities: license and reporting requirements:** Regulated generators and facilities report the amount of waste generated and managed, sorted by hazard category, and waste type. Private-sector generators are accountable to Plan objectives based on their status as hazardous waste generators. Hazardous waste generators are accountable through Ordinance 111 which establishes standards based on generator size for training, licensing, generating, storing, processing, and managing hazardous waste in Dakota County. The County licenses, inspects, and trains hazardous waste generators and facilities. Licensing is renewed annually. Inspection and training frequency depends on size. Large and



small generators are inspected every year, very small quantity generators every two years, and minimal quantity generators every five years. Inspections and training requirements hold private-sector hazardous waste generators accountable for meeting Plan objectives for proper hazardous waste management.

Standard for approval of licenses and reports: The County will approve hazardous waste generator and facility licenses and reports if they meet Ordinance 111 requirements.

Procedures:

- **Required License and Report:** The County will annually provide a license application and report forms and notify generators and facilities of license and reporting obligations and submittal deadlines, as specified in Ordinance 111. Forms outline information and data that is required to be submitted.
- **County Review and Approval:** The County will review and approve applications and reports if they are determined to be accurate. If applications or forms are incomplete or inaccurate, the County will work with the generator or facility to complete an accurate submittal or can deny the application/reports.

- **Solid waste generators: reporting requirements:** Regulated commercial generators (e.g., businesses) report the amount of waste generated and managed and waste type. Commercial solid waste generators are accountable through Dakota County Ordinance No. 110 which establishes standards for reporting and implementing recycling best practices (i.e., co-locating containers, collecting designated recyclables, labeling containers with standardized labels, training employees) and larger generators of organics must collect back-of-house food scraps following best practices. The County inspects commercial solid waste generators, prioritizing those that generate large volumes of food scraps.

Standard for approval of licenses and reports: The County will approve commercial solid waste generator reports if they meet Dakota County Ordinance No. 110 requirements.

Procedures:

- **Required License and Report:** The County will annually provide a report form and notify generators of reporting obligations and submittal deadlines, as specified in Dakota County Ordinance No. 110. Forms outline information and data that is required to be submitted.
- **County Review and Approval:** The County will review and approve reports if they are determined to be accurate. If forms are incomplete or inaccurate, the County will work with the generator to complete an accurate submittal or can deny the report.

- **Municipalities: reporting requirements**

- a. **Community Waste Abatement Grant Program.** Municipalities in suburban areas report progress toward achieving waste abatement objectives and Plan requirements, in accordance with Community Waste Abatement Grant Program JPAs. Dakota County Ordinance No. 110 requires all municipalities to have a solid waste abatement program in compliance with the Plan.

Community Waste Abatement Grant Program dollars are distributed to each suburban city based on annual work plans. To receive funds, suburban municipalities annually submit an application, work plan, and budget. Funds must be used for residential recycling programs, education and outreach, and priority issues indicated in the JPAs. Municipalities must submit a reports to the County with qualitative and quantitative measurements resulting from work plan projects and programs. Work plans focus on meeting several Plan objectives: outreach and education, recycling and other waste abatement activities. The Annual Report is used to measure performance. If a municipality fails to meet Dakota



County Ordinance No. 110 or JPA requirements the County can implement a program on the municipality's behalf, request the return of funds, or both.

An excerpt of Dakota County Ordinance No. 110 for a municipal solid waste abatement program is below:

16.01 MUNICIPALITY SOLID WASTE ABATEMENT PROGRAM.

- A. *Each municipality shall have a solid waste abatement program. Each municipality's program must:*
 1. *Be consistent with the County Solid Waste Master Plan; and*
 2. *Ensure the opportunity to recycle exists for all residents and commercial generators.*
 3. *Deliver solid waste abatement messaging as determined by the Department.*
 4. *Support the implementation of the County Solid Waste Master Plan.*
- B. *By January 1, 2021, each municipality with a population over 10,000 shall enact or modify and enforce an ordinance that must:*
 1. *Be consistent with and no less restrictive than this ordinance.*
 2. *Require property owners of multi-unit residential buildings to comply with section 16.03, except for 16.03 (A) (5).*
 3. *Require event sponsors, owners and operators of large event venues with organics to comply with section 16.05.*
- C. *If a municipality does not maintain a solid waste abatement program, the county may implement a solid waste abatement program in that municipality consistent with the county's solid waste master plan and this ordinance.*
- D. *The county may recover its costs for developing, implementing, and operating a solid waste abatement program including, but not limited to, administrative, monitoring and public education costs, from any municipality or group of municipalities, which does not maintain a solid waste abatement program. Costs may be pursued through a service charge established pursuant to Minn. Stat. §400.08 or through such other means deemed appropriate by the county board.*
- E. *Each municipality shall submit a completed annual report to the department on a form prescribed by the department by February 15 of the following year. Failure to submit a report shall be construed by the department as a failure on the part of the municipality to have a solid waste abatement program and shall be subject to sections 16.01(C) and 16.01(D).*

Standard for approval of funding and annual report: The County will approve the annual funding if grant agreement and Dakota County Ordinance No. 110 requirements are met, or if municipalities demonstrate progress toward grant agreement objectives, as documented in the required Final Report.

Procedures:

- **Required Report:** The County will annually provide a Final Report and notify municipalities of reporting obligations and reporting submittal deadlines, as outlined in the grant agreement. Forms will outline information and data that is required to be submitted.
- **County Review and Approval:** The County will review the Final Report to determine if the municipality has met grant agreement requirements. If the municipality fails to meet requirements, the County will notify the municipality and work with them to identify action steps to achieve grant agreement requirements. If the municipality continues to fail to make adequate progress, County



staff will discuss options with the municipality and the County Board for remedial actions that include implementing the program on behalf of the community, having the municipality return funding to the County, or both.

- b. Rural Solid Waste Abatement Grant Program.** The County provides funding to interested rural townships and the rural cities to implement local waste abatement projects and programs consistent with this Plan. Interested municipalities must enter into a grant agreement/contract with the county for funding.

Standards for approval of contracts: The Guidelines establish eligible items and funding amounts for activities (e.g., collections, resident education). The County will approve grant funding in application's if projects meet eligible activities and funding amounts identified in Guidelines.

Procedures:

- **Required Program Reports:** The contract requires that participating municipalities submit an annual application. Grant Guidelines establish eligible activities and funding. Funding is performance-based and uses a reimbursable model. Reimbursement must demonstrate proof of purchase and payment of County-approved items.
 - **County Review and Approval:** The County will review and approve the program forms to determine if they meet Guidelines and contract obligations. If they do not, and until any issues are resolved, the County will not issue reimbursement for project items.
- **School Waste Prevention and Recycling Grant Program: reporting requirements:** The County requires schools to enter into a grant agreement/contract with the County to participate in program to establish program roles and expectations. The agreement supports Plan goals to implement and document results of waste reduction and improved recycling (including organics recovery) actions.

Standards for approval of contracts: The contract establishes program eligibility and requirements to use County technical assistance to ensure schools follow best management practices (e.g., paired, labeled, color-coded bins, green teams, update internal policies) and measure waste diversion progress.

Procedures:

For the contract to be approved by the County for participation in the program, the school must agree to comply with agreement obligations. The County works closely with school participants to ensure program expectations are achieved. If they are not, the County can remove any waste management system infrastructure (e.g., recycling bins) provided by the County.

- **Multifamily Recycling Program: reporting requirements:** The County requires multifamily properties to enter into a contract with the County to participate in the Multifamily Recycling Program. The program provides recycling containers and other recycling and waste reduction equipment up to \$10,000 in value per location, along with free on-site technical assistance, labels, signage, and education for residents and staff. Program guidelines and contract language support Plan goals to implement and document results of recycling improvements. Guidelines establish funding eligibility, details on how the funding will be used, reporting requirements, and project plans.

Standards for approval of contracts and program report forms: For contracts to be approved by the County, waste abatement activities identified in the required County-developed application must be consistent with the program's guidelines and contract. Once the contract is approved for program



participation, program staff assist the multifamily property to ensure successful implementation of the contract activities.

Procedures:

- **Required Program Reports:** The contract requires that participating multifamily properties complete a final report that demonstrates fulfillment of the project plans outlined in the application and contract.
- **County Review and Approval:** The County will review and approve the program forms to determine if they meet program guidelines and contract obligations.

Agreements/contracts are used with the private sector to provide incentives to support Plan goals and establish mechanisms for reporting:

- **Business Recycling Incentive Program: reporting requirements:** The County requires businesses and organizations to enter into a contract with the County to participate in the Business Recycling Incentive Program. The program provides up to \$10,000 for eligible businesses subject for implementation of eligible activities identified in program guidelines. Program guidelines and contract language support Plan goals to implement and document results of waste reduction and improved recycling (including organics recovery). Guidelines establish funding eligibility, details on how the funding will be used, reporting requirements (e.g., Application, Baseline Report, Final Report), and requirements to use County technical assistance to ensure businesses follow best management practices (e.g., use standardized color-coded bins and labels). The County will reimburse the business for County-approved items identified in the contract, following proof of payment by the business.

Standards for approval of contracts and program report forms: For contracts and reports to be approved by the County, waste abatement activities identified in the required County-developed Application must be consistent with the program’s Guidelines and Contract. Once the contract is approved for program participation, the business is required to submit reports to demonstrate diversion improvements in their waste management program.

Procedures:

- **Required Program Reports:** The contract requires that participating businesses complete a Baseline and Final Report and identifies the submittal timeline and report content requirements. Guidelines establish funding eligibility, details on how the funding will be used, reporting requirements, and project plans. Forms outline information and data that is required to be submitted. Baseline Reports require reporting on quantitative (pre-program trash and recycling volumes at the businesses) and qualitative measures (general awareness of recycling). The Final Report must be submitted within 12 months of program participation (when project is complete). In addition, for payment of County funds for items identified in the contract, the businesses must submit a Reimbursement Form that demonstrates proof of purchase and payment of County-approved items.
- **County Review and Approval:** The County will review and approve the program forms to determine if they meet Guidelines and contract obligations. If they do not, and until any issues are resolved, the County will not approve reports and will not issue reimbursement for project items purchased by the business.

The County will individually, and with state and regional partners, routinely evaluate aforementioned forms and related measurement requirements. The County will revise forms as necessary to ensure data is accurate and relevant and assist in reporting of Plan implementation.

Appendix E: Plan Strategies and Projected Implementation Timing

The tables below show the Plan strategies, planned implementation schedule and interested parties that may have a role to support strategy implementation. Projected timing is provided for each required and selected optional strategy from the Policy Plan and for each continuing county strategy. Strategy implementation timelines align with the general timelines identified in the Policy Plan.

Individual implementation and prioritization of strategies are subject to County Board approval through annual budgeting and work planning processes.

Table 14: Dakota County Solid Waste Management Plan Strategies and Projected Implementation Timing

Improving the Reliability of the Data	Policy Plan #	Continue	Expand	New	Projected Timing	Interested Parties
Required Strategies						
1. Increase compliance with Hauler reporting per Minn. Stat. § 115A.93.	1	x			Ongoing	Haulers, industry, county staff
2. Provide required county reporting.	2	x			Ongoing	County staff
Selected Optional Strategies (7 points)						
3. Improve recycling data collection at businesses within the county. (7 points)	4				Ongoing	County staff, businesses
Education and Regional Planning	Policy Plan #	Continue	Expand	New	Projected Timing	Interested Parties
Required Strategies						
4. Participate in an annual joint commissioner/staff meeting on solid waste.	9			x	Annually	County staff and board
5. Commit to standardized outreach and education.	10	x			Ongoing	County staff, MRFs, residents
6. Engage in efficient and value-added infrastructure planning.	11	x			Ongoing	County staff, SW facility operators
7. Develop plans for large facility closures to reduce landfill reliance.	12			x	2029	County staff, SW facility operators
8. Participate with the Product Stewardship Committee under the Solid Waste Administrators Association (SWAA).	60	x			Ongoing	County staff
Continuing County Strategies						
9. Provide messages and education programs to all audiences using communication methods most effective for the intended audience.		x			Ongoing	County staff

Waste Reduction and Reuse	Policy Plan #	Continue	Expand	New	Projected Timing	Interested Parties
Required Strategies						
10. Provide grants for or access to software that can track food waste.	13		x		2027	County staff, restaurants, cafeterias
11. Establish partnerships between food rescue organizations and restaurants/stores to increase food rescue.	14		x		2026	County staff, food rescue orgs, restaurants, grocery stores
12. Launch bi-annual sustainable consumption challenges for residents.	15		x		2025	County staff, residents
13. Implement a formal county sustainable purchasing policy using MPCA guidance.	16	x			Ongoing	County staff, vendors
14. Participate in Responsible Public Purchasing Council meetings.	17	x			Ongoing	County staff, MPCA
15. Offer grants or rebates for organizations to transition to reusable food and beverage service ware.	19		x		Ongoing	County staff, restaurants, organizations serving food
16. Offer grants for waste reduction, reuse, and repair.	20		x		2026	County staff, repair and reuse businesses
17. Implement a green meeting policy.	21	x			Ongoing	County staff
Selected Optional Strategies (27 points total)						
18. Work with health inspectors to educate restaurants and other establishments that have excess prepared food to donate. (7 points)	18			x	2025	County staff, MN Department of Health, restaurants and other food producers
19. Join and/or actively participate in a reuse network, like Reuse Minnesota, to provide county and city staff with learning opportunities to broaden their reuse expertise. (6 points)	24	x			Ongoing	County staff
20. Establish a Repair Ambassador program, like the Recycler/Composters (RCAs) Ambassador programs. (7 points)	25	x			Ongoing	County staff, residents
21. Establish a reuse location for residential drop-off and pick-up. (7 points)	26	x			Ongoing	County staff, residents
Continuing County Strategies						
22. Implement residential waste reduction and reuse programs and opportunities.		x			Ongoing	County staff, residents
23. Implement municipal, school and commercial waste reduction and reuse programs and opportunities.		x			Ongoing	County staff, municipalities, schools, businesses

Recycling and Organics Management Strategies with Collection Best Practices	Policy Plan #	Continue	Expand	New	Projected Timing	Interested Parties
Required Strategies						
24. Collect recyclables, organics and trash on the same day.	30			x	2026	County staff, residents, haulers
25. Recruit a minimum of 12 commercial businesses a year to recycle at least three materials from their operations and promote the environmental and resource benefits.	35	x			Ongoing	County staff, businesses
26. Establish mandatory pre-processing of waste at resource recovery facilities and landfills by 2030.	36			x	By 2030	Haulers, landfill operators, transfer station operators
27. Provide assistance to multi-family properties to improve recycling.	37	x			Ongoing	County staff, property managers
28. Make residential curbside organics collection available in cities with a population greater than 5,000 by 2030.	40			x	By 2030	County staff, residents, haulers
29. Expand backyard composting outreach and resources for residents.	41		x		Ongoing	County staff, residents
30. Require management of organics from large commercial food generators by 2033.	42	x			Ongoing	County staff, commercial food generators
31. Require food-derived compost in county construction and landscaping projects.	55		x		2028	County staff, industry
Selected Optional Strategies (14 points)						
32. Collect recycling weekly by 2030. (7 points)	31	x			Ongoing	County staff, residents, haulers
33. Establish additional organics recycling drop off sites. (7 points)	43		x		Ongoing	County staff, residents
Continuing County Strategies						
34. Improve the consistency and accountability of waste materials collection.		x			Ongoing	County staff, waste industry, municipalities
35. Support the collection of household items that are challenging to recycle.		x			Ongoing	County staff, waste industry, municipalities
36. Ensure the opportunity to recycle.		x			Ongoing	County staff
37. Provide support to schools to improve recycling in their operations through the school recycling program.		x			Ongoing	County staff, schools
38. Implement recycling and organics diversion at venues.		x			Ongoing	County staff, municipalities, event coordinators
39. Provide organics recovery/diversion opportunities in County operations, including in public and employee areas.		x			Ongoing	County staff

Waste-to-Energy	Policy Plan #	Continue	Expand	New	Projected Timing	Interested Parties
Required Strategies						
40. Counties must continue to support the implementation of Minn. Stat. § 473.848 Restriction on Disposal.	58	x			Ongoing	County staff, industry, facility operators
Landfilling	Policy Plan #	Continue	Expand	New	Projected Timing	Interested Parties
Required Strategies						
41. Require waste composition study at least once every five years at all landfills that are located within your county.	3	X			2029	Landfill operators
Continuing County Strategies						
42. Regulate solid waste generators, haulers, facilities, generators to achieve compliance and protect public health and the environment, in accordance with County Ordinances.		x			Ongoing	County staff, waste generators, industry and facility operators
43. Regulate hazardous waste generators and facilities to protect public health and the environment, in accordance with County Ordinances.		x			Ongoing	County staff, generators
44. Provide opportunities to recycle and properly manage non-MSW that is banned from disposal.		x			Ongoing	County staff, residents
45. Regulate non-MSW haulers and facilities in accordance with County Ordinance.		x			Ongoing	County staff, haulers, facility operators
Household Hazardous Waste and Toxicity Reduction	Policy Plan #	Continue	Expand	New	Projected Timing	Interested Parties
Required Strategies						
46. Encourage retailers to increase consumer awareness of responsible end-of-life handling for products containing lithium-ion batteries.	61		x		2026	County staff, retail store operators
47. Continue participation in the reciprocal use agreement for HHW collection sites.	62	x			Ongoing	County staff, metro counties
48. Partner with cities to increase participation in HHW collection.	63		x		Ongoing	County staff, municipalities

Household Hazardous Waste and Toxicity Reduction	Policy Plan #	Continue	Expand	New	Projected Timing	Interested Parties
Selected Optional Strategies (9 points)						
49. In partnership with Scott County, increase drop off opportunities for problem materials, hazardous waste management (HHW) and hazardous waste at a second permanent county facility by 2027. (9 points)	Alternative to 64		x		By 2029	MN Legislature, Dakota and Scott counties, residents
Continuing County Strategies						
50. Continue to provide year-round drop-off site (e.g., The Recycling Zone) to collect problem materials and hazardous and household hazardous waste from residents.		x			Ongoing	County staff, residents
Sustainable Building and Deconstruction	Policy Plan #	Continue	Expand	New	Projected Timing	Interested Parties
Required Strategies						
51. Implement the use of a Building Material Management Plan.	65		x		Ongoing	County staff, county contractors
Selected Optional Strategies (24 points)						
52. Host a building material collection event or swap. (8 points)	67			x	2027	County staff, residents, municipalities
53. Provide deconstruction training. (8 points)	69			x	2027	County staff, builders and contractors
Wood Waste	Policy Plan #	Continue	Expand	New	Projected Timing	Interested Parties
Required Strategies						
54. Develop plans to prevent and manage wood waste in each county and throughout the region.	45			x	2025	County staff, yard waste processors, municipalities, tree care companies
55. Promote existing programs that use EAB-affected wood for furniture, home goods, flooring and other purposes.	46			x	2026	County staff, local artisans and producers of wood products
56. Composting and mulching operations must continue to be supported.	47	x			Through 2032	County staff, composting and mulching operators
Selected Optional Strategies (9 points)						
57. Expand composting and mulching capacity beyond existing markets. (5 points)	52		x		2027	County staff, industry

Cost and Finance	Policy Plan #	Continue	Expand	New	Projected Timing	Interested Parties
Selected Optional Strategies (4 points)						
58. Implement additional fees to better account for the externalities of land disposal. (4 points)	59		x		Ongoing	County staff, industry
Continuing County Strategies						
59. Collect and manage waste fees to implement waste management programs.		x			Ongoing	County staff, industry, generators
60. Provide performance-based grant funding and resources to municipalities to implement landfill abatement programs within their operations and in the community.		x			Ongoing	County staff, municipalities
61. Institute funding incentives to divert waste from landfill disposal.		x			Ongoing	County staff, generators, industry
62. Implement long-term revenue sources for landfill abatement programs that encourage waste diversion		x			Ongoing	County staff, generators, industry

Appendix F: Checklist of Statutory County Management Plan Requirements

Metropolitan counties are required by Minn. Stat. § 473.803 to submit a revised Plan to the MPCA for approval. Below is a list of statutorily required components and the location in the Plan where they are addressed.

Table 15: Checklist of Statutory County Plan Requirements and Location in the Dakota County Plan

STATE LAW COUNTY PLAN REQUIREMENTS	LOCATION IN DAKOTA COUNTY PLAN
<i>County Solid Waste Master Plan to implement the Policy Plan</i>	<p>Part One: Introduction Section A: Introduction Section B: Plan Purpose and Framework</p> <p>Part Two: Solid Waste Management Plan Section B: County Solid Waste Policies Section C: Strategies and Tactics by Topic Section D: Implementation</p>
<i>County solid waste activities, functions, and facilities</i>	<p>Appendix A: Existing Waste Management System and County Programs Section A: Waste Management Governance, Roles, and Responsibilities Section E: Dakota County’s Waste Programs and Activities Section G: Waste Management Facilities</p>
<i>Existing system of solid waste generation, collection, processing, and disposal</i>	<p>Appendix A: Existing Waste Management System and County Programs Section C: Waste Projection and Composition Section D: Solid Waste Management in Dakota County Section E: Dakota County’s Waste Programs and Activities Section F: Collection and Transportation of Waste Section G: Waste Management Facilities</p>
<i>Proposed mechanisms for complying with the recycling requirements of § 115A.551</i>	<p>Part Two: Solid Waste Management Plan Section B: County Solid Waste Policies Section C: Strategies and Tactics by Topic Subsection 2: Education and Regional Planning Subsection 4. Recycling and Organics Management with Collection Best Practices Subsection 7: Household Hazardous Waste and Toxicity Reduction Subsection 11. Landfilling</p>
<i>Proposed mechanisms for the household hazardous waste management requirements of § 115A.96, subd. 6</i>	<p>Part Two: Solid Waste Management Plan Section B: County Solid Waste Policies Section C: Strategies and Tactics by Topic Subsection 7. Household Hazardous Waste and Toxicity Reduction</p>
<i>Existing and proposed county and municipal ordinances and license and permit requirements relating to solid waste facilities and solid waste generation, collection, processing, and disposal</i>	<p>Part Two: Solid Waste Management Plan Section B: County Solid Waste Policies Section C: Strategies and Tactics by Topic Subsection 1. Improving the Reliability of the Data Subsection 2. Education and Regional Planning Subsection 4. Recycling and Organics Management with Collection Best Practices Subsection 6. Landfilling Subsection 7. Household Hazardous Waste Subsection 9. Wood Waste Subsection 10. Cost and Finance</p> <p>Appendix A: Existing Waste Management System and County Programs Section A: Waste Management Governance, Roles, and Responsibilities Section E: Dakota County’s Waste Programs and Activities Section F: Collection and Transportation of Waste Section G: Waste Management Facilities</p>



STATE LAW COUNTY PLAN REQUIREMENTS	LOCATION IN DAKOTA COUNTY PLAN
<p><i>Existing or proposed municipal, county, or private solid waste facilities and collection services within the county together with schedules of existing rates and charges to users and statements as to the extent to which such facilities and services will or may be used to implement the Policy Plan</i></p>	<p>Part Two: Solid Waste Management Plan Section C: Strategies and Tactics by Topic Subsection 2. Education and Regional Planning Subsection 4. Recycling and Organics Management with Collection Best Practices Subsection 5. Waste-to-Energy Subsection 6. Landfilling Subsection 7. Household Hazardous Waste Subsection 9. Wood Waste Subsection 10. Cost and Finance Appendix A: Existing Waste Management System and County Programs Section A: Waste Management Governance, Roles, and Responsibilities Section E: Dakota County’s Solid Waste Programs and Activities Section F: Collection and Transportation of Waste Section G: Waste Management Facilities</p>
<p><i>Any solid waste facility which a county owns or plans to acquire, construct, or improve together with statements as to the planned method, estimated cost and time of acquisition, proposed procedures for operation and maintenance of the facility</i></p>	<p>N/A - Dakota County does not own or plan to acquire any solid waste facilities.</p>
<p><i>A proposal for the use of each facility after it is no longer needed or usable as a waste facility</i></p>	<p>N/A - Dakota County does not own or plan to acquire any solid waste facilities</p>
<p><i>The master plan shall, to the extent practicable and consistent with the achievement of other public policies and purposes, encourage ownership and operation of solid waste facilities by private industry</i></p>	<p>Part Two: Solid Waste Management Plan Section C: Strategies and Tactics by Topic Subsection 5. Waste-to-Energy Subsection 9. Wood Waste Subsection 10. Cost and Finance</p>
<p><i>For solid waste facilities owned or operated by public agencies or supported primarily by a public agency, the master plan shall contain criteria and standards to protect comparable private and public facilities already existing in the area from displacement unless the displacement is required in order to achieve waste management objectives identified in this plan</i></p>	<p>N/A - Dakota County does not own or plan to acquire facilities</p>
<p><i>Include a land disposal abatement element to implement the Metropolitan Land Disposal Abatement Plan adopted under § 473.149, subd. 2d (consistency with the “Policy Plan”)</i></p>	<p>Part Two: Solid Waste Management Plan Section B: County Solid Waste Policies Section C: Strategies and Tactics by Topic Subsection 1. Improving the Reliability of the Data Subsection 2. Education and Regional Planning Subsection 3. Waste Reduction and Reuse</p>



STATE LAW COUNTY PLAN REQUIREMENTS	LOCATION IN DAKOTA COUNTY PLAN
	Subsection 4. Recycling and Organics Management with Collection Best Practices Subsection 5. Waste-to-Energy Subsection 6. Landfilling Subsection 7. Household Hazardous Waste Subsection 8. Sustainable Building and Deconstruction Subsection 9. Wood Waste Subsection 10. Cost and Finance
<i>Implement the local abatement objectives for the county and cities within the county as stated in the Metropolitan Abatement Plan</i>	Part One: Introduction Section B: Plan Purpose and Framework Part Two: Solid Waste Management Plan Section B: County Solid Waste Policies
<i>Include specific and quantifiable county objectives, based on the objectives in the Metropolitan Abatement Plan, for abating to the greatest feasible and prudent extent the need for and practice of land disposal of mixed municipal solid waste and of specific components of the solid waste stream generated in the county, stated in six-year increments for a period of at least 20 years from the date of the Policy Plan revisions</i>	Part Two: Solid Waste Management Plan Section C: Strategies and Tactics by Topic Subsection 1. Improving the Reliability of the Data Subsection 2. Education and Regional Planning Subsection 3. Waste Reduction and Reuse Subsection 4. Recycling and Organics Management with Collection Best Practices Subsection 5. Waste-to-Energy Subsection 6. Landfilling Subsection 7. Household Hazardous Waste Subsection 8. Sustainable Building and Deconstruction Subsection 9. Wood Waste Subsection 10. Cost and Finance Appendix E: Plan Strategies and Projected Implementation Timing
<i>Include measurable performance standards for local abatement of solid waste through resource recovery and waste reduction and separation programs and activities for the county as a whole and for statutory or home rule charter cities of the first, second, and third class, respectively, in the county, stated in six-year increments for a period of at least 20 years from the date of the Policy Plan revisions</i>	Part One: Introduction Section B: Management Plan Purpose and Framework Part Two: Solid Waste Management Plan Section D: Implementation Appendix D: Performance and Accountability Section B: County Reporting Requirements Section C: County Oversight of the Private Sector, Municipalities, and Program Partners
<i>Performance standards must implement the metropolitan and county abatement objectives</i>	Part One: Introduction Section B: Plan Purpose and Framework Part Two: Solid Waste Management Plan Section B: County Solid Waste Policies Section D: Implementation Subsection 4. Performance and Accountability Appendix D: Performance and Accountability Section A: Evaluating Progress Section C: County Oversight of the Private Sector, Municipalities, and Program Partners
<i>Include performance standards and procedures to be used by the county</i>	Part Two: Solid Waste Management Plan Section D: Implementation



STATE LAW COUNTY PLAN REQUIREMENTS	LOCATION IN DAKOTA COUNTY PLAN
<i>in determining annually under subdivision 3 whether a city within the county has implemented the plan and satisfied the performance standards for local abatement</i>	Subsection 4. Performance and Accountability Appendix D: Performance and Accountability Section A: Evaluating Progress Section B: County Reporting Requirements Section C: County Oversight of the Private Sector, Municipalities, and Program Partners
<i>Plans for required use of resource recovery facilities. Plans proposing designation shall evaluate the benefits of the proposal, including the cost of the proposal (direct and indirect) and adverse long-term effects.</i>	N/A – Dakota County does not currently or plan to designate waste to a resource recovery facility.
<i>The County Plan may include a determination (delegate) that the private sector will achieve, either in part or whole, the goals of the Policy Plan and Master Plan:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>a. County monitors performance</i> <i>b. County continues to meet responsibilities under law (education, opportunity to recycle, promote waste reduction)</i> <i>c. Continues to provide required annual reports</i> 	N/A – Dakota County is not delegating Plan goal achievement to the private sector.
<i>Recycling Implementation Strategy that identifies how to reach recycling goals along with mechanisms for providing financial incentives to generators to reduce the amount of waste and to separate recyclables). (Minn. Stat. § 115A.55)</i>	Part One: Introduction Section B: Master Plan Purpose and Framework Part Two: Solid Waste Landfill Abatement Plan Section C: Strategies and Tactics, and Timing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subsection 1. Improving the Reliability of the Data Subsection 2. Education and Regional Planning Subsection 3. Waste Reduction and Reuse Subsection 4. Recycling and Organics Management with Collection Best Practices Subsection 6. Landfilling Subsection 7. Household Hazardous Waste Subsection 8. Sustainable Building and Deconstruction Subsection 9. Wood Waste Section D: Implementation



Appendix G: Dakota County Board Resolution of Adoption

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS DAKOTA COUNTY, MINNESOTA

September 23, 2025
Motion by Commissioner Atkins

Resolution No. 25-456
Second by Commissioner Hamann-Roland

Authorization To Adopt 2024-2044 Dakota County Solid Waste Management Plan

WHEREAS, Minnesota counties are responsible for developing projects and programs to achieve state goals for waste management; and

WHEREAS, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) adopted the 2022–2042 Metropolitan Solid Waste Management Policy Plan (Policy Plan) on January 30, 2024; and

WHEREAS, Minn. Stat. § 473.803 requires each metropolitan county to revise its current solid waste management plan to implement the revised Policy Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Policy Plan prescribes strategies that must be incorporated into county-specific plans, including required strategies and optional strategies that must meet a minimum point threshold; and

WHEREAS, stakeholder engagement was conducted and comments were gathered on waste management barriers and opportunities, timing, and needs for a preliminary set of required and optional strategies from the MPCA Policy Plan; and

WHEREAS, by Resolution No. 24-368 (July 30, 2024), the County Board authorized release of the draft 2024–2042 Dakota County Solid Waste Management Plan (2024–2024 Management Plan) for a 30-day public review and comment period; and

WHEREAS, the 2024–2044 Management Plan incorporates input from stakeholder engagement, public review, the Dakota County Planning Commission, and the County Board; and

WHEREAS, the 2024–2024 Management Plan was developed in accordance with Minn. Stats. §§ 473.803 and 115A; and

WHEREAS, the 2024–2024 Management Plan communicates Dakota County’s vision, policies, strategies, and tactics for solid waste management over the next 20 years; and

WHEREAS, the 2024–2024 Management Plan includes Policy Plan required strategies and optional strategies that meet the minimum point value; and

WHEREAS, tactics and timelines have been included as required by Minn. Stat. § 115A.46; and

STATE OF MINNESOTA County of Dakota

	YES		NO
Slavik	<u> X </u>	Slavik	_____
Atkins	<u> X </u>	Atkins	_____
Halverson	<u> X </u>	Halverson	_____
Droste	<u> X </u>	Droste	_____
Workman	<u> X </u>	Workman	_____
Holberg	<u> X </u>	Holberg	_____
Hamann-Roland	<u> X </u>	Hamann-Roland	_____

I, Jeni Reynolds, Clerk to the Board of the County of Dakota, State of Minnesota, do hereby certify that I have compared the foregoing copy of a resolution with the original minutes of the proceedings of the Board of County Commissioners, Dakota County, Minnesota, at their session held on the 23rd day of September 2025, now on file in the Office of the County Manager Department, and have found the same to be a true and correct copy thereof.

Witness my hand and official seal of Dakota County this 23rd day of September 2025.



Clerk to the Board



WHEREAS, revised Metropolitan county master plans must be submitted to the MPCA Commissioner for review and approval; and

WHEREAS, by Resolution No. 24-514 (October 29, 2024), the County Board authorized submittal of the draft 2024-2044 Management Plan, dated October 2024, to the MPCA for review and approval; and

WHEREAS, the MPCA Commissioner approved the 2024–2044 Management Plan on August 22, 2025; and

WHEREAS, staff recommends adoption of the 2024–2044 Management Plan; and

WHEREAS, implementation and costs will be determined annually as part of the County Board of Commissioners' work plan priorities and approval of the Environmental Resources Department budget.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Dakota County Board of Commissioners hereby adopts the 2024–2044 Solid Waste Management Plan.

STATE OF MINNESOTA
County of Dakota

	YES		NO
Slavik	<u> X </u>	Slavik	_____
Atkins	<u> X </u>	Atkins	_____
Halverson	<u> X </u>	Halverson	_____
Droste	<u> X </u>	Droste	_____
Workman	<u> X </u>	Workman	_____
Holberg	<u> X </u>	Holberg	_____
Hamann-Roland	<u> X </u>	Hamann-Roland	_____

I, Jeni Reynolds, Clerk to the Board of the County of Dakota, State of Minnesota, do hereby certify that I have compared the foregoing copy of a resolution with the original minutes of the proceedings of the Board of County Commissioners, Dakota County, Minnesota, at their session held on the 23rd day of September 2025, now on file in the Office of the County Manager Department, and have found the same to be a true and correct copy thereof.

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Clerk to the Board

