



2020 Solid Waste Progress Report

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Introduction

The 2020 Solid Waste Management Progress Report provides an overview of Dakota County (County) projects and programs developed and continued throughout the year to meet the goals of the new 2018 – 2038 Dakota County Solid Waste Master Plan (Master Plan).

The Master Plan, adopted by the Dakota County Board of Commissioners in September 2018, provides a framework for the County, residents, businesses, schools districts, municipalities, the waste industry and others to properly manage municipal solid waste (MSW). Strategies focus on expanded use of existing educational, regulatory and financial tools; increased accountability and partnerships; and focused work in new areas such as multi-family dwellings and other large-volume generators.

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Policy Plan set waste management objectives for Twin Cities Metropolitan Area counties and establishes a framework for meeting the statutory goal to recycle 75 percent of total solid waste generated by 2030 (includes organics diversion; Minn. Stat. § 115A.551).

Policy Plan Objectives for Municipal Solid Waste Management System

Management Method	2019 Actual	2020 Actual	2020 Goal	2025 Goal	2030 Goal
Source Reduction & Reuse			1.5%	3%	4%
Recycling & Organics	53%	56%	63%	68%	75%
Resource Recovery	2%	4%	35%	31%	24%
Maximum Land Disposal	45%	42%	2%	1%	1%

Due to rounding, totals do not equal 100%

Progress Summary

To manage our resources in an effective and environmentally-sound manner, Dakota County prioritizes municipal solid waste management in accordance with Minnesota's waste hierarchy; County programs and initiatives are designed to reflect this. Many programs are new or continuously adjusted to meet the needs of our community, with some of the benefits not yet realized.

Minnesota's waste hierarchy



Listed in order of preference, the waste hierarchy directs Minnesotans to manage waste to have the biggest environmental benefits. (Minn. Stat. § 115A.02)

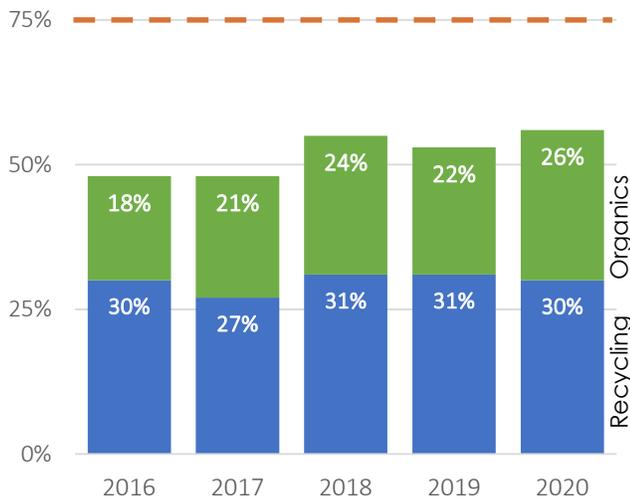
Progress Towards Goals

A reported 496,823 tons of solid waste – recyclables, organics and trash – was generated in Dakota County in 2020 - a 10 percent increase from the previous year.

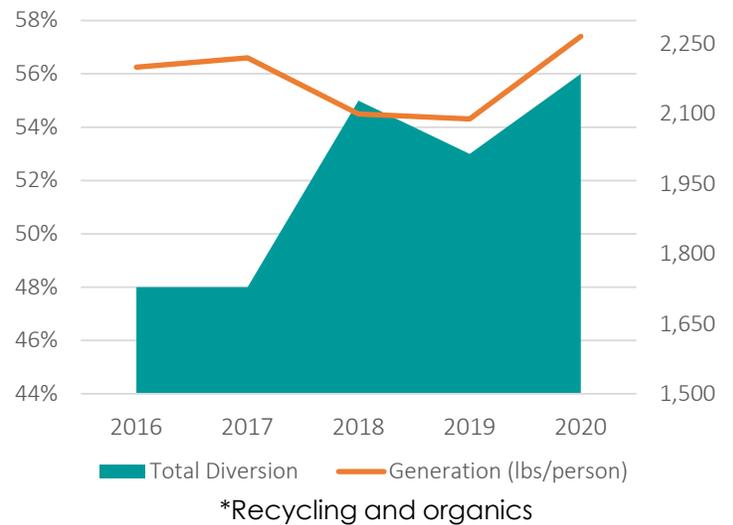
- Combined recycling and organics amounts increased 15 percent.
- Trash amounts increased by four percent.
- Recycled or composted 56 percent of waste.
- Three percent of waste sent for resource recovery.

59% of waste diverted from landfills in 2020

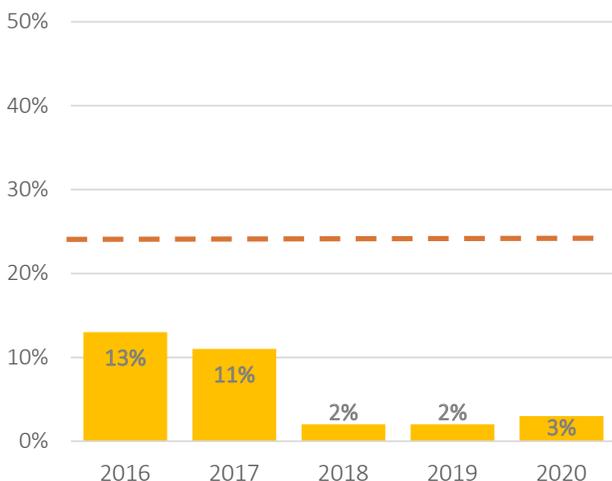
Recycling & Organics 2030 Goal: 75%



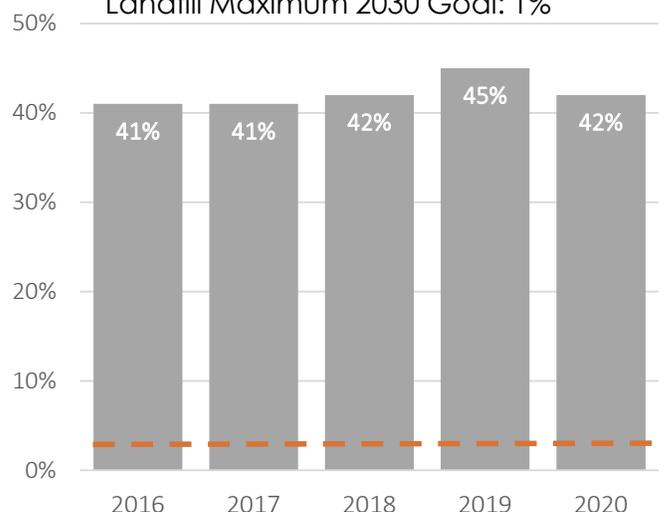
Diversion* vs. Waste Generation per Person (lbs)



Resource Recovery 2030 Goal: 24%



Landfill Maximum 2030 Goal: 1%



Waste Reduction & Reuse

The MPCA has not identified reduction and reuse metrics for reporting purposes. Dakota County uses the per capita generation of municipal solid waste as our waste reduction metric. Overall waste generation in 2020 went up. Waste created per person in the county increased from 2,089 pounds in 2019 to 2,266 pounds in 2020 (eight percent increase over the previous year).

Fix-It Clinics

Residents receive free guided assistance to repair items at monthly Dakota County Fix-It Clinics. These events help build community and keep household items out of landfills.

In June, Fix-It Clinics moved online to keep residents safe from COVID-19. Through the passion of volunteers, patience of residents, and careful planning by staff, the virtual clinics continued to be successful.

- Two in-person clinics, seven virtual events.
- 34 volunteers gave their time and knowledge.
- 63 residents worked on 96 personal items.
- 70 percent of items were repaired during the event or the resident was shown how to fix an item later with the right materials.



Reuse at The Recycling Zone

The reuse area at the Dakota County Recycling Zone was rebranded to The Reuse Zone. The program was moved from a busy staff working area to a designated room with a separate entrance. The Reuse Zone was closed Mar. 18 - Oct. 7 due to COVID-19. Residents visited when it was back open to get free products:

- Over 93,000 pounds of items were given away.
- \$70,833 saved in avoided disposal costs.

Reuse in County operations

Dakota County auctioned surplus County equipment such as office furniture.

- 79 auctions of 42 items.
- 8,438 pounds of electronic waste collected for recycling and reuse.

Local reuse options

Through the County's Solid Waste Abatement Program, cities were encouraged and reimbursed for costs of separating and donating usable material from city-hosted clean-up events. Most planned events were postponed or canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dakota Valley Recycling, representing the cities of Apple Valley, Burnsville, Eagan and Lakeville, sponsored a shoe collection for America Recycles Day, which brought in more than five tons of shoes. A private vendor went through the collected shoes and usable pairs were donated. In addition, DVR presented decluttering and reuse topics to 80 residents at four events.

Each city also published an article in their newsletters sent to residents promoting reuse and donation.

School highlight: Discovery Charter School

The School Waste Prevention & Recycling Grant Program now covers waste reduction projects. Through the program, Discovery Charter School in Inver Grove Heights reduced their dependence on disposable products:

- Condiment packets → bulk condiment dispensers
- 29,000 disposable trays annually → durable trays
- 6,000 foam bowls each year → washable bowls
- 13,500 plastic utensils yearly → reusable utensils



"As a small charter school, we have a very limited budget to implement additional programs. The Dakota County recycling grant allowed us the opportunity to invest in the necessary equipment to sustain a successful recycling and reuse program and educate our students and community."

Shannon Benalshaikh, Director of Operations Discovery Charter School

Business highlight: Feed My Starving Children

Feed My Starving Children "distributes meals in schools, orphanages, clinics and feeding programs around the world to deliver hope and break the cycle of poverty." The not-for-profit became a Business Recycling Incentive Program participant to cut waste where they could.

Through the County program, the Eagan-based organization purchased reusable pallet wraps used for mobile food-packing events around the state. Before the grant, staff had to use about 178,800 feet of stretch wrap per year to secure pallets. By implementing durable pallet wraps, Feed My Starving Children saves around 546 pounds of stretch wrap from the trash each year. They also are saving about \$1,362.46 annually by not purchasing more stretch wrap - funds that can be used to buy more meals for kids.



Before project
FMSC used disposable shrink wrap.



After project
FMSC uses reusable pallet wraps.

Recycling

Dakota County Master Plan strategies focus on capturing both traditional recyclable materials - like paper, glass, plastic, and metal - and non-traditional recyclable materials like appliances and mattresses from all sectors – public entities, commercial, residential, schools and multifamily dwellings.

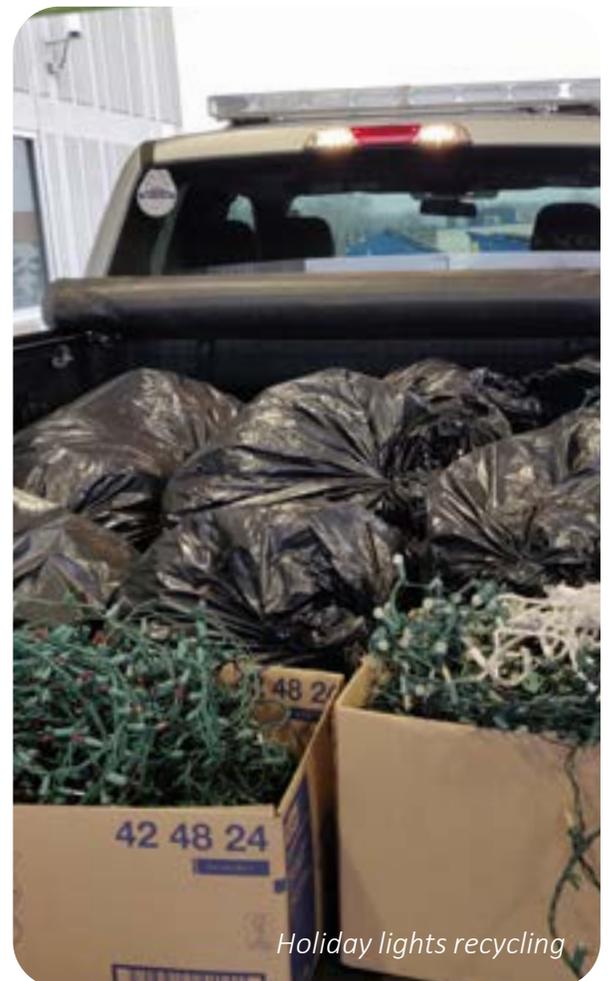
Of the total materials recycled:

- ↑ Paper and cardboard recycling increased by 19 percent (96,730 tons)
- ↑ Glass recycling increased by 18 percent (15,667 tons)
- ↓ Plastic recycling decreased by 28 percent (5,157 tons)
- ↓ Metal recycling decreased by 11 percent (8,607 tons)
- ↓ Other recyclable materials- appliances, tires, carpet, electronics, clothing, mattresses/box springs and batteries - decreased by 26 percent (16,584 tons)

30% recycling rate
for Dakota County
businesses and residents

Collection of non-traditional recyclables

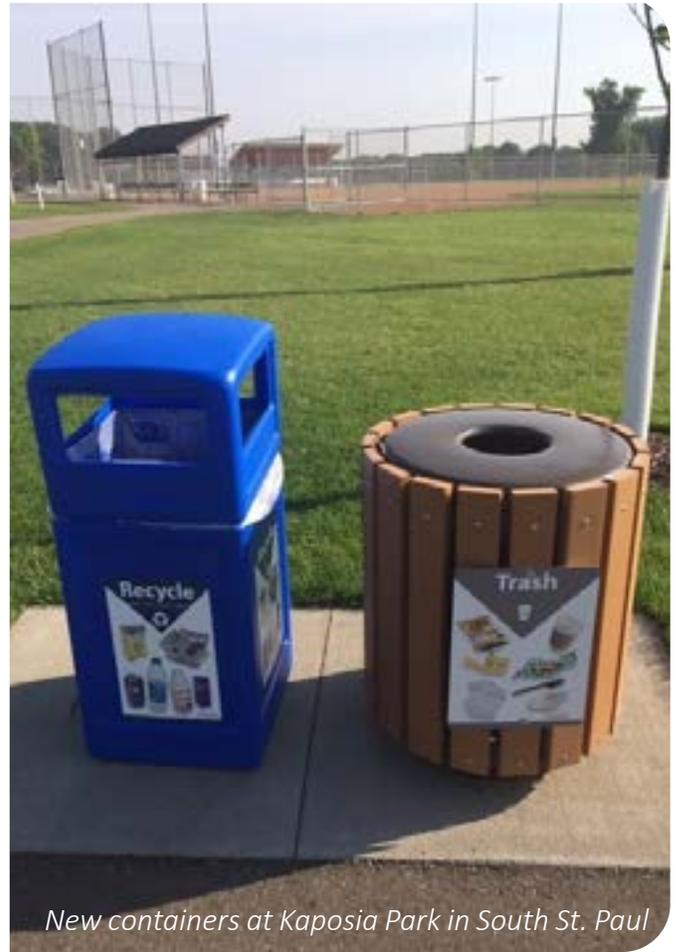
- **45 city drop-off events** and seasonal curbside collection efforts **diverted more than 160 tons of residential recyclable or reusable material** from landfills.
- **77 tons of mattresses and box springs collected from residents** - 42 tons from a public-private partnership with Certified Recycling to pickup from homes and 35 tons from city drop-off events.
- **42 tons of confidential documents** dropped off by residents at city events to be shredded and recycled.
- **4.8 tons of string lights** - collected by ProAct Inc. from eight city sites, three County service centers and the Lebanon Hills Park Visitor Center.
- **25 tons of agricultural and boat film plastic** - 22 tons of silage bags, bunker covers and bale wraps from on-site farm collection went to Revolution Plastics and nearly 3 tons of boat wrap from a spring collection went to Up North Plastics to be made into new film plastics.
- **13 tons of waste tires** - Dakota County and the Metropolitan Mosquito Control District collected from rural residents. An additional 3.58 tons collected by cities.
- **Nearly six tons of clothing and shoes** gathered at city-sponsored, seasonal drop-off sites.



Public space and event recycling

Almost all events were canceled due to COVID-19. City staff increased recycling opportunities by placing 243 new recycling containers in municipal public spaces through the Community Grant Program:

- City staff updated recycling infrastructure in more than 20 parks. The City of South St. Paul added 52 recycling containers in Kaposia, Harmon, Lorraine and Jefferson Field parks. Burnsville and Farmington transformed 57 existing containers into new recycling bins in city parks.
- Inver Grove Heights added recycling bins in 17 city parks and a fire station.
- The Rosemount Community Center, a fire station in Mendota Heights, Valleywood Golf Course in Apple Valley, and Cascade Bay water park in Eagan also added recycling containers.
- Empire Township put 30 recycling containers next to trash bins at five parks and along 10 plus miles of walking and biking trails.



New containers at Kaposia Park in South St. Paul



Mattresses waiting for home pickup

Mattress Pick-up Pilot Success

For some Dakota County residents, mattress drop-off is difficult due to transportation barriers or physical limitations. To address these barriers, Certified Recycling offered a reduced pick-up charge for Dakota County residents from Memorial Day to Labor Day, making it easy to recycle mattresses without hauling it themselves. Dakota County helped get the word out to residents.

This market-driven collaboration was a great success. **Certified Recycling picked up 779 mattresses and box springs** during the summer promotion resulting in 42 tons of material diverted from landfill. Mattress materials were disassembled and sent to businesses that are able to use the wood, metal, and foam for new purposes.

Event Recycling Requirements

Dakota County staff from multiple departments updated the county License Application for Assemblage of Large Numbers of People, which is needed for events over 300 people that are not subject to municipal jurisdiction.

Updates make the license consistent with requirements in County Ordinance 110 (Solid Waste Management) for recycling at events. The application now specifies that event organizers must provide sufficient recycling capacity to collect all material; ensure that all trash containers are paired with recycling containers; and make sure that containers are well-labeled with images to assist attendees with sorting.

Recycling in County operations

A robust recycling program in Dakota County buildings collects a large amount of recycling and provides an example to partners and visitors.

Housekeeping goes bagless

County staff collaborated with the County's two contracted housekeeping firms to implement bagless recycling at County facilities. Instead of tossing full bags of recyclables into the exterior recycling containers, housekeeping crews are now emptying recyclables loosely into the dumpsters.

County staff provided the housekeeping firms with tools to assist with this new practice, including a dumpster lid prop. Housekeeping staff were also given dumpster labels stating ***No Plastic Bags***.

This practice prepares the County to meet its own Ordinance 110 requirements to reduce contamination by January 1, 2021.

Waste sorts at County rental facilities

County staff sorted through trash, recycling and organics. Findings helped develop education and program improvements.

Dakota Lodge in Thompson County Park (West St. Paul): wedding guests diverted more than half (54 percent) of materials to recycling and organics yet had a high amount of wrong items in the recycling (42 percent). If all the materials created at this event were recycled properly, 86 percent of items would be kept from the trash.

Lake Byllesby Campground (Cannon Falls): campers recycled 16 percent of materials while the potential to divert materials from the trash was two-thirds (66 percent).



Multifamily recycling program

Staff assisted 34 properties through the Multifamily Recycling Program - a 48 percent increase from the prior year. Of those sites, 23 buildings received recycling containers and labels while 11 properties only requested County staff to help educate residents. The majority (65 percent) of properties in the program in 2020 were privately-owned or managed properties and the remainder were senior apartments managed by Dakota County Community Development Agency.

City staff join the program

Beginning in 2020, the County's municipal grant program included funding for city staff to help apartments, condominiums, townhomes and senior living centers with on-the-ground recycling improvements and education for residents. This partnership expands the reach and effectiveness of Dakota County's recycling support for multifamily housing in local communities.

CDA expands recycling capacity

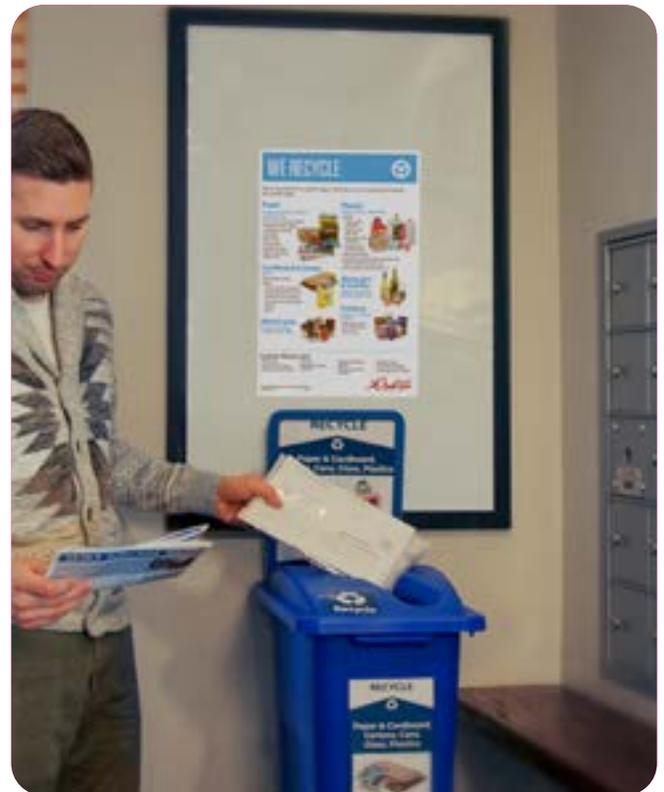
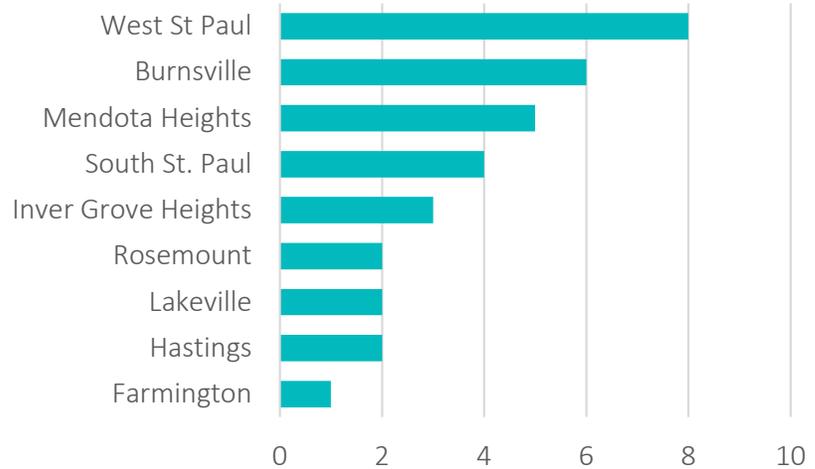
Community Development Agency (CDA) staff collaborated with County recycling staff to strengthen recycling for residents and meet new county requirements for recycling service levels (weekly service capacity of at least 0.1 cubic yards or 20 gallons per dwelling unit). CDA updated their hauling contract to increase recycling service for the buildings they manage:

- 26 townhomes (847 units)
- 29 senior buildings (1,731 units)
- One youth development (25 units)

By providing 90-gallon recycling carts for an additional 348 dwelling units, CDA now meets the new requirements for all the multifamily housing they manage.

In addition, CDA staff continued to review recycling expectations with new residents and provide a recycling information kit during move-in. In 10 senior apartment complexes participating in the Multifamily Recycling Program in 2020, tenants received reusable tote bags to carry their recyclable glass, plastic, metal and paper materials to central collection areas.

Number of properties by city in the Multifamily Recycling Program (2020)





Labeling Right at Schools

Dakota County partnered with Burnsville-Eagan-Savage Schools (District 191), Farmington Area Public Schools (District 192) and Lakeville Area Public Schools (District 194) to improve recycling and meet the new recycling requirements for schools.

Based on County staff recommendations, each district received funding to purchase recycling containers, lids and labels. Volunteers gave 466 hours of their time to help place labels on 8,400 recycling, trash and organics collection containers in all district buildings.

Now, all trash bins in all buildings are paired with a recycling container and have labels that comply with new standards.

School recycling program

School Waste Prevention and Recycling Grant Program

All public and private schools located in Dakota County are eligible to receive support including educational resources and grants up to \$10,000 to help start or improve waste management practices and educate students and staff.

- \$90,170 awarded to 14 schools to reduce waste and improve recycling and organics collection.
- Reusable utensils were implemented to replace disposable plastic utensils at five schools.
- Outdoor recycling containers were added at nine schools.
- Shifted to reusable clamshells and baskets for meals in the classroom.

For the first time, schools could request in-school waste education performances and cover the cost of field trip busing to waste and recycling facilities.

Annual workshop goes virtual

The 6th Annual School Recycling Workshop moved online due to COVID-19 but still had a record 56 school staff attend. Administrators, building and grounds staff, food service staff, teachers and Green Team leaders learned about new school recycling requirements, bagless recycling solutions, reusable breakfast bags, classroom collection models for breakfast and lunch waste, reuse program insights and school recycling resources.



SCHOOL RECYCLING POSTER CONTEST

Thirteen fourth graders entered Dakota County's first recycling poster contest to celebrate America Recycles Day.

The theme was "How to Recycle Right." Prizes included a framed copy of the poster, a recycled blue-jean pencil, and activity sheets.

1st Place: Georgie Berg,
Grade 4, Somerset Elementary

2nd Place: Elizabeth Pendergrass,
Grade 4, Somerset Elementary

First and second place posters were displayed at the Galaxie Library in January.



Business recycling support

Even while facing COVID-19 challenges, businesses continued to request assistance through the County's Business Recycling Incentive Program.

The County's Business Recycling Incentive Program adapted and pivoted to address pandemic safety protocols and business needs such as providing technical assistance and recycling education virtually as much as possible.

The Program allocates up to \$10,000 per location to eligible businesses and non-profits to implement sustainable activities to reduce waste, start or improve recycling, and start organics recovery. Since the start of the program in 2016, 150 businesses have participated and in 2020:

- County staff and consultants worked with 45 businesses across a range of industries.
- Participating businesses diverted an additional 83 tons (166,000 pounds) of material from the landfill.
- 25 businesses received funding for infrastructure improvements.
- Businesses ordered more than 33,000 container labels and educational resources.

SUCCESS STORY: MDVA in Hastings

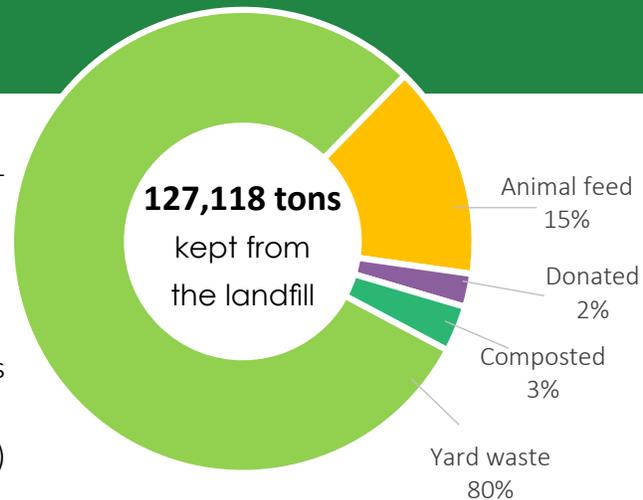
The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) in Hastings showcased recycling improvements that were made through the County's Business Recycling Incentive Program. Recycling is now available in public areas and resident rooms. Organics collection was added to the kitchen for food scraps and bathrooms for paper towels. All new and old containers are color-coded and labeled so residents, staff and visitors know what belongs in each bin.

The MDVA promoted the improved recycling program in their November Newsletter: "In recognition of November 15 as America Recycles Day, MDVA is proud to share how we are helping protect the environment at our Minnesota Veterans Homes while providing the high-quality care and services our Veteran Residents, and their families, have earned."

Organics

Organics - food waste, compostable materials and yard waste - was diverted from the landfill in a variety of ways:

- ↓ 2,938 tons donated to people in need (14 percent decrease)
- ↑ 18,994 tons made into animal feed (31 percent increase)
- ↑ 4,089 tons composted at commercial source-separated organics facilities (37 percent increase)
- ↑ 101,096 tons of yard waste was composted (29 percent increase)



Reducing wasted food in schools

The School Waste Prevention and Recycling Grant Program has incorporated best practices to prevent wasted food in school cafeterias.

- Nine schools put updated food share tables. Students placed packaged food, whole fruit and unopened milk cartons on these tables which are put back into cafeteria circulation or donated outside the school.
- Three schools added flavor stations to allow students to customize their meals.
- One school added a mini fridge to keep shared food fresh longer for redistribute later.

Prevent wasted food in homes

Food is the largest component of waste sent to landfills with households throwing away the most.

- 38 Hastings residents took part in the Save the Food Challenge to understand what food they toss and why. Participants tracked food scraps weekly and got training and tools to reduce food waste.
- The County, Hastings' MN GreenCorps member and the University of Minnesota Extension Office offered five virtual classes on preventing food waste at home with a class in Spanish and Somali.
- Articles in monthly residential e-news helped residents make the most of their food during the pandemic.

Less wasted food in high school

The School of Environmental Studies in Apple Valley improved ways to reduce wasted food.

Staff added a food share table to the cafeteria to capture edible but unopened food; a milk dispenser to let the student judge how much milk they want; and, a Flavor Station for students to customize their meals.



Organics diversion for residents

Organics Drop-off Sites

- An organics drop-off site at the County Transportation Shop in Hastings became the 5th drop-off site now available to residents.
- 5,450 households registered, with 1,426 households joining the program in 2020.
- **Overall, residents dropped off more than 284 tons of food scraps and other compostable materials.**

Lakeville organics drop-off participants were surveyed six months after the site opened (2019):

- 13 percent of participants completed the survey
- 89 percent are from the City of Lakeville, with 67 percent living within two miles of the site
- 90 percent of respondents said they participate for environmental reasons
- 48 percent use the site at least weekly
- The most common items dropped off are: fruits and vegetable peelings, eggs and eggshells and paper towels/napkins

Compost bin sale

Through the Recycling Association of Minnesota spring sale, residents purchased 72 backyard composting bins. Dakota County promoted the event and provided residents with a 30 percent discount.



Organics site in Hastings

“Thank you for implementing this service. It removes an estimated 10-15 pounds of food waste and other compostable items from our regular trash each month. It has increased our awareness of how much food is being wasted in our house.”

Lakeville drop-off site participant

Residential Organics Drop Site Total Participation



Resource Recovery & Disposal

Resource Recovery

Three percent of waste generated in Dakota County (13,989 tons) was converted into energy at a resource recovery facility (92 percent more than the previous year) through these facilities:

Facility	Tons Sent
City of Red Wing Solid Waste Campus	13,827
Ramsey/Washington Recycling and Energy Center	112
Hennepin Energy Recovery Center	50

Partnership boosts waste-to-energy

State law requires public entities in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area to use resource recovery facilities with capacity prior to land disposal.

Over the last few years, resource recovery facilities in the Metro Area have closed or reached capacity. Limited Dakota County waste was delivered to the Ramsey/Washington Recycling and Energy Center in Newport and the Hennepin Energy Recovery Center in Minneapolis. The City of Red Wing Solid Waste Campus was the only relatively close facility with capacity to accept and process a more significant amount of waste from Dakota County.

The cities of Hastings and Farmington in Dakota County provide waste pickup services for their residents and deliver collected trash to the Redwing resource recovery facility. Dakota County along with these cities worked together to establish a framework to make sure that the Red Wing Solid Waste Campus operates at full capacity.

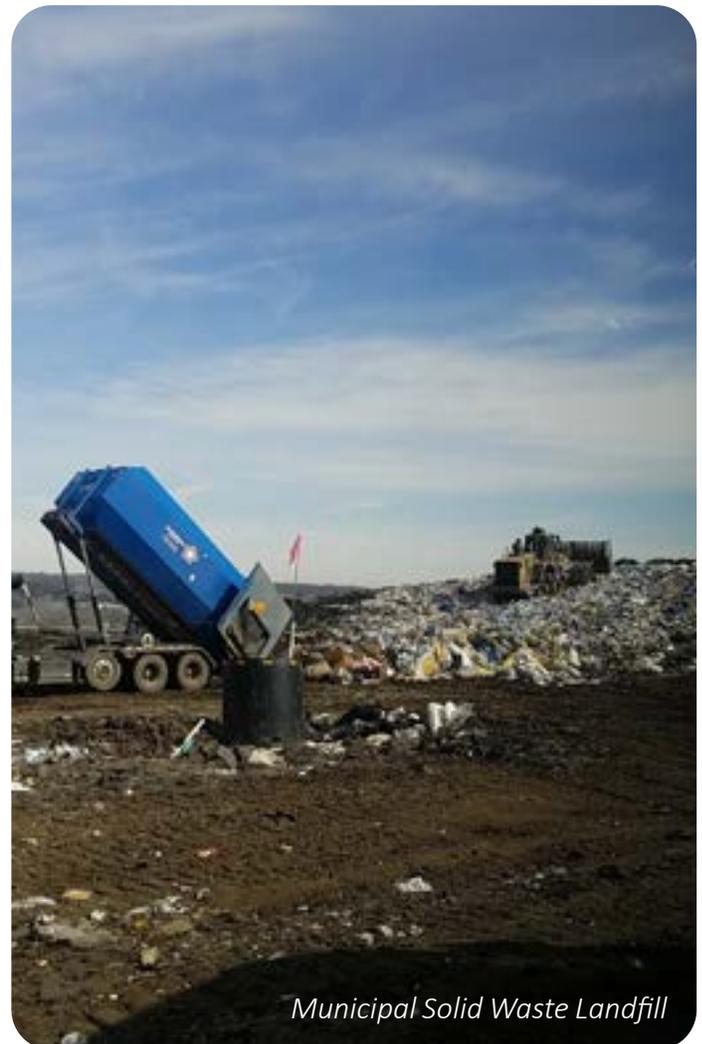
Programs that support resource recovery efforts:

- Contract to deliver county building and park trash to a resource recovery facility.
- Land lease allows for a transfer station to have trash be brought a resource recovery facility.

Land Disposal

Forty-two percent of the municipal solid waste (MSW) generated in the County was landfilled (206,781 tons; one percent increase over previous year).

The County continues to face obstacles in meeting the Policy Plan objective to send a maximum of two percent of MSW to landfills. Privately-owned and operated landfills in Dakota County are conveniently located for waste haulers, and no additional resource recovery capacity is available.



Municipal Solid Waste Landfill

Hazardous Waste

Residents and businesses used The Recycling Zone to get rid of hazardous waste, electronics and other items.

- 67,992 households visited The Recycling Zone (20 percent increase).
- More than 1,470 tons of materials were managed (0.4 percent increase).
- No one-day drop-off collections were held due to COVID-19.
- 243 businesses brought 35.4 tons of hazardous waste through the Very Small Quantity Generator program.

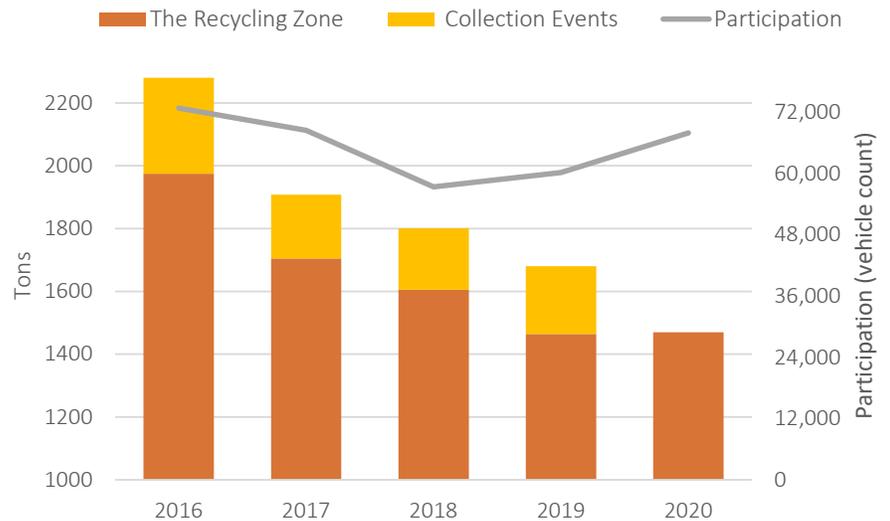
Recycling Zone updates

Updates to The Recycling Zone building and traffic flow have made it easier for residents to drop off items.

- A new outside kiosk allows for scanning driver's licenses
- An extra driving lane allows vehicles to move through more quickly
- Residents now stay in their car while helpful staff unloads, making drop-off safer.
- A separate entrance was added for safer access to the Reuse Zone
- A new color scheme and directional signs help to improve the experience



Participation and Material Quantities at The Recycling Zone and Drop-off Events



Commissioner Egan celebrated the improvements by being the first one in line when the new kiosk opened, January 29. So far, residents have appreciated not leaving their cars and the smooth flow of traffic.

The Recycling Zone and COVID-19

The Recycling Zone closed March 18 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and reopened May 20. The Reuse Zone continued to be closed until October 17. A postcard was mailed to all households to announce The Recycling Zone reopening and guidelines for dropping off materials. The two-month closure and residents cleaning at home during the first months of the pandemic created a surplus of visitors to The Recycling Zone. Average wait times during the first weeks after reopening were 30 - 45 minutes. New directional signs were created and staff from other programs were asked to help with traffic control. The Recycling Zone had to be closed two more times briefly when staff were exposed to COVID-19.

Outreach & Education

Outreach and education do not have specific measurement goals in the Policy Plan, but strategies were included in the Master Plan to address public education requirements in Minn. Stat. §§ 115.552 and 115A.96.

Dakota County staff and municipal partners used a variety of promotional outlets and in-person tactics to educate residents on recycling.

- **939,785 impressions**- Cities conducted indirect education through social media, newsletters, emails and other outlets.
- **12,600 residents** directly educated by City partners through in-person events.
- **95 percent increase in pageviews** for the residential recycling page over the previous year; **59 percent increase** for The Recycling Zone page.
- **89 social media posts** about recycling, organics, The Recycling Zone or waste reduction.

The Dakota County e-news service provides waste and recycling education tailored to each audience:

E-news Audience	Number Sent	Subscribers	Open Rate
Residents	13	1,874	39%
Businesses	7	364	32%
Schools	4	487	32%
Organics Drop Site Participants	6	4,280	54%
Master Recyclers	6	274	56%



“Please tell whoever is responsible for the [What Goes Where] Guide that this is the most productive thing I have seen done by a government agency in years.

Anonymous resident

New recycling resources

New materials and tools were created to help increase recycling knowledge:

- What Goes Where booklet sent to all households
- Pickup Point - contactless scheduling and pickup for recycling containers and educational resources
- Multifamily recycling tote bag - to aid in carrying recyclables to a central collection area
- Business and multifamily compliance handouts
- Medication disposal card in English and Spanish
- Recycle Right posters for business partners

Contactless Pickup Point Opens

Dakota County offers free educational resources and event recycling containers to cities and residents for free. Scheduling a time to pick-up and drop-off material became a challenge for working volunteers and busy staff.

The new Pickup Point shed at the Dakota County Western Service Center in Apple Valley solves that issue. Borrowers request items online. When they are notified for picking up, they are given a code to use to open the shed. Staff and residents have appreciated the flexibility and innovation.



Recycling Guide directory

The Recycling Guide - formerly the Green Guide - launched with a promotional campaign. During 2020, Dakota County saw:

- 61 percent increase in pageviews from the previous year
- 79,676 material searches
- 53,228 user sessions
- 38,044 first-time users
- 1,504 waste sort games played



Master Recycler/Composter Program

The Dakota County Master Recycler/Composter program completed its seventh year with 44 new participants— bringing the total number of volunteers to 334.

- 12 additional graduates completed their obligatory 30 hours of volunteering
- Master Recyclers engaged with 7,729 people at various events

Participants fill out a pre- and post-class test to see if they gained basic recycling knowledge.

- The spring class went from 72 percent correct answers to 88 percent
- The fall class went from 67 percent correct answers to 86 percent

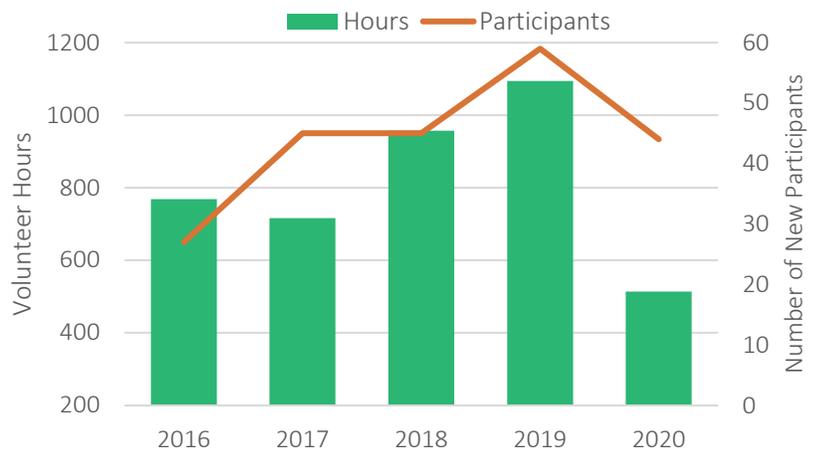
The spring class of 30 participants moved online for the first time due to COVID-19. The pandemic also affected volunteer activities. Master Recyclers got creative with making videos, labeling recycling and trash bins in schools and volunteering at food shelves where much of the donated food might have been thrown away.

“Through the class, I'm understanding my [truck driving] job much more and getting a much clearer picture of how it all works.”
Master Recycler participant

COVID-19 effects on outreach

Stay-at-home rules put many spring activities on hold including the dozens of in-person classes and events surrounding the 50th Earth Day Celebration in April. County staff experimented with new ways to reach residents while educating safely.

- Master Recycler/Composter six-week class moved online for the first time
- More than 300 residents registered for one of four free online classes offered. The classes were recorded and are now on the Dakota County YouTube channel.
- Attendees in the Back to Basics Recycling class increased their knowledge by 10 percentage points.



Regulatory Initiatives

On November 26, 2019, the Dakota County Board of Commissioners adopted a revised Solid Waste Management Ordinance (Ordinance 110) to implement the regulatory strategies in the Master Plan. Ordinance 110 changes included new recycling and waste management requirements for residents, commercial entities and waste industry. Requirements are designed to standardize recycling and organics collection to:

- Reduce waste going to landfills
- Improve the quality of materials recycled and organics collected
- Make progress toward the state's goal to recycle 75 percent of waste by 2030

Requirements phase-in over the next years. New regulations that went into effect in 2020 are listed below.

2020 Generator requirements

Certain commercial entities

Businesses, schools, municipalities, event venues and other commercial entities subject to Minn. Stat. §115A.15 were required to collect designated recyclables and follow best practices, including provide sufficient container capacity to avoid overflow, ensure all trash containers are paired (within 10 feet) with recycling containers, label all new collection containers with standardized signage, ensure all collection containers are sufficiently sized to avoid overflow, and educate all employees and contractors on what and how to properly recycle.

- Dakota County provided grant funding and technical assistance to businesses, organizations, and schools for education and recycling and organics collection improvements.
- Dakota County developed required recycling and organics messaging, and then provided handouts and templates for stakeholders to order or download from the County website.
- Dakota County conducted complaint-driven waste inspections for commercial generators.

Multi-unit residential properties

Apartments, condominiums and other properties with four or more residential units with a common waste contract were required to collect designated recyclables and follow best management practices similar to those for commercial entities. Building owners and managers also have to ensure residents are provided a minimum recycling cart and dumpster capacity to avoid overflow (i.e., at least 0.1 cubic yards per dwelling unit per week).

- Dakota County provided grant funding and technical assistance to multifamily residents for education and recycling collection improvements.
- Dakota County developed required recycling messaging, and then provided handouts and templates for property owners and managers download from the County website.

2020 City Requirements

Cities with populations over 10,000 adopted County Ordinance 110 recycling and organics (if collected) requirements for multi-unit residential properties and certain large events. In addition, all cities and townships had to provide County-developed standardized recycling education to all residents.

- Dakota County worked with the 11 cities meeting the population threshold to amend their codes to incorporate the necessary requirements.
- Dakota County provided grant funding and technical assistance to municipalities for education and recycling collection improvements.
- Dakota County developed required recycling messaging, and then provided handouts and templates for municipalities to use.

2020 Waste Hauler Requirements

Licensed waste haulers serving Dakota County generators were required to collect designated recyclables from all residential and commercial customers, educate their customers using standardized messaging, and label all new containers with standardized signage. Hauler invoices also had to be itemized to help customers understand waste charges.

- Dakota County updated and offered new standardized cart and dumpster labels for hauler containers (e.g., carts, dumpsters, totes).
- Dakota County reviewed hauler invoices and hauler labels for compliance.

