

Dakota County Solid Waste
Master Plan
Public Engagement Plan

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1. Introduction

During 2016 through 2017 Dakota County's (County) Environmental Resources Department (ERD) will be conducting stakeholder engagement while revising the Dakota County Solid Waste Master Plan (Master Plan). The public engagement process will provide the County with timely, relevant, and truthful feedback on strategies proposed to be included in the Master Plan.

The Master Plan describes the County's strategic approach for new and on-going programs that support proper waste management by residents, businesses, industry, and government. The current Master Plan was adopted by the County Board in March 2012 and outlines numerous near-mid- and long-term strategies to meet County and State waste management goals.

Significant statutory changes have occurred since the current Master Plan was approved, including an increased recycling rate goal for Metropolitan Counties (from 50% to 75% by 2030), mandatory business and multi-unit housing recycling, and a focus on organics diversion. In addition, the household hazardous waste program continues to expand, with increased participation at The Recycling Zone, increased waste management, and increased costs. To meet the 75% recycling goal, all parties of the waste system have responsibilities, from waste generators to the waste processing and disposal facilities. The Master Plan strategies apply to all stakeholders in the waste system; therefore their input is necessary while crafting the revised plan.

The County's Public Engagement Tool assigned this project a Level 3 (Involve) Public Engagement Level. A Level 3 requires the County Board to review a Public Engagement Plan and recommends the use of an Advisory Committee. The Dakota County Planning Commission will be Dakota County's primary advisory committee and consulting services will be secured for Master Plan development, including public engagement, using funds approved by the County Board in the 2016 ERD budget. The consultant will work closely with ERD's Master Plan project team to develop, facilitate, organize, and summarize the public engagement process to inform the revision of the Master Plan. Devoting resources to the planning effort beginning in 2016 will place the County in a better position to complete a viable Master Plan by the anticipated deadline.

This Solid Waste Master Plan Public Engagement Plan guides the public engagement process to be used by ERD. The Public Engagement Plan focuses on involving all affected stakeholder groups and creating effective and inclusive engagement methods tailored to each group to motivate and involve stakeholders who may not normally be engaged. A successful Public Engagement Plan will produce meaningful and pointed feedback to guide the development of proposed Master Plan strategies.

2. Background

The Master Plan's framework and goals are influenced by the State of Minnesota's Waste Management Act (Minn. Stat. §115A) and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA) Metropolitan Solid Waste Management Policy Plan (Policy Plan) (Minn. Stat. §473.149).

The State of Minnesota's Waste Management Act requires that waste be managed in accordance with the Waste Hierarchy, which identifies the preferred order of waste management practices:

- 1) waste reduction and reuse;
- 2) waste recycling;
- 3) composting;
- 4) resource recovery;

- 5) land disposal with methane gas capture; and
- 6) land disposal without methane gas capture.

The strategies for waste diversion in the Master Plan must reflect this waste management order. Strategies must also include mechanisms to meet the statutory recycling goals and household hazardous waste management requirements, including educational components.

Furthermore, the Master Plan is developed in accordance with the MPCA's Metropolitan Solid Waste Management Policy Plan (Policy Plan). The current Policy Plan was adopted in 2011, and is required to be updated by December 31, 2016 and every six years thereafter. All counties within the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area (TCMA - Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington) are required to follow the Policy Plan. Counties' Master Plans are required to be submitted to the MPCA nine months after the adoption of the Policy Plan (Minn. Stat. §473.803). The Policy Plan is anticipated to be completed in December 2016 and adopted in March 2017; therefore, a revised Master Plan will be submitted to the MPCA in December 2017.

3. Public Engagement Objectives and Approaches

The primary public engagement objectives are:

1. Learn more about the current perception of the Master Plan and Master Plan strategies
2. Collect data to best inform the County throughout the Master Plan revision process
3. Describe and explain necessity for prospective Master Plan strategies to the relevant stakeholder groups
4. Request feedback, ideas, and opinions from the stakeholder groups to:
 - a. Assess solid waste management challenges and determine strategies for diversion opportunities.
 - b. Identify barriers to implement and/or to follow prospective Master Plan strategies
 - c. Understand the level of support for prospective Master Plan strategies
5. Provide accurate, relevant, and timely information to help all of those involved understand the Master Plan revision process and prospective strategies for them to make informed comments and recommendations.

The County's Master Plan public engagement approach is designed to solicit ideas, responses, feedback, and opinions from a varied group of stakeholders. The public engagement process will bring together multiple points of view to inform Master Plan decisions, establish legitimacy to the Master Plan revision process, identify potential problems and generate solutions, and articulate and clarify key Master Plan strategies. The Master Plan process will connect the County with new collaborators and foster relationships with existing partners to encourage change and raise awareness of the Master Plan revision. The County's engagement process will include visibility, transparency of the process, appreciation of points-of-view, and will employ multiple communication methods to engage stakeholders.

The stakeholder groups affected by the Master Plan revision are varied with different and occasionally conflicting drivers and desires for outcomes. Therefore, the County will use a broad range of engagement approaches, including:

- Creating an inclusive engagement system that reflects the demographics of the County and its various stakeholder groups
- Establishing, renewing, and maintaining relationships with stakeholders

- Providing a variety of opportunities using multiple engagement techniques for all stakeholders to share diverse ideas and promote information to direct the revision of the Master Plan
- Informing, listening, inviting, and responding to feedback from stakeholders
- Incorporating feedback into the revision process or addressing it in other ways
- Providing opportunities for ongoing communication with stakeholders
- Updating stakeholders throughout the revision process to discuss and provide new information and ideas or changes and apply them proactively
- Recognizing and thanking stakeholders for the contributions during the revision process

Supportive Work Effort: Contractor services are being provided to ERD in 2016 that include conducting research and identifying educational, financial and regulatory options that have a high likelihood to divert large amounts of recyclable materials coupled with the resource cost (staff time and financial). Interviews with waste haulers and businesses will be conducted to gather more information regarding diversion habits and business practices. *The impact/cost tools and survey information will inform this stakeholder process and ultimately, the Master Plan revision.*

4. Major Groups to Engage and Methods

Because of the recent statutory changes, including an increased recycling rate from 50% to 75%, mandatory business and multi-unit housing recycling, and a focus on organics diversion, nearly everyone who works and lives in Dakota County will be affected by the Master Plan revision. Engagement efforts will explore Master Plan revisions for existing and new methods to manage waste; regulatory, financial, and educational influences; and accountability mechanisms for everyone involved in waste generation, transportation, disposal, and regulation. Stakeholder groups will be engaged depending on the proposed Master Plan strategy and implementation timeline. Specific stakeholder groups, with the priority level of engagement in parenthesis, include:

- Political. The political sector has been involved in previous Master Plan revision processes. County staff will retain responsibility to directly engage these groups.
 - Dakota County's Board of Commissioners (high). The County Board is responsible for approving the Master Plan and the members are held accountable by their constituents.
 - Dakota County Manager (high). The County manager is accountable to the County Board and manages day-to-day operations of County employees.
 - MPCA (high). The MPCA commissioner will review and approve the Master Plan.
 - Dakota County Planning Commission (high). The Planning Commission will be used for committee advice and recommendation of strategies to the Dakota County Board of Commissioners.
 - Solid Waste Management Coordinating Board (SWMCB) (medium). SWMCB counties collaborate and exchange information.
- Waste Haulers.
 - Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) haulers, approximately 43 licensed in Dakota County (high). Waste services in the County are primarily privately-owned and operated. The MPCA is focusing on County governments holding the waste industry more accountable to achieving the goals, thus they will play a significant role in the Master Plan revision.
 - Non-MSW haulers (high). The County does not license non-MSW haulers and this is a new stakeholder to engage as previous Master Plans did not set goals for non-MSW. However, the MPCA will prioritize non-MSW in the Policy Plan.

- Waste Disposal and Waste Management Facilities. Dakota County has MSW and Non-MSW waste disposal facilities, materials recovery facilities (MRFs), a transfer station, and organics management facilities.
 - MSW landfills: Pine Bend Landfill and Burnsville Landfill (high). Collaborative approaches with the privately-owned waste facilities are needed to achieve Master Plan goals.
 - Non-MSW landfills: SKB Landfill and Frattalone’s Dawnway Landfill (high). This is a new stakeholder group to engage since previous Master Plans did not focus on non-MSW. However, the MPCA will prioritize non-MSW in the Policy Plan.
 - Transfer Stations: Freeway Transfer Station and Specialized Environmental Technologies (SET) Transfer Station (high). The MPCA will emphasize transfer station capacity needs in the Policy Plan. The SET transfer station is located on land owned by the County, and managed by a land lease through 2022.
 - Recycling drop off center: The Recycling Zone is owned and operated by Gopher Resources Inc. (high). The Recycling Zone is the County’s only year-round recycling and household hazardous waste drop off for residents and businesses. Use, location, and materials will be evaluated during the Master Plan revision process.
 - MRFs: recycling management facilities owned and operated by Allied Waste and Dick’s Sanitation/Lakeville Sanitation (high). The MPCA will focus on holding the waste industry more accountable in achieving the Master Plan goals.
 - Organics management and yard waste facilities (high): ReConserve Inc./Endres Processing, SET/The Mulch Store, Sanimax, Hastings Drop-Off, Gertens R.E.S. Facility, and South St. Paul Compost Site. The MPCA will emphasize organics diversion in the Policy Plan and these facilities will play a role in achieving Master Plan goals. Because food-to-animals is higher on the waste hierarchy than composting, food-to-animal organizations will be engaged to determine their contribution to diverting organics waste.
 - Facilities outside of Dakota County that will be engaged include: OTI Yard and Tree Waste (yard waste management), Barthold Recycling (organics management), Integrated Solid Waste Management Campus (processor), Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community Organics Recycling Facility (organics).
- Internal County Departments. County staff will retain responsibility to directly engage these groups.
 - Dakota County Communications (high) will facilitate presenting timely and accurate information to stakeholders and to advance the Master Plan goals.
 - Facilities Management (medium) is responsible for waste management contracts, building design and construction/de-construction, employee and visitor operations related to waste, and housekeeping contracts.
 - Transportation (medium). The MPCA is emphasizing use of compost and shingles in road design and construction projects.
 - Purchasing (medium). The MPCA is emphasizing continued improvements in environmentally-preferable purchasing.
- Residents. Dakota County has roughly 400,000 residents.
 - Single-unit residences (high). The MPCA is considering organized collection and curbside organics pickup as part of the Policy Plan. Single-unit residents have curbside collection for recycling and trash and use haulers licensed by the municipality.
 - Multi-unit residents (high). With new multi-unit recycling mandates, this previously untapped stakeholder group will be important to engage.
 - Underserved residents, including non-native English speakers, low income households, older adults, racial-ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities (high). This new stakeholder group will help identify barriers for all residents to properly manage waste.

- Businesses.
 - Commercial entities (high). Commercial entities, primarily those that fall under NAICS codes 42-81 are impacted by the State’s Commercial Recycling Mandate and will be impacted by the Master plan strategies. In addition, the MPCA will emphasize organics diversion for businesses.
 - Landlords and commercial property owners (high). Property owners, specifically those with entities that fall under NAICS codes 42-81 including landlords of multi-unit residences, will be impacted by Master plan strategies and the State’s Commercial Recycling Mandate. In addition, the MPCA will emphasize organics diversion for commercial property owners and landlords.
 - Chambers and Trade Associations (medium). Trade associations will be instrumental in communicating engagement and Master Plan implementation with their members.
 - Hazardous Waste generators (medium): Dakota County has over 11,145 businesses that are classified as a Large Quantity, Small Quantity, Very Small Quantity, or Minimal Quantity Generator. Recycling requirements apply to these entities and County staff has regular interactions with them.
 - Industrial waste generators (medium/high). Industrial waste generators will be impacted by the Policy Plan.

- Public Entities.
 - Municipalities (high). There are 34 cities and townships within the County. County Ordinance 110 requires municipalities to develop and implement waste management practices consistent with the Master Plan. The Policy Plan will include multiple new priorities for municipalities.
 - School Districts (medium). There are 10 public school districts with schools located within the County. Recycling and organics diversion are not new to schools; however, strategies for maintaining effective programs and a focus on waste reduction, reuse, and environmentally preferable purchasing may be addressed in the Master Plan.
 - County Fair Board/Dakota County Agricultural Society (low). Recycling and organics diversion are not new to the County Fair Board; however, expanding and maintaining effective programs may be addressed in the Master Plan.

- Nonprofits, advocacy and special interest groups.
 - Food rescue organizations (medium). Since organics diversion will be a focus and because reuse is higher on the waste Hierarchy than other disposal options, food rescue organizations will contribute to diverting organics. This is a new stakeholder group for the County.

It is important to note that not all of these groups will be impacted to the same degree or have the same level of interest in the Master Plan revision process.

The table below lists engagement methods for each stakeholder group.

		Engagement Method									
		Survey	Workshop/Planned Updates	Open house	Website/e-news	Phone interview	Working Meeting	Open meeting	Producing &/or Releasing Materials	Leverage existing materials and partners	Invited speaking engagements or presentations
Stakeholder Group	Political - County Board - County Manager - MPCA - City Councils - Planning Commission - SWMCB		X						X		X
	Waste Hauler - MSW - Non-MSW				X	X*	X	X			
	Facilities - MSW landfills - Non-MSW landfills - Transfer Station - Recycling Zone - Materials Recovery - Organics Management				X		X	X			
	County Departments - Communications - Facilities Management - Transportation - Purchasing						X	X		X	
	Residents - Single-unit residences - Multi-unit residents - Underserved residents	X		X	X					X	
	Businesses - Commercial entities - Landlords and business owners - Trade Associations - Hazardous/Industrial Waste Generators	X			X	X*	X	X		X	X
	Public Entities - Municipalities - RSWC - Schools - County Fair Board				X		X		X	X	X
	Nonprofits/etc. - Food Rescue				X				X		X

* Initial engagement performed under contract as described in Supportive Work Effort, Section 3.

Anticipated engagement methods, described more specifically:

Surveys: Electronic surveys will be provided for residents and businesses. The surveys will ask a myriad of questions to gauge recycling practices currently happening in Dakota County and the direction in which residents and businesses would like the County to move in, providing a framework for Master Plan strategies.

Workshop(s): One or more workshops will be conducted and consist of interactive sessions to fully inform the County Board and Planning Commission, and for staff to gather input on the Master Plan revision process, iterative proposed strategies, and the draft Master Plan.

Open House: Residential stakeholders will be invited to attend an open house to browse information on the Master Plan revisions.

Website/e-news: The website will be dedicated to updating all external stakeholders on the revision process, upcoming meetings, and outcomes of meetings. County e-news will be used for strategically-timed information.

Phone interviews: Under Supportive Work Effort, Section 3, phone interviews of haulers and businesses will be used to gather views of current waste management practices and strategies to meet state goals.

Working Meetings: Separate working meetings will fully engage haulers, facility owners/operators, select County staff, businesses, and public entities in the revision process by inciting participation by all contributors while the Master Plan strategies are still being formed.

Open Meeting: Open meetings will inform stakeholders of possible revisions and solicit comments on proposed strategies.

Reviewing, producing and releasing materials: County staff will develop and distribute materials to explain the Master Plan revision process and potential strategies. This includes materials directed to the political sector, including Request for Board Actions to the County Board and informational guidance for nonprofits and public entities.

Leverage existing materials and partners: County staff will engage existing partners through existing interaction methods, such as: the Local Solid Waste Staff at bi-monthly meetings; SWMCB subcommittees such as the communications, multi-unit, policy staff, and event recycling subcommittees; MPCA groups such as the GREEN Group that focuses on Environmentally Preferable Purchasing and the hauler reporting group. County staff will also use existing materials to generate feedback from stakeholders such as Metro municipal/county/state residential surveys and focus groups, and SWMCB surveys and focus groups.

Invited speaking engagements or presentations: County staff will promote the Master Plan revision process and proposed strategies by accepting invitations for speaking engagements and/or presentations. These are likely to be presentations in front of municipal boards, public entity administration, business trade organizations, and internal presentations to management.

Effectively promoting and advertising the engagement opportunities will be crucial to their success. The County will assist the stakeholder engagement contractor to leverage existing resources such as the County's website, business and resident e-news, and newsletter; Municipal websites and

newsletters; Master Recycler/Composter classes; print advertising at The Recycling Zone and libraries; inspection and technical assistance site visits; and through social media. The County will create resources such as mailers for businesses and facility owner/operators and a website page dedicated to the Master Plan revision process.

5. Key Questions to Ask

Key questions for stakeholder engagement will be refined through the stakeholder engagement consulting contract based on the published draft Policy Plan. Key questions being considered for each stakeholder group include:

Engagement with political bodies will focus on:

- What are the overall goals the Master Plan should meet?
- What are various stakeholder roles and responsibilities?
- What strategies and implementation timeline is most effective in achieving Policy Plan goals?

Engagement with waste haulers will focus on:

- What infrastructure (e.g., trucks, containers, technology, etc.) limitations affect implementation of proposed Master Plan strategies?
- What are the current waste hauling cost structures?
- What cost barriers affect implementation of proposed Master Plan strategies?
- What financial, regulatory, and educational approaches should be considered to reach the Policy Plan objectives?
- What is Dakota County's role in the collection of new materials (e.g. organics)?
- What are the barriers to collecting new materials (e.g. organics) and potential strategies to overcome these barriers?
- What are the barriers to collecting accurate data?
- How has the enforcement of the Restriction on Disposal (Minn. Stat. §473.848) affected haulers?

Engagement with waste disposal and management facilities will focus on:

- What are the current and foreseeable markets for recycled materials and/or where does market development need to be focused to encourage recycling?
- What are the health and safety hazards associated with implementation of proposed Master Plan strategies?
- What is the current waste flow and capacity limitations?
- Are there any other barriers to implementation of proposed Master Plan strategies, and if so, what are potential strategies to overcome these barriers?
- How has the enforcement of the Restriction on Disposal (Minn. Stat. §473.848) affected disposal/processing facilities?
- What financial, regulatory, and educational approaches should be considered to reach the Policy Plan objectives?

Engagement with County Departments will focus on:

- How can ERD and Dakota County leverage existing and new contracts with vendors to incentivize/encourage moving waste up the hierarchy?
- How do potential Master Plan strategies impact day-to-day operations of County departments?

- How can ERD close communication loops between departments to better encourage proper waste management?
- What is the timing and level of involvement County departments envision for implementing Master Planning needs?
- Are there any barriers to implementation of proposed Master Plan strategies, and if so, what are potential strategies to overcome these barriers?

Engagement with residents will focus on:

- What are the key barriers to improved waste diversion, and what are potential strategies to overcome these barriers?
- How can Dakota County incentivize/encourage moving waste up the hierarchy?
- What are the current waste management attitudes and habits?
- How and when is the Recycling Zone used?
- What financial, regulatory, and educational approaches should be considered to reach the Policy Plan objectives?

Engagement with businesses will focus on:

- How has the requirement to collect at least three recyclable materials (Minn. Stat. §115A.151) affected businesses?
- What are the current waste management attitudes and habits?
- What are the biggest opportunities to divert more waste?
- How can business goals and waste management goals synchronize?
- How is the Recycling Zone used for businesses?
- What financial, regulatory, and educational approaches should be considered to reach the Policy Plan objectives?
- Are there any barriers to implementation of proposed Master Plan strategies, and if so, what are potential strategies to overcome these barriers?

Engagement with public entities will focus on:

- What are the current waste management attitudes and habits?
- What are the biggest opportunities to divert more waste?
- What are the legal limitations (e.g., city ordinances for organics collection, enclosure space, reuse drop-boxes, event recycling) for businesses and residents to divert waste and/or move waste up the hierarchy?
- How do state legal limitations impact public entity reuse?
- What tools (e.g., license, permit, practice, contracts) are available to institutionalize proper waste management by public entities, businesses and residents within cities/towns and how can they be improved?
- What are the current recycling and organics collection practices and opportunities in public spaces?
- What financial, regulatory, and educational approaches should be considered to reach the Policy Plan objectives?
- What is the County's role in programs that move waste up the hierarchy?
- Are there any barriers to implementation of proposed Master Plan strategies, and if so, what are potential strategies to overcome these barriers?

Engagement with nonprofits will focus on:

- What are the legal limitations in place to increase food recovery?
- What efforts could be advanced to increase food recovery?

6. Action Plan by Project Phases

- 1) Project Initiation (June 2016 - October 2016)
 - Develop public engagement plan and draft Request for Proposals (RFP.)
 - Develop and refine specific approaches for each stakeholder group.
 - Develop outreach material to engage and involve stakeholder groups based on stakeholder groups' most effective channels of communication.
 - Organize public engagement sessions.
 - Develop and conduct survey of County residents, businesses, and public entities.

- 2) Assessment and Analysis (October 2016 – January 2017)
 - Conduct public engagement as described as part of the project research phase to gauge reaction to draft Policy Plan requirements and overall interest/disinterest in various potential Master Plan Strategies

		Method of Engagement								
		Survey	Workshop/Planned Updates	Website/e-news	Phone interview	Working meeting	Open Meeting	Producing & Releasing Materials	Leverage existing materials and partners	Invited speaking engagements or presentations
Groups to Engage	Political		X					X		X
	Waste Haulers			X	X	X				
	Waste Facilities			X		X				
	County Departments					X	X		X	
	Residents	X		X				X	X	
	Businesses	X		X	X	X		X	X	X
	Public Entities	X		X		X		X	X	X
	Nonprofits							X	X	X
	Number of Sessions per group	1	1	Continual	1	1	1-2	Continual	Continual	As requested

- 3) Discussion (February 2017 – March 2017)
- Conduct public engagement to discuss specific, refined strategies.

		Method of Engagement					
		Workshop/Planned Updates	Website/e-news	Open Meeting	Producing & Releasing Materials	Leverage existing materials and partners	Invited speaking engagements or presentations
Groups to Engage	Political	X	X		X		X
	Waste Haulers		X	X			
	Waste Facilities		X	X			
	County Departments			X		X	
	Residents		X		X	X	
	Businesses		X	X	X	X	X
	Public Entities		X		X	X	X
	Nonprofits				X	X	X
	Number of Sessions	1	Continual	1	Continual	Continual	As requested

- 4) Refine strategies (April 2017)
- Refine strategies.

7. Available Resources and Budget

The Dakota County Board of Commissioners allocated \$75,000 in the approved 2016 ERD budget for Master Plan revision consulting services. ERD staff has experience with stakeholder engagement in previous Master Plan revisions, has created this proposed stakeholder engagement plan, and will contract with a consultant who specializes in public engagement to enhance and implement this plan. The ERD project team and consultant will be primarily responsible for the public engagement process. The Dakota County Planning Commission, Dakota County Board of Commissioners, Senior Management, Communications Department, and County Manager will also dedicate time for the engagement process.