



Recycling Progress Report

On the path to zero waste landfilled

April 2016



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Introduction

The Recycling Progress Report provides an update on progress made to implement Hennepin County's Solid Waste Management Master Plan. The Master Plan is intended to guide waste management in the county through 2030. The plan was adopted by the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners in April 2012.

The county is a national and regional leader in environmental protection, and the Master Plan was developed with the goal of maintaining and strengthening the county's leadership in waste management. Learn more about the Master Plan at www.hennepin.us/solidwasteplanning.

This report provides an update on the county's progress toward meeting its 2015 waste management goals, examines industry trends that impact recycling and waste diversion rates, and gives an overview of the 2015 results and 2016 strategies for the county's waste management programs.

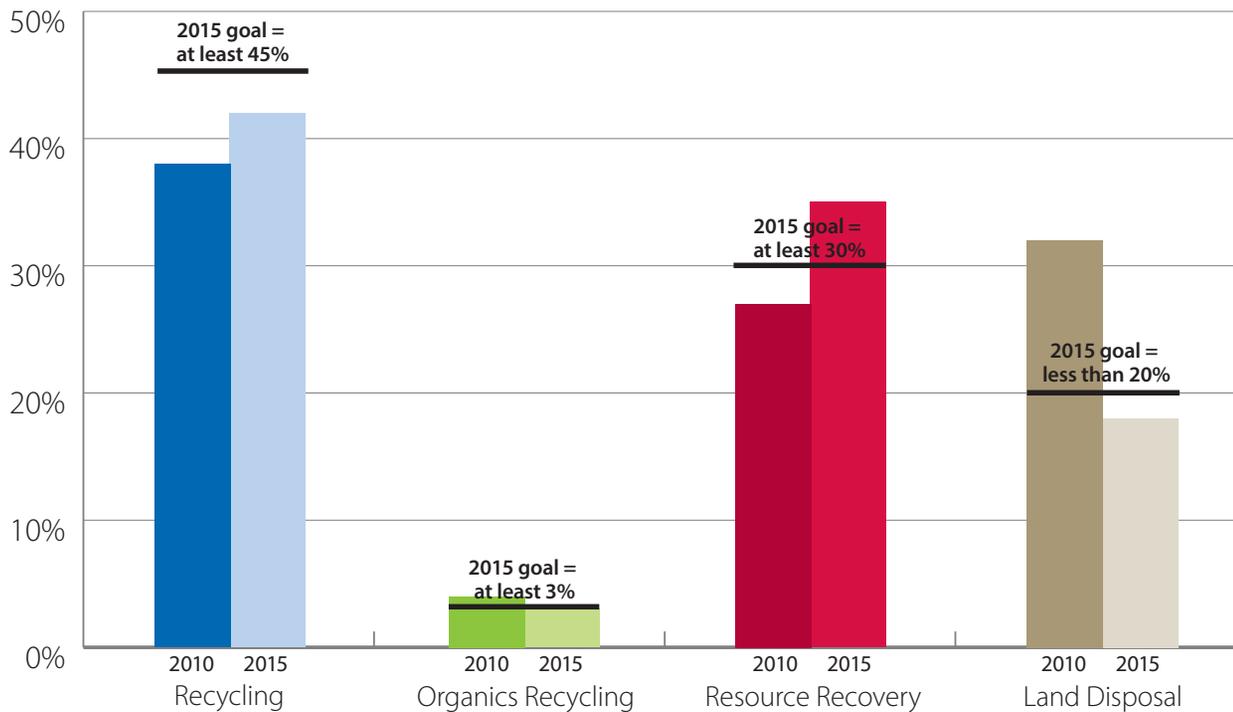


Progress toward 2015 waste management goals

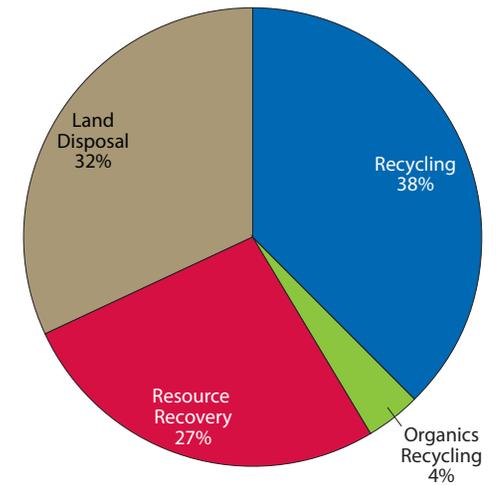
In 2011, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency approved a new solid waste management policy plan and established waste management goals for 2015. Hennepin County adopted the state's 45 percent recycling goal and set a more ambitious target of 6 percent for organics recycling.

The county has made steady progress but came up short of achieving the recycling goal. The county also did not meet its organics recycling goal but did attain the state goal of a 3 percent organics recycling rate. The county also met the state goals for resource recovery and land disposal. Overall, the county diverted 82 percent of waste from landfills, a rate on par with national leaders.

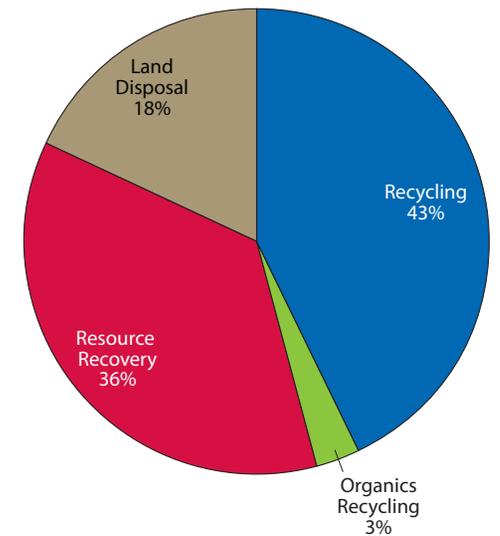
Progress toward 2015 state goals
Percent of goal



Waste management in Hennepin County
2010



2015



Waste generation

Hennepin County's goal is to reduce waste by 6 percent by 2030. Waste reduction and reuse programs focus on preventing the creation of waste in the first place and encouraging reuse. Reuse actions include renting, borrowing, repairing, buying used, donating usable goods, consigning, exchanging, trading, or giving an item away. Waste reduction and reuse have many benefits, including preventing pollution, saving energy, promoting sustainable living, avoiding disposal, and using materials to their fullest extent.

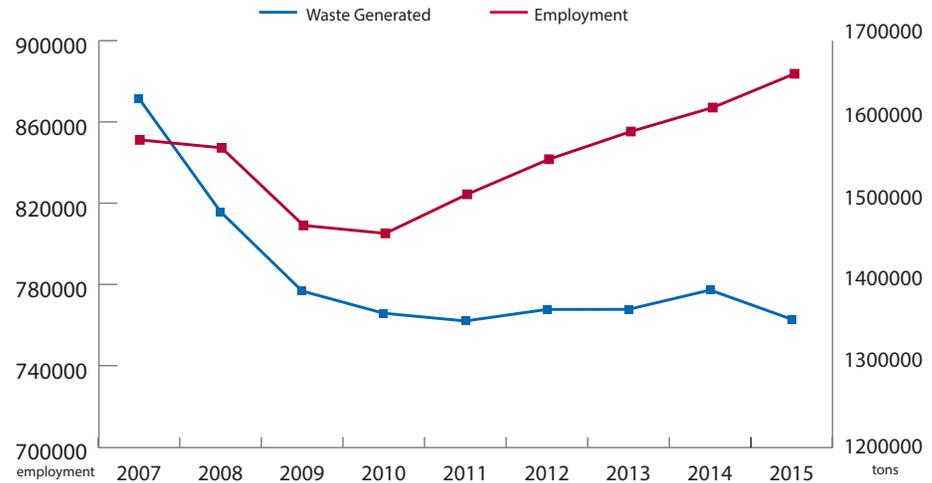
Historically, a stronger economy and increases in employment have been correlated with more waste generation. Recently, waste generation - both overall and per capita - has remained flat or slightly decreased as the economy improves, which is a positive trend.

About 1.35 million tons of solid waste was generated in Hennepin County in 2015, which is nearly 34,000 tons less than 2014. This represents a 2.4 percent decrease in waste generation. The amount of waste generated per capita decreased in 2015 compared to 2014 and is significantly below the 2007 amount of waste generated per capita. Waste generation per capita in the county has decreased by 20 percent since 2007, which is a much greater decrease than the national reduction of about 4 percent since 2007.

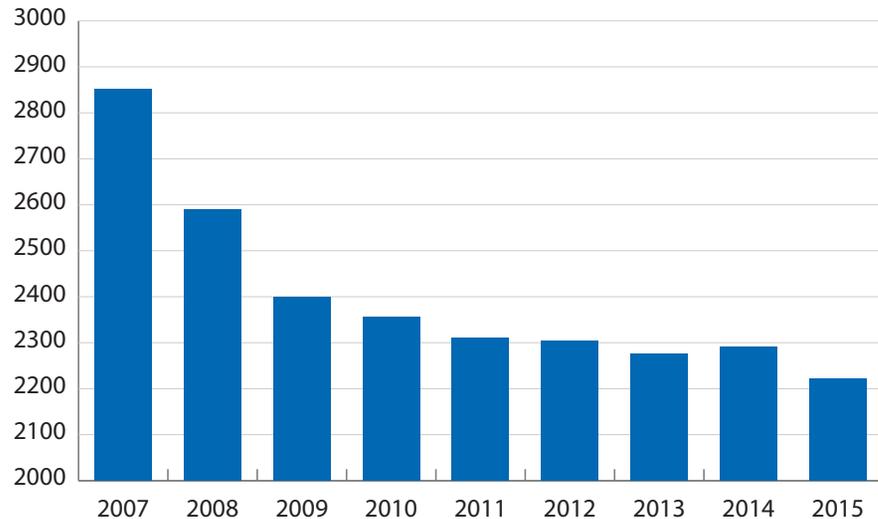
Resource recovery

There are two options for managing waste that remains after recycling and organics recycling: burning it to generate energy or burying it in a landfill. Processing waste to generate energy is environmentally preferable to landfilling and provides the opportunity to recover metal for recycling. In 2015, 485,000 tons of waste generated in Hennepin County were processed at the Hennepin Energy Recovery Center and Great River Energy.

Waste generation steady as economy improves



Waste generation in Hennepin County Pounds per capita



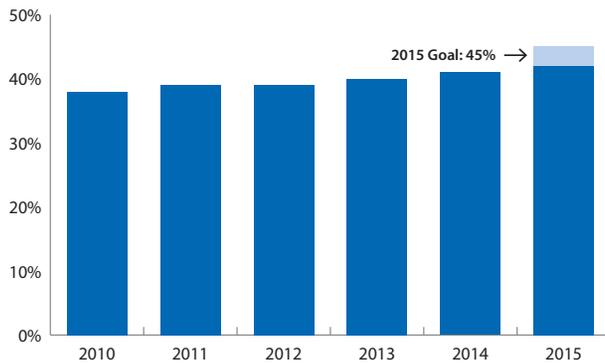
* Estimated at 1.2 million because 2014 population data is not yet available from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Recycling

Recycling increased to 43 percent in 2015. This is an increase of 2 percent compared to 2014, with 9,000 more tons of material recycled. The 2015 results continue the trend of small but consistent annual increases since 2010 when the recycling rate was 38 percent. However, this is 2 percent short of the 2015 goal.

Progress has been gradual because of several trends: newspaper in the waste stream has declined rapidly, packaging materials have gotten lighter, there is increasingly more non-recyclable plastic in the waste stream, and current market conditions for recycling are challenging. In other words, there are less recyclables by weight per ton of waste generated, so better and more recycling is required to maintain the same recycling rate.

Recycling rate over the years

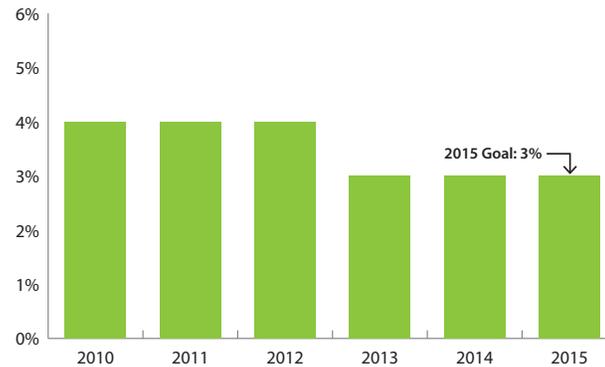


Organics recycling

Organics recycling remained at 3 percent in 2015 with a decrease of about 5,000 tons of material recycled. This is well below the county's goal of 6 percent goal, but meets the state goal.

Two opposing trends underlie the overall results: composting continues to increase and food-to-animals continues to decrease. Although organics recycling is often associated with one recycling option – composting – more than 50 percent of the organics collected in Hennepin County in 2015 were diverted to food-to-animals programs, which involve diverting food waste to hog farmers or animal-feed processors. The organics recycling rate has remained steady because increases in composting have been offset by decreases in food-to-animals.

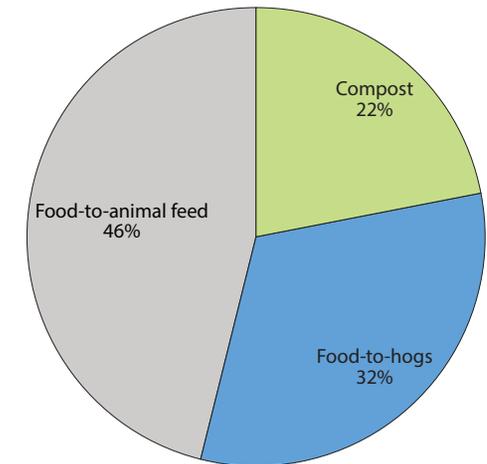
Organics recycling rate over the years



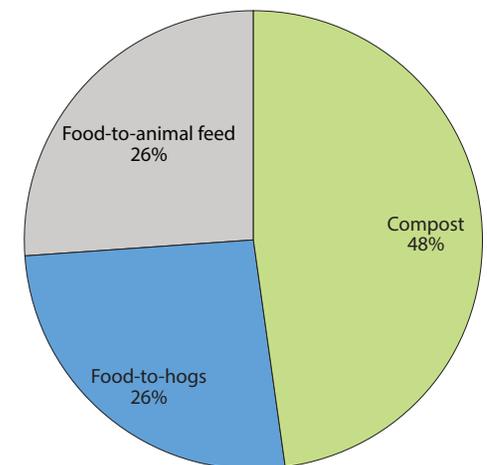
The tons of organics collected for composting increased by 17 percent in 2015. This increase reflects the impact of the county's business recycling grants program and improvements in residential organics, which increased by 45 percent in 2015 after the Phase I roll out of the Minneapolis organics recycling program. The opposite trend has been observed in food-to-animals programs, with the amount of materials collected declining by 13 percent because of changes in materials accepted at processing facilities.

Changes in how organics recycling has been managed

2010



2015



Trends in waste management impact Hennepin County

Hennepin County's ability to meet its recycling goals is impacted by trends in the waste management and recycling industries. The following trends mean that more and better recycling is required to maintain the same recycling rate. Although the county has continued to make incremental progress towards achieving its recycling goals, considering these national and international trends is important to understanding the challenges the county faces.

A recycling crisis?

A prolonged nationwide crisis in the recycling industry has been making headlines in 2015 due to a drop in commodity prices for recyclables. The prevailing story is that recycling is too expensive.

Although reports of the death of recycling have been greatly exaggerated, there a number of changes affecting the industry. These include changes in the material mix, packaging getting lighter, processing costs increasing, and commodity prices falling. Despite these changes, it is important to remember two things: the cost of recycling is far less than garbage and recycling has many benefits, particularly compared to the hidden costs of landfilling.

Average annual cost of recycling and garbage service for single-family households

Recycling	\$40
Garbage	\$200 – \$300

Changes in the material mix: more plastic, less paper

Plastic has become increasingly prevalent in the waste stream, and more than any other material, plastic causes the most confusion about recycling. Some plastics, such as plastic beverage bottles, are readily recyclable. Materials like plastic bags and film can be recycled but not in curbside programs. Other items including foam, composite or multi-layered materials, and plastic-lined products are not easily recyclable because there are currently no recycling markets for these materials.

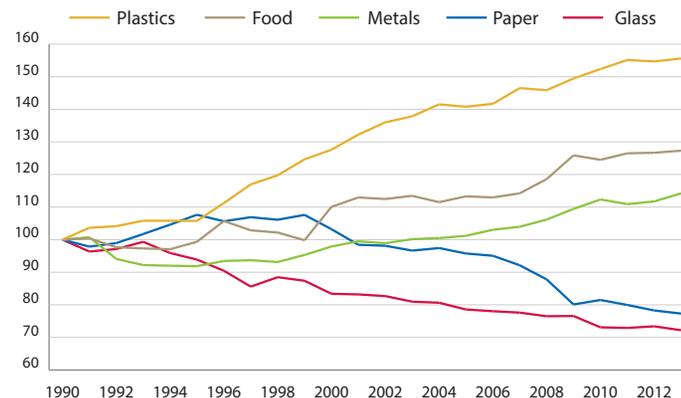
Some of the increase in plastics is related to changes in the modern lifestyle with families leading busy lives where convenience is a premium. This has changed cooking and eating habits with food often pre-made, pre-packaged, and consumed on the go. Although single-use items and individualized packaging meet the demand for convenience, they also generate more waste that is often difficult to recycle. Items are commonly packaged in plastic wrap, foil, and plastic-lined products that are generally not accepted in residential recycling programs. The increase in plastic packaging has also caused the prevalence of glass to decrease significantly over time.

On the other end of the spectrum, the amount of paper in the waste stream continues to decline. The Internet, smart phones, and e-readers have rapidly replaced print, causing newspaper subscriptions to plummet. Paper in the recycling stream has declined from about 80 percent to only 50 to 60 percent. This is true even though the amount of cardboard has increased as people receive more deliveries in cardboard boxes from online shopping services.

Another change is that food waste continues to increase, making up about one-third of the average household's trash. Unfortunately, opportunities for organics recycling are limited in most places.

All of these changes mean that there are less recyclables by weight per ton of waste generated. So people need to recycle more and better in order to maintain or increase the recycling rate. The good news is that the amount of recycling being diverted from the trash has increased, and Minnesotans are above average recyclers.

The evolving ton
Changes in waste generation of specific materials compared to a 1990 baseline.



All packaging is lighter

Making packaging materials lighter has been a prevailing trend throughout various industries. This involves both increasing the use of plastics, which tend to be lighter weight than other packaging materials, and the continued reduction in packaging materials overall.

Using less packaging materials has many benefits, including reducing the costs of materials and transportation and reducing a company's environmental footprint. So although this trend may negatively impact recycling, companies increasingly taking a life-cycle approach with the materials they use is good for sustainability overall.

Processing costs are up

Most recycling programs have switched to a single-sort system, and the system's simplicity and convenience has increased participation and the amount of recycling collected.

However, increased quantity sometimes means lower quality. Single sort has led to more contamination, especially as well-intended participants engage in "wish-cycling," which involves throwing questionable items into the recycling with the hope they will be recycled. Comprehensive education to the public is important to make sure the right materials are recycled.

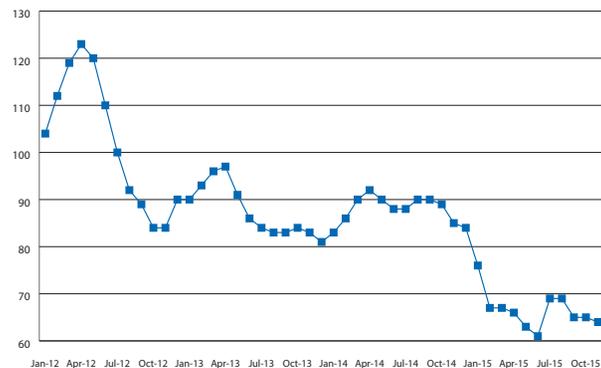
In addition to more contamination, facilities that process recycling - called materials recovery facilities (MRFs) - are also impacted by the changes in the waste stream. MRFs were designed and built for a material mix that existed more than a decade ago. In some cases, the same equipment is being used to process a waste stream that now has more plastic and less paper. The increase in plastic means more volume and less weight. This impacts profitability as processing costs are based on volume and revenue is based on weight.

Commodity prices are down

Lower commodity prices have exposed a multitude of unsustainable practices in the recycling industry. Trends such as the changing waste stream, lightweighting of packaging materials, increased contamination, and higher processing costs were tolerable when commodity prices were high. But now the recycling industry needs to adapt to these challenges. The break-even price for a ton of mixed recyclables is about \$84 per ton. The current market price is around \$69 per ton.

Although commodity prices fluctuate, some things remain the same: recycling is much cheaper and more beneficial than landfilling, there's still demand for recycled-content packaging and products, and the materials needed to make those products are still being recycled.

Commodity value per ton of mixed recyclables



Contaminants in the recycling

Top five contaminants at recycling facilities:

As the recycling industry shifts focus from quantity to quality, the following items are the greatest concern as they cause problems at recycling facilities:

1. Plastic bags and film
2. Tangles, such as cords, holiday lights, and clothes
3. Plastic film and polystyrene foam
4. Toys and bulky plastics
5. Loose shredded paper

Other recycling options may be available



Plastic bags, while not accepted in curbside recycling programs because they get caught in the machinery at recycling processing facilities, can be recycled in drop-off containers available at many grocery and retailer stores.

Residential recycling and organics

Residential recycling

Although trends in the waste industry indicate that residential recycling, which is measured in pounds per household per year, should be decreasing, the amount of materials recycled actually increased slightly in 2015. Waste industry trends that impact residential recycling include the decrease in waste generation per capita, changes in the material mix of the waste stream, reduction in the weight of packaging materials and increased contamination in recycling. To offset these trends, people need to recycle more materials to maintain the recycling rate.

The last big increase in residential recycling occurred when programs, including the City of Minneapolis, switched to single-sort recycling in 2013. Performance of residential recycling as since leveled off.

To support residential recycling programs, the county continues to partner with cities to distribute recycling guides and other messages about recycling. The county also continues to monitor and adapt educational messages and materials to changing industry trends, such as the perception that recycling is too expensive and the increased focus on quality over quantity.

2015 results

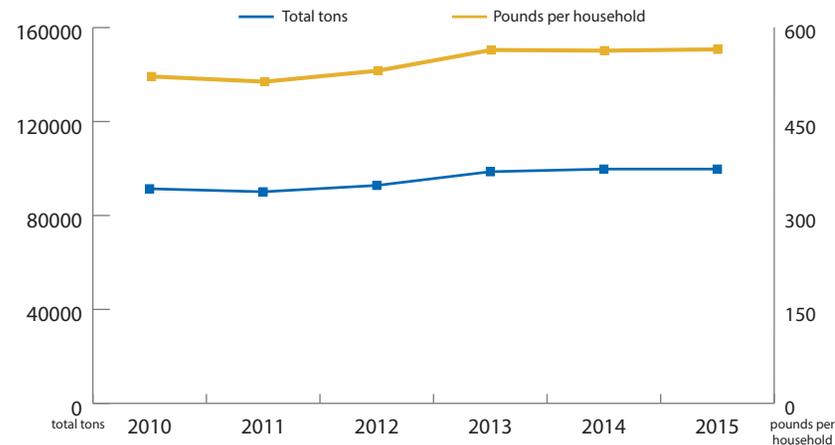
- Assisted cities with promotional efforts and sending recycling guides to all residents. Cities used county terminology and images and provided recycling messages through a variety of channels including direct mail, newsletters, website, social media, and city events. The county also distributed residential recycling labels and factsheets on various environmental topics.
- Provided technical assistance to cities on recycling RFPs and contracts. City recycling contracts allow cities to communicate consistent educational messages, provide a variety of resources, and deliver the best overall price for service. Of the 44 cities in the county, 41 contract for recycling service. Bloomington initiated the organized collection process in October 2014 but implementation has not yet begun.

2016 strategies

- Support education and outreach efforts in all cities by continuing to provide educational resources, such as recycling guides, newsletter articles, social media posts and additional materials on a variety of topics.
- Increase the amount of outreach conducted by the county on behalf of the cities.
- Review the recycling guide terminology, images, and design to reflect industry changes and style updates.
- Focus on city cleanup events as an opportunity to communicate recycling messages to residents.
- Work with underperforming cities to implement best practices, such as ensuring residents can upgrade to a large cart upon request or improving recycling information provided on city websites.
- Evaluate the metrics used to gauge city recycling performance. For example, a few cities measure both trash and recycling, which provides insights on recycling rates and waste generation per capita.



Residential recycling performance



Residential organics recycling

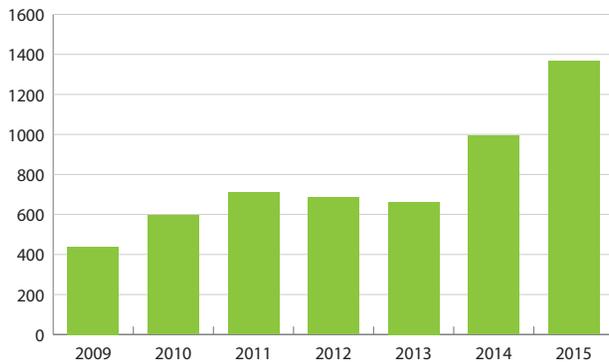
Residential organics recycling, which involves collecting and recycling food scraps and non-recyclable paper into compost, increased by 45 percent in 2015.

This increase was largely due to Minneapolis beginning the roll out of its curbside organics recycling program. All of the city's solid waste and recycling service customers can sign up to participate at no additional cost, and about 32,000 households have signed up to participate. About 25 percent of the households that have signed up received their organics recycling carts in fall 2015, and the remaining 75 percent will be able to start participating in spring 2016.

Although 100 percent of single-family households have recycling service, only 4 percent have organics recycling service. That percentage will increase as Minneapolis continues rolling out their program and other cities that have organics recycling available increase promotion of their programs.

Residential organics

Tons collected per year



2015 results

- Nearly 16,000 households participated in curbside organics recycling programs throughout the county.
- Received an additional \$800,000 in SCORE funding from the state, half of which was made available to cities with curbside organics programs. A total of 13 cities received grant funds in January 2016. Cities intend to use the funding in a variety of ways, including to promote their programs, increase educational efforts, offset the cost of service, and provide supplies such as compostable bags and kitchen pails to participants.
- Minneapolis, Wayzata, and Medina led the way in percentage of households participating by spreading the cost of organics to all households with other waste services so that households opt in to organics at no additional cost.
- Minneapolis organics tonnage increased by 84 percent in 2015. Minneapolis and St. Louis Park account for 80 percent of the total residential organics collected.

2016 strategies

- Increase opportunities for organics recycling by recommending that cities be required to offer collection of organics to all households with residential recycling by the end of 2020.
- Continue to promote and support the development of existing organics recycling programs, particularly by working with the City of Minneapolis to implement citywide residential organics collection.
- Provide assistance to cities interested in moving forward with new organics recycling programs.
- Develop organics recycling messages to increase basic knowledge and address barriers to organics recycling.

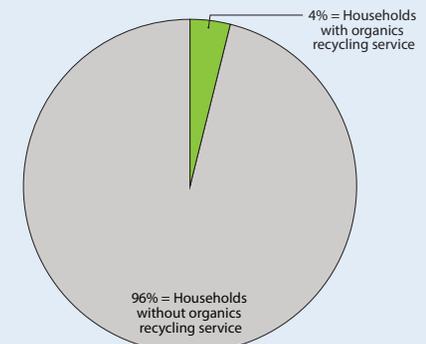
Household participating in residential organics recycling programs by city in 2015

City	Households participating	Participation rate
Minneapolis	12,113	11%
St. Louis Park	1,461	12%
Edina	500	4%
Minnetonka	489	3%
Wayzata	380	30%
Medina	261	14%
Orono	115	4%
Bloomington	88	0.3%
St. Bonifacius	71	8%
Shorewood	45	2%
Maple Plain	43	6%
Medicine Lake	32	19%
Loretto	19	7%
Total	15,617	9% average

352,000: households in Hennepin County with residential recycling service

15,617: household in Hennepin County with residential organics recycling service

Residential organics Household participation rate



Business recycling and organics recycling

A little more than half of the waste in the county is generated by businesses and organizations, and as of January 1, 2016, most commercial buildings in the county are required to recycle under state law.

Hennepin County has provided \$1.3 million in grants since fall 2013 as well as technical assistance and education materials to businesses and non-profit organizations as an incentive to implement and improve recycling and organics recycling efforts. Businesses who have received grants have successfully increased the amount of materials they divert from the trash.

In addition to offering grants and technical assistance, the county began recognizing businesses and organizations for their efforts to recycle and divert organic waste from the trash through the Hennepin County Environmental

Partners program in 2014. County staff provide onsite assistance to potential partners to ensure they are using best management practices for their recycling and organics recycling programs. Participating businesses receive decals and other outreach materials and are listed in an online directory on the Hennepin County website. The program helps businesses communicate to their customers that they care about the environment, and the online directory provides residents a way to find and support businesses that are taking action to protect the environment. The county will continue to track the recycling results of organizations that receive grants while the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has assumed responsibility for measuring overall commercial recycling.

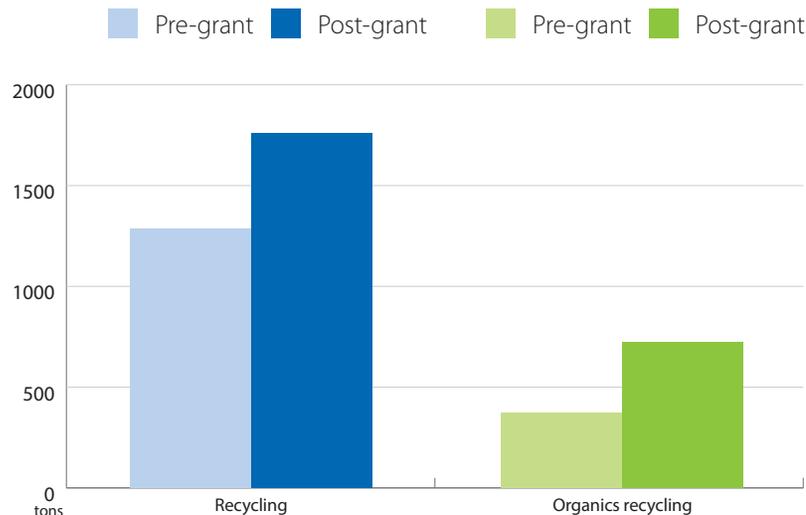
Business recycling success stories



Mercado Central, a marketplace of 45 businesses on Lake Street in Minneapolis, used a business recycling grant to make recycling bins available in every business, expand the types of materials collected for recycling, and offer a training workshop for business owners focused on improving recycling.

Tons recycled pre vs. post grant

Total for all business recycling grantees that have reported data



On average, businesses receiving recycling grants increase their waste diversion from 40 percent to 53 percent.



The 50th & France Business Association in Edina received a business recycling grant to start organics recycling at the Barrio, the Edina Cinema, Edina Grill and Salut Bar American. They used the grant to purchase a compactor for organics recycling. They diverted more than 146 tons of organics from the trash during the first year, and all of these business have been recognized as Hennepin County Environmental Partners.

Location of Hennepin County Environmental Partners

2015 results:

- Awarded \$500,000 to 61 organizations. The demand for the grants was high with all grant funding distributed after two funding rounds. The planned third funding round was cancelled.
- Consulted with 43 businesses who did not receive recycling grants to offer advice and assistance with their recycling programs.
- Distributed 17,900 signs and stickers to label recycling, organics recycling and trash containers.
- Assisted 85 businesses along Lake Street in implementing or improving recycling programs through a partnership with the Lake Street Council to target the Latino businesses community.
- Recognized an additional 123 businesses as Environmental Partners, increasing the program participation to more than 150 businesses.

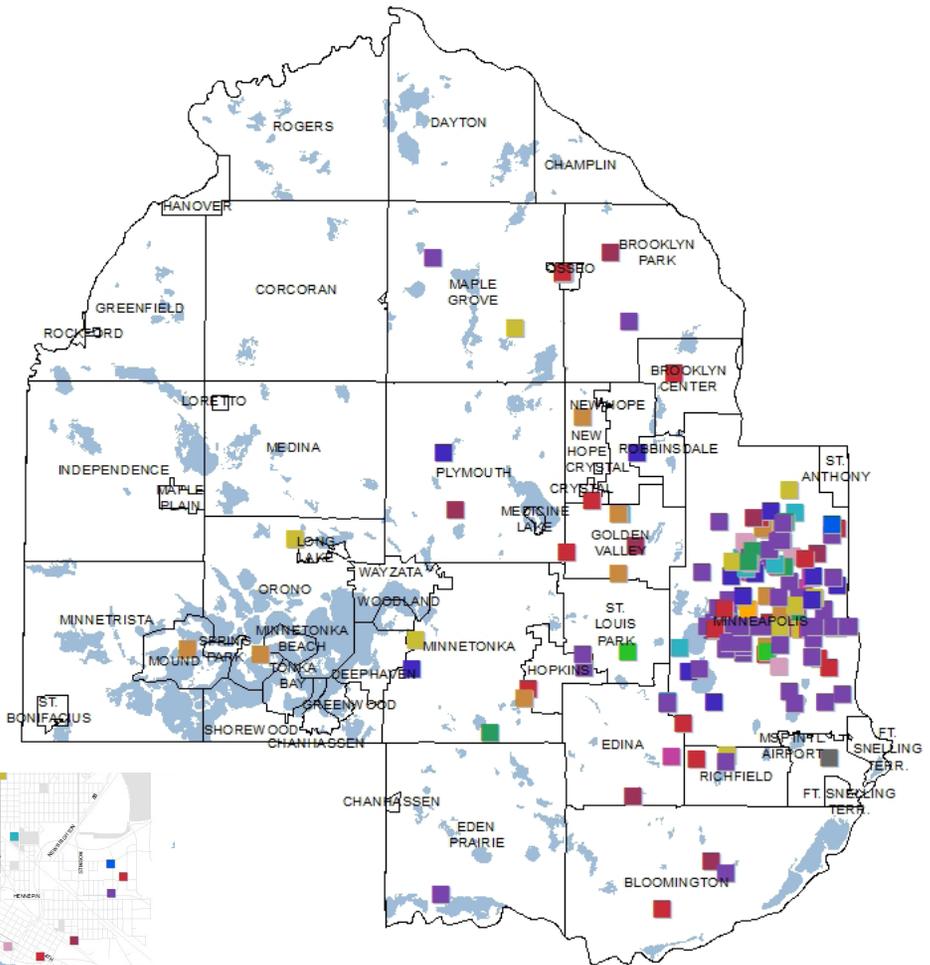
2016 strategies:

- Award up to \$750,000 in recycling grants.
- Expand efforts to target multicultural business communities and businesses serving immigrant and minority communities.
- Increase awareness of the state law requiring owners of commercial buildings to provide recycling, which went into effect on January 1, 2016.
- Develop assistance efforts and partnerships with non-profit organizations to reduce the generation of food waste.
- Double the number of businesses recognized as Environmental Partners for a total of 300 participating businesses with a special focus on increasing the geographic spread of participating businesses throughout the county.
- Increase promotion to the public of the Environmental Partners program and participating businesses.

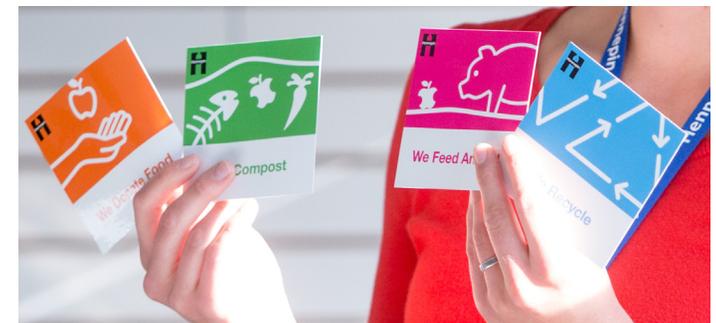
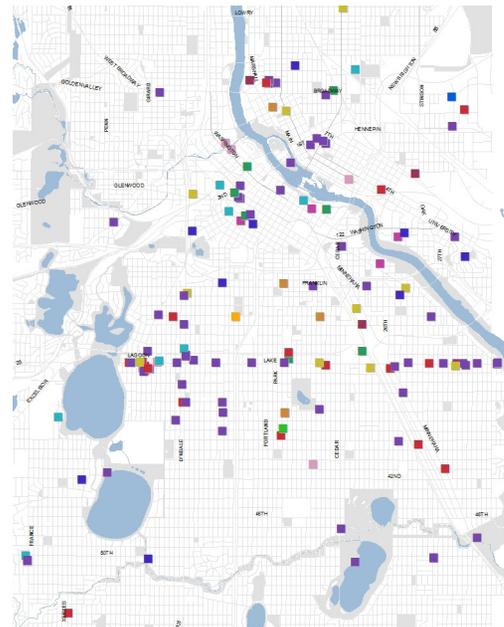
Environmental Partners

Organization Type

- Apartment building, townhouse or...
- Child care
- Congregation
- Entertainment or exercise
- Grocery store or farmers market
- Hospital or clinic
- Medical services
- Multi-tenant commercial property
- Non-profit or human services
- Office
- Other
- Restaurant, coffee shop or caterer
- Retail
- School



Minneapolis



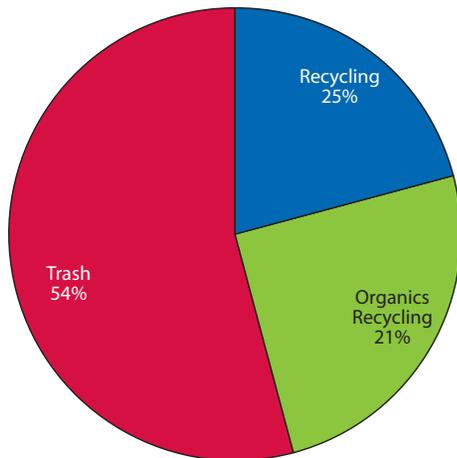
Other recycling initiatives

School Recycling

The county has provided assistance and grants to schools for recycling and organics recycling since 2002. More than 180 schools in the county collect organics for recycling. This is more than 73 percent of public schools and 20 percent of charter and private schools.

All public schools in the county were surveyed in 2015 to assess how much waste is being diverted to recycling, organics recycling and trash. The 10 school districts that responded report diverting on average 50 percent of waste to recycling and organics recycling programs. Charter and non-public schools were also surveyed but only 10 percent responded. The schools that responded report diverting on average 43 percent of waste to recycling and organics recycling. A joint Hennepin County/Minnesota Pollution Control Agency study in 2010 found that nearly 80 percent of waste generated at schools could be diverted from the trash to recycling and organics recycling programs.

Public school diversion rates



2015 results

- Awarded more than \$181,000 in grants to 44 schools to improve recycling or start organics recycling programs.
- Presented lessons on recycling and organics recycling to 2,200 students in 89 classrooms.
- Helped develop and bid out an RFP for organics collection services at 94 schools to replace collection service being discontinued by the City of Minneapolis.

2016 strategies

- Provide \$200,000 in grants to schools to improve and implement recycling and organics recycling programs.
- Continue to offer and expand topics available for classroom presentations.
- Continue to host bi-monthly school recycling meetings for school representatives to learn from their peers about methods to manage and reduce waste.

School districts achieving a 50 percent or higher diversion rate:

- Bloomington (67%)
- Edina (63%)
- Minnetonka (61%)
- St. Anthony (54%)
- Rockford (63%)
- Wayzata elementary schools (53%)

Multifamily recycling

A variety of resources, educational materials and staff assistance are available to help property managers educate residents on what is recyclable and improve recycling rates at multifamily properties. The county is also focusing on increasing reuse by piloting a program that has local reuse retailers collecting reusable materials from residents on-site at multifamily complexes.

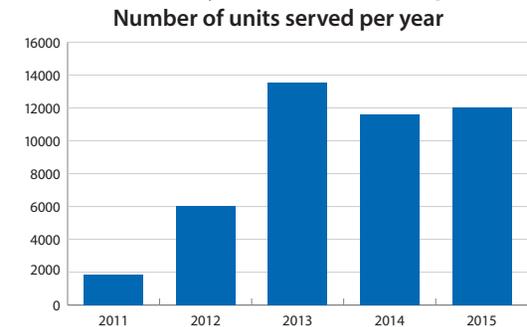
2015 results

- Provided assistance to improve recycling to more than 12,000 multifamily units in 53 complexes.
- Piloted a bulky waste reuse program to collect reusable material during move in and move out times at nine complexes, diverting more than 6,000 pounds of material for reuse.

2016 strategies

- Assist 10,000 units concentrating efforts in Brooklyn Park, Crystal, Minneapolis and New Hope.
- Expand the bulky item reuse pilot to at least 10 additional complexes.

Multifamily outreach program



45,000 multifamily units have received assistance from the county since 2011, which is 29 percent of the all the multifamily units in the county.

Public space recycling

To help make recycling more widely available, Hennepin County provides grants to public entities to start or improve recycling programs in public spaces such as parks, recreation centers and business districts. The county also has portable recycling containers available for event organizers to borrow at no cost to add recycling and organics recycling at events.

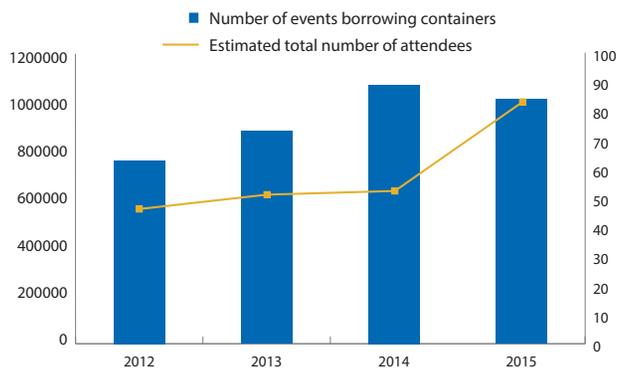
2015 results

- Awarded six grants totaling \$94,300 to cities and park districts for eight projects to improve recycling in parks and along business districts. Grants will add more than 100 recycling containers in public spaces.
- Loaned recycling containers to 84 events with a total attendance of nearly 1 million people.

2016 strategies

- Evaluate options to more cost effectively support increased recycling and organics recycling in public spaces.
- Continue to provide portable recycling units, technical assistance and Master Recycler/Composter volunteers at a minimum of 75 low-waste events.

Use of portable recycling units



Master Recycler/Composter volunteers

Master Recycler/Composter volunteers learn about waste prevention, recycling and composting from industry experts and tours of waste processing facilities during a six-week course. They then commit to volunteering 30 hours inspiring others in their communities to reduce waste, recycle more and compost through activities such as answering questions at events and designing and implementing waste reduction and recycling projects.

2015 results

- Trained an additional 63 Master Recycler/Composter volunteers.

2016 strategies

- Continue to offer regular public training courses twice per year, and offer customized training courses to partners as requested.
- Engage Master Recycler/Composter volunteers by connecting them to county and partner volunteer opportunities, improving the educational resources available for volunteers to use at events, and holding recognition events and advanced training opportunities.

Backyard composting

In order to increase backyard composting, Hennepin County Environment and Energy partners with Hennepin County Sentencing to Service to build and sell compost bins.

2015 results

- Sold about 100 compost bins at the Hennepin County Drop-off Facility in Brooklyn Park.

2016 strategies

- Sell at least at least 500 compost bins at the drop-off facility in Brooklyn Park and at about five community events in partnership with community organizations.

387: Master Recycler/Composters trained to date

5,200: Volunteer hours contributed



Waste reduction and reuse

Hennepin County offers programs like the annual Choose to Reuse campaign and monthly Fix-It Clinics to encourage waste reduction and reuse. To reach its waste reduction goals, the county also plans to target specific materials that represented the largest percentage of reusable goods found in the trash in the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's 2013 Statewide Waste Characterization Study.

Materials to target for waste reduction and reuse:

Food waste

Wood

Textiles and leather

Furniture and household goods

Choose to Reuse

Hennepin County encourages residents to support local reuse, rental, and repair retailers through the Choose to Reuse program, which includes the online Choose to Reuse Directory and annual coupon book.

2015 results

- About 43,500 coupons were redeemed during the Choose to Reuse campaign, a 28 percent increase from 2014. The 2015 Choose to Reuse campaign included 56 participating retailers at 86 retail locations.

2016 strategies

- Overhaul and relaunch the online Choose to Reuse Directory.
- Partner with at least 60 partners at 100 retail locations in the annual Choose to Reuse campaign.

Fix-It Clinics

Fix-It Clinics provide residents the opportunity to get free, guided assistance from volunteers with repair skills on disassembling, troubleshooting and fixing their broken household items, including appliances, clothing, electronics, mobile devices and more. Fix-It Clinics teach valuable repair skills, build community connections and reduce the number of repairable objects that are thrown in the trash.

2015 results

- Held monthly Fix-It Clinics with an average attendance of more than 50 people per clinic.
- Repaired 419 items – 81 percent of the items brought in – keeping 1.5 tons of materials out of the waste stream.

2016 strategies

- Hold 12 clinics throughout the county.
- Promote the clinics with a goal of 50 to 75 attendees per clinic bringing in 85 to 100 items for repair.



The Choose to Reuse campaign focused on personal reuse testimonials and was promoted through transit, online and social media ads.



Fix-it Clinic results to date (since 2013)

42 clinics

2,655 items fixed

77% of items fixed

4,274 hours volunteered

Food waste reduction

To address food waste, which is an increasing part of the waste stream, the county plans to focus outreach efforts on some of the common reasons that food waste is generated in homes. This includes people misunderstanding expiration, best buy and sell by dates, and not being familiar with food preservation techniques such as proper storage and freezing.

2016 strategies

- Educate residents on how to reduce food waste in their homes by developing resources such as learning trunks and environmental education activities for use at community events and workshops.

Bulky item reuse and repair

Bulky items, such as furniture and other household goods, can be difficult to reuse or dispose. Although reuse retailers will take some furniture, the materials accepted are limited to certain items and conditions. Additionally, many people have limited ability to transport bulky items they no longer want to drop-off sites that will take them. So the materials often end up at the curb, and items that would have been reusable quickly become trash as they are exposed to the elements.

2015 results

- Promote reuse and repair of bulky items through factsheets and the online Choose to Reuse Directory

2016 strategies

- Continue current efforts while exploring new options for keeping bulky furniture and household goods out of the waste stream.
- Find recycling options for materials that can't be repaired or reused.

Deconstruction and building materials reuse

About 800,000 tons of construction and demolition waste is generated every year in the Twin Cities metro area, and about 70 percent of that waste ends up in landfills. Although some materials, including concrete, asphalt, and steel, are separated for recycling at construction and demolition waste transfer stations and landfills, many additional materials have the potential to be separated, reused or recycled from the construction and demolition waste stream.

2015 results

- Minimized the amount of waste sent to landfills by contracting with Better Futures Minnesota to partially and fully deconstruct 16 homes throughout the county. Deconstruction efforts diverted nearly 78 tons of materials to reuse and 1,300 tons to recycling.
- Hennepin County Community Works Land Acquisition staff developed bids and sold four single-story homes the county procured during a road construction project on CSAH 53 (66th Street) in Richfield to a house mover to be relocated. The main part of the houses will be reused and the concrete foundation will be recycled.

2016 strategies

- Continue to compile data on deconstruction techniques and benefits based on results and cost analysis of homes deconstructed by Better Futures.
- Create promotional materials to demonstrate the deconstruction process, including online tools and resources for the public, cities and building professionals about waste diversion during home remodeling and construction projects.
- Develop a construction and demolition waste policy for county facilities, operations and properties.
- Create a factsheet for building code officials in Minneapolis and other cities to inform demolition permit applicants about the options and benefits of salvage and deconstruction.



Household hazardous waste

To ensure proper disposal of hazardous items, the county operates two permanent drop-off facilities in Bloomington and Brooklyn Park where residents can get rid of electronics, appliances and household hazardous wastes. To provide more convenient local disposal options, the county also offers collection events at various sites throughout the county. Additionally, the county collects household batteries at libraries and community centers and provides disposal of medicines at drop boxes and collection events at senior living facilities.



2015 results

Drop-off facilities and events

- Served more than 139,000 residents and collected more than 1,500 tons of household hazardous waste at county drop-off facilities.
- Served 4,600 residents and collected 128 tons of household hazardous waste at five community collection events held in Minneapolis, Minnetonka, Shorewood and St. Louis Park.

Electronics

- Collected more than 4.4 million pounds of electronic waste.
- Generated nearly \$128,330 in revenue by initiating a \$10 recycling fee for computers, laptops and televisions to support the county's efforts to responsibly recycle electronic waste.
- Started using the state contract for managing electronics.

Pharmaceuticals

- Collected nearly 20,000 pounds of medicines, an increase of 4,000 pounds compared to 2014.
- Supported the Maple Grove Police Department in adding a medicine drop box, which collected 835 pounds of medicines.
- Held 33 medicine collection events at senior living facilities, collecting 395 pounds of medicines.

Paint

- PaintCare partnered with local hardware stores to increase the availability of disposal options for paint.
- Hennepin County received \$767,000 dollars from PaintCare for costs related to paint disposal from November 2014 through December 2015.

2016 Strategies

- Hold eight collection events to continue to provide convenient disposal options for household hazardous waste.
- Work with partners to restore the original intent of the electronic waste law, ensuring manufacturer are held to meaningful obligations to cover costs of managing and recycling electronics.
- Begin collecting medical sharps at the Hennepin County Drop-off Facilities.
- Partner with Call2Recycle to promote the recycling of alkaline and rechargeable household batteries.
- Continue to offer medicine disposal and hold medicine collection events at senior living facilities to support the needs of the aging county population.



Education and outreach

Hennepin County promotes environmental stewardship by raising awareness about changes in recycling programs, generating excitement about waste reduction and partnering with organizations in the community to motivate behavior change.

Recycle Everywhere campaign

The fourth year of the county's recycling campaign encouraged residents to recycle in every room of their house and offered tips on recycling more from the bathroom, laundry room and home office. The \$300,000 advertising campaign was promoted August through October through cable TV, radio, online marketing and event outreach.

2015 results

- Received 42.2 million consumer impressions, \$60,000 worth of in-kind placements from advertisers and 17,000 visits to the web page.
- Filled 850 orders of 37,000 recycling guides, labels, bags and other educational materials for residents. Nearly one-third of residents who placed orders indicated they were going to give some of the resources to family or friends.
- Generated excitement by bringing a "selfie station" to community events where residents posed for photos using props illustrating the recyclability of different materials throughout the home.
- Partnered with the Minnesota Twins to offer the Recycling VIP sweepstakes. More than 600 residents registered to win tickets to a game, take a recycling tour of Target Field and meet Torii Hunter.

2016 strategies

- Continue to promote the Recycle Everywhere messages and residential recycling educational resources.
- Consider transitioning the focus of the campaign to residential organics for 2017.



Green Partners

Through the Green Partners Environmental Education program, Hennepin County provides funding, activities supplies, field trip transportation and project support to organizations that empower residents to reduce waste and increase recycling.

2015 results

- Partnered with 76 community groups to provide environmental education by providing grants, supplies and field trip transportation. These projects engaged more than 33,000 people. Many of these partner organizations reach underserved populations, including youth, seniors, multicultural residents and low-income individuals.
- Hosted networking meetings to showcase the county's educational resources and the department's services. These meetings were attended by community members representing 47 organizations.

2016 strategies

- Develop new peer-to-peer outreach resources to support community groups conducting outreach on residential organics programs.
- Award up to \$250,000 in environmental education grants through funding rounds in the spring and fall.
- Update the county's environmental education activity guides and learning trunks based on feedback gathered from partners.

Of the 98 Green Partners grants awarded since 2012:

58 projects have primarily engaged youth audiences

62 projects have reached underserved audiences

Outreach and communication efforts

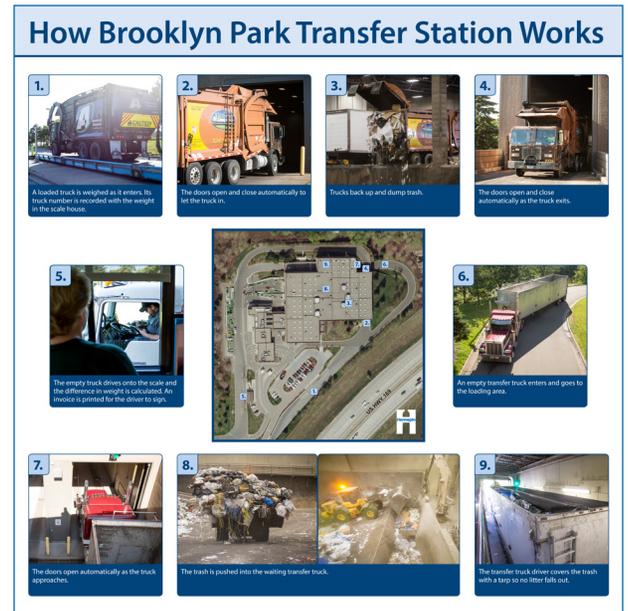
Outreach efforts engage our community and partners in developing the knowledge, skills, attitudes and motivation to work individually and collectively towards sustaining a healthy environment.

2015 results

- Reached more than 4,000 residents at 55 community events where the county conducted outreach or staffed an educational table.
- Provided tours of the Hennepin County Drop-off Facility in Brooklyn Park or the Hennepin Energy Recovery Center to more than 650 participants.
- Redesigned the visitor center at the drop-off facility in Brooklyn Park to integrate more educational displays and hands-on activities.
- Launched the Green Disposal Guide, an online guide to help residents find information on the best way to recycle, reuse or dispose of household items.
- Provided multicultural communications by translating pieces of literature into languages including Cambodian, Hmong, Lao, Somali, Thai and Vietnamese.
- Partnered with the Spokesman Recorder to bring stories highlighting environmental actions taken by African American community members to 40,000 readers.

2016 strategies

- Continue our presence at community events and through presentations.
- Advance inclusive outreach to engage multicultural, low-income and other traditionally disadvantaged communities to mobilize around environmental issues.



One of the displays created for the redesigned visitor center at the Brooklyn Park Drop-off Facility.



Urban Strategies, a Green Partners grantee, helped organize residents of the Heritage Park Neighborhood to participate in the Minneapolis Earth Day Clean up.

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