



PLANNING FOR A WASTE-FREE FUTURE

Purpose of the Plan

Every county in the state of Michigan is required to have an approved Solid Waste Management Plan. The main purpose of a plan is to make sure each county has adequate disposal capacity for any waste generated within the county; to set goals for waste reduction and recycling; and to protect public health. The existing Washtenaw County Solid Waste Management Plan was approved in 2000. Since then, the state has not required a plan update however a county can initiate a plan amendment for any reason.

To support the plan goals, the County has implemented dozens of programs and initiatives to safely handle hazardous wastes and provide outlets other difficult to recycle items. In 2016, these programs have directly served 6,000 residents, safely disposed of 227 tons of hazardous waste and electronics waste, and diverted almost 20 tons of shrink wrap, pharmaceutical waste, and recyclables from schools and special events.



EWASHTENAW.ORG/PUBLICWORKS
E: PUBLICWORKS@EWASHTENAW.ORG
P: 734.222.6860

The Solid Waste Planning Process

The Washtenaw County Solid Waste Planning Committee (SWPC) was convened in August 2015 to prepare a solid waste management plan amendment in response to a request to expand the Arbor Hills Landfill. In September 2016, the Arbor Hills Landfill withdrew its option to request an expansion, however by opening the plan, the County continued to be committed to the update of outdated sections of the county's 1999 plan.

During the planning period, it was important to seek input from the public. The County provided many opportunities for public feedback including an online survey and by rotating the meeting locations around the County. The feedback received from the public coincided with the Solid Waste Planning Committee's analysis of solid waste and recycling related activity within the county. Convenience of programs, more opportunities to recycle, more education and outreach, and reducing need of landfills were priorities of both groups. The public feedback was incorporated into the plan specifically in the development of plan goals and guiding principles.

WASHTENAW COUNTY BY THE NUMBERS

Current Recycling Rate
in County (residential)

33%

*More than doubled
since the 2000 SWMP*

Tons
Requiring Disposal

291,771

Percent of County Population
with Curbside Recycling

66%

*(population that receives municipal
or contracted collection)*



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Guiding Principles

A set of guiding principles were developed that are at the core of what this plan amendment seeks to achieve.

- **Access and Convenience:** Programs and services that support proper disposal of waste and diversion of recoverable materials must be accessible and convenient for County residents, businesses, agencies, and institutions to utilize.
- **More Diversion and Recovery, Less Disposal:** Additional programs and services will increase the diversion of recoverable materials, and may require additional infrastructure, funding, and outreach. Increasing diversion opportunities will contribute to a reduced need for disposal and preserve capacity at existing disposal facilities available to the county.
- **Education and Outreach:** Education and outreach around available programs and services is necessary to ensure proper participation. Education and outreach can also contribute to an increase participation as well as illustrating the impacts that programs and services make.
- **Data and Measurement:** Measurement systems and processes will be investigated and implemented as needed to establish realistic and measurable goals for regular evaluation for successes, challenges, improvements and opportunities.
- **Funding:** Adequate funding is required to support the Selected System. Using a variety of available methods as well as developing an adequate reserve of funds will support programs and services in challenging times.
- **Coordination and Collaboration:** Coordination and collaboration are opportunities to expand while managing costs. Working together can have a greater impact than an individual community pursuing programs on their own. This also applies within the county and outside of the county, where regional efforts and collaboration should occur to benefit as many users as possible.

UPDATES IN THE 2017 SWMP

- Flexibility to handle emerging waste issues
- Emphasis on education and outreach for all ages and improved data collection
- Plan implementation with active committee support and guidance

We Want to Hear from You!

The draft plan amendment is available for your review and comments at ewashtenaw.org/publicworks or in person at the Western Washtenaw County Service Center, 705 N. Zeeb Road. Please provide comments via email at publicworks@ewashtenaw.org; by mail or in person at one of the upcoming public information meetings (please visit website for more information).