



HENNEPIN COUNTY
MINNESOTA



Mapping a zero-waste future

Hennepin County Board Briefing January 12, 2023



Today's presentation and discussion

- Describe the Zero Waste Plan development process
- Review community engagement activities and key findings
- Review scan of communities with high recycling rates and gaps in the county's system
- Discuss recommended strategies to advance a zero-waste future
- Discuss policy options and next steps

Today's presenters



Carolyn Collopy
Hennepin County
Waste Reduction and
Recycling Manager



**Antonia
Apolinário-Wilcoxon,
Ed. D**
Equity Strategies
Diversity, Equity and
Inclusion Consultant
Community group cohort
facilitator



Juri Freeman
Resource Recycling
Systems (RRS)
Solid waste consultant

Developing an operational map to zero waste

Getting to zero waste will require transformative changes

- 1.3 million tons of waste created in the county in a year – enough to fill Target Field more than **11** times.
- We recycle or compost 39% of this waste



Process guided by the county's Racial Equity Impact Tool (REIT)

- Clearly define the plan's goals, objectives and measurable outcomes
- Engage the community in the decision-making process
- Consider who benefits and who is burdened by the plan's actions
- Examine potential unintended consequences of implementing the plan and develop actions to advance racial equity and mitigate those unintended negative consequences
- Design actions that are informed by data and driven by the community with maximum impact
- Develop mechanisms to track and report on progress/impact for transparency and accountability



The current system doesn't work for everyone

- Disparities in access to services, especially in multifamily settings
- Those who generate the waste don't take equitable responsibility for managing the waste
- The current system makes zero-waste lifestyle choices difficult
- Some residents are more burdened by the impacts of this system



Plan development process



- Community conversations
 - Online engagement
 - Industry stakeholder meetings
 - Solid waste system research
- Work group meetings
 - Actions development
 - Actions analysis and refinement
 - Cohort actions review

Community engagement approach

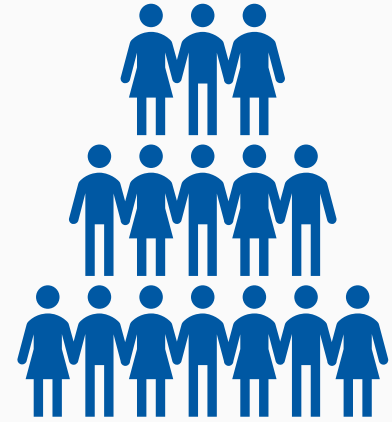
Phase I: community-led engagement



18
community
groups



31
conversations



500
participants

Community group cohort organizations



- Action to Equity
- Audubon Neighborhood Association
- Center for Hmong Arts and Talent
- Climate Generation/Youth Environmental Activists of Minnesota (YEA! MN)
- Community Power/MN EJ Table
- Congregations Caring for Creation
- Eastside Neighborhood Services
- Ebenezer Oromo Evangelical Church
- Encouraging Leaders
- Lao Assistance Center of Minnesota
- Little Earth Protectors
- McKinley Community
- MN Renewable Now
- NoMi Roots
- Off The Blue Couch
- Somali American Women Action Center
- Resilient Cities and Communities with Inquilinx Unidxs por Justicia
- Thai Cultural Council of Minnesota



Key learnings from community conversations

- Equitable access and participation
- Consistent and relevant messaging, marketing, and educational programming
- Incentives to reward people for doing the right thing

"Not having access to all the bins needed to separate garbage from recycling gets in the way of recycling more."

"Recycling is difficult when you don't know what to recycle"

"I'd really like to compost, but it is difficult to do. How do I do that if there are no bins nearby?"

"Incentives! Get caught disposing of your trash properly."



Key learnings from community conversations

- Funding for collaborative efforts across neighborhoods to build communities
- Concerns about HERC's impact on the surrounding community
- Continued community engagement in the process to ensure transparency and accountability

"How do we help these different community-based organizations to partner, not only during the plan development but also in implementation?"

"Don't just think about these communities as communities that are harmed - communities that are under stress, but also communities that have incredible power and if that power is identified, and they're brought in, in a different way, I think it could really transform this more into a movement."

"The HERC should be moved, especially with people's health in this area. And the city is getting more heavily populated. It's not improving. More trash, more lungs to hurt. Needs to be gotten rid of."

"How is this information gonna be used to change things? And how are things going to be different for our communities?"

Centering community voice with the cohort



- Provided input throughout the process
- Based initial actions and work group themes on their engagement findings
- Recruited residents to participate in Phase II action planning work groups
- Reviewed the refined actions for alignment with their engagement findings

Online engagement efforts

457 site visitors from 29 cities contributed through surveys, stories, and ideas shared

Key learnings

- More recycling options are needed, especially at home
- Plastics are the most confusing and frustrating
- Hold businesses accountable for the materials they create, especially packaging
- Change the cost structure and offer incentives
- Increase education and outreach
- Focus on better consumption and reuse over recycling

BeHeardHennepin.org

The screenshot displays the BeHeardHennepin.org website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with tabs for 'NEWS AND UPDATES', 'IDEAS', 'SURVEY', 'WASTE STORIES', and 'HAVE A QUESTION?'. The main content area features a survey titled 'What items do you find the most confusing to recycle, compost or dispose of?' with social media sharing icons. Below the survey title, there is a grid of user-submitted ideas. Each idea card includes the user's name, the date it was posted, the text of the idea, and a comment count with a heart icon for likes. The ideas include:

- Condo Resident** (5 months ago): "I live in a condo and thus no city services. We recycle paper and plastics, but no compost. All trash service should have composting."
- cts** (5 months ago): "Mailing bags (seem like vinyl but are flexible & stretchy. Often have recycling symbols on them, but can they go in my plastic bag recycling?"
- Recycling nazi** (4 months ago): "How to make separating trash a habit? Teach young children, parents first. Elders need motivation, incentives. Convenience is key."
- EJ** (5 months ago): "Tetrapak Cartons: The messaging on the cartons is confusing. Sure, they're MADE of recycled material, but can they be recycled again? I feel like the..."
- Heather R** (5 months ago): "Plastic shopping bags: I wish we could recycle these curbside but I know the goal is to use less of them."

At the bottom of the ideas grid is a 'View All Ideas' link. To the right of the main content area, there is a sidebar with a 'Submit' button at the top. Below it is a 'STAY INFORMED' section with a megaphone icon, a subscription form with the text 'Subscribe for project updates', an email input field, and a 'Subscribe' button. Below the subscription form, it says '30 members of your community are following this project'. Further down is a blue banner with the text 'Help us reach our goal of diverting 90% of waste from landfills and incinerators'. At the bottom of the sidebar is a 'Who's Listening' section featuring a profile picture of Jessica Arika, her name, title 'Zero Waste Community Group Cohort Project Lead', and email 'jessica.arika@hennepin.us'.

Solid waste system research

Industry and other stakeholder feedback

Key learnings

- Zero waste is supported, and urgent action is needed
 - The current system is not equitable
 - Barriers to zero waste need to be addressed
 - County role in developing and maximizing infrastructure
 - Progress on policy efforts to:
 - hold producers responsible for the materials they make
 - create economic incentives
 - establish disposal bans
 - diversion requirements
 - mandatory programs
- 170 participants – 10 meetings
- Material processors
 - Haulers
 - Environmental advocates
 - Construction and demolition businesses
 - Multifamily properties
 - Small and large businesses
 - Reuse industry

Strategies from high performing communities

	Hennepin, MN	King County, WA	San Jose, CA	Washington, DC	Alameda County, CA	Toronto, Canada	Rotterdam, Netherlands
Diversion rate	39%	48%	52%	25%	64%	55%	N/A
Mandatory programs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Disposal bans		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Food waste focus	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Trash sorting to recover more recyclables		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Packaging producer responsibility, upstream policies			✓		✓	✓	✓
Control of the system		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓

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Other highlights from high performing communities

- Focus on equity to increase access and opportunities
- Support regional, circular economy (end markets and small businesses)
- Emphasize construction and demolition materials
- Pursue variety of solutions to address challenges with recycling and participation in multifamily settings, but no single solution has proven most effective.
- Support innovations in education and outreach

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County successes and areas for improvement

	Collection	Processing	Education and Outreach	Policy	End markets	Partnerships
Successes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curbside services – trash, recycling, organics • Drop-offs • Consistent single stream • Multifamily and business grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disposal facilities • Transfer stations • Drop-offs/HHW • MRFs/compost facilities • Construction/demo material facilities • Processing capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent guidelines and other resources • Social marketing and channels • Green Partners education grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solid waste fees • Hauler licensing • Recycling requirements (Ordinance 13) for cities, multifamily, food generators • State level statutes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local markets • Regional markets • Material transportation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City and county collaboration • State grant funding • Local stakeholder groups
Areas for improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service costs • Open hauling • Multifamily and business • Equitable access – drop-offs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reuse infrastructure • Organics processing • Equitable distribution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools, multifamily, businesses • Equitable access – messages, messengers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay as you throw, service cost • Producer responsibility • Market development • State level statutes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Markets needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organics • Construction/demolition materials • Reuse • Plastics • Textiles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manufacturers/brands • Private funding • Contract innovations • Community-led initiatives

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Phase II: Develop actions



Work groups develop the actions

- Work groups organized around themes from Phase I findings
- 167 participants, balance of community members, representatives from businesses and government, other subject experts
- Collectively identified solutions to move to zero waste

The screenshot displays a virtual meeting interface with a central mural board titled "Actions & Programs" and "Refine & Build on Action". The board is organized into a grid of cells, each containing a policy action and associated refinement notes. The actions include:

- EXAMPLE ACTION:** Implement a program to, amass, donate and recycle used books
- 4. C&D Policy – Deconstruction:** Work with cities and state agencies to adopt policies that prioritize and incentivize building deconstruction over demolition
- 1. Advance Disposal Fee:** Adopt ordinance that places a fee on the sale of certain disposables, potential litter, or toxic items, such as disposable shopping bags, fast food wrappers, cigarettes, pesticides. Fee covers end of life and creates disincentive for purchase
- 6. C&D Policy - Minimum Diversion Requirement:** Require construction and demolition projects over a size threshold to recycle or divert a min. % of total materials; diversion could be source separated or sorted after collection at a mixed waste processing facility; consider using a deposit fee system to increase adoption.
- 53. Mandatory Compost:** Require that households and / or businesses properly separate food scraps and food soiled paper from the trash; consider accompanying this with a disposal ban

Refinement notes and additional actions include:

- Include magazines, not just books
- Work with school districts to get books to kids
- Distribute books & mags at adult shelters & city spaces, Mobile library
- Use a mobile collection vehicle to provide service to lower income areas
- Should include educational component - Work with cities and state agencies to both educate policy makers on the purpose and value of deconstruction leading to the adoption of ...
- Specifically call out ordinances as the policy at a city level
- Include "green materials" like green concrete and high quality materials in new building as well
- Establish requirements for material reuse that compliment deconstruction policies
- Phase in quality materials requirements but move deconstruction faster by restricting landfill option
- draft code for consider home tea at point
- Revise to focus on areas where consumer has a choice, such as disposable bags. Action should include statement covering where the revenue from the ban are spent - revenues should have a direct impact on growing recyclable programs
- Implement a charge for bags at retail locations
- All packaging that is not recyclable should have fees
- Address batteries, specifically in e-cigs that start fires
- Prefer an \$50 reuse with fees on products. If a fee is placed on certain items at point of purchase, what will happen to the fee collected? it should be placed into an organization that wins on furthering waste diversion and education.
- Require waste management plans be submitted prior to beginning of project that estimates how much C&D will be generated and how it will be managed.
- Change from charging a general fee to rewarding recycling. I like concept of requiring a plan up front with the incentive that a fee is only charged to those not achieving the % required. Perhaps a tiered fee approach, fee increases as % of recycling drops.
- Add a fee per sq ft for every part of the building that is removed if the structure being removed is still usable and could have been renovated or modified through adaptive reuse. If it's removing a building to just build a slightly different version of the same building (or knocking down a smaller house to build a bigger house), add a fee for the entire cost of that choice.
- Utilize LEED program to incentivize and create policy
- Consideration for lack of space for separate containers
- Incentivizing restaurants and food distributors towards food-to-feed programs instead of involving additional cost
- Need to have an exemption for those that compost in backyard
- The county needs to lead here. There is disconnect between city/haulers/resident interest and access to resources
- Not a pure priority
- Make it easier to be organic food market provide programs, encourage organ growing, if you can, compostable, reduced carbon footprint for re-back, authority fees to get to market.

Screenshot of policy work group using a mural board to review, refine and build on strategies in a virtual meeting

Zero Waste Plan aims



Create a materials management system that reduces racial disparities and advances equity



Expand the reach of county waste education, grants, and programs



Adopt policies that accelerate the transition to a zero-waste future



Implement programs to advance circularity, reduce waste, and support reuse

Recommended actions



Aim: Create a materials management system that reduces racial disparities and advances equity

14 actions included in the draft plan

- Expand drop-off options
- Increase access to organics recycling options for multifamily residents
- Establish and maintain community equity panel
- Establish milestones to phase out the use of HERC as county approaches zero waste
- Expand funding and support for community-centric solutions
- Expand workforce development for living wage green jobs



Aim: Expand the reach of county waste education, grants, and programs

15 actions included in the draft plan

- Improve marketing of grant programs
- Improve compliance with recycling requirements (Ordinance 13)
- Expand reach of waste education programming
- Expand partnerships to provide culturally relevant outreach
- Develop large scale organics processing infrastructure



Aim: Adopt policies that accelerate the transition to a zero-waste future

17 actions included in the draft plan

- Support the transition to organized collection
- Develop and implement county plan to eliminate food waste
- Mandate participation in recycling and composting programs
- Adopt a single-use ban and zero-waste packaging for food service
- Prioritize Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) (state level)
- Advocate for minimum diversion requirement for construction and demolition projects (state level)



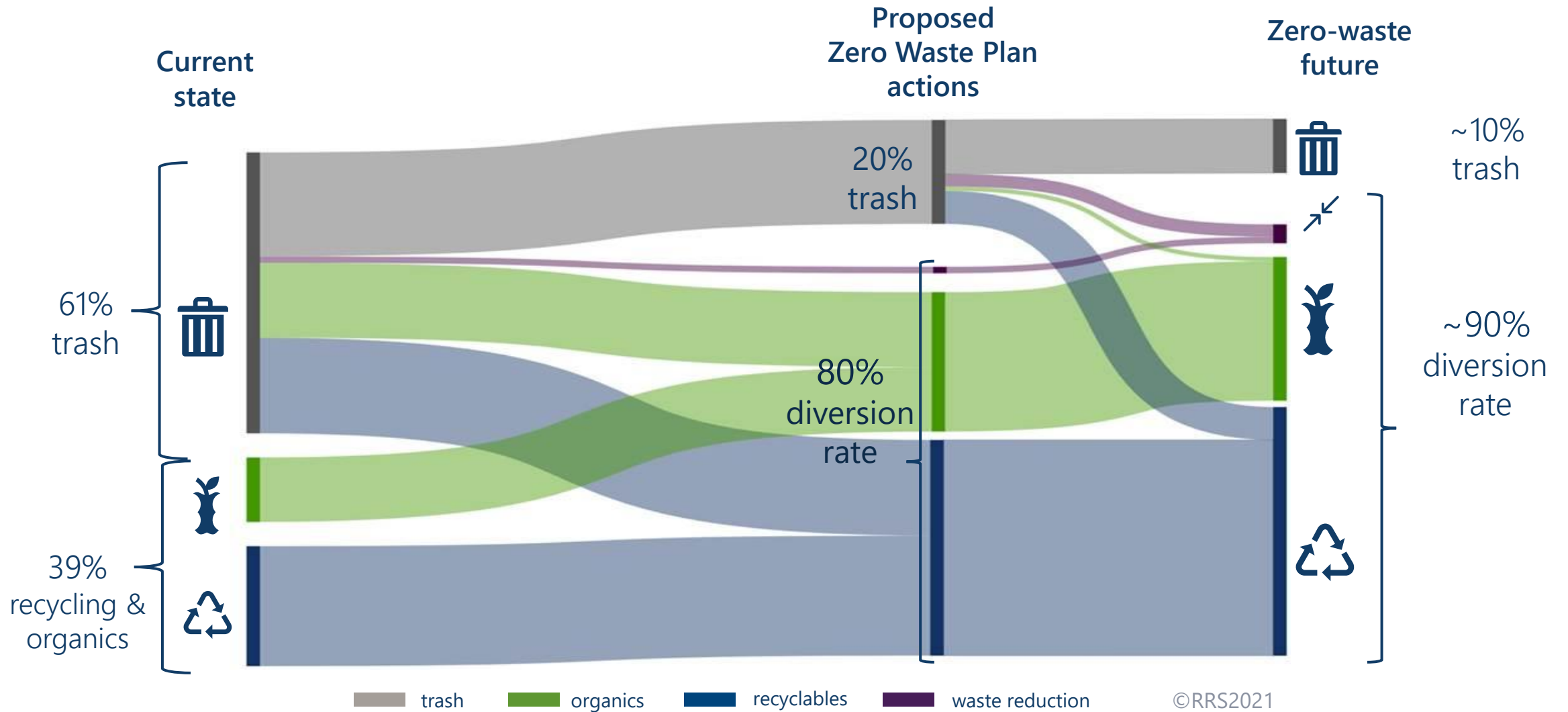
Aim: Implement programs to advance circularity, reduce waste, and support reuse

12 actions included in the draft plan

- Establish countywide Innovation Hub
- Support development of local and regional end markets
- Establish brick-and-mortar reuse and repair centers
- Support and encourage city adoption of deconstruction policies
- Conduct feasibility study of recovering recyclable materials from the trash



Will the proposed actions get us to zero waste?



Using the county's Racial Equity Impact Tool



- Board action: operational plan to map a zero-waste future
- 90% diversion of material from the trash; improved equity in the waste system
- Meaningful community involvement and neighborhood-centric solutions

- Case studies and gaps analysis

- Centered lived experience of residents not typically engaged
 - 500 participants,
 - 30+ conversations,
 - 18 community groups
- Contracted DEI facilitator
- Additional stakeholder engagement

- Work groups built around findings of community engagement
- Diverse action planning work groups
- Equity impacts prioritize with waste diversion, considered at each stage
- 14 actions identified to advance equity
- Cohort considered equity in final review of actions and alignment with findings

- Finalize plan
- Prioritize strategies
- Board direction on staff and program resources, legislative priorities

- Continued relationship with community groups on implementation
- Report on results toward goal and established actions

Plan development process



Policy discussion



Questions and policy discussion

- What are the board's priorities for advancing a zero-waste future?
- Is there anything else we should address before the plan is made available for public comment?