HENNEPIN COUNTY

MINNESOTA



Briefing: Climate Action July 24, 2025



Our commitment to disparity reduction

Through policies, services and programs we will drive disparity reduction and work to benefit people's lives in the areas of:



Health



Employment



Income



Housing



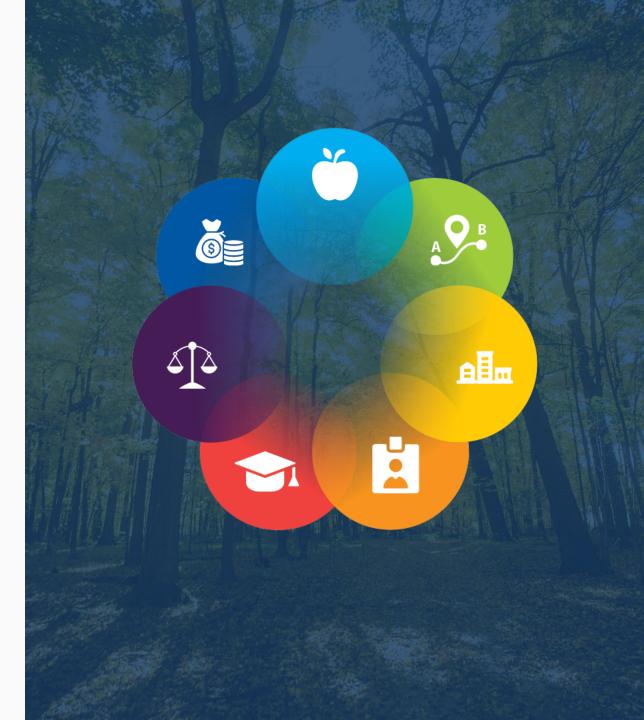
Justice



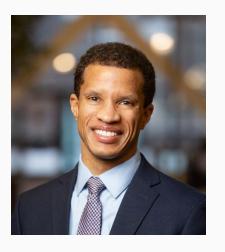
Connectivity



Education



Presenters



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Agenda

- Climate overview and progress
- Implementation and meeting the challenge
- Climate Spotlight: Zero Waste
- Discussion



Hennepin County's Climate Action Goals



Protect and engage people, especially vulnerable communities.



Enhance public safety



Increase the resilience of the built environment and protect natural resources



Reduce emissions in ways that align with core county functions and priorities



Partner in ways that can be most impactful

REDUCE EMISSIONS

45%

FROM 2010 LEVELS BY 2030 **NET ZERO**

EMISSIONS BY 2050



Foundational strategies



Strengthen individual and community resilience



Transition to renewable energy sources and reduce energy use overall



Cut greenhouse gases from transportation



Prevent food waste and divert organic material from the trash



Design infrastructure, buildings and property to future climate conditions



Build and maintain green infrastructure and sequester carbon on all county-owned properties



Decrease the heat island effect, especially in areas with the highest vulnerability

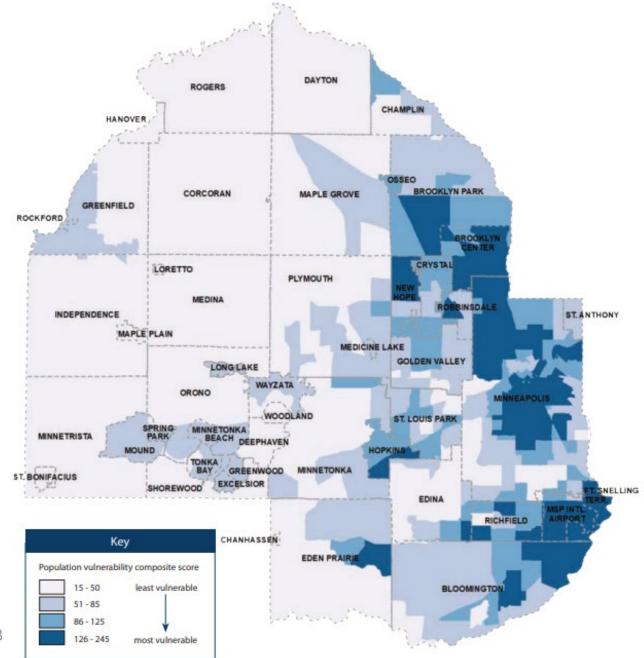


Prioritizing Climate Vulnerable Communities

Climate Vulnerability Composite Measure:

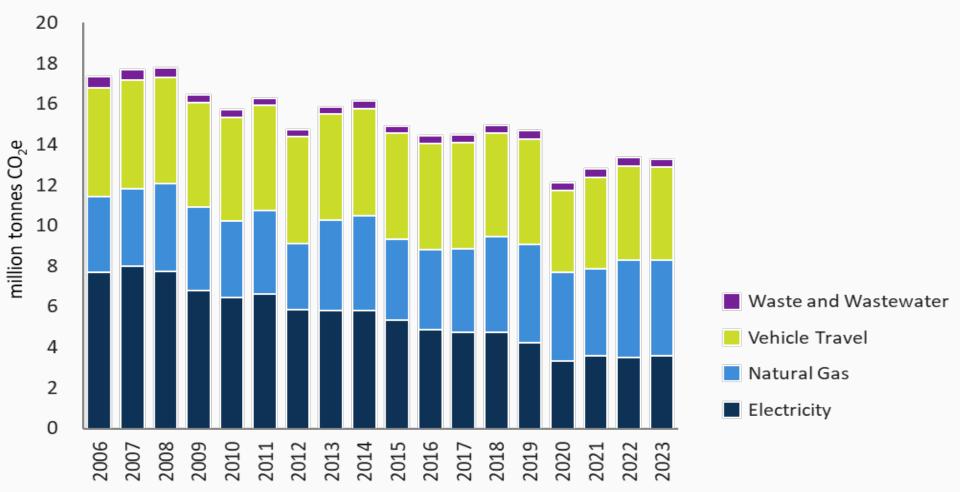
- Asthma & COPD Hospitalization rates
- Households without vehicles
- Limited English proficiency
- People of color
- Unemployment rates
- Populations below 185% poverty threshold
- Sources: CDC-SVI, ACS

Figure 5: Human vulnerability index



Greenhouse gas emissions

HENNEPIN COUNTY GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

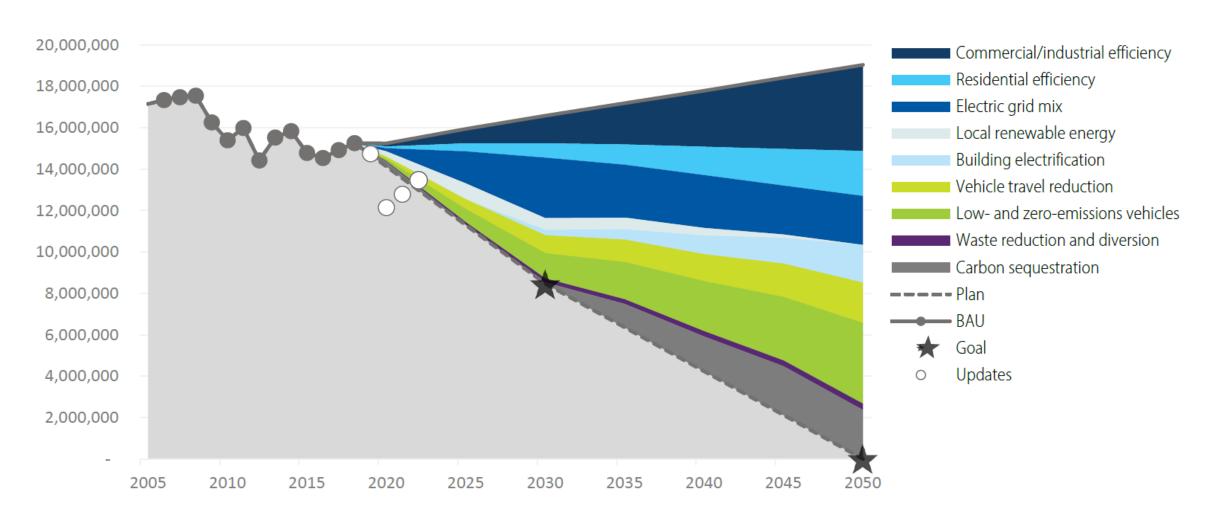






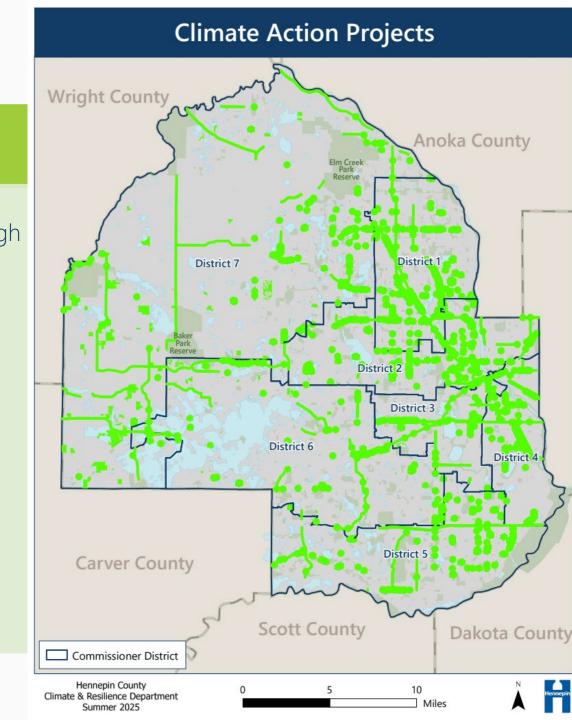
Pathway to Net Zero Emissions

The path to achieving our greenhouse gas emission reduction goals



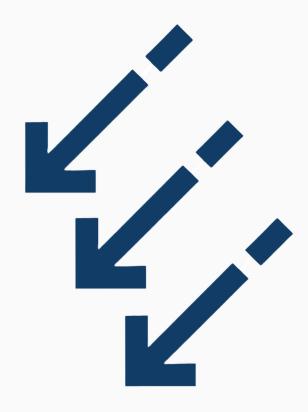
Implementation

Community Region-wide County Adopting policies and Shaping regional Empowering practices throughout our initiatives that communities through support our goals: operations: partnerships: • Urban agriculture MN Climate Action County budget Framework • IGR Legislative Platform Urban heat island Met Council Green Fleet Strategy Tree removal and Climate Action replacement • Complete and Green Workplan and Streets Policy Conservation Imagine 2050 Plan easements Green Jobs Plan National Electric Solar group buy Vehicle Infrastructure Plan



Navigating headwinds

- More intense weather impacts
- Economic uncertainty
- Increasing costs
- Evolving federal partnership
- State, local government and private partnership commitment
- Behavior change





Embedding long-term community engagement

- Engaged directly with over 22,000 residents and 5,000 youth
- 75+ community events
- 10,000+ surveys collected
- 6.5 million+ reached through newsletters, social media and paid ads on community and cultural media
 - 260,000+ mailers highlighting services
- 12 languages represented





How can communities become resilient?



Four in five participants **(80%)** highlighted the relevance of climate mitigation strategies



locally







Tree planting

Water conservation

Renewable energy sources

"Drought has really affected farm produce, and flooding this year has also impacted a lot of farmers." - Workshop participant







Establishing Resilience Hubs in community sites



Sabathani Community Center

Minneapolis American Indian Center

Brookdale Regional Service Center and Library











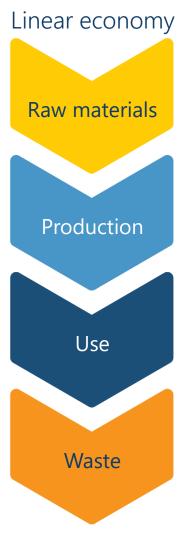








Solid waste system is driven by consuming and discarding



Who benefits?

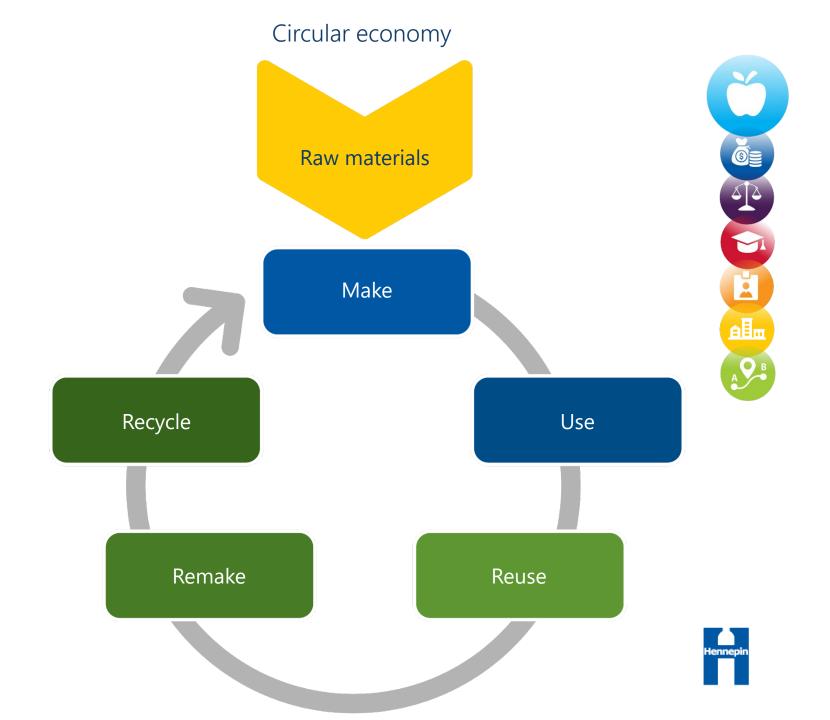
- Multinational waste industry that makes big profits from landfilling
- Manufacturers and retailers
- Businesses that generate a lot of waste
- Residents that consume and dispose excessively

Who is burdened?

- Residents who live near trash facilities
- Residents who live in multifamily housing that don't have access to recycling services
- Local governments that must deal with the trash problem



Climate, equity and zero-waste goals require a shift that values materials and prioritizes reuse



The climate benefits of consuming less

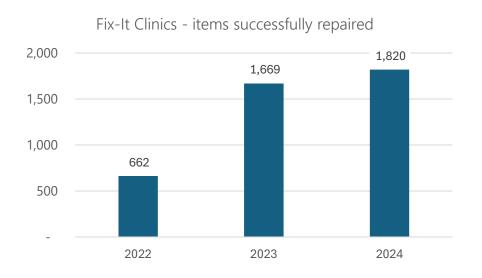
Most of the climate impacts of a product happen before it becomes waste





More thoughtful consumption

Programs and education that generate excitement about waste prevention, support action, and shift consumer behavior.





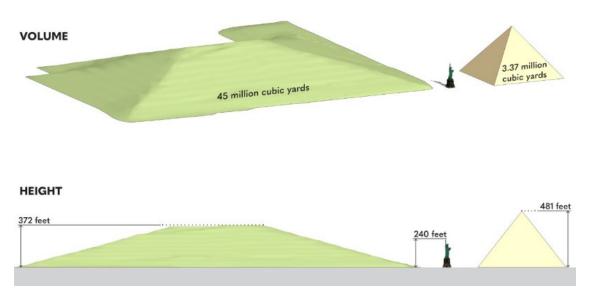
Climate benefits of diverting organics from the trash

Largest portion of what remains in the trash



Organics in landfills create methane

In the U.S., landfills are the third-largest source of human-caused methane emissions



Visual representation of the Burnsville Landfill expansion plan compared to the Statue of Liberty and the pyramids for scale



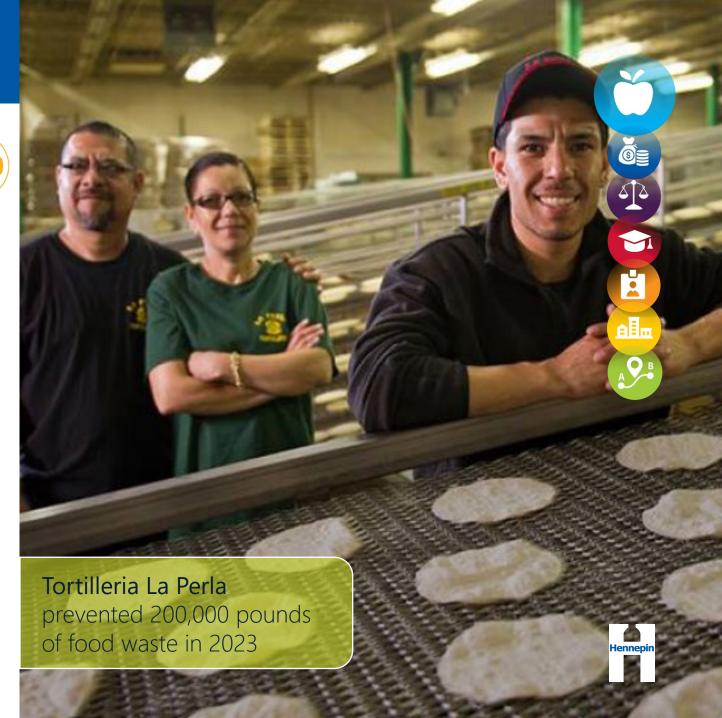
Food waste prevention



Goal: Cut discarded edible food in half



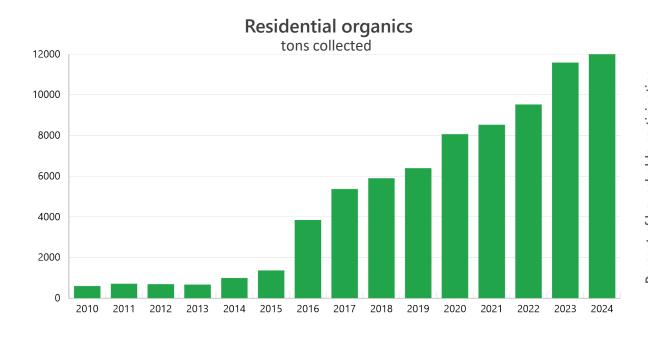
- Raising awareness and motivating action among residents
- Funding schools, businesses, and food security organizations
- Working with businesses to comply with food recycling requirements, which include food donation



City organics recycling programs

Access to service dramatically expanded

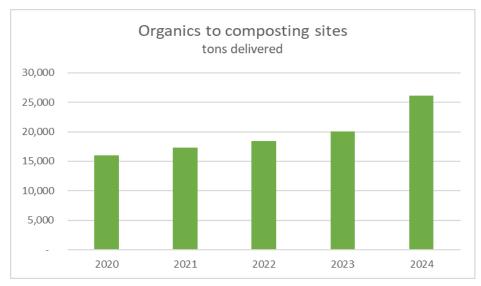
• 27 cities with curbside collection; 60 drop-off sites



Organic recycling performance by city 14 Percent of households participating Lbs per household per week 70% 12 10 50% 8 2 30% St. Louis Park Golden Valley Richfield Hopkins Bloomington Robbinsdale Brooklyn Park MapleGrove

Workplace organics recycling

- Composting of food waste increased 30% because more businesses started participating in organics recycling
- Organics collection roll-out at county buildings



Briefing: Climate Action 2025



Efforts by material type to maximize climate benefits

Carbon-intensive materials

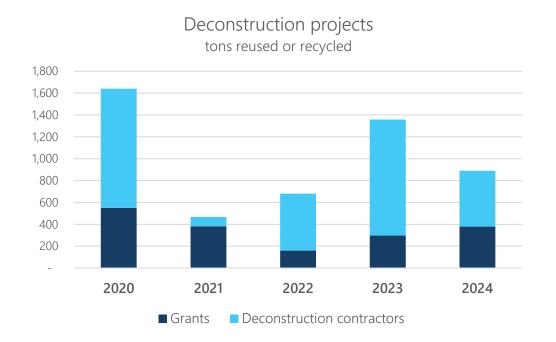
- Cement
- Aluminum
- Steel
- Precious metals
- Plastics

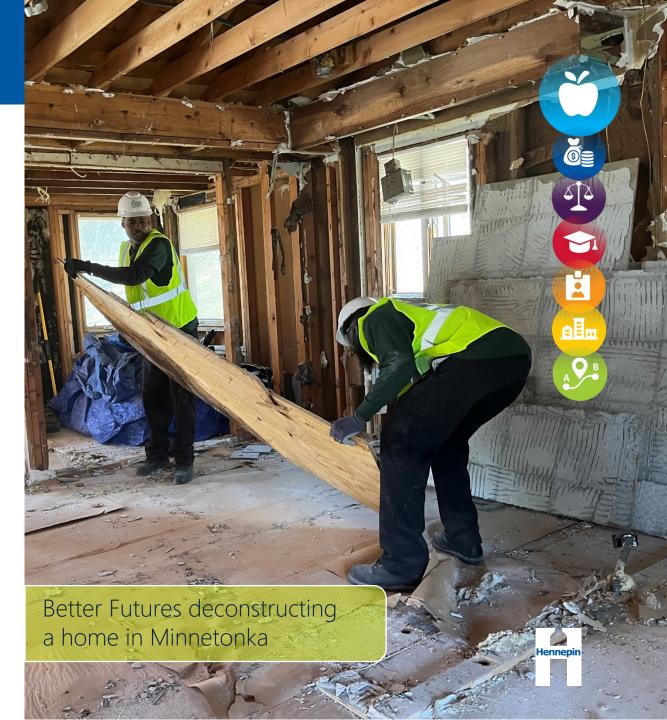
- Increasing the reuse and recycling of building materials
- Recovering metals, including precious metals in electronics/battery collection and processing trash
- Reducing single-use plastics and plastic packaging



Building materials

- Incentivizing deconstruction
- Reducing barriers and promoting used building materials



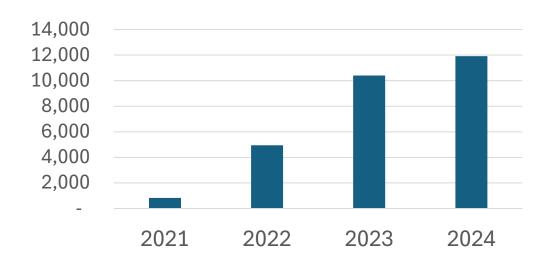


Plastics

- Public-private partnerships
- Education campaigns
- Policies

Plastic-Free Challenge results

plastic straws, cups, utensils, and bottles avoided





Tracking progress toward goals

- Meaningful progress in the areas we directly influence, but overall progress has been incremental.
- Limited control over the system and changing behavior is hard work.
- Our success depends on alignment across the system and each partner doing their part.

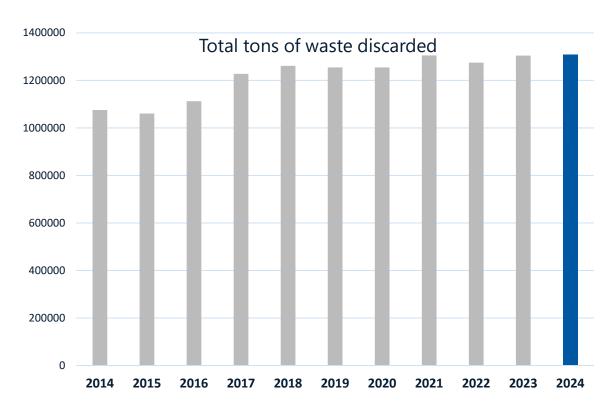


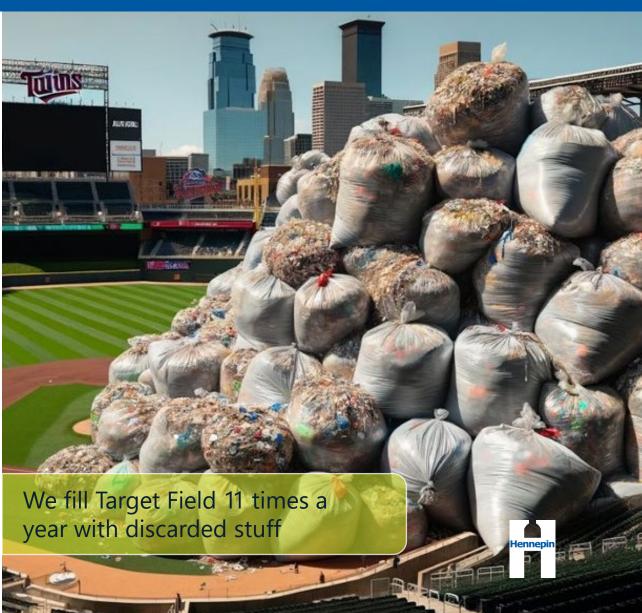


Total waste generated in Hennepin County

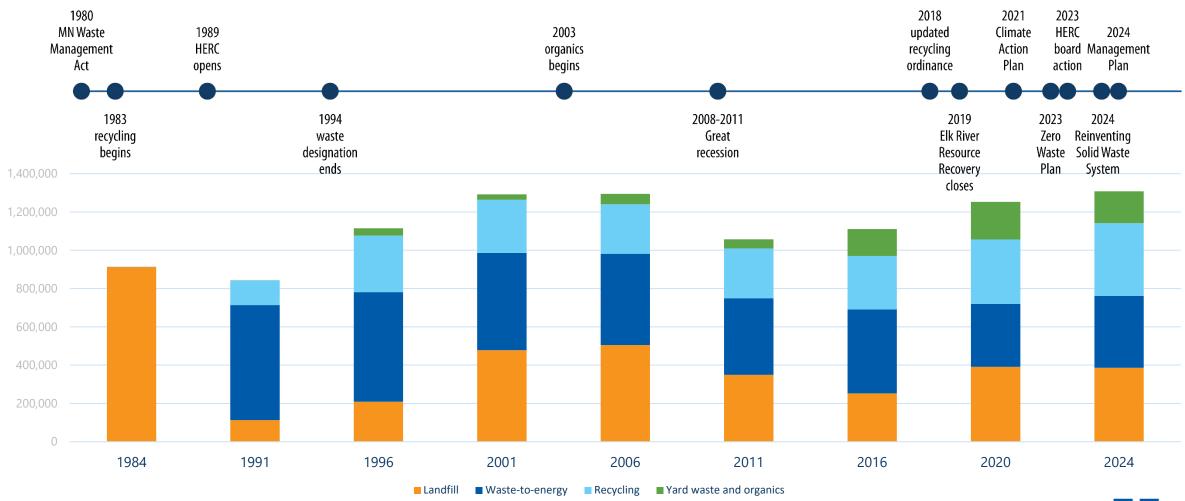
1.3 million tons of waste, which includes recycling, organics and trash, was discarded

<1% increase from 2023, or 3,500 tons more in 2024





Solid waste system milestones and outcomes

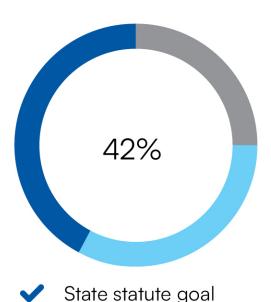




Zero-waste dashboard – 2024 results

Recycling rate

Goal: 75%

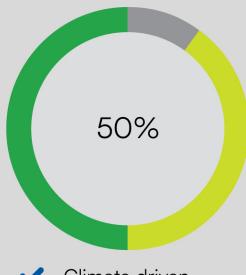


2024 recycling rate

Increase in recycling rate needed to meet state statute goal of 75%

Amount of food, paper and other biogenic materials in the trash

Goal: less than 10%



Climate driven

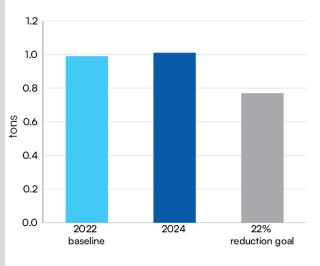
Critical to meeting recycling goals

2022 amount of biogenic materials diverted from the trash

Additional biogenic materials that need to be diverted from the trash to achieve goal of less than 10%

Waste generated per capita

Goal: reduce waste generated per capita by 22%

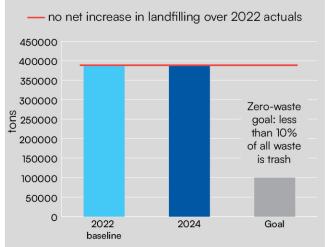


Climate driven

Critical to meeting zero-waste goal

Landfill rates

Goal: no net increase in landfilling rates over 2022 actuals

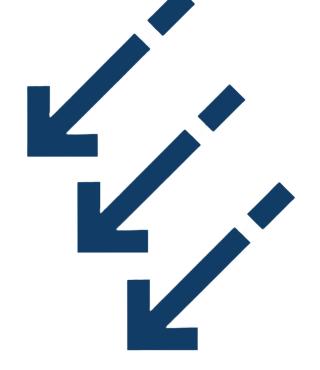


Climate driven

Critical to meeting zero-waste goal

Navigating headwinds...

- Behavior change by 1.3M residents and 43,000+ businesses
- Gaining momentum is taking time, the snowball effect with partners has not materialized
- Competing priorities
- Cost of implementation, especially in uncertain economic times
- Pushback on infrastructure development
- End market challenges



...to meet the challenge



Shared responsibility and mutual accountability

Legislature: Pass legislation on par with national leaders and increase funding to match the scope of the challenges we face and the ambition of our goals

MPCA: Hold all members of the solid waste system accountable for meeting goals, oversee implementation of producer responsibility laws, streamline permitting, lead market development efforts, lead enforcement of state laws

Cities

Collaborate on implementation, policy changes, enforcement, outreach, and education

County

Fulfill statutory obligations and lead on zero-waste plan implementation with policy, programs, and infrastructure

Solid waste industry

Provide excellent service and implement changes that align with state and local government policies and objectives

Residents, businesses, and environmental advocates: Engage, drive support for a zero-waste future, and participate in actions that realize that vision

Highest impact zero-waste actions

- Ensure every individual has equitable access to zero-waste tools (Legislature and county)
- Prioritize extended producer responsibility (Legislature, MPCA)
- Secure adequate funding for zero-waste initiatives through SCORE and other sources (Legislature)
- Ban recyclable and organic materials from landfills (Legislature and MPCA)

- Recover recyclable materials from the trash – recycling recovery facility (Legislature and county)
- Support the transition to organized collection across Hennepin County (Legislature, county and cities)
- Increase compliance and expand recycling requirements (County, Cities, MPCA)
- Develop and implement county plan to eliminate food waste (County and legislature)

- Expand collection and drop-off options for hard to recycle items (County and legislature)
- Reduce single-use plastics and plastic packaging (Legislature and producers)
- Increase the reuse and recycling of construction and demolition waste (Legislature)
- Mandate participation in recycling and composting programs (Legislature and county)



Our commitment to a climate friendly future



Healthy communities



Sustainable buildings, transportation and material use



Protected natural resources



Green infrastructure and economic opportunities



Engaged communities powering ambitious goals and strategies



Equitable results

Question for the board

Are we on the right track?

