

DESCRIPTION

Minnesota law includes a hierarchy of methods to manage waste that includes reduction and reuse (most preferred), recycling and composting, energy recovery, and land disposal (least preferred).¹ Acknowledging that land disposal is the least preferred method of waste management, Ramsey County is committed to managing waste in better ways.

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) is responsible for establishing solid waste policy and planning in accordance with Minnesota's Waste Management Act.² The MPCA prepares a policy plan every six years with input from state agencies, county staff, and a variety of stakeholders.³ Counties are responsible for a number of activities such as developing policy and adopting ordinances; financing the waste-management system; ensuring technical, financial and other support for partners (including cities, school districts, and other private and non-profit entities); and providing collection and management of certain materials. Through the Recycling & Energy Board, Ramsey and Washington Counties work together on solid-waste management, focusing on getting the most value out of what is thrown away, increasing recycling and reducing the amount discarded.⁴

There are specific 5-year objectives to reduce land disposal of waste through 2036. The MPCA objectives include targets for waste reduction, recycling, organics recovery, resource recovery and landfilling. Minnesota Statute² also establishes a goal for metro counties to ensure that 75% of solid waste generated is recycled (including organics that are composted) by 2030.

HOW WE ARE DOING

Ramsey County diverted 87% of discarded material (waste recycled, composted and resource recovery) from landfills in 2016. During 2007-2016, the percentage of discarded waste managed as recycling or organics has risen steadily, largely due to increased organics-management efforts (e.g., residential drop-offs, food-to-hogs programs, yard waste collection, etc.). From 2007-2016, an average of 36% of discarded material was used for resource recovery (defined as the recovery of energy and usable materials during the processing of mixed municipal solid waste).²

BENCHMARK INDICATOR

Healthy People 2020: Increase the percent of municipal solid waste recycled.

U.S. Target: 36.5 percent.

MN Metro County Targets: 63% recycled by 2020; 68% recycled by 2025; 75% recycled by 2030; 2% landfilled by 2020; 1% landfilled by 2025.

WHAT RAMSEY COUNTY GOVERNMENT IS DOING

With the purchase of the Recycling & Energy Center in Newport (R&E Center) completed January 1, 2016, Ramsey County is taking significant steps towards meeting both the metro policy plan objectives and the 2030 legislative goal of 75% recycling. Ramsey County has started directing all Ramsey and Washington County trash to the R&E Center by diverting most waste that would have been landfilled and by removing more materials for recycling. Ramsey and Washington Counties, through the Recycling & Energy Board, are also (continued on back)

Information to note

- From 2007-2016, Ramsey County reduced the amount of waste landfilled from 22% to 13%.
- Since 2008 Ramsey County recycling rates have met or exceeded both state and national targets.



Community voice

"Dirty environment and trash all over the place."

- Filipino Female, age 55-64

190 respondents mentioned waste and littering as affecting community's health. Of these, 91% (174) stated waste management, community cleanliness, trash collection, and recycling were essential in keeping their community healthy.

¹ 2015 Solid Waste Policy Report. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/lrw-sw-15y15.pdf>. Published January 2016. Accessed December 18, 2017.

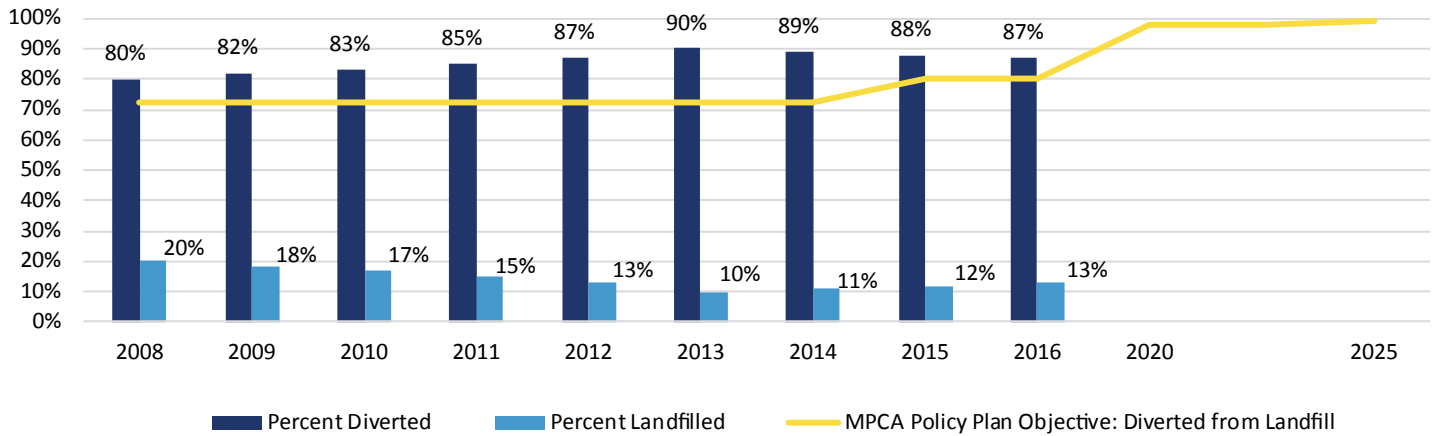
² Minnesota Statutes 2017, section 115A.551. <https://revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=115A&view=chapter#stat.115A.551>. Accessed June 29, 2017.

³ Metropolitan Solid Waste Management Policy Plan. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/waste/metropolitan-solid-waste-management-policy-plan>. Accessed December 18, 2017.

⁴ Connecting value to waste. Ramsey/Washington Recycling and Energy Board. <http://morevaluelesstrash.com/>. Accessed December 18, 2017.

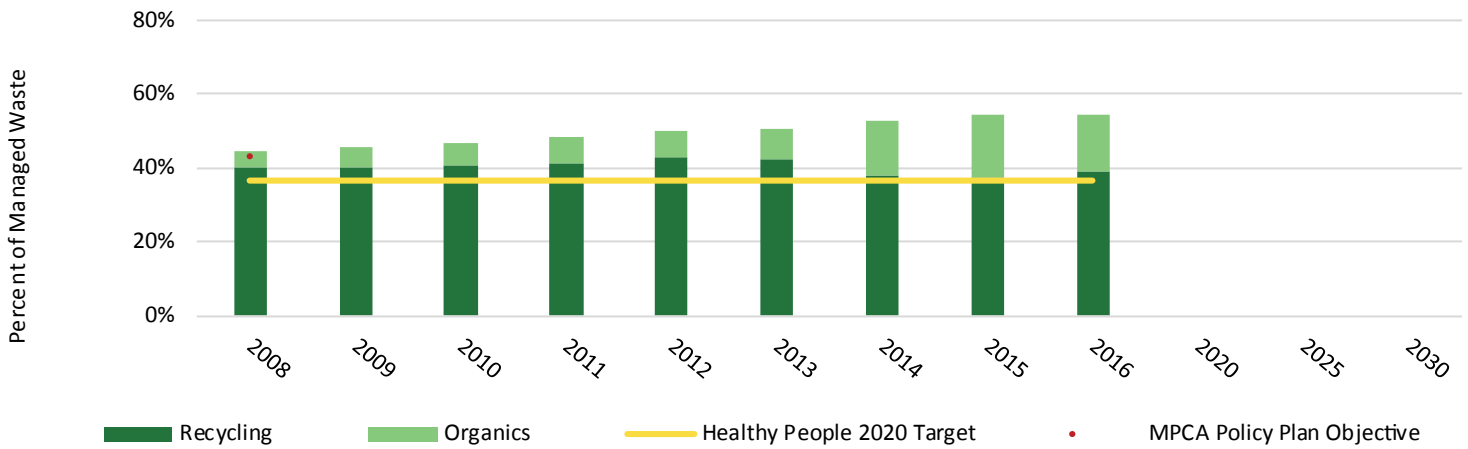
expanding and improving programs to help businesses start, expand, improve, and manage recycling, including organics collection, through on-site consultations, technical assistance, expert advice, guidance and grant funding.⁵

Solid Waste Diversion from Landfill, Ramsey County



Source: Saint Paul – Ramsey County Public Health

Waste Managed as Recycling or Organics, Ramsey County



Source: Saint Paul – Ramsey County Public Health

⁵ BizRecycling: Less Trash, More Savings. <http://www.bizrecycling.com/>. Accessed December 18, 2017.