



Metropolitan Solid Waste Management Policy Plan 2010-2030

Fundamental change in how solid waste is managed in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area (TCMA) is necessary if the region is to continue to move beyond current trends. This is the overarching message of the new Metropolitan Solid Waste Management Policy Plan (Plan), adopted in 2011 by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA).

The plan:

- **Sets aggressive objectives for waste reduction, recycling, and organics recovery** because they are important components of the solid waste system to improve public health, reduce our reliance on landfills, conserve energy and natural resources, and reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Builds a regional approach** in order to meet solid waste objectives and gain efficiencies through economies of scale, and to promote consistency in solid waste programs.
- **Maximizes resource recovery capacity** and does not call for an expansion of this type of MSW processing, assuming the waste reduction, recycling, and organics objectives are reached.
- **Emphasizes accountability** and effective tools among all stakeholders responsible for solid waste management in the region.

Stakeholders in the metropolitan area include producers and sellers of products, waste generators, waste industry, and government.

Accomplishments and challenges

Since 1980, the TCMA has increased its recycling rate to 41 percent from only 14 percent, and accomplished other notable improvements to its solid waste management system.

The current challenge facing the TCMA is how to continue to develop the solid waste system, given that over the last 10 years:

- MSW generation has grown by 8 percent.
- Recycling rates have remained essentially flat.
- The use of resource recovery capacity has declined by 15 percent.
- Land disposal has increased by 15 percent.

If current trends continue, it will result in a 46 percent increase in landfilling over the 20-year period of this plan, as well as the loss of valuable metals, plastics, paper and other commodities that continue to be discarded.

Goals and policies

The goals of the plan are to:

- Protect the environment and public health, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and conserve energy and natural resources.
- Manage waste in an integrated system to minimize landfilling.

- Manage waste cost-effectively and internalize future costs to minimize long-term financial liability and maximize environmental benefits.
- Share responsibility and costs for environmentally sound management of waste.

The Plan’s policies guide actions and decisions on solid waste management in the TCMA.

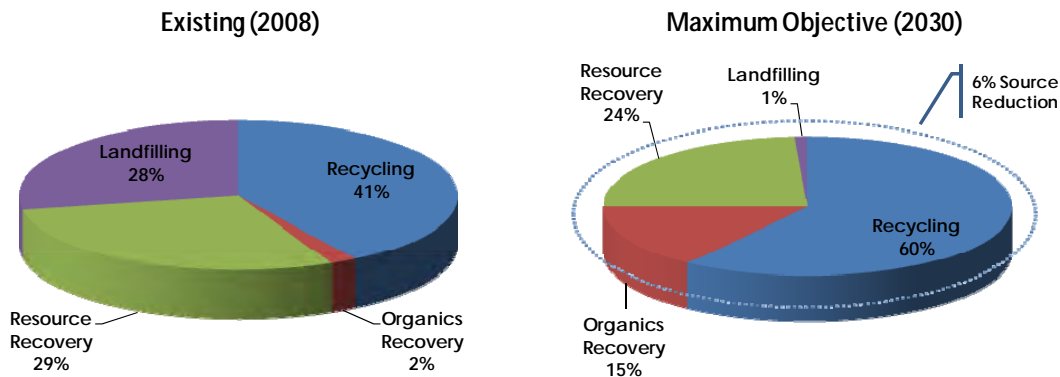
Metropolitan system plan

The Plan’s Metropolitan System Plan describes broad regional objectives and the strategies necessary for solid waste programs and services to meet the region’s needs for the next 20 years.

System objectives maximize the upper end of the hierarchy, setting floor objectives for every 5 years for source reduction, recycling, and organics recovery; maintain existing resource recovery facility capacity; and place a ceiling on landfilling.

The source reduction system objective ranges from a cumulative 1 – 2 percent by 2015 to 4 – 6 percent by 2030. Recycling objectives go from 45 – 48 percent in 2015 to 53 – 60 percent in 2030; and organics recovery short-term goals are 3 – 6 percent in 2015 and 9 – 15 percent in 2030. The System Plan also provides objectives for non-MSW, a list of strategies and how they can be implemented, and an analysis of regional system costs.

Solid Waste Management in the TCMA



Additional benefits

If the 2015 system objectives are achieved, it would:

- Benefit the economy by supporting approximately 380 additional jobs and increasing economic activity by \$160 million.
- Save enough energy to power over 40 percent of the households in the TCMA.
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by an amount equivalent to taking 1.6 million cars off the road.

For more information

The plan also includes review criteria, including those for solid waste facility permits, certificates of need and county certification reports.

For more information on the Metropolitan Solid Waste Management Policy Plan, call Tina Patton at 651-757-2642, toll-free at 800-657-3864, or look online for a copy of the Plan:

<http://www.pca.state.mn.us/hqzq86a>