

VII. Environmental Stewardship

D. Solid Waste

Vision For Solid Waste

Management of solid waste involves the collection, transport, recycling, or disposal of waste materials in an effort to reduce their effect on public health and protect public safety. Solid waste management is essential for the protection of the environment. It also ensures that future generations possess adequate resources and face fewer costs for solid waste management. This work has become increasingly important in recent years as metropolitan area landfills are reaching capacity and waste generation outpaces population growth. The City has placed growing emphasis on reducing the amount of solid waste generated by the City by implementing programs and activities that support reuse, recycling and yard waste composting.

Collection System

The City of St. Louis Park contracts with two private refuse haulers for residential collection of garbage, recycling and yard waste for single family homes through four-plex residences. Ordinances require high density buildings such as apartments, condominiums and townhomes to provide weekly recycling opportunities for their tenants. Owners of multifamily residences and commercial properties are responsible for contracting for the collection and disposal of their waste from their buildings. In 2008, the City expanded the collection program which now allows smaller businesses and multi-family residential buildings to participate in the program if their waste can be handled with garbage carts and recycling bins. Hennepin County continues to operate a program for hazardous waste.

Comparison Between Solid Waste Refuse and Recycling Generation (in tons per household per year)

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Refuse	1.02	1.01	1.00	1.04	1.02	0.98	0.89	0.90	0.90	0.87
Recycling	0.36	0.38	0.40	0.33	0.35	0.36	0.43	0.44	0.43	0.39

Source: Public Works Department

Mixed municipal waste consists of paper, food waste, yard waste, glass, metals, and miscellaneous other materials collected from residences, commercial properties, and other sources. Disposal of this enormous amount of waste has the potential to negatively impact the environment and public health. Waste reduction, reuse and recycling practices hold the greatest potential to reduce the amount of waste being disposed. St. Louis Park is committed to helping its

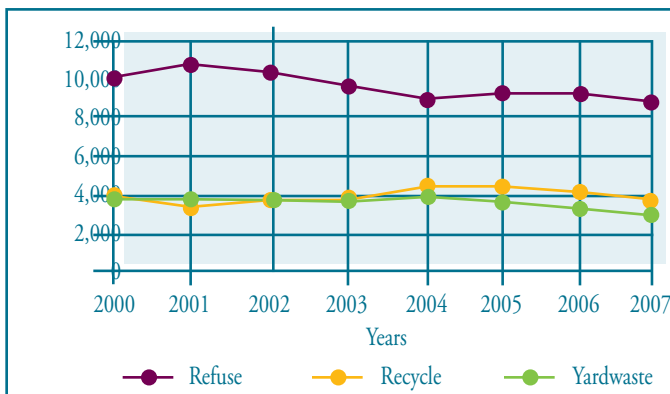


VII. Environmental Stewardship

D. Solid Waste

residents reduce waste and increase recycling. To this end, the City has implemented yard waste and expanded recycling programs. These programs have reduced the volume of solid waste deposited in landfills. Specifically, the total amount of refuse collected has reduced from 10,000 tons in 2000 to 8,680 tons in 2007. In addition, recycling and yard waste composting now account for approximately 44 percent of the total waste tonnage, which represents an improvement over the figure of 38 percent from ten years earlier.

Solid Waste History



Disposal

Where does the garbage go?

Approximately two-thirds of all solid waste generated in St. Louis Park is not recycled or composted. These wastes are either incinerated or put in landfills. There are no active landfills in St. Louis Park, but several old landfill sites are within its boundaries.

In St. Louis Park, the residential garbage goes to the Hennepin Energy Recovery Center (HERC), a waste-to-energy facility. The HERC burns garbage to produce electricity and sells it to Xcel Energy, Inc. HERC produces enough electricity to power 25,000 homes each year. HERC also reclaims 11,000 tons of ferrous metal from garbage each year. Bulk items that cannot be recycled or burned are put in landfills.

City Programs

Spring & Fall Cleanup Days

Twice a year, the City provides a Clean Up Day event for its residents. At these events St. Louis Park charges a fee to accept material for disposal or redistribution to others. Such events highlight the City's commitment to a clean environment by discouraging illegal dumping and raising community awareness.

Household Hazardous Waste Drop Off Event

Each year Hennepin County and the City of St. Louis Park sponsor a spring community collection event for county residents to safely and properly dispose of their unwanted garden and household hazardous wastes. Hennepin County also organizes several collection events throughout the year. These give residents more convenient, local disposal options for their household hazardous wastes. Hennepin County also provides permanent drop-off facilities in Bloomington and Brooklyn Park.

Education and Outreach

Public Works Staff provides public information and education through various media to encourage waste reduction and recycling. Educational efforts focus on reducing waste, increasing recycling, improving sustainability, and encouraging composting. Education is provided through the City's website, Park Perspective newsletters, the Sun Sailor newspaper, ads in the City-School calendar, Recyclopedia handbooks, and individual mailings. Staff members also visit with residents, attend public events, and meeting with school children to teach them about garbage and recycling.

Future Initiatives

Source Separated Organics

The City is considering expansion of the residential recycling program to include food waste organics and non-recyclable paper. This modified recycling program would provide more control over processing and end markets, and this will

VII. Environmental Stewardship

D. Solid Waste

ultimately benefit the environment. Combined, these new opportunities could revitalize the solid waste program and increase participation in recycling programs.

Under a source separated organics program, residents would separate the biodegradable garbage from the non-biodegradable garbage. This separation could include food scraps, non-recyclable paper such as pizza boxes and paper towels, and even vacuum cleaner bags and dryer lint. The source separated organics are then collected and composted. The finished compost is typically used on golf courses, playing fields, farm fields, professional landscaping and road construction projects. Using compost replenishes soils, reduces soil erosion, and prevents stormwater runoff from contaminating wetlands, lakes and streams.

Goals and Strategies

Goal 1

High Quality Service

Strategy A

Coordinate with other departments and groups to maintain a clean city.

Strategy B

Provide consistent & reliable waste collection service.

Strategy C

Provide convenient, user-friendly solid waste services.

Goal 2

Environmental Stewardship

Strategy A

Promote public health and safety.

Strategy B

Encourage citizens to take responsibility for the environmentally sound management of their solid waste.

Strategy C

Increase levels of reduction, reuse and recycling.

Goal 3

Cost-effective services

Strategy A

Pursue changes that may reduce cost while continuing to meet the goals of the Program.

Strategy B

Minimize city administrative effort and costs without compromising program goals.

Goal 4

Education

Strategy A

Provide public education on reducing, reusing and recycling solid waste.

Strategy B

Inform the residents about the city's program and services.

Goal 5

Continual evaluation of program and industry

Strategy A

Continually monitor program performance with surrounding communities.

Strategy B

Track industry standards.

Strategy C

Comply with regulations on solid waste.

Strategy D

Be proactive in providing new and better ways to provide service.