

Waste Reduction and Recycling Program

2012 Annual Report

Community Diversion Rate

A diversion rate compares the amount of material that was recycled or composted compared to the total waste generated by the community. It is useful for tracking trends in the community related to waste generation.

The Community Diversion Rate (which includes residential, commercial and industrially-generated waste) decreased slightly, from 57.9% in 2011 to 57.7% in 2012. The Industrial Diversion Rate was fairly constant – 69.6% in 2011 and 70.1% in 2012. The most significant change was in residential and commercial waste diversion. This Non-Industrial Diversion Rate was 42.4% in 2012, down from 47.4% in 2011.

Based on the 2012 population of 148,700 residents, Fort Collins generated 5.12 pounds of landfill-bound material per capita per day.

By the numbers:

- Community-wide landfill up 4.7%, organics down 60%, recycling up 16%, total disposed up 4%
- All types of industrial materials increased ~20-25%
- All types of MSW decreased 5% (landfill) to 212% (organics), with an overall reduction of 30% of materials disposed of
- Residential landfill down 3%, recycling up 18%, organics down 344% (2011 branches)
- Commercial landfilling down 7%, organics down 77% (food waste collection program ended by local hauler), recycling up 11%

Community Waste Trends

The most significant difference in waste or recyclables generation from 2011 to 2012 was the reduction in organics composted by residents in 2012. This resulted from a large amount of woody debris generated from three significant fall snow storms in 2011 that was then ground into mulch for use in landscaping projects. The nearly 19 tons of yard waste from the storms in 2011 were unusual and caused a temporary increase in the diversion rate that year – the 2012 numbers are more common.

In other trends, commercial food waste composting decreased when a local company ended its food waste collection program due to excessive costs of transportation costs to the nearest compost facility certified to collect food waste (in Commerce City). Due to state regulations, the City's Parks department also significantly decreased its compost program. An increase in road projects led to an increase in concrete and asphalt recycling by the City's crushing facility. A greater number of construction and demolition projects in the Fort Collins community led to more wood waste being recycled, and also to more industrial landfill waste generation.

Residents of single-family homes have continued to actively practice recycling habits and learned to generate less trash, likely influenced by the City's Pay-As You Throw ordinance. The ordinance requires licensed haulers to provide residential customers with curbside recycling at no charge, and to apply rates based on the volume of trash generated. In 2012, 69% of single-family home residents were using a 65- or 95- gallon lidded recycling cart, which were introduced by haulers in 2010 and have largely replaced the older 18-gallon open-topped recycling boxes. Trash can sizes have continued to decrease, with 35% of residents now subscribing to the small (35-gallon), 36% subscribing to the mid-size (65-gallon) and 28% of residents subscribing to the large trash can (95-gallon).

WRAP (Waste Reduction and Recycling Assistance Program)

The Waste Reduction and Recycling Program was started in January 2012. This program assists Fort Collins businesses and apartment complexes in starting or improving recycling programs. WRAP provides free on-site assessments, communication materials, education for employees / residents, as well as rebates for locations starting a new recycling program.

One of the largest of the early participants in WRAP was Ram's Village, a 1,000-resident apartment complex for CSU students. This location had recycled in the past, but due to contamination in bins and other issues, had stopped recycling. Working with WRAP, Ram's Village added a 30-yard roll-off for residents to bring their recyclables to one centralized recycling location on the property. Residents received significant education, with notes in their move-in packets, recycling magnets on refrigerators in the units, signs on every trash enclosure, and yard signs posted during move-in time. The program was even more successful than anticipated and continues to be a positive example of creating special recycling "solutions" in response to challenging circumstances.

WRAP created a photo-based recycling guidelines poster that has been received with enthusiasm. This poster was generated in paper form and also produced as a durable metal sign for use on outdoor trash / recycling enclosures.

A total of 14 apartment complexes and businesses participated in WRAP in 2012, impacting a total of 3,571 residents / employees.

Other Significant Projects

Waste Reduction and Recycling staff worked with a consulting firm to complete three significant projects in 2012: a feasibility analysis for an Integrated Recycling Facility, a Waste Stream Study that analyzed the materials that are sent to landfills from Fort Collins, and a Waste to Energy analysis that considered emerging technologies that may pertain to Fort Collins. All reports can be found at fcgov.com/recycling under the "reports" tab.

Research and community outreach were conducted in preparation for City Council considering a ban on the disposal of cardboard in Fort Collins' waste stream, for consideration in spring 2013. Options were also examined for new restrictions to be placed on single-use disposable shopping bags; a proposed ordinance that would have established a 10-cent per bag (both paper and plastic sacks) fee received a split vote from the City Council in March, 2013 and thus was not implemented.

Amendments to the Universal Building Code went into effect in January of 2012, requiring all new construction sites in Fort Collins to recycle cardboard, wood, metal, and aggregates. Staff worked closely with the construction industry to facilitate greater recycling on construction sites.

Definitions

Non-industrial diversion rate: includes waste generated by single-family residential, multi-family residential, and commercial sectors.

Industrial diversion rate: includes waste generated by City operations, concrete and asphalt recycled by City's crushing facility, construction and demolition waste, brewery wastes, biosolids that were land-applied .

Community diversion rate: the combined total of industrial and non-industrial wastes – provides an overall view of waste generation and waste diversion for the community.