

# 2013 FORT COLLINS WASTE REDUCTION & RECYCLING REPORT

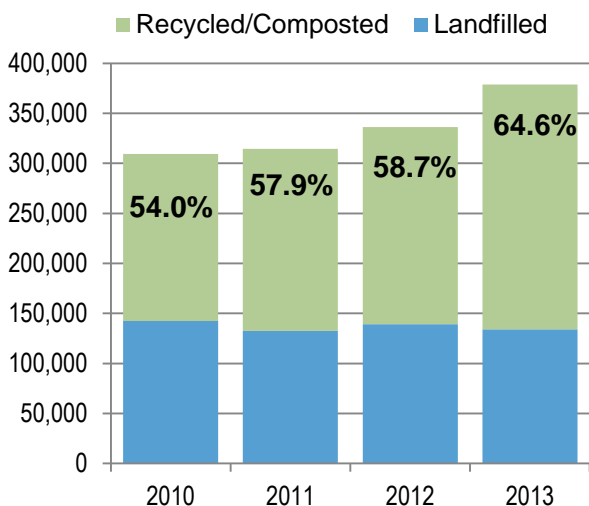
## Community Diversion Rate

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.

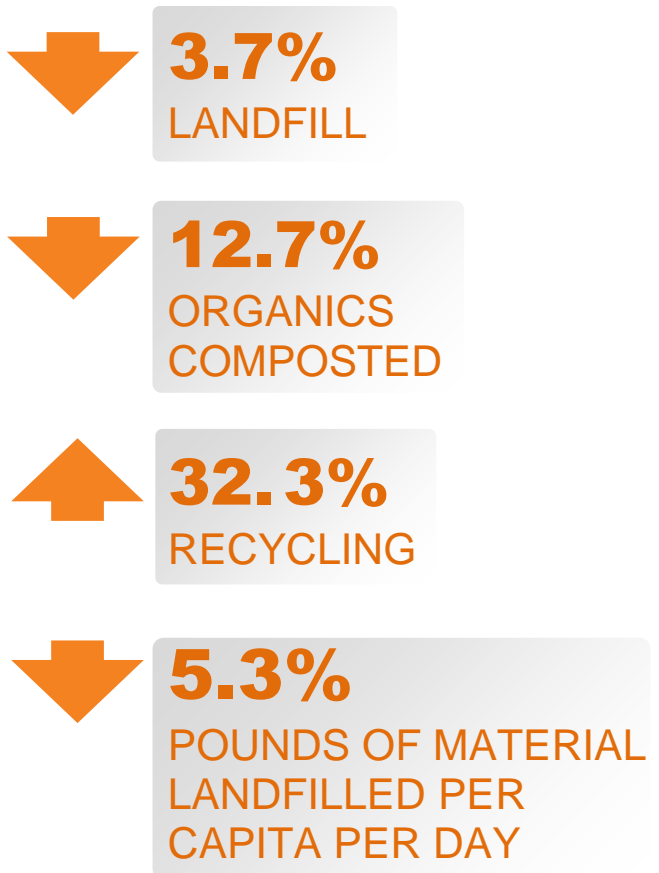
Fort Collins' overall Community-wide Diversion Rate (which includes all residential, commercial and industrially generated trash and recyclable materials) increased from 58.7% in 2012 to 64.6% in 2013. The Industrial Diversion Rate – exclusive of residential/commercially generated discards – increased from 70.4% in 2012 to 79.2% in 2013. The combined residential and commercial waste diversion rate (which may be thought of as Non-Industrial Diversion) basically stayed constant, from 43.5% in 2012 to 43.3% in 2013.

Based on the 2013 population of 151,330 residents, Fort Collins generated 4.85 pounds of landfill-bound material (trash) per capita per day (in 2012, per capita trash measured 5.12 pounds per day).

**FIGURE 2 – COMMUNITY DIVERSION RATES**



**FIGURE 1 – CHANGE IN MATERIALS GENERATED FROM 2012-2013**



## By The Numbers

### Community-wide

- landfill down 3.7%, organics composted down 12.7%, recycling up 32.3%

### Industrial

- landfill down 16.6%, organics composted down 23.9%, recycling up 43.9%

### Residential-only

(excluding commercial and industrial)

- landfill down 3.6%, organics composted up 12.1% recycling up 2.8%

### Commercial-only

(excluding residential and industrial)

- landfill up 12.6%, organics composted down 0.7%, recycling up 5.1%

## Community Diversion Rate Drivers

The community diversion rate increased by 5.9 percentage points from 2012 to 2013, which by most accounts can be considered a very significant amount compared to waste and recycling trends throughout the US; community diversion rates are rarely observed to change this dramatically in one year. Several primary factors contributed to this change:

### Soils Recovery Project

This new project, which started in 2013, is solely responsible for a decrease in the amount of material the municipality (City government operations and services) hauled to the landfill by 44.6%, while significantly increasing recycling. City crews' efforts were responsible for 4.6% of the change in the community diversion rate from 2012 to 2013, since such a large volume of very heavy material is now being recycled. (See details about this project below.)

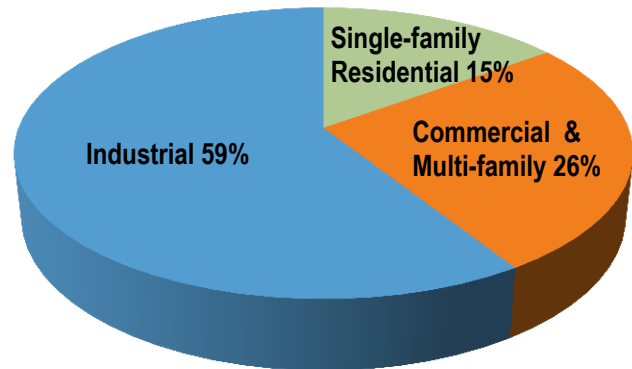
### Increased Concrete and Asphalt Recycling

The City of Fort Collins operates a crushing facility on Hoffman Mill Rd. that accepts concrete and asphalt; materials are crushed and then sold for use as road base. Due to an increased number of road projects that occurred, these heavy industrial recyclables increased by 88.9% (concrete) and 24.1% (asphalt) between 2012 and 2013.



*Recycled asphalt at the City of Fort Collins Crushing Facility.*

**FIGURE 3 - PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL COMMUNITY WASTE AND RECYCLING GENERATION BY SECTOR FOR 2013**



### Cardboard Ordinance

An ordinance prohibiting disposal of cardboard in Fort Collins' waste stream was passed in March 2013 and therefore was in effect for less than a year; nonetheless changes were documented that included: an increase in cardboard-only collection from businesses by 94.8%; an 8.9% increase in cardboard recycled at the City's Recycling Drop-Off Center; and, an increase in the amount of single-stream recyclables collected from businesses (2.6%) and residents (3.5%). See details about the cardboard ordinance on the next page.

### Community Flooding

In September 2013, much of the Front Range of Colorado flooded. While Fort Collins did not see impacts as severe as communities further south, some large waste- and recycling-generating businesses had to temporarily close due to the floods, which may have affected trends in waste and recycling. A great deal of debris generated from Loveland, Larimer County, and other jurisdictions was taken to the Larimer County landfill for disposal; while this did not affect Fort Collins' 2013 community diversion rate, it represents a long-term impact on waste management planning. Flood debris is estimated to have decreased the lifespan of the Larimer County Landfill by at least several years (the specific amount has not yet been quantified).

## Road to Zero Waste Community Input and Planning Project

Throughout 2013, City staff and consultants from Zero Waste Associates assessed the local recycling infrastructure, met with dozens of stakeholders, and engaged hundreds of members of the Fort Collins community to discuss the future of waste reduction and recycling in Fort Collins. Acknowledging that the goal set in 1999 of recycling or composting 50% of the community's waste had recently been met, this project sought to hear what direction the community wanted to take regarding waste reduction and recycling and, if new goals were to be set, how aggressive the community wanted them to be. The project resulted in a report that details the economic impacts and opportunities in waste reduction and recycling in the community. It suggests a framework for reaching a community diversion rate of 75% by 2020, 90% by 2025, and zero waste by 2030.

## New Community Goals

In December 2013, the Fort Collins City Council adopted new goals for the community to recycle or compost 75% of its waste by 2020 and to reach zero waste by 2030. A complementary objective is for the community to only generate 2.8 pounds of landfilled material per capita by 2025.

## Cardboard Ordinance

In March of 2013, the Fort Collins City Council passed an ordinance banning the landfill disposal of cardboard, becoming the first community in Colorado and in the region to have used this waste reduction approach. The ordinance allows corrugated cardboard to be reused, recycled, or composted, but not to be landfilled. All generators of cardboard, whether residential, commercial, or industrial, are included in the ordinance.

City staff worked to educate the community about the cardboard ordinance via in-person presentations, printed publications, newsletter articles, community events, etc. WRAP (the Waste Reduction and Recycling Assistance Program) worked with apartment complexes and businesses seeking to comply with the ordinance by educating their employees / residents, or starting new recycling programs. Educational materials and details about the cardboard ordinance can be found at [fcgov.com/cardboard](http://fcgov.com/cardboard).



Example of educational materials distributed in the community regarding the 2013 cardboard ordinance.

## Soils Recovery Project

The City of Fort Collins self-hauls material to the landfill from industrial operations such as repairing water pipes and maintaining stormwater collection areas. Typically, a significant percentage of this excavated material is made up of wet soils mixed with plant debris, rock, concrete, and metal. In 2013, Fort Collins Utilities implemented a program to dry out wet soils and screen out the rock, concrete, and metals for reuse or recycling. Soils are now reused for construction and engineering purposes after being dried out and screened. Additional information can be found at [fcgov.com/recycle](http://fcgov.com/recycle).

## WRAP (Waste Reduction & Recycling Assistance Program)

The Waste Reduction and Recycling Assistance Program (WRAP) continued to grow in 2013. WRAP provides resources to apartment complexes and businesses in Fort Collins to start or improve their recycling programs. Since its inception in early 2012, over 11,000 residents or employees have been impacted by WRAP. In 2013 alone, WRAP reached over 7,500 individuals, of whom nearly 3,000 have new access to recycling.



In 2013, the City’s recycling guidelines poster was modified to include text on the back about the new cardboard recycling ordinance and other recycling information. 7,000 copies of these popular “all-in-one” information flyers were distributed to rental housing managers to share with their tenants as part of the move-in process.



Soils being screened by Fort Collins Utilities stormwater staff.

## Definitions

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

**Industrial diversion rate:** includes materials such as waste generated by City government’s operations, concrete and asphalt recycled at crushing facilities, construction and demolition waste, brewery wastes, and 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 entire community.

## Report Prepared By



Caroline Mitchell, Environmental Planner  
 Environmental Services  
 Waste Reduction and Recycling  
 City of Fort Collins  
 970-221-6288  
[cmitchell@fcgov.com](mailto:cmitchell@fcgov.com)  
[fcgov.com/recycling](http://fcgov.com/recycling)