

Washtenaw County Materials Management Planning Committee (MMPC)

Meeting Minutes

9/10/2025, 10:00 AM

Washtenaw County Learning Resource Center

4135 Washtenaw Ave., Ann Arbor, 48108

Members Present: Seegert, Mazanec, Bukowski, Ukena, Kerkez, Maciejewski, Reeve, Nicholson, Hwang, Williams, Kofflin, Mason (ex-officio), Drinan (ex-officio)

Members Absent: Ohren

Washtenaw County Staff Present: Wright, Morris

Resource Recycling Staff Present: Naud, Heflin, Oulton (virtual), Wouters (virtual), O'Neal (virtual)

Call to order: Bukowski called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

Roll Call

- a. David Seegert – present
- b. Paul Mazanec – present
- c. Todd Bukowski (Vice Chair) - present
- d. Bryan Ukena – present
- e. Lindsey Kerkez – present
- f. Joseph Ohren (Chair) - absent
- g. Jason Maciejewski – present
- h. Bruce Reeve - present
- i. James Nicholson – present
- j. Roland Hwang – present
- k. Marc Williams – present
- l. Josh Kofflin – present
- m. Sarah Mason (ex-officio) – present
- n. David Drinan (ex-officio) – present

Land Acknowledgement (read by Wright)

Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda moved by Seegert, seconded by Nicholson. All in favor. Motion carries.

Last Meeting Minutes Approval

A motion to approve the 8/13/2025 Meeting Minutes moved by Hwang, seconded by Seegert. All in favor. Motion carries.

Vote on Working Session for Draft Recycling Chapter

Motion to hold a working session for the draft recycling chapter on September 18, 2025, at 12:00 p.m. moved by Nicholson, seconded by Maciejewski. All in favor. Motion carries.

Member Input Form Feedback

Heflin reviewed the new feedback received from the Committee input form.

Food Waste Overview and Data

Naud shared high level data of food waste projections from NRDC broken into sources of generation. Naud shared projections of food waste per person in Washtenaw County and the potential for diversion with ambitious food rescue.

Make Food Not Waste, Danielle Todd

Todd shared the background of Make Food Not Waste and their work in Detroit. She noted the bulk of food waste in Michigan is happening in southeast Michigan because that is where most of the population lives. The 15 most populated cities in the state of Michigan represent about ¾ of Michigan's food waste diversion goal. Todd encouraged the Committee to set a goal of cutting food waste in half by 2030 since that is the state's goal and shared that Make Food Not Waste has a template for food waste diversion for municipalities. Todd shared key steps to planning for food waste diversion and encouraged the Committee to emphasize reduction of food waste in the Materials Management Plan – this will lead to the greatest financial and environmental benefit.

The Committee discussed how to support the food waste reduction goals and how to measure reduction. Todd noted that the average cost per person of food waste is over \$700 in food waste per year.¹ That's a cost of \$270 million a year in Washtenaw County.

Residential: Reduction & Compost Programs

Food Waste Reduction

The County reiterated the importance of food waste reduction and shared there are many model campaigns and other tools to promote food waste reduction.

Backyard Composting

Wright reviewed the educational resources that the County has for backyard composting and shared other relevant resources. Master Composter class: Washtenaw (in-person) annually in the Fall and MSU (online) offer courses to residents. A consideration was brought up if the MMP should have a goal to increase the number of master composters.

Drop off Composting

Morris reviewed drop off programs in Ypsilanti to Chelsea and noted that Washtenaw County will be piloting a food scrap drop off program in three communities. Morris mentioned the County's pumpkin drop off network that was piloted in 2024.

Collection in Ann Arbor

Mason shared that all food scraps and plate scraps are collected with yard waste in the City of Ann Arbor. Mason reviewed the city's efforts to address the challenge of engaging with multifamily residents. They are looking at piloting drop sites that require a code for residents of multifamily buildings to enter to prevent contamination. Mason mentioned food waste challenges in the city and educating residents on reduction.

¹ EPA prepared the report, Estimating the Cost of Food Waste to American Consumers, to estimate the amount of savings available to Americans by reducing food waste. The report finds that the cost of food waste to each U.S. consumer to be \$728 per year. For a household of four, the annual cost is \$2,913, with an average weekly cost of \$56.

Bukowski asked what percentage of residents are utilizing the curbside service. Mason responded the collection of food waste is in the same container as yard waste, so it is hard to track. Mason also noted pickups go down to once per month in January through March.

Food Gatherers, Jeff Wells

Wells shared the vision of Food Gatherers to provide nutritious food to residents of Washtenaw County. Wells shared that Food Gatherers distributed 10.3 million pounds of meals in FY2025. Wells noted that food rescue is costly, time sensitive, and labor intensive. They rely heavily on a network of over 4,000 volunteers. Food Gatherers is constantly running up to storage capacity in their trucks and warehouse. Food Gatherers is bringing in: ~236,000 lbs/monthly and distributing ~196,000 lbs/month. Food not distributed is composted with My Green Michigan. Compost and trash bills for Food Gatherers are over \$2,200 per month.

Bukowski asked about where the bulk of donated food ends up. Wells noted many retail partners have a culling program from compost and also donation to feed animals. This way, donatable food is separated. Wells noted that the biggest help this Materials Management Planning Committee could focus on is decreasing their waste management costs.

Naud noted there is a lot more food that is rescuable and asked Wells where this rescuable food is. Wells noted food donation is flat and has not changed in years. Food waste is more about business practice, and many businesses are figuring out how to utilize it internally.

Committee Discussion

Naud asked Todd about other opportunities for food rescue. Todd shared their work with the Produce Terminal in Detroit where seven produce houses have 50 million pounds per year of whole fruits and vegetables that are currently going to waste. Todd also noted their work in tackling food scrap waste at the commercial scale by trying to partner with companies to divert the scraps from landfill.

Ukena noted we are looking at food waste from perspective of pounds recovered and reminded the Committee to focus on capture rate and other impacts, not just pounds.

Future Meetings Schedule

Next regular meeting is October 8th. A draft recycling chapter working session notice for September 18th and agenda will be sent to Committee members.

Public Comment

Jill Hollister, Freedom Township

Spoke to the anaerobic digester that may be built in Freedom Township. Noted that the County should focus its efforts on education of food waste diversion instead of spending millions of dollars to build an anaerobic digester.

Meeting adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting moved by Nicholson, seconded by Hwang. Meeting adjourned at 11:28 a.m.

Approved by:

 (Chair)

 (Vice Chair)