

**Washtenaw County Materials Management Planning Committee (MMPC)
Meeting Minutes**

10/08/2025, 10:00 AM

**Washtenaw County Learning Resource Center
4135 Washtenaw Ave., Ann Arbor, 48108**

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

Members Absent: Maciejewski, Drinan (ex-officio)

Washtenaw County Staff Present: Eggermont, Wright, Morris

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

Call to order: Chair Ohren called the meeting to order at 10:02 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, arrived 10:07 a.m.
- f. Joseph Ohren (Chair) - present
- g. Jason Maciejewski – absent
- h. Bruce Reeve - present
- i. James Nicholson – present
- j. Roland Hwang -present
- k. Marc Williams – present
- l. Josh Kofflin – present, arrived 10:07 a.m.
- m. Sarah Mason (ex-officio) – present
- n. David Drinan (ex-officio) – absent

Land Acknowledgement (read by Wright)

Approval of Agenda

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

Last Meeting Minutes Approval

A motion to approve the 9/10/2025 Meeting Minutes moved by Hwang, seconded by Nicholson. All in favor. Motion carries.

Special Working Sessions Meeting Minutes Approval

A motion to approve the 9/18/2025 Meeting Minutes moved by Seegert, seconded by Hwang. All in favor. Motion carries.

Member Input Feedback

Heflin read new feedback. Bukowski elaborated on consumer confusion around what is and is not acceptable in the compost stream across the county, specifically for liners.

Commercial and Institutional Organics

Data

Naud reviewed national and county-level data on commercial and institutional organic waste generation averages per year.

Washtenaw County Food Policy Council

Wright reviewed the Council's work and its current project on a resolution to get surplus food from county events donated to food pantries in collaboration with MSU extension.

Thomas McQuillan, VP of Client Strategy of Denali

McQuillan reviewed Denali's background and operations, highlighting the importance of keeping food in the cycles of feeding people, animals, and soils. Denali represents 11% of the compost created in the U.S. each year. Denali has a de-packing operation, where they recover materials from grocery stores, depackage it, and then compost the food. Denali works with many commercial and institutional entities and can calculate the greenhouse gas emissions prevented by diverting organics from landfill. Brian Colela, Manager of Collection in Michigan and Ohio for Denali, shared their challenges of contaminants in collection.

The Committee asked about where the packaging goes and how the de-packaging unit handles the odor. Colela responded most packaging goes to landfill, and that odors are controlled through pressure washing. The Committee discussed the need to decrease plastics and liners in the first place to prevent contamination in organics. Eggermont asked about addressing microplastics. McQuillan noted that the screening process helps filter plastics. The largest source of food waste is from food production and food distribution. The Committee asked about the human health impacts of processing organics, from microplastics to methane release. The Committee noted there is a need to consider human health impacts and beyond and from microplastics.

Zachary Bach, Zingerman's Deli

Zingerman's has four key ways they divert organic waste. 1) PARS (periodic automatic replacement) - things that they use frequently have a high PAR (e.g., reuben). The Deli reviews historical data and forecasting to project how much purchasing should take place without over-stocking. 2) First In, First Out – they always use what is made first as what should sell first. 3) Selling items at a discount(e.g., day old bread). 4) Buying food whole (e.g. a whole chicken).

Zingerman's Deli is committed to giving Food Gatherers 100 meals per week. Zingerman's Deli has been composting back-of-house food waste for 10 years. With a Washtenaw County sponsorship, they are working to implement composting for front-of-house.

Bach noted that what enables Zingerman's to be successful is passion at all employee levels. The Committee asked about front-of-house composting, specifically their compostable packaging and the challenges of collection and contamination. Bach noted that at this point, most of the packaging is compostable, which helps prevent confusion and contamination. Hwang asked about third parties that sell Zingerman's products. Bach noted that this is an opportunity to train third party partners. The Committee asked Bach what best practices he would suggest to increase composting in the County. Bach responded that widespread and consistent education is the most important. Naud shared an example of the power of educating and designing out waste on the front end.

Breweries and Other Considerations

Heflin reviewed research and stats from other commercial entities that should be noted in the plan: breweries, cannabis, farm waste and ag plastics, forestry / urban wood.

Institutional

Naud and Wright covered the goals and challenges of different institutional entities in the county.

- Trinity Health
- Washtenaw Community College
- University of Michigan
- K-12 Schools
 - Washtenaw County did a cafeteria waste audit for one day of an elementary school's waste. The total waste was 0.6 pounds per student for the day. 0.5 pounds of this was from food and liquids.
 - Opportunities to reduce waste include offer versus serve which allows students to choose what they want to eat, share tables, and composting.
 - Challenges include food safety policies and short time periods for lunch.
 - Plastic Free Restaurants is an organization that can support the transition from single use to reuse in schools, subsidizing the costs of purchasing reusable wares and trays.

Jennifer McCullen, My Green Michigan

My Green Michigan is a food waste hauler. They work with two state-registered industrial composters to process all organic waste collected. The industrial composters they work with accept all food scraps including eggshells, meat, bones, dairy, grease, coffee, and tea fiber bags. Their customers have a wide range of organic waste from 30-yard dumpsters to one bin collection per week and a range of mostly compostable packaging versus mostly food waste. My Green Michigan additionally works with multi-family resident buildings. They intend to support the City of Ann Arbor as they work to build out multi-family organics drop off service and school collection programs.

The Committee asked McCullen about how My Green Michigan addresses contamination. Their drivers are trained to address contamination with tags and customer education. Their

composting partners charge them for contamination.

Announcement

We have an updated recycling draft chapter with your feedback. Please see the updated version in the folder under Version 2.

Future Meetings Schedule

Next meeting November 12th – begin of Special Materials topic.

Committee Discussion on Yard Waste and Air Quality Benefits Tools

Eggermont noted we don't have authority over requiring residents to keep leaves on their lawns and mulching, but we can provide best practices. The Committee discussed the harms of leaf blowers, burning leaves, and the greenhouse gas impacts of hauling leaves to composters instead of keeping them on site.

Kerkez mentioned there is a good tool for tracking air quality called COBRA. She also noted she is moving on from her position at SEMCOG and will no longer be on the Committee.

Public Comment

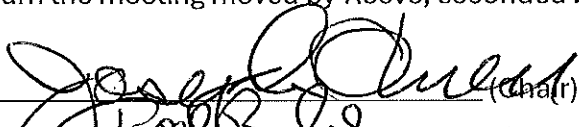
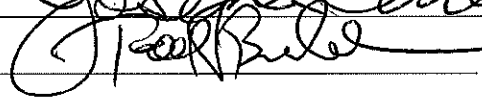
Jill Hollister, Freedom Township

Shared an info sheet with a study that FDA did that tracked parts per trillion (PPT) of PFAS in common eaten foods.

Meeting adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting moved by Reeve, seconded by Seegert. Meeting adjourned at 11:38a.m.

Approved by:

 (Chair)
 (Vice Chair)