

OUTCOME 6.4: SOLID WASTE

WORKING GROUP WHITE PAPER

Overview

Outcome 6.4: By 2050, we are working together effectively as a region to reduce and manage solid waste and landfills.

The Solid Waste working group has focused primarily on Regional waste reduction through policy implementation, targeted messaging, metric collection, and reducing yard waste. The strategies succeed in working towards addressing waste reduction and management systems.

Accomplishments in the last two years:

- The Solid Waste Working Group (SWWG) started meeting with the Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan (ISWMP) Task Force in 2017. Several of the solid waste strategies were very similar to ISWMP goals and it made sense for the two groups to meet and work together.
- The SWWG hosted an education/outreach collaboration event at UNO on March 16, 2018 and utilized the “Think Tank” collaboration tool, which was facilitated by UNO and the Nebraska Business Development Center (NBDC).
- On May 23, 2018, Karna Loewenstein facilitated a workshop at MAPA to prioritize items for implementation. The group then met again at UNL Extension (8015 West Center Road) on June 28, 2018 to continue the prioritization process. The following are the five (5) primary areas of focus, with individual actions/goals within each area:
 - Planning for a circular economy (waste characterization studies; funding and local market development; proof of concepts; benchmarks)
 - Regional waste reduction policies (gather and evaluate existing policies; formulate future policies)
 - One message/one voice and buy in from leaders/stakeholders (develop message; identify stakeholders/leaders/audiences; develop targeted messages; campaign effectiveness assessment)
 - Metrics and data gathering (establish baselines and continue measurements)
 - Reduce yard waste (define baseline; education/outreach campaign; measurement)
- Each of the aforementioned areas of focus have a small group working on the respective individual actions/goals.

Things to work towards in the next two years:

- **Circular economy sub-group:** Identify resource information from Bellevue re waste characterization and recycling contamination; Identify return on investment (ROI) and economic impacts of utilizing recycled materials; survey manufacturers regarding their use of recycled materials
- **Regional waste reduction policies sub-group:** Gather existing policies pertaining to waste reduction among MAPA region agencies; identify resources/references of “best practices” of waste reduction policies at the local, state and national levels; create a discussion paper MAPA agencies can use as a guide to structure stronger waste reduction policies in the MAPA region.
- **One message/one voice sub-group:** Develop and implement an information campaign in concert with the residential collection contractors; create a working group of sustainability coordinators to develop and implement the message to address the growing movement of commercial zero waste; develop and implement the message re composting - enabling more to compost.
- **Metrics/data gathering sub-group:** Identify data collection points already existing; refresh ISWMP data to set a new baseline; what other data collection points are needed?
- **Reduce yard waste sub-group:** Identify ways to reduce collection and processing of yard waste through education and outreach efforts; create stakeholder/network lists; develop and distribute programming to get the “one message” out to residents.

Challenges and Priorities

Challenges the work group faces, and assistance that is needed:

- **Challenges**
 - Gathering data. This is time-consuming and realistically will not be accomplished without outside paid consulting assistance.
 - Data availability. Some data will not be available because there is no requirement for entities to report said data. For example, a private material recovery facility (MRF) is not required to report any of their input/output.
 - Ensuring there is a consistent message(s) on the relevant solid waste issues that is/are being distributed.

- **Potential solutions**

- Identify funding (perhaps grant funding through NDEQ or NET) that could provide the necessary dollars to complete some of the required data assembly and analysis. Potential partnership with UNO School of Public Administration (or others?).
- Begin the steps with the Nebraska Legislature to mandate reporting on solid waste generation, recycling, etc.
- Contacting businesses to enlist the assistance of their sustainability coordinators - share resources and coordinate initiatives regarding zero waste.

- **Who (individual, organization, entities, etc.) is best suited to assist the workgroup?**

- A paid consultant that can devote time and effort on data assembly and analysis
- Existing resource efforts through work group partners (First Star Fiber, for example, has reached out to the Association of Plastic Recyclers for a potential survey of local/regional manufacturers re their use of recycled products.)
- Commercial businesses and their respective sustainability coordinators.
- Omaha Wasteline - provides a mechanism for distributing the “one message”

How does your working group’s priorities relate to other working groups (climate change, waste, GHG emissions, etc)?

- *There are certainly ties with the Local Food Coordinating Council re the “food waste” aspects. The United Way of the Midlands also has a food mapping initiative that has a “food waste” component.*

Priorities for the next 5-10 years to accomplish the Heartland 2050 objective

(These are yet to be determined.)

Priorities	High	Med	Low
Mandatory solid waste reporting (to NDEQ) from all sectors.	X		
Sustainable funding source(s) for solid waste-related education and outreach.	X		
Consistent messaging for all solid waste-related education and outreach.	X		
Local/regional recyclable product market development.	X		