

Accelerate Zero Waste Infrastructure and Policies

The City of Fort Collins is lacking key infrastructure and related supportive policies, which are vital to progress toward the 2030 Zero Waste goal.

Work Plan Items:

The long-range vision and goals for this priority are established in City Plan (ENV 5: Create a Zero Waste system), the City Strategic Plan (ENV 1) and Our Climate Future (Big Move 2: Zero Waste Neighborhoods and Big Move 10: Zero Waste Economy). Consideration will be given to how Larimer County's development of new waste diversion facilities, guided by its Solid Waste Infrastructure Master Plan, may impact options for Fort Collins' residents and businesses.

The following is a compilation of achievable, short-term goals to advance these plans during this Council term. It incorporates work already in progress.

1. Identify pathways to local or regional construction and demolition (C&D) materials sorting facility and food scrap composting facility.

- Description: Past planning efforts have identified infrastructure for C&D materials recycling and food scraps composting as being essential to making progress on zero waste goals. Policy development on these topics is dependent on identifying the pathway to getting these facilities constructed and financially viable.
 - Staff applied for and received CDPHE grant funding for consulting work with recycling industry experts to conduct analysis of options for these facilities, given that the pathways to these facilities identified in the past have changed.
 - The consulting work will identify options solely in the control of the City, as well as potential partnership opportunities and a comparative analysis of them. The City will then select an option for each facility for more in-depth feasibility-level cost analysis and implementation pathways (including the potential for supportive policies).
- Resources required:
 - Existing staff time and consulting provided by grant that has already been received.
 - Identified infrastructure pathways are likely to require resource investment. Staff will engage with Council through the process to identify preferred options and related resources
- Community Engagement and Outreach:
 - The first phase of planning and research will be based on extensive past engagement, which shows high level of interest in increasing affordable access to food scrap/C&D diversion. Any future policy development would include additional community engagement.
- Deliverable/Council Action/Council Role:
 - Deliverable
 - Clearer pathway and next steps to food scraps, C&D infrastructure
 - Council Action/Council Role:
 - Provide guidance about potential infrastructure pathways identified
 - Potentially allocate resources to take next steps toward infrastructure implementation
 - Participation in regional PAC to help ensure alignment with County research and action

- Next Step:
 - Staff will work with grant-funded industry expert consultants to identify potential infrastructure pathways for C&D material recycling and food scrap composting.
- Timeline:
 - Q2 2024: Work with consulting firm begins
 - Q2-Q4 2024: Identify potential pathway options with comparative analysis
 - Q1/Q2 2025: Work session to discuss pathway options and select option for in-depth analysis
 - Q3 2025: Work session to share full analysis and discuss next steps and resource allocation needs to support implementation
 - Further deliverables TBD pending analysis and resource allocation
 - e.g., Development of policy to support C&D recycling and/or food scrap composting possible once infrastructure pathway identified and initiated

2. Leverage existing infrastructure to increase yard trimmings composted.

- Description: Yard trimmings composting facilities already exist in a reasonable distance from Fort Collins. This work is to utilize policies and programs to increase the amount of yard trimmings composted.
 - Committed Work: Implement the contracted residential hauling program in September 2024, with expanded yard trimmings collection (yard trimmings are moving from opt-in with an extra fee, to being opt-out for no additional fee)
 - Potential Work: Explore commercial yard trimmings policy development in 2025
- Resources Required:
 - Contracted hauling implementation and ongoing management already resourced
 - Staff capacity to develop commercial yard trimmings policy dependent on time required for Zero Waste infrastructure project and other departmental priorities, based on Council direction.
- Community Engagement and Outreach:
 - Extensive outreach is underway for the roll out of the contracted residential hauling program
 - Broad community engagement and in-depth stakeholder engagement with landscapers and commercial yard trimmings generators would be central to commercial yard trimmings policy development
- Deliverable/Council Action/Council Role:
 - Deliverables:
 - Successful start to and ongoing operation of contracted residential hauling program, including yard trimmings collection, providing new data for additional yard trimmings composted through program
 - Potential policy supporting commercial yard trimmings composting
 - Council Action: Direction on development of potential commercial yard trimmings policy
- Next Steps:
 - Staff will continue to support the successful roll out of the contracted residential hauling program
 - As the Zero Waste infrastructure project progresses, staff will scope future commercial yard trimmings policy development for 2025

- Timeline:
 - Q2-Q3 2024: prepare for successful roll-out of contracted residential hauling program
 - Q4 2024 and ongoing: support successful contracted residential hauling program and additional residential yard trimmings collection, including tracking additional yard trimmings composted through program
 - Q2 – Q3 2025 potential commercial yard trimmings policy

3. **Develop additional waste and recycling measurement approaches.**

- Description:
 - The current approach to measuring waste and recycling in Fort Collins is collecting weights of materials collected by haulers servicing the community and using that data to calculate the community diversion rate (the percentage of material recycled or reused rather than landfilled). This industry-standard metric is useful for tracking long term trends.
 - This project is to work with a consultant to identify an additional measurement approach that provides more frequent, granular information that can support identifying impacts from policy and program changes and to inform next opportunities
- Resources Required:
 - Consultant funding (BFO offer submitted)
 - Potential resources required to implement new approach
- Community Engagement and Outreach:
 - N/A
- Deliverable/Council Action/Council Role:
 - Deliverable
 - Recommended additional approach to measuring waste and recycling in Fort Collins
 - Identification of resources needed to implement additional measurement approach
 - Council Action/Council Role
 - Potentially approve funding for consultant, additional resources to implement (if needed)
- Next Step:
 - Offer for consulting support will be included in 2025/2026 budget process.
- Timeline:
 - Q4 2024: Potentially fund budget offer.
 - Q2 2025: If funded, engage in competitive purchasing process to identify consultant.
 - Q3/Q4 2025: If funded, work session to share consultant findings with Councilmembers.

4. **Increase municipal industrial materials reuse and recycling.**

- Description:
 - Municipal industrial materials are generated from City operations such as repairing water mains, maintaining stormwater facilities, conducting street repairs, etc. This includes materials such as soil, metal, asphalt, concrete, stone, etc.
 - Municipal industrial materials are 95% of the waste generated by the City organization (by weight) and 7% of the total material disposed of in the community
 - Past analysis of the City’s municipal industrial recycling programs identified dedicated staff resources as essential to making further progress on material reuse or recycling.

- Resources Required:
 - Staff position.
 - Community Engagement and Outreach:
 - N/A
 - Deliverable/Council Action/Council Role:
 - Deliverable
 - Dedicated staff member to coordinate and expand recycling and reuse programs for City industrial waste, increasing the amount of municipal industrial materials reused or recycled.
 - Council Action/Council Role
 - Consider approval of potential position request.
 - Next Step:
 - Offer for position will potentially be included in 2025 budget revision process.
 - Timeline:
 - Q2/Q3 2025: Potentially fund position in budget process.
 - Q1 2026: If funded, hire staff person into position.
 - Q2 2026: If funded, staff person to coordinate and develop reuse and recycling programs for municipal industrial materials.
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Department Lead and Partners: Lead: Environmental Services; Partners: Departments that generate municipal industrial materials (Streets, Water Utilities, Light and Power, Parks and Natural Areas).

Current Work Underway:

- Our Climate Future has identified the top-priority areas of focus for meaningful progress on our waste diversion goals: 1) Construction and demolition materials, 2) Food scraps and yard trimmings, 3) Municipal industrial “waste” (soils and aggregates).
- Contracted trash and recycling service to over 41,000 households in Fort Collins to start September 2024- services include weekly recycling and weekly yard trimmings (seasonally).
- Existing requirements that new construction, remodels and demolitions to recycle cardboard, metal, aggregates and wood.
- Enforcement through permit documentation as well as site visits.
- Engaging in statewide C&D collaborations with a goal of market development for C&D materials.

Challenges:

- Infrastructure pathway identification includes many factors; potential regional approaches or partnerships for infrastructure dependent on identifying willing partners and working through project together.

Tradeoffs:

- Staff time allocation to new projects vs. ongoing projects and programs.