



The City of  
Worcester

# ZERO WASTE MASTER PLAN 2025



# ZERO WASTE MASTER PLAN

## AGENDA – Workshop 2

September 17, 2025 • 6:30-8PM • Worcester Public Library

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Recap of the Zero Waste Master Plan: Process & Findings
3. Current List of ZWMP Initiatives: Policies, Programs, and Infrastructure
4. Drafting the ZWMP Vision Statement
5. Wrap up and Next Steps
6. *Activity*
  - Dot Voting for Top 3 ZWMP Initiatives
  - Creating a Vision Statement for Zero Waste Worcester

# WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

# **ZERO WASTE**

# LINEAR ECONOMY

→ TAKE



Resource Extraction

→ MAKE

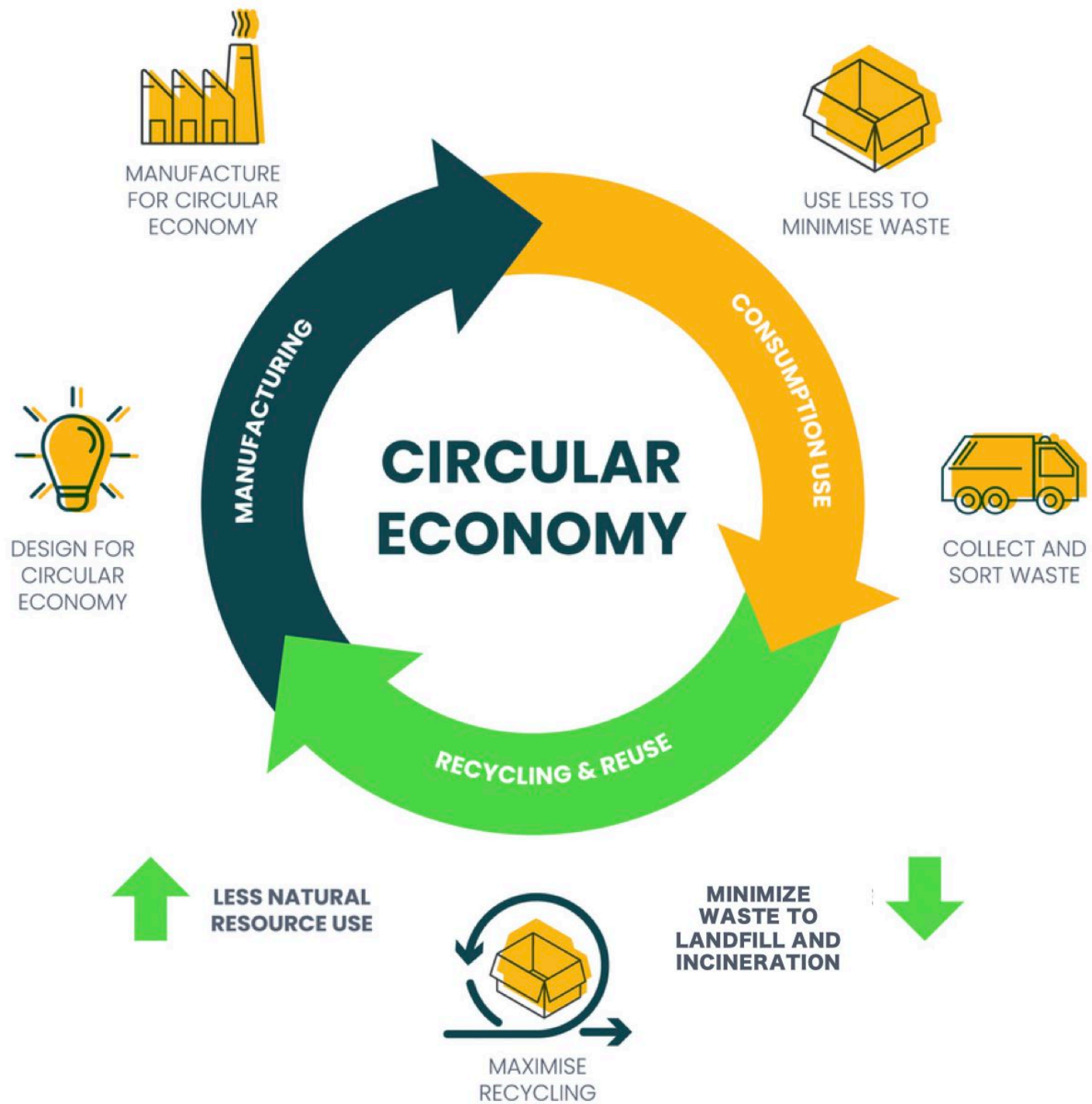


Manufacturing

→ WASTE



End of Life



# International Peer-Reviewed Definition of Zero Waste

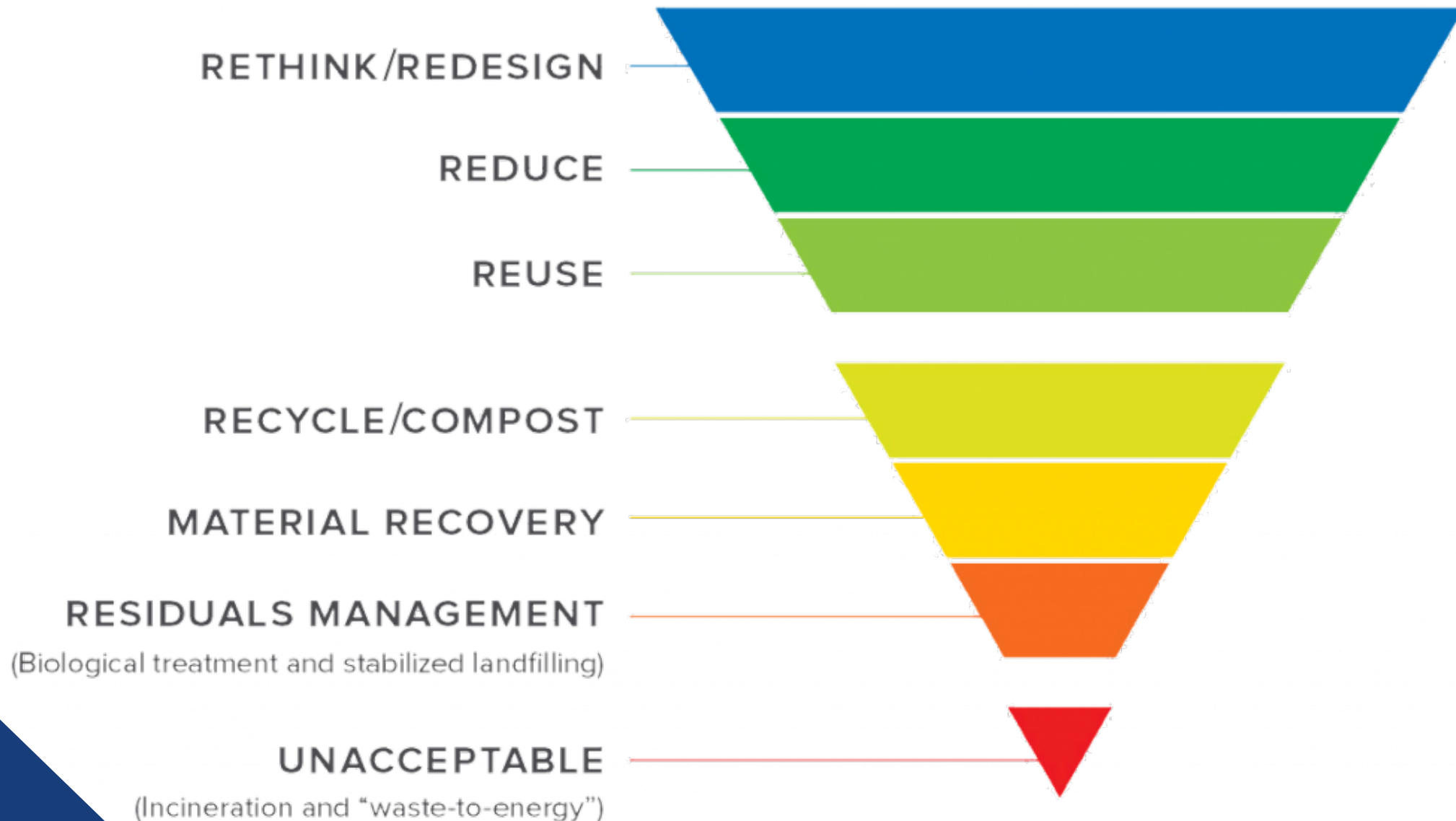
**Zero Waste:** The conservation of all resources by means of responsible production, consumption, reuse, and recovery of products, packaging, and materials without burning and with no discharges to land, water, or air that threaten the environment or human health.



Source: [zwia.org](http://zwia.org)

# THE ZERO WASTE HIERARCHY 8.0

For detailed version visit [www.zwia.org/zwh](http://www.zwia.org/zwh)

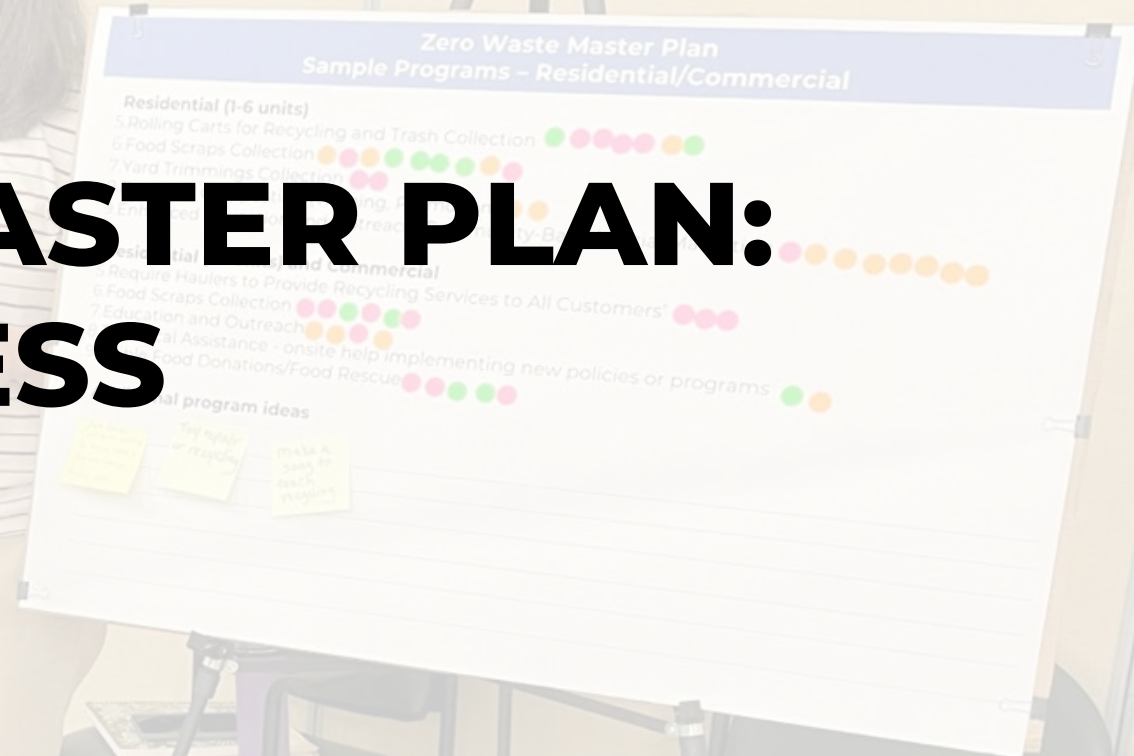


Source: [Zero Waste International Alliance](http://Zero Waste International Alliance)

The background image shows a residential street with blue houses. In the foreground, there are several green recycling bins and yellow plastic bags filled with waste. The text is overlaid on this image.

# **RECAP OF THE ZERO WASTE MASTER PLAN: PROCESS & FINDINGS**

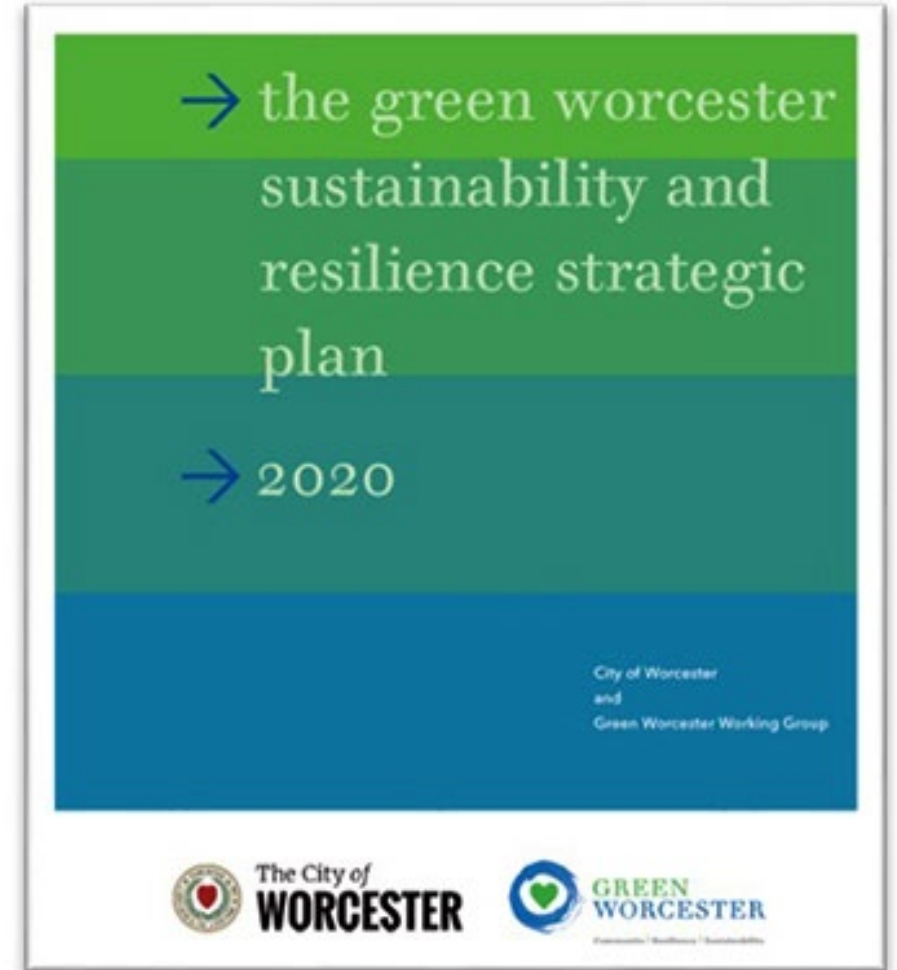
# ZERO WASTE MASTER PLAN: PROCESS



# **CALLED FOR IN THE GREEN WORCESTER PLAN**

Charts a roadmap to bring sustainability values to all aspects of city life

- Sustainable transportation and mobility
- Green infrastructure projects
- Renewable energy
- Urban Forestry Master Plan
- **Zero Waste Master Plan**



# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SCHEDULE

	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
COMMUNITY SURVEY									
LISTENING SESSIONS									
STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS	4/17		6/18		8/21		10/16		12/18
PUBLIC WORKSHOPS				7/16		9/17		11/5	
ONLINE WORKSHOPS				7/22		9/23		11/13	

# KEY DELIVERABLES BY THE CONSULTANT

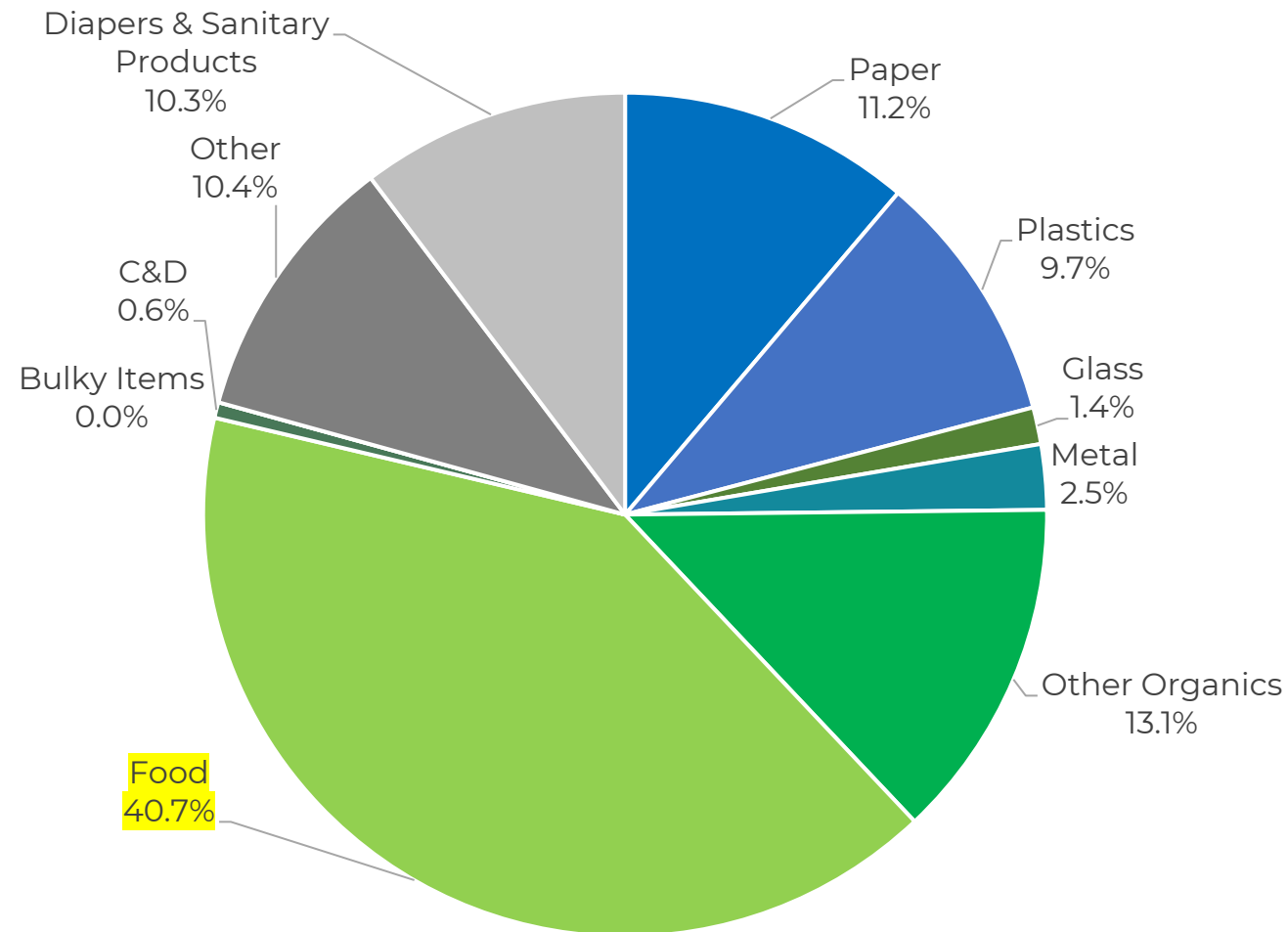
Current State Review & Analysis	Policy & Program Analysis		Zero Waste Plan	
Waste Generation and Disposal	Organics program	Drop-off Center	Implementation Road Map	Budget & Resource Allocation
Facility Survey and Analysis	Disposal Market	Litter & Illegal Dumping	Framework for Monitoring & Evaluation	Draft & Final Plan
Legal and Regulatory Analysis	Pay As You Throw	Single-Use Plastic Bag Ban	Framework for Education & Outreach	Presentation to City Council
	Large Multifamily & Commercial	Other Initiatives		

# ZWMP: INITIAL FINDINGS



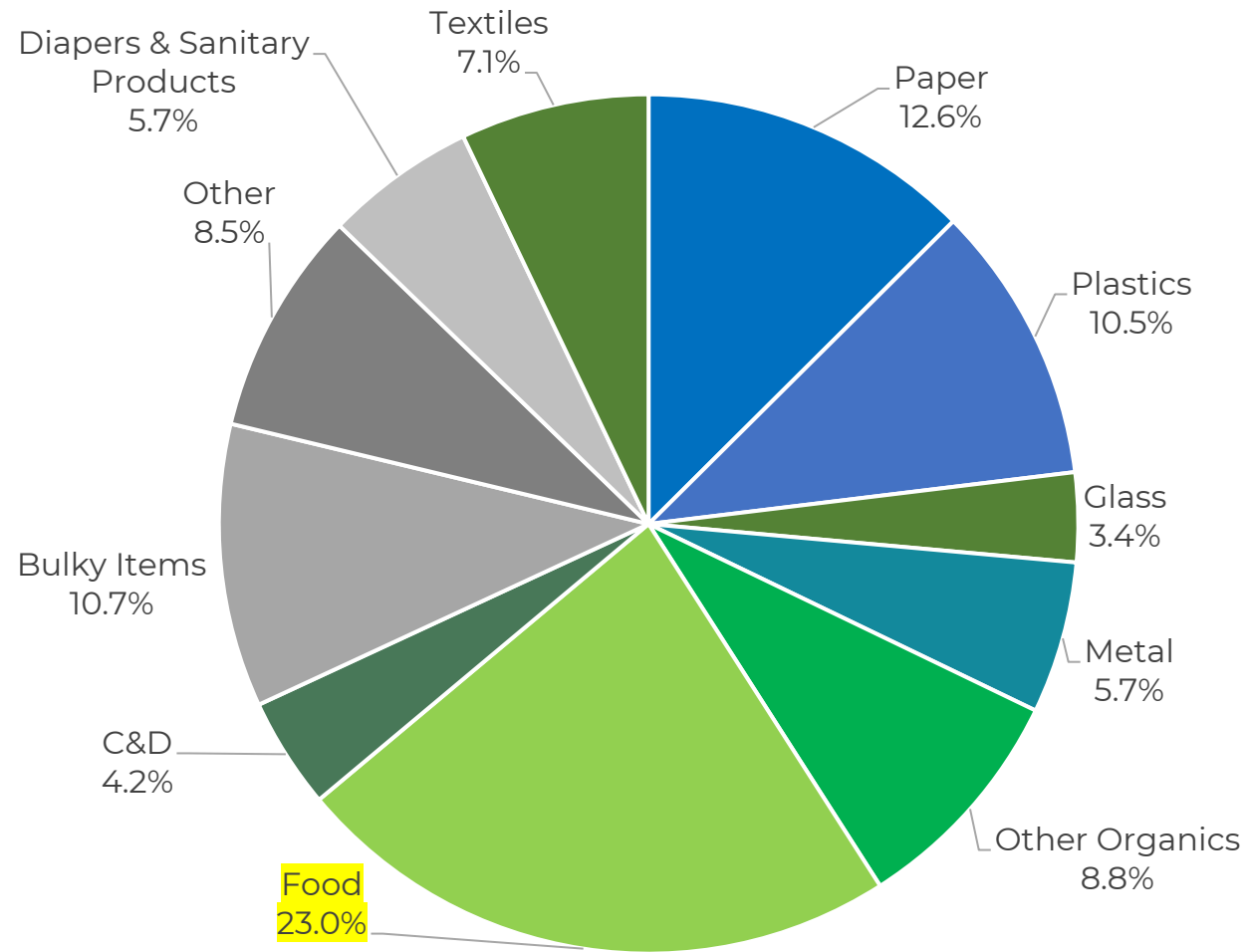
# WASTE CHARACTERIZATION STUDY

## Residential Trash (1-6 units)



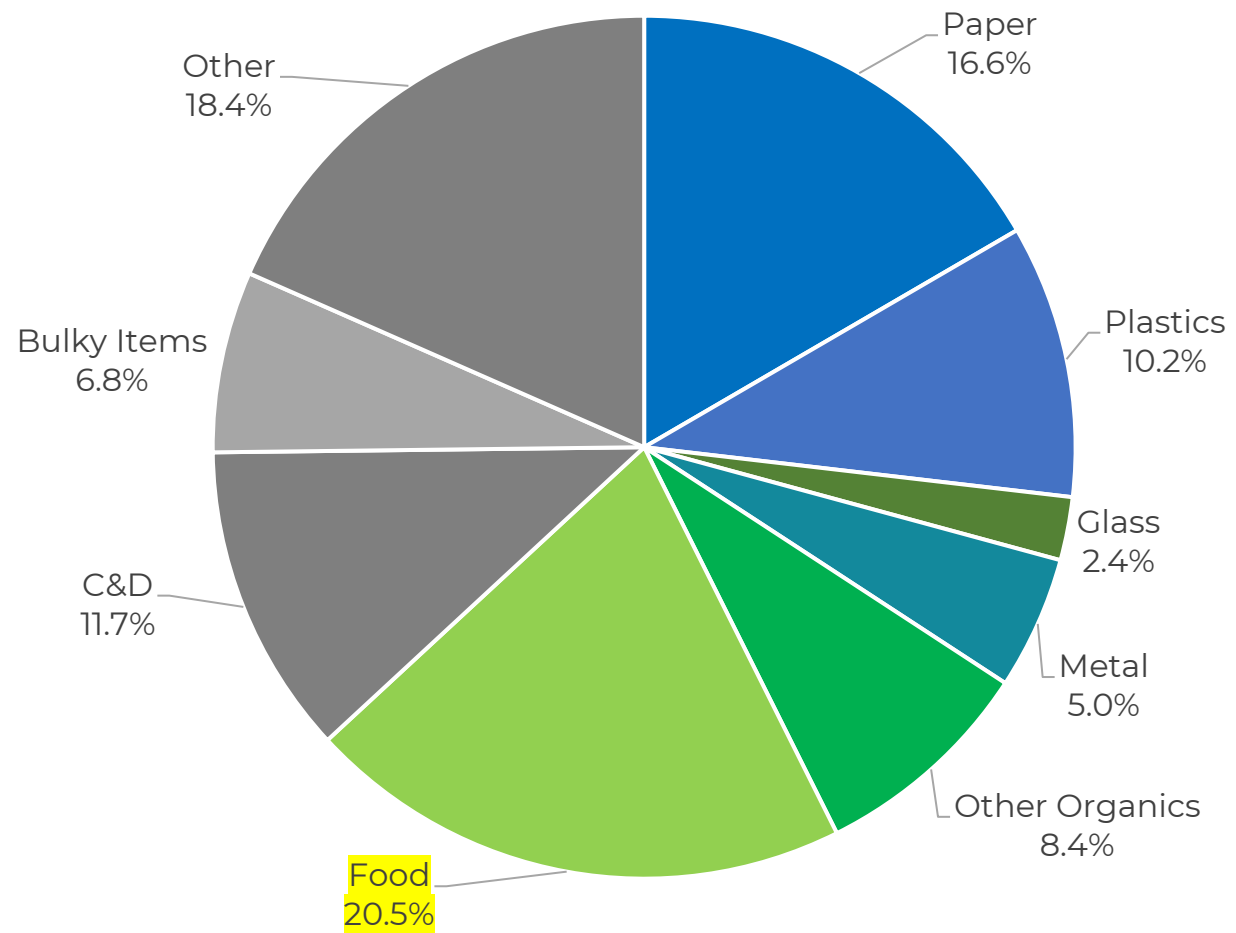
# WASTE CHARACTERIZATION STUDY

## Residential Trash (7+ units)

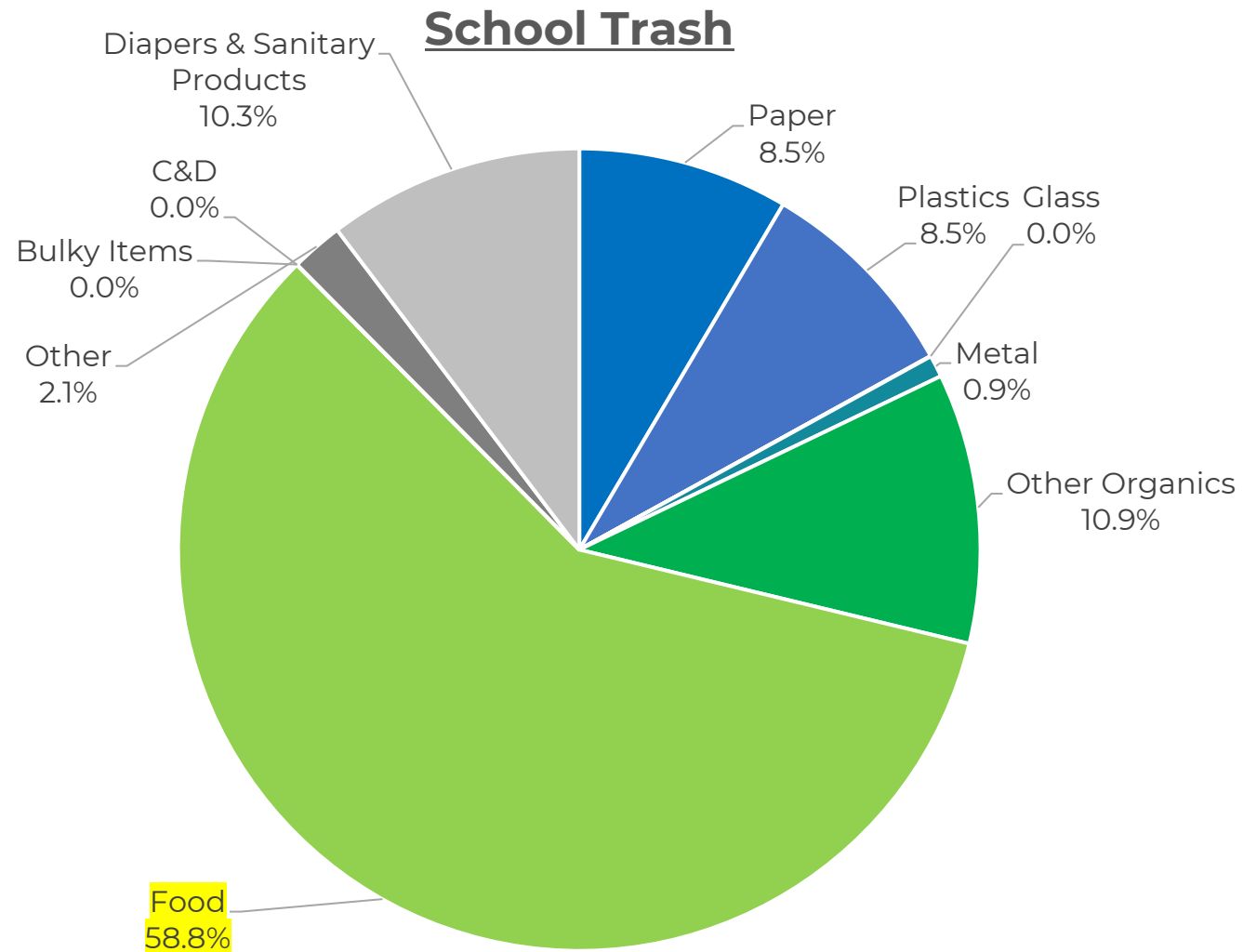


# WASTE CHARACTERIZATION STUDY

## Commercial Trash



# WASTE CHARACTERIZATION STUDY



### Residential (1-6 units)

- 5. Rolling Carts for Recycling and Trash Collection
- 6. Food Scraps Collection
- 7. Yard Trimmings Collection
- 8. Backyard Composting (Training, Promotion)
- 9. Enhanced Education and Outreach, Community-Based Social Marketing

### Residential (7+ units) / Commercial

- 5. Require Haulers to Provide Recycling Services to All Customers'
- 6. Food Scraps Collection
- 7. Education and Outreach
- 8. Technical Assistance - on-site help implementing new policies or programs
- 9. Edible Food Donations/Food Rescue

# WHAT WE ARE HEARING

**SURVEY (1,800+ RESPONSES), WORKSHOPS, INTERVIEWS**

### Additional program ideas

Dark Room  
Contractor Looking  
To Recycle more  
Keep less waste  
Transfer station

Toy repair  
or recycling

Make a  
song to  
teach  
recycling

3 bin system  
- trash  
- rec  
- comp

# WHAT WORCESTER DOES WELL

What do you think Worcester does well with waste management?

Answered: 1,185   Skipped: 635

*[Survey's open-ended question]*

**Timely, reliable  
collection service 20%**

**Like the yellow bag PAYT  
program 5%**

**Low cost 4%**

**Covers the basics  
(trash, recycling) 18%**

**No sort recycling 5%**

**Friendly  
hard-working staff 2%**

**Weekly Collection 8%**

**Good communication 5%**

**New public refuse bins 1%**

**Drop-off center 6%**

**Yard waste drop-off 4%**

**Nothing/Not sure 8%**

# WHAT COULD BE BETTER, WHAT DO YOU NEED?

If you have experienced a problem with any aspect of waste disposal in Worcester, what resources do you need that are not currently available to you?  
*[Survey's open-ended question]*

Answered: 1,060   Skipped: 760

**Do not like the  
recycling bins  
(size, quality) 27%**

**Would like  
bulk waste collection 9%**

**Would like more  
litter cleanup 4%**

**Do not like the  
yellow bags  
(cost, quality) 16%**

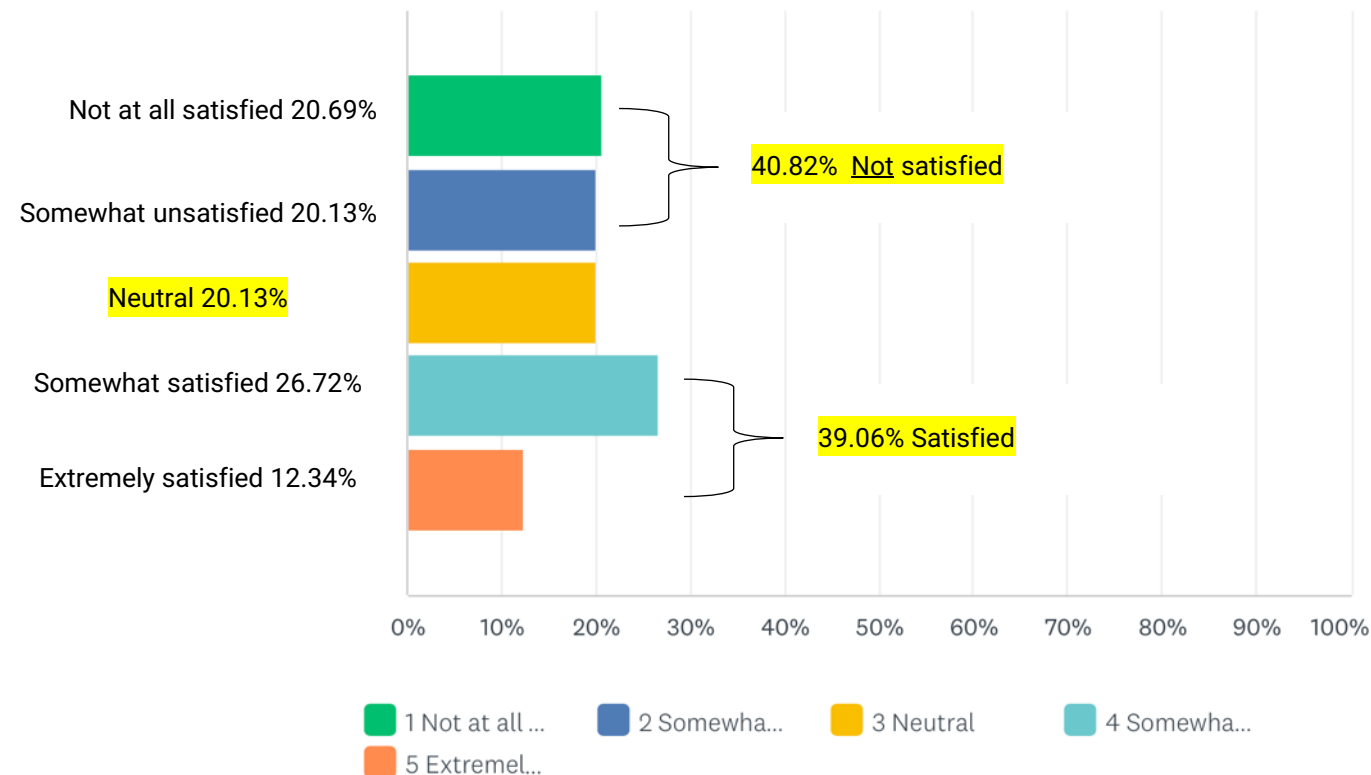
**Concerned about wind  
debris and waste  
containment 6%**

**Would like compost  
collection service 4%**

# PAY AS YOU THROW PROGRAM

How satisfied are you with Worcester's curbside trash collection program (also known as the yellow-bag or Pay-As-You-Throw program)?  
Rank 1-5 with 5 being extremely satisfied

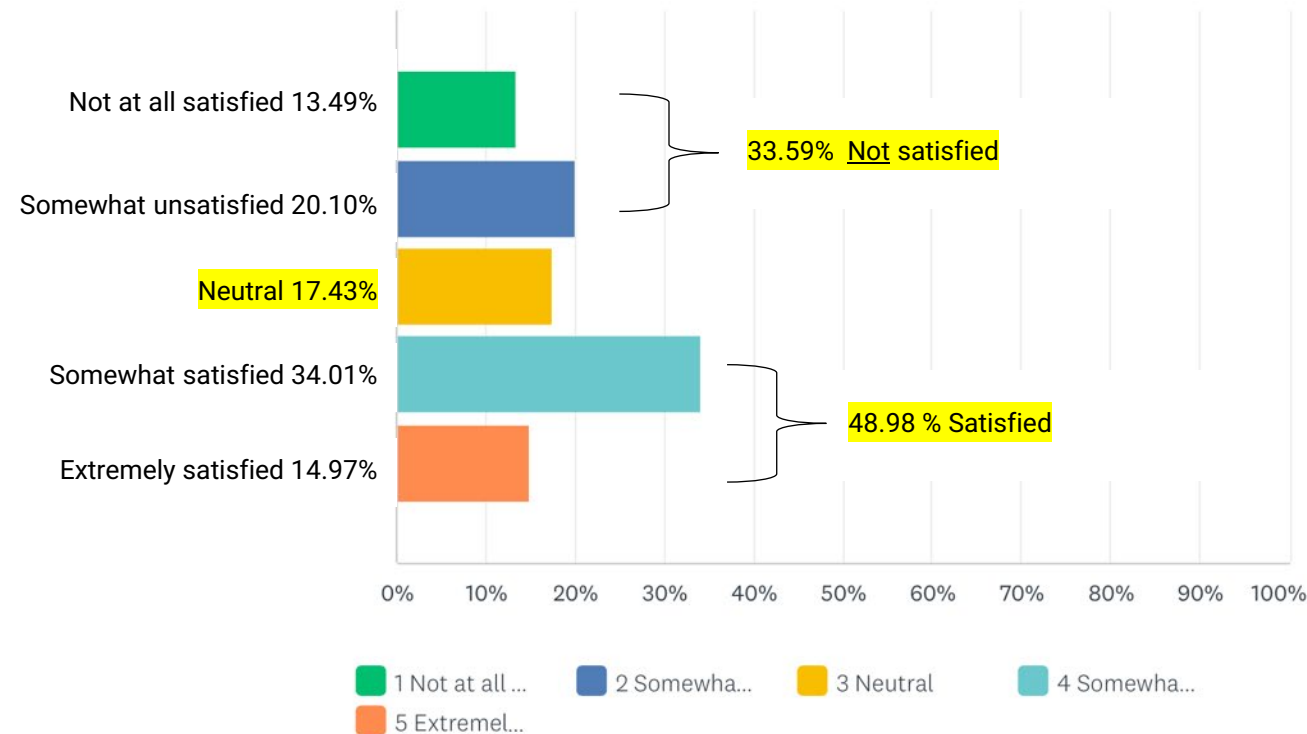
Answered: 1,426 Skipped: 394



# CURBSIDE RECYCLING

How satisfied are you with Worcester's curbside recycling collection program?  
Rank 1-5 with 5 being extremely satisfied

Answered: 1,423 Skipped: 397



# WORKSHOP 1 - What's going well?

**Recycling bins are bigger, and that's good**

**Drop-off center folks are very helpful**

**City staff who pick up the trash are friendly and work hard**

**The compost satellite site is great**

**Zero sort recycling is good**

**Weekly pickup**

**Green bags for trash  
– Clean Streets Collective Program**

**Helpsy for textiles  
Black Earth for compost**

# WORKSHOP 1 – What are the challenges?

**Some people say they are too busy or don't care**

**Taking bulk items to drop-off center isn't always possible**

**When students move out of dorms, reusable items (ex. fans) are thrown away**

**Recycling is blowing everywhere**

**Yellow bags are thin**

**Consistency in communication**

**Need recycling education at schools, businesses**

**Drop-off center hours are too restrictive**

# WORKSHOP 1

## What is Your Vision for Zero Waste in Worcester?

Drop-off site for food

Community partners to spread the word - WooSox

Make a catchy song

Work with local thrift stores to limit clothing waste

Better education about trash/recycling programs

Increase 311 call hours to be after 5 pm

A clean city - litter free, bring back KWC because that was a movement

Make zero waste a community value - a culture shift



# **CURRENT LIST OF ZWMP INITIATIVES: POLICIES, PROGRAMS & INFRASTRUCTURE**

# POTENTIAL NEW OR EXPANDED POLICIES

## Zero Waste Initiative

Single-Use Plastic Bag Ban Enhancement

Single-Use Plastic Bans (expansion beyond bags to other items)

Single-Use Foodware & Litter Reduction Ordinance

Mandatory Recycling Participation

Waste Disposal Bans Policy and Enforcement

Lease Requirements (Notices and Transition Plan)

Lead by Example (ordinance for municipal and school facilities)

Require Haulers to Provide Recycling Services to All Customers

Recycling Requirements for Contractors and Builders

# POTENTIAL NEW OR EXPANDED PROGRAMS

## Zero Waste Initiative

Education and Outreach with Community Based Social Marketing

Rolling Carts for Recycling Collection

Rolling Carts for Trash Collection

Food Scrap and Yard Trimmings Collection (with food scrap drop-off)

Backyard Composting (Training, Promotion)

Edible Food Recovery and Donation

Technical Assistance - onsite help implementing new policies or programs

Share, Reuse, Repair Events and Directory

Green Product and Services Directory and Promotions

Systemic Cleanup (litter and illegal dumping)

# POTENTIAL NEW OR EXPANDED INFRASTRUCTURE

## Zero Waste Initiative

Household Hazardous Waste Events

Program for Diapers

Zero Waste Business Recognition Program

Public Notice of Pending Demolition to Facilitate Deconstruction

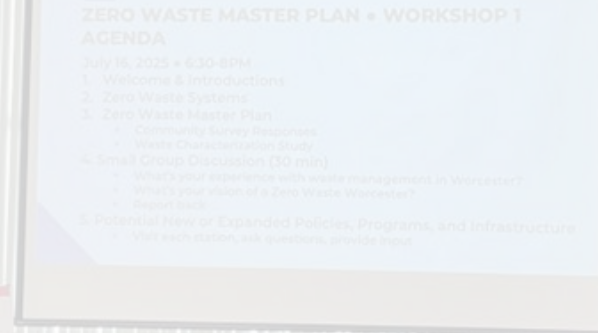
Residential Drop-Off Center Expansion

Trash Infrastructure

Library of Things Expansion

Water Bottle Filling Station Expansion

# DRAFTING THE ZWMP VISION STATEMENT






## **WHAT IS A VISION STATEMENT?**

A vision statement is a clear and inspiring expression of an organization's long-term goals, describing the future it ultimately aims to create.

It answers the question, “What will the world look like if we succeed?” and serves as a guiding light—providing direction, inspiring action, and aligning efforts with the organization's core values.



# SAMPLE VISION STATEMENTS

- When implemented, Baltimore's Fair Development Plan for Zero Waste will achieve these outcomes: Clean Air, Clean Communities, Reclaim Communities, Build Community Power, More Jobs, Create Less Waste.
- In pursuit of building a more equitable solid waste management system that enhances the natural beauty and standard of living across our great city, the Government of the District of Columbia commits to ensuring a just transition to zero waste, where solutions are convenient, accessible, and affordable for all, with support focused on low-income households and small businesses.
- Vision: Missoulians will adopt and normalize Zero Waste behaviors with the increase of convenient, affordable Zero Waste services and programs.

# STAKEHOLDER ZERO WASTE VISION IDEAS

- Options for a clean city for all folks visiting and living in Worcester (unhoused included).
- Zero Waste is everyone's responsibility, and we all should join together to undo the harm caused to our planet
- A cleaner Worcester, less litter in the streets.
- Cleaner city, programs that promote composting, reducing organic waste, sites/locations that allow the community to dispose of household items.
- Zero Waste in Worcester should be a commitment to sustainability, community engagement and a healthier environment.
- Zero waste should not only be an environmental goal but also a commitment of responsible government budgeting.

# **STAKEHOLDER ZERO WASTE VISION IDEAS**

- The cleanest city in New England
- A future with less consumption
- Make zero waste a community value - a culture shift
- A clean city - litter free
- Radical upcycling
- Circular economy, everything to be reused, remanufactured
- Meaningful reduce and reuse anything that you have in your household

# SHAPING IDEAS INTO A VISION

For example:

- Zero Waste Worcester: *become the cleanest, greenest, least wasteful mid-sized city nationwide by 2050.*
- Zero Waste Worcester: *a community that values working together to eliminate litter and reduce waste, converting what's left into reusable, affordable resources for all.*
- Zero Waste Worcester: *a future with clean streets and sidewalks, thoughtful consumption, efficient and affordable recycling, fostering community pride.*

Additional Ideas?


# **WRAP UP AND NEXT STEPS**

- Cost Analysis
- Implementation Plan
- Workshop 3 – November 5 (in person),  
November 13 (online)



# **SHARE YOUR FEEDBACK**

Please visit all 4 stations:

- Vote on your top 3 initiatives for each of the 3 boards
  - Provide feedback/ideas on the ZWMP Vision Statement (by voting on proposed ones and/or writing your own statement!)
- 



## **Thank you for your input!**

Learn more: [Worcesterma.gov/zerowaste](https://Worcesterma.gov/zerowaste)

Contact: [zerowaste@worcesterma.gov](mailto:zerowaste@worcesterma.gov)

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