

Presentation to the Green Worcester Advisory Committee

By:

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The City *of* Worcester

Agenda

- Plan Development
  - Waste Characterization Study
  - Community Engagement
- The Roadmap
  - Goals & Priority Strategies
- Plan Impact
- Implementation Resources & Next Steps
- Questions



VISION STATEMENT

Zero Waste Worcester:

A community committed to working together to reduce waste, reuse materials, prevent litter, and ensure Zero Waste programs are accessible for all.



Plan Development

What’s in Worcester’s trash?

WASTE CHARACTERIZATION STUDY PURPOSE	Worcester hired Diversion Designers, LLC. in April 2025 to establish baseline data for its Zero Waste Master Plan.
STUDY SCOPE	• 111 samples • 22,000+ pounds of material • 103 locations across Worcester
LOCATIONS INCLUDED	• Residential homes (1–6 units) and multifamily buildings (7+ units) • Worcester Public Schools • Commercial businesses • Municipal buildings • Illegal dump sites
KEY FINDINGS	• Over 60% of materials in our trash could be recycled or composted • Food is the most common recoverable item
ITEMS NEEDING SPECIAL HANDLING	Bulky items, textiles, construction and demolition debris

Source: City of Worcester | Waste characterization study conducted April 2025

Built With the Community

11 listening sessions

4 public workshops

3 community wide surveys

9 member steering committee





The Roadmap

7 goals

23 strategies

10 years

5 strategies in **5** Years

7 goals for Zero Waste Worcester

Goal 1: Lead by Example

Goal 2: Reduce Food Waste

Goal 3: Expand Recycling Access Citywide

Goal 4: Improve Residential Curbside Collection Services

Goal 5: Reduce Litter and Illegal Dumping

Goal 6: Improve and Expand the Drop-off Center

Goal 7: Create Opportunities for Reduction, Recovery and Reuse

Zero Waste Goals and Strategies

(and initial priorities)

Goal 1: Lead by Example	1. Lead by Example
Goal 2: Reduce Food Waste	2. Backyard Compost Training 3. Food Scrap Drop-off Locations **4. Edible Food Recovery and Donation Program** 5. Collection of Compostable Materials
Goal 3: Expand Recycling Access Citywide	**6. Support Property Owners, Haulers, and Generators to Includes Recycling Participation** 7. Increase Construction & Demolition Recycling Ordinance for Contractors and Builders 8. Lease Requirements Focusing on Waste Diversion, Especially
Goal 4: Improve Residential Curbside Collection Services	**9. Upgraded Recycling Containers** 10. Wheeled Carts for Trash Collection

Zero Waste Goals and Strategies

(and initial priorities)

Goal 5: Reduce Litter and Illegal Dumping	11. Single-Use Plastic Bag Ban Enhancement 12. Comprehensive Single-Use Plastics Reduction and Litter Prevention Ordinance 13. Reduce Single-Use Foodware and Litter **14. Systemic Citywide Cleanup** 15. Expanding Public Waste Bins
Goal 6: Improve & Expand the Drop-off Center	**16. Millbury Street Residential Drop-off Center Expansion** 17. Household Hazardous Waste Events 18. Drop-off Sites for Residential Trash
Goal 7: Create Opportunities for Reduction, Recovery, and Reuse	19. Education Program for Disposable Diaper Alternatives 20. 20. Water Bottle Filling Station Expansion 21. Share, Reuse, Repair Events and Directory 22. Expanding Library of Things Offerings 23. Zero Waste Business Recognition Program

Where do we start?
5 priority strategies in 5 years

- Five strategies identified as priorities for implementation in the plan's first five years

- Selected based on:
  - ✓ Community support and need
  - ✓ Cost and feasibility
  - ✓ Environmental impact

PRIORITY STRATEGY:
Edible food recovery and donation program

GOAL: Reduce Food Waste

A program to divert surplus food from restaurants, grocery stores, and schools by giving it to people in need instead of being thrown away (via food rescue or food bank organizations).



PRIORITY STRATEGY:
Upgraded recycling containers

GOAL:
Improve Residential Curbside Collection

Residents (1-6 units) would get upgraded recycling containers for curbside pickup by a semi-automated truck.



PRIORITY STRATEGY:

Support Property Owners, Haulers, and Generators to Increase Recycling Participation

GOAL:

Expand Recycling Access Citywide

The municipality will provide education, technical assistance, and incentives to help property owners (residential and commercial), haulers, and individual generators — including tenants, businesses, municipal buildings, and public schools — participate in recycling, consistent with MassDEP's statewide Waste Disposal Bans (310 CMR 19.017).



PRIORITY STRATEGY:
Systemic citywide cleanup

GOAL:
Reduce Litter and Illegal Dumping

This program builds on the efforts of the Keep Worcester Clean program and Quality of Life team. The program would include an expanded effort to clean up public spaces affected by illegal dumping and heavy littering. Thoroughly clean illegal dump sites and redesign the area with landscaping, barriers, lights, signs, and monitoring. Thoroughly clean littered areas and install educational and warning signs while continuing cleanup efforts through street sweeping and monitoring the area.



PRIORITY STRATEGY:

Millbury Street Residential Drop-off Center expansion

GOAL:

Improve and Expand the Drop-Off Center

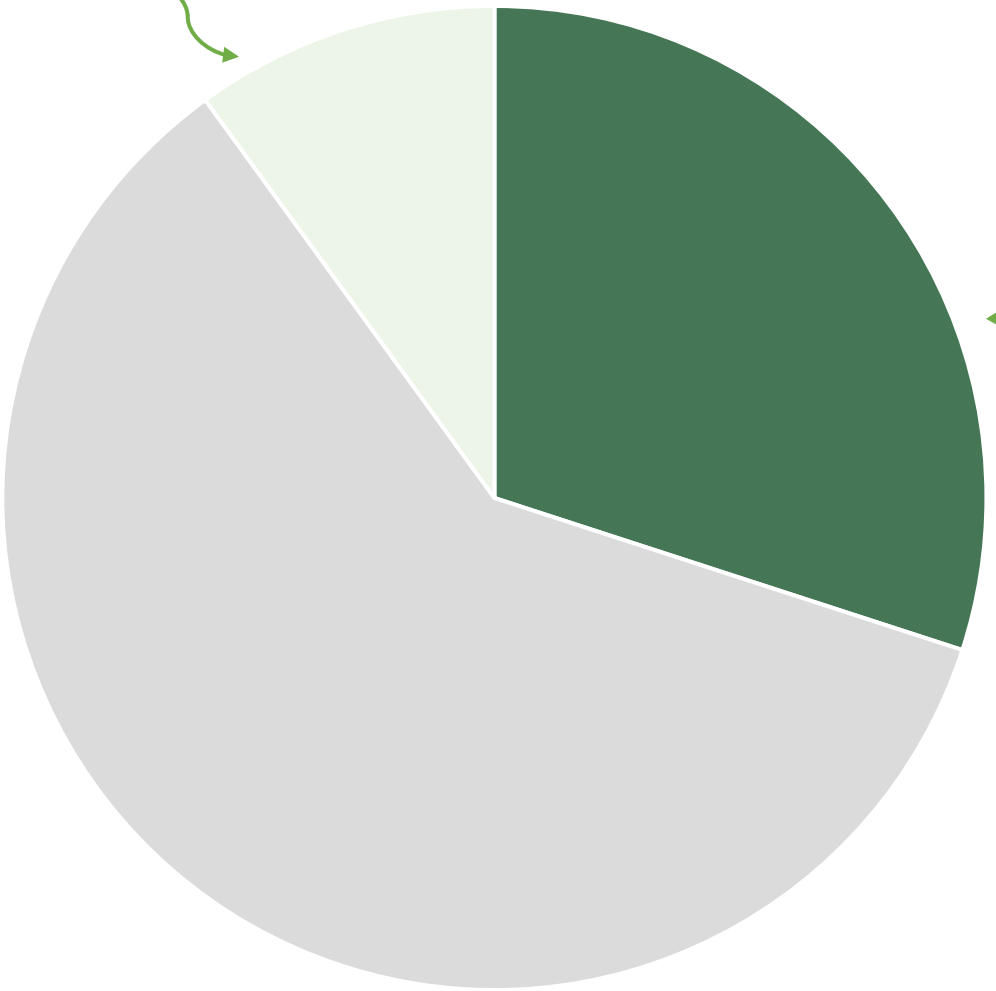
For this expanded program, the Drop-off Center would be open year-round (frequency in the off-season TBD) and would accept a wider range of materials for reuse, recovery, and composting.





Plan Impact

10% current waste diversion rate



Together, these 23 strategies could divert an <u>additional 30%</u> of Worcester's waste over the **next 10 years**.

Saving an estimated $3 million annually in trash tipping fees.

Reducing GHG emissions by 2.4%. (That's more than 41,000 tons of CO2E)

Results

OVERALL IMPACTS IF ALL ZERO WASTE STRATEGIES ARE IMPLEMENTED

Impact	Near Term 1-3 Years	Mid Term 4-6 Years	Longer Term 7-10 Years	Total
Waste Diversion (Tons)	6,352	14,155	17,834	**38,342**
Diversion Rate (%)	5%	11%	14%	**30%**
GHG Emissions Reduction (MTCO2E)	9,817	16,910	14,826	**41,553**
Citywide GHG Reduction (%)	0.6%	1.0%	0.9%	**2.4%**

*$3 million anticipated avoided trash tipping fees. Program costs are TBD (see implementation).



Implementation Resources & Next Steps

Implementing the Zero Waste Master Plan

Dedicated staff and citywide collaboration will drive progress.

CITYWIDE RESPONSIBILITY	All municipal departments will support the plan and lead by example.
LEAD DEPARTMENTS	• Sustainability and Resilience • Public Works • Inspectional Services • Quality of Life interdepartmental team
STAFFING OVER 10 YEARS	Full implementation will require new staff positions over the plan's 10-year timeframe.
NEAR-TERM ACTIONS	Some early actions can be completed by existing staff.
FIVE-YEAR PRIORITY STRATGIES	**At least three new staff positions are needed to make significant progress on the five priority strategies within five years.**

Funding the Zero Waste Master Plan

A mix of startup investments, annual funding, and partnerships will support implementation.

COSTS OVER TIME	Implementation will require one-time startup investments and ongoing annual costs.
COSTS VARY BY STRATEGY	Some actions need modest program budgets; others require larger investments, such as upgraded recycling containers or expanded drop-off centers.
HOW COSTS WILL BE ESTIMATED	Estimates will include startup and operating costs, staff time, and outside contracts. The City will use the Zero Waste USA Cost Estimate Tool, MassDEP resources, and information shared by other municipalities.
POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES	• City operating and capital budgets • MassDEP state grants • Federal grants • Partnerships with regional organizations and institutions

Next Steps

- Finalization of plan in late fall 2026
- Budget requests in winter 2027
- Begin implementation by city departments and partners, as resources allow



JOIN US

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