

Environmental Commission

Solid Waste Updates and Highlights

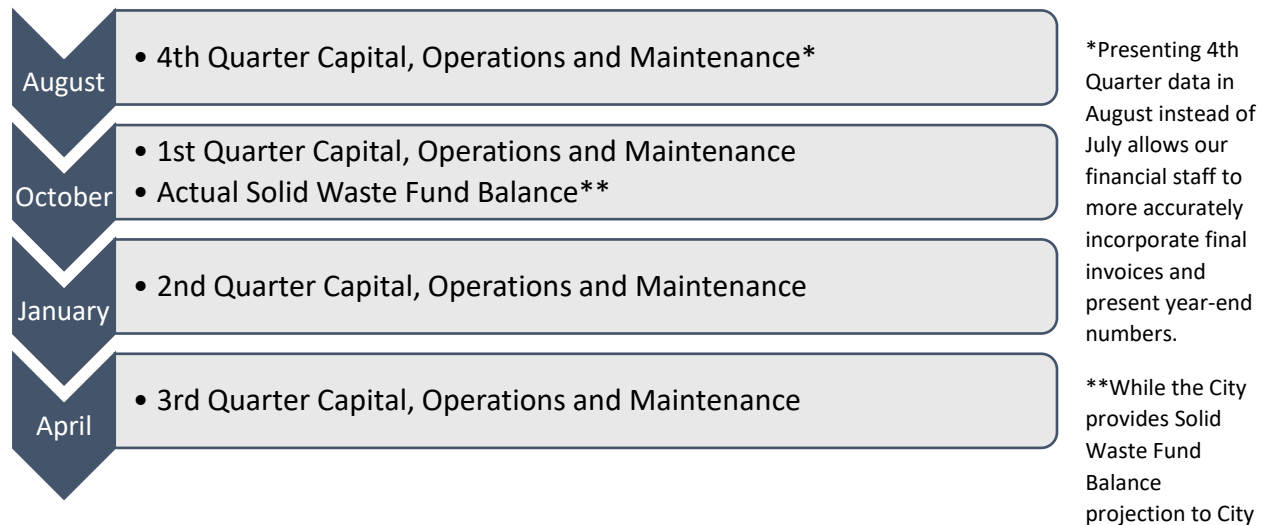
Spring 2020

This spring, the Solid Waste team in Ann Arbor has been busier than ever with normal business, new projects, and COVID-19 program adaptations. We've included some highlights in this update, but please feel to contact Eileen Naples at enaples@a2gov.org for additional details.

Budget Update

City staff strive to provide our stakeholders, including the Environmental Commission's Solid Waste Working Group, with regular budget updates. Below, we propose a schedule to present quarterly operations and maintenance updates, as well as an annual update on the Unrestricted Fund Balance. For the purposes of this update, we've included the latest calculation of the Unrestricted Fund Balance.

Proposed Budget Update Schedule

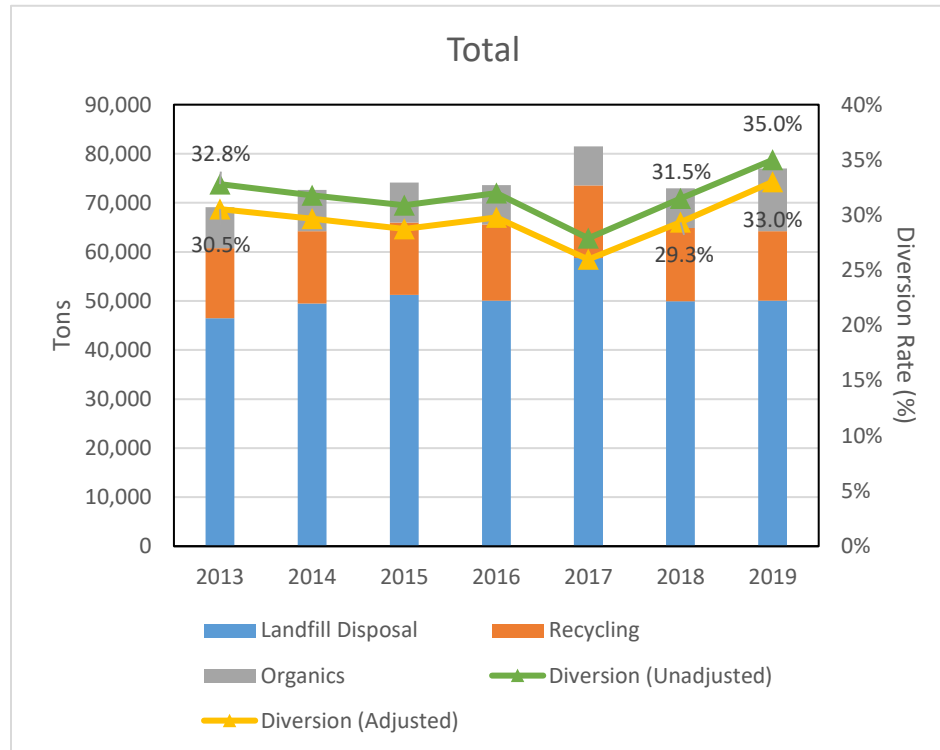


Council during annual Budget Work sessions, the Actual Solid Waste Fund Balance is posted in the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, usually by the end of October.

Unrestricted Solid Waste Fund Balance

Attached is an annual Solid Waste fund balance summary with projections provided to Council during annual Budget Work sessions. These projections are based on data that was available up until early February. Since then, increased curbside recycling costs have necessitated using additional fund balance to satisfy a contractual obligation with Recycle Ann Arbor (Resolution R-20-205, see attached). The Available fund balance for FY19 is \$4.4 million (unrestricted fund balance less 25% of operating expense, balance requirement). The FY20 Actual fund balance will be posted in the [Comprehensive Annual Financial Report](#), usually by the end of October.

Diversion Trends – Landfill, Recycling and Compost



In 2019, Ann Arbor’s adjusted diversion* rate was 33 percent, a 3.7 percent increase over 2018.

In 2019, the residential sector diverted 60.2 percent of waste from the landfill and the commercial sector diverted 10.4 percent**.

The residential sector disposed of 15,127.30 tons of materials in the landfill, recycled 10,094.28 tons, and composted 12,789.62

tons. The commercial sector disposed of 34,938.20 tons and recycled 4,059.05 tons.

*Ann Arbor’s diversion rate is adjusted to deduct a 10.74 percent recycling residual rate that is identified through biannual recycling composition audits. Residue is contamination in our recycling stream and, therefore, should not be included in our waste diversion figures.

**The City does not collect data on private food waste diversion and this figure is not represented in the City’s diversion rate.

Compost



As part of our ongoing outreach on composting best practices, as of May 2020, the City is placing educational stickers on compost carts.

The 2020 compost season kicked off on April 6. While the start of the season has been unusual due to the COVID-19 pandemic (more on this below), the City was thrilled to see a surge in requests for residential compost carts. By the end of June, more than 800 new compost carts will be in circulation. To put things in perspective, that is more carts than a full day’s route.

We are also pursuing opportunities to place compost carts at multi-family residences currently serviced by trash and recycling carts and meeting curbside space requirements. This placement is part of the City’s efforts to increase organics collections and requires City staff to assess specific locations for cart placement suitability and may also

require an additional truck and driver to meet increased demand.

In response to state and local guidance regarding COVID-19, the City implemented a number of changes to its regular compost service. In particular, we temporarily suspended bundled brush collection and bag pick-up service to protect our operations staff from direct contact with potentially-contaminated material. In lieu of curbside bag pick-ups, the City encouraged residents to place yard trimmings in compost carts and additionally made a roll-off bin available at the City Compost facility for those customers who wished to compost bags. On June 15, the City resumed bundled brush collection on June 15 and is making plans to resume bag collection by the end of June.

[Solid Waste Resource Management Plan](#)

In 2018, City Council passed a resolution directing staff to complete a solid waste plan that lays out a strategic approach on how best to provide solid waste, recycling and compost programs, and additionally serves as a business plan to guide solid waste operations for a five-year period. The plan reflects feedback from a public engagement strategy that included 33 interviews with key community stakeholders, a representative survey of Ann Arbor's residents in all 5 Wards, input from an Advisory Committee comprised of 31 interested stakeholders, and a Downtown Business Focus Group.

In January 2020, City staff presented a draft Solid Waste Resource Management Plan (SWRMP) to City council that identifies operational improvements and highlights alignment with the City's zero waste and sustainability priorities. City Council tabled the plan for further consideration and it will take an act of Council to revisit discussion and decisions about the SWRMP.

[EGLE Recycling and Organics Infrastructure Grant](#)

City staff recently collaborated with Washtenaw County to complete an application for a Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy grant aimed at improvement recycling and organics infrastructure in the state. The City's application focused on the re-siting of a regional Drop-Off Station (DOS).

The current County full-service DOS, located at 2950 Ellsworth Road, receives approximately 30,000 vehicle visits, and 3,000 tons of materials each year. The site has structural deficiencies and space constraints that contribute to lack of queuing space and traffic flow problems during heavy use.

Along with Washtenaw County, the City received letters of grant application support from Saline, Ypsilanti Township and Recycle Ann Arbor.

[Materials Recovery Facility](#)

The City of Ann Arbor and Recycle Ann Arbor (RAA) have a joint goal to execute and implement a ten-year MRF service agreement and land and building lease that shares risk and optimizes measurable economic and environmental community benefits.

The City and RAA continue to make good progress with the negotiations process by focusing on the development of key concepts in the service agreement and land and building lease, as well as related projects including building and environmental assessments.

As of May 15, the City and RAA remain committed to developing and implementing a sound service agreement and land and building lease; however, because of the attention to detail required of the negotiations process, as well as some extenuating logistical circumstances related to COVID-19, we are

extending our negotiations process beyond the initially anticipated July 1, 2020 start date and now aim to finalize a service agreement and land and building lease for August 3, 2020.

Residential Recycling Collection – Invitation to Bid

On April 6, 2020, City staff issued Invitation to Bid #4623: Residential Customer Recyclables Collections (Residential Recycling ITB) in anticipation of replacing the existing collection contract expiring on June 30, 2020. However, in response to bidders' request to delay the bidding due date and contract start date because of the global pandemic, the City subsequently extended the Residential Recycling ITB due date to July 1, 2020 and the anticipated contract start date to July 1, 2021.

City staff are now in the process of extending its current recycling collection contract with Recycle Ann Arbor by one year—to June 30, 2021. Additionally, to address RAA's monthly truck repair, maintenance and rental costs of approximately \$44,000 (reimbursed by the City) above the base service fee of approximately \$160,000 per month, the City recently sought Council's approval to amend our current collection contract to replace three of four RAA-leased trucks with City trucks, as well as to change the current truck rental terms for a reduction in monthly rental fees—from \$8,300 per truck to \$7,300 per truck. Council approved this amendment on June 15, 2020.

Big Belly Dual Trash and Recycling Systems

On June 15, City staff installed ten [Big Belly](#) dual recycling and trash containers in downtown Ann Arbor. These are innovative, solar-powered containers that provide increased trash and recycling capacity and service efficiency in highly-trafficked areas. The City has partnered with the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy to wrap the ten containers with [Recycling Raccoon](#) outreach messaging to encourage correct usage.

Pedestrian Cans

The City recently purchased new pedestrian cans to collect trash and recycling in the downtown area. The old cans were serviced by automated trucks but with minimal space and many cars downtown it was difficult for solid waste drivers to access them. The new containers were chosen in coordination with the DDA and the downtown associations. They will be serviced by hand and will include trash and recycling. Three recycle and eight trash containers were installed in Kerrytown around Detroit Street on April 29. The other containers are being replaced as resources allow.

New Scale

On April 20, City Council approved a contract to re-locate the City scale from its current location at the Materials Recovery Facility to an unattended location near the Platt Road entrance to the Wheeler Facility. The new infrastructure includes inbound and outbound scales to ease traffic congestion, provides a facility-central location and includes enhanced security features such as fencing, cameras and vehicle identification sensors.

Calendar of Events

- June 22-26, 2020: Youth Sustainability Summit: First-ever Youth Sustainability Summit organized and presented by Ann Arbor Youth. Featured topics include: Sustainable Agriculture and Food, Systemic Change, Circular Economy and Waste, Local Ecosystems, and Systemic Change in Local Policy. City solid waste staff will participate in the student-led sessions on Circular Economy and Waste.

- August 14, 2020: 20th Annual Mayor's Green Fair: City will be partner with Earth Day and the Ann Arbor Summer Fest to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day. City staff are revising the setup of the fair so that social distancing can be observed to keep everyone safe while spreading the message of sustainability.