

Strategic Plan 2026-2031

Background

The Ontario County Department of Sustainability and Solid Waste Management is entering a pivotal phase of its evolution. Building on the foundation laid by the Local Solid Waste Management Plan (LSWMP), the Department is poised to lead the region in advancing Sustainable Materials Management through bold, measurable action and strategic foresight.

The current LSWMP provides policy direction for the next decade. Building on the LSWMP foundation, the Department will transition from landfill oversight to regional systems leadership, emphasizing innovation, equity, and long-term resilience. The current landfill contract runs through 2028, and the County's municipal landfill will cease operation in 2029, requiring a pivotal transition to a diversion-first strategy.

In December 2024, the Board of Supervisors adopted multiple resolutions affecting the landscape of waste management in the County. The first resolution memorialized the closure of the County's landfill site at the end of the current contract term, December 31, 2028. The second resolution directed the Department to continue and advance efforts to reduce the generation of municipal solid waste in Ontario County and increase waste diversion efforts.

2045 Vision

Ontario County will be a leader in creating a community where managing resources responsibly is second nature. We will cultivate a reputation for being on the forefront of cutting-edge solutions that reduce waste effectively, create synergies in product creation and reuse opportunities, and motivate residents and businesses to adopt responsible behaviors that benefit the individual, community, economy, and environment.

Executive Summary

Key Focus Areas for 2026-2031

Equal and Adequate Access

Focuses on ensuring residents and municipalities have equitable opportunities and facilities for solid waste management.

Funding to Advance Department Goals

Focuses on advocating for and securing funding opportunities from various sources to move the Department and this plan forward.

Legislation Aligned with County's Plan for Solid Waste Management

Focuses on laws and policies that support current and future solid waste management priorities.

Education & Communications

Focuses on improving and expanding audience-specific communications about solid waste management practices and updates.

Department's Role Post-Landfill Closure

Focuses on planning and shaping the post-landfill disposal landscape throughout the County in 2029 and beyond.

Infrastructure Priorities

Focuses on the County's diversion goals and the future of reuse and recycling processing within the County and region.

Commitment to Action

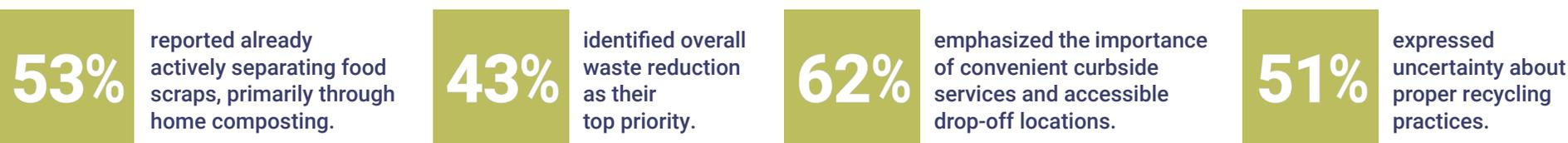
Ontario County Department of Sustainability and Solid Waste Management will hold itself accountable to this plan through the following actions:

- Regularly educating the Board of Supervisors (BOS) of the plans and project needs to ensure support for new initiatives, including communicating with BOS regularly as needed and at every meeting for PEQ and hosting an annual retreat or workshop for BOS on next year's plan priorities.
- Ensuring Solid Waste Management Plan updates are consistent with strategic plan priorities and current legislation through an annual review/adjustment of plan priorities, biannual reports to DEC and reviewing the plan as needed to reflect legislation changes.
- Achieve waste diversion targets and implement all key infrastructure and programmatic shifts outlined in the current LSWMP.

Public Engagement

Community Survey Highlights

Community feedback gathered during the LSWMP planning process from June - September 2025 underscores strong public support for advancing waste reduction, improving recycling systems, and expanding education and outreach. Over 400 individuals responded to the survey, reflecting a shared desire for more accessible, transparent, and equitable solid waste services across Ontario County.



Waste Reduction and Diversion

- Respondents consistently prioritized reducing landfill-bound waste and expanding reuse and recycling opportunities.
- Many emphasized the importance of local reuse infrastructure, including repair cafes and donation networks, to keep materials in circulation and out of the waste stream.

Education and Outreach

- Respondents requested more consistent regional messaging and digital education tools, such as short videos and interactive guides, to improve participation and reduce confusion.
- There is a clear appetite for standardized outreach across municipalities, especially for new residents and youth audiences.

Transparency and Accountability

- Residents want greater visibility into program performance, including hauler accountability and enforcement of recycling standards.
- The idea of a public-facing dashboard to track illegal dumping, contamination hotspots, and hauler compliance received strong support.

Equity and Access

- Several comments highlighted the need to ensure equitable access to waste reduction programs, particularly in rural areas and among underserved populations.
- Suggestions included expanding drop-off options, improving signage, and offering multilingual resources.

Infrastructure and Service Improvements

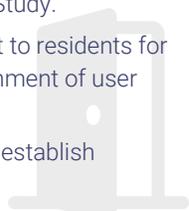
- There is broad interest in modernizing recycling systems, with calls for clearer guidance on acceptable materials and improved contamination control.
- Participants expressed concern about the future of the County's Material Recovery Facility (MRF), with many supporting its retention and upgrade to meet evolving diversion goals.

If you participated in the survey, thank you for taking the time to share your input and ideas!

Strategic Plan

Equal and Adequate Access

1. Implement findings from Department's Program Assessment and Consolidation Study.
2. Provide equal distribution of cost to residents for waste disposal through establishment of user fee-based programs.
3. Work with curbside collectors to establish adequate access.



Funding to Advance Department Goals

1. Advocate for funding opportunities at various regulatory levels.
2. Demonstrate value of Department services to BOS to foster support of necessary expenditures.
3. Partner with Office of Economic Development to leverage funding and attract businesses that specialize in recycling and reuse of items and materials to support the goals of the Department.



Infrastructure Priorities

1. Conduct a feasibility study to inform the BOS policy decision regarding the MRF's future and whether recyclables will continue to be processed and marketed within the County, or redirected to external recovery facilities.
2. Advance regional reuse infrastructure through the development of a Reuse Trail and Repair Café Network.
3. Launch the Ontario County Organics Management Plan (OMP) to guide future investment in composting infrastructure.



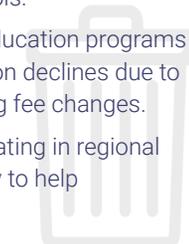
Legislation and Policies Aligned with County's Plan for Solid Waste Management

1. Invest in staying informed on and advocate for legislation and policies using staff, County and elected official connections.
2. Maintain oversight of compliance with the landfill Operation, Management, and Lease Agreement (OMLA) and regulations.
3. Revise and pass a local law that supports priority County initiatives and programs.
4. Develop and execute plans for future of landfill site post-2028.
5. Ensure SWMP updates are consistent with strategic plan priorities and current legislation.



Department's Role Post-Landfill Closure

1. With the anticipated closure of the County Landfill in 2029, the Department will assume a central role in shaping the post-landfill disposal landscape.
2. Monitor landfill closure and post-closure activities.
3. Manage new ordinances and promote transparency through digital tools.
4. Strengthen enforcement and education programs to mitigate potential participation declines due to economic shifts, such as tipping fee changes.
5. Assess the potential of participating in regional markets beyond Ontario County to help reach goals.



Customized Education & Communications

1. Improve and expand audience-specific communications.
2. Develop standardized branding and educational materials across all municipalities in the County to help educate residents of the cost of waste disposal/recycling and offer alternative and new programs to modify habits, eliminating confusion that deters participation.
3. Regularly educate BOS of the plans and project needs to ensure support for new initiatives.
4. Use our municipality's growing social awareness to educate, influence and inspire other municipalities to build up their efforts and facilities.
5. Develop standard reporting procedures of local diversion efforts providing consistent, adequate and measurable results for calculating the County's diversion rate consistent with the adopted LSWMP.
6. Develop sector specific objectives for reuse, recycling and waste reduction opportunities through partnering with Office of Economic Development.
7. Revamp the structure of the landfill oversight committee to be a "county sustainability working group."
8. Public input will continue to shape this Strategic Plan. These insights ensure that future strategies remain aligned with community needs.



Please contact
Recycle@OntarioCountyNY.gov
with any questions.

Our Vision

Ontario County will be a leader in creating a community where managing resources responsibly is second nature. We will cultivate a reputation for being on the forefront of cutting-edge solutions that reduce waste effectively, create synergies in product creation and reuse opportunities, and motivate residents and businesses to adopt responsible behaviors that benefit the individual, community, economy, and environment.

Our Mission

The Department of Sustainability and Solid Waste Management will focus on the County's efforts to maximize waste reduction, reuse, and recycling, and ensure a seamless, environmentally responsible transition to the post-2029 disposal system. The Department implements the County's LSWMP by working with municipalities, businesses and organizations to ensure the sustainability of our local environment.

The Department will also work to achieve aggressive waste diversion goals while ensuring a sound transition to a post-landfill disposal system.

Phased Implementation Strategy

The Strategic Plan is supported by a detailed Implementation Schedule outlined in the 2025-2030 LSWMP, which outlines specific actions, responsible parties, and projected timelines across the planning horizon. This schedule ensures that initiatives are sequenced for impact, feasibility, and alignment with community priorities and regulatory milestones.

Key highlights as applicable to this Strategic Plan include:



The schedule also reflects stakeholder feedback and incorporates adaptive review cycles to ensure responsiveness to emerging needs and opportunities.