



2022 Annual Report

Tompkins County Department of
Recycling and Materials Management

Table of Contents

Contents

Director's Report	3
2022 By the Numbers.....	5
Program Highlights	6
Recycling	6
Curbside Recycling	7
Organics	9
Waste Reduction	11
Old Landfills	13
Household Hazardous Waste (HHW)	15
Administration	17
Disposal.....	18
2022 Organizational Chart.....	19
Financial Information	20

The Mission of the Tompkins County Department of Recycling and Materials Management (TCRMM) is to develop and implement a sustainable materials management strategy for Tompkins County consistent with the New York State solid waste management hierarchy that is environmentally sound, cost-effective, socially responsible and safe. This is accomplished through coordinated administrative, operational, and educational programs that maximize diversion with the 4Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Rethink) as a focal point.

Director's Report

The first half of 2022 showed strong markets for recyclable commodities, which was followed by sharp declines in the latter half of the year. Despite the recycling revenue fluctuations and unexpected consumer price index expense increases in major contracts, Tompkins County Department of Recycling and Materials Management (TCRMM) and its contractors continued to provide normal operational services while complying with policies and procedures issued by New York State and Tompkins County. Additionally, TCRMM expanded and refined programs to further its commitment to sustainable waste management.

The Tompkins County Legislature upheld its long-term commitment to waste diversion, recycling, and other programs, and reaffirmed the enterprise funding structure of utilizing revenues and fees to pay for TCRMM expenses without the use of property taxes.

Fortunately, recycling revenues were strong in the first seven months of the year and allowed TCRMM to best serve Tompkins County residents, businesses, and educational institutions. Continued education and communication campaigns, along with the rejection of contaminated single-stream recyclables, kept contamination rates significantly lower than most communities in the U.S. This low contamination rate allows for a higher quality of recyclable materials to be marketed.

A planned capital paving project was completed in 2022 that included repairs, full site paving, and stripping. Additionally, planning and design work was done to replace the outbound truck scale in early 2023.

In 2022, TCRMM continued and expanded several programs as part of a plan to implement a sustainable materials management strategy for Tompkins County:

- The materials that TCRMM accepts for recycling are extensive. Single-stream recyclables – some plastics, cardboard, paper, and select glass – are accepted both curbside and at the RSWC. Numerous other recyclables, including scrap metal, batteries, textiles, electronics, rigid plastics, propane tanks, tires, and yard waste are accepted at RSWC's various drop off areas.
- Residents and businesses continued to bring food scraps to the 17 Food Scraps Recycling Drop Spots located throughout Tompkins County. TCRMM hauled the scraps from the Drop Spots and Tompkins County offices to the RSWC's food scrap transfer station. The material was then delivered to a low-tech processing facility in Trumansburg through a contract with Cayuga Compost. The finished compost product is sold to residents in bags, while bulk compost is sold to landscapers and other end users.
- Six Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) collection events were held at the hazardous waste depot at the RSWC for residential and small quantity generator customers through a NYSDEC permit.

- Curbside recycling collection is provided to all residences with four or less units. Apartment and mobile home park recycling is collected through various containerized systems, such as wheel carts or dumpsters.
- TCRMM accepts trash at the RSWC with payment through coupons and punch cards, or by the ton. Trash is then transported to a New York State permitted landfill in Ontario County.
- Two closed landfills in Tompkins County are maintained and environmentally monitored by TCRMM using a well-established series of wells. This has been the case for 38 years and will continue indefinitely. The maintenance includes cap stability, gas vent repairs, and evaluation of the integrity of the leachate collection system.
- Educational presentations, community outreach events, and tours curtailed during the COVID-19 pandemic continued to be reinstated and expanded in 2022. Extensive website and social media messaging provide public education through recycletompkins.org, Facebook, Instagram, paid advertising, digital and print newsletters, and additional printed information.
- In 2022, TCRMM initiated development of a draft Local Solid Waste Management Plan, as required by the NYSDEC. This draft plan will guide the direction of the organization over the next decade, providing insight into strategies to increase community-wide waste reduction, while achieving the goals of TCRMM's mission.

As we develop our 2024 budget and work plan, TCRMM will strive to balance services and programs to reduce waste with the development of a financially stable plan for upcoming years.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve the Tompkins County Legislature and residents in reducing waste and decreasing the negative climate impact of landfilling waste.

Leo Riley
Director of Recycling and Materials Management

Program Highlights

Recycling

This program provides recycling opportunities for County residents, businesses, and institutions. Through a contract with Casella Waste Systems Inc., the County received and processed 10,420 tons of recyclables at the Recycling and Solid Waste Center (RSWC). The facility includes a convenient public drop-off that accepts single stream recyclables, residential food scraps, and additional materials for recycling that aren't accepted at the curb. Other aspects of the recycling program include ReBusiness Partners, Borrow-A-Bin, Public Space Recycling, and public outreach and education.

Program Goals

- Provide a local facility to transfer, transport, and market recyclable materials collected through the curbside and drop-off programs
- Provide educational information, direct assistance, and community support for recycling.
- Accept commercial recyclables from haulers, contractors, and educational institutions.
- Provide a program to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws.
- Support an overall goal of 85% waste diversion by 2030.
- Increase recycling tonnage for food scraps and other organic materials.
- Reduce contamination in recycling streams.

Highlights

- In 2022, 10,420 tons of recyclables were accepted at the RSWC.
- The RSWC accepted residential and commercial single stream recyclables, source-separated recyclables, and source-separated organics from residents and commercial haulers.
- Communications staff conducted recycling and food scraps recycling awareness campaigns. Utilizing in-person and remote presentations, community events, and tours of RSWC, staff reached 229 students and 624 adults. Staff offered 6 presentations 2 tours and tabled at 11 outreach events.
- Staff regularly updated the RecycleTompkins.org website with timely information and continued to support the "Find My Recycling Day" and "What Do I Do With...?" tools, as well as Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) drop off event registration. Residents used these tools to view recycling schedules 37,695 times and searched for information about specific items 18,992 times. 82,086 unique users visited the website.
- Staff initiated review of the ReBusiness Partners Program to support local businesses and organizations through a refreshed approach to this longstanding waste reduction program. ReBusiness assists businesses and organizations in implementing the 4Rs by offering free waste assessments, recycling bins, technical assistance, and educational guidance. During 2022, waste assessments were conducted for two entities in Tompkins County.

Program Highlights

Curbside Recycling Collection

Through this program, the County provides bi-weekly countywide curbside collection of recyclable materials, which are transported to the County-owned RSWC. TCRMM contracts with Casella Waste Systems Inc. through a competitive bid process. County staff monitors and tracks service requests from the public to ensure quality service from the contractor. Recycling bins are available for sale at the TCRMM offices, and R-decals are provided free of charge to allow for flexibility in collection receptacles. Public education is an important component of this program.

Approximately 47,993 homes receive curbside recycling collection as well as an estimated 2,255 small businesses.



Curbside recycling is collected from over 47,000 residential locations throughout Tompkins County.

Program Goals:

- Provide convenient, cost-effective residential recycling opportunities through curbside collection through a ten-year contract with Casella and a public drop-off area at the RSWC.
- Monitor service calls and responses to maintain quality service for the curbside collection program and to minimize recycling collection complaints year over year.
- Enforce all applicable federal, state, and local laws for mandatory recycling.

Highlights

- A 2022-2023 Curbside Recycling Guidelines brochure was made available to Tompkins County residents. The brochure includes a 12-month recycling schedule calendar, as well as best practices for single stream recycling. Curbside Recycling Guidelines are available at the Recycling and Materials Management Office, municipal offices, Tompkins County Public Library, grocery store service desks, and online at RecycleTompkins.org. Communications staff also distribute the Curbside Recycling Guidelines at community events and community hubs such as cafés when a new issue is printed.
- In 2022, TCRMM tracked 341 service calls regarding curbside recycling collection service. This service-based contract was monitored closely throughout the year to maintain a high quality of service.
- To enhance communication and response systems regarding service requests, staff recorded data about truck routes traveled.
- Public Space Recycling locations in Tompkins County were monitored and serviced throughout 2022. These locations included: two locations at the Greater Ithaca Activities Center (Ithaca), Wood Street Skate Park (Ithaca), Hancock Street (Ithaca), Stewart Park (Ithaca), Tompkins County Courthouse (Ithaca), Tompkins County Human Services Building (Ithaca), Tompkins County Public Library (Ithaca), Montgomery Park (Dryden), and two locations each at both Greater Ithaca Activities Center (Ithaca) and Trumansburg's Main Street. It is estimated that 1.89 tons of materials were diverted through this program in 2022.

Program Highlights

Organics

Through its Organics program, Tompkins County Recycling and Materials Management works to implement a sustainable materials management strategy for the organics segment of the waste stream, including food and yard waste. Through food waste prevention, food donation, food scraps recycling, yard waste recycling, and organics diversion education, TCRMM aims to reduce the amount of organic waste sent to landfills.

Food scraps and yard waste collected through TCRMM programs are recycled through a public-private partnership with Cayuga Compost in Trumansburg.



A family receiving a free food scraps kitchen caddy at the Ellis Hollow Fair, September, 2022.

Program Goals

- To implement strategies that adhere to the US EPA Food Recovery Hierarchy.
- Provide a clean, convenient, and comfortable food scraps recycling program for residents.
- Accept commercial organics from haulers, contractors, businesses, and educational institutions.
- Provide yard waste disposal and recycling services at the Recycling and Solid Waste Center.

Highlights

- Cayuga Compost processed 1,519 tons of food scraps, with approximately 475 tons collected from the residential drop spots.
- A total of 17 Food Scraps Recycling Drop Spot locations received residential food scraps including Brooktondale Community Center, Tompkins County Highway Department, Cayuga Compost, Cyuga Heights Village Hall, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Ithaca Farmers Market, Danby Town Hall, Dryden Town Highway Department, East Hill Plaza, East Hill Farmers' Market, Groton Town Clerk's Office, Hancock Street, Lansing Village Office, Newfield Town Hall, the Recycling and Solid Waste Center, and Trumansburg Department of Public Works sites.
- A seasonal, weekly Food Scraps Drop Spot was added at the Trumansburg Farmers Market.
- For the second year in a row, TCRMM staff hosted a Food Scraps Drop Spot Compost Giveaway event in early May in celebration of International Compost Awareness Week and New York State Compost Awareness Week. Cayuga Compost donated 2 cubic yards of compost to residents through this giveaway event.
- Tompkins County contracted with Buffalo Biodiesel to remove approximately 2.46 tons of fats, oils, and grease (FOG) material collected at the RSWC.
- Distributed 241 kitchen caddies to participants in the food scraps drop-off program.
- Staff continued weekly on-site food scraps collection at 3 apartment complexes as part of a New York State DEC grant.

Program Highlights

Waste Reduction

Through this program, Tompkins County Recycling and Materials Management supports the community, local economy, and environment by encouraging innovative waste reduction and reuse projects. Many of these initiatives are accomplished through partnerships with local organizations including Cornell Cooperative Extension's (CCE) Compost Education Program. TCRMM continued work on a grant project from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to further food waste reduction, recycling, and donation efforts at apartment complexes, with a project extension due to the COVID pandemic. An Environmental Preferred Purchasing (EPP) team was established within Tompkins County government to advance EPP by developing, maintaining, and communicating sustainable procurement resources for departmental use, and to monitor the progress of current practices.



TCRMM used funds collected from Tompkins County's \$.05 paper bag tax to purchase and distribute reusable bags.

Program Goals

- Reduce both the volume and toxicity of the waste stream by providing waste reduction, reuse, and green purchasing programs and education to businesses, schools, municipalities, and residents.
- Maintain community reuse efforts by promoting the mission and work of Finger Lakes Reuse.
- Support the statewide goal of achieving 2.42 lbs. of MSW per person per day by 2032.
- Maintain support for home composting through a contract with Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Highlights

- Through home composting, it is estimated approximately 4,410 tons of food scraps along with roughly 2,628 tons of yard was diverted, showing a slight increase in home composting since 2018. The Compost Learning Collaborative (CLC) diverted additional food scraps at various sites.
- TCRMM maintained a program to utilize funds collected from the Tompkins County \$.05 paper bag fee to purchase and distribute high quality reusable bags to fixed- and low-income individuals in accordance with state and local law.
- Staff worked with Finger Lakes ReUse to review current reuse practices throughout Tompkins County and identify potential reuse activities for the coming decade.
- The Legislature prioritized increasing Environmentally Preferred Procurement, passing a new Green Fleet Policy, which mandates the purchase of electric vehicles unless there is a compelling reason why the vehicle should not be electric. Additionally, staff-initiated work to review the Surplus Equipment Policy to bolster internal reuse of unneeded but usable materials.

Program Highlights

Old Landfills

Tompkins County has two closed landfills, the Hillview Road Landfill in South Danby/North Spencer, and the Caswell Road Landfill in the Town of Dryden. This program includes monitoring, maintenance, and leachate removal at the two sites, which are regulated by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC).



Department Staff uses a pickup truck and sampling equipment to monitor the closed landfills.

Program Goals

- Perform routine quarterly and annual reporting and inspections, regular maintenance, and leachate removal required by NYSDEC closure permits.
- Routine inspections to identify maintenance items to schedule for repair or budget for the following year, depending on the magnitude of the problem.

Highlights

- The Hillview and Caswell landfill sites have a total of 64 monitoring wells, including 13 residential locations. There are also 23 manholes and 18 cleanouts along the perimeter collection systems, and 88 gas vents.
- Of the 64 monitoring points, 13 were eliminated in 2013 in an agreement between the Hillview Road Advisory Committee and Tompkins County, by the DEC. These wells are no longer monitored on an annual basis but are still maintained.
- TCRMM staff worked with Barton & Loguidice consulting engineers of Syracuse, N.Y., to perform groundwater and residential sampling.

- TCRMM staff perform weekly inspections to ensure contractual pumping of two underground leachate storage tanks at each landfill are fulfilled. Leachate is hauled to the Ithaca Area Wastewater Treatment Plant for treatment.
- Monitoring wells routinely require maintenance including sanding, repainting, flagging, and concrete apron replacement, as required by the DEC.
- The closed landfills are mowed, plowed, and maintained during the year to remove rapid growth of vegetation as well as to provide a setting for accurate sampling. Each landfill footprint consists of approximately 30 acres that require mowing each July.
- The amount of leachate removed from Hillview in 2022 was 182,600 gallons, and 979,200 gallons from Caswell in 2022.
- TCRMM records the daily amount of leachate collected. A three-year average of these records was used to budget handling 1,619,274 gallons of leachate in 2022. Above-average rainfall in 2022 led to leachate-associated costs under budget by approximately \$34,000.

Program Highlights

Household Hazardous Waste (HHW)

The Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) collection program directs the proper management of residential household hazardous waste and small quantities of hazardous waste from qualified non-residential generators (i.e., businesses and community organizations) through a contract with Clean Harbors, Inc. The hazardous waste vendor handles material in a hierarchy of first reusing viable products, then recycling eligible materials, followed by using material at a waste-to-energy facility, with the remaining material sent to a specialized landfill. Examples of materials accepted through the HHW program include paints and stains, lawn and automobile care products, and pesticides. The HHW program is a convenient way of keeping hazardous materials from accumulating in households and groundwater, and is often the sole option for residents to safely dispose of these materials.



Residents line up at the HHW Depot to be unloaded by Clean Harbors staff.

Program Goals

- Diversion of hazardous waste from the waste stream and the effective management of that waste.
- Compliance with NYSDEC permit required inspections, maintenance, waste management and reporting.

Highlights

- There was a total of 1,369 residents at the six Household Hazardous Waste drop off events conducted in 2022. Residents use an online registration form at RecycleTompkins.org to schedule appointments.
- 10 non-residential Conditionally Exempt Small Quantity Generators (CESQG'S) and an additional 25 appointments for businesses brought in universal wastes such as fluorescent tubes.
- There was a total of 21,430 pounds of solids, and 8,630 gallons of liquid hazardous and universal wastes diverted from the waste stream in 2022.

- PaintCare, a product stewardship program, started May 1, 2022, in New York State. This led to reduced disposal costs for covered materials including architectural coatings such as latex and oil-based paints, stains, and resins.

Program Highlights

Administration

TCRMM administrative staff assist both customers and TCRMM staff. Approximately 19,671 customers were assisted in 2022, with administrative staff providing timely, accurate information about recycling, composting, trash disposal, household hazardous waste, and waste reduction programs.

Highlights

- The TCRMM Administrative staff served approximately 19,671 customers in 2022. Admin answered 10,944 customer inquiries via telephone and completed 9,106 transactions at the front desk.
- Front desk transactions included sales of permits, trash disposal coupons and punch cards, and recycling and compost bins. The front desk also distributed 291 food scraps recycling toolkits at no charge to residents.
- TCRMM accepts the online sale of permits, punch cards, and coupons online its website, with Administrative staff fulfilling the online sales. There were 602 online transactions.
- Administrative staff assisted customers with navigating the RecycleTompkins.org website and using the Recycling and Solid Waste Center.

Program Highlights

Disposal

In 2022, Tompkins County transported 15,400 tons of municipal solid waste (MSW) from the Recycling and Solid Waste Center (RSWC) to nearby landfills through a contract with Ontario County, Seneca Meadows, Hyland Landfill (Angelica), and Chemung County. This program also includes enforcement of Chapter 140 of the County Code to prevent violations related to trash tag, hauler licensing, mandatory recycling, and illegal dumping laws.

Program Goals

- To provide safe and environmentally sound disposal practices for Tompkins County waste generators.
- Identify and report illegal disposal violations in the County.

Highlights

- TCRMM continued to cull recyclables from commercial trash, diverting 54 tons from the landfill through recycling.
- TCRMM issued 91 vehicle hauler permits and 19 hauler licenses in 2022.
- 47 County Coden Violation cases were investigated: 35 for illegal dumping, 1 for trash tag violation.



Vehicles weigh in and out at the Recycling and Solid Waste Center Weigh Station.

2022 Organizational Chart



Total Staff: 13

Financial Information

Financing Tompkins County Recycling and Materials Management enables the development, maintenance, and sustainability of an integrated solid waste management system that prioritizes recycling, composting, waste reduction, and other diversion activities to the greatest extent possible. The financing system is also designed to create incentives for diversion of materials from disposal.

TCRMM is enterprise funded and does not receive revenue from Tompkins County property taxes. Revenue is generated from the following sources:

- **Disposal Fees:** Waste is accepted at the Recycling and Solid Waste Center (RSWC) from Tompkins County residents, businesses, and licensed haulers. A disposal fee is charged to do so.
- **Solid Waste Annual Fee:** The annual fee helps to defray the costs of the Department's programs and services, exclusive of waste disposal. The annual fee pays for the Recycling and Solid Waste Center, curbside recycling collection, waste reduction programs, Household Hazardous Waste, and maintenance of closed landfills.
- **Recycling Revenue:** The Department receives revenue from the sale of recyclable materials.
- **Grants:** The Department actively seeks available grants to defray some of the cost associated with its programs. Grant sources include:
 - NYSDEC Municipal Waste Reduction & Recycling
 - NYSDEC Food Waste Reduction & Recycling
 - NYSDEC Climate Smart Communities
 - NYSDEC Household Hazardous Waste
- **Miscellaneous Revenue:** Other sources of TCRMM revenue include the sale of permits, licensing fees, recycling and compost bins, and fines.