

Dufferin county

Long-Term Waste Management Strategy Update

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | September 2026

The County of Dufferin would like to thank the community for all their input on this initiative, and for their ongoing waste diversion efforts.

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Dufferin County: Navigating a New Era of Waste Management

Dufferin County's 2025 Long-Term Waste Management Strategy (LTWMS) Update serves as a comprehensive, strategic roadmap designed to guide the municipality's waste diversion, collection, and disposal services over the next five-year planning horizon (2027–2031). Building upon the foundational successes of the original 2018 Strategy, this Update responds to a rapidly changing waste sector. Most notably, the provincial transition of the residential Blue Box recycling program to full Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) under the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act (RRCEA) has fundamentally altered municipal historical responsibilities. The LTWMS Update will help the County adapt to shrinking landfill capacities, escalating cross-border disposal costs, and a growing public appetite for climate action and circular economy solutions.





GOALS, OBJECTIVES & TARGETS

MISSION STATEMENT

To update and enhance the County's waste management system to maximize the diversion of waste from disposal in an economic, environmental and socially responsible manner.

GOAL #1

Maximize diversion of waste from disposal.

While this goal remains vital, the previous objective of tracking a singular 60% weight-based diversion rate is no longer feasible. Because the County no longer manages residential Blue Box tonnages under the new EPR model, this goal requires a shift toward new metrics.

GOAL #2

Explore waste management opportunities that are either local or located within Central Ontario.

This goal remains important; original objectives have largely been implemented and new options for mitigating long-term disposal risks will be evaluated over the next five years.

GOAL #3

Involve stakeholders and the public through continual education and feedback to support and facilitate individuals and businesses taking responsibility for their waste.

Public involvement remains important for system implementation, evaluation, and fostering participation in remaining diversion programs like the Green Bin.

GOAL #4

Continue with waste diversion programming that is consistent with provincial waste management policy.

This goal remains highly relevant, particularly as the Province embraces circular economy frameworks and plans a comprehensive review of its "Strategy for a Waste-Free Ontario" by 2027.

WASTE IN DUFFERIN COUNTY

66,257 people

23,210 multi-residential & single family households

2021 Census

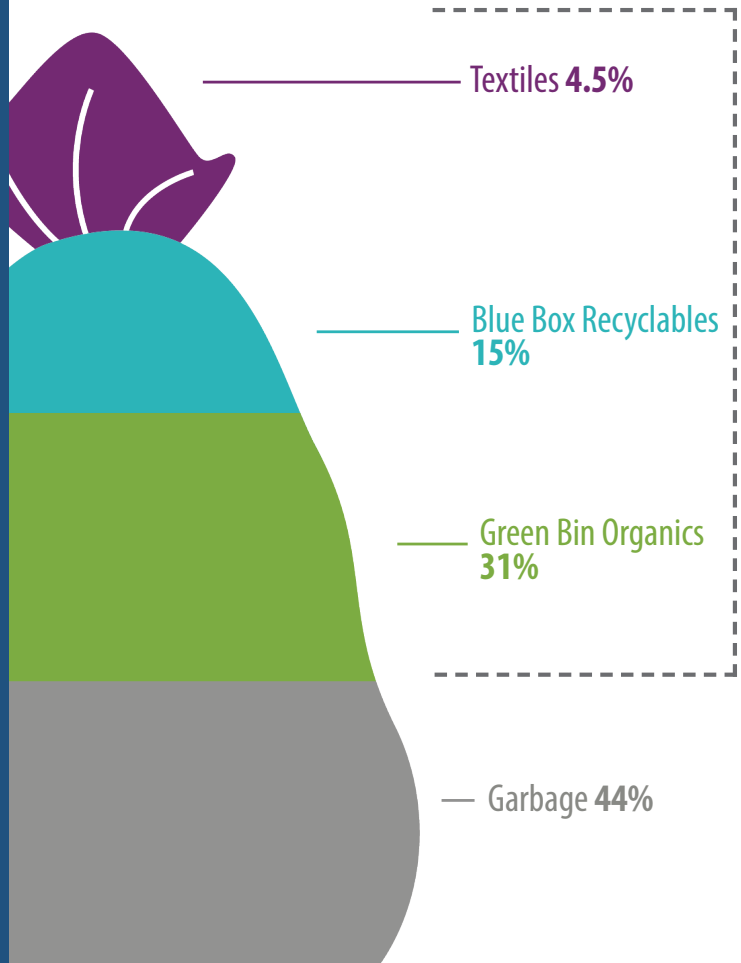
60% of waste was **DIVERTED** from landfill

19,781 tonnes of waste were generated in 2023.

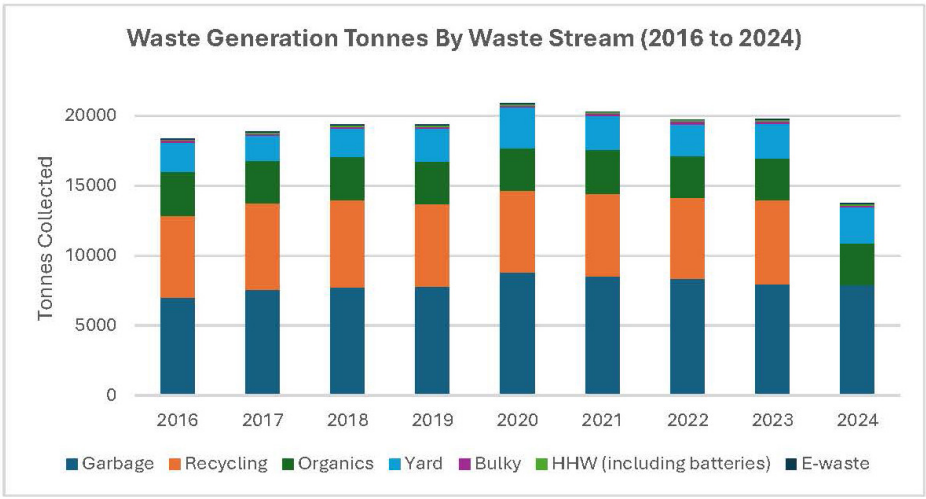
7,994 tonnes of waste were sent to landfill.

11,787 tonnes were DIVERTED from disposal.

AFTER DIVERSION PROGRAMS, what's still left in the garbage?



A SNAPSHOT OF OUR TOTAL WASTESTREAM



Note: Residential recycling was assumed by Circular Materials in 2024

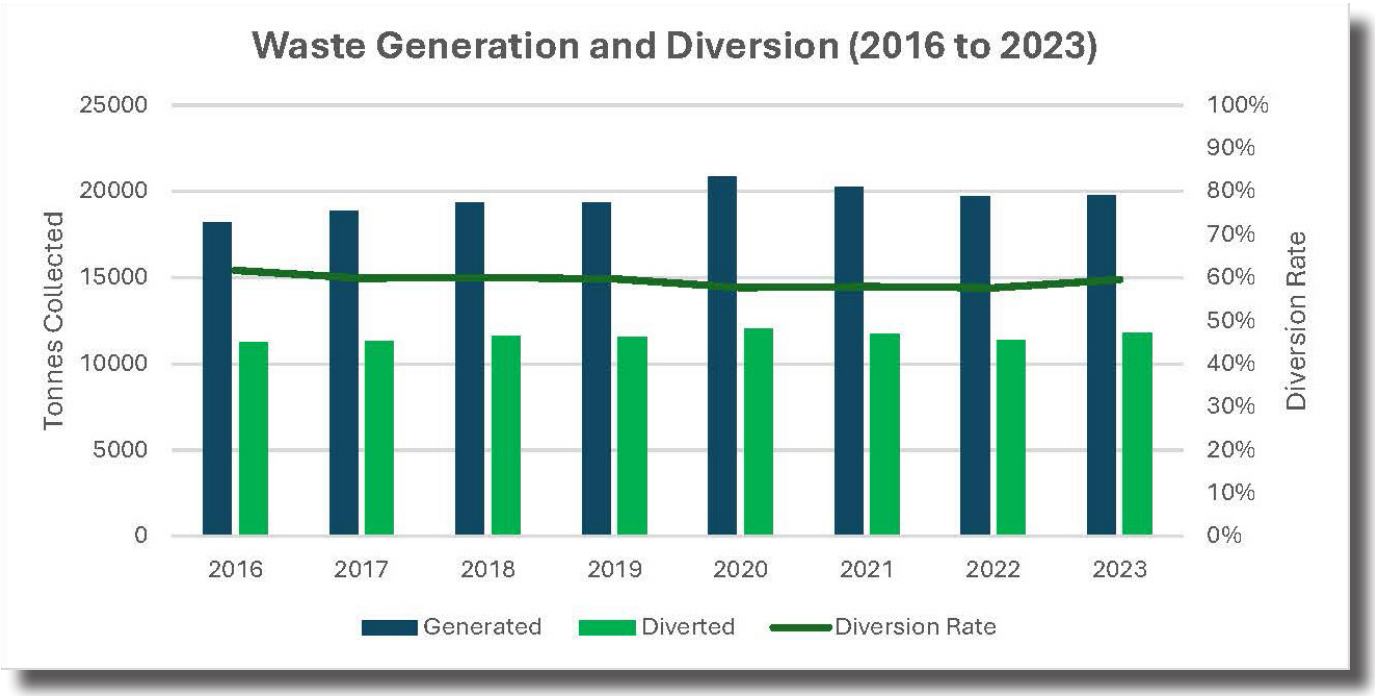
Key Differences in Program Participation Between 2024-2025:

Garbage | **96%** average across the study period.

Green Bin | **61%** average with significant variations across municipalities.

TRACKING OUR PROGRESS

While historical trends (2009 to 2015) showed a positive decline in per capita waste generation and a climbing diversion rate, recent data indicates a shift in system performance. Between 2016 and 2023, the County's overall diversion rate plateaued, fluctuating between 58% and 62% without a discernible upward trend. Driven largely by increases during the COVID-19 pandemic, per capita and per household waste generation for garbage and yard waste settled at a higher level in 2023 than in 2016.



The LTWMS Update reviewed initiatives presented in the 2018 LTWMS to determine the current relevance and viability of each option for the next five-year planning period. An additional ten options explored in the LTWMS Update prioritize service-based solutions that maximize diversion potential while maintaining manageable costs and focus on the higher levels of the waste hierarchy (reduction, reuse, and repair).

PLANNED INITIATIVES 2027-2031





1

POTENTIAL SOURCE SEPARATED ORGANICS (SSO) PROGRAM EXPANSION

An assessment of the potential expansion of the curbside organics program to include other materials (e.g., hygiene products and animal wastes). This assessment would involve a comprehensive financial review to determine costs increases, such as tipping fees, as well as considerations of existing green bin capacity and whether carts would be required to meet the higher volumes, what changes would be required with respect to liner bags, and potential impacts to participation rates.

2

TEXTILE COLLECTION PROGRAM

Establishing a formal, accessible collection system for used clothing and textiles, prioritizing cost-effective methods such as drop-offs during existing HHW events.

PLANNED INITIATIVES 2027-2031

3

REPAIR CAFÉ AND LENDING LIBRARY FACILITATION

Supporting community-led initiatives to repair items or share tools, moving the County toward a circular economy. The goal is to shift towards a "materials recovered" mindset by providing residents with the tools and expertise needed to extend the life of consumer goods, as well as reducing the purchases of new products. This could include providing tools for public lending and a volunteer base of experts to repair common broken items at periodic repair café events.



4

CURBSIDE GIVEAWAY DAYS

Formalizing "Goods Exchange Day" community events to divert reusable goods (like furniture) from the landfill by offering them to neighbours for free.





PLANNED INITIATIVES 2027-2031

5

EXPAND DUFFERIN'S TAKE IT BACK PROGRAM

Explore the Circular Innovation Council's "Share, Reuse, Repair Hub" program as a potential next step to the County's Take It Back program, to increase reuse and diversion, and support a circular economy.

6

UPDATE WASTE COLLECTION BY-LAW

A review and update of the by-law to reflect changes such as producer responsibility for blue box program recyclables.

7

ENHANCE ENFORCEMENT TOOLS OF THE SOLID WASTE BY-LAW

Adopting an education-first enforcement approach, utilizing "Oops" stickers and applying for set fines to enforce mandatory source separation and improve sorting behaviours.

PLANNED INITIATIVES 2027-2031



8

ASSESS CURBSIDE COLLECTION USING CARTS

Evaluate the potential transition to automated or semi-automated cart collection for garbage and organics, including evaluation with respect to timing of implementation and costs.



9

CONTINUE ASSESSMENT OF MUNICIPAL HAZARDOUS SPECIAL WASTE (MHSW) AND ELECTRONIC WASTE (E-WASTE) PROGRAM EXPANSION

Continuing the assessment of service delivery models, exploring mobile depots, or a permanent depot to meet the high public demand for convenient hazardous and electronic waste disposal.

10

DISPOSAL SERVICES FOR SOLID WASTE

Assessment of future disposal alternatives and services to mitigate long-term cross-border disposal risks.

ROADMAP FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Option Name	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
1. Potential SSO Program Expansion		Planning	Implementation		
2. Textile Collection Program	Planning	Implementation			
3. Repair Café and Lending Library Facilitation		Planning	Implementation		
4. Curbside Giveaway Days		Planning	Implementation		
5. Expand Dufferin's Take It Back Program	Planning	Implementation			
6. Update Waste Collection By-law	Planning	Implementation			
7. Enhance Enforcement Tools of the Solid Waste By-law		Planning	Implementation		
8. Assess Curbside Collection Using Carts			Planning	Implementation	Implementation
9. Continue Assessment of MHSW & E-waste Program Expansion*	Planning	Implementation	Implementation		
10. Disposal Services for Solid Waste		Planning	Planning	Implementation	Implementation

***** Timing depends on assessment recommendations, suitable/available location, approvals etc.

Planning Time

Implementation Time

The successful implementation of these options relies on a structured timeline that includes an upfront planning period (to secure resources, consultant expertise, budgets & Council support) followed by active implementation. The rollouts would be staged between 2027 and 2031.

MONITORING & EVALUATION

PER-CAPITA WASTE DISPOSAL — The new primary metric to normalize data despite population growth.

CONTAMINATION RATES — Tracking non-acceptable items in waste streams to direct education.

GHG EMISSIONS — Tracking operations to align with Net-Zero climate targets.

CIRCULAR ECONOMY INDICATORS — Measuring items repaired, tool library uses, and shared materials.

ENGAGEMENT KPIs — Evaluating the success of education campaigns and track self-reported waste reduction behaviours.

ENFORCEMENT METRICS — Tracking compliance activities, warnings or tickets issued, and reported incidents of illegal dumping.

With the provincial transition of the Blue Box program to EPR, Ontario municipalities no longer report to the RPRA Datacall, meaning the County cannot benchmark its diversion rate against others.

To track progress, the LTWMS Update establishes a refined Evaluation and Monitoring Plan utilizing new Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

ONGOING WASTE AUDITS

Seasonal waste characterization audits are now the County's key tool for maintaining data integrity, accurately evaluating participation rates, monitoring generational trends, and pinpointing areas that require targeted public education.

long-term
WASTE STRATEGY

To see the full strategy update,
please visit our website or contact us.

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