

CHAPTER 5



The Erie County Correctional Facility in Alden is repurposing 8-10 yards of food waste per month – about the equivalent of a large dumpster – with its composting program. Food waste from the facility and holding center is mixed with chicken litter from Kreher Family Farms in Clarence, seaweed from Black Rock Canal Park and wood chips that local municipalities are looking to dispose of to create nutrient-rich compost. It is then used on the grounds in vegetable and flower beds, as well as other areas that may need help nutritionally or with moisture retention. The program not only reduces GHG emissions, it also provides financial savings.

“The most immediate benefit is a decrease in the amount of garbage and the dumping fees associated with that,” says Matt Dills, a forestry officer with the Erie County Sheriff’s Office who leads the inmate program. “To me, it’s basically free material that we’re keeping from going to a landfill, and we’re putting it immediately back into use around the jail.”



Consumption and Waste



GOAL: Responsible production and consumption of resources and sustainable management of waste.

Managing waste through responsible consumption, production, and disposal of resources means minimizing the use of natural resources, toxic materials, and the emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle of a service or product so as to not jeopardize the needs of future generations.

Consumption and waste both contribute to far-reaching environmental impacts that are felt by our community and beyond. In particular, disadvantaged communities disproportionately experience the detrimental effects of rampant consumption and waste. For example, the siting of waste facilities has historically been in low-income communities.⁴⁹

The County does not own or operate any active landfills and most of the waste generated in the County is transported to areas outside the County. However, waste management facilities, such as transfer stations, exist within the County's borders. Additionally, many of the products and resources that Erie County residents consume

come from national and even global sources, further adding to our "hidden" GHG impacts surrounding waste and consumption. While the majority of GHG emissions that result from consumption and waste within Erie County are not accounted for, this does not alleviate the County's responsibilities as policymakers or consumers to reduce waste. Erie County's current efforts to reduce the production of waste include outreach and education with municipalities and commercial entities, but significantly more work is needed to reach greater reduction and diversion goals.

With this Plan, Erie County has a tremendous opportunity to reduce its waste, consumption of resources, and GHG emissions by means of responsible production and consumption of resources. With an equity-driven, inclusive approach, and through our overriding strategies of Reduction, Diversion, and Reuse, this Plan will positively impact the environment of individuals, neighborhoods, businesses, our great County, and our global community.

DEFINITIONS

FOR ACTIONS
SPECIFICATIONS

Short-term:

By or before 2030

Medium-term:

By 2040

Long-term:

By 2050

Direct:

County government can directly control the action - relating to County government operations and infrastructure

Indirect:

Regional agencies and municipalities have control and/or County government can support/influence

STRATEGY 1: Reduction

Waste reduction means reducing waste at the source. As a consumer, this can be achieved through avoiding disposable products, buying in bulk, and developing mindful consumption habits. As a business, this can be accomplished through improved

purchasing and packaging, eliminating the toxicity of products, improving the efficiency of operations and facilities, and by refurbishing, selling, or donating used equipment and tools. The simple act of not creating waste is often overlooked as we strive to

help our communities properly divert as much material as possible. Waste reduction decreases GHG emissions that contribute to climate change while conserving natural resources and energy and reducing the toxicity of our waste.

Figure 16 Erase Waste

Mindful consumption = **Think before you buy and replace**

Can I borrow or rent it? Do I really need it now?



Mindful Consumption

Mindful consumption is the commitment to making purchasing decisions that have positive social, economic, and environmental impact. For example, only buying what is needed, buying second hand, and opting for reusable products over single-use products.

It is understood that there currently are limited opportunities to practice mindful consumption. The

practice of mindful consumption requires holding self-accountability while shopping, such as considering if a product is necessary to buy, purchasing second-hand, or has a reusable alternative. The practice of putting extra thought into purchases is the first step to mindful consumption.

A step that you can take to be a mindful consumer is extending

the life of the products you buy. For example, your clothing life can be extended by following the care label and using the proper amount of laundry detergent.

As consumers continue to put extra thought into what they are buying and how the product will be used, it will become progressively easier to practice mindful consumption.



Erase Waste

The processes of creating, selling, buying, and disposing of products causes a cascade of impacts on the environment that is often overlooked. The social pressure of frequently buying a new product, such as a cellphone, leads to products bought more often than necessary.

The Solid Waste Management Act of 1988⁵⁰ established New York State's Solid Waste Management Policy. The top solid waste management priority in this policy is to reduce the amount of solid waste generated. Similarly, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) lists waste prevention as the most preferred waste management strategy.⁵¹ The County aims to

align its actions with these policies, making waste reduction the number one priority under the Consumption and Waste goal.

Additionally, Erie County supports the Northeast Southtowns and Northwest Local Solid Waste Management Plans in addition to collaborating on the City of Buffalo's local Comprehensive Recycling Analysis.⁵² These plans include waste reduction

as the number one priority in waste management strategies. Improvements in waste reduction at the source can be achieved through education, collaboration, support, and encouragement within all sectors of the community including individuals, businesses, not-for-profit organizations, and local municipalities.

Figure 17 USEPA Waste Management Hierarchy

The USEPA Waste Management Hierarchy ranks waste management strategies from most to least preferred, recognizing that different types of waste materials require certain management strategies.¹ This hierarchy is currently under review by the USEPA.²

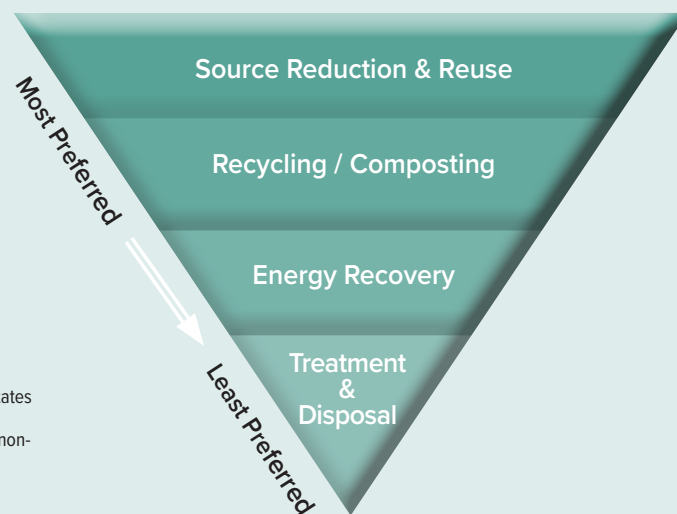
USEPA, Waste Management Hierarchy, 2023, graphic, United States Environmental Protection Agency, <https://www.epa.gov/smm/sustainable-materials-management-non-hazardous-materials-and-waste-management-hierarchy>

Sources and Notes:

1 USEPA, "Sustainable Materials Management: Non-Hazardous Materials and Waste Management Hierarchy," Collections and Lists, June 19, 2023, <https://www.epa.gov/smm/sustainable-materials-management-non-hazardous-materials-and-waste-management-hierarchy>.

2 To see if there is an update on the USEPA's Waste Management Hierarchy, go to the USEPA's website at <https://www.epa.gov/smm/sustainable-materials-management-non-hazardous-materials-and-waste-management-hierarchy>

Waste Management Hierarchy



What's Going on with Recycling

Single-use plastic has become a product of convenience in our lives, but the environmental impacts that result from single-use plastic are extremely harmful. Single-use plastic is meant to be thrown away after one use, such as plastic cutlery, water bottles, food packaging, and produce bags. Even if a single-use plastic item is labeled as recyclable, the product is not guaranteed to be recycled. Plastic may not be recycled because the market to buy plastic is weak and the buyer may not be local, making shipping expensive.

The recycling industry needs to be bolstered to ensure plastic is successfully recycled. To do this, there should be restrictions on the type of plastic that can be made. Polyethylene terephthalate (PET), the number “1” recycling symbol, is the most widely recycled plastic. PET can be made into PET items again or other items, such as clothing, backpacks, and carpets.¹ High-density polyethylene (HDPE), the number “2” recycling symbol, is accepted at most recycling centers and is one of the easiest to recycle. HDPE can be recycled into different items, such as pens, ropes, toys, recycling bins, and trash



cans.² By limiting the type of plastic that can be made for single-use to the best recycled plastic, the chance of plastic being recycled can be increased and kept out of landfills. Single-use plastic and plastic used for packaging should be made out of materials that are best to recycle. Creating single-use plastic that has a low chance of being recycled is wasteful and perpetuates the issue of plastic lingering in our world.

Sources:

1 Plastics For Change, “Which Plastic Can Be Recycled?,” Plastics For Change, May 20, 2021, <https://www.plasticsforchange.org/blog/which-plastic-can-be-recycled>.

2 Matthew McWilliams, “What Can High Density Polyethylene Be Recycled Into?,” Accel Polymers (blog), December 31, 2020, <https://accelpolymers.com/what-can-high-density-polyethylene-be-recycled-into/>.


Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)

“Extended Producer Responsibility” (EPR) is a policy approach that gives producers significant responsibility – financial and/or physical – for the treatment or disposal of post-consumer products. This policy could provide incentives to prevent wastes at the source, promote product design that is more sustainable, and support successful public recycling and materials management goals.¹

Source:

1 OECD, “Extended Producer Responsibility,” Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, accessed July 17, 2023, <https://www.oecd.org/environment/extended-producer-responsibility.htm>.

CONSUMPTION AND WASTE GOAL: Responsible production and consumption of resources and sustainable management of waste.

STRATEGY 1: Reduction	HORIZON	SPHERE OF INFLUENCE	LEAD COUNTY ENTITY	PARTNERS
ACTION ITEM 5.1.1:	Work to reduce single use plastics and other single use products in government contracts and provide commercial entities with single use product reduction methodologies.			
	Short-Term	Direct	Purchasing	New York State Pollution Prevention Institute (NYSP2I), WNY SBR, New York State Association for Reduction, Reuse, and Recycling (NYSAR ³), NYSDEC, Solid Waste Management Boards
ACTION ITEM 5.1.2:	Educate community members on the prevalence of food waste and solutions to food waste while promoting programs, such as the United States Environmental Protection Agency’s (USEPA’s) Food: Too Good to Waste Program⁵³ and United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Let’s Glean Program.⁵⁴			
	Ongoing	Direct	DEP	Local restaurant associations, local grocery stores, USEPA, USDA, local municipalities, ECEMC, schools
ACTION ITEM 5.1.3:	Promote and educate the community and businesses on mindful consumption through campaigns such as “Buy in Bulk” and “Bring Your Own,” which aim to decrease food packaging waste.			
	Ongoing	Direct	DEP	USEPA, WNY SBR, NYSP2I , NYSAR ³
ACTION ITEM 5.1.4:	Encourage municipalities to adopt programs that foster community member waste disposal reduction habits, including potential incentives, such as pay-as-you-throw pricing for municipal garbage.			
	Long-Term/ Ongoing	Direct	DEP	Local municipalities
	 Pay-As-You-Throw Garbage Pay-as-you-throw: A usage-pricing model for disposing of municipal solid waste. Users are charged a rate based on how much waste they present for collection to the municipality or local authority.			
ACTION ITEM 5.1.5:	Work with external organizations to educate and encourage businesses and municipalities on the benefits of reducing energy usage, toxicity of products, improved packaging, and waste in supply chains.			
	Ongoing	Direct	DEP, Purchasing	WNY SBR, NYSP2I, local municipalities
ACTION ITEM 5.1.6:	Endorse Extended Producer Responsibility state legislation such as “Bottle Bill” legislation (Senate Bill S1185C,⁵⁵ Assembly Bill A10185,⁵⁶ Assembly Bill A8668A⁵⁷).			
	Ongoing	Direct	DEP, County Executive	Statewide organizations, State and County legislatures
ACTION ITEM 5.1.7:	Encourage commercial entities to track waste, energy, and water data using USEPA tools, such as its ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager.			
	Ongoing	Direct	DEP	USEPA, WNY SBR
ACTION ITEM 5.1.8:	Support community groups whose goals align with creating effective changes in waste reduction practices.			
	Ongoing	Indirect	DEP	Local and State community action groups



Extend the Bottle Bill

The New York State Returnable Container Act, also known as the “Bottle Bill,” is an effective way to incentivize recycling and reduce littering. The current Bottle Bill requires a 5-cent deposit on certain beverage containers which is returned when the container is returned to a store or redemption center. Currently, “the law requires at least a 5-cent deposit on all individual, separate, and sealed glass, metal, aluminum, steel, or plastic bottles, cans, or jars containing less than one gallon of a beverage for consumption at the time of sale.”¹

The following beverages are currently covered by the Bottle Bill:

- Carbonated soft drinks
- Sparkling water
- Carbonated energy drinks
- Carbonated juice (anything less than 100% juice, containing added sugar or water)
- Carbonated tea
- Soda water
- Beer and other malt beverages
- Mineral water (both carbonated and non-carbonated)
- Wine products (including wine coolers)
- Water that does not contain sugar, including flavored or nutritionally enhanced water

The following beverages are NOT covered:

- Milk products
- Wine and liquors
- Hard ciders
- Non-carbonated tea
- Non-carbonated sports drinks
- Non-carbonated juice
- Non-carbonated energy drinks
- Drink boxes or pouches
- Waters containing sugar

Currently, New York Senate Bill S9164 is proposed to extend the Bottle Bill to wine, liquor, distilled spirit coolers, cider, and wine products. Bill S9164 also proposes to raise the deposit refund value from 5 cents to 10 cents and increase the handling fee from 3.5 cents to 6 cents.² Such an expansion of the Bottle Bill will increase the types of containers being recycled and will result in a decrease in litter. Also, raising the deposit to 10 cents will incentivize the public even further to return their recyclable containers. Erie County is in support of extending the Bottle Bill to create better opportunities for recycling. Overall, extending the Bottle Bill should keep more glass and plastic out of landfills, reduce litter, and ease the burden at municipal recycling facilities.³

Sources:

¹ NYSAC, “The History and Future of the NYS Bottle Bill,” May 2019, https://www.nysac.org/media/24qda3hl/bottle-bill-white-paper-5_14_19.pdf

² Samantha Christmann, “New ‘Bottle Bill’ Proposes Doubling Deposit Fee, Expanding List of Beverages,” The Buffalo News, February 13, 2023, https://buffalonews.com/news/local/new-bottle-bill-proposes-doubling-deposit-fee-expanding-list-of-beverages/article_516e4cee-ab01-11ed-b350-2bd6f73405fa.html;
The New York State Senate, “Senate Bill S9164,” The New York State Senate, 2022, <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2021/S9164>.

³ Christmann, “New ‘Bottle Bill’ Proposes Doubling Deposit Fee, Expanding List of Beverages”; The New York State Senate, “Senate Bill S9164.”

STRATEGY 2: Diversion

“Diversion,” as defined in this Plan, sets actions that target the removal of materials that are currently destined for landfills or incinerators so they can be recycled and remade into useful products. Expanding recycling and composting is one of the fastest, least expensive, and most effective strategies to reduce GHG emissions.⁵⁸ Although some citizens are motivated to manage

their waste responsibly, the average municipal recycling and organic diversion rate in Erie County is 29%, indicating much room for improvement.⁵⁹ However, the solutions are not simple. In order to achieve significant reductions in GHG emissions, Erie County needs to expand waste diversion infrastructure; educate local leaders, citizens, businesses, and commercial entities on how

to separate organic waste and “Recycle Right;”⁶⁰ and to support existing and proposed waste diversion programs. Furthermore, the County will pursue a community waste flow study to characterize the types, quantities, and current solutions to waste management available to determine how to most effectively support and improve waste diversion in Erie County.

Composting in the Backyard vs. Driving to a Collection Site

“Composting is a resourceful way to recycle the food scraps and yard trim you generate at home all year and manage your waste more sustainably.”¹ According to the USEPA, for backyard composting, “Your compost pile should have an equal amount of browns to greens. You should also alternate layers of organic materials of different-sized particles. The brown materials provide carbon for your compost, the green materials provide nitrogen, and the water

provides moisture to help break down the organic matter.”²

In New York State, yard clippings can be picked up from the curb, but not food scraps. Instead, residents have to drive to a collection site to drop off food waste as well as compostable items, such as eating utensils and bags. Collection sites found in New York State can be found at New York State Association for Reduction, Reuse, and Recycling’s website.³

Table 2 What You Can Compost in Your Backyard

What You Can Compost in Your Backyard	What to Avoid Composting in Your Backyard
Food and vegetable scraps	Meat, fish, and bones
Coffee grounds and paper filters	Cheese and dairy products
Paper tea bags (no staples)	Pet waste and cat litter
Eggshells (crushed)	Produce stickers
Most grass clippings and yard trimmings	Fats, oils, and greases
Dry leaves	Glossy paper
Plant stalks and twigs	Treated or painted wood
Shredded paper (non-glossy, not colored)	Aggressive weeds/weeds with seeds
Shredded brown bags	Diseased and pest-infested plants
Shredded cardboard (no wax coating, tape, or glue)	Compostable food service ware and compostable bags
Untreated wood chips	Cooked food (small amounts are fine)
	Herbicide treated plants
	Dryer lint

USEPA, “Composting At Home,” June 14, 2023, <https://www.epa.gov/recycle/composting-home#whatcancom>

Sources and Notes:

1 USEPA, “Composting At Home,” United States Environmental Protection Agency, June 14, 2023, <https://www.epa.gov/recycle/composting-home>.

2 USEPA.

3 To find food scrap collection sites at New York State Association for Reduction, Reuse, and Recycling’s website, go to <https://www.nysar3.org/page/nys-food-scraps-drop-off-collection-programs-178.html>

Materials that can be diverted include recyclables, food waste, and other compostable materials, textiles, mattresses, carpets, construction and demolition debris, and disaster debris. Another key component of waste diversion is proper management of hazardous and other materials that are difficult to dispose of, which should reduce instances of illegal dumping. Materials such as pesticides, chemicals, and automotive fluids cannot be disposed of through weekly trash collection, and instead need to be disposed of through the County's Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Program. The County also offers the Conditionally Exempt

Small Quantity Generator Hazardous Waste Program to provide a convenient, cost effective, and environmentally acceptable method of disposal for Western New York businesses, municipalities, schools, or other agencies that meet the requirements for the program. In addition, there is a need for better regulation across municipalities for recycling across the board. The County will address barriers associated with HHW, such as deciphering new rules for collecting e-waste and serving community members that do not have vehicles, by partnering with local community centers and organizations who can help educate and provide support with

more accessible collection events and opportunities for drop-offs.

Additionally, the County will encourage private-public partnerships to improve the waste recovery and collection infrastructure that is currently in place to better maximize the effectiveness of our diversion rates and mitigate the damaging effects that improper waste disposal has on our communities. Finally, we understand the need to actively pursue, promote, and encourage our citizens and commercial entities on why quality participation in this strategy is essential for successful climate impact mitigation in our region.

Figure 18 Recovery & Collection Infrastructure

Know where it GOES!

Recycle at the CURB

- Paper Products (News, newspapers)
- Plastics (Bottles, containers)
- Metals (Cans, lids)
- Cardboard (Boxes)
- Bottles & Jars (Plastic bottles)

BEYOND the recycle bin
These items should not go to the curb and when managed properly, can be recycled elsewhere

- YARD WASTE**: erie.gov/recycling
- ELECTRONICS**: Recycle at an e-waste event erie.gov/recycling
- HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE**: erie.gov/recycling
- CLOTHING**: Thrift store or donation bin
- PAINT**: paintcare.org
- PLASTIC BAGS**: Supermarkets, retailers or bagandfilmrecycling.org

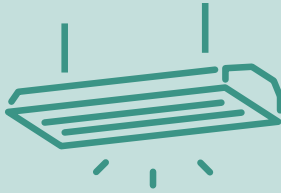
Examples of items that are trash and cannot be recycled:
Garden hoses, bowling balls, mirrors, dishes, and drinking glasses.
**Check with your municipality since many may accept these items*

Recovery & Collection Infrastructure

Recovery and collection infrastructure refers to the recovery (repurposing, donating, borrowing, and reusing) and collection (disposing of waste and recycling) of materials. Recycling and disposing materials correctly is key to a sound recovery and collection infrastructure.

Recycling Fluorescent Light Bulbs or Potentially Hazardous Materials

Fluorescent light bulbs often break when they are thrown away in the trash, which releases mercury into the environment. When fluorescent light bulbs are recycled, glass, metals, and other materials that make up the light bulb can be reused. In New York, improper disposal of mercury lamps is against the law.




react, or explode when mixed with other substances, or that are corrosive or toxic. Check for labels that have “poison,” “toxic,” “warning,” “danger,” “combustible,” “flammable,” “corrosive,” or “caution.”

Visit Erie County’s Materials/Recycling sites website¹ for all hazardous materials, including fluorescent light bulbs, and collection sites in Erie County.

Note:

¹ Erie County’s Material/Recycling website: <https://www3.erie.gov/recycling/materials-recycling-sites>

STRATEGY 2: Diversion	HORIZON	SPHERE OF INFLUENCE	LEAD COUNTY ENTITY	PARTNERS
ACTION ITEM 5.2.1:	Encourage compliance with NY Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) Food Waste Law and Good Samaritan Law⁶¹ for business enterprises through outreach and education.			
	Ongoing	Direct	DEP	NYSDEC, WNY SBR, Sheriff’s Department, Department of Public Works (DPW), local service providers, Erie County Department of Health (ECDOH)
				
	NYSDEC Food Waste Law The NYSDEC Food Waste Law currently requires businesses and institutions that generate an annual average of two tons of food per week or more must donate excess edible food and recycle all remaining food scraps if they are within 25 miles of an organics recycler (composting facility, anaerobic digester, etc.). It important to note that lowering the two ton threshold is being reviewed. This law does not include hospitals, nursing homes, adult care facilities, K-12 schools, and farms. ¹			
	Source: ¹ NYSDEC, “Food Donation and Food Scraps Recycling Law,” New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, 2023, https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/114499.html .			
ACTION ITEM 5.2.2:	Develop and expand food and yard waste recycling programs at municipal buildings and operations. Train and promote residential and commercial collection programs, including backyard composting.			
	Short-Term	Direct	DEP	Local municipalities, ECEMC, DPW, Department of Social Services (DSS), local service providers
ACTION ITEM 5.2.3:	Develop and enhance local recycling solutions for construction and demolition debris, refrigerant containing appliances, mattresses, textiles, and carpets.			
	Medium-Term	Indirect	DEP	Waste haulers & recycling companies, local trade organizations
ACTION ITEM 5.2.4:	Support recycling options for multi-family residential buildings, public housing, and commercial entities.			
	Ongoing	Indirect	DEP	Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA), WNY SBR, local municipalities, waste haulers & recycling companies, ECEMC

**STRATEGY 2:
Diversion**

	HORIZON	SPHERE OF INFLUENCE	LEAD COUNTY ENTITY	PARTNERS
ACTION ITEM 5.2.5:	Reduce GHG emissions during the collection and processing of recycling and waste through electrification of fleets and use of efficient routing methods.			
	Short-Term	Indirect	DEP	Waste haulers, NYSERDA, local municipalities, NYSDEC
ACTION ITEM 5.2.6:	Educate and promote responsible waste management practices, such as the recovery and collection infrastructure, throughout all sectors of Erie County.			
	Ongoing	Direct	DEP	WNY SBR, local municipalities, NYSP2I, K-12 schools, Erie 1 Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), grocery stores, religious and cultural institutions, DSS, waste management companies, NYSDEC
ACTION ITEM 5.2.7:	Develop local solutions for managing disaster debris.			
	Medium-Term/ Ongoing	Direct/ Indirect	DEP	Emergency Services, local municipalities, ECEMC, NYSAR ³ , NYSP2I
ACTION ITEM 5.2.8:	Conduct a waste flow study to understand how waste moves throughout the County, local capacities for management, and baselines.			
	Short-Term	Direct	DEP	Academic institutions, local municipalities, NYSDEC, NYSAR ³ , NYSP2I, waste haulers & recycling companies, UB
ACTION ITEM 5.2.9:	Promote and expand participation in the HHW collection program and address barriers to participation in existing and emerging programs.			
	Ongoing	Direct	DEP	Local service providers, ECEMC, local municipalities
ACTION ITEM 5.2.10:	Identify changes or opportunities to expand and increase recycling of electronics and other difficult to dispose of products (e.g., fluorescent tubes and refrigerants) in Erie County.			
	Short-Term	Direct/ Indirect	DEP	NYSDEC, solid waste boards, UB

Figure 19 Consumer Habits

STRATEGY 3: Reuse

According to the USEPA, each person in America produces 4.9 pounds of waste every day.⁶² This translates to 1,789 pounds per year per person, or 1.65 billion pounds of waste per year in Erie County alone! Additionally, the USEPA estimates that 28.1% of our municipal solid waste is made up of packaging.⁶³

As expressed in STRATEGY 1: “Reduction,” the most effective way to reduce waste is to not create it in the first place. Consider all the things we buy for use at home and work. GHG emissions from the creation of all these products and their packaging are emitted throughout the entire product life cycle, which begins during the extraction of raw materials from the earth and includes the manufacturing process, energy, waste, and transportation throughout the various stages.

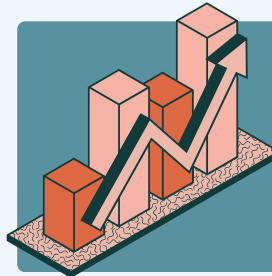
As a result, reuse and repair can be extremely effective ways to reduce natural resource consumption, protect the environment, and save money. Waste reduction through reuse and repair can be achieved in many ways and has many benefits. When feasible, buying only what you need; buying items that can be used more than once; reusing and repurposing items; buying used, repaired, or remanufactured items; taking good care of your things through maintenance and repair; and borrowing, renting, and sharing items can all reduce the amount of waste generated in addition to saving consumers money.

The reuse and repair methodology is intended to extend the life of a product in order to protect our resources and reduce the amount of waste we produce by encouraging a shift in mindset away from both impulse buying and a “throw-away, convenience” culture. In order to increase reuse and repair in Erie County, the County will disseminate information about current reuse and repair practices, and focus on educating consumers, removing barriers, and supporting and enhancing reuse-repair activities. The County will make it easier for citizens to reduce the amount of waste they generate by informing the community on the positive impact of reuse, connecting people with reuse options, and promoting reuse through campaigns such as “Bring Your Own.” Furthermore, the County will expand the reuse and repair movement through legislative support of bills that promote product stewardship by extending the life of products to reduce their impact, including the NYS Digital Fair Repair Act.



OVERCONSUMPTION & OVERPRODUCTION OF GOODS

Break the Habit of Overconsumption



From 2000 to 2017, global material consumption rose 70%, faster than both population and economic output.

In the U.S., the number of households with two or more cars has increased substantially, from 22% in 1960 to 59% in 2020.



Between 30 to 40% of food is wasted. Food waste is the most common landfilled and incinerated material in the U.S.

In the world, 15% of fabric used in production is wasted. 57% of all discarded clothes end up in landfills.



Sources:
Mawgoud, Nadeem Abel. “Fast Fashion Statistics and Trends in 2023.” Blog. Gitnux (blog), March 20, 2023. <https://blog.gitnux.com/fast-fashion-statistics/>.
Rodrigue, Jean-Paul. “Percentage of Households by Number of Vehicles, 1960-2020.” The Geography of Transport Systems, 2020. <https://transportgeography.org/contents/chapter8/urban-transport-challenges/household-vehicles-united-states/>.
United Nations. “Ensure Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns.” Sustainable Development Goal Indicators. Accessed May 12, 2023. <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2019/goal-12/>.
US EPA. “United States 2030 Food Loss and Waste Reduction Goal.” Overviews and Factsheets. United States Environmental Protection Agency, April 4, 2023. <https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/united-states-2030-food-loss-and-waste-reduction-goal>.

STRATEGY 3: Reuse	HORIZON	SPHERE OF INFLUENCE	LEAD COUNTY ENTITY	PARTNERS
ACTION ITEM 5.3.1:	Identify and disseminate current reuse, repair, resell, and sharing practices and programs in Erie County to determine how they can be supported and enhanced.			
	Short-Term	Direct	DEP	Buy nothing-type groups, academic institutions, local donation centers, WNY SBR, local tool libraries, local repair cafes, local municipalities, library system
ACTION ITEM 5.3.2:	Promote and encourage repair per the NYS Digital Fair Repair Act.⁶⁴			
	Ongoing	Direct	DEP	Chambers of commerce, local repair cafes
ACTION ITEM 5.3.3:	Promote and educate consumers on the benefits of reusable products like refillable containers, product repair, maker spaces, and buying used goods.			
	Ongoing	Direct	DEP, ECDOH	Local municipalities, WNY SBR, state agencies, The Foundry, library system
	Maker Spaces Places that have the tools, equipment, and permitting to make items and sell to others.			
ACTION ITEM 5.3.4:	Encourage businesses to develop reuse and material exchange programs in commercial spaces.			
	Ongoing	Direct	DEP	WNY SBR, NYSDEC

Further Reading

Reduction Strategy

Food: Too Good to Waste Program (USEPA) – The Food: Too Good to Waste Implementation Guide and Toolkit is designed for community organizations, local governments, households, and others interested in reducing wasteful household food management practices.

https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2016-02/documents/implementation_guide_and_toolkit_ftgtw_2_1_2016_pubnumberadded508_alldocuments.pdf

Reduction Strategy

Too Good to Go – Downloadable app that can be used to explore stores and restaurants in your local area and save Surprise Bags of surplus food from going to waste at a great price.

<https://www.toogoodtogo.com/en-us/>

Diversion Strategy

Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Program – Safe handling instructions and how to reduce HHW in your home.

<https://www.epa.gov/hw/household-hazardous-waste-hhw>

<https://www.epa.gov/saferchoice>



With help from its compost, a variety of peppers, tomatoes, and flowers are produced in the greenhouses and garden beds at the Erie County Correctional Facility. The goal is to add more vegetables in the future, such as squash and zucchini, and to donate the produce to a community-based organization.

FOOTNOTES: Consumption and Waste

- 49 Tishman Environment and Design Center, "U.S. Municipal Solid Waste Incinerators: An Industry in Decline" (The New School, May 2019), https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5d14dab43967cc000179f3d2/t/5d5c4bea0d59ad00012d220e/1566329840732/CR_GaiaReportFinal_05.21.pdf.
- 50 To learn about the Solid Waste Management Act of 1988, go to the NYSDEC's website at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/294.html>
- 51 USEPA, "Sustainable Materials Management: Non-Hazardous Materials and Waste Management Hierarchy," Collections and Lists, June 19, 2023, <https://www.epa.gov/smm/sustainable-materials-management-non-hazardous-materials-and-waste-management-hierarchy>.
- 52 NYSDEC, "Status of Local Solid Waste Management Plans (LSWMP)," New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, 2023, <https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/65541.html>; City of Buffalo, "Comprehensive Recycling Analysis Final Report," July 2020, <https://buffalorecycles.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Full-Final-Revised-Report-Buffalo-CRA-7-9-20.pdf>.
- 53 To learn about the EPA's Food: Too Good to Waste Program, go to the EPA's website at <https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/food-too-good-waste-implementation-guide-and-toolkit>
- 54 To learn about the USDA's Let's Glean Program, go to the USDA's Let's Glean toolkit at https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/usda_gleaning_toolkit.pdf
- 55 To learn about Senate Bill S1185C, go to the New York State Senate's website at <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2021/S1185>
- 56 To learn about Assembly Bill A10185, go to the New York State Senate's website at <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2021/A10185>
- 57 To learn about Assembly Bill A8668A, go to the New York State Senate's website at <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2021/A8668>
- 58 Eureka Recycling, "Environmental Benefits of Recycling and Composting," 2008, https://eurekarecycling.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/composting_factsheet_0.pdf; Eco-Cycle, "Zero Waste Is a Climate Change Solution," Eco-Cycle, accessed July 28, 2023, <https://ecocycle.org/learn-about-zero-waste/zw-is-a-climate-change-solution/>.
- 59 Erie County DEP, "Local Solid Waste Management Plan," 2020, https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/materials_minerals_pdf/nestfinalswmp.pdf.
- 60 Recycle Right NY is an education and outreach effort with help from over 100 recycling professionals across New York State. They provide information and resources to help people understand easier how to recycle. Wish-Cycling is the act of recycling an item hoping will be recycled without knowing for sure if it is locally accepted for recycling. Adding items to recycling that are not recyclable can damage equipment, injure workers, slow the process down, increase the cost of sorting, and decrease the value of recyclables. To learn more, go to Recycle Right NY's website at <https://recyclerightny.org/>
- 61 The Good Samaritan Law provides limited liability protection for people who make good faith donations of food and grocery products to nonprofits that feed the hungry. The act also provides limited liability protection, both civil and criminal, for those who distribute food and groceries, such as food banks. This law does not cover direct donations to needy individuals or families.
- 62 USEPA, "National Overview: Facts and Figures on Materials, Wastes and Recycling," Overviews and Factsheets, December 3, 2022, <https://www.epa.gov/facts-and-figures-about-materials-waste-and-recycling/national-overview-facts-and-figures-materials>.
- 63 USEPA, "Containers and Packaging: Product-Specific Data," Data and Tools, United States Environmental Protection Agency, December 3, 2022, <https://www.epa.gov/facts-and-figures-about-materials-waste-and-recycling/containers-and-packaging-product-specific>.
- 64 To learn more about the NYS Digital Fair Repair Act, go to New York State's website at <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-signs-digital-fair-repair-act-law>