



Metro Waste Authority



ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Metro Waste Authority
provides answers for
safe, smart
disposal and recycling.

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integrity

Always do what's right.



positivity

Bring my best to every task, every day.

Bring out the best in my colleagues.



innovation

Forge a new path.

Evolve!



teamwork

Collaborate!

Together, we will address opportunities and challenges.



leadership

Set the example.

Everyone's a leader.

AGENCY VALUES

OVERVIEW

Metro Waste Authority's approach to managing Central Iowa's garbage, recycling, yard waste, hazardous waste, environmental education, landfill management, and solid waste transportation is regional, just as it was when the agency was formed in 1969. Offering disposal services in more than 200 communities in 24 counties, Metro Waste Authority minimizes the duplication of resources and keeps residents' and businesses' tonnage rates among the lowest in the country. Metro Waste Authority is an innovator, leader, and facilitator that keeps safe, smart disposal options top-of-mind and easily achievable in the region.

Each year, staff focuses on achieving objectives around these six simply stated, yet complex goals:

- 1. provide safe, smart recycling and disposal options for residents.*
- 2. provide safe, smart recycling and disposal options for businesses.*
- 3. introduce and maintain robust, innovative recycling programs.*
- 4. ensure each facility is innovative, efficient, and environmentally focused.*
- 5. ensure each facility is an asset to our communities.*
- 6. encourage employees to reach their fullest potential.*

Together, Metro Waste Authority's Board of Directors, staff, facilities, programs, and services carry out the vision of achieving "no wasted resources" in Central Iowa and beyond.

For 53 years, it's been Metro Waste Authority's mission to provide answers for safe and smart disposal and recycling. While the needs of the metro have transformed, our commitment to the region remains unchanged.

The pages ahead highlight the successes and developments of the agency in the past year, demonstrating this promise as well as the value Metro Waste Authority provides to the communities and residents we serve.

In 2022-23, we streamlined curbside services, upheld some of the lowest rates in the country, and provided reliable, consistent customer care to residents and communities across the metro. We also answered the call for responsible disposal services beyond our service area, accepting recyclable material from businesses and municipalities across the state and partnering with satellite locations in 20 counties for convenient disposal of hazardous materials.

Additionally, the agency continued to plan and prepare for the years ahead. We completed master planning at both Metro Park East and West Landfill to ensure long-term efficiency; strengthened established services, such as Curb It! for Business; and developed new programs, including can and bottle redemption.

These accomplishments, and much more, are a culmination of dedication and innovation from each agency facility, department, team member, and board member.

In the year ahead, I look forward to continuing to deliver exceptional programs and innovative solutions while providing excellent service to our communities and residents!

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Cheers,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael McCoy". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Michael McCoy
Executive Director

METRO PARK EAST LANDFILL

554,899
tons of garbage received

increased 18,202 tons

6,173
appliances recycled

Metro Park East Landfill, the largest sanitary landfill in Iowa, is located just outside of Mitchellville. In 1971, the site accepted its first load of garbage, leaving the region's use of "dumps" in the past.

This site is a scientifically engineered landfill, carefully constructed to protect land, groundwater, and air quality. Although the location was designed to serve as the final resting place for Polk County's garbage, today it is much more. Now, 53 years later, this location pioneers the agency's vision of "no wasted resources."

In addition to properly managing garbage, many services exist onsite to prevent materials (such as tires, appliances, shingles, yard waste, and construction and demolition debris) from ever entering the landfill.

- Improvements were completed on Phase I, which closed in 2007 and holds nearly 40 years of waste. The improvements will ensure the land and groundwater remain protected.



METRO PARK EAST LANDFILL

- Repurposed 2,500 tons of concrete, shingles, brick, and granite to construct a road and 5.5 tons of discarded cinder blocks for a building remodel.
- A new 21-acre cell was constructed and opened to customers for daily acceptance of garbage. This cell is equivalent in size to 15 football fields and is projected to last at least four years.

METRO COMPOST CENTER

Through the Compost It! yard waste program, residents in participating communities can conveniently dispose of yard and garden waste at the curb. This waste is brought to the nine-acre Metro Compost Center, located in Mitchellville, to be ground, turned, and maintained for four to nine months as it breaks down. Grow Gold Compost, the finished product, is a natural soil enhancer that has been screened, tested, and certified.

- Diverted tree stumps and debris from the landfill that is too large to be composted by grinding into mulch. Mulch is used onsite and sold for residential and commercial use.
- A new compost product, derived from animal bedding, was created to help meet increased commercial demand for a natural soil enhancer. More than 14,102 cubic yards of this product was sold.
- Began selling pre-packaged Grow Gold Compost to make this in-demand soil enhancer more accessible to all customers.

METRO COMPOST CENTER



37,677
tons of yard waste collected

decreased 3,510 tons

14,102
cubic yards of Grow Gold Compost sold

decreased 12,630 cubic yards

METRO PARK WEST LANDFILL



Metro Park West Landfill is located just outside Perry. Metro Waste Authority purchased the facility in 2009, making the site a public, rather than private, landfill for the first time since the 1970s.

Metro Park West's landfill space is carefully crafted, with four layers above and below the garbage, to ensure the land and groundwater are always protected. This site gives Metro Waste Authority a footprint in Dallas County, providing safe, smart disposal options for its businesses and residents.

While the landfill provides a responsible destination for garbage, the site also offers alternative disposal options for items that don't belong in the landfill (such as tires, appliances, and household hazardous waste).

- A 40-year master plan was completed to assess landfill development and guide decisions on operations, prioritizing optimal land use, and environmental protection. Updates include enhancements for managing water run-off, as well as a new scalehouse, and a user-friendly drop-off areas.
- For the first time in eight years, construction of a new cell, Cell D, began. This 2.3 acre cell will hold the equivalent of 400,000 cubic yards of garbage and is projected to last four and a half years.
- Improvements were made to the water collection system to ensure continued protection for the surrounding waterways.

METRO PARK WEST LANDFILL

48,426
tons of garbage received

.....
increased 388 tons

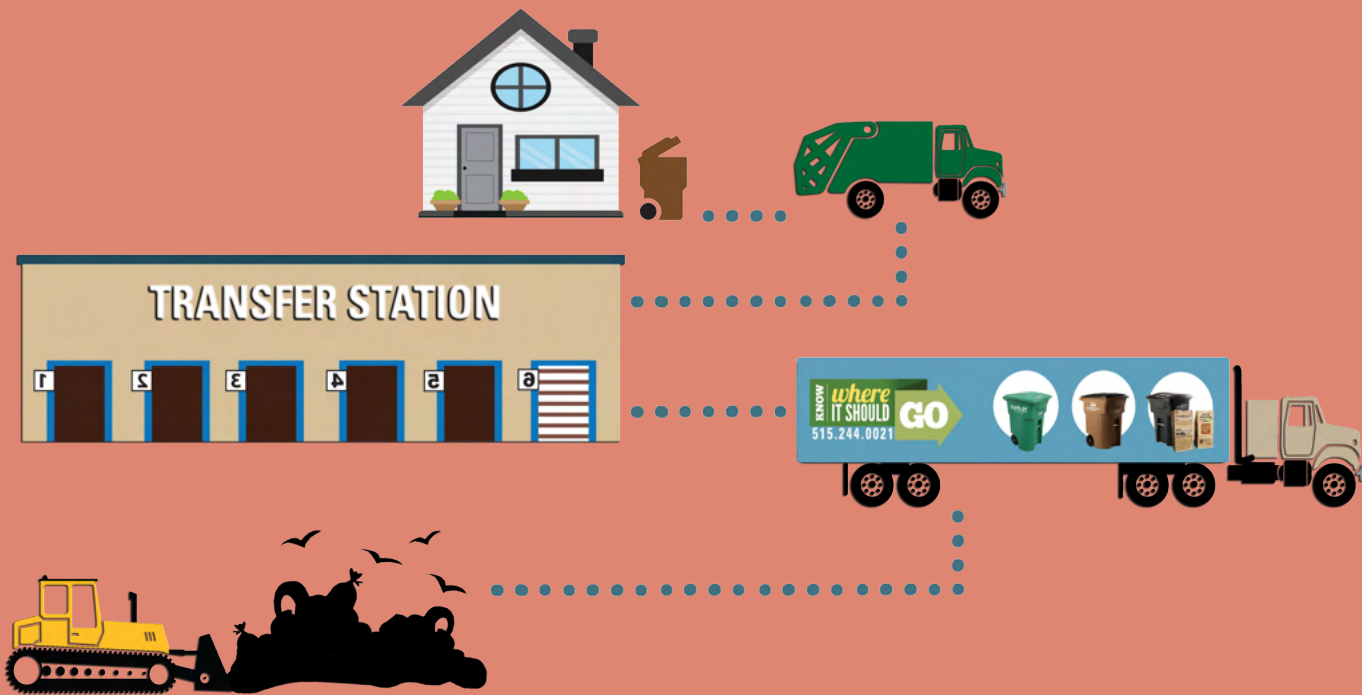
609
appliances recycled

.....
increased 38 appliances

2,104
pounds of household hazardous materials collected

.....
increased 1,864 pounds

TRANSFER STATIONS



Metro Waste Authority has two strategically placed transfer stations in the metro: Metro Northwest Transfer Station in Grimes and Metro Central Transfer Station in Des Moines.

These sites serve as temporary hubs for both residential and commercial waste, as it's quickly offloaded by haulers, then loaded into Metro Waste Authority semis to be transferred to the landfill. One semi-trailer holds the same amount of waste as four and a half garbage trucks.

- A significant investment of two new scales were installed at Metro Central Transfer Station, a site that received 301,866 tons of garbage.
- Purchased three new transfer tractors and four trailers to support community growth and maintain some of the lowest rates in the country. The trailers are wrapped in messages to educate the public about safe, smart disposal as the trailers make rounds each

TRANSFER STATIONS

301,866
tons of garbage received

increased 14,317 tons

14,485
transfer trips made to the landfill

METRO HAZARDOUS WASTE DROP-OFF



Metro Hazardous Waste Drop-Off, located in Bondurant, safely processes and disposes of hazardous waste brought in by residents and businesses. It also handles material collected from the Grimes satellite location, the houseside collection program, and 20 additional counties across Iowa.

- After expanding the Swap Shop, a reuse outlet for household hazardous waste, more than 77,000 pounds were diverted in the first five months due to increased space to display items.
- Partnered with local nonprofit groups for the redemption of more than 600,000 cans and bottles, providing reclamation as many redemption centers closed.
- Served nearly 500 residents at hazardous waste collection events at Metro Northwest Transfer Station. By expanding operations to early mornings and evenings, more residents could take advantage of this convenient and safe disposal option on the west side of the metro.

608,837
pounds of hazardous material safely disposed

increased 122,896 pounds

189,990
pounds of material repurposed in the Swap Shop

increased 59,797 pounds



Metro Waste Authority's administrative office is located in East Village, downtown Des Moines. This location is central to supporting staff, facilities, programs, and services across the organization.

Administrative functions, including customer care, finance, and public affairs, operate from this site. It is also host to monthly meetings for the agency's Board of Directors. Metro Waste Authority opened the building in 2002 and rents the excess space to various tenants who represent a variety of services.

- To obtain real-time feedback on the recruiting and onboarding process, a new hire survey was introduced and completed by 84% of new employees.
- To align candidates with the physical demands of work with safety in mind, Post-Offer Employment Testing (POET) was introduced at all facilities to reduce work related injuries.
- IT implemented remote support to access and control computers and devices, regardless of their physical location, for faster problem resolution and cost savings of \$22,272 per year related to traveling to and from various facilities.

CENTRAL OFFICE

113
employees supported

8
locations supported

METRO RECYCLING FACILITY

Metro Recycling Facility began operations in 2021 and was developed with the goal of applying the same successful regional approach from the landfill to the recycling center.

This 101,100 square foot facility was built with advanced technology, strategic partnerships, and enhanced education to process recycling collected through the agency's Curb It! recycling program and ensure a sustainable partner for recycling in the Midwest.

- In the first year of operations, 26,976 tons of single stream recyclable material was processed, with a 94% equipment uptime. The facility serves more than 100,000 households through the Curb It! curbside recycling program, as well as 100,000 households from the City of Des Moines, and additional partners throughout the state.
- Contamination rates at the facility consistently remain 50% lower than the national average due to enhanced sorting equipment and a strong education program.
- Received the 2022 Outstanding Facility/Program Award from the Iowa Society of Solid Waste Operations, the 2022 Infrastructure Award from the Iowa Recycling Association, and the 2022 Recycling Facility of the Year, Honorable Mention, from the National Waste and Recycling Association.



29,434
tons of recycling received



METRO RECYCLING FACILITY

21,552
bales of recyclables sold

EDUCATION



122

education & outreach events

10,245

*learners reached through
virtual resources*

.....
increased 1,549 learners

EDUCATION

Environmental education is one of Metro Waste Authority's key priorities. Because education is the first step to changing behavior, the agency takes a comprehensive approach to educate Central Iowans from pre-kindergarten to retirement.

- The EPA awarded a \$145,548 grant to teach about safe and responsible waste management through the creation of immersive virtual reality programming for classrooms and the development of an interactive simulation game.
- Welcomed 117 groups at Metro Recycling Facility's open hours. The education center teaches recycling and sustainability through an interactive exhibit space, a vibrant mural, hands-on games and activities, and an observation deck overlooking the sorting floor.
- More than 10,245 learners accessed the agency's virtual learning resources. To enhance environmental education, the Environmental Learning Center was added as a virtual learning resource, incorporating trail cam footage of animals and native plants that call the restored prairie home.
- Expanded classroom outreach and community engagement through a partnership with Green Iowa AmeriCorps.

ENVIRONMENT

While Metro Waste Authority was originally formed to manage a landfill for one county, the role of the agency quickly evolved to managing waste from a holistic environmental perspective. To guide the agency's environmental efforts, Metro Waste Authority participates in the Environmental Management System (EMS) through the Iowa DNR. This voluntary program provides a framework for solid waste organizations to set goals for

- A guided prairie walk at the agency's Environmental Learning Center provided an opportunity for attendees to learn about native plants and animals, waterways, and environmental stewardship.
- Collected more than 1,300 pounds of lithium batteries through a campaign promoting safe, smart disposal. Lithium batteries are one of the most common hazardous waste items improperly disposed of in garbage and recycling and are highly flammable, posing danger to the environment and staff.
- Nearly 36% of energy consumed at Central Office was offset through installation of 300 solar panels. The energy source has saved approximately 55,000 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions, comparable to planting more than 400 trees.



300
*pounds of carbon dioxide
emissions saved through
solar panels*



500
*acres of restored prairie
at the Environmental
Learning Center*

ENVIRONMENT

COMMUNITY



42,868

customer care calls

increased 1,263 calls

209

communities served

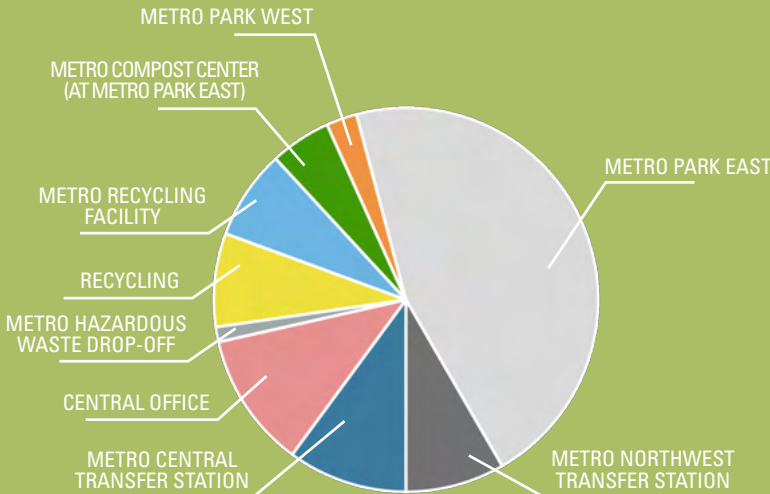
COMMUNITY

Metro Waste Authority was originally formed as a partnership between 16 member communities and one county. Today, that partnership is thriving, providing programs and services that support safe, smart waste disposal for more than 100,000 households in the metro.

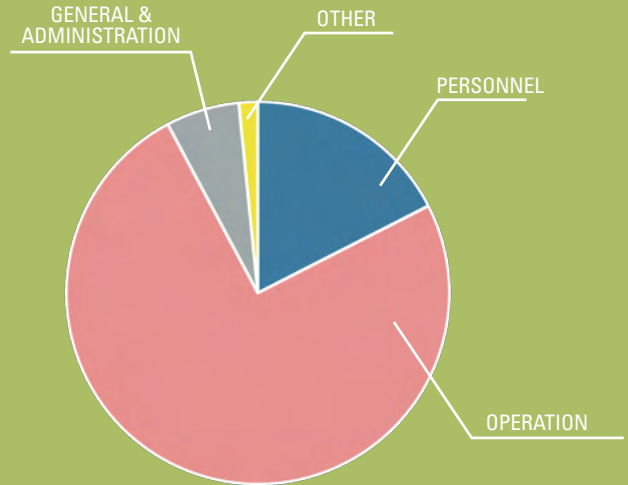
- More than one million beverage containers were redeemed, in just 10 months of operations, at the agency's first can and bottle redemption center.
- Awarded scholarships to seven high school seniors/college students to continue their education in an environmental field.
- A new contract for collection of garbage, recycling, and yard waste went into effect. This contract established some of the lowest collection rates in the country and created one-stop customer support for residents in 21 metro communities.
- Provided grant dollars to municipal and nonprofit spaces for the placement of electric vehicle charging stations and installation of water bottle filling stations.

FINANCIALS

Metro Waste Authority is a 28E quasi-governmental agency. The organization's revenue is 100 percent generated by the fees from services, rather than from state or federal taxes. Metro Waste Authority is a fiscally-conservative organization that aims to reinvest revenue back into programs and services, as well as giving back to the communities it represents.



revenue



expenses



Metro Waste Authority

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