



The University of Winnipeg published its first Sustainability Policy in 2006. Since then, our institution has diligently pursued resource management solutions that invest in our natural environments and human communities. Waste management is an obvious and important piece of this puzzle. With the right approach, waste management programs can go beyond reducing environmental damage caused by landfilling – they can add value to ecosystems and communities by contributing to renewable resource economies. UWinnipeg’s waste management systems exist to make sure that all types of materials leaving campus end up in the most sustainable destination.

Education and communication are essential to the success of our landfill diversion efforts. But, having strong waste management infrastructure and community partnerships is only worthwhile if campus users (faculty, staff, students and, community members) understand where and how to discard different items. Put simply, waste management at UWinnipeg is about integrating individual behaviors with our waste collection infrastructure, and working with service providers that offer sustainable waste processing solutions.

Waste audits give us the data needed to pinpoint key variables, such as overall waste stream volumes, the quantity of organic and recycled waste being wrongfully sent to landfill, and items that are most frequently discarded incorrectly. Equipped with the findings of waste audits, sustainability managers at UWinnipeg can focus on making necessary improvements to infrastructure and develop specific outreach and engagement strategies. The 2023 waste audit is particularly useful in this regard as it was intentionally planned prior to a \$150,000 multi-stream waste bin improvement project. By auditing before and after the new waste bins are installed, we can measure how effective they are at increasing proper disposal and landfill diversion.


The Campus Sustainability Office (CSO) would like to acknowledge the University of Winnipeg’s ongoing investment in effective waste management practices. Certainly, without this leadership, our institution would be sending far more unsorted waste to the Brady Road Landfill. We encourage everyone on campus to continue doing their part by taking time to sort their waste and find the appropriateness of, landfillpropr5s was1 to lawis onrypes oaste ded2incorr







Landfill



Findings from UWinnipeg's 2023 Waste Audit indicate that our institution's waste management systems are effective, but there is also substantial room for improvement. Our organics and recycling collection efforts divert more than 25,000 kgs of material from the landfill each year. However, we still send over 60% of all campus-generated waste to landfill. Over half of this amount consisting of materials that do not need to be sent to landfill. Despite having post-consumer organic material collection on campus for over fifteen years, our compost collection bins are frequently rejected by our organic waste hauler due to contamination, and large volumes of compostable food containers end up in our landfill stream.

To reduce contamination and increase landfill diversion, The University will implement the following improvements to our waste management program:

1. **Assess and reduce the number of single-stream bin locations across campus.**

Assess the distribution of single stream recycling and landfill bins in classrooms, hallways and communal spaces across campus and consider removing these where multi-stream waste bins are/can be made accessible. Use this assessment along with a review of best practices at other institutions to develop a guideline or procedure for waste bin distribution and use. People tend to take the path of least resistance when it comes to getting rid of waste. For example, if an administrator eats lunch in their office and has a single-stream black garbage bin on-hand that is emptied regularly by cleaning staff, they have no incentive to take their organic lunch waste to a multi-stream bin. If their closest and only nearby option is a multi-stream bin, individuals will at least have an opportunity to separate their recycling and compost.

2. **Add more multi-stream waste collection bins across campus.**

The waste audit showed that campus users are more likely to sort their waste and remember to compost when using multi-stream bins. If we take single-stream bins away, we must ensure people encounter multi-stream bins often and that they can find them quickly and easily whenever needed. More than fifty new multi-stream bins have already been put into service since the start of 2023, with more set to arrive later this year.

3. **Finish the multi-stream rebranding effort.**

The multi-stream bins seen across campus were introduced over fifteen years ago. Understandably, they have lost their luster, and the messaging is not completely accurate. To make our bins easier to find and provide clearer instructions for users, all new bins will be built with larger backboards and updated decaling. The eighty existing, first-generation bins will be retrofitted to match the new design and style.

4. **Outreach and education for campus community members.**

To accompany the newly-branded bins, Campus Sustainability staff are developing a suite of new educational materials and engagement programming to boost waste disposal literacy on campus. Among other things, they will develop waste sorting instructions in our new Sustainable Office, Sustainable Campus Living, and Sustainable Events guides. They will train a team of student Sustainability Ambassadors, who will engage their peers with class talks and at bin sites throughout campus.

In addition to implementing the recommendations listed above, sustainability managers at UWinnipeg, will continue exploring other waste management innovations. For example, an economic case could be made (as well as an environmental one) to do our own composting on-site. Sustainability staff will look at the level of organic materials generated on campus, the cost of our organics collection service, and the elevated levels of contamination. They will also arrange a site visit to the Forks to learn more about their on-site composting operations and ongoing post-consumer waste sorting program.

UWinnipeg will conduct our next internal waste audit in March of 2025, with the goal of measuring the impact of our planned changes on the sustainable waste management performance outcomes.

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