

A Tale of Twin Cities

State of Residential Organics Collection in MN

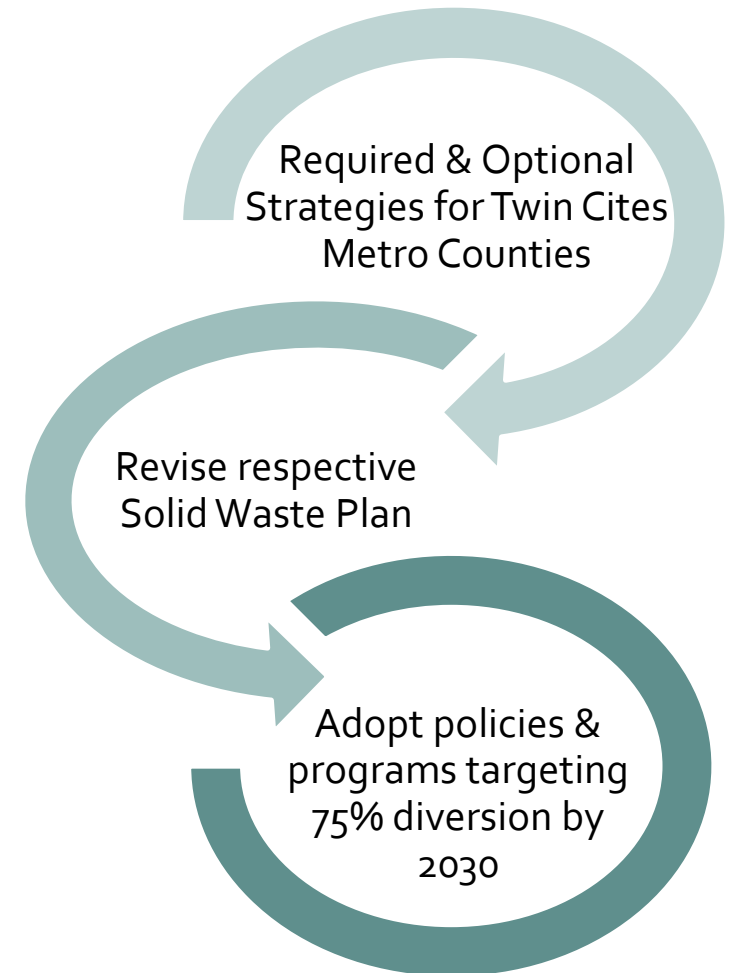
Brandon Suchomel
10/14/2025 - Illinois Circularity Conference



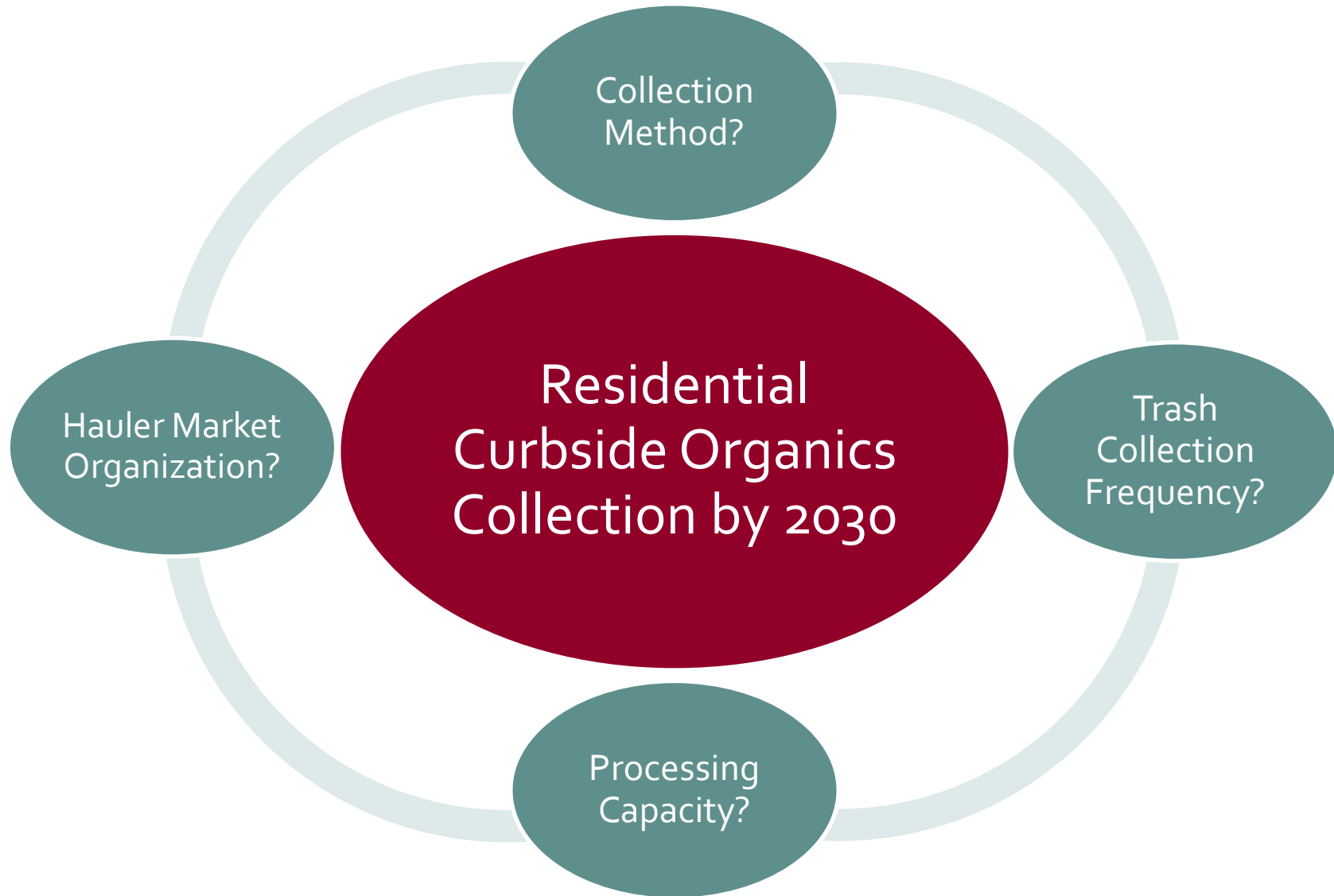
AGENDA

- Overview of current TCMA Region policy
- Status of Established Programs
 - Minneapolis
 - St. Paul area
- Selection of a Strategy

MPCA Waste Policies & Goals



MPCA Required Strategy #40





Existing Programs

Minneapolis & St. Paul area

SCS ENGINEERS

Twin Cities | Minneapolis/St. Paul

- **Minneapolis** – west side of river
- **St. Paul** – capital, east side of river
- 16th largest metro area in US (3.7M)



Food Scrap Collection Programs

- Both have implemented curbside residential food scraps collection programs
- Approach for each is different
 - Minneapolis: Separate cart collection
 - St. Paul: Co-collected with trash



Minneapolis Food Scrap Program

SCS ENGINEERS

Collection Process



- **Curbside Cart:** A green organics cart, collected weekly, collected separately
- **Accepted Materials:** All food scraps, non-recyclable paper, BPI-certified compostable products

Program History and Development



- Pilot 2008
- Began phased rollout around 2015
- Citywide curbside organics collection for residents who opt-in
- All solid waste and recycling customers pay but opt in or sign up to participate

Education Process

- **Resident Education:**
Ongoing campaigns to promote the program
 - BPI-certified compostable or paper bags
 - Acceptable materials
 - On going cart tagging (notifying of contamination; cart not serviced)
 - City programs, neighborhood associations, and volunteer “Block Leaders” help educate neighbors

Minneapolis City of Lakes
Organics Recycling Collection

Reminder: Yard waste is **not** accepted in the green Organics Recycling cart







Yard waste items not accepted include:

- Grass clippings
- Twigs and tree trimmings
- Leaves
- Garden plants

Soil, dirt and rocks are not accepted by any Solid Waste & Recycling collection.

For more information on yard waste collection, call Solid Waste and Recycling at 612-673-2917, email us at SWRcustomer@minneapolismn.gov or visit minneapolismn.gov/solid-waste/yardwaste

What is accepted in the green Organics Recycling cart?
Food, non-recyclable paper and other compostable items













For more information on organics recycling call Solid Waste and Recycling at 612-673-2917, email us at SWRcustomer@minneapolismn.gov or visit minneapolismn.gov/organics

Hearing impaired can use a relay service to call 311 at 612-673-3000
TTY users call 612-263-6850
Para asistencia 612-673-2700
Rau kev pab 612-673-2800
Hadii aad Caawimaad u baahantahay 612-673-3500

05-2020

Minneapolis City of Lakes
Recolección de Reciclaje Orgánico

Aviso: Los desechos del jardín **no** son aceptados en el bote verde de reciclaje orgánico







Los desechos del jardín que no se aceptan son:

- Residuos de podas
- Ramas y cogollos de arboles
- Hojas
- Plantas del jardín
- Tierra, barra y rocas no son aceptadas en el bote de basura ni del bote de reciclaje.

Para más información sobre los desechos de jardín, llame a la oficina de Solid Waste & Recycling al 612-673-2917, email SWRcustomer@minneapolismn.gov o visite la página de internet minneapolismn.gov/solid-waste/yardwaste

¿Qué es aceptado en el bote verde de reciclaje orgánico?
Comida, papel no reciclable y otros artículos compostables













Para más información de reciclaje orgánico, llame a la oficina de Solid Waste & Recycling al 612-673-2917, email SWRcustomer@minneapolismn.gov o visite la página de internet minneapolismn.gov/organics

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Successes

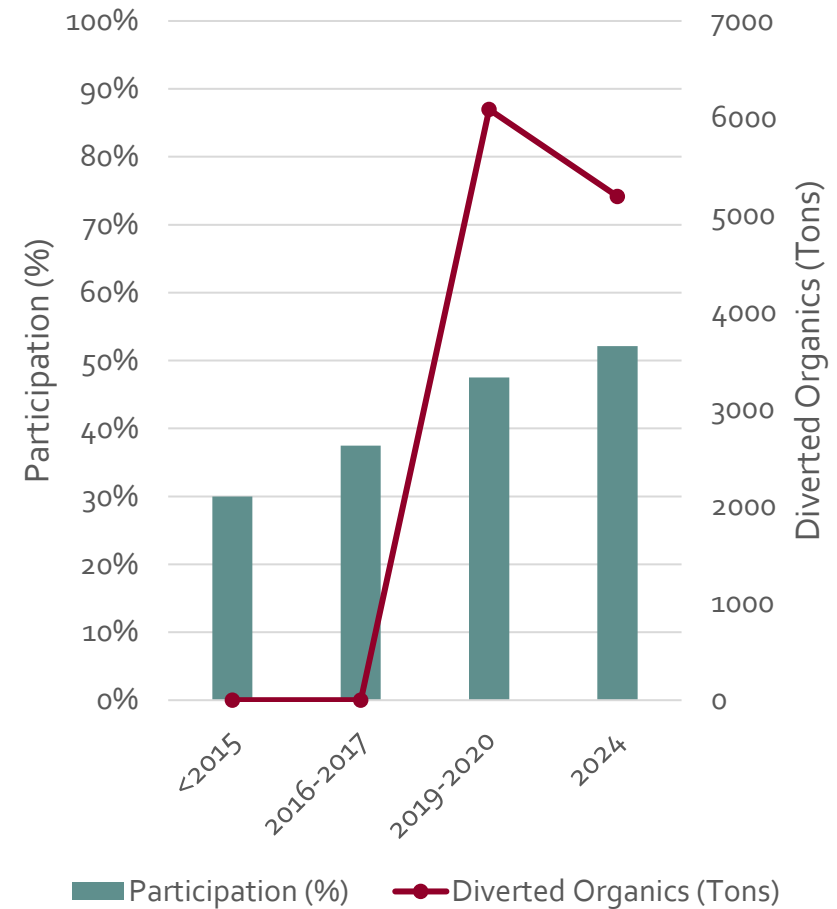
- **Effective Education Program**

- Welcome kit after sign up
- Low contamination rates

- **Participation**

- Opt-in structure is challenging for participation

- **Diverted Organics**



Challenges

- **Program Costs**

- Additional trucks, staff, carts, and educational materials require consistent funding

- **Sustained Participation**

- Encouraging households to remain active after initial sign-up

- **Starting a New Program**

- Logistics associated with that



St. Paul Food Scrap Program

SCS ENGINEERS

Collection Process

How It Works



Order your free annual supply of food scrap bags.



Once a week or when the bag is full, **tie a single knot** at the top to close the bag.



Place your bag inside your trash cart or dumpster for collection.



Done! The food scraps will be composted.

Collection Process

- **Accepted Materials:** All food scraps, compostable paper, BPI compostable, no pizza boxes



Program History and Development



**RAMSEY/WASHINGTON
RECYCLING & ENERGY**
CONNECTING VALUE TO WASTE

- **Ramsey and Washington Counties
Working Together**

- Own and operate the Recycling & Energy Center (R&E Center) in Newport, MN
- All MSW in both counties goes through R&E Center
- Rolling out curbside collection program

Program History and Development

- **R&E Center Processes MSW**

- Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF)
- Ferrous/Nonferrous
- Bulky waste
- Residue

- **Recent Upgrades**

- Food scrap bag processing line
- Recyclables recovery line



Program History and Development



- **Pilot - April 2023**

- 2,200 households were eligible to participate

- **Formal Program Rollout – October 2023**

- Continuing to roll out to more communities in County
- Goal to achieve 40% participation

Education Process

- **Community Engagement**

- Program website
- E-newsletters with programmatic updates
- Customer service (phone line, chat, and contact form)
- Direct mail, social media
- Traditional marketing campaigns
- Community events
- In-person engagements and partnerships with municipalities

Successes

- **Significant Landfill Diversion**
 - Goal is to divert 30,000 tons per year
- **Participation and Continued Rollout**
 - At the end of 2023, 7.8% participation rate, with 2,861 households enrolled.
 - At the end of 2024, 11% participation rate with 12,394 households enrolled.
- **Effective Education Program**
 - Low contamination rate
- **Expanded Availability of Program**
 - Multifamily
 - Senior living facilities (apartment-type living)



Challenges

- **Contamination**

- Capturing bags in the system (robot recognition)
- In-bag contamination is low



- **Starting a New Program**

- Logistics associated with that



- **Program Costs**

- Investment in equipment, staff, and educational materials require consistent funding



- **Sustained Participation**

- Encouraging households to remain active after initial sign-up

Selecting The Right Approach



Separate Cart



Co-collection with Trash



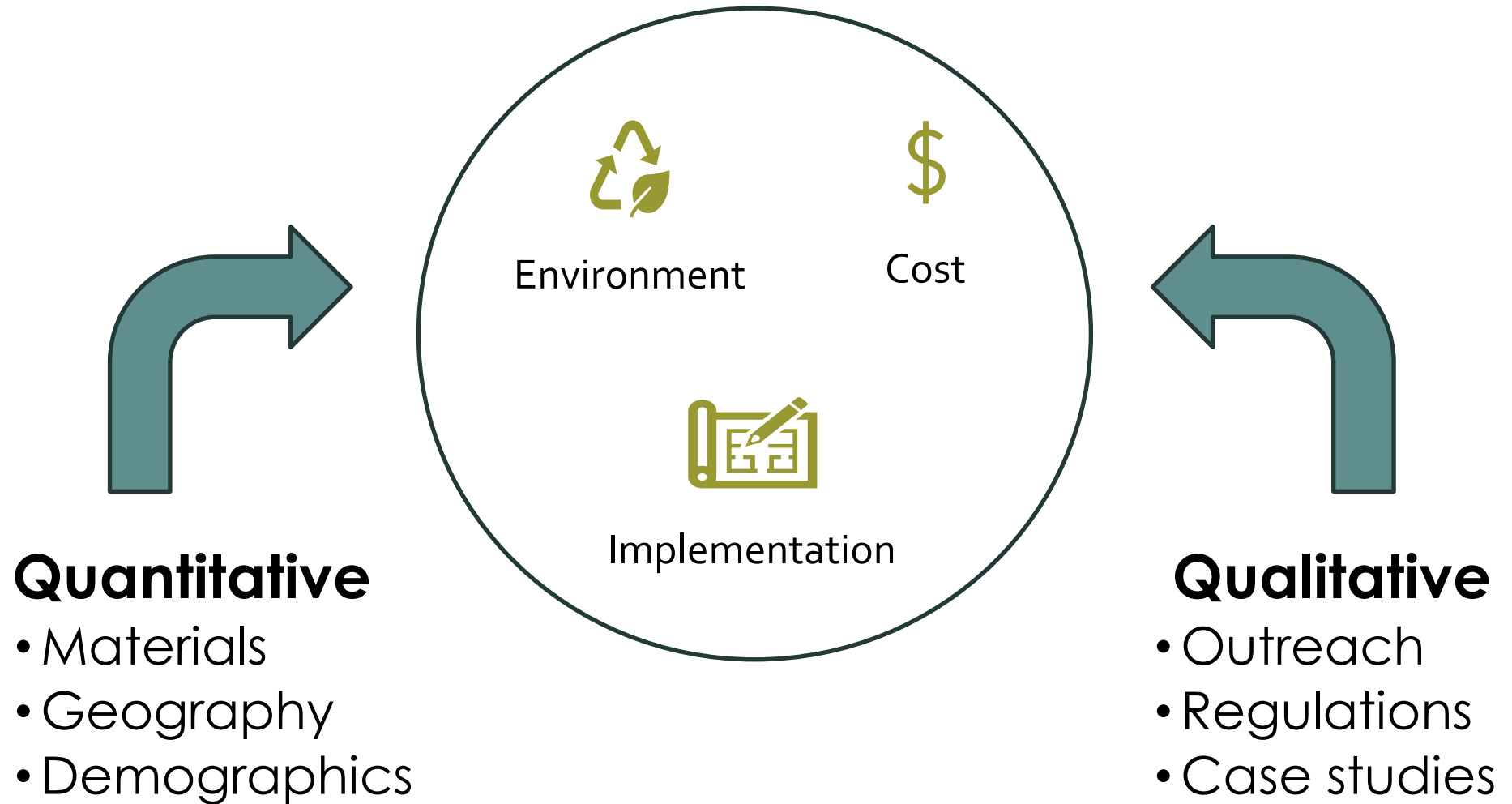
Commingled with Yard
Waste



Drop-off Sites

**Which
makes most
sense for the
region?**

Evaluation Approaches



Thank You For
Attending!



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