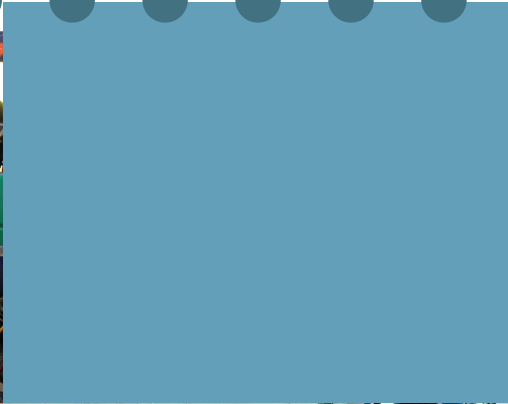




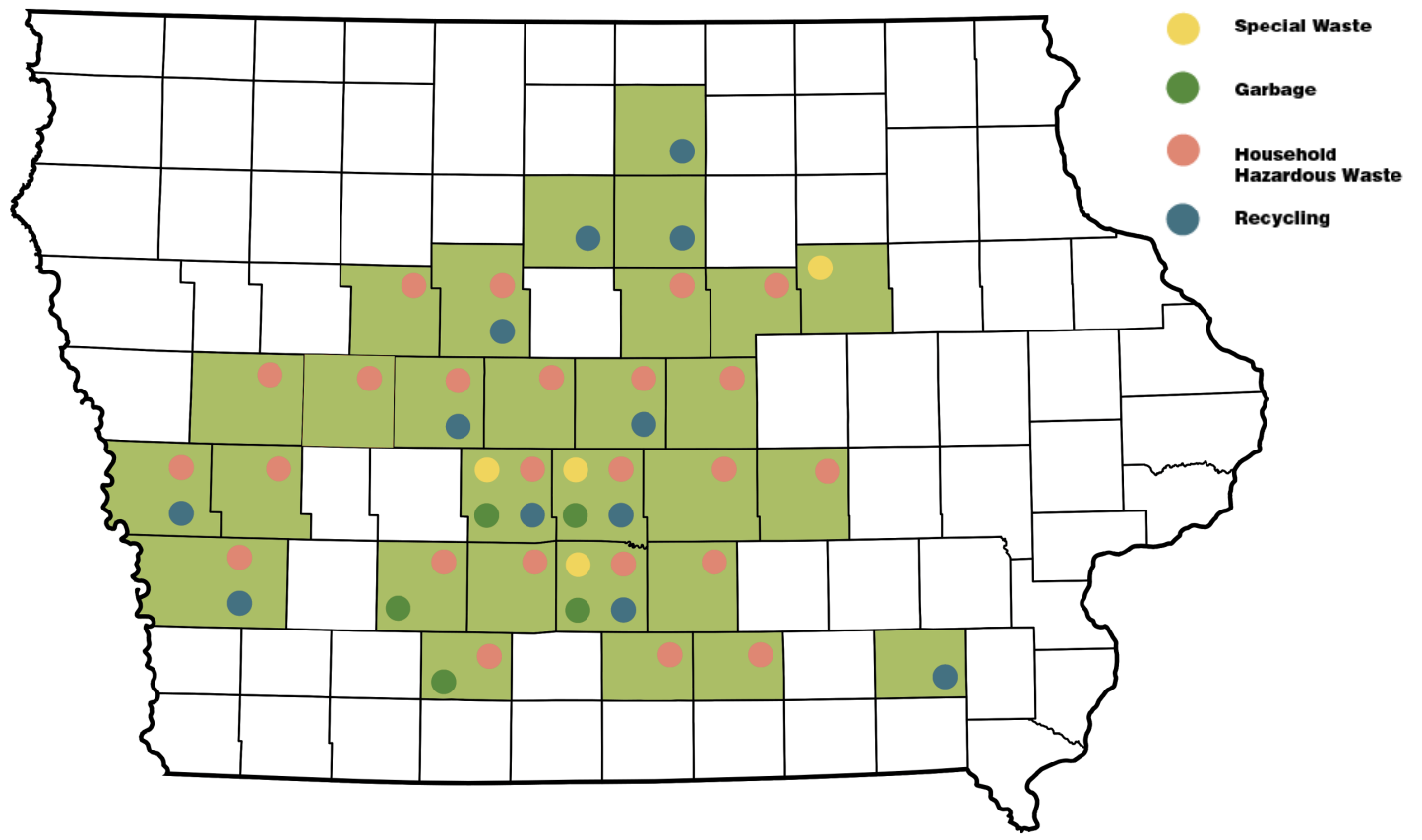
Metro Waste Authority ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24





counties served

While originally formed to manage solid waste for Polk County, the agency's services now extend to more than 250 communities in 29 counties throughout the state.



board of directors

Dean O'Connor (Chair)
Altoona

Mark Holm
Ankeny

Bob Peffer
Bondurant

Ted Weaver
Clive

Joe Gatto
Des Moines

Steve Allen
Elkhart

David Gisch
Grimes

Bryan Burkhardt
Johnston

Bill Roberts
Mitchellville

Ed Kuhl
Norwalk

Konnor Hodges
Pleasant Hill

Rob Sarchet (Vice Chair)
Polk City

Tom Hockensmith
Polk County

Jeremy Lindquist
Runnells

Patricia Boddy
Urbandale

Doug Loots
West Des Moines

Susan Skeries
Windsor Heights



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

agency values



integrity

Always do what's right.



positivity

Bring my best to every task, every day.
Bring out the best in my colleagues.



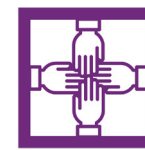
innovation

Forge a new path.
Evolve!



leadership

Set the example.
Everyone's a leader.



teamwork

Collaborate!
Together, we will address opportunities and challenges.

overview

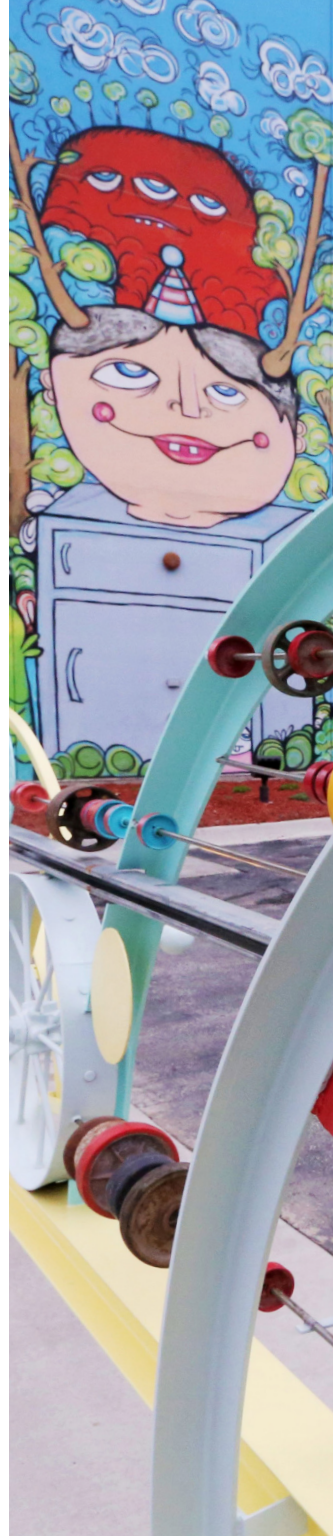
Metro Waste Authority's approach to managing Central Iowa's garbage, recycling, yard waste, hazardous waste, environmental education, landfill management, and solid waste transportation is regional, just as it was when the agency was formed in 1969.

Offering disposal services in more than 250 communities in 29 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.



letter from the executive director



For 54 years, Metro Waste Authority's mission has been 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 2023-24, the agency served as a resource across the state, developing partnerships through diversion projects and assisting communities in disaster response and storm cleanup efforts.

Additionally, we continued to plan and prepare for the years ahead. We strengthened our established programs and services through proactive investment in our facilities, securing grant funds for state-of-the-art equipment, launching innovative education touchpoints, and restructuring service models to enhance the customer experience.

We also focused on internal development, welcoming dozens of new faces to the agency, celebrating agency values, and initiating new employee engagement efforts to empower staff at every level.

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



Cheers,

Michael McCoy
Executive Director

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METRO PARK EAST LANDFILL

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.

The site is a scientifically engineered landfill, carefully constructed to protect land, groundwater, and air quality. Although the site was designed to serve as the final resting place for Polk County's garbage, today it is much more. Now, 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.



INNOVATIVE DIVERSION PROGRAMS

To continue diverting material from the landfill in innovative ways, staff expanded the construction and demolition recycling program, separating through co-mingled loads and capturing recyclable materials, such as wood pallets and concrete. Approximately 60 percent of material from these loads is spared from the landfill.

RELIABLE OPTIONS FOR UNIQUE WASTE STREAMS

The agency established a partnership with University of Northern Iowa to receive its fly ash, which is an instrumental solidification agent in the liquid waste disposal process. As the only landfill with a liquid waste disposal program in Central Iowa, this new partnership ensures customers continued, reliable access to disposal of non-hazardous liquids and semi-solids.

INVESTING IN EFFICIENT WORKSPACES

The site's administration building was remodeled to create a more pleasant working environment and support agency growth. In the spirit of the agency's vision of "no wasted resources," existing tables and desks in good condition were integrated into the new design.

463,221

tons of garbage received



decreased 91,678 tons

6,523

appliances recycled



increased 350 appliances

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

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 months as it decomposes. Once ready, it is screened, tested, certified, and sold as Grow Gold Compost, a natural soil enhancer.



43,170
tons of yard waste collected

increased 5,493 tons

11,193
cubic yards of Grow Gold Compost sold

decreased 2,909 cubic yards

966
pre-packaged bags of Grow Gold Compost sold

ACCESSIBLE PRE-PACKAGED COMPOST

To make the in-demand soil enhancer more accessible to customers, custom private-labeled bags of Grow Gold Compost were introduced at three facilities and three retailers throughout the metro. Nearly 1,000 pre-packaged bags of the compost sold in the first year of availability.

INCREASING COLLECTION CONVENIENCE

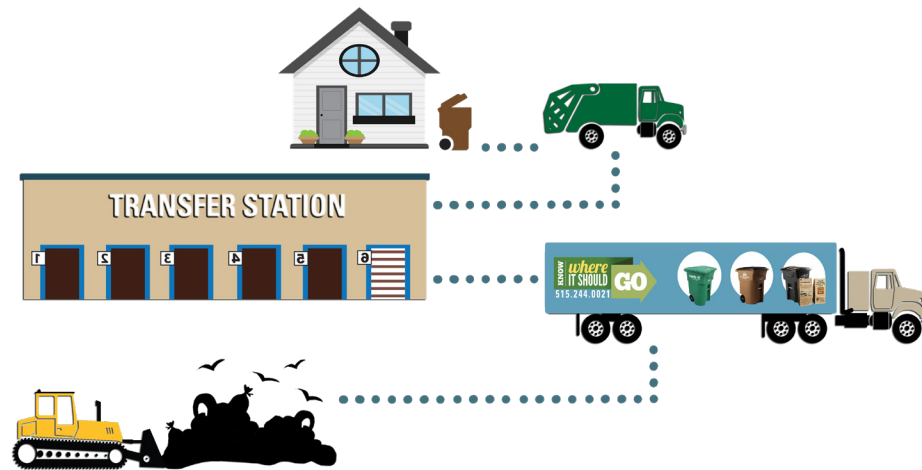
Compost It! cart subscriptions increased by nine percent, allowing the agency to capture and recycle more residential yard waste.

METRO 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.

This system increases collection efficiencies, thus, lowering collection costs, reducing fuel consumption, improving air quality, and enhancing road safety.



136,792
*tons of garbage received at
Metro Northwest Transfer Station*



168,876
*tons of garbage received at
Metro Central Transfer Station*



15,580
*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.



811,525
*pounds of hazardous
material safely disposed*
.....
increased 202,688 pounds

169,520
*pounds of material
repurposed in the Swap Shop*
.....
decreased 20,470 pounds

REPURPOSING USABLE MATERIAL

In the first year of the Swap Shop's expansion, nearly 1,900 residents repurposed cleaning products, paints, stains, and other household hazardous waste free of charge.

INCREASED PARTICIPATION

In addition to residential disposal, this collection center also provides convenient local disposal for businesses that produce small amounts of hazardous waste. In the last year, participation from these very small quantity generators increased by 15 percent. Staff use this touchpoint to advise customers on alternative materials that are less hazardous and more cost-effective.

CENTRAL OFFICE

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.

123
employees supported

8
locations supported



ENGAGING & EMPOWERING STAFF

New hire welcome breakfasts and emerging leader roundtables were launched as a means to engage and empower staff. This year, 10 were promoted. A continued focus on company values, celebration of successes, and employee events are an ongoing investment in agency culture.

LIVING THE AGENCY'S VALUES

Agency leadership received the Patriot Award from the Iowa Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) for the ongoing support of employees who are also military service members. Sergeant Iowa Army National Guard and Metro Park East Landfill Mechanic Carter Ossman nominated Executive Director Michael McCoy for the award.

CONTINUED STAFF SUPPORT

The agency implemented a paid family and caregiver leave and updated its paid time off programs to ensure competitive benefits to recruit and retain employees.

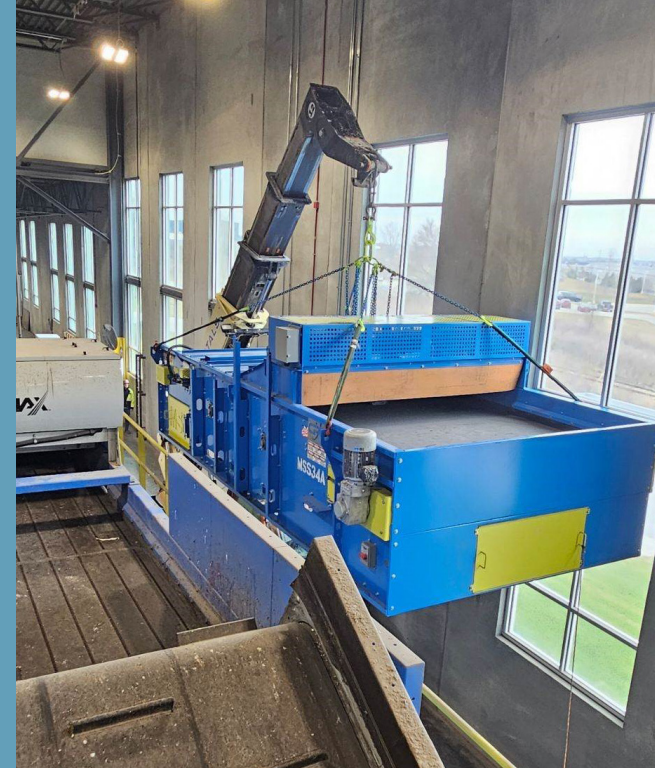
UNIQUE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

The agency partnered with the Southeast Polk Apprenticeship Program to recruit new talent and offer unique training opportunities in the metro. The first candidate through the program learned hands-on experience in maintenance and repairs as a diesel mechanic apprentice at Metro Park East Landfill.

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.



STATE-OF-THE-ART SORTING EQUIPMENT

An emphasis on advanced technology was on display through the purchase and installation of four robotic sorters and a third optical sorter. Incorporating state-of-the-art equipment into the sorting system captures more recyclable material and reduces contamination.



NAVIGATING A FACILITY FIRE

The agency navigated a significant fire at the facility without interruption to services, repairing damage and returning to operations within two months. Efforts to improve operations and prevent future fires through innovation are underway with the recent purchase of early fire detection equipment, such as a rover and thermal alert system.

31,487
 tons of recycling received

 increased 2,053 tons

22,696
 bales of recyclables sold

 increased 1,144 bales

METRO REDEMPTION CENTERS

Metro Waste Authority piloted a redemption program in 2022 after reform of Iowa's Bottle Bill allowed many stores to opt out of processing can and bottle returns, resulting in fewer convenient outlets for residents.

The program first launched at Metro Hazardous Waste Drop-Off in Bondurant and was positively received by residents across the metro. After seven months of successful operations, the program expanded to a second location at Metro Recycling Facility in Grimes. The two Metro Redemption Centers recycled more than three million cans and bottles in the first full year of operations.



3.1
*million cans & bottles
redeemed*

\$1,579
*raised for local organizations
through the fundraiser
program*

SUPPORTING LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

A fundraiser program was launched, allowing residents to donate their redemption value to nonprofits, schools, community groups, and other local organizations. More than \$1,500 was raised for businesses, which is the equivalent of redeeming 30,000 beverage containers.

EVOLVING OPERATIONS

To evolve with the demand of the program, Metro Redemption Center in Bondurant transitioned to an automated sorting operation with a high-speed counting and sorting machine. This new process captures up to 18,000 aluminum cans and plastic bottles per hour with a high degree of accuracy, ensuring the program can continue meeting the needs of metro residents.

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.



LAUNCHING NEW LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Two online simulation games were designed and provided for young learners to play more than 3,500 times! Both games focus on safe and responsible waste management, helping to develop informed, empowered, and engaged citizens.

IMPLEMENTING VIRTUAL REALITY

Implementation of virtual reality programs provided classrooms and community groups accessible and immersive field trips to the agency's facilities. This innovative program reached nearly 1,300 students.

EDUCATION FOR ALL AGES

Education center open hours at Metro Recycling Facility welcomed more than 1,700 visitors. 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.

71
education & outreach events

37
field trips hosted

community



Metro Waste Authority was originally formed as an agency comprised of 16 member communities and one county. Today, the partnerships with these communities – and more – are thriving, providing programs and services that support safe, smart waste disposal for more than 100,000 households in the metro.



68,561

customer care calls

increased 25,693 calls

UNIQUE DIVERSION PARTNERSHIPS

The agency partnered with the Iowa Waste Exchange to divert more than 20,000 pounds of new, compostable straws and forks delivered by a vendor that couldn't utilize them. The items were matched with more than 30 organizations, who saved nearly \$55,000 in avoided purchases.

ASSISTING IN DISASTER RESPONSE

A series of tornadoes in spring of 2024 devastated communities in Central Iowa. The agency collaborated with affected cities to ensure vegetative and infrastructure debris was properly removed and disposed of in a timely manner. Metal was recycled through the construction and demolition recycling program at Metro Park East Landfill, and tree debris was managed at Metro Compost Center, where it is turned into Grow Gold Compost.

ENGAGING WITH NEW AUDIENCES

To increase brand awareness among new audiences, a new ambassador program was launched. Four individuals were selected as 2024 Eco Advocates to engage with their communities through the creation of relevant and authentic short-form social media content.

PARTNERING WITH NEW COMMUNITIES

Metro Recycling Facility was built to provide a sustainable solution for recycling in Central Iowa and beyond. The additional capacity to accept and process material surrounding communities has positioned the facility as a solution for recycling across the state.

252

communities served

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 Department of Natural Resources. This is a voluntary program that provides a framework for solid waste organizations to set goals for environmental improvement.



GUIDING BEST PRACTICES

Responsible operations are central to protecting the environment. To guide best practices and promote proper handling of waste, Metro Waste Authority hosts trainings for landfill operations, hazardous waste operations, and emergency response for staff and external partners, including individuals from statewide agencies. More than 159 individuals attended the trainings throughout the year.

UTILIZING ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Metro Waste Authority purchased an electric vehicle to replace a gasoline-fueled vehicle. This change will have an improved environmental impact.

80,126

*pounds of carbon dioxide
emissions saved through
solar panels*



500

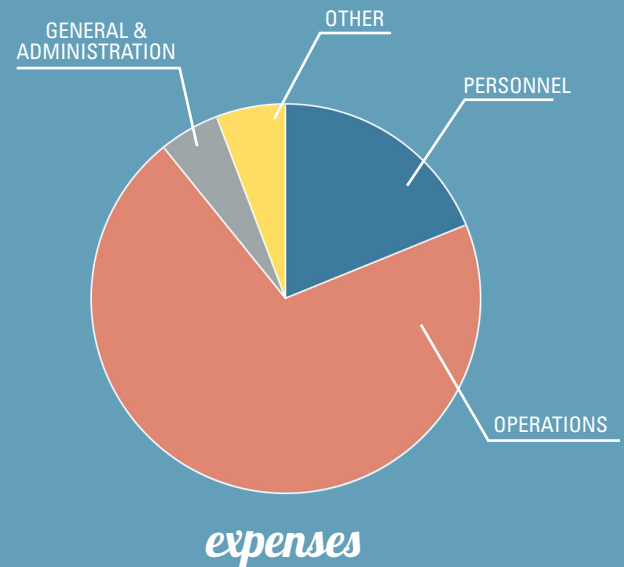
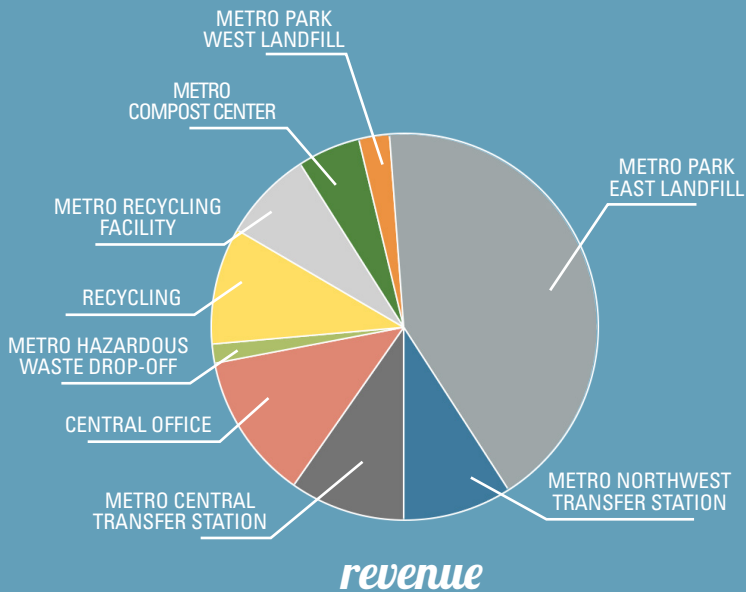
*acres of restored prairie
at the Environmental
Learning Center*

OFFSETTING ENERGY WITH SOLAR

Nearly 21% percent of energy consumed at Central Office was offset through 300 solar panels. The energy source saved more than 80,000 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions since installation, comparable to planting 580 trees.

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.



Metro Waste Authority

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