



UNIVERSITY
OF ALBERTA

Zero Waste Plan

2022-2032



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Executive Summary

The University of Alberta Zero Waste Plan sets out goals, targets, and actions that will move the University of Alberta campuses towards a Zero Waste vision. In the context of this plan, Zero Waste is being adopted both as a guiding principle and as an aspirational goal, where conservation of all resources by means of responsible production, consumptions, reuse, and recovery of products, packaging, and materials will lead to zero waste being produced in select University of Alberta campuses. This Zero Waste Plan focuses on our four main campuses which include North Campus, South Campus, Campus Saint-Jean, and Augustana Campus.

Recycling was first introduced at the University of Alberta almost fifty years ago with the establishment of a paper and cardboard recycling program and in 2025 we diverted nearly 1700 tonnes of recyclables and organics from landfill. Continuing today with processing our organics at Claystone Waste Limited, the University of Alberta has maintained a position ahead of the curve by being proactive when it comes to dealing with the diversion of our institutional solid waste.

One important accomplishment of note for the University of Alberta was the recycling program redesign from 2013-2015, where the six-stream recycling system (Paper/Cardboard, Plastics, Glass/Light Metals, Beverage Containers, Organics, Landfill) was condensed into a new four stream system (Mixed Paper, Recyclables, Organics, Landfill) and rebranded as Zero Waste stations.

The University of Alberta has set a target to achieve a 90% waste diversion. This target will be achieved through the continued enhancement of the existing recycling and composting programs and with the introduction of new policies and initiatives over the next ten years. As of March 2026, a diversion rate of 48% was achieved. This was accomplished through the implementation of the Zero Waste program in 58 of the university's buildings that included all of the major food vendor buildings, most labs, and a number of traditional lecture style buildings. The University of Alberta currently captures an approximated 300 tonnes of organics annually.

The University of Alberta's Zero Waste program sets us ahead of the ICI sector, but we have work to do to reduce our overall waste generation rates and achieve a fully integrated waste diversion and organics collection program. To achieve this, the University of Alberta has identified gaps in the existing Zero Waste program and set out goals and strategies in this Zero Waste Plan that focus on reducing waste and improving waste handling processes, outline how we will document our progress going forward, and help the University of Alberta to continue being a resilient leader by staying ahead of the curve on the road to zero waste.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Zero Waste Plan is a guiding document for the University of Alberta that addresses a zero waste approach to its waste management. Reducing the amount of waste generated every year is an important step in ensuring the long-term sustainability of our campus, our city, and our planet. The University of Alberta has been taking actions to reduce and divert waste away from landfills for almost fifty years. Beginning in the early 1970s with the establishment of a paper and cardboard recycling program, and continuing today with processing our organics Claystone Waste Ltd., the University of Alberta has maintained a position ahead of the curve by being proactive when it comes to dealing with the diversion of our institutional solid waste.

The Zero Waste Plan will provide an overview of the background, development, and future directions of the University of Alberta's efforts to reduce the amount of waste generated and sent to landfills by our campuses and will ensure that the University of Alberta remains a leader in waste management efforts and sustainability among institutions of higher education.

Note: Due to the previous Zero Waste plan having been published in 2022, a 2026 review was conducted and the following sections were updated to reflect current state: Portfolios and departments, rankings, University of Alberta strategic plans, external strategic plans and initiatives, waste diversion figures, current program status, goals and strategies, references.

SCOPE

This Zero Waste Plan focuses on our four main campuses which include North Campus, South Campus, Campus Saint-Jean, and Augustana Campus. Enterprise Square and the Calgary Centre were excluded from the Zero Waste Plan because they are not under the main waste collection contract with the rest of the campuses and have different waste diversion programs in place.

The Zero Waste Plan will cover all buildings and areas operated by the portfolio of the Vice President, University Services, Operations + Finance and includes the following departments:

Utilities and Operations (UTOPS)

Campus Services

Infrastructure Planning, Development and Partnership (IPDP)

3.0 BACKGROUND

The University of Alberta is a globally recognized leader in post-secondary education and research, and a leader in sustainability. It was established in Edmonton in 1908 and has expanded over time to comprise four campuses in Edmonton (North, South, Campus

Saint-Jean, and Enterprise Square), one campus in Camrose (Augustana), and a centre in Calgary. The University of Alberta develops strategies to conserve resources, decrease the production of waste, minimize ecological footprints, decrease greenhouse gas emissions, and build a culture of sustainability at the institution and in the greater community of which it is a part. As a result of these guiding commitments, the University has demonstrated sustainability to be a core value and has made progress in recent years to advance towards the specific goals and targets set.

We demonstrate our achievement and commitment to continuous improvement by participating in several rating, ranking and certification programs related to sustainable operations and research:

- We are [**STARS Gold in 2025/2026**](#)
- We are ranked 8th in our inaugural submission to the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings for our work to advance the UN Sustainable Development Goals
- We have 34 [**buildings certified**](#) through the BOMA BEST program for green building operations and maintenance, and 17 buildings certified using LEED or Green Globes for green design and construction
- We participate annually in the [**APPA Facilities Performance Indicators program**](#) and [**APPA Key Facilities Metrics Survey**](#)
- We participate in the City of Edmonton [**Building Energy Benchmarking**](#) program

University Services, Operations + Finance is committed to taking a Zero Waste approach to reduce the amount of waste created and disposed of at this institution. By reducing our overall waste footprint, the University of Alberta:

- Reduces its greenhouse gas emissions
- Reduces the demand on virgin materials to produce new products
- Avoids contributing to other harmful environmental of waste on our air, water, and land
- Improves its social impact

3.1 Institutional Strategic Context

There are several important guiding documents that include sustainability and/or highlight the importance of taking a zero waste approach at the university.

Shape: The University Strategic Plan 2023-2033²	Our institutional strategic plan, Shape, establishes sustainability as a key core commitment: Sustainability: We strive to be a sustainable institution because we know the well-being of our people depends on our long-term viability. We lead through the prudent stewardship of resources and by stewarding our environment and the lands on which we reside. (University of Alberta, 2016, p.16)² Taking a Zero Waste approach is one of the ways we can express stewardship of our resources and guide the campus community's action to participate in this shared goal.
Integrated Asset Management Strategy (IAMS)	The Zero Waste program supports achieving social, economic, and environmental sustainability by 'reducing our ecological footprint' a principle from the University of Alberta Integrated Asset Management Strategy (IAMS, 2019-2035). IAMS is a guide to ensure all aspects of managing the physical assets of the university are considered and was approved by the U of A Board of Governors in May 2019 and refreshed in 2023
Built for Purpose	Zero Waste supports the University's vision as outlined in Built for Purpose (2025) of campus as a vibrant, sustainable, accessible, and collaborative space. By providing crucial services for the University community and safe, well-maintained, and inviting sustainable spaces we can remain resilient and responsible to changing campus and community needs, building a stronger foundation for success at the University of Alberta.
Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Plan 2025	Having surpassed our former target (17% GHG emissions reduction from 2005 levels, by 2020), we now look toward further improvements, and continuing our journey as a leader in climate change mitigation. The University surpassed its former target of a 17% reduction from 2005 baseline level GHG emissions, and is now poised to achieve a further 35% reduction in operational GHG emissions by 2050 compared to our new 2020 baseline. This target will be met by implementing both supply and demand reduction strategies, as well as asset optimization and innovative strategies.
* The Sustainability Plan and its targets were superseded by this Zero Waste Plan upon its initial introduction in 2022. They are provided here as relevant historical planning context.	

Sustainability Plan 2016-2020 *	Goal Divert 90% of waste from landfill and continue reducing waste per campus user. Strategies 1. Increase source-separation and collection of organics to 1500 tonnes per year by 2017. 2. Introduce “Zero Waste” collection of mixed paper, other recyclables, organics, and landfill waste across university facilities. 3. Elevate awareness of the university’s waste diversion goal and engage the campus community in ambition to become a “Zero Waste” campus. 4. Assess high-impact opportunities for reducing packaging waste for lab supplies and equipment. 5. Assess high-impact opportunities for reducing paper consumption and increasing the purchase of recycled-content paper. 6. Explore opportunities to reduce the chemical waste footprint of teaching and research activities. 7. Increase diversion of CDR waste. 8. Expand the Reusable Dish Program to include more food vendors across North Campus 9. Work with food vendors to eliminate polystyrene food service ware and replace it with recyclable or compostable alternatives. 10. Explore opportunities to reduce paper towel waste by installing hygienic, energy-efficient hand dryers.
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3.2 Jurisdictional Review

Jurisdiction or Organization	Key Documents and Initiatives
City of Edmonton	25 Year Waste Strategy • 25 year Waste Management Strategy approved by Council in 2019 • Longstanding 90% diversion target set across all sectors • Source-separated organics programs in all City-owned and operated buildings, facilities, and attractions as well as single-unit residential properties fully implemented Single Use Item Bylaw (2017) • Single use item bylaw passed by council in October 2022 (City of Edmonton, 2023) with the goal of reducing waste and encourage use of reusable alternatives Waste Roadmaps • Waste Reduction Roadmap ‘30 (2026) outlines strategies to reduce residential waste to meet their target of a 14% reduction in residential waste generation from a 2019 baseline by encouraging behavioral change, reducing barriers, and increasing awareness • Industrial, Commercial and Institutional Waste Roadmap to identify key waste reduction strategies in the ICI sector from 2027-2030 to be released in 2026

City of Calgary	City of Calgary Waste and Recycling Bylaw (20M2001) - As of 2017, all businesses and organizations in Calgary must have waste diversion programs, including separating food and yard waste from garbage and recycling materials to align with the residential program - This includes providing signage with all bins and education at least once a year to tenants
Recycling Council of Alberta	Implemented the RCA Vision 2030 strategic plan in 2024, which guides how the organization will advance the transition to a circular economy in the province
Government of Alberta	Too Good to Waste Strategy (2007) - Outlines a conservation-focussed waste strategy Extended Producer Responsibility - Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) introduced in April 2025, and is now overseen by the Alberta Recycling Management Authority (Government of Alberta, 2026).
Government of Canada	A Canada Wide Strategy for Sustainable Packaging (2009) - Initiated after the country's first shifts towards EPR, aims to reduce packaging waste and promote more sustainable packaging alternatives Canada-wide Strategy on Zero Plastic Waste (2018) - Outlines a shift to reducing plastic waste by focussing in a circular plastics economy, which prevents, collects, and recovers plastics - A key action in reaching Canada's aspirational Canada-wide waste reduction targets set by the Canadian Council of Ministers of the environment in 2018, which are to reduce the amount of waste per person from the 706 kg (2014 baseline) to the eventual 2040 target of 350 kg. Single Use Prohibition Regulations (2022) - Targets 6 key items to prohibit manufacture or import of
United Nations	Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2020-2030 Decade of Action 4 SDGs have direct Zero Waste linkages: - SDG 2 Zero Hunger - SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and Production - SDG 14 Life Below Water - SDG 15 Life on Land

Note: More detailed points from each jurisdiction are available in Appendix A.

3.3 Key Concepts in Zero Waste

3.3.1 Definition of 'Zero Waste'

The following definition of Zero Waste is widely used and accepted and has guided the development of the University of Alberta's ambitious 90% waste diversion goal.

“Zero Waste: The conservation of all resources by means of responsible production, consumption, reuse, and recovery of products, packaging, and materials without burning and with no discharges to land, water, or air that threaten the environment or human health.

Zero Waste is a goal that is ethical, economical, efficient and visionary, to guide people in changing their lifestyles and practices to emulate sustainable natural cycles, where all discarded materials are designed to become resources for others to use.

Zero Waste means designing and managing products and processes to systematically avoid and eliminate the volume and toxicity of waste and materials, conserve and recover all resources, and not burn or bury them.

Implementing Zero Waste will eliminate all discharges to land, water or air that are a threat to planetary, human, animal or plant health.”

Zero Waste International Alliance, 2018

3.3.2 Zero Waste Hierarchy

The concept of Zero Waste is linked to the Zero Waste Hierarchy which is defined as “a progression of policies and strategies to support the Zero Waste system, from highest and best to lowest use of materials”(Zero Waste Canada). It illustrates the activities we should prioritize when managing waste from most to least environmentally preferable while providing more depth to the internationally recognized 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle). Rethink/Redesign are included at the top of the hierarchy to encourage policy change before products are even produced, and to ensure product durability and longevity. After Rethink/Redesign come the more familiar steps to reduce waste or the consumption of materials where possible, reuse what we can, and then recycle it with the last resort being landfill or incineration.

Zero Waste Hierarchy of Highest and Best Use 7.0



An increasing number of organizations have established Zero Waste as an ambitious goal, with supporting targets and an emphasis on procurement and design change. Along with the well-documented environmental benefits, pursuing a Zero Waste goal is likely to have financial advantages, for example by reducing landfill charges and discouraging unnecessary purchasing.

For these reasons, universities and colleges have been at the forefront of the Zero Waste movement. Institutions such as University of British Columbia, University of California, Davis, and University of California, Berkeley have specific Zero Waste goals, and have integrated the Zero Waste concept into their waste management programs from the outset. Others, such as Ohio State University and Simon Fraser University, are using the Zero Waste brand combined with concrete targets to incentivize change within their organizations. The University of Alberta too incorporated Zero Waste into its waste management system redesign in 2015.

3.3.3 Circular Economy

Zero Waste is also an integral part of a Circular Economy. "A circular economy is a systemic approach to economic development designed to benefit businesses, society, and the environment. In contrast to the 'take-make-waste' linear model, a circular economy is

regenerative by design and aims to gradually decouple growth from the consumption of finite resources.”(Ellen Macarthur Foundation, 2019).

New policies in Canada are beginning to support the circular economy and in 2021, Canada hosted the World Circular Economy Forum (**WCEF2021**), in partnership with Finnish Innovation Fund, Sitra. The economic potential of recovering and re-selling valuable materials represent new business opportunities that can help grow the circular economy.

By integrating the concepts of Zero Waste and Circular Economy, the University of Alberta can inspire greater community involvement, partnerships, innovations and sharing of materials.

3.4 Current University of Alberta Zero Waste System Overview

3.4.1 A History of Program Adaptation

Recycling was first introduced at the University of Alberta almost fifty years ago and in 2025, the University of Alberta diverted just over 1,750 tonnes of recyclables and organics from landfill.

One important accomplishment of note for the University of Alberta was the recycling program redesign from 2013-2015, when the original six-stream recycling system (Paper/Cardboard, Plastics, Glass/Light Metals, Beverage Containers, Organics, Landfill) was condensed into a new four stream system (Mixed Paper, Recyclables, Organics, Landfill) and rebranded as Zero Waste stations. This was effectively the launch of the “Zero Waste” Program as it is now known.

In 2013, the University of Alberta contributed to a successful funding application with the City of Edmonton to construct a high solids anaerobic digestion facility (HSADF) at the Edmonton Waste Management Centre (EWMC). This facility became operational in spring 2021 and the University of Alberta had an agreement to divert our organics to the HSADF, which allowed the University to expand its capacity for rolling out organics collection across campus.

In addition to collecting these standard four material streams, the Zero Waste program also targets several specialized recycling streams that continue to be collected on campus such as:

- Electronics
- Scrap metal
- Fluorescent light tubes
- Dry cell batteries
- Ink and toner cartridges
- Writing instruments
- Construction, demolition and renovation waste

To oversee the progress of the waste management program, a Waste Diversion Working Group (WDWG) was developed in 2013. The WDWG brought together stakeholders in waste diversion programs across the University of Alberta to collaborate, to provide strategic guidance for the activities of these stakeholder groups, and to help develop a comprehensive waste diversion strategy for the University of Alberta.

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

WASTE MANAGEMENT

1970-1990

Paper recycling is introduced in the early 70's followed by refundable beverage container collection in the 90s.



2007

The University's recycling program is expanded to include plastics, metals, and glass.



2005

22%

diversion rate

2013-2015

The Zero Waste program is researched and piloted in SUB, HUB, and Lister.



2011

32%

diversion rate

2016

New waste hauling contract supports the growth of the Zero Waste program, with a dedicated organics compactor and improved data to track the volume of all waste streams.



2019

The Zero Waste Program is implemented in 50 buildings, 35% of spaces on all four campuses.



2019

45%

diversion rate

2026

The University continues rollout of the Zero Waste Program to more buildings on North Campus, with a new organics processor to scale up collection volume as organics diversion grows.



2026

48%

diversion rate

3.4.2 Measurement and Evaluation

There are two main ways the Zero Waste program is measured and evaluated at the U of A:

1. Waste collections weights and volumes
2. Waste audits

Waste Collection Weights and Volumes

Total waste collection weights are provided by our primary hauling contractor, collated, and tracked using the online platforms Figbytes and Google Data Studio. This tracking enables continuous monitoring of total generation rates and diversion rates over time. For certain specialty recycling streams such as light tubes and ballasts, industry standards are used to estimate weights using a number of units or volume collected. This data is used to supplement the waste weights received from our hauler.

Of note, prior to the beginning of the most recent waste hauling contract in 2016, the waste data provided by the hauler was not consistent or comprehensive. Recognizing the importance of data for tracking program performance over time, the RFP team worked to ensure that the current contract stipulates that each front load bin and compactor is weighed at each pick up and RFID tagged for tracking purposes.

Waste Audits for Planning and Evaluation

Waste audits are an integral part of the waste management planning and evaluation process at the U of A. The first comprehensive campus waste audit was done in 2005 by a consultant. The recommendations from that audit led to the collection of plastic, glass, light metals, and organics, and led to the construction of the Recycle Transfer Station (RTS) on North Campus near the R.E. Phillips building. As part of our ongoing certification for Green Globes and other Sustainability rating systems (STARS, Times Higher Education Impact Rankings) periodic waste audits are completed. These audits are based on best practices from others in the waste management field, and specifically tailored to post-secondary institutions and the University of Alberta. By participating in periodic audits, we can receive both recognition and valuable insights on the current state of our waste diversion efforts to guide the future and identify areas of improvement.

Campus as a Living Lab

Waste diversion has also been integrated into the classroom. A professor sitting on the Waste Audit Methodology committee taught a Municipal Solid Waste Management class (EnvE 432 & CivE 628) and as part of the class project for two years, the students participated in waste audits. In 2011, they did a separate audit of one building and provided recommendations for improvement to F&O staff. In 2012, they participated in an organics waste audit and proposed plans for a theoretical organic waste handling facility. They designed both an anaerobic digestion facility and a windrow composting facility and presented their plans to F&O staff, who also acted as judges at a presentation and awards night at the end of the semester. In 2018, the Solid Waste Research Group in the Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering conducted a feasibility study of an on-site small-scale anaerobic digestion facility capable of treating the amount of organics generated at the University of Alberta.

In 2026, students from SUST 202 An Introduction to Sustainable Development conducted a revamp to the University's Green Spaces program, which acts as a sustainability checklist for labs, offices, residence, events, and food vendors. One of the criteria for success in these programs is participation in the University's Zero Waste system.

3.4.3 Current Program Status

In 2025, the University of Alberta's contract to process organic waste with the City of Edmonton's High Solids Anaerobic Digestion Facility concluded. With a continued desire to continue supporting local composting initiatives, a new contract began for organics disposal with Claystone Waste Ltd. in 2026.

The University of Alberta is continually working towards optimized collection of its waste stream and we continue to drive towards minimal waste entering the landfill. As of 2026, the University of Alberta had reached a diversion rate of 48%, over halfway to our ambitious 90% diversion goal. This has been achieved by continual rollout of the Zero Waste Program across University spaces. The program has been implemented in 50 of the university's buildings.

Due to unforeseen circumstances beyond the university's control, this diversion rate has suffered slightly in recent years but is on an upward trajectory in the years that have followed the COVID-19 pandemic.

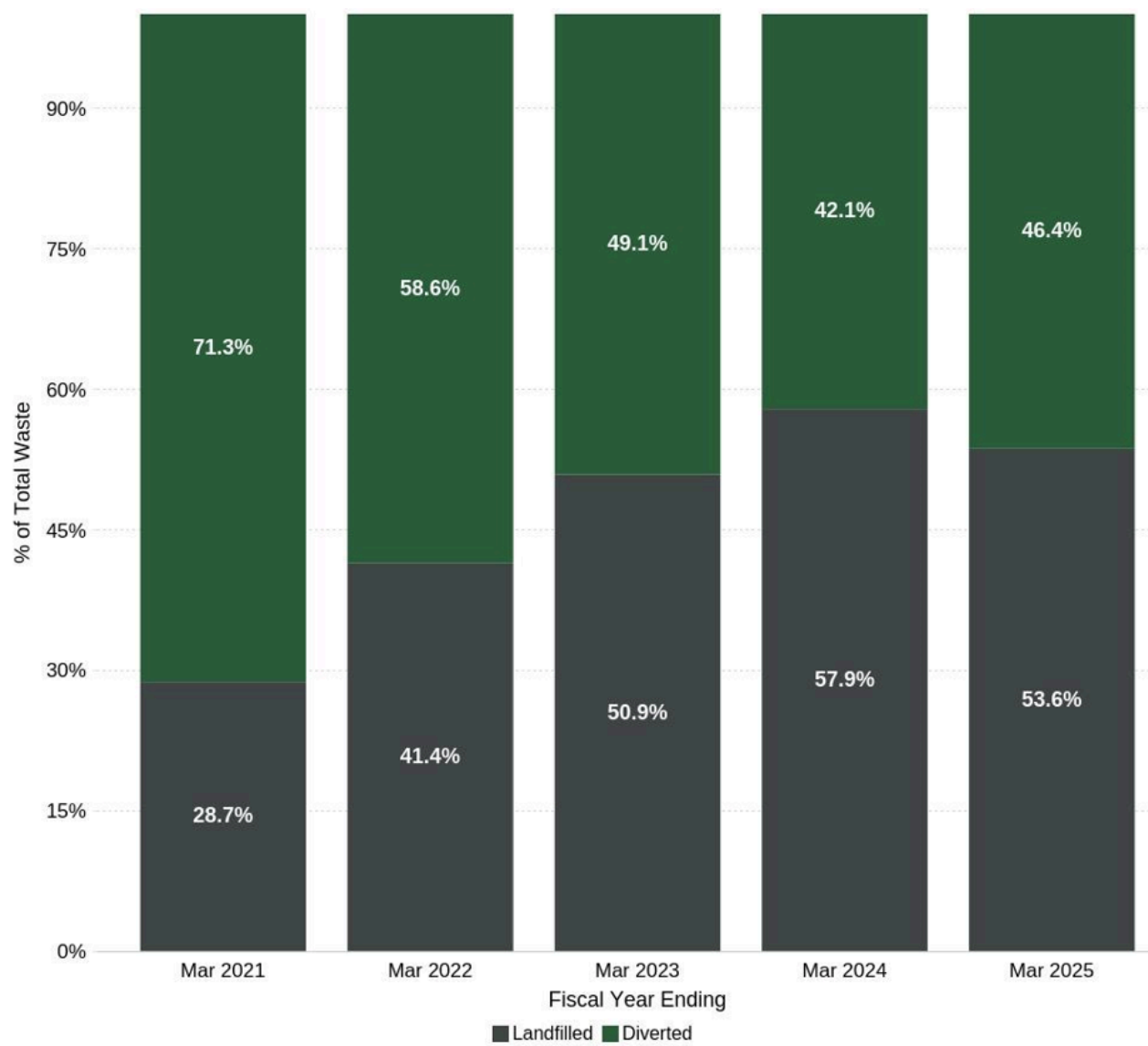


Figure 1. Waste diversion rate over time

Note 1: March 2021 represents the year most impacted by COVID-19.

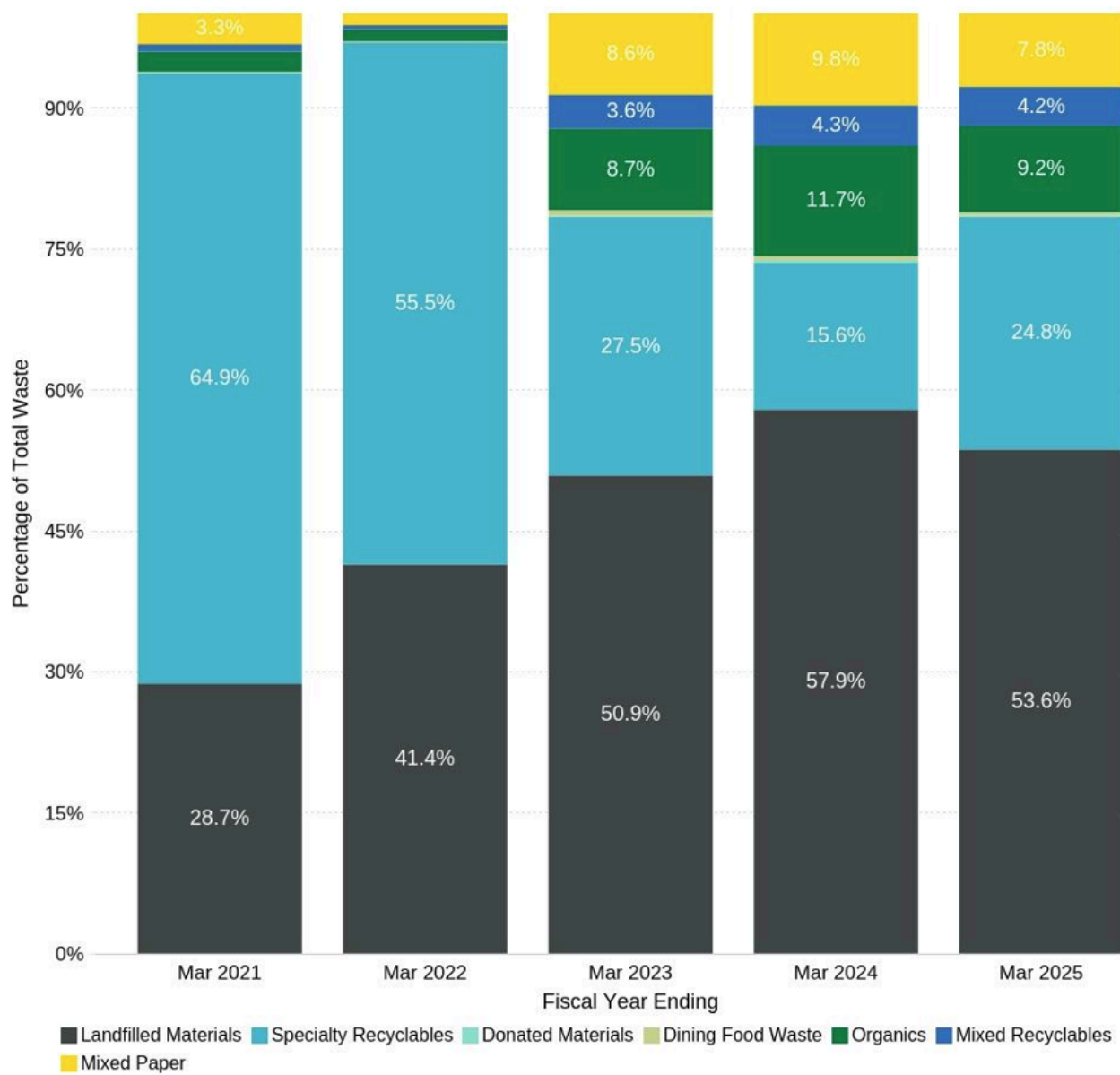


Figure 2. Proportion of each major material stream captured for diversion or sent to landfill as a percentage of the total amount of waste generated

Note 1: March 2021 represents the year most impacted by COVID-19

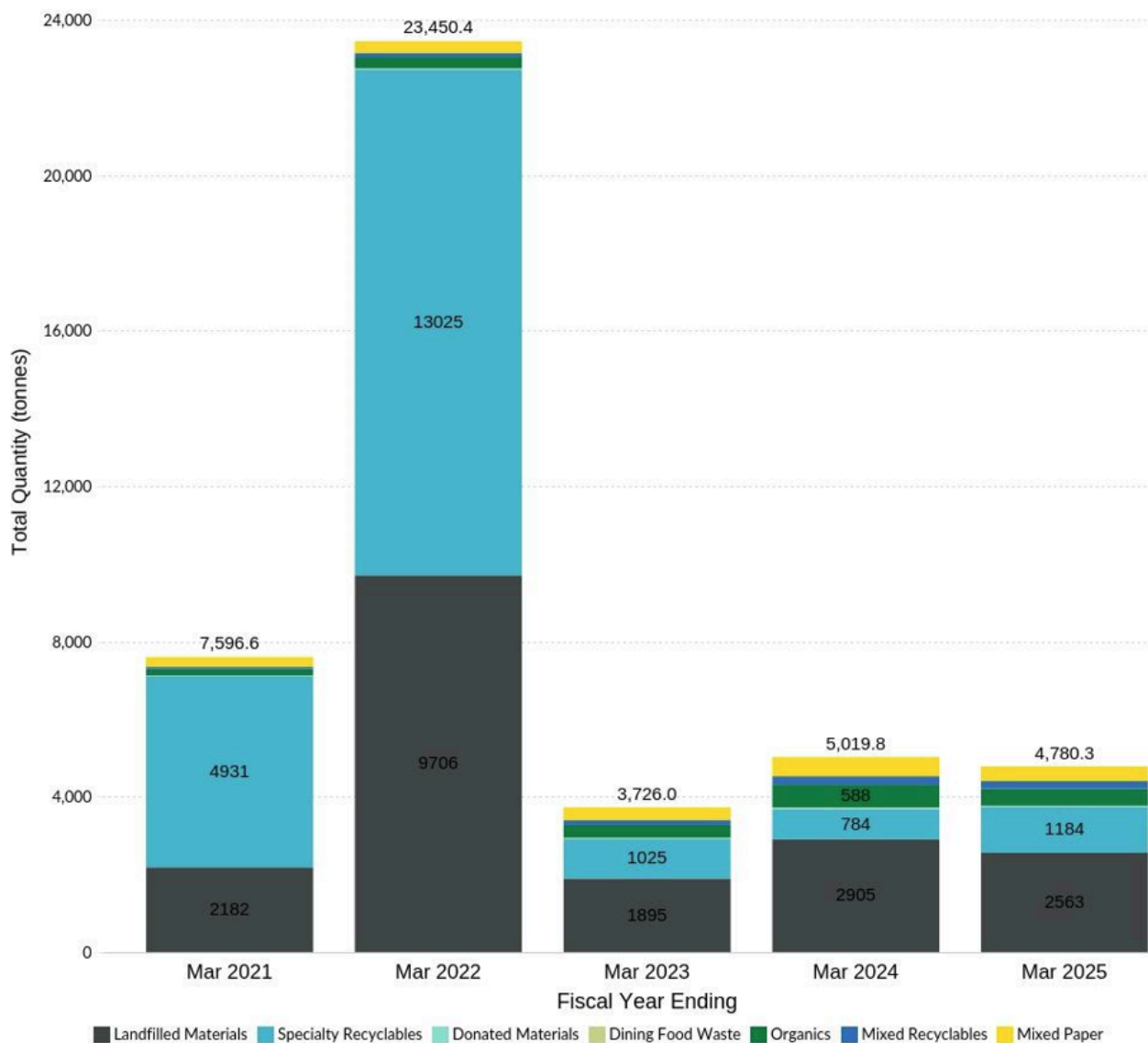


Figure 3. Weight of each major material stream captured for diversion or sent to landfill

Note 1: March 2021 represents the year most impacted by COVID-19

Note 2: March 2022 represents the year with a high number of Construction & Demolition projects

3.4.4 Where do we go from here?

The University of Alberta's strategic plan, Shape: A Plan for Impact 2023-2033, supports the university in leveraging our new structure and aligning resources to continue evolving and working towards shared goals, including sustainability, innovation, growth, and exceptional education. There continues to be opportunities for more sustainable approaches and innovations as we move forward.

Our Zero Waste program sets us ahead of the ICI sector, but we have work to do to reduce our overall waste generation rates and achieve a fully integrated waste diversion and organics collection program.

The goals and strategies outlined here address gaps in the existing Zero Waste program, focus on reducing waste and improving waste handling processes, outline how we will document our progress going forward, and help the University of Alberta to continue being a resilient leader by staying ahead of the curve on the road to Zero Waste.

4.0 ZERO WASTE PLAN FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

The Zero Waste Plan intends to achieve the following goals and strategies in the short, medium and long term. The Plan identifies the timeframe as follows: short-term (0-2 years); medium-term (2-5 years); and long-term (5+ years).

4.1 Goals and Strategies

Overarching Goals		
Goal	KPI	Timeline
Elevate awareness of the university's waste diversion goal and engage the campus community in the ambition to become a Zero Waste campus.	# of engagement events, surveys, and connections	Medium-term
2. Increase capture rate of organics to at least 50%	Capture rate	Medium-term
3. Increase diversion rate to 90%	Diversion rate	Long-term
4. Reduce total waste generated per year to 1950 tonnes (50% reduction from 2005 baseline).	Total waste	Medium-term
5. Reduce total waste generated per year to 46 kg per weighted campus user.	Total waste per weighted campus user	Long-term

6.	Increase diversion of construction, demolition, and renovation waste to 90%.	Diversion Rate	Medium-term
7.	Obtain Green Globes certification for all campus buildings	# of buildings certified	Long-term

Strategies			
Strategy	KPI	Timeline	Responsible Group
1. Complete the implementation of the Zero Waste waste collection system.			
a. Re-establish Waste Diversion Working Group as the umbrella governance body with roles and responsibilities defined for each member, that is responsible to provide directions for smaller subgroups/steering committees/or implementation teams that can be created for specific projects/specific buildings/faculties to solidify program buy-in.	Number of working groups/committees and representation	Short-term	Facility Services E&CA
b. Develop comprehensive evaluation plans with clear performance metrics to improve the Zero Waste program.	Diversion, capture, and generation rate	Short-term	Facility Services E&CA
c. Explore feasibility of pursuing Zero Waste certification	Assessment completed (Y/N)	Short-term	Facility Services
d. Introduce 'Zero Waste' collection of mixed paper, other recyclables, organics and landfill waste across university facilities.	% of buildings implemented	Medium-term	Facility Services

e. Expand 'Zero Waste' collection of mixed paper, other recyclables, organics and landfill waste across all university residences.	Every residence has an integrated collection program (Y/N)	Medium-term	Facility Services CS E&CA
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2. Optimize the Zero Waste collection system

a. Optimize outdoor bins to collect mixed paper, other recyclables, organics and landfill waste across university facilities.	Grounds (outdoor) bins optimized (Y/N)	Medium-term	Facility Services
b. Assess feasibility of sorting waste on site before hauling off site, and implement if feasible	Assessment complete (Y/N) Implementation complete (Y/N)	Medium-term	Facility Services
c. Complete a representative sample-style waste audit of each campus every 3 years	Audit complete min. every 3 years (Y/N)	Short-term	Facility Services E&CA
d. Conduct a waste audit on all athletics facilities	Waste audit conducted (Y/N)	Medium-term	Facility Services SRS E&CA
e. Develop a 'green athletics' program summary	Program outline complete (Y/N)	Medium-term	Facility Services SRS E&CA
f. Assess ways to optimize the loading dock and compactor setup at SUB.	Assessment done (Y/N)	Medium-term	Facility Services
g. Identify opportunities for alternative fuels (including biomass) in utilities renewals and expansions.	Assessment done (Y/N)	Long-term	UTOPS
h. Develop a process map for custodial staff to identify gaps and areas of improvement and to optimize tasks to achieve	Reduced time spent on each task	Short-term	Facility Services E&CA

efficiency

i.	Once outdoor bin placements are optimized, geo-map the collection routes of landscape/grounds staff when picking up from outdoor bins and optimize this	TBD	Long-term	Facility Services E&CA
j.	Geo-map the routes that Bee-Clean uses for rolling cart collection and optimization where possible.	TBD	Long-term	Facility Services E&CA
k.	Using the ECHA process map as a starting point, develop more detailed process maps (with times and # of people for each task) -- will need to select a software program that is capable of this to enable optimized process	TBD	Stretch goal	Facility Services E&CA

3. Expand the collection of specialized recycling programs to increase waste diversion.

a.	Update the CDR waste F&O contractor/consultant documents to reflect a minimum 75% diversion from the current 50% requirement, since 75% is regularly met and exceeded.	Document updated to reflect new 75% goal (Y/N) Diversion rate over time increases	Short-term	Facility Services Project/Planning group
b.	Increase compliance of CDR waste reporting to the Zero Waste Coordinator for both internal and major externally bid projects.	Compliance rate (# of projects tracked)	Medium-term	Facility Service Project/Planning group
c.	Review data for all specialty streams and work with haulers to identify and correct any gaps.	Good data for all waste streams (Y/N)	Short-term	E&CA Facility Services
d.	Review recycling programs for specialty items and expand where applicable	# and types of specialty streams with active recycling program	Medium-term	Facility Services

e.	Investigate options for Alberta electronics recyclers with e-Stewards and/or Responsible Recycling (R2) certification.	e-waste recycler is certified (Y/N)	Short-term	Facility Services E&CA
f.	Review e-waste processes in light of institutional reorganization and identify gaps. Explore feasibility of using an R2 certified recycler as part of this.	Review completed (Y/N)	Medium-term	FPP, IST
g.	Expand the Reusable Dish Program to include more vendors across all campuses.	# of locations with RDP	Medium-term	SU CSJ Student Group(s)
h.	Develop a formal reuse system for the university to make surplus goods visible and accessible to the campus community; track uptake/reuse of surplus goods.	Program established (Y/N) Amount of material recovered/reused (kg/#)	Stretch goal	Facility Services Procurement (FPP)
i.	Implement an expanded polystyrene (EPS; Styrofoam) recycling program for lab EPS.	Quantity recycled annually	Short-term	Facility Services
j.	Investigate battery recycling options that address current issues of bulk battery storage and transport.	Weight of batteries recycled	Short-term	Facility Services

4. Track and communicate progress clearly and consistently

a.	Anytime Dining Waste Tracking and Feedback Loop (including: LeanPath data tracking, Visualization of LeanPath data on screens in Lister Market, and Potential expansion of this visualization to other locations if successful)	Number of screens tracking data on locations	Medium-term	CS (Dining Services)
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b.	Report annual food waste weights from main dining halls using LeanPath data	Weight of food waste from main dining halls	Short-term	CS E&CA
c.	Conduct visuals audits periodically for food vendors with clear evaluation and reporting method to encourage ongoing best zero waste practices	Lower contamination rate or higher capture rate	Medium-term	Facility Services
d.	Develop incentives and check-ins for vendors to continue encouraging best zero waste practices and peer-to-peer learning	Action items implemented	Medium-term	Facility Services E&CA
5. Expand waste reduction initiatives in targeted areas.				
a.	Explore the potential for supporting bulk purchasing for food service compostable ware for food vendors.	Assessment complete (Y/N)	Medium-term	CS FPP (SMS)
b.	Implement single-napkin dispensers in all food service areas.	Single-napkin dispensers are mandated (Y/N)	Medium-term	CS SU
c.	Create and implement a cohesive set of communications materials in all food service areas (e.g. stickers for food vendors, stamps for compostable containers).	Comms materials present in all food service areas (Y/N)	Medium-term	Facility Services E&CA Comms
d.	Provide all condiments in bulk in major dining halls and cafeterias to reduce the use of individually-wrapped packages.	All condiments bulk (Y/N)	Medium-term	CS E&C A SU
e.	Charge clients at coffee shops for not using a reusable mug	Fee implemented	Medium-Term	CS E&CA

	instead of just providing a discount to those that do.	(Y/N) Can uptake be tracked (Y/N)		SU
f.	Assess high-impact opportunities for reducing packaging waste for lab supplies and equipment.	Assessment complete (Y/N)	Medium-term	E&CA Procurement (FPP)
g.	Assess opportunities to reduce the chemical waste footprint of teaching and research activities.	Assessment complete (Y/N)	Medium-term	Facility Services E&CA
h.	Assess high-impact opportunities for reducing paper consumption and increasing the purchase of recycled-content paper.	Assessment complete (Y/N)	Medium-term	Procurement (FPP)
i.	Replace all paper towel dispensers with high efficiency hand dryers	\$ spent on paper towels	Medium-term	E&CA Procurement (FPP)
j.	Reduce desktop printing and move to fewer and larger multi-function devices.	# of each type of device in IST inventory	Long-term	IST
k.	Align all campus food services with the federal single use plastics ban.	Single use plastics eliminated from food services (Y/N)	Short-term	Facility Services CS SU
l.	Meet or exceed the federal single use plastic ban for all university operations	Single-use ban Reduction in plastic waste	Medium-term	Facility Services
6. Encourage the campus community to participate in Zero Waste with strong communications, outreach and engagement activities.				
a.	Develop a comprehensive communications and marketing plan to accompany Green Spaces with Green Procurement	Plan development with measurable goals Modified Green Spaces checklist	Medium-term	Facility Services E&CA Comms CS

	practices/policies incorporated for all commercial retails/tenants on campus and outsourced supplies			
b.	Mitigate waste at the university's major events and communicate these measures to participants	Measure and report waste diverted from landfill	Short-term	Facility Services CS
c.	Develop and implement comprehensive education and outreach tools (e.g. community-based social marketing) for the staff, students, residences, and the general UofA community.	Number of effective tools for different audiences (cleaning staff, students, residences)	Short-term	Facility Services E&CA Comms
d.	Share green procurement guidelines with all retailers (food vendors and others) operating in university facilities	Guidelines shared with retailers (Y/N)	Short-term	CS FPP E&C A
e.	Determine (conduct survey?) how many retailers have implemented items in the green procurement guidelines	# of retailers using the guidelines	Medium-term	CS FPP E&C A
f.	Refresh the Green Labs program framework, including waste, water and energy initiatives.	Program outline complete (Y/N)	Short-term	E&CA Facility Services

7. Strengthen contract language to support Zero Waste.

a.	Develop set parameters for acceptable contamination levels and its reduction methods in custodial and haulers contracts and provide necessary training to obtain goals	Lower levels of contamination	Short-term	Facility Services
b.	Review and update speciality materials stream contracts to ensure consistent data	Data provided on time (Y/N)	Short-term	Facility Services Procurement (FPP)

reporting.

c.	Contract Incentives and Training – Residents. Update lease terms to require proper removal of materials (e.g. landfill, recyclable, and organic materials) at regular intervals to avoid pest issues.	lease terms updated? # of pest issues reported?	Medium-term	CS (Residence Services)
d.	Explore product "take-back" or "recycling" stewardship programs into new and existing contracts (at renewal date) and develop an education and outreach program to expand awareness about these programs	Successful implementation of these programs into contracts	Medium-term	Facility Services
e.	Standardize a specification clause in tenant leases outlining the expectations for tenants to fully participate in any and all building waste diversion efforts, including requirements for acceptable single use containers and alignment with the federal single use plastics ban.	All contracts updated (Y/N)	Short-term	Facility Services CS SU

4.2 Risks

- The university remains dependent on external facilities to support processing for source-separated organics. These facilities vary in terms of available screening equipment, acceptable items, and contamination thresholds which may influence the volume of organic waste the University is able to capture.
- Funding availability for Zero Waste station infrastructure expansion.
- Resource availability (staff and other funding) for outreach and training.
- Buy-in from various groups who have responsibility for strategies identified in this plan.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The University of Alberta's Zero Waste Plan sets out a vision, goals, and strategies for its four campuses to move toward achieving a target 90% waste diversion from landfill. In order to meet this ambitious goal, this Plan outlines strategies for departments to come together to implement actions in their respective areas. These individual actions, when combined, will help move the entire University on the path to become virtually zero waste.

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Appendix A - Jurisdictional Review

Jurisdiction or Organization	Key Documents/Initiatives	Key Points
City of Edmonton	September 10, 2019 25 year Waste Management Strategy approved by Council December 2023 Single-Use Item Reduction Bylaw introduced February 2026 Waste Reduction Roadmap '30 plan released to strategize actions from 2026-2030	• Longstanding goal of 90% waste diversion from landfill • Adopt a Zero Waste Framework • Expand source separated organics citywide, including City-owned and operated buildings, facilities, and attractions as well as to residential sector • Enforce volume limits on residual garbage • Cease commercial collections • Shift programming to support and inspire community-based waste reduction initiatives • Participate in efforts to promote Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) policies • Develop and implement a roadmap for non-residential (ICI sector) waste management • Enact a bylaw to restrict single-use items and encourage reusable alternatives
Edmonton Region	Municipalities with existing organics diversion programs	Sherwood Park, St. Albert, Spruce Grove, Stony Plain, Leduc and Beaumont
City of Calgary	2015 New target approved November 2, 2017 Bylaw enacted	• A revised target of 70% waste diversion by 2025 approved by council • A bylaw banning food and yard waste from City landfills enacted
Recycling Council of Alberta	Several recent policy recommendations related to waste management in Alberta.	Key Principles for Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) framework: • Drive a circular economy • Be outcomes-based • Have performance standards that are ambitious, measurable and enforceable • Ensure a level playing field • Be implemented alongside complementary regulations

		Zero Plastic Waste 2018 letter calling for the concept of the circular economy to be applied to plastics in Alberta.
Government of Alberta	Too Good to Waste Strategy approved in 2007 Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Regulation 2025	• Reduce landfill waste to 500 kg per capita by 2010 (adjusted in 2008 as the target was not considered attainable) from residential, ICI and CDR sectors • Development of economic instruments to discourage waste generation and disposal • Development of disposal bans where necessary to facilitate waste reduction initiatives • EPR Legislation introduced in 2025, applying to thousands of residential products • All communities anticipated to have transitioned to EPR framework in October 2026 • Two main systems ○ Single use products, packaging, and printed paper products ○ Hazardous and special products (flammable/corrosive/toxic consumer products, batteries, pesticides)

Government of Canada	October 2009 A Canada-wide Strategy for Sustainable Packaging (2009) 2018 Canada-wide Strategy on Zero Plastic Waste 2022 Single-use Prohibitions Regulations	• Gradually policy has shifted to emphasize waste prevention and diversion for major waste streams such as organics and packaging • Extended Producer Responsibility legislation to make producers responsible for end-of-life management of products and packaging, incentivizing packaging to be designed with its full life cycle in mind • In 2021, Canada hosted the World Circular Economy Forum (WCEF2021), in partnership with Finnish Innovation Fund, Sitra. • New policies in Canada are beginning to recognize and support a vision for a circular economy. Circular economy keeps products and materials circulating within the economy at their highest value for as long as possible, through re-use, recycling, remanufacturing, and delivering products as services. • Single-use plastics ban introduced in 2022 to ban plastic grocery bags, stir sticks, plastic cutlery, straws, six-pack rings, and food containers made from hard-to-recycle single use plastics
UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	2020-2030 Decade of Action to achieve the 17 SDGs	SDG 2 Zero Hunger calls on us to waste less food. SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and Production is about doing more and better with less, decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation, increasing resource efficiency, promoting sustainable lifestyles, and transitioning towards low-carbon and green economies. SDG 14 Life Below Water and SDG 15 Life on Land call for the prevention of marine and other ecosystem pollution by single use plastics and other common pollutants. SDG 17 Partnerships for the Goals is all about interdisciplinary and community collaboration to maximize our positive impact.