

# Strategic Plan 2021-2025: Executive Summary

## Background

Ontario County Department of Sustainability and Solid Waste Management implements the County's Local Solid Waste Management Plan by working with municipalities, businesses, and organizations to ensure the sustainability of the local environment. The Department is focused on increasing sustainable practices and waste diversion among people who live or work in the community. The current Local Solid Waste Management Plan renews in 2023. The current landfill contract runs to 2028, and the future of the landfill has not yet been decided.

Ontario County Department of Sustainability and Solid Waste Management engaged Causewave Community Partners on a 5-year Strategic Planning Process in early 2020.

## Process & Timeline\*

### Startup (February 2020)

In this phase, a current state analysis was conducted, as well as identification of process participants and a timeline for the work. A small workgroup was established to lead the work that included County, Department and Town representatives and community members from across Ontario County.

### Community Survey (March-July 2020)

Community input was essential to the development of the County's plan for waste management and diversion. Causewave developed a county-wide survey to help learn more about resident attitudes and current behaviors regarding recycling and waste management, as compared to baseline results captured in a similar survey issued in 2017. Results were used to inform subsequent steps in the planning process to be sure the final plan reflected input from across the community. The survey was distributed via the following channels: Ontario County employees, Ontario County's library system, Facebook advertising to Ontario County residents, individual Town distribution, Ontario County website & via other community partners.

### 25-year Vision for the Department of Sustainability and Solid Waste Management (September-October 2020)

While Ontario County has mission and vision statements that serve as an umbrella for all County departments, it was important to be able to articulate a specific vision related to sustainability and solid waste management that could be used as a compass to guide this planning process and future planning. A larger group of County and community stakeholders were assembled to participate in this step of the process in order to have broad input from multiple perspectives.

### Strategies, Tactics & Targets aligned with Key Focus Areas (October-December 2020)

In this phase, strategic planning workgroup members used input from the Community Survey and a SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats) to identify 4 Key Focus Areas that were used to guide strategy and tactic development. Each strategy was assigned timing and targets for the next 5 years.

### Implementation Planning (December 2020-January 2021)

An implementation plan was developed to capture each of the Key Focus Areas along with tactics, targets, timing and responsibility. This spreadsheet will be used as the tracking document going forward to ensure action and accountability by all responsible parties.

\*The original completion date for this planning process was slated for September 2020, but was delayed due to the impacts of COVID-19.

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## Community Survey Background & Highlights

Causewave developed a county-wide survey to learn more about resident attitudes and current behaviors regarding recycling and waste management, as compared to baseline results captured in a similar survey issued in 2017. The survey was conducted from February-May 2020, and all results were captured online due to COVID-19 and “Stay at Home” protocols. There were 1,319 respondents to the survey, as compared to 867 in 2017. The survey included Ontario County residents, aged 18 or older and was distributed via the following channels: Ontario County employees, Ontario County’s library system, Facebook advertising to Ontario County residents, individual Town distribution, Ontario County website & via other community partners.

If you participated in the survey, thank you for taking the time to share your input and ideas. Generally, we heard that concerns remain high about waste management issues which is consistent with 2017 responses. Here are some key findings from the survey.

### **Current Waste Management/Recycling Attitudes & Behaviors**

64% of respondents say that increasing the amount of items they recycle at home is a critical issue.

83% of respondents say that plastic bags can’t be recycled in the household bin, up from 64% in 2017.

### **Barriers and Enablers to Recycling**

Residents say that they would do more if they knew more about where to take non-standard items, if there were more recycling events in their town, and if they had a better sense of what was recyclable.

93% of respondents say that would be willing to drive to a permanent facility located in Ontario County where they could drop-off Electronic Waste, Household Hazardous Waste, Confidential Paper Shredding or Residential Tires more than twice a year.

Half of respondents say they’ve participated in one of the county funded/hosted collection events, and of that group, nearly everyone said the event was valuable to them.

### **Communications and Marketing**

The Ontario County website is a more popular resource to learn about issues affecting Ontario County than in 2017.

Nearly 65% of respondents would go to Ontario County’s website to look for information on recycling, up from 50% of respondents in 2017.

Nearly 50% rated Ontario County as “Excellent” or “Good” in terms of how well they communicate what can and cannot be recycled, up from 27% in 2017.

### **Opinions on Future Planning**

The majority of respondents believe the County should explore only accepting Ontario County generated waste as the top way to prepare for ongoing and future disposal needs.

Ideas for improving recycling and waste diversion in Ontario County include making guidelines simple, increasing communications with residents, and limiting the amount of waste accepted from outside the area. Reducing the odor the landfill produces was also noted.

# Strategic Plan 2021–2025: Executive Summary

## 2045 Vision

Ontario County will be a leader in creating a community where managing resources responsibly is second nature. We will cultivate a reputation for being on the forefront of cutting-edge solutions that reduce waste effectively, create synergies in product creation and waste reuse opportunities, and motivate residents and businesses to adopt responsible behaviors that benefit the individual, community, economy and environment.

## Key Focus Areas for 2021-2025

### 1. Equal & Adequate Access

Focuses on ensuring residents and municipalities have equitable opportunities and facilities for solid waste management.

### 2. Funding to Advance Department Goals

Focuses on advocating for and securing funding opportunities from various sources to move the Department and this plan forward.

### 3. Legislation and Policies Aligned with County's Plans for Solid Waste Management

Focuses on laws and policies that support current and future solid waste management priorities.

### 4. Customized Education & Communications

Focuses on improving and expanding audience-specific communications about solid waste management practices and updates.

## Commitment to Action

Ontario County Department of Sustainability and Solid Waste Management will hold itself accountable to this plan through the following actions:

- Hiring an outside consulting firm to reconcile Solid Waste Management Plan goals and timeline.
- Regularly educating the Board Of Supervisors of the plans and project needs to ensure support for new initiatives, including communicating with BOS regularly as needed and at every meeting for PEQ and hosting an annual retreat or workshop for BOS on next year's plan priorities.
- Ensuring Solid Waste Management Plan updates are consistent with strategic plan priorities and current legislation through an annual review/ adjustment of plan priorities, biannual reports to DEC and reviewing the plan as needed to reflect legislation changes.

## About Causewave Community Partners

Since 1950, Causewave Community Partners, formerly The Advertising Council of Rochester, has worked to improve the Greater Rochester region through programs designed to help causes and coalitions grow their impact on a variety of issues. Causewave focuses its capacity building support exclusively on the nonprofit sector and works with nearly 200 organizations per year. Causewave's work with nonprofits is generally consultative in nature, with customized processes and approaches applied to the unique needs of each organization. As a capacity builder, we seek to teach as we do, to allow nonprofits to build sustainable capacity through each encounter with us.

Causewave has developed a broad suite of capacity building services that gives us an unmatched set of experiences that apply to the diverse topics that often arise with nonprofit organizations and community coalitions, including:

- Marketing, brand and communications
- Strategic planning
- Mission, vision and core values development
- Organizational culture development
- Board and staff development
- Organizational collaboration
- Fundraising planning
- Event development and implementation
- Social marketing / behavior change, including theory of change and intended impact work
- Funding / business model development

## Strategic Plan 2021–2025

### VISION

Ontario County will be a leader in creating a community where managing resources responsibly is second nature. We will cultivate a reputation for being on the forefront of cutting-edge solutions that reduce waste effectively, create synergies in product creation and waste reuse opportunities, and motivate residents and businesses to adopt responsible behaviors that benefit the individual, community, economy and environment.

### MISSION

The Department of Sustainability & Solid Waste Management will focus on the County's efforts to increase sustainable practices and waste diversion by employees and residents. The department implements the County's Local Solid Waste Management Plan, by working with municipalities, businesses and organizations to ensure the sustainability of our local environment. The department also provides administrative oversight of the County's Landfill Operations.



### Equal & Adequate Access

1. Implement findings from Department's Program Assessment and Consolidation Study.
2. Provide equal distribution of cost to residents for waste disposal through establishment of user fee-based programs.
3. Work with curbside collectors to establish adequate access.



### Funding to Advance Department Goals

4. Advocate for funding opportunities at various regulatory levels.
5. Demonstrate value of Dept services to BOS to foster support of necessary expenditures.
6. Partner with Office of Economic Development to leverage funding and attract businesses that specialize in recycling and reuse of items and materials to support the goals of the Dept.



### Legislation and Policies Aligned with County's Plans for Solid Waste Management

7. Invest in staying informed on and advocate for legislation and policies using staff, County and elected official connections.
8. Maintain oversight of compliance with OMLA and regulations.
9. Revise and pass a local law that supports priority OC initiatives and programs.
10. Develop and execute plans for future of landfill site post 2028.
11. Ensure SWMP updates are consistent with strategic plan priorities and current legislation.



### Customized Education & Communications

12. Improve and expand audience-specific communications.
13. Develop standardized branding and educational materials across all municipalities in the County to help educate residents of the cost of waste disposal/recycling and offer alternative and new programs to modify habits, eliminating confusion that deters participation.
14. Regularly educate BOS of the plans and project needs to ensure support for new initiatives.
15. Hire a full-time educator responsible for development and presentation of educational materials.
16. Use other municipality's growing social awareness to educate, influence and inspire other municipalities to build up their efforts and facilities.
17. Develop standard reporting procedures of local diversion efforts providing consistent, adequate and measurable results for calculating the County's diversion rate consistent with the adopted SWM plan.
18. Develop sector specific objectives for reuse, recycling and waste reduction opportunities through partnering with Office of Economic Development.
19. Revamp the structure of the landfill oversight committee to be a 'county sustainability working group.'

**Please contact**  
**Recycle@OntarioCountyNY.gov**  
**with any questions.**

# Strategic Plan 2021–2025: Common Questions

## Equal & Adequate Access

### **1. What does user fee-based programs mean, and what will the fees look like if implemented?**

User fee-based programs are those in which the people who utilize the program pay for the cost of administering the program. For example, if a tire collection program was established, only those residents dropping off tires would pay for the event. At this point in time it is uncertain what those fees could look like, but it something that would be explored within this Strategic Plan.

### **2. What are the options for curbside collection?**

Depending on where you live in the County, there are several options for curbside collection waste and recycling services. Please consult [ontariocountyrecycles.org](http://ontariocountyrecycles.org) for more information on services near you.

## Funding to Advance Department Goals

### **3. What is the BOS and what do they do?**

The Ontario County Board of Supervisors (BOS) is the legislative body for the County of Ontario with one Supervisor representing each of the 16 towns, two Supervisors representing the City of Canandaigua, and three Supervisors representing the City of Geneva. Each Supervisor is allocated a certain number of weighted votes which is determined by the population of the Town, Ward, or District he/she represents.

The members of the Board, at the Organizational Meeting, elect a Chairman to preside at meetings. The Chairman, in turn, selects a Vice-Chair to act in their stead, when necessary, and also appoints the members of

the Board's six standing committees. Each standing committee oversees various departments and agencies and presents resolutions for approval by the full Board on behalf of those departments under its supervisor.

## Legislation and Policies Aligned with County's Plans for Solid Waste Management

### **4. What does OMLA mean?**

OMLA references the Operations, Management and Lease Agreement (OMLA) that was signed between the County and Casella in 2003. The 25-year agreement details the terms by which Casella leases and manages the County's landfill.

### **5. Does the County have a law that requires recycling?**

The County does have several laws that reference various waste and recycling requirements. The laws as written are outdated and difficult to enforce. The Strategic Plan aims to update the law under which residents and businesses would be required to recycle.

### **6. Where will Ontario County's waste be transported after the closure of the County's landfill?**

The Strategic Plan seeks to help understand the answer to this question. The continuation of the County's waste reduction efforts will help to ensure that our residents are only throwing away material that cannot be recovered or reused in any other way. Whether waste generated within the county after 2028 is transported out of county for disposal will be discussed as part of the Strategic Plan's implementation.

## Customized Education & Communications

### **7. How will OC communicate with residents regarding any new initiatives, reports, or other educational opportunities?**

The County will continue to utilize both web-based and print-based platforms to communicate programs, events and initiatives. Various resources for information include:

[www.ontariocountyrecycles.org](http://www.ontariocountyrecycles.org)

twitter: @OntarioCountyNY

Instagram: @ontario.county.ny

Facebook: Ontario County, NY

### **8. Who will pay for the educator referenced in the documents?**

The referenced educator would be a county employee. The County would seek to obtain New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) grant funding to pay for 50% of the positions salary and benefits.

### **9. What are the sectors referenced in the Plan?**

The sectors referenced throughout the documents include; residents, municipalities, commercial and industrial businesses and institutions. The vast differences in the needs of these sectors require a tailored approach to waste reduction, recycling and education.

**Have a question that's  
not listed here? Email  
[Recycle@OntarioCountyNY.gov](mailto:Recycle@OntarioCountyNY.gov)**