(d)2. Climate Smart San José Zero Waste Element

Valerie Osmond, Deputy Director, Environmental Services
Megha Prakash, Sr. Environmental Program Manager, Environmental Services

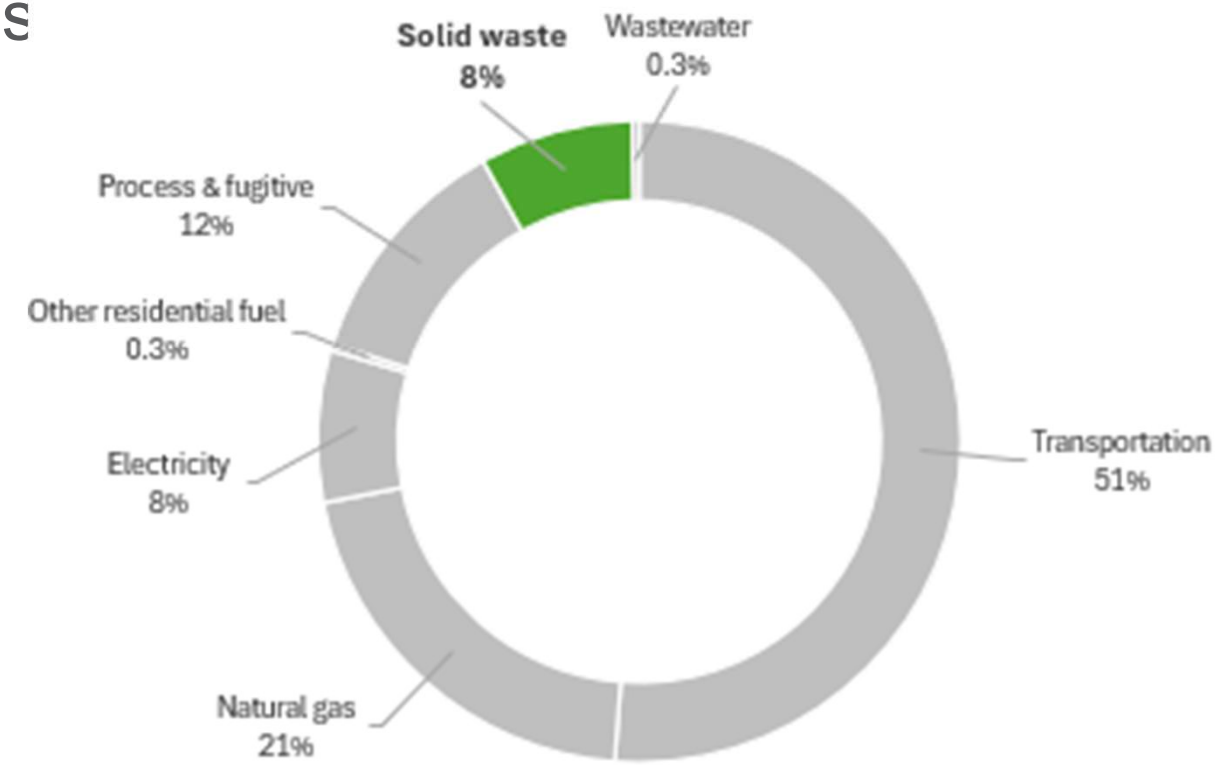
Transportation and Environment Committee
October 6, 2025

CITY OF SAN JOSE
CAPITAL OF SILICON VALLEY
Environmental Services

Delivering world-class utility services and programs to improve our health, environment, and economy.

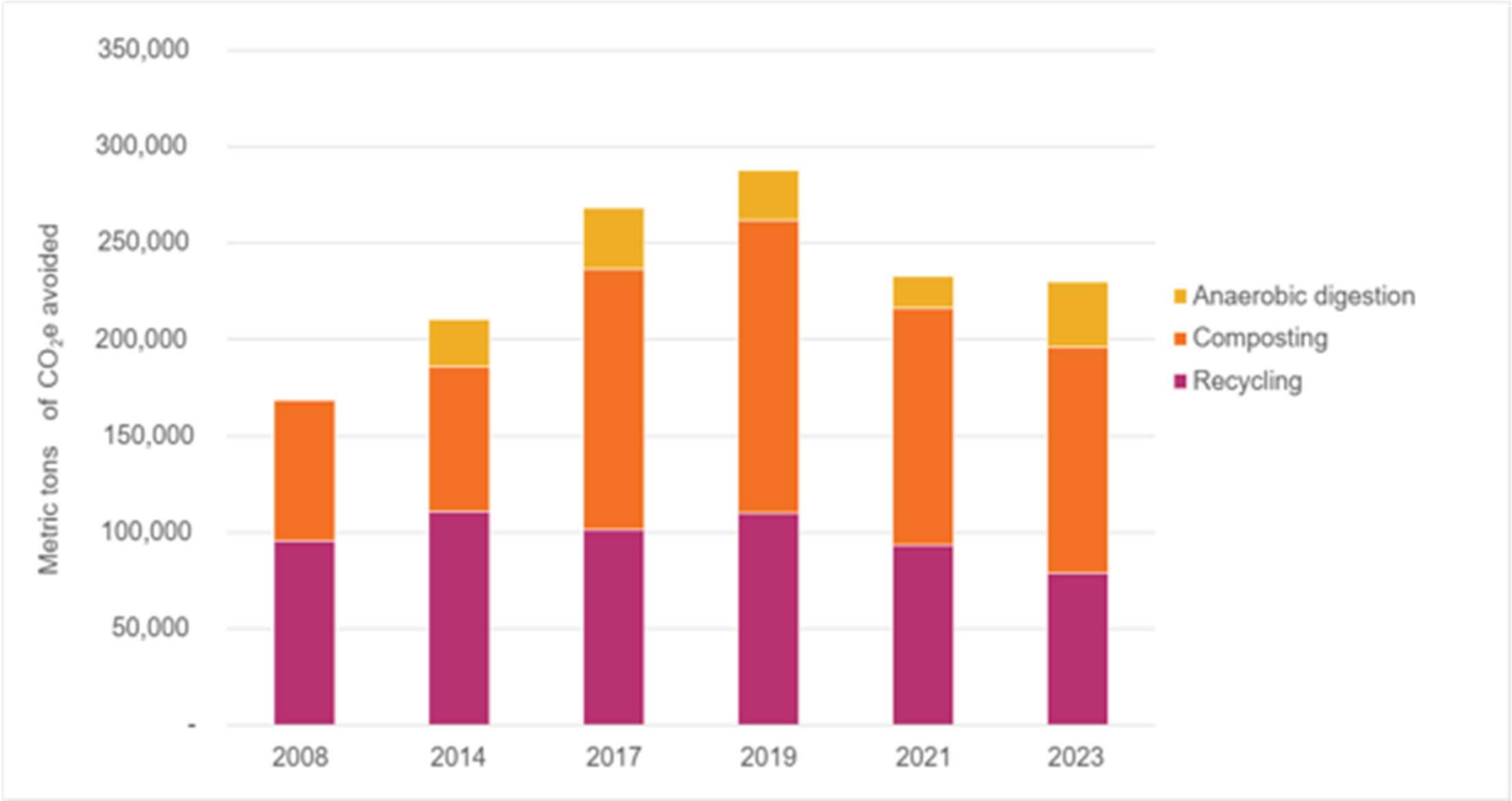
Background

- 2018 ClimateSmart plan Solid waste identified as a topic for future research
- Update to City's 2008 Zero Waste Strategic Plan
- Landfill capacity
- Long-term contracts

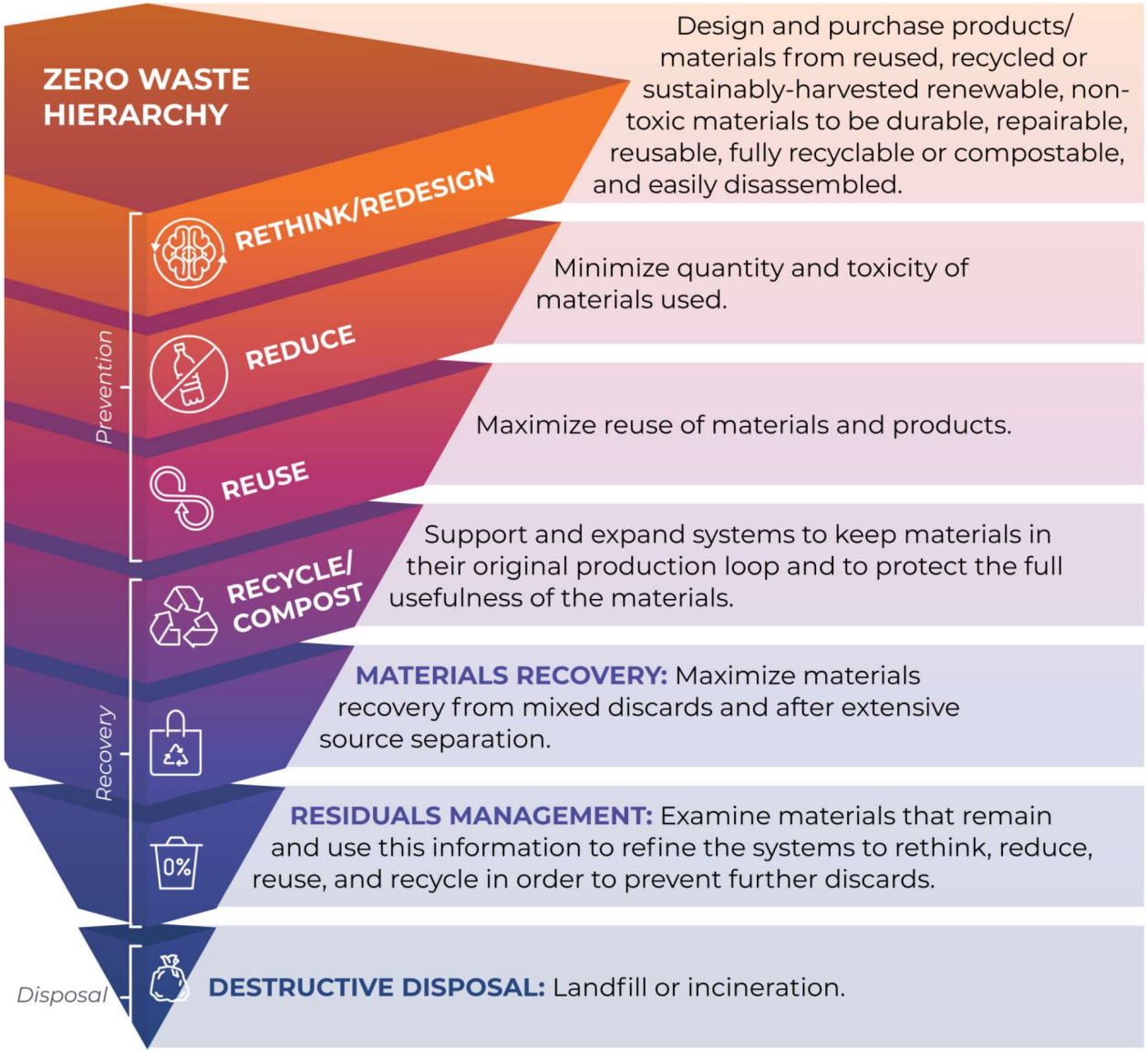


2023 Communitywide GHG inventory

Solid Waste: Connection to Climate Goals



What is Zero Waste?



Zero Waste Element Development Process

Stakeholder Engagement Overview

How was the community engaged?

- Online Open House
- Survey
- Community meeting

Community feedback:

Barriers:

- Limited access to recycling in public spaces
- Difficulty disposing of Household Hazardous Waste and hard-to-recycle materials
- Convenience of single-use plastics
- Confusing product labels

Opportunities:

- Participating in repair clinics
- Access to free community compost

Zero Waste Element Strategies

FOUNDATIONAL

- Community Engagement
- Materials Characterization
- Research & Development

RETHINK/REDESIGN

- Sustainable Products & Packaging
- Sustainable Purchasing Citywide

REDUCE

- Lead by Example
- Food Waste Prevention

REUSE

- Surplus Food Recovery
- Repair & Reuse

RECYCLE/COMPOST

- Construction & Demolition Recycling
- Reduce Disposal of Compostable Materials in Landfills
- Recycling Market Development

MATERIALS RECOVERY

- Technology for Higher Diversion

Metrics: Tracking Progress

INDICATORS	PER CAPITA WASTE GENERATION	CITY PROGRAM DIVERSION PERCENTAGE	WASTE TO LANDFILL	CARBON EMISSIONS
METRICS	Tons of waste generated per person per year	Percentage of waste diverted from landfill across all City programs	Landfill disposal across all City programs	Emissions from these strategies

Current Projects

- **Decreasing Recycling Contamination**
- **Compost Hub Pilot**
- **Construction & Demolition Diversion program**
- **Zero Waste Innovation Grant program**
- **Pilots to increase diversion from landfills**

Recommendation

- Accept the Zero Waste Element and recommend this item for full City Council consideration
- Council to direct staff to incorporate this Element into the Climate Smart San José plan

Questions?

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