

BEYOND THE GREEN BIN

YORK REGION'S FOOD WASTE REDUCTION PROGRAM

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Public Works



About York Region



117,920
tonnes
RESIDUAL WASTE
Sent to energy-from
waste facilities



106,252
tonnes
**GREEN BIN
ORGANICS**
Processed



50,500
tonnes
**BLUE BOX
RECYCLING**
Marketed



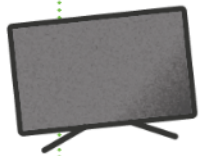
43,481
tonnes
**LEAF AND YARD
WASTE**
Composted



1,687
tonnes
**DEPOT
DIVERSION**
Recycled



1,265
tonnes
**HOUSEHOLD
HAZARDOUS WASTE**
Properly disposed



770
tonnes
**ELECTRONIC
WASTE**
Recycled



1,478
tonnes
**TEXTILES/
HOUSEHOLD GOODS**
Reused or repaired

90%
**DIVERSION FROM
LANDFILL**



SM4RT Living Waste Management Master Plan

Visionary Goal:

“A world where nothing goes to waste”

Innovative plan that focuses on waste reduction and reuse to achieve:

- Environmental benefits
- Cost reduction by reducing demand on servicing
- Key metrics include Diversion from Landfill and Waste Generation Rates

Plan was originally developed in 2013, updated in 2020 and 2025



Avoidable Food Waste is Not Just a Waste Issue

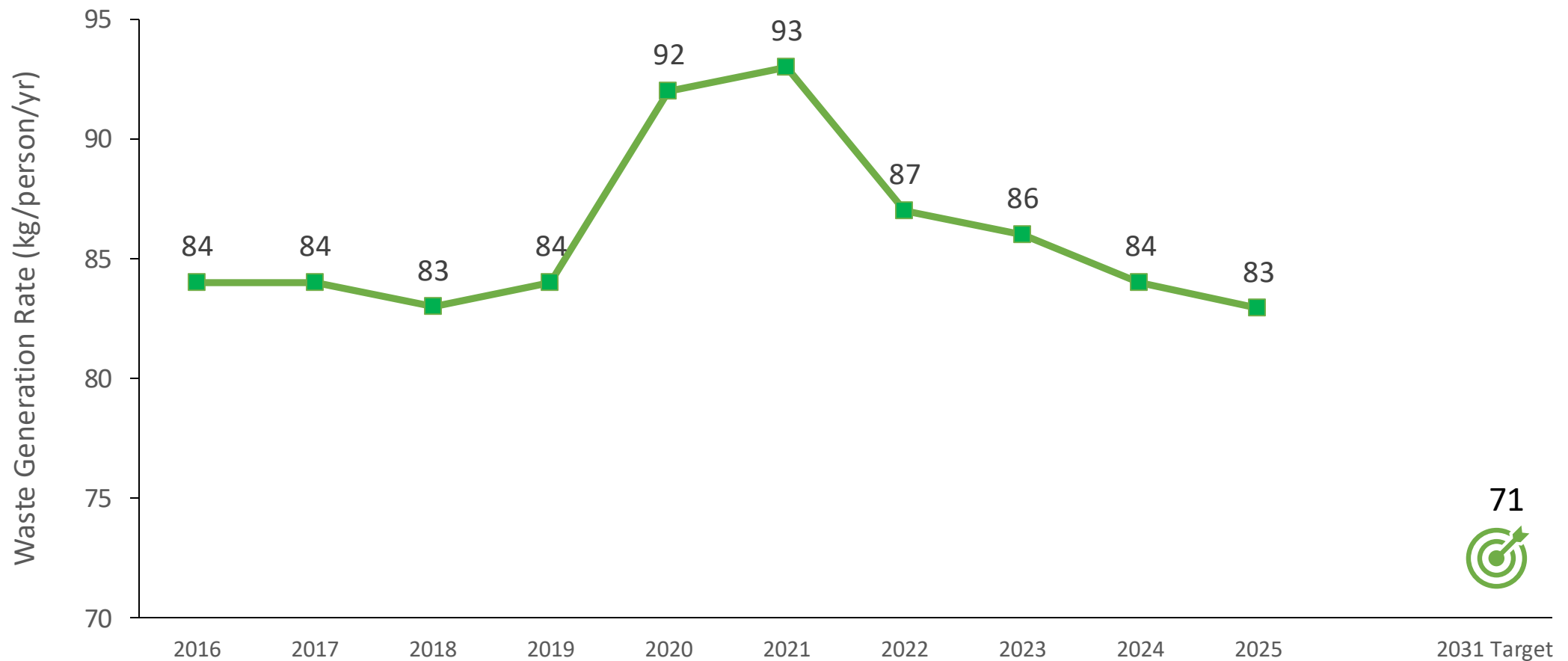
- Contributes to greenhouse gas emissions
- Impacts household food budgets
- Links to health and wellbeing
- Wastes water, energy, resources from field to fork
- Increases costs for businesses and municipalities

How does food waste reduction align with your organization's environmental or other priorities/goals?



Understanding Avoidable Food Waste and the Green Bin

York Region Residential Green Bin Generation Rate

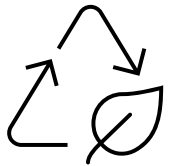


Understanding Avoidable Food Waste and the Green Bin

Food waste categories added to quarterly waste audits provide insights into food waste generation and disposal habits



- Decline in per cent of avoidable food waste in the green bin follows pattern of waste generation rate
- 60-70% of organic waste generated by households is correctly sorted into the green bin (capture rate) over the past five years
- Fruits and vegetables are by far the most frequently wasted type of food in green bin and garbage streams



What data is available to you? Have you tried food waste audits or tracking? What approach did you use?



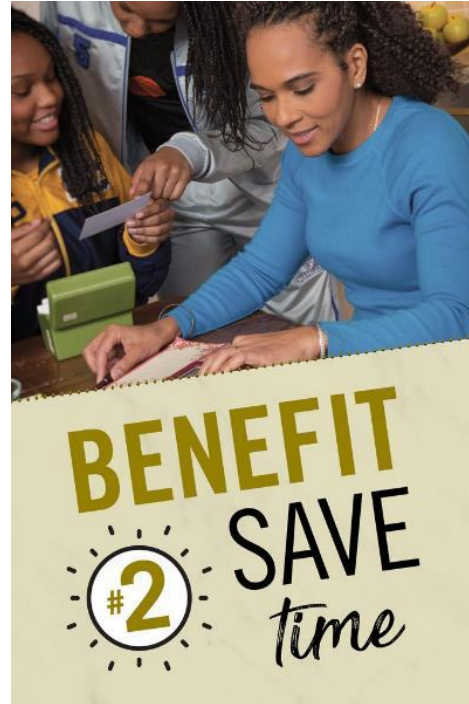
Unavoidable food waste:
bones, peels, coffee grounds, etc.



Avoidable food waste:
food that could have been eaten

Data and Consumer Research Informed Program Development

Good Food Program promotes the value of planning, preparing and enjoying meals



Collaboration across Departments Increases Impact

- Public Works, Community and Health Services, Economic Development support food-related policy and programs
- Food literacy framework informs connections between our work
- Collaborate on policy, messaging/education and community partnerships



Image credit: Ontario Dietitians in Public Health

Employee Engagement Activities

Food literacy/waste reduction messaging integrated into internal events and campaigns tied to local food, corporate wellness

Encouraging to see departmental initiatives such as Public Works Community Garden challenge supported by internal champions

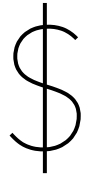


Community Activities: Good Food Challenge

- Annual Campaign promoting cooking skills, gardening, composting, through family-friendly activities
- Developed and delivered with York Region Food Network
- Started during COVID-19 as a virtual 4-week challenge
- Expanded to in-person programming and take home activities, working with libraries across the Region



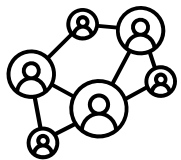
What's Next



- Updating our community funding program with more focus on food waste reduction



- Refreshing market research on food waste and green bin programs



- Continue to support knowledge transfer and partnerships for a circular food economy in York Region

Thank You

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