

SW MI Materials Management Planning Committee Agenda

December 15, 2025

1:00 p.m.

Location: Pokagon Band Community Center
27043 Potawatomi Trail Dowagiac, MI 49047

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

Kalli Marshall, VBCD, Chair

2. Approval of Agenda

3. Approval of November 17, 2025 Minutes

4. Old Business

Working Groups Update and Approval

Bekah Schrag, DPA

Public Survey Update

Bekah Schrag, DPA

5. Hearings

None.

6. New Business

Policy Prioritization

Bekah Schrag, DPA

Recycling Goals Assignments and Resources

Bekah Schrag, DPA

7. Public Comment

8. Miscellaneous

2026 Meeting Schedule

9. Adjournment



Minutes

SW MI Materials Management Planning Committee

Monday, November 17, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.

Location: Pokagon Band Community Center

27043 Potawatomi Trail Dowagiac, MI 49047

Role	Member	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Solid Waste Facility Operator	Bob Kras	IP	A	IP	IP	E	IP	IP	E	IP	IP	IP	
Hauler	Christopher Phillips (Vice-Chair)	IP	E	IP	IP	A	IP	E	IP	IP	IP	IP	
Materials Recovery Facility Operator	Donovan Kelley		IP	E	IP	A	E	E	IP	E	IP	IP	
Composting Facility Operator	Adam Brent								IP	IP	IP	IP	
Waste Diversion, Reuse, Reduction Facility Operator	Sheila Bergen				IP	IP	IP	IP	A	IP	A	IP	
Environmental Interest Group	Kalli Marshall (Chair)	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	
Elected Township Official	David Kuhn	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	E	IP	IP	
Elected City/Village Official	Deah Muth	IP	IP	V	IP	V	IP	E	IP	E	E	IP	
Business that generates Managed Materials	Al Pscholka	IP	IP	E	E	A	E	IP	A	A	E	IP	
Regional Planning Agency	John Egelhaaf	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	
Sovereign Nation	Jennifer Kanine	IP	IP	IP	V	A	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	
Berrien County													
Elected County or Municipal Official	Dave Vollrath	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	
Business that Generates Managed Materials	Jeff Doroh	IP	IP	IP	E	A	IP	IP	E	IP	V	IP	
Cass County													
Elected County or Municipal Official	Roseann Marchetti (Secretery)	IP	IP	E	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	E	
Business that Generates Managed Materials	Amy Huser	IP	IP	IP	IP	E	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	
Van Buren County													
Elected County or Municipal Official	Kurt Doroh							IP	IP	A	IP	E	
Business that Generates Managed Materials													
IP - Present in Person; V - Participating remotely; E- Excused absence; A - Unexcused absence; A blank spot means the position is vacant													

Public Present

Adams, Jill
 Koel, Lois
 Field, Jaysen
 Graves, Genevieve
 Chubb, Deb
 Plathe, Justin
 Krcmark, Jeff
 O'Brien, Mindy

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

Chair Kalli Marshall called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. Role call was taken, and it was established that a quorum was present.

2. Approval of Agenda

Christopher Phillips moved to **“ACCEPT THE AGENDA.”** Al Pscholka seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

3. Approval of October 20, 2025 Minutes

Bob Kras moved to **“APPROVE October 20, 2025 MINUTES.”** Donovan Kelley seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

4. Old Business

Working Groups Update

The committee received an update on the working groups, beginning with an extensive discussion about Open Meetings Act (OMA) compliance. Bekah Schrag explained that if working groups are doing the bulk of the work and the main committee is only rubber-stamping recommendations, then those groups must comply with OMA requirements. She outlined what OMA compliance would entail, including in-person meeting requirements, record keeping, formal procedures, and public comment management.

Several concerns were raised about transparency and the capacity of volunteer members to meet these requirements, including that individuals had signed up for the working groups under the knowledge that they would be virtual meetings. The group explored multiple options for the future of the working groups, including dissolving them, keeping them as they are with closer committee review, or transitioning some into OMA-compliant bodies. A poll completed by all those at the meeting indicated that the preferred option was to keep the working groups as they currently operate while ensuring that all recommendations receive full committee review.

Following the discussion, Al Pscholka made a motion to **“dissolve the three county working groups and keep the Policy and Education Working Groups as OMA-compliant entities.”** Dave Vollrath seconded the motion. A role call vote was taken and the motion passed with all present voting in favor. Members acknowledged the need to reach out to current working group participants to assess whether they could meet in-person requirements, noting that some may face geographic limitations.

Public Survey Update

Schrag gave the committee an update on the public survey for materials management planning, which has gathered 287 responses thus far. Most of the responses are from Berrien County residents over the age of 50. Schrag mentioned that reaching the younger generation should be a priority. Strategies to increase participation were discussed, including using individual signatures at the bottom of emails, social media posts, and posting flyers at large gathering venues.

5. Hearings

None.

6. New Business

Municipality Engagement

Schrag spoke about the importance of getting municipalities engaged in the planning process, and keeping them engaged throughout the implementation of the plan. A quick survey was completed by those in the meeting to gauge best methods for how to engage municipalities. Discussion followed including how webinars are beneficial because they can be watched when there is free time, however distractions pose another challenge. David Kuhn suggested presenting at the Clerks' Association and Treasurers' Association meetings.

Chair Marshall reminded the committee that, as members of the Planning Committee, they also play a role in promoting the project and planning process. She emphasized that speaking with colleagues, giving presentations, and sharing information with various boards are effective ways to broaden outreach while distributing the responsibility across the committee.

7. Public Comment

Lois Koel stated she was from the Cass County Conservation District.

Mindy O'Brien noted that while she will be unable to serve as a member on the Education Working Group, she will attend virtually as a member of the public.

8. Miscellaneous

None.

9. Adjournment

Christopher Phillips moved to adjourn the meeting. Dave Vollrath supported the motion. Chair Marshall declared the meeting adjourned at 1:57 pm. The next meeting will be held on December 15, 2025 at 1:00 p.m.

Submitted by:

Bekah Schrag

November 20, 2025

SW MI Materials Management Planning Committee Work Group Recommendations

Policy Committee

John Gruchot

Tyler August

Georgette Peterson

Roseann Marchetti

Mandy Wallace

Education Committee

Sargundee Kaur

Jill Adams

Kalli Marshall

Kathryn Hayes

Lois Koel

Goal	Objective	Action	Responsible Parties	Resources Needed
Goal 1: Divert Materials From Landfills Through Diversion Improvements and Market Development	Objective 1.1 Improve Diversion of Hard-to-Recycle and Hazardous Materials	Implement at least one year-round collection site within each County that accepts tires, HHW, batteries, and	Counties	Partnerships, Funding
		Add four comprehensive drop-off sites per county (HHW, mattresses, foam, tires, recyclables, food waste).	Counties, LUGs,	Funding, Staffing, Real Estate
		Partner with Gazelle, TerraCycle, Goodwill, Habitat ReStore, and others to expand diversion pathways.	Counties, Conservation Districts, Businesses	Partnerships, Staffing
	Objective 1.2 Expand Glass Recycling Opportunities	Research feasibility of diverting glass for alternative uses (e.g., sand for lakefront projects).		Staffing, State Resources
		If feasible, establish or incentivize a glass recycling facility in the tri-county area.	Public/Private Partnerships	Funding, Partnerships
	Objective 1.3 Foster Local Markets and Economic Development	Partner with local economic development agencies to attract companies to the region that utilize recycled	Counties, LUGs	
		Promote Michigan’s Materials Marketplace and NextCycle program for innovation.		
		Encourage existing businesses within the region to use recycled materials as feedstock.		
		Encourage community-level baling (e.g., cardboard) for resale rather than relying only on MRFs.		
	Objective 2.1 Increase Public Awareness of Recycling Opportunities	Develop a regional education campaign on what, where, and how to recycle and reduce waste.		
		Launch outreach through billboards, media, and digital channels to advertise recycling events and promote correct recycling practices.		
		Build and maintain a digital presence (e.g., “Southwest Michigan Recycles” social media, blog, education programming).		
		Hold public events to share programs, goals, and		
		Encourage community-wide visibility by sharing progress updates and goals in multiple formats		

Goal 2: Build a Culture of Recycling and Waste Reduction Through Education, Engagement, and Outreach	Objective 2.2 Strengthen Recycling Education in Schools and Businesses	Establish a school recycling coordinator position for each district to lead recycling education and outreach in		
		Provide toolkits for schools and businesses to implement recycling education programs.		
		Engage grocery stores and businesses as partners to share recycling information and host events.		
	Objective 2.3 Promote Retailer Responsibility and Consumer Choices	Encourage retailers to recycle the products they sell and provide clear recycling instructions to customers.		
		Educate consumers on waste reduction initiatives, including single-use packaging; promote reusable/recyclable alternatives.		
		Highlight examples of retailers and businesses who successfully promote recycling and waste reduction through certifications.		
		Educate the public on hazardous materials and the need to keep them out of landfills.		
	Objective 2.4 Improve Effectiveness of Outreach and Messaging	Utilize AI contamination technology to deliver targeted, audience-specific recycling messages.		
		Develop campaigns that explain why recycling works and address myths to improve participation and reduce contamination.		
		Create outreach strategies for rural, urban, and hard-to-reach populations.		
	Objective 3.1 Expand Curbside Recycling	By 2026: Ensure 90% of single-family dwellings in urban areas have curbside service (min. twice/month).		
		By 2028: Ensure 90% of single-family dwellings in municipalities >5,000 residents have curbside service.		

Goal 3: Expand and Improve Recycling Infrastructure and Access	Curbside Recycling Services, Ensuring Minimum Requirements are Met.	Minimum Requirements for all curbside recycling services: consistent materials accepted (plastics, cans, cardboard, paper, cartons, glass), recycling is picked up at least twice per month, and education regarding acceptable materials is provided often.		
		Develop strategies to reduce contamination alongside volume increases, ensuring recyclables are market-ready.		
	Objective 3.2 Ensure Equitable Drop-Off Access, Ensuring Minimum Requirements are Met.	By 2032: Counties <100,000 residents → 1 site per 10,000 residents without curbside. Counties ≥100,000 residents → 1 site per 50,000 residents without curbside. Minimum Requirements: Sites must offer collection of plastics, cans, cardboard, paper, cartons, glass; the site must be open to the public for at least 24 hrs/month; the site must offer at least some evening/weekend hours; the site must be manned.		
		Develop drop -offs within ~10 miles for every household.		
		Use GIS mapping to optimize facility placement; explore schools and grocery stores as additional collection points.		
		Encourage business-government partnerships to share infrastructure costs.		
		Promote universal access for all sites so anyone from the County or region may drop-off recyclables.		
	Objective 3.3 Modernize Recycling Transportation and Logistics	Transition municipal waste fleets to electric/clean-fuel trucks, and promote the transition for private companies.		
		Develop coordinated logistics with haulers to ensure adequate equipment, hours, and materials handling		
		Standardize procedures to reduce likelihood of the expansion of services resulting in higher contamination		
	Objective 4.1 Make Recycling Cost-	Encourage single-hauler contracts in cities/villages to provide universal recycling access at consistent costs.		

Goal 4: Implement Policies and Funding Mechanisms to Support Recycling	Effective and Transparent	Investigate models to make recycling cheaper than disposal, including subsidies, fee restructuring, or		
	Objective 4.2 Advance Waste Reduction Through Policy and Incentives	Enact a county ordinance that requires haulers to obtain a license to operate within the county, and require haulers offer curbside recycling access to any household with curbside trash pickup.	Counties	Online license application,
		Explore ordinances or voluntary agreements that require retailers and businesses to support waste reduction and recycling promotion.	Counties, LUGs,	
		Support Extended Producer Responsibility legislation to incentivize producers to use easier-to-recycle packaging and help fund recycling programs throughout the state.	Counties, Elected Officials	
		Enact a county resolution requiring all county-sponsored functions to use recyclable and compostable materials when possible, and require the function to provide recycling and food scrap recycling.	Counties	
		Enact a county resolution requiring all county buildings purchase recyclable or compostable materials when possible, and ensure all county buildings have access to recycling and food scrap recycling.	Counties	

SW MI Materials Management Planning Committee

2026 Meeting Dates

1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Location: TBD

First Wednesday, 1-3p.m.

January 7, 2026

February 4, 2026

March 4, 2026

April 1, 2026

May 6, 2026

June 3, 2026

July 1, 2026

August 5, 2026

September 2, 2026

October 7, 2026

November 4, 2026

December 2, 2026