Zero Waste by 2050

1. IDENTIFY THE CONTEXT

OF WASTE created in Evanston is sent to landfills. 75%

OF WASTE per person per year is created in Evanston. 725 lbs.

3. EXPERIENCE THE SYSTEM

LANDFILLS
Landfills hold discarded material for 1000’s of years. Since landfills can cause negative environmental impacts, it is important they are managed well. As organic materials break down, they release methane, a potent greenhouse gas and when it rains, water filters through the waste in the landfill and picks up harmful substances that can cause water pollution.

MINING & TRANSPORTING RAW MATERIALS
Raw materials like wood, metals, and oil are needed to make the items we buy and use, which require a lot of energy and resources to mine. As we make more and more items, air, soil, and water pollution increase and ecosystems become damaged.

DESIGN & MANUFACTURING
A lot of items bought in Evanston are designed for convenience and with no thought about what happens to the item or its packaging after it is used.

USE
When we buy items, our relationship with our purchase is determined by the design. Items like clothes, appliances, and electronics are only used for a short time before they are no longer valued or are broken. Throwing them out can lead to litter and be expensive to clean up.

DISTRIBUTION & PURCHASE
Once an item has been manufactured, it is then ready for you to buy it at a store or online. Disposable items may be cheap, but have a negative and expensive impact on the environment. Reusable and durable items may be expensive, and therefore, harder for people to buy.

END-OF-USE COLLECTION & MANAGEMENT
Once we are done with items because they have been used or no longer have value to us, we dispose of them. It can be hard to know how an item should be correctly disposed of and sometimes, composting, recycling, and other collection programs like medical waste collection are not available to everyone so a lot of items get sent to the landfill.

WASTE HIERARCHY
A guide to help people think about the most effective ways to reduce overall waste. The top of the hierarchy has the most preferred strategies that reduce the most amount of waste and the bottom has the least preferred strategies.

PREVENT
Avoid the generation of material to reduce the amount of waste created in the first place.

REUSE
Use materials again in their original form.

DIVERT
Collect used materials to create new products.

DISPOSE
The end of the material’s use

COMPOSTING
The breaking down of organic materials like food scraps and food soiled paper into a fertilizer that can be used to grow new plants. Composting can take many forms—you can compost in your backyard or have your compost collected to be processed at a commercial facility.

END-OF-USE
When a person is done with an item and no longer has a use for it, they then have to make a decision about how to dispose of the item.

WASTE REDUCTION
Avoiding the creation of waste by decreasing the amount of material that is manufactured and purchased.

WASTE DIVERSION
Material that is composted, recycled, or given a longer life instead of being sent to the landfill. For example, Evanston’s waste diversion rate is the amount of material that is recycled and composted divided by all of the waste generated in Evanston.

ZERO WASTE
A cyclical system in which products are designed for reuse, creating no waste. Evanston’s goal of Zero Waste by 2050 is calculated based on the percentage of material diverted from a landfill. When that percentage reaches 100%, then Evanston will have achieved Zero Waste.

4. TAKE ACTION