



DENVER
CLIMATE ACTION,
SUSTAINABILITY &
RESILIENCY

Waste No More Ordinance

City Council Business Committee

Ordinance Update

May 21, 2025

Waste No More Timeline



*All Task Force meetings were recorded and are open to the public.



Useful background information

Denver's Waste Diversion Target



Sustainable Resource Management Plan (2021)

Divert 50% of solid waste by 2027 and 70% by 2032

50% diversion is estimated to reduce emissions by 1.7 million
MtCO₂e

(equivalent to annual emissions from 370,000 cars)

2022 Waste diversion rate = 29%

Sources of Denver's Waste



2022 Data

Residential (single family up to 7 units)

These households are serviced by DOTI

18% of municipal waste

Commercial, Multi-family and Institutional

44% of municipal waste

Construction & Demolition (C&D) Waste

34% of municipal waste

Industrial Waste

3% of municipal waste

81% of MSW

WNM Ordinance Sectors



Sectors & Waste Generators Covered

- Multi-family buildings
- Non-residential buildings
- Food waste producers
- Special events
- C&D waste producers

WNM Ordinance Opportunities

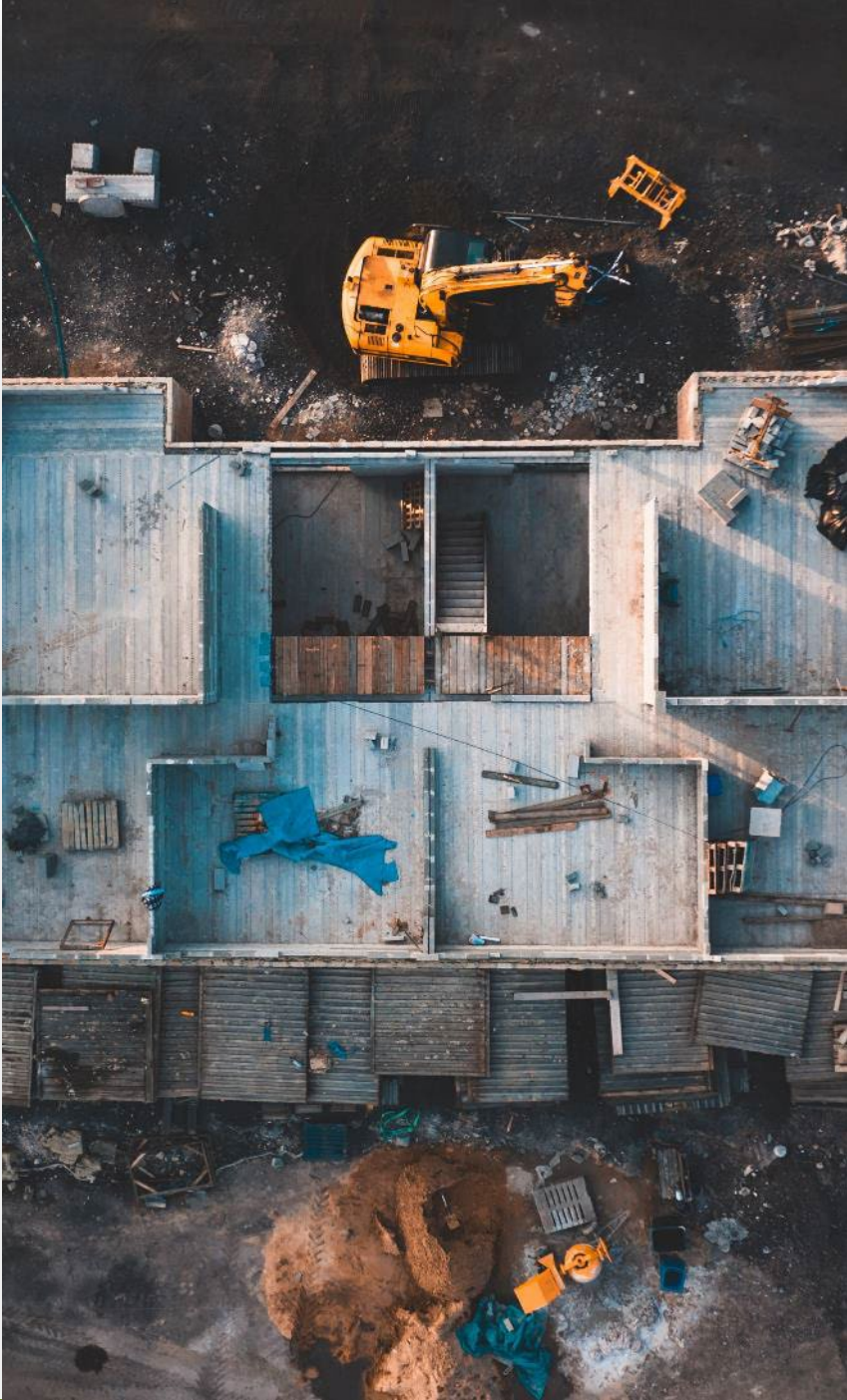


Fully implemented, the WNM Ordinance will help our community

- Address gaps in access to services
- Reduce environmental impacts
- Support natural carbon cycles and nature-based climate solutions (compost)
- Facilitate material circularity through recycling and reuse



Overview of Proposed Updates



Construction & Demolition



Construction & Demolition

Effective Date: April 1, 2026

Applicability: Projects requiring a demolition permit or construction permit

Requirement: 50% landfill diversion of all waste debris generated on site

Exemptions:

- Hazardous materials
- Projects 500 square feet or less
- Remodels and tenant finishes 2,500 square feet or less
- Quick permits (ex: plumbing, electrical, HVAC)
- Construction permits solely required to change occupancy
- Emergency orders from the city

Construction & Demolition

Compliance:

- Waste diversion plan required during permitting
- Performance security deposit collected at issuance of permit
- Compliance report required within 60 days of project completion
- Refund amount based on level of compliance

Scope of Work	Deposit required	Maximum deposit
New construction of 501 – 2,500 square feet	\$0.50/sf	\$1,250
New construction more than 2,500 square feet	\$1.00/sf	\$200,000
Demolition of a structure 501 – 2,500 square feet	\$0.50/sf	\$1,250
Demolition of a structure more than 2,500 square feet	\$1.00/sf	\$200,000
Existing building renovation/tenant finish more than 2,500 square feet	\$1.00/sf	\$100,000

C&D diversion: An opportunity for circularity & economic development



The Circular Economy Development Center

Established by HB22-1159, CEDC is working to grow existing markets & develop the infrastructure & systems needed to create a sustainable circular economy in Colorado.

Current CEDC projects in the metro area:

- Establishing two full-service C&D recycling centers
- Asphalt shingle recycling infrastructure

Construction & Demolition

C&D Covered Materials:

- Concrete
- Asphalt
- Masonry
- Untreated wood
- Metal
- Corrugated cardboard
- Items that can be reused
- **Additional covered materials may be added to the list through rulemaking process**



Special Events

Special Events

Effective Date: April 1, 2026

Applicability: Permitted special events taking place on public property and permitted events requiring a revocable street occupancy permit

Requirement: Must provide recycling and organic material collection to employees, contractors, customers, volunteers, and attendees

Exemptions:

- Economic hardships and de minimus volumes of materials
- Small events with 350 or fewer daily attendees are exempt from all requirements
- Events with 1,000 or fewer daily attendees exempt from organic material requirements
- Events without commercial food vendors exempt from organic material requirements
- Inability to secure services with demonstration of good faith effort

Special Events

Compliance:

- Must submit a waste management plan with permit application
- Must follow rules for signage and education of event staff and vendors
- May face civil penalties for non-compliance

Note: Events with 350 or fewer attendees will be provided the same information and resources and will be encouraged to comply

Enforcement Agencies: Office of Special Events (OSE), Denver Parks & Recreations (DPR), Department of Transportation & Infrastructure (DOTI)



Multi-Family Residential



Multi-family Residential

Effective Date: April 1, 2026

Applicability: Multi-unit dwellings, manufactured home communities, congregate living uses as defined in Denver Zoning Code. (*~ 190,000 households*)

Requirement: Must provide recycling and organic material collection services to tenants, customers, employees, and contractors

Exemptions:

- Economic hardships, de minimus volumes of materials, space constraints
- Inability to secure services with good faith effort

Compliance:

- Must maintain a current waste diversion plan
- Must post signage and provide education
- May face civil penalties for non-compliance



Non-Residential Buildings



Non-Residential Buildings

Effective Date: April 1, 2026

Applicability: Any building not used for residential purposes and residential care use types under the Denver Zoning Code

Requirement: Must provide recycling collection services to tenants, customers, employees, and contractors

Exemptions:

- Parking garages, parking structures, parking lots, vehicle depots, vacant lots, condemned properties, or vacant land
- Buildings with de minimis volumes of recyclable materials

Compliance:

- Must maintain a current waste diversion plan
- Must post signage and provide education
- May face civil penalties for non-compliance



Food Waste Producers



Food Waste Producers

Effective Date: April 1, 2026

Applicability: Retail food establishments, food processing, wholesale and warehouse establishment, commissary

Requirement: Must provide access to recycling collection services to employees, contractors, and customers. Must provide organic material collection services to employees and contractors (back of house).

Exemptions:

- Mobile retail food establishments, pushcarts, food peddlers, or temporary retail food establishments
- Food shelves or food banks
- Excluded establishments under DRMC 23-1 (ex; vending machines, hot beverage establishments with packaged food not requiring preparation.)
- Retail food establishments that reported less than \$2 million in revenues and have operated with fewer than 25 employees in the previous tax year

Food Waste Producers

Compliance:

- Must maintain a current waste diversion plan
- Must post signage and provide education
- May face civil penalties

NOTE: Rules & Regs may be developed to enable compliance through alternative means such as food donation, animal feed, on-site organic material diversion, or other innovative processes.



Action Item

- Requesting approval of Ordinance 25-0628
- Subject to committee approval, this item will then be placed before the full council for first reading on June 2nd. There will also be an opportunity for public comment on this date.
- Subject to the full council's vote to publish, final reading will be on June 9th. Per Denver's Charter, 2/3rds of City Council must vote to amend any voter-initiated ordinance. (8.3.1(F)).

Stay Connected



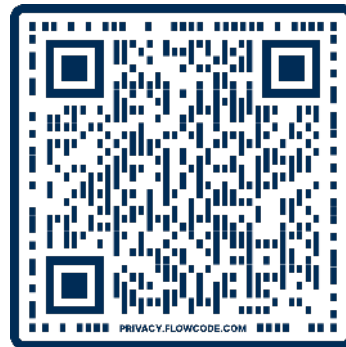
WasteNoMore@denvergov.org



@DenverCASR



Visit our
website



Subscribe to
our newsletter