

Materials Recovery Facility

OLMSTED COUNTY MINNESOTA

Olmsted County requests \$19,375,000 in state capital investment to construct and equip a materials recovery facility (MRF), which will remove recoverable and noncombustible materials from the waste stream, as well as increase the efficiency and delay the need for expansion of the Olmsted County Waste-to-Energy Facility (OWEF).

Background and need

Currently, there are no materials recovery facilities operating in southeastern Minnesota. A regional MRF will promote collaboration, augment recycling efforts, and recover additional value from waste.

A regional MRF is needed because it will:

- Assist Olmsted and other Southeast Minnesota counties in meeting state recycling and long-range solid waste management goals.
- Provide local businesses convenient access to a MRF.
- Increase local recycling rates.
- Allow waste material to move further up the waste hierarchy.
- Enhance the current solid waste system for the lowest impact to the environment.
- Gain efficiencies through economies of scale.

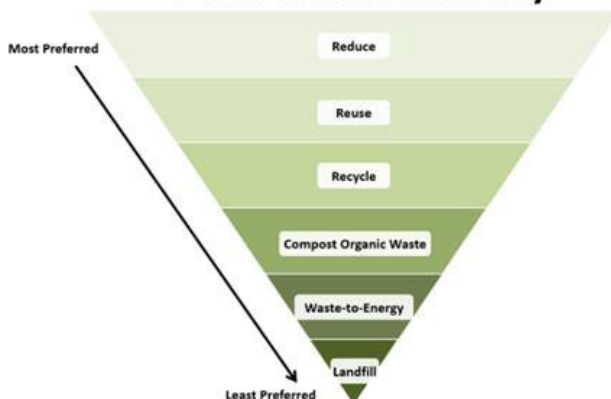


Rendering of proposed MRF

Other benefits of a regional MRF include:

- Preparing quality marketable materials for end-use manufacturers.
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions by eliminating long transport of mixed recyclables to other areas for processing.
- The opportunity to divert organic materials from the waste stream.

Solid Waste Hierarchy

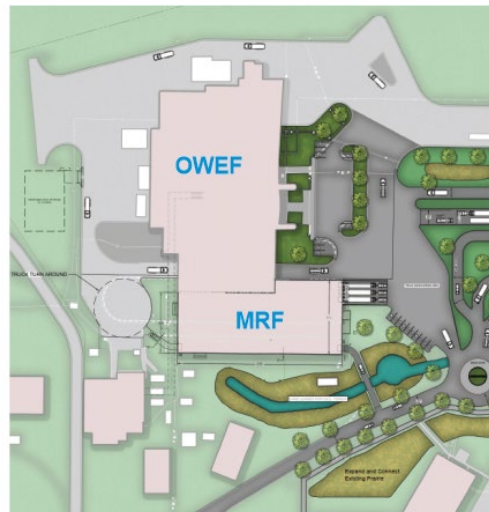


Recycling is essential to waste management in Olmsted County. Recycling (along with reduction, reuse, and composting) tops the state's waste management hierarchy and plays a critical role in minimizing solid waste disposal at waste-to-energy and landfill facilities. Minnesota Statute [§115A.551](#) requires counties to develop and implement recycling programs to reach state recycling goals. Construction of a MRF was included in Olmsted County's 10-year solid waste management plan that was approved by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Olmsted County is committed to improving recycling outcomes in the area by strengthening partnerships with other local units of government, businesses, nonprofits, and the waste and recycling industry.

Project details

The materials recovery facility will expand upon Olmsted County's current integrated solid waste management system by reclaiming materials and removing problematic items from the waste stream. The new 49,000 square foot MRF will be located on the south side of the OWEF which currently accepts waste from Olmsted and Dodge Counties. Additionally, Olmsted County has already received support from other government agencies and organizations in the region interested in the opportunities this facility will provide.

The primary objective of the MRF is to improve recycling and the characteristics of the municipal solid waste (MSW) being sent to the OWEF by greatly reducing metals, glass, grit, and other non-combustible waste items. This will improve the reliability of the OWEF, which will reduce operational costs and delay the very expensive expansion of the OWEF. Removing these materials prior to combustion will decrease air pollutant emissions and wear on OWEF equipment, extending the life of the equipment. An additional benefit is these same materials will be marketed for recycling, extending their useful life while also increasing revenue for Olmsted County. The metals component in Olmsted County's MSW will be converted from a liability to an asset. The county is also reviewing technology that will separate organic waste for use in a regional anaerobic co-digester, which will be considered as a future addition to the MRF.



Birdseye view of MRF location



Photo inside Perham MRF

Increased revenue from the sale of recyclable materials will be part of the solid waste management public "Enterprise Fund." Olmsted County is unique in that its integrated solid waste management system is funded primarily by user fees, the sale of energy, and the sale of recyclable materials. No property tax dollars are used, nor are they planned to be used in the future.

Project timeline

A feasibility study and conceptual design plans have been completed. Permitting and pre-design began in 2023 and will be complete by April 2025. Formal design for construction documents will start upon approval of state bonding support. The following is the tentative timeline, pending the award of state capital investment:

- Design, permitting, and bidding: January 2025
- Construction: July 2025 – July 2026
- Begin operation: August 2026

Legislative priority/Bonding request

Olmsted County requests \$19,375,000 in state capital investment to construct and equip a materials recovery facility adjoining the OWEF.

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