Post-Landfill Action Network
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Wesleyan University

November 2023

2023 Strategic Vision for Institutional Zero Waste Wesleyan University

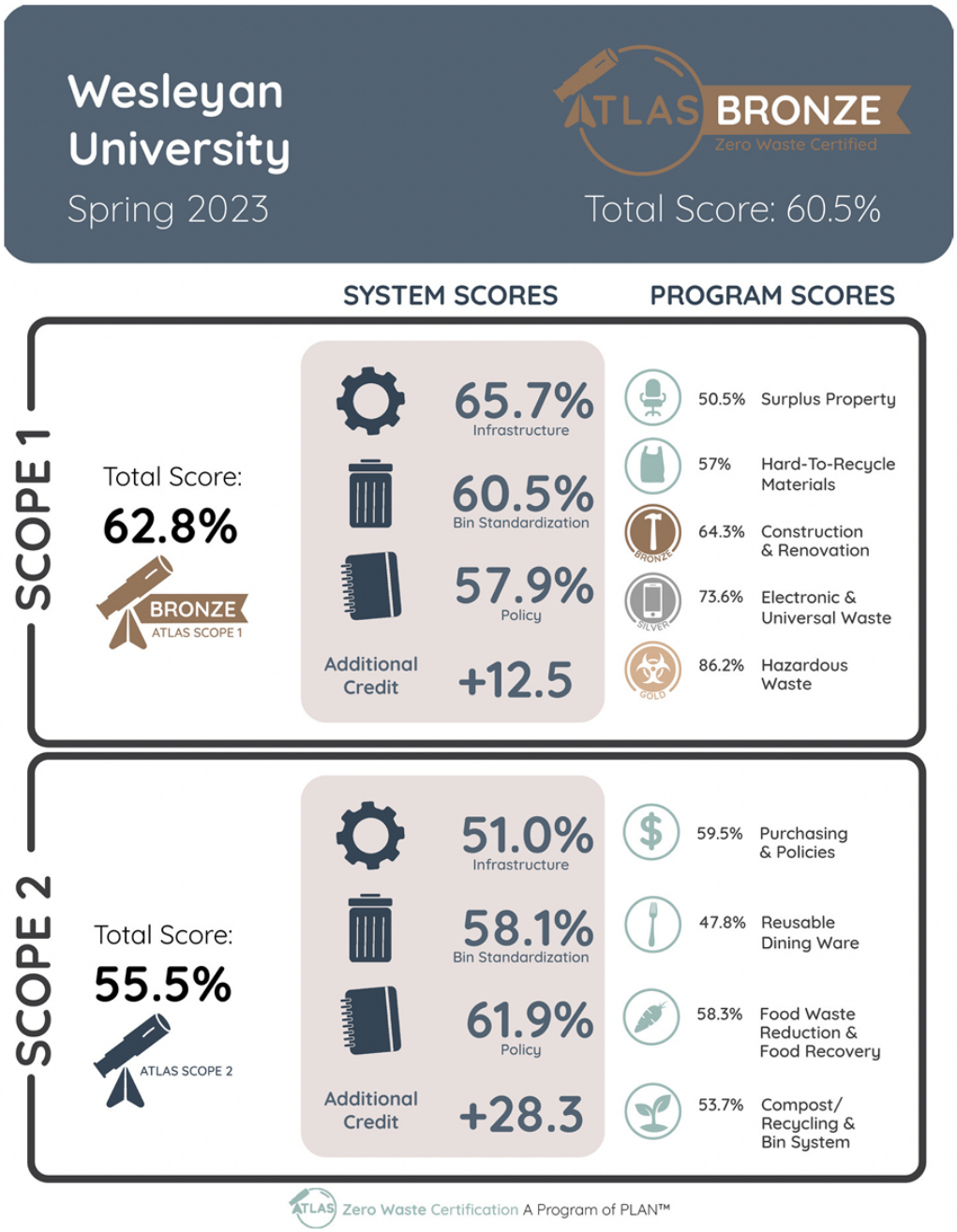
Introduction: In Spring, 2023, the Wesleyan University Sustainability Office hired two Zero Waste Fellows, Arlette Aguilera '25 and Vivian Redmond '24, to work with the Post-Landfill Action Network as Zero Waste Atlas Fellows. As Fellows, Arlette and Vivian utilized PLAN's Atlas Stage 1 process to perform a comprehensive assessment of Wesleyan's campus-wide policies, infrastructure, and logistical capacity to establish a materials management system that achieves zero waste. The final Atlas Stage 1 Report and Score Sheet for Wesleyan can be found here. The final campus scores are represented below.

During the fall of 2023, Wesleyan University began the Atlas Stage 2 Strategic Visioning process. Strategic visioning sessions with more than 25 key campus stakeholders were co-facilitated by PLAN staff and Zero Waste Fellows, Danielle Eforo '25 and Lyah Muktavaram '26. The goal of these sessions was to map out a multi-year vision to establish the infrastructure, policies, and standardization systems necessary to achieve a zero-waste campus and reach an Atlas Zero Waste Score above 90%. This Strategic Vision for Institutional Zero Waste at Wesleyan University is a summary of the opportunities discussed at these sessions and articulates the strategy for meeting the recommendations outlined in the strategic plan.

Methodology: This vision serves as the guideline for how the campus plans to manage materials through the following two Materials Management Scopes. These scopes help Wesleyan develop methods for handling materials at a system-wide level.

Scope 1 "Hard Goods" Surplus Property & Hard-to-Recycle Materials (HRM) *Materials the campus has direct control over from purchase to recovery*	**Scope 2** "Soft Goods" Food, Packaging, and Daily Consumables *Materials the campus purchases, but individual users control disposal decisions*
Furniture Electronics Office Supplies Equipment (Lab, Art, Gym, etc) Vehicles (including tires & oil) Chemicals & Hazardous Materials Construction & Demo Materials Fixtures (cabinets, doors, etc)	Food Waste & Composting Packaged Goods Disposable Dishes & To-Go Ware vs. Compostable Dishes & To-Go Ware vs. Reusable Dishes & To-Go Ware

Purpose: This vision serves as a summary of the interdepartmental collaborative process of responding to the question "What does the Wesleyan need to achieve zero waste in terms of infrastructure, policies, staffing, and resources?" Many of the initiatives identified are only possible with campus-wide administrative buy-in and support, so the creation of this resource is the first step in working towards the development, approval, and implementation of a Zero Waste Action Plan.


Wesleyan University
Spring 2023
ATLAS BRONZE
Zero Waste Certified
Total Score: 60.5%
SYSTEM SCORES
PROGRAM SCORES
SCOPE 1
Total Score:
62.8%
BRONZE
ATLAS SCOPE 1
65.7%
Infrastructure
60.5%
Bin Standardization
57.9%
Policy
Additional Credit
+12.5
50.5% Surplus Property
57% Hard-To-Recycle Materials
64.3% Construction & Renovation
73.6% Electronic & Universal Waste
86.2% Hazardous Waste
SCOPE 2
Total Score:
55.5%
ATLAS SCOPE 2
51.0%
Infrastructure
58.1%
Bin Standardization
61.9%
Policy
Additional Credit
+28.3
59.5% Purchasing & Policies
47.8% Reusable Dining Ware
58.3% Food Waste Reduction & Food Recovery
53.7% Compost/ Recycling & Bin System
ATLAS Zero Waste Certification A Program of PLAN™

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Scope 1 - Surplus Property and Hard-to-Recycle Materials Management System

Goal: Significantly improve and expand the capacity of Wesleyan's surplus property and Hard-to-Recycle Materials (HRM) management systems. As part of this system expansion:

- **Identify a newer and larger centralized physical facility** for the campus-wide management of surplus property, HRM materials, and common household products.
- **Expand the capacity of the surplus property program and facility** to effectively capture all materials available for reuse on campus, and/or explore capacity within specialized facilities to implement more sharing and repairing practices into their operations.
- Explore opportunities to integrate **materials management decision-making** through the formalization of **campus-wide procurement policies and procedures** for electronics and hard goods. Communicate sustainable procurement policies to guide departments with purchasing.

A. Physical Infrastructure - Central Surplus and Aggregation Facility

Full completion of goals in **Sections 1A (B, C, and D)** would result in:
123 additional points
17.28% increase in Scope 1 Score
6.66% increase in Total Atlas Zero Waste Score

Wesleyan requires a new, larger physical location that will serve as the central aggregation point for the management, handling, and redistribution of surplus property and the aggregation and proper disposal of HRM materials. Currently, Wesleyan has a physical storefront, but it is located a mile from the main campus at the Physical Plant.

During the stakeholder engagement sessions, there was a clear focus on identifying a centralized space Wesleyan could utilize as the location for a surplus and aggregation facility. Additionally, upper-level financial support is needed to provide staffing for the surplus property and aggregation facility's maintenance. A centralized, accessible facility would allow for the expansion of Wesleyan's surplus property program. Refer to Carleton College for an example of a small campus surplus and aggregation facility.

a. **Expansion of Current Program**: This physical facility would be an expansion of Wesleyan's surplus property and technology recycling programs. The facility would serve as a drop-off/pick-up location for all items listed in the Scope 1 section of the Methodology chart on Page 1. The creation of this facility and expansion of this program would provide opportunities for exploration of partnership and collaboration around material aggregation

and help resolve Housing's need for additional storage space. This aggregation will allow for greater efficiency and expansion of resource availability.

b. **Location:** This physical location would be environmentally secure and would ideally be close to the central campus. It would have a large processing space and showroom/sales floor that could be visited by faculty, staff, students, and the public. The facility would also have a large loading dock for easy transport of items and multiple storage options including lockable lockers for high-value items, storage areas for HRM, storage areas for reusable shipping materials, and storage areas for large zero waste programs/events on campus. For example, this facility would house zero waste collection bins and water bottle refill stations for large events. This facility would also have workbench space for the repair of various items like clothing, electronics, furniture, and other unique items. Potential locations for the surplus facility include 37 Broad Street and 44 Hamlin Street.
    i. **Carbon Neutral Facility**: Explore opportunities to power this facility via solar panels or other carbon-neutral options.
    ii. **Physical Storefront:** Explore opportunities to connect Wesleyan's free thrift store with the facility. It's common for campus reuse initiatives to have a storefront that functions like a thrift store with a sales floor and display shelves for the campus community. A pop-up thrift store/storefront will further efforts to add revenue opportunities to this program.
c. **Financial Benefit:** Multiple campus departments and students would benefit financially from the existence of a larger, centralized facility. During the stakeholder engagement process, it was identified numerous times that the facility is not large enough to handle the current volume of materials.
    i. Reuse of demolition materials for small-scale renovation projects on campus (not having to buy new materials for future projects);
    ii. Improvement of building space utilization by handling large quantities of items during a renovation or move-out and processing surplus materials efficiently;
    iii. Sharing of office supplies and smaller household items;
    iv. Space to manage inventory for digital sales and online auctions to provide revenue back to individual departments.
    v. Processing materials on a faster timeframe so that surplus items requested for pickup are moved quicker
d. **Drop-Off/Pick-Up:** The facility would serve as a drop-off/pick-up location for all items listed in the Scope 1 section of the Methodology chart on Page 1.
e. **Assessing Value of Materials:** Materials that move through the facility would be assessed for their highest value: first for institutional reuse on campus, then for possible donation options for reuse off campus, and finally for de-construction into hard-to-recycle material recovery.
    i. **Extending Material Through Research and Repair:** Within the facility, there would be various opportunities to creatively extend the life of

materials. These opportunities could incorporate a wide range of campus departments, from student employment opportunities to academic explorations and pursuits. These opportunities include furniture, bicycle, or electronics repairs, business proposals to use discarded materials in new product development, and mixed media art projects.

ii. **Contract with local repair and refurbishment companies.** Explore opportunities for partnership with a wide variety of product repair companies and technicians to repair/refurbish broken furniture, electronics, and other unique items (for example rug cleaning, etc).

iii. **E-Waste and Electronics Repair.** This would include expanding E-waste collections to all Wesleyan students, faculty, and staff free of cost. The facility would prioritize material recovery over the cost of managing materials while following best practices for the handling of data and mitigating cybersecurity concerns. These positions would focus on creating reuse, repair, and material recovery practices.

iv. **Hacker/Repair Space:** Within the facility, Wesleyan would develop a hacker/repair space. This space would operate through a partnership with the Integrated Design, Engineering, Arts & Society (IDEAS) lab and would help students develop practical mechanical and repair skills along with building creative projects similar to the Waste Reclamation and Upcycling Assistant at Michigan State University. More information about MSU's program can be found here.

f. **Community Partnerships**: During stakeholder engagement, stakeholders identified that some items are difficult to find end-users/markets for disposal. Expanded partnerships in the community would help to manage inventory build-up and material flow. Some items that traditionally have been hard to find a buyer for may be easier to manage with more storage and a more streamlined partnership engagement process.

    i. Stakeholders expressed concern regarding recycling opportunities for materials like porcelain and styrofoam in Connecticut. Expanding partnerships would help create opportunities to properly dispose of HRM outside of the Connecticut area.

g. **Student Positions:** Establish student positions within the IT department and the surplus facility that prioritize material recovery over the cost of managing materials. These positions would focus on practical mechanical and repair skills along with building creative projects similar to the Waste Reclamation and Upcycling Assistant at Michigan State University. More information about MSU's program can be found here. These positions would focus on creating reuse, repair, and material recovery practices. This project could be developed in coalition with the IDEAS lab.

h. **Increasing Accessibility:** To increase accessibility to the surplus program and the Surplus Storefront, Wesleyan could consider expanding the RIDE program to provide transportation to and from the Surplus Storefront once a week. This would allow students who would otherwise be unable to visit the Surplus

Storefront to participate in this program and it would encourage the reuse of materials on campus.

i. **Equipment and Tools:** To conduct the activities mentioned in this section, there would need to be a full suite of tools designated specifically for this facility's use. These tools would include a truck/vehicle, welding equipment, a basic suite of hand tools, compressed air, chop saw, orbital sander, circular saw, dust bag system and air filtration, electronics repair kits, and other necessary tools. This would include a budget for regular repair, maintenance, or replacement of tools.

B. Physical Infrastructure - Storefront

To make the surplus property more shoppable for all campus communities, Wesleyan could consider opening up a storefront connected to the surplus property facility identified in Section A above. It's common for campus reuse initiatives to have a storefront that functions like a thrift store for the campus community. We recommend bridging the gap between surplus, WasteNot, and WesThrift programs to increase accessibility and awareness for the storefront. This effort will happen in consultation with the Sustainability Office, which plays a critical role in helping to run the campus move-out program and other pre-established community partners.

A storefront would provide several opportunities and benefits to the Wesleyan community, including:

a. **Revenue:** An added revenue stream for Wesleyan's materials management system.
    i. The current materials management budget can not accommodate investments in recycling certain HRM.
b. **Shipping Waste Reduction:** The opportunity to stock and provide common household items that many in Wesleyan's community often purchase online (e.g., toiletries, office supplies, etc). This would significantly cut down on items shipped to campus in single-use packaging.
c. **Drop-Off Location for Common Items:** Explore the capacity of this facility to also serve as a drop-off and distribution center for a campus food pantry of non-perishable donated food products.
d. **Combine with Digital Infrastructure:** Explore the process of establishing a digital system for centralized purchasing and the management of assets at all stages of their lifecycle. Ensure alignment with current systems (like the Surplus Storefront).
    i. During stakeholder engagement sessions, we heard that many campus departments could benefit from the creation of a new electronic sharing system that is based on the Freecycle format that would allow sharing of surplus items between departments before they are taken to the surplus warehouse.
    ii. Explore establishing a digital asset management system to assist faculty in understanding the extent of resources on campus and

engage with other departments to better manage, use, and share their materials and skills. Wesleyan could explore programs such as Rheaply that specialize in digital asset management and creating a digital marketplace for campus users.

iii. This system could allow the campus to purchase common items in bulk and distribute them to various departments, therefore cutting down on excess or unnecessary purchases. Explore the need for stockroom expansion.

e. **Keeping Items in Use:** This system could also allow the campus to keep reusable items in use longer by ensuring that used items are distributed before new items are purchased. This would be in addition to the physical surplus system, as a method of digitizing the process of material flow and managing inventory.

C. Digital Infrastructure and Procurement Fees

Wesleyan currently does not have a digital inventory system to manage surplus and standardize procurement. During stakeholder engagement sessions, there was a clear focus on improving awareness of items in surplus. Wesleyan's current system lacks standardization: faculty may have informal infrastructures within their departments to manage surplus items. We recommend exploring the process of streamlining and formalizing surplus and procurement policies to reach all staff, faculty, and departments.

a. **Inter-Departmental Communication:** This system would establish inter-departmental communication and sharing systems across all staff and departments on campus that could be extended for use in a Connecticut-wide sharing system. Staff would be trained on how to request surplus items get picked up, how to request repair services, and how to access items available for reuse.

i. Specialized equipment will be cataloged, and staff can request interdepartmental loans of unique items.

b. **Bulk Purchases:** This system would allow the campus to purchase common items in bulk and distribute them to various departments, therefore cutting down on excess or unnecessary purchases. Explore the need for stockroom expansion.

i. Wesleyan will prioritize companies that offer take-back programs. For example, electronics companies and carpet companies that collect and recycle their products. The Central Surplus facility outlined in Section 1A could have aggregation space for the storage and distribution of centrally managed items.

c. **Digital Asset Management System:** Explore establishing a new digital asset management system to assist faculty, staff, and students in understanding the extent of resources and surplus inventory available on campus. Asset Management Systems allow for more than just digital purchases and

inventory management - they also assist departments with inter-departmental sharing and loaning of equipment and materials.

d. **Addition to Physical Surplus System:** This system would also allow the campus to keep reusable items in use longer by ensuring that used items are distributed before new items are purchased. This would be in addition to the physical surplus system, as a method of digitizing the process of material flow and managing inventory.
e. **Digital Inventory Staff:** Establish student positions to assist in the maintenance and regulation of a digital asset management system.

D. Staffing - Surplus and HRM Management

During the stakeholder engagement process, there was an identified need for hiring additional staff members. As the campus continues to expand and surplus demands increase, these formalized and centralized positions would help manage the material flows of all Scope 1 materials within the surplus warehouse and throughout campus. To expand, stakeholders suggested adding part-time/student internship positions for the digital inventory program and full-time positions to handle the current volume of surplus property.

a. **Part-Time Positions/Student Workers:** Expanding job descriptions beyond the summer months to host repair and education workshops (possibly in collaboration with the Office of Sustainability and Student Housing).
b. **Facility Management:** Management is needed to operate the Central Surplus Facility. Tasks include building management as well as coordination of all the different systems; surplus property, HRM management, research, student interns, etc.
    i. Rotating shifts should be assigned to share the responsibility of managing the facility. At Middlebury College, physical plant employees are required to work two hours per week at the waste sorting facility. A rotation of workers trained in all aspects of surplus will prevent delays due to staff shortages and the loss of knowledge with role turnover.
    ii. The establishment of a point-person position to direct day-to-day operations at the facility.
c. **Value Assessment**: An asset valuer would work with other colleges and centers to assess the value of specialized items and equipment (e.g., analytical instruments). This person would need to be educated in the market of such products, and they would regularly (e.g., annually) assess the value of all specialized items and equipment owned by Wesleyan. This would allow the University to receive the highest value from its technological assets. For example, if a piece of research equipment is obsolete and has little to no resale value, the University can prioritize the recycling of that item instead.
d. **Processing**: Developing a faster timeframe to process surplus items requested for pickup will help to increase participation in this program. Stakeholder conversations identified that timely pick-ups are very important

to a functioning surplus system. This is most important when renovations don't have a clear timeline. The implementation of a digital surplus system, mentioned above in section 1C would greatly aid in this effort.

e. **Repairs**: Furniture and electronics repairs are necessary to obtain the longest lifespan of an item that goes through the systems mentioned above. This would be great for education, research, and student intern opportunities.
f. **Pick Up/Delivery:** Transportation services will require a few team members as well as any vehicles required. They will be responsible for the pick-up/delivery of surplus property and HRM material. They will also aid in the fast processing mentioned above.
g. **Training/Education:** Current staff and faculty, and all new hires would need new training on how to utilize these programs and services. This training would need to be extended to custodial staff and may need to be offered in multiple languages.

E. Physical Infrastructure - WesThrift

Full completion of goals in **Section 1E** would result in:
13 additional points
1.83% increase in Scope 1 Score
0.70% increase in Total Atlas Zero Waste Score

Wesleyan already has a well-established free/thrift store, but it lacks resources for expansion. As more students take advantage of the free store, an increase in staffing and resources can contribute to greater accessibility and opportunities for waste diversion.

a. **Partnerships:** This facility would explore the opportunity to work in collaboration and partnership with the surplus program and WasteNot.
    i. Opportunities for community partnerships include Bikes For Kids in Essex, Connecticut.
b. **Build a Community of Reuse:** The Free Store as a central drop-off location on campus will make these reuse systems attainable and accessible for students, staff, and faculty to empower community reuse. Details of funding, location, staffing, operations, etc. will need to be discussed with stakeholders.
c. **Sharing Shelves Locations:** Items and materials dropped off at "sharing shelves" locations throughout campus will also be transported to the Thrift Store by Sustainability interns and/or federal work-study students.

F. Physical Infrastructure - Standardized Bins and Signage

Full completion of goals in **Section 1F** would result in:
61.5 additional points
8.64% increase in Scope 1 Score
3.33% increase in Total Atlas Zero Waste Score

We suggest establishing a campus-wide standardization system for collection bins and signage. Stakeholders, faculty and staff, and students have all expressed a need for clear, understandable signage to properly dispose of individual waste. Multiple examples of this can be found in PLAN's Case Study Database within

the Member Hub. Here is an example of bins and signage.

a. **Physical Bins and Signage:** Standardization of collection bins and signage is a key component of a successful program in that it allows all campus staff, students, and visitors to clearly understand the expectations that Wesleyan has around properly handling and disposing of all material types.
    i. Standardization would include color and shape coding for bins and universal signage for all collection and drop-off locations for items that are being donated to the campus surplus property program or disposed of via the HRM management system.
b. **Space Requirements:** Be aware of space needed in buildings and establish requirements so we are not replacing loading docks with office spaces or storage spaces. We must make sure we have enough disposal space to allocate for the offices and classrooms in each building. Also, keep exterior spaces open and available for dumpsters and other required disposal and compost bins. Establish permanent spaces for dumpsters for each building.
c. **Outreach and Communication:** Standardization would also include clear outreach and communication strategies to train all staff, faculty, and students on how to use these new systems and what opportunities exist to extend the life of products like repair and maintenance programs, etc. This could be an opportunity for student research and applied learning in communications/messaging/organizational management, etc.
    i. The establishment of a policy for surplus materials to be offered to off-campus organizations if unneeded at the University.
d. **Sharing Shelves:** Standardize and formalize a few "sharing shelves" as donation collection systems in residence halls and department offices. These are locations where students and faculty would be able to regularly drop off or pick up small items, like office supplies, electronics, and household wares. Shelves can be purged or cleaned out monthly, quarterly, or semesterly as needed by Sustainability interns or work-study students, and items can be brought to the Free Store (Section E) as a central management point for these materials.
e. **Centralized Collection:** Establish collection locations in most buildings on campus. The Olin Memorial Library could serve as a potential pilot for this program. Bin standardization through centralized aggregation points would make HRM and surplus programs more accessible to the student body. Waste streams would include E-Waste (e.g., alkaline and lithium batteries, large batteries from items like e-scooters, light bulbs, and common electronics), ink cartridges, lab gloves, etc.
    i. **Models:** Here is an example of an interactive map of HRM collection stations at Emory, E-Waste collection bins at UConn, and styrofoam collection at Georgia Institute of Technology.
f. **Specific Waste Streams**: Certain materials would need collection bins in certain locations on campus for regular pick-up. Wesleyan will need to explore options to lessen contamination and increase pick up of these

materials, such as textiles, sets, and costumes at the Center for Arts (CFA) for theater and art classes. These materials would regularly be brought to the centralized facility and containers.

g. **Construction and Demolition (C&D)**: Wesleyan will explore options for a centralized location for all C&D material aggregation. This location would ideally be the Central Surplus Facility described in Section 1A.
h. **Vendor Research:** Continue research into vendors that collect and recycle Hard-to-Recycle Materials. Maintain backup options if a vendor contract falls through to avoid having to discontinue established collection programs.

G. Policies

Full completion of goals in **Section 1G** would result in:
67.5 additional points
9.48% increase in Scope 1 Score
3.66% increase in Total Atlas Zero Waste Score

During stakeholder engagement sessions, there was a clear focus on establishing a standardized procurement policy that all departments adhere to. We recommend extending procurement policies for campus-wide material handling. In addition, we suggest expanding procurement policy education to new staff/faculty.

a. Wesleyan should consider establishing policies that:
    i. State the campus' expectations for keeping items in use rather than purchasing new items where reasonable.
    ii. Encourage same-type campus departments to practice centralized purchasing for bulk purchase options of commonly procured materials.
    iii. Require all staff and faculty on campus to send items to the surplus program when they are at the end of their use-value for that department:
        1. Establish requirements for how items are sent or listed digitally, the length of time items should be listed, how to price items that are for sale, etc.
    iv. Require staff to check the surplus property system before purchasing new items.
    v. Outline the inter-departmental movement of materials and how materials are managed within the surplus facility.
b. Wesleyan should also strengthen sustainable procurement policies with language prioritizing:
    i. EPEAT Products certified Bronze, Silver, or Gold
    ii. Leased equipment
    iii. Companies with take-back programs
    iv. Repairable products
    v. Refillable ink cartridges over disposable
    vi. Keeping current electronics in use over purchasing new
    vii. Partnering with an electronic waste recycler certified under the e-Stewards and/or the Responsible Recycling (R2) standard

c. While the campus practices many methods of sustainable materials management for construction and demolition projects, we recommend that the campus institutionalize these practices by establishing written policies that:
    i. Prioritize rehabilitating existing buildings over building new ones.
    ii. Prioritize deconstruction over demolition to better salvage and reuse materials.
    iii. Require contractors to use the campus surplus property (for sending salvaged materials and for furnishing new buildings) and electronic waste recycling programs where practical.
    iv. Require all construction project managers to evaluate materials with the surplus property program during the early stages of planning for a new construction project. This would allow the surplus system enough time to plan logistics for large volumes of materials.
    v. Incentivize the use of existing on-campus materials and/or Surplus materials for construction projects.
    vi. Require all in-house construction and renovation projects to recycle or repurpose construction and demolition materials and building fixtures within reason.
    vii. Require contractors and in-house teams to send non-reusable materials from construction and renovation projects for specialized recycling, using the campus' existing collection systems and contracts for hard-to-recycle materials where applicable.

H. Student Engagement

Explore opportunities for student participation in this program:

Full completion of goals in **Section 1H** would result in:
13 additional points
1.83% increase in Scope 1 Score
0.70% increase in Total Atlas Zero Waste Score

a. **Interns & Fellows:** Expand the Eco Facilitator program to encourage student involvement in the development and maintenance of these projects.
    i. Possible projects include: building the digital management system (either researching existing asset management software products or building spreadsheet models that could be managed internally), researching outlets for material reuse and recovery, studying the materials that frequently flow through the facility to research new innovative solutions, managing work-order requests, etc.
    ii. Explore opportunities for student-led DIY workshops: upcycling, creative reuse, make your products, etc.
b. **Orientation**: Explore opportunities to implement a mandatory zero waste orientation for all first-year students to learn about campus sustainable materials management and repair programs, understand where materials go, tour facilities, learn how to get involved, etc.
c. **Classes:** Opportunities for research classes to participate in zero waste initiatives.

i. Academic classes could explore a wide variety of integrative uses of a facility like this:
    1. Projects could include material reuse via art projects and upcycle through the Arts department, developing business plan proposals for material recovery via business classes, sociological or anthropological analysis of discarded materials, philosophical analysis of disposability, architectural analysis of commonly discarded items during construction and renovation, technological analysis of electronics and repair opportunities, sustainability life-cycle analysis of common products, etc.
    2. Identify faculty who can come together to support academic research and engagement.

d. **Resident Hall Sustainability Package:** To aid in zero waste/sustainability education and action, students should be given a starter package when they move in.

Scope 2 - Compost, Dishware, and Bin Standardization

Goal: Establish Campus-Wide Bin Standards, Universal Reusable To-Go Ware Programs, and Procurement Policies that streamline material flow, reduce confusion, and eliminate as much disposable waste as possible. As part of this:

- **Explore options to limit disposable dining ware usage**, such as by offering reusable dining ware to *all* sit-down food service facilities on campus extending the reusable to-go container program, and/or developing a bring-your-own-container program that is universally accepted at all facilities, including third-party vendors, athletics, and events.
- **Pledge to limit single-use plastic and non-essential packaged items** by signing the Break Free From Plastic Campus Pledge, as well as establishing systems for bulk service and bulk purchasing. This pledge is designed to be achievable within the limits of our campus' system. The commitments outlined in this strategic vision fully encompass the commitments necessary to sign this pledge.
- **Establish and communicate sustainable procurement policies** that apply to all departments and vendors on-campus and standardize disposable dining ware procurement to prevent confusion and contamination.
- **Establish campus-wide event guidelines for soft goods material management** and goals and guidelines for zero waste events.

A. Physical Infrastructure - Expand Reusable Dishware and Reusable To-Go Container System

Full completion of goals in **Section 2A & 2B** would result in:
77 additional points
10.81% increase in Scope 2 Score
4.81% increase in Total Atlas Zero Waste Score

Wesleyan has existing programs in Usdan Marketplace and Summerfields dining locations that utilize reusable dining ware and to-go containers. The goal of this section is to expand the capacity of campus dining operations to provide universally accepted reusable to-go containers at all food-service facilities on campus (Example from the University of Vermont) including at WesWings, Red and Black, Cardinal Cafe, Usdan Cafe, Pi Cafe, campus events, and athletics. Reusable to-go containers would allow Wesleyan to eliminate disposable dishware / to-go containers by providing a reuse option for both sit-down and take-out food service at these locations. Refer to PLAN's Reusable to-go Containers + Tracking Apps Database for product breakdowns and comparisons.

a. **Dishwashers:** This program would wash all containers at a central location, and distribute them to all food-service facilities for daily use. Used containers would then be dropped off at collection bins or machines, like Ozzi Collection Machines, distributed around campus (an expansion of the current reusable dish collection bins on campus), and brought to the dishwashing station for sanitization and re-distribution.
    i. Utilize all dishwashing units across campus to clean reusable containers. Increase space at these units for additional storage and drying racks.
        1. If this is not possible, explore options for an outside party to wash increased loads of reusable dishware
b. **Drop-Off Locations:** Establish more collection points for to-go containers and cups drop off stations that are more accessible to participants, particularly for students such as outside of dining halls, and close to dishwasher stations.
c. **Reusables:** Commit to explore cost-effective alternatives to single-use plastic silverware.
    i. As part of the shift to reusable containers, also explore small containers for sauces, condiments and dressings. In dining halls and food-service facilities, switch away from single-use packets to pump containers and bulk-condiment stations.
    ii. Explore packaging prepared foods in reusable containers.
d. **Reduce Food Waste:** Containers uniform in weight and appearance would allow the purchase of bulk food, which reduces food waste.
e. **Vendor Contracts:** Explore establishing new policies to apply to future vendor contracts that require all on-site vendors to follow Wesleyan's reusable to-go ware program. Encourage current on-site vendors to change from disposable dining ware to reusable.

i. Incentivize “bring your own” dishware through discounts at all dining/cafe locations that don't adapt reusables.
ii. Establish policy that all events requiring disposables must use compostables.
iii. Explore opportunities to partner with food trucks and vendors to accept to-go ware and the use of compostables. Especially when bringing food trucks to campus for events.

f. **Mobile App Integration:** All Dining Services should explore expanding reusable container integration with the campus mobile to-go ordering app, MobileOrder, and the mobile tracking system, ReUser. Expansion of ReUser is required to monitor individual usage of reusable to-go containers and incentivize container returns.
g. **Additional Funding:** Set aside additional funding for loss or replacement of reusable to-go ware and explore possibilities of creating on-campus jobs to support the program.

B. Physical Infrastructure - Food Recovery

Full completion of goals in **Section 2B** would result in:
60.5 additional points
5.33% increase in Scope 2 Score
3.28% increase in Total Atlas Zero Waste Score

Wesleyan is participating in food recovery by donating uneaten food from catering services through the student organization Wesleyan Food Rescue. This food is donated to The Eddy Shelter in Middletown. Currently there is no system in place for tracking the amount and types of foods that are recovered and donated, which makes it more difficult to analyze the progress of this partnership. To mitigate these challenges, Wesleyan will work towards exploring opportunities to establish paid student positions within these organizations for continued success and duration of their progress.

a. **Limit Food Waste:** Further develop policies to limit food waste, similar to practices already in place like auditing food purchases or donating leftover ingredients from dining to catering. Work with a committee led by Dining to explore these.
    i. Explore opportunities to reduce food waste by establishing formal production and consumption auditing processes - like monitoring portion controls- or implementing a program like LeanPath.
    ii. Establish a stronger communication system between Bon Appetit and the Food Recovery Program to coordinate food recovery needs before large events.
b. **Coordination Support:** While the program can function with volunteer support, key staff roles should be compensated for coordination roles (establishing packaging, and storage standards distribution to community locations, general coordination of shifts and roles).
c. **Location:** Identify permanent space for food donation processing management.
d. **Student Education:** Expand the “Clean Plate Challenge” engagement program.

e. **Tracking:** Begin tracking what food and how much food is donated from Bon Appetit to the community partners.
f. **Student Resources:** Obtain funding for more refrigerators and microwaves for student use.
    i. **Food Security Cooler:** Explore opportunities to make leftover food available to people on campus who are food insecure, by establishing a food security cooler where packaged leftovers are made available to anyone on campus for free, like at the University of Southern Maine.
g. **Community Partnerships:** Search for more organizations in the community to establish partnerships with to accept donated food when it cannot be used on-campus following the model that the Food Recovery Network has established with dozens of campuses in the US.
h. **Digital Group Alerts:** Set up a system (Google Groups, Facebook, Email) where messages can be sent out to inform all in the group that leftover food from an event is available on campus.

C. Physical Infrastructure - Compost Collection

Full completion of goals in **Section 2C** would result in:
81.5 additional points
7.18% increase in Scope 2 Score
4.41% increase in Total Atlas Zero Waste Score

Wesleyan works with compost waste hauler Blue Earth to manage all of its compostable waste. All residential and dining hall food waste is sent to an industrial anaerobic digestion facility, Quantum Biopower in Southington, CT. The Residential stream is maintained by the Eco-Facilitators and Compost Interns of the Sustainability office. Public composting (Usdan Cafe, Pi Cafe, etc.) is sent to an industrial composting facility, 360 Recycling in Westfield, MA. Composting is not available in most academic buildings, administrative offices, or athletics. This effort would establish these composting programs in all locations on campus and increase communications surrounding them.

Wesleyan will explore expansion of campus-wide compost collection for public-facing bins in residence halls, academic buildings, athletic facilities, and pop-up collection for major events. To be able to expand collection efforts, Wesleyan will explore possible projects to expand on campus composting at long lane farms and improve funding and organization of maintenance for the industrial and residential compost streams.

a. **Campus Wide Collections:** Expand compost collection to all residence halls, athletics facilities, and buildings across campus, as well as pop-up events and any other area where food is served.
    i. Expansion of eco facilitator role to oversee compost in program housing

ii. Work with individual buildings and departments, not just commercial partners, to ensure post-consumer compost is collected.
iii. Need for more janitorial staff to extend industrial stream compost
iv. Establish an online system to request a compost bin for special events

b. **Compostable Products:** Switch all disposable products (that haven't already been switched to reusable) to compostable products for proper disposal in Wesleyan Dining operated facilities. Assess all currently purchased compostable products and make recommendations to procurement.
c. **Vendor Policy:** Establish a policy to require vendors to utilize only reusable and/or compostable dining ware at their locations. This may not be possible for current vendor contracts that are already in place, but should be established as a requirement for all future RFP processes and applied to the execution of all new vendor contracts. This will continue to ensure that the compost stream is uncontaminated with single-use disposable plastics coming from campus vendors.
d. **Research and Education:** This facility would be the physical location of both the handling and processing of all compostable products as well as the laboratory for materials assessments, educational tours, workshops open to students and the public, and the field-site for student intern projects, capstone research, grad student and PhD research.
e. **Bucket Program:** The Sustainability office provides on-demand residential and office composting services through free bucket or jar rentals. Expanding participation to all locations on campus, including offices, would greatly increase the amount of organic waste diversion.
f. **Personnel and Training:** Add personnel to collect compost during and after athletic events or establish an "on call" eco facilitator role to service this Provide campus-wide training for custodial staff.

D. Physical Infrastructure - Standardized Bins and Signage

Establish a campus-wide standardization system for collection bins and signage.

Full completion of goals in **Section 2D** would result in:
56.25 additional points
4.96% increase in Scope 2 Score
3.05% increase in Total Atlas Zero Waste Score

Currently there are no standard regulations for garbage and recycling bins on campus beyond Usdan and Exley, which creates confusion on the purposes of each bin. This then leads to staff and students disposing of their items incorrectly, leading to contamination issues within the trash and recycling streams. To eliminate this confusion and contamination we suggest that the University establishes a campus wide standardization system for collection bins and signage.

a. **Bin Standardization:** These standards would cover bin color and shape for commonly collected streams like compost, recycle, and landfill, like the

existing ones in Usdan and Exley, and be applied to bins in all academic buildings, offices, admissions, and athletics.

b. **Centralized Collection Locations and Campus Wide Streamlining:** This would include campus-wide streamlining and expansion of current and new collection streams outlined in this Vision as well as a switch to "centralized" collection locations in the lobbies or central hallways of residence halls, athletics facilities, and most major buildings on campus for items like trash, recycling, compost, reusable to-go ware collection, and in some cases liquids in order to reduce weight and the risk of spills in the previously mentioned streams.
    i. Expand "mini-bin" collection system for all offices and deskside receptacles. Require all staff to bring items placed in mini-bins to centralized collection stations and limit the labor needed for custodial teams to enter offices.
    ii. Mini-bin collection systems and liquid collection systems have both been documented to save costs (reduction in daily use of trash bag liners) and establish efficiency of labor efforts for the expansion of other collection streams. Here are case studies of mini-bin programs and liquid collection systems.
    iii. Establish compost collection in bathrooms and labs for items like paper towels.
    iv. Expand the number of bins provided to students that live in residence halls. Students are currently offered just a recycling bin, which many use only as a trash bin. Offer students color-coded trash, recycling and compost bins.
c. **Procurement Policies:** Bin standards would be outlined in procurement policies so that bins across all departments on campus are identical in color and signage.
    i. Template with options to customize signs for individual types of buildings.
    ii. Continue partnerships with Waste Management to better understand where contamination issues are coming from and what locations are facing contamination issues to better support education and re-evaluate bins and signage in those locations.
d. **Back-of-House Management:** Also included in this process would be guidance on bin standardization for back-of-house systems management and the length of time collected materials should be handled - in order to mitigate smells and pests.
e. **Student Education:** Increased education and/or required course for first year and all continued dorm residents around bin use and proper waste disposal on campus.
f. **Roll-Out:** After procurement policies are established and as materials across campus are streamlined to reduce confusion and the risk of contamination, establish a plan to roll out new bins and signage across campus. Include in the plan details on bins in classrooms, offices, event spaces, and all other

campus locations. An example roll-out process from University of Michigan can be found here.

E. Staffing - Dishwashing and Compost Collection

Increased capacity for reusable to-go containers and compost collection will likely require additional staffing needs. This applies to the existing Eco-to-Go system established at Summerfields and Usdan, as well as expanding into other dining locations.

a. **Reusable to-go Containers:** Expand staffing capacity for dishwashing and collection of reusable to-go containers from across campus.
b. **Streamlined Workflows:** Explore how streamlined workflows and efficiency management could free up staff capacity to increase collection streams for items like composting and dish collection. For example, switching to a mini bin system in offices and classrooms would result in significantly less time needed for staff to collect small bins from hundreds of locations. This would also reduce the cost of bag liners for all of those locations.
    i. Explore opportunities to work with Bon Appetit to review and possibly renegotiate custodial contracts to include these new systems in collection services.
    ii. Add personnel to collect compost during and after athletic events.
    iii. Provide campus-wide training for custodial staff.

F. Procurement Policy - Environmentally Preferable Purchasing

Full completion of goals in **Section 2F (G)** would result in:
202.5 additional points
17.85% increase in Scope 2 Score
10.97% increase in Total Atlas Zero Waste Score

Establish policies that apply to all food-service facilities, campus departments, and vendors that state preferences for the following criteria. Lack of standard procurement policy has caused compost contamination and confusion among students and faculty.

a. **Packing and Product Standards:** Packaging and product standards made from compostable materials or post-consumer recycled content.
b. **Disposable Merchandise:** A restriction on disposable merchandise in favor of products that are durable and reusable, similar to the University of Massachusetts Lowell.
c. **Bulk Purchasing:** Bulk purchasing and the elimination of individually wrapped single-serve items (napkins, oyster crackers, individually wrapped fresh baked goods, mints, toothpicks, etc.).
d. **Reduce Packaging Waste:** Working with producers and partners to reduce waste from packaging.

e. **Communal Cleaning Supplies:** Bulk, communal cleaning supplies in residence halls that can be shared between students when needed.
f. **Paper Towels:** Maintain the use of paper towels in bathrooms and labs but establish requirements for compost collection systems in those locations to collect paper towels.

G. Events Infrastructure and Policies

Establish event policies and infrastructure logistics for zero waste events.

a. **Reusable Dishware at Campus Events:** Establish a process for how campus events of all sizes and budgets can access reusable dishware or to-go ware.
    i. Explore opportunities for student orgs to rent or check-out reusable dishware kits for their events.
b. **Vendors and Caterers:** Establish zero waste guidelines for bringing vendors and caterers to campus.
    i. Explore reusable or compostable alternatives to single-use plastic silverware and dining ware.
    ii. Ensure that the same zero waste requirements that apply to on-campus vendors also apply to outside vendors so that they do not receive a cost advantage, especially with catering.
    iii. Establish zero waste suggestions and guidelines for bringing vendors and caterers to campus, as well as local restaurants to support with a heavy focus on BIPOC-owned locations and supporting local food - regardless of packaging. Model after the MAC College Equity Purchasing guide.
c. **Event Policies:** Develop zero waste event policies, guidelines and resources that clearly explain how all members of campus (student organizations, campus departments, visitors) can host a zero waste event.
    i. RSVP system to plan out food and materials to prevent as much waste or excess as possible

H. Student & Staff Engagement

Create mandatory courses and training to educate and orient all students and staff to the campus's materials management infrastructure and practices. Require an in-person orientation event for first years. This section is in addition to the areas of this vision where student positions are named and strategies for engaging students and staff are outlined.

a. **Establish Educational Resources:** Establish accessible, educational resources for students and staff to learn about campus sustainability
    i. Require new students and staff to take a campus sustainability course that focuses on waste management. Ensure these sessions are available in multiple languages for accessibility purposes and that they are consistent with all student, staff, and faculty training. This course will include:

1. How to properly dispose of HRMs, recyclables, compost, and trash
2. How to donate appliances and clothes
3. Facilities and student organizations on campus that offer repair or donation services
4. Reoccuring zero waste events such as move-in and move-out
5. Resources to learn about Wesleyan's waste management

b. **Mandatory Training for New Employees:** Explore implementing mandatory training for new employees to provide education on waste management and reduction efforts on campus. This would create cohesion and increase interdepartmental communication. Ensure these sessions are available in multiple languages for accessibility purposes and that they are consistent with all student, staff, and faculty training.
c. **Student Recruitment:** Develop strategies to better advertise and recruit students for Wesleyan Housing and Dining employment with an emphasis on its importance to sustainability.
d. **Student Organizations:** Explore expanding collaboration between campus student orgs and the Wesleyan Sustainability Office for educational events and to keep up student engagement throughout the year.

This vision was compiled by Lyah Muktavaram '26 and Dani Eforo '25, Zero Waste Interns - with support from Jenn Kleindienst and the Sustainability Office.The release of this Strategic Vision represents the culmination of Lyah and Dani's Stage 2 Fellowship with the Zero Waste Atlas project of the Post-Landfill Action Network (PLAN).

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Wesleyan University Atlas Scoresheet

		Points Earned	Points Possible	Points Left to Earn: Points Remaining	Points Left to Earn: % of Scope Score*	Points Left to Earn: % of Total Score*	Strategic Vision Section
	Scope 1: Surplus Property & HRM	**447**	**712**	**265**	**37.22%**	**14.35%**	
	Surplus Property	**108**	**214**	**106**	**49.53%**	**5.74%**	
	Surplus Program Policies & Communication	25	55	30	4.21%	1.62%	1G
	Surplus Program & Managed Materials	33	81	48	6.74%	2.60%	1A (B, C, D)
	Reuse & Repair of Departmental Surplus Items	13	28	15	2.11%	0.81%	1A (B, C, D)
	Reuse & Sharing of Student Items	37	50	13	1.83%	0.70%	1E, 1H
	Hard to Recycle Materials (HRM)	**102**	**179**	**77**	**43.02%**	**4.17%**	
	HRM from Specialized Facilities	67.5	117	49.5	6.95%	2.68%	1A (B, C, D)
	HRM Aggregation & Collection Point Accessibility	34.5	62	27.5	3.86%	1.49%	1F
	Construction & Renovation	**40.5**	**63**	**22.5**	**35.71%**	**1.22%**	
	Construction & Renovation Policies	40.5	63	22.5	3.16%	1.22%	1G
	Electronic Waste	**140.5**	**191**	**50.5**	**26.44%**	**2.73%**	
	Policy Requiring Staff to Send E-Waste to Surplus/Recycling	13.5	21	7.5	1.05%	0.41%	1G
	Procurement Policies for Purchase, Takeback & Recycling	16.5	24	7.5	1.05%	0.41%	1G
	Electronics Repair & Recycling	71.5	82	10.5	1.47%	0.57%	1A (B, C, D)
	E-Waste Collection Infrastructure	39	64	25	3.51%	1.35%	1F
	Hazardous Materials	**56**	**65**	**9**	**13.85%**	**0.49%**	
	Hazardous Waste Collection & Management	56	65	9	1.26%	0.49%	1F

		Points Earned	Points Possible	Points Left to Earn: Points Remaining	Points Left to Earn: % of Scope Score*	Points Left to Earn: % of Total Score*	Strategic Vision Section
	Scope 2: Compost, Food, and Plastics	**628**	**1134.5**	**506.5**	**44.65%**	**27.43%**	
	Purchasing & Policies	**285.5**	**480**	**194.5**	**17.14%**	**10.53%**	
	Adherence to Campus Procurement Policies	133.5	185	51.5	4.54%	2.79%	2F (G)
	Policies That Favor Bulk Products Over Single-Use	94	168	74	6.52%	4.01%	2F (G)
	Institutionalizing Zero Waste Goals & Plans	24	66	42	3.70%	2.27%	2F (G)
	Paper Reduction & Reuse Initiatives	34	61	27	2.38%	1.46%	2F (G)
	Compost/Recycling & Bin System	**149.75**	**279**	**129.25**	**11.39%**	**7.00%**	
	Composting Program	23	37	14	1.23%	0.76%	2C
	Compostable Dining Ware & Disposables	24.5	92	67.5	5.95%	3.66%	2C
	Bin Standardization	63.75	106	42.25	3.72%	2.29%	2D
	Recycling	38.5	44	5.5	0.48%	0.30%	2D
	Reusable Dining and To-Go Ware	**108.25**	**230.5**	**122.25**	**10.78%**	**6.62%**	
	Accessibility Policy	5	10	5	0.44%	0.27%	2F (G)
	Reusable Dining Ware at Sit-Down Eateries	44.25	77.5	33.25	2.93%	1.80%	2A (E)
	Reusable To-Go Ware Program	28.5	97	68.5	6.04%	3.71%	2A (E)
	Hydration Station Availability	17	20	3	0.26%	0.16%	2F (G)
	BYO Program	8	12	4	0.35%	0.22%	2A (E)
	Collection Locations for To-Go Ware	5.5	14	8.5	0.75%	0.46%	2D
	Food Waste Reduction & Food Recovery	**84.5**	**145**	**60.5**	**5.33%**	**3.28%**	
	Food Recovery Program	22.5	76	53.5	4.72%	2.90%	2B
	Food Waste Reduction Initiatives & Education	62	69	7	0.62%	0.38%	2B

KEY to Color Coding	
	HIGH PRIORITY: ≥2.5% of total points remaining
	MED PRIORITY: 1.0-2.5% of total points remaining
	LOW PRIORITY: ≤1.0% of total points remaining

	Additional Credit	**40.75**	**170**
	Additional Credit - Surplus Sharing Initiatives	2	8
	Additional Credit - Hard-to-Recycle Material	4.5	14
	Additional Credit - Hard Goods Reuse	6	9
	Additional Credit - Reusable Dishware, To-Go Ware, BYO	8.5	66
	Additional Credit - Food Recovery & Waste Minimization	0.5	12
	Additional Credit - Compost	0.75	7.5
	Additional Credit - Education	16	31
	Additional Credit - Soft Goods Policies	0	5
	Additional Credit - Liquid Collection	2.5	17.5

Strategic Vision Section	Gap Points	Percent of Scope Score	Percent of Total Score
1A (B, C, D)	123	17.28%	6.66%
1E, 1H	13	1.83%	0.70%
1F	61.5	8.64%	3.33%
1G	67.5	9.48%	3.66%
2A (2E)	101.75	8.97%	5.51%
2B	60.5	5.33%	3.28%
2C	81.5	7.18%	4.41%
2D	56.25	4.96%	3.05%
2F (G)	202.5	17.85%	10.97%