

TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS

2022 SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

PREPARED BY THE TRAVIS COUNTY SUSTAINABILITY TEAM



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Travis County's FY22 Annual Sustainability Report.

Every year sustainability becomes more important to the way in which we carry out business of government and serve the evolving, long-term needs of the residents of Travis County. Sustainability is a measure of our ability to consciously maintain or support a process continuously over time - or adapt to changing conditions. From a governmental operational and policy perspective, sustainability describes our efforts to prevent the depletion of natural or physical resources, so that they will remain available for future generations. The sustainability principle requires organizations to transform every aspect of their business in the face of a rapidly changing global environment. Sustainability must be a fundamental component in our county strategies to serve the public today as well as for posterity.

The intent of this report is to provide an overview of Sustainability efforts and performance across county operations including energy and water usage, waste diversion and recycling, transportation, and other county policies and practices. Sustainability for us represents our capacity to manage, maintain, and improve current environmental, economic, and social structures over time. Sustainability is also a critical element in developing resiliency in the face of climate change.

FY22 was a period in which we slowly began to emerge from the worst of the COVID19 pandemic. We continued to adapt our working environment and practices to minimize exposure of employees and the public to COVID infection, while continuing to deliver essential services. Many of our sustainability operations were constrained by unprecedented supply chain issues or staffing shortages. Post-COVID inflation affected supplies, services, and budgets. Wild fluctuations in commodity prices affected recycling, waste management, and environmentally preferable purchasing programs. Many of our key collaborators faced significant staffing shortages. Nevertheless, we had noteworthy sustainability successes as described in this report.

Collaboration and coordination are essential to our successes. We continue to enjoy excellent support from Facilities Management Department, the Office of Emergency Services, the Purchasing Office, Planning and Budget Office, and the offices of our Travis County Commissioners, and many others. We look forward to continuing these valuable relationships.

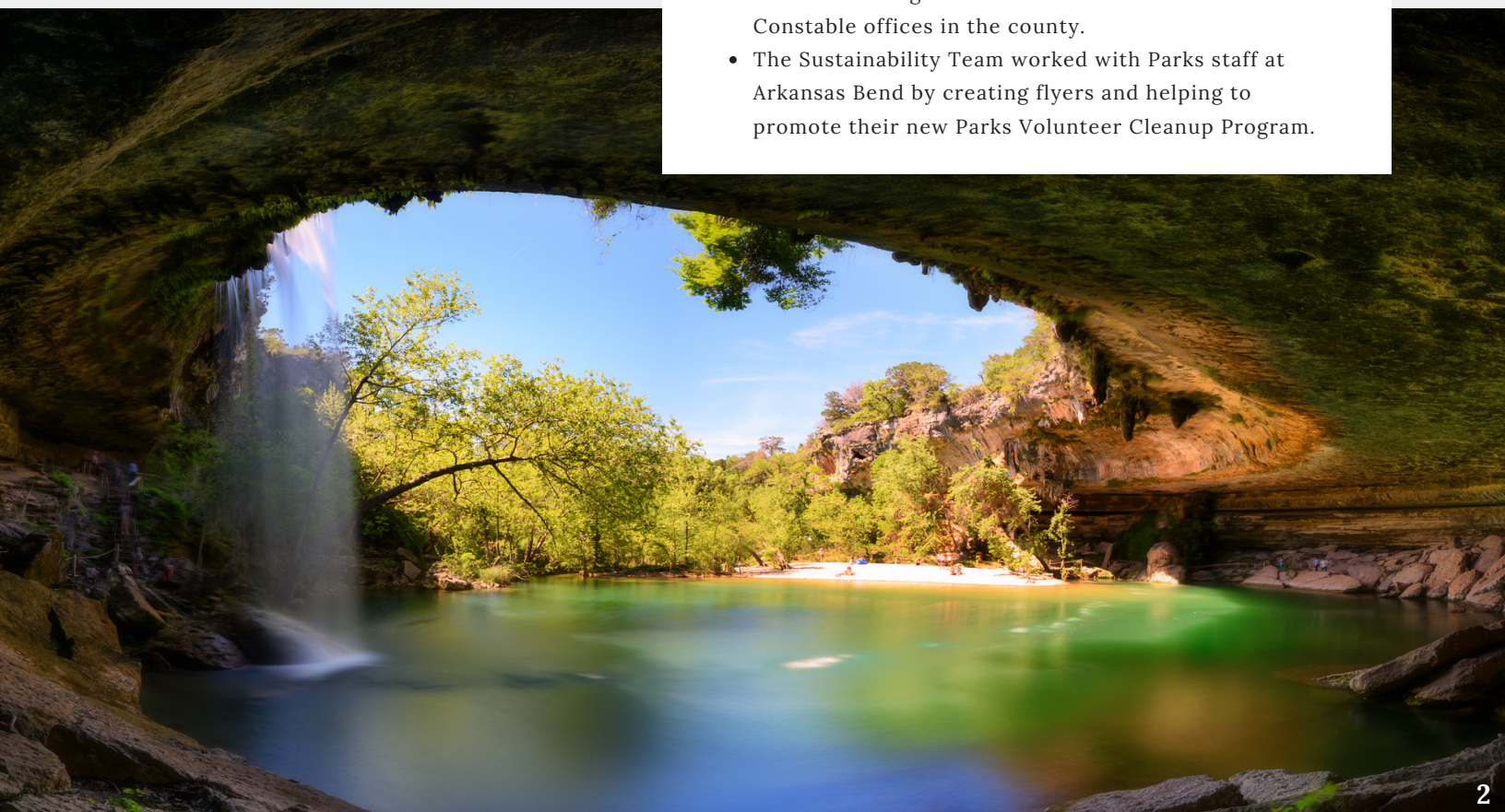
Thank you to all those who contributed to the figures, success stories, and information within this report. Sustainability is an organization-wide effort, and these results would not be possible without countless county employees helping to drive positive change day in and day out.

Sincerely,

Jon A. White
Director, Natural Resources & Environmental Quality Division
Travis County Transportation & Natural Resources Department

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Sustainability Team hired a new Project Manager, Environmental Specialist Senior, and Environmental Technician who focus on sustainable business practices for Travis County internal operations.
- The Community Resiliency Team hired a new Project Manager and Environmental Specialist Senior who focus on climate resiliency for Travis County residents.
- The new Civil Family Court Facility, constructed under a Green Energy Plan, is a prime example of Travis County's dedication to energy conservation, sustainable waste diversion, and water conservation. Having been equipped with a purple pipe system, the county could save millions of gallons of potable water once online.
- The Gardner Betts Composting Program has grown by 1,200% since its inception in FY21.
- Sharps containers have been distributed to all five Travis County Constable offices, and vendor training has been made available to assist the officers with the proper handling and disposal of sharps.
- Online Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) training reached 1,566 employees in FY22, which is more employees than ever within a fiscal year.
- Permanent drug kiosks have been added to all five Constable offices in the county.
- The Sustainability Team worked with Parks staff at Arkansas Bend by creating flyers and helping to promote their new Parks Volunteer Cleanup Program.



CLIMATE ACTION PLAN UPDATES

The FY22 Sustainability Report focuses on short term priorities outlined in the Climate Action Plan.

FOCUS AREA	ACTIVITY	STATUS
Energy	Increase temperature range to use less A/C	Implementation has started. FMD is adding Building Automation Systems (e.g., temperature control) to three buildings per year.
Energy	Monitor and manage energy use (turn out lights, install additional occupancy sensors, etc.)	Many of the buildings' equipment has been replaced by energy efficient equipment, and FMD will continue this process on an annual basis. Additionally, FMD has also begun utilizing Green Energy Plans for their new buildings, such as the new Civil Family Court Facility.
Energy	Engage employees about energy costs and conservation (light switch signs and other tools to encourage conservation)	Implementation has started. 'Lights Out Texas' banner on Travis Central was created to educate employees about energy conservation and light pollution. The banner is displayed as a reminder twice a year during peak bird migration periods.
Organizational Culture and Process Improvement	Update space standards to use smaller, shared spaces to encourage teleworking and office hoteling	Implementation has started; waiting to receive final recommendations from Deloitte.

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN UPDATES

FOCUS AREA	ACTIVITY	STATUS
Organizational Culture and Process Improvement	Install more water bottle filling stations and encourage reusable bottle use	Implementation has started. FMD has added water bottle filling stations in newly constructed buildings.
Organizational Culture and Process Improvement	Communicate organizational goals on Travis Central – more information about existing programs and goals	Implementation has started. ITS has been digitizing county processes and replacing paper forms with electronic alternatives. All HR forms have been digitized.
Purchasing/ Procurement	Develop a webpage or reuse platform for county resources and supplies (office supplies, computer equipment, and other small items)	Implementation started but has been put on hold until county office-based operations return to a more normal state. Reuse resources for employees will be created and posted on Travis Central.
Transportation/Fuel Response	Streamline telecommuting process and provide more acceptance/support for telecommuting	Implementation has started; waiting to receive final recommendations from Deloitte.

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN UPDATES

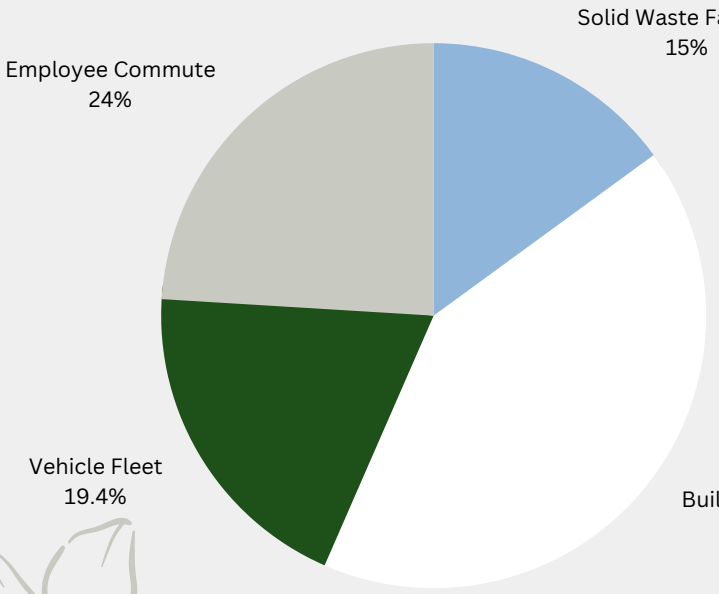
FOCUS AREA	ACTIVITY	STATUS
Waste/Recycling	Don't have trash cans in every office – centralized recycling and waste collection	FMD has started to implement centralized recycling and waste areas in their newer buildings (i.e., Civil Family Courts Facility).
Waste/Recycling	Provide more information on what can be recycled and regular reminders to recycle- Travis Central	Implementation has started. Earth Day banner on Travis Central was created to educate employees about conservation and recycling. Annual reminders will be sent to employees. With the start of re-integration back to the office buildings, the new Sustainability Team has started to have more hands-on involvement with disposal efforts, including educating staff and distributing materials for recycling and universal waste. The Sustainability Team has also been utilizing the Green Team meetings to educate employees on waste disposal practices.
Waste/Recycling	Have custodians collect recycling in all buildings (not just trash)	Implementation has started. FMD collects deskside recycling in most county buildings. Employees who have sensitive documents to recycle utilize Iron Mountain. 193 tons of confidential paper was shredded and recycled through Iron Mountain in FY22.

GREENHOUSE GAS (GHG) INVENTORY

Travis County saw overall GHG emissions drop by 6% – largely due to the implementation of better energy efficiency practices in our buildings and facilities, as well as the continuation of employees working from home and utilizing more hybrid vehicles in the county. While the county saw emissions decrease by 29% for buildings and facilities, emissions increased by 16% for vehicle fleet, 19% for employee commute, and 7% for solid waste.

We believe this decrease in building and facilities emissions is largely attributed to employees learning more about energy costs and conservation, and applying this knowledge to ensure lights are turned off when they leave work for the day, increasing temperature range to use less A/C when no one is in the building, etc. Because many employees have returned to work in some hybrid capacity, it makes sense that vehicle fleet, employee commute, and solid waste emissions have all increased. It is unclear as to why the increase in solid waste was so significant in FY22, but we believe the reporting methods are now more accurate than they have been in the past.

Although overall emissions dropped, there is still a great deal of work to be done to continue to lower emissions and achieve a net zero emissions goal by the end of the decade.

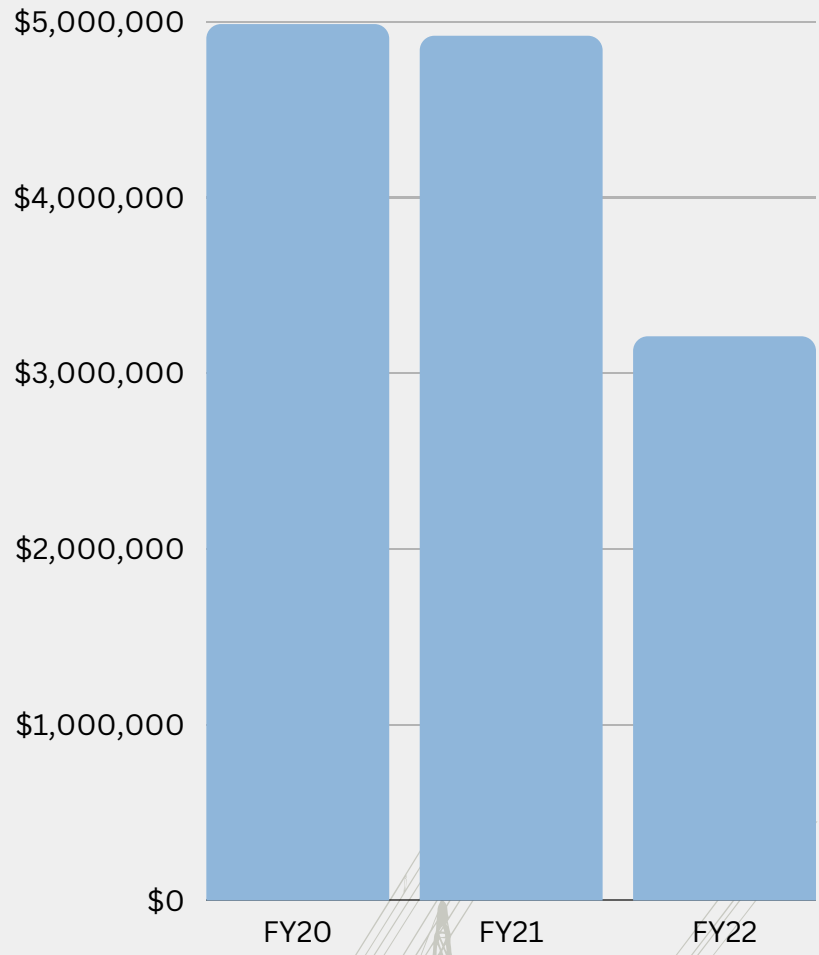


40,306 Metric Tons CO2e in FY22

SECTOR	FY20 CO2e	FY21 CO2e	FY22 CO2e
Buildings & Facilities	22,775	23,700	16,762
Vehicle Fleet	9,757	6,768	7,825
Employee Commute	9,289	8,168	9,687
Solid Waste	4,737	4,404	6,032
Total	46,281	43,040	40,306

ENERGY

Cost of Electricity, FY20-FY22



ELECTRICITY

Electricity consumption decreased by 38% between FY21 and FY22. In FY22, the county saved roughly $1,710,000 in electricity costs compared to FY21 spending. This is especially impressive when considering that most employees were still exclusively teleworking in FY21. With fewer employees in buildings, temperatures could be adjusted to conserve resources. In addition, the chiller in the Exposition Center was shut off for months in FY22 due to replacement and maintenance work.

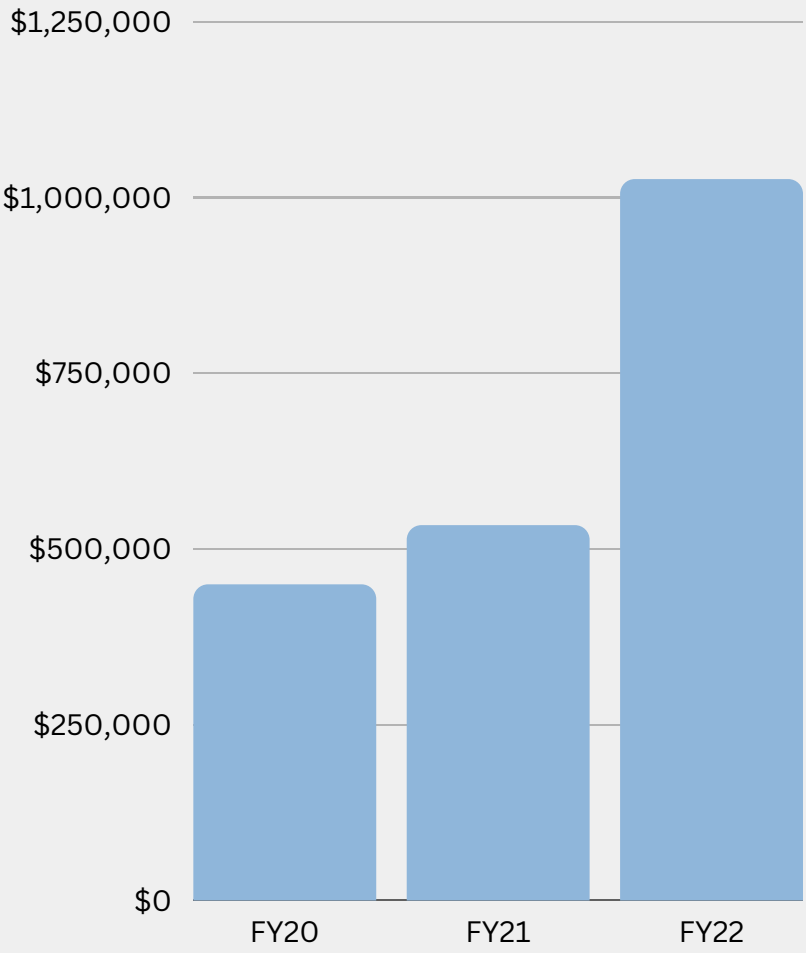
As stated in the previous section, it appears that employees have learned more about energy costs and conservation and have applied this knowledge towards keeping energy use and costs down.

FY2022 Electricity:

- **Usage (kWh): 33,617,013**
- **Cost: $3,206,608**
- **Usage Per Capita (kWh): 6,053**
- **Cost Per Employee: $577**

ENERGY

Cost of Gas, FY20-FY22



The Henry Hub is the major distribution hub of natural gas in the United States. It interconnects with nine interstate and four intrastate pipelines, and it is used as the pricing point for natural gas futures contracts traded on the New York Mercantile Exchange (NYMEX) and the OTC swaps traded on Intercontinental Exchange (ICE).

NATURAL GAS

Natural gas usage increased by 50% between FY21 and FY22, resulting in a $492k cost increase. More employees are returning to the office on a hybrid or full-time basis. This could be a reason for this large increase in usage. Additionally, Travis County added facilities in FY22.

While the cost increase is partially attributed to the increase in usage, natural gas prices also spiked throughout the United States in 2022. According to the United States Energy Information Administration in a post titled "Average cost of wholesale U.S. natural gas in 2022 highest since 2008":

The 2022 average Henry Hub real natural gas spot price increased over 53% from 2021, the fourth-largest year-over-year increase in natural gas prices on record, behind only 2000, 2003, and 2021. On a daily basis, the Henry Hub spot natural gas price ranged from $3.46/MMBtu to $9.85/MMBtu, reflecting significant day-to-day price changes.

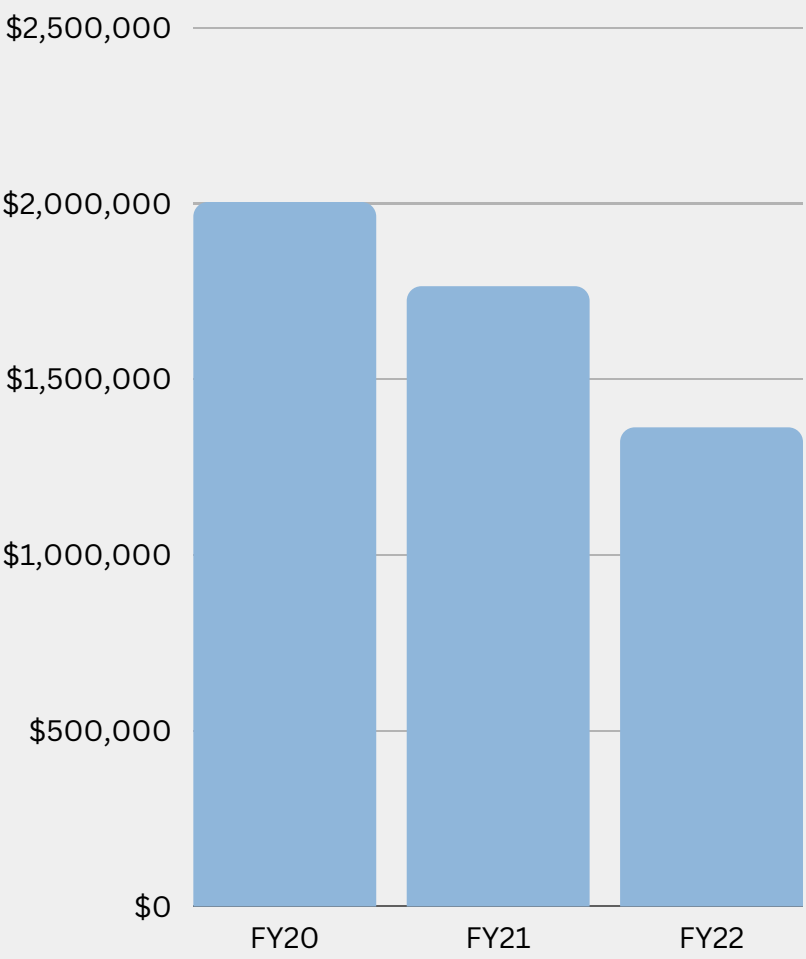
During the first quarter of 2022, declining U.S. natural gas production due to production freeze-offs in January and February and high net withdrawals of natural gas from storage caused the natural gas price to increase. Continued high demand for U.S. liquefied natural gas (LNG) exports in Europe and rising, weather-driven demand for natural gas in the United States.

Although the natural gas prices spiking in 2022 is not in our control, what is in our control is how much natural gas we use. It will be investigated further as to why our usage increased so much between FY21 and FY22. Hopefully we can better understand the reason for the increase and work towards lowering our gas usage in the upcoming fiscal year.

FY22 Gas:

- **Usage (ft3): 63,504,342**
- **Cost: $1,025,242**
- **Usage Per Capita (ft3): 11,434**
- **Cost Per Employee: $185**

WATER





Water consumption decreased by 17% between FY21 and FY22, resulting in roughly $401k in savings. The reason for such a decrease is unclear considering employees were returning to the office on a hybrid basis in FY22. Perhaps, as seen with electricity consumption, employees have become more conscious of their water usage and are practicing better conservation habits.

FY22 Water:

- **Usage (gal): 105,188,840**
- **Cost: $1,361,358**
- **Usage Per Capita (gal): 18,939**
- **Cost Per Employee: $245**

RECYCLING & WASTE DIVERSION

MEASURE	FY20	FY21	FY22
Capacity Diversion Rate	28%	31%	29%
Overall Disposal- Single-Stream Recycling	1,644 tons	2,218 tons	2,749 tons
Single-Stream Recycling Services Cost	$116,717	$103,473	$114,160
Overall Disposal- Landfill	6,862 tons	7,431 tons	10,179 tons
Landfill Dumpster Services Cost	$304,822	$343,988	$382,661
Total Landfill Cost	$320,678	$366,722	$411,064

Travis County's diversion rate of 29% still lags behind the national average of 31% and the local average of 42%. The good news is, we are continuing to improve the way we collect data to improve accuracy. Furthermore, our haulers are improving the way they report data. For example, we now have a hauler who has implemented the use of scales on their trucks so that the actual weight of collected material is recorded. We still have some haulers who do not have scales on their collection vehicles, and report only estimates of what is collected. This method may cause discrepancies as it pertains to data analysis, considering that landfill disposal still is, and past recycling metrics were based off estimates of container sizes. Landfill dumpsters may not be full when they are collected, but the numbers show as if the containers are 100% full. We will further investigate this diversion rate in future reports, and hopefully in turn increase our diversion efforts considerably.

Our efforts to compost brush have not been accounted for in previous reports. This report does include the pounds of brush we composted through one of our vendors, and this alone improved our diversion rate from 27% to 29% in FY22.

The Sustainability team also conducted dumpster audits in FY22 of downtown facilities and worked with the vendor to ensure that all sites were in compliance with our current recycling contract. Inaccurate quantities of recycling containers, sizing discrepancies, contamination, and inadequate signage were all noted and corrected with the vendor.

We were also able to add two new Travis County facilities to our recycling schedule; The new tax office at Ridgepoint Drive, as well as the new tax substation.



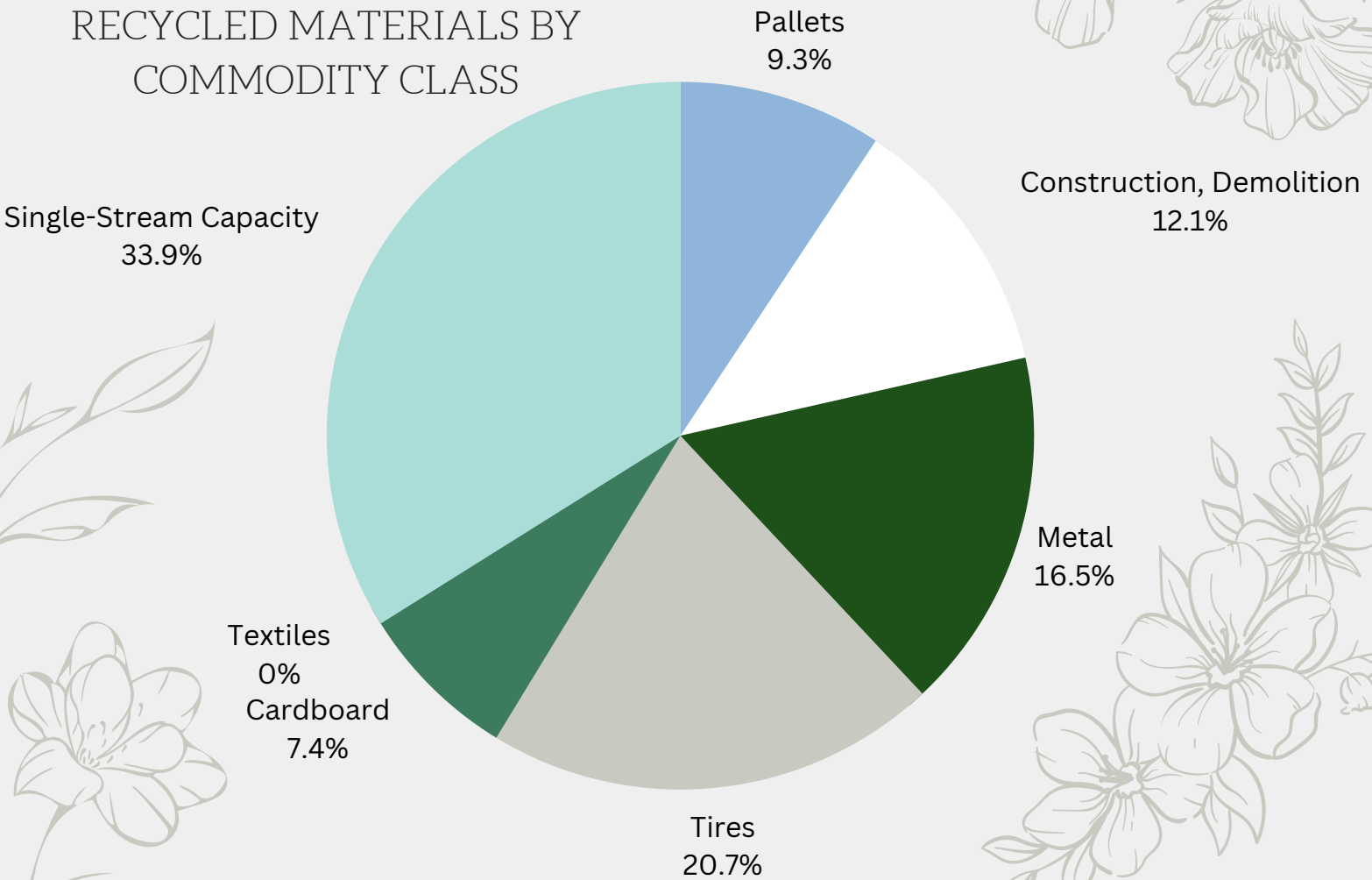
RECYCLING & WASTE DIVERSION

In FY21 and FY22, the Sustainability team reduced overall single stream recycling collection services due to decreased demand since many employees are continuing to telework. There has not been an equal reduction in trash service, so the disparity between recycling collection and trash collection continues to widen. Landfill costs increased between FY21 and FY22 due to overloaded container fees, higher disposal of uncompacted trash, and additional lock bars, casters, and one-time use roll-offs (used for large community events or to remove a large amount of waste).

In addition to the scheduled recycling services, we continue to support county operations by assisting other groups and departments with relevant purchases, disposal assistance, and material distribution. In FY22, we purchased new stickers for the park recycling bins at Arkansas Bend and bailing wire for the cardboard baler at the Del Valle correctional complex. We also assisted a minimum of five departments to dispose of numerous different items from cell phones, paint totes, cleaning chemicals, etc., and assisted a minimum of eleven departments to supply them with disposal materials and recycling containers.

The Sustainability Team are also active State of Texas Alliance for Recycling (STAR) members. STAR is a registered 501c3 nonprofit on a mission to advance recycling through partnerships, education, and advocacy for the benefit of Texas. They work to help recycling professionals, educate the public and lawmakers, expand access to recycling, develop infrastructure, and grow recycling markets in Texas.

FY22 WEIGHT PERCENTAGES OF RECYCLED MATERIALS BY COMMODITY CLASS



RECYCLING & WASTE DIVERSION

COMPOSTING (lbs.)	FY20	FY21	FY22
Jail Garden Composting	37,200	23,760	42,729
Animal Composting	71,320	75,280	47,708
Juvenile Probation Kitchen Composting	N/A	7,348	95,471
Brush Composting	N/A	N/A	580,492

SUCCESS STORY: JUVENILE PROBATION COMPOSTING

In March 2021, Gardner Betts Juvenile Center started composting both pre-consumer (e.g., food waste from the kitchen) and post-consumer (e.g., food waste and compostable napkins leftover from meals) items. According to Gardner Betts staff, 99% of their compost is from food waste. A large portion of this food waste is actually from the kitchen staff peeling their own fresh fruit (watermelons, pineapple, etc.).

This initiative involved training Gardner Betts kitchen staff as well as working with Correctional Officers to educate students who eat meals provided by the kitchen. Signs were created to help students identify which items to put in the green compost buckets, and which items to put in the trash bins. These signs are posted in every dining area directly on the wall behind the compost buckets and trash bins.

Between FY21 (when the program began) and FY22, the number of pounds composted and diverted from the landfill increased from 7,348 lbs. to 95,471 lbs., respectively! That's an increase of 1,200%!



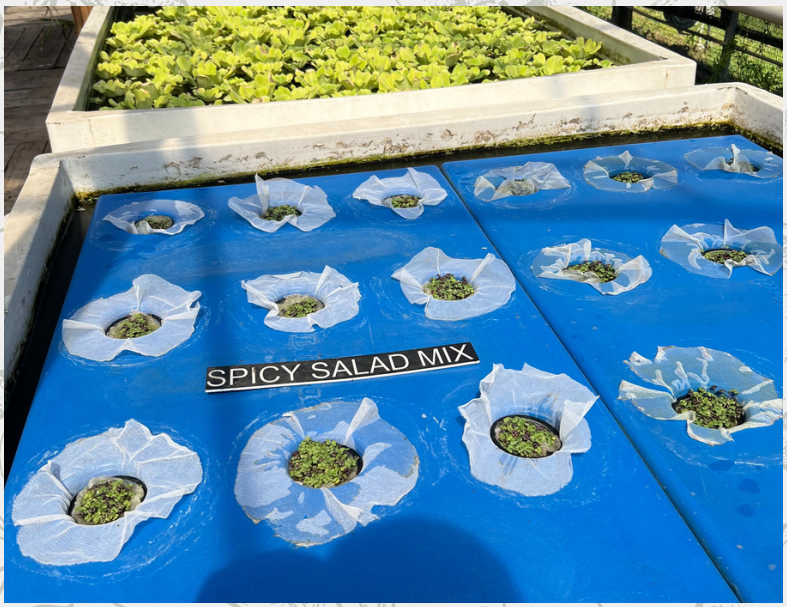


RECYCLING & WASTE DIVERSION

SUCCESS STORY: SUSTAINABLE JAIL

In addition to the garden composting at the Del Valle correctional complex, they also have many other sustainable initiatives. They have a fully equipped greenhouse on site that utilizes an aquaponics system to water and fertilize plants. They reused plastic screen protectors from desks used during Covid as garden bed containment. They even donate their food grown in the garden to the local food pantry. They also have plans to create their own food pantry at the jail where inmate's families and friends can come pick up food that was grown by their loved ones. That way, the inmate is still able to provide for their family and friends, while learning the valuable skill of gardening along the way.









RECYCLING & WASTE DIVERSION







SUCCESS STORY: CIVIL FAMILY COURTS FACILITY BUILDING

Travis County began construction on the new Civil Family Court Facility in 2019, and the construction is coming to an end with staff moving into the building to serve the public in February 2023. The staff who worked on the construction of this building were incredibly dedicated to waste diversion as it pertains to construction waste, and they were able to achieve a 72% diversion rate!

The total construction waste was about 19 million pounds, and the total diverted and recycled waste was just under 14 million pounds. There was a total of six material streams for this project. Only the masonry materials were not recycled. Concrete, wood, gypsum board, and metals were all 100% recycled. One step up from recycling is material reuse. A third party provided rentable cardboard boxes which were used for the move to the new courthouse. These boxes were later returned to the vendor so they could be reused by other customers at a later date.

In addition to the impressive waste diversion efforts during construction, the Civil Family Courts Facility has a dual-plumbing system installed. While it is not online as of yet, this system will enable toilets and urinals to be flushed with City of Austin “purple pipe” reclaimed, or treated, wastewater. The facility is also working on condensate from air handling units to be captured and used for the air conditioning system. These two initiatives are projected to save the facility millions of gallons of potable water a year.

Innovative landscape strategies were also utilized around the building to capture rainwater. This landscape design enables rainwater to gradually absorb into the ground. This lessens the amount of runoff that leaves the site and enters the municipal storm-water system.

RECYCLING & WASTE DIVERSION

SUCCESS STORY: SHARPS CONTAINERS & TRAINING

In FY22, sharps containers have been distributed to all five Travis County Constable offices, and vendor training has been made available to assist the officers with the proper handling and disposal of sharps.





SUCCESS STORY: SHRINK WRAP

Prior to FY22, we were not recycling shrink wrap. However, in FY22, the Sustainability Team worked with our vendor and implemented a way for facilities and parks to recycle shrink wrap. This was a significant accomplishment, especially for our warehouse locations that house large quantities of this material with their pallet shipments. It is estimated that the Inventory Food Section at the Del Valle Correctional Complex alone generates about three to five full 56-gallon trash bags of plastic shrink wrap a week!

RECYCLING & WASTE DIVERSION

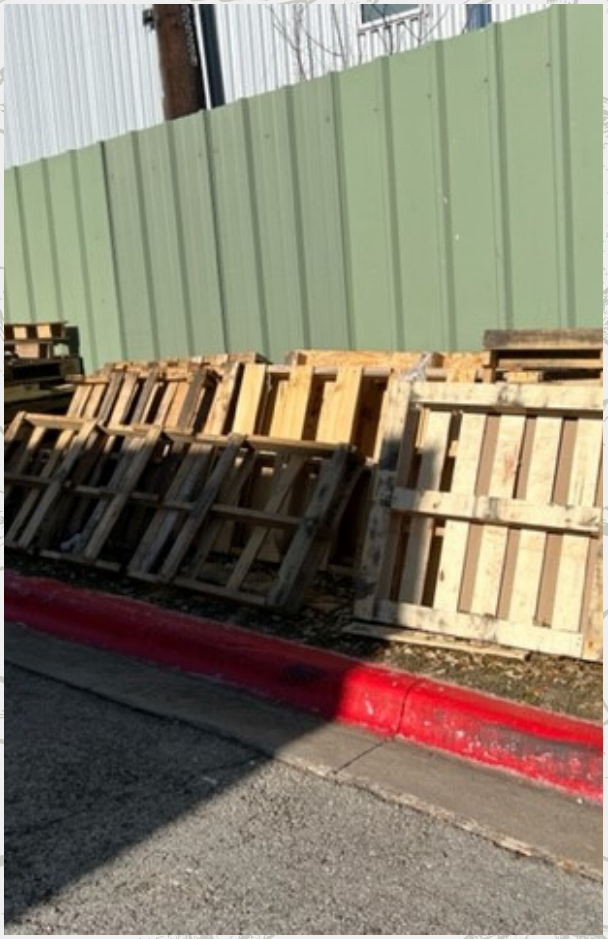
COMMODITY REVENUE	FY20	FY21	FY22
Printer Cartridge	$496	$0	$259
Cardboard	$1,424	$1,586	$4,687
Metal	$12,453	$17,526	$18,014
Pallets	$995	$1,393	$1,740
Revenue Total	$15,368	$20,505	$24,700

RECYCLING REVENUE

From FY21 to FY22, the county increased revenue by 20% from recycled commodities, which includes pallets, metal, cardboard, and printer cartridges. The largest source of revenue came from metal (73%), followed by cardboard (19%), pallets (7%), and printer cartridges (1%).

Though printer cartridges were recycled in FY21, no revenue was made due to buyback deductions that were larger than buyback amounts. Buyback reductions include toner and ink bottles, and clone imitation cartridges. Thankfully, we were able to make revenue off the printer cartridges again in FY22. During FY22, staff were trained on how to properly send printer cartridges back to the vendor, and we were able to make $259.15 in revenue from printer cartridges.

Prior to FY19, the county received revenue for electronics recycled through Dell. Due to a process change recommended by the County Attorney's office, electronics are no longer sent to Dell for recycling and the county no longer receives revenue for these items. According to finance, Dell would now require that we pay to have electronics recycled through them, instead of us receiving revenue for it. Something to consider in future years.



UNIVERSAL WASTE

COMMODITY	FY20	FY21	FY22
Fluorescent Lamps (units)	1,430	1,472	1,465
Lamp Ballasts (lbs.)	112	97	33
Mixed Batteries (lbs.)	417	246	268



The county has seen an overall decline in universal waste collection since FY19, pre-Covid. Since the county has shifted towards telecommuting, there are fewer employees using lamps and batteries at the office.

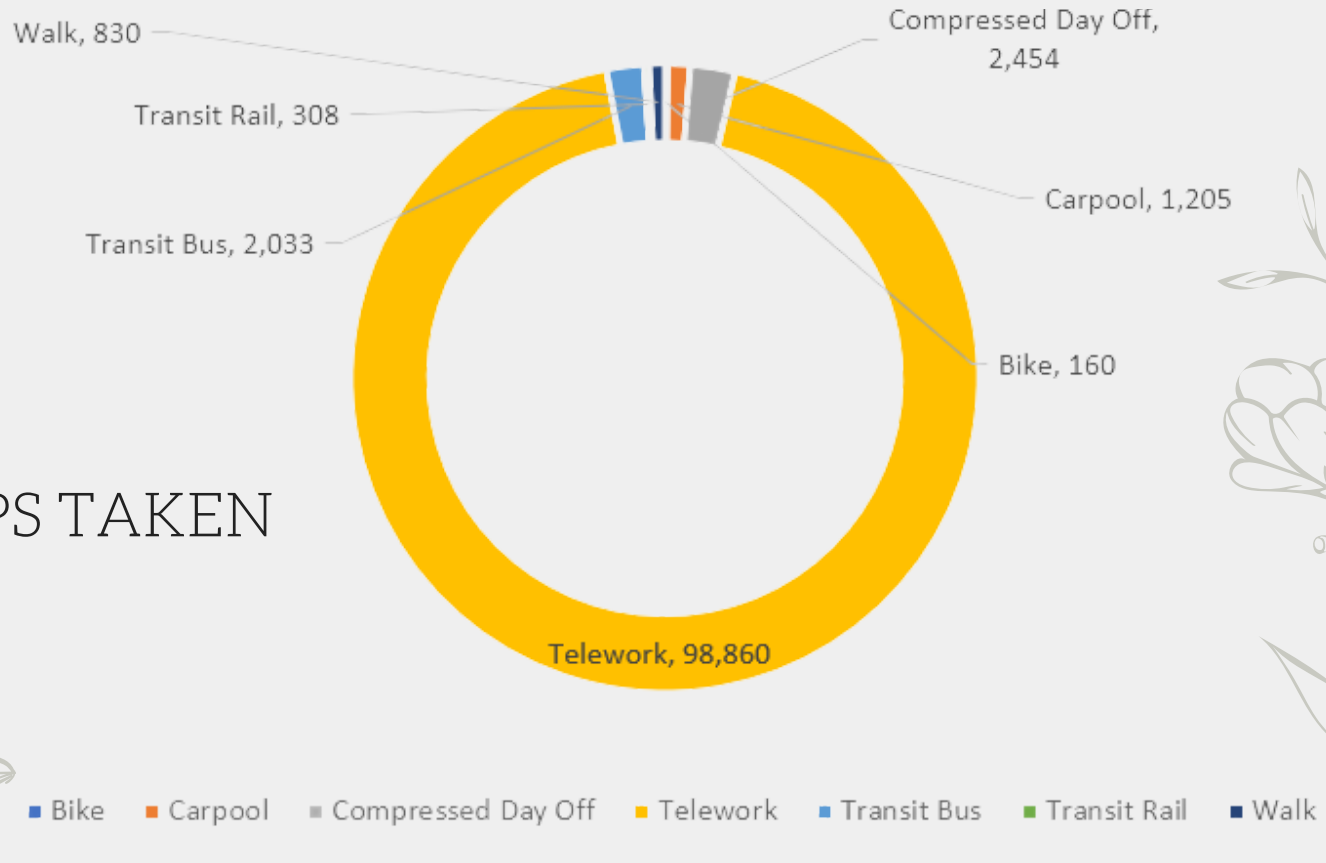
We changed vendors in FY21 to a vendor that uses newer lamp ballasts. These newer lamp ballasts do not contain PCB and are not considered hazardous. Additionally, there have been staffing changes and turnover, resulting in challenges with ensuring appropriate universal waste management. Consistent, ongoing universal waste training is important to ensure that all employees who handle universal waste understand proper disposal and best practices.

Although Covid has contributed to a reduction in universal waste disposal, our efforts continue. The battery collection at Lavaca has been hauled to respective vendors several times throughout the year, we've completed multiple vendor shipments, and we've assisted many departments in delivering universal waste shipping materials. We've also had to re-stock on ballast buckets and bulb boxes due to high demand for disposal.

TRANSPORTATION

	FY20	FY21	FY22
Transit Passes Distributed	723	601	789
Telecommute Participants	3,268	3,213	2,992
Telecommute Hours	2,951,727	3,261,935	2,531,770

TRIPS TAKEN



Telework trips are the most utilized commute type (94%) among Commuter Leave Incentive Program (CLIP) participants, with 98,860 telework trips taken in FY22.

Although 789 transit passes were issued to employees, it is estimated that less than 50 employees actually used public transit in FY22. From FY21 to FY22, employee telecommuting hours decreased by 22% and the number of telecommute participants decreased by 7%. This decrease can be attributed to the more employees returning to hybrid work at the county in FY22.

PURCHASING - GREEN SPENDING

GRAINGER	FY22
Total Spend	$2,006,913
Total Green Spend	$168,323
Green Percent of Total Purchases	8%

OFFICE DEPOT	FY22
Total Spend	$637,846
Total Green Spend	$213,833
Green Percent of Total Purchases	34%

POLLOCK	FY22
Total Spend	$238,397
Total Green Spend	$98,181
Green Percent of Total Purchases	41%

In FY22, Travis County spent a total of $2,883,156 on office supplies, with $480,337 or 17% spent on products that qualify and were recorded as Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) products. While this number is significantly lower than the 50% goal stated in the Commissioners Court-approved policy, the County's EPP Team, comprised of staff from Purchasing, the Auditors Office, and Sustainability, have been engaged in discussions to identify improvements to the EPP policy, training, implementation, and reporting. These discussions have already paid off considering in FY21 only 5% was spent on products that qualify and were recorded as EPP products, so we are on the right track.

The EPP Team requested green spending data from the County's top office supply vendors. Data was provided by three companies:

- FY22 saw an increase in overall spend with Office Depot, as well as an increase in "green" spending, or spending on products that meet certain environmental criteria. The county spent $637,846 on office supplies through Office Depot, with $213,833 or 34% on EPP products. This is an increase from the 30% spent on green products in FY21 from Office Depot.
- The county spent $2,006,913 on products through Grainger, with $168,323 or 8% of these purchases spent on EPP products. This green percent of total purchases is about the same as it was in FY21.
- The county spent $238,397 on products through Pollock, with $98,181 or 41% of these purchases spent on EPP products. This is an increase from the 31% spent on green products in FY21 from Pollock.



PURCHASING - PAPER CONSUMPTION

MEASURE	FY20	FY21	FY22
Virgin Paper (cases)	4,633	2,412	263
25% Recycled Content Paper (cases)	-	-	2,930
30% Recycled EPP Quality Paper (cases)	40	708	0
Per Capita Purchased	0.85	0.44	0.57

For paper to be considered EPP, it must be made of 30% or more recycled content. According to our Print Shop, all the paper they procure is made of 25% recycled materials, which does not qualify as EPP. In addition, paper shortages in FY22 have also contributed to the county's inability to purchase a higher percentage of recycled content paper.

Due to these shortages, our vendor prices went up 50% in the cost of EPP quality recycled paper. According to Chapter 107.09c (2) of the Travis County Conservation Plan, “the cost of the product determined by life-cycle cost accounting does not exceed by more than 10% the cost of similar alternative products determined by life-cycle cost accounting not made of recycled material.”



Travis County’s Purchasing department did begin price negotiations regarding EPP quality recycled paper, but the vendor ended their contract before an agreement was reached. Because of the paper shortage and necessity, departments began ordering paper from Office Depot and other outlets. There was less of an emphasis on EPP qualified paper in FY22 because most of the focus was going toward getting affordable paper in a timely manner.

The good news is that in FY22, more recycled content paper made of at least 25% recycled materials was purchased than ever before. We saw a 314% increase in recycled content paper between FY21 and FY22! Even though this paper does not qualify as EPP, this is a major achievement and progress should be celebrated. In addition to purchasing more recycled content paper, we hope to continue reducing our overall paper consumption through paperless process improvements and innovations.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE, PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS & TRAINING - EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

EMPLOYEES ENGAGED	FY20	FY21	FY22
Toner Ambassadors	74	81	82
New Employee Orientation (Includes two-year required NEO refresher course)	641	81	908
EPP Course	282	56	1,566
Universal Waste Training	254	35	3



New Hire Orientation (NHO) is assigned to all new hires with the expectation that it is completed soon after an employee's date of hire. NHO is an excellent way to introduce new employees to county Sustainability initiatives and recruit new Green Team members. The NHO Sustainability portion of the training is titled, "Our Impact." In addition to the original NHO training, there is an NHO refresher course that is mandatory to take every two years for all employees. In the NHO refresher course, the Sustainability portion of the training is titled, "Conservation Customs."

FY20 was the first year of EPP training for all shoppers and Purchasing Office staff. In FY20, 282 employees completed the online EPP training. In FY21, only 56 employees completed the training. We were able to increase this number to 1,566 employees completing the online EPP training in FY22.

As of FY22, there were 82 toner ambassadors. These are county employees who volunteer to lead printer and toner recycling outreach to their department, as well as ship boxes of used printer and toner cartridges to be recycled. We signed up 9 new toner ambassadors in FY22.

In FY22 and prior, the Universal Waste Training has been an in-person training. In FY22, the Sustainability Team worked on developing an online universal waste training, and we are working to make this training available to all employees. The goal is to make this an annual online training requirement for employees who handle universal waste.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE, PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS & TRAINING - GREEN TEAM HIGHLIGHTS

PROGRAMS	FY20	FY21	FY22
T-shirts for Hunger (bags created)	3,060	910	0
3 Rings for Learning	52	0	100

During FY22, our Travis County Green Team has grown to 119 members!

The county has many gently used binders we no longer need or use, and historically, we have donated these to teachers and staff within the Austin Independent School District (AISD). The program was paused during FY21, but during the June 14th, 2022, voting session, the Court approved the donation of binders to AISD. We donated about 100 binders to the school district during a back-to-school event in FY22.

The T-Shirts for Hunger program was put on hold during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Sustainability team is working to get this program up and running again in FY23.



ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE, PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS & TRAINING

SUCCESS STORY: SUSTAINABILITY LEADER

The Travis County Sustainability Leader Program is a new initiative started in FY22 that provides comprehensive training in environmental sustainability, including climate change, recycling, composting, waste management, energy and water conservation, air quality, and more. Participants will learn how to lead sustainability initiatives, applying the knowledge gained from this program to be effective change agents in their community and/or career. Upon the completion of the program, participants will receive a certificate from the Travis County Natural Resources and Environmental Quality Division.



The program is designed for all Travis County employees, inmates in the Travis County Jail, and youth in Gardner Betts Juvenile Detention Center. The certificate training content helps to promote sustainability-related careers, increase awareness of environmental issues, increase waste and recycling compliance, and other environmentally beneficial activities. Participants who complete the program will receive a Certificate of Completion which can be listed on their resume. They will also receive the option to add a Certification Badge to their LinkedIn profile. In FY23, this program will be continued to be developed, and hopefully ready for implementation soon!

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT - AUSTIN RECYCLE & REUSE DROP OFF CENTER INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT

	FY20	FY21	FY22
County Households Served	1,884	2,039	4,268
Cost	$88,005	$136,939	$197,442
Percent Diverted	42%	23%	35%



Since 1997, Travis County and the City of Austin have coordinated on providing household hazardous waste services at the Austin Recycle and Reuse (ARR) Drop-off Center. Under the agreement, Travis County residents can drop off household hazardous waste at ARR. The county provides funding support for waste processing and disposal as well as for a staff position.

The amount of household hazardous waste diverted from landfills increased from 23% in FY21 to 35% in FY22. There are a number of causes for this increase, but most notably are: the Austin Re-Blend paint mixer was out of commission in FY21 and then replaced in FY22, and the Reuse Store had to remain closed due to COVID-19 concerns in FY21 but re-opened in FY22. The price increase seen between FY21 and FY22 is attributed to the City of Austin changing to a new vendor that charges higher disposal and recycling rates.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT - LAKE TRAVIS CLEANUP

MEASURE	FY20 (VIRTUAL EVENT)	FY21 (SPRING 2022)	FY22
Number of Volunteers	392	150	350
Litter Removed (tons)	1.35	0.28	2.26
Litter Recycled (lbs.)	720	400	1,480





The Lake Travis Clean-Up began in 1994 as an informal gathering of divers in the Lake Travis area who turned their recreational diving ventures into a small-scale clean-up effort. Due to the popularity and expansion of the program to include the shoreline, additional organizations became involved to help facilitate volunteer coordination, boat support, and proper waste disposal.

In more recent history, the event is managed by a partnership between the Colorado River Alliance and Travis County. Dive volunteers and shoreline volunteers gather to collect trash from the bottom of Lake Travis and from Travis County Parks around the lake. This event also helps to raise public awareness of the importance of Lake Travis and the Highland Lakes.

We saw a 133% increase in the number of Lake Travis Cleanup volunteers in FY22 compared to FY21. Due to the ongoing pandemic in FY21, this cleanup event took place in the spring of 2022 but still utilized FY21 funding. This event had significantly fewer volunteers than usual.

There was an 11% decrease in participation between FY20 and FY22, but we removed 67% more litter and recycled 106% more litter in FY22 than in FY20. The FY20 event was handled differently as it was a virtual event, broken up over two weekends, and volunteers were kept in groups of 10 or less, per Covid best practices. The quality of participating volunteers in FY22 helped make this event a success and critical effort in protecting and revitalizing county parks and protecting local bodies of water.

The Colorado River Alliance (CRA) joined the Sustainability Team at the Commissioner's Court on August 9th, 2022, and presented information pertaining to the event and the importance of it.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT - PHARMACEUTICAL TAKE BACK

MEASURE (lbs.)	FY20	FY21	FY22
Amount Collected from Events	710	1,415	1,031
Amount Collected at Permanent Takeback Kiosks	452	343	596

In FY22, the Sustainability Team and Constable Offices partnered with the DEA to host two Prescription Drug Take Back Days for the general public to drop off unwanted, unused, or expired prescription drugs. Drug Take Back Days provide a safe, convenient, and responsible means of disposing prescription drugs and educating the general public about the potential abuse of medications. The misuse and improper disposal of prescription drugs is a growing problem nationwide and threatens local water supplies.

The total amount of prescription drugs collected during the national Drug Take Back events in FY22 was 27% less than in FY21. However, in FY22 we did see a 74% increase in the amount collected at the permanent take back kiosks compared to FY21. In FY22 and prior, we only had one permanent take back kiosk in Travis County. As of FY22, the Sustainability team added permanent prescription drug kiosks to all five Constable offices in the county, which may have contributed to why we saw less materials collected from the events.

The one permanent take back kiosk that we had prior to FY22 was located at Precinct 5 in downtown Austin. This kiosk was formerly owned by the City of Austin, but we were able to transfer ownership to Travis County in FY22.



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT - CHRISTMAS TREE RECYCLING

MEASURE	FY20	FY21	FY22
Number of Trees Collected	630	745	610
Collection Sites	4	4	4

For over a decade, Travis County Parks, Road and Bridge, and the Sustainability Team have collaborated to host an annual Christmas Tree Recycling Drive for Travis County residents.

Recycling trees into mulch helps preserve limited space in landfills, and mulch can be used in outdoor landscaping to help plants retain moisture and nutrients. Residents dropped off 135 less trees in FY22 compared to FY21; an 18% decrease. The Sustainability Team collaborated with Travis County Media Services to promote Christmas Tree Recycling on social media, including Nextdoor, Facebook, and Twitter.

In FY23, we were able to add a fifth Christmas tree recycling location that has improved numbers greatly.





PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT - [RE]VERSE PITCH COMPETITION



The City of Austin Circular Economy Program started a competition in 2015 called [RE]verse Pitch, where they turn raw materials generated by companies into valuable materials for new or expanding social enterprises. The [RE]verse Pitch website says the following about the competition:

Entrepreneurs are used to pitching their business idea to investors, partners, and anyone they might share an elevator ride with. In this competition, the tables turn. The [RE]verse Pitch Competition helps turn valuable raw materials that are currently leaving local businesses, non-profits, and institutions as waste into the raw materials for new or expanding social enterprises.

Travis County participated in the [RE]verse Pitch competition where businesses pitch waste materials, and entrepreneurs develop a product and business plan using those waste materials. In FY22, Travis County collaborated with the Del Valle correctional complex and pitched bulletproof vests for this competition.

While our vests were ultimately not selected for the competition in FY22, we look forward to participating in this competition for years to come.

RESILIENCY

Travis County has a brand-new Community Resiliency Program! Just one year ago, the Environmental Quality Program hired a Project Manager and an Environmental Specialist Sr. to work on efforts aimed at preparing the Travis County community for the impacts of climate change. This new program will focus on understanding what climate change means to the residents of Travis County and engage with the community to better understand what needs exist to inform the county on how we can assist residents with being resilient. This program will also champion a vulnerability assessment for Travis County operations, complete a community level greenhouse gas inventory, develop a community climate action plan and look for funding opportunities that may be available to further the county's climate goals.



JOHANNA ARENDT
Environmental Project Manager



MAX MORALES
Environmental Specialist Sr.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Update our Climate Action Plan
- Increase Green Team participation and active membership by identifying opportunities to provide incentives for engagement in Green Team activities
- Increase funding for new and expanded recycling services at Travis County facilities and parks
- Expand the Lake Travis Cleanup to include a spring clean that focuses on the east side of Travis County
- Provide a FTE for the Sustainability Team that will focus primarily on sustainable initiatives at Del Valle and Gardner Betts
- Begin attending in-person NHO and present on Sustainability Team programs (toner ambassador, battery recycling, T-Shirts for Hunger, etc.), Green Team, and EPP
- Work with vendors and Purchasing to improve EPP tracking and reporting
- Encourage county employees to reduce paper consumption
- Provide annual universal waste management training to employees who manage and/or handle universal waste as part of their job responsibilities
- Reduce trash collection services and utility usage in buildings/facilities where most employees are telecommuting



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- To all Green Team members and other employees who have worked as a Toner or Battery Ambassador, or who have gone the extra mile to assist the county with waste diversion
- Parks and Road & Bridge staff who assisted with Christmas Tree recycling efforts, in addition to their ongoing dedication to proper disposal methods
- Parks staff for their efforts in the Lake Travis Clean Up
- Travis County Constables for their collaboration with the national Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) to ensure the proper disposal of pharmaceuticals
- The Web Team and the Public Information Office for their constant support in helping promote Sustainability Team events and messages
- The Auditors Office and Facilities Management staff for their assistance and support in collecting information for this report
- Purchasing and Auditor's Office staff working to improve and advance County Environmentally Preferable Purchasing efforts
- Steven Wentrcek and the entire team at the Del Valle Correctional Complex for taking ownership and making innovative sustainability ideas come to life
- Gardner Betts and John Furnis for their work on the juvenile probation composting program
- TNR Fleet staff for their help in ensuring an accurate greenhouse gas inventory and for their efforts to reduce the fuel consumption of the county vehicle fleet
- ITS staff and Adele Noel (Air Quality Project Manager) for their continued efforts to assist county employees with effective telecommuting
- Travis County Health and Human Services, our local medical experts, essential workers, and front-line staff for their unwavering commitment to protecting our community and maintaining essential services throughout the pandemic
- Facilities Management staff for their work in energy reduction, waste diversion, and overall conservation efforts for existing and new building complexes
- County Judge and the Commissioners for all of their continued support of our sustainability initiatives

Thank you!

TRAVIS COUNTY SUSTAINABILITY TEAM



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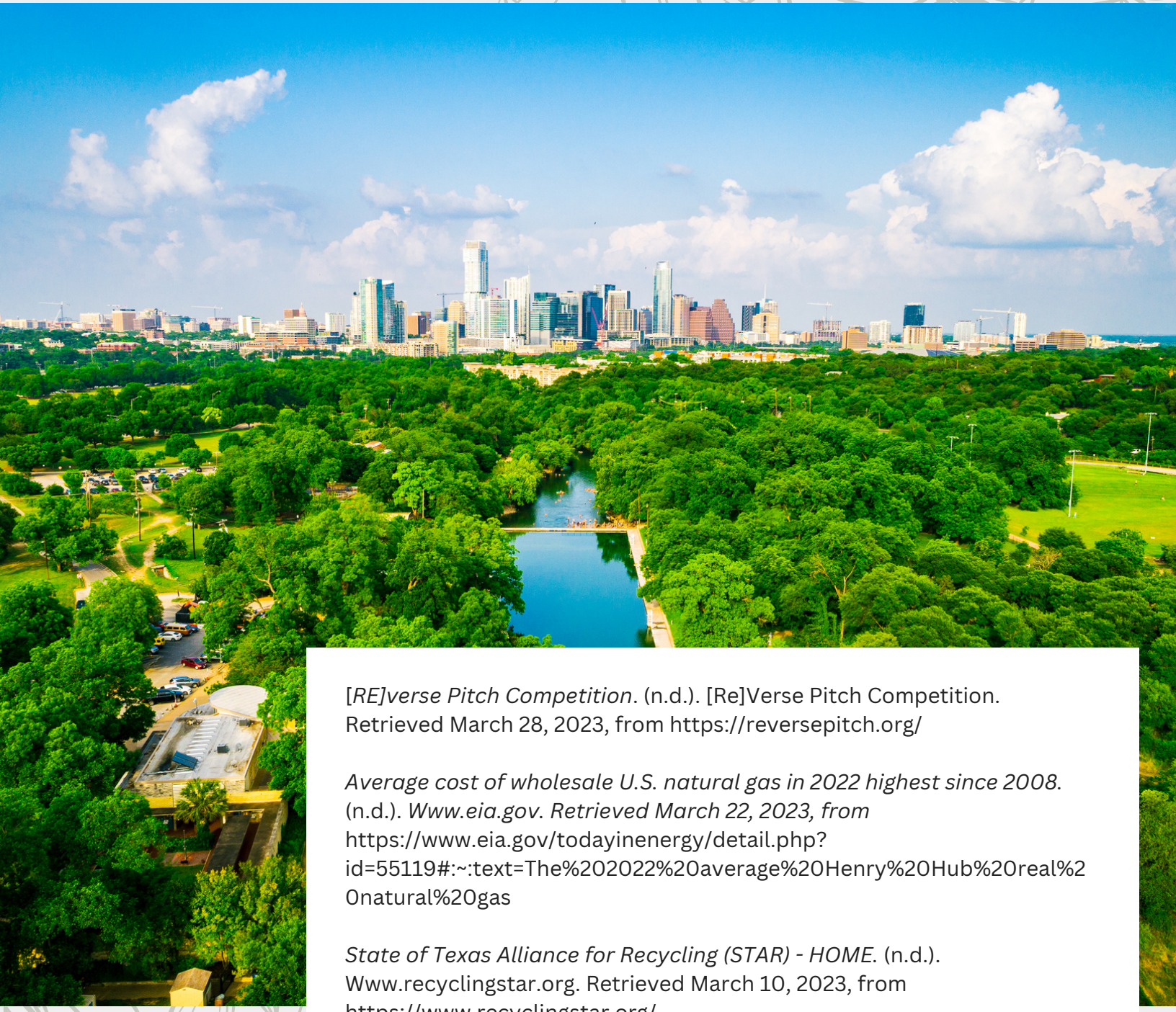


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