



Department of Public Works

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City of Milwaukee Announces An Organics Collection Pilot Program

Residents in selected Milwaukee neighborhoods encouraged to participate

The City of Milwaukee Department of Public Works (DPW) announces a one-year pilot program to study the impact of a residential collection program for food and yard waste. The pilot study zone will target a limited number of households that include the Bay View, East Side, and Riverwest neighborhoods (see attached map). Residents in these neighborhoods living in single-, two-, and multi-family homes (up to four units) are eligible to participate in this pilot study.

Participating households will receive a 65-gallon cart for food and yard waste, which will be collected every other week December 2016 through March 2017, and collected every week April through November 2017. Collection will occur at the resident's usual garbage/recycling collection point – curb or alley.

Residents who volunteer for the pilot program will pay a \$12.75 per month fee during the pilot period for this additional collection service. Participants will be billed on a quarterly basis. They also will receive a starter kit that includes a kitchen caddy, a supply of compostable plastic bags, an acceptable compost materials guide, and coupons from area stores and restaurants.

This pilot program is voluntary – residents are not required to participate. When 100 households sign up for the program, it will move forward. If there is sufficient demand, the program will accept up to 500 total households.

Organics Collection Pilot Program Details:

Why compost?

When organics are placed in the garbage and go into the landfill, we waste potential resources and consume space that could otherwise be used to extend the life of the landfill. Food waste makes up 21% of the average person's garbage. To help residents reduce the amount of waste that is sent to the landfill, Mayor Tom Barrett set a goal of achieving a 40% diversion rate of waste by the year 2020, also known as the "40 by 2020" campaign. To meet that goal, DPW has provided a variety of tools and resources for City residents, including Single Sort recycling programs (milwaukeecycles.com), expanded recycling drop-off opportunities, sponsoring an annual backyard compost bin sale at a reduced cost, and studying the impact of backyard composting and in-sink food disposals. Each of these efforts is raising awareness and increasing the amount of waste recovered for better purposes.

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“I am pleased that DPW is moving forward with the organics collection pilot program in Milwaukee,” said Mayor Tom Barrett. “My goal of 40% waste diversion from the landfill by 2020 can be achieved when we offer Milwaukee residents the tools to make good decisions to improve and protect our environment.”

DPW Commissioner Ghassan Korban: “DPW is excited to launch this pilot program to help us learn more about how Milwaukee residents can and would better dispose of organic waste. Our objective is to provide residents with a better alternative and through our outreach efforts, we stand ready to assist them as they participate in this important program.”

Goals for this pilot study include:

- Gaining a better understanding of the demand for this type of collection service
- Establishing the recovery rate this type of program provides
- Assessing and supporting the development of regional organics processing capacity that includes food waste
- Measuring customer satisfaction for the program, and
- Understanding the overall economics of the program.

“I was happy to sponsor the legislation that created the Organics Collection Pilot Program that includes my Bay View neighborhood,” said Ald. Tony Zielinski, 14th District. “I believe that many neighbors will be eager to sign up and participate as we work to better re-use and dispose of our food and yard waste.”

Ald. Nik Kovac, 3rd District: “I am proud to be a co-sponsor of the legislation creating this important pilot program. Our East Side and Riverwest neighbors look forward to joining the effort to divert organic waste. We all want to see our food waste create more food, not more landfills.

What to compost: Participating residents will be able to include food waste such as fruit and vegetable scraps, bread products, bones, cheese, and coffee grounds as well as yard waste (weeds, garden trimmings, and plants). While yard waste can be placed loose in the compost cart, food waste must be bagged using either paper or certified compostable plastic bags (provided in the starter kit). Prior to this pilot program, residents’ only option to compost food waste was either in their own backyard bin or at a community compost site. Yard waste had to be taken to one of the City’s Self-Help Drop Off Centers. This pilot program makes disposing of these items much more convenient while reducing what is sent to the landfill.

Who can participate in the Organics Collection Pilot Program?

Residents who live in the designated pilot neighborhoods (map attached) and are interested in participating can log on to milwaukee.gov/Milwaukee-Recycles/Organics to learn more and register to participate. Residents who are not able to participate in the collection pilot program at this time are encouraged to visit milwaukeerecycles.com to learn about other ways to reduce and recover food waste and yard materials.

About the vendor:

The City used a competitive RFP process to identify a hauling and processing partner. Compost Crusader, LLC won that process and will be delivering collected materials to Blue Ribbon Organics where they will be processed into compost.

For more information:

Milwaukee.gov/Milwaukee-Recycles/Organics

Milwaukeerecycles.com

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