

## Ann Arbor Organics Management Plan Draft Recommendations for Review by the Ann Arbor Environmental Commission

The following draft recommendations for enhanced organics management in Ann Arbor have been developed for review by the City of Ann Arbor Environmental Commission. The draft recommendations have been developed based on the research and analysis completed to date, best practices in other high-performing and progressive communities, the input of residential and commercial advisory committees over a series of meetings, and resident feedback secured through a scientific residential survey.

Recommendations are segregated by area of influence (Citywide, residential sector, commercial / institutional sector) and organized by topic / operational area. Priority recommendations that may be considered for near-term (within the next 6 months) implementation are identified in **bold, underlined** text. Supplementary information is also provided addressing implementation, costs, or decision points. Further detail and implementation responsibilities will be developed and incorporated in the future Organics Management Plan report.

### Citywide Recommendations

#### Education

1. **Develop an immediate, robust education program.**
2. **Tailor the education program to provide specific messaging to different types of households; for example, families with children, young people without children, older residents.**
3. **Develop educational materials to be provided by the City and/or downloadable from the A2 website for posting or distribution by neighborhood associations and at multi-family properties receiving residential service.**
4. To facilitate implementation of a commercial collection program, provide half-day workshops to the business community at-large and offer one-on-one training / site evaluations to assist businesses in establishing a food waste diversion practice.
5. Develop and provide promotional materials to businesses participating in a City-organized commercial compost collection program to denote their participation and serve as ambassadors of the program to the broader community.
6. Provide ongoing education to reinforce food waste reduction and compost collection best practices and communicate program changes when planned for implementation.

*Develop separate but inter-related programs and materials for residents and businesses.*

*Program components: slogan/branding; highlight environmental benefits; comprehensive website; food waste reduction workshops; broad-based promotion.*

*Types of materials: collection-area signage for businesses and multi-family properties; container labels identifying acceptable materials; tips for organics management (magnets); "A2 Compost Partner"-type decals or certificates*

*Ongoing services: training / evaluation services for businesses; workshops for businesses; neighborhood and business association meetings to communicate changes and/or report on performance and best practices; changes to ordinance requirements and penalties.*

## Reduction and Prevention

1. Promote food waste reduction practices by sharing published resources and tools through the A2 website, supplementing with local information if necessary.

*Nominal cost to the City to implement.*

*Existing resources include:*

- USEPA, *Food: Too Good To Waste Implementation Guide and Toolkit*
- USDA / USEPA, [www.furtherwithfood.org](http://www.furtherwithfood.org)
- NRDC / Ad Council, [www.savethefood.com](http://www.savethefood.com)
- ReFED, *Roadmap to Reduce U.S. Food Waste*

## Donation

1. Promote food donation to non-profit food rescue organizations such as Food Gatherers.
2. Provide guidelines for food donation or link to guidelines from Food Gatherers on the A2 website and through other outreach materials.
3. Work with Food Gatherers and other applicable food donation outlets to determine whether data tracking and reporting can be provided to measure Ann Arbor resident efforts to reduce disposal of food waste.

*Nominal immediate cost to the City to promote organizations and provide guidelines.*

*Food donation should consider the impact on the food rescue or donation organization (e.g., Food Gatherers) due to potential increases in the quantity of donated food that is not usable and must be managed as a waste. Efforts to track and report donation quantities also increase labor requirements, resulting in cost increases to the organization. Options to mitigate cost increases may include:*

- *Grant funding to offset investments to support increased operations, such as depackaging equipment or additional storage area*
- *Reduced cost or no-cost collection of organic waste and/or trash*

## Future Plan Updates

1. Periodically review and update the Comprehensive Organics Management Plan.

*Organics diversion performance data should continue to be collected and tracked annually.*

*The Organics Plan should be reviewed and updated every 5 years to reflect advances in organics management methods, lessons learned through implementation, and update recommendations accordingly.*

## Residential Sector Recommendations

### Collection System Change - Year-Round Collection

1. Provide every-other-week or monthly compost collection during the December - March period, when yard waste quantities are reduced.

*Addresses requests from residents and members of the Residential Advisory Committee for ongoing collection of food waste. Also meets needs for occasional winter and early spring yard waste pick-ups that are a resident desire noted in the resident survey and by resident calls and emails to City staff.*

*Reduced frequency (less than weekly) during winter months minimizes increased costs.*

*Service could be provided Citywide (all households eligible to set out) or on a subscription basis only (limited to households signed up for the service). Cost would be negotiated with the City's contracted private hauler for compost collection (proposals from private haulers have been solicited, with a contract expected to be awarded during 2017). A funding mechanism would need to be determined, as the added collection is not likely to be financially feasible with current funding from the solid waste millage assuming all other solid waste operational costs remain unchanged from current conditions.*

- *If subscription-based, interested residents are envisioned to pay a supplemental fee for the additional service. This would be consistent with the low willingness to pay for extended service that was identified in the resident survey.*
- *If provided to all customers Citywide, costs would be distributed across all customers. Costs for this option would be expected to be lower on a per-household basis than a subscription service, but the resident survey indicated residents are largely unwilling to pay a supplemental fee for year-round collection.*

### Collection System Change - Compost Carts

1. **Conduct a pilot roll-out of compost carts to all residential properties within select neighborhoods to assess impact on resident use of the carts for food wastes, measure diversion impacts, and secure resident feedback.** If the pilot outcome is positive, require all residential properties to have a compost cart, with the option to select their preferred cart size (32-gallon, 64-gallon, 96-gallon). Continue to allow additional yard waste to be set out in bags and to prohibit food waste from being placed in bags.
2. For residents who do not already have a cart, charge a one-time fee of \$25 for the cart, including delivery.
3. Provide delivery of carts to residents using City or City-contracted staff.

*The pilot would include service to 300-500 homes. Assuming the City pays for all carts for the pilot, cost impact of the pilot may be \$18,000 - \$30,000 for carts, plus additional outreach and staff or consultant expense for education and performance monitoring.*

*If rolled out Citywide, the City would be required to subsidize the cost of the carts as it has done historically. Grant funding should be pursued to cover a portion of the cost. Citywide cost to provide carts may be up to approximately \$30 per premise (based on 96-gallon cart costs; cost is reduced for smaller carts). Estimating 17,500 carts would be required, total cost = \$962,500; resident payment of \$25 each = \$437,500; net cost to City = \$525,000 excluding delivery to residents.*

### Kitchen Containers and Compostable Bags

1. Provide guidelines on the A2 website and in other educational materials for collecting food wastes with resident-provided small containers.
2. Make kitchen containers available for all residents on an as-requested basis and provide a “starter set” of kitchen container liners with each container distributed.
3. Work with local businesses to sell approved compostable liners, and provide a list of participating businesses on the A2 website and in published program information.

*Grant funding should be pursued to cover a portion of the cost. Cost impact is less than \$10 per container including a roll of 25 compostable bags/liners if purchased in bulk by City.*

#### *Funding options:*

- *City purchases containers and bags and maintains inventory, pass cost through to residents requesting a container*
- *City purchases containers and bags and maintains inventory, provides containers to residents at no charge (cost to City of about \$44,500 for 4,800 containers with bags)*
- *Provide link to vendor(s) for purchase of containers at residents’ option, with cost paid by residents; cost to resident estimated to be double or more the City’s cost due to no volume discount and individual item shipping costs.*

### Home Composting

1. Promote mulching / grass-cycling through educational materials and the A2 website.
2. Promote the use of home compost bins and provide educational information to assist residents in bin construction / purchasing and usage.

*Existing education workshops (Master Composter) offered by Washtenaw County and partners.*

*Build awareness of proper materials to manage through home composting and encourage use of City compost collection for materials that can’t be composted at home (meat, dairy).*

### Future Phased-In Mandatory Diversion

1. Routinely evaluate organics diversion performance to begin phasing in mandatory organics diversion for residential customers.

*Review Citywide performance 1 year after cart distribution: collection quantities; household participation and feedback, via online survey and lid-lifting of carts; contamination, via visual observation of incoming material and feedback from compost facility operator on screenings from finished compost;*

*Future policy decision / ordinance development dependent on: available funding; adequate City staffing for inspections/enforcement; compost facility continues to operate without problems / contamination / odor; education of upcoming shift is communicated at least 1 year in advance*

*Targeted phase-in period of 3 years from the date all premises are provided compost carts.*

### Multi-Family Compost Collection Service

1. Perform an assessment of all multi-family properties to assess available space for compost carts and suitability of truck access or cart staging for collection.
2. Properties that are determined to be feasibly served with compost carts will be included in the residential program and provided the same services as single-family and duplex properties.
3. Properties that are determined to not be feasibly served with compost carts will be included in the commercial program and provided the same services as commercial properties.
4. Provide a reference list or look-up option on the A2 website to identify the program (residential or commercial) that each multi-family property is assigned to.

*City staff (collection operations supervisor or trained designee, possibly in cooperation with City-contracted private hauler) will visit each property to provide visual assessment of the ability to serve the property using compost carts and classify properties for residential or commercial service.*

*List will be developed, maintained, and posted by the City based on the outcome of property assessments; responsible departments to be identified in Plan.*

### Commercial Sector Recommendations

#### Subscription-Based, Voluntary Collection Service

1. **Survey businesses to identify preliminary interest in subscribing to a food waste collection service provided by a hauler contracted by the City, with cost to be paid by participating businesses.**
2. **Develop and distribute a Request for Proposals to secure a private hauler to provide food waste collection on an exclusive basis to subscribing businesses and multi-family properties not eligible for residential collection service.**
3. Provide implementation oversight to participating businesses, including identifying or reviewing organics container size, location, and service frequency needs and waste service modifications.

*Target food-centric businesses (restaurants/bars, catering businesses, grocery stores, farmer's markets) for the initial survey, and use the survey as an initial educational outreach opportunity. Information received through the survey will be incorporated into the collection RFP as a guideline for responding haulers, though the number of subscribing businesses will not be guaranteed and may change over the contract term as businesses add or drop service.*

*The contract term must be sufficient to ensure the hauler can cost-effectively serve businesses and recover investment in equipment and labor. This requires an initial contract term of 5 years, and one 5-year renewal option is suggested.*

*Business and multi-family organics collection will be voluntary, on a subscription basis. The selected hauler will provide exterior collection containers, with sizes, number, and collection frequency selected by the business and approved by the hauler/City. Subscribing businesses are assumed to pay for the service at the rate established in the contract, similar to current commercial waste collection. Current funding through solid waste millage is not expected to be sufficient to provide sustainable funding for the collection service; the City will evaluate whether it can sustainably fund a portion of the costs (e.g., the tipping fee at the compost facility).*

## Subscription-Based, Voluntary Collection Service

*The hauler will be responsible for all billing to participating businesses and providing customer service; this is different from the commercial waste collection program and reflects lessons learned through that program.*

*Implementation oversight will be required for all businesses prior to the start of service, provided by one or more dedicated City staff members. All containers and placement must comply with City code and be approved by the City prior to implementation. For businesses in the DDA with alley service or other properties with significant space constraints, the contracted hauler should also participate in the space / service review to identify particular constraints that may need to be addressed to provide adequate service without impeding other alley or property operations*

*Container sharing may be of interest to some businesses but requires special consideration for accountability, payment, and performance, which should be addressed in the collection contract.*

- Businesses need to mutually agree to sharing the container and receive prior approval of the City (this is critical when it comes to thinking about space, billing and code)*
- Billing and enforcement could be allocated to a single business per container (i.e., if 3 businesses agree to share service, only 1 is named on the account, likely with a subcontract arrangement between that business and the others) or could be equally shared by the businesses sharing the container if acceptable to the hauler and the City.*

## Performance Monitoring

- 1. Routinely evaluate commercial sector organics diversion performance.*
- 2. Prepare case studies of successful collection implementation at various types of properties in the City to serve as models for other properties.*

*Review performance annually during the initial term of collection contract:*

- Collection quantities via scalehouse records and/or hauler reports*
- Business participation and feedback, via hauler reports, online survey, and lid-lifting of carts/containers*
- Contamination, via visual observation of incoming material and feedback from compost facility operator on screenings from finished compost*
- Compost facility operation, including ability to manage food waste as an increased proportion of incoming organics*

*Prepare a performance summary prior to renewal or re-procurement of collection contract to assess program performance and identify the need for possible program changes.*

*Case studies may include: downtown alleys; strip malls; multi-building multi-family complexes; high-rise apartments; mixed use buildings with consolidated collection; shared containers; restaurants; grocery stores.*

### Future Phased-In Mandatory Collection Service for Food-Centric Businesses

1. Following implementation of the subscription-based collection program and based on the performance of the program, conduct a future evaluation of the feasibility of mandatory organics collection service for food-centric commercial properties (restaurants/bars, catering, grocery stores, farmers markets)

*Future policy decision / ordinance development for mandatory collection dependent on:*

- Available funding and staffing for City contract administration and inspections / enforcement
- Specific and proven solutions available for space-constrained properties, including alleys
- Compost facility continues to operate without problems / contamination / odor
- Education of upcoming shift is communicated at least 1 year in advance, and possibly phased based on business size over a multi-year implementation period

*A recommendation for mandatory diversion of food waste / organics (i.e., a disposal ban) for the commercial sector should not be considered at this time. At a minimum, mandatory collection service must first be established and successfully implemented before a future disposal ban is considered.*

### Fats, Oils, and Grease Management

1. Develop and implement a licensing or registration requirement applicable to all companies providing used cooking oil collection via City ordinance. As a condition of licensing, require service providers to submit a listing of customers and container locations with the initial license request and all annual renewals.

*Coordination with the Washtenaw County Health Department will be necessary.*

### On-Site Composting

1. Require businesses engaging in on-site food waste management (such as on-site composting, food slurring to send to wastewater treatment, individual digesters) to register their operation with the City.

*The registration provides benefits including: data reporting for use in monitoring diversion quantities; potential information for use in identifying alternative management options for food wastes; basis for evaluating future criteria that may be used to exempt businesses from a mandatory collection requirement.*