



# Waste & Materials

Manage solid waste by reducing, reusing, recycling, composting, and sustainable purchasing.



**Action  
C-18**

**Develop a food waste composting program for residents**

<b>Objective</b>	To divert organic food scraps from incineration/landfill to be processed into compost and used as soil amendment				
<b>Metrics</b>	Tons of waste composted, % of waste diverted from incinerator/landfill				
<b>Target</b>	Community waste emissions	<b>Development Stage</b>	Proposed FY 2023		
<b>Lead</b>	Public Works (Environment)	<b>City Upfront Cost</b>	\$6,000/site (bins + site work, signs)		
<b>Partners</b>	Recreation and Parks, Private contractors,	<b>City Operating Cost</b>	\$10,000/site + outreach support. Cost share: C-19, C-25		
<b>GHG Benefit</b>	<b>Resiliency</b>	<b>Feasibility</b>	<b>Health</b>	<b>Equity</b>	<b>Co-Benefits</b>
+	N	+	+	+	Environment

The City of Rockville provides weekly refuse, recycling, yard waste and special collections for more than 14,000 residential homes (single family and townhomes). Commercial and multifamily properties contract private services. While City yard waste is composted by Montgomery County, organic food waste is included as refuse. In FY 2021, the City collected more than 11,000 tons of refuse, which was brought to the County’s Transfer Station and sent to the waste-to-energy Resource Recovery Facility (RRF) at Dickerson. Montgomery County estimates about 15 to 19% of municipal residential refuse taken to the Transfer Station from municipalities is food waste.<sup>40</sup> For Rockville, this translates to approximately 2,000 tons of potentially compostable food waste that could be diverted from disposal as refuse annually.

Although waste comprises approximately 0.43% of GHG emissions and the creation of a composting program would generate minimal GHG reductions, numerous residents requested the City provide food waste composting options. The City has not provided this service due to economic and operating constraints associated with the lack of local food waste processing options in Montgomery County. The County’s website currently suggests residents interested in composting food scraps hire a collector to collect and deliver the food scraps to a composting facility in the region. The Mayor and Council have requested the County provide food waste composting infrastructure that is as economically feasible and easily accessible as the County’s current yard trim composting program.

Until that time, the City could explore smaller voluntary options to encourage food waste diversion, such as a voluntary community drop off or coordination with private collectors for transportation and processing at a regional facility. While there is demand for composting in the area, the regional organics recovery infrastructure has not grown in proportion to the

**Equity Considerations**

Ensure equitable access to composting drop-offs for a range of residential building types, neighborhoods, and socio-economic classes. Residents from multifamily properties expressed interest in food waste composting options; however, these properties currently do not pay into the Refuse and General funds could support a more equitable food-waste composting drop-off program through-out the city.

<sup>40</sup> Montgomery County. 2017 Waste Characterization Study Summary of Results. <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/SWS/Resources/Files/studies/waste-composition-study-2017.pdf>

demand. The main facilities that accept both food and yard wastes in the area include the Prince George's County facility in Upper Marlboro and the Balls Ford Composting Facility operated by Freestate Farms in Manassas, Virginia. An aerobic digester facility is under construction in Jessup for organics recycling and is expected to open in 2022.

The CAP technical consultant researched programs options and estimated the costs of contracted curbside collection was more than \$1 million per year, while a voluntary drop-off center was approximately \$10,000 per year (per site), plus staff resources for administration and outreach. Rockville could pilot the more affordable drop-off center model, which is used by cities such as Gaithersburg, College Park, Baltimore, Alexandria and Fairfax. They provide 24-hour community compost drop-off centers at several municipal facilities. Residents collect their food waste in compost containers/caddies and drop the material off, free of charge, in composting carts at municipal facilities/parks. Most of the jurisdictions work with a private composting contractor/food scrap hauler to collect the waste weekly and transport it to a regional processing facility.

In addition to annual hauling contracting costs, the consultant estimated the program would require staff and resources to establish the drop-off centers to deter vandalism and pests (carts, signage, safety measures, etc.); distribute home composting starter kits (caddies, biodegradable bags and education); and staff to establish and administer contracts for weekly collections, set-up and monitor the drop-off centers, provide ongoing public education and outreach on acceptable items. The consultant conservatively estimates 150 homes may participate in a voluntary drop-off, reducing 20 metric tons of waste over 9-year period.

To provide equitable access, site selection should consider convenient access to various neighborhoods. Facilities such as the Gude Maintenance Facility, Thomas Farm Community Center, the Senior Center, Twinbrook Community Center, Croydon Creek Nature Center or even the weekly Farmers' Market may be considered for a pilot, depending on community interest. Space constraints and site accessibility would also need to be factored in the design of a pilot project.



 <b>Action C-19</b>	<b>Expand residential recycling and waste reduction outreach program to increase compliance and waste diversion</b>					
	<b>Objective</b>	To reduce materials from incineration/landfill, reduce GHG emissions, conserve energy, recover resources, and protect the environment				
<b>Metrics</b>	Tons of waste recycled, % of waste recycled, recycling tons per household					
<b>Target</b>	Residential waste and GHG emissions	<b>Development Stage</b>		Proposed program expansion		
<b>Lead</b>	Public Works (Environment)	<b>City Upfront Cost</b>		-		
<b>Partners</b>	Public Information Office, volunteers, Montgomery County	<b>City Operating Cost</b>		\$5,000 + outreach support Cost share: C-18, C-25		
<b>GHG Benefit</b>	<b>Resiliency</b>	<b>Feasibility</b>	<b>Health</b>	<b>Equity</b>	<b>Co-Benefits</b>	
+	N	++	+	N	Environment	

In FY 2021, Rockville’s residential recycling program collected approximately 5,000 tons of single stream recycling, metal recycling and electronics recycling and more than 4,000 tons of yards waste and leaves for composting. The City’s recycling rate dipped to 45% by weight and is below Montgomery County’s 70% goal. While this rate is higher than many other communities, it is City’s lowest level in the last decade. This drop is a result of increased limitations in acceptable recyclable materials due to volatile commodities markets and processing constraints, reductions of newspaper and printed materials due to the prevalence of electronic media, and reductions in the weight of many plastics. Additionally, recycling rules are complicated and vary from place to place. Depending on the recycling processor, the types of materials and methods to recycling could differ between a business, single family home, and an apartment all located in Rockville.

While waste is a minor source of our community GHG emissions, many stakeholders in the CAP planning process strongly valued the environmental and public health benefits associated with improving recycling and waste reduction efforts and reducing single use plastics. While plastic bag fees and restrictions on polystyrene and plastic straws apply in Rockville, there are more opportunities for improvement. State and federal actions are also needed, especially those that reduce plastic waste, which derive from GHG emitting fossil fuels. On-going outreach and education, events to foster materials reuse, technical assistance, and training efforts are essential components of an integrated solid waste system. The City could further expand the information and outreach provided to residents and businesses about reducing waste, reusing items, recycling, and using their purchasing power to support demand for recycled materials and products that conserve valuable natural resources. Given that Montgomery County oversees the Transfer Station and the commercial and multifamily recycling program in Rockville, better coordination with the County would also improve waste diversion efforts. Recycling volunteers can also augment City resources through grassroots efforts to increase participation.

**Equity Considerations**

Recycling materials need to be easy to find, leverage clear graphics, and available in multiple languages to communicate to Rockville’s diverse community. Recycling outreach materials must also be diversified to help reach a broader audience, such as quick search feature on a phone or a multilingual decal with tips on the recycling carts or bins.

Rockville collections provide a back-door service to residents that are either temporarily or permanently unable to move their carts to the curb can receive weekly services.

		<h2 style="text-align: center;">Develop a City sustainable procurement policy</h2>			
<h3>Action M-10</h3>					
<b>Objective</b>	To minimize environmental impact of purchased products, foster innovation in supply markets, and foster and integrate supplier diversity				
<b>Metrics</b>	Milestone/Status update				
<b>Target</b>	Municipal GHG emissions and waste	<b>Development Stage</b>		Proposed	
<b>Lead</b>	Procurement	<b>City Upfront Cost</b>		-	
<b>Partners</b>	Various Departments	<b>City Operating Cost</b>		-	
<b>GHG Benefit</b>	<b>Resiliency</b>	<b>Feasibility</b>	<b>Health</b>	<b>Equity</b>	<b>Co-Benefits</b>
+	N	++	+	+	Environment, Economic

Section 17-89 of the City Code, Environmentally preferable procurement, states that “[t]he purchasing agent will develop an environmentally preferable procurement policy which shall provide preference, to the greatest extent practicable, to products and services that will enhance and protect the environment, protect the welfare of workers, residents, and the larger global community, and represent the best overall value to the City.”

While the City has evaluated and improved many purchasing processes, the development of an environmentally preferable procurement policy is still pending. Procurement can develop a comprehensive sustainable procurement policy to lay the foundation for an effective sustainable procurement program. The policy may include identifying staff roles and responsibilities; developing sustainable procurement plans, goals, procedures and implementation tools; educating employees to use credible eco-labels and “best value” assessment methods when making purchasing decisions; and tracking and reporting requirements. Many governments are discovering that sustainable procurement can including the following to help make measurable progress toward achieving their sustainability goals:

- GHG can be significantly reduced by purchasing electric and hybrid-electric vehicles, LED light bulbs and fixtures, energy-efficient computers and appliances, solar panels, electricity from wind, solar and coal-free sources, plant-based food options, and recycled paper.
- Consider the life-cycle costs and GHG emissions of products purchased.
- Waste and toxins can be reduced by purchasing reusable, refillable, and readily recyclable products or utilizing processes, technologies, services and products that reduce exposure of Substances of (Very) High Concern (SVHCs/SHCs) to people and the environment.

**Equity Considerations**

Local governments can meet their social responsibility, diversity, and local economic development goals by giving preference to goods and services that are certified as fairly traded; offered by certified disadvantaged businesses, B Corps, or worker-owned cooperatives; or locally sourced.