

# Westchester's Food Scrap Recycling Program Making An Impact

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The City of White Plains signs on to participate in the County's new food scrap recycling initiative.

When Westchester County Executive George Latimer announced the launch of the Department of Environmental Facility's new Residential Food Scrap Transportation and Disposal (RFSTAD) program, he emphasized that one of the goals was to design a program that would make sense, both environmentally and financially, for municipalities that were not already operating residential food recycling programs. The decision by the City of White Plains to start a voluntary, residential food scrap drop off program and to participate in the RFSTAD program, goes a long way toward meeting the County Executive's mandate.

**Latimer said:** "We could not be happier with the City's decision to partner with the County in expanding food scrap recycling options for our residents. The inclusion of White Plains will make a tremendous impact, representing the largest municipality in the County to date offering food scrap recycling to its residents. The goal of the RFSTAD program is to expand food scrap recycling by reducing the costs and making it feasible for all our municipalities to operate programs. The announcement that White Plains will be part of the program shows that it is working the way we intended."

**White Plains Mayor Tom Roach said:** "White Plains is excited to participate in this new County program. The City has encouraged its residents to compost on their own property as a means of reducing their carbon footprint, but this new program allows us to expand that opportunity to residents who do not have their own yards as well as to those who are interested in this new recycling option but do not have use for the compost. In addition to providing an important environmental benefit, the Food Scrap Recycling program is also a great example of shared services between governments, which is good for our taxpayers."

White Plains has been working on several fronts to reduce its carbon footprint. We are getting ready to install solar on city buildings and facilities, we offer 28 electric vehicle charging stations in public garages and lots throughout the city, textile and shoe recycling, we've phased out the use of the dirtiest fuel oils, and more (see [Go Green White Plains](#) ☐). I am pleased to be able to add the Food Scrap Recycling program to this list and thank the County Executive for this opportunity."

**DEF Commissioner Vincent Kopicki said:** "The overwhelmingly positive response to RFSTAD from local municipalities only reinforces our Department's continued commitment to governmental partnerships such as this one with White Plains. With the City of White Plains' participation, food scrap recycling will now be available for many more County residents. I am proud that our work can make food scrap recycling a reality for residents as we make real strides to protect our environment on a local level."

**Director of Energy Conservation and Sustainability Pete McCartt said:** "Westchester County is leading the charge when it comes to food scrap recycling – and this is just one of the many steps we are taking as a government to protect our environment. As we look to encourage more municipalities to join this and other efforts, our goal is to build an understanding and an urgency to protect future generations from the deleterious impact of climate change."

Under RFSTAD, the County's Department of Environmental Facilities (DEF) arranges for the consolidation, transportation, and processing of food scraps collected by municipalities. The County's participation reduces the cost so that it is the same as-- or less than -- the transportation and disposal cost of garbage, making food scrap recycling feasible for municipalities that otherwise would not be able to offer this service. Moreover, incorporating grant funding from NYSDEC for start-up materials, allows local municipalities to start these programs for a few thousand dollars.

Additionally, the County recently started construction on CompostED, the Department of Environmental Facility's new Compost and Education Facility in Valhalla. CompostED will be a small scale compost demonstration facility, offering educational tours and classes on the benefits of composting and for municipalities on incorporating food scraps in municipal yard waste composting activities. The facility is slated to open in Spring 2021.

DEF and the County also recommend that residents compost at home when they are able. The County sells compost bins and rain barrels at wholesale cost. Next sale will be April 24, 2021, send an e-mail to [PLM9@WestchesterGov.com](mailto:PLM9@WestchesterGov.com) for details.