

PE 5: Organic Waste Management Plan

Village of Bronxville

Organic Waste Management Plan 2022

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Credits and Acknowledgements

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Executive Summary

Wasted food and other organic waste are major generators of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Reducing and diverting such waste is a key strategy for mitigating climate change and has other important environmental benefits. In response to community interest in reducing solid waste, improving organics diversion, and reducing the effects of climate change, the Village of Bronxville has developed this Organics Waste Management Plan to review our current operations and provide strategies and recommendations for future steps. The goal of the Plan is to outline strategies to reduce the amount of organic waste destined for incineration or landfill by preventing its generation, ensuring that eatable food reaches hungry people, and encouraging composting.

Reducing organic waste is a significant component in the local, county, state, national, and international effort to avoid the most dangerous climate change scenarios, which requires that by the end of this decade greenhouse gas emissions must be in sharp decline and that policies will ensure a further decline to net zero by mid-century.

In recent years, Bronxville's citizens and government have instituted a variety of programs for managing organic waste. These include a residential food scrap drop-off program for composting; composting of yard waste both through municipal pickup and by encouraging healthy yard practices; a farmer's market that supports regional farms and brings fresh food to our area; and a community garden whose purpose is to raise and donate vegetables to local food pantries, to feed hungry families.

These programs are managed in partnership with the local government, private entities, and volunteers. The programs are supported by the Village and county governments. Vigorous efforts of public outreach with websites, flyers, events, and so forth have been underway for several years.

With so much infrastructure already in place, many of this Plan's proposed actions focus on promoting greater participation in the existing programs and improvements in their efficiency. The Plan also proposes new projects and outreach, suggests types of data that should be gathered, and points to other projects that are worth investigating for the long-term. While adoption of the existing programs has been swift among certain segments of the population, the majority of residents and local businesses do not currently participate, so many of the proposed actions seek greater community education and engagement.

Although Bronxville's 2020 Comprehensive Plan does not directly address organic waste management, the Plan does encourage sustainable practices and green infrastructure, which align with the recommendations in this report.

PART 1): CONSIDERATIONS FOR ORGANIC WASTE MANAGEMENT

Introduction

What is organic waste? It is any “dead” plant or animal material. In nature, such material decomposes through a natural process in which trillions of bacterial microbes convert plant material and animal flesh back into hummus or soil. Seeds sprout in this soil and new plants grow, completing a regenerative cycle.

The word “organic” in this context has nothing to do with organic produce or organically raised meat that is purchased for consumption. The word organic attached to food that is purchased to be eaten indicates that it was raised using environmentally sustainable practices, i.e. without man-made chemical fertilizers, pesticides, or herbicides, and using other regenerative agricultural methods.

The word organic is also used to describe non-chemical treatments for lawn and tree care. In that context organic refers to “natural” treatments that seek to work with nature to promote healthy soil and plants.

Organic waste that requires municipal disposal plans can include biosolids from waste treatment plants, FOG (fats, oils and grease which by New York State law must be collected by commercial food service companies), and animal carcasses on farms, well as the more familiar food waste and yard trimmings. Since Bronxville contains no farms or waste treatment facilities, this report addresses the need to reduce wasted food and to compost food scraps and yard waste.

In 2018 more than 63 million tons of food was wasted in the United States, and about 40% of that came from households (EPA: Food Too Good To Waste). The volume of household food waste has been increasing in recent years; it is estimated that the U.S. wastes 33-40% of all food produced for human consumption.

This loss has a huge environmental impact once one accounts for all that goes into raising, harvesting, transporting, and selling food. Consider the costs of seeds, water, energy, land, fertilizer and pesticides, labor, and financial capital. Greenhouse gas emissions result from the production of every resource and in every step of the food production process. The environment suffers ancillary harms, among them soil erosion and nutrient depletion, loss of habitat and direct poisoning of wildlife, and algae blooms from nitrogen run-off downstream.

The Scoping Document for New York State’s Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA), released for public comment in January 2022, notes that New York State produces 18 million tons of overall waste per year. As much as 23% of that is organic material. To meet the goals of the CLCPA, the state must drastically reduce all waste, and must move organic material away from landfills and incineration facilities to organic composting facilities, where it can be turned into a rich soil amendment.

In Westchester County alone, it is estimated that we dispose of over 185 tons of food waste annually (Woodard and Curran Engineering: Westchester County Food Waste Study Report, January 2020.). Since 2010, it’s been New York State’s goal to reduce solid waste disposal to 0.6 pounds per person, per day (PPD) by 2030 through waste reduction, recycling, resource recovery, and significant reductions in the

amount of waste destined for municipal incineration or landfill. Currently the average Westchester resident disposes of 3.7 pounds PPD.

With the implementation of the New York State Food Donation and Food Scrap Recycling Law in January 2022, there is more incentive for restaurants and businesses to donate still-eatable food rather than throw it away. And in Westchester County nearly half the municipalities, including Bronxville, have adopted residential food scrap recycling programs.

Studies have shown that food waste in wealthy communities such as Bronxville is more likely to occur at the consumer level. “In nations with low per capita income, food loss happens closer to the farm than the fork. In sub-Saharan Africa, more than 80 percent of food wastage happens during harvesting, transportation, storage, and processing, while only 5 percent is caused by consumers. In North America, by contrast, two-thirds of food loss and waste takes place at the consumer stage.” (*Regeneration: Ending the Climate Crisis In One Generation* by Paul Hawken, 2021, Penguin Books)

Background

The Village of Bronxville is a one-square-mile village located in Westchester County in the southwest section of the town of Eastchester, New York. It is situated about fifteen miles north of midtown Manhattan. According to the 2020 U.S. Census, the Village has a population of 6656, with 81.1% owner-occupied homes. Sixty percent of residents live in single-family homes or townhouses; 40% live in multi-family apartment buildings, the majority of which are owner-occupied co-ops or condos.

According to Westchester County’s most recent Solid Waste and Recycling Report (2020), the Village of Bronxville collected 6217 tons of solid waste in 2020. Residents recycled 64% and sent 2251 tons of waste to Peekskill for incineration. That works out to 1.85 lbs per person per day (PPD). However, since this figure does not include businesses, Lawrence Hospital, churches, or Bronxville School, it does not reflect the full picture of waste in the Village.

According to Westchester County’s 2020 Food Waste Study (Woodward & Curran), Westchester produces this much food waste: 103,000 tons/year from the commercial sector and 85,000 tons/year from the residential sector.

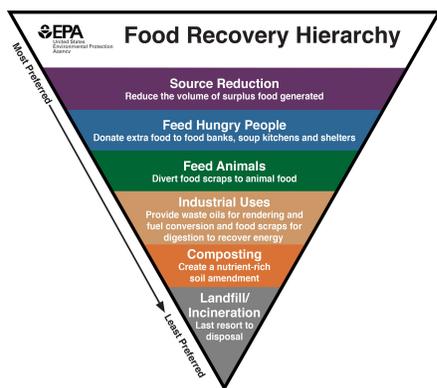
Goals & Objectives

Establishing an Organics Waste Management Plan is an important step in promoting environmentally sustainable practices and mitigating climate change. Food waste typically represents the largest component of municipal solid waste in the United States; landfills are the third largest source of methane emissions. Methane is the second most powerful greenhouse gas (GHG), and pound for pound, its impact is 25 times greater than carbon dioxide over a 100-year period. Wasted food is one of the largest generators of GHG emissions globally.

Organic waste contains a high percentage of water, which does not burn well. Reducing the organic waste that Bronxville sends to the Wheelabrator waste-to-energy facility in Peekskill will help it run more efficiently. And organic waste contains vital organic material; by recognizing it as a resource rather than a waste, we can complete a natural cycle and return this vital organic material to the earth, where it enriches our soil by feeding microorganisms and encouraging healthy soil structure.

This Plan can serve as a valuable tool for the Village in its organics management decision-making. The Plan will help identify opportunities for improved organics waste management and help develop a strategy for implementing projects that further reduce waste.

This Plan takes into account the Food Recovery Hierarchy in which consideration should be made in descending order: food waste source reduction; feed hungry people; feed animals; collect waste for industrial uses; recycle/compost; landfill/incineration. As a densely populated, urban suburb, Bronxville has very little open land and no farms. We're not able to reduce food waste at its source, nor is it practical to feed animals. Our focus is on wasting less food in the home, raising food for hungry people, developing food donation programs, and composting as much as possible of what remains.



Food Waste Hierarchy

Constraints to keep in mind have to do with:

*Challenges in reaching high participation rates among residents and businesses. Participation rates may rise over time with continued promotion and as more people feel the urgency of climate change and fully embrace their role in mitigating it.

*Limitations of geography and space, which tend to rule out local composting facilities; local facilities reduce transportation emissions and costs and have the potential to produce energy for local use, but they require significant amounts of open space, which Bronxville simply doesn't have. However, long-term consideration might be given to incorporating composting facilities, where appropriate, in existing or renovated municipal structures.

Community Engagement

Bronxville has many residents who are knowledgeable and concerned about climate change, but for the most part, they are just beginning to recognize its impact in their own lives and acknowledge their responsibility in taking steps to mitigate it. Families are very busy, with demanding jobs and hectic schedules for their children. Often, they want to do the right thing but seek quick explanations of the problem and easy practices to adopt. They may need to understand how a program directly benefits them before they're willing to invest time and attention in it.

Our engagement strategy is focused on energizing residents to make changes that will have meaningful impacts. The Bronxville Green Committee has focused on raising residents' awareness of the full environmental impact of wasted food, from the field to their refrigerator; on offering easy, practical tips for reducing wasted food at home; and on encouraging participation in the food scrap recycling program. Community-level involvement is critical to ensuring that solutions are practical, sensible, and long lasting.

The authors sought feedback from key stakeholders throughout this document's planning process. We spoke to Village staff and Trustees, the directors of the Bronxville Giving Garden, managers of the Farmers Market, volunteers promoting the Food Scrap Recycling program, and local and county officials managing Bronxville's municipal pick-up of organic yard waste. In addition, we spoke to members of sustainability committees in Scarsdale, Larchmont, and Dobbs Ferry. We visited CompostED in Valhalla, NY, Westchester County's pilot project and education center for food scrap composting. We attended meetings at Bronxville School about initiating a food scrap recycling program in the Elementary School. We shared information in this Plan at meetings of the Bronxville Green Committee and with the Bronxville Climate Smart Task Force.

In addition, the authors read numerous county, state, and federal documents about reducing organic waste (listed under Resources) and incorporated data and information from them in this report.

PART 2: CURRENT VILLAGE ORGANICS MANAGEMENT

Programs that Feed Hungry People: Bronxville Giving Garden and Bronxville Farmer's Market

Bronxville Giving Garden (BGG)

In 2016, inspired by the suggestion of a local resident, Bronxville's Trustees allocated money for the creation of a volunteer-run garden whose mission would be to address local food insecurity by raising and donating herbs and vegetables to area food banks. The BGG received nonprofit status, and a generous donation from the Bronxville Rotary allowed the project to move forward. When the original site chosen, Maltby Park, proved to be unworkable because it lacked a ready water source, the BGG was constructed on a corner of Village Hall property. Farmer Dave Phillips and Director Mary Liz Mulligan were instrumental in establishing and running the garden for the first years of its existence.





First photo: On right, Farmer Dave Phillips; on left Jason of CSA Mount Vernon

Second photo: Mary Liz Mulligan, former Director of Bronxville Giving Garden, and Denise Chin at ECAP

A letter confirming donations from BGG to ECAP can be found in the Appendix B.

Now in its fifth growing season since 2017, the Garden has raised and donated hundreds of pounds of fresh vegetables and herbs to Eastchester Community Action Partnership (ECAP). In many years the Garden has also donated food to Community Service Associates, Inc. (CSA) in Mount Vernon.

Before the pandemic, the Bronxville Giving Garden hosted a number of school groups, including nursery school children from Eliza Frost and the Reformed Church programs; from the Bronxville School; and from Westhab's Community Center in Nodine Hill, Yonkers. In fall 2021, the Garden hosted its first group since the start of the pandemic, the Bronxville School Mentoring Committee, which included approximately 30 students from the Bronxville Elementary, Middle and High Schools. In the spring of 2022, the BGG began once again hosting nursery school students from Eliza Frost.

During these visits, children learned about food insecurity in our area, about the carbon cycle, and about the benefits of chemical-free organic gardening. They were introduced to vegetables that, in some cases, were unfamiliar to them, and were given a chance to do some actual gardening—planting seeds, pulling weeds, harvesting vegetables, and/or planting their own seeds in pots to take home.



Left: a group from Westhab; Right: The Bronxville School Mentoring Group

Director of the Bronxville Giving Garden, with the support of Mayor Mary Marvin, raises funds to support the Garden each year through a letter appeal; the director also seeks grant money from the Eastchester Community Fund, which has been generous in its support.

Information about the Bronxville Giving Garden is available through its website <https://www.bronxvillegivinggarden.org/>, which is in the process of being significantly updated, with a greater focus on its mission to feed hungry people. The Giving Garden website links to the Village of Bronxville and Bronxville Green Committee websites. The Garden has a limited social media presence on Facebook; our intention is to let that drop and focus on promoting the Garden through the Green Committee's social media pages.

The Bronxville Giving Garden is promoted through articles in the local digital newspaper, My Hometown Bronxville—most recently in a June 2021 article about the Giving Garden: <http://myhometownbronxville.com/index.php/lifestyle/home-garden/7142-growing-season-well-underway-at-the-bronxville-giving-garden>. In Summer 2022, we will write an article to announce a new season and new director; we will reiterate the importance of its mission to feed hungry people.

Bronxville Farmer's Market

In 2012, with support from the Village of Bronxville, the Bronxville Chamber of Commerce partnered with Morning Glory Markets, a company that manages farmers markets in the lower Hudson Valley, to create the Bronxville Farmer's Market. The market is available to residents and people from neighboring communities each Saturday from mid-May through mid-November, from 8:30 am until 1:00 pm. Located on the west side of the Village near the Bronx River and Sprain Parkways, it provides easy access to residents from Bronxville, Tuckahoe, and Yonkers. Attendance ranges from 1200 to 2000 people each market day.

The market is a non-profit organization managed by a small all-volunteer board, and operations are coordinated by the market director, Pascale Le Draoulec of Morning Glory Markets. There is an on-site manager to assist with daily operations. Vendors rent space from the Chamber of Commerce.

The Village of Bronxville offers access to the public roadway at no cost to the market. The Bronxville Police Department closes the street at Stone Place (along Paxton Avenue).

The Bronxville Department of Public Works provides trash bins and collection following the event. However, no attempt is made to separate recyclables and food scraps from regular trash. According to Morning Glory Market representatives, organic farm vendors transport their food waste (cut off carrot and beet tops, for example) back to their farms, incurring those costs, while non-organic farm vendors tend to throw their organic material in with regular trash. The Bronxville Green Committee is working with the Farmers Market and Village to make bins for mixed recycling and organic food waste available to vendors and shoppers.

In 2020 and 2021, the Farmer's Market was an especially vital resource as it gave many residents access to fresh food in an outdoor setting during the worst of the pandemic (photo at left of is market November 2021). Many vendors are regional farms and artisans, and a few are local business owners. Vendors of fruits and vegetables have expressed a willingness to accept SNAP and ETB cards, but those programs can be a challenge to administer. We encourage the on-site manager to investigate the possibility of setting up a payment system that would make it easier for vendors to accept these programs.

The market is an important resource in the Village and brings together vendors providing fresh produce, bread, cheese, fish, poultry, meat, honey, jams, and even pickles. It also includes artisans who offer handcrafted goods, and occasionally a knife sharpener. The market not only provides residents with access to fresh food, but also supports farms and local vendors from throughout the Hudson Valley. Several merchants in Bronxville and Tuckahoe have booths there.

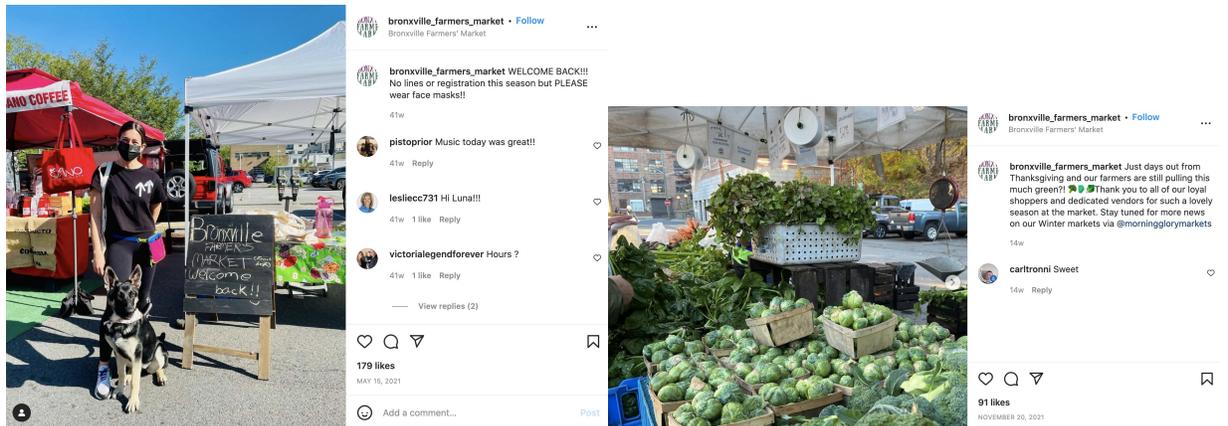
The Bronxville Green Committee sets up a table at the market on many Saturdays, especially in the spring and fall, to share information on Heard Yard practices, Pollinator Pathways practices, and the Village's Food Scrap Recycling Program.

The Bronxville Farmer's Market is promoted through its website:

<https://www.bronxvillefarmersmkt.org/>, with links from the Village's own website. It has an active Facebook page. The Green Committee is beginning to work with the market to cross promote their programs on social media.



Green Committee Members at Farmers Market



FARMERS' MARKET

In our mission to bring healthy, nutritious food to our community, we are partnered with New York - Presbyterian Lawrence Hospital.

Fresh food grown, produced locally brought to you with enhanced safety and social distancing protocols.

2022 OPENING DAY, MAY 14!

Top

Brought to you by



Photo Credit: Sarah Billings. Design: Fernanda Franco

Programs that Recycle/Compost: Food Scrap Recycling Program & Organic Yard Waste Program

Food Scrap Recycling Program

According to the Draft Scoping Plan of the CLCPA, “ending the disposal of food scraps and yard waste at landfills and incinerators is probably the single most important action the State can take to cut emissions from [the solid waste] sector.”

In December 2021, with the intention of reducing organic waste in Bronxville, the Village launched a voluntary, residential food scrap recycling program in which residents collect their food scraps and drop them off at a central drop-off site behind Village Hall.

Background

In early March, 2020, during a public meeting of the Bronxville Trustees, the Bronxville Green Committee hosted the presentation of a residential food scrap recycling program given by Michelle Sterling of Scarsdale, NY’s Sustainability Committee. The Green Committee had extensively researched the Scarsdale drop-off model of this program, which had already been adopted by over 20 municipalities in the county. The Trustees were impressed with the program and willing to move forward but preferred to wait until ongoing construction of a new DPW facility was finished and could become the location of a drop-off site.

In fall of 2020, the Village joined an Inter Municipal Agreement (IMA) with Westchester County in which the County manages the transportation and disposal of food scraps collected through the Village’s municipal program, making the cost of the transportation and recycling of food scraps equal to or less than the cost of disposal as managed solid waste.

By September 2021, construction of the DPW was complete, and the Trustees passed a resolution officially adopting the Food Scrap Recycling program. (See G Resolution: <https://ecode360.com/documents/BR1468/public/626272720.pdf>.)

The Program

In this program, residents collect all food waste, including meat, bones, and dairy, as well as soiled compostable paper products such as paper towels, paper napkins, and the greasy portion of pizza boxes. Paper plates (without plastic coatings) and compostable single-use cutlery, popsicle sticks, and all natural products (nothing plastic) are also collected. Liner bags **MUST** be compostable (not biodegradable). No stickers on fruit/veg and no staples on tea bags.

Bronxville’s Green Committee volunteers promote the program, sign up participants, handled the initial distribution of Starter Kits (which consist of a counter-top collection bin, roll of 24 compostable liners, larger totter bin, and brochure, sold at cost for \$25), maintain a database, and monitor the program’s progress. Village and DPW staff order and store bins, maintain the drop-off site, and provide collection data. From Village Hall, they handle sales of starter kits and additional bin liners for on-going participants.

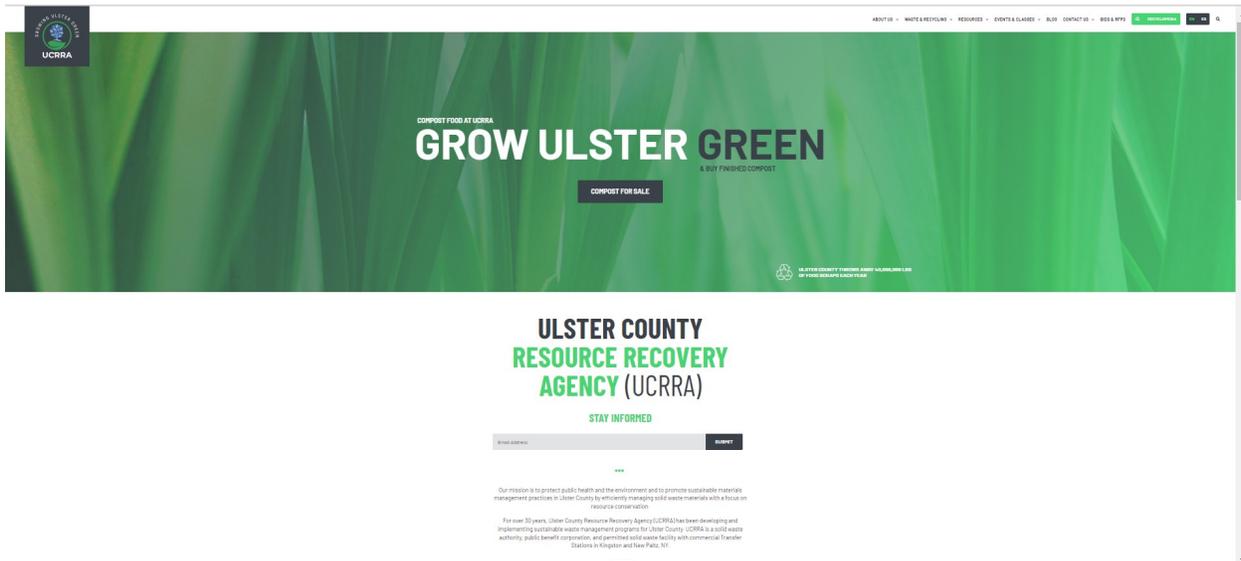
At the program’s initial launch 125 families signed up.

Where Are the Food Scraps Taken?

Through an agreement with Westchester County (mentioned earlier), Suburban Carting hauls Bronxville’s food scraps to a commercial composter; the county does not specify a particular one. Suburban hauls to both Sustainable Materials Management in Cortlandt Manor, 30 miles away; and to Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency near Kingston, 60 miles away. The composting facility sells the resulting compost to local retailers for resale to consumers.



Screenshot of website for Cortlandt NY based commercial composter used by Suburban Carting



Screenshot of Ulster County based commercial composter used by Suburban Carting



Starter Kit

Food Scrap Drop-Off Site Behind Village Hall December 2021



Bronxville Trustee Helen Knapp (far right), Assistant Administrator Stephen Shallo, Green Committee Members



Bronxville Mayor Marvin & Green Committee Members

Promotion

The Green Committee promoted the program in the many months before it was implemented, with presentations to the Bronxville's Chamber of Commerce (January 2020) and Bronxville Rotary (Zoom, March 2021), and through a table at the Bronxville Farmers Market, with signage and sign-up forms, during the fall of 2020.

On November 23, 2021, an eblast with sign-up form was distributed to residents by the Village. The program was initially promoted by the Green Committee through its website, an article in a local digital newspaper (Dec 8), on social media, and in several follow-up emails and a second eblast from the Village (Dec 9). The program was launched on December 10th and 11th when volunteers distributed starter kits to residents from Village Hall, from 10am-2pm each day. On December 13th a ribbon was cut at the drop-off site, which officially began accepting food scraps.

In winter 2022, a spike in Covid cases meant that promotion efforts could not safely take place in person. The Green Committee promoted Food Scrap Recycling through articles in My Hometown Bronxville, in the Village's monthly newsletter One Square Mile, in church newsletters, email messaging, and through word of mouth. In April books on food waste were displayed in the Bronxville Public Library along with information about the program. On April 30th the Village held what we hope will be an annual Compost Give-Back Day, in which residents picked up free compost and volunteers promoted the Food Scrap Recycling program. The Green Committee will promote the program through tabling at the Bronxville Farmers Market from spring through fall.

FOOD SCRAP RECYCLING IN BRONXVILLE

The Village of Bronxville has launched a food scrap recycling program (now bring ALL food scraps to the Food Scrap Drop-off Site behind Village Hall). We are proud to join our neighbors in this service!

All food scraps are accepted, including fruits, vegetables, or pasta, raw and cooked food, as well as cut flowers, napk paper. If it's a natural product, it can go in. The scraps are taken to a commercial compost facility and turned into soil!

How does it work?



Collect food scraps & paper products in a countertop pail using compostable bags

Store bags of food scraps in a storage and transportation bin

Flyer (also a poster) promoting Food Scrap Recycling program

Article in MyHometownBronxville announcing Food Scrap Recycling program:

<http://myhometownbronxville.com/index.php/lifestyle/home-garden/7399-food-scrap-recycling-is-here-how-to-get-started>

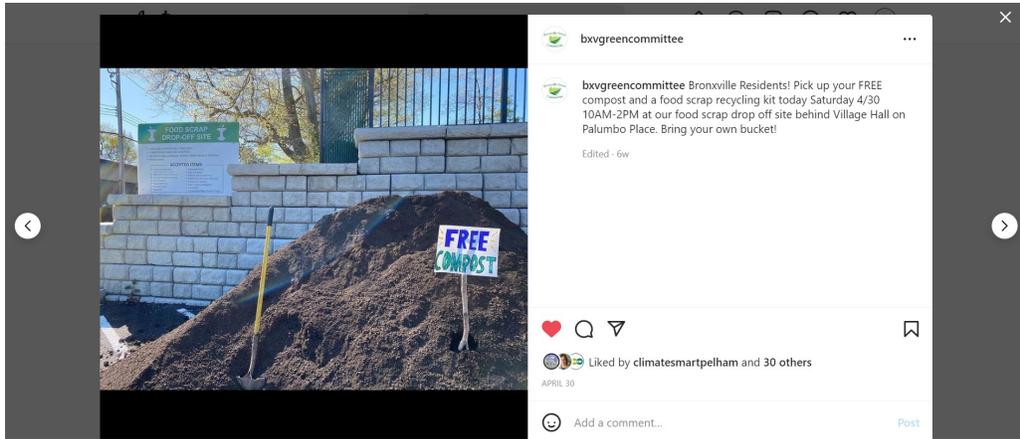
Article in MyHometownBronxville on food waste that also promotes Food Scrap Recycling program:
<http://myhometownbronxville.com/index.php/sustainable-living/7543-food-too-good-to-waste-let-s-do-better-together>

Article in MyHometownBronxville promoting Compost Give-Back Day:
<http://myhometownbronxville.com/index.php/sustainable-living/7667-bronxville-s-first-compost-give-back-day-is-april-30th>

Link to Green Committee website pages promoting Food Scrap Recycling program:
<https://www.bronxvillegreencommittee.org/waste-not/food-scrap-recycling>

Social Media Posts:





Village Hall Display:



Community Board:



Library Display:



Compost Give Back Day:



Jim Palmer, Village Administrator, and Amy Paulin, NYS Assemblymember District 88

Success in Numbers

As of May 1, 2022 about 100 residents have signed up for the program and 95 Starter Kits were sold. From January through March, we collected 1.86 tons/month of food scraps, diverting it from the waste-to-energy facility in Peekskill. This represents approximately 1% of our total solid waste, which is 168 tons/month. We consider this a good start from which to expand participation.

Costs of Transportation

Transporting waste for long distances adds significantly to the environmental impact of disposal. That Bronxville is hauling collected food scraps 30-60 miles away is far from ideal. The authors strongly suggest that this issue be studied in depth when this Plan is updated and revised. Westchester County legislators are aware of the problem and seeking a solution, which might involve creating county hubs where food scraps can be taken for organic composting. The Village might also investigate the potential of local biodigesters, which need not take up much room but can be complex to manage.

Organic Yard Waste Program

In 2020, according to Westchester County's 2020 Solid Waste Management Report, the county collected and recycled 201,953 tons of organic yard waste. An additional 57,8845 tons was collected by private haulers and brought to municipal transfer stations for recycling.

From mid-October until the first week of December, Monday through Friday as needed, the Bronxville DPW picks up leaves at curb-side; they must be piled loosely apart from other yard waste. Small branches must be cut into 4 foot lengths and tied into bundles no more than 18 inches in diameter. Small twigs, flowers, etc. must be placed in biodegradable brown bags intended for lawn-care debris and left at the curb.

From early April until mid-October, residents are encouraged to leave grass clippings on their lawn. Other yard material may be tied in bundles or placed in brown biodegradable bags and left at the curb.

https://www.villageofbronxville.com/public-works/pages/sanitation-recyclingyard-waste#anchor_yard

According to Westchester County's 2020 Annual Report on Solid Waste, beginning in 1998, the Westchester County Board of Legislators authorized the County to enter into Inter-Municipal Agreements (IMAs) with municipalities to operate the Organic Yard Waste Transfer Station Program. Participating municipalities collect yard waste at a municipal depot. The County arranges for collection from the depot and transport to private commercial composting facilities. As an economic incentive to divert yard waste from the solid waste stream, member municipalities pay less per ton for collected yard waste than for disposal of municipal solid waste. The program allows participating municipalities to increase local recycling rates and to save money by diverting yard waste from the waste stream.

Where is Yard Waste Taken?

Through Bronxville's agreement with Eastchester, organic yard waste is collected and brought to a transfer station in Eastchester, a natural area near Twin Lakes county park (off California Road), where it is placed in piles and allowed for a time to naturally decompose. When the area gets full, the County transports the material to one of a number of private commercial composting facilities, where is further

breaks down and eventually becomes compost . The county does not receive any of the resulting compost.

The Village collects about 750 tons of yard waste each year. This program is promoted on the Village website.



Photos of yard waste ready for collection

The Village and Bronxville Green Committee continue to promote “love ‘em and leave ‘em” and other healthy yard care practices. The Pollinator Pathway Committee, under the umbrella of the Green Committee, encourages residents to avoid using pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides in their yards; use native plants that support the full lifecycle of pollinators and other insects and birds; and other healthy yard practices.

However, most residents use landscaping services and most landscapers registered in Bronxville do not offer mulching or healthy yard practices in general.

With the help of the Green Committee the Village is committed to informing residents of healthy yard practices in the hope that they will request these services of their landscapers, who will in turn begin to provide them. The Village is also exploring ways to encourage landscapers directly to adopt beneficial practices. A more restrictive ordinance regulating gas-powered leaf blowers, which took effect in Bronxville in December 2021, and restrictive leaf blower ordinances in many other Westchester municipalities, have begun to raise awareness among landscapers that they must begin to transition their businesses to cleaner, quieter electric lawn care equipment. On March 1, 2022, Larchmont offered a free workshop for all Westchester landscapers in using electric lawn care equipment and adopting healthy yard practices. Bronxville promoted this opportunity among its registered landscapers. Twenty landscapers registered to attend.

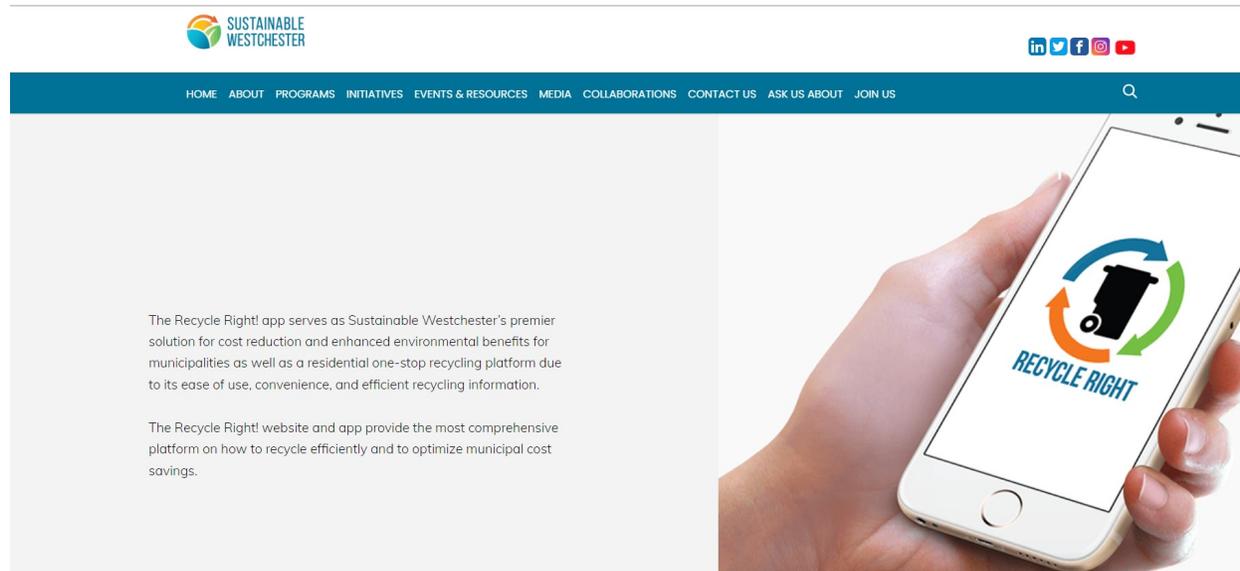
PART 3: PARTNERSHIPS AND EDUCATION

Partnerships

Partnerships have been a key component of Bronxville’s efforts to prevent waste generation and increase reuse, recycling, and composting.

The Village participates in Sustainable Westchester’s Zero Waste Program. This program promotes the free, one-stop waste and recycling website + phone app “Recycle Right,” which allows residents to assess what items are recyclable or compostable. Villagers who download and subscribe to the Recycle

Right app learn more about local waste disposal regulations. The app also reminds users of DPW pickups and alerts them to any schedule changes. Sustainable Westchester's Zero Waste program also generates announcements on zero waste news and initiatives related to food waste reduction (e.g. the Village food scrap program).



The Village also promotes Westchester's Healthy Yards programs first promoted by Bedford2030 and Pollinator Pathway groups.



In fall 2020, Bronxville joined Westchester County's residential Food Scrap Transportation and Disposal (RFSTAD) Program. [RFSTAD \(westchestergov.com\)](https://www.westchestergov.com/RFSTAD).

Bronxville partners with Eastchester to run its Organic Yard Waste Program; material is brought to a local area situated within Eastchester's municipal borders.

The Bronxville Green Committee partners with the Bronxville DPW twice a year, in spring and fall, to run TAKE BACK DAY, a recycling event during which residents drive through to drop off documents for shredding, electronics for recycling, and other items for reuse or recycling. The DPW is also instrumental in maintaining the drop-off site for the Food Scrap Recycling Program.

The Village and Green Committee work with the Chamber of Commerce to support the Bronxville Farmers Market.

The Bronxville Green Committee works with Bronxville High School's Earth Club and science classes to support their programming, research, and community outreach. In 2021, a Bronxville High School student

was awarded a \$10,000 Bronxville School Foundation Grant to introduce food scrap recycling and recycling education to the Bronxville Elementary School. Volunteer moms associated with the Green Committee are working with administrators from the Elementary School and consulting with Scarsdale's Sustainability Committee to launch this program, with an anticipated start date of fall 2022.

The Bronxville Green Committee has worked with Scarsdale's Sustainability Committee to propose and implement the Food Scrap Recycling program.

The Bronxville Green Committee is also working with the Bronxville Giving Garden to promote its mission of feeding hungry people and educating groups about the benefits of organic gardening and composting. In-person events are tentatively planned for the summer of 2022.

The Bronxville Green Committee is working with the Bronxville Public Library to promote its programs.

Education

The Village of Bronxville website contains information related to waste recycling and composting: <https://www.villageofbronxville.com/public-works/pages/sanitation-recyclingyard-waste>.

The Bronxville Green Committee maintains and frequently updates a comprehensive website: <https://www.bronxvillegreencommittee.org/>. It includes a major section called "Waste Not" that promotes all recycling: reuse, curbside recycling, and composting of food scraps. Recently, a section was added on reducing wasted food in the home. A section for businesses and institutions (schools and churches) suggests creating a food donation program with links to state resources.

The Bronxville Green Committee ran an educational campaign around wasted food that included articles in My Hometown Bronxville (<http://myhometownbronxville.com/>) on February 9, 2022 and February 16, 2022; posted about wasted food on social media, and arranged a display of books on wasted food at the Bronxville Public Library (April 2022). The committee also runs frequent articles endorsing healthy yard practices, most recently on March 9, 2022.

The Bronxville Giving Garden website also includes information on its mission to feed hungry people and to reduce the amount of wasted food: <https://www.bronxvillegivinggarden.org/>.

The Green Committee runs a table at the Bronxville Farmer's Market, periodically from mid-May until mid-November, and at the Chamber of Commerce-run Sidewalk Sales in fall and spring. Volunteers manning the table have focused on promoting healthy yard practices through its Pollinator Pathways sub-committee of the Bronxville Green Committee. Now that the food scrap recycling program has launched, that will become a major focus of their outreach.

The Village's monthly newsletter One Square Mile, available both in print and digitally, frequently promotes programs to reduce organic waste. Archive articles are available on the Village Website: <https://www.villageofbronxville.com/village-clerk/pages/one-square-mile-newsletter>

The Green Committee has distributed flyers and posters in Village Hall, at the Public Library, and on public bulletin boards to promote the food scrap recycling program.

The Green Committee and Village of Bronxville post regularly on Instagram @ bxvgreencommittee

The Green Committee anticipates offering more in-person events at the Bronxville Giving Garden and elsewhere to educate residents about the Food Waste Hierarchy, the importance of reducing food waste, and the benefits of composting food scraps and yard debris (see more under RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE PROJECTS).

PART 4: STRATEGIES FOR ORGANIC WASTE MANAGEMENT

Considerations

In developing this Plan, the following considerations and research informed our strategies:

*Assessed Bronxville’s current organic waste management programs

- Assessed Bronxville’s density, open public and private spaces, and DPW site plan.

*Considered community preferences and patterns of behavior

- Consulted a range of stakeholders (see earlier under Community Engagement)
- Reviewed the Village’s 2020 Comprehensive Plan

*Reviewed county, state, and federal documents such as solid waste and food waste reports; summaries of NYS Food Donation and Food Scrap Recycling law and guidelines for creating a food donation program; NYS Department of Conservation (DEC) documents and related links regarding how to reduce food waste and run food waste campaigns.

- Studied key concepts, including the EPA’s food recovery hierarchy, pros and cons of on-site composting, diversion potential, and source reduction.
- Collected information from neighboring communities in search of proven best practices.

Strategies—We suggest these strategies:

Educate and Engage

Expand and Improve

Initiate and Evaluate

Educate and Engage

Educate and engage the community about the connection between reducing wasted food and feeding hungry people, saving money, and mitigating environmental impacts.

- Continue educational campaigns that encourage residents to avoid the potential for wasted food before it enters their home or business, and to separate it for composting rather than disposing of it as regular trash.
- Promote the food scrap recycling program by signing up participants and selling Starter Kits at in-person events that draw crowds, such as the Farmers Market
- Create new events that will attract families where food scrap recycling can be promoted.

- Seek ways to partner with additional local organizations to further Village efforts.
- Develop a plan specific to local businesses focused on preventing wasted food through food donation programs and food scrap recycling.

Expand and Improve—Expand participation in current programs while continuing to evaluate their effectiveness.

- Continue to promote and grow participation in the excellent programs already in place.
- Keep up-to-date with the latest best practices, state and county legislation, and relevant developments in the private sector.
- When appropriate, propose laws, policies and regulations that help achieve waste reduction goals.
- Periodically re-evaluate the effectiveness of outreach and programming, with an eye toward improving and refreshing.
- Use stakeholder interviews, surveys, and feedback to inform recommendations.

Initiate and Evaluate—Initiate new programs that promise to help achieve our goals while continuing to evaluate both on-going and new projects.

- Propose new projects and research the potential of future projects
- Continue to collect data on how many pounds of food scraps and how much yard waste we're collecting. Seek more participation while at the same time encouraging the creation of less waste
- Propose and evaluate campaigns and initiatives to understand why certain actions, programs, and/or projects have succeeded or languished.
- A continual process of reexamination and refreshing will keep projects relevant and productive in reducing organic waste.

PART 5: RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

When evaluating ideas for new projects, many factors were taken into consideration, including the character of Bronxville as a community, limitations of public and private open space, financial and staffing resources, and community support. Funding sources to implement the recommendations were not evaluated as part of this Plan. Feedback on these recommendations will continue to be gathered from the community. Updates and necessary changes to the Plan will be made on an ongoing basis.

Recommendations are separated into short-term (one year or less), medium term (1 to 4 years), and long-term recommendations (more than 5 years).

Recommendations are broken into nine sections:

(1) Waste Less Food

- (2) Promote Food Donation Programs for Businesses
- (3) Promote Healthy Yards Along With Residential Yard Waste Pick-Up
- (4) Increase Participation in Food Scrap Recycling Drop-Off Program
- (6) Increase Community Engagement with Annual Events
- (7) Encourage Food Scrap Recycling Programs at the Farmers Market, Bronxville School, Lawrence Hospital and Local Churches
- (8) Pilot Project for Food Scrap Recycling Pickup at Co-op Apartment Building
- (9) Pilot Project for Curbside Pickup of Food Scraps
- (10) Pilot Project of Food Scrap Recycling in Bronxville Restaurants
- (11) Looking Forward

Waste Less Food:

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) uses the term “wasted food” instead of “food waste.” “Wasted food” conveys that a valuable resource is being wasted, whereas “food waste” implies that the food no longer has value and needs to be managed as waste (EPA’s Sustainable Management of Food Basics). The Village should consistently follow the EPA’s lead and use “wasted food” as it continues a multi-faceted campaign to educate people on wasting less food.

It is vital to focus on waste prevention to reduce the volume of surplus food in the community. The EPA estimates that in 2018 in the United States more food reached landfills and combustion facilities than any other single material in our everyday trash: wasted food was 24% of the total amount of material landfilled and 22% of the total amount combusted by energy-recovery incinerators. Food overall is responsible for about 11% of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions every year (EPA’s Greenhouse Gas Emissions).

As previously stated, it is important to consider the GHG emissions associated with the entire life-cycle of food use: food often travels thousands of miles to get to local markets, roughly 45 trillion gallons of water are used every year to irrigate crops, and millions of pounds of pesticides and fertilizers are used to produce it. Consequently, wasted food also wastes all the material inputs that went into its entire life-cycle. (World Resources Institute: Reducing Food Loss and Waste)

On-going campaigns should focus on educating consumers on the extent and impact of wasted food. The top priority of the food hierarchy is to reduce the surplus amount of food generated. The campaign should target the residential sector and focus on waste prevention techniques (see below). The Village should seek ways to capture data and cite local statistics to monitor the success of the campaign.

Tips for reducing wasted food include: basing shopping lists of the meals that will be eaten at home that week, intentionally purchasing imperfect produce that might otherwise be discarded, frequently reviewing the contents of one’s refrigerator and creating an “Eat First” bin for food that should be consumed soon, and understanding what “Sell By” and “Best By” dates really mean.

Additionally, proper food storage and preservation techniques (dehydration, freezing, canning, fermentation, etc.) can have a significant impact.

Messages should focus not only on the conservation benefits of food waste reduction, but also on saving money. Encouraging the purchase of locally raised food should be part of any campaign.

On its website, the Green Committee can continue to identify and build a list of online wasted food prevention resources. The Village and Green Committee can continue to leverage their communication channels (eblasts, website, monthly newsletter, media, etc.) to promote wasted food prevention tips and techniques. In addition, the Village with the assistance of the Green Committee should continue to partner with local organizations such as the Bronxville Giving Garden and Farmers Market to organize gatherings and presentations on ideas and techniques to further prevent wasting food, and to purchase locally raised food. Information about participating in local CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) programs can be made available. Evaluation of this wasted food prevention campaign will be necessary on an ongoing basis.

Promote Food Donation Programs for Businesses:

In January 2022, New York State's Food Donation and Food Scrap Recycling Law went into effect. This law requires that organizations that produce two tons of food waste per week must create a food donation program and, if within 25 miles of an organic composting facility, they must arrange to have the remaining food waste hauled away for composting. Many institutions, including hospitals and schools, are exempt from the law. No businesses or institutions within the Village of Bronxville are on the list of businesses and institutions that must comply. (Nearby Sarah Lawrence College, in Yonkers, is required to comply.)

However, the law can serve to raise awareness of wasted food and give weight to campaigns that encourage the creation of Food Donation Programs. Bronxville has a major grocery store, Acme, and several other stores that sell food products, including Topps Bakery and Bronxville Natural.

New York State offers businesses many useful resources to create a Food Donation Program:

A guide to what businesses need to know about the new law:

https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/materials_minerals_pdf/lawupdatepres.pdf

Another guide for businesses: Food Donation and Food Scraps Recycling Law--Guidance for New York State Businesses

https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/materials_minerals_pdf/excessfoodbusinesshandbook.pdf

A recorded webinar on starting a Food Donation Program:

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/114499.html#DFSG>.

These two central food distribution organizations in Westchester can connect businesses to local food banks: Feeding Westchester (<https://feedingwestchester.org/> 914 909 9622) and Feeding NY (<https://feedingwestchester.org/> 518 930 7000).

According to Jay Hawkins, Food Rescue Manager, Feeding NY, in setting up a Food Donation Program, businesses must consider: food safety, inventory control, communications, liability protection, tax

incentives, and the food waste hierarchy. Agencies receiving donations must be registered 501(3)c organizations. Regional organizations such as Feeding Westchester distribute food to local, volunteer-run organizations. It's important to partner with these local organizations, get to know the people running them, and visit their sites. Different programs accept different kinds of food and operate on different pickup schedules. By partnering with several food banks or food rescue organizations, businesses can develop programs that allow them to donate a variety of food products.

Businesses must follow all food safety protocols. Most often, they have trained staff who can help ensure that all donations are stored properly, and at the correct temperature, before they're picked up, and food banks and food rescue organizations can often help as well.

Two pieces of legislation offer businesses liability protection: the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act and New York's Good Samaritan Law; both free businesses from liability as long as they donate in good faith and do not act with gross negligence.

Businesses willing to work with an accountant, donate only to 501(3)c corporations, and collect receipts for donations may be eligible for tax deductions. The New York State website provides details.

The Green Committee is happy to promote Food Donation Programs set up by Bronxville merchants.

Westchester County's 2020 Food Waste Report indicates that food recovery rates in well-run food donation programs vary from 10% to 40%, with the higher rate achievable only after a program has been in existence for several years. Businesses in Bronxville should keep these rates in mind to set realistic goals for their Food Donation Programs.

Promote Healthy Yards Along With Residential Yard Waste Pick-Up

Bronxville offers curb-side pick-up of yard waste, which is transported to sites where it can be composted.

Although yard waste is successfully kept out of the regular trash waste stream—a big plus!--considerable expense and greenhouse gases are emitted in collecting and transferring it to sites for decomposition. The best practice, where appropriate, is to adopt Westchester County's long-standing "love 'em and leave 'em" policy: to leave yard waste on private residential property. Grass clippings can be left on lawns to decompose, adding nutrients to the soil. Much of the autumn leaf-fall can be mulched in place and arranged in planting beds, to protect soil health, discourage run-off, and provide habitat for beneficial insect and bird life. Some yard waste can be left in piles to naturally decompose on site. Such practices would result in healthier lawns and in a healthier local ecosystem.

Limiting and eventually eliminating most leaf blowers, both gas and electric, would also improve the health of our landscapes, as well as our own health. Although electric leaf blowers are a big improvement over gas-powered blowers, they still kick fine particulate matter into the air, promoting respiratory ailments. They also compact soil around plantings, which is harmful for the plants, and increase run-off from rain. Finally, by removing all leaves and debris in planting beds, they obliterate insect habitats, contributing to the "insect apocalypse."

The Green Committee website has a section on Healthy Yard practices, including eliminating pesticides, using more native plants in landscape designs, and the practices mentioned above. Frequent articles, social media posts, and outreach in the community help to spread this message.

Across Westchester, more attention is being brought to these concerns. Sustainable Westchester now offers programs supporting a transition to healthy yards. Bedford2030 runs a Healthy Yards program that has become the model for the county. Pollinator Pathway groups, including Bronxville's, and groups that work to restrict gas-powered lawn care equipment are part of a national movement that is gaining traction.

Researchers such as Doug Tallamy have shown the connection between native plants and the increased presence of beneficial insects and birds in a landscape. Tallamy's Homegrown National Park concept, in which our yards must not only look beautiful but also perform ecological functions, is influencing landscape designers and homeowners throughout the East Coast. The hope is that what we grow in our yards and our standards of lawn care will gradually change and homeowners will begin to request services of their landscape maintenance companies that are currently not offered.

As this transition begins, it will be important to reach out directly to landscapers and engage them in conversation about the need to transition their businesses to a new model, in which electric lawncare equipment and healthy yard care practices are standard. Larchmont's recent workshop, for which twenty landscapers from throughout Westchester County registered, was a good start.

Increase Participation in Food Scrap Recycling Program

The Green Committee will continue to heavily promote this relatively new initiative with outreach to local organizations, at public events, at the Bronxville Farmers Market and at the Chamber of Commerce run Sidewalk Sales in spring and fall. In addition to the usual sources of media outreach—local digital newspaper, local print newspapers, social media, One Square Mile newsletter, flyers and posters in Village Hall and the Library--the Green Committee will continue to seek new opportunities to engage and inform local residents in person. Two promising possibilities include hosting a Compost Give-Back Day and an annual Pumpkin Smash, at which the Food Scrap Recycling program can be promoted (see below). Offering Zoom Power Point presentations can be an effective way to reach members of local organizations whenever Covid limits in-person events and presentations.

The small backyards of most Bronxville homes, and irregular landscapes in which one person's backyard may look out onto another's front yard, makes backyard composting a less practical option in the Village. Raising participation rates in the Food Scrap Recycling program is a more promising strategy, at least for the time being.

Westchester County's CompostED pilot project and educational center has the potential to be an inspiring resource for school groups and local organizations. Once people understand how compost is made (like baking a cake: with a 1 to 2 proportion of food scraps to organic yard waste; moisture; and oxygen), and see food scraps being turned into a rich, organic soil amendment that smells like good dirt and emits no methane during its creation, they may be further inspired to separate their food scraps and drop them off behind Village Hall.

The Village might also investigate the disposal of FOG—fats, oils, and greases—to ensure they are disposed of in the best way possible. FOG is generated from commercial food preparation, including frying foods, cooking meats, and managing creams, sauces, and dairy products. Many commercial food preparers are required to install and maintain FOG interceptors to avoid disposal to the sewer system. Most restaurants in Bronxville are required to hire private haulers to remove FOG, but where is it taken and how is it disposed of?

One Bronxville restaurateur shared that Buffalo Biofuel pays them to collect their used oil every three months; according to Buffalo Biofuel's website, the oil is refined into biodiesel fuel, an environmentally sensible outcome. More research, and collection of information through surveys, might provide a more complete picture.

Scarsdale offers its residents a receptacle to dispose of cooking oil. KP Waste Disposal Services offers a free receptacle and free pick-up for cooking oil. Contact information: kpwastedisposal@gmail.com, ask for Kelyvn 646-535-3476. The receptacle could be placed next to the Food Scrap Drop-Off bins at the DPW lot; it would take up very little space. We would want to confirm that the oil is reused in an environmentally acceptable way.

Increase Community Participation with Annual Events:

Compost Give-Back Day: The Green Committee ran an April 30th Compost Give-Back Day based on Scarsdale's successful model and hopes to make it an annual event. This spring event, near Earth Day, was easy to implement and offered another opportunity to promote Bronxville's food scrap recycling program.

Scarsdale made compost give-back part of its food scrap recycling program from the beginning. It is a very popular event. Compost is purchased by the municipality for a few hundred dollars and hauled by the Scarsdale DPW from the composter to the Scarsdale food scrap drop-off site on the Thursday or Friday before the Saturday event. The pile takes up no more than two parking spots. A tarp to cover the pile overnight and 3-5 shovels are the only equipment required. Residents bring and fill their own buckets. They are pleased to get back some of the compost made from the food scraps they've been dropping off. The Village government and DPW are highly praised for making the event possible. Volunteers handle every aspect of promoting and running the event. Invariably, the pile is gone before the day of distribution ends.

This event generates the most sign-ups all year for the Scarsdale food scrap recycling program. Volunteers Ron Schulhof and Michelle Sterling sign up new participants and sell starter kits under a pop-up tent. A few other volunteers taking shifts throughout the day are all that's required.

Although most residents in Bronxville do not handle their own yard maintenance, many do plant containers, window boxes, and small patches, and are expected to welcome free compost. Bronxville did have some compost left over after the event but the Bronxville Giving Garden is nearby and will be happy to take it.

Pumpkin Smash: Bronxville residents enjoy dressing up their homes for Halloween, and that often includes displaying lots of pumpkins. Small pumpkins make great eating, and the Green Committee can remind people that some of their pumpkins might be eatable; they might offer recipes. Eventually, the

others must be disposed of. In fact, in the U.S. 1.3 billion pumpkins are thrown away annually (Hastings website). In an effort to redirect this waste stream from regular trash to composting, the Green Committee proposes holding a fall 2022 Pumpkin Smash, in which families are invited to bring their pumpkins to Village Hall during a couple hours on a Saturday. Conversations with Dobbs Ferry, which holds an annual Pumpkin Smash, have elicited tips on how to smash the pumpkins (and which ones smash better than others!) to ensure it's fun, safe, and not too messy. A Pumpkin Smash promises to attract families and offer a terrific opportunity to promote the Food Scrap Recycling program. Volunteers from the Green Committee would sign up new participants in the program and sell Starter Kits during the event.

Encourage Food Scrap Recycling Programs at the Bronxville Farmers Market, Bronxville School, Lawrence Hospital, and Churches

Farmers Market: By partnering with the Green Committee, the Bronxville Farmers Market might begin to make carefully considered changes that would further align with the Market's goals of connecting people to the farmers who grow their food and the farming practices that ensure that food is good to eat.

For example, currently no attempt is made to collect mixed recyclables or separate food scraps at the Market. The Farmers Market might set up a complete waste management system, with a committed group of volunteers to man the bins and make sure shoppers use them correctly. Barriers to this project would include not enough volunteers and the need for the DPW to collect three kinds of bins instead of one—for regular trash, mixed recyclables, and food scraps. The Village would have to agree to add all food scraps collected to the bins at its residential drop-off site. Finding enough volunteers to consistently monitor the bins every Saturday from 8:30 until 1:00, to ensure that they're used correctly, would be a challenge.

A simple interim solution might be providing a single bin in which only vendors would throw organic food waste and one mixed recycling bin to position next to the regular trash bin for shoppers to use.

Bronxville School: Establishing a complete waste management system at the Bronxville School that includes food scrap recycling, initiated and run by parents and students, will be a big win for improving organic waste management in the Village. The Green Committee can offer encouragement. Some of its volunteers who have kids in the school will be helping to launch this program. As of May 2022, steps are underway to start the program at the Elementary School in the new school year in September.

Lawrence Hospital: As the largest institution in Bronxville, it's safe to assume that Lawrence Hospital generates considerable solid waste, including organic waste. The Green Committee has established contacts at the hospital and hopes to work with them to gather information and begin a long-term relationship as we take further steps to reduce our emissions and transition to clean energy.

Bronxville Churches: Bronxville Churches are also among the larger institutions in town and their programs, which often involve socializing with food, generate organic waste. Many churches include the donation of purchased, self-stable food as part of their mission outreach. Most churches don't generate enough food on a regular basis to make a formal Food Donation Program feasible, but they could include food scrap recycling in their waste management system. Ron Schulhof of the Scarsdale

Sustainability Committee also works with houses of worship to introduce complete solid waste management systems and he's willing to donate his time once a commitment to make the transition has been achieved. The Green Committee can ensure that area churches are aware of this opportunity.

Pilot Project for Food Scrap Recycling Pickup at Co-op Apartment Building

Convincing apartment dwellers to participate in a food scrap drop-off program poses unique challenges. Residents are often older and may be less able to make weekly trips to the drop-off site. The lack of space in apartments can raise residents' concerns about possible smells and the additional clutter of countertop and transport bins. Considering that 40% of Bronxville's residents live in multi-dwelling apartment buildings, most of them resident-owned co-ops or condos, it's important that we make special efforts to encourage apartment dwellers to join the program.

The Green Committee has consulted with Scarsdale, which now offers curb-side pickup of food scraps in two apartment buildings. On their suggestion, we propose initiating this project in one to three years, once Bronxville's food scrap recycling program has more participants and is more solidly established in the community. Once again, Ron Schulhof and Michelle Sterling have a turnkey program to share once we're ready to take this step. In the meantime, the Green Committee will continue to include apartment dwellers in its outreach. Many members of the Green Committee live in apartments and participate enthusiastically in the program.

Pilot Project of Curbside Pickup of Food Scraps

Once the Food Scrap Recycling program is well established and has strong participation in the community, Bronxville might consider a pilot project of limited curbside pickup. In the next year or two, we should establish what the threshold to launch such a program should be. Scarsdale, which already offers curbside pickup and consults with many municipalities, might offer advice.

Rye also offers a pilot program for curbside pickup. It is limited to 150 single-family residents for a one-time cost of \$52; there appears to be a wait list.

In a few years, additional municipalities may be offering curbside pickup and could serve as good sources of information.

Pilot Project of Food Scrap Recycling at Bronxville Restaurants: With a large number of restaurants located in a small geographical area, Bronxville seems well suited to a program in which restaurants join together in a shared contract for private hauling of their food scraps to an organic composting facility. Owners of La Casa Bronxville, Spencer and Gretchen Pingel, have already expressed interest in finding a way to compost their food scraps. None of Bronxville's restaurants are obligated under the NYS Food Donation and Food Scrap Recycling Act to do so, but many might be convinced of the benefits. Concerns for the Village would include the escape of lechete from trucks through the central commercial area of Bronxville.

Looking Ahead:

The ultimate goal is to drastically reduce both food waste being sent to Peekskill for incineration and wasted food overall. So, as the number of participants in the Food Scrap Recycling program grows, we'd also like to see the amount collected per person also fall—because residents are wasting less.

Eventually, too, we envision a time when all food scraps are routinely collected at the curb along with trash and mixed recyclables.

We envision a time when all major food vendors in Bronxville offer Food Donation Programs. And we envision a time when it might become feasible to compost food scraps within the municipal boundaries, by making space for composting on-site or through indoor composting technologies.

TIMELINE

The following recommendations are for consideration for the Village management and leadership, and do not imply obligation or commitment. Recommendations are separated into short-term (one year or less), medium term (1 to 4 years) and long-term (5 years and longer, to be explored in a revised Organic Waste Management Plan to be written in 2026). While many individuals will be consulted, informed and accountable for these actions, the main groups responsible for implementation are listed below.

Within 9-12 Months

Pumpkin Smash—DPW with most work done by volunteers from the Green Committee; success will be judged by the number of participants, positive feedback from Village staff, residents, and Green Committee volunteers, and the amount of waste diverted from regular trash to the Food Scrap Recycling Program.

Food Donation program established with one Bronxville merchant—Information and encouragement offered by the Bronxville Green Committee perhaps with Chamber of Commerce, with support from Village leadership. Achieving this goal will require outreach to food vendors such as Acme, Bronxville Natural, and Brothers on Palmer Road. Success will be judged by whether one business commits to setting up a Food Donation program and takes steps to create a successful program. The Green Committee and Village staff can bring attention to the achievement, encouraging others to join.

Growth of food scrap recycling program to 200 or more participants—Bronxville Green Committee with Village support; success will be judged by increasing participation to 200 sign-ups, selling a commensurate number of Starter Kits, and collecting more food scraps.

Within One to Four Years

Pilot Project for Curb-Side Pickup of Food Scraps in one apartment building—Village government, DPW, Green Committee. Once the Food Scrap Recycling program is well established (after 1-2 years), the Green Committee will seek feedback from residents in apartment buildings to determine if participation is lower than in single-family residents and if curb-side pickup would make residents more likely to participate; the Food Scrap Recycling Program must be well established, with steadily increasing participation, and smoothly running operations before this Pilot Project is initiated. An analysis of the impact of a pilot project on the DPW would be considered, as well as the impact and training required of staff in the apartment building and how the program would be offered and explained to residents.

Pilot Project of Food Scrap Recycling at Bronxville Restaurants—Information and encouragement from the Green Committee with support from the Chamber of Commerce. To determine the feasibility of this project, meetings hosted by the Green Committee (with Village staff & trustees), the Chamber of Commerce, and local restaurateurs would be held to explain the potential benefits and explore barriers

to participation. Research into possible hauling contracts with multiple restaurants would reveal the financial viability. The dense concentration of restaurants suggests the potential for cost savings; an analysis would have to confirm that.

A Food Donation Program established at Acme—Green Committee to encourage, perhaps with support of Village leadership & Chamber of Commerce. Since Acme is the largest food vendor in the Village, establishing a Food Donation Program there would make significant strides in reducing wasted food. However, management of our local store has not always welcomed suggestions and the first step might be to find a contact in upper management who would be receptive.

Acme is owned by Albertsons Companies (includes Safeway, Shaws, and many other brands). On its website, Albertson's touts its ambitious environmental goals, its participation in the Food Waste Reduction Alliance, and its reliance on the Food Waste Hierarchy in setting its goals in reducing wasted food: <https://www.albertsonscorporation.com/our-values/planet/fighting-food-waste.html>. The company says it annually donates \$265 million worth of food to food banks. This context suggests a strong starting point in conversations with staff at Acme. There is also an Acme Nourishing Neighbors program that solicits donations for hunger relief.

Pilot Project for Curb-Side Pickup— Village government, DPW, Green Committee. Further research would be needed to explore the costs and benefits of this pilot project. What would be the impact on the Village, especially the DPW? What would be the additional costs, and could they be recouped by charging participants for this service? Might the Village apply for a state grant to cover some costs? If one of the goals of the pilot is to analyze the feasibility of community-wide curb-side pickup, how would this pilot project further that goal? Community surveys, discussions with people from municipalities that have initiated such programs, and logistical analysis would be required before this pilot could proceed.

Food Scrap Recycling in Bronxville School—Within three years, volunteer parents hope that Food Scrap Recycling will have become an institutionalized program in all three of the Bronxville Schools—elementary, middle, and high schools. The Village and Green Committee can monitor and encourage this progress.

Food Scrap Recycling in Churches and other Bronxville Institutions—Scarsdale volunteers Ron Schulhof and Michelle Sterling offer a model for bringing complete waste management systems to houses of worship. Once a church commits to the program, and in many cases is willing to assume the cost of hauling food scraps, they are willing to guide the transition every step of the way. Again, the Village and Green Committee can monitor and encourage such progress.

Five Years or More—To Be Explored More Fully in an Updated Organic Waste Management Plan for 2026

Curb-Side Pickup of Food Scraps Throughout the Village of Bronxville—Initiating curb-side pickup would require funding and careful analysis. By making food scrap recycling an integral part of how residents manage their waste, we would expect significantly higher participation rates. The ultimate goal will be to make food scrap recycling an automatic practice in Bronxville households.

Significant increase in organic yard waste left in situ through healthy yard care practices—Information and encouragement from the Green Committee with support of Village government. Yard care and

commercial landscaping practices are expected to undergo a transformation in the next years as electric equipment replaces gas-powered equipment, and standards of care shift from perfectly manicured landscapes to healthy landscapes. It is hoped that leaving most yard waste on landscapes, where it can naturally decompose and return nutrients to the soil while also providing habitat for beneficial wildlife, will eventually become the norm. Success would be evaluated by less yard waste picked up by DPW (easy to measure) and less by hired landscapers (more difficult to measure).

Full-scale program to collect food scraps for composting at Bronxville restaurants—Information and encouragement from the Green Committee with Chamber of Commerce. Here too one hopes that increased awareness of the cost of wasted food will prompt all Bronxville restaurants to seek ways to reduce wasted food and to compost waste that cannot be avoided. After an initial exploration and pilot project of collecting food scraps at restaurants, the hope is that such businesses will all want to participate.

PART FIVE: CONCLUSION

The Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, signed in 2019, set ambitious goals for New York State to drastically cut emissions contributing to climate change and promote the transition to a clean energy economy. Reducing and better managing solid waste are essential actions required to meet that goal. By joining the Climate Smart Community program and supporting the work of the Bronxville Climate Smart Task Force, the Village of Bronxville has indicated its commitment to join that effort.

Early in the Draft Scoping Plan released by the Advisory Groups created to further the CLCPA, we find this passage: “The State can set the stage for action, but engagement from all New Yorkers in the decisions they make each and every day will impact the ability of New York to make progress toward its goals.”

It is the goal of this Organics Waste Management Plan to suggest how we can drastically reduce the amount of organic waste we generate while also significantly reducing emissions associated with its disposal. This Plan also seeks to identify ways to educate our community about the importance of this goal, its benefit to them, and to engage them in joining this important work.

More efficient management of waste has economic value for individuals, businesses, and municipal operations. More subtly, increased participation in common enterprises such as composting and feeding the hungry can enhance the community spirit that underpins all social life. Better organic waste management will enhance our shared environment in subtle but important ways—by working with nature, not against it; by turning wasted food into compost that nourishes the earth; and, by producing ecological benefits through healthy yard practices: achieving better soil structure that absorbs rainwater and encourages healthy plant growth; enhanced biodiversity through more beneficial insects and birds and plants. Above all, every reduction in greenhouse gas emissions will result in a corresponding fractional reduction of the future global temperature and will diminish the risk of disastrous impacts from climate change.

Sources

CLCPA Draft Scoping Plan: <https://climate.ny.gov/-/media/Project/Climate/Files/Draft-Scoping-Plan.ashx>

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https://environment.westchestergov.com/images/stories/pdfs/2020_Annual_Report_Solid_Waste.pdf

Woodward & Curran Report for Westchester County Jan 2020:

<https://www.scarsdale.com/DocumentCenter/View/5572/Westchester-County---Food-Scrap-Study--Jan-2020-PDF>

EPA Food Waste Hierarchy: <https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/food-recovery-hierarchy>

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Organic Materials Management:

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8798.html>

Love 'Em and Leave 'Em: <http://www.leleny.org/>

Leave Leaves Alone (Bedford): <https://www.leaveleavesalone.org/>

Homegrown National Park: <https://homegrownnationalpark.org/>

Food: Too Good to Waste Implementation Guide and Toolkit:

<https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/food-too-good-waste-implementation-guide-and-toolkit>

King County, WA Food Waste Campaign: <https://kingcounty.gov/depts/dnrp/solid-waste/programs/waste-prevention/food-too-good-to-waste.aspx>

Food Donation and Food Scraps Recycling Law, Guidance of New York Businesses:

https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/materials_minerals_pdf/excessfoodbusinesshandbook.pdf

Westchester County CompostED: <https://www.westchestergov.com/composted>

Appendix A

Commercial Food Scrap Carters in Westchester County (from 2020 Westchester County Food Waste Report):

Curbside Compost Phone Number: 914-646-6890 Website: <https://www.curbcompost.org/commercial-cart-service.html> C.R.P.

Sanitation, Inc. Phone Number: 914-592-4129 Website: <https://crpsanitation.com/recycle/>

Interstate Waste Service Phone Number: 1-866-DIAL-IWS- Press Option #1 Website:

<https://interstatewaste.com/>

Natural Upcycling Phone Number: 585-584-3124 Website: <http://naturalupcycling.com/>

New York Crushing and Recycling, Inc. Phone Number: 845-331-7522 Website:

<https://www.nycrushing.com>

Organix Recycling Phone Number: (708) 326-3900 Website: <https://www.organixrecycling.com/>

Suburban Carting Co. Phone Number: 914-698-4300 or 1-800-273-9394 Website:
<https://www.suburbancarting.com>

Waste Management Phone Number: 800-972-4545 Website: <https://www.wm.com/us/en>

Appendix B

