



sanitation

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FROM CURB TO COMPOST:

How the City of New York is Building an Organics Collection Program to Serve 8.5 Million People

SESSION OVERVIEW:

In 2013, the New York City Department of Sanitation (DSNY) began implementing a curbside collection program for organic waste, including food scraps, yard waste, and soiled paper. Today, the program serves more than 700,000 residents, and DSNY is on track to grow its organics initiatives to serve all New Yorkers by the end of 2018 with either curbside service or convenient neighborhood drop-offs.

The development and implementation of DSNY's citywide organics collection program involves nearly every part of the agency—the world's largest sanitation department—working in close collaboration to engage residents, build public support, rethink collection routes, train employees, develop in-city collection and transfer infrastructure, encourage the growth of regional organics processing capacity, and much more. DSNY proposes to share this experience, lessons learned, and future expansion strategy through either a series of presentations or a full session at the US Composting Council's COMPOST2017.

The session would include the following presentations:

PART ONE: An Overview of NYC's Organics Policies and Programs

The first presentation will provide an overview of the context within which DSNY's organics collection program is being implemented. Session attendees will leave with a strong understanding of (1) the history of organics policy and initiatives in NYC, (2) current legislation and mandates that guide expansion of organics diversion efforts, and (3) the suite of DSNY services that complement the organics collection program and aim to divert the greatest quantity of organic waste from the landfill. DSNY believes that a strong organics diversion strategy, particularly one that operates in NYC, one of the nation's densest and most diverse urban centers, must operate at several scales and offer diverse opportunities for participation. Complimentary organics initiatives include a private landscaper waste composting program, outreach to commercial establishments that are required to source separate their organics, seasonal leaf and yard waste and Christmas tree collection programs, school food waste collection, residential food waste drop-off sites, and home and community composting support through the NYC Compost Project.

PART TWO: Residential Curbside Organics Collection Program Methodology

The introduction of source-separated organics collection has required a rethinking of how DSNY performs all of its collections. To efficiently implement the program, DSNY is working closely with its union employees to revise routes, truck types, and collection schedules. This

presentation will provide session attendees with a ‘behind the scenes’ look at how DSNY is planning for its citywide expansion. It will include (1) the Department’s methodology for developing service packages for each of NYC’s 59 sanitation districts based on housing density, recycling rates, and other characteristics, (2) its route development process, and (3) its district-by-district program rollout strategy.

PART THREE: Public Education, Communications, and Marketing

The success of the organics collection program rests on DSNY’s ability to build understanding of, and support for, the program with two critical audiences: its own workforce of nearly 10,000 employees and the 8.5 million residents of NYC, nearly 50 percent of which speak a language other than English in their homes. To meet this challenge, the Department is developing and testing a number of communications, marketing, and engagement strategies, and is working to equip its staff and partners with the knowledge and tools needed to effectively and accurately promote DSNY organics initiatives. During this presentation, a DSNY representative will share the lessons learned by the Department in leveraging the following tools and strategies: (1) bin deliveries and direct instructional messaging to residents, (2) marketing and social media campaigns, (3) press engagement, (4) compost distribution and application, and (5) workforce training, communications, and leadership opportunities.

PART FOUR: Ensuring Capacity for the Beneficial Use of Organic Waste

Ensuring capacity to beneficially utilize the city’s organic waste is critical for each of DSNY’s organics diversion programs. DSNY is working to enhance the quality of organic waste streams generated through the curbside collection program by requiring the installation of mechanical pre-processing equipment to sort out any contaminants at transfer stations, before organics are sent to regional compost and anaerobic digestion facilities. Additionally, while supporting the growth in regional capacity, the Department is simultaneously upgrading its own compost facility to expand its capacity to accept food waste. A representative of DSNY’s Bureau of Solid Waste Management, the unit responsible for the disposal and recycling of all materials collected by DSNY, will provide an overview of this work, including (1) the procurement of organics processing capacity and DSNY’s investment in infrastructure, (2) the installation and early performance evaluation of pre-processing equipment at in-city transfer stations, (3) the state of regional processing capacity, (4) the role of DSNY-owned compost facilities, (5) the food waste digestion demonstration project at a NYC Department of Environmental Protection-owned wastewater treatment plant.