The Benefits and Challenges of starting a Municipal Composting program



What *is* compost?

- **Recycled organic matter**
- **Natural Fertilizer for soil**
- **“Black Gold”**



In landfills, wasted food breaks down relatively quickly, generating methane – a powerful greenhouse gas – before landfill gas collection systems are in place.

Keeping food out of landfills helps tackle climate change.



BENEFITS

- WASTE REDUCTION
  - Organic waste is diverted from landfills, and instead is sustainably converted into nutrient-rich “gold” for soil.
- GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION
  - Food waste is responsible for 58% of methane released from landfills, according to the EPA.
- COST SAVINGS
  - Reducing the overall volume of waste can save on landfill Tipping fees.
- COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
  - Municipal composting programs can foster community involvement and education in sustainability and waste management.
- CLIMATE RESILIENCE
  - Compost improves the health of soil, which can enhance resilience against extreme weather events.

CHALLENGES OF MUNICIPAL COMPOSTING

- CO$T
  - Neighborhood Compost charges weekly, per tote, for pickup and replacing a clean tote. Subscribers pay $16/month. Seniors pay $10.
- CHANGE OF ROUTINE
  - Learning new habits takes effort, and this turns people off.
- “ICK” FACTOR
  - Some are repelled by the thought of spending any more time with food waste and want to dispose of it quickly. They are also worried about insects/pests.

MORE CHALLENGES

- TIME
  - It’s yet another thing that takes time out of one’s day!
  - Getting more people to participate is a gradual process.
- SNOWBALL EFFECT
  - Hopefully, more towns will create similar programs. Neighborhood Compost also has programs in Ridgefield Park, Tenafly, Ramsey.
  - Hoboken, Maplewood, and Princeton have programs with other providers.

June 5, 2024 to September 15, 2026



We have collected 34,500 lbs of food scraps.

We started with **24** subscribers, now have **48.**

The town is looking for ways to reduce expenditures, and has started to think about a strategic plan for a Leonia Food-Waste Collection Program that would:

- Reduce landfill-bound waste
- Cut tipping/disposal fees
- Support regional farms
- Engage the public in sustainable practices

