



ZERO WASTE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS 2017 UPDATE

FPAC adopted Zero Waste Policy Recommendations at its October 2015 meeting in support of Philadelphia reaching its goal of being the greenest city in America.

In March 2017, the Zero Waste Subcommittee reviewed the recommendations, outlined below, and added updates to show the significant progress that has been made during the past year and a half, and next steps to take in moving the recommendations forward.

Establish a zero waste policy in the City of Philadelphia - *Through the Solid Waste and Recycling Advisory Council's (SWRAC) 10-year solid waste management plan that is being prepared for the PA Department of Environmental Protection, develop a zero waste policy that includes goals for conducting residential food waste collection pilot programs, and emphasizes the need for food composting to further reduce the City's carbon footprint and provide healthy soils in support of community gardens, urban agriculture, green stormwater infrastructure, and local economic development. The policy should focus on waste reduction, recycling, and composting with the objective of diverting 90% of materials from landfills and waste-to-energy facilities.*

Update: During fall 2015, FPAC recommended to Mayor Kenney's transition team that the Mayor establish a Zero Waste Policy for the City of Philadelphia that incorporates waste reduction, recycling, and food waste composting with the objective of diverting 90% of materials from landfills and waste-to-energy facilities.

Mayor Kenney signed Executive Order 13-16 in December 2016 establishing a Zero Waste and Litter Control Cabinet within the Managing Director's Office. Director Nic Esposito oversees the 16-member Cabinet and prepared a Zero Waste and Litter Control action plan that was made available to the public during summer 2017.

Next Step: FPAC will support the development and implementation of the action plan.

Increase the City's Zero Waste practices - *The City should model food waste recovery practices, such as Waste Watchers. The City can extend these successful practices if there is local capacity to responsibly handle the material.*

Update: On November 15, 2017, Waste Watchers and the Philadelphia Recycling Rewards Program merged to become Philacycle. Philacycle is the Zero Waste and Litter Cabinet's outreach and community engagement program. As Philacyclers, residents participate in a

certification program that trains them on organizing block clean-ups, educating community members about zero waste practices, and volunteering at zero waste events. Philacyclers earn rewards and incentives every time they implement an action that they were taught during the training. Philacycle continues to operate at major City events like the Philadelphia Marathon and Broad Street Run, with the goal of expanding to make Philadelphia the home of zero waste events.

Next Step: Continue to expand Philacycle and explore including sustainable waste management practices in RFPs for the Convention Center and other City-controlled facilities.

Support increased surplus food donation - *FPAC can create a dialogue with Philabundance and other leading food rescue organizations to understand how the City can better support their efforts. This should start with a Surplus Food Donation session at an FPAC meeting. Philabundance and other rescue organizations' food waste can be a clean source of material for any new City or related local composting initiatives. Disposing of food donations that spoil while in storage is a large cost for these agencies and having local composting facilities may lower these costs.*

Update: During summer 2016, the Zero Waste Subcommittee supported Philadelphia Parks & Recreation (PPR) efforts to organize a pilot project to donate excess meals from PPR facilities to local food pantries. FPAC also supported a coalition of local anti-hunger groups, self-titled Operation Food Rescue, to promote the use of the Food Connect App at the 2017 Democratic National Convention (DNC). Through Operation Food Rescue, Food Connect recovered more than 11,000 pounds of food that would have been wasted from local DNC events, and distributed it to food pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters. Operation Food Rescue recovered more than 21,000 pounds of food from the 2017 NFL Draft. Food Connect continues to be used by restaurants and caterers across the city.

Next Step: FPAC will continue to support PPR in expanding the food recovery pilot at PPR facilities over summer 2017, and will continue to participate in Operation Food Rescue.

Emphasize the necessity of properly preparing source-separated materials - *Source-separating materials properly and maintaining strict material acceptance standards are critical for the success of all composting operations.*

Update: FPAC continues to support this critical practice to ensure the long-term success of food composting efforts. The Philacycle program will also spread awareness of this practice through education and event outreach.

Strengthen the food composting option for commercial food establishments – *The City should encourage a dialogue between the Recycling Office and the Health Department regarding making food composting an effective option for commercial food establishments.*

Update: FPAC supports food composting as an option for commercial food establishments as long as it is managed in a responsible way. At this point in time, the region does not have sufficient capacity to handle source-separated food waste from all restaurants.

Next Step: As food waste capacity increases in the region, FPAC can initiate a zero waste restaurant competition to bring positive attention to the issue.

Promote and support backyard composting - *The City of Philadelphia should work in partnership with local organizations to promote and support backyard composting. This do-it-yourself method of composting is the most environmentally preferable way of handling food waste because it eliminates the need for transporting food waste for processing and for delivering finished compost to markets. Using the New York City model, the City should promote and educate residents about composting benefits, backyard composting methods, and bins that can be purchased or built. The City should use its website as a resource and should actively sponsor and promote training programs in neighborhoods throughout the city. The City should seek funding support to subsidize the bin costs.*

Update: The Streets Department has expressed interest in backyard composting and hosted a backyard composting session at the 2017 Block Captain Rally.

Next Step: FPAC will integrate instructions and resources for backyard composting into the Urban Agriculture Clearinghouse webpage.

Support the growth of community-based composting efforts - *The City should foster a culture of composting by promoting existing successful models and offering Master Composting training sessions similar to the ones offered in New York City.*

Update: FPAC organized the Philadelphia Community Compost System Design Competition to raise awareness about the benefits of community-based composting and to identify cost-effective models that can be replicated in community gardens, schools, and other neighborhood locations.

Next Step: FPAC will continue with the competition process and promote results.

Encourage the use of compost and/or compost production on the Land Bank's urban agriculture projects - *FPAC will identify Land Bank community garden and urban agriculture properties that will benefit from the use of compost to enrich existing soils or for raised beds. FPAC can present options for (1) securing compost from local businesses or organizations producing compost from food waste and/or (2) doing on-site composting using food waste in combination with carbon-rich materials. Any new composting sites will require proper training to ensure that the system is designed well and operated properly.*

Update: Land Bank regulations allow for on-site composting.

Explore Water Department/Private Sector partnership for compost and engineered soils for Green City, Clean Waters projects - *FPAC will encourage the Water Department to consider making property available for a private contractor(s) specifically to create an engineered soils pilot project for the Green City, Clean Waters projects. This effort would use targeted, locally-generated food waste (i.e. Philabundance, universities, other nonprofits, thus assuring savings for them) along with City-collected leaves and wood chips from fallen trees, limbs and branches in its process.*

Update: There have been conversations among stakeholders.

Next Step: Broaden the recommendation to encourage a public/private partnership beyond the Green City Clean Waters program.