



Department of Public Works | 860.584.6125

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 7, 2021

TO: Mayor Ellen Zoppo-Sassu
Board of Public Works

FROM: Raymond A. Rogozinski, P.E., Director of Public Works

RE: Food Waste Collection / Composting Program

The CT DEEP has contacted the DPW through NVCOG regarding a grant to perform a pilot program implementing a residential food waste collection and composting program. Information received to date regarding the program is preliminary and based on initial discussions with the CT DEEP. However, the program is similar to a grant recently received by the City Meriden.

The Meriden grant has not started. Once begun, it will consist of the collection residential food waste for a four-month period. Participating residents (requested to volunteer) will be offered to segregated food waste. Residents who participate will be required to place all food waste in designated colored bags (pink). They will continue to place the food waste along with their typical solid waste in the City supplied barrel (single stream). There will NOT be a separate City collection for food waste.

City solid waste barrels will continue to be collected curbside by the City. However, in the pilot test area City collection trucks will not dispose of the waste directly at Covanta. During the test pilot program City trucks will dispose of solid waste at a regional facility where the food waste bags will be separated (pink food waste bags taken out). The food waste bags (pink) will be sent to a regional food compost facility and the remaining waste will be sent to Covanta.

Due to its proximity to Covanta, CT DEEP has indicated that Bristol may be a desirable location for a future solid waste separation and food composting site. Some of the potential concerns would be odors and compliance with City zoning requirements. The food composting operation consists of mixing food waste with wood chips, therefore it may provide an additional market for wood debris chips generated at our transfer station from processing woody debris. Although segregation of food waste (pink) bags will occur manually during the pilot program the CT DEEP has identified equipment capable of automatically separating color bags using optical scanners.



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Participating in the pilot program will require participating residents (volunteering) to separate their food waste and City collection trucks being required to dispose of solid waste at regional facility. Although stated that residents will volunteer, I would say that that CT DEEP did use the term “encourage” to volunteer. DPW currently has 30 rubbish routes; the pilot program will be available to only a portion of the City’s routes. Since the number of collections per day varies, pilot program areas will be selected to coincide with low-collection days (Thursday’s downtown and Tuesday’s Redstone Hill Road routes) in order to compensate for additional hauling time.

The purpose of the CT DEEP’s pilot program is to obtain data on the feasibility of implementing food composting in the state. The State estimates that approximately 20-25 of the waste stream is attributed to food waste. The current market rate for solid waste disposal is approximately \$92/ton. The City’s existing Covanta disposal contract cost through BRFFOC is \$68.40/ton and will remain in place until 2034 (adjusted for CPI).

I have discussed the pilot program with BRFFOC’s administrator who has indicated that there are other communities outside Connecticut that have food waste programs or have performed pilot programs and therefore questions the value of collecting data. I personally have concerns with implementing a food compost program. There are several complex issues that must be considered such as participation rate of residents, impact to existing rubbish routes, location of compost serration facility and impact to existing BRFFOC contract.

It is imperative that food composting does not impact the City’s existing Covanta contract; however, CT DEEP’s food composting initiate is not going away. Along with pay as you throw it is the cornerstone of the State’s solid waste management program. Although I may agree with our BRFFOC administrator that the data is available on residential food composting I do believe that participating in a pilot program will allow the City to obtain Bristol specific data and more importantly provide the City an opportunity to communicate solid waste challenges directly with Bristol residents in addition to being part of the State’s solid waste policy discussion.

Due to the need of additional information I am not requesting authorization for DPW to participate in a food waste collection / composting pilot program. However, I am requesting the following BPW action to pursue:

Authorize the Director of Public to pursue participating in a food waste collection/ compost pilot program subject to final approval by the Board of Public Works.



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Please feel free to contact me with any question at 860-584-6113.

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