

**Wednesday, July 12, 2023 – 5:30 – 7:30pm**  
**MEETING NOTES**

**SWAC MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Carol Jones, Chair Robin Barr, Vice Chair Adam Diamond, Secretary Amy Maron, Secretary	Troy Cavell Fred Kranz Heidi Lovett Chaz Miller	Ellen Ryan Mark Symborski (M-NCPPC rep, non-voting)
---	--	---

**SWAC MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**DEP STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:**

David Frank, RRMD Waste Reduction and Recycling Section (WRRS)  
Lisa Shine, RRMD Executive Administrative Aide  
Eileen Kao, Chief, Waste Reduction and Recycling Section  
Sarah Mueller, Non-residential/Business Recycling Program Manager  
Ruth Carbonell, Multi-family Recycling Program Manager

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** Janet Owens, Neil Seldman

The regular meeting of the Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) was called to order by the Chair at 5:32pm.

A quorum was present and the April and May minutes were approved unanimously.

**Presentation by David Frank on the County’s Food Scraps Programs and Public Education Campaign.**

Note: Eileen Kao, Chief, Waste Reduction and Recycling Section, was scheduled to give the presentation but was unable to attend due to illness.

David Frank shared the following program activities and accomplishments:

**1. Increasing Awareness to Reduce Wasted Food and Increase Donations of Edible Food.**

RRMD’s Waste Reduction and Recycling Section (WRRS):

- Continues to provide information to residents and businesses/organizations.
- Uses social media messaging, a broad-based multi-media education campaign, dissemination of multi-lingual educational materials, dedicated outreach events to promote reducing wasted food to residents and businesses
- Provides information during Multi-Family and Business Waste Reduction and Recycling seminars/webinars
- Is reviewing current efforts undertaken by businesses/organizations and MF properties to identify and encourage best practices
- Partnered with ReFed’s Food Waste Prevention Week as a Community Partner (April 10-16, 2023).
- Conducted 3 dedicated outreach events at Hillandale Shopping Center, Fox Chapel Shopping Center and Downtown Silver Spring and provided multilingual information cards.

2. **Food is too Good to Waste Educational Awareness Campaign.**

RRMD WRRS:

- Conducted a media campaign on cable TV, streaming radio, web streaming, bus advertising, bike kiosks, social media, Chamber of Commerce websites, and WTOP.com sponsored articles.
- Provided Sector-Specific Educational Materials (examples were provided)

3. **Developing Policy for Edible Food Recovery.**

RRMD WRRS:

- Convened an Edible Food Recovery Working Group with key stakeholders in March 2022.
- Reviewed edible food recovery aspects of California legislation, SB 1383.
- Focused on edible food recovery.
- Researched edible food recovery requirements in other states.
- Has many food waste management programs underway as part of County Aiming for Zero Waste initiatives.

4. **Update on Obtaining Baseline Measurement of Edible Food Available for Recovery.**

- RRMD WRRS received USDA grant for \$175,000 to develop baseline measurement of edible food eligible for recovery.
- RRMD awarded a task order to an engineering contractor to conduct survey work and perform waste audits of 50 food service businesses and 20 food service assistance providers. To date, 19 businesses and 3 food service providers have agreed to participate. Contractor will initiate outreach efforts to businesses in Bethesda, Friendship Heights, Silver Spring and Wheaton central business districts starting in summer 2023.

5. **Backyard Food Scraps Composting**

- 1,000 residents are participating in a test of two types of backyard compost bins. They are provided with educational materials. Trainings are also held. Data collected will help build/improve the program. A survey tool is being designed to obtain feedback from participants.
- In FY23 piloted large-scale truck distribution of compost bins to county residents. Social media and newspaper ads were used to recruit. A one-day event at Blair High School resulted in 650 bins distributed.

6. **Commercial Food Scraps Recycling Partnership Program.**

- Program goal: increase food scraps recycling by businesses; document these efforts through measurement, feedback and data.
- 37 partners have participated or are currently in the program; one dropped out and two are on deck. Graduates have continued recycling their food scraps.
- 1.8 million pounds collected through June 2023.

7. **Commercial Food Scraps Recycling Seminar**

- Coordinated an in-person seminar focused specifically on food scraps recycling, food waste reduction and the new state food residuals regulation.
- 197 businesses were invited to attend.
- Tim Kerr from MDE provided an overview of HB264; Cheryl Kollin from Manna discussed how businesses can participate in edible food donation.
- An educational rack card was developed to provide an overview of the regulation. Cards were translated into Spanish and Chinese.

8. **Revised Estimate of HB171 Potentially Impacted Businesses/Organizations**

- A total of 1459 food businesses that generate food scraps
  - 1245 food service businesses (FSBs) generate less than 1 TPW food scraps

- 135 generate 1-2 TPW: 126 are within 30-mi radius of currently operating firm, representing a minimum of 6552 tons per year to be recycled starting 1/1/24
- 79 generate 2 TPW or more: 71 are within 30-mile radius, representing a minimum of 7384 tons per year to be recycled, starting 1/1/23
- 76 of the 1,459 are currently recycling their food scraps either through composting or as animal feed.
- Outreach and education efforts underway to affected businesses.
- 9. Working with Multi-Family Properties to Recycle Food Scraps**
  - Providing technical assistance, education, outreach, and training
  - Working with about 10 properties.
- 10. Single-Family Food Scraps Pilot Program – Participation Rates**
  - Silver Spring: 720 households enrolled of 2,053 eligible for a 35% participation rate; 374,544 pounds collected since 11/10/21 with 8.53 lbs per week average setout quantity, 90% weekly setout rate
  - Potomac: 357 enrolled of 1,909 eligible for a 19% participation rate; 196,012 pounds collected since 12/7/21 with 10.08 lbs per week average setout quantity, 75% weekly setout rate
  - Bethesda: 369 enrolled of 2,053 eligible, for a 18% participation rate; 48,101 pounds collected since 3/27/23, with 11.83 lbs per week average setout quantity, and 74% weekly setout rate
  - Total Program: 618,657 pounds collected.

**Questions/comments:**

- Will there be an evaluation of the program to determine the best method of collection?
  - David noted that the consulting firm EA with Craig Coker as a subcontractor will be evaluating this question in their contract with the County.
- Will the County consider doing a combined collection of food scraps and yard waste?
  - David noted that the consulting firm EA with Craig Coker will be evaluating this question.
  - Seattle, Arlington County (VA) and Howard County (MD) combine food scraps with yard waste collection; another member noted this may result in a lack of nitrogen in the mix as not that many people put out grass clippings.
  - When additional capacity can be acquired or developed. Again, this is a topic the EA contract is addressing.
- Will MCPS be involved? Answer: MCPS has a separate program
- When can we start expanding the program to the rest of the county?
  - When additional capacity can be acquired or developed. Again, this is a topic the EA contract is addressing.

**Presentation on Local Municipal Residential Food Scraps Collection Programs**

Robin Barr, the MD Municipal League representative to SWAC with support from the other Organics subcommittee members, Adam Diamond and Carol Jones, conducted a survey of the independent municipalities in the County that collect food scraps to reduce food waste. (Note: Independent municipalities carry out solid waste collections independently of the County solid waste collections.) Adam Diamond compiled information about programs operating outside of Montgomery County.

## **Key findings**

### **Montgomery County municipalities:**

- Of the 21 independent municipalities in Montgomery County (with about 200,000 total residents), 10 (representing 70-80% of residents in municipalities) have some form of food scrap collections program.
  - Five have curbside pickup – either provided by a public agency (City of Takoma Park) or by public contractors (Town of Chevy Chase, Town of Somerset, Chevy Chase Section 3, Chevy Chase Section 5); in addition, Garret Park and Gaithersburg are considering developing programs
  - Four are promoting Compost Crew's discount program, with discounts based on extent of participation of municipality residents (Village of Martins Additions, Kensington, Garret Park, Village of Chevy Chase)
  - Three have drop-off sites: Kensington, Gaithersburg, Rockville

### ***Selected noteworthy findings:***

- The City of Rockville, which only has a drop-off program, very much underestimated the demand. They started with one drop-off area and expanded to two. They also offered free caddies and there is now a waiting list. People began dropping off food scraps before the site was officially open.
- Takoma Park has the longest running program: it began with a pilot in 2013, has a full-scale curbside program that is considered very successful. It is considering combining food and yard waste in one cart.
- Somerset: Each new resident is given a welcome package and asked to sign up for curbside collection, which nearly everyone does. Considered a very successful program.
- Chevy Chase Village, which has a curbside program, had an anonymous donor pay for startup costs.

### **Outside of Montgomery County:**

- The City of Laurel is making residential food scraps separation mandatory as of 2025.
- Arlington County has a full-scale yard waste/food waste curbside program.
- DC has ongoing curbside pilots.
- Howard County has 34,000 households participating in curbside, with plans to expand further.

### **RRMD Updates (David Frank)**

- The County is reviewing the proposals received from the Request for Expression of Interest to transfer trash from incineration to landfill.
- The EA Consulting draft report on options for processing organics is due this week.
- SAYT – the report is pending, along with the design of a pilot.
- The DEP website has been redesigned and will be rolled out in September.
- The new DEP director, Jon Monger, previously of USEPA, starts in August.
- New changes to the Transfer Station:
  - The upper lot for public drop-off has been redesigned with expanded areas to drop off electronics (more types accepted), bicycles and other donations. A new textile contractor was hired and the mattress drop-off area was set up.
  - Scrap metal area expanded and made safer.
  - In the new durable medical equipment collection program, \$82,000 worth of durable medical equipment has been donated since startup.
  - One of the lanes to the tipping floor has been widened.
  - Two electric vehicles are being used at the site.

**SWAC Updates**

- The Subdistrict B/A Consolidation Subcommittee is drafting its report and will share with the rest of SWAC for review before being presented to Willie. We briefed Willie on our preliminary findings at the end of March.

**Potential Topics for Next SWAC meeting in September**

- SAYT
- REOI responses: Alternatives to incineration
- Waste Composition Study and recycling reports
- Subdistrict consolidation
- What happens to our plastic recycling. Chaz noted that he has given talks on this topic: most plastic has markets with the U.S.; paper goes to Indian Mills.
- Statewide legislative update
- Plastic bag ban

**Public Comments**

- Neil Seldman introduced himself as a consultant to Zero Waste Montgomery County and to the County Executive helping to craft alternatives to incineration. He applauded the county for all of its programs.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:32 pm.

**ACRONYMS**

C&D	Construction and Demolition	SWMP	Solid Waste Management Plan
CC	County Council	T&E	Transportation and Environment Committee
CE	County Executive	TPD	Tons per Day
CNG	Compressed Natural Gas	TPW	Tons per Week
CPI	Consumer Price Index	ZWTF	Zero Waste Task Force
DAFIG	Dickerson Area Facilities Implementation Group		
DEP	Department of Environmental Protection		
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency		
FTE	Full Time Employee		
FY	Fiscal Year		
MDE	Maryland Department of the Environment		
MC	Montgomery County		
MES	Maryland Environmental Services		
MRF	Materials Recovery Facility		
MML	Maryland Municipal League		
MCPS	Montgomery County Public Schools		
OLO	Office of Legislative Oversight		
PAYT	Pay-As-You-Throw		
RRF	Resource Recovery Facility		
RRMD	Recycling & Resource Management Division		
SA	Service Area for County collection		
SAYT	Save-As-You-Throw		
SCA	Sugarloaf Community Association		
SF	Single family		
SWAC	Solid Waste Advisory Committee		

