

Food Scraps Drop Spots, Vancouver

City of Vancouver in Metro Vancouver, BC



Population: 640,915

Land Area: 115 km²

Density: 5797.2 persons/km²

Median Age: 39.7

Housing Mix – SF/MF – 40:60

Average persons per household: 2.2

2011 City of Vancouver per capita disposal rate:

643 kg/capita¹ (all sectors)

242 kg/household/year (residential only)

Program Highlights / Summary

The Food Scraps Drop Spots program was started in August 2011 by the Vancouver Farmers Markets and Recycling Alternative (a local recycling company) and supported by the City of Vancouver Greenest City Neighbourhood Grant. Drop Spot locations have been created to encourage local residents from multi unit residential buildings to bring their food scraps for composting. Drop Spots are set up at the local farmers markets, neighbourhood houses and community hubs and provide an option for residents who wish to compost, but do not have access to the city's curbside collection. The program was piloted in 2011 (August –October 2011), initially at farmers markets and then rolled out to other locations as partners and capacity allowed.

Metro Vancouver's Integrated Solid Waste and Resource Management Plan established a target for the total ban of organic waste from landfill by 2015. Additionally, the Metro Vancouver Zero Waste initiative has identified multi-family and industrial, commercial, and institutional (ICI) sectors as areas where significant gains can be realized in reaching the regional target of 70% waste diversion by 2015. People are concerned about the fact that organics collection services are provided to single-family homes but not yet to multi-unit residential buildings.

There is a growing interest among residents in doing the right thing with their waste, so the Drop Spots program addresses this need. This program assists in building capacity in advance of the 2015 disposal ban on organics in Metro Vancouver by educating residents on what organic wastes can be collected and other aspects of waste reduction. Start up funding came from the City of Vancouver and the Vancouver Foundation. The City now lists the program on its 311 service (the City's telephone number for non-emergency services) to let residents know it is available.

¹ 2012-2013 Greenest City Action Plan Update

<http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/greenest-city-2020-action-plan-2012-2013-implementation-update.pdf>

Organics Case Study 9: Waste Recycling – Multi-family Residential Kitchen Scraps Collection Program

All locations rely on volunteers to staff the Drop Spots so partnering with interested local groups that have volunteer capacity is essential. This is seen as an interim measure until there can be regular food scraps collection for multi-unit buildings. The volunteers provide information on organics as well as engage with the community on other issues like recycling and waste reduction.

To date, over 68 tonnes of organic material has been diverted from landfill to composting facilities, while building community capacity and awareness around organics diversion.

Program Details

The program was piloted in 2011 (August –October 2011), initially at farmers markets near densely populated neighbourhoods. The program was then rolled out to other locations as partners and capacity allowed. The \$10,000 initial grant allowed the program to determine if people would be willing to bring their food scraps with them on a trip they were already making (to the farmer’s market). Once participation was confirmed, the community hub locations were established to see if people would make a single-purpose trip to bring their food scraps. In both cases, people were willing to engage. All locations rely on volunteers to staff the Drop Spots so partnering with interested local groups that have volunteer capacity is essential. This is seen as an interim measure until there can be regular food scraps collection for multi-unit buildings. Drop Spots provide initial education to residents about how to and gets them started on organics collection in one of six current locations.

Collection

The program provides Drop Spot locations for collecting food scraps during specific hours at local community hubs. Volunteers staff the Drop Spots. Recycling Alternative drivers deliver the bins and return to pick up the organic material and take it to the two processors.

Processing

Collected organics are taken for composting to Fraser Richmond Soil and Fibre and West Coast Lawns (Envirosmart) and turned into topsoil or a soil amendment for local markets.

Promotion / Education

The program has a website that describes acceptable organic materials and identifies the locations and times of the various Drop Spots. There are signs at each Drop Spot and small leaflets with information on what is compostable (suitable to be put on a fridge). Twitter updates and press releases announce important program information. Drop Spot locations are good venues for outreach, education and engagement around recycling and urban agriculture. Discussions of the upcoming bans have encouraged people to look at options for food scrap collection services in their buildings.

FOOD SCRAPS DROP SPOT

Introducing a 10-week pilot project brought to you by Vancouver Farmers Markets, Recycling Alternative and City of Vancouver

bring it on!
acceptable:
fruit & vegetables
meat, bones & dairy
breads & pastries
cooked food scraps
soiled paper towels
coffee grounds & filters
tea bags

not acceptable:
plastic bags
plastic or styrofoam
oils or grease
coffee cups
diapers or wipes
animal waste or cat litter

tips for storing scraps at home:

- store in containers or paper bags
- keep in the fridge or freezer to reduce odours and fruit flies
- use old newspaper to line or layer your container

keep your food scraps out of the landfill!

bring your weekly food scraps to:
the west end farmers market
comox street (between bute and thurlow)
august 13 - october 15, 2011
saturdays only between 9 am - 2 pm

information:
eatlocal.org
recyclingalternative.com
vancover.ca
or call 3-1-1

Map showing Drop Spot location between Bute Street and Thurlow Street, between Nelson Street and Comox Street.

information: eatlocal.org, recyclingalternative.com, vancover.ca, or call 3-1-1

Map showing Drop Spot location between Bute Street and Thurlow Street, between Nelson Street and Comox Street.

Logos for City of Vancouver, Vancouver Farmers Markets, and Recycling Alternative.

Organics Case Study 9: Waste Recycling – Multi-family Residential Kitchen Scraps Collection Program

Supporting Policies and Regulations

The Metro Vancouver Integrated Solid Waste and Resource Management Plan sets out a course of action to increase diversion rates. Metro Vancouver's goal is to achieve an overall 70% composting and recycling rate by 2015, and an 80% waste diversion rate by 2020. Diverting compostable organics is a priority to meet the target for a total ban of organic waste from the landfill by 2015.

Additionally, the Metro Vancouver Zero Waste initiative has identified multi-family and industrial, commercial, and institutional (ICI) sectors as areas where significant gains can be realized in reaching the regional target of 70% waste diversion by 2015. People are concerned about the fact that organics collection services are provided to single-family homes but not always to multi-unit residential buildings. There is a growing interest among residents in doing the right thing with their waste.

Program Results

Financial Data

Capital Costs

Drop Spots are hosted for free at existing community hubs. One partner, Recycling Alternative, already had the bins and vehicles, so the cost of these items was not considered a program cost. Some signage was purchased.

Operating Costs

The initial \$10,000 grant covered the costs of the 11-week pilot (hauling, processing, signage and administration). Ongoing costs are the organics tipping fees \$60-80 per tonne and the hauling costs, which usually are \$100-120/hour but are discounted for this project. Initially bags and buckets for in-home collection were sold at near cost. Actual costs vary by number of sites, location and time spent (as the hauling costs are by the hour). On average, it costs \$250-300 per Drop Spot per opening.

Staffing Implications

Volunteers staff the Drop Spot locations. The Vancouver Farmers Markets and Recycling Alternative provide the administration.

Cost Recovery

After the initial grant was used, participants are asked for a voluntary \$2 donation to pay for hauling and processing. Previous donations averaged \$1.10 per drop.



Organics Case Study 9: Waste Recycling – Multi-family Residential Kitchen Scraps Collection Program

Environmental

Reduction and Diversion – By June 22, 2013, the Drop Spot program had collected 68.6 tonnes of food scraps that would have otherwise gone to landfill.

Disposal Impact / Landfill Space Savings – 68.6 tonnes

GHG Reduction – 51.7 tonnes²

Social

Political Acceptability

This program assists in building capacity in advance of the 2015 disposal ban on organics in Metro Vancouver by educating residents on what materials can be collected and other aspects of waste reduction. Start up funding came from the City of Vancouver and the Vancouver Foundation. The City now lists the program on its 311 service to let residents know it is available.



Community / User Acceptability

By June 22, 2013 the program recorded 20,236 drops of food scraps (over four months). The program answers a need in the community for those who wish to compost, but may not have avenues to do this (i.e., no curbside program, may live in an apartment). Volunteers engage with the people using the program and encourage further organics collection while strengthening the sense of community and answering other questions related to recycling and waste. Expanding from the original Drop Spots tested in the pilot, other community organizations partnered with Drop Spots to add locations in the other Vancouver neighbourhoods.

Community Economic Development

Collected organics go to two local commercial composting sites: Fraser Richmond Soil and Fibre and Envirosmart-Organics). One local business, Recycling Alternative, is a partner in this project. They have tried giving out the finished compost at farmers markets and are looking at how the compost might be sold at these locations more regularly.



² Using Green Communities Carbon Neutral Framework, assuming all kitchen scraps, materials going to Vancouver Landfill otherwise, landfill gas capture efficiency of 41-60%.

Organics Case Study 9: Waste Recycling – Multi-family Residential Kitchen Scraps Collection Program

Lessons Learned

- Do not leave bins unstaffed or the wrong items will end up in the bins.
- Volunteers are the key to staffing Drop Spot sites.
- Participation in the program increases over time.
- Developing a partnership between local government and non-profit organizations, businesses and the volunteer community is very important.
- This model of direct outreach at locations where residents are engaged and have time for conversations can be used by local government to let people know what is available and how to be ready for bans. Drop Spots can be used as a way to engage citizens and as a platform for disseminating information on other topics such as recycling, urban farming, etc.
- Local governments do not need to administer and provide all programs. Willing partners can support, pilot and foster programs through grants and other initiatives.
- To be sustainable, some funding should be secured for ongoing administration.

Communities with Similar Programs

New York City Green Markets – developed around the same time.

Whistler, BC – local environmental group, AWARE, collects kitchen scraps at the local Farmers Market (with support from the municipality and the Squamish Lillooet Regional District)

Program Contacts

Louise Schwarz of Recycling Alternative
at info@recyclingalternative.com
or by phone 604.874.7283.

Daniel Oong of the Vancouver Farmers Markets
at daniel.oong@gmail.com.

More information at <http://foodscrapsdropspot.ca>.

