

Westfield's Food Waste Recycling Program

Fueling our Journey to Sustainability

Catherine Choudhry, Zero Waste Lead, Westfield Green Team Member



What I Will Cover Today

- Our approach to creating a food waste recycling program in Westfield
- How we engaged our 30,000 residents
- Our elementary school pilot program
- Program economics
- Next steps toward sustainable food management



How the program got started...



Experience in NYC with DSNY's
organics recycling program
2013-2016

Identified a need in Westfield

Visited RVSA and CORE facilities
Fall 2018

Engaged potential key stakeholders
January 2019

Official program kick-off
November 2019

Engaging Key Stakeholders and Building the Case

January 2019



Jim Van Woert,
Area Director of Diversion
Strategies Waste Management



Dr. Serpil Guran
Director of Rutgers' EcoComplex



Jim Meehan,
Executive Director Rahway Valley
Sewerage Authority



We invited: Town Engineer, Town Administrator, Head of Public Works,
Council Members, Local Businesses

From Concept to Town Approval

Key Player/Champion: David Contract, Westfield Town Council Member, Liaison to the Green Team, Chair of the Department of Public Works, Finance Committee Member

1) Assessed Community
Interest
Spring 2019

2) Secured Committee
Approval
Summer 2019

3) Secured Town
Council Approval
Fall 2019

4) Launched and
Promoted
November 2019

5) Quickly Expanded
December 2019



Processing the Collected Food Waste

Key Player: Arielle Bernard: Waste Management's CORE Sales Support Manager



Food waste transported to CORE



Food transformed into an engineered bio-slurry (EBS)

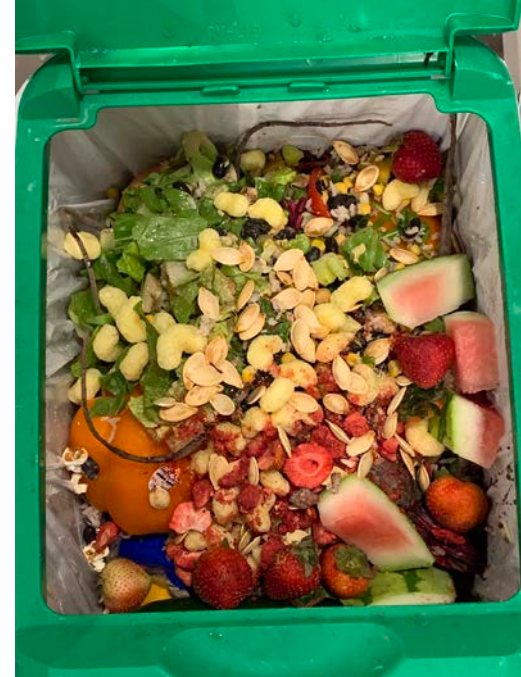


EBS transported to a wastewater treatment digester where it is converted to energy



Overview of How Residents Participate

- ▶ I keep my bin in the kitchen
- ▶ It has a lid to help with any smells- just like regular kitchen garbage
- ▶ I take it weekly to our Conservation Center
- ▶ For this program, food waste can be collected in a container or a non-black plastic bag
- ▶ Low barrier to entry



Food Waste Collection at the Conservation Center

Key Player: Richard Eubanks: Westfield Department of Public Works, Supervisor Parks & Fields Division, Westfield's Recycling Coordinator

- ▶ Working with Waste Management to get started
- ▶ Initial concerns
- ▶ Demands on staff
- ▶ Troubleshooting contamination



Spreading the Word



Green

Westfield First in Union County to Feed Into New Food Waste Process

The Westfield Southerner · Join
Kirti Malik · Dec 12, 2019 · 📍

Hey Westfield- You hit the ground running and filled up the organic recycling bin faster than Waste Management could empty it! So, due to popular demand, there will now be **THREE** bins available for drop offs.

Just a reminder that while it is okay to... See more



Food Waste Recycling Only

Fruits, Vegetables, Poultry, Meat, Seafood, Dairy, Bakery & Dry Goods, Liquids & Beverages, Teabags & Coffee Grounds



YES:

Food waste is being recycled at WM's CORE Facility. Plastic liners are acceptable (except black bags) or dispose of food waste directly into toter.

NO

- Glass
- Wood
- Chemicals, paints, & other hazardous material
- Aluminum foil & trays
- Clothing & linens
- Corks
- Polystyrene foam
- Yard waste
- Dirt, rocks, stones

Small amounts of soiled paper goods, fats, oils, greases, and florals are acceptable. These items can contaminate recyclables if found in large quantities.

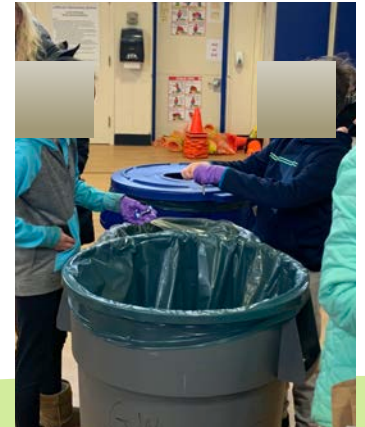
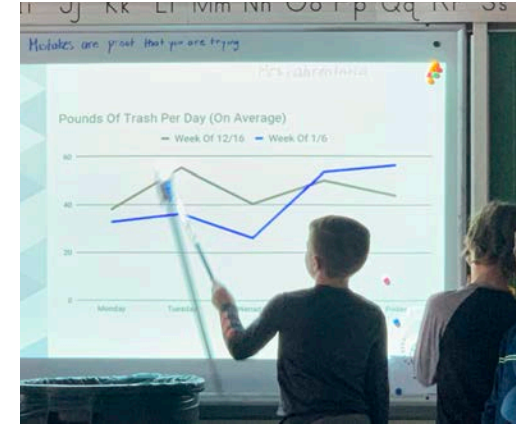


To learn more, visit www.westfieldnj.gov/green.



Food Waste Recycling in an Elementary School

- ▶ Westfield Board of Education approved pilot in one of its ten schools
- ▶ Green Team worked with the principal, head custodian and a science teacher
- ▶ Students performed an assessment of the school's waste
- ▶ Most importantly we supported a very engaged group of 5th graders who educated the community and facilitated the waste sorting at lunch



Economic Considerations of Food Waste Recycling

- ▶ We need to switch from seeing food waste as heavy garbage to a valuable resource that we want to keep in our community
- ▶ Food waste is often heavier than other items found in household trash
- ▶ Currently it is \$355/month for three 64 gallon totes to be picked up weekly.
- ▶ Sustainable Jersey did give a grant to Cranford to start their own waste recycling program - there is some money out there
- ▶ If residents are source separating and food waste is being recycled, there is less garbage generated and waste removal fees can be renegotiated



Looking Ahead



Embarking on a Sustainable Organics Material Management Plan

Catherine Choudhry, Westfield Green Team Member

With direction and support from Gary Sondermeyer

17 Core Opportunities for Action

THE NEW JERSEY
CLIMATE CHANGE
ALLIANCE ORGANICS
WORKGROUP

Westfield as a Pilot Community

Engaging Broader Community



Next Steps and Concluding Thoughts

- ▶ Lunch and Learn with Important Community Leaders: clergy, BOE, Girl Scouts, library, volunteer organizations
- ▶ This is a piece of the puzzle for Westfield
 - ▶ We also have backyard composting
 - ▶ We would love to have an in-vessel composter
 - ▶ We have school gardens and are looking at a possible community garden
 - ▶ We would also be interested in diverting food waste to a composting facility
 - ▶ We have an active food pantry that wants to expand
 - ▶ We would like more food waste recycling drop off locations in town
- ▶ We are looking to think bigger in an effort to have a more comprehensive way to recover more food as well as divert food waste from our landfills
- ▶ Identify champions



Questions?

Thank you!

Contact me:

- ▶ Catherine Choudhry, Westfield Green Team Member
 - ▶ catherinehirschman@yahoo.com
 - ▶ catherinechoudhry1@gmail.com

