



Food Scrap Composting and Wasted Food Prevention



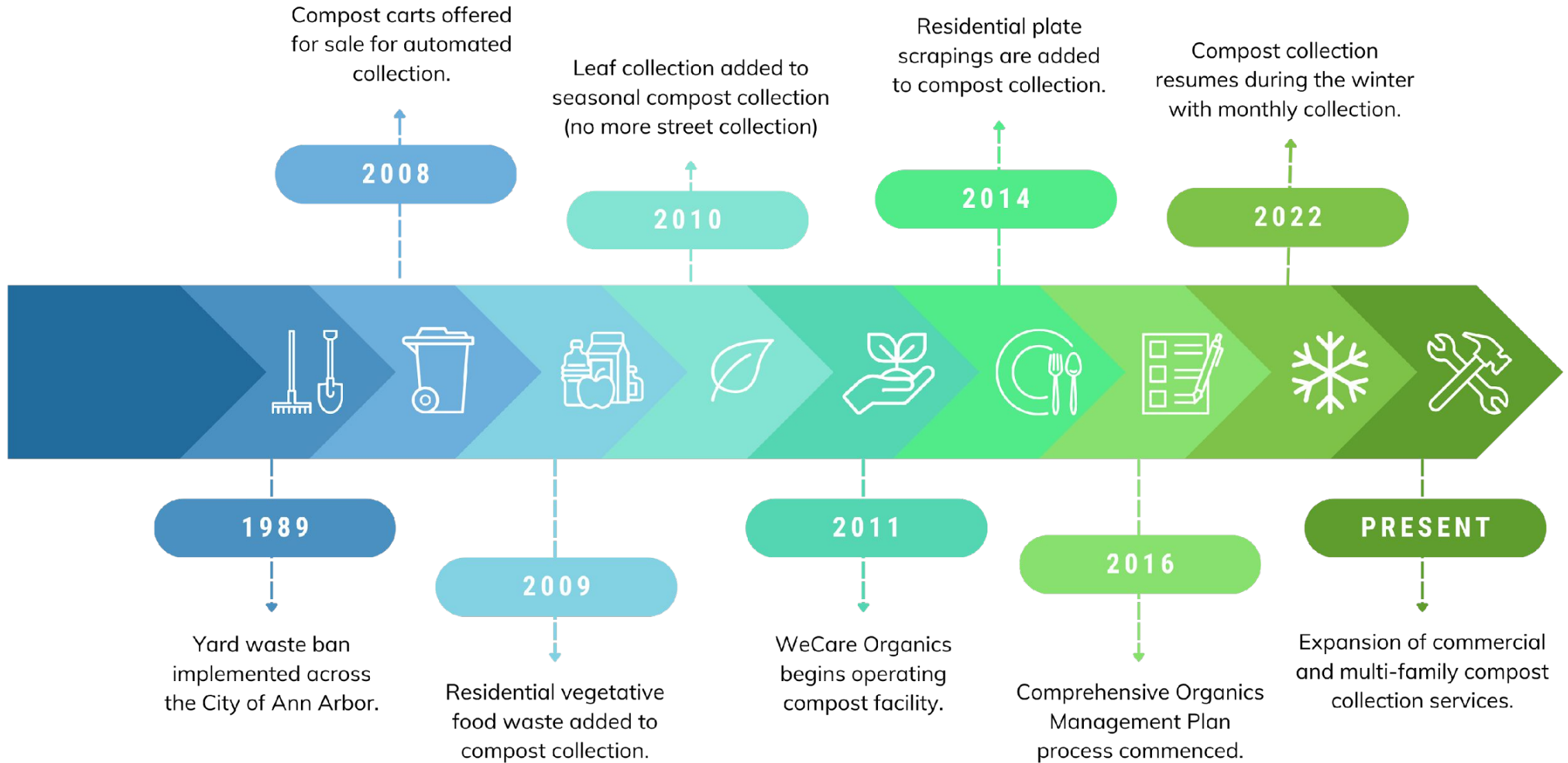
Provide direct and contracted collections, education, outreach and planning for trash, recycle and compost streams to nearly 30,000 residential and commercial customers within Ann Arbor.

Our Compost Facility



- Expanded in 2005 to a fully engineered composting facility
- Operated by WeCare Denali since 2011
- Windrow composting method
- Processes between 10,000 to 13,000 tons annually
- Free drop off for residents year-round
- Contracted landscapers may also drop off leaves for free during the fall
- 1,000 cubic yards of finished compost is offered back to residents each year

Brief History of Composting in A2



Focus on Food Waste Recovery and Prevention



Wasted Food Scale

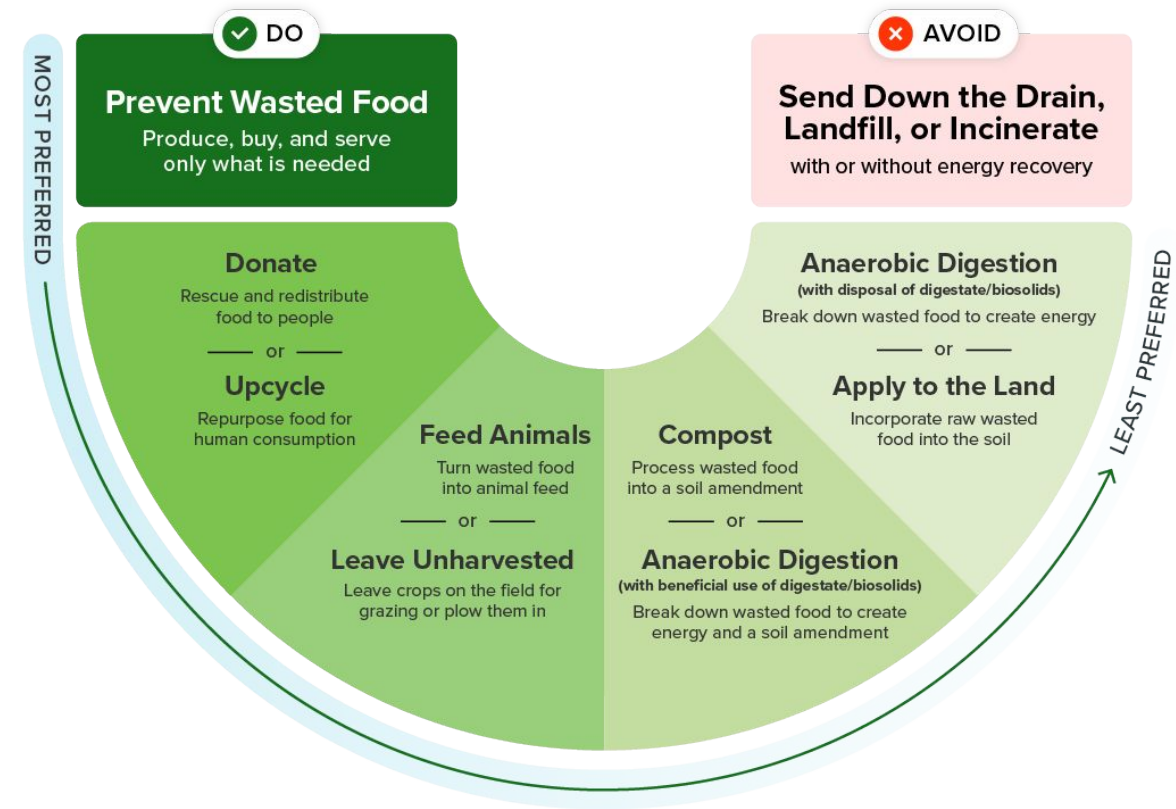
How to reduce the environmental impacts of wasted food

**“To change the way we use, reuse,
and dispose of materials”**

Strategy 5 of the City’s Carbon Neutrality Plan

**Reduce food waste to landfills by 50%
by 2030.**

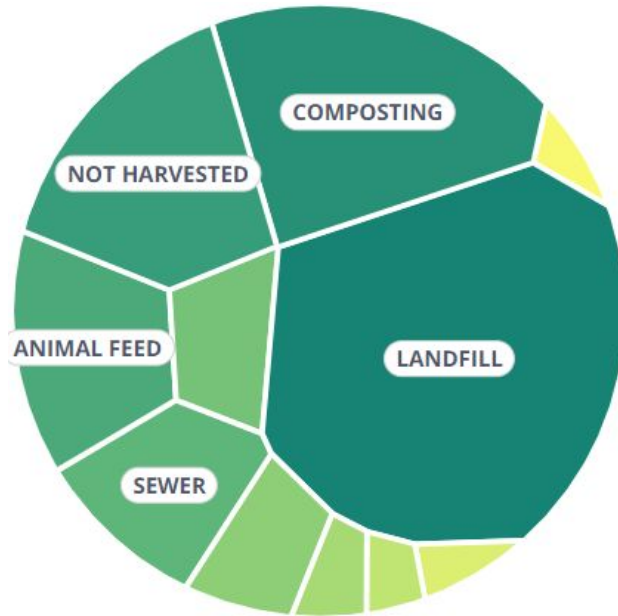
Michigan Climate Neutrality Plan



October 2023

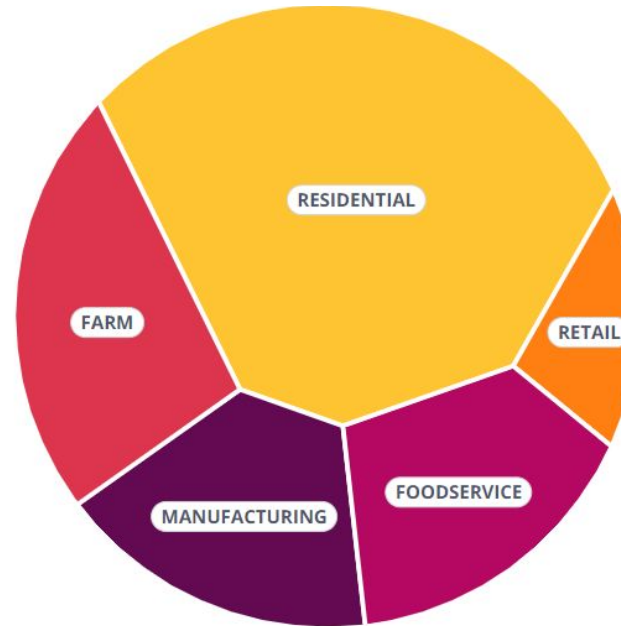
In 2022, the U.S. generated 88.7 million tons of surplus food.

Where did it go?



37% - Landfill
18% - Composting
14% - Not Harvested

Who is responsible?



48% - Residential
17% - Farm
15% - Manufacturing

What caused it?

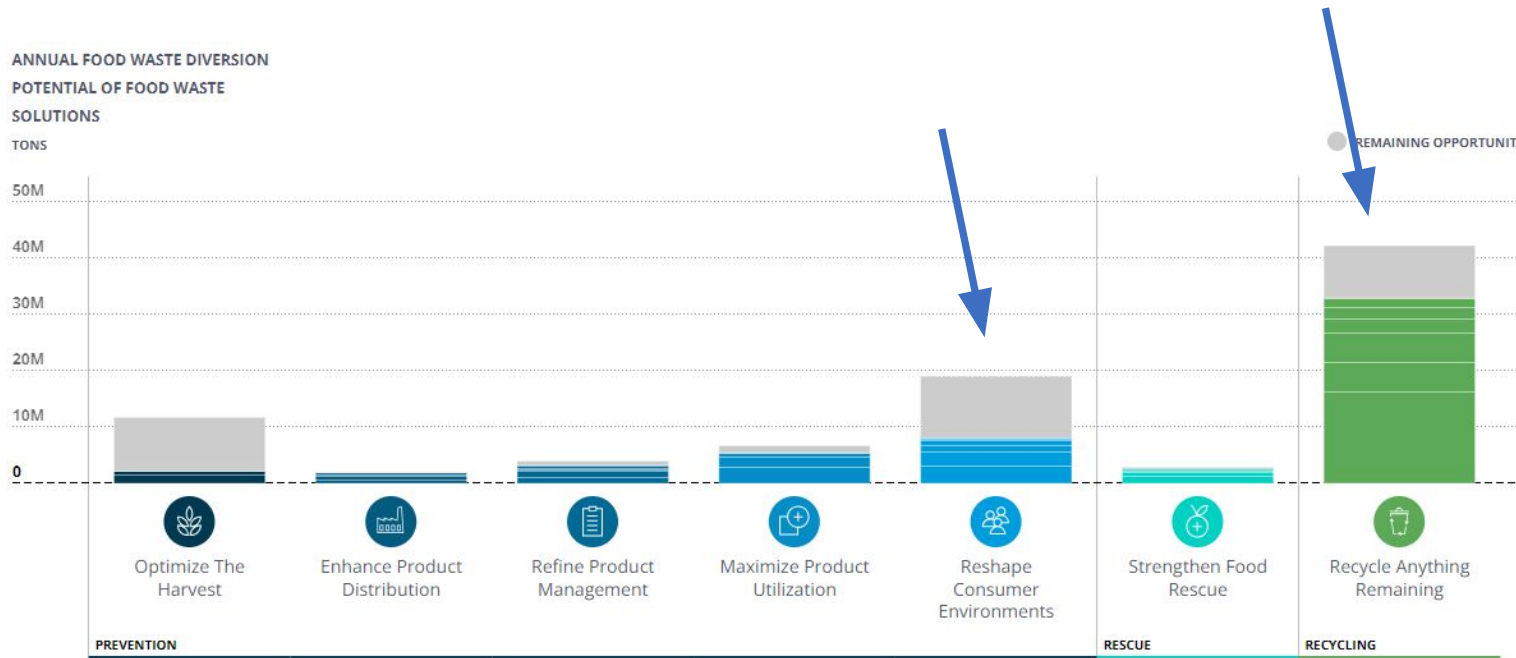


30% - Trimmings & Byproducts
25% - Excess
15% - Spoiled

Annual Impact Potential of Centralized Composting

ReFED's Solution Database quantifies the potential financial, environmental, and social benefits of actionable solutions to reducing food waste in the U.S.

One of these solutions is centralized composting and it has the highest annual food waste diversion potential of any other solution.



16.2M
Tons

of food waste
diverted

emissions
reduced by

8.75
MTCO2E

16.7k

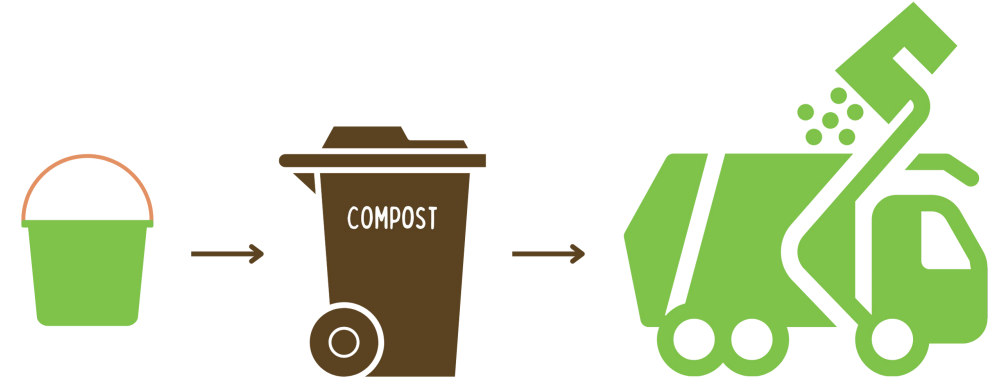
jobs created

Source: ReFED's Solution Database

Potential Multi-Family Food Scrap Collection Programs

Curbside Service

1. Collect food scraps in a small container
2. Empty your container into the shared curbside cart
3. City trucks will collect weekly

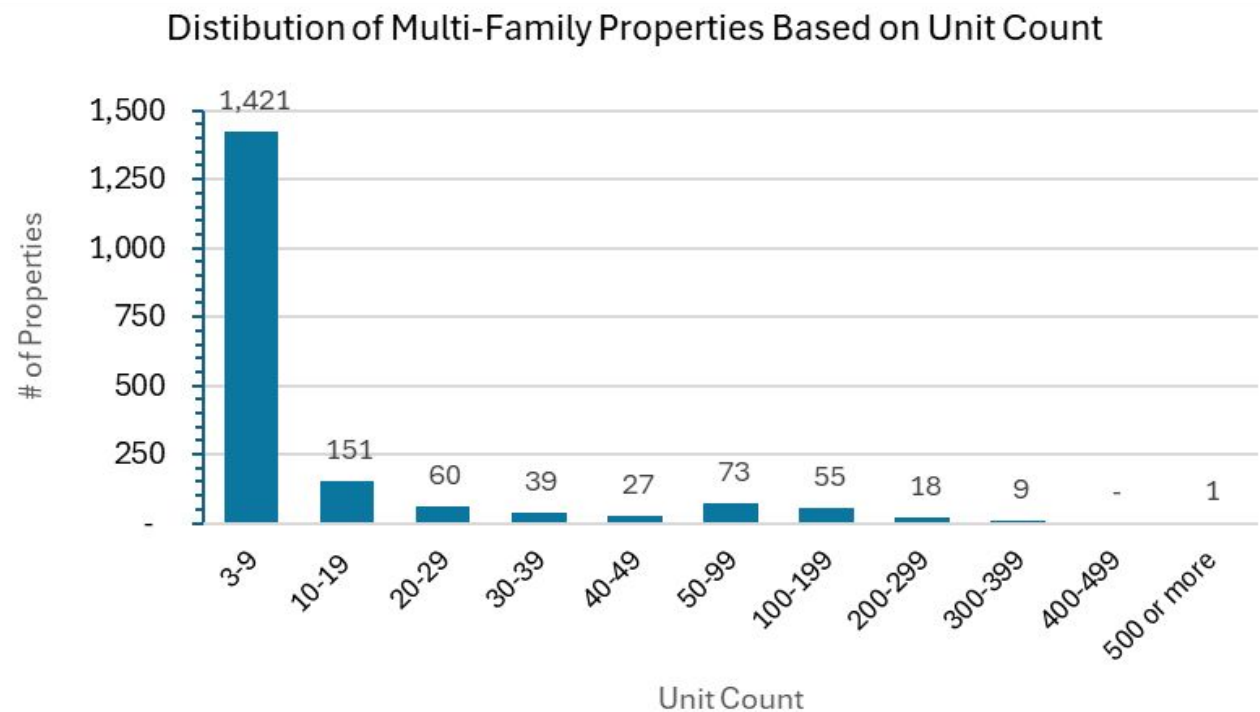
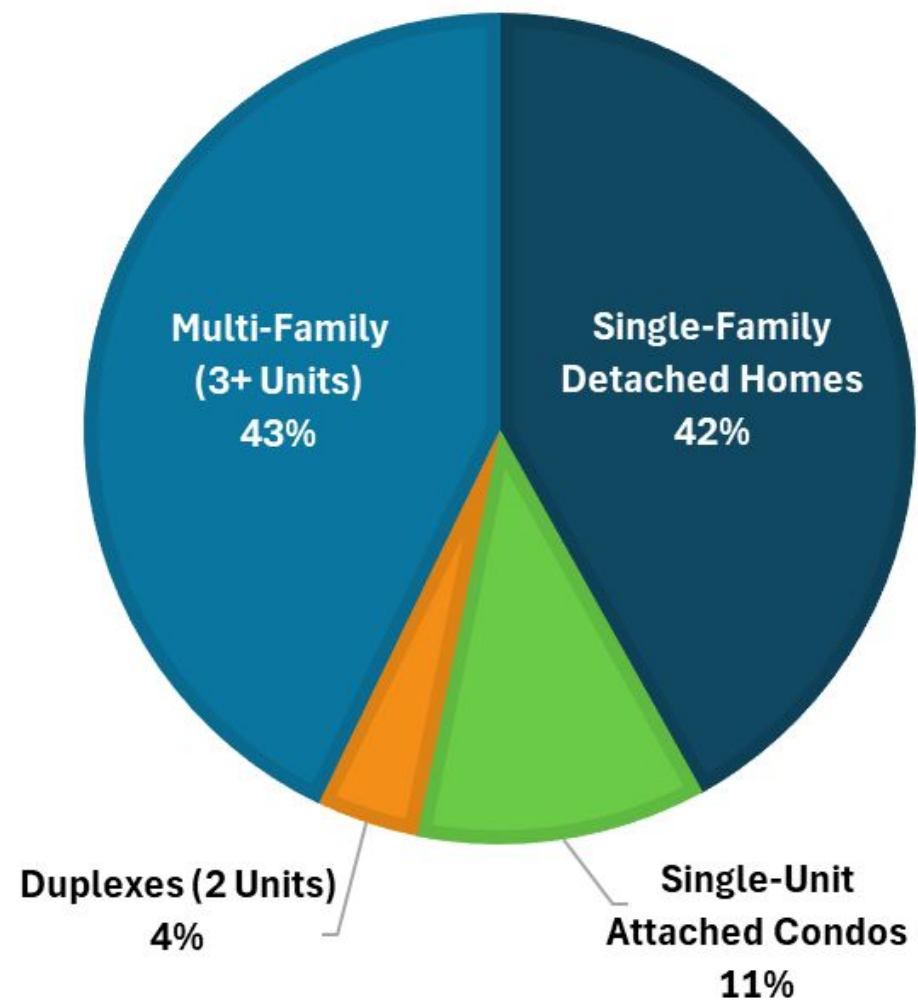


Drop Off Sites

1. Collect food scraps in a small container
2. Find your nearest drop off location
3. Empty your container into the cart



Housing Types in Ann Arbor



Source: U.S. Census, ACS 5-Year Estimates (2023)

Source: City of Ann Arbor Property Data

Composting at Multi-Family Properties

Because of our unique composition of housing types, we take a few **different approaches** to composting:



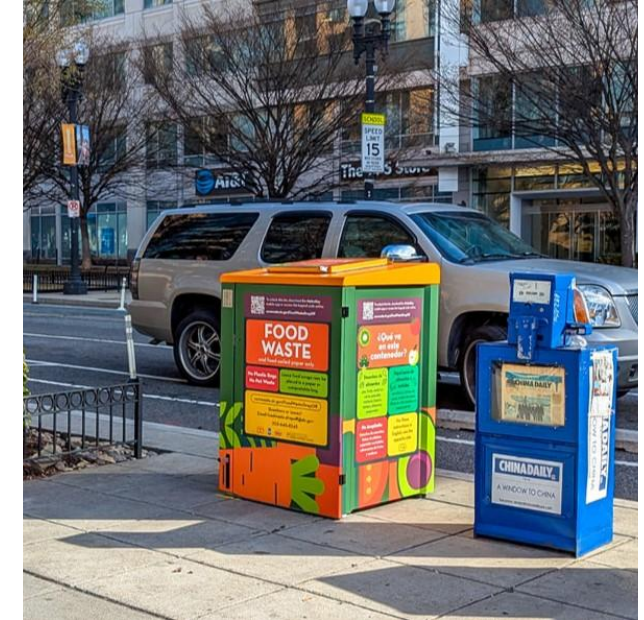
Curbside Service

Properties with 8 units or less are typically eligible to receive compost collection through the city's standard residential curbside service.



Shared Community Carts (pilot program)

Larger properties that meet specific criteria may be invited to participate in a pilot program using shared compost carts.



Food Scrap Drop-Off Bins (in development)

Access-controlled drop-off bins will soon be piloted throughout the city for all residents to use, regardless of property type.

Criteria for Shared Carts at Multi-Family Properties



Pictured above is Mallory Lawson (left), the City's Compost Program Coordinator, with one of our "Compost Champions" (right).

The City must confirm that:

1. The property is on a residential compost route
2. Our trucks have the capacity

In addition, each property is required to:

1. Obtain written approval from the property owner/management/association
2. Identify at least 2 residents and/or staff members to set out carts
Also known as our "Compost Champions!"
3. Demonstrate interest from residents
(sustainability club, resident survey, A²Zero Ambassador involvement, etc.)
4. Place only food waste and small amounts of household plant material in the cart

Acceptable Food Scrap Materials



**plate
scrapings**



**meat &
bones**



**dairy &
eggs**



**bread,
grains,
pasta, & rice**



**fruits, vegetables,
pits, & peels**



**coffee
grounds &
filters**



**soiled paper
towel & napkins**



**cut flowers &
house plants**



**certified
CMA-W fiber
products**

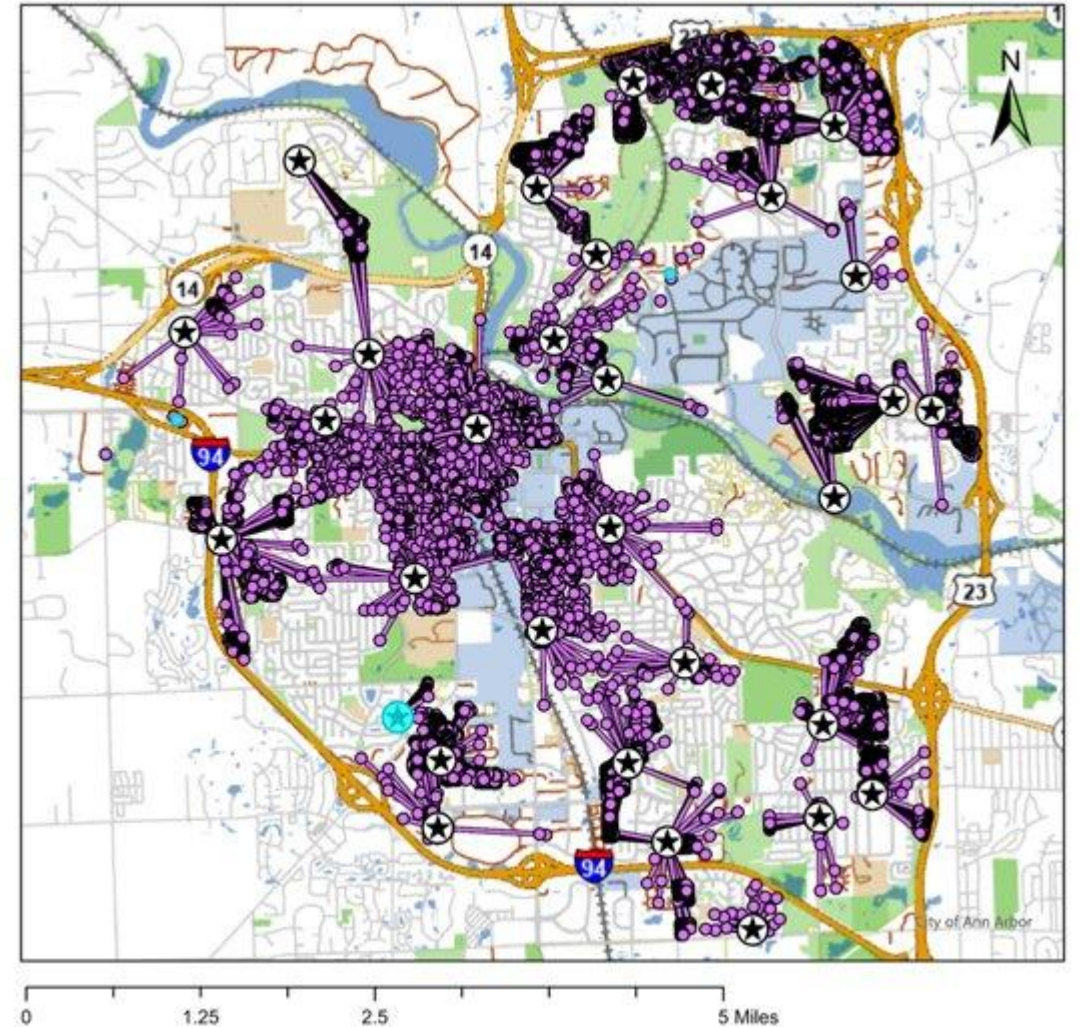
On Site Champion Success





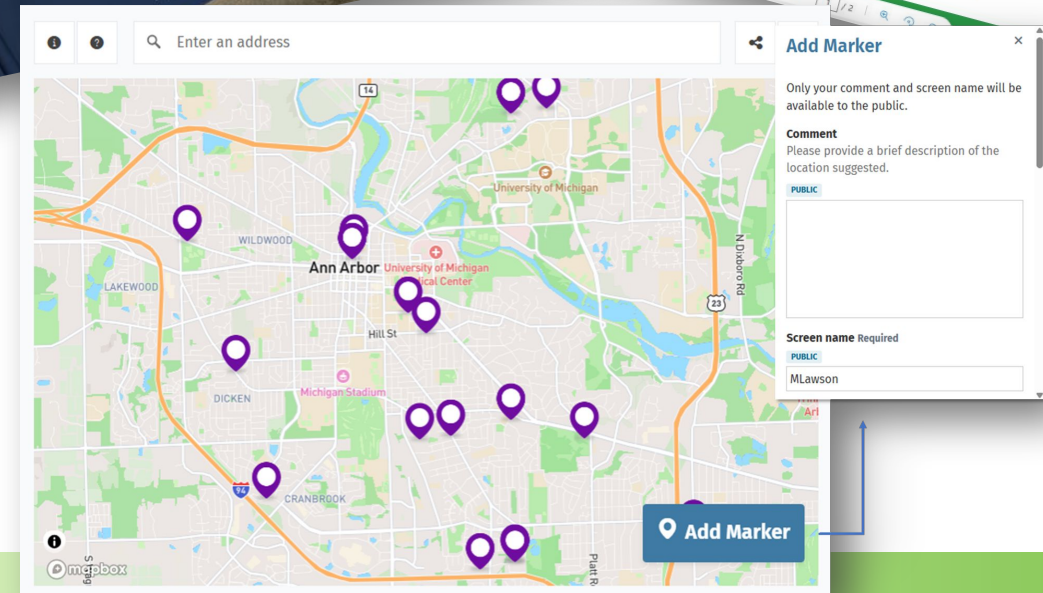
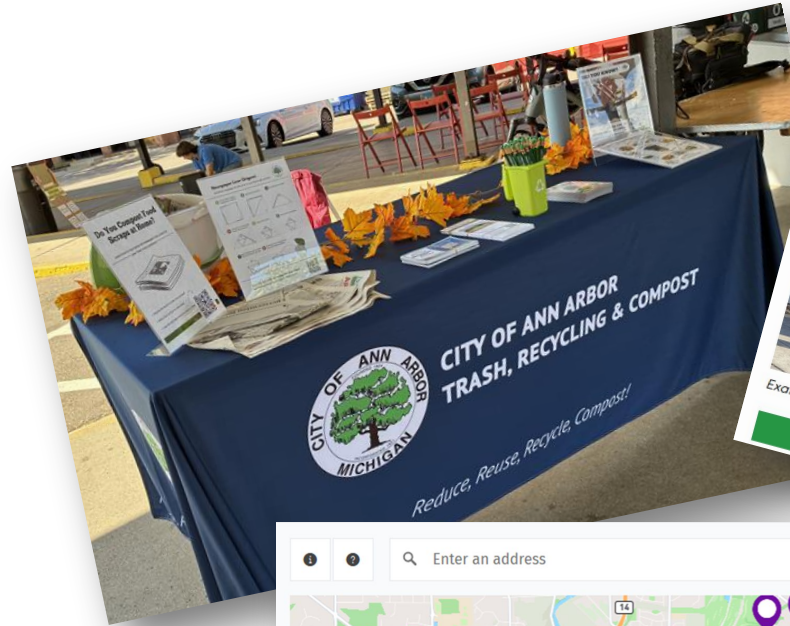
Food Scrap Drop-Off Project Development

- Analyzed distribution of multi-family properties to attempt identification of number and location of drop-offs needed.
- Researched cost and options for different style drop-offs.
- Compiled budget for proposed sites and collection methodology.
- Conducted public engagement to better guide location development.



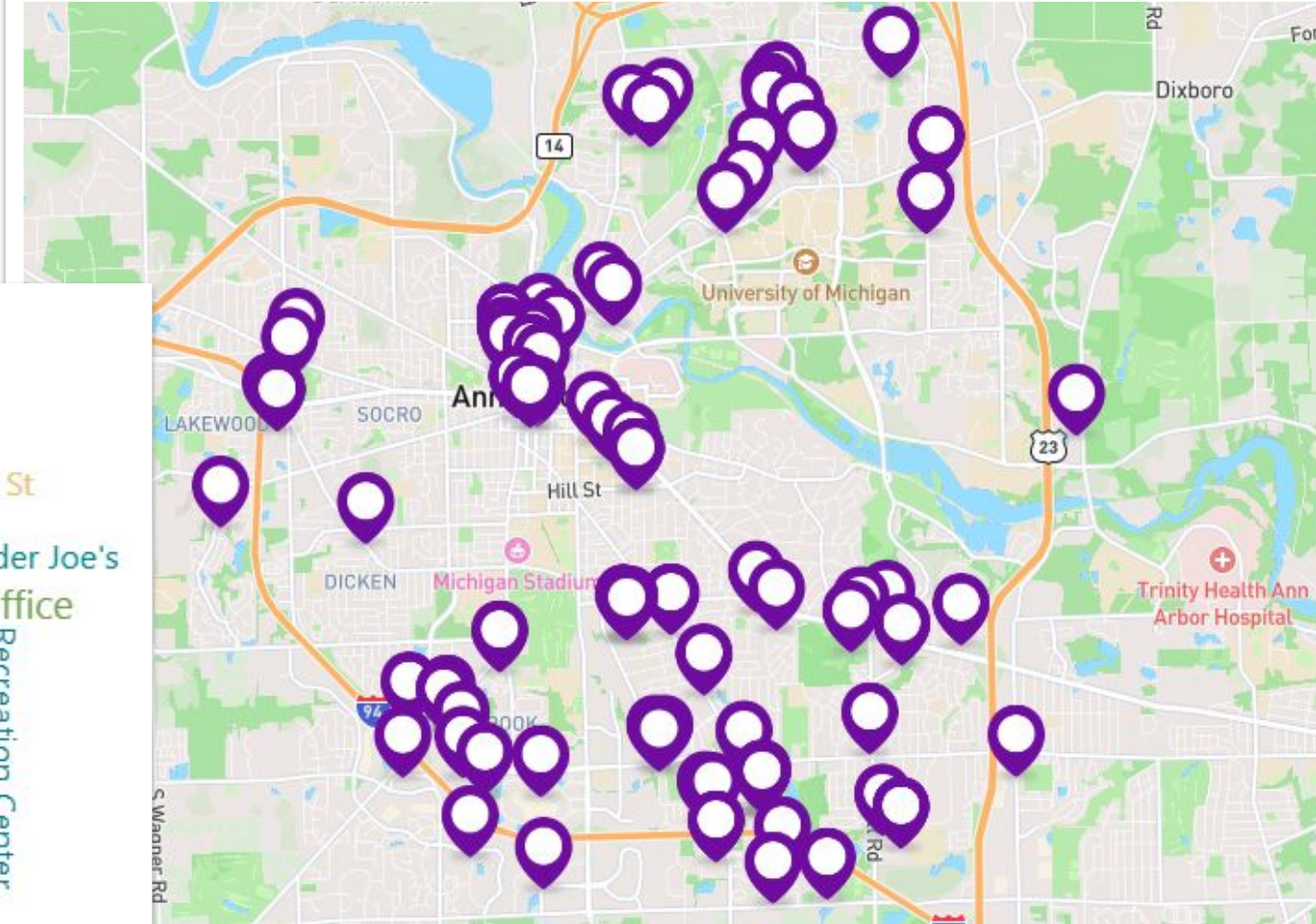
Public Engagement for Drop-Off Program

- Tabling at the Farmer's Market
- Postcards mailed out to ~24,000 multi-family units
- Hosted 2 virtual information sessions
- Created dedicated project webpage: engage.a2gov.org/foodscraps



Results of Public Engagement

- A total of **598** community members visited our project page to find more information, ask questions, or provide input
- **88** residents suggested unique locations
- **69** residents upvoted others' suggestions



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Food Scrap Drop-Off Bin Next Steps

- Agreement needed with potential five host sites
- Bin procurement and installation
- Education and outreach to launch program

Food Waste Reduction Programs

A²ZERO Food Waste Challenge – 2024

- Weeklong challenge with prizes!
- Educational content delivered by email
- Earned points by completing a daily call-to-action
- Each day focused on a new topic:
planning & shopping, food storage, cooking, disposal,
& food waste systems


Fast Track to Reducing Food Waste – 2025

- 21-day habit-building program
- Web-based platform
- Added teams, streaks, and a leaderboard
- Each week focused on solidifying 1 of 3 key habits:

The Program

Take a **few moments a day** to build a simple routine that is proven to reduce your food waste.


[Sign Up for the Fast Track](#)



Week 1

Quick Fridge Check


Start off strong with one simple change designed to bring wasted food into view.



Week 2

Flexible Meal Plan

No need for rigid meal plans, find a solution that works for you and your routines.



Week 3

Smart Shopping List

Put your plans into action with a shopping routine that will save you time and money.

Food Waste Reduction Messaging

Increased focus on food waste prevention messaging, including annual mailer to all residential properties, tabling outreach and green rental housing guide.

"Tips to Prevent Wasted Food At Home"

- **Buy only what you need**

Create a realistic meal plan, make a shopping list, and buy only the amount you need.

- **Keep food fresh for longer with proper storage**

Use a food storage guide, the first in, first out method, and clear containers.

- **Make the most of your food**

Love your leftovers, freeze what you can't finish, learn how to revive wilted produce, and share food.

Tips to Prevent Wasted Food at Home

#1: Buy only what you need

- **Create a realistic meal plan.** Decide what you need before going to the store. Be sure to check your fridge and pantry for items you need to use up.
- **Make a shopping list** based on your meal plan and stick to it! Try to resist impulse buys.
- **Buy the amount you need.** Shop from bulk bins and buy loose fruits and vegetables instead of pre-packaged foods.



#2: Keep food fresh for longer with proper storage



- **Use a food storage guide** to learn how to keep food fresh longer. Try the NRDC's resource at [savethefood.com/storage](https://www.savethefood.com/storage).
- **First in, first out.** Rotate items in your fridge and pantry so you see and use older items first.
- **Use clear containers** so you can see what needs to be eaten.

#3: Make the most of your food

- **Love your leftovers.** Plan a weekly leftovers night as part of your meal plan.
- **Freeze what you can't finish.** Pack extra food in small portions in clear containers, then freeze for easy cooking later!
- **Bring food back to life.** Learn how to revive wilted greens and produce.
- **Share food** with friends, family and neighbors when you have too much.



Learn more about food waste prevention at
a2gov.org/sustainablefood



Commercial Food Scrap Collection



- Offered by **My Green Michigan** under Commercial Refuse Franchise contract; voluntary opt-in service for a fee
- Service options include **bi-weekly, weekly, or 2x/week** collection
- **All food scraps** are accepted
- Currently, participants include:
 - Restaurants & coffee shops
 - Schools
 - Corporate offices
 - Flower shops
 - High-rise condos



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THANK YOU
