

FROM IDEA TO PILOT

Morristown Composting Pilot

How a Resident-Led Pilot came to fruition —
and How You Can Do It Too

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WHY FOOD WASTE?



BY THE NUMBERS, LET'S LOOK AT WHY REDUCING FOOD WASTE MATTERS:



FOOD IS WASTED AT EVERY STAGE:

- An estimated 38- 40% of all food produced in the U.S. is never eaten ([US EPA / USDA](#)).



THE COST IS ENORMOUS:

- Wasted food represents roughly \$218 billion a year in lost value across the U.S. supply chain ([US EPA/NJDEP](#)).



IT'S THE SINGLE BIGGEST THING WE LANDFILL:

- Food waste is the largest single category of material sent to U.S. landfills, about 24% of landfill municipal solid waste ([US EPA/US FDA](#)).



IT'S A MAJOR SOURCE OF METHANE:

- Decomposing food waste accounts for an estimated 58% of methane emissions from landfills. Methane traps roughly 80 times more heat than CO2 over 20 years. ([US EPA](#)).



THIS IS THE NATIONAL BACKDROP BEHIND NEW JERSEY'S 50%-BY-2035 TARGET.





WHY NOW?

Plans at the County Level [S2426/A2090](#)



TIMELINE:



END OF 2025:

New Jersey has enacted P.L. 2025, c. 228 (A2090/S2426), requiring each solid waste management district to develop and implement a food waste reduction strategy within two years of the law's effective date, targeting a 50% reduction by 2035.



END OF 2026 / EARLY 2027:

NJDEP to release its food waste reduction strategies guidance document

- Currently in production by Rutgers/NJ Composting Council.



END OF 2027:

Solid Waste Management Districts begin work, if not already, to develop plans and reach out to stakeholders on updating their SWMPs in response to this new law.



EARLY 2028:

NJDEP works to approve submitted plans.

- Once approved, Municipal and County Governments should start implementing the amended SWMPs, if they haven't begun already.



YEAR 2035:

See a 50% reduction in food waste using 2022 generation numbers.

- Municipal Governments should continually enhance tonnage reporting, a key indicator of success, to achieve this goal.



THREE CONVERGING REALITIES



1. A new state mandate is in effect for waste diversion



2. Neighboring municipalities are already running successful programs.



3. Disposal costs are rising



PROGRAMS THAT PROVED THE MODEL



Princeton, NJ

Free residential drop-off model serving roughly 500 households — proof that a no-cost-to-residents approach can scale.



Ridgewood and Millburn, NJ

Municipally organized drop off programs (many more)



Washington, D.C.

Access-controlled bin program (MetroSTOR) with a large registered resident base — the infrastructure model Morristown adapted.



Seattle, WA

Have mandated food waste programs with pick up service for all residents.



All towns will need a food waste strategy. A proactive approach allows the town to build that strategy on its own timeline, with real data, operational experience, and the flexibility to learn and adjust. Getting ahead of compliance deadlines gives the town time and space needed for thoughtful planning and meaningful community engagement, both of which are essential ingredients for a program that truly works.



THE FINANCIAL CASE

What Changed? – Largest Increases	
OPERATING BUDGET	FY2025 Increase*
Medical and Dental Insurance	+\$1,673,101
Liability Insurance & Workers Comp	+\$297,605
Recycling & Sanitation Services	+\$234,750
Police & Fire Pension	+\$137,304
Police Operating Expense	+\$88,417
TOTAL CHANGE	+\$2,431,177
*compared to FY2024 Budget	

FY 2025 MUNICIPAL BUDGET PRESENTATION THE TOWN OF MORRISTOWN 19

P. 2022 REA Rate Band Table

For illustration purposes only - Rates are subject to change without notice.

Band Value per ton	\$7.11	\$5.34	\$1.07	\$0.12	\$0.06
Commodity	23 Food Waste (Non-industrial)	01 Corrugated	15 Tires	10 Aluminum Scrap (non-ferrous)	09 Heavy Iron
		02 Mixed Office Paper	16 Used Motor Oil	11 White Goods and Light Iron	12 Anti-freeze
		03 Newspaper	17 Brush/Tree Parts	24 Paint/Stain	13 Auto Batteries
		04 Other	19 Leaves		

NUMBERS TO LOOK INTO

TRASH & HAULING COSTS

Recycling and sanitation services was one of the largest growing line items in our municipal budget.

TIPPING FEES

A tipping fee is the per-ton (or per-load) charge a landfill, transfer station, or composting/waste-processing facility charges haulers or municipalities to accept and dispose of their waste or organic material.

TONNAGE GRANTS

A tipping fee is the per-ton (or per-load) charge a landfill, transfer station, or composting/waste processing facility charges haulers or municipalities to accept and dispose of their waste or organic material.

HAULING CONTRACTS

Municipal contracts should be public upon request. An OPRA request can be made as a formal ask to a government agency, like your municipality for access to public records they hold.



ONE EXAMPLE OF HOW YOU CAN DESIGN A PILOT



Two drop-off locations, sized to prove the concept without reaching



MUNICIPAL BUILDING

Central, high-visibility location convenient for residents already visiting town hall.



RECYCLING CENTER

Familiar destination for residents already sorting waste — reinforces the existing habit.



80

HOUSEHOLDS TARGETED

2

DROP-OFF SITES

WEEKLY



HAULING CADENCE



Infrastructure: access-controlled bins, sourced through a vendor relationship built after comparing options; weekly hauling partner secured to keep the pilot running reliably from day one.

STEP TWO

SHOW UP AND DO YOUR HOMEWORK



You can have an impact when you show up with an idea and are willing to do the work.

01



Be in the room

Regular attendance at MEC meetings built the credibility and context needed to bring a new idea forward. The first time I attended an MEC meeting was December of 2025.

02



Do the Research

Understand your topic, talk with people who have been doing it longer than you, seek advice, and read up on the issue you care about.

03



Understand the Process

Figure out who the people are who make the decisions and get people on board. First the EC, then the administration, then council.



TAKEAWAY FOR YOU

Environmental Projects happen when people driving projects show up with ideas and are ready to work.

YOUR TURN

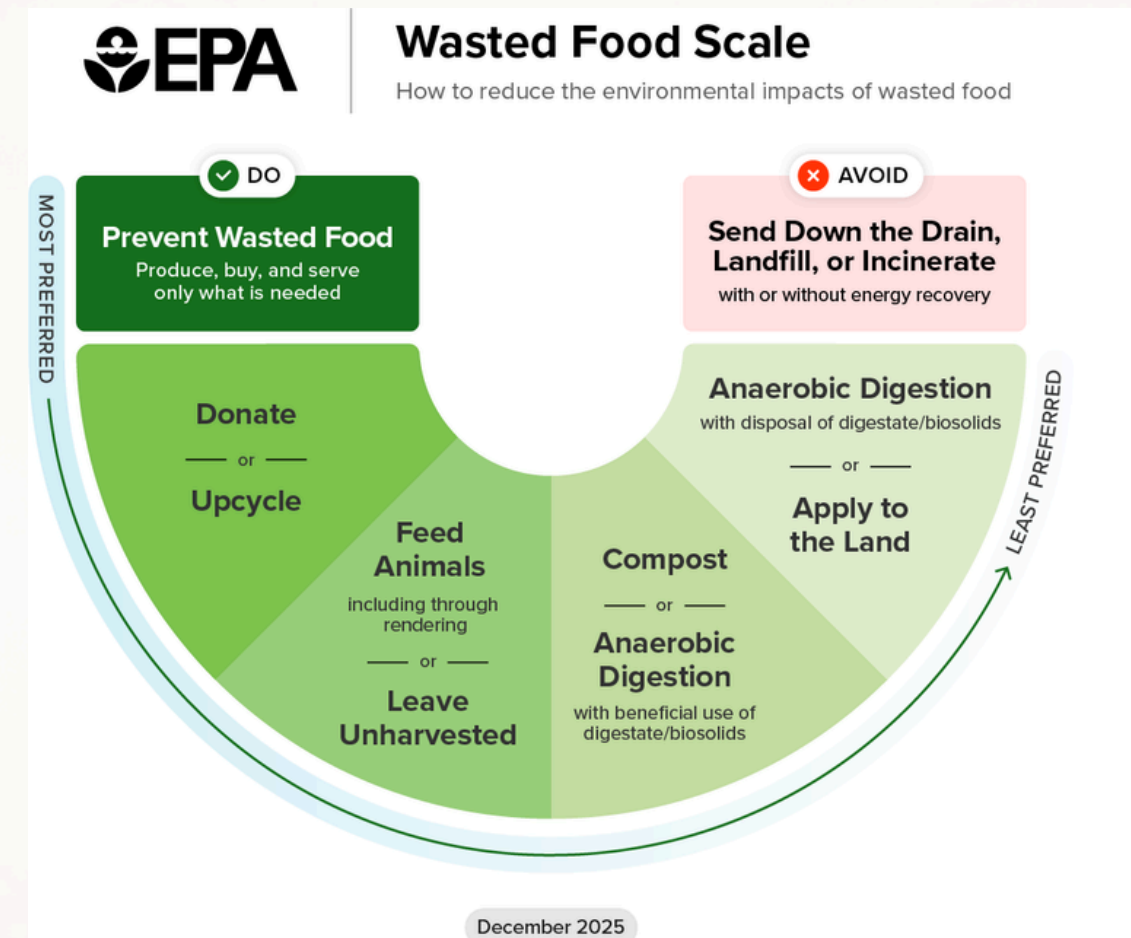
HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

- **Food Recovery / Donation:** Partnerships with local food pantries directly or organizations like Share My Meals, Grocery store/restaurant edible food rescue agreements
- **Municipal Residential Programs:** Drop off, Pick Up, HOA/multi-family building pilot programs
- **School Programs:** in classes, in cafeteria share programs or source separation, composting on site
- **Businesses:** Restaurant/café organics collection partnerships, Farmers market food scrap collection stations
- **Composting Classes:** Classes to learn how to do it in your backyard



Find your idea & Build your Case

You don't need permission to start — just a question worth chasing.



Want to talk it through?

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES





RUTGERS New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station

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[Home](#) > [FOOD AND NUTRITION PUBLICATIONS](#)



Cooperative Extension Fact Sheet FS1352

Share Tables: An Easy Way to Reduce Food Waste and Alleviate Food Insecurity

Jennifer Shukaitis, Family and Community Health Sciences Educator
Sara Elnakib, Chair, Department of Family and Community Health Sciences
Amy Rowe, County Agent II, Agriculture and Natural Resources, Cooperative Extension of Essex and Passaic Counties

MCMUA Awards \$1,500 Grants to Five Morris County Municipalities

Published on August 03, 2026

Projects Will Support Waste Reduction, Recycling and Community Education

The [Morris County Municipal Utilities Authority \(MCMUA\)](#) is pleased to announce its annual mini grant program aimed at promoting waste reduction and enhancing recycling efforts.

This year, five municipalities were awarded \$1,500 grants each to support innovative recycling and waste prevention projects. The competitive grant program provides funding to increase recycling participation, educate residents, reduce waste and promote community sustainability across Morris County.



Certification

Actions

Grants & Technical Assistance

Events

Resources

Get Involved

News Releases

Newsletters

> Sustainability Heroes

Videos

Sustainable Jersey Awards More Than \$300,000 in Grants to 56 New Jersey Municipalities and Schools

August 15, 2024

Food Waste Toolkit

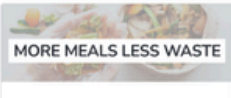
Resources to inform, authorize and fund food waste prevention and management practices at home, at work, at school or in government.

Quick Links



DEP Food Waste

reducing food waste resources



More Meals, Less Waste

Campaign created by a partnership between the NJ Department of Agriculture, The Community Food Bank of New Jersey (CFBNJ), The Food Bank of South Jersey, Mercer Street Friends, and Norwescap to help residents and businesses prevent food waste.



Sustainable Jersey

Acting with state agencies, non-profit organizations, foundations, academia and industry, Sustainable Jersey awards certifications to municipalities and schools that have documented meeting a set of rigorous standards for a variety of sustainability best management



Center for EcoTechnology

The Center for EcoTechnology (CET) is a nonprofit organization that helps people and businesses save energy and reduce waste, including food waste offering program design and implementation services.



EPA Sustainable Food Management

EPA's central webpage for reducing food waste in the U.S. covering the problem of food waste and what businesses, organizations, individuals and communities can do about it.



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