

Hamilton Food Waste Reduction Action Plan

Overview

Hamilton City Council and staff recognize the importance of food waste reduction to help improve environmental and social factors within Hamilton's communities. The "Hamilton Food Strategy: A Healthy, Sustainable, and Just Food System for All" includes fourteen recommendations and associated actions, with two recommendations and actions specifically related to food waste management as noted in Table 1. Table 1 includes activities which are already in progress as well as proposed actions to support the food waste management recommendations.

Table 1 – Food Waste Reduction Action Plan
Recommendation #13 – Foster innovation to reduce food waste through diversion and composting.
Recommendation 13.1 – Expand programs to increase the use of composting in all settings
<p>Strategies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continued promotion of the City's Green Bin Program <p>The City introduced the green bin program in 2006 to help reduce the amount of organic waste being sent to the City's landfill. In June 2017, the "Green Your Routine" campaign was launched to raise awareness of the green bin program. The campaign's goal is to increase the number of households participating in the green bin program and to decrease the amount of food and organic waste being sent to the City's landfill.</p> 2. Green Bin Program expansion to other properties <p>The initial rollout of the green bin program focused on residential households; however, over the past few years the City has expanded the program to include multi-residential buildings, small commercial properties which receive municipal waste collection services, and schools within the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board. Ongoing promotion is necessary so that properties continue to participate in the green bin program. The Ontario Government's proposed Food and Organic Waste Framework (Framework) outlines the Province's plan to support resource recovery of food and organic waste from a broad range of sectors including schools, multi-residential buildings, commercial, institutional, and industries.</p> 3. Green Bin Program at City Facilities <p>The green bin program is available at several City facilities including administrative offices, recreation centres, and Public Works yards. Participation in the green bin program varies from site to site. It is recommended that City facilities are revisited regularly to ensure these locations are actively participating in the program, especially for the facilities which have a significant source of organic waste. Mandatory</p>

Table 1 – Food Waste Reduction Action Plan

participation may be required in the future if there are new regulatory requirements which requires food and organic waste recovery programs in office buildings, commercial, and institutional properties as directed from the Province through the Waste-Free Ontario Act, 2016.

4. Backyard composters

Many residents use backyard composters to compost organic waste on their property. The City sells backyard composters at cost which are available for purchase at the City's municipal service centres.

Recommendation 13.2 - Explore the feasibility of food recovery programs to divert edible food from being wasted

Strategies

1. Advocacy on Food Waste Reduction

Hamilton Staff is currently involved with inter-municipal working groups, including the Municipal Waste Association's food waste reduction working group and the Ontario Food Waste Collaborative, to work together to research and develop ideas to reduce food waste in our communities. By working collectively, these groups can help gain greater support for food waste initiatives, particularly for policies which may require advocacy at the provincial or federal level.

2. Food waste reduction pilot project at City Facilities

Several City facilities have food preparation areas and serve food at special events, for example, the King's Forest golf course has banquet facilities for meetings and other events. Other City facilities such as recreation centres and arenas sell food at concession stands. Staff from Public Works and Public Health Services is planning to conduct a pilot project to review opportunities to reduce food waste through the City's food preparation operations. The pilot project will include assessing food portioning, healthy eating, and potential cost savings from food waste reduction.

Recommendation 13.3 - Investigate the feasibility of innovative ways to deal with food waste to ensure our environment is sustainable

Strategies

1. New technologies to process food waste

In 2017, the City issued a Request for Information to review options to support the long term management of the City's organics management program to help process organic waste, food waste, and yard waste. These potential solutions include innovative technologies and commercial arrangements that offer a potential to maximize current infrastructure including the City's central composting facility.

Table 1 – Food Waste Reduction Action Plan

2. Research partnerships

City staff will explore research opportunities through the CityLab project with local educational institutions. Research on food waste management may align with existing courses at Mohawk College, McMaster University and Redeemer University College. The CityLab project will partner these educational institutions with City departments to provide hands on experience with policy research and project delivery.

Recommendation #14 – Promote a culture that values healthy, local food to reduce food waste through food literacy.

Recommendation 14.1 - Enhance marketing and education programs to reduce food waste at home, work, school, and other public facilities

Strategies

1. Public Education

Promotion and education are necessary to ensure the success of any type of waste management program. The following is an overview of the public education tools that are proposed to support the implementation of the food wastage reduction action plan:

- “Green Your Routine” campaign – the next phase of the “Green Your Routine” campaign will include information and tips to reduce food waste.
- City’s waste management guide - This annual guide is distributed to all curbside residential homes in Hamilton which includes information on the City’s waste management programs. The future guide will include information on food waste reduction.
- City’s website – the City’s website has a webpage on organic waste and composting. Staff is planning to add information on food waste reduction tips on the City’s website to assist with public education.
- Social Media – In 2017, the City launched the “MyWaste” mobile App as a convenient tool to access waste management information. In 2018, messaging will be expanded to include information on food waste reduction and food literacy.
- Creative videos – Public education on food waste reduction may be shared through creative and impactful videos and advertisements through social media channels. Staff is exploring opportunities to create these videos using existing staff complement or through other partnerships.
- Community events – Staff will consider various types of promotional materials which can be distributed through community events to help educate residents on food waste reduction and food literacy.

The public education tools will include several messages to encourage food waste reduction including tips on smarter shopping, how to keep food fresh longer, food portioning, and information on food perishable dates, etc.