

Food Waste Reduction Task Force
Progress Report and Work Plan
October 31, 2018

Background

The Food Waste Reduction Task Force is a joint effort with the Dane County Food Council formed to explore and make recommendations on reducing food waste entering our landfill in Dane County. We are using the EPA's Food Recovery Hierarchy to explore strategies across a variety of possible uses of food waste as an alternative to landfilling. Those strategies include source reduction, feeding people, feeding animals, industrial uses (biodigestion), and composting.

In 2017, the Dane County Board passed a resolution, signed by County Executive Parisi declaring it the Year of Food Recovery (see attached).

Accomplishments

The early years of our meetings were focused on understanding the City's Organic Waste Collection pilot program and focusing on whether or not it could be expanded. It was expanded to a new neighborhood and then, ultimately the entire program was suspended due to continued contamination in the waste stream. We moved from this on to educating ourselves on biodigestors, how they work and where they are located in our region. We had lengthy discussions on the feasibility of expanding biodigestion in Dane County and had some discussion with the Madison Sewerage District on the use of a biodigestor to create electricity for their treatment plant. Finally, we surveyed Dane County food businesses to get a sense of current food waste reduction efforts and willingness to do more.

In the winter of 2016 we held a Food Recovery Convocation at Olbrich Gardens designed to bring together agencies, volunteers, and government officials to better coordinate food recovery efforts and to discuss ways that programs could be better supported.

Current Projects/Key Issues

We recently completed a Food Recovery Guide that will be posted online similar to the City of Madison's Recyclopedia. The Guide is intended for both food industry folks and households as a way to educate about food waste and make very apparent where different types of food stuffs are best donated or disposed of as an alternative to throwing them away.

This fall we also embarked on a pilot project with Madison Schools to introduce "No Thank You Tables" at Leopold Elementary and Badger Rock Middle Schools.

We are also in the process of planning a Food Waste Convocation for businesses to disseminate information, share best practices, and introduce the Food Recovery Guide. The Food Waste Convocation will take place in March 2019.

We do not have a formal workplan, we are simply following our way down the EPA Food Recovery Hierarchy and finding projects that move us forward on reducing food waste.

Next Steps

Beyond getting the Food Recovery Guide online, implementing No Thank You Tables, and planning the Food Waste Convocation in March, we have not set any other goals.

Participants

Outside participants and advisors to our work:

Brian Johnson, Recycling Coordinator City of Madison Streets

Madison LaFollette High School Key Club

Monona Terrace Catering

Interns: Johanna Doren, Mouna Algahaithi, Angad Dhariwal, Samantha Minor

WasteCap

Madison Dane County Public Health

Website

Direct visitors to the Food Waste Recovery Guide