



Title: Proposal for West Windsor Township to Establish Food Waste Drop-Off Locations

1. Executive Summary

Torus, a local student-led 501(c)(3), founded in West Windsor, and committed to combating food waste and promoting sustainable waste management, respectfully submits this proposal for West Windsor Township to establish dedicated food waste drop-off locations. This initiative will enable residents to easily divert food waste from landfills by depositing it at designated drop-off sites, with subsequent transport to Trenton Renewables for processing into compost. Implementing this program will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and foster community engagement in environmental stewardship. Torus offers its expertise and ongoing support to ensure the successful planning and execution of this project.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1. The Food Waste Challenge

Food waste is a critical environmental and economic issue. In the United States, around 31% of the food supply is wasted, equating to about 148 billion pounds and \$382 billion worth of food annually ([src](#)). Food waste contributes to over 6.1% of all greenhouse gas emissions in the United States ([src](#)). In West Windsor, as in many communities, food waste takes up a large proportion of landfills, where it contributes to methane emissions and squanders valuable resources. Much of this waste was edible at the time of waste disposal.

Princeton Township's Sustainability Action Plan focuses on reducing food waste and enforcing the town's broader environmental values. Princeton's success demonstrates that West Windsor can follow similar paths by implementing dedicated food waste diversion programs. With a groundwork laid, West Windsor can create a more sustainable future for its residents.

2.2. Why West Windsor?



Currently, there is no public food waste compost service in West Windsor. There is a commercial fee-based service that includes a pickup option by OneCompostCan ([src](#)). They also sell a monthly drop-off service that is restricted to the WW Farmers Market dates and hours.

Torus provides a free and donation-based pickup service to residences. Pickup services are limited to single and multi-family homes. However, apartment complexes and many planned developments are unable to accommodate a pickup service.

Furthermore, as WW's Waste Management services will no longer provide twice weekly pickups during the summer, a food waste compost drop-off service will help reduce the accumulation of odorous garbage in residents' receptacles.

By establishing dedicated food waste drop-off locations, West Windsor Township can lead by example in sustainable waste management. This initiative will:

- Provide all West Windsor residents with a convenient and accessible method to participate in composting and further environmental awareness throughout the township.
- Reduce landfill volumes and thus lower greenhouse gas emissions.
- Establish West Windsor as an exemplary regional leader in sustainability, setting a precedent for other townships to follow.

Through township-wide composting, we seek to explore further economic and community benefits, such as potential funding from federal, state, and county programs and increased resident satisfaction. Conducting surveys could help quantify these impacts and guide future improvements.

3. Alignment with State Legislation

The Torus food waste drop-off program for West Windsor Township aligns with Assembly Bill A4118 and Senate Bill S203, which establishes statewide targets to reduce organic waste in landfills and mandates the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to adopt regulations to achieve these goals. Below, we detail how our initiative supports the legislation's key provisions:

- **Organic Waste Reduction**
A4118 sets targets to reduce organic waste disposal in landfills by 50% from a baseline year level by January 1 of the seventh year post-enactment (approximately 2032) and



75% by the twelfth year (approximately 2037). The DEP will establish the baseline using the most recent reliable data. West Windsor’s 2024 municipal solid waste totaled 5,430.10 tons, which can serve as a reference point. The Torus drop-off program supports these targets by diverting food waste to Trenton Renewables for composting.

- **Edible Food Recovery Goals**

The bill mandates recovering 5% of excess, unused, edible food by year 7, increasing to 20% by year 13. Torus’s partnerships with food recovery organizations such as Share My Meals, will promote donating edible food to food banks, aligning with A4118’s goals.

- **Phased Compliance for Generators**

A4118 mandates a phased compliance schedule prohibiting large generators—those producing over two tons of organic waste weekly, such as restaurants or institutions—from landfill disposal, with additional thresholds set by the DEP. Local governments may impose requirements on generators and collect reasonable fees, based on actual costs and preferably using variable rate pricing, to fund compliance activities like the Torus composting program’s collection, transportation, and processing. This supports West Windsor’s drop-off sites, ensuring generators contribute to Statewide diversion goals.

- **Infrastructure and Reporting**

The bill mandates a Statewide Organic Waste Infrastructure Readiness Assessment within 12 months of enactment. Our active partnership with Trenton Renewables ensures processing capacity, and we will provide diversion data for the DEP’s biennial reports, due starting July 1, 2027, to track progress towards reduction targets.

- **Regulatory Compliance**

A4118 requires contamination reduction standards and performance-based controls for odor and leachate by December 31, 2025. Torus’s expertise with food waste composting will ensure compliance with these standards.

This program positions West Windsor as a leader in meeting and exceeding A4118/S203’s goals and serves as a model for other New Jersey townships.

4. Project Objectives

This proposal aims to advance West Windsor sustainability goals as outlined in the Sustainability Plan, Section 13 of the West Windsor Master Plan. Specifically, this project is in alignment with Strategy 1 of Objective 4.6 in the Master Plan, “provide resources and incentives for township-wide composting” ([src](#)).



5. Project Description

- **Implement central drop-off sites:** Identify locations that are convenient for residents to drop off their food waste. Establish food waste collection points.
 - **Engage and Educate Residents**
 1. **Educational Workshops and Events:** Host workshops to highlight the impact of food waste and how composting helps reduce it. The workshops will also cover best practices for joining and using the township's food waste collection program.
 2. **Informational Resources:** Create and share simple guides, FAQs, and other materials to help residents understand what can be composted, the benefits of composting, and how to start at home or join the community collection program.
 3. **Youth and School Programs:** Collaborate with local schools and youth organizations to host different composting and food waste events that appeal to younger students to foster environmental stewardship in the next generation.
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6. Timeline and Implementation Plan

6.1 Identify (Month 1-2)

- **Identify ideal locations for food waste drop-offs.** Identify centrally located sites within the township (e.g., at the Department of Public Works) that are easily accessible to residents.
- **Identify contractors:** Work with local composting companies and independent contractors for routine transport of food waste to Trenton Renewables for processing.
- **Identify a site manager:** West Windsor Township would be responsible for maintaining and managing these drop-off sites, ensuring proper storage and handling of food waste. Identify someone who could manage this for the township.
- **Regulatory and Compliance:** Identify and begin addressing potential liabilities like odor, vehicle-related accidents, and general liabilities.

6.2 Establish (Month 2-4)

- **Transportation:** Draft and sign a contract for routine transportation of food waste to Trenton Renewables.
- **Drop-off equipment:** Purchase necessary totes/trash cans and locks. Place in the established drop-off location. Install necessary signage and fliers for the location.



- **Compliance:** Ensure that all operations meet applicable environmental and health regulations.

6.3 Launch (4-5 months)

- **Announce:** In the West Windsor newsletter, website, digital media, and Council meetings, announce the opening of the drop-off locations. Announce this in a joint press release.
- **Workshops and Materials:** Create fliers about the impact of food waste and composting best practices. Ensure these are easily accessible on the website, at the community library, and in more locations to be determined. Begin working with local schools and townships.

6.4 Continue (5+ months)

- **Resident Engagement:** continue exploring and implementing the resident engagement programs mentioned above.

7. Costs

The initial proposal seeks funding from the Township, with the option for Torus to be contracted for transportation services. This plan details both one-time capital costs and ongoing operational expenses, ensuring financial sustainability and legal compliance. Cost estimates are based on Torus’s existing program at [The Food Bank Network of Somerset County](#), which processed 12,000 pounds of food waste in December 2024. The proposed West Windsor drop-off location would operate under a similar model.

Cost Summary*

Year	Capital Costs	Operating Expenses	Total
1	\$2000	\$7319	\$9319
2	\$0	\$7449	\$7449
3	\$0	\$7579	\$7579
4	\$0	\$7709	\$7709



5	\$0	\$7839	\$7839
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*Based on 4,000 lbs of food waste per Month, approximately 200 households are serviced

Capital Costs

- **Site Setup:** Purchase and installation of acceptable food waste containers, such as six 64-gallon trash cans or [metroSTOR](#) units, similar to those used by Princeton. These units have an expected useful life of 5 years.
- **Estimated Cost:**
 - \$1,000 for 6 trash cans
 - \$500 for installation
 - \$500 for signage, labeling, and educational materials for township residents
 - Total: \$2,000

Operating Expenses

- **Transportation Options**
 - **Township-Managed Transportation**
The township provides transportation to Trenton Renewables and covers the \$70/ton tipping fee.
 - We anticipate the \$70/ton tipping fee to increase by \$5.00 per year to align with inflation and rising demand.
 - However, according to the West Windsor Clerk's Office, West Windsor currently pays \$13.50/ton for municipal waste, meaning the net additional cost of diverting food waste to composting would be \$56.50/ton (\$70/ton - \$13.50/ton).
 - The township assumes responsibility for all transportation logistics.
 - **Torus-Managed Transportation**
 - Torus handles transportation, with the township reimbursing costs at \$50/hour and the prevailing tipping rate (currently \$70/ton).
 - Pickup frequency is based on food waste volume.
- **Ongoing Maintenance & Cleanup:** Includes the cost of general site upkeep.
 - \$250–\$500 per year, depending on usage by residents



Operating Expenses Estimates Based on Food Waste Volume and Transportation

Example 1: 4,000 lbs of Food Waste per Month

- Equivalent to 200 houses participating. This is a reasonable estimate when compared to Princeton, where 100 houses participate per drop-off location.
- Weekly pickup frequency
- Torus handles transportation (70 Southfield Rd, West Windsor to Trenton Renewables)
- Estimated round-trip + processing time: 2 hours per trip at \$50/hour
- Annual Costs:
 - Torus Driver transport fees: \$5,200
 - Tipping fees: \$1,820 (\$70/ton x 1,000 lbs/week x 52 weeks)
 - Tipping fee offset from Waste Management: -\$351 (\$13.50/ton)
 - Bag costs: \$150
 - Ongoing Maintenance Cost: \$500
 - Year One Total Operating Cost: \$7,319

Example 2: 8,000 lbs of Food Waste per Month

- Equivalent to 400 houses participating. This is a reasonable estimate when compared to Princeton, 100 houses participating/drop-off location, given that this has more food scraps capacity.
- Weekly pickup frequency
- Torus handles transportation (70 Southfield Rd, West Windsor to Trenton Renewables)
- Estimated round-trip + processing time: 2 hours per trip at \$50/hour
- Annual Costs:
 - Torus Driver transport fees: \$5,200
 - Tipping fees: \$3,640 (\$70/ton x 2,000 lbs/week x 52 weeks)
 - Tipping fee offset from Waste Management: -\$702 (\$13.50/ton)
 - Bag costs: \$300
 - Ongoing Maintenance Cost: \$500
 - Year One Total Operating Cost: \$8,938

8. Future Funding Sources

1. Municipal Tonnage Grant



- West Windsor Township can apply for the [2024 Municipal Tonnage Grant](#) (deadline: April 30, 2025) to fund the development of a composting convenience site. The grant could cover operational costs, necessary equipment and supplies (such as composting containers), and site maintenance. Additionally, a portion of the funds could support educational outreach and signage to enhance program effectiveness and community participation.
 - 2. **Sustainable Jersey Grants**
 - Torus will partner with West Windsor Township to apply for the 2026 PSEG Grants Cycle or similar grant programs.
 - These grants could cover part or all of the program's operational costs.
 - 3. **Federal Composting and Food Waste Reduction (CFWR) Grant**
 - This grant would fully fund a curbside composting program in West Windsor.
 - The grant would cover:
 - 5-gallon buckets and compostable liners for residents
 - Weekly or biweekly curbside collection
 - Transportation and processing fees
 - Torus would fully operate this curbside program
 - Princeton secured \$245,590 in CFWR funding for its composting program, serving as a model for this proposal. ([src](#))
 - Alexandria, Virginia, \$300,000 grant for opt-in subsidized curbside pickups ([src](#))
 - Haverford, PA, \$88,848 for Curbside pickup partnering with established pickup services ([src](#)).
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9. Impact Evaluation

To ensure the success of the program, there must be defined benchmarks. The following performance indicators will help gauge the success of this community drop-off program and the community engagement it fosters:

- **Resident Participation Rates:** Princeton's 2 drop-off locations serve 223 residents. With West Windsor and Princeton having similar population sizes and the proposed drop-off location having a similar holding capacity to the two Princeton locations combined, servicing a similar number of residents, 200-250 residents, should constitute the success of the proposed drop-off location.
- **Community Satisfaction:** Through customer surveys and providing metrics for feedback from residents, this proposal, based on the writer's experience with running a composting non-profit and fostering a sense of community within its clientele, suggests that around



90% positive feedback from West Windsor’s residents should constitute the success of the proposed drop-off location.

To ensure transparency, the township and Torus will publish annual reports that outline the program’s real impact based on the metrics listed above. Data for this report can be gathered from Trenton Renewables' monthly invoice detailing the poundage of food waste dropped off and through surveys conducted on a routine basis, details to be determined at a later date. This report will be utilized to inform future decisions regarding the expansion and modifications of the program.

10. Conclusion and Recommendations

Torus believes that establishing dedicated food waste drop-off locations in West Windsor Township is a crucial step toward a sustainable future. This initiative not only addresses pressing environmental challenges but also offers economic and community benefits. We respectfully recommend that West Windsor Township:

- Approve the establishment of designated food waste drop-off sites.
- Collaborate with key partners (e.g., Trenton Renewables) to ensure efficient operations.
- Utilize Torus’s expertise in developing and implementing educational outreach and program monitoring.

We look forward to the opportunity to discuss this proposal further and to support West Windsor Township in making this environmentally transformative initiative a reality.