

Lodi, NY Organics Management Plan
Climate Smart Community Task Force
Action PE 5.0
May 2023

OVERVIEW

Food is the largest single source of waste in the U.S. More food ends up in landfills than plastic or paper. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA 530-R-20-004), 66% of residential food waste goes to landfills, where 24% of landfill volume comes from food waste. These are alarming numbers. The town of Lodi recognizes that organic waste management is an important part of climate change mitigation. An organics management plan focused on residential food waste is a key component of its efforts to develop and execute a comprehensive waste management plan.

The organics management plan for the town of Lodi, NY focuses on educating the community about organic waste and building a compost program for residential food waste. The Lodi CSC Task Force also recognizes that commercial food waste is a serious issue and supports the efforts underway by the Cayuga Seneca Community Action Agency that specifically focuses on commercial food services.

The community of Lodi currently has a pilot residential education and composting program in partnership with the South Seneca Community Services Center, Inc, a not-for-profit corporation doing business as the Lodi Food 4 All Pantry. This organics management plan aims to execute and document the current pilot program and establish a plan to build out the pilot program to the entire Lodi community and surrounding communities that will address food waste.

PLAN ELEMENTS

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Starting in 2022, community engagement to educate and promote action by residents includes a combination of workshops/demonstrations, website information, email campaign, advertising, and other activities. Community education through these types of engagement activities will be ongoing to build awareness and participation. Education will focus on food waste prevention and waste management. Past and future events are listed. These types of actions have also been proven to be successful in promotion and engagement of other CSC actions such as Swap Day, climate friendly workshop for the home, and a community flood survey.

Community Workshops (with partners), all open to public. Past and Future

- May 7, 2022 @ Lodi Community Garden – introduction to composting and pilot program

- July 23, 2022 @ South Seneca School – cross community group discussion of food waste prevention and management needs and current resources with compost programs (school, commercial, county)
- Sept 13, 2022 @Lodi Library - STEPS monthly “Table Talk” featuring food waste prevention and composting.
- Oct 22, 2022@Lodi Community Garden – A How To demonstration workshop on composting
- June 3, 2023 @ Lodi Town Festival (planned) – Booth at community fair to promote food waste prevention, composting (at home and drop-off program), hand out composting materials, demonstrate composting, and handout composting survey for public input.
- Future events include partner round table meeting to discuss waste education and management along with ongoing workshops.

Websites

- Lodi Town website – link to information on climate change and practices that support resiliency. The site includes updates from Climate Smart Community (CSC) Task Force and specific programs that are being implemented. Organics management plan will be posted.
- Lodi Food 4 All Pantry and Community Garden: <https://www.lodifood4all.com>

Email communication campaign to promote events and educate (will utilize list serves of partner organizations)

- Lodi Library
- STEPS Organization (Seneca Towns Engaging People for Solutions)
- Plan to set up a dedicated compost email list that residents can opt in for monthly releases of helpful tips and other resources.

Advertising (for events)

- Local Newspaper “The Shopper”
- Posters at local businesses

Other Resources

- Lodi Library has invested in an expansive selection of books and other materials on climate change, food waste management and composting.
- We will explore establishing a Compost Steward program where trained residents can provide hands on instruction for residents.

GOALS

Plan goals include short term, executable goals for the Lodi community along with longer term expansion goals to broaden both number of residents beyond Lodi as well as resources to support increased accessibility.

1. Educate Lodi residents (~1500) about organic waste reduction and management of food scraps and yard waste.
2. Educate and promote LodiFood4All Pantry as a food donation entity for easy drop off of excess garden produce and other food types.
3. Make composting accessible and available. Develop and establish 2-3 easy composting options to offer residents for drop off and home-based composting.
4. Introduce and enable residents to learn and adopt one of the composting actions via live instruction, self-learning resources and support services.
5. Expand and/or integrate compost program with surrounding communities to engage more participants and create efficiencies of scale.

RESEARCH

Extensive information has been gathered about planning, execution and critical success factors associated with residential composting. Research activities have included attending seminars, local meetings, conversations with active persons, community groups and local institutions that support climate change adaptation and organic waste management. The process of the research action has also helped create a network of resources and partnerships that will be valuable for implementation (see list of support partners).

Seminars/Meetings

- July 2022 – Attended the South Seneca Compost Task Force compost workshop sponsored by the Compost task force and Cornell CCE.
- Fall 2022 – Sustainable Food Management Course – Syracuse University Center for Sustainable Community Solutions and NY State Pollution Prevention Institute – 3 full day course.

Research Resources

- South Seneca Compost Task Force – Lodi community is a member. Ongoing research and collaboration with local experts
- Surrounding township models – Hector, Seneca Falls, Geneva. Sharing of information including critical success factors, key lessons learned and financing ideas
- Commercial
 - Composting Businesses – Finger Lakes Compost (large and small clients)
 - Closed Loop Systems – paid consulting agency for pilot planning
- Institutions
 - South Seneca School: Education at school level is important for youth awareness and influence on family behaviors. Current school compost activity shows how it can be done on site.
- Government

- Seneca County: the county is developing a solid waste plan in collaboration with Genesee Valley Planning commission – the Lodi community and town can review and may consider adopting strategies.

SUPPORTING PARTNERS

The Lodi organic management team for the composting initiative consists of Martha (Marti) Macinski, a volunteer community leader of the Lodi Community Garden and the Lodi Food 4 All pantry. Marti is a retired attorney and past owner/operator of a local vineyard and winery. She has extensive knowledge and established network of contacts related to organic waste management. Marti is joined by Maura Toole, a volunteer on the Lodi Climate Smart Community Task Force to help develop and execute an organic waste management plan in collaboration with existing and new partners as identified in the other sections of this plan (see research and expected participants).

Current established partners that are involved in the current pilot phase and/or serve as consult:

- South Seneca Compost Task Force: Cross county group of representatives from the community, commercial and industrial sectors who are currently engaged with composting activity.
- Closed Loop Systems, Geneva, NY: Closed Loop is a not-for-profit organization that has been hired to assess the pilot composting site, navigate all regulatory and permit requirements, advise on correct materials and processing of those materials, train volunteers to accept and process materials, recommend signage, marketing, and education.
- STEPS Organization, Seneca County, NY: STEPS has assisted with organization and promotion of workshops and collaborative efforts across the county to mobilize resources for the pilot program. It has also provided funding for the pilot.
- Lodi Library, Lodi, NY: The Lodi Library has provided space and promotion of the workshops and meetings.
- Cornell Cooperative Extension and Cornell Waste Management Program – consult and materials, including instruction, materials and support with promotion of activities.
- Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council

New Partners will be secured from the business and farming sectors to assist with promotion and logistics for composting options.

ORGANIC WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

1. Research, prepare and incorporate information on current situation of food and yard waste issues that impact climate and the keyways to mitigate – prevent, feed, and recycle.
2. Conduct local survey for residents and businesses to understand current activities and views related to food waste.

3. Partner with and promote Lodi Food 4 All Pantry as a place to donate excess foods.
4. Research the “how to” component of composting. Identify different compost systems and methods (home based, drop-off, pick-up) that can work for different situations to mobilize the largest amount of people.
5. Create pilot program for drop-off food composting. Use pilot to gather data and expand program to Lodi community.
6. Research and establish partnerships with public and private local entities that can assist with waste management (initially composting) and prevention.
7. Research and establish partnerships with local businesses and organizations that can help promote food waste management and composting via communication and incentives.
8. Pursue private and public grants and town support.
9. Engage public with ongoing communications campaign leveraging local partners to educate, recruit and gain continuous feedback on food waste management.
10. Explore how to utilize existing residential recycling and trash pick-up activity or existing trash drop-off sites to minimize use of motor vehicles and GHG emissions from resident vehicle use.
11. Explore non volunteer options for labor resources to run program - i.e Americorp.

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS AND TIMELINE

The organics management action plan is being launched with a composting pilot project. The experience from the pilot project will be used to help with the next steps for a full launch of a community-led composting program.

Pilot project Overview: The Lodi Community Garden has purchased a Jora Composter via a grant. The compost task force is recruiting a small group of residents (20) who have agreed to bring their compostable material to the Lodi Community Garden site. Volunteers will verify the material is acceptable, chop it smaller if needed, and process the material in the composter. As the compost finishes, first use will be for the community garden that feeds the food bank, and a small portion may be available to the participants. As we work through the logistics of the pilot project, we will also gain experience in regulatory issues, proper materials, and proper processing of the compost. Ultimately, the pilot will help us fine-tune the program for full expansion.

Pilot steps and timeline:

2022

Develop pilot program (complete)

- Research and preliminary planning (complete)
- \$2500 grant secured for pilot program. Muller Foundation (complete)
- Execute Consultant agreement with Closed Loop Systems (complete)

- Procurement of composter, buckets for residents and location of pilot compost drop-off at the Lodi Community Garden (complete)

Launch pilot program.

- Recruitment and education of 20 participants (complete)
- Create spreadsheet of participants and data elements to measure activity.
- Document instructions for pilot participants and start drop off activity: print and digital version.
- Create method to log data at site.
- Public outreach campaign
 - “How To” Workshop: October 22, 2022 @Lodi Library
 - Lodi June Festival promotion, June 3, 2023: Hand out materials, demonstrations, deploy questionnaire
 - Flyer distribution and email communications to educate and continue recruitment.
- Implement questionnaire to gain insight on average quantity of current food that goes to landfills.

2023

- Identify specific target participants for full launch - i.e., local businesses and farms.
- Hold round table discussion for local businesses to engage and secure support.
- Use pilot data to seek 2nd round of funding from original grantor.
- Fine-tune details of food waste drop-off and prep.
- Establish one at-home compost solution and access to materials.
- Build out community wide concrete compost options and outreach plan.

DATA COLLECTION

As part of the pilot program implementation, specific, meaningful data records will be collected. Data elements will include the following and more as the plan evolves.

- Number of participants
- Number of compost drop-offs, average drop-off period
- Quantity of waste
- Quality of drop-off material (scale)
- How much does this represent of total generated food waste. See questionnaire to estimate amount of total food waste in Lodi.

RESOURCE NEEDS AND BUDGET

Resource needs and budget for pilot program include:

1. Location for drop-off – Lodi Community Garden – secured.
2. Composter: *Jora Composter* (donated by business) – secured.

3. Buckets for the participants, 1-2 each. – secured, will obtain more as needed
4. Consult with Closed Loop Systems –20 hours at \$70 per hour.
5. Education, Communication, and instruction materials – volunteer hours and printing, leverage Cornell Institute of Waste Management materials.
6. Volunteer hours to assist with drop-off and composting mechanism – in process.

Anticipated resource needs and budget for full program launch will be determined based on progress of pilot project.