

**SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN  
PUBLIC/TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
WORKING GROUP**

Food Waste and Organics Management Working Group – Fifth Meeting

**Tuesday, August 12, 2024**

**9:00 am – 10:00 am**

Online meeting

**Meeting Notes**

Attendees: Ben Liegey, Sue Maxwell, Doug Schell, William Selten, Louise Schwarz

Metro Vancouver Staff: Brooke Atkinson, Terry Fulton, Denise Phillips, Karen Storry

ITEMS
<p><b>1. MEETING NOTES - <a href="#">July 9, 2024</a></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No comments or edits on notes</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Food Waste Data: Existing Data and What’s Missing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Question on avoidable and unavoidable food waste -- what is Metro Vancouver’s definition? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No formalized definition in solid waste department</li> <li>○ Closest to a definition is the waste composition categories – data collected is sorted into different categories including unavoidable and avoidable</li> <li>○ Unavoidable includes things like pits and peels, things that are not edible</li> <li>○ Avoidable is everything else</li> <li>○ Metro Vancouver staff to post definition of what goes into each category for waste composition studies</li> <li>○ Metro Vancouver to share food waste data showing the differences between household food waste (single and multi family) and commercial</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Question: What is the uncertainty of the data? How do you measure it? Is it possible to have commercial sector data included? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The waste composition study data includes confidence intervals for each category, as well as information by sector.</li> <li>○ Staff to include the plus and minus percentage that data is in within the given confidence interval, as well as a breakdown by sector</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Question: What is the baseline year for food waste information?</li> </ul>



- 2016 is the best year to use as a baseline (e.g. first year with fully expanded food waste categories)
- Survey done by Mustel in 2014 shows resident behaviors for composting organics
- Need to focus on Sustainable Development Goal 12 of ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns. Metro Vancouver has committed to SDGs, including SDG 12.3: reducing food waste by 50% by 2030. This KPI has never been tracked by Metro Vancouver. It should include only food waste (avoidable and unavoidable), and exclude other compostable organics. This data is available for food waste being disposed of. Metro Vancouver to share if it is possible to split organics recycled into food and other compostable organics.
- Important to define unavoidable and avoidable (inedible and edible) food waste
  - the notion of "unavoidable" has been challenged, as it is highly dependent on knowledge (banana peels can be eaten), technology (Susgrainable upcycling unavoidable spent grains to make cookies), and cultural background (with a lot of diversity in Metro Vancouver)
- Study of food waste supply chain in progress nationally and early results show that food waste is decreasing in the restaurant industry, but increasing further up the supply chain
- Work underway in Nova Scotia to pilot circular food hub, similar to work completed in Guelph-Wellington
- Liquid waste (fats oils grease) and garburators – contributing factor to contamination
- Important to capture 'inedible' food waste as well, since this can be an input to circular processes (e.g. Susgrainable)
- Metrics are key - Needs to be certain indicators to help show the food waste going into certain areas to be processed
- Economic development is a part of this – working with businesses on innovative processing
- Metro Vancouver is currently working with FoodMesh to focus on more complete data in 2024/25. Currently FoodMesh reports on their network data, but this doesn't include other players in the space. Based on a successful data pilot with City of Vancouver, FoodMesh will work on inviting/incentivizing those doing similar work outside their direct network to provide data.

### **3. Composting: Feasibility of Developing Local Infrastructure**

- Land use bylaws are important for organics infrastructure to be considered
  - Advocating in community plans for all of functions needed for waste as well as typical usages (e.g. industrial, transportation)
  - This would help provide space for managing all different materials including compost
- Need to make sure infrastructure is local and long term
- To invest in organics infrastructure, businesses require a sufficient volume of organics going to the facility to keep it running
- Current tonnage of organics contemplated in Metro Vancouver RFP is not enough for investing in a new facility
- Proximity to residents is a large issue in the lower mainland for organics facilities
- By localizing processing, transfer sites etc. it will build community and encourage more



sustainable ways of commuting. This should be linked to affordable housing around these potential processing sites

- Residents need to know what is being processed and where – make smell issue less if they know what is going into the facility
- Metro Vancouver can be a leader in capturing organics from the waste stream, but harder to lead in building infrastructure for organics processing

#### **4. Compostable Plastics**

- Louise to send out slides to the working group to summarize current work with compostable plastics

#### **5. National Zero Waste Council Update and Questions**

- Background information provided for the National Zero Waste Council (NZWC)
- Point of council is to work across sectors and levels of governments to improve policies on waste prevention
- Food waste specific work includes:
  - incentivizing food waste recovery
  - best before dates
  - interpreting good Samaritan acts across the country
  - shared research for food waste reduction
  - working with agriculture food committee
  - circular food systems
- Keeping food in the system as long as possible is a focus for the NZWC
- GHG impact research on food waste – what are the GH impacts through the food supply chain for various types of food
  - more information is need (GHG impact of food waste depending on: 1) type of food (meat, seafood, produce) and/or 2) food supply chain (1kg of food waste in a fine dining restaurant will have a much bigger carbon footprint than 1 kg food loss upstream in the supply chain)
- Need to relocalize food chains as we lose a lot of food waste along the distribution process
- Study with Nova Scotia to see how to relocalize food, key findings include emphasizing the importance of :
  - Procurement and policy support (land use and infrastructure)
  - Technological advances
  - Education within communities
  - Group and cluster supply chain activities
  - Data collection

#### **Questions:**

- Is there anywhere in the country that businesses have access to incentives to relocalize food chains?
  - Currently only Guelph-Wellington and Nova Scotia where circular food hubs have been created or piloted
  - Funding for this type of work may be available from organizations such as FCM
  - Proposal for the federal government to hold FLW data and aggregate the data from across the country; would have the resources to establish a platform to do data



- amalgamation nationally
- NZWC sets the template and methodology for other cities to work on relocalizing food chains
- Promotes the harmonizing part of relocalizing and data gathering
- Pilot in place to see how businesses can be involved in the process
- What are the different types of categories you are focusing on for relocalizing food?
  - What was found in Nova Scotia study was:
    - Meat has the highest GHG impact
    - Produce had the highest cost for transport
    - Seafood waste is put back into ocean, so it is hard to track the GHG emissions impact

#### **6. Next Meeting and Action Items**

- Chair to send out a poll to set up a date for the September meeting
- Terry to send updated waste data including avoidable and unavoidable category definitions, information on uncertainty, and breakdown by sector