

What to do with

Food Waste?

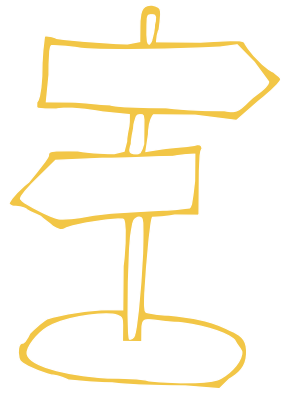
Design systems to manage food scraps sustainably

In every city, town and village, waste is managed differently. In some places, waste is buried or incinerated. In others, waste is separated by hand or with highly mechanized systems. Organics can be composted in backyards or converted into energy in large anaerobic digesters. Where does waste go in your community? How can food scraps be treated or managed more sustainably? Create a map or system diagram to help your community understand how organic waste is managed locally and how it could be improved.



Mapping out your Local Waste System

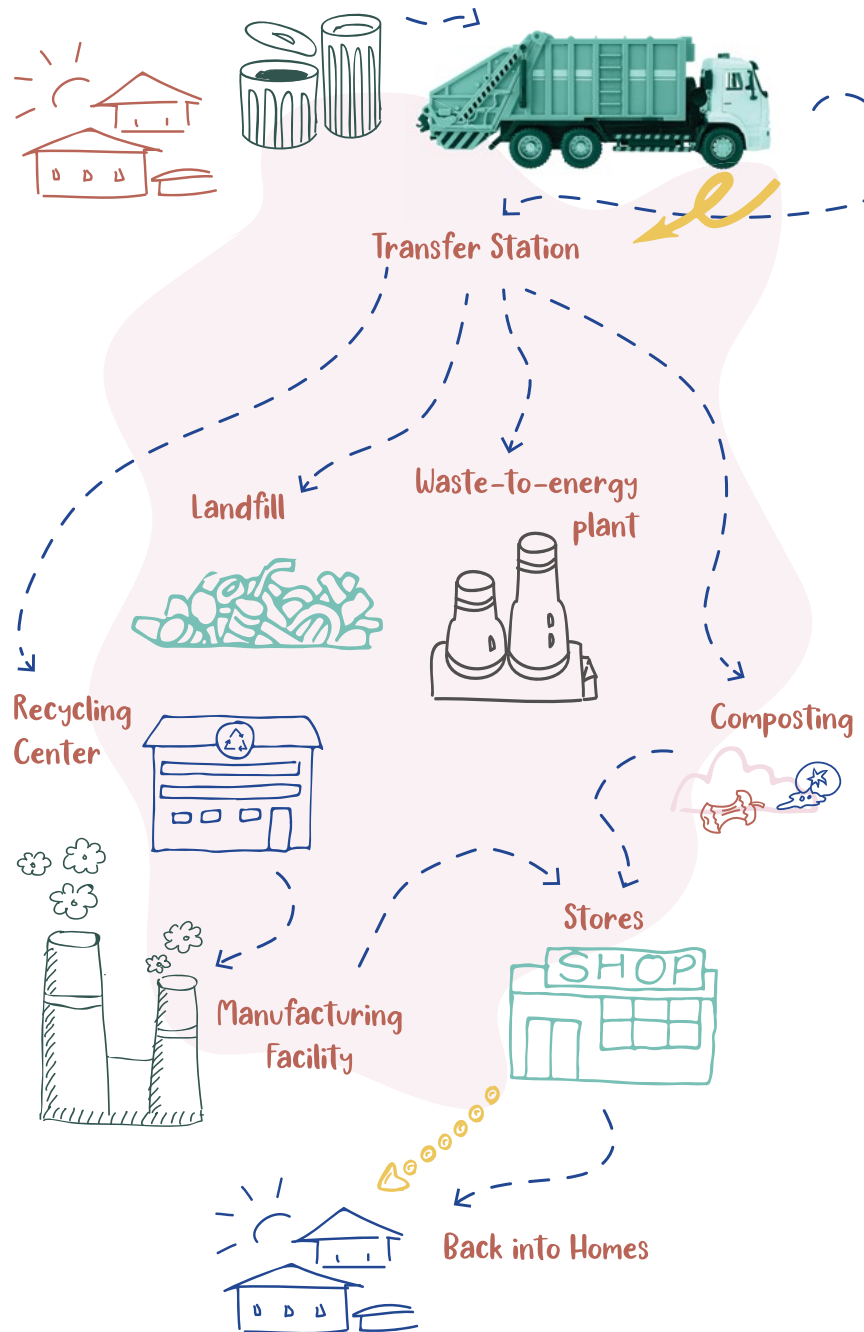
Time: 3-5 days or more depending on complexity



Making it Happen:

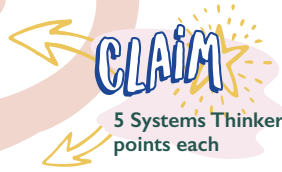
1. Take notes. How are food scraps and organic waste managed in your community? Are they separated from the other waste? Where do the different waste items go? To find out, observe waste collection, ask the waste collector on pick-up day, look on your municipality's website, call the local waste collection companies or ask a local environmental organization.
2. Get the scoop. Find out where various waste streams are taken, research how they are treated and the amount of food waste they treat.
3. Plot points. Using paper or [Google maps](#),⁸⁵ mark the location of facilities on the map, noting any places where organics or food scraps are taken. Large-scale facilities, backyard composting, or a company or store that uses food waste by-products—they all count! Use different sized points to show the size of the facilities. You may need to calculate estimates for how much food waste the smaller scale facilities treat or use.
4. What else would you recommend to help divert food scraps from landfills? Is there a perfect location for a community composting site?

Waste Stream Map



Visualize the Data:

1. Do the math. How much organic waste gets diverted (or not) at each type of facility?
2. Create an infographic to help your community or municipality better understand what facilities are available, how waste gets managed and what is lacking. You can use free online software like [Canva](#)⁸⁶ to help.
3. Are there similar sized cities or towns that have found good solutions?



Want to do More?

- How could organics be better managed in your community? Could you compost in local parks or have people bring compostable food scraps to community gardens or farmers markets? Would it be economical for your municipality to invest in a biodigester? Present your ideas to your local decision-makers.



- Zero Food Waste Challenge: Challenge others to participate in a week-long food waste challenge. Make a pledge and create a short video to document your process. Share it at #FoodMattersActionKit. These examples may inspire you:



- [I Value Food: Too Good To Waste Challenge](#)⁸⁸
- [Zero Food Waste challenge](#)⁸⁹
- [We Tried The Zero Waste Challenge For A Week](#)⁹⁰

Did you know?

Organic waste in landfills creates methane, a greenhouse

gas that is 20–25 times more potent than carbon dioxide. Both of these gases are major contributors to climate change and across Canada, Mexico and the United States are the equivalent to 200 million metric tonnes of carbon dioxide combined. This has the same impact as driving 41 million cars non-stop all year!⁸⁷



⁸⁵My Maps (2018). <<https://www.google.com/maps/about/mymaps/>>

⁸⁶Canva (2018). Bring Facts to Life with Canva's Free Infographic Maker. <<https://bit.ly/2PJQmQi>>

⁸⁷CEC (2017). Characterization and Management of Organic Waste in North America—White Paper. Montreal, Canada: Commission for Environmental Cooperation. pp. 48. <<http://www3.cec.org/islandora/fr/item/11770-characterization-and-management-organic-waste-in-north-america-white-paper-en.pdf>>

⁸⁸I Value Food (2019). Too Good To Waste: Take the Challenge. <<https://challenge.ivaluefood.com>>

⁸⁹Buzz Feed Video (2019). Tasty Producers Tried To Not Waste Any Food For A Week. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GuleZt5OOUY>>

⁹⁰Michelle Khare (2018). We Tried the Zero Waste Lifestyle For A Week. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6tgpTWCkkgc&t=214s>>

