

Chat from May, 2024 Go Green Illinois Meeting

00:37:34 Wendy Greenhouse, Oak Park Climate Action Network: The Village of Oak Park has the following open position: please spread the word:

Chief Sustainability Officer (accepting applications) - The Village of Oak Park is seeking qualified candidates for the position of Chief Sustainability Officer within the Village Manager's Office. Click here to read a description of the position and the application requirements. <https://oak-park.us./your-government/human-resources-department>

00:49:50 Cindy Grau -Go Green Park Ridge: is this why our city council has suddenly started talking about leaf blower emissions?

00:55:49 Seema Keshav: Thank you Edith and Nora. This was great. How to connect to get plastics reduction as part of the CAP moving forward

00:57:22 Nora Beck, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning: Thanks again. My last slide was showing GHG emissions by county:

01:03:52 Kim Moldofsky / GG Morton Grove: It is illegal in many communities. Would love to suggest new language to mine to make it legal. Currently, fruit and vegetable scraps are defined as garbage in our code.

01:05:24 Edith Makra, Metropolitan Mayors Caucus: Thanks, Seema. We have a full presentation of priority climate strategies in the PCAP. See the waste sector of p11 <https://mayorscaucus.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Priority-GHG-Reduction-Strategies-3-4-24.pdf>. The priority strategies include reducing waste and recycling generally, so plastics are included. If you look at the slide Nora showed about the source of GHG emissions, you'll see that buildings, industry and transportation are the most significant sources of emissions. Emissions from plastic production or plastic waste are not significant. But our greatest opportunities for emissions reduction are in the building, industrial, and transportation sectors.

01:05:28 Merleanne Rampale: One of our ICAW Adventures was a bin building demo with a tour of his garden and composting processes So many wonderful learning opportunities and experiences all over Illinois, especially in the northern Illinois region.

01:07:25 Liz Bowman Go Green Des Plaines: Does LRS compost the yard waste & food scraps?

01:07:57 Edith Makra, Metropolitan Mayors Caucus: @Cindy Grau -Go Green Park Ridge It is possible, but we didn't do a lot of outreach for our landscape equipment electrification grant application. We will if we get the grant!

01:09:16 Michael Garfield-Buffalo Grove: Waste Management in Buffalo Grove just started plant food waste collection from April to December along with lawn waste.

01:10:06 Jeff Weiss Buffalo Grove Environmental Action Team: Waste Management recently started picking up food scraps in Buffalo Grove (no meat) during the landscape waste season (April-December)

01:11:03 Jacquelyn Casazza: how often is that IFSC list updated?

01:12:02 Kim Stone, Highland Park: Replying to "Does LRS compost the..."
Yes.

01:12:18 Wendy Greenhouse, Oak Park Climate Action Network: In Oak Park, residents of buildings with 5+ units are not served by the muni waste contract but must

contract with a service such as WasteNot or take their kitchen waste to one of 5 public drop sites. Renters and condo owners in other communities could be similarly excluded by muni compost programs.

01:12:39 Jennifer Nelson: <https://illinoiscomposts.org/start-composting/composting-for-officials/>

01:12:47 Merleanne Rampale: We also offer education along with the sales :)

01:13:06 Deb Singleton, Deerfield: Has any research been done on the infiltration of plastic micropellets from composting bins into the compost?

01:13:22 Jennifer Nelson: This is updated as we receive updates from people. We do a review and check of all of them each year.

01:13:41 Wendy Greenhouse, Oak Park Climate Action Network: Keeping your compost in your freezer can be a helpful option for those who have to haul their own to a drop site. i.e. your kitchen waste! which will become compost.

01:14:33 Deb Singleton, Deerfield: Also, what are the metrics of the GHGs produced by collection programs (esp waste trucks) vs those saved by reducing methane production by landfills?

01:15:00 Jennifer Nelson: Replying to "Does LRS compost the..."
LRS is a hauler - they haul waste, recycling and organics (yard waste and sometimes food scraps). The composting happens at a commercial compost processor.

01:15:31 Michael Garfield-Buffalo Grove: Collective Resource Compost Coop 5 gallon buckets are air tight and can stay in your kitchen for the two weeks between their swap out pick up. No smell and a new container every two weeks.

01:15:39 Wendy Greenhouse, Oak Park Climate Action Network: LRS is the contractor for my 28-unit condo building. They will not pick up organic waste for us.

01:16:30 Merleanne Rampale: That year-round with no opt-in is the way to go!

01:16:45 Jennifer Nelson: Replying to "Does LRS compost the..."
Whether or not food scraps are included depends on the contract your municipality or building have with the hauler.

01:17:05 Wendy Greenhouse, Oak Park Climate Action Network: In Oak Park, the compostable pickup service for residents on the muni contract is an opt-in program. Some of us are fighting to make it an opt-out. The subscription rate is lower than it should be.

01:21:00 Jeff Weiss Buffalo Grove Environmental Action Team: SWALCO, do you net out emissions from vehicles hauling food scraps when you calculate benefits of composting?

01:22:03 Kim Stone, Highland Park: Replying to "SWALCO, do you net o..."
If the food scraps were instead in the trash, they would be trucked to the landfill instead, so the emissions for the transportation are essentially a wash.

01:22:08 Joe Haughney GGDeerfield: The city of Seattle has a long running program to separate food waste from the waste stream. this includes fines to residents who do not participate.

01:23:38 Merleanne Rampale: Replying to "The city of Seattle ..."
Yes Joe and even apartment complexes/multi family dwellings have containers for organics -- it's just a way of life there and children grow up with this as a natural process.

01:27:11 Edith Makra, Metropolitan Mayors Caucus: FYI, the GHG inventory for the Chicago MSA showed waste, inclusive of food waste was the lowest source of emissions in our region. Figure 3. Greenhouse gas emissions in the Chicago MSA region by subsector, listed in order of greatest to least share of the total inventory, 2020 Source: CMAP, 2024.

01:28:03 Edith Makra, Metropolitan Mayors Caucus: See GHG emissions in the PCAP beginning on page 17 here <https://mayorscaucus.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Chicago-MSA-PCAP-3-4-24-FINAL.pdf>

01:35:09 Merleanne Rampale: And in addition to Project Drawdown, if you look at the UNs 17 Sustainability Goals, you can make a case for a relation to/impact of compost/composting to at least 12 or 13 of those goals and some of us believe even more!

01:37:55 Walter Willis, SWALCO: Should have mentioned WasteNot's program in Lake Forest, I think they are up to about 170 or so homes that have opted in.

01:39:13 Tommy Vaughan: Replying to "Should have mentio..."

Thanks Walter - we've been in Lake Forest since September with almost 200 households participating now.

01:40:04 Merleanne Rampale: Tagging on to Walter's comment -- in Lake County we have a tabling toolkit that we developed/ can customize for municipalities and it has helped us grow our participating households.

01:40:46 Seema Keshav: @Tommy, Walter mentioned earlier that seasonal municipal ride along programs typically cost the resident between \$11-\$15 per month. Is your program within that range?

01:41:13 Jennifer Nelson: @Merleanne Rampale - would love to see your tabling toolkit. Is it on your website?

01:41:42 Tommy Vaughan: Replying to "@Tommy, Walter men..."

The ride along programs have some differences from what WasteNot offers with our bucket swap residential service model, so our services are more expensive, but not significantly more so

01:44:18 Tommy Vaughan: I can be reached at tommy@wastenotcompost.com if anyone has questions about anything I discussed.

01:44:45 Anne Peterson Go Green Northfield: Who offers waste audits?

01:45:43 Merleanne Rampale: Replying to "@Merleanne Rampale -..."

No -- but that's a good idea! I came up with it after being invited to a municipal community event and they wanted to increase participation. They had about 40 families signed up the first year and we had 50 families sign up during the 3 hour event using the toolkit. I will say there was a little freebie giveaway if they "pledged" to participate, so that may have helped too. 😊 I'd be happy to share. Pretty simple little kit but seems to be effective.

01:47:38 Jenny Futterman Go Green HP: Our bus drivers are lunch monitors and many have been trained to help kids sort waste

01:48:03 Candice Dalrymple (Highland Park Go Green): Could one of our experts comment on compostable liner bags? Cleaning composting bins and disposing of the water required can be problematic for some residents.

01:51:54 Merleanne Rampale: I'm going to share my personal thoughts on liner bags. Ideal is no liners. Especially for kitchen counter top pails -- we rinse out our coffee mugs, we can rinse out our kitchen pails. I do not line my home organics cart either, as I feel like

that although it's "compostable" it's still a single use item and I consider all of the time, energy, water and other resources that go in to making that liner. Forego them if you can. However, I will say if the only way we can get schools or home owners, businesses to compost commercially is to use liners then I absolutely support using liners if that's the only way.

01:52:47 Kim Stone, Highland Park: I try to reuse greasy paper bags if I need to bag my kitchen compost.

01:53:01 Seema Keshav: Not the expert but according to this 5 gyres report, further research is required into the toxicity of bioplastics (as it can be picked up in the soil). They however reference biobag as a liner that seems to be free of toxic chemicals (page 79) Better+Alternatives+3.pdf (squarespace.com)

01:53:36 Anne Peterson Go Green Northfield: Just to add to the liner convo, waste Management has told us that they do not accept them so Northfield just goes straight into toter

01:55:18 Michael Garfield: You are adding another truck to the cycle so there would be more transportation emissions. But the methane offset would be huge.

01:57:34 Becky Brodsky, Seven Generations Ahead, Skokie, Evanston:

<https://sevendgenerationsahead.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/SGA-Lunchroom-Waste-Audit-Guide-updated-Dec.-2022.pdf>

<https://sevendgenerationsahead.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Food-Waste-Activity.pdf>

01:58:11 Phil Bolton from Greener Grove in Downers Grove: How do we know if this food waste is going to a landfill that doesn't burn off the methane. I see one on hwy 88 that has burn off of the methane. I have heard the argument that the methane is just burnt off and there is no extra emissions.

01:58:18 Wendy Greenhouse, Oak Park Climate Action Network: In my condo building, a lot of owners just put their organics down the drain using a sink disposal. Another habit we have to break. There's got to be a price for purifying all that waste water.

01:59:02 Becky Brodsky, Seven Generations Ahead, Skokie, Evanston: Replying to "Just to add to the l..."

Yes, it depends on the hauler.

02:00:34 Merleanne Rampale: Another important part of the conversation which was touched on briefly is the circular piece to all of this. We can have 1000 communities develop and offer programs to collect food scraps and divert waste, but if we do not support our compost sites with purchasing/using compost it's a moot point. We need our municipalities, corporations, park districts and other using this wonderful product.

02:02:18 Wendy Greenhouse, Oak Park Climate Action Network: LRS will not provide organic waste pickup to my condo building. We have a contract with them for trash and recycling.

02:02:32 Kim Stone, Highland Park: If your community has a report, please put your community name in the chat now and we will call on you.

02:02:50 Jacquelyn Casazza: @Kim Stone, Highland Park our hauler doesn't take soiled paper in the compost as of now...

02:03:04 karrah cullers: Can you post the link for The Secret Life of Groceries meeting?

02:03:33 Wendy Greenhouse, Oak Park Climate Action Network: LRS has the OP muni contract, incl compos pickup, so that's not the issue.

02:04:11 Wendy Greenhouse, Oak Park Climate Action Network: Possibly they just don't have capacity. Hopefully down the road,

02:04:17 Kim Moldofsky / GG Morton Grove: Join the #CicadaClimateParade by making or drawing a cicada and posting it to social media with a climate action or solution along with the hashtag #CicadaClimateParade Look for it at the June 2 Evanston Climate Action extravaganza <https://www.instagram.com/p/C638UFNLfhI/>

02:04:45 Liz Bowman Go Green Des Plaines: How can I get the spreadsheet?

02:05:29 Kim Moldofsky / GG Morton Grove: I recently completed Rewiring America's Electric Coach program. Drop me a note if you want to learn more themakermom@hotmail.com

02:05:37 Deb Singleton , Deerfield: Where do we send the info for the spreadsheet?

02:05:53 Kim Stone, Highland Park: Send it to info@gogreenillinois.org. We will post the spreadsheet to the GGI website once its been completed.

02:08:25 Andrew Hoffman Morton Grove: Morton grove

02:08:27 Jacquelyn Casazza: Glen Ellyn

02:10:27 Carrie Malfeo: Beth, could you share your intern job description with me? cmalfeo@vopf.com Thanks.

02:11:14 Deb Singleton , Deerfield: Replying to "Beth, could you shar..." I'd be interested in that too, Beth. Deb@CreatingClimateHope.com

02:11:39 Wendy Greenhouse, Oak Park Climate Action Network: Stopped to charge the EV in Jaynesville, WI, yesterday and the Starbuck's was giving away bags of used coffee grounds to use as compost!

02:14:06 Seema Keshav: Replying to "Beth, could you shar..." I am interested in that too

02:14:14 Wendy Greenhouse, Oak Park Climate Action Network: Oak Park

02:14:20 Cindy Grau -Go Green Park Ridge: Park Ridge

02:15:37 Andrew Hoffman Morton Grove: Mortongroveil.org/enrc for exhibitors for sustainability expo

02:22:42 Seema Keshav: Thank you everyone!! Always learning from you. Sorry have to leave early. Please email me if you want to talk about Deposit Return Laws seema.keshav@gmail.com

02:23:19 Phil Bolton from Greener Grove in Downers Grove: Greener Grove for an update if we have time. Sorry I wrongly messaged someone direct instead of to the group.

02:23:19 Jacquelyn Casazza: @Wendy Greenhouse, Oak Park Climate Action Network the climate coaches sounds amazing!!!

02:23:29 Wendy Greenhouse, Oak Park Climate Action Network: opcan.org

02:23:33 Kim Moldofsky / GG Morton Grove: Check out Rewiring America's free Electric Coach program to help build capacity within your group

02:23:44 Merleanne Rampale:Hopping of but wanted to mention ICAW. We were selected to kick-off the whole global celebration this year due to all of the work we had done in Illinois. Nearly 60 events/programs around Illinois plue 2 virtuals -- one presented

by Liz Kunkle and the other was a Compost Café I put together with a small but mighty team of artists and performers. Seema and Jenny F. helped me greatly with not only Adventures in Composting events, but our Songs & Stories from the Compost Café. We did have a few Go Greens this year participate, so if anyone would like to get involved and host an Adventure next year, please reach out to me - we'd love to have you be a part of these most important efforts and I'm happy to brainstorm with you and share! International Compost Awareness Week (ICAW) 2024 - Illinois Food Scrap & Composting Coalition (illinoiscomposts.org). Have a great week all.

02:24:42 Phil Bolton from Greener Grove in Downers Grove: Was great to hear about the schools recycling, that its possible. Was at an event last night eating from styrofoam plates, spoilt the meal :)

02:26:36 Wendy Greenhouse, Oak Park Climate Action Network: All the foodwares in the state capitol cafeteria are STILL Styrofoam. The recently passed law phasing out this stuff in state facilities only mandates the end of purchasing, not use, so it could take a while to use all this toxic material. We need to pass a statewide ban on Styrofoam used anywhere!

02:27:04 Liz Bowman Go Green Des Plaines: Is there a list of compostable foodwares resources to share with local businesses/restaurants?

02:27:07 Ben Mjolsness, Naperville: Thanks for all the great work you're all doing! I appreciate the opportunity to learn from our neighbors.

02:28:44 Wendy Greenhouse, Oak Park Climate Action Network: Thanks everyone!