

Waste (Resources)

Community Input by Formal Submission
Ideas and Recommendations for Moving Forward

The following information is a collection of formally submitted recommendations to the District Department of the Environment and the Office of Planning by local organizations. The information was reviewed and pertinent comments, suggestions and ideas for the waste working group are included in this document. Much effort by concerned citizens went into the creation of those documents and a lot of relevant material has been compiled. Please review these ideas and concerns to enhance participation in the working group process.

1. Becoming Greenest

Recommendations for a More Sustainable Washington, D.C. Submitted by the American Society of Landscape Architects

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency offers some disturbing facts on U.S. food waste: Each person throws away about **one pound of food waste every day**, generating about 30 million tons of food waste annually, or about 12 percent of the total waste stream. Only 2 percent of that food waste is composted, whereas in comparison, some 67 percent of yard waste is reused. *Discovery* reports that food waste, much of which is due to avoidable spoilage of fresh produce, is equal to throwing out \$17 billion annually.

A number of innovative cities have instituted zero-waste policies (meaning no waste to landfills). **San Francisco** is aiming at becoming zero waste by 2020. In addition to recycling and composting efforts, San Francisco is banning plastic bags and Styrofoam, encouraging donations, and asking producers to make recycling and reuse easier.

Set clear, ambitious targets and deadlines for achieving zero waste in the District and measure progress against targets. Like San Francisco and Palo Alto, develop a robust waste action plan that leverages compost for urban agriculture, including rooftop farms. Enact waste rules that create fines for homes and offices that don't recycle and compost. Recognize businesses that are voluntary early adopters in these efforts with "Best Zero-Waste Places to Work" or similar certificates. Promote zero-waste policies throughout the District.

Traditional ways of constructing buildings create pollution and waste. Building materials contain vast amounts of embedded energy. According to **Architecture 2030**, building construction and materials account for 5.5 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, while exact numbers aren't available, trucks and cranes transporting and installing materials at construction sites produce considerable amounts of greenhouse gas emissions.

Typically, materials from torn-down buildings and sites are carted off to the landfill. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency says only 40 percent of building and construction material is now "recycled, reused, or sent to waste-to-energy facilities, while the remaining 60 percent of the materials is sent to landfills." Many sustainable architects, landscape architects, and construction firms are now moving towards a more sustainable construction process to reduce waste and greenhouse gas emissions.

In a sustainable reconstruction, building materials are reused or recycled, dramatically reducing waste. For example, a new park can be created out of old building materials. Once the materials have been separated, some are kept at the construction site and reprocessed. Reclaimed soils, concrete rubble, glass, wood, and steel can be **reused or recycled to serve new functions**, reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the process. With climate change, any new construction methods that help landscape architects avoid producing additional emissions are a major benefit both to the project and society as a whole.

Ensure all building materials are reused in new buildings (if the materials are non-hazardous). Like Chicago, invest in building material reuse exchanges and also create a new park material reuse exchange.

Parks, like any man-made landscape, generate yard or grounds waste. It should be a matter of practice that park waste is composted and reused, perhaps for urban agriculture projects on rooftops within the District.

Use Sustainable Sites Initiative (SITES) guidelines for park maintenance and eliminate grounds waste generated from Washington, D.C., parks through composting. Reuse compost in urban farms within the District.

2. Sustainability Recommendations Submitted by DC Sierra Club

ACTION ITEM	PURPOSE	RESPONSIBILITY
(1) Set <u>65% (by weight) target for diverting</u> solid waste by 2020 (including construction materials) to--	Reduce waste going to landfill.	DPW, Mayor
(1)(a) <u>recycling</u> (enforce recycling laws; particularly for businesses; reinstate recycling education in DPW and/or put resource management staff under DDOE; increase public education on recycling, including consumer leaflets on recyclables and real tours or virtual tours of transfer stations and recycling facilities).	Reduce: production/ consumption of plastic [and glass] water bottles, failure to recycle materials.	DPW, City Council, citizens.
(1)(b) composting (move to year-round collection of yard waste collection – prohibit disposal of grass and leaves; establish a dedicated DC municipal composting operation.	Reduce waste going to landfill; use composting to encourage local farmers and gardeners off of petroleum-based fertilizers.	DDOE, DPW, citizens, partnerships and contracts with local gardeners and neighboring state agriculture departments.
(2) Expand and optimize recycling in the schools.	Education, waste reduction.	Chancellor, Mayor, citizens.
(3) Increase frequency and sites for collection of e-waste and hazardous waste.	Reduce toxic leaching from landfills to river systems.	DPW.

3. UDC Ward 3 Input

Submitted by the **University of the District of Columbia**

(Only items relevant for review by the waste working group are listed)

On 28 September, UDC held a meeting as part of 'Start in September' under Mayor Gray's [Sustainable DC](#) initiative. Office of Planning staff, UDC staff, and concerned citizens gathered to discuss ideas about the attributes of a sustainable city in an effort to break down high-level concepts and bring them into our local context.

This open discussion at UDC allowed participants to share their own visions and aspirations for the city and gave them an opportunity to listen to other residents with different perspectives. In small tables of 4-5 people, we discussed three guiding questions:

- 1) What are the attributes of a sustainable city?
- 2) How does DC measure up to that vision of a sustainable city?
- 3) How can we engage and energize the whole city around this sustainability plan?

Question 1: What are the attributes of a sustainable city?

The city is in sync with natural systems and all resources are valued.

- Design is informed by nature/works with nature
- Holistic thinking is present in all planning
- Nothing Toxic/Poisonous
- People are connected to nature

Question 2: How does DC measure up to that vision of a sustainable city?

Strengths

- Local farm produce/farmers markets
- Grassroots action - more and more NGOs and businesses are involved in sustainability

Weaknesses

- Recycling - we have it, but there is low awareness of what can be recycled
- Scale of social disparities – state scale problems/city funding
- Water and waste systems are old

From the conversation came the following suggestions for building on our strengths and addressing our weaknesses:

Local Goals –

- 75% waste diversion/recycling

Potential Action –

- Make recycling available to everyone
- Increase public awareness around what can/can't be recycled
- Ban use of non-recyclable containers/Remove disposable products from restaurants
- Encourage upcycling

Question 3: How can we engage and energize the whole city around this sustainability plan?

Social Media Strategy

- Twitter meetings – Q&A between city officials and Tweeps
- Tweet ups
- Sustainable DC Foursquare Badge

Collect ideas outside of meetings

- Collect ideas on napkins, used envelopes, things with blank surface areas like toilet paper
- Suggestion boxes for sustainable DC at local businesses – maybe through Think Local First
- Collect ideas via text

Mobile meetings

- Bike rides
- Experimental circulator bus routes

Paid/incentivized participation

- Give rebate for bottle recycling (5-10 cents)
- Make it FUN
- iPod giveaway at planning meetings
- Take the money we would have used to hire a consultant and instead pay businesses directly to participate.

Go to existing meetings and groups

- Churches/Religious networks/GWIPL/Creation Care
- ANC meetings – Mobilize the ANCs
- Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts
- Unions

- Rotary Club
- Lions Club
- Business orgs like AOBA
- Parents at playgrounds on Saturday mornings

Go to existing events

- Local sports venues
- Music/concerts
- Comedy shows

Get schools engaged

- Universities
- Clubs (UDC Sustainability Club, UDC Garden Club)
- Put in school curriculum /better education on environmental issues

Showcase and encourage good examples

- Create competitions between schools
- Incentivize local business participation by holding competitions, giving awards for green practices
- Competitions between employees of small/large firms
- Action is motivating – bring the results of your own actions to the next meeting to share back with the group
- Shame bad behavior
- Lead by example, especially for city leadership

Reach all community members

- Have meetings whenever it makes sense in your community. Don't rush it based on this planning process.
- Switch target demographic and recognize that kids are change agents
- Reach pockets, but also have a central place to bring ideas back together/find out about new events
- Everybody must bring 2 new people to next meeting – if we keep doing this, we'll eventually reach a critical mass