

To: Mayor Charles Sisitsky
Cc: City Councilors
From: Aimee Powelka and Diana Porter, Energize Framingham
Date: July 21, 2023



Energize Framingham is building support for curbside composting in our community. We have:

- Increased curbside composting participation by over 100 households, resulting in a 30% price drop.
- Secured funding for a small pilot and recruited Walsh Middle School and Saint Tarcisius participants.
- Initiated a collaboration with FPS on a planned cafeteria composting pilot at Dunning Elementary.

Our compostable food waste is costing us money every day. According to the Framingham DPW, we pay \$100 per ton of trash and collect approximately 65 tons of trash daily. 26-30% of this trash is compostable materials. Cities that have implemented composting initiatives benefit from less waste going into landfills and transfer stations, as well as saving substantial funds due to the differential cost of composting. For their composting operations, Cambridge, MA pays 70% of what they pay for the same weight of trash.¹

Here in Framingham, about 1% of households use Black Earth Compost (BEC) to collect their food waste weekly. According to BEC, these 346 households have diverted an estimated 177 tons from landfills, saving Framingham \$17,700 in the process.

Municipalities that support curbside composting see an increase in participation. When Newton announced their partnership with BEC, their participation increased from approximately 400 households to over 2000.² There is momentum for composting initiatives on a state and national level, with multiple grant opportunities available.³⁴⁵

Now is the time for our city to step up.

Energize Framingham stands ready to help the City of Framingham to make widespread curbside composting a reality in Framingham. We recommend the City pursue these goals in the next year while working towards a more comprehensive solution:

1. Publicize the availability of private residential curbside options using City communication channels.
2. Release an RFP for qualified private contractors and negotiate a preferred rate for Framingham subscribers.
3. Pursue a grant to financially support a curbside composting pilot.

Energize Framingham has done substantial research on composting arrangements in other municipalities that we are happy to share. We are also happy to participate in discussions as desired by the City. We will also continue to fully support the Dunning Elementary School cafeteria's composting pilot. Finally, we will continue our community engagement efforts to enroll additional households in curbside composting. **Let's work together to launch a residential curbside composting initiative that will save Framingham money on hauling waste, reduce our climate impact, and showcase the best of who we are as a community.**

¹ <https://www.nhpr.org/nh-news/2022-04-21/how-food-waste-could-transform-new-england-garbage>

² <https://www.newtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/50469>

³ <https://www.epa.gov/infrastructure/solid-waste-infrastructure-recycling-grants-political-subdivisions>

⁴ <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-smrp-recycling-dividends-program-funds>

⁵ <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-a-sustainable-materials-recovery-program-smrp-municipal-grant>

Dear Mayor Sisitsky,

We are writing to you to request a meeting to discuss the attached memo on curbside composting. We represent the members of Energize Framingham working to build support for curbside composting in Framingham.

We have presented information at the City Council's Environment & Sustainability subcommittee. We have publicized the availability of private curbside composting subscriptions at many public events and on social media. And we have conducted research on composting options in other Massachusetts communities.

We would like to present our findings to you and offer to act as a resource for the City and the DPW. We believe that public support for curbside composting is increasing enough to warrant action by the City.

We look forward to hearing from you and hopefully meeting with you.

Sincerely,

Aimee Powelka and Diana Porter
Energize Framingham