

Tales from Tim's Recycling Bin - Organics are Coming

The Hennepin Recycling Group is preparing for the biggest change in the recycling program since we switched to single-stream recycling 17 years ago. Organics recycling is coming.

Organics refers to food scraps and non-recyclable paper (for example napkins and greasy pizza boxes). Recent studies show that there are more organics in our trash than any other category. Perhaps up to 40% of what we throw out.

Just like your traditional papers, bottles and cans, organics can be recycled into new products. In the case of organics, most often they are composted turning them into a nutrient-enriched soil amendment. Think fertilizer without the chemicals.



So, we should be treating organics as a resource instead of a waste. The question is how do we capture that resource? Right now, you can put items such as stale bread and banana peels in your backyard compost bin, or you can take bags of organics to the Hennepin County Drop-Off Facility on Jefferson Highway. But those options are only capturing a fraction of what's out there.

That's why Hennepin County is requiring cities to make curbside collection of organics available to our residents by January 1, 2022. Now we have to figure out how to do that. Do we use a method similar to Minneapolis where they give you a small size organics cart that gets picked up every week? Or do we have you place your organics in a compostable bag that you put in your trash cart. The trash is taken to a processing facility, so the bags can be removed and sent to a composting facility. Maybe there's a third option we haven't discovered yet.

Let me know your thoughts. Email me at tim.pratt@brooklynpark.org. I'll compile what you have to say and share the results with the City Council and staff to help guide decision making.

Until next time, prepare for organics recycling my friends.