

STATEMENT OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL

BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL

SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE COMMITTEE

REGARDING THE SANITATION DEPARTMENT'S PRELIMINARY FY 22 BUDGET

March 4, 2021

Good afternoon and thank you, Chairman Reynoso, Councilmember Chin and members of the Committee. My name is Eric A. Goldstein and I am New York City Environment Director at the Natural Resources Defense Council. As you know, NRDC is a national, non-profit legal and scientific organization active on a wide range of environmental health, natural resource protection and quality-of-life issues internationally, across the country and right here in New York City, where we have had our main offices since NRDC's founding in 1970. Over the decades, NRDC staff have had as one of our top regional priorities the goal of transforming New York's waste system from primary reliance on landfilling and incineration to one that has waste prevention, composting, recycling and equity as its cornerstones.

The failure to deal sustainably with the City's organics -- food scraps and yard waste -- has been one of the biggest disappointments on the environmental front during the eight years of the De Blasio Administration. When Mayor De Blasio took office, the Administration pledged that New York City would become a national leader in sustainable organics handling. In fact, just the opposite has happened. (And this is not the fault of Sanitation Department Commissioner Grayson or former Commissioner Garcia.)

The nation's largest pilot project for curbside food waste collection was scrapped last Spring. Community composting operations -- which have been so successful in handling food waste sustainably, teaching city kids about nature and returning finished compost to neighborhood residents to use in cultivating street trees, plants and community gardens -- was zeroed out in last year's pandemic budget. Only an outcry from diverse constituencies across the city and last-minute intervention by the City Council, for which we are grateful, was able to resuscitate a portion of these operations, although the number of drop-off sites now is less than 2/3's of what it once was. And even composting collections at the city's public schools -- which is so essential to teaching the next generation about the climate crisis and the sensible ways to reduce and recycle food waste -- was suspended.

In the Mayor's proposed FY22 budget, the bad news for most of these essential Sanitation Department programs continues. But looking down the road, a successful program for separating and collecting food scraps and yard waste is not only the right step environmentally, but holds the potential to save city taxpayers tens of millions of dollars a year, by cutting the amount of trash going to expensive-to-dump-at landfills and incinerators. Why is it so difficult for government budget officials to think and plan for the long-term, even when the long-term dangers and opportunities are so apparent?

NRDC is part of the Save Our Compost coalition. And we join our colleagues in urging the Council to boost funding for these and related programs to 14.7 million dollars in the final FY 22 budget. That is still a fraction of what the City was spending on pre-pandemic composting programs.

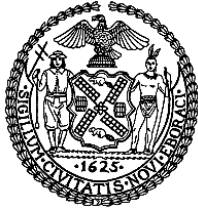
Three DSNY programs in particular urgently warrant increased funding. One is GrowNYC's Zero Waste operations. These activities have been a mainstay of New York City composting since the very beginning of food waste collections at GrowNYC's popular Greenmarket sites. These locations have been among the highest performing sites across the entire city in terms of food waste tonnage collected. Private and charitable funding for GrowNYC composting operations, some of which the organization was able to secure on a one-time basis last year, is unlikely to be available in FY 22. The GrowNYC non-profit deserves -- and New York City needs -- the Council to fund that organization's composting operations at the level it received in FY 20, approximately 2.5 million dollars.

A second priority funding need is to open new community composting sites in underserved neighborhoods that still do not have convenient drop-off locations, as well as to provide stepped-up composting collection opportunities at NYCHA developments. This is a simple matter of fairness and equity. All New Yorkers have a right to convenient access to food waste composting. And the Council needs to right this wrong by providing additional funding to establish and run these additional sites. We recommend that the Council review the specific recommendations of the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance on this point.

Third, there's the need for restoration of composting (and recycling) collections in all New York City public schools. These should be funded to begin in September when we expect that school operations will be more or less back to normal. It is so important to teach young children about nature and the climate crisis, as well as get them into the habit of separating food scraps (and recyclables) from ordinary trash. School system composting and recycling programs do exactly that.

Finally, as my colleagues from the Transform Don't Trash Coalition will describe in more detail in this hearing, NRDC urges the Council to ensure that the Department's budget includes four million dollars to fund implementation of the Commercial Waste Zone law, Local Law 199 of 2019, which promises to completely transform our current and dis-functional, polluting, unsafe and inefficient commercial waste collection system into one that is sustainable, fair to private sanitation workers and reliable for businesses across all five boroughs.

We are counting on the City Council, which has historically been the leader in New York City on environmental issues, to step in and re-prioritize these essential sanitation programs, from which all New Yorkers will benefit. Thank you for your attention.



CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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LOWELL D. KERN
Chair

JESSE R. BODINE
District Manager

February 12, 2021

Hon. Bill de Blasio
Mayor, City of New York
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Hon. Corey Johnson
Speaker, New York City Council
224 W. 30th Street, Suite 1206
New York, NY 10001

Re: Litter Basket Pickup Service and Alternative Program Funding

Dear Mayor de Blasio and Speaker Johnson,

Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) requests that the Mayor's Office and City Council work toward restoring the budget for Department of Sanitation (DSNY) basket pickups in the FY2022 budget, while also investigating complementary solutions to mitigate the problem of overflowing litter baskets. These comments were approved at the February 3, 2021 Full Board meeting with 40 in favor, 2 against, 0 abstaining and 0 present but not eligible to vote.

Background

Due to budget cuts in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, DSNY has reduced litter basket pickup service by 63%, with no plans for restoration this fiscal year. In Manhattan Community District 4 (MCD4), there are now only 2 basket pickup trucks operating on Sundays and Mondays, and 1 truck on the remaining days of the week.¹ The reduction of DSNY service has led to overflowing litter baskets, which reduces usable sidewalk space and creates unsanitary and unsightly conditions on many

¹ From DSNY presentation to Arts, Culture, Education & Street Life committee on Jan 11, 2021.

street corners in both Chelsea and Hell's Kitchen. Overflowing baskets are now especially problematic from a health perspective given that they are often within close proximity to outdoor dining sites.

At a meeting of the MCB4 Arts, Culture, Education & Street Life Committee (ACES) on January 11, 2021, committee members heard from Marissa Yanni, DSNY Manhattan Community Affairs Liaison, as well as Catie Savage, leader of the Hell's Kitchen Litter Legion.

The Hell's Kitchen Litter Legion is a grassroots group started in June 2020 as a response to trash-strewn sidewalks in our neighborhood, and has subsequently hosted more than 25 community clean ups involving 225 volunteer participants. We thank Catie and her volunteers for their initiative and tireless efforts. At the same time, we call upon the City government to step up and take ultimate responsibility for maintaining sanitary streets and sidewalks. Private citizens should not have to resort to organizing and mobilizing volunteers to pick up overflowing trash around their neighborhood in order to live in sanitary conditions- DSNY should be adequately resourced to pick up the trash throughout the city.

Recommendations

MCB4 advocated for a restoration of funding for DSNY basket pickups in its FY22 Statement of District Needs and continues to reiterate the importance of a timely restoration of pickup service. We urge the city to use recent data on truck capacity rates by route to strategically determine the areas most urgently in need of service restoration given the altered residential, tourist and workplace traffic patterns during the pandemic. Leaders of business improvement districts and community groups like the Hell's Kitchen Litter Legion can also provide valuable feedback on the most problematic corner basket sites within our neighborhoods.

Additionally, we request an investment in other complementary solutions to help keep our sidewalks clean. As an example, in Hell's Kitchen, The Association of Community Employment Programs for the Homeless (ACE)² has hired a worker who provides supplemental cleaning on 9th Avenue between 42nd and 59th Streets. This has helped with sidewalk sanitation on 9th Avenue, but we would support City funding for an additional ACE worker in Hell's Kitchen on 10th Avenue and in other problematic areas in MCD4. If funding becomes available, we would encourage ACE to engage with the shelters in our neighborhood and recruit locally for any additional workers. Increased funding for programs like ACE can help to mitigate the issue of sidewalk litter throughout MCD4.

²ACE website: <https://acenewyork.org/>

We thank DSNY for its willingness to engage on the issue of overflowing baskets, and request feedback if there are additional ways MCB4 can help to advocate for a solution to this sanitation issue in our neighborhood.

Sincerely,



Lowell D. Kern
Chair
Community Board 4



Allen Oster
Co-Chair
ACES Committee



Kit Tollerson
Co-Chair
ACES Committee

CC: Edward Grayson, Commissioner, NYC DSNY
Hon. Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President



NYC-EJA's Testimony for the NYC Council Preliminary Budget Hearing Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management

March 4, 2021

Good afternoon. My name is Dr. Tok Oyewole, and I am testifying on behalf of the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance (NYC-EJA).

Founded in 1991, NYC-EJA is a non-profit citywide membership network linking grassroots organizations from low-income neighborhoods and communities of color in their fight for environmental and climate justice.

For decades, NYC-EJA has led efforts for comprehensive policy reforms to address the disproportionate burden of New York's solid waste system on a handful of environmental justice communities. The impacts of the solid waste system are greatest in a few low-income and communities of color where truck-dependent transfer stations are clustered, causing higher proportions of health consequences such as asthma, heart disease, and various cancers.

We are here today to advocate for adjustments in City budget allocations for the upcoming fiscal years pertaining to solid waste and composting that we think would dramatically improve equity for environmental justice and frontline communities, and ensure the City's commitments to its stated goals. Some of these changes also pertain to the committee on land use.

Organics and Composting Budget (Save Our Compost Coalition): As colleagues in the Save Our Compost Coalition will also share at this hearing, we are proposing a moderate budget proposal of \$14.75 million dollars for the upcoming fiscal year - that girds us for full implementation of mandatory organics collection and processing in the near term (next fiscal year at the latest). The request includes Community Composting and Food Scrap Drop-off Program at \$7 million; Zero Waste Schools program funding at \$1 million; Multifamily Building Collection and Processing Pilot-to-Implementation, inclusive of NYCHA at \$2 million; an analysis of organics programs toward implementing Citywide Curbside Compost Collection Program at \$250,000, to be concluded by the end of 2021; municipal agency composting at \$1 million, and budget allowing, reinstating and expanding curbside organics collection. As we proposed last year, even a small fraction of the NYPD's budget would help to fully fund a citywide organics collection program, diverting tons of food scraps from transfer stations, landfills, and incinerators.



Today I will speak about building up composting sites in particular, and others in the Save Our Compost coalition will discuss other budget requests pertaining to our collective vision for local organics processing.

Create New Community Composting Sites, \$3.5 million: In order to compost the growing volume of food scraps generated in the Food Scrap Drop-off program and build capacity for localizing organic waste processing and green jobs in composting, the City should fund the construction of community composting sites throughout the city on Parks and/or other city land to provide equitably-cited composting resources throughout the city.

Even with limited drop-off sites compared to pre-COVID times, the current processing sites are facing capacity issues. Currently, there are community composting sites on Governors Island (Earth Matter NY), Western Queens (Big Reuse), in Western Brooklyn (Big Reuse), and Lower Manhattan (LES Ecology Center). The City should partner with nonprofit partners to build community composting sites throughout the city with at least 6 new sites, 2 in the Bronx, and one each in South Brooklyn, Eastern Queens, upper Manhattan, and Rikers Island as legislated within the recently passed Renewable Rikers Act, including open and enclosed sites, using bicycles and electric vehicles for transport. More sites should be added after these 6 to meet our city's capacity and stop waste export, paired with consumer and corporate waste reduction education efforts, as well as the usage of food scap devolumizing machinery where appropriate.

Composting locally would also save funds on exporting recyclable materials out of the City, and we can project broader transport savings via the expansion of local residential and commercial organic waste collection and processing with a universal, mandatory organics program.

There are many local organizations on the ground who are adept at handling local organics collection and processing work: As the Lower East Side Ecology Center is being pushed out of their site during the ESCR process, the City should fund a temporary relocation to a site nearby, such as the one identified under the Williamsburg Bridge, and ensure that a compost site is incorporated into the reconstructed East River Park. The Big Reuse site under the Queensboro bridge should be allowed to remain in place, given overwhelming public support, in general, and during a recent visioning session with the community that was held by NYC Parks, and due to the beneficial environmental/educational services they provide. This would ensure the continued use of the capital investments already put into this site.

Robust Universal Organics Program: We request that all feasibility studies and pilots should be done by the end of 2021 for rapid and thoughtful implementation of a robust mandatory organics program, as soon as 2022. We see reducing surplus funds from bloated budgets in the City such as the NYPD's overtime budget, or the receipt of federal funds for environmental and climate initiatives, as potential ways to fund this program. We have until 2030 to curb GHG emissions to prevent global warming above



1.5 degrees celsius, and so we must advance bold, hard-hitting decisions at every chance we get - this means building the infrastructure now to plan for when we can manage all of our City's organics capacity.

Commercial Waste Zones & Additional Waste Equity Concerns: We and the Transform Don't Trash Coalition are asking for \$4 million for staffing and oversight of the Commercial Waste Zones system passed in Local Law 199 of 2019. We support the program aims of reducing truck miles, improving working conditions, and reducing community burdens - we particularly want to see facilities that have not been in compliance with laws relating to public health and safety either 1) not contracted with in the CWZ system or 2) brought up to code without any further delay. The funding will help with oversight of facilities.

Additionally, we ask the city to explore and implement comprehensive reusables programs in food retail, restaurants, and shipping, to divert a large portion of our city's avoidable waste.

Such waste reduction strategies listed above will aid in preventing our City's export of waste to polluting infrastructure, within our City, and to incinerators and landfills in other municipalities, such as nearby Newark.

Finally, the City has committed to building the Gansevoort Marine Transfer Station by 2026, to displace the quantity of metals, glass, plastics, and paper going to transfer stations in communities of color, using a more efficient mode of transport than heavy-duty diesel trucks. This requires coordination between the City and the State, and as 2026 is approaching, we are requesting to see the City's plans for the build out of the project this year.

Thank you for the opportunity to raise these urgent concerns pertaining to zero waste, waste equity, and greenhouse gas and co-pollutant reductions. We encourage you to invest in the development of long-term waste reduction and waste equity plans, to reduce burdens unjustly faced by a handful of communities in and out of NYC, and to better preserve our planet's limited resources.



Committee on Sanitation and Public Waste Management

March 4th 2021

2pm

Good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Phoebe Flaherty, I'm an Organizer at ALIGN: The Alliance for a Greater New York. ALIGN is a community-labor coalition dedicated to creating good jobs, vibrant communities, and an accountable democracy for all New Yorkers.

We coordinate the Climate Works for All coalition and the Transform Dont Trash Coalition, the coalitions that led the organizing to pass Local Law 97 the Dirty Buildings bill and Local Law 199 Commercial Waste Zones.

As we all know, we are still in the midst of this pandemic, and New York's Black and brown and environmental justice communities are bearing the brunt of the impact of the virus and the economic downturn. We're seeing record high unemployment, concentrated in BIPOC and environmental justice communities.

Our City's budget must prioritize investment and job creation for the communities that have been hit the hardest by this pandemic.

The Climate Works for All coalition created an Equitable Recovery Report, a roadmap to creating 100,000 good green jobs for New York City's Black and brown communities and moving us out of the pandemic and recession towards our climate goals by investing 16 billion dollars over 3 years. This is the comprehensive plan we need to move our city through crisis and towards equity and climate justice.

However, we know that the city budget is still reeling from the crisis, and we have developed interim Climate budget priorities that will lead us on the same path towards investment in communities and green job creation, while acknowledging the reality of our budget constraints.

Within the City's 2022 budget, we are calling for an investment of 17 million for public waste management, including 4 million for the implementation of Commercial Waste Zones and 13 million to expand organics collection.

The City can begin to lay the groundwork for a cost-effective citywide, mandatory organic waste recycling system by doubling the capacity of the community food scrap drop-off program while piloting new technology, building and street designs, and community education to begin efficiently collecting food scraps for recycling from large multifamily buildings and public agencies. DSNY will need \$7 million to

expand community drop-off composting, plus \$6 million to initiate food scrap collection from larger residential and government buildings this year.

DSNY will also need an investment of 4 million dollars to staff up for the implementation of Commercial waste zones.

In addition to these sanitation and waste asks, Climate Works for All is calling for an investment in the following areas as well, totaling an investment of \$150 million.

80 million to retrofit public buildings

50 million for solar on schools in Environmental Justice neighborhoods

3 million towards clean transportation expansions via electric school buses

These investments are what is necessary to invest in New York's BIPOC and frontline Environmental Justice communities, address the inequities of the pandemic and move us out of the COVID crisis while addressing the climate crisis. We believe these investments will move us forward on the path towards an Equitable Recovery.

Thank you for your time and consideration today.

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ALIGN is a local affiliate of Jobs with Justice and the Partnership for Working Families



Contact: Clare Miflin
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Feb 28, 2021

Testimony for 3.4.21 Zero Waste Hearing

Funding needs to be provided to pilot equipment in buildings and containers on streets for organic waste. These pilots are essential to ensure all buildings can be set up for successful organic waste diversion, so that future citywide collection is equitable, affordable and accessible to all New Yorkers.

NYC has a diverse building stock, and for many buildings DSNY's small organics bins don't work well. Buildings with enough staff and space can manage them successfully, but most buildings just don't have the resources to do so.

Typically, trash is dropped into a chute, which feeds directly into a compactor and black bags. Those bags are 40% full of organic waste. To collect that waste in bins instead requires more labor and space. Many buildings have unventilated waste rooms, without enough space or staff to service the bins. Other buildings don't even have enough space for the bins in a central location, or staff to bring them back from the curb and keep them clean.

With the current suspension of organics collection, the city should fund pilots to determine the best way to set all buildings up for successful participation, and reduce costs for collection.

Equipment can be installed in buildings that reduces the volume of organic waste by 90%, eliminates odors, and produces an organic fertilizer. On-street containers allow residents in under-resourced buildings to drop off waste curbside.

How these systems are best set up for high participation, low contamination, easy management, low energy use and a high value output of compost or organic fertilizer, needs to be tested and evaluated.

Pilots can ensure that when the city restarts collection, the system will be successful, equitable and affordable, so all New Yorkers can participate in making their city greener, cleaner and more sustainable.

Food scraps are the most problematic part of the waste stream – bringing cockroaches and pest control chemicals to buildings; garbage juice, rats and odors to streets; and GHG emissions to landfills. Yet reducing and separating organic waste can also bring the greatest benefits to the city, by converting them into compost, organic fertilizer or biogas, which can regenerate local soils. This can be done in many ways, requiring differing amounts of space and labor, with community involvement or high-tech equipment. These different methods can all co-exist to ensure many paths to success and a resilient system. Compost can be used to grow food in urban gardens, and nourish the soils of parks and street trees so they retain more water to keep the city cool and reduce flooding. Organic fertilizer can be returned to the regional farm system to grow healthier food and eliminate the need for fertilizers from fossil fuels.

Please see attached illustrations for details on the proposed pilots.



DRAFT: Feb 24, 2021

ORGANIC WASTE PILOTS

Aims:

Investigate how municipal organic waste collection could be made easier for building staff, equitable so buildings without enough space or staff can participate successfully, and less expensive for DSNY to collect, by piloting:

- Organic waste processing equipment in buildings to reduce staff and space needs and make waste easier to manage
- On-street containers for consolidated drop off points for organic waste

Organic Waste Processing Equipment in Buildings:

Requirements:

Reduce volume, odors and weight of waste so that it:

- Takes up less space in building
- Is easier to manage - fewer pests, and reduced labor
- Reduces Vehicle Miles Traveled which reduces GHG and air pollution

Turns it into a usable product such as:

- Compost or soil amendment that can be collected by local community gardens, or used for street trees and urban greening projects.
- Dry bio-digester output which is collected by bio-digester company and used as a certified organic fertilizer.

Evaluation Criteria:

Organic waste collected:

- Quantity per occupant and dwelling unit
- Number of participating households
- Contamination levels

Equipment:

- Energy usage and GHG reductions
- Space Requirements
- Ease of installation and utility and venting requirements
- Maintenance requirements
- Staff time and expertise
- Use of output and benefits
- Costs
- Issues and challenges

On-Street Containers for Organic Waste:

Requirements:

Are sited in the curb lane, safe for traffic and able to be maintained and serviced:

- Follow DOT requirements for containers for Clean Curbs program and a maintenance agreement (could be with building staff, hauler or community partner)
- Are able to be collected by NYC Compost Project community partners or local microhaulers.
- Can be used by residents directly rather than building staff

Evaluation Criteria:

Organic waste collected:

- Quantity per occupant and dwelling unit
- Number of participating households
- Contamination levels

Containers:

- Space Requirements
- Ease of use and hauling
- Maintenance requirements
- Costs
- Issues and challenges

Engagement and Incentives:

Incorporate education and community engagement as well as incentives that mimic Save As You Throw to measure the impact on participation rates.

Dry Bio-Digester Pilot Scenario 1

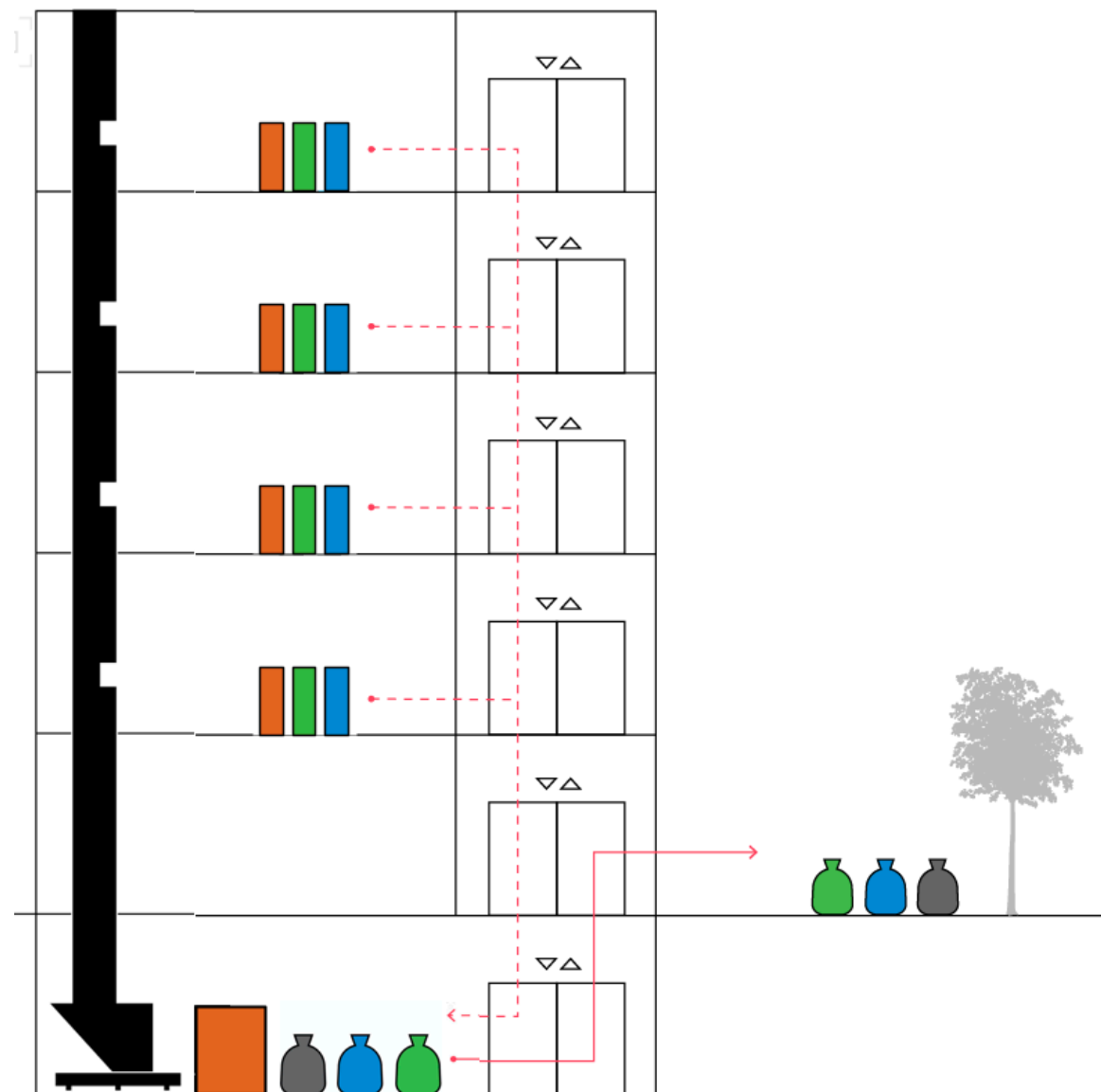
Residents take organic waste to waste rooms, staff take to central bio-digester

Suitable for buildings with

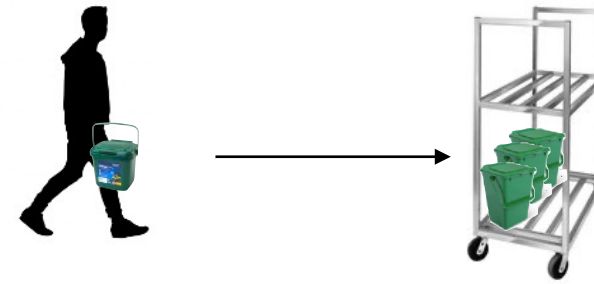
- Large well ventilated waste rooms that accommodate caddies rack or toter
- High level of staffing, to move waste to the bio-digester, and possibly wash caddies.

For example:

- The Helena, Solaire, or other buildings that were already collecting organic waste
- Recently constructed buildings will have well ventilated waste rooms, and typically have enough room for a slim toter / caddies on a shelf/ rack.



1a

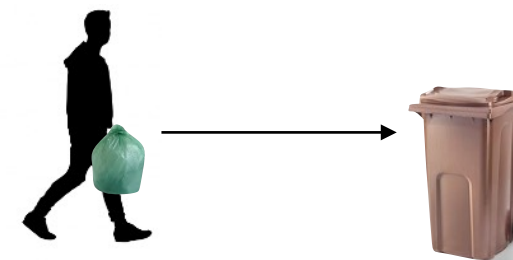


Residents take caddies of waste to a shelf or rack in the waste room on every story.

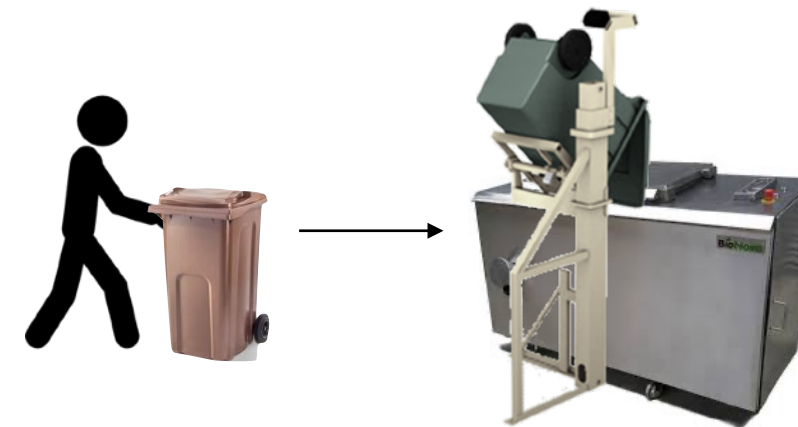


Staff wheel rack of caddies to central waste and empty into equipment. Apartment can be noted on each caddy allowing tracking of contamination and feedback to apartment. Caddies need to be washed by staff, tenants can pick up new one at central location or from waste room.

1b



Residents take compostable bag of waste to an organics toter in the waste room on every story.



Staff wheel organics toter to the centrally located equipment

Dry Bio-Digester Pilot Scenario 2

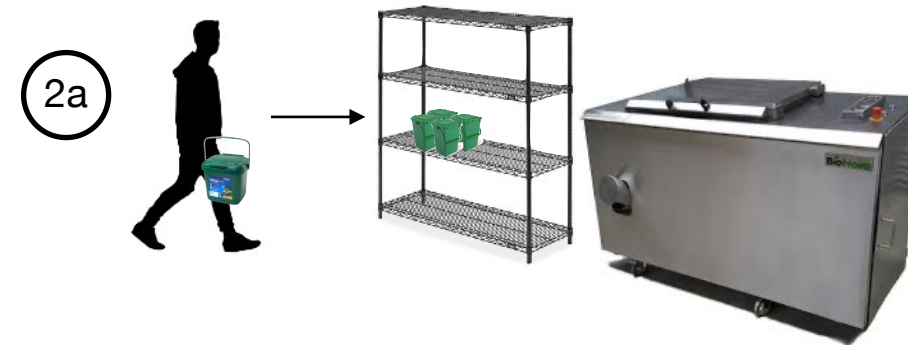
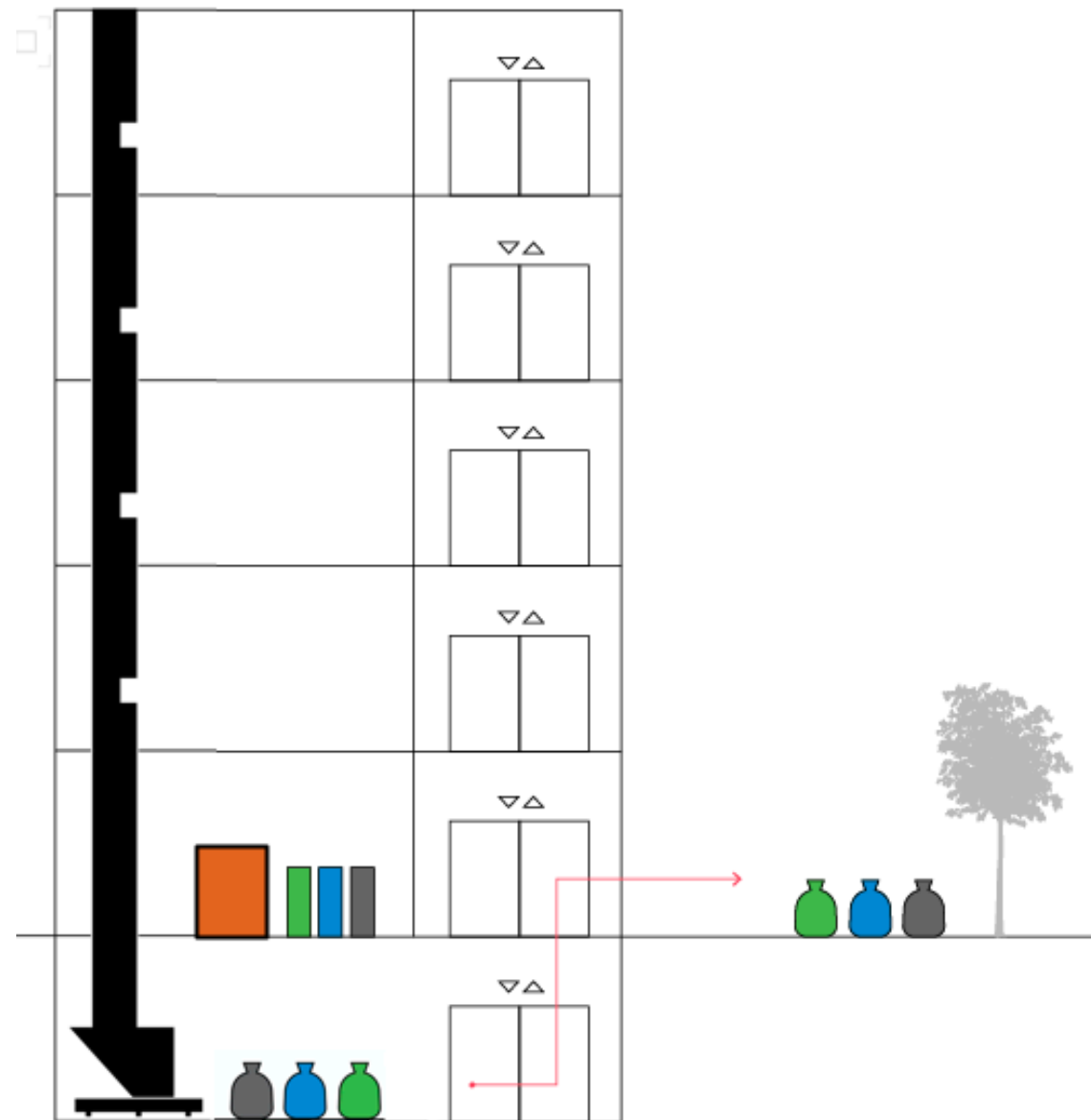
Residents take organic waste to central bio-digester

Suitable for buildings with

- Small or unventilated waste rooms
- Space for centrally located equipment - eg alongside a laundry room / behind lobby.
- Medium level of staffing to move waste to the bio-digester and possibly wash caddies.

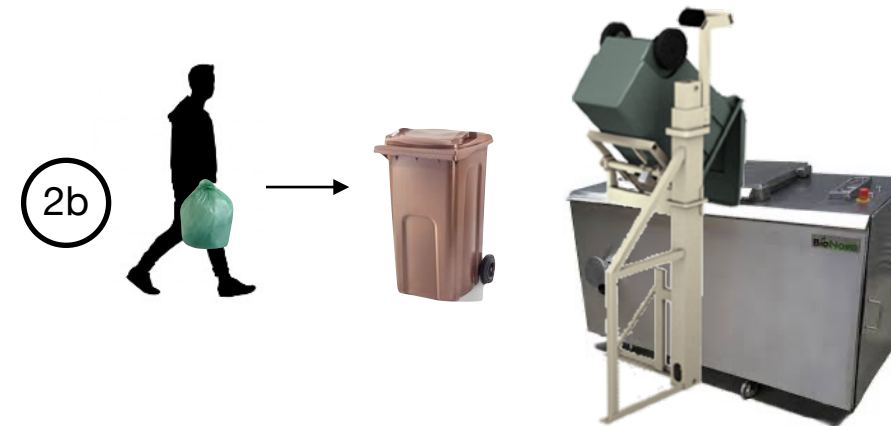
For example:

- Strivers Gardens, Stuy Town, or other buildings that were already collecting organic waste caddies centrally, or had central brown bins.
- Other buildings with central facilities (eg laundry room) or a doorman who can take waste caddies and offer a clean one.



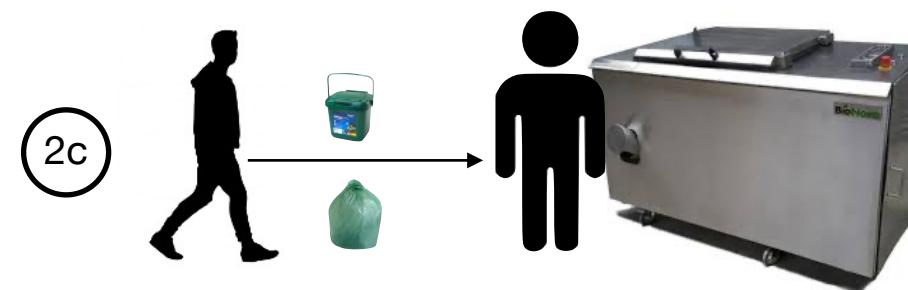
2a

Residents take caddies to a rack or shelves in a central location. Staff empty into equipment. Requires caddies, and staff need to wash them.



2b

Residents put compostable bags in a central toter. Staff empty toter into equipment. Requires a toter lifter, and residents need to use compostable bags.



2c

Residents take bags or caddies of waste to manned central equipment. Can use any type of bag and empty into a 5 gallon caddy by machine. Opportunity to educate and give feedback.

On-Street Container Pilot Scenario 3

Residents take organic waste to on-street container

Suitable for buildings with

- No waste rooms and/or unventilated central waste areas
- Part-time supers or no staff

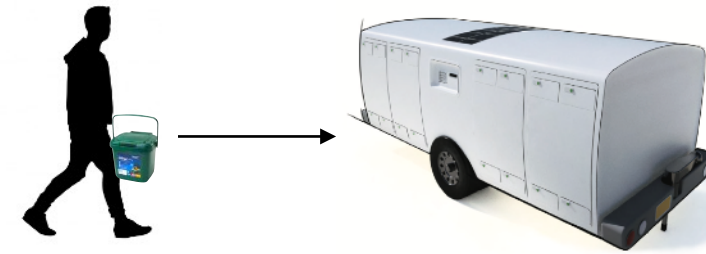
For example:

- Buildings with sidewalk containers for waste, eg tenement buildings like those in East or West Village or Lower East Side.
- 3-5 story residential above commercial spaces on ground floor, typical of main streets in all boroughs.



3a

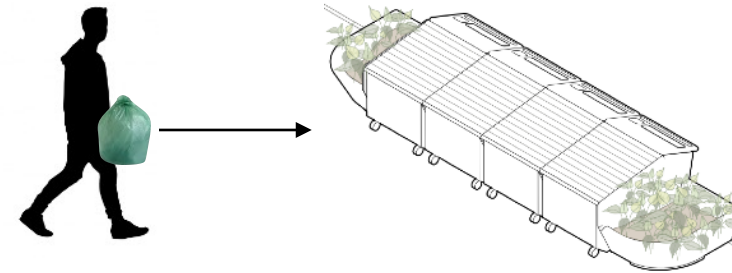
3b



Residents take caddy of food waste to on-street container, swap for new caddy. Use a key fob, app or combination lock to access.
3b - Use 5 gallon Bokashi caddies emptied once every 2 or 4 weeks.

Caddy vehicle by Center for Zero Waste Design shown - would pilot a simpler version of this made from off-the-shelf components.

3c



Residents take bag of waste to on-street container. Use a key fob, app or combination lock to access.

DaRT by Marvel and RTS shown.

Scenario	Description	Suitable for	Pilot run by	Notes	Costs	Total Cost
1	Dry Bio-Digester Residential Waste Rooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large well ventilated waste rooms that accommodate caddies rack or toter High level of staffing, to move waste to the bio-digester, and possibly wash caddies. 	Building Management	Assume 4 buildings of each setup - total 8	Equipment - \$30k/building Installation (vent, electric) - \$20k/building	\$400,000
2	Dry Bio-Digester Residential Central	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small or unventilated waste rooms Space for centrally located equipment - eg alongside a laundry room / behind lobby. Medium level of staffing to move waste to the bio-digester and possibly wash caddies. 	Building Management, or could be contracted out to compost consultant or partner	Assume 4 buildings of each setup - total 12	Equipment - \$30k/building Installation (vent, electric) - \$20k/building	\$600,000
3	On-street containers Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No waste rooms and/or unventilated central waste areas Part-time supers or no staff 	NYC Compost Project Partners - collect and process the waste	At least 4 of each setup - total 12	Design of 3 types = \$60k Fabrication - \$40k / station x 12 = \$480,000	\$540,000
4	On-street containers Litter bin waste from plazas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Union Square, Madison Square Park, other public places that generate a lot of food waste. 	Parks conservancy	Assume 3	Design = \$30k Fabrication - \$50k / station x 3 = \$150,000	\$180,000
5	Schools Pilot of shredder and dry bio-digester?					
					Assistance, set up equipment and incentives	\$200,000
					Pilot Design, Assessment and Oversight. (assume 1 year)	\$80,000
						\$2,000,000



Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste
Department Sanitation Budget Hearing March 4th, 2021, 2-4pm
Management of Refrigerant Disposal from Commercial Systems

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony for this hearing. My name is Jane Selden and I represent the local climate group 350NYC. We are testifying before the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste to discuss refrigerants—powerful greenhouse gases that are thousands of times more destructive than CO₂. Refrigerants in use now are mostly hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) and in some older equipment, chlorohydrocarbons (CFCs) They are components in refrigerators, air-conditioners, dehumidifiers, and a host of other machines. Refrigerants must be recovered before these systems are disposed of or they leak into the atmosphere, contributing significantly to extreme climate damage.

Based on data supplied by the DEC, we can estimate that the emissions of hydrofluorocarbons (HFC) in NYC is about 4 Mmtons of CO₂e and 70% of this is from large commercial air conditioners and stationary refrigeration systems. This represents about 6% of greenhouse gas emissions in the city. Over half of this emission occurs at end-of -life of the systems, due to trash haulers not following correct recovery and disposal protocols of refrigerant F-gases. Enquiries to DSNY in the past reveal that there has been little or no monitoring of commercial haulers practices in recovery and disposal of large refrigerator and A/C systems.

We now have an opportunity to change this. With the introduction of the new Commercial Waste Zone legislation (Int 1574) we recommend that:

- Commercial Haulers awarded contracts with the city be required to be trained in safe recovery and disposal of large refrigerant systems and refrigerant gases, according to procedure in the process of being finalized at the EPA.
- The DSNY establishes a database for monitoring of large systems collected from commercial haulers and the amount of HFC and CFC gas collected tracked.

In December 2020, Congress passed the American Innovation and Manufacturing Act, which gave the EPA authority to rewrite Refrigerant Management Regulations; these are now in the process of being finalized by the Biden EPA [2021-02774.pdf \(federalregister.gov\)](https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/02/27/2021-02774). We urge DSNY to establish an office of Refrigerant Recovery with adequate capacity to oversee and enforce Refrigerant Management, Recovery, Disposal and Monitoring of both Commercial Haulers and Residential Collection. We recommend that if NYC is to reach its stated climate goal it is crucial that adequate funding be included in the Department of Sanitation of New York's budget to hire personnel to ensure enforcement, recovery, disposal and monitoring of HFCs and CFCs.

Sincerely

Jane Selden
janselo2000@yahoo.com

Steering Committee for 350NYC

TESTIMONY OF HARRY NESPOLI, PRESIDENT USA LOCAL 831 IBT
BEFORE COMMITTEE ON SANITATION & SOLID WASTE

MARCH 4, 2021

CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE, I WOULD LIKE TO BEGIN BY THANKING CHAIRPERSON REYNOSO AND THE REST OF THE COMMITTEE FOR YOUR SUPPORT FOR OUR MEMBERS. THESE HAVE BEEN VERY DIFFICULT TIMES FOR OUR NATION AND OUR CITY. MILLIONS OF AMERICANS HAVE SUFFERED WITH COVID-19, AND A HALF-MILLION AMERICANS HAVE LOST THEIR LIVES.

OUR MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES HAVE BEEN IMPACTED AS WELL. SINCE THIS VIRUS FIRST HIT US, FOUR OF OUR MEMBERS HAVE LOST THEIR LIVES, AS WE MOURNED FOR THEIR FAMILIES MORE THAN 1,200 OF OUR MEMBERS HAVE TESTED POSITIVE FOR THE VIRUS.

THAT NUMBER GOES UP EVERY DAY.

AT THIS VERY MOMENT, WE HAVE MORE THAN 250 MEMBERS WHO HAVE TESTED POSITIVE. THIRTY-NINE OF THEM IN A SINGLE BROOKLYN GARAGE! EVERY ONE OF THESE MEMBERS MUST BE QUARANTINED.

THEY CANNOT WORK!

WHO KNOWS HOW MANY OF THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS AND OTHERS THEY HAVE COME INTO CONTACT WITH WHO NOW HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO THE VIRUS? YET, DESPITE THESE TROUBLING NUMBERS OUR MEMBERS STILL CANNOT GET ACCESS TO THE VACCINE.

HOW CAN IT BE THAT OUR MEN AND WOMEN WHO ARE OUT ON THE STREET KEEPING THE CITY CLEAN AREN'T CONSIDERED WORTHY ENOUGH TO HOLD 1-B STATUS AND ACCESS TO THE VACCINE?

WE ARE OUT ON THE STREETS AND IN THE GARAGES EVERY DAY. WE CANNOT WORK FROM HOME AND ZOOM DOESN'T HAVE A PROMPT FOR PICKING UP GARBAGE OR PLOWING SNOW!

EVEN UNDER THE BEST OF CIRCUMSTANCES FILLING OUT WORK ROSTERS AND REWORKING SCHEDULES CAN BE A CHALLENGE. ALONG WITH THE PANDEMIC, OUR HEADCOUNT HAS DROPPED FROM 6,700 TO 6,000. THINK ABOUT THAT.

TODAY, THERE ARE AT LEAST 920 FEWER WORKERS AVAILABLE TO DO THE JOB. THAT DOESN'T COUNT THOSE WHO ARE SICK, ON VACATION OR OTHERWISE UNAVAILABLE.

EVEN MORE DISTURBING IS THE HIRING PIPELINE MAY SOON RUN DRY. DUE TO THE FINANCIAL CRUNCH CREATED BY THE VIRUS, THE CITY HAS CANCELLED THE LAST THREE SCHEDULED CLASSES.

THE MEMBERS OF THIS COMMITTEE KNOW AND UNDERSTAND HOW HARD OUR MEMBERS WORK. WE KNOW THE WORK CAN BE CHALLENGING, WHETHER IT IS CLEARING THE STREETS AFTER A BLIZZARD OR A SUPERSTORM LIKE SANDY, OUR MEMBERS ANSWER THE CALL EVERY DAY.

WE CAN ONLY DO SO MUCH. IT HAS NOW BEEN ONE YEAR SINCE WE WERE HIT WITH COVID-19. IT HIT ALL OF US, KNOCKED US DOWN AND LEFT MANY OF US WITH PAINFUL LOSS.

OUR MEMBERS STILL GET UP EVERY MORNING AND DO THEIR JOB. ALL WE ASK IS FOR IS THAT THE CITY PROVIDE US WITH THE MANPOWER TO DO THE JOB RIGHT. PROVIDING OUR MEMBERS WITH 1-B STATUS AND ACCESS TO THE VACCINE, IS A GOOD WAY TO START.

THANK YOU.



RESOURCE SHEET: COMMUNITY COMPOSTING AND DSNY MARINE TRANSFER SITE

Presented by Lisa Bloodgood Director of Advocacy and Education Newtown Creek Alliance for
the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management
March 4, 2021

Compost in North Brooklyn: General Information and a Proposal Prepared by Newtown Creek Alliance, the North Brooklyn Community Composting Project, and local residents. Winter 2021

Background: In March 2020, GrowNYC compost sites and other food scrap drop-offs were shuttered due to COVID-19 protocols. On May 4th, DSNY suspended brown bin / curbside compost collection for the remainder of the fiscal year, until at least summer 2021. Since early summer, numerous community members and organizations have stepped up to provide critical organic waste diversion options for thousands of local residents.

GrowNYC Compost at McCarren Park

After closing in late March due to city budget cuts, the GrowNYC food scrap collection at the McCarren Park Greenmarket reopened on Saturday, October 3rd. Since then, they have diverted more than 27,000 lbs of organic matter from landfills. On average, more than 400 neighbors drop off around 3,000 lbs of food scraps and yard waste per week. All scraps collected are processed by Big Reuse in Queens.

North Brooklyn Compost Project at McGolrick Park

The North Brooklyn Compost Project launched on June 6th as an initiative of North Brooklyn Mutual Aid. NBK Compost primarily operates out of McGolrick Park. The initiative has consistently collected food scraps from the community for 31 weeks straight (as of 1/9). On average, NBK Compost collects approximately 2,800 lbs of food scrap and yard waste from nearly 500 residents or households each week. The initiative has diverted 62,500 lbs of organic waste from landfills since June. All scraps collected are processed by Big Reuse in Queens.

BK Scrap Shuttle at Cooper Park

BK Scrap Shuttle was started in July 2020 as a response to the city of New York's budget cuts and cancellation of the brown bin organics pick-up. BK Scrap Shuttle operates out of Cooper Park in East Williamsburg. The initiative has grown from serving 25-30 people per week and about 200 lbs of food waste to approximately 100 people per week and 750+ lbs of scraps per week. To date BK Scrap Shuttle has redirected around 10,000 lbs of food waste from landfills.

North Brooklyn Compost Project at Transmitter Park

North Brooklyn Compost Project launched a new winter outpost outside Transmitter Park to provide another option for those living on the waterfront side of Greenpoint. Since the first collection on December 13th, the outpost has diverted 1,700 lbs of organic waste from landfills. All scraps collected are processed by Big Reuse in Queens.

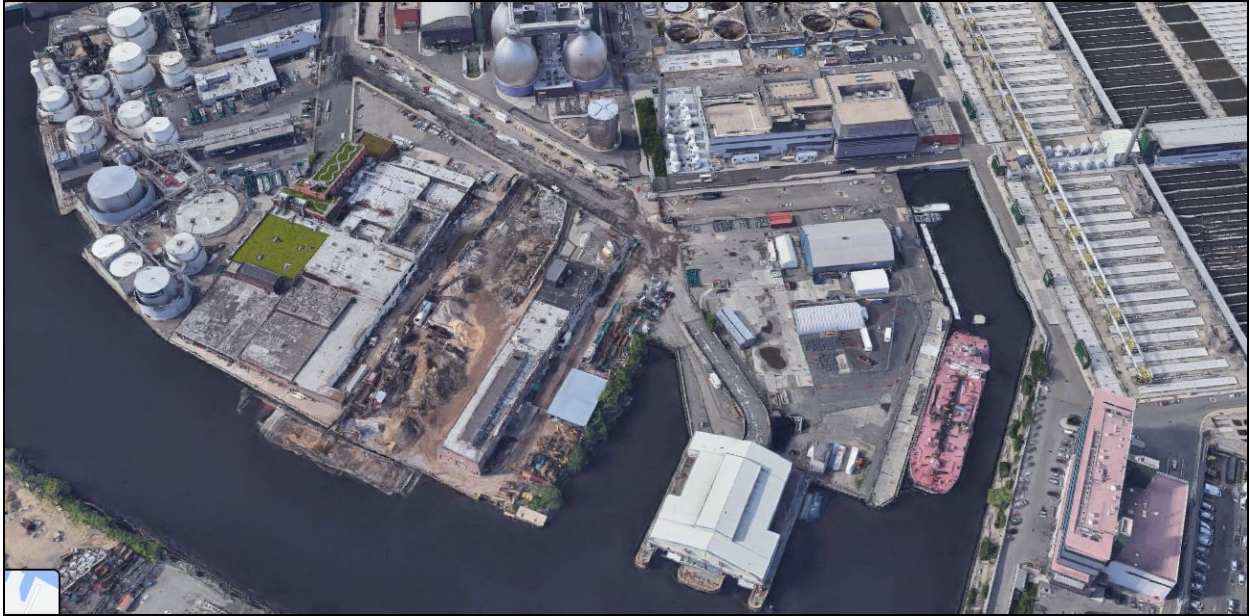
Since mid-summer/early fall, organizations in North Brooklyn have diverted over 100,000 lbs of food scraps and organic waste from landfills. If able to continue, these organizations are on track to divert nearly 225,000 lbs of organic waste annually.

It is clear that community-scale compost processing sites, like Big Reuse, Lower East Side Ecology Center, Redhook Community Farm, and BK Rot, are integral to the future sustainability of New York City. If community-scale compost sites have taught us anything, it is that these small, highly efficient and nimble compost sites can have substantial impact on the communities they serve. The City and its agencies should look to these sites as models to replicate and actively seek opportunities to insert community-scale compost sites into more neighborhoods.

COMMUNITY COMPOST: North Brooklyn
A pilot organics recycling program in Greenpoint.



Rendering Courtesy of Newtown Creek Alliance, Riverkeeper, Perkins + Will. Taken from the 2018 Newtown Creek Vision Plan.



Aerial view of existing site looking south: Bounded by Whale Creek and DEP operations to the east, No Name Inlet and industrial and ecological uses to the west, Newtown Creek to the north and the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Facility and the Newtown Creek Nature Walk to the south.

Brief:

We are seeking access to one half acre of dedicated space within DSNY's Greenpoint Marine Transfer Station to create a new community-scale compost processing site.

Who:

A coalition of nonprofits, individuals, and elected officials came together to respond to the current crisis in food waste management, to collaborate on a solutions oriented plan to develop new community composting options.

What:

We are seeking approval to occupy one half acre of dedicated space within the existing underutilized DSNY property known as the Greenpoint Marine Transfer Station, located in northern Greenpoint to house a community composting operation. Our goal is to connect existing compost drop off sites, micro-haulers, and Master Composters, with a physical site to process food waste and to make compost as a resource for distribution to surrounding communities. This would be a replicable operation, with minimal needs, that if proven successful, could take place in other communities citywide that demonstrate similar existing components and space.

Why:

Prior to the suspension of the Department of Sanitation's (DSNY) Curbside Composting Program, New York City had the largest municipal organics recycling program in the country



with more than three million residents served. This program, coupled with the decades-old NYC Compost Project, represented dedication and commitment—at a municipal level—to transforming New York City’s soil and air quality, and reducing its waste. With the curbside program suspended as of July 2020 and the drastic cuts made to the NYC Compost Project budget as a result of the COVID-19 emergency, New York City risks undoing decades of important work and sends a message that in an emergency, our resiliency networks and environmental initiatives are first to the chopping block.

Through the establishment of a community-based composting initiative in partnership with the City but operating outside of its budgets, we can recommit, at a grassroots community level, to the OneNYC goal of becoming “the most resilient, equitable, and sustainable city in the world.” Additionally, we are proposing a pilot program for hyperlocal compost processing to continue the NYC Compost Project’s pursuit “to rebuild NYC’s soils by providing New Yorkers with the knowledge, skills, and opportunities they need to produce and use compost locally.”

This project aligns with the City’s waste management and reduction goals, by limiting the need for long-distance hauling of organics, reducing air pollution, and promoting the expansion of neighborhood and greenmarket drop-off sites. The resulting end product is a soil amendment that the community can use for growing food, reviving degraded urban soils, and enhancing urban ecosystem services. With this soil amendment, or compost, we will remediate soils contaminated by decades of industrial and urban pollution, and create the ability to grow food locally with compost.

Where:

The proposed facility can be sited on underutilized city-owned property, located at the decommissioned DSNY Marine Transfer Station (MTS) in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. By utilizing this site, bringing in established and experienced compost processing partners, creating new green jobs, and capitalizing on innovative technology, we can localize a community’s processing of food waste and other organics.

We recognize the need for the successful and robust future of mandatory residential and commercial composting. This proposal builds on years of work by the City, individuals, and groups, positioning us to continue to share the knowledge and skills pertaining to urban community composting. This proposed project seeks to capitalize on the city-wide community actions catalyzed by the City’s suspension of funding for residential and community composting. There is a clear imperative to link grassroots and local efforts with the high level broad city-wide goals to keep organic waste from ending up in landfills and to create a much-needed resource for the future resilience of our communities.

While the focus of this proposal is to create compost in Greenpoint Brooklyn, the model we seek to create can be applied on a neighborhood scale across the city, building off existing work in communities, and scaling to fit a community’s capabilities and needs.

How:

Not for Profit Model

ALTERNATIVE SYSTEM: 4 Phase Aerated Static Pile System to Process 1 million lbs of Organics/Year. *Would likely require initial capital investment*.*

- **Phase 1**
 - Install 2 bays: 30' x 100,'
 - 2 90' 4" PVC aeration pipes,
 - 2 40' x 110' Compostex Covers,
 - 2 B-Air Koala Blowers,
 - 2 Intermatic Blower controls,
 - 4 110v outlets.
- **Phase 2, 3, 4,**
 - 20' x 80' windrows, 3 30' x 100' Compostex covers.
 - 4 month turnaround time from food scrap to screened compost.

Paid Personnel:

- Operations Coordinator to manage compost operations and volunteer engagement.
 - This staff person would train staff on mechanized aerated static pile composting.
- Subcontracted local food scrap collection and hauling to serve immediate neighborhoods.
- Drop-off sites to be determined with the focus on centralizing the transport to the MTS.

Post processing opportunities to give back and grow:

1. Compost distribution back to community.
2. Food scraps Pick-up service for fee
3. Education Programs
4. Paid Personnel:
 - a. Master Composter
 - b. Asst in training
 - c. Educator
5. For Profit Model: small businesses drop-off

NOTES

1. Partner with local Schools to encourage organics recycling and urban farming.
2. Partner with local community gardens to distribute the newly produced compost for the community to use in community gardens and residential gardens.
3. Create green jobs in the community.
4. Creating waste management redundancy at community level to improve and strengthen overall resilience locally and citywide.

Oasis Map of Site

<http://www.oasisnyc.net/map.aspx?etabs=1&zoomto=lot:3025080001>

Total Lot Area: 6 ½ Acres 276,135 Square Feet

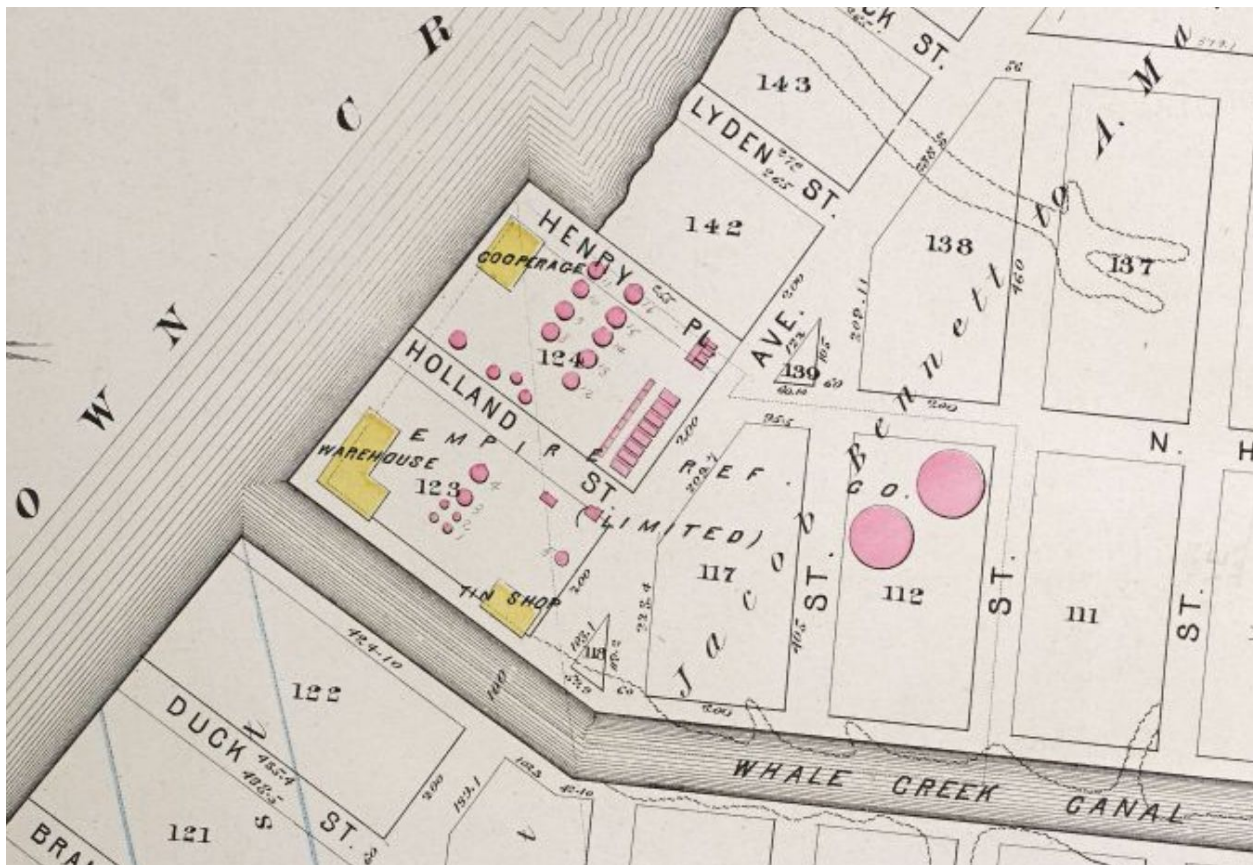
A half acre, if given access and proper funding, could process more than 1 million lbs of organics per year.

Historical Timeline of Site

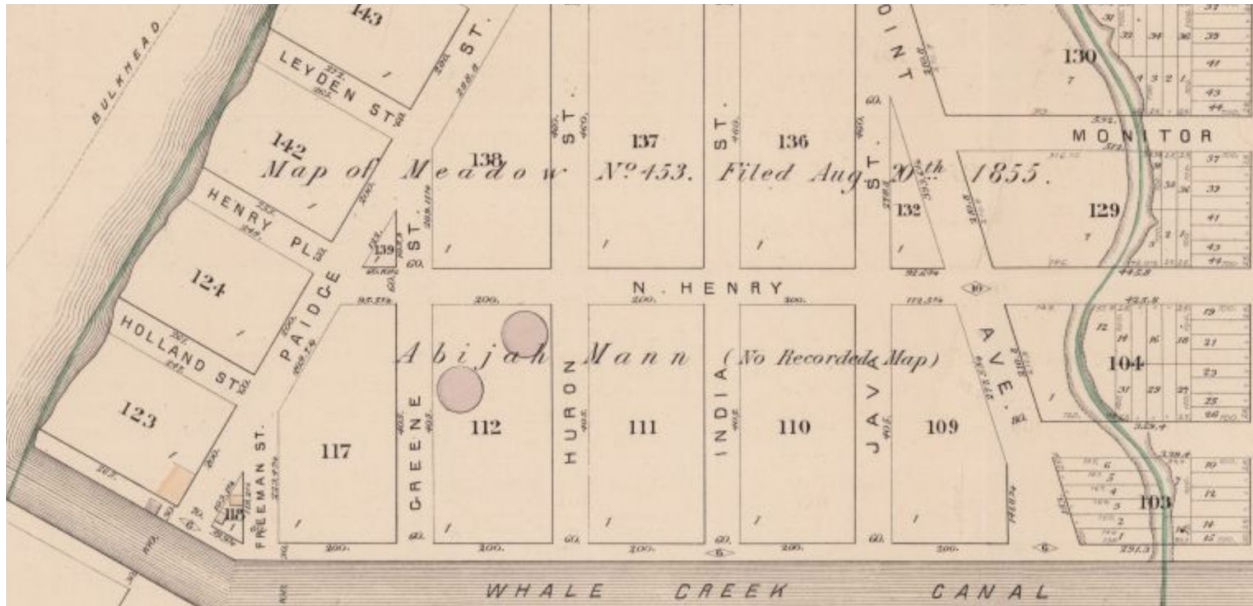
[1797](#): a vast marshy delta sits at the mouth of Whale Creek.

[1850](#): “Certain property in the vicinity of Whale creek, Brooklyn” is deeded to Abijah Mann, Jr.; Per this 1907 document, the land is acquired by the City (specifically, by the Department of Docks and Ferries) a half-century later — first, to become a “public basin,” and later an incinerator, and finally, a Marine Transfer Station. **It is unclear what the boundaries of this land, owned by Mann and then the City, are.**

[1855](#): Land near Whale Creek is mapped as “public meadows.” Again, the boundaries of these meadows are unclear. Were these meadows along the shore, and was Mann’s land further ashore? Or did Mann’s land fully comprise the future MTS site, and was the “meadow” something else entirely?



[1880](#) (above -- screenshot, not full original jpg): Empire Refining is operating just east of the mouth of Whale Creek. (Empire was later obtained by Rockefeller’s Standard Oil.)



[1880](#) (above -- screenshot, not full original jpg): Again, was the land in question ever part of that “meadow”? Was it public property while within the municipality of Bushwick? Again, unclear here!

[1880](#): Or did a “Jacob Bennett” own the land before Mann did? (How much does that matter to us? Not much, probably!)

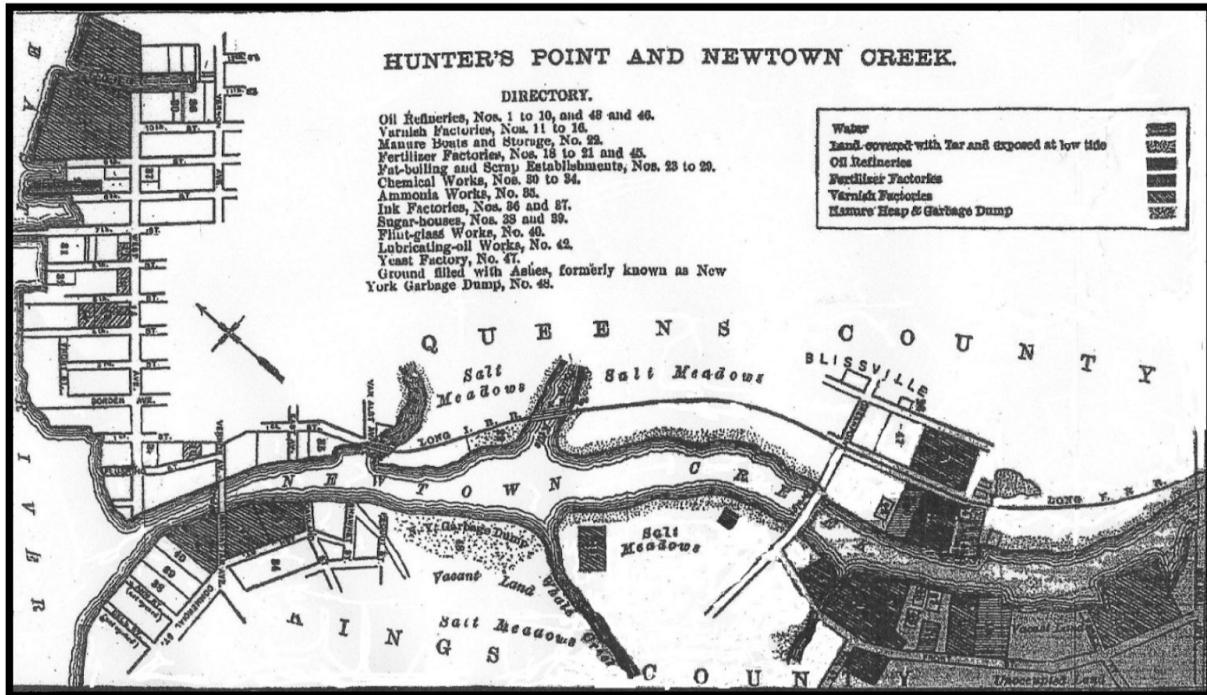
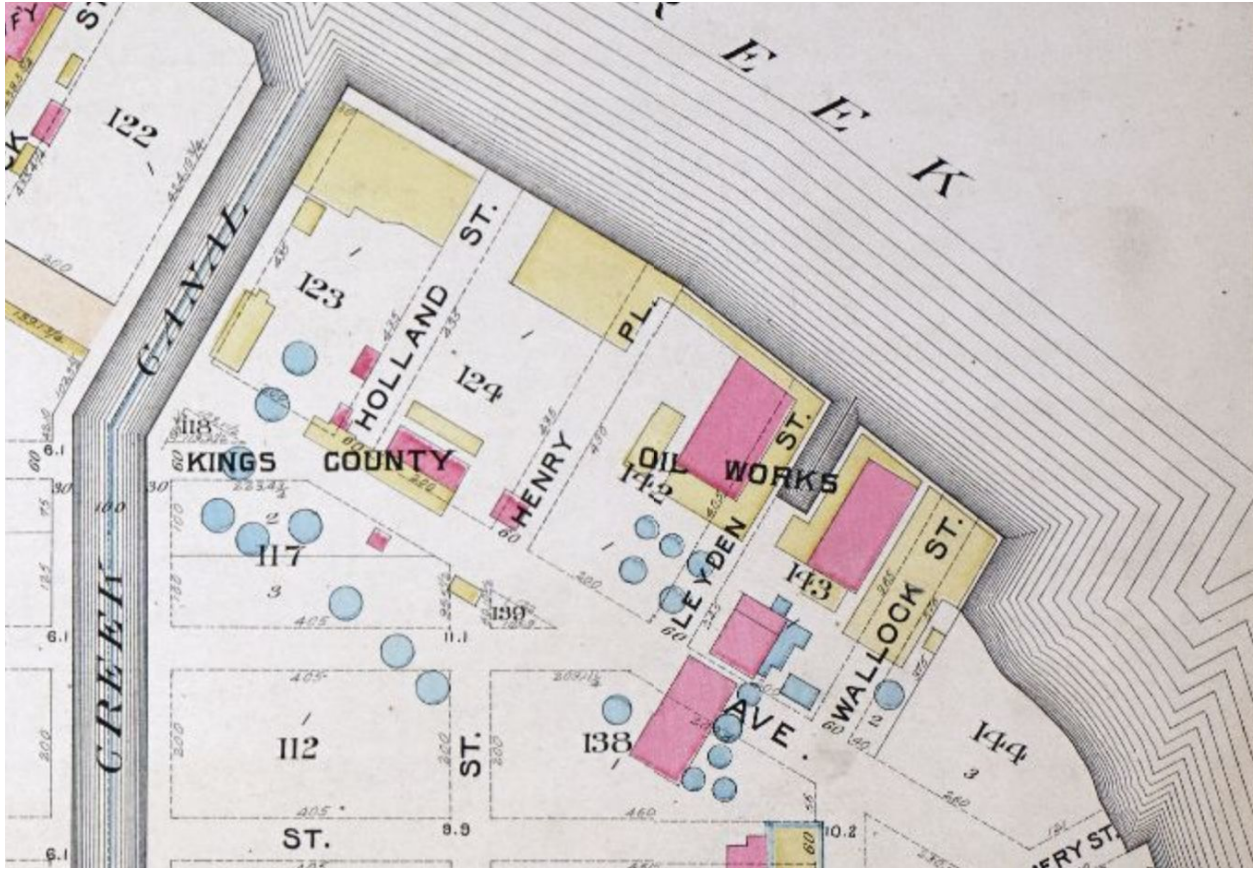


Figure 2.6. Map of Hunter's Point and Newtown Creek (Harper's Weekly 1881), showing locations of principal communities, industries, and land use within the lower Newtown Creek watershed (Brooklyn Public Library).

[1881](#) (above): An Oil Refinery, and "Salt Meadows"



[1893](#) (above -- screenshot, not full original jpg): Empire's operation labeled as "Kings County Oil Works"

The Committee on Municipal Affairs of the Manufacturers' Association held a meeting in the Manufacturers' Building, No. 198 Montague street, last night, to discuss the proposed building of a public dock at the Head of Whale Creek Canal, in Greenpoint. Several manufacturers from Greenpoint and the vicinity were present to advocate the immediate construction of a basin at the head of the creek to relieve the traffic which now enters at the only public dock in that locality, which is at the foot of Noble street.

[October 1902](#) (highlight above, full clipping linked): [Local manufacturers] held a meeting... last night to discuss the proposed building of a public dock at the head of Whale Creek Canal, in Greenpoint. Several manufacturers from Greenpoint and the vicinity were present to advocate the immediate construction of a basin at the head of the creek to relieve the traffic which now enters at the only public dock in that locality, which is at the foot of Noble street.

The Hon. McDougall Hawkes, Commissioner of Docks and Ferries, has approved of the project to erect a basin and docks on Whale Creek, near Greenpoint avenue, and the plans have been placed before the Sinking Fund Commission of the City of New York and by them referred to the chief engineer of the Department of Finance for investigation and report. Commissioner

[December 1903](#) (highlight above, full clipping linked): Plans approved for basin

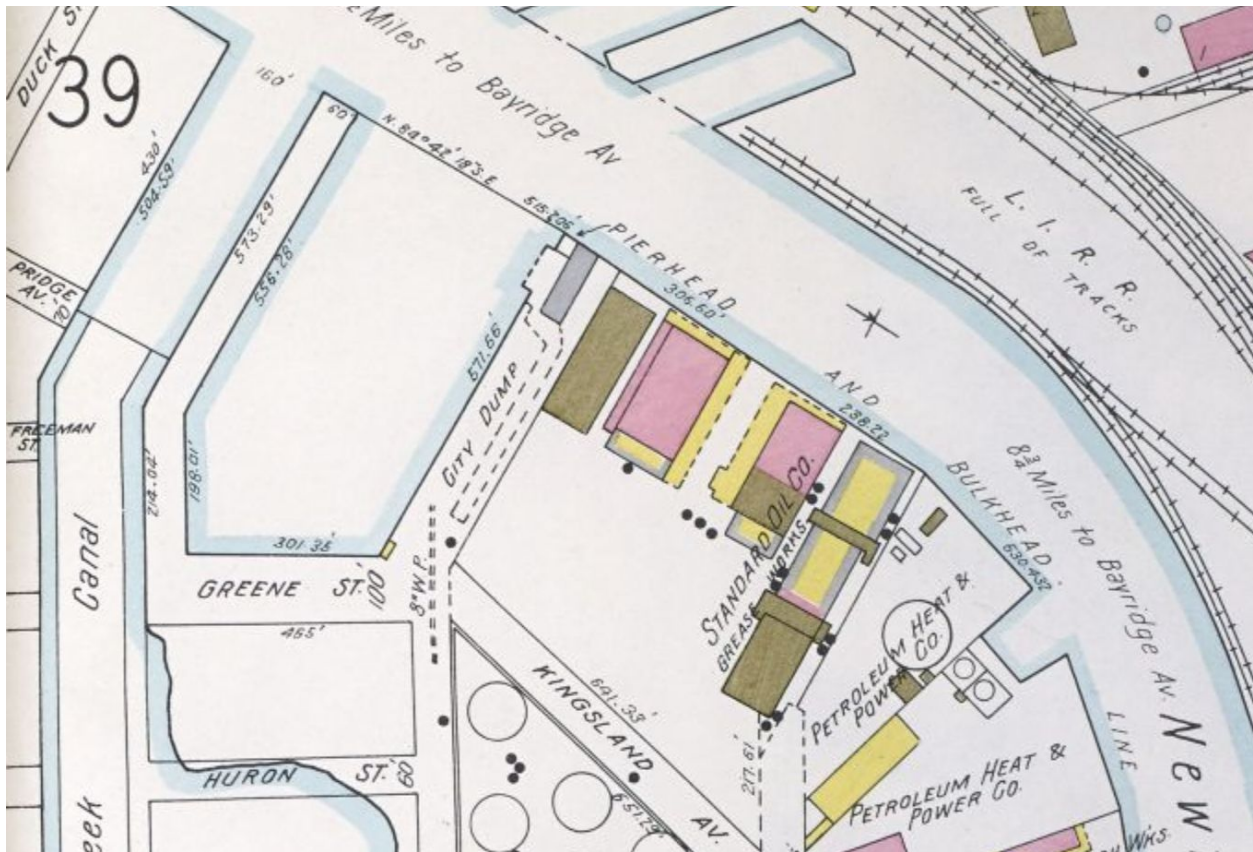
[1904](#): First (and back-dated!!) mapping of the “public basin” adjacent to whale creek. Displaces the refining operation.

NEW YORK SUPREME COURT, SECOND JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT—In the matter of the application of The City of New York, acting by and through the Commissioner of Docks, relative to acquiring right and title to and possession of certain uplands, filled-in lands, lands and lands under water, wharf property, wharfage rights, terms, easements, emoluments and privileges of and to the uplands, filled-in lands, lands and lands under water, and wharf property necessary to be taken for the improvement of the water front and harbor of The City of New York in the vicinity of Whale Creek, in the Borough of Brooklyn, in The City of New York, pursuant to a certain plan heretofore adopted by the Commissioner of Docks, and approved by the Commissioners of the Sinking Fund.

[June 1907](#) (highlight above, full clipping linked): notice in newspaper regarding Docks and Ferries plans to obtain property

[August 1907](#): "Proceedings have been instituted to acquire the necessary property to secure pier room which existed only on Whale creek..." Planning for two piers. (Dept. Docks and Ferries)

[1924](#): an aerial photograph shows the public basin.



[1928](#) (above -- screenshot, not full original jpg): a “city dump” is labeled on the northernmost block of North Henry

I'd love to be able to say with any certainty that the former MTS site was also once public open space, held in common by the people of Bushwick and/or later Brooklyn. But I can't say that with what I've got access to online at this point. For now, all I can say is that this land was open land, until it was used by the oil industry, and then the city obtained it and dug out a huge basin, and then the city filled back in most of the basin to build an incinerator, and now it's what it is now.

MARINE TRANSFER STATION & GREENPOINT

From NCA's Report: North Henry Street A Vision for Ecological Restoration and Community Access

INCINERATOR - 1956 TO 2002

The Greenpoint Incinerator and Greenpoint Marine Transfer Station (MTS) began as a small ash dump established by the City of New York in the 1920s, eventually evolved into two waste facilities. Both facilities were built out over Newtown Creek, reducing the size of 'No Name', which was then separated from Whale Creek by a narrow pier. The Incinerator was in operation



from 1958 to 1994 and eventually demolished in 2002, just a year after the MTS ceased operation with the closure of Fresh Kills landfill in 2001. For decades, these facilities generated enormous amounts of truck traffic and air pollution, affecting the surrounding area. It was an environmental burden that fueled great concern and disfavor from Greenpoint residents. A 2004 study examined the option to re-design and reopen a handful of defunct NYC MTS facilities; ultimately the Greenpoint facility was not selected. As of 2015, the MTS remains out of commission with no proposed plans for use going forward.



**Testimony of Carlos Castell Croke
Associate for NYC Programs
New York League of Conservation Voters**

**City Council Committee on Sanitation
Preliminary Budget Hearing
March 4, 2021**

Good afternoon, my name is Carlos Castell Croke and I am the Associate for New York City Programs at the New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV). NYLCV represents over 30,000 members in New York City and we are committed to advancing a sustainability agenda that will make our people, our neighborhoods, and our economy healthier and more resilient. I would like to thank Chair Reynoso and all of the Council Members on the committee for the opportunity to testify today.

NYLCV supports a Fiscal Year 2022 City budget that secures progress on many of the environmental, transportation, and public health priorities Mayor de Blasio has committed to in OneNYC and beyond. Our city is on the precipice of the road to recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, and it is incumbent upon our elected leaders to invest our tax dollars in climate action and solutions as we rebound from this crisis and not lose ground.

Last year, the City made substantial cuts to programs that were originally implemented to make progress on our sanitation-related climate goals. The City was already behind schedule on meeting its Zero Waste goal of reducing the amount of waste we send to landfills by 90% by 2030 before these cuts, so we implore that the City take bold action to drastically reduce waste over the next 9 years.

First, we must ensure that the Department of Sanitation has the funding they need to properly implement Commercial Waste Zones. This program, which was established as Local Law 199 of 2019, will reduce emissions and improve safety for workers and pedestrians by requiring commercial carters to operate within waste zones instead of rushing to cover long and gratuitous routes. We ask that the Department of Sanitation receive \$4M to fully fund the staff, consultants, and data management needed to implement this program.

The FY22 budget must also include \$14M in funding for composting programs across the city that will start to bring us back towards our Zero Waste goals. This \$14M will include doubling the current funding for New York's food scrap drop off program, providing additional funding to

large scale compost sites such as BigReuse and the LES Ecology Center, reinstating the in-school composting educational program, and exploring a multi-family building collection pilot program.

This \$14M in funding will set the city up to take aggressive waste reduction actions in the near future. Initially, the City Council should pass Intros 1942 and 1943, sponsored by Council Members Powers and Reynoso respectively. These bills would establish community compost and recycling drop off sites to equitably serve New York City's residents by establishing and enforcing good recycling habits and reducing waste. Then, very soon after this, the City needs to introduce legislation to create a citywide curbside composting program and ensure that this program is fully funded. This initiative will ultimately save the city money, put organic materials back to use as fuels and soil amendments instead of treated as waste, reduce emissions from landfills, and put us back on track with our waste reduction goals.

Achieving Zero Waste and carbon neutrality will require financial commitments from the City in this and future budgets and we look forward to working with the City to achieve this goal.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.



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**Testimony of Justin Wood, Director of Policy
at the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management Hearing on the FY 22
Preliminary Budget
Dated March 4, 2021**

Good afternoon, my name is Justin Wood and I am the Director of Policy at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest.

Thank you Chair Reynoso and members of the Committee on Sanitation for the opportunity to testify today, and for your consistent leadership on the critical issues of racial equity, worker safety, sustainability, and green jobs in our City's solid waste system.

We should no longer need to debate the clear and present danger posed by greenhouse gas emissions, including those from solid waste, which is fully within the City's control. The recent extreme weather crisis in Texas and the Midwest is just the latest reminder.

We cannot afford to abandon our efforts to transform both the commercial and residential waste systems to sharply reduce climate emissions, air pollution, and the safety hazards caused by an outdated system that exports far too much waste to landfills and incinerators in environmental justice communities.

At a bare minimum, we urge you to ensure that the DSNY budget includes adequate funding for two key programs:

First, we need to continue with full and robust implementation of Commercial Waste Zone (CWZ) Law (Local Law 199) passed by the Council in 2019, including a transition to zero-emissions private sanitation truck fleets and major investment in recycling infrastructure. After pausing due to a COVID-related downturns in the commercial waste sector, DSNY is preparing to issue the second phase of an RFP that will set far high standards for safe streets and working conditions, recycling, pollution reduction, and local job creation in the notoriously dangerous and inefficient NYC commercial waste industry. The historic transition to a far more efficient and accountable zone system will benefit workers and environmental justice communities who have been among the hardest hit by this pandemic and unemployment

crisis, will improve service and transparency for businesses, will reduce emissions and stimulate local investment by increasing recycling, and will make the streets safer and cleaner for all New Yorkers. We understand that DSNY will need about \$4 million to hire staff to negotiate the contracts underpinning this new system and to enforce environmental, labor, and safety standards in the commercial waste industry – with the expectation that the new system can become self-sustaining in the future.

Second, we call on the Council and the Mayor to make much-needed investments in residential organic waste recycling. In a city that generates more than 1.6 million tons of organic waste annually, recycling all food scraps as locally as possible should be a major priority for emissions reduction and job creation.

In the interim, the Save Our Compost coalition believes that a modest \$14 million budget – which is still only half of what the DSNY’s limited, pre-COVID organics recycling budget — would allow us make meaningful progress toward organic waste diversion goals. Our proposal would support vital in-city composters, double the reach of the popular food scrap drop off program, restart critical compost and zero waste education in public schools, and begin piloting innovative technologies and outreach programs to ensure that the majority of New Yorkers living in multifamily buildings will soon have accessible, easy ways to recycling their food scraps.

Sadly, our community composters spent much of the last year fighting for their survival amidst funding cuts, layoffs, and to simply renew their licenses to remain on tiny plots of public parkland. We deeply appreciate the advocacy of allies on the City Council and within DSNY to let these programs and communities survive. We now call on the administration and the Council to make what is truly a modest financial commitment to these programs this year, so next year we can begin the serious work of bringing universal organics recycling to every NYC resident and business, and create the equitable and sustainable solid waste system our city deserves.

Justin Wood
Director of Policy
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest
jwood@nylpi.org
212.244.4664

March 4, 2020

Thank you, Chairman Reynoso, and members of the Committee for this opportunity to testify in support of **increasing funding for GrowNYC & other compost programs** in the Department of Sanitation budget for Fiscal Year 2022.

My name is Sarah Gallagher and I am a resident of Manhattan's Upper East Side.

I can't tell you how disheartened residents of our area were to learn that our great City is planning yet another year of inadequate funding for composting programs!!.

Especially disheartened given – and as unlikely as it would seem in an area largely considered to be populated by the wealthy and spoiled - the astonishing year-to-year leaps in compost drop-offs at each of our 3 year-round and 1 seasonal collection sites. To wit:

020 Recycling at 82nd (from 1/4/2020 - 3/25/2020):

2019 TOTAL - 146,368 POUNDS COMPOST (73.2 TONS)

2018 TOTAL - 102,374 POUNDS (51.2 TONS)

2020 Recycling at 92nd):

2019 TOTAL: 2019 TOTAL - 19,643 POUNDS (9.8 TONS)

2018 TOTAL - 15,821 POUNDS (7.9 TONS)

2020 Compost collected at Lenox Hill, 70th & First (from 1/8/20-3/25/20): 110 bins

2019 TOTALS: 28,259 POUNDS (14.1 TONS)

2018 TOTALS: 16,292 POUNDS (8.11 TONS)

2019 Compost collected at 96th & Lex (from 1/9/20-3/25/20): 294 bags; 12,522 lbs

2019 TOTALS: 43,417 POUNDS (21.7 TONS)

2018 TOTALS: 23,231 POUNDS (11.65 TONS)

That in a time of a health crisis there were any cuts to Sanitation's share of the budget has been the source of continuing shock and worry. That our most progressive city would once again be sending our waste – best case – to distant waste-to-energy facilities or – worst – to landfill added shame to the mix. And that we're now purchasing finished compost to enrich soil throughout our city's parks, community gardens and volunteer gardening projects...

Well, be it financially or morally, how can we allow this state of affairs to continue?

Please... Please... Please...

Let us return NYC to its position as a leader in all things green with the reasoned policy and \$14.75 FY2022 budget allocation advocated by Save Our Compost and GrowNYC:

- GrowNYC Compost Program - \$2.5 million
- Other Community Composters and Food Scrap Drop-off operators - \$4.5 million
- New compost processing facilities - \$3.5 million
- Multifamily building collection and processing pilot - \$2 million
- Zero Waste Schools & NYCHA Organics pilot projects – \$1 million
- Composting in municipal agencies and facilities \$1 million
- Feasibility study on citywide Curbside Composting - \$250,000

In closing, we thank Council Members Powers and Reynoso for their unflagging support of organics collection.

Most sincerely,

Sarah Woodside Gallagher

Upper Green Side

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New York, New York 10065

212-759-6895

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Dear NYC City Council,

I am submitting testimony to advocate for the restoration of DSNY funding and expansion of city-wide organics collection. I live in Astoria and have been a regular volunteer with the Proud Astorian organization for the last several months, attending weekly clean-ups to pick up overflowing trash and litter throughout the neighborhood. While it has been energizing and inspiring to be a part of community-led efforts to take care of the neighborhood, it has also served as a constant reminder of the ways in which city sanitation services are falling short. The reduction in sanitation services has had visible consequences for neighborhood cleanliness, has created unsanitary conditions in many cases, and makes it harder for business owners to attract customers. New Yorkers deserve better than this and should not be responsible for filling these massive service gaps.

I also believe that NYC would benefit immensely from substantially increased investments in organics collection. Since citywide organics collection was put on hold last year, community-led composting efforts have admirably stepped up to provide opportunities for people who are committed to composting. However, these grassroots composting operations will never be enough if the city hopes to reach its goal of zero waste to landfills by 2030. We need reinvestment in organics drop-off sites and major investments in curbside organics collection, as well as education campaigns to demonstrate the benefits of composting to NYC residents who have never had the opportunity to participate. These policies will divert NYC food waste from landfills, reduce the city's carbon footprint, and create compost that can be used to improve the natural environment in green spaces throughout the city.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my testimony and I sincerely hope the council will adopt these changes in their upcoming budget.

Sincerely,

Adam Schreiber

Testimony of Wylie Goodman, Queens Resident and Chair of the Queens Solid Waste Advisory Board Organizing Committee at the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management Hearing on the FY 22 Preliminary Budget

Dated March 4, 2021

Thank you Sanitation and Solid Waste Committee members, particularly Chair Reynoso and new Queens members Constantinides and Gennaro and Queens-raised DSNY Commissioner Grayson for your time and attention. My name is Wylie Goodman and I am the Chair of the Queens Solid Waste Advisory Board Organizing Committee. However, I am testifying today as a Queens resident, not in my formal role.

In the same way that Citibikes changed transportation behavior by bringing biking to the neighborhood level, we need to change New Yorkers' waste behavior by bringing waste collection to the neighborhood-level too through community-led organic waste collection and processing. With cuts to DSNY's budget that formerly went to organic voluntary curbside collection, New York City Compost Project partners, and GrowNYC food scrap drop-off sites, much of this work has been taken up by women- and BIPOC-led nonprofits and small businesses, whose services are not dispersed equally across the city; in Queens, such services are lacking entirely.

For this reason, I strongly urge an amended FY22 DSNY budget that restores the \$14.75M already noted to increase the capacity of local, neighborhood-based composting collection and processing as well as e-waste recycling in partnership with organizations such as Big Reuse, Queens Botanic Garden, and GrowNYC, among others. This is not because DSNY's highly valuable and respected unionized workforce cannot do the work, but because when waste is exclusively handled through what might feel to many as an anonymous City agency, it allows the public's out-of-sight-out-of-mind perception of waste to continue. To change behavior, New Yorkers need to see people who look like them going the extra mile to separate the 22-40% of our waste that includes organics and then be rewarded for doing so by being given locally-produced compost they can use to amend street tree beds, rain gardens, community gardens, and even feed their houseplants.

Similarly, we need to change the behavior of the next generation of New Yorkers by restoring funding for Zero Waste Schools and creating Repair Clinics that teach youth the skills they need to repair and reuse, the latter of which we have never had, to my knowledge. Without such programs, youth will continue to feel disconnected from the materials they use rather than see themselves as active contributors to a circular economy and potential future workers in a well-paid green workforce, which they could easily be if taught early and often.

We know the economic fallout from COVID-19 has had devastating effects on the City's economy, requiring across-the-board cuts at City agencies, including at DSNY. But given the urgency of mitigating climate change in the most populous and diverse city in the nation, we cannot continue pouring money into traditional trash collection practices while cutting funds for Waste Prevention, Reuse, and Recycling innovations that will, in time and if fully supported, reduce the costs of long-term waste export to our City and ensure we are no longer complicit in the landfilling and incineration of waste in environmental justice communities nationwide.

Wylie Goodman
wyliegoodman@gmail.com
917.601.5010

I am a resident of Astoria and want to testify about the issues regarding sanitation and cleanliness of our sidewalks. It's not clear if it is the lack of trash bins or if the existing bins aren't cleared often enough, but there is a lot of litter on the streets. It seems that property owners are not being held responsible for garbage on their sidewalks, and thus don't clean the sidewalks. In personal experience, the stretch of 30th Ave. between 29th Street and 32nd Street is particularly bad. I see the street cleaners come, but because most drivers will sit in their vehicle during street cleaning, the streets aren't actually cleaned. It would be beneficial if the street cleaning times are "no standing" instead of "no parking," which will allow the streets to be actually cleaned.

Alice Chiang

Hello,

I have lived close to the Socrates Sculpture park in Astoria for past ten years and noticed that no additional trash cans have been set up in this time despite the exponential growth of the neighborhood. This is a very dog friendly neighborhood, that has added both large number of people and dogs in just last five years with 4 large buildings being built in the vicinity. As a result, there is trash left on the streets, and even if people try to be responsible and pick up after their dog there is no where to put the dog poop bag and thus it is left on the sidewalk.

There is only two trash cans in the four block radius – one close to the Socrates sculpture park and one in the playground area. There used to be one by the bus stop and I was dismayed to see that it was removed. More trash cans need to be added so that the trash doesn't end up on the side walk.

Alissa Saoutina

To Whom It May Concern:

The use of brown composting cans was discontinued at the beginning of the COVID pandemic. I'm sure that decision was made for necessary budgetary concerns. But now that the year has passed and we have some hope that the epidemic will be completely under control by the end of the year, it's time we again reinstated the composting program. In many ways, composting is far more economical than throwing organic waste in the trash. As you know, decomposing food creates enormous amounts of greenhouse gases: according to the UN, food waste in landfills is the third highest producer of greenhouse gases, just behind the US and China.

On the other hand, composted material is excellent nutrition for our soil. I garden my front and backyards, and can testify to the value that compost brings to my gardens. But as an individual with a tiny backyard frequented by raccoons and possums, I'm hesitant to start my own composting pile. The city program was so useful for that reason, and I found that the amount of trash I disposed of was far decreased when I could use the brown containers for food waste. It was also good to know that in a small way, I wasn't adding to our climate concerns by putting food in landfills.

Please reinstate the composting program: the amount of change it could create for a city of our size is enormous.

Thanks for your consideration.

Angela Starita
560 East 7 Street
Brooklyn, NY 11218

March 4, 2021

Dear City Council Folk:

RE: COMPOSTING PROGRAMS

I am a long-time resident of New York City. After many years of living in Brooklyn, I am now lucky enough to live somewhere with an outdoor space and I am becoming an avid gardener.

As a senior on limited income, the free composting give away programs in Brooklyn have been a blessing and a boon for my garden, the street trees on my block, and my very limited pocketbook. I do my best to compost but it's never enough and the compost that I get from the city has made a significant difference to the health of my garden and the ecology.

I am writing to plead that you continue the composting programs with no cuts. This has been an invaluable resource for all gardens, the community and the city.

Kind regards,

Arlene Chung-Bednar
299 Tompkins Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11216
Bobbyarlene299@gmail.com



Funded by **NYC**sanitation

Hosted by



Queens Botanical Garden



Photos (clockwise from logos): Riis/Queensbridge Senior Gardeners--MAP N'hood Stat Program (Q-shaped bed, Aug. 2019); Gardeners at McIntosh Community Garden, E. Elmhurst; and Ashley Cruce, Master Composter.

March 4th 2021 Hearing Testimony by Ashley Cruce:

Dear Councilmembers of the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Mgt.,

My name is Ashley Cruce (resident of Jackson Hts) and I am an Environmental Educator at Queens Botanical Garden in Flushing, and a proud NYC Compost Project Master Composter (trained in 2012 at QBG). I am a passionate booster for composting as a long-time gardener and environmentalist. I have directly benefited from **NYC Compost Project hosted by Queens Botanical Garden (QBG), BigReuse, and GrowNYC** for the past 10+ years.

Currently, I am an active Master Composter volunteer with 3 different community compost sites in Queens (two in Jackson Hts & one in E. Elmhurst). The closures of all community compost sites from March to June 2020, due to the pandemic, truly demonstrated how important and committed to composting folks are. I participated in the SaveOurCompost advocacy efforts in May 2020 to reinstate funds for the NYC Compost Project, which was thankfully successful, and supported by CM Reynoso and your committee's efforts! But more work is needed to keep NYC on track to tackle the climate emergency.

All of the 8 Organizations of the NYC Compost Project are VITAL and should be given MORE \$\$\$\$funding to expand their operations since Citywide Organics Collection has been halted.

I want to share all the ways that 2 NYCCP organizations--QBG and BigReuse--have been essential for both my composting and gardening efforts with citizens of Queens:

- 1) Trained by QBG Compost Project in 2012, I was later hired in 2015 as an Instructor/Tour Guide at QBG. Since 2015, I have used my composting know-how with thousands of kids, adults, and seniors from diverse ethnic groups in many Queens' school gardens, community gardens, co-op gardens and community compost sites.
- 2) As Master Composter, I have volunteered with three community composting sites: JHScraps, Dunolly Gardens Co-op, and McIntosh Community Garden in E. Elmhurst, which are all affiliated with the QBG Compost Project. I have also worked with 2 local Queens' schools' Green Teams (PS69Q & PS92Q) to set up compost bins and teach gardening skills.
- 3) Late August-September 2020-present: BigReuse assisted with Food Scraps Overflow at JHScraps Community Composting Site when we rec'd 500-600 lbs. of food scraps weekly due to the closure of the JH GreenMarket FSDO (until early October) and the overwhelming commitment by local residents to continue to compost!! The partnership assisted us to keep up with the huge volume!
- 4) For many years, I worked as a Garden Consultant at Riis/Queensbridge Houses with senior gardeners, and again in 2019 with the MAP N'hood Stat Program where we relied on BigReuse' FREE compost supplies every gardening season. Because NYCHA did not allow composting on public housing grounds, we had to rely on external sources of compost for our vegetable and herb gardens, butterfly garden and other ornamentals.
- 5) For many years, my community garden in E. Elmhurst (McIntosh Garden) was also a recipient of free bags of compost from BigReuse. They were even able to deliver it directly to the garden back then.

Therefore, not only do I want to see the NYC Compost Project fully funded in FY22 at \$7 million, I am still concerned about the dire situation that BigReuse is facing now since the Parks Dept. has only given a temporary site lease until end of June 2021. BigReuse

has stepped up to the challenge to keep composting alive given that the city has cut curbside organics collection! BigReuse has diverted 7 million lbs. of organic materials from landfills in its 9 yrs.

With curbside organics collection suspended until June 2021 and most likely 2022 (and it must be mandatory when it returns), the eight vital organizations of the NYC Compost Project--MUST BE SUPPORTED.

Sincerely,
Ashley Cruce, MA, LMSW

*QBG Environmental Educator--Flushing, Queens
NYC Compost Project hosted by QBG: Master Composter (2012)--Flushing*

JHScraps Community Composting Site--Jackson Hts.[affiliated with Jackson Hts. Beautification Group (JHBG)]

*Riis/Queensbridge Community/Senior Garden (MAP N'hood Stat Program)--Long Island City
McIntosh Community Garden & Compost site----E. Elmhurst*

[Green Thumb garden, owned by Brooklyn Queens Land Trust (BQLT)]

Dunolly Gardens' Co-op Composting site--Jackson Hts.

PS69Q & PS92Q Green Team School Garden & Compost Volunteer- Jackson Hts. & Corona

March 3, 2020

Thank you, Chairman Reynoso, and members of the Committee for this opportunity to testify in support of **increasing funding for GrowNYC & other compost programs** in the Department of Sanitation budget for Fiscal Year 2022.

My name is Blaise Dupuy and I am a resident of South Slope Brooklyn, where we were part of the pilot organic waste program for many successful years. I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning yet another year of inadequate funding for composting programs. It is vital that we not only resume the programs that were in place before 2020, but expand them across the city to help the city become fully sustainable and stop creating more greenhouse gasses.

In the last year, we've seen Department of Sanitation funding for composting decrease by 90%, from \$26.6 million in FY20 to just \$2.8 million in FY21. Funding was reduced by 34% for the NYC Compost Project, 75% for the GrowNYC Compost Program, and 100% Curbside Composting program. The loss of the curbside composting program has diverted tons of vital living organic material from our farms and gardens and wasted it in anaerobic land fills where it contributes to more greenhouse gasses instead of sequestering carbon in the soil.

I support the **Save Our Compost Coalition's request for \$14.75 million in FY22**, which includes:

- GrowNYC Compost Program - \$2 million
- Other Community Composters and Food Scrap Drop-off operators - \$5 million
- New compost processing facilities - \$3.5 million

- Multifamily building collection and processing pilot - \$2 million
- Zero Waste Schools & NYCHA Organics pilot projects \$1 million
- Composting in municipal agencies and facilities \$1 million
- Feasibility study on citywide Curbside Composting - \$250,000

We need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future, and composting gives people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. I ask that the City increase funding for composting in FY22, including restoring the GrowNYC Compost Program to its FY20 funding levels.

I would like to thank Chairman Reynoso and the Committee for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Sincerely,

Blaise Dupuy

270 21st Street #3

Brooklyn, NY 11215

As human beings we have taken immeasurable levels of resources from the earth over many generations, and there is no doubt that irreversible damage has been done in attempt to maximize what we reap out of the earth. Composting diverts immeasurable amounts of yard trimmings, coffee grounds and food scraps' nutrients from landfills and back into the soil serving our own communities, allowing us to grow grass, flowers, trees, and indeed, food in our own backyard gardens.

Ending funding for the composting program creates more problems than it solves: Ending it would ultimately mean we'd have more waste to dispose of, which costs money. To move this refuse, we would have to compact said waste, wrap it up and ship out of the city by barge, truck or rail, which creates carbon emissions from the shipping. Moreover, the cost to restore nutrients back into our soil would have to be covered in part by buying additional fertilizer.

The costs of the program are ugly ones, but your issue, I submit, is not one that derives from having a composting program itself; Your issue derives from not having enough neighborhoods having access to composting bins. The argument is often made that curbside composting is costly; and I understand the points behind that argument. However, why not consider establishing simple neighborhood sites, educating the public on how their participation in such a program actually saves them money in taxes and ultimately improves their neighborhood parks and playgrounds? Maybe place these collection areas by Subway stations? Surely the average family can manage to save a week's worth of coffee grounds and tea bags in paper bags and drop them off by the E Train on their way to work...

The choice is simple. We can continue to kick the ecological can down the road while we cry about the cost, or we can make the numbers work by easing access for the average Joe.

Thank you for your consideration,

Evan F. Boccardi

From: Brian E
Sent: Wednesday, March 3, 2021 2:50 PM
To: NYC Council Hearings ; Costa Constantinides
Subject: RE: REVERSE SANITATION BUDGET CUTS

To Whom It May Concern-

As a resident of Astoria, Queens for the last decade, it has pained me to watch the streets fill up with litter and trash due to overflowing trash cans. Council leadership should be embarrassed to declare support in cutting sanitation budgets, which is an absolute and total disgrace.

Being a good neighbor and citizen, I clean my front stoop and sidewalk diligently each day only to have fresh garbage blown in immediately after. I don't think it's too much to ask for the same diligence from my city government.

Again, it's an absolute and total disgrace that anyone representing the greatest city in the world would even mention cutting sanitation budgets. I will be watching closely; if Mr Constantinides votes in favor of this proposal he will most surely lose my confidence and future vote.

Respectfully,

Brian Egan

March 6, 2021

Dear Members of City Council,

I'm writing to share my testimony about the state of our streets in Astoria, NY and across the boroughs of New York City -- and asking you to please quickly restore necessary funding for sanitation.

Since I moved to New York City in 2018, there have been many things I have fallen in love with. The obscene amount of litter I see on the streets in my neighborhood is not one of them. I regularly see discarded lots of floating paper and plastics, old boxes, entire lunch bags, even dirty diapers and tampons - tossed right out of cars or purses or bags on the curbs and sidewalks in my neighborhood. It's ugly to look at, it's a health hazard, and it discourages people who live here from taking pride in our neighbourhood.

I was confused to notice that there are hardly any trash cans to be found where people can appropriately dispose of their trash when they are outside their homes. I placed a call to the Department of Sanitation in 2018 and filed a comment on their Facebook page suggesting the addition of a trash can on a nearby corner. I was told, very harshly, that trash cans would absolutely not be brought to my neighborhood because they encourage "illegal dumping by contractors." I'm sorry, but how about enforcement? How about issuing fines to businesses who fail to clean up their sidewalks or break the law by dumping?

Here's a photo to demonstrate what I regularly see on the sidewalks in my neighborhood, near Broadway and Vernon Boulevard in Astoria -- these dirty sidewalks are all often surrounding businesses, not individual apartments or homes.



Earlier this fall, inspired by a citizen-organized clean up crew called Proud Astorian, I did my own clean up of one particularly unsightly block. In just one block I picked up 2 completely full

trash bags off the street - it was mind blowing how much was just sitting there. The block was Broadway, between 21st and 14th streets - right across from a Long Island City high school, no doubt discouraging students from taking pride in the neighborhood or the place where they learn.



(block clean after pick up)



(these two trash bags just for 1 block)

I'm asking the City Council to please urgently restore the budget to the Sanitation Department also invest in solutions that will make our streets cleaner and greener, and prepare our city to withstand the forthcoming effects of climate change.

- Please restore composting options curbside and in parks and make it more accessible to more people
- Please make it easier to get trash cans installed in particularly littered areas of our communities
- Please take action against businesses who are failing to keep their sidewalks clean or are participating in illegal dumping

It has been amazing to see the impact that local litter clean up groups like Proud Astorian and individual citizens are having on their communities - seeing a problem and not waiting for someone else to fix it - inspiring their neighbors to want to get involved and make our city better. But this should not be what it takes!!! We need our government to invest in the future of sanitation and ensure businesses are doing what's required so we can live in a cleaner, greener, forward-looking city.

Thank you for reviewing my testimony,
Caitlin Garlow
A Proud Astorian

My name is Caleb Albo and I am a resident in the 34th District in Bushwick. I have lived in New York City for almost 4 years and consider it my home. I love everything about this city and have never felt more welcome anywhere else. I'm not here to go over what makes our home as amazing as it is however. Rather, I want to express my urgent concern with the current state of the city's pollution and litter problem.

I have been around the world and have been to similar size, and larger cities, London (similar size) and Tokyo (larger) as prime examples to show that cities of this size CAN be clean and presentable. In no other major global city, have I witnessed the despicable state of pollution and litter as I have seen here. Not only is it an embarrassing eye sore, but it is an environmental problem as well as a public safety hazard. From used needles in parks that children can hurt themselves with to trash in bike lanes in an already dangerous city to bike in. It is clear that this is not the type of society that is the safest to be going about day to day life.

I have recently joined mutual aid groups to help clean up the city and have also gone on my own time. While it has become a recent and fulfilling hobby of mine, it has raised serious questions about the current state of the sanitation department and why our streets are so despicably filthy. While part of me is disappointed in my fellow residents for littering, the problem is much larger than that. I notice many street corners where trash bins are not readily available. Often times I notice trash bins but are entirely full to the point litter is piling up higher and higher to the point residents just put their trash next to the bin. This is not okay!!!

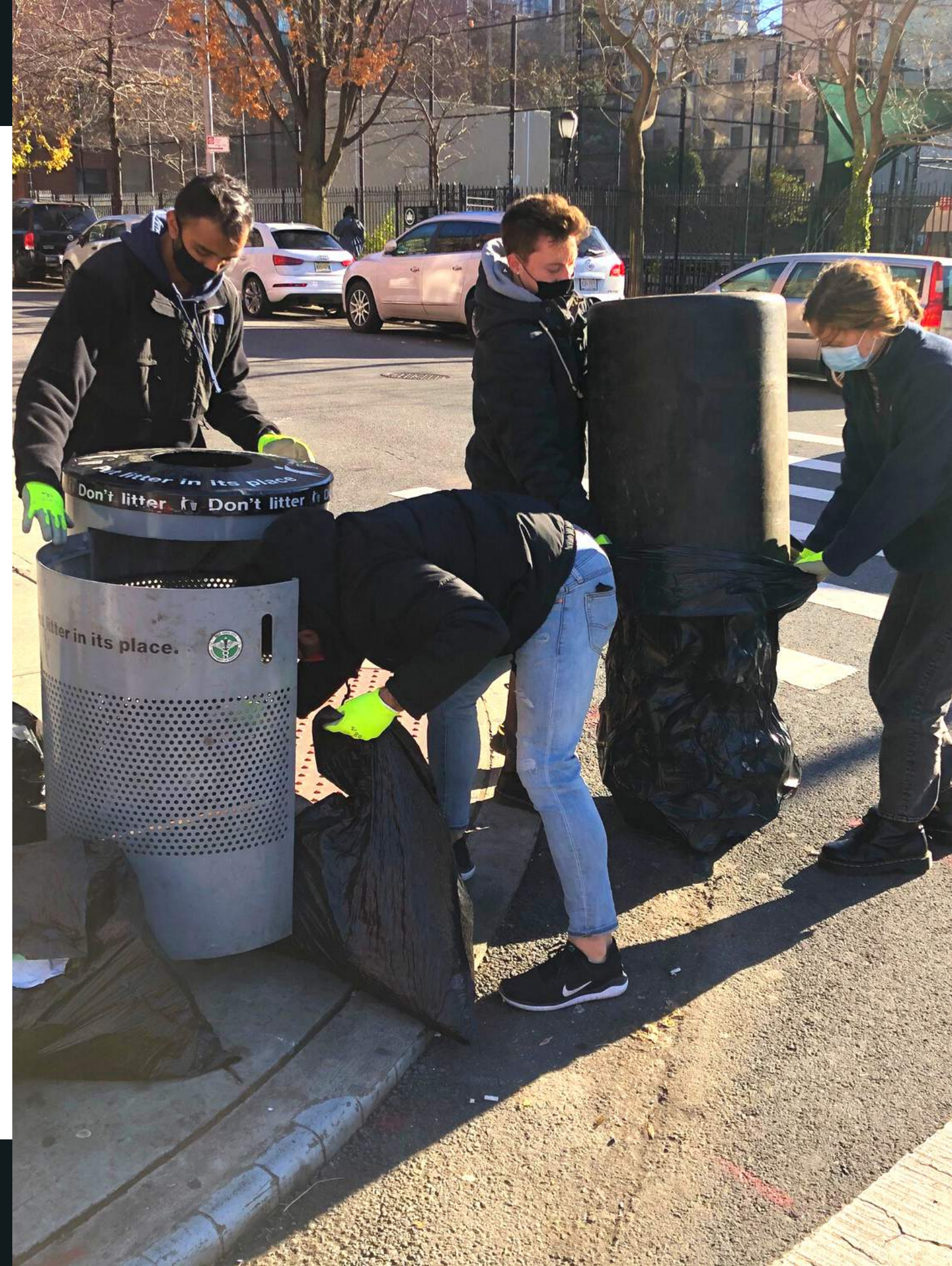
Picking up the trash alone and with organizations is not going to solve this problem. It isn't even a bandaid to the issue at hand. We need solutions and proper funding now to mitigate and eventually fix this solvable problem. New York is known for many things, being disgustingly filthy should not be one of them. Fix this now, it's not impossible.

PS Have the city do something about all the dog droppings, I can't go anywhere without looking down to watch my step. Heavier fines? Dog tax? Not every resident should be owning a dog.

HELLS KITCHEN

LITTER LEGION

Founded in June of 2020, we have hosted 30 group clean ups with over 275 participants and at least 100 unique volunteers. Together we pick up litter and empty overflowing corner baskets filling between 25-40 bags at each clean up. We are funded solely by community donations including 750 contractor bags, 1000 household bags, 20 boxes of disposable gloves, 60 pairs of heavy polyurethane coated work gloves, 12 trash grabbers, hand sanitizer & wipes.





Overflowing Litter Baskets

When the Department of Sanitation's budget was cut by over \$100 million for FY21, corner basket service was drastically reduced. We are using our public spaces more than ever and litter baskets are being left in an overflowing state for days before they are collected. The excess litter blows around on the street and sidewalk and can enter our waterways via the storm sewers during heavy rains.

BEFORE



"Trashplosions" have become a frequent occurrence in Hell's Kitchen and around the city. Bags get ripped open in search of usable items or food. Their contents are left littering the streets & blocking sidewalks. We cannot have food waste, used personal care items or broken glass on our streets. This is a matter of public health & safety.

With so many empty storefronts, who is responsible for maintaining these areas now? The businesses that remain are already struggling due to the impacts of the pandemic. How are we to revive our much needed tourist economy when our streets are filled with trash?



AFTER



NYC Clean Up Initiative

Funding for vital supplemental cleaning services provided by non-profit organizations such as ACE Programs for the Homeless was drastically cut in the FY21 budget. The impacts of these cuts were felt immediately along with the decrease in basket service and more people being outside. Funding for these programs not only helps keep our commercial corridors clean, but provides much needed jobs for our formerly homeless or incarcerated neighbors. For FY22, I urge City Council to restore funding for the NYC Clean Up Initiative to FY20 levels. It should not be up to volunteers to keep our streets clean during a global pandemic.

Syringes in the Street

Syringes are a common sight during our clean ups, both on the street and in tree pits. Groups in the Bronx, Queens, Manhattan and Brooklyn are encountering this as well. We need the dedicated DSNY syringe collection unit to be refunded to respond to these conditions quicker. Calling 311 to report these takes entirely too long. We need a shortcut on the 311 app that allows us to quickly report and upload images for location reference.



THERE IS NO TRASH CANNOT, THERE IS ONLY TRASH CAN!



**State Assemblymember
Linda B. Rosenthal**



**Manhattan Borough President
Gale Brewer**

How You Can Help

- Restore funding for DSNY basket truck service to address the overflowing litter baskets plaguing our city
- Bring the NYC Clean Up Initiative funding back to FY20 levels of \$260,000 per council district
- Streamline reporting & collection process for syringes to address them in a more timely manner

Get Social With Us



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LitterLegion@gmail.com

RESOURCES

linktr.ee/litter_nyc





**1278 Myrtle Ave
Brooklyn, NY 11221
www.bkrot.org**

BK ROT Testimony to the Committee of Sanitation and Solid Waste

March 4, 2021

Good afternoon. My name is Ceci Pineda and I am the Executive Director at BK ROT. We are a youth powered composting project that collects food scraps by bike and composts them at our partner gardens. I am testifying on behalf of BK ROT to underscore the need of increasing City public funding towards residential organic waste collection and composting in FY 2022.

Residential collection and processing of organic waste is a public good. It is in our opinion that this service should be fully managed and overseen by the City. As you well know, over a third of NYC's waste is compostable. In the short term, trucking this material to landfills amplifies toxic air along its journey, disproportionately impacting Black and Brown communities. In the long term, it will most acutely impact Black, Indigenous and Brown communities around the world who will acutely feel our decisions today. On the other hand, collection and processing of organic waste creates a surplus of social, economic and ecological benefits. These benefits further increase when they are hyper localized, use zero to low emissions technologies and include an environmental justice analysis.

Currently, New York City's organics collection and processing functions off of service and labor that is not being paid by the City. In 2020, BK ROT, like many other composters and organic waste collectors in the City, saw tremendous growth in our residential collection. In 2020, we collected the largest amount of residential organic waste since launching in 2013. This growth reflected cuts in public composting options as well as an increases in residential organic waste from the pandemic. We grew from serving 76 residential customers in 2019 to 225 by the end of 2020. Furthermore, we saw our public food scraps collection rates more than double. In comparing July to December across 2019 and 2020, our average rates collected in our three hour window more than doubled from 545 pounds in 2019 to 1163 pounds (as displayed in second image below)



Image 1: Residential Organic Waste Diverted Over the Years

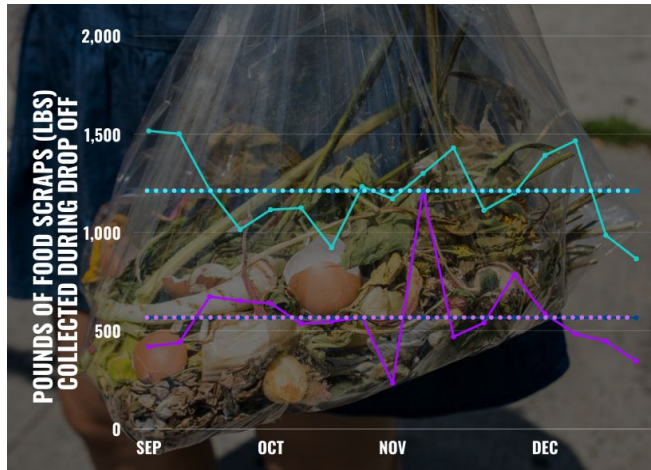


Image 2: 2019 (turquoise) & 2020 (purple) Public Drop Off Food Scraps collected

Prior to COVID-19, we encouraged our Drop Off community to chop up their food scraps to build awareness and responsibility of composting labor. In response to COVID, we implemented a contactless model outside of our host garden. This has significantly increased the labor demands on our team and our operations rely on weekly donations from our neighbors who use our drop off services. New Yorkers understand the great importance and need to responsibly manage the resources we use. Composting is one of the most accessible tools to do so - and so we see hundreds of volunteers show up to support responsible waste management, when really this public service should be funded by and managed by the City.

Along with others in the Save Our Compost coalition, we see this upcoming fiscal year as an immense opportunity to advance efficient, just and accessible systems to collect and process NYC's organic waste, all the while creating great opportunities for local employment. We urge the Committee of Sanitation and Solid Waste to deeply consider the ecological, climate and social justice crises in structuring their FY22 budget and increase NYC Compost funding to \$14.75 million to cover:

- Community Composting and Food Scrap Drop-off Program - \$7 million
- New compost processing facilities - 3.5M
- Multifamily building collection and processing pilot (prioritizing low-income New Yorkers who have been left out of previous organics recycling programs) - \$2M
- Zero waste schools and NYCHA Organics pilot programs - \$1M
- Composting in municipal agencies and facilities - \$1M
- Feasibility study on citywide curbside composting - \$250K

Gratefully,

Ceci Pineda
Executive Director
BK ROT

March 4, 2020

Chairman Reynoso, and members of the Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of **increasing funding for GrowNYC & other compost programs** in the Department of Sanitation budget for Fiscal Year 2022.

My name is **Christine Freschi** and I am a resident of the **Upper West Side, Manhattan**. I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning yet another year of inadequate funding for composting programs. **As a Millennial who has been concerned for our planet for as long as I can remember and as a young adult contemplating the realities of bringing a child into our damaged earth, I believe composting is a critical, powerful step New Yorkers can take to help the planet. It is heartening to see just how many New Yorkers drop off their compost at the UWS greenmarket on Sunday mornings. Despite our tiny spaces and for most of us, zero outdoor space, we still prioritize collecting our food scraps and dropping them off. On the other hand, every day walking down the street it is downright depressing... gutting!... to see the amounts of garbage bags piled up. This city does not need to be a dirty, wasteful, trash-filled place! Clearly there is passion and interest in composting, and it is on you to help support and encourage this habit! Keep up the momentum! Please.**

Composting is a habit I want to teach my children. It's a beautiful thing to be able to give back to the earth and to be mindful about the waste we're creating.

In the last year, we've seen Department of Sanitation funding for composting decrease by 90%, from \$26.6 million in FY20 to just \$2.8 million in FY21. Funding was reduced by 34% for the NYC Compost Project, 75% for the GrowNYC Compost Program, and 100% Curbside Composting program. **During the pandemic, without composting sites, I was at a total loss as to how to keep precious compostable matter out of the trash. I attempted to collect it in a bin on my fire escape and won't go into detail about the mess that created... Having a local drop off is essential to the majority of us New Yorkers who do not have outdoor space.**

I support the **Save Our Compost Coalition's request for \$14.75 million in FY22**, which includes:

- GrowNYC Compost Program - \$2.5 million
- Other Community Composters and Food Scrap Drop-off operators - \$4.5 million
- New compost processing facilities - \$3.5 million
- Multifamily building collection and processing pilot - \$2 million
- Zero Waste Schools & NYCHA Organics pilot projects – \$1 million
- Composting in municipal agencies and facilities \$1 million
- Feasibility study on citywide Curbside Composting - \$250,000

We need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future, and composting gives people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference.

I ask that the City increase funding for composting in FY22, including restoring the GrowNYC Compost Program to its FY20 funding levels.

I would like to thank Chairman Reynoso and the Committee for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Sincerely,

Christine N. Freschi

Christine N. Freschi

Narrativ

111 West 94th St, 3E

New York, NY 10025

To whomever it may concern

Budget Testimony for Sanitation Hearing

Reducing our waste up to the pandemic has been a collective action in our building, tying people together to build a better community, care for one another.

PLEASE help fund proper funding for efficient city composting in next year's budget. It is EVERYBODY's cause, and we need to act now! Our building has kept the good habit of sorting waste to be more responsible, despite the elimination of regular compost pick-up. Such a habit needs to be encouraged by the city, who has the chance to show the way to other US cities and worldwide.

Bring back pioneering city composting program: it will help everyone to save and move towards a better environment.

Thank you
Claire Stefani

3/7/21

Dear member of the New York City Council,

My name is Danny Zelibor, and I have been a proud NYC transplant for six years now.

The past year has taken a massive toll on our urban environment. Access to compost services has almost entirely dried up, and the litter on the streets is out of control. None of this has a place in what we'd all argue is the greatest city on the planet.

We have the monumental task of becoming greener and more sustainable on an incredibly short timeline. Composting services, which were completely gutted last year, are a crucial tool in making that happen. Currently, if I want to drop off my organics, it's at least a 30 minute endeavor. I don't mind taking the time - but many people do.

The litter on our streets is as much a problem as the lack of compost access. Garbage is everywhere, and it's not only unsightly but unsafe, too. Since last year, I have volunteered with the Hell's Kitchen Litter Legion, which has been a great way to contribute to my neighborhood. But as is often the case with this kind of community volunteering, we shouldn't have to be doing it in the first place.

The longer we allow either of these things to persist, the higher our tolerance for it will grow. For many people, it will just become 'the way that it is.' We can't allow that to happen. If we are to grow back better from this pandemic, we have to properly invest. I urge you to restore and enhance funding for these absolutely vital sanitation services.

Thank you for your time.

Danny Zelibor

March 4, 2020

Thank you, Chairman Reynoso, and members of the Committee for this opportunity to testify in support of **increasing funding for GrowNYC & other compost programs** in the Department of Sanitation budget for Fiscal Year 2022.

My name is Daphna Ezrachi and I am a resident of Washington Heights in Manhattan. I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning yet another year of inadequate funding for composting programs. Composting is so important to me as it is one of the most direct and impactful ways to address climate change. It is a win-win situation in which we reduce waste and create compost/soil that betters the earth. I have personally utilized GrowNYC sites all over the City and found them to be crucial to making composting easy.

In the last year, we've seen Department of Sanitation funding for composting decrease by 90%, from \$26.6 million in FY20 to just \$2.8 million in FY21. Funding was reduced by 34% for the NYC Compost Project, 75% for the GrowNYC Compost Program, and 100% Curbside Composting program. Because of these cuts I have to walk over a mile to compost.

I support the **Save Our Compost Coalition's request for \$14.75 million in FY22**, which includes:

- GrowNYC Compost Program - \$2.5 million
- Other Community Composters and Food Scrap Drop-off operators - \$4.5 million
- New compost processing facilities - \$3.5 million
- Multifamily building collection and processing pilot - \$2 million
- Zero Waste Schools & NYCHA Organics pilot projects – \$1 million
- Composting in municipal agencies and facilities \$1 million
- Feasibility study on citywide Curbside Composting - \$250,000

We need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future, and composting gives people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. I ask that the City increase funding for composting in FY22, including restoring the GrowNYC Compost Program to its FY20 funding levels.

I would like to thank Chairman Reynoso and the Committee for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Sincerely,

Daphna Ezrachi,

540 Fort Washington Ave., #1A

NYC, NY, 10033

March 4, 2020

Thank you, Chairman Reynoso, and members of the Committee for this opportunity to testify in support of **increasing funding for GrowNYC & other compost programs** in the Department of Sanitation budget for Fiscal Year 2022.

My name is Deborah Hersch Johns and I am a resident of Van Cortlandt Village in the Bronx. I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning yet another year of inadequate funding for composting programs. We are currently scrambling to recycle as many food scraps as possible locally, but greatly miss the municipal organics recycling that allowed for so much more, in terms of types of food scraps as well as volume that was able to be processed. Sanitation and GrowNYC were instrumental in bringing this program to us and throughout as much of the City as possible at the time.

In the last year, we've seen Department of Sanitation funding for composting decrease by 90%, from \$26.6 million in FY20 to just \$2.8 million in FY21. Funding was reduced by 34% for the NYC Compost Project, 75% for the GrowNYC Compost Program, and 100% Curbside Composting program. Budget cuts at NYC Compost Project have impacted us directly as we are benefiting from their guidance at a significantly reduced rate. With the complete loss of curbside composting, we have possibly permanently lost the recycling efforts of so many residents, losing the countless hours of encouragement and guidance by GrowNYC and local volunteers that led these residents to the daily practice of organics recycling.

I support the **Save Our Compost Coalition's request for \$14.75 million in FY22**, which includes:

- GrowNYC Compost Program - \$2 million
- Other Community Composters and Food Scrap Drop-off operators - \$5 million
- New compost processing facilities - \$3.5 million
- Multifamily building collection and processing pilot - \$2 million
- Zero Waste Schools & NYCHA Organics pilot projects – \$1 million
- Composting in municipal agencies and facilities \$1 million
- Feasibility study on citywide Curbside Composting - \$250,000

We need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future, and composting gives people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. I ask that the City increase funding for composting in FY22, including restoring the GrowNYC Compost Program to its FY20 funding levels.

I would like to thank Chairman Reynoso and the Committee for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Sincerely,

Deborah Hersch Johns
3967 Sedgwick Avenue, 18A
Bronx, NY 10463-3116

As a constituent and fervent supporter of keeping New York City on a zero waste track, I support the well planned and detailed budget requested by Save Our Compost in funding for NYC Compost, totaling \$14 Million for the 2022 fiscal year, a fraction of the original costs for organics collection and processing in the City and their request for a timeline for reinstating a robust universal curbside organics collection program in the very near term.

Save Our Compost has presented a detailed breakdown of how the funds should be allocated toward Community Composting and Food Scrap Drop-off Program, Creating New Community Composting Sites, Zero Waste Schools and NYCHA organics pilot projects, Multifamily Building Collection and Processing Pilot, Feasibility Study - Citywide Curbside Compost Collection Program, Municipal agency composting, Reinstatement & Expansion of Curbside Compost Collection shows more transparency and thoughtfulness than any of the existing municipal entities have provided in their plans for the future of the city park's and it's responsible waste collection and processing.

If only my tax paying dollars went directly to people and organizations as intelligent and capable as those running non-profits like Save Our Compost and Big Reuse, I would have much more confidence in the city's environmental progress and efficient and ethical use of the resources available.

To disregard this plan is irresponsible and tone deaf to the needs of me and my fellow citizens of New York City and would be a blatant disregard for creating an environmentally sustainable future for this city.

Deborah Salsberg

**704 Sterling Place
Brooklyn NY 11216
03/04/21**

I'm a 13 year resident of Crown Heights and a 43 resident of New York City. There isn't a time I can remember the city being in such an unsanitary state. Our residential side streets are over-run with rat infestations in nearly half of the front yards.

Some neighbors who have had limited resources had to remove there gardens and lay perforated metal over the former green yards. Instead of a season of blooming plots we are left with barren rat infested dirt squares – sometimes paved over.

This all stems from the infrequency of trash collection, the shut down of the restaurants last summer and the street cleaners NEVER coming ONCE over the last several months.

Bike riders have blown out countless tires (I count 7 since last april) because of the amount of glass in the street.

This trash affects people and businesses and NYC's inability to manage this leaves the community footing the bill in so many ways. The city needs to fix this issue that is driving business away and residents mad.

Sincerely
Derek Gruen



I am requesting that the city reinstate and expand curbside compost collection

New York should be leading the country in green initiatives that reduce greenhouse gases. The methane released from landfills is 28 times more potent than CO₂ in contributing to climate change. Composting should be a no-brainer, part of our waste management system, not a disposable feelgood pet project of elected politicians.

The requested amount for NYC Compost is \$14 Million for the 2022 fiscal year, a fraction of the original costs for organics collection and processing in the City. Just do it. It's the right—and only—thing to do.

elizabeth j braswell

Investing in Composting to Benefit Schools and the Local Community

Written Testimony for March 4th, 2PM New York City Council Meeting on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management

I'm a college-aged student from Elmhurst, Queens, who recently began composting. I volunteer with two local composting programs, and work to collect compost from the neighborhood. From my time working with JH Scraps and St. James composting, I've learned about how integral composting is.

New York City creates a massive amount of waste per year, ~40% of which is organic material that can be composted. Personally, I come from a family that eats lots of organic and whole foods. But up until last year, we threw away our peels and leftovers. However, once I started composting in our backyard, I've noticed a sharp drop in the amount of trash we throw away. What would've been a plastic bag every few days of kitchen waste, became a bag every week or so, simply because I've removed the compostable components. In a macro-level, this would drastically decrease the amount that NYC needs to spend on shipping out waste, and if families use plastic bags for trash-liners, would also decrease the amount of plastic used.

I specifically am heavily invested in composting because of the benefits it would bring to schools and the local community. I grew up in the public school system, and although there's been an effort to properly recycle, I notice that it simply doesn't happen in cafeterias. We throw all our trash into the same bins, and don't bother separating them. For even small schools, we must go through so much produce that kids don't eat, or don't finish. I don't want it to sit in a landfill for the rest of my lifetime in a large clear bag.

I worked at JH Scraps when the pandemic hit, and after we resumed operations, there were upwards of 600lbs of compost coming in, since the nearby GreenMarket was still shut down. Even now, we get around 150lbs of compost a week. This is from a super localized neighborhood, so I hate to imagine how much is going wasted without a proper city program for gathering food waste. We're a small operation, but the fact we're a backyard organization means people who try to be conscientious and bring compostable bags can't have those bags be composted. We need a citywide composting initiative and better funded composting programs now.



Written Statement of GrowNYC Before the Preliminary Budget Hearing of the NYC Council Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management

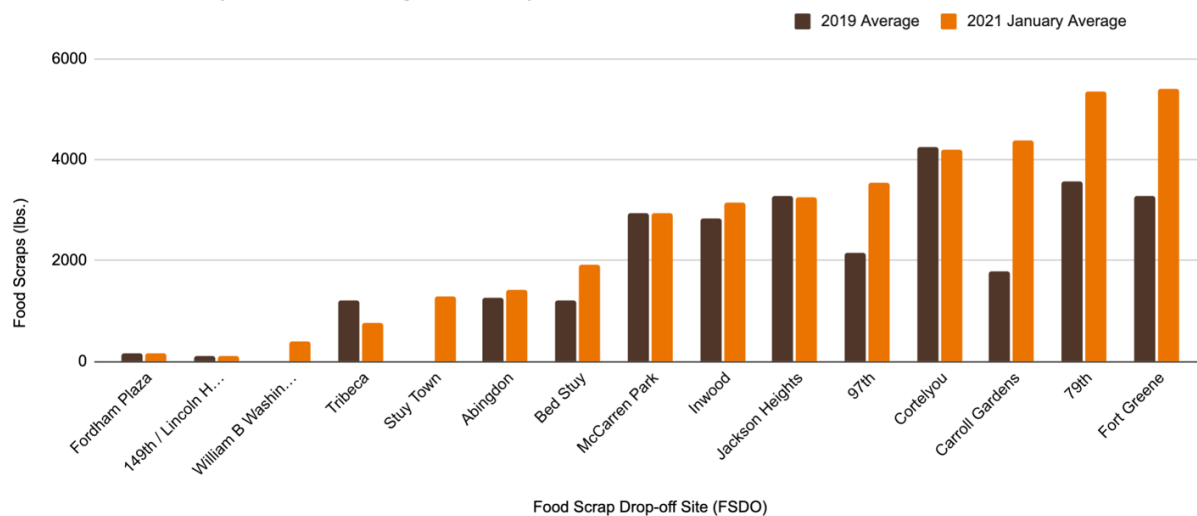
March 4, 2020

Thank you, Chairman Reynoso, and members of the Committee for this opportunity to testify in support of **increasing funding for composting** in the Department of Sanitation budget for Fiscal Year 2022. My name is Emily Bachman, and I'm the Compost Program Manager at GrowNYC, the non-profit that serves more than 3 million New Yorkers every year via food access programs, food scrap drop-off sites, Greenmarkets, community and school gardens, and environmental education in all five boroughs.

GrowNYC's food scrap drop-off sites are community gathering spaces where all New Yorkers can participate in climate action and environmental stewardship through composting. Since 2011, our Compost Program has been popping-up at Greenmarkets, subway stations, and community gardens to collect household food scraps from New York City residents, and we partner with NYC Compost Project host sites to make compost locally. The finished compost is distributed to parks, gardens, and street trees, where it sequesters carbon in the soil, fertilizes crops, captures stormwater runoff, and improves our City's parks and green spaces from the ground up. 34% of our New York City's residential waste stream is made up of materials that could be composted, and composting locally helps the City reduce both cost and emissions associated with exporting that waste to landfills and incinerators hundreds of miles away. Composting is about reimagining waste as a resource, turning food scraps into "black gold."

The importance of both continuing and expanding GrowNYC Compost Program efforts is made clear by the escalating climate crisis, by the ongoing suspension of the Curbside Composting program, and by the current growth in participation at our food scrap drop-off sites. This year, despite the challenges of COVID-19, we've seen composting participation increase at our food scrap drop-off sites by 20% in the south Bronx, 55% in the Upper West Side, 60% in Bedford-Stuyvesant, 65% in Fort Greene, and 145% in Carroll Gardens (Figure 1).

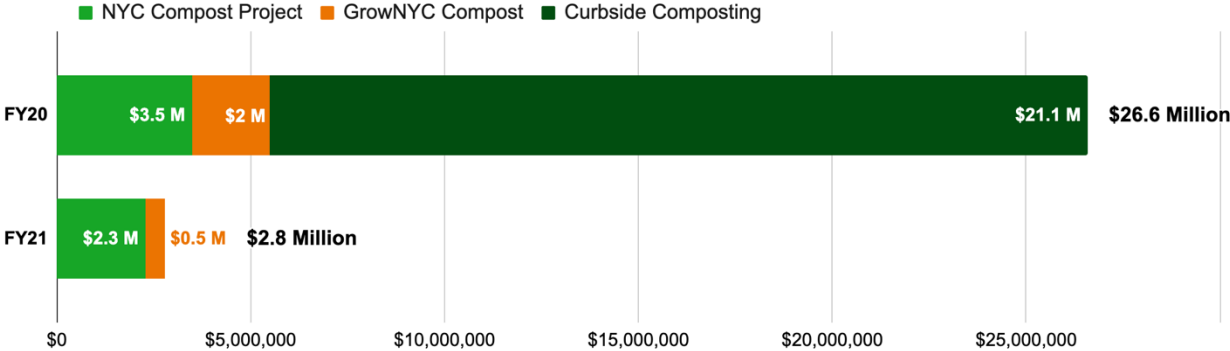
Figure 1. Food Scrap Collections Pre & Post-COVID 2019 vs. January 2021 Average Weekly Collections



This growth is both encouraging and alarming – where our work has historically focused on expansion, outreach and education to increase participation, this year has been about scrambling to meet demand. We are thrilled to see New Yorkers’ dedication to composting, but severely limited in our ability to meet existing demand due to FY21 budget cuts.

In the last year, we’ve seen Department of Sanitation funding for composting decrease by 90%, from \$26.6 million in FY20 to just \$2.8 million in FY21 (Figure 1). Funding was reduced by 34% for the NYC Compost Project, 75% for the GrowNYC Compost Program, and 100% Curbside Composting program. And yet, the funding that remains is being stretched to the limits, providing outsized community and environmental benefits that warrant increased investment in FY22. At GrowNYC, we’ve been able to leverage our \$499,000 budget to raise an additional \$210,000 in private funds. We’ve reopened 15 of our 76 former food scrap drop-off sites, hired 20 Compost Coordinators & Drivers, and engaged 118 volunteers so far this fiscal year. On average, collections at our reopened sites are 30 percent higher today than they were before COVID-19. This growth reflects increasing demand for composting services despite budget cuts that have significantly decreased access to composting opportunities. (Figure 1). Right now, we are collecting 17 tons of food scraps from over 5,000 participants across NYC each week. That’s the emissions equivalent of conserving 1,750 gallons of gasoline every single week.

Figure 2. NYC Compost Budget FY20 vs. FY21



GrowNYC’s goal is to provide all New Yorkers with access to composting. We want to continue reopening food scrap drop-off sites, but doing so will require renewed commitment of adequate City funds. Our private-sector fundraising efforts are consistently met with potential donors’ beliefs that residential waste management in New York City should be publicly funded at the municipal level, as has historically been the case.

The Department’s preliminary budget for FY22 proposes \$3.5 million for community composting, which would bring NYC Compost Project back to FY20 levels, but provide no funding for the GrowNYC Compost Program to operate the city’s largest food scrap drop-off sites. Access to composting opportunities and diversion of organic waste from landfills and incinerators would be devastatingly low. Alternatively, we support the **Save Our Compost Coalition’s request for \$14.75 million in FY22**, which includes:

- **GrowNYC Compost Program - \$2.5 million**
- Other Community Composters and Food Scrap Drop-off operators - \$4.5 million
- New compost processing facilities - \$3.5 million
- Multifamily building collection and processing pilot - \$2 million



- Zero Waste Schools & NYCHA Organics pilot projects – \$1 million
- Composting in municipal agencies and facilities \$1 million
- Feasibility study on citywide Curbside Composting - \$250,000

While \$14.75 million for composting in FY22 represents a 45% reduction in funding from FY20 levels, we believe it would restore our city’s commitment to climate change mitigation through responsible waste management and dramatically increase access to composting for all New Yorkers while getting us back on track toward establishing a universal Curbside Composting program in the very near term.

We are incredibly thankful to the City Council, the Mayor, and the Department of Sanitation. Over the years, your support has helped turn GrowNYC’s scrappy compost program from a small pilot to the nation’s largest network of food scrap drop-off sites. Together, we have demonstrated the feasibility of scaling grassroots community composting to build an effective citywide network of zero waste solutions. We are eager to continue expanding this work, but we cannot do so without adequate funding for the GrowNYC Compost Program and our compost processing partners. Our sincere hope is to see renewed commitment to our city’s Zero Waste goals reflected in the Department of Sanitation budget for FY22.

I would like to thank Chairman Reynoso and the Committee for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

With gratitude,

Emily Bachman
Manager, Compost Program
GrowNYC

For 50 years, GrowNYC has been transforming communities throughout the five boroughs by giving New Yorkers the tools and resources they need to make our city cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable. Whether it’s operating the world-famous Union Square Greenmarket, building a new community garden, teaching young people about the environment, or increasing recycling rates through education, GrowNYC is hard at work in your neighborhood. GrowNYC is a privately-funded 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization.



Written Statement of Emily Edmonds-Langham Before the Preliminary Budget Hearing of the NYC Council Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management

March 4, 2020

Thank you, Chairman Reynoso, and members of the Committee for this opportunity to testify in support of **increasing funding for GrowNYC & other compost programs** in the Department of Sanitation budget for Fiscal Year 2022.

My name is Emily Edmonds-Langham and I am a resident of Prospect Heights, Brooklyn. I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning yet another year of inadequate funding for composting programs. I believe that composting is an essential component in our overall strategy to reduce waste and combat climate change in New York City. But diverting waste from landfills, we reduce the emission of harmful gasses like methane, and produce useable soil.

In the last year, we've seen Department of Sanitation funding for composting decrease by 90%, from \$26.6 million in FY20 to just \$2.8 million in FY21. Funding was reduced by 34% for the NYC Compost Project, 75% for the GrowNYC Compost Program, and 100% Curbside Composting program. I brought my compost to the Grand Army Plaza market weekly and have had to scramble to find other options in my neighborhood, which are often overwhelmed by demand.

I support the **Save Our Compost Coalition's request for \$14.75 million in FY22**, which includes:

- GrowNYC Compost Program - \$2.5 million
- Other Community Composters and Food Scrap Drop-off operators - \$4.5 million
- New compost processing facilities - \$3.5 million
- Multifamily building collection and processing pilot - \$2 million
- Zero Waste Schools & NYCHA Organics pilot projects – \$1 million
- Composting in municipal agencies and facilities \$1 million
- Feasibility study on citywide Curbside Composting - \$250,000

We need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future, and composting gives people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. I ask that the City increase funding for composting in FY22, including restoring the GrowNYC Compost Program to its FY20 funding levels.

I would like to thank Chairman Reynoso and the Committee for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Sincerely,

Emily Edmonds-Langham
778 Washington Ave
Apt 2
Brooklyn, NY 11238

March 4, 2020

First I would like to thank Chairman Reynoso and the Committee for the opportunity to submit testimony. I write to you today in support of increasing funding for GrowNYC (and other compost programs) in the Department of Sanitation budget for Fiscal Year 2022.

I am Emily Newman and I am a resident of Crown Heights. I am frustrated to learn that the City is once again under-funding essential composting programs. Not only do these programs help reduce waste in a city that has a lot of waste to go around, but these programs run efficiently and with a clear positive purpose. They ensure a brighter future and quite literally take scraps and turn them into a useful resource to regrow food - used in community gardens amidst food deserts to feed our communities. It is an important cycle, and one we depend on to hope for a brighter future. There were many battles to fight during the beginning of the pandemic, but one thing my household often agonized over -- even as we fought through covid -- was the amount of waste heading to landfills that otherwise could have been composted. Now that some pick up spots have reopened it is even more apparent how much we need these programs and the clear benefit to our environment and our community.

In the last year, we've seen Department of Sanitation funding for composting decrease by 90%, from \$26.6 million in FY20 to just \$2.8 million in FY21. Funding was reduced by 34% for the NYC Compost Project, 75% for the GrowNYC Compost Program, and 100% Curbside Composting program. When composting programs are not able to maintain scrap drop off sites in convenient and plentiful locations, folks with access issues already are then put in a position to carry their scraps (sometimes frozen and at constant risk of breaking bags and spilling onto the streets) for long journeys just to do the right thing. Our communities want to reduce waste, let us. It is a win win. Support GrowNYC well and it will support the city well in return. It is an essential function of government. We need recycling bins, we need trash bins, and we need food scrap bins/ drop-off points.

I support the **Save Our Compost Coalition's request for \$14.75 million in FY22**, which includes:

- GrowNYC Compost Program - \$2.5 million
- Other Community Composters and Food Scrap Drop-off operators - \$4.5 million
- New compost processing facilities - \$3.5 million
- Multifamily building collection and processing pilot - \$2 million
- Zero Waste Schools & NYCHA Organics pilot projects – \$1 million
- Composting in municipal agencies and facilities \$1 million
- Feasibility study on citywide Curbside Composting - \$250,000

We need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future, and composting gives people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. I ask that the City increase funding for composting in FY22, including restoring the GrowNYC Compost Program to its FY20 funding levels.

I would like to thank Chairman Reynoso and the Committee for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

With hope for a better future,

Emily Newman
1027 President Street
Crown Heights

Testimony

Written statement of Jean Laupus Before the Preliminary Budget Hearing of the NYC Council Committee on Sanitation & Solid Waste Management

March 4, 2021

Thank you, Chairman Reynosa and members of the Committee, for this opportunity to testify in support of **increasing funding for GrowNYC & other compost programs** in the Department of Sanitation Budget for Fiscal Year 2022.

My name is **Jean Laupus** and I am a resident of **Yorkville, Manhattan**. I am deeply disheartened to learn that at present the City is not planning to adequately fund composting programs across the city.

Prior to last year's budget cut we had a year-round drop off at the Saturday 82nd St. Greenmarket and a seasonal drop-off at the Sunday 92nd St. Market. Both were heavily used, and were gaining more users every week. There are currently no compost drop-off sites in my neighborhood, one of the densest residential neighborhoods in the city. None. No more composting at the neighborhood schools, either. What we do have are rats! Lots of them. Getting food waste off the streets and into compost programs would not rid our neighborhood and the city of rats, but it would greatly help reduce the rat population. AND significantly reduce the amount of trash we send to landfills AND the methane that trash emits.

I support the **Save Our Compost Coalition's request for \$14.75 million in FY22**, which includes:

- GrowNYC Compost Program - \$2.5 million
- Other Community Composters and Food Scrap Drop-off operators - \$4.5 million
- New compost processing facilities - \$3.5 million
- Multi-family building collection and processing pilot - \$2 million
- Zero Waste Schools & NYCHA Organics pilot projects - \$1 million
- Composting in municipal agencies and facilities - \$1 million
- Feasibility study on citywide Curbside Composting - \$250,000

We need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future. Composting shows that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference.

I ask that the City **increase funding for composting in FY22, including restoring the GrowNYC Compost Program to its FY20 funding levels.**

Thank you, Chairman Reynoso and Committee members, for your work and for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Sincerely,
Jean A. Laupus
NYC Citizen
401 East 88th Street, #3A
New York, NY 10128

Wednesday, March 3rd, 2021

Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management
New York City Council
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chair Reynoso and Honorable Committee Members:

I write to you regarding the Department of Sanitation Budget for FY2022. Without a doubt, 2020 brought incredible hardship to many New Yorkers. Understandably, the severe \$1.5 billion revenue decline coupled with almost \$5.9 billion unexpected costs since the start of the pandemic has presented the City with challenging budget decisions.

As a Brooklyn resident, my family and I have personally been affected by the deep cuts made to the Sanitation budget. As you know, trash pickups have been reduced by over 60 percent, and this problem has only exponentially grown into a larger hazard and health issue.

I am lucky to live in North Crown Heights where the sense of community is strong. Residents have taken personal initiative to try and keep the community clean, for example with the incredible group 'Clean Up Crown Heights'. However, this is not close to enough. Trash continues to spill over trash bins, single-weekly street cleaning leaves piles of garbage behind, including sharp objects such as broken glass bottles. Our local public space, Brower Park, is overwhelmed with garbage consistently, a serious hazard to both people and animals.

Trash and sanitation are an overlapping issue that connects to public health, climate change, transit, and more. In a post-Covid-19 world, this has become even more obvious and grave. I applaud the small steps to modernize NYC sanitation through the 'Clean Curbs' program and some neighborhood compacting stations. Unfortunately, this is not enough! We need a unified 'smart' collection system that serves New Yorkers, especially the underserved. Through streamlining efficiencies and recognizing where there is systematic failure, we can help New York modernize into the 21st-century global city it should be.

I urge you to resist further cuts to the Department of Sanitation FY2022 Budget and encourage you to capitalize on this moment and improve our sanitation infrastructure when the health and well being of New Yorkers and our public spaces is absolutely critical.

Sincerely,

Jen and Lauren Verrusio

720 Nostrand Avenue #4R
Brooklyn, NY 11216

Jenni Li

26 Butler Street

Brooklyn, NY 11231

March 3, 2021

The city must invest in compost! When the composting program was in place as a household of 6 people we were able to reduce our non recyclable garbage to less than one bag per week. Composting is of utmost importance for our city and I hope it will be reinstated as soon as possible.

Reinstate and Expand Curbside Compost Collection as soon as possible.

For next year we are suggesting totaling \$14 Million be allocated for the 2022 fiscal year:

- **Community Composting and Food Scrap Drop-off Program** - \$7 million
- **Create New Community Composting Sites** - \$4 million
- **Zero Waste Schools and NYCHA organics pilot projects** - \$1 million
- **Multifamily Building Collection and Processing Pilot** - \$2 million
- **Feasibility Study - Citywide Curbside Compost Collection Program** - \$750,000
- **Municipal agency composting** - \$1 million

Sincerely,

Jenni Li

Since the closure of Shore Blvd alongside Astoria Park and in addition with the cuts in sanitation department budgets our street for the first time in 15 years has become a litter filled street with rats. I have never seen Shore Blvd with this much litter until recently. This is due to the fact that partiers are allowed to park their cars at all hours of the night on Shore Blvd. These partiers, often drunk, will leave their trash on the shore side as well as in the residents yards. Every morning I used to see the parks department sanitation department at least pick up the trash on the shore side and we would pick up the trash on our side. This has to stop, first the litter, but also now with the cut backs in sanitation I no longer see anyone pick up the trash on the shore side. We need more trash cans on Shore Blvd, but also more enforcement. These people who come and leave their trash need to be responsible for their trash left, not the tax paying house owners who are being bombarded with trash, rats, and even litter fines for something that they cannot control.

Joanna Stone

03/06/2021

New York City Council,

I like to testify the sad state our beautiful city has become since the sanitation cuts. There are barely any trash cans in the streets where we can safely dispose our trash. The streets roads are never cleaned, even though there are still parking restrictions on certain days in the streets; I do not understand what the point of this is, when I do not see the trucks picking up the litter anymore. The sites these days are the ones you see in the documentary of a developing nation. I live in the great neighborhood of Astoria, Queens, the decline in my neighborhood and the rest of the city has been heartbreaking. I was born in New York City, and I love this city to the heart. I am praying the sanitation budget will be resolved, otherwise, this will be the further downfall of our great city.

Jonathan Paramo, MD

Testimony Submission
Committee on Sanitation & Solid Waste Management
Thursday, March 4, 2021

Josh Tjaden | Proud Astorian Volunteer
josh.tjaden@me.com | 917.683.5464
Astoria Resident | 18 years | City Council District 22

Hello,

My name is Josh Tjaden, an 18 year resident of Astoria. I am submitting testimony as a concerned citizen and volunteer for the Proud Astorian organization.

Since the start of the pandemic last spring, Astoria experienced a noticeable and serious increase in the amount of trash on our sidewalks, streets, and in our public spaces. Groups like Astoria Park Alliance, Astoria Mutual Aid, and Proud Astorian have all gladly organized and pitched in to improve conditions in our neighborhood in response.

While this has benefited our neighborhood morale, enabling neighbors to become friends and allies in our efforts to beautify and clean up Astoria, it demonstrates the serious and immediate need for an increase in city funding and resources.

Proud Astorian has organized and participated in clean ups nearly every weekend over the past nine months; including over 250 people, more than 1,000 hours of combined litter cleanup, and thousands of bags of trash. In addition, we have participated in PPE distribution and encouraged proper social distancing & safe COVID19 protocols.

In recent months, we have also improved pedestrian conditions by shoveling sidewalks, breaking up snow & ice in crosswalks, and ensuring that our neighbors who require handicap-accessible walkways are made safe and have equal access. The need for ensuring we have safe public spaces also extends to medical waste and construction materials. We have come across hypodermic needles, broken glass, metals objects and other materials that, if the Sanitation Department were given proper resources, would be removed safely and in a more timely fashion.

Our efforts have had a positive impact on the social network of Astoria, as we have built alliances with other community organizations, elected officials, small business owners, and like-minded residents who want to see our neighborhood clean and encourage mutual respect for our public spaces.

And Astoria is not alone. Residents and groups in other neighborhoods (notably in Hell's Kitchen and Chelsea - District 3) where councilmembers have responded by advocating for increased sanitation budget funding have seen marked improvement. The city and Council District 22 must recognize these efforts and respond accordingly. Thank you for your time & consideration.

Best, Josh Tjaden

Comments in Support of NYC Composting Programs - March 6, 2021

I am writing in support of increasing funding for GrowNYC & other compost programs in the Department of Sanitation budget for Fiscal Year 2022.

My name is Judy Fletcher, and I am a resident of the Riverdale neighborhood in the Bronx. I am distressed to learn that the City is planning yet another year of inadequate funding for composting programs. I try very hard to live my life sustainably and to leave as small an environmental footprint as I possibly can. The composting program is a huge relief to those of us trying to live with low-waste values.

And more broadly, long after the coronavirus crisis is past and the city has regained its financial stability, global warming will continue to pose an existential threat. Without these community composting programs, the city will fall further behind our climate and Zero Waste goals and will not easily bounce back. For this reason alone, it is in the city's best interest for you to find a way to keep these programs going.

In addition, NYC's composting programs can reduce our waste stream significantly, and by recycling organic waste through decomposition, produce carbon-sequestering, nutrient-rich soil.

I support the **Save Our Compost Coalition's request for \$14.75 million in FY22**, which includes:

- GrowNYC Compost Program - \$2.5 million
- Other Community Composters and Food Scrap Drop-off operators - \$4.5 million
- New compost processing facilities - \$3.5 million
- Multifamily building collection and processing pilot - \$2 million
- Zero Waste Schools & NYCHA Organics pilot projects – \$1 million
- Composting in municipal agencies and facilities \$1 million
- Feasibility study on citywide Curbside Composting - \$250,000

Being able to compost my household's organic waste gives me a rare sense of empowerment, as a precious opportunity to do my part toward solving an overwhelming problem. Please do yours as our city leaders and save these programs. I ask that the City increase funding for composting in FY22, including restoring the GrowNYC Compost Program to its FY20 funding levels.

Sincerely,

Judy Fletcher
525 W. 238th St., Apt. A1
Bronx, NY 10463
jfletcher@riverdale.edu

To the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management:

As a NYC resident for over 40 years, I was so proud of the work DSNY did to begin the composting program, and was eagerly waiting to benefit from curbside pickup of compost in my neighborhood (the Upper West Side). I religiously compost my organic waste at the GrowNYC sites, sometimes at Union Square but most frequently at the 79th and Columbus site, the 97th and Amsterdam site and the Columbia University site. It made a huge difference in reducing my trash volume and stinkiness.

On a more global note, I am firm in my support of the improvements to the environment that come when we don't truck our solid waste to far-off dumping grounds: better air quality, lower fossil fuel/gas consumption and truck road use, and less landfill pollution. And I'm willing to pay more in taxes to live in a city that incorporates those considerations strongly into all aspects of city life and services.

Please include support for DSNY's composting program in your budget considerations.

Julia Robbins

Wednesday March 4th, 2021

Re: Trash and Litter Crisis in Bushwick

To the Committee on Sanitation,

My name is Kate Sullivan and I am a Bushwick resident and the owner of Kala Yoga, a new yoga studio that opened in Bushwick only three weeks before the pandemic hit. I am writing to report that my neighborhood is a hellscape. There is garbage everywhere - it overwhelms the eyes upon stepping outside. Litter, illegal dumping on almost every corner, an unbelievable amount of dog waste on the street, and a general lack of consistent sanitation workers or police officers are what define our beloved Bushwick at the moment. Just today, once again, my street sweeper didn't come and my street is filthy. I clean the front of my house every day, but with garbage everywhere and wind it's impossible to keep it clean for more than an hour.

The garbage crisis is not only unsanitary, but creates the sense that our neighborhood is unsafe. I do not think it is a coincidence that during the last few months not only has our neighborhood become increasingly and unbearably dirty, but violent crime is also on the rise. Young women in particular are the target of attacks from unstable people in the subway. Just this last Sunday a young woman from my studio was attacked on the way to work at 2pm in the subway by a man who exposed himself to her, cornered her, and tried to pin her down. Where were the police officers who were supposed to be monitoring our subways after the serial attacks from last month?

We have been abandoned by the city and we need help. Since my business was new I was not eligible for any government assistance, and while that burns because new businesses needed help more than anyone, what I want the most from my government is to do their basic job and address this crisis of trash and violent crime in Bushwick.

Thank you,
Kate Sullivan

Kristen Lazzarini-Diomedede

Astoria, NY 11102

970-590-2020

Kristen.Lazzarini@gmail.com

March, 3 2021

To whom it may concern:

I am writing this letter to testify to the ongoing Sanitation issues in Astoria, NY. I have lived in Astoria for 11 years, and consider this neighborhood my home.

I've lived all over Astoria, and currently reside on Hallet's Cove, which has been severely underserved for many years. There is trash and litter absolutely everywhere. There is alternate side street parking, and while parking tickets are distributed regularly, the streets are never cleaned. There are TWO NYC trash cans in the proximity of 1st street to 14th street, and one of them has been removed since Whitey Ford Field is under construction. The one remaining trash can is always overflowing.

Garbage, needles, dog and human feces are everywhere. It's disgusting and disheartening to walk through the streets, and to live in such filth. There are grassroots organizations going out in their spare time to clean up the neighborhood- but it's not enough. Please allocate more funds to district 22's sanitation budget.

Sincerely,

Kristen Lazzarini-Diomedede

I am submitting testimony first and foremost on the issue of community composting. The city needs to prioritize curbside organics disposal and keeping organic waste out of our landfills, which releases harmful methane emissions that pollute our air. The city has left it to non-profit organizations like Big Reuse to process as much of this waste as possible, and the Parks Department is now evicting Big Reuse. This is a waste issue primarily, and we would not be so desperate to save Big Reuse in their location under the Queensboro bridge if there were other options for safely disposing of organic waste. This issue spans both Parks and Sanitation. Sanitation should be taking up further composting measures.

I would also like to bring up the issue of waste and litter in Long Island City. My neighborhood of Long Island City, near Queensboro Plaza (I live on the north side but the problem is also apparent on the south side) the waste on the streets is appalling. I regularly see individuals throwing trash from cars directly onto the street, as well as dog waste and trash strewn across the streets. When I walk in this neighborhood, I hardly see any trash receptacles. The ones that are closer to the subway stop regularly overflow. We need more litter baskets and cleaning in this neighborhood.

Finally, I'd like to bring up an issue of safety in terms of snow and ice. This was not a safe neighborhood to walk around in following the recent snowstorms. There are older residents and disabled residents in this neighborhood that cannot climb over snow banks that are two feet high. Most crosswalks were obstructed by snow banks, and the sidewalks were not appropriately salted, making it slippery and dangerous for even a young person such as myself to walk outside.

Thank you for taking action on these issues.

Kristen Misak

March 6, 2021

Hon. Bill de Blasio
Mayor, City of New York
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Hon. Corey Johnson
Speaker of the Council
Hon. Antonio Reynoso
Chair, Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management
224 W. 30th Street, Suite 1206
New York, NY 10001

Re: March 4th, Sanitation and Solid Waste Committee Hearing Testimony Submission

To Whom it May Concern:

Please consider this letter a written testimony submission in response to the Sanitation and Solid Waste Committee Hearing held this past Thursday, March 4th at 2 pm. As a member of Clean Bushwick Initiative in Bushwick and a community resident, I would like to provide my own frontline perspective on the pervasive litter issue, its impacts on the community, along with recommended actions.

Evidenced by all kinds of litter on the streets, illegal dumping sites and the pervasive rat presence, Bushwick's litter challenges are far reaching and longstanding. As a co-director of Clean Bushwick Initiative, a community based organization aimed at mitigating the litter problem, I have a distinct perspective of how this affects our communities. Our group has been in operation for the past five years, and at its current state the litter challenge is at an all-time high. The Community Board 4 has even formed a Sanitation Working Group made up of local nonprofits, community based organizations, and small businesses in the neighborhood to tackle this challenge on a multisector scale. Many of its members, who are lifelong Bushwick residents, have personally testified that the problem has never been worse. In spite of the growing awareness of the issue prompting many cleanup coalitions to form, the issue continues to exacerbate. The cleanup initiatives are simply a bandage to a greater problem, and further residents from the idea that they too are a part of the solution.

The city's decision to cut back DSNY, composting and recycling funding was quickly noticed throughout the boroughs, and was magnified in neighborhoods like Bushwick. In our neighborhood, what this looks like is opened garbage bags spilling litter on the streets, often left for days on end. In light of the snowstorms, this looks like hardened mounds of snow and litter, often in the form of opened trash bags. It is a testament to how diligent these services had operated pre-pandemic, and how neighborhoods like Bushwick are the last to get cleaned. While many of this is beyond the efforts of the DSNY, its effects have a harmful toll on working class black and brown communities like Bushwick.

Moving forward from this will require a renewed and creative approach due to funding constraints. Below are some recommended actions that I have discussed with my working group, and that I believe may be able to help on a community scale.

Recommendations:

- Advocate for the restoration of full funding for DSNY basket pickups
- Use recent data on truck capacity rates by the route to strategically determine the area's most urgently in need of service restoration given the altered residential, tourist, and workplace traffic patterns during the pandemic.

- Fully restore NYC Cleanup Initiative Discretionary Funding for programs like ACE to help to mitigate the issue of sidewalk litter in high traffic areas like Knickerbocker Ave
- Allocate more funding towards Marketing programs to help educate the public on sustainable waste management to reduce garbage.
 - Multilingual marketing campaigns to help educate residents on waste management
- Zero-waste education: advocating for the adoption of more zero-waste programs-- including the mitigation of plastics, and the adoption of reusable items wherever possible
- Implement a sanitation citation program. Concentrate enforcement in areas of larger developments. Holding developers accountable for their spaces and or incentivizing them to keep their spaces cleaner.
- Restore the Composting Programs budget to help reduce the landfill cost

Kristen Tadrous

To whom it may concern,

I am a resident of Astoria, Queens, since October of 2019. I would like to testify that I believe making composting a priority for NYC waste management is crucial for the city to achieve its carbon reduction goals. To underfund NYC composting would be senseless and to the detriment of the city as a whole. After the brutal budget cuts to city composting during the pandemic, we cannot afford to further jeopardize its availability.

It is already very difficult for many New Yorkers to make composting a sustainable habit, due to inaccessibility of collection sites. I would love to live in an NYC where every residential building has a compost bin just like that for garbage and recycling. In my community, in order to compost, I have to save scraps in my freezer and then travel about half a mile on Fridays or Saturdays to the closest collection site, and this situation is enough of an inconvenience in this convenience-driven world that the majority of my community members haven't even considered composting.

We ought to be transitioning as rapidly as possible to drastic carbon-reduction energy and waste management infrastructure, no matter the cost. It is shameful that the city is willing to dump massive sums of money into the policing and jail system while denouncing something like improving waste management, which could be done for considerably less than, say, the NYPD's annual budget, as too expensive.

Invest in NYC's future by making access to compost collection and processing a bigger priority. Include \$14 million for composting in the 2022 fiscal year.

Respectfully,

Ledah Finck



Testimony submitted on March 7, 2021
Hearing held March 4, 2021

Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management
Chairman Antonio Reynoso

Dear Chairman Reynoso,

In less than a year, we have seen our beautiful, vibrant West Side neighborhoods descend into garbage pile after garbage pile, stacked and strewn on every block. This is solely due to COVID related budget cuts and the City's mistaken determination that the hard work of the men and women of the DSNY is low priority. I can certainly point to the unwise cuts and elimination of building trash & recycling removal, basket pick up and the composting program but I would like to take this opportunity to focus on one service, in particular.

We have recently seen a large uptick in syringes on our sidewalks, in our parks and stuck in our tree pits. This is not solely a trash issue but a serious public safety one, as well. Attached are examples we have come across of used syringes scattered in our neighborhood. This is a significant danger to residents, especially young children, who tend to pick up everything, and dogs on their daily walks.

You have eliminated the DSNY Syringe Clean Up Unit that handled this with no effective substitute. I am confident that I speak with the residents in my district and urge the City Council to recognize the important connection between clean streets, health and safety.

To eliminate funding and essential sanitation service, especially during a pandemic, is unhealthy and shortsighted. I ask that the DSNY's full basket collection services be restored, syringe unit reinstated and for increased funding for the NYC Clean Up Initiative.

Respectfully Submitted,

Leslie Boghosian Murphy
Hell's Kitchen Resident
Candidate for NY City Council, District 3

LESLIE

BOGHOSIAN★MURPHY
FOR CITY COUNCIL 2021



Written Statement of Lorin Zackular Before the Preliminary Budget Hearing of the NYC Council Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management

March 4, 2020

Thank you, Chairman Reynoso, and members of the Committee for this opportunity to testify in support of increasing funding for GrowNYC & other compost programs in the Department of Sanitation budget for Fiscal Year 2022.

My name is Lorin Zackular and I am a resident of Washington Heights, Manhattan. I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning yet another year of inadequate funding for composting programs.

In the last year, we've seen Department of Sanitation funding for composting decrease by 90%, from \$26.6 million in FY20 to just \$2.8 million in FY21. Funding was reduced by 34% for the NYC Compost Project, 75% for the GrowNYC Compost Program, and 100% Curbside Composting program.

We love composting in my apartment and it used to be so easy. I could drop it off on Wednesday morning right on my walk to the train. This made us compost everything! Now, our closest site is the Inwood Farmers Market. It's usually a 45 minute round trip to wait for the bus or train both way. We are compost enthusiasts- so we still make time every other week (although we just don't compost as much... we run out of space!) I can only imagine that others in the neighborhood would stop all together as it is now a HUGE commitment to do something so important.

I support the Save Our Compost Coalition's request for \$14.75 million in FY22, which includes:
GrowNYC Compost Program - \$2 million
Other Community Composters and Food Scrap Drop-off operators - \$5 million
New compost processing facilities - \$3.5 million
Multifamily building collection and processing pilot - \$2 million
Zero Waste Schools & NYCHA Organics pilot projects - \$1 million
Composting in municipal agencies and facilities \$1 million
Feasibility study on citywide Curbside Composting - \$250,000

We need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future, and composting gives people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. I ask that the City increase funding for composting in FY22, including restoring the GrowNYC Compost Program to its FY20 funding levels.

I would like to thank Chairman Reynoso and the Committee for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Sincerely,
Lorin Zackular
570 West 183rd St APT 2D
NYC NY 10033

3-7-2021

As a resident of Astoria and a member of Proud Astorians, I echo my fellow volunteers' comments made at the March 4th meeting Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management in support of the restoration of the Sanitation budget.

I am sure we can all agree that overflowing trash cans and litter scattered over the sidewalks are not representative of this great city. And yet, this is what residents and visitors alike have been seeing day after day in every borough and every neighborhood. We, residents, want a clean city; it's our home and we want to make it nice not just for ourselves, our families, and our fellow New Yorkers but also for all those who visit the city. We want to show it off, of course. But this litter is preventing us from putting our best foot forward.

I started volunteering with Proud Astorians in July of 2020 to help do something about it. It's been great giving back to the community and making our neighborhood at least a little better. But what I find most frustrating about the issue is that New Yorkers want to keep the streets clean too. They are not just throwing their takeout containers on the ground and walking away. Of course not!

People are going to the trash bin on the sidewalk and want to throw things away properly but they can't because the bin is already overflowing. So they have no choice but to lay it precariously on top of the heap and then, unbeknownst to them, 10 minutes later a gush of wind comes along and blows all over the sidewalk. This is what happens over and over again.

How do we fix this? Us New Yorkers are doing the right thing. We are not littering and throwing away our garbage. We can control the weather, so stopping the wind from blowing isn't an option either. The only option that is left is to empty the bins more often so that they do not overflow. And the only way to do this is to restore the sanitation budget.

Sincerely,
Lydia A. DiLalla

Meeting of March 4 City Council Sanitation Committee Hearing on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management

Written Testimony of Maria Fernandez

Thank you for accepting my testimony. Along with several concerned residents throughout Astoria for the situation on our streets and sidewalks. I would like to express how important sanitation is for our community.

As you will see in my testimony, the pictures I am providing will simply speak for themselves.

I have also volunteered with a Proud Astorian group led by Kate Peterson to help clean up some of the streets of Astoria. It not litter clean, it's a massive trash cleanup.

Why does New York City need to remain seen as dirty? This can change with efforts of our community and accountability.

With all the advances in technology, why haven't we been able to move in the right direction with simple and common sense sanitation of our neighborhoods?

Please help allocate more Department of Sanitation funding for trash pickups at the city public bins.

Here are some examples of trash/litter on the sidewalks and streets of Astoria:





Sincerely
Maria Fernandez
Astoria, NY



3.3.21 Earth Matter NY Testimony to the NYC Council's Committee of Sanitation and Solid Waste

Good Afternoon Council Members,

I am speaking today to recommend that the FY 22 City Council budget includes \$14 million earmarked for composting.

I am Marisa DeDominicis, the Executive Director of Earth Matter NY, Inc., a non-profit organization located on Governors Island. We are contracted with the Department of Sanitation's NYC Compost Project. We are in a position to assert the success of community scale composting efforts as a part of City's waste management solution since 2012.

ADDRESS

Earth Matter NY
179 Rivington Street #4A
New York, NY 10002

WEB

www.EarthMatter.org

PHONE

917-447-7256

EMAIL

marisa@earthmatter.org

Our NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) compost facility processes 800 tons of organic material annually. We are one of several facilities with a proven track record of reducing waste exportation and creating an invaluable soil amendment in NYC for NYC. The 2014 DSNY NYC Community Compost Report, showed a pie chart that illustrates 31% of our waste stream is suitable for composting and yet, over 99% of our organics go into the waste stream.

I'm here today to respectfully request this committee ensures there is a decrease in the amount of organic waste going to incineration and landfills in FY 22. I urge you to allocate additional composting funding as a budget priority.

- Invest in infrastructure! Allocate the land, and resources to create 6 additional NYS DEC compost facilities, located strategically in all the boros, to increase the local compost processing capacity and educational hubs. These facilities will create green jobs for many of the skilled volunteers who dedicate and donate thousands of hours to compost neighbor organics in their small community gardens and parks.
- The suspension of the curbside program allows for the exploration of innovative 24/7 non-staffed systems where residents can walk to a collectively shared bin! The EMZ bin, or other systems may be a good way to service our densely populated urban settings such as NYCHA developments and Chinatown.
- And finally, compost education for everyone! – In schools, for residents, offices, the Parks Department! Fund GrowNYC, the Compost Project, and other composting organizations trained to provide the education necessary to ensure the success of NYC composting.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my views.

Marisa DeDominicis

Hello,

I am writing to urge you to support the demands of Save Our Compost. These are:

- Community Composting and Food Scrap Drop-off Program - \$7 million
- Create New Community Composting Sites - \$4 million
- Zero Waste Schools and NYCHA organics pilot projects - \$1 million
- Multifamily Building Collection and Processing Pilot - \$2 million
- Feasibility Study - Citywide Curbside Compost Collection Program - \$750,000
- Municipal agency composting - \$1 million
- Reinstate & Expand Curbside Compost Collection

These requests, totaling \$14 million for the 2022 fiscal year, which is significantly less than what the city currently spends for organics collection and will create a better world in the long run.

Please make the decision that will be better for the future generations.

Sincerely,

Marley Alford

3/3/21

I have lived on the corner of 31st Avenue and 36th St for over 10 years. The garbage has always been bad in the neighborhood, but it has gotten significantly worse in the past two years.

Some of it is an eyesore, but so much of it is an actual hazard. Broken glass, bottle caps, wooden meat skewers are all over the sidewalk. I pull it out of my front yard on a weekly basis. That is not hyperbole - I pull new broken glass out of my front yard every single week, with no exception in 2020 or 2021.

There has also always been a disturbing amount of foodstuffs on the ground. Chicken bones, vegetables, beer puddles, bread - it seems that there is truly no limit to what could be on the ground. Besides looking and smelling awful, it is a major hazard to dogs in the neighborhood. In my side yard right now, there is a scattering of loosely chopped onions that I intend to clean up later today. I have a dog who uses the yard space, and onions are poison to dogs. The fact that this is normal is completely unacceptable.

31st Avenue is well trafficked by pedestrians, and although not the commercial hub of the scale of Broadway or 30th Ave, it has a good number of active businesses. There are only two city garbage cans on the 1.75 mile stretch of 31st Avenue from Vernon to 51st St. The garbage cans on many corners of Broadway and 30th Ave are too often overflowing with garbage. Again, this is not hyperbole - the garbage cans have loose garbage stacked up above the rim of cans, spilling out to the sidewalk, where more garbage has been placed next to them. They can be found like this at any and all hours of the day. They fill up so quickly, then spread around the neighborhood. I used to manage a restaurant on the corner of Broadway and 38th St and would have to pull garbage out of the garbage can myself and bag it in order to cut down on the garbage blowing under tables being used by our customers. The garbage would actually flow into the open doors in nice weather and come inside. Steinway is filthy with garbage every weekend, and continues to be.

My super does a poor job of managing the garbage of my building, and many tenants in my building fill up our cans with whole cardboard boxes and loose garbage that sometimes spills out onto our alley. Note that this issue is separate from the foodstuffs in the side yard - that is coming from somewhere else. The landlord has never asked people in the building to manage their garbage better, and he has failed to get the super to do better with the garbage.

On top of these issues with my building's garbage, the twice weekly garbage pickup hasn't taken every one of our bags since the first snow some four weeks ago. We had a garbage pickup last night, and there are still 6 or 7 bags sitting there on the sidewalk.

Dog poop on the ground has gotten worse too. The state of garbage in Astoria seems to have escalated to a point of 'WHY EVEN TRY?'

I have reported this to 311 twice in the past year, requesting garbage cans be added to 31st Avenue. No action was taken.

I would like to see a number of measures taken to deal with this...

- More street corners with garbage cans
- More garbage cans on the busiest street corners - put multiple ones near busy intersections like Steinway and Broadway, Steinway and 30th, etc
- Alert property owners that fines will be issued to buildings that don't keep their garbage tidy and their sidewalks cleared
- Issue fines to property owners
- Not sure how to deal with dog poop - maybe signs alerting people of the fines for not tidying up dog poop would have an impact.
- Find a way to get sanitation workers to take all of the garbage. Do they need more people? More trucks?

You may contact me if you'd like. My name is Matt Archambault. My cell is 401.359.1221

Written Statement of Michael Quinn Before the Preliminary Budget Hearing of the NYC Council Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management

4 March 2021

Thank you, Chairman Reynoso, and members of the Committee for this opportunity to testify in support of **increasing funding for GrowNYC & other compost programs** in the Department of Sanitation budget for Fiscal Year 2022.

My name is **Michael Quinn** and I am a resident of **Prospect Park South, Brooklyn**. I'm disheartened to learn that the City is planning yet another year of inadequate funding for composting programs. **One of the most encouraging experiences of this past year was seeing people carrying their bags and buckets of organic scraps to the few sites that were still operational, sometimes from great distances, and in all kinds of weather. It made me think, "People really do care about the environment." Do you?**

In the last year, we've seen Department of Sanitation funding for composting decrease by 90%, from \$26.6 million in FY20 to just \$2.8 million in FY21. Funding was reduced by 34% for the NYC Compost Project, 75% for the GrowNYC Compost Program, and 100% Curbside Composting program. **Once you start composting, you can't easily bring yourself to throw out organic waste with the rest of the trash—you understand how truly wasteful that is. Isn't it in everyone's best interest to have a healthy, clean planet?**

I support the **Save Our Compost Coalition's request for \$14.75 million in FY22**, which includes:

- GrowNYC Compost Program - \$2.5 million
- Other Community Composters and Food Scrap Drop-off operators - \$4.5 million
- New compost processing facilities - \$3.5 million
- Multifamily building collection and processing pilot - \$2 million
- Zero Waste Schools & NYCHA Organics pilot projects – \$1 million
- Composting in municipal agencies and facilities \$1 million
- Feasibility study on citywide Curbside Composting - \$250,000

We need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future, and composting gives people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. I ask that the City increase funding for composting in FY22, including restoring the GrowNYC Compost Program to its FY20 funding levels.

I would like to thank Chairman Reynoso and the Committee for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Sincerely,

Michael Quinn
1600 Caton Ave, #1K
Brooklyn, NY 11226

Michael William Garcia

561 10th Avenue
New York, NY 10036
michaelwgjr@gmail.com

5th March 2021

Sanitation & Solid Waste Committee

250 Broadway
New York, NY 10007

Dear Sanitation & Solid Waste Committee,

First thank you for being generous with your time to review my written testimony. I can only imagine the type of decisions that your committee has to endure and appreciate your time.

I'm writing this letter to help ensure that City Council members hear the effects of the Department of Sanitation budget cuts on NYC residents and to share my personal ground intelligence to help you see what NYC residents are enduring during their daily lives.

I have recently moved from the Upper East Side after 5 years to New York City's Hell's Kitchen neighborhood in District 3. The disparity is apparent between the public waste management of my previous neighborhood to my current neighborhood. I think it's common knowledge that the Upper East Side is a "bubble" when compared to other neighborhoods, but why is it that this contrast in waste management is so blatant?

To help illustrate this, I documented how the streets look in the Upper East Side on March 3, 2021 compared to the streets in Hell's Kitchen on March 5, 2021 to illustrate the contrast of sanitation measures being taken in each neighborhood.

This first image illustrates the cleanliness and lack of waste on the streets in the Upper East Side. The second image illustrates the lack of sanitation, overflowing public trash bins, and the visual effects of the budget cuts that had taken place.

Please Turn to Next Page

Image of Clean Upper East Side Streets



Image of Hell's Kitchen Public Bins and Streets located on 10th Ave & 43rd



To further illustrate the impact of the waste management cuts the next two images show the visuals of how bad the situation is located directly across from the Hell's Kitchen City Target



Not only is this lack of waste management unsafe, but it hurts the city's "curb appeal" in chances of welcoming big business to a city that desperately needs work and money.

It is with this that I highly encourage you reconsider your budget cut efforts and help improve the livelihood of this city we all call home.

Thank you for your time.

Michael William Garcia

Dear Committee:

I am the creator of '**Keep Murray Hill Clean**'; a neighborhood clean-up initiative and campaign.

This campaign effort is due to the on-going citywide problem of garbage on the streets and its removal. We need more manpower to clean our streets.

Murray Hill is especially being affected from the plethora of homeless people leaving garbage, laying their food and baggage on the sidewalks, and 'acting out' in such cases, catching garbage cans on fire. Adding to this, we have outsiders who drive into the city and literally dump their trash out of their cars.

As a neighborhood association, we ask that you provide more workers to clean up our streets daily, and with more enforcement to businesses not keeping their storefronts clean, and more workers post snowstorms.

And more education and awareness is needed to buildings about recycling, as well as putting out their garbage.

Additionally, in Murray Hill as well as Kips Bay, we have garbage-dumping tree-bed issue inside of the largely boarded up trees due to the water project on 33rd, 1st, 2nd & 3rd Avenues.

The tree beds have become a trash bin; we are constantly finding needles, glass and bottles, and dumps of garbage in these tree beds. Please provide more service so that we can restore and maintain, historic Murray Hill.

Michael-Ann Rowe
Co-Chair, Green & Clean Committee,
The Murray Hill Neighborhood Association

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Nicole Sabino and I have been a resident of Astoria, Queens for almost 10 years. I'm writing this testimony in regard to two issues that have become more important to me this year after adopting a dog: 1) the increasing amount of trash that has been plaguing our local streets over the past few months, and 2) the lack of public trash cans on our street corners. I love Astoria and am proud to be a part of this wonderful community, but I'm embarrassed and disgusted by the lack of attention that's been given to keeping our neighborhood clean.

This is more than just litter. I'm seeing overflowing trashcans on every sidewalk and food scraps and household waste left behind after trash day. As a dog owner, I'm constantly worried every time I take my dog for a walk that he's going to eat something off the sidewalk that is dangerous to his health, and there have been a few times that I've had to pry a chicken bone out of his mouth that he quickly and quietly picked up while walking down the sidewalk. In fact, I now have to avoid walking down certain streets, as I know the amount of trash on those streets is worse than others and I just don't want to take that risk anymore.

There's also a huge problem with people not properly disposing of their pet waste and I think that issue is made worse by the lack of places to dispose of it. The sidewalk is literally a minefield of dog poop. I always pick up my dog's waste and throw out the bag when I get home, but I know my neighbors don't always do the same. If there were more trashcans in the neighborhood, not just at major intersections, there would actually be a place for them to dispose of these poop bags rather than tossing them anywhere they please.

I'm asking for the sanitation department to take trash collection and management more seriously in Astoria for the safety of our animals and the general wellbeing of our community.

Sincerely,

Nicole Sabino

Tuesday, March 2nd, 2021

Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management
New York City Council
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chair Reynoso and Honorable Committee Members:

I write to you regarding the Department of Sanitation Budget for FY2022. Without a doubt, 2020 brought incredible hardship to many New Yorkers. Understandably, the severe \$1.5 billion revenue decline coupled with almost \$5.9 billion unexpected costs since the start of the pandemic has presented the City with challenging budget decisions.

As a Brooklyn resident, my family and I have personally been affected by the deep cuts made to the Sanitation budget. As you know, trash pickups have been reduced by over 60 percent, and this problem has only exponentially grown into a larger hazard and health issue.

I am lucky to live in North Crown Heights where the sense of community is strong. Residents have taken personal initiative to try and keep the community clean, for example with the incredible group 'Clean Up Crown Heights'. However, this is not close to enough. Trash continues to spill over trash bins, single-weekly street cleaning leaves piles of garbage behind, including sharp objects such as broken glass bottles. Our local public space, Brower Park, is overwhelmed with garbage consistently, a serious hazard to both people and animals.

Trash and sanitation are an overlapping issue that connects to public health, climate change, transit, and more. In a post-Covid-19 world, this has become even more obvious and grave. I applaud the small steps to modernize NYC sanitation through the 'Clean Curbs' program and some neighborhood compacting stations. Unfortunately, this is not enough! We need a unified 'smart' collection system that serves New Yorkers, especially the underserved. Through streamlining efficiencies and recognizing where there is systematic failure, we can help New York modernize into the 21st-century global city it should be.

I urge you to resist further cuts to the Department of Sanitation FY2022 Budget and encourage you to capitalize on this moment and improve our sanitation infrastructure when the health and well-being of New Yorkers and our public spaces is absolutely critical.

Sincerely,

Nora Bisharat
720 Nostrand Avenue #1
Brooklyn, NY 11216

Written Statement of Paige Williams Before the Preliminary Budget Hearing of the NYC Council Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management

March 6, 2020

Thank you, Chairman Reynoso, and members of the Committee for this opportunity to testify in support of **increasing funding for GrowNYC & other compost programs** in the Department of Sanitation budget for Fiscal Year 2022.

My name is Paige Williams and I am a resident of Sunnyside, Queens. While it is good that there will be more money allocated to composting programs in the city this year, the proposed budget still does not reflect the commitment that they deserve. In my neighborhood, residents have come together to try and locally process the food waste that we create. These undertakings have built community and supported neighborhood food pantries and, most importantly, underscored the need for robust, well-funded, city-wide composting programs. People deeply feel the loss of GrowNYC organics collection in Sunnyside and, though we have stepped in to try and fill the gap, residents are no where near as equipped to take organics processing on the way our city could if it truly supported these programs.

In the last year, we've seen Department of Sanitation funding for composting decrease by 90%, from \$26.6 million in FY20 to just \$2.8 million in FY21. Funding was reduced by 34% for the NYC Compost Project, 75% for the GrowNYC Compost Program, and 100% Curbside Composting program. Making composting an easy target for budget cuts undermines its linchpin role in making the city more sustainable, creating jobs, and improving waste processing that oftentimes harms black, brown, and low-income communities.

I support the **Save Our Compost Coalition's request for \$14.75 million in FY22**, which includes:

- GrowNYC Compost Program - \$2.5 million
- Other Community Composters and Food Scrap Drop-off operators - \$4.5 million
- New compost processing facilities - \$3.5 million
- Multifamily building collection and processing pilot - \$2 million
- Zero Waste Schools & NYCHA Organics pilot projects – \$1 million
- Composting in municipal agencies and facilities \$1 million
- Feasibility study on citywide Curbside Composting - \$250,000

We need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future, and composting gives people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. I ask that the City increase funding for composting in FY22, including restoring the GrowNYC Compost Program to its FY20 funding levels.

I would like to thank Chairman Reynoso and the Committee for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Sincerely,

Paige Williams

43-07 39th Place, Apt. 5E
Sunnyside, NY 11104

March 4, 2020

Please accept this letter as my written testimony in support of **increasing funding for GrowNYC & other compost programs** in the Department of Sanitation budget for Fiscal Year 2022.

My name is Patricia Silver and I am a resident of **10128 in Manhattan**. I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning yet another year of inadequate funding for composting programs. During the time I was able to drop off compost prior to the pandemic, my household trash was reduced dramatically. In addition, food waste rotting in a landfill releases yet more methane into our already-compromised environment.

In the last year, we've seen Department of Sanitation funding for composting decrease by 90%, from \$26.6 million in FY20 to just \$2.8 million in FY21. Funding was reduced by 34% for the NYC Compost Project, 75% for the GrowNYC Compost Program, and 100% Curbside Composting program. I now have nowhere to drop off compost and am forced to throw it in the garbage.

I support the **Save Our Compost Coalition's request for \$14.75 million in FY22**, which includes:

- GrowNYC Compost Program - \$2.5 million
- Other Community Composters and Food Scrap Drop-off operators - \$4.5 million
- New compost processing facilities - \$3.5 million
- Multifamily building collection and processing pilot - \$2 million
- Zero Waste Schools & NYCHA Organics pilot projects – \$1 million
- Composting in municipal agencies and facilities \$1 million
- Feasibility study on citywide Curbside Composting - \$250,000

We need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future, and composting gives people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. I ask that the City increase funding for composting in FY22, including restoring the GrowNYC Compost Program to its FY20 funding levels.

I would like to thank Chairman Reynoso and the Committee for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Sincerely,

Patricia Silver
150 East 93rd Street
New York, NY 10128



New York City should prioritize community and curbside compost in the 2021 budget and all budgets hereafter. Organics recycling is a hugely important part of the fight against climate change, which threatens our city's very existence due to rising sea levels. I urge the city council to do the right thing and set aside this very reasonable amount of money to ensure New Yorkers have access to dispose of organic waste in a sustainable manner.

Penina Kessler

Written Statement of Phebe Pierson Before the Preliminary Budget Hearing of the NYC Council Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management

March 4, 2020

Thank you, Chairman Reynoso, and members of the Committee for this opportunity to testify in support of **increasing funding for GrowNYC & other compost programs** in the Department of Sanitation budget for Fiscal Year 2022.

My name is **Phebe Pierson** and I am a resident of **Harlem, Manhattan**. I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning yet another year of inadequate funding for composting programs. **As someone who worked at community farmers markets for 5 years, I saw first-hand how important the compost sites that GrowNYC and other organizations run are to the communities they service. For many neighborhoods, the drop-offs run by these organizations are the only way for folks to compost. Composting is such an easy and EFFECTIVE way to combat climate change and food waste, keeping millions of tons of waste out of the landfill while simultaneously enriching the soil (and lives) it touches.**

In the last year, we've seen Department of Sanitation funding for composting decrease by 90%, from \$26.6 million in FY20 to just \$2.8 million in FY21. Funding was reduced by 34% for the NYC Compost Project, 75% for the GrowNYC Compost Program, and 100% Curbside Composting program. **During the coronavirus pandemic it was devastating to lose one of our most beloved community services, one that is participatory, positive, and just makes sense. I saw the amount of trash in my household at least double. Composting is an essential service for New Yorkers, and it's essential if we are serious about making our city greener.**

I support the **Save Our Compost Coalition's request for \$14.75 million in FY22**, which includes:

- GrowNYC Compost Program - \$2.5 million
- Other Community Composters and Food Scrap Drop-off operators - \$4.5 million
- New compost processing facilities - \$3.5 million
- Multifamily building collection and processing pilot - \$2 million
- Zero Waste Schools & NYCHA Organics pilot projects – \$1 million
- Composting in municipal agencies and facilities \$1 million
- Feasibility study on citywide Curbside Composting - \$250,000

We need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future, and composting gives people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. I ask that the City increase funding for composting in FY22, including restoring the GrowNYC Compost Program to its FY20 funding levels.

I would like to thank Chairman Reynoso and the Committee for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Sincerely,

**Phebe Pierson
Columbia University, Earth Institute
348 West 118th Street, #61
NY NY 10026**

Online testimony for March 4 Committee Meeting on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management

Rachel Smucker

I have lived in Astoria for 11 years. There is noticeably more trash on the sidewalks and in the streets than there ever has been before. Here are my comments on some critical aspects of this issue.

How has any increase in trash and litter has affected your quality of life?

It is on the sidewalks outside my building and all along my block. When I walk my cat, she is drawn to the trash and I have to be very careful when we walk so that she does not eat any or walk in it. There has also been a noticeable increase in people leaving their dog poop, either as-is or in bags, all over the sidewalk.

The delay in snow removal this past winter led to a huge pileup of trash outside my building. There was several weeks' worth of trash piled up outside on the sidewalk, behind the building, and in the basement of my building, which is where the laundry is, so I had to encounter it on a regular basis. The lack of waste bins on sidewalk corners also means that people drop their trash on top of these trash piles, so there was often loose trash – coffee cups, dog poo bags, masks – that was simply placed on top of the trash piles.

Have sanitation issues impacted your ability to run your business or earn a living or decision on where to reside?

I am currently looking for a new apartment and my decision has definitely been influenced by neighborhood trash management. For example, there is one area on 35th street north of Ditmars Blvd that has such massive trash pileups that there is a massive colony of rats that live on that block. I have heard anecdotes from residents in that area that it is unadvisable to live on the first floor of the buildings on that block because you can hear the rats picking through the trash at night. This is unacceptable and has driven me away from what is otherwise a very nice block to live on.

March 6th, 2020

Thank you, Chairman Reynoso, and members of the Committee for this opportunity to testify in support of increasing funding for GrowNYC & other compost programs in the Department of Sanitation budget for Fiscal Year 2022.

My name is Regina Koehler and I am a resident of Morning Side Heights in Manhattan. I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning yet another year of inadequate funding for composting programs. **Especially after the city so boldly committed to being ZERO WASTE by 2030 this decision completely goes against that goal.**

In the last year, we've seen Department of Sanitation funding for composting decrease by 90%, from \$26.6 million in FY20 to just \$2.8 million in FY21. Funding was reduced by 34% for the NYC Compost Project, 75% for the GrowNYC Compost Program, and 100% Curbside Composting program. I have had to now pay for a service to come pick up my compost. I am lucky enough to be able to afford this service, but many New Yorkers can't afford yet another expense, especially during these trying times.

I support the Save Our Compost Coalition's request for \$14.75 million in FY22, which includes:

- GrowNYC Compost Program - \$2.5 million
- Other Community Composters and Food Scrap Drop-off operators - \$4.5 million
- New compost processing facilities - \$3.5 million
- Multifamily building collection and processing pilot - \$2 million
- Zero Waste Schools & NYCHA Organics pilot projects – \$1 million
- Composting in municipal agencies and facilities \$1 million
- Feasibility study on citywide Curbside Composting - \$250,000

We need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future, and composting gives people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. I ask that the City increase funding for composting in FY22, including restoring the GrowNYC Compost Program to its FY20 funding levels.

I would like to thank Chairman Reynoso and the Committee for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Sincerely,

Regina Koehler
245 West 107th Street #5G
New York, NY, 10025

Testimony for the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management, 3/4/2021

I am writing to express my concern about the removal of the city trashcan previously located on the northeast corner of the intersection of Astoria blvd and 8th street (outside the Eighth Street Mini Mart). This is a major intersection with a lot of foot traffic and multiple bus stops. The trashcan on that corner was often very full to the point of overflowing — evidence that this was a useful location. Sometime between February 25th and March 3rd, the trash can was moved to the southeast corner of the intersection, outside of the Two Coves Community Garden. There are now two city trashcans less than five feet from each other on that corner in addition to several non-city cans. That corner receives much less foot traffic; Two Coves is essentially a large traffic island.

Moving the trashcan from the spot where it was sorely needed to a place where it is redundant is a transparently petty move to avoid dealing with the fact that human beings produce trash. The fact that the can was often very full means that the spot needs more care from the city, not less. Stockpiling cans on a corner where they are barely used is an absurd misuse of resources. Simply moving the can and pretending the problem is therefore gone punishes the people who live and work in the neighborhood, the owner and employees of the Eighth Street Mini Mart, and everyone who uses and cares for the community fridge on that corner. Removing the trashcan from the northeast corner has already resulted in increased trash accumulation on that corner. Especially as warmer weather approaches, this poses a potential public health risk for us all. The Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management has a responsibility to use its resources to care for the community, not to punish us by taking away the infrastructure we need.

Sincerely,
Robin Owen Joyce, Astoria Resident

March 6, 2021

Samuel P Carnicelli
514 W 48 St., 2B
New York, NY 10036
spcarnicelli@gmail.com
315-406-0179

Dear Sanitation & Solid Waste Committee Members,

My name is Samuel P. Carnicelli, and I would like to first and foremost thank the committee members for providing me a chance to submit my testimony regarding the budget for sanitation services provided to New York City residents. The COVID-19 pandemic has had devastating effects on the physical, mental, and financial health of our City's residents. It's also a sad truth that we will continue to experience this devastation as we continue to battle the disease with the hope of hastening down the road of recovery in the near future. It comes as no surprise that the finances of every level of government have been negatively impacted, and they will continue to be in the foreseeable future, leaving us with difficult budgeting decisions about prioritizing certain City services above others. With this fact in mind, I respectfully write to you with urgency to restore the sanitation and solid waste management services that our City relies on and desperately needs.

I have been a resident of Hell's Kitchen for almost four years. Prior to the beginning of the pandemic, I observed that the streets and sidewalks were generally clean and free from litter. In addition, corner waste receptacles were emptied regularly and adequately for people to dispose of trash. However, since the cut in these essential services took place, the cleanliness of my neighborhood has drastically deteriorated. Litter covers the streets and sidewalks almost daily, to the point where people must take measures to avoid it. Broken glass and used syringes have become a common sight on the sidewalks, posing a hazard to both people and dogs. The corner receptacles are not emptied as frequently, especially along 10th Avenue, and it is not unusual to find them overflowing with trash that spills onto the streets and sidewalks.

As a resident who saw these changes and cares deeply for the environment, I joined a local volunteer group in November 2020 called the Hell's Kitchen Litter Legion, led by Hell's Kitchen resident Catie Savage. The group meets once per week to clean up litter along the sidewalks and bike lanes of 10th Avenue between 57th Street and 42nd Street. The group had only a handful of dedicated volunteers at the time I joined; however, as I write this testimony, the group's dedicated volunteer base has expanded significantly to around 20 people as concerns about inadequate sanitation continue to grow. The scope of Hell's Kitchen Litter Legion's work has also expanded beyond collecting loose litter as we identified more issues, including:

- Emptying the contents of filled corner receptacles into contractor bags for pickup
- Shoveling snow from sidewalks and bike lanes
- Safely disposing used syringes in sharps containers
- Separating recyclables found on the ground and in the corner receptacles
- Reporting overflowing corner receptacles to 311
- Providing cleanup kits to local businesses

This is not an exhaustive list of the work we do, but it serves to illustrate what our residents need to do to ensure the cleanliness of our neighborhood is kept at an acceptable level. To provide more perspective about a typical cleanup, our group collected about 325 lbs. of loose litter from the streets and sidewalks and emptied over 40 full corner receptacles on February 28, 2021. In addition, we filled four 33-gallon bags of recyclables that would otherwise have been brought to the landfill. On a last note, our group recently collaborated with another volunteer cleanup group in the Bronx to assist with their cleanup event. This emphasizes that the sanitation budget cut is a Citywide problem, as further evidenced by the work documented on social media by several volunteer cleanup groups across the City.

It is critical to restore funding for sanitation services. Sanitation is not only an issue of cleanliness, but also of safety and public health. Inadequate sanitation is costly to both the City and its residents—it promotes the spread of diseases and increases instances of injuries. City residents have been through unprecedented times during the past year and deserve clean sidewalks and streets as City businesses and attractions reopen.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you.

Samuel P. Carnicelli

March 5, 2020

Please accept this letter as my written testimony in support of **increasing funding for GrowNYC & other compost programs** in the Department of Sanitation budget for Fiscal Year 2022.

I am a resident of Manhattan (zip code 10128) and am disheartened to learn that the City is planning yet another year of inadequate funding for composting programs. During the time I was able to drop off compost prior to the pandemic, my household trash was reduced dramatically. In addition, food waste rotting in a landfill releases yet more methane into our already-compromised environment.

In the last year, we've seen Department of Sanitation funding for composting decrease by 90%, from \$26.6 million in FY20 to just \$2.8 million in FY21. Funding was reduced by 34% for the NYC Compost Project, 75% for the GrowNYC Compost Program, and 100% Curbside Composting program. I now have nowhere to drop off compost and am forced to throw it in the garbage.

I support the **Save Our Compost Coalition's request for \$14.75 million in FY22**, which includes:

- GrowNYC Compost Program - \$2.5 million
- Other Community Composters and Food Scrap Drop-off operators - \$4.5 million
- New compost processing facilities - \$3.5 million
- Multifamily building collection and processing pilot - \$2 million
- Zero Waste Schools & NYCHA Organics pilot projects – \$1 million
- Composting in municipal agencies and facilities \$1 million
- Feasibility study on citywide Curbside Composting - \$250,000

We need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future, and composting gives people hope that through collective action individual choices can make a difference. I ask that the City increase funding for composting in FY22, including restoring the GrowNYC Compost Program to its FY20 funding levels.

I would like to thank Chairman Reynoso and the Committee for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Sincerely,

S. G. Washburn
150 East 93rd Street
Apartment 10-F
New York, NY 10128

Composting is a doable and cost effective method to combat climate change. Composting is one of the best ways NYC can join the fight for a sustainable future and save the city and the planet so we can all have a future.

Please Reinstate and Expand Curbside Compost Collection

This budget recommendation is a good start on this hopeful path.

For next year we are suggesting totaling \$14 Million be allocated for the 2022 fiscal year:

- **Community Composting and Food Scrap Drop-off Program**
- **Create New Community Composting Sites**
- **Zero Waste Schools and NYCHA organics pilot projects**
- **Multifamily Building Collection and Processing Pilot - \$2 million**
- **Feasibility Study - Citywide Curbside Compost Collection Program - \$750,000**
- **Municipal agency composting - \$1 million**

sandy renz

Written Statement of Sarah Edmunds Before the Preliminary Budget Hearing of the NYC Council Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management

March 3, 2020

Thank you, Chairman Reynoso, and members of the Committee for this opportunity to testify in support of **increasing funding for GrowNYC & other compost programs** in the Department of Sanitation budget for Fiscal Year 2022.

My name is **Sarah Edmunds** and I am a resident of **the Upper West Side, Manhattan**. I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning yet another year of inadequate funding for composting programs. I have relied on GrowNYC's Compost Program for years. Composting is a major way to slow climate change! It greatly reduces the waste we send to landfills and subsequent methane emissions from processing that waste. Without the GrowNYC program, I would not be able to continue composting. When the GrowNYC Compost Program was cut at the beginning of COVID-19, I invested in my own worm compost bin to keep in my apartment, but this isn't enough to handle the amount of food scraps my partner and I produce from a week of cooking. We need to keep the weekly compost collection program AND expand to provide curbside brown bins to every apartment in the city for those who are unable to make it to a weekly drop-off site. When I visited my friends in Seattle and Vancouver in 2018, I was amazed to see how easy composting was for every resident because of these residential curbside collections. New York calls itself progressive in many ways, but we are far behind many other cities in this regard.

In the last year, we've seen Department of Sanitation funding for composting decrease by 90%, from \$26.6 million in FY20 to just \$2.8 million in FY21. Funding was reduced by 34% for the NYC Compost Project, 75% for the GrowNYC Compost Program, and 100% Curbside Composting program.

I support the **Save Our Compost Coalition's request for \$14.75 million in FY22**, which includes:

- GrowNYC Compost Program - \$2.5 million
- Other Community Composters and Food Scrap Drop-off operators - \$4.5 million
- New compost processing facilities - \$3.5 million
- Multifamily building collection and processing pilot - \$2 million
- Zero Waste Schools & NYCHA Organics pilot projects – \$1 million
- Composting in municipal agencies and facilities \$1 million
- Feasibility study on citywide Curbside Composting - \$250,000

We need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future, and composting gives people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. I ask that the City increase funding for composting in FY22, including restoring the GrowNYC Compost Program to its FY20 funding levels.

I would like to thank Chairman Reynoso and the Committee for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Sincerely,

Sarah Edmunds
67 West 73rd Street, Apt. 4B
New York, NY 10023

Public Testimony

Sanitation and Solid Waste Committee Hearing March 4, 2021

I, Sarose Klein, am submitting this brief testimony on behalf of myself and beloved Astoria street cleaning volunteer group, Proud Astorian. Each Sunday morning as I spend time with my upstanding neighbors and comrades with trash bags, I witness the historic lack of resources directed towards keeping trash off the street. Our sanitation and waste solutions should be a pillar of our city's hygiene and health efforts right now, more than ever. While some might do just about anything to leave our homes these days, I do not support the burden unfairly placed on neighborhood groups to pick up the slack of inadequate planning and resources for our community. In the midst of a public health crisis, we pick up thousands of disposed PPE items from overflowing trash cans, harmful and dangerous objects left out by individuals and business owners who clearly do not feel supported by current systems in place to recycle or dispose of their waste, create accessible and safe sidewalks and crosswalks by removing waste, as well as snow and ice come the winter. Our survival as humans and the only way we can begin to thrive together as a population again is directly tied to the strength and resilience of the environment around us. Currently, the environment of our city does not reflect one of health and wellness and we need elected leaders to listen to the involved community leaders and step in with support. I recommend that the City Council direct funds to create immediate solutions for the issues raised during the meeting and more funds towards permanent solutions for planning a safer, healthier future together. Thank you.

Written Statement of Selina Ang Before the Preliminary Budget Hearing of the NYC Council Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management

March 4, 2020

Thank you, Chairman Reynoso, and members of the Committee for this opportunity to testify in support of **increasing funding for GrowNYC & other compost programs** in the Department of Sanitation budget for Fiscal Year 2022.

My name is **Selina Ang** and I am a resident of **Chelsea, Manhattan**. I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning yet another year of inadequate funding for composting programs. **[Composting is a critical part of my lifestyle in NYC and it has so much potential to mitigate food waste for residents, especially in the residential pick-up program that existed before the pandemic. Composting eliminates so much waste going to the landfill, something the city so desperately needs to work on to compete with other major metropolitan leaders like San Francisco, Seattle, Portland, among others.**

In the last year, we've seen Department of Sanitation funding for composting decrease by 90%, from \$26.6 million in FY20 to just \$2.8 million in FY21. Funding was reduced by 34% for the NYC Compost Project, 75% for the GrowNYC Compost Program, and 100% Curbside Composting program. **It's been so disappointing to see reductions in food waste drop-off sites and the elimination of the curbside pick-up program that was on a good trajectory to grow and expand to more zip codes.**

I support the **Save Our Compost Coalition's request for \$14.75 million in FY22**, which includes:

- GrowNYC Compost Program - \$2 million
- Other Community Composters and Food Scrap Drop-off operators - \$5 million
- New compost processing facilities - \$3.5 million
- Multifamily building collection and processing pilot - \$2 million
- Zero Waste Schools & NYCHA Organics pilot projects – \$1 million
- Composting in municipal agencies and facilities \$1 million
- Feasibility study on citywide Curbside Composting - \$250,000

We need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future, and composting gives people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. I ask that the City increase funding for composting in FY22, including restoring the GrowNYC Compost Program to its FY20 funding levels.

I would like to thank Chairman Reynoso and the Committee for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Sincerely,

Selina Ang
221 W 29th St Apt 20B
New York, NY 10001

March 4, 2020

Thank you, Chairman Reynoso, and members of the Committee for this opportunity to testify in support of **increasing funding for GrowNYC & other compost programs** in the Department of Sanitation budget for Fiscal Year 2022.

My name is Stacy Robinson and I am a resident of Upper East Side, New York. I am disheartened to learn that the City is planning yet another year of inadequate funding for composting programs. As I continue to travel across Central Park (usually by walking) to the Upper West Side to drop my large amount of Compost, I coincidentally always run into Upper East Side residents. We share the same struggles of dropping off compost at an inconvenient location. (May I add, 95% of the neighbors I run into are seniors age 65+). I am in my thirties and luckily in great physical and mental shape, but I feel for my neighbors who are elderly or busy with families to take the time to drop off their compost across the park. Adding a composting site in the Upper East Side neighborhood is valuable and important to me and my neighbors who have expressed the need and urgency. The GrowNYC Compost Program is an asset to our city and I would consider volunteering to assist and/or learn how to raise funds in order to make this happen.

In the last year, we've seen Department of Sanitation funding for composting decrease by 90%, from \$26.6 million in FY20 to just \$2.8 million in FY21. Funding was reduced by 34% for the NYC Compost Project, 75% for the GrowNYC Compost Program, and 100% Curbside Composting program. These cuts have led to the Upper East Side community and residents with no access to drop their compost and forced to travel to other boroughs.

I support the **Save Our Compost Coalition's request for \$14.75 million in FY22**, which includes:

- GrowNYC Compost Program - \$2.5 million
- Other Community Composters and Food Scrap Drop-off operators - \$4.5 million
- New compost processing facilities - \$3.5 million
- Multifamily building collection and processing pilot - \$2 million
- Zero Waste Schools & NYCHA Organics pilot projects – \$1 million
- Composting in municipal agencies and facilities \$1 million
- Feasibility study on citywide Curbside Composting - \$250,000

We need programs that contribute to a more sustainable future, and composting gives people hope that through collective action, our individual choices can make a difference. I ask that the City increase funding for composting in FY22, including restoring the GrowNYC Compost Program to its FY20 funding levels.

I would like to thank Chairman Reynoso and the Committee for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Sincerely,

Stacy Robinson
Upper East Side Resident

307 E 76th Street #19
New York, NY 10021

HK49-53 Block Alliance

453 West 50th Street 1B

New York, N.Y. 10019

917-886-1233

HK5051@gmail.com

March 4, 2021

Dear Council Members,

My name is Stephen Belida and I Chair our Block Association, HK49-54 Block Alliance. Our Community has been dealing with the on going shortage of trash pick ups since last years budget cuts.

Catie Savage, who is a member of our Community start the Litter Legion to help collect trash using volunteers from the neighborhood.

We really need more help from DSNY regarding the amounts of trash left in overflowing containers .

We appreciate any help that you can give us.

Thank you,

Sincerely,

Steve Belida

Chair

HK49-54 Block Alliance



LINDA B. ROSENTHAL
Assemblymember 67th District

THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

CHAIR
Committee on Social Services

COMMITTEES
Agriculture
Codes
Health
Housing

MEMBER

**Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal's Testimony Before the New York City Council's
Sanitation and Solid Waste Regarding the Sanitation Budget for Fiscal Year 2022**

March 4, 2021

I am Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal, and I represent the Upper West Side and Hell's Kitchen in the 67th Assembly district. I would like to thank Chair Reynoso for the opportunity to comment on the importance of fully restoring the New York City Department of Sanitation's (DSNY) budget in Fiscal Year 2022, and of course, the pivotal and irreplaceable role DSNY plays within my Assembly district and in communities across the City.

The City's decision to slash DSNY's budget during the COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically affected my constituents' quality of life. Prior to the pandemic, my office fielded hundreds of calls and emails about neighborhood sanitation. The number of complaints led me to launch a survey asking Upper West Siders to send me locations that they thought the City should prioritize for clean-up. I then organized two walking tours of my district with DSNY to address chronic litter concerns at those very locations. The tour was effective and certain blocks were placed on DSNY's "hotspot list" and received extra cleaning services as a result. Old garbage cans were replaced, and missing trash cans were replaced at various intersections throughout the district.

However, that progress came to an abrupt halt in June 2020 after the City reduced DSNY's budget by approximately \$106 million, severely reducing litter basket service by 67%. Making matters worse, more than 400 hardworking DSNY employees lost their jobs in the middle of a pandemic.

As a result, my office experienced an increase in trash-related complaints. However, DSNY's ability to respond has been hindered by a lack of resources and staff. To fill in the gaps left by the City, neighborhood groups such as Litter Legion and OneBlockUWS have stepped up to perform essential governmental services. Early on, I organized a meeting between DSNY and those homegrown groups to set up communication between them and to obtain basic resources for volunteers, such as garbage bags and implements to remove trash. Although those groups and DSNY have partnered for the good of the West Side, the burden of keeping our streets and sidewalks clean and clear of debris is a full-time job, and ultimately the responsibility of New York City.

An analysis of DSNY-related 311 calls found that delayed trash collection complaints increased by 50% compared to last year. I have seen overflowing garbage bins at most major intersections throughout my district. Some residential streets were not serviced by mechanical street sweepers for weeks at a time. And residents have complained about mounds of garbage sitting on the sidewalk for days before being picked up. As a result, rat sightings have increased, as vermin revel in the heaps of trash. While these concerns continue to be addressed by the incredible staff

of DSNY, the City's burgeoning garbage concerns demand the attention of additional staff members and resources. DSNY's current staff has moved mountains, and at times, put their own lives in danger to provide every neighborhood a level of cleanliness. Their efforts have been greatly appreciated throughout the pandemic, and they certainly deserve additional support from City Hall in the next budget.

The Biden Administration has made good on its promise to deliver necessary and lifesaving funding to New York State. With an influx of \$23 billion in aid, it would be unthinkable for the City to further reduce or freeze DSNY's budget. Many residents had not realized DSNY's impact until the streets reflected their absence. Sanitation is an essential service that ensures the safety and health of all New Yorkers. Communities depend on DSNY workers, and as we slowly emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is critical that the City restore and increase DSNY's budget moving forward.

Thank you.