

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1: Organization/Respondent Name: Circle Compost LLC

1.2-1.3: Mailing Address (home office of our two founders):

420 S. 21st St.
Philadelphia, PA 19146

Operations Address (not a mailing address):

5222 Paschall Ave.
Philadelphia, PA 19143

1.4: Primary Business: Hauling of food scraps and other organic waste from households and businesses in Philadelphia to composting sites where all material is composted.

1.5: Point of Contact: David Bloovman

1.6: Title: President and Co-owner

1.7: Phone: 267-784-4441

1.8: Email: david@circlecompost.com

1.9: Organization Website: <https://www.circlecompost.com/>

2. PROPOSAL INTRODUCTION

2.1 Circle Compost LLC has been in business since 2016 with a mission to prevent food scraps and other organic materials from going into landfills. In business for 9 years, we currently have 5 full time employees and 5 part time employees. We currently offer the following composting pick-up services:

Composting Service Details
5 gallon bucket emptied weekly
5 gallon bucket emptied every other week
5 gallon bucket swapped weekly
5 gallon bucket swapped every other week
2 gallon bucket swapped weekly
2 gallon bucket swapped every other week

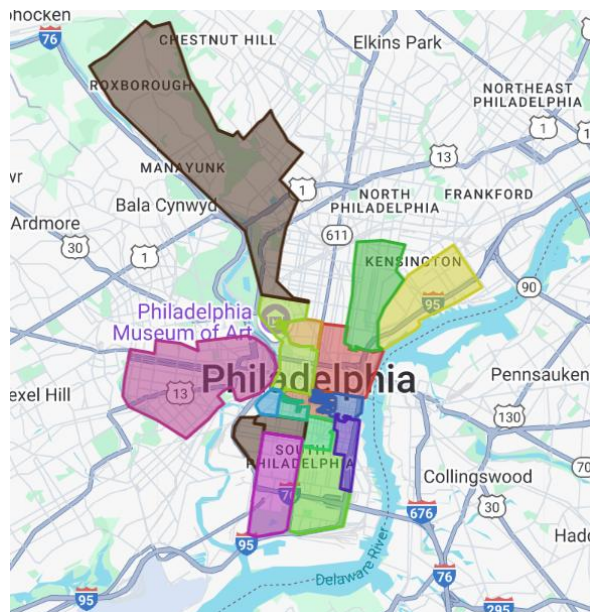
We recently partnered with Rabbit Recycling to offer their recycling pick-up services as well, and we now offer the following options for these services:

Recycling Service Details
18 gallon bin swapped weekly
18 gallon bin swapped every other week
18 gallon bucket swapped once per month
18 gallon bin picked up on demand

We currently service 2,400+ households in Philadelphia with composting services, and around 100 households with Rabbit Recycling services.

We also partner with Trinity Church (22nd and Spruce) on a drop off program free to their local community, which has around 100 participants dropping off their food scraps up to 2x per week.

2.2 Our company is based in Philadelphia and only operates in Philadelphia. The shaded areas on the below map image show our current service areas:



3. PROPOSAL BODY

Section 1: Methodologies, measurement tools, and best practices to evaluate the comparative health and environmental impacts of residential waste management practices.

Living in Philadelphia for the past 22 years, I believe that one of the most important and critical elements to any potential changes in the City's waste collection services is EDUCATION. City residents are accustomed to putting "trash" in one receptacle and recyclables in a separate receptacle. I know firsthand from seeing neighbors' recycling bins, as well as seeing recycling bins all around the City while doing my work for Circle Compost, that many residents do not know or understand what they should put in their recycling bins as it is. And I have read that the City's actual recycling rates are currently below 10%. To succeed in diverting material from landfills, our City must allocate funding and resources toward educating people across the City

about why recycling is important, and why it only works when materials are properly sorted before being put out for collection or dropped off at a recycling center.

Related to the importance of education, I feel very strongly that if the City were to offer other forms of waste management services like composting pick-up services, any new programs should only be offered on an “OPT-IN” basis. The fact that people would opt in indicates that they are likely to take that service seriously and therefore, contamination rates are likely to be lower than if the service were mandated.

Avoidance of contamination, as any recycling or composting professional knows, is absolutely crucial and fundamental to any successful recycling or composting program. If the City were to conduct a trial on an outsourced composting pick-up service, for example, if the material collected were to have high levels of contamination, funding and efforts used to divert the material would be wasted, as material would either end up in a landfill or incinerator anyway, or compost piles would be contaminated and potentially ruined.

3.1.1: Methodology recommendations for the City’s upcoming residential RFP.

- a. Offer additional recycling or composting services, outsourcing collections to local private companies who already specialize in those services, on an opt-in basis, beginning with a trial in certain zip codes / neighborhoods.
 - i. These services could be in the form of outsourced curbside collection services, or outsourced collection from established drop off points.
- b. Engage in a massive educational campaign City wide to teach people why these additional services are necessary, why they should care, why proper source separation of materials is crucially important for the health of our City and planet, and how they can do their part when the opportunity comes to their neighborhood.
- c. Measure the environmental impact of additional recycling collection:
 - i. Track the number of signups per zip code / neighborhood / demographic.
 - ii. Track the estimated weight / volumes diverted from landfill per zip code / neighborhood / demographic.
 - iii. Track contamination levels per zip code / neighborhood / demographic.
 - iv. Track the hopefully lower weights brought to landfills and incinerators, as well as the increased ease of trash collection routes.
 1. Stopsuite, a proprietary application and software can be used to measure these data. Circle Compost has been using Stopsuite for 4 years for our back end logistical operations and customer-facing portal.
 - a. This software is built for waste management and contains many tools to track the information described above, and is highly customizable.
- b. Measure the customer impact of an additional recycling collection:
 - i. Quarterly survey of customers using the service to measure: satisfaction, impact on household, street, and neighborhood.

3.1.2: Methodology recommendations for ongoing waste management planning.

1. The City could incorporate life cycle assessment tools into waste management planning by analyzing the impact of additional recycling services as managed by outsourced companies.
2. Minimum data requirements Philadelphia could consider enabling alongside the use of additional recycling and/or composting services, as described above, are:
 - a. **Number of participants**
 - b. **Landfill diversion rate (% success rate)**
 - c. **% customer satisfaction rate**
 - d. **% contamination rate**
3. Technological tools could the City employ to improve the health and environmental impacts of waste management practices and inform future planning, including any considerations or limitations related to those tools:
 - a. Stopsuite, a waste management software designed to track customers, pick-ups, and weight.

3.1.3: Operational health and safety recommendations

1. Circle Compost ensures maximum compliance with all City and State environmental health and safety regulations.
2. Regular, weekly pick-ups of organic material will minimize the health and environmental impacts of standard landfill operations, reducing the production of methane gas (landfills) or carbon (incinerators).

Section 2: Information about the capacity and availability of large-scale residential waste management providers to meet the City's ongoing residential waste management needs.

3.2.1 Large provider capacity:

Circle Compost would contribute to the Safe, Clean and Green goals by introducing an organic waste diversion option for Philadelphians and reducing the tonnage of waste Philadelphia sends to landfills and incinerators each year.

3.2.2 Environmental and health impacts:

Using Stopsuite, the waste management routing software we pay for, all of our routes are optimized for maximum efficiency, minimizing fuel usage and CO2 emissions from our gas-powered vehicles.

3.2.3 Data collection methods and reporting capabilities:

Using Stopsuite, we track all of the following data:

- a. Successful and missed pick-ups at each residential customer.
- b. Successful and missed pick-ups at each commercial customer.
- c. Estimated lifetime weight collected from each residential customer (based on volumes and average bucket weights).
- d. Weight of each pick-up for select commercial accounts (for commercial accounts interested in tracking the total weights we collect from them).

Operational and Service Metrics

1. Frequency and volume of different waste stream collections (residential, commercial, recyclables, organics):

Our estimated total weights of organic materials picked up for composting in 2024:

- i. from households: 589 tons
- ii. from commercial accounts: 325 tons

2. Seasonal variation patterns in waste generation.

We do not see a lot of seasonal variation in our collections. We have some school accounts that are closed in the summer, but we also have some seasonal business accounts that make are busier in the summer.

Environmental and Compliance

1. Greenhouse gas emissions from collection vehicles and fuel consumption per ton collection

In 2024, we used approximately 4 – 5 gallons of gas and travelled around 30 -40 miles for every ton of organic materials collected.

We also currently do a portion of our collection routes with e-bikes and trailers, and we are looking at ways to transition our gas-powered fleet to electric vehicles.

3.2.4 Diversion methods: Please describe your approach to maximize waste diversion including the necessary infrastructure for implementation.

Our approach to maximizing waste diversion is to help our customers divert as high of a volume of food scraps and organic materials as possible, and to spread our messaging to grow our customer base as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Working with current commercial customers and many schools, we have designed education and promotional materials to increase success and participation

3.2.5 Recycling recommendations:

To increase residential recycling rates, we recommend the following:

- a. Pilot programs where customers in certain zip codes / neighborhoods can opt-in to having multiple bins, with each bin specific to certain types of materials, i.e. 1 bin for metals, 1 bin for plastics, 1 bin for paper etc. This approach will require collection vehicles with multiple inputs, or other alternative collection approaches.
- b. Pilot programs with drop off points for specific types of recyclables. A given drop off point can have 1 bin for metals, 1 for plastics, 1 for paper, etc. Any drop-off points should control who can opt-in to use the drop off points via coded locks on the bins or other systems. People who opt-in to use these drop off points must show that

they understand which bins to use for which materials via a simple, streamlined application process.

- c. Only provide recycling bins with built in lids, whether the City sticks with single stream recycling to be sorted later, or pilot using multiple bins for specific materials. Current bins that do not have lids allow materials to get soaking wet during rainstorms and blow out of the bin when we have moderate levels of wind. The current bins that do not have built in lids lead to a lot of litter in our streets, defeating the purpose of attempted recycling.

3.2.6 Barriers to increased capacity, service delivery, data collection and partnership development.

The City could identify City owned land for additional public / private partnerships to create permitted urban composting sites within the City, similar to what the City has already done on Rising Sun Ave. in partnership with Bennett Compost. Other than the two permitted composting sites run by Bennett Compost on City owned land, the closest permitted composting site to the City is the one we are partnered with at Linvilla Orchards in Media, PA, run by Kitchen Harvest Inc. We will need additional permitted composting facilities within or very close to the City to increase the number of City households composting at scale.

Opportunities for smaller providers to utilize City land to run hauling operations would also be extremely helpful for enhanced service delivery. Industrial space within City limits rents out for premium pricing, so for a smaller provider to take a large leap in adding multiple additional vehicles for hauling, it can be challenging to find appropriate space where vehicles can be parked and maintained.

Workforce training programs are always helpful, as well. If a smaller provider were to expand all at once to accommodate new City programs, it is always helpful to have a pipeline of people looking for work who have been trained with basic job skills.

Section 3: Recommendations for solutions that will assist the Department in developing new approaches, innovations, and initiatives to minimize the City's waste streams, including practices that will help the City advance its Safe, Clean & Green mission and Zero Waste goals.

3.3.1 Processing capacity: Currently we do not have our own processing facilities. We are partnered with Kitchen Harvest Inc., who runs a permitted composting facility at Linvilla Orchards in Media, PA. I do not know the total available capacity at Linvilla Orchards, but I know they have a large amount of permitted land that is not yet being utilized, so we have room for expanding our capacity to work with them there, significantly.

Fleet size and service area coverage: our current hauling fleet is comprised of:

Four small trucks (smaller sized pick-up trucks and vans used for residential collections)

Two heavy duty trucks (heavier duty pick-up trucks used commercial collections and for hauling collected material to the composting site)

Two e-assist bikes with trailers (used for residential collections in certain neighborhoods)

Current waste diversion rate from landfills: everything we collect is diverted from landfills, so 100% diversion rate for our collections. Here again are our 2024 estimated weights:

- a. From households: 589 tons
- b. From commercial accounts: 325 tons

Key partnerships: Kitchen Harvest, Inc. is our partner running a permitted composting facility at Linvilla Orchards in Media, PA.

Projected capacity increases: we increase our hauling capacity as we add residential and commercial customers by purchasing additional vehicles and by hiring and training new employees. We are currently looking at electric vehicles with the goal of transitioning from gas-powered to electric vehicles over the next 1 – 5 years.

Financing: we have a six-figure line of credit with our bank that currently has a zero balance. We also have access to other lines of credit via our owners. We do not currently have outside investors but could potentially raise money via outside investors if we feel that course of action is appropriate for our needs.

Insurance coverage: we have the following coverages:

- a. General Liability: \$2,000,000 / \$1,000,000
- b. Workers Compensation: \$1,000,000
- c. Automotive: \$1,000,000

Data collection: we track data on each customer using Stopsuite, the software we use to run our business.

Customer education and community engagement: this is a big part of who we are as a company. We have spoken in schools and volunteered at community events many times over the course of our 9 years in business and continue to do so. In communicating with our customers, from onboarding to ongoing discussions, we constantly address the difference between truly compostable materials vs. “greenwashing” / materials claiming to be compostable that should actually be avoided.

3.3.2: Roadblocks and barriers to capacity: Since the creation of the Urban Composting Permit via the City and Bennett Compost’s public / private partnership, we have been searching for qualified land where we can apply for a permit of our own. This has proven extremely difficult to find via partnership with a landowner or via potential land purchase or lease. If the City were to identify a site for another partnership similar to the one with Bennett Compost at Rising Sun Ave., especially in or close to Southwest Philadelphia, we would be very interested in this type of arrangement, which would benefit the City by increasing composting capacity.

3.3.3: General information on zero waste strategies: we believe implementation of a City subsidized “opt-in” residential composting drop off and/or curbside composting pick-up program, with the running and management of the program being outsourced to local companies like Bennett Compost and Circle Compost, is a great way to move toward zero waste. Such programs would accomplish the following:

- a. Prevent organic materials from going to landfills, where they do not break down properly, and eventually emit extremely harmful methane gas.
- b. Save the City money on tipping fees paid to landfill or incinerate materials.
- c. Give people who want to compost, but live paycheck to paycheck, an opportunity to compost.

We would also love to see the duplication of the public / private partnership between the City and Bennett Compost located on Rising Sun Ave. at an additional location. As we are based in Southwest Philadelphia, and we would love to see this area considered for a similar partnership.