

Middlebury

Key Messages

Connecticut is Facing a Trash Crisis

- Waste disposal capacity in the US is shrinking. In 2000, there were over 6,000 landfills and today (2022) only 1,000 landfills remain.
- The decreased capacity is driving the cost of disposal higher and higher across the country. In the next five years, tipping fees are expected to double.
- The New England region is expected to lose 40% of its MSW landfill capacity in the next 5 years and nearly 100% of its landfill capacity by 2040.
- The CT MIRA incinerator is no longer burning trash, and the four other CT incinerators have passed their useful life.
- Siting a new incinerator or landfill in our City is not a good option as it can lead to pollution that may be detrimental to our health.
- Trucking CT trash out of state is expensive and not sustainable. We need a new approach.

We Need to Reduce Waste

- Food scraps make up 22% of the waste we currently throw away and can easily be converted to energy and compost.
- There are two proven waste reduction programs that together could reduce our trash by more than 50%:
 - Unit Based Pricing (UBP) programs are used by over 550 municipalities in New England and reduce trash by an average of 44%
 - Weekly Curbside Food Scrap Collection would allow residents to recycle their food scraps and reduce the amount of waste needed for disposal by an additional 20+%

Middlebury is Being Proactive

- Middlebury received a \$115,000 grant from DEEP to implement a trash reduction pilot program at the transfer station.
- The transfer station pilot program is free to residents.
- All transfer station users will sort trash and food scraps in special color-coded trash bags provided by the town.
- The pilot program will allow the town and our residents to try the program before deciding if we want to make it permanent.
- A permanent program could see trash reduction for the town between 40-60%

It Will Be Easy to Participate

- Residents will receive an allotment of free colored-coded bags for the duration of the pilot:
 - 1 green (8-gallon) food scrap bag per week for food scraps
 - 2 orange (15-gallon) tall kitchen bags per week for non-recyclable household trash
- Recycling of paper & cardboard and bottles & cans will continue as usual.
- Residents should tie and close each of the orange and green bags and bring to the transfer station.
- The orange bags get brought to landfill or incinerator as usual, the green bags go to an anaerobic digester in Southington.
- If everyone uses only the allotted 2 orange trash bags per week, it will mimic the results of UBP and cut the trash in half.
- It's not mandatory—if a household uses more than 2 orange bags per week, more will be available, but we are encouraging people to take the challenge.

Middlebury Frequently Asked Questions

What happens to the green bags on trash day? The green bags are hauled to Quantum BioPower in Southington. In this anaerobic digester, food scraps are broken down into what eventually becomes compost or soil additive (digestate), and methane gas produced from food breakdown is harnessed and converted into electricity (clean energy).

How do I sort my food scraps at home? The most popular and convenient options are a 4 or 5 gallon pail or paint bucket with a lid. This can be kept under the sink, counter, in the garage or on the deck, and fits the green bag perfectly. A mason jar, bowl, plastic container with a lid, or coffee can be kept on the counter for short-term and convenient food scrap collection, to be emptied into the larger pail as needed.

How will I get my green and orange bags? Residents can pick up their free bags at the transfer station on a designated weekend.

How many bags will I get in my allotment? Each resident will be given 1 green food scraps bag for each week of the pilot and 2 free orange tall kitchen trash bags for each week of the pilot. A total of 52 green and 104 orange.

Is this program free? The program is free for the pilot. Please do your best to divert the food scraps into the green bag and recycle as much as possible.

What if I run out of bags? If you run out of bags, more will be available.

Why do I need to use special bags? Food scraps make up over 20% of the waste we throw away. The special bags keep the waste and food separated so that the food can be captured and turned into energy. The orange bags are a “measuring cup” to track and conceptualize the amount of waste each household is producing. Residents are encouraged to challenge themselves to use only 2 bags per week—if everyone does this, Middlebury would cut the trash in half.

How can I reduce my waste?

- **Reduce** your food waste. Keep your refrigerator clean and organized so you know what you have before you shop. Store leftovers in clear containers so you can see what's in them. Use a shopping list. Use your freezer. Reduce other household waste by avoiding single use disposable items and choose products with minimal packaging.
- **Reuse:** Use reusable shopping bags and coffee mugs. Repurpose glass jars at home. Donate household items and clothing. Consider cloth napkins.
- **Recycle:** Remember the basics: Recycle your paper & cardboard and empty bottles & cans. Items should be clean and dry and placed loose in your collection bin. Also, try the What's In What's Out tool at www.recyclect.com Type in the product you are wondering about and the tool will tell you if its recyclable.
- **Separate:** All your food scraps! Fruits & Veggies, Eggs & Eggshells, Meat & Seafood (include bones and shells), Coffee Grounds & Tea Bags, Dairy, Pasta, Grains & Bread, Cookies, Cake, & Candy. Please no plastic, no metal, no sanitary waste, no pet waste

Is this program mandatory? The pilot program is free and highly encouraged. Take the challenge!

What are the benefits to this program? The program will have a positive environmental impact because our food scraps will be turned into green energy and waste related greenhouse gas emissions (methane and carbon dioxide) will decrease. Less trash produced is money saved for the town, especially looking forward as tipping fees skyrocket.

Does the program benefit me? Yes, the program will help keep taxes down, will lead to cleaner air, and help keep our environment clean.