



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT
KATJANA BALLANTYNE
MAYOR

MEMO

To: City of Somerville City Council - The Open Space, Environment and Energy

From: Christine Blais, Office of Suitability and Environment, Director

CC: Neha Singh, Office of the Mayor, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs
Julia Damiano, Office of Suitability and Environment, Environmental Policy Manager
Alison Beucler, Department of Public Works, Sanitation and Hazardous Material Program Manager

Date: Thursday, April 18, 2024

RE: Response to City Council Orders 24-0370 and 24-0042 - Citywide Composting Program

Dear City Council Members,

I am writing to provide an update on the city's composting program, as requested in Orders 24-0370 and 24-0042.

Composting aligns with the City's waste management strategy and contributes to Somerville's sustainability efforts. We have noted interest from several community groups and residents, who have expressed willingness to participate in such a program.

The Office of Sustainability (OSE) is working collaboratively with the Department of Public Works (DPW) to investigate the feasibility and impact of a city-wide composting program for residents of the City of Somerville. Composting is a key recommendation in the City of Somerville's Zero Waste Plan, which underscores its importance in Somerville's waste management strategy. The plan, [available for review here](#), recommends composting as a keyway for reducing residential waste tonnage in Somerville along with engaging residents in sustainable practices.



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OSE is currently in the Project Initiation and Research phase of the program. This involves research and collaboration with nearby cities that have successfully established composting programs. The aim is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the cost implications, implementation strategies, key data points for collection, as well as any risks and lessons learned from their experiences. Additionally, OSE and DPW are continuing ongoing conversations with appropriate city departments, including the Inspectional Services Department to determine impacts on rodent control and the Integrated Pest Management Plan. Next steps include engaging with residents, businesses, schools, and local organizations to determine barriers to participation and evaluate feasibility of solutions to inform program design.

For residents looking to stay informed, the best way to stay up-to-date on sustainability initiatives is by signing up for the [SustainaVille Newsletter](#). Questions or comments regarding a city-wide composting initiative can be emailed to jdamico@somervillema.gov. Additionally, members of the community are invited to join OSE and other City representatives on April 24th at 5:30pm at Greentown Labs for *Imagining Climate Forward 2050* where further information on strategies to accomplish climate goals will be announced. Information for the event can be [found here](#).

Sincerely,
Christine Blais
Director
Mayor's Office of Sustainability and Environment
City of Somerville



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