



## *Municipality of Princeton*

*Witherspoon Hall  
400 Witherspoon Street  
Princeton, NJ 08540-3496*

---

Telephone (609)924-4141

Fax: (609) 924-0267

### **MEMORANDUM**

**TO: Princeton Mayor Liz Lempert**

**CC: Princeton Council Members**

**FROM: Princeton Environmental Commission**

**DATE: January 5, 2015**

Happy New Year Mayor and Council,

After review of the current waste management process in Princeton, and investigating other local and regional options, we have compiled a Waste Memorandum offering some suggestions for waste reduction solutions for our Town.

We understand that we have provided a comprehensive list and that not all suggestions may be currently feasible and that they cannot be implemented at the same time.

However, we hope that this document may serve as the framework for further discussion and action as you attempt to revise your waste and refuse ordinance in the coming months.

We hope to present this in person at a Council meeting in January and would be happy to be included in your waste ordinance revision sessions.

2014-15 PEC Waste Memorandum

As every facet of community life produces waste, it is important to have a strategy to reduce waste created and responsibly dispose of it as our current landfill will be moving to capacity during this decade. .

Waste removal is an ongoing and ever changing process that directly involves citizens and their government. Currently, the town manages the waste contract process and tax payer dollars are used to fund the waste removal programs. It is much more expensive to put waste in a landfill than it is to send it to a recycling or compost facility.

Waste management also has an impact on the environment, as build up of landfill waste produces gases that have been scientifically proven to increase our carbon footprint and contribute to global warming.

For these reasons, it is important for the Town to view waste management as a top priority and make every attempt to decrease the amount of waste sent to landfills through increasing recycling and composting rates by a variety of means.

Additionally, asking people to be more responsible for the amount of waste they generate as well as properly disposing of their waste are critical components of landfill waste reduction. One way of helping residents understand the cost of waste disposal is through a Pay As You Throw program. Creating accessible and properly labelled recycling/composting options and enforcing current recycling laws assists residents, visitors, and businesses in properly disposing of the waste they generate.

Below are more specific recommendations to help decrease waste sent to landfills.

I. PEC Recommendations to Council for Amending the Waste and Refuse Ordinance to REQUIRE:

- A. DEFINED GOAL: The town to set annual waste management goals for waste reduction
- B. PLAN: The Public Works department and/or designated agent to provide a waste management plan outlining specific actions and/or strategies designed to support and achieve the Municipality's waste reduction goals.
- C. DATA: The Recycling Coordinator and/or designated agent to provide the Municipality and the PEC with an annual report containing rates and cost data on residential, commercial, and institutional landfill waste, recycling, composting, and leaf & brush collections. The purpose of the report is to allow the municipality and/or designated agent to measure the effectiveness of the annual plan developed by Public Works.
- D. SPECIFICS:
  - 1. Business and Institutional Recycling
    - a. Businesses (for profit and non-profit) and institutions (PU, PPS) to annually register a standard Recycling Plan provided

by the Town either on a paper form or an online tool. These will be maintained by the Recycling Coordinator.

- b. Restaurants to have a labelled and visible recycling bin for customers.
- c. Issuance of a certificate of occupancy by the Health Officer to be linked to the submission of a recycling plan and visible recycling bin requirement.
- d. Recycling and enforcement during large town wide events.
- e. Enforcement of recycling of large scale demolition and construction project debris by linking certificate of occupancy issuance from the building department only after receipt of the recycling ticket showing recycled quantities has been submitted. Additionally, new site plan applicants to provide space for recycling and composting receptacles, and adhere to other waste related items in the Green Building Checklist.

## 2. Downtown Recycling

- a. Visible Downtown recycling with a recycle bin next to each trash can that currently line the streets, and with proper labeling. This will require funds to be made available for the purchase of new bins as well as for their collection.

## 3. Composting

- a. Composting in all restaurants for kitchen and customers use
- b. Composting at large community events where food is served
- c. Residential composting for all residents when a Mercer County Facility is available and to continue voluntary composting until that time.
- d. Only the collection of bagged leaves at the curb(as opposed to loose leaves) with encouragement of leaving the leaves in place through various methods (corral, mulching, composting, natural piles in woodlots)

II. The PEC supports the introduction of an ordinance that will decrease the use of single-use bags at retail stores at carry out.

III. Future waste reduction strategies may include encouraging restaurants to use reusable serving items (cups, utensils, plates, napkins) when possible. If single use is necessary, paper serving items and take out containers are preferred as they can be composted as opposed to Styrofoam or other non-recyclable plastics that go to the landfill.

In conclusion, waste reduction strategies have an impact on both the environment and our tax burden and should be a priority for our Town.