

metroSTOR Webinar Summary and Transcript

Building Scalable Municipal Food Waste Drop-Off Programs

09.10.26

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metroSTOR Webinar **Key Learnings**

1. Start small, but design for the next stage

Both HRRR and Rust Belt Riders built from relatively small pilots to generate evidence: participation, tonnage, contamination, testimonials and operating costs, which then supported the next expansion decision.

2. Free pilots can create a funding trap

HRRR's Bridgewater pilot performed well while free, with strong set-out rates and low contamination, but participation collapsed when residents were asked to pay around \$20 per month. The lesson is to decide early who will ultimately fund the service rather than assuming a free pilot can later convert to a paid model.

3. Drop-off can radically improve the economics versus curbside

HRRR's move from curbside to transfer-station drop-off reduced the potential annual program cost from roughly \$212,000 to under \$5,000. That was the first major proof that fewer, shared collection points can make organics much more affordable.

4. Convenience remains critical

Transfer-station drop-off worked, but residents consistently complained about limited opening hours and distance. That led HRRR to add satellite units with 24/7 access. The wider lesson is that a cheaper service model still has to fit people's real routines.

5. Controlled access can do much more than keep lids locked

HRRR uses app-based access not just for security, but for registration, payment status, direct communications and usage data. Combined with time-stamped camera monitoring, it also allows contamination to be traced back to individual users and addressed directly. HRRR reported drop-off contamination below 2%.

6. Direct, specific education appears more effective than general messaging

When contamination occurs, HRRR contacts the individual user rather than broadcasting generic reminders. Jennifer said that once users realize the system is monitored, repeat problems are rare. Some users even self-report accidental contamination.

7. Processing costs can undermine an otherwise successful collection model

HRRR found that lower organics tip fees did not automatically mean overall savings. Extra hauls, long transport distances and limited processing capacity kept costs high. The collection system became much more financially resilient only when local processing removed transportation and external tipping costs.

8. Local processing can change the whole business case

Newtown's ASP system turned a historically loss-making organics program into one showing nearly \$28,000 in savings to date, including avoided brush and leaf disposal. The strongest lesson is that scalable organics needs to be designed as a full system: collection, hauling, processing and end-market.

9. Pay-as-you-throw can materially increase organics capture

In Newtown, organics stayed roughly flat for years while general waste was effectively included in a flat annual fee. Once residents paid for trash by the bag and organics remained free, food-scrap tonnage rose from about 2.75 tons per month to around 11.6 tons per month. The increase came largely from existing users separating more, rather than from a large jump in participant numbers.

10. Framing matters when introducing PAYT

Jennifer described pay-as-you-throw as “save as you throw” and compared it with utility billing: households should pay according to what they use, rather than subsidizing heavier users. A soft-launch period also helped residents experience the savings before the model became permanent.

11. PAYT did not create the contamination problem people feared

A common concern was that residents would dump trash into the free organics stream to avoid paying. Jennifer said that this did not happen at scale. Oversight and clear accountability appeared to reduce that risk.

12. There are two viable routes to municipal scale

HRRAs: municipality-led, grant-supported, with increasing public infrastructure and local processing. Rust Belt Riders: private paid sites first, then evidence-led conversion to municipally subsidized services. Both models rely on proving demand before scaling.

13. Private paid sites can be a useful market test

Rust Belt Riders uses private \$12/month sites to establish demand before asking a city to subsidize the service. That creates a strong municipal proposition: the city is not funding an untested idea; it is taking over a service residents are already using and valuing.

14. Public funding can unlock better host sites

Shaker Heights found that some public hosts, including the library, were more willing to participate once the service was municipally funded and free to residents. This suggests the funding model can directly affect siting opportunities.

15. Scale needs active cost management

Rust Belt Riders showed that growth can create its own problem. In Lakewood, almost 500 private subscribers make full municipal subsidy potentially expensive. Their response is to develop volume-based pricing so cost per bin falls as program scale increases.

16. Communications capability can make or break participation

Natalie noted that some cities can generate hundreds of sign-ups in weeks because they have strong newsletters and email lists, while others struggle because they lack communications capacity. Promotion is therefore not a side issue; it is part of the operating model.

17. Resident advocacy is powerful

Rust Belt Riders encourages users to contact councilors and mayors directly. Natalie said this grassroots pressure is effective because elected officials respond to visible resident demand. This helps convert a successful private service into a public budget priority.

18. Impact reporting is essential for municipal buy-in

Simple reporting on tonnage, participation, photos and testimonials gives city staff evidence they can use internally to defend and renew program funding.

19. Urban and rural models will look different

HRRA can develop local ASP and in-vessel processing at transfer stations. Rust Belt Riders, working in dense Greater Cleveland, faces land and permitting constraints and therefore relies more heavily on regional processors. Scalability needs to reflect local geography.

20. The strongest programs combine ease, accountability and economics

The overall pattern from both case studies is that successful organics drop-off depends on making participation easy, building accountability into access, managing contamination directly, controlling haulage and processing costs, and giving municipalities evidence that the program is worth funding.

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metroSTOR Webinar **Transcript**

Tim Steckel

Welcome to Building Scalable Municipal Food Waste Drop-Off Programs. Over the next hour we're going to hear two short presentations, have some discussion and Q&A, and hopefully give everyone a chance to connect with peers.

If you can, put something in the chat about where you're from and where you are on your organics journey. Are you planning a pilot? Are you trying to expand an existing program? Part of the value of sessions like this is knowing who else is working through the same issues.

Building organics infrastructure can take years. It can be slow and sometimes frustrating, so having people you can reach out to, compare notes with and ask questions of really matters.

Our first speaker is Jennifer Heaton-Jones from the Housatonic Resources Recovery Authority, or HRRRA. They serve 14 municipalities in western Connecticut, covering more than 266,000 people. Jen is going to talk about how their model has evolved over time, particularly in a largely rural region.

Jennifer Heaton-Jones

Thanks, Tim. For anyone who doesn't know HRRRA, we're a regional governmental solid waste and recycling authority. I've been working on organics and food-scrap collection since 2013. What I want to do today is walk through the history of our program across 14 municipalities, the different collection models we've tried, the cost challenges we've hit, and the points where we've had to pivot rather than give up. Then I'll talk about where we're heading now and how we're trying to build something that can actually scale.

We're in western Connecticut and most of our communities are rural. Our smallest town has fewer than 1,600 residents, while our largest, Danbury, has around 89,000. One important bit of context is that Connecticut is predominantly a private-subscription state for residential waste. Most households arrange collection privately rather than receiving a municipal curbside service. Residential organics aren't mandated statewide, although we do have a large-generator law, and from July this year larger schools are included in that.

At the moment we have 29 food-scrap drop-off locations across HRRRA. We have access to three commercial processors in the state, we've built two municipal aerated static pile systems, and we're in the process of building two in-vessel composting systems as well.

There are also private haulers offering curbside organics, and we run free home-composting classes because, where it works for people, composting at home is still the most local and sustainable option.

We started very small. Back in 2014, we ran a curbside pilot in Bridgewater, which is a tiny rural town and also happens to be my hometown. It's close to one of the state's permitted compost processors, and we were able to partner with a private hauler that already had most of the local waste routes. The pilot ran for about 18 months and it was free to residents. That taught us one of our first big lessons: don't offer something for free unless you have a plan for what happens when the free period ends.

We were trying to learn a few things: would people participate, what would contamination look like, could the service operate consistently, and what volume and quality of food scraps would we actually collect? Because Bridgewater was so small, it was a good place to test all of that closely. We kept the instructions simple and collected every Friday so people had a predictable routine.

Participation reached about 16% of households, which I thought was pretty good for a voluntary program. Among the households that did sign up, the weekly set-out rate got as high as 98%. Contamination was also low. So the pilot showed that when people are informed, motivated and the service is convenient, they can sort food scraps really well.

Then the free pilot ended, and that's where things changed. We tried moving to a paid subscription at about \$5 a week, roughly \$20 a month, and almost everybody dropped out. For the people who had been participating, the service would have cost around \$34,000 a year. If we had expanded it to the whole town, we were looking at something like \$212,000 a year. Nobody was willing to absorb that cost. That was the point where we made our first major pivot.

We moved from curbside collection to a municipal drop-off at the transfer station. We used a two-yard container and the same hauler took the material to the nearest processor. That changed the economics completely. Instead of talking about a \$212,000 program, the transfer-station model came in at under \$5,000 a year, basically the transportation and disposal cost.

Fast-forward to today and we have nine municipal transfer-station drop-offs across our 14 towns. Some use larger containers, some use small totes that get swapped out. It works, but it's not perfect. The most consistent complaints from residents are the transfer-station opening hours and the distance. In rural towns, the transfer station can be a long way from where people actually live or travel.

So in 2025 we made another move and invested in 20 satellite collection units around the region to give residents 24/7 access. We looked at a number of enclosure options and chose metroSTOR because of the price point, the simplicity and the fact that the units could stay locked. We had a choice between PIN-code access and app access, and we chose the app. Residents use their phone and Bluetooth to open the unit, and the deposit point is foot-pedal operated. The app also lets us make sure people are registered and, where a town charges for the service, that they've paid. Just as importantly, it gives us contact details so we can communicate directly with users if there's a service issue or a contamination problem.

We also put our own cellular, motion-activated camera inside the units. When somebody opens the enclosure, the camera records what's going into the bin. Because the app gives us an access timestamp and the camera gives us a timestamp, we can match the two. If someone puts in something that shouldn't be there, we can usually work out who it was and contact them directly. That means the education is very specific rather than sending a general message to everybody. The data is useful in other ways too. We can see how often people are using the site, whether a promotion has increased usage and how often a unit needs servicing.

We've also always tried to close the loop with residents. Each spring we give participants finished compost as a thank-you. Historically, we've actually had to buy that compost back from the processor, so it's an extra cost, but we think it matters because people can see what their food scraps have become.

There are other program costs as well. We provide a six-gallon carry container, which costs us around \$12, and a vented kitchen caddy. We've been able to source some of those kitchen caddies free through BioBag when buying a qualifying quantity of bags. I prefer to sell the starter kit rather than give everything away, because I think even a small payment creates some buy-in.

But the biggest ongoing cost is still transportation and disposal. Depending on the vendor, we've paid anywhere from about \$150 to \$250 per location each time it's serviced. And this is the difficult bit: even though organics can have a lower tip fee than municipal solid waste, the program did not historically save us money. You add extra hauls, management time and long travel distances to one of the few processors in Connecticut, and the cost builds up very quickly.

Between 2015 and 2020, those transportation and processing costs kept rising. So the drop-off model was cheaper than curbside, but it still wasn't financially resilient. We knew we had to tackle the processing side of the system as well. In 2021, we received a USDA grant to build what became Connecticut's first permitted solar-powered aerated static pile composting system.

The goal was really simple: can a municipality make food-scrap diversion financially sustainable if it can process material locally? We built the first system in Ridgefield, it worked well, and then we built another one in Newtown. Newtown is a really useful example because we have more than ten years of data.

For the first eight years or so, we were collecting about 2.75 tons of food scraps a month, around 33 tons a year. During that time, residents paid one annual permit for the transfer station, but their general waste disposal was effectively included. There was no real financial incentive to separate more material. Then we introduced a voluntary pay-as-you-throw pilot. Residents started paying for garbage by the bag, while organics remained free.

That's when the graph really changed. We didn't suddenly get lots more participants, but the same participants started separating far more food waste because there was now a reason to do it. When pay-as-you-throw became permanent, organics went up again. We went from roughly 2.75 tons a month to an average of about 11.6 tons a month - more than four times the earlier level.

At first, more organics actually meant more cost because we were still hauling it away. Newtown had been losing around \$3,000 a year on the program. The real change came when the ASP system opened at the transfer station in October 2024. Once we stopped paying for external transportation and tipping, the economics flipped.

To date, we're showing nearly \$28,000 in savings. That includes savings on brush and leaves too, because those materials used to be hauled away and now we need them as the carbon source for composting. So the local processing system removed the two biggest cost drivers: transportation and external tip fees.

We funded the capital work with grants, including USDA and Connecticut DEEP funding. But going forward we're also looking at the cost of collection itself. Right now individual towns are paying separately for collection. We've secured funding for a regional truck so we can pool that work and reduce the cost across the region.

We're also going to look at where else local processing makes sense. Not every transfer station will be suitable, so we'll look at space, staffing and funding. Data will stay central. We want to standardize how we report participation, contamination and performance so we can learn from the network and show what is working. And we're planning to add another 15 to 28 satellite locations using metroSTOR enclosures as the program grows.

Natalie Antenucci Senturk

Thanks, Tim, and thanks, Jen. It's really interesting hearing the municipal side because I'm coming at this from almost the opposite direction - from the hauler and program-operator side. Rust Belt Riders is a worker-owned cooperative in Cleveland, Ohio. Ohio doesn't have an organics mandate, so a lot of the programs in our region have had to be built voluntarily.

We have 37 employees now. We haul the material, we administer programs, we do the outreach and education, and we're also working toward having more control over processing ourselves. The company started about 11 years ago with two people working in a restaurant kitchen who wanted to stop food scraps from going in the trash and instead take them to a community garden.

Today we're running around six commercial routes a day and two residential routes, and collecting roughly 800,000 pounds of food scraps a month across Northeast Ohio. We work with commercial clients, offer curbside residential pickup, and run residential drop-off programs. We now have 57 drop-off sites around Greater Cleveland and about 5,500 participating households.

We're also working directly with four cities. What's different about our model is that we're not just the hauler. We handle a lot of the program administration as well - education, outreach, resident questions, access problems, all of that. For smaller cities that don't have a lot of staff capacity, that full-service model is useful because they don't have to build a whole new team just to run organics.

Shaker Heights is probably our strongest municipal example. We didn't begin by asking the city to fund a citywide service. We started with a private drop-off site at the Shaker Lakes Nature Center. Residents paid us \$12 a month to use it. That one site grew to around 300 households. Once that happened, we had real participation data, testimonials and evidence that people actually wanted the service. That gave us something concrete to take back to the city.

That's basically our model: plant the seeds privately first. We'll find a church, a park, a coffee shop or another host and say, there's no cost to you - let us put a collection site here. Residents who want to use it pay the \$12 a month. That gives us time to build awareness, prove demand and gather data before we start talking about public subsidy.

In Shaker, the next step was the Lomond pilot. The city wasn't ready to fund the whole city immediately, so we drew a small geographic area and started with roughly 150 households. Once that worked, they expanded to six sites around the city, using elementary schools and the main library so the locations were reasonably well distributed.

And the nice thing about starting with a paid private service is the direction of travel. Instead of saying to residents, "the grant has ended, now you have to start paying," we get to say, "you used to pay \$12 a month, but your city is now funding it, so it's free." That is a much easier conversation.

The citywide program has been extremely popular. The individual sites are serving roughly 100 to more than 200 households each, and those numbers are still growing. In fact, they're almost bursting at the seams. We're hauling so much material that we've started giving Shaker some additional bins free each month just to help them stay within budget.

A lot of our basic sites are very simple - totes secured with bike locks. You do not necessarily need expensive infrastructure to start proving demand. But where the city has been willing to invest, we've also used metroSTOR enclosures. At the public library, for example, the library had not wanted to host us when it was a paid private service. Once the program was municipally funded and free to residents, they were happy to take part. That is worth remembering: public funding can unlock hosts like libraries and schools that may not want to be associated with a paid private service.

We also try to make the sites really obvious. The graphics need to tell people immediately what the unit is for and how to sign up. And when Shaker moved from the small pilot to six citywide sites, participation really took off. We went from about 129 members to more than 900, and now we're above 1,200 households. The collection data followed the sign-ups, which is important because free registrations don't always translate into real use. We're now collecting more than 22,000 pounds a month just in Shaker Heights.

Where our model differs from Jen's is processing. Shaker is a dense urban place and there simply isn't much land for an on-site composting system. So the city needs haulers and processors like us. They pay us per bin collected. The city doesn't have to manage our tipping fees or processing costs - that's our problem to solve internally.

The city-funded service has also improved access. We hear from people on fixed incomes, especially seniors, who liked the idea of composting but couldn't justify \$12 a month. Once the municipality started paying, those households could participate too.

There's still a hybrid model in Shaker. Some people continue paying for older private drop-off sites, and some pay extra for curbside because they want the convenience of us taking the bucket from their porch. We're now starting to look at municipal subsidies for curbside pickup as well. That may be the next frontier for us.

From a business point of view, we try not to rely on grants for operating costs. We're happy to use grants for one-off capital things like trucks or equipment, but ongoing operations need a business model behind them. That's where Till Soil comes in. Finished soil products are around a third of our revenue now. We're also building that loop back into municipal partnerships, so residents can come and collect finished product in the spring and see where their food scraps have gone.

Q&A

Tim

Jen, I'm really interested in the camera and access tracking. You've got a timestamp from the app and a timestamp from the camera, so you can match those together. Do you have an escalation process for repeat contamination? And do you ever go back and see whether somebody has improved after you've contacted them?

Jennifer

Yes, we match the camera timeline with the access timeline. But we're very gentle about how we handle it. We're trying to educate people, not catch them out. What I've found is that once somebody gets contacted once and realises we are watching what goes into the bin, they're usually very good after that. We don't generally have to go back and monitor them again. In fact, we often have residents contact us first and say, "I'm really sorry, I dropped something in there by mistake." Our contamination at the drop-off sites is below 2%. And interestingly, the material residents bring to the drop-offs is cleaner than the organics collected curbside by private haulers.

Tim

You said you were building your own aerated static pile systems. It sounds as though you've managed to keep them relatively low-tech. Sometimes when people hear "ASP" they assume they're looking at hundreds of thousands of dollars in infrastructure. Were you able to do this at a much lower cost and get to those savings more quickly?

Jennifer

On the ASP system, it really is pretty low-tech. The blower itself is basically like a bouncy-house blower running on a timer and pushing air through pipes. The more expensive part is when you add solar power, a screener, skid steer and the other equipment needed around the operation. But if you're already at a transfer station and you already own heavy equipment, you may be able to use what you've got rather than buying everything from scratch.

Tim

Do you use a biofilter over the pile? Do you cover it with wood chips or something similar to deal with odor?

Jennifer

We cover the ASP with unfinished compost, and that acts as our biofilter. It helps with odor control and with keeping moisture in. The in-vessel systems we're planning will also use a biofilter, again using unfinished compost.

Tim

Does HRRRA manage the ASP processing side, or do the municipalities manage those systems themselves? Do you provide the staff, or is that handled locally?

Jennifer

For Ridgefield, the ASP is managed by the town's Public Works team. We used the grant to hire a consultant and train their staff. Newtown is different. We've just gone through an RFP and appointed a third-party operator. They'll manage the processing on our behalf under an HRRRA contract, at no direct cost to the town. The operator can make and sell compost, and they can also charge a tip fee for large-generator organics coming in. So they have revenue streams that help cover the cost of running the facility.

Tim

Natalie, what does your composting process actually look like? Jen has talked about ASP systems in Connecticut - what are you doing with the material in Northeast Ohio?

Natalie

Our processing is different. We currently work with two processors, and tipping fees can really eat into the margin. We're now working more closely with a Class II processor in Lorain. The food scraps go into large windrows and are mechanically turned. We're also building out a bagging and processing facility there so Till Soil can be bagged on the same site where the compost is made.

Tim

And it's worth adding that Rust Belt Riders spent years trying to build a composting facility inside Cleveland and kept running into the usual land and permitting constraints. That's a big difference between urban and rural areas. In a rural setting you may have the space to put in an ASP. In a dense city, you may have no choice but to build strong relationships with regional processors.

Jen, where sites have space limitations, have you looked at combining metroSTOR collection points with an in-vessel system or an ASP for processing?

Jennifer

Yes, and that's how we think about scale too. The collection network and the processing capacity don't have to be the same size. The metroSTOR units can be distributed across the whole region, while each processing system is sized to the community. Newtown has our largest ASP. Ridgefield is a bit smaller. Bethel will have an in-vessel system, and Kent will have a smaller in-vessel system. And with an ASP, if you need more capacity, you can expand it fairly simply by adding more blowers and pipework.

Tim

Natalie, once you've built up, say, 150 private subscribers at a paid site, how do you approach converting that into a publicly funded, free-to-resident service? Do you have a particular game plan for making that transition with the city?

Natalie

On moving from a private paid site to a publicly funded site, the private phase gives us the evidence. We can show the city how many people are using the service, how much material we're collecting and what residents are saying about it. We also encourage residents to contact councilors and mayors directly and say, "I use this service, I value it, and I'd like the city to fund it as part of our waste services." That kind of grassroots advocacy matters. Elected officials respond when they hear directly from residents. In Shaker, it was phased. They used a small grant for the Lomond pilot, then once that had proved itself, they built the full program into the city budget. It also helped that organics supported wider city goals. They had poor performance in the waste category of their LEED for Cities work, and they were dealing with the same recycling-market pressures everybody else was seeing. So we could say, "this program helps you move those sustainability measures, and here's the likely diversion impact." We also give cities impact reports. They don't have to be complicated. We'll show tonnage, photos, participation numbers and some resident testimonials. That gives staff something they can take internally and say, "this is what the program is actually achieving." That evidence helps make the case for keeping it in the budget.

Tim

Do you do that advocacy systematically now? Do you actually email your subscribers and ask them to contact their representatives, or is it mostly word of mouth? How proactive are you about that?

Natalie

We've become much more systematic about advocacy and communications as we've grown. We've got four or five cities looking at pilots now and more coming behind them. But every city is different. Some have really strong newsletters and email lists and can generate 400 sign-ups in a few weeks. Others hardly have a communications function at all, and participation is much harder to build. So the strength of the city's own communications can make a huge difference.

Tim

That's useful to know, because I can imagine some people being hesitant about encouraging residents to contact elected representatives. But if that pressure comes from the community itself, it probably carries more weight and makes the city more receptive.

Natalie

Sometimes success creates the next problem. In Lakewood, we already have almost 500 households paying privately. If the city decided to subsidize all of those users, it could cost around \$150,000 a year. That's a big number to suddenly put into a municipal budget. So we're developing volume pricing. If a city is bringing us a much larger program, the cost per bin should come down. That's part of making this scalable from our side too.

Tim

Jen, how did the Connecticut municipalities overcome the policy and legislative hurdles around pay-as-you-throw? In some places it can be a complete non-starter at county or state level. How did you get it through?

Jennifer

On pay-as-you-throw, this wasn't a statewide legislative change. We used state grant money for the pilot, but the program itself was introduced locally. Waste is very personal, and pay-as-you-throw creates fear because people often misunderstand it. The way we explained it was to compare it with electricity. You wouldn't expect everyone on your street to pay the same electricity bill regardless of how much they use. But that's effectively what a flat waste fee does. Under the old system, everybody paid the same annual amount even though one person might bring one small bag every couple of weeks and somebody else might bring a lot more. So we started calling it "save as you throw" and showed people examples of what they might actually pay if they only paid for the waste they produced. For some low-waste households, the annual cost dropped dramatically. And we didn't just switch it overnight. We did a soft-launch year so people could experience it before it became permanent. Once they saw that they could save money, the resistance dropped. Because organics stayed free, people also had a very clear reason to take food scraps out of the trash.

Tim

That makes a really strong case. My follow-up is: what happens on the municipal side once pay-as-you-throw is introduced? Does the town actually collect more money overall, less money, or does it roughly balance out?

Jennifer

You do have to model the pricing properly. We used a colored-bag system, and the price of the bag needed to cover the bag itself and the expected cost of the waste system. What surprised me was how accurate our estimates were. A year later, the program had generated enough revenue to cover its costs, and the municipality still achieved savings. So the town did not lose revenue by moving to pay-as-you-throw.

Tim

One concern people often raise is contamination. If residents have to pay for trash but organics are free, do you see people putting non-organic waste into the food-scrap stream to avoid the charge?

Jennifer

There was a lot of concern beforehand that people would just put their trash into the free organics stream to avoid paying. In practice, we didn't see that at scale. We do have attendants at the transfer station, and residents understand that if they misuse the system they can still be challenged. I'm not saying nobody ever contaminates, but the widespread behavior people were worried about simply didn't happen.

Tim

Was the pay-as-you-throw program implemented through local executive or administrative authority?

Jennifer

Yes, the program went through local administrative approval. In that town it went through the Board of Selectmen and the council. It wasn't something imposed through state legislation.

Tim

Another audience question: do you accept compostable plastics in the HRRRA program?

Jennifer

We don't accept compostable serviceware or general compostable plastics. We do allow BioBag liners, because on the residential side the "yuck factor" matters. If the liner makes people more comfortable collecting food scraps in the kitchen, it can help participation. But we stick with a known bag because not everything marketed as compostable is the same.

Natalie

Jen, do you take meat, bones and dairy at your sites?

Jennifer

Yes, we take meat, dairy, bones and fish.

Natalie

We do too. We can also take compostable plastics, but we separate the material into different streams. The compost with those plastics doesn't go into our premium soil products because of the standards we're working to. So we manage it differently at the processing end.

Tim

And just to clarify on the liners: are BioBags something the municipalities provide, or are residents expected to buy them themselves?

Jennifer

Some of our towns give BioBags away, some sell them at the transfer station, and residents can also buy them themselves.

Tim

And one final practical question: do you have any experience with paper bags as liners?

Jennifer

With paper bags, we'll allow them if somebody wants to line a carry container and absorb some liquid, but we don't actively promote them. If clean paper can stay in the recycling system, we'd rather keep it there.

Tim Steckel

We're already a little over time, but that's usually what happens once we get into the practical detail. If you're here, make sure you connect with people in the chat. These programs take time. I've seen people come to sessions like this, then a year or two later the program they were talking about actually launches. So keep talking to each other and reach out if you need help.

Nigel Deacon

Thanks, Tim, and a huge thank-you to Natalie and Jen for sharing so much detail. What's useful in conversations like this is hearing both what has worked and what hasn't. We've also started a monthly online forum where people can bring questions and share experience with others working through the same issues. Look out for the invitations - it would be great to see you there.

Tim Steckel

And if you want to go deeper, there are previous webinar recordings on the [metroSTOR YouTube channel](#) with more examples from other programs. Thanks everyone for joining. Keep connecting, and keep making compost mainstream.

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