

Meat, bones, and more food scraps recycled curbside in Wixom. Could your town be next?

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Mayor and Council –

Following up on the composting pilot program in Wixom. We continue to be in contact with our contacts at RRRASOC regarding the success of this effort.

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WIXOM — You can stop scraping all your rotten food and leftovers into your trash and instead put it into yard waste bags for curbside recycling if you're a city resident.

Wixom is only the third community in the state to take this next step in recycling to combat harm to the environment. Food scraps comprise up to 45% of landfill waste and result in methane gases that warm the planet.

Among the food scraps accepted for recycling are meat, bones, dairy products, and fruits and vegetables.

“If it grows, it goes,” said Mike Csapo, general manager of RRRASOC - or the Resource Recovery and Recycling Authority of Southeast Oakland County. “It made sense to tell residents, you can put kitchen scraps with yard waste.”

Other items accepted include **napkins, paper towels** and coffee grounds and filters, but no K-cups.

The city is only about three weeks into the recycling food scraps pilot program. If it proves successful, it could be coming soon to Oakland County communities that participate in RRRASOC including Novi, South Lyon, Milford, Farmington and

Farmington Hills. So far, similar programs are only operating in Ann Arbor and Mackinac Island.

Wixom was chosen for the food scraps recycling program by RRRASOC, Csapo said, in part due to having a compost partner, Spurt Industries, already in the city at 2041 Charms Road. The company will convert food scraps picked up curbside by the city's waste hauler, GFL, and brought to its facility weekly from now through November.



This is at no cost to the residents and in fact, residents can get free compost in return to use in their gardens.

Wixom City Manager Steve Brown says the program is going “quite well” in the city of about 17,000, although it is impossible to tell how many residents are participating.

“We have had a lot of comments and questions—people are interested,” Brown said.

“We haven’t heard any negative feedback. We’re doing this as a pilot to evaluate good and bad things and see the implications.”

Pattie Warner and Dave Kataja, sitting on their Wixom porch on a sunny warm spring afternoon recently, said they had received information in the mail about the program, but weren’t yet participating.

“I think it sounds difficult,” Warner said. “It doesn’t seem easy, but composting is awesome for the environment...I will do it if they give more clarity and a container that is animal-proof.”



Csapo said one of the challenges the program faces is the cost of recycling carts. Residents are encouraged to use yard waste bags or to put their food scraps in containers with lids that are labeled before being placed out at the curb to reduce odors. If the pilot program goes well, he hopes to obtain grant money for containers, as well as compostable liners for trash cans if residents would prefer that.

He does not expect animals such as raccoons, opossums and rats to be a problem if they are not already an issue in a community. He notes that food in plastic trash bags produces odors and said there is possibly less odor from food mixed with yard waste.

“We don’t think there will be a raccoon problem, but we are prepared to deal with it if there is,” he said. “One solution would be to go to a cart system.”



Damon Gorelick has not yet put food scraps in his curbside recycling but thinks it is “an awesome idea to reduce waste.”

“We compost for our garden now,” he said. “I appreciate the city is doing this. Realistically, you don’t put your garbage out until the morning anyway, so you can keep the food scraps in a container in the garage instead of in a garbage bag and then put it out for recycling.”

To learn more, visit www.rrrasoc.org/yard-waste/wixom-food-scrap-program.

Those who reside outside of the city are encouraged to bring their food scraps to Spurt Industries or compost at home. For composting information, [visit www.rrrasoc.org/yard-waste/composting](http://www.rrrasoc.org/yard-waste/composting).

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