

ORGANICS WASTE DIVERSION IN MULTI-UNIT RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

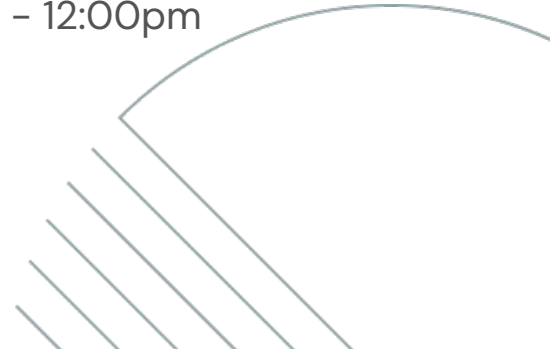
Workshop Summary

May 10, 2024



WORKSHOP DETAILS

- **What:** a half-day, multi sector, workshop to surface barriers and find solutions for diverting organics waste in Toronto's multi-unit residential buildings (MURBs). Funded by a SSHRC Connections grant.
- **Where:** Canoe Landing Community Recreation Centre
- **When:** Friday, May 10, 2024, 8:30am – 12:00pm



WORKSHOP PURPOSE

- Identify and discuss solutions for diverting organics waste in multi-unit residential buildings (MURBs) to help meet the TransformTO 2030 target for waste: *70 per cent residential waste diversion from the City of Toronto's waste management system*
- Ensure solutions produce co-benefits for human and ecological health and wellbeing, equity, livelihoods, and align with and advance the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



HOSTS

Urban Climate Action Project (UCAP)

In partnership with:

- Toronto Environmental Alliance (TEA)
- Climate Positive Energy Institutional Strategic Initiative
- SDGs@UofT Institutional Strategic Initiative
- City of Toronto, Energy & Climate Division



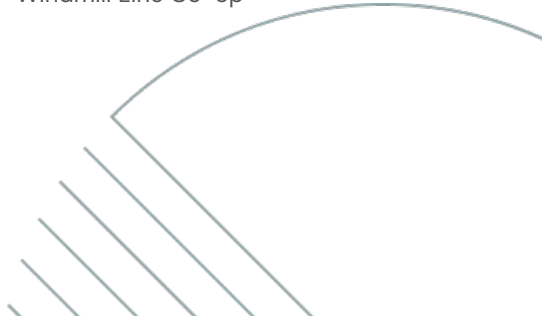
PARTICIPANTS

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Emily Leung
Ryan Kent
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Shatha Qaqish
Colin Campbell
Viji Pal

BOMA Canada
BOMA Canada
CEED
City of Hamilton
City of Hamilton; Municipal Waste Association
City of Toronto
City of Toronto
City of Toronto
City of Toronto
City of Toronto's Climate Advisory Group
Climate Positive ISI, U of T
Climate Positive ISI, U of T
Climate Positive ISI, U of T
Community Group: E-Heroes grassroots group

Mike Thomson
Maria Constantinou
Daryl Chong
Bernadette Celis-Clarke
Quentin de Becker
Emily Alfred
Sarah Buchanan
Maggie Hall
Virginia Maclaren
Wenny (Yiyao) Jin
Chelsea Dalton
Emily Smit
Kim Slater
Kristen Ma
Juan Vidal

GFL Environmental Inc
GFL Environmental Inc
Greater Toronto Apartment Association
Peel region
Scarborough Zero Waste
Toronto Environmental Alliance
Toronto Environmental Alliance
Tridel Development
University of Toronto
University of Toronto
University of Toronto
Urban Climate Action Project, U of T
Urban Climate Action Project, U of T
Urban Climate Action Project, U of T
Windmill Line Co-op



AGENDA

8:30 AM – 9:00 AM

Breakfast and networking

9:00 AM – 9:40 AM

Opening remarks and context

9:40 AM – 10:10 AM

Breakout groups: Exploring barriers

10:10 AM – 10:40 AM

Breakout groups: Developing solutions

10:40 AM – 11:00 AM

Breakout groups: Creating solution pitches

11:00 AM – 11:35 AM

Solution pitch presentations

11:35 AM – 11:55 AM

Reflections

11:55 AM – 12:00 PM

Closing



BARRIERS TO ORGANICS WASTE DIVERSION IN MURBs

1. Inconvenience
2. Lack of knowledge and information regarding proper sorting rules
3. Waste contamination in MURBs



ADDITIONAL BARRIERS

- Organics diversion programs and infrastructure are often inaccessible to some or all of building inhabitants
- Jurisdictional boundaries; gaps and conflicts in location-specific rules
- Lack of community motivation to divert resulting from attitudes, beliefs, values, lack of trust, apathy, etc.
- Property management and building staff lack awareness of the challenges building inhabitants face in diverting organics and other materials
- Lack of understanding of circularity

DEVELOPING SOLUTIONS

What's needed?

- Regular communication with and education for residents
- Training and support for property management and staff buy-in
- Reinvestment of waste-fee savings into building improvements
- Financial levers such as incentives and/or fines
- Policy and regulatory changes
- Culture change and a shift away from a linear economy, consumerism, and single use practices
- Enhanced trust in governing bodies and belief that diverting organics makes a difference
- Upstream accountability from producers for waste
- Closure of waste loops with organics waste contributing to food production
- Making building infrastructure for organics diversion more convenient for residents





**THEN PARTICIPANTS
GOT CREATIVE...**

SOLUTION PITCHES – DRAGON'S DEN STYLE!

Pitches had to be practical, actionable, and effective while including:

- Dimensions of the barrier that the proposed solution would solve (i.e. the problem)
- Description of the solution
- Steps for enacting the solution
- Statement of the co-benefits the solution would generate

DRAGONS' DEN

TORONTO ORGANICS CAPTURE CHALLENGE

Solution Pitch

Description: Organics capture challenge for MURBs

Steps:

- 1 year, audited, free to enter
- 3 winners
 - First place: grant and low interest loan
 - Second place: low interest loan
 - Third place: less low interest loan
- Resident engagement
 - Pre / post workshops
 - By property management and boards

Co-benefits:

- Addresses other net-zero works and framework targets
- Tie to the framework targets
 - Benefits
 - Winners
- Pilot projects and data gathering



SHOWCASE CIRCULARITY

Solution Pitch

Description: Build trust in circularity by showing where organics go (or compost on site)

Steps:

- Start with a pilot project
 - Collector brings organics to digester, connects with farms, returns with produce
- Undertake research that drives effective solutions
- Hire waste managers for each building
- Invest in on-site digesters/ RNG facility/ other end-use
- Create peer learning programs
- Tell the story of where waste goes and how it can support food production

Co-benefits:

- Circularity
- Reducing food costs/ improving food security
- Reducing transportation emissions /climate action



ECO-B CERTIFICATION

Solution Pitch

Description: A certification program that delivers rebates and builds a triangle of trust between the city, property management/ owners/ sitestaff, and residents

Steps:

- City creates a certification program for owners and property managers
- Property managers receive rebates from City for becoming certified
- Rebate covers existing costs of waste management
- Report to residents (e.g., multimedia reporting, Town hall, video, auditor reports)

Co-Benefits:

- Cost savings fund residents' initiatives and amenities
- Scholarships for sustainability education



SHIFT THE ANGLE

Solution Pitch

Description: Incentivize property managers, building owners and staff to be accountable for meeting waste diversion targets or metrics

Steps:

- Create a whole new value chain
- Build trust and credibility by enhancing transparency with finances and waste reporting to residents
- Share knowledge with residents
- Help residents become “waste champions”
- Multiple systems to consider/ decide private or municipal service

Co-benefits:

- Enhanced job satisfaction and purpose

WASTE LOUNGE COMMUNITY HUB

Solution Pitch

Description: Designate a room in every MURB as a waste 'lounge' to double as a community hub

Steps:

- Designate or build a waste lounge with a minimum of 3 bins (organics, recycling, garbage)
- Eliminate building waste shoots
- Offer/include regularly scheduled repair sessions
- Re-use center/Free/Donation area and/or notice board
- A spot for food recovery (e.g., canned goods, food about to expire)

Co-benefits:

- A safe and inviting space that also cultivates greater connection and cohesion among building residents
- Supports other elements of circular economy
- Jobs (lounge operators)



Sharing your answers

Which of the solutions are you most excited about?

- Filling the gaps in the community's fragmented knowledge
- Cities making sure buildings provide organics collection for residents
- Technology, I think it's the most likely to change behaviour
- Competition/challenge for MURB waste diversion, agrifood circularity, and certification.
- Informing the public of end uses
- Supporting building staff with time and knowledge
- Seeing waste as a resource and a starting point
- A multifaceted approach using many of today's suggestions
- Organics capture challenge
- Community waste lounge
- More collaboration between stakeholders
- Toronto Organics Capture Challenge 🧐
- Developing more circular systems for waste diversion
- Redesigning the waste room
- Organics as part of agriculture, not waste
- Circular economy
- Eco-B-Certification!



Sharing your answers

What is one step you or your organization can take to advance the solutions we explored today?

- Expand work in existing MURBs on city service to help develop their waste diversion programming; track more data
- Look into building standards (chutes, sorters etc). What is working elsewhere?
- Will share key takeaways with my team and see what sticks!
- Education regarding how much of diverted material is properly treated
- Organize a workshop with our community
- Be open to new / non-traditional ways of solving this problem
- Change my mind about what I can do
- Make sure we contract for organics!
- Train property managers and building staff
- More research!
- Explore technical innovations
- Connect with property manager and staff
- We can incorporate these ideas into our policy advocacy and projects with residents in buildings
- Support residents in their education about organics
- Bring some ideas to the condo strata board I'm a part of
- Share behind-the-scenes organics and garbage videos
- Divert correctly and encourage friends and neighbours to do the same.
- Empower property staff



THANK YOU



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