

Addressing Compost Contamination in Seattle: a combination of policy and outreach

Avoiding Contamination in Organics Feedstock Webinar

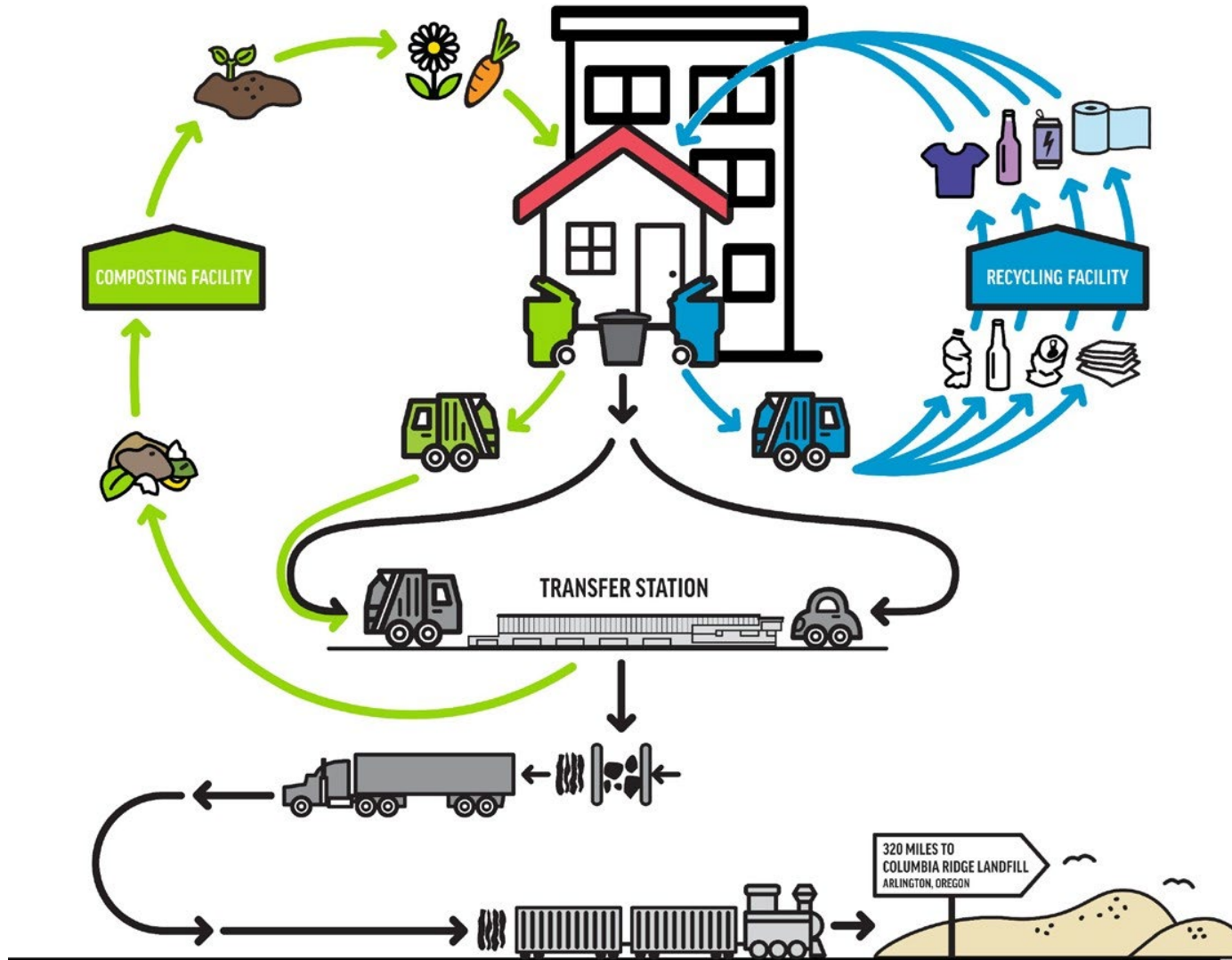
June 14, 2022

Addressing Compost Contamination in Seattle

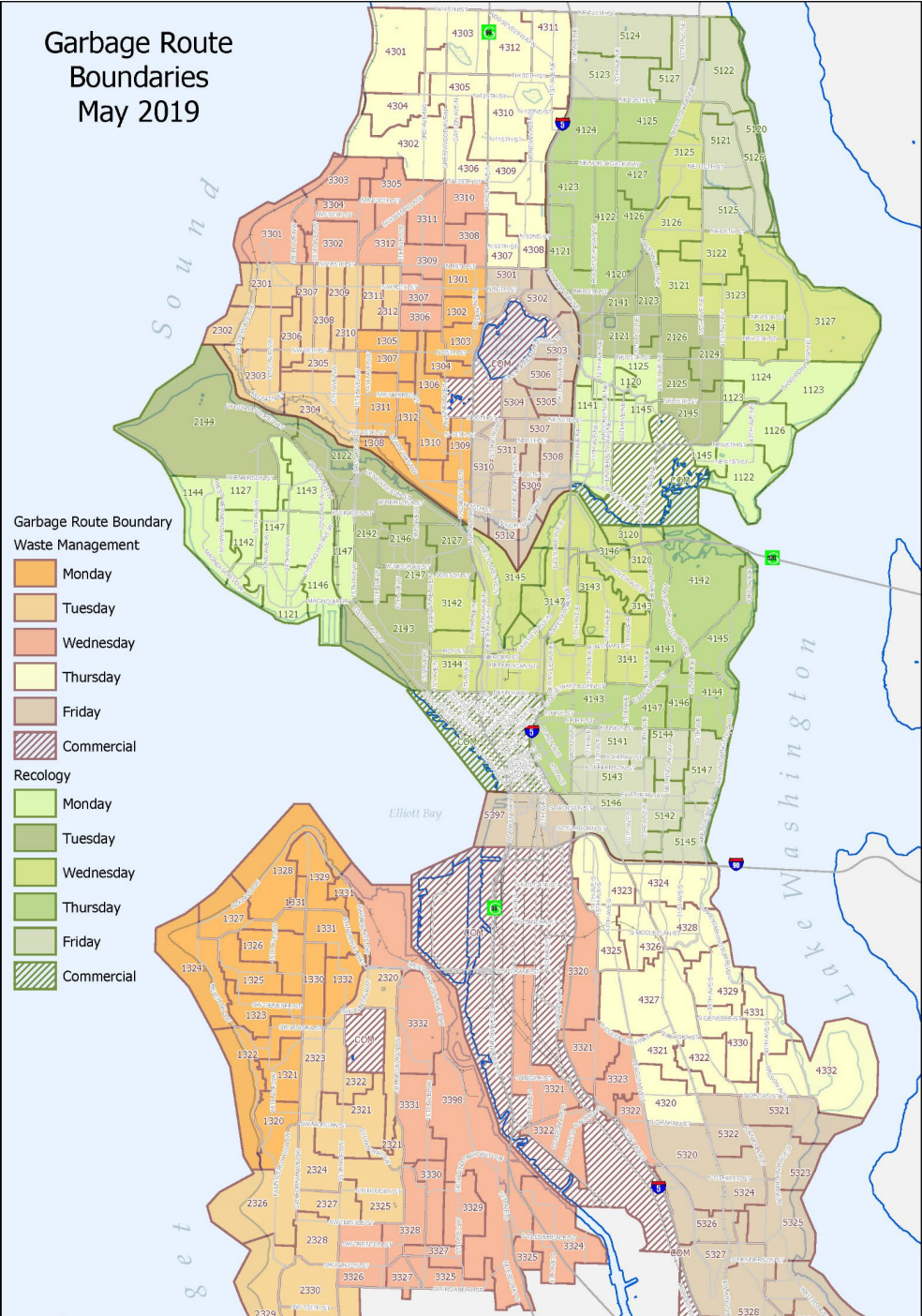
1. System Overview and History of Composting
2. How We Reduce Contamination – Policy & Outreach
3. Does it Work?
4. What's Next?



Seattle's Solid Waste System



Garbage Route
Boundaries
May 2019



Seattle by the Numbers

- **2020 Population** – over 750,000
- **84 square miles**
- **8,000 business accounts**
- **150,000 SF households/properties**
- **200,000 MF households**
 - 6,900 MF properties
- **2020 Waste Generation:**
 - Recycled & Composted 385K
 - Disposed 327K



Overview of Seattle's Organics System

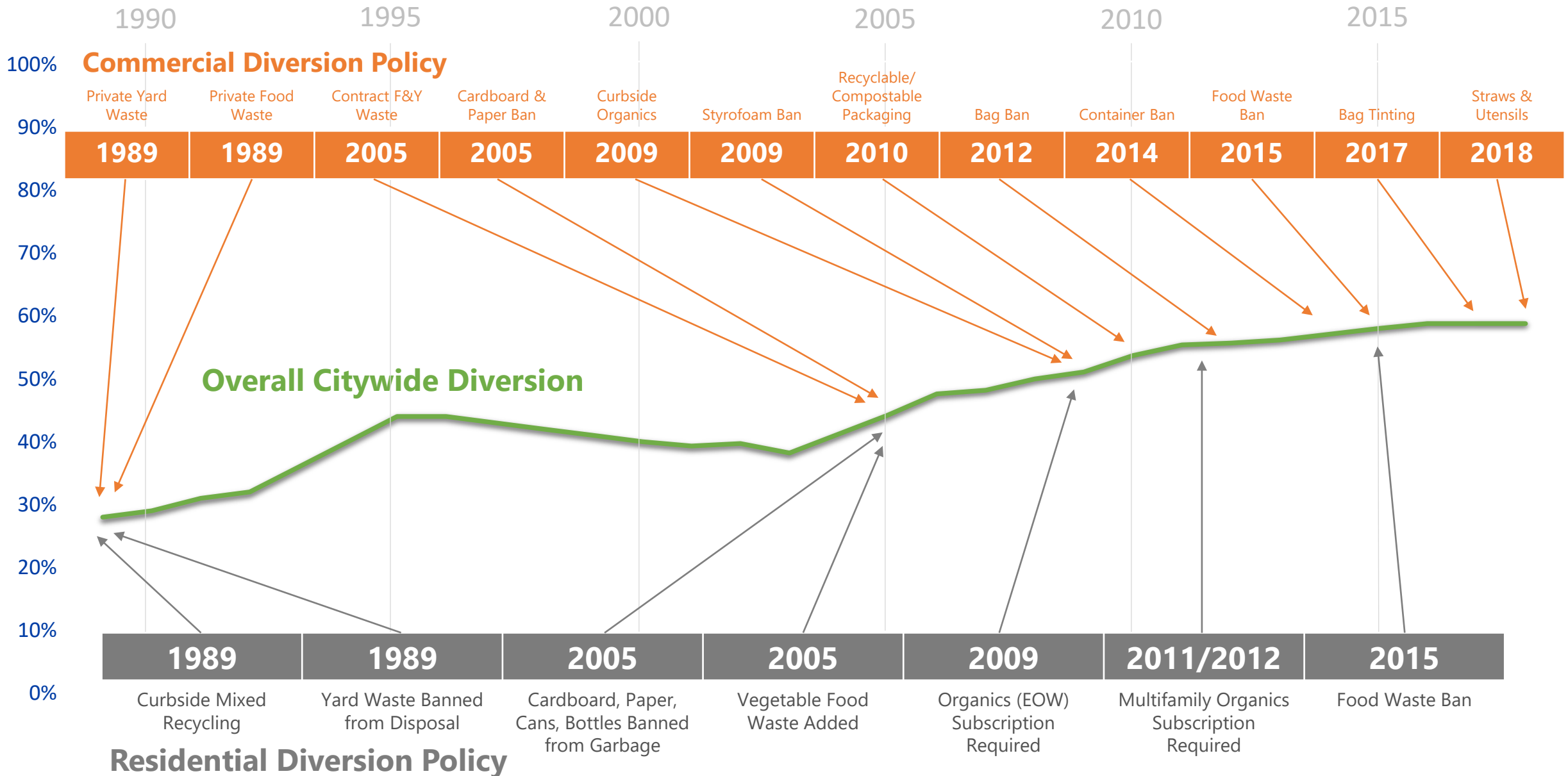
- Organics service is mandatory for all customer sectors
- Curbside service for SF & MF
 - More MF residents than SF residents in Seattle
- Accepted in Organics stream:
 - Yard Waste
 - Food Waste
 - Approved Compostable Serviceware

FOOD
&
YARD
Seattle

History of Composting in Seattle

- 1989 Required separation of Yard Waste from Garbage
- Backyard Composting Outreach & Education programs – Master Composters program
- 2008 Addition of Food Waste to YW & SF Mandatory Service
- 2008 Food Serviceware Required to be Compostable or Recyclable
- 2011 Mandatory Service for MF & Commercial Customers
- 2015 Ban Food Waste From the Garbage





1986: The World's First Master Composter Program



City of Seattle
contracted with
Seattle Tilth to create
a formal Master
Composter Volunteer
program

A lasting community ethic was created

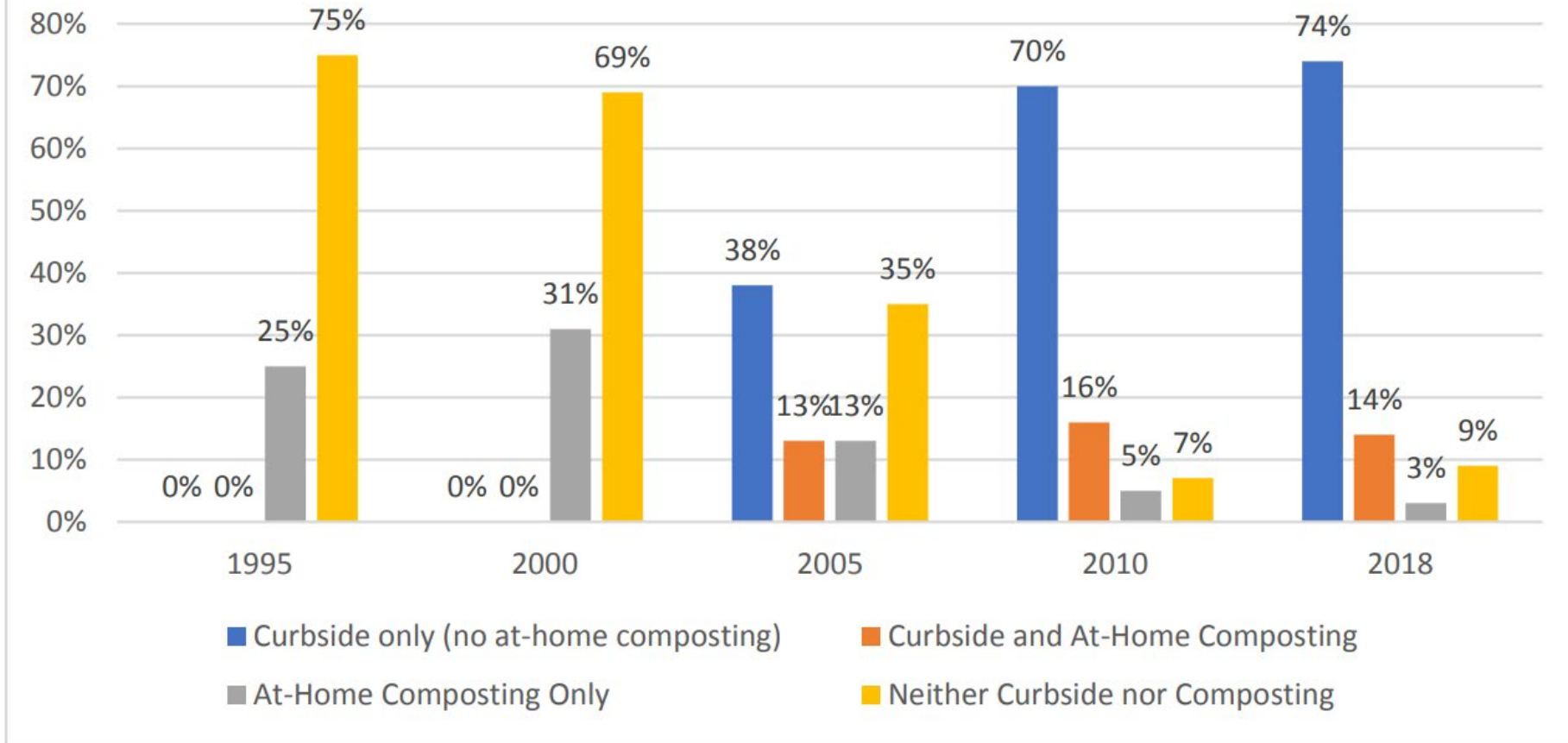
Table 7: Comparison of Yard Waste Composters
(Based on the Eligible Market)

March 2018 (566)	December 2010 (566)	December 2005 (574)	January 2000 (568)	January 1995 (527)
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All yard waste taken to curbside	73%	64%	51%	45%	38%
Composted on-property and curbside	21%	28%	34%	35%	30%
All yard waste composted on-property	3%	5%	8%	14%	17%
No on-property or curbside composting	2%	3%	6%	6%	15%



Chart 15: Summary of Food Waste Composters (At Curbside versus At-Home)

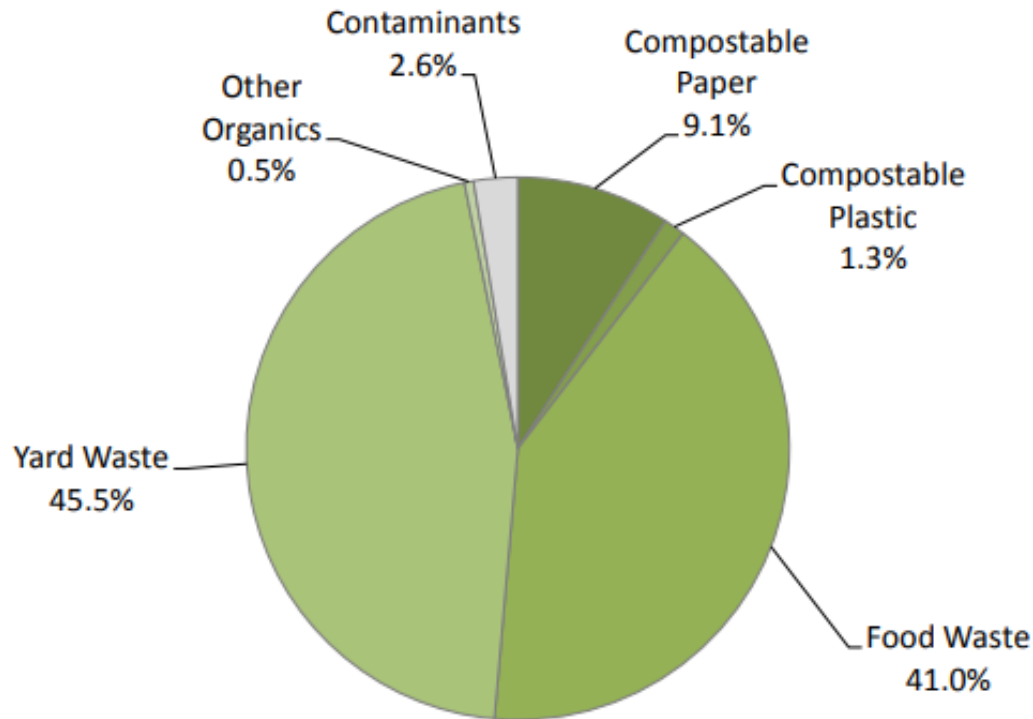


Source: 2018 Home Organics Waste Management Survey Report



Organics Composition Study - 2016

Figure 2. 2016 Organics Composition by Broad Material Class – Overall



Contaminants	4,122	2.6%
Recyclable Polycoated Paper	465	0.3%
Other Paper	592	0.4%
Non-compostable Plastic Film	1,029	0.7%
Non-compostable Plastic Containers	387	0.2%
Other Plastic	221	0.1%
Recyclable Glass	239	0.2%
Recyclable Metal	164	0.1%
Pet Waste	181	0.1%
Disposable Diapers	68	0.0%
Hazardous	45	0.0%
Other Materials	732	0.5%

Table 2 below lists the top five materials in the overall organics stream, by weight. When summed, they accounted for 93.5% of the stream. *Grass/leaves* was the most prevalent material component in the stream (42.6%) followed by *vegetative food* (20.3%) and *other food* (19.3%).

Organics Composition by Sector

Figure 3. 2016 Organics Composition by Broad Material Class – **Single-family**

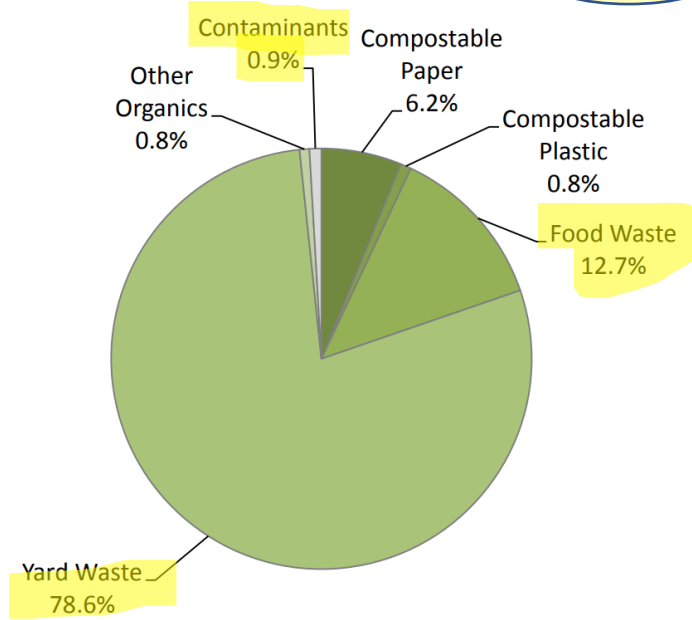


Figure 4. 2016 Organics Composition by Broad Material Class – **Multifamily**

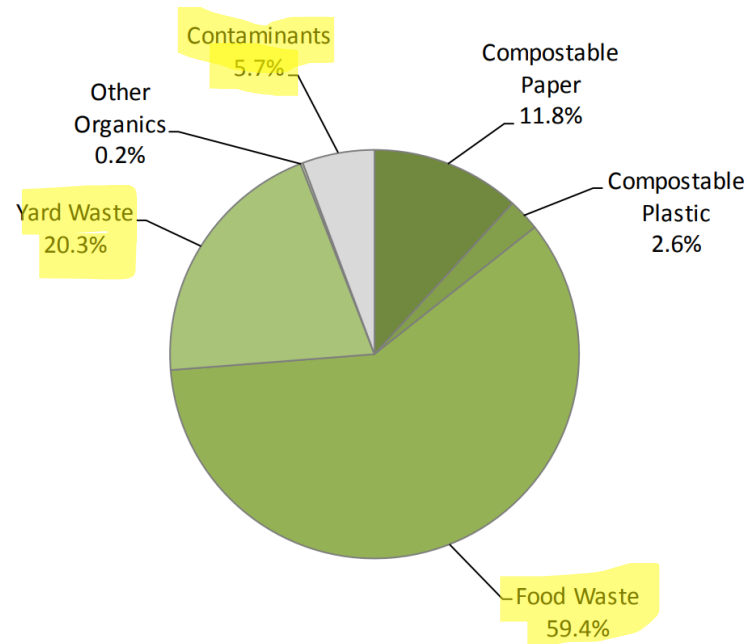
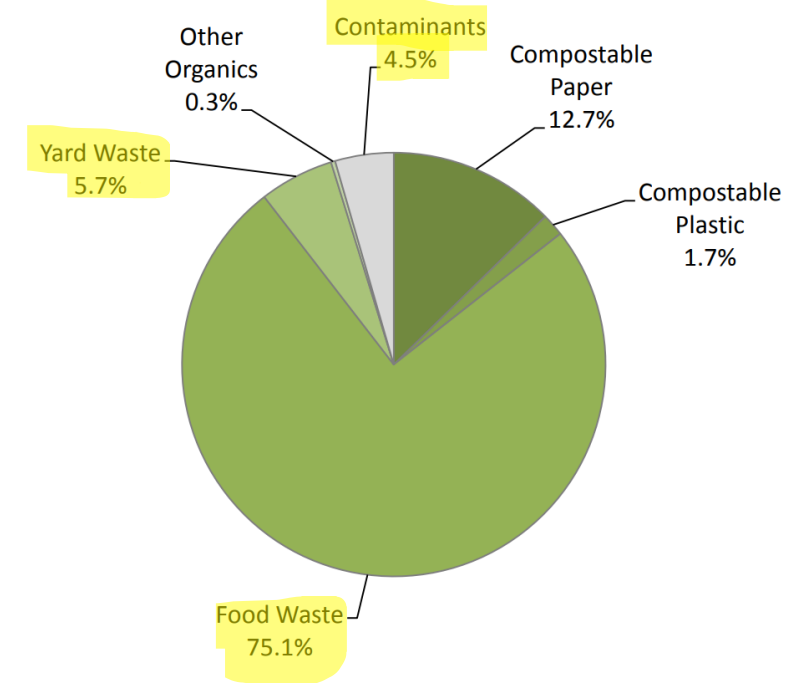


Figure 5. 2016 Organics Composition by Broad Material Class – **Commercial**

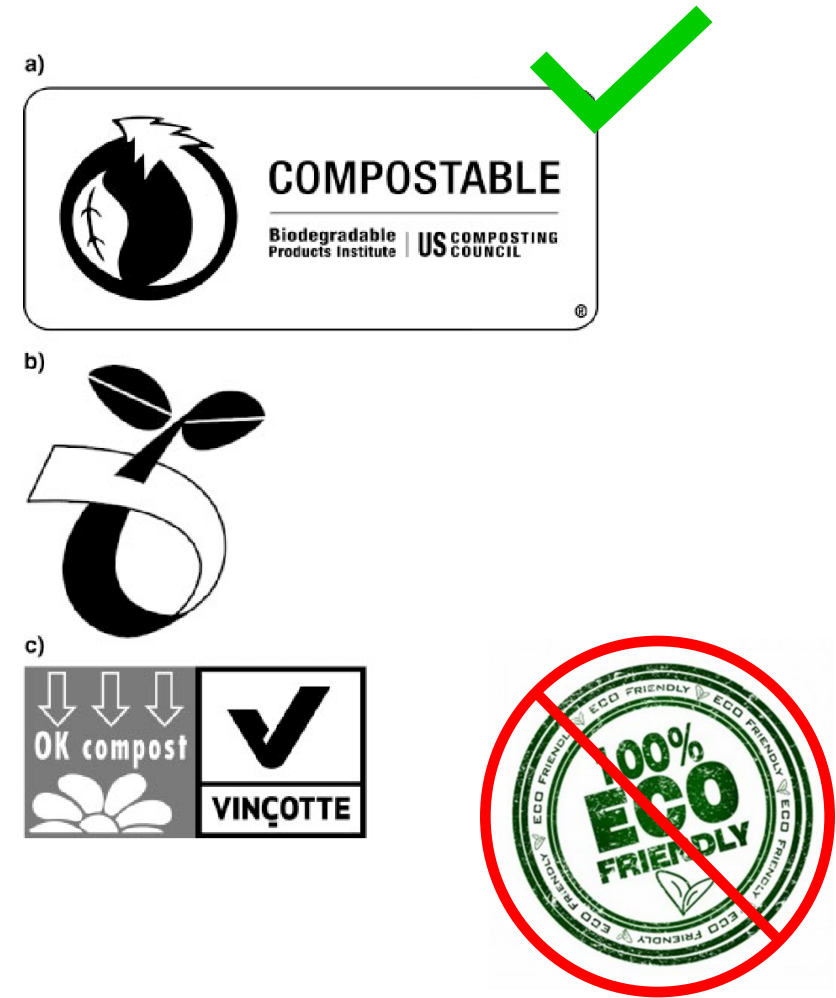


*Organics Stream Composition Study 2016



Labeling policies to reduce contamination (2020 and 2021 WA state laws)

- Compostable products must feature labeling that uses green, beige, or brown labeling or color striping or tinting that help differentiate compostable items from non-compostable items.
- Non-compostable items are discouraged from using green, beige, or brown coloring.
- Term “biodegradable” is against the law in WA state



Outreach & Education - Printed Collateral

- Simplify the message
- Do's & Don'ts
- Graphics & Images



Compost

- 1 Food scraps
- 2 Pizza boxes, napkins & paper towels
- 3 Compostable bags
- 4 Compostable food packaging
- 5 Yard waste & plants



No Plastic Bags



Food & Compost

All Food Waste

Food Soiled Paper

Approved Compostable Items

Yard Waste, Plants & Untreated Wood

NO PLASTIC, METAL, AND GLASS

Outreach & Education - Printed Collateral

- MF audience, high Food Waste & Contaminants
- Focus on top accepted materials

Seattle Public Utilities

Top 5 Items Wanted in Recycle, Compost & Garbage

Complete sorting information at: Seattle.gov/utilities/WhereDoesItGo
WHEN IN DOUBT, FIND OUT.

Recycle

MUST be EMPTY, CLEAN & DRY

- 1 Paper
- 2 Cardboard - **flattened**
- 3 Plastic bottles & containers
- 4 Metal cans
- 5 Glass bottles & jars

No Plastic Bags

Compost

- 1 Food scraps
- 2 Pizza boxes, napkins & paper towels
- 3 Compostable bags
- 4 Compostable food packaging
- 5 Yard waste & plants

No Plastic Bags

Outreach & Education - Compost Right Campaign

- Simple messages
- Mainly graphics
- Regional Effort



In Person Outreach

Meet People Where They Are



Transcreated materials

<p>Rác Phân Hủy Được</p> <p>Tất Cả Các Rác Thực Phẩm</p>	<p>Tái Chế</p> <p>ĐỒ PHẢI RỎNG, SẠCH, VÀ KHÔ</p> <p>Hộp, Chai & Thùng Nhựa</p>	<p>Rác</p> <p>Giấy & Nhựa Không Tái Chế Được</p>	<p>Tái Sử Dụng</p> <p>Chọn Đồ Có Thể Sử Dụng Nhiều Lần</p>
<p>Giấy Dính Đồ Ăn</p> <p>Đồ Có Thể Phân Hủy</p>	<p>Đồ Nhựa Khác</p> <p>Nắp đóng phải có đường kính hơn 3 inches.</p>	<p>Xốp</p> <p>Dầu Mỡ/Dầu Ăn Thừa</p> <p>Bỏ vào hộp, làm lạnh và đặt vào thùng rác</p>	<p>Dao muỗng nĩa có thể sử dụng lại</p> <p>Hộp lưu trữ đồ ăn</p> <p>Túi có thể sử dụng lại</p> <p>Cốc uống cà phê và chai nước</p>
<p>Rác Vườn, Cây & Gỗ Chưa Qua Xử Lý</p> <p>Gỗ không sơn</p> <p>KHÔNG BỎ NHỰA, KIM LOẠI VÀ THỦY TINH</p>	<p>Giấy</p> <p>Bìa Các-Tông</p>	<p>Các Vật Liệu Không Thể Tái Chế</p> <p>Chất thải thú nuôi</p> <p>KHÔNG BỎ RÁC THỰC PHẨM & RÁC VƯỜN, ĐỒ TÁI CHẾ VÀ RÁC NGUY HẠI</p>	<p>Sử Dụng Với Mục Đích Khác</p> <p>TÁI SỬ DỤNG NHỮNG ĐỒ ĐÃ CỐ & HẠN CHẾ DÙNG ĐỒ MỘT LẦN</p>

Khi nghi ngờ, hãy tìm hiểu cách phân loại rác ở trang web seattle.gov/utilities/wheredoesitgo hoặc gọi (206) 684-3000

@SeattleSPU
@SeattlePublicUtilities
Seattle Public Utilities



COMPOST
堆肥 Compost Chất thải thực phẩm và sân vườn

All Food Waste Food-Soiled Paper Compostable Packaging Yard Waste & Untreated Wood

No Plastic. No Garbage. No Recyclables.



RECYCLE
回收 Reciclaje Tái chế

Empty Bottles & Cans Empty Cups & Cartons Clean Containers Paper & Cardboard

No Food. No Garbage.

Next steps...

- **Waste Audit currently underway**
(5-year cycle)
- **Customer Behavior Surveys**
- **Continued work to get ahead of the contamination**
 - Statewide policies
 - Continued work on increased diversion
 - Push for contamination reduction w/ MF & Commercial sectors

