

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Zero Waste design is a sustainable materials management principle that goes beyond recycling to focus first on reducing wastes and reusing products; then composting, and finally recycling the rest. Zero Waste works to redesign the antiquated waste stream management system focusing on reuse; everything is a resource for something or someone else.

By current national estimates per capita waste generation has increased, from 2.7 lbs/person/day to 4.1 lbs/person/day; or 1,500 pounds per year. Locally estimates are as high as 5.65 pounds/person/day. New Paltz Zero Waste Plan will strive to recover that estimated loss and eliminate waste. Recommendations developed through this process are integral to achieve the Town and Village's goals to reduce by 20% the per capita solid waste disposal to landfills by 2012 and Zero Waste by 2018. Zero Waste initiatives could per year reduce greenhouse gases by nearly 142 metric ton carbon equivalent (MTCE), making Zero Waste one of the most significant contributors to reducing climate change that New Paltz can influence at the local level.

Big Box Businesses are already leading the way by processing their materials (i.e OCC, organics, plastic film) for financial gain which is diverting their wastes from landfills and incinerators to revenues. New Paltz's Zero Waste Plan will consider current and planned public and private solid waste infrastructure, as well as implementing programs to reuse/reduce, modify consumerism and support local products.

New Paltz was an early leader to implement recycling and to adopt Waste Wise and Climate Smart pledges. The New Paltz Zero Waste Action Plan proposes to build on their past success to work together throughout the region and state to:

Zero Waste does not just manage the "end of the pipeline" disposition of products and materials. Rather, it acknowledges the vast flow of resources and waste through our society and economy, challenges the wasteful and inefficient use of material and energy resources, and creates greater opportunities for local sustainable economic development.

The Plan establishes strategies to prioritize "upstream" solutions and stop waste before it is created, and include the following initiatives to improve and expand traditional, "end of the pipeline" recycling programs and public education:

- Educate, Promote and Advocate a Zero Waste Sustainability Agenda;
- Expand and improve local and regional reuse, recycling, and composting programs;
- Advocate for Manufacturer Responsibility for Product Waste, Ban Problem Materials
- Adopt new rules and incentives to reward those who embrace the goal of Zero Waste;
- Develop Green Campuses, event waste programs & Resource Recovery Parks for Zero Waste infrastructure;

- Preserve Land for Sustainable Development and Green Industry Infrastructure
Develop and Adopt New Rules and Incentives to Reduce Waste Disposal
Expand and Improve Local and Regional Recycling and Composting
- Modify consumerism

Additionally, the Plan will go beyond solid waste to include:

Sustainable Materials Management: Reduce, Reuse, Compost, Recycle

Alternative Energy: Renewable Energy | Energy Efficiency | Climate Change

Government Efficiency: Consolidate Services| Improve Infrastructure| Share Common Space
Planning and Zoning Design: Green Building | Urban Planning | Community Epicenter

Nature: Parks | Habitat Restoration | Wildlife

Transportation: Public/Non-motorized Transportation | Clean Vehicles | Reducing Congestion

Environmental Health: Toxics Reduction | Healthy Food Systems | Clean Air

Water Protection: Water Access | Source Water Conservation | Waste Water Reduction

This proposed Zero Waste plan is intended to serve as the first step on a long path towards a Zero Waste future. Dedication, collaboration, and continual re-evaluation will be essential to the Zero Waste Initiative success.



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