

Compost Facility SWIFR Grant Progress

City of **IOWA CITY**
A UNESCO CITY OF LITERATURE

Jen Jordan

Resource Management
Superintendent

Jane Wilch

Recycling Coordinator

OVERVIEW



WHO

The Iowa City Landfill's Compost Facility accepts food, wood, and yard waste. The Iowa City Landfill and Compost Facility are owned and operated by the City of Iowa City Resource Management Division.

SERVICE AREA

Facility services, including organic material drop-off and finished compost purchase, are available to residents and businesses in Johnson County and city limits of Kalona and Riverside.

FEES

Residential and commercial entities are charged a \$5 minimum fee for organic material loads weighing up to 400 pounds. Loads exceeding that amount are charged at the standard organic material rate of \$24 per ton.

OVERVIEW

CURBSIDE COLLECTION

The Resource Management Division oversees curbside collection of trash, recycling, and composting for Iowa City residents living in single-family homes up to 4-plex residential buildings (~17,000 households).

- \$3.50 monthly utility bill fee for weekly curbside composting services (includes a 25- or 95-gallon cart)
- \$2 yard waste sticker required for each yard waste paper bag or bundle



LANDFILL BREAKDOWN (2022)

- 24% organics
- 18% paper
- 18% C and D
- 14% plastic
- 5% metal
- 2% glass
- Other...



TIMELINE

2009 - Food waste was added to the yard waste composting program at the Compost Facility after a joint City and University of Iowa pilot project. Composting permit was amended to allow food waste.

2014 - The Food Waste Pilot Program was conducted to test out the feasibility of curbside food waste composting. This pilot program introduced several food waste reduction techniques through a partnership with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) education program, Food: Too Good to Waste.

2017 - Food waste was added as an accepted item to the City's existing yard waste curbside collection program.

2018 and 2019 - Curbside carts (25- or 95-gallon) were made available to curbside customers for easier collection of organic material.

2022

- Iowa City's Compost Facility increased permitted capacity to 15,000 tons per year as a response to continuous program growth.
- The City partnered with Table to Table to create a new food waste reduction education program called Love Food, Fight Waste.

TIMELINE

2023

- City staff applied for an EPA Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling (SWIFR) grant in February 2023. The application was accepted, and the City was awarded \$4 million to expand the Compost Facility from five acres to seven acres, to resurface and repair the existing compost processing pad, and to support the purchase of a rideover windrow turner to increase processing efficiency.
- Food Waste Wednesdays Pilot Program was conducted to test out a small-scale event-style food waste drop-off program.

2024 - City staff applied for a DNR Environmental Management System grant requesting funding support for the purchase of a rideover windrow turner. The City was awarded \$100,000 through the DNR grant to support the purchase of a rideover windrow turner.

2025

- A new Vermeer rideover windrow turner was purchased.
- The expanded Compost Facility design was completed.

2026 - The expanded Compost Facility construction is nearly complete and increased composting program access efforts are initiated.



FUNDING OVERVIEW

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling (SWIFR) Grant Program- \$4 million

- Compost Facility construction with PCI
 - Resurface and repair the existing compost processing pad
 - Expand compost processing pad from five acres to seven acres
- Vermeer rideover windrow turner purchase

Iowa Department of Natural Resources (Iowa DNR) Environmental Management System Grant Program - \$100,000

- Vermeer rideover windrow turner purchase

City of Iowa City funds

- \$400,000 match
- Staff time
- Compost Facility design with Shive Hattery and SCS Engineers
- Outreach and marketing
- Facility signage, food waste drop-off program supplies, etc.





Compost Facility





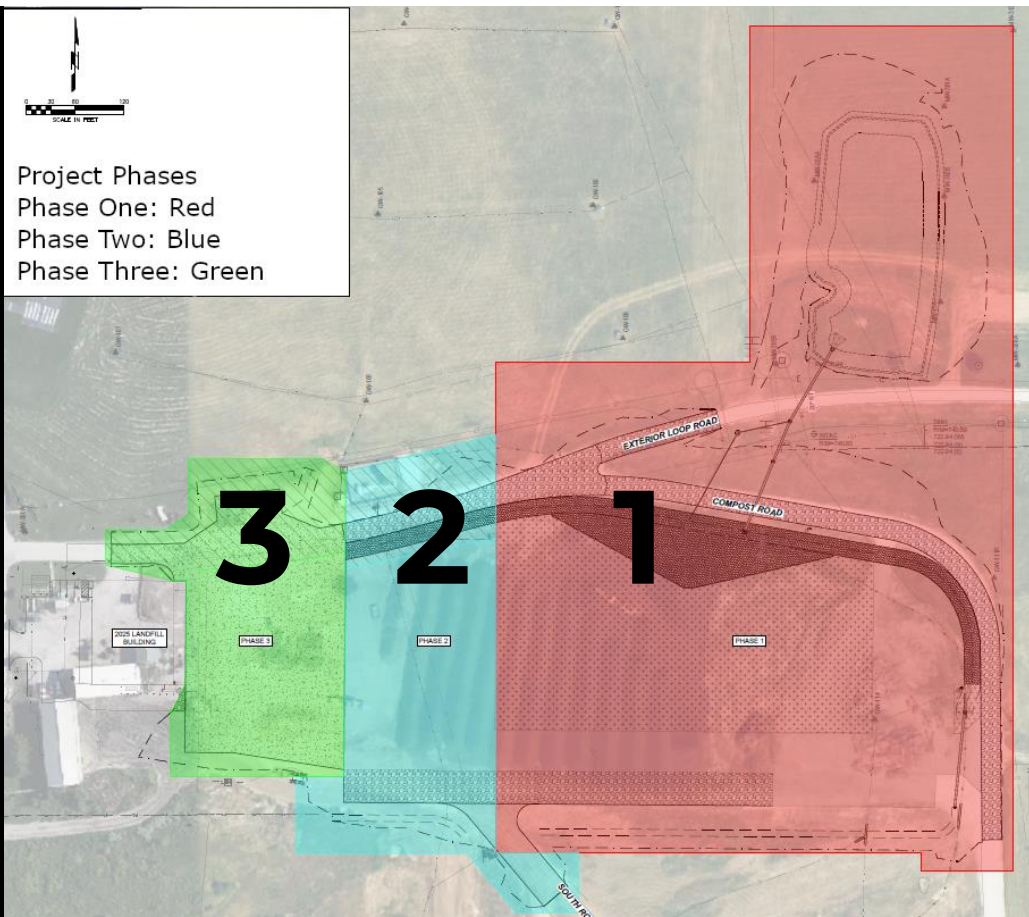
**Training with
Tina the Turner**



PRE-CONSTRUCTION

(IMAGE SOURCE: GOOGLE)

PRE-CONSTRUCTION



IN CONSTRUCTION 5-13-26

Looking east, the area has been excavated and base is being laid for the new compost processing pad.



IN CONSTRUCTION 5-20-26

Note the pits holding rain in the foreground—that's part of the old compost processing pad, where staff are still processing/grinding.



IN CONSTRUCTION 5-30-26



IN CONSTRUCTION 7-2-26

Concrete swale is being poured.



IN CONSTRUCTION 7-30-26

Additional concrete has been poured for the road.



IN CONSTRUCTION 8-3-26

Asphalt pouring has initiated!



IN CONSTRUCTION 8-10-26

More asphalt is rolling in!



IN CONSTRUCTION 8-25-26

Staff moved first few loads of organic material into the newly-paved Phase 1 area.



IN CONSTRUCTION 8-26-26

Staff are moving last of the material from the old processing pad to the newly-paved Phase 1 area to accommodate chunking out Phase 3 area.



IN CONSTRUCTION 8-28-26

Phase 3 area is cored out with rock compacted in. Next, waiting on the PCC.



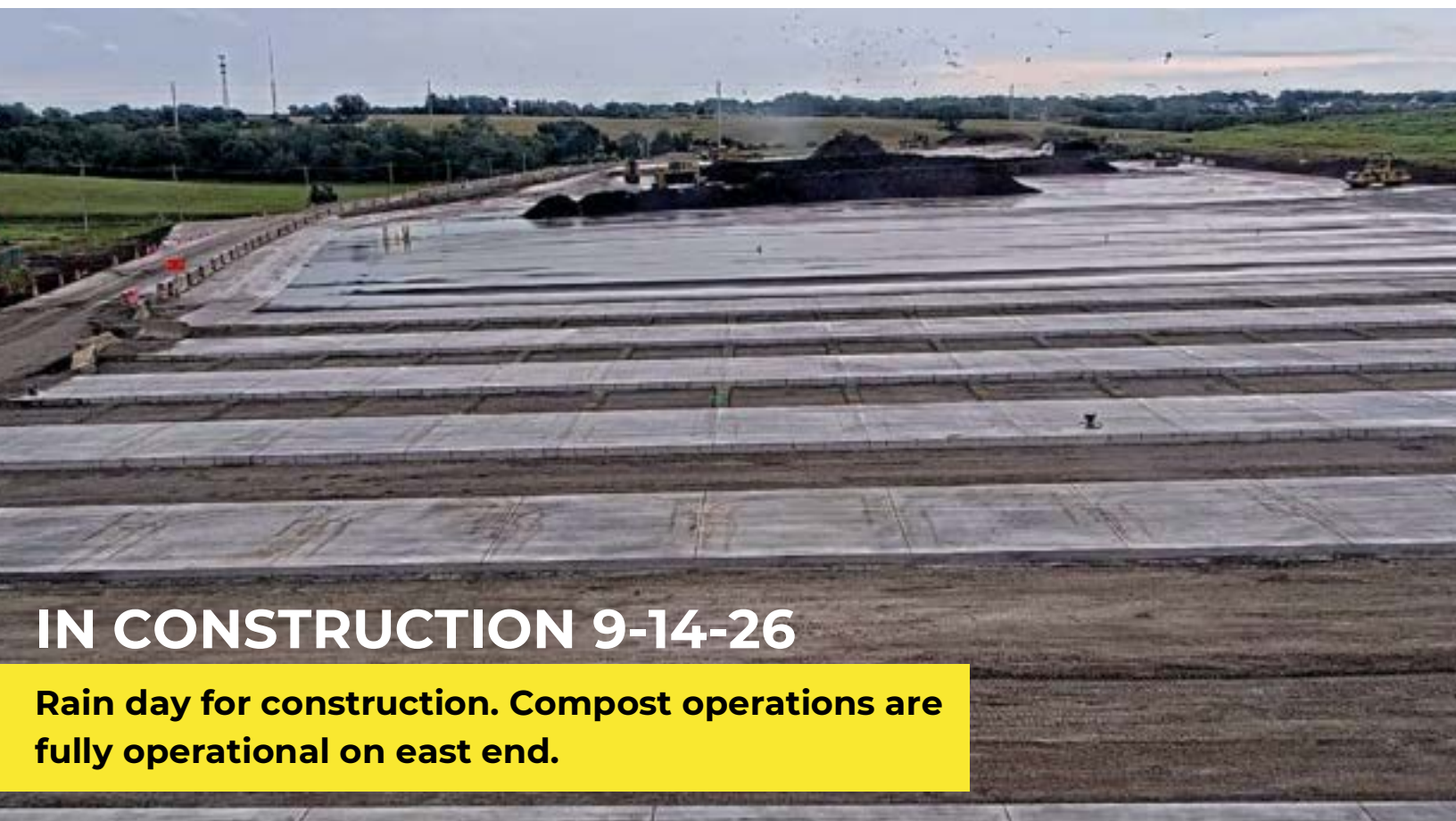
IN CONSTRUCTION 9-9-26

Multiple windrows have been built over the past two weeks and the turner is now in use on the completed east end (Phase 1 area)!



IN CONSTRUCTION 9-9-26

Getting to the last (west) sections of concrete!



IN CONSTRUCTION 9-14-26

Rain day for construction. Compost operations are fully operational on east end.

OUTREACH



SERVICE AREA AUDIENCES

- Staff
- Organics haulers
- Businesses that generate organic waste
- Residents
 - With access to curbside composting
 - Without access to curbside composting (targeted audience for drop-off options)

KEY MESSAGES

- How to participate in programs correctly
- Why our Compost Facility does not accept contaminated loads
- How to reduce contamination
- Why composting and food waste reduction are important
- How to use finished compost



Image Source: <https://metrostor.us/products/fx-system-controlled-deposit-organics-enclosure/>



BUSINESS GUIDE TO REDUCE FOOD WASTE

1 Prevent food waste.

Preventing food waste from forming in the first place can save money and help the environment. Check out ReFED's tips for foodservice: refed.org/stakeholders/restaurants-and-foodservice



2 Donate quality food.

Table to Table (local food rescue organization) partners with restaurants, caterers, and institutional kitchens to rescue prepared items and surplus unopened ingredients.

What to donate:

- Prepared foods from licensed kitchens
- Unopened ingredients or bulk items
- Baked goods, bread, and packaged food
- Refrigerated or frozen items that have been properly handled

How to donate:

- Drop off donations at Table to Table's facility
- Schedule a pickup for larger or unexpected surplus
- Contact Table to Table (table2table.org) to set up a recurring donation partnership that fits your operations



3 Compost food scraps.

Composting is available to restaurants, grocery stores, floral shops, and other businesses in Johnson County that generate food waste or organic material. The following local haulers are available to pick up clean loads of organic material:

- Compost Ninja
- GreenRU
- Smith Sanitation
- Republic Services
- Waste Management

Please reach out directly to haulers, or email recycling@iowa-city.org to request hauler contact information.

IOWA CITY
A UNESCO CITY OF LITERATURE



1 Type in the code on the keypad.

2 Use the top lid or foot lever to open the bin.

3 Place only accepted items into the bin - items can be loose or in paper or certified-compostable bags!



icgov.org/compost

DO put these items in bin!



- Fruits and vegetables
- Coffee grounds
- Cheese
- Bread and grains
- Meat and bones
- Eggshells
- Cooked or leftover food



Coffee filters



Certified-compostable bags and dishware



Paper food take-out boxes



Paper bags



Paper towels



Pizza boxes

DO NOT put these items in bin!



Yard waste



Plastic bags



Plastic dishware



Styrofoam



Plastic wrappers and packaging



Pet waste, diapers, and wipes



Tape and produce stickers



Rubber bands



Liquids



Syringes and batteries

FOOD WASTE DROP-OFF



DO NOT put these items in bin!



Yard waste



Plastic bags



Plastic dishware



Styrofoam



Plastic wrappers and packaging



Pet waste, diapers, and wipes



Tape and produce stickers



Rubber bands



Liquids



Syringes and batteries

FACILITY SIGNAGE



Compost Facility Ahead

Organic Material Drop-off →

Bulk-loading Wood Chips →

← Self-loading Compost and Wood Chips

↑ Bulk-loading Compost



Grass, Leaves, and Food Waste Drop-off



Wood and Tree Waste Drop-off

LOVE FOOD, FIGHT WASTE

PAIRING COMPOSTING WITH REDUCTION PROGRAMMING IN JOHNSON COUNTY

- Donate surplus, quality food.
- Use your senses to check food freshness.
- Make a shopping list.
- Eat or share leftovers with guests.
- Use up leftover ingredients - soups, smoothies, casseroles!
- Freeze food to keep it for longer.



QUESTIONS AND THANKS!

Jen Jordan

JeJordan@iowa-city.org
319-887-6160

Jane Wilch

JWilch@iowa-city.org
319-887-6110

