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A RECOVERY FOR ALL OF US: MAYOR DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES RETURN OF CURBSIDE COMPOSTING, MAJOR EXPANSIONS OF COMMUNITY COMPOSTING, REUSE, AND HAZARDOUS WASTE DISPOSAL PROGRAMS

NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio announced today, Earth Day, that the City of New York will resume its world-leading Curbside Composting Program, which had been put on hold due to the budgetary impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This new iteration of the program will be available to the 3.5 million New Yorkers who previously had curbside collection service, with buildings and residents able to voluntarily opt-in to receive free weekly curbside composting service. Enrollment will launch in August, with collection services set to begin in October and expand as more buildings opt in. Significant expansions of community composting, reuse, and hazardous waste disposal programs are included in the announcement as well.

“Today is Earth Day, but New York City’s commitment to sustainability is year-round,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “No other municipality ran a compost program like ours, and this new citywide program will advance the cause of environmental justice in all five boroughs.”

“When people think about the work of the Department of Sanitation, all too often they think it’s our job just to make trash disappear. But we are a sustainability organization – one of the largest municipal resource recovery operations in the world,” said **Edward Grayson, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Sanitation**. “I want to thank Mayor de Blasio for his commitment to this mission, and I’m excited to see brown bins back on the streets.”

“Our students are the future leaders of New York City, and initiatives like our school composting program will empower them with the knowledge and resources to care for our environment,” said **Schools Chancellor Meisha Porter**. “We are thrilled for the return of curbside composting at our schools, and we’re grateful for our partners at DSNY for their continued commitment to educating our students on the importance of reducing waste and protecting our planet.”

"Huzzah, the brown bins are back!" said **Ben Furnas, Director of the Mayor's Office of Climate and Sustainability**. "Reducing emissions from our waste stream and making important actions like composting more accessible are key to the fight against climate change. Congratulations to the Department of Sanitation on the return of these nation-leading programs."

To allow the City to continue to devote resources to essential safety, health, shelter and food security needs, the City made a number of tough budget cuts in the spring of 2020, including those that affected the curbside composting program. Today’s announcement means curbside composting and seasonal leaf collections are being restored nearly a year ahead of schedule.

In addition to the re-launch of voluntary curbside composting, the popular Food Scrap Drop-Off program will be significantly expanded, from over 100 community-based sites at present to more than 200 this fall. From September 2020 through February 2021, many food scrap drop-offs have broken participation records and have collected and diverted 1,300,000 pounds of material. Residents can find their closest site at nyc.gov/dropfoodscraps.

Growth of this program will be achieved via a restoration of GrowNYC's Greenmarket Composting program funding and an expansion of NYC Compost Project funding to support community-based drop-offs, composting and education. In addition, it will include a first-of-its-kind pilot of "smart bins," in which New Yorkers use an app to access public food scrap drop-off bins, thus preventing cross-contamination and misuse.

As part of this Earth Day announcement, School Curbside Composting service will also return in the 2021-2022 school year, and nearly 1,000 schools that had service prior to COVID-19 will resume curbside composting.

Beyond composting, today's announcement includes expansions or restorations of several other sustainability programs. SAFE Disposal Events, which collect Solvents, Automotive, Flammables, and Electronics products as well as other regulated waste, will expand from two per borough each year – a total of 10 – to nearly 60 per year, one for each community district. This six-fold expansion means fewer dangerous chemicals and products on our streets, in our waterways, or in landfills.

Special Waste Drop-off locations, sites around the city where residents can drop off harmful materials that do not belong in household trash, will also be re-opening starting this July. These sites have been closed since March 2020.

Finally, DSNY will begin offering Reuse Swap Events across the city to keep usable items out of landfills and help them find good homes. At these events, one person's unwanted household goods can become another's treasure.

Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer said "Composting was picking up steam before the pandemic and I am so pleased that it is now restored. It is a key component of our city's recycling initiatives. Curbside organics collection for residential buildings and schools, along with drop-off food scrap locations, make this environmentally sound practice easier for all to do."

"With climate change already taking a toll on our city in terms of severe storms like Sandy, it is imperative that we leave no stone unturned in our fight to make New York City the greenest city in America — ensuring the long-term sustainability of our communities in the process," said **Queens Borough President Donovan Richards Jr.** "The restoration and expansion of these programs are part of a greater puzzle we must solve to secure the safety of our families, and Queens is grateful to all involved for their commitment."

"I congratulate Mayor de Blasio and his terrific environmental and sustainability team for re-starting the best-in-the-nation curbside composting program and for the major expansions being made to the community composting, reuse, and hazardous waste disposal programs. For this Mayor to make this kind of bold commitment as the City is still emerging from COVID really

speaks to the remarkable commitment to environmental leadership that Bill de Blasio has always shown throughout his career. This is a great day for NYC's environment -- thank you, Mr. Mayor!," said **Council Member James Gennaro**.

"I am thrilled to hear that curbside compost is back!" said **Council Member Brad Lander**. "On Earth Day this is an important step for the City that will reduce the waste that sits rotting in our landfills and reducing greenhouse gas emissions."

"Sustainability is at the core of who we are as New Yorkers committed to reducing our environmental and ecological footprints. With the continuation of composting and SAFE Disposal events, we are preserving the health and wellness of our communities by minimizing the amount of waste in our landfills and air pollution. The future of our planet depends on neighbors who compost, conserve, reuse, and recycle. I look forward to seeing our blocks lined with not only beautiful trees but brown bins working in tandem to protect our environment for future generations," said **Council Member Farah N. Louis**.

"The restoration of curbside composting and the expansion of SAFE disposal events is a welcome development as we celebrate Earth Day today. Many local residents have been eagerly looking forward to composting service resuming, and we are grateful that service will be restored ahead of schedule. We are also looking forward to holding a SAFE disposal site in our district again this summer and greatly appreciate the partnership with DSNY," said **Council Member I. Daneek Miller**.

"On Earth Day, we recognize how important it is to preserve our planet. Today, we are upholding a commitment to a city that's greener and more sustainable every day. As we begin to recover from this pandemic, we have to prioritize the future of our city and the health of our earth. This is a good step. Thank you to the Mayor and Commissioner Grayson for the dedication to restore these programs," said **Council Member Keith Powers**.

"Composting is a vital part of green infrastructure that diverts waste from landfills, promotes environmental justice, and brings communities into our efforts to advance a green agenda locally. The return and expansion of these essential initiatives is going to create a healthier New York City, and I look forward on engaging with my constituents on ways they can take part as these programs are implemented and grow," said **Council Member Carlina Rivera**.

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