



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

November 14, 2022

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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES COMPOST PILOT  
AT SIX COMMUNITY GARDEN SITES**

*Partnership with NeighborSpace will reduce landfill waste and create resources that support healthy vegetation*

**CHICAGO** — Mayor Lori Lightfoot and the Department of Street and Sanitation (DSS), in partnership with [NeighborSpace](#), today announced six small-scale community garden compost sites located throughout Chicago. Funded partially through a grant from the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), as part of the Food Matters Initiative, and through Mayor Lightfoot's Chicago Recovery Plan (CRP), the pilot locations are on NeighborSpace-protected community garden sites and will accept certain organic waste materials from area residents.

"Chicago has been strategic about studying and outlining plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and equitably increase recycling rates in all communities, as outlined in the [2021 Chicago Waste Strategy](#) and the [2022 Chicago Climate Action Plan](#)," said Chicago Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot. "These compost sites represent the first step in our plans to both reduce the overall waste that ends up in our landfills and reuse waste as resources that support healthy trees and vegetation."

The six community gardens included in the pilot program are:

- **Stockyard Garden** - 5136-58 S Carpenter Street
- **El Paseo Garden** - 944 W 21st Street
- **Merchant Park Community Garden** - 4200 W Addison Street
- **Hermitage Street Community Garden** - 5647 S Hermitage Avenue
- **Fulton Street Flower and Vegetable Garden** - 4427 W Fulton Street
- **Montrose Metra Community Gardens** - 4386 N Ravenswood Avenue

The goal of the pilot program is to offer community garden participants and nearby neighbors an opportunity to compost some of their food scraps from home. A three-bin compost system will be provided at each location in which garden trimmings, fruit and vegetable scraps, eggshells, coffee grounds, and tea bags can be composted onsite. Produce stickers, meat, bones, dairy products, and cooking oils will not be accepted. The finished compost will be available for use in the community gardens to nourish the soil.

"With the community composting pilot, community gardeners will be able to work together, just as they do, growing food and flowers, to divert scraps from our landfills and right back into the garden community," said Ben Helphand, Executive Director for Neighborspace.



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As the garden communities work together to accept compost materials, Neighborspace will work with the DePaul Steans Center on an ongoing evaluation of pilot. DSS will review the processes and results and set a goal to increase the number of gardens with active composting operations able to accept small scale kitchen scraps from the community.

“DSS is also expanding its recycling program with additional staff who will focus on increasing education and programming for residents,” said Chris Sauve, DSS Deputy Commissioner for Recycling. “We are excited to have added resources to elevate our waste diversion strategies in accordance with the City’s overall mission.”

Newly added staff includes two leaders with proven experience in waste reduction and recycling, Carter O’Brien who is Assistant Commissioner for overall recycling efforts, and Program Director Susan Casey, who will manage organic collections and composting.

“Worldwide, wasting food is responsible for 8% to 10% of climate emissions. Community composting sites help keep nutrient-rich food scraps from disposal, while also building healthy soils, spurring local economic growth, and reducing harmful methane emissions,” said Madeline Keating, City Strategist at NRDC. “Chicago’s pilot community garden composting program is an exciting next step in the city’s growing food waste reduction work, and a great example for other cities interested in reducing their climate impact.”

For more information on the community composting gardens and all Chicago’s recycling activities, please visit [www.chicagorecycles.org](http://www.chicagorecycles.org).

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