

ZERO WASTE

Zero Waste Event Planning

...for events 10 to 1,000 people

SOUTH PORTLAND is committed to being a sustainable community and supports efforts to make all events zero waste.

THIS GUIDE provides information, strategies and resources to help simplify the process of planning a zero waste event. If you have any questions please contact the Sustainability Office at 207-347-4148.

WHAT IS A ZERO WASTE EVENT?

The ultimate goal of a Zero Waste Event is to divert 90% or more of trash from the landfill by recycling and composting. While this might seem like a lofty goal for your next event, taking strides to achieve even 50-75% waste diversion can make a huge difference.

ZERO WASTE EVENTS INCLUDE:

- Source Reduction
- Recycling
- Composting
- Raising Public Awareness

HOSTING A ZERO WASTE EVENT CAN:

- Promote a positive image
- Increase visibility
- Increase participation and turnout
- Build community

ORGANIZING A ZERO WASTE EVENT:

Organizing a Zero Waste event is a great way to minimize your impact on the community and showcase sustainable practices. Zero Waste events can be designed to be not only sustainable, but also cost effective, which is appealing to more and more businesses and event planners. Additionally, advertising your event as Zero Waste is also a great marketing tool and may draw more support for your event.

Planning a Zero Waste event also promotes and spreads waste reduction practices throughout the community. And after the event, every guest, employee and volunteer can be proud to be an environmental steward.



PLANNING FOR ZERO WASTE

PUTTING YOUR COMMITMENT INTO PRACTICE

ZERO WASTE

PLANNING is essential when it comes to executing a Zero Waste event. How you organize your event will determine how close you get to zero waste. The key is to evaluate what materials will be used and disposed of at the event and then implement compostable or recyclable alternatives.

AN IMPORTANT FIRST STEP is committing to make your event zero waste early in the planning process. This will inform all of the decisions you make about how to organize your event.

WHY? Hosting a zero waste event shows leadership and creativity and can encourage others to do the same. Once you commit to zero waste, it will be much easier to get all your vendors and participants on board with clear expectations.

How? Think about sources of waste (food, beverages, serviceware*, decorations, invitations, signs, etc.) and where that waste will end up – compost, recycling or trash. Then you can begin to identify where and how to eliminate as much waste as possible, and make any remaining waste either recyclable or compostable.

WORKING WITH FOOD VENDORS

- Communicate clearly with vendors about your zero waste goals.
- Ask vendors to use only recyclable or compostable serviceware*, and to clearly identify all serviceware items as recyclable or compostable.
- Have vendors provide samples of their serviceware to feature on signs above recycling, compost and trash bins.
- Ask vendors to avoid single-serving packaging (e.g. wrapped utensils, condiment packets, etc.)

KEY PLANNING QUESTIONS:

- What types of waste will be generated and how can you minimize that waste?
- What type of food and beverages will be served?
- How will food and be served? Choose signs, handouts carefully.
- How will you educate event participants? How will compost, recycling and trash be handled?

Serviceware refers to cups, plates, food containers, utensils, napkins, etc. Any item that is used to serve food and drinks.

ZERO WASTE

MINIMIZING WASTE CHOOSING FOOD, BEVERAGE & SERVICEWARE

YOU CAN ELIMINATE A GREAT DEAL OF WASTE by deciding what food and beverages will be served and how.

ALL FOOD ITEMS CAN BE COMPOSTED. You have three options for serviceware to make your event zero waste — reuseable, recyclable and compostable. The goal is to work within these options to eliminate trash.

TOP FIVE WAYS TO ELIMINATE WASTE

- 1 Serve foods that have minimal packaging and serviceware needs. Finger foods are easy and fun and help avoid the need for utensils. Plastic utensils are not recyclable. If do plan to serve foods that require utensils, compostable options are available.
- 2 Avoid providing single-serve items that are individually wrapped and cannot be composted or recycled (e.g. chip bags and granola bar wrappers).
- 3 Consider how items are packaged. Provide condiments in bulk to avoid individual packaging, and replace plastic stir sticks with wooden, which are compostable. Paper plates and aluminum foil are examples of serviceware that can be recycled. These are preferable to plastic wrap, which goes in the trash.
- 4 Offer beverages from large reusable jugs. Provide composable or recyclable cups or encourage attendees to bring reusable water bottles that can be refilled.
- 5 The less sorting people have to do when they throw things away, the better. You may want to use familiar recyclable items, such as cups and beverage containers,

and make all other items compostable or reuseable. Or you could opt to make everything compostable — utensils, hot and cold cups, plates and bowls (unlined paper plates are easy and cheap), even straws and lids — almost anything you need for food service at your event can be purchased to be compostable.

PORTABLE DRINKING FOUNTAINS

You can borrow a portable drinking fountain from the Portland Water District for a refundable deposit of \$100. It is equipped with six bubblers, and can easily attach to any spigot. Along with the fountain, the Portland Water District has three coolers, biodegradable paper cups and water bottles. Contact the Public Relations Office at (207) 774-5961 ext. 3050 for more information.

BE AWARE:

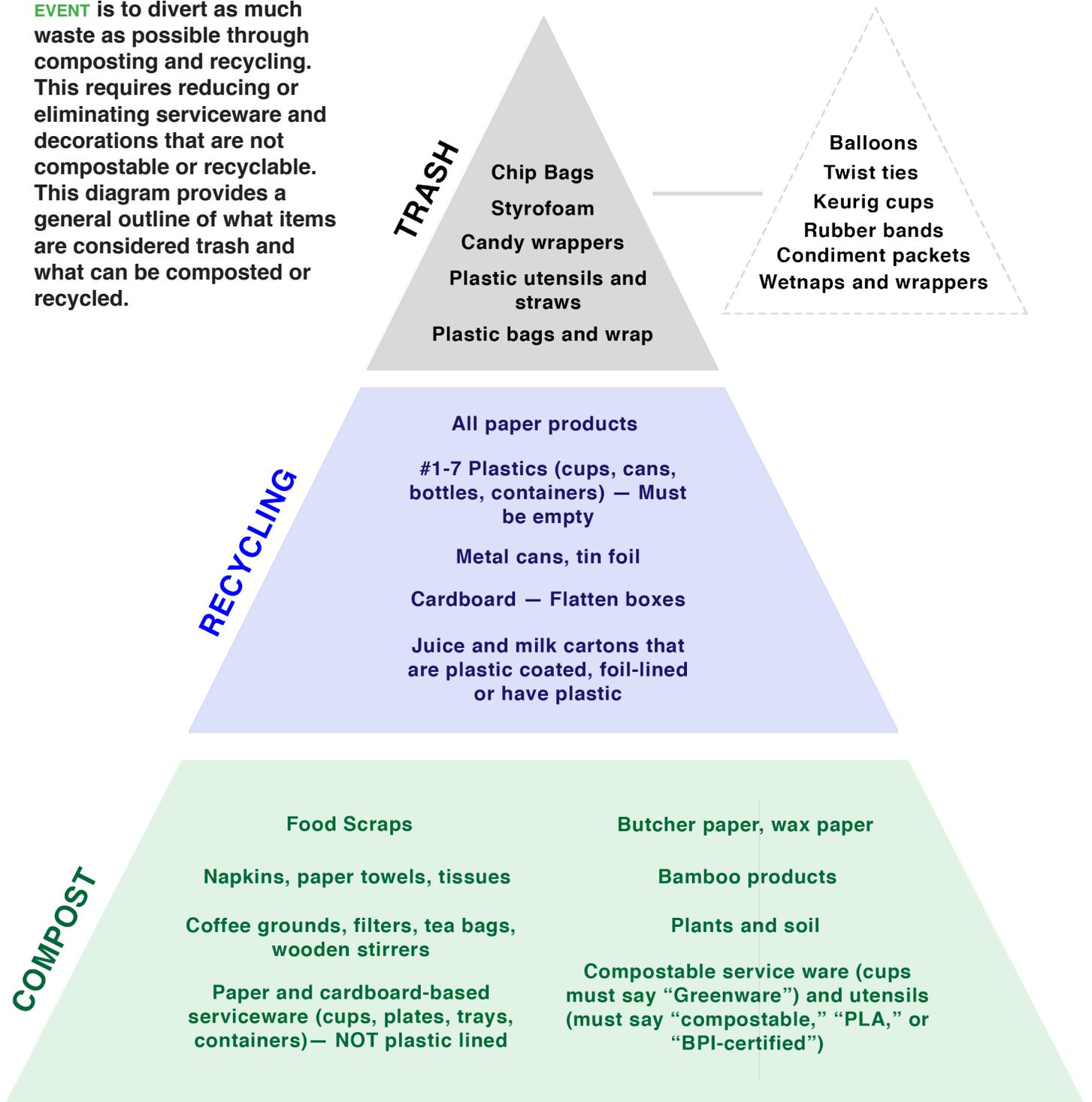
- Items labeled “biodegradable” may NOT be compostable. They must say “compostable,” “PLA” or “BPI-Certified” to be compostable.
- Cooking oil can be collected by some haulers for reuse by Maine BioDiesel. Check with your waste hauler to see if they provide this service.
- Compostable cups might be mistaken for recyclable plastic because they look the same. If using these at your event, be sure to post additional signs on your compost bin and/pr include a picture or sample of the cup on signs.

WHAT GOES WHERE?

UNDERSTANDING RECYCLING, COMPOST & TRASH

ZERO WASTE

THE GOAL OF A ZERO WASTE EVENT is to divert as much waste as possible through composting and recycling. This requires reducing or eliminating serveware and decorations that are not compostable or recyclable. This diagram provides a general outline of what items are considered trash and what can be composted or recycled.



ZERO WASTE

EDUCATION & OUTREACH

EDUCATING EVENT PARTICIPANTS

THE KEY TO A SUCCESSFUL ZERO WASTE EVENT is making it easy for guests and vendors to participate. This means being clear about your zero waste goals and providing reminders throughout the event so that when it comes time to dispose of their waste, they are familiar with their choices.

MAKING IT EASY FOR PARTICIPANTS

- Make sure attendees know that your event is zero waste by saying so in event advertising, invitations and registration forms — market the event as a “Zero Waste Event.”
- Make announcements throughout the course of the event to remind guests that this is a zero waste event, and guide guests about how to do their part.
- Use signs and table tents when people are getting their food to identify each serviceware item as recyclable or compostable.
- Clearly labeled waste stations will make it easy for everyone to dispose of their items. Signs should be clear, simple and consistent throughout the event.
- Consider creating and placing signs above each bin with actual serviceware items used at the event taped on them to clearly indicate where to deposit each item.
- Check with your waste hauler to see if they can help with education and outreach.
- Having volunteers to help direct people at the waste stations will make a big difference.
- Don't forget to show people how little waste was generated. This will get people talking about how successful the event was and encourage them to participate actively the next time.

Compost.

What goes in Compost Bin?

-  Napkins, Tissues, Paper towels
-  Food scraps
-  Uncoated paper plates
-  Wooden stir sticks
-  Compostable cups
-  Compostable utensils



Recycling

What goes in Recycling Bin?

-  Paper & cardboard
-  Coffee cups & lids
-  Plastic containers
-  Juice boxes
-  Metal cans & foil
-  Glass



Trash

What goes in Trash Bin?

-  Plastic wrap & bags
-  Potato chip bags
-  Candy bar wrappers
-  Styrofoam
-  Plastic Utensils



BINS & HAULING LOGISTICS

HANDLING COMPOST, RECYCLING & TRASH

ZERO WASTE

THE CITY DOES NOT PROVIDE BINS OR COLLECTION SERVICES FOR EVENTS, but the following businesses will provide recycling, composting and trash services for your event.

For small events, you may be able to buy or rent waste stations, and set them up on your own, but for larger events, you may want to hire out this task. These local businesses can help:

GARBAGE TO GARDEN

Provides comprehensive compost, recycling and trash services, including complete waste station setup, drop-off, pick-up and signage. Waste station staff and volunteers can be provided for an additional fee.

(207) 332-0277; garbagetogarden.org

WE COMPOST IT

Provides comprehensive compost services for events. Services will be tailored to the event, and include logistics planning and staff training.

(207) 883-6294; wecompostit.com

ECOMAINE

For nonprofit events, EcoMaine offers a free recycling bin loaner program. They will provide up to 100 units and collection bags for the event. You will need to pick up and return the units during their Recycling Center's normal operating hours, but they will take the recyclables at no charge.

(207) 523-3108; ecomaine.org

TROIANO WASTE SERVICES, INC.

Provides a wide range of waste services, including recycling, composting (they work with We Compost It) and trash. Bins and dumpsters of all sizes are available with drop-off and pick-

REMEMBER...

- Signs are great, but having volunteers at waste stations to answer questions is event better.
- Share your event's success with the community with stories and photos from the event. Some haulers may be able to help you with this.
- By showcasing zero waste efforts and strategies before, during and after your event, you will bring greater awareness to zero waste practices and encourage other businesses and organizations to host similar events.
- The Sustainability Office is always here to help. Contact us at (207) 347-4148.

up service included. Signage for bins is not provided.

(207) 767-2070; troianowaste.com

PINE TREE WASTE

Provides recycling, compost and trash solutions specially tailored for your event. They provide bins for the event, pick-up services, and will help you develop customized signage and training for the event.

(207)228-9014; casella.com