

# Composting in Longmont and Boulder County

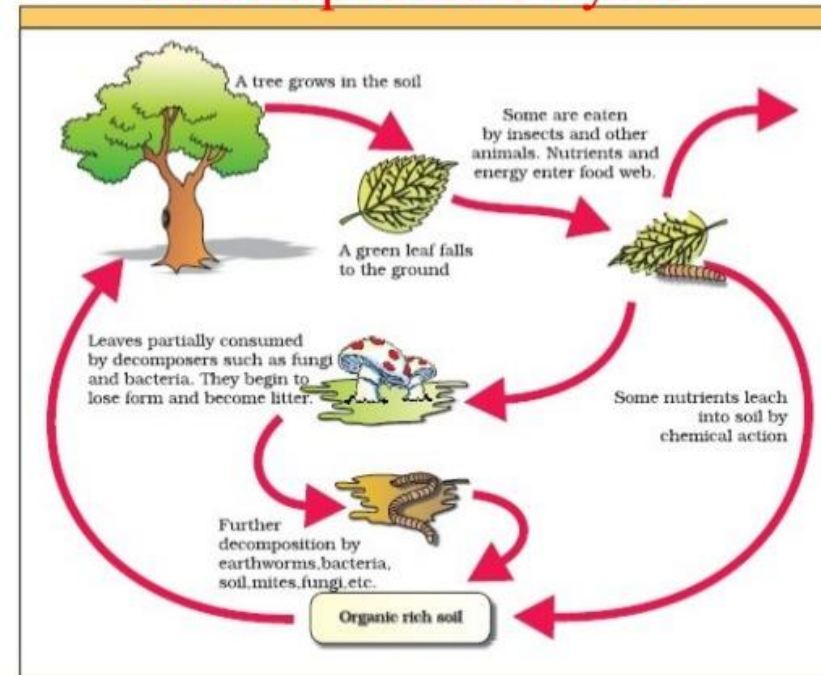
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Dan Matsch  
Eco-Cycle



**The Problem:  
Modern  
Civilization  
Has Disrupted  
the Natural  
Organics Cycle**

**Decomposition Cycle**



...and replaced it with

## The 20<sup>th</sup> Century Linear Economy





## Organics on the linear path create significant GHGs

- Organic waste (food and yard waste, soiled paper, clean wood waste) makes up ~40% of the waste stream
- Creates methane when landfilled

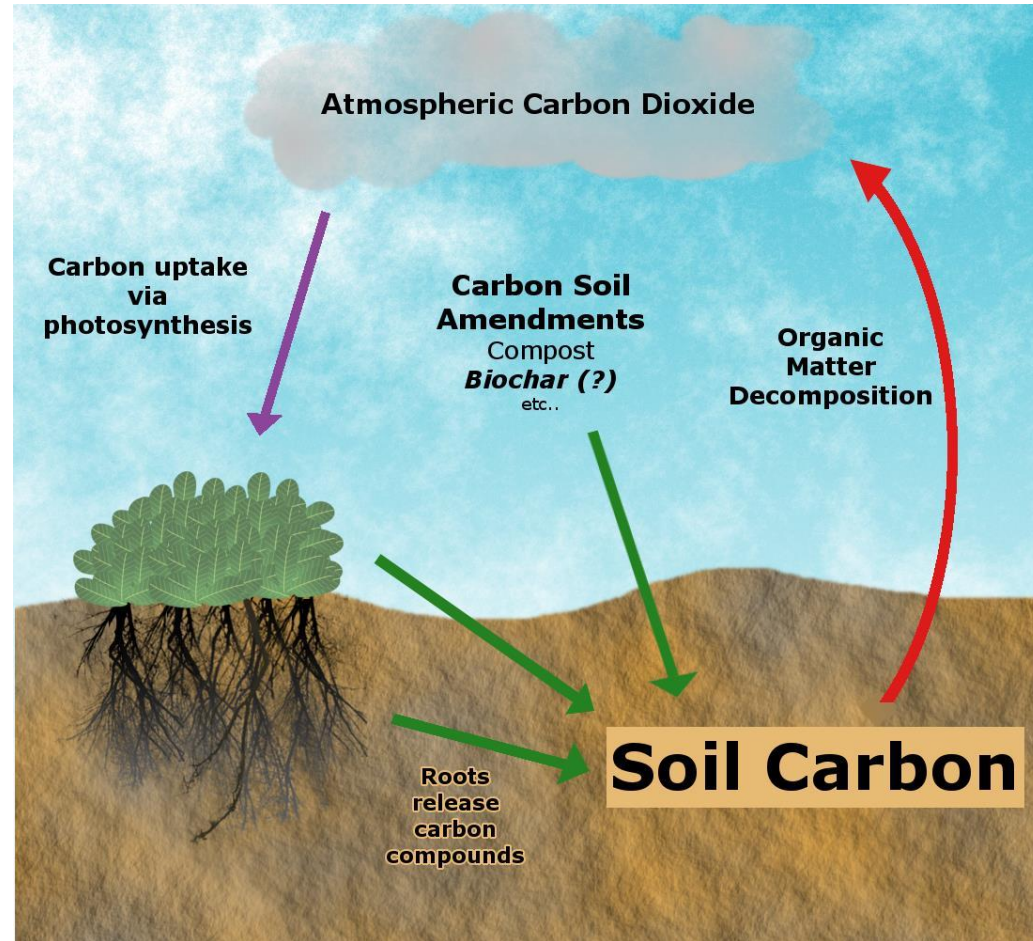
# The Solution: Create a value for farmers to build soil


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- Quantify the associated benefits?
- Create a \$ value to one benefit:  
carbon sequestration?

Carbon Sequestration in soil: using compost and other means to build soil and maximize photosynthesis

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A vibrant blue sky filled with fluffy white clouds. A large, light blue circular graphic is positioned on the right side of the image, containing text. The text is centered within the circle and reads: "...and it might be our best tool to draw down excess CO2!".

...and it might be our  
best tool to draw  
down excess CO2!

**Applied globally,  
this concept  
provides a solution  
to 3 global  
challenges:**



**Carbon Sequestration = Restoring  
Lost Topsoil = Restoring Food  
Nutrition**



# How well is Longmont composting?

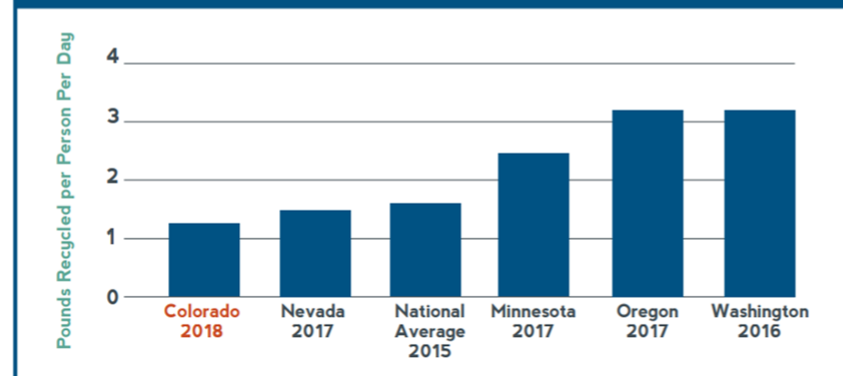
Compared to other Western states with a similar mix of urban and rural populations, Coloradans are more wasteful than our peers. On average, each Coloradan threw away more than 5.6 pounds of trash per day, compared to only 4.2 pounds of trash per person in Oregon and 3.9 pounds of trash per person in Washington.<sup>xvi</sup>

## RECYCLING INCHES SLIGHTLY UP

Despite producing more waste, Colorado continues to inch slowly forward on recycling. Colorado communities recycled and composted over 1,217,000 tons of materials in 2018, up nearly 75,000 tons compared to 2017. While it's great that we are keeping slightly more tons out of the landfill, we still only recycle about 1.2 pounds per person per day, which is far less than our peers. Residents in Oregon and Washington recycle 3.1 pounds per person per day, nearly three times more than Colorado residents.<sup>xvii</sup>

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FIGURE 8. RESIDENTS IN OREGON AND WASHINGTON RECYCLE NEARLY THREE TIMES MORE THAN COLORADO RESIDENTS<sup>xviii</sup>



2019 State of Recycling in Colorado: [http://ecocycle.org/files/pdfs/Campaigns/zero-waste-colorado/2019 State of Recycling in Colorado Eco-Cycle CoPIRG web.pdf](http://ecocycle.org/files/pdfs/Campaigns/zero-waste-colorado/2019%20State%20of%20Recycling%20in%20Colorado%20Eco-Cycle%20CoPIRG%20web.pdf)

## STATEWIDE WASTE AND RECYCLING NUMBERS

**Colorado produced more waste in 2018 than in 2017, a trend that continues to move in the wrong direction.** From all residential, commercial, and industrial sources, Coloradans generated over 15,900,000 tons of materials in 2018, up from 14,000,000 tons in 2017. That's a staggering increase of over 10 million pounds of waste generated per day in 2018! Residents and businesses produced about half of our total waste statewide, generating 7,077,958 tons of municipal solid waste in 2018. Of this, residents and businesses recycled and composted only 1,217,062 tons, which puts the recycling rate for non-industrial waste at just 17.2% statewide. **Colorado's diversion rate of 17% is just half the national average of 35% and far below the state goal of reaching 28% by 2021.**<sup>xliv</sup>

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FIGURE 7. COLORADO'S DIVERSION RATE FOR 2018 (NON-INDUSTRIAL)<sup>xlv</sup>

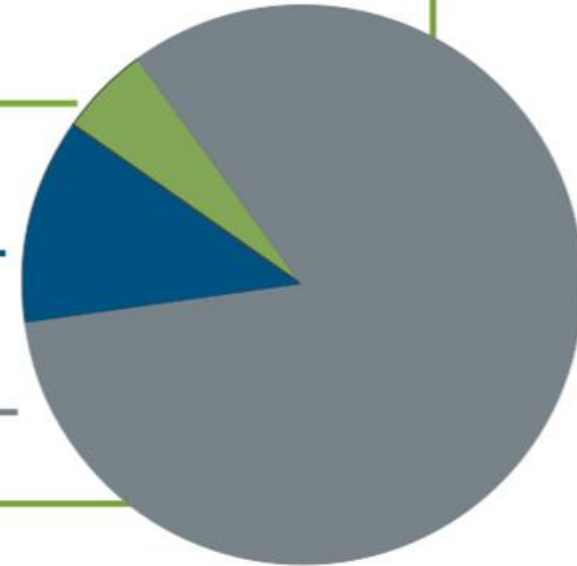
The diversion rate, commonly called the recycling rate, is the amount of material collected for recycling and composting divided by the total amount of discards generated, i.e.

$$\frac{\text{recycling} + \text{composting}}{\text{recycling} + \text{composting} + \text{trash}}$$

COMPOST  
5.4%

RECYCLING  
12.0%

LANDFILL  
82.8%



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FIGURE 10: TOP 10 FRONT RANGE CITIES AT RESIDENTIAL RECYCLING<sup>liv</sup>

CITY	DIVERSION RATE
Loveland	60%
Louisville	53%
Boulder	52%
Lafayette	38%
Longmont	36%
Golden	31%
Superior	30%
Fort Collins	27%
Greenwood Village	27%
Denver	23%

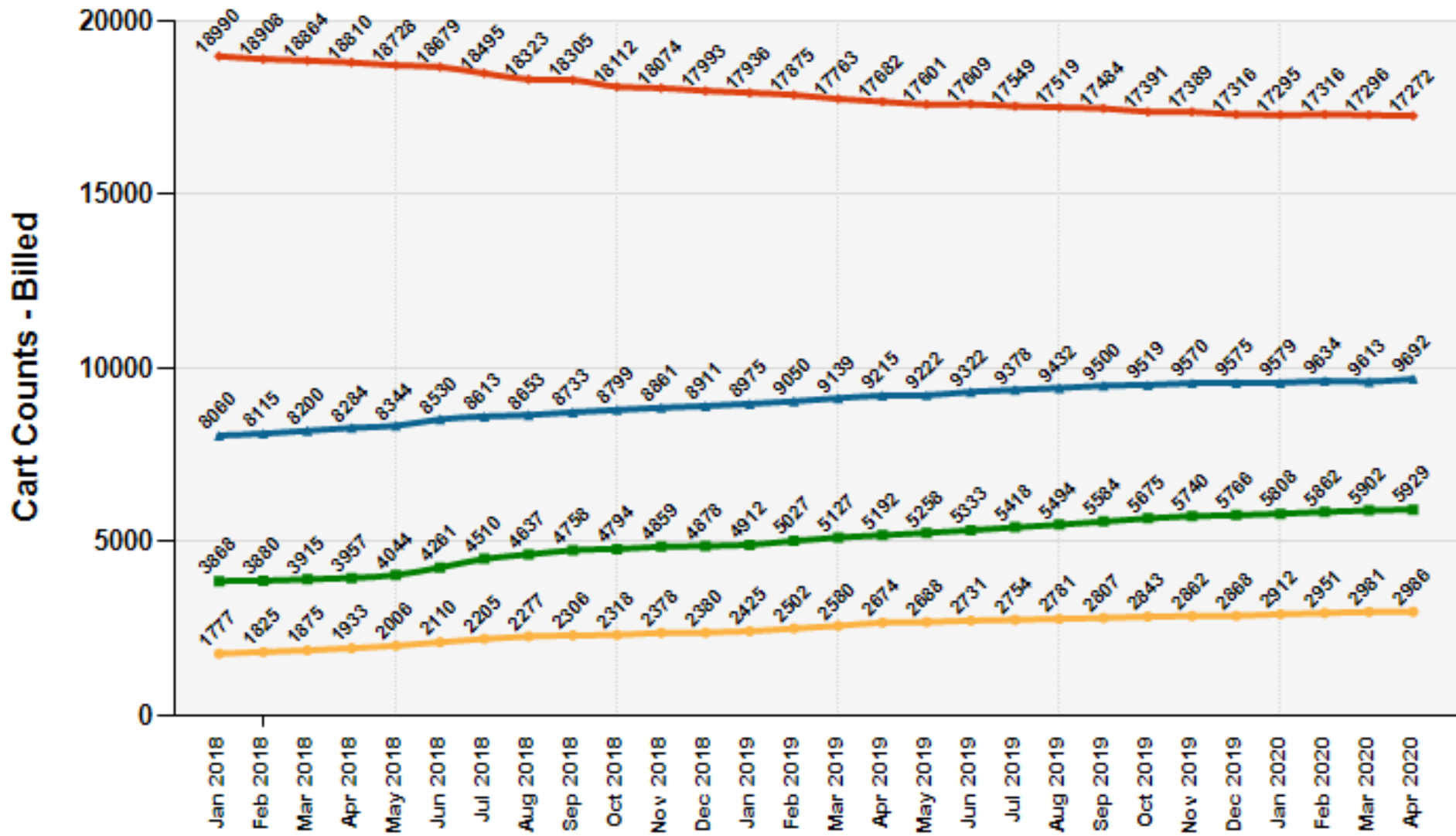
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FIGURE 11: TOP 5 GREATER COLORADO CITIES AT RECYCLING<sup>lv</sup>

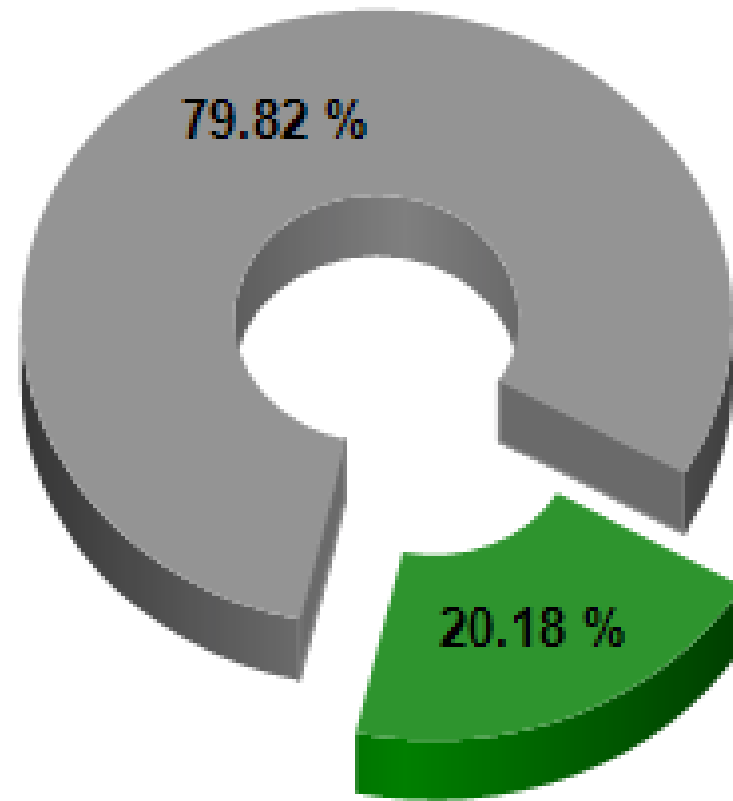
CITY	DIVERSION RATE
Durango	31%
Aspen	27%
Vail	25%
Rifle*	22%
Silt*	18%

\*Residential recycling rate only.

### Solid Waste Cart Service Counts



— 96-Gallon Composting    
 — Every-Other-Week Trash    
 — 96-Gallon Trash    
 — 48-Gallon Trash



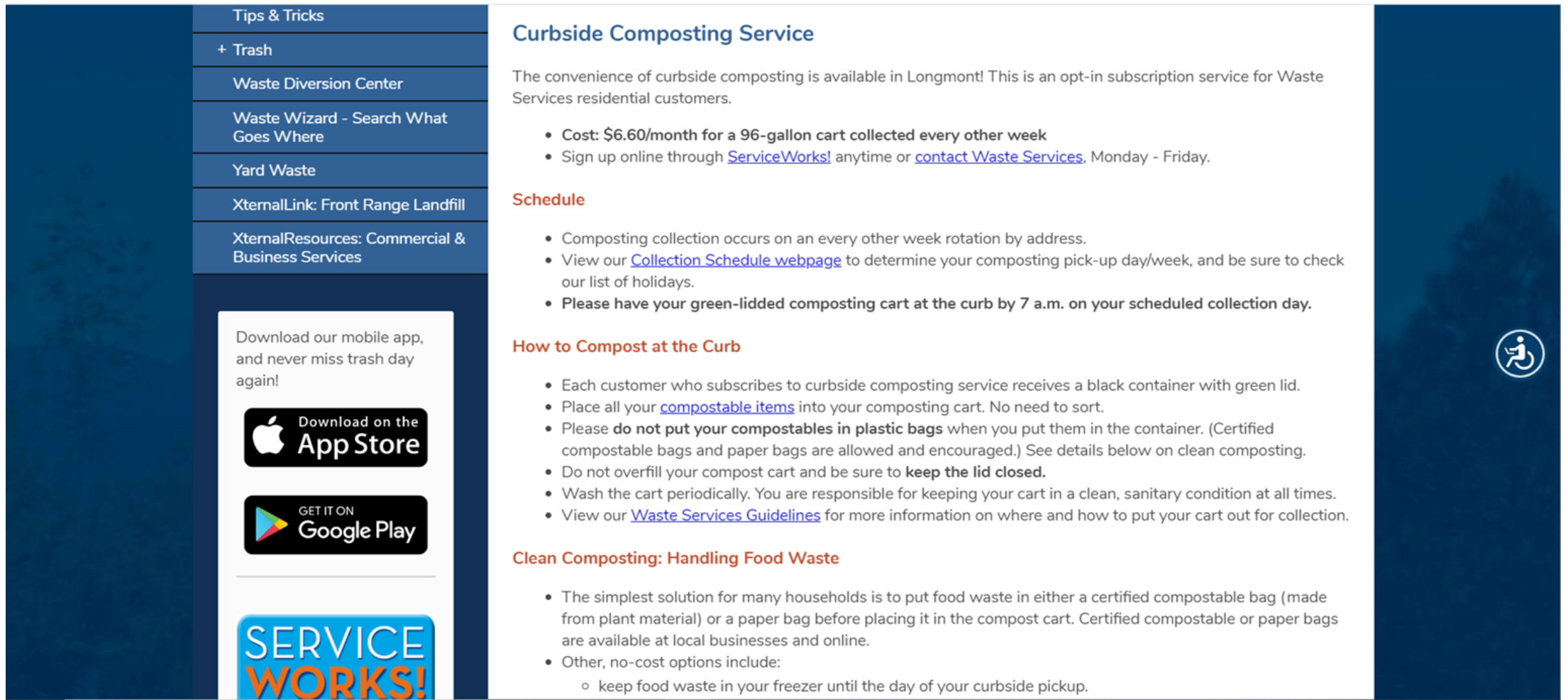
■ Compost Service   ■ No Compost Service

**Compost Customer %**

# What you can do to strengthen Longmont's composting options:

- Single-family homes: subscribe to Longmont's opt-in program; advocate for Universal Zero Waste ordinance, or at least opt-OUT composting
- Multi-family and commercial sites: support a Longmont Universal Zero Waste Ordinance
- Support the Boulder County Compost Facility, and the County's carbon farming efforts
- Compost at home to build your own soil!

# Longmont's Opt-In Compost Collection Program



The screenshot shows a website page with a dark blue sidebar on the left containing a navigation menu with the following items: Tips & Tricks, + Trash, Waste Diversion Center, Waste Wizard - Search What Goes Where, Yard Waste, XternalLink: Front Range Landfill, and XternalResources: Commercial & Business Services. Below the menu is a white box with the text "Download our mobile app, and never miss trash day again!" and buttons for "Download on the App Store" and "GET IT ON Google Play". At the bottom of this box is a "SERVICE WORKS!" logo.

## Curbside Composting Service

The convenience of curbside composting is available in Longmont! This is an opt-in subscription service for Waste Services residential customers.

- **Cost: \$6.60/month for a 96-gallon cart collected every other week**
- Sign up online through [ServiceWorks!](#) anytime or [contact Waste Services](#), Monday - Friday.

### Schedule


- Composting collection occurs on an every other week rotation by address.
- View our [Collection Schedule webpage](#) to determine your composting pick-up day/week, and be sure to check our list of holidays.
- **Please have your green-lidded composting cart at the curb by 7 a.m. on your scheduled collection day.**

### How to Compost at the Curb

- Each customer who subscribes to curbside composting service receives a black container with green lid.
- Place all your [compostable items](#) into your composting cart. No need to sort.
- Please **do not put your compostables in plastic bags** when you put them in the container. (Certified compostable bags and paper bags are allowed and encouraged.) See details below on clean composting.
- Do not overfill your compost cart and be sure to **keep the lid closed**.
- Wash the cart periodically. You are responsible for keeping your cart in a clean, sanitary condition at all times.
- View our [Waste Services Guidelines](#) for more information on where and how to put your cart out for collection.

### Clean Composting: Handling Food Waste

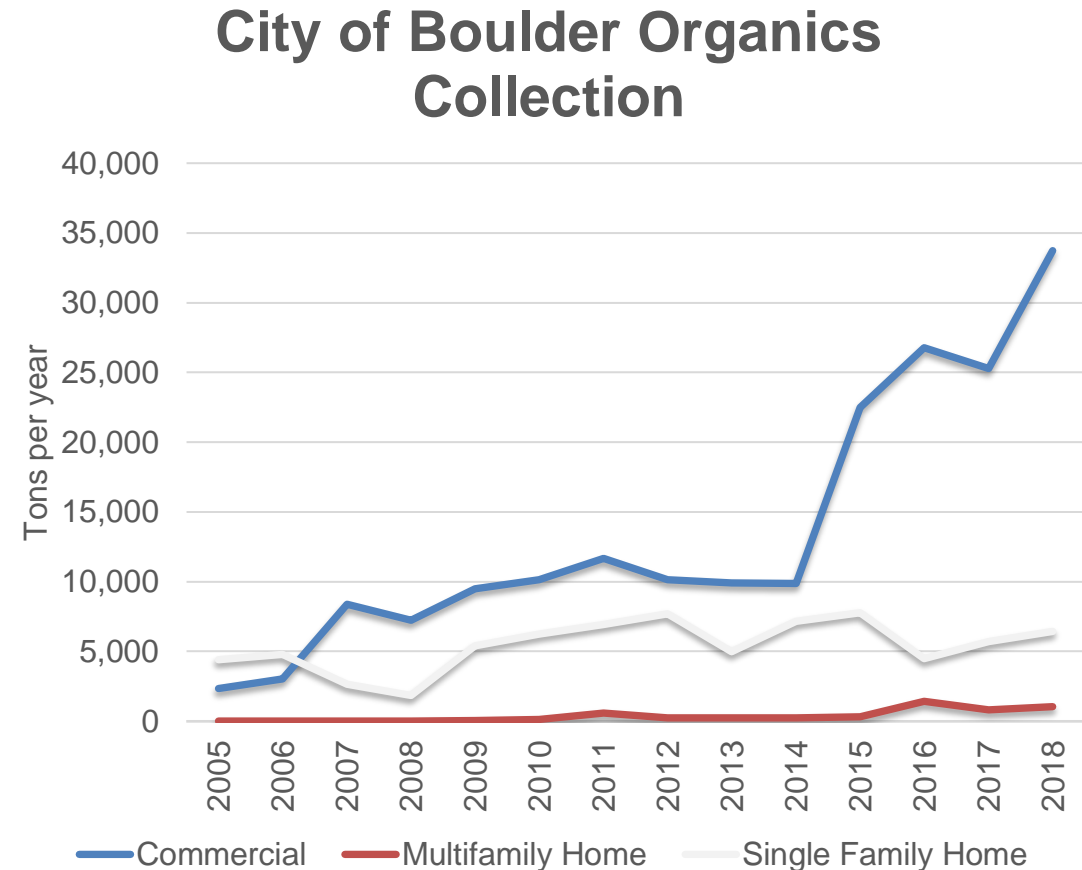
- The simplest solution for many households is to put food waste in either a certified compostable bag (made from plant material) or a paper bag before placing it in the compost cart. Certified compostable or paper bags are available at local businesses and online.
- Other, no-cost options include:
  - keep food waste in your freezer until the day of your curbside pickup.



<https://www.longmontcolorado.gov/departments/departments-n-z/trash-and-recycling/composting>

# VOLUNTARY TO MANDATORY

- **2014:** Business diversion at 26%
- **2015:** Universal Zero Waste Ordinance adopted
- → All homes, apartments and businesses must have recycling, composting and trash services
- **2018:** Business diversion at 58%
- [zerowasteboulder.com](http://zerowasteboulder.com)





# Support Boulder County Compost Facility plan



...and local  
farmers  
committed to  
Carbon Farming!

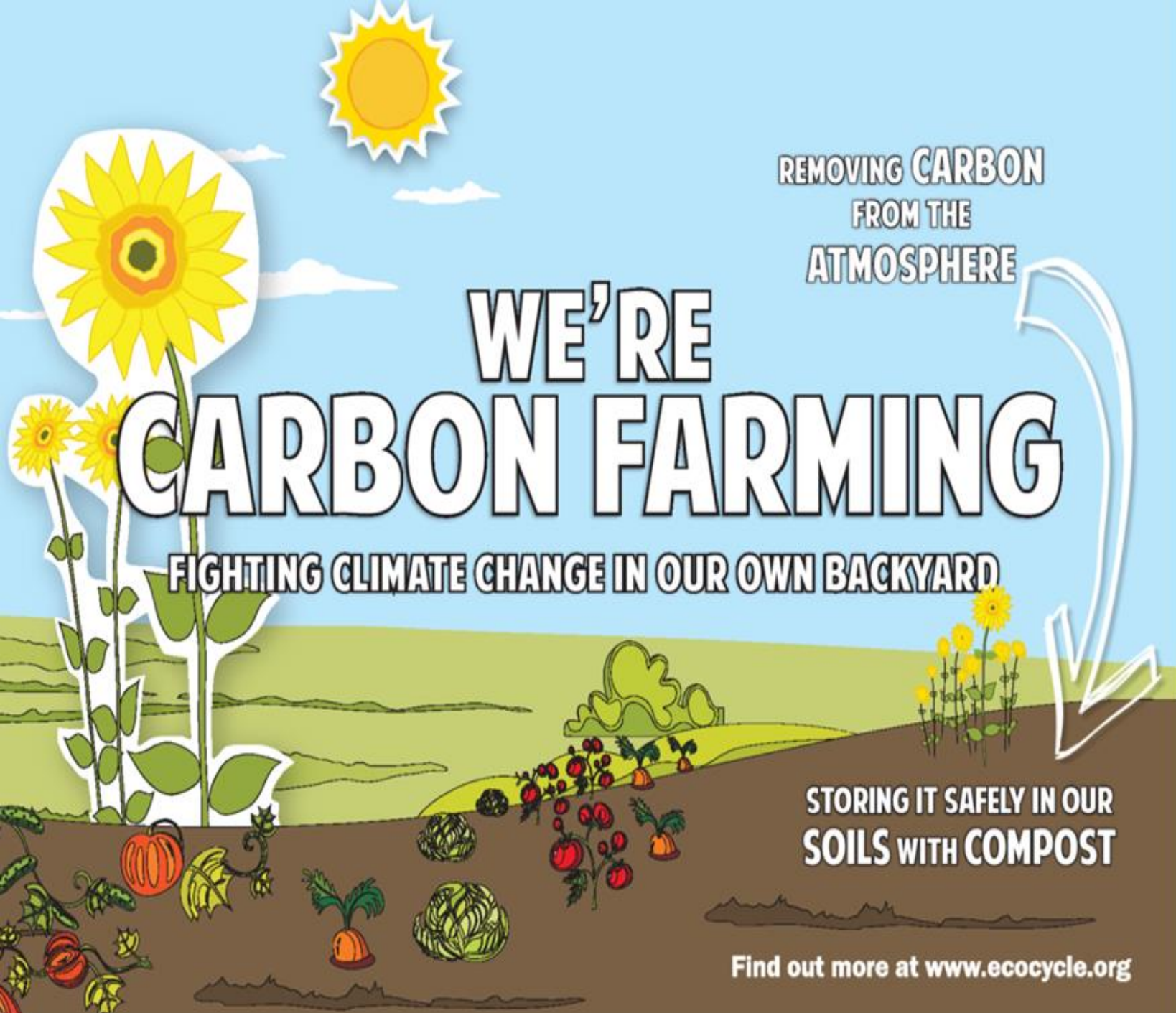
# Backyard Composting Resources on Eco-Cycle website

The screenshot shows the Eco-Cycle website interface. At the top left is the logo "eco-cycle® Building Zero Waste Communities". To its right is the "A-Z Recycling Guide" section with a search input field containing the text "type the item you want to recycle" and a "Search" button. Further right is an orange "DONATE" button and a green "MENU" button with a "Get started!" callout. Below the header is a blue navigation bar with a search bar and a button that says "Play our new recycling sorting game »".

On the left side, there is a vertical navigation menu with the following items: Home, About Us, Earth Month, Videos, Eco-Cycle Solutions, **Recycle, Compost & Reuse** (highlighted), In Your Community, CHaRM Facility, Commercial Hauling, Corporate Sustainability, Schools Programs, Zero Waste Events, and Zero Waste.

The main content area features a large image of a green seedling growing from a mound of dark brown soil. Overlaid on the image is the text "All About Composting". To the right of this image is a light green box titled "Recycling Guidelines" which contains a "RECYCLE" poster. The poster lists various items for recycling, including "PAPER & CARDBOARD", "PLASTIC & METAL", "GLASS", "ELECTRONICS", and "RECYCLING CONTAMINANTS". Below the poster is the text "Recycling Contaminants: Dirty Dozen".

<https://ecocycle.org/recycle-compost-reuse/compost>



REMOVING CARBON  
FROM THE  
ATMOSPHERE

# WE'RE CARBON FARMING

FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE IN OUR OWN BACKYARD

STORING IT SAFELY IN OUR  
SOILS WITH COMPOST

Find out more at [www.ecocycle.org](http://www.ecocycle.org)

## Join us as an Observational Carbon Farmer!

Looking for 250 volunteers to join a citizen science study. Can we sequester carbon in our backyards? OCFs:

- Attend virtual trainings
- Apply compost on their lawn
- Learn about their own backyard soil
- Use a phone app to record data
- Have science fun for the whole family and help fight climate change!

email: [Rosie@ecocycle.org](mailto:Rosie@ecocycle.org)