

## A Vision to Reduce Waste in Chestertown

February 2018

*The Chestertown Environmental Committee collected community input to develop a strategic plan in support of Chestertown's commitment to the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement and Sustainable MD Certified requirements.*

### Our Vision

Chestertown can lead the Midshore region toward a zero-waste culture by promoting the use of products according to the waste reduction hierarchy — reduce, reuse, then recycle or compost — so no material goes to landfill or high-temperature destruction.

### The Challenge

In 2017, the Town collected over 1,259 tons of materials and 565 tons of recyclables. It's a long way from zero waste.

### Impact Opportunities

About half of what we landfill is compostable and recyclable. By pursuing tactics with measurable outcomes, Chestertown can protect ecosystems, conserve resources and energy, reduce pollution, and prepare for the challenges of climate change.

### Suggested Strategic Goals

**Goal 1:** Reduce volume landfilled by 10% annually to achieve zero waste by 2028.

**Goal 2:** Implement a K-through-gray environmental educational program.

**Goal 3:** Empower civic leaders and businesses to champion ecological initiatives.

**Goal 4:** Reduce the distribution of plastic water bottles in Chestertown.

**Goal 5:** Increase infrastructure for electric vehicles and bicycle transport.

**Goal 6:** Develop a resilient local food system.

**Goal 7:** Prevent rainwater runoff and encourage water conservation.

**Goal 8:** Promote ecotourism.

### Suggested Tactics (and supported goals)

- Host an **annual public forum** with community leaders (town and county gov, business leaders, Heron Point, hospital, WC, and school boards) to bring awareness of shared goals and realistic targets. (1, 2, 3)
- **Train annual event producers** to assure that 50 events exceed 50% diversion and 25 events exceed 75% diversion; identify 5 events that have no recycling or composting and work to assist them. (1, 2, 3, 4, 8)
- Collect **garbage once a week** rather than twice a week. (1, 2)
- Provide **fee-based waste collection** rather than tax-supported. (1, 2)
- Charge for **takeout containers** at restaurants. (1, 3)
- Create label and develop website to **recognize for green restaurants/businesses** that avoid Styrofoam and charge for compostable take out containers. (1, 2, 3)

- Encourage restaurants to switch to **paper straws**. (1, 3, 8)
- Create **education campaigns** on topics such as plastic straws and Styrofoam tailored for businesses, schools, churches, and libraries. (1, 2, 3, 4)
- Celebrate “**Plastic free day**” each year. (1, 2)
- Develop **film series** geared for distribution in schools. (1, 2, 6)
- Host **informational booths** at Farmers’ Market and Earth Day. (1, 2)
- Host **Permaculture Design Certificate** courses. (2, 3, 6, 7, 8)
- Host training in gardening, conservation landscaping, and craftwork skills to **promote regenerative households** and local economic exchange. (1, 2, 6, 7, 8)
- Encourage **volunteer groups** to clean up and teach. (1, 2, 3, 6, 7)
- Conduct a **cost analysis** of plastic/paper straws and Styrofoam/compostable containers. (1, 3, 4)
- **Explore ordinances** for paper straws, compost, and backyard livestock. (1, 3, 6)
- Improve signage on existing **public recycling** containers. (1, 2)
- Enforce the current **recycling ordinance** and plastic bag ban. (1, 2, 3)
- Increase **public recycling bins and signage** in town and businesses. (1, 2, 3)
- Offer **more recycling pickup options**; recycle more than plastics 1 and 2. (1, 2)
- Invest in **recycling bins** for every resident of Chestertown. (1, 3)
- Promote the use of **trade services** like the “WAC Free and For Sale” and “Kent County swap and sell.” (1, 2, 3)
- Support **school gardens** and **community compost** programs. (1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8)
- Reuse and **repurpose materials** in community gardens. (1, 2)
- Create a **local composting station** with organic waste recycling; share costs with businesses, institutions and surrounding governments; promote use of compost in public projects, low income housing, and community gardens. (1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8)
- Analyze the value of sending **food waste** to another city for processing as an interim or long-term solution for reducing organic waste. (1)
- Support Chestertown food pantry, Food Recovery Network, and children in the Free and Reduced Meals program with **access to local produce**. (1, 2, 3, 6)
- Promote residential and commercial **energy performance audits** and implementation of recommendations. (2, 3, 7, 8)
- Make Chestertown’s Tea Party and Earth Day and Harry Potter Festival **zero waste events**: start by incentivizing food vendors to use only compostable food packaging and dishware, and gradually make it a requirement. (1, 2, 3, 4, 8)
- Work with local businesses and residents to encourage the transition to an **electric vehicle** transportation economy. (5, 8)
- Promote **transportation alternatives** that reduce the wastefulness in the auto industry and lower carbon emissions. (3, 5, 8)
- Promote access to **refillable water bottle stations**; prioritize destination points for cyclists. (1, 4, 5, 7, 8)
- Demonstrate permaculture along **Rails-to-Trails pathway** with fruit and nut trees, educational signage, and water bottle refilling stations. (2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)