

# Fairoaks Compost Update

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Orange County Solid Waste  
Advisory Group Meeting

April 29, 2024



Carrie Donley:  
also known as  
the 'Pumpkin  
Lady'





# GREEN NEIGHBORHOODS GRANT PROGRAM

APPLY NOW TO FUND A PROJECT IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD AND MAKE CARRBORO A GREENER PLACE!



## Green Neighborhoods Grant

- Seeks to help bring neighbors together to pursue projects which will
  - reduce greenhouse gas emissions
  - create natural areas that are more resilient to the impacts of climate change
  - benefit the entire community.
- Fair Oaks received \$2,500 for this project

# Fairoaks Composting Goals

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- Divert compostable items from the landfill.
- Create a habit of separating out compostable materials from the trash.
- Build community around this Green Neighborhood project.
- **Serve as a pilot project that can enable composting in future neighborhoods**



# Our progress to date

## Leadership Team

Carrie Donley

Cindy Shea

Clara Zelasky

Delia Barrick

Della Chambless

Greg Randolph

Jane Danielewicz

Kira McGovern

Randee Haven O'Donnell

## Neighborhood Sign-Up

- 60 out of 161 households have signed up for the program
- Many who haven't signed up already do some form of backyard composting



## Our progress to date

- Held 2 orientation meetings in August
- Distributed household buckets to the participants
- Held one educational and two social meetings
- Composting for ~8 months

# Fairoaks Compost Impact

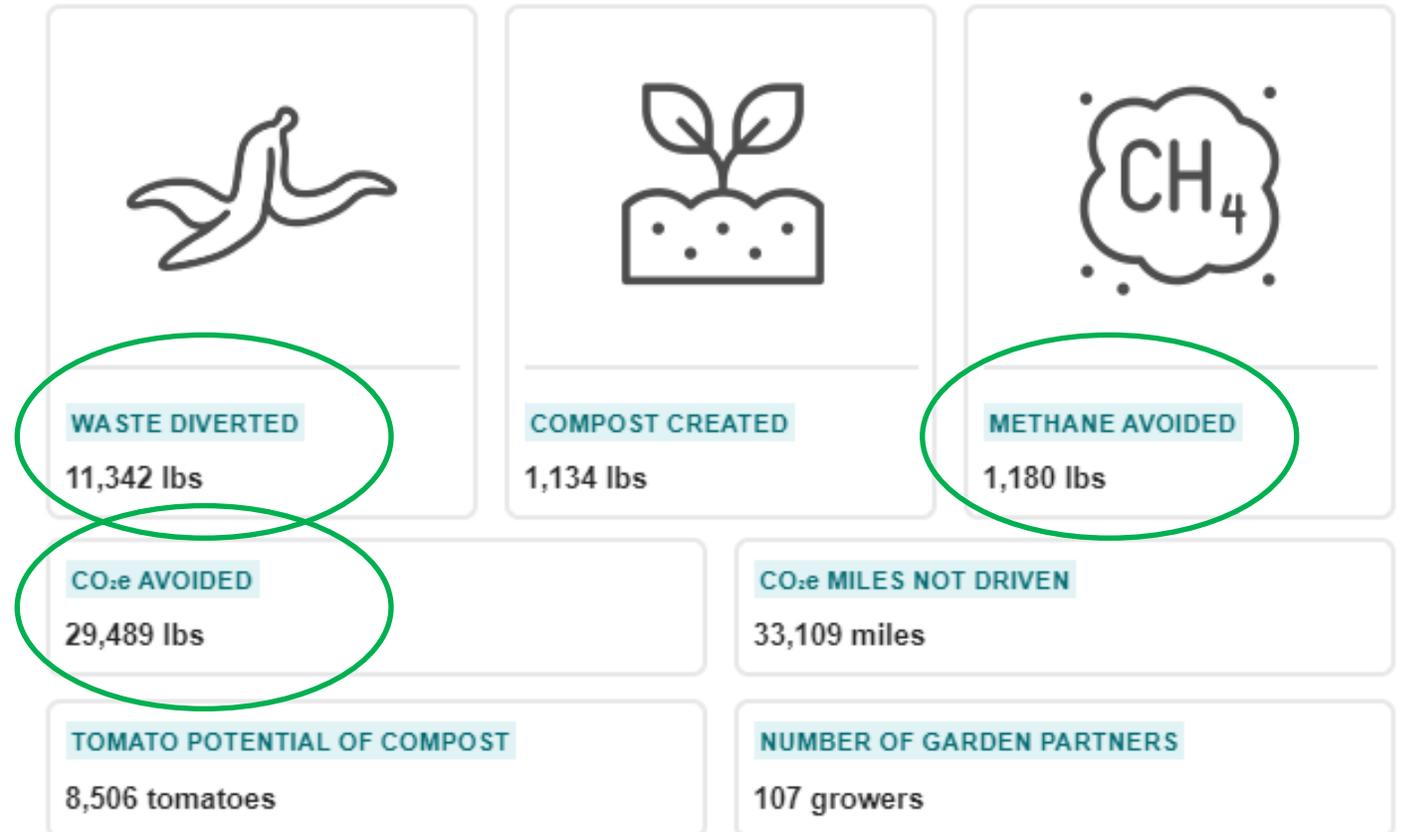
- About 350 pounds of compostables diverted from the landfill every week.
- About 150 pounds of methane not produced every month. (Equivalent to 3,700 lbs of CO<sub>2</sub>!)
- Participants notice a reduction in the amount of trash produced compared to before composting
- Return on investment is \$2.32 for every dollar spent
- **As a neighborhood we are making an impact!!**

## After 7 months of composting:

### Fairoaks Neighborhood

### Your Impact Report

Thank you for your commitment to sustainable business practices. This report highlights the impact from your program.





# Next Steps...



## Green Neighborhood Proposal – Year 2

- 1) Continue the Fair Oaks Composting project through Compost Now with increased neighborhood participation
- 2) Work with at least new communities to start neighborhood composting. (Share our Toolbox for getting started: Green Neighborhood proposal, educational information, emails, surveys, etc.)
- 3) Work with the Town/County towards curbside compostable collection

# Our Challenges



- Funding through the Green Neighborhood funding is only possible through mid-2025.
- **We want to encourage people to continue their composting habits.**
- Our goal is to see curbside compostable collection
- How do we bridge the gap between Green Neighborhoods funding and more comprehensive curbside compostable collection?

# Composting aligns with many local and national priorities

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- Town of Carrboro: Climate Action Plan
  - Ecosystem Recommendation #3: Accelerate/Expand Organic Waste Collection/Composting
  - We've carried out Next step #2: Implement a pilot program.
- Orange County: Solid Waste Master Plan (Road to Zero Waste by 2045)
  - GOAL 6 – Identify strategies to increase public education and participation in waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and composting.



# Curbside Collection is More Equitable

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- Compost Now is \$40/household/month for individual households
- If we were to charge our participants it would be \$3.25/month
- County drop off sites are free, but require free time on Saturday mornings (Carrboro Farmer's Market) or access to personal transportation to get to the county drop off sites.
- Our program is designed to be a more equitable solution that can help bridge the gap between where we are now and curbside collection.



# Our Questions

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- 1) Is there a plan/timeline for curbside compostable collection?
- 2) What are the challenges to implementing it?
- 3) Are there ways the Fair Oaks team could help?
  - Launch a compost program at an apartment complex to show it can work there too
  - Identify funding opportunities to help provide infrastructure to **pilot** curbside collection.
  - Help with county wide educational efforts around composting
  - Others??





# Financial Impact

	Fairoaks (6 months)	Town of Carrboro (1 year) <sup>3</sup>
Weight Diverted (lbs)	9,784	978,400
CH <sub>4</sub> Avoided (lbs)	1018	101,800
CO <sub>2</sub> Equivalent Avoided (lbs)	25,439	2,545,000
Cost	\$1,170	??
Tipping Fees Saved <sup>1</sup>	\$294	\$29,352
Cost Savings to Society <sup>2</sup>	\$2,417	\$241,775
Return on Investment	\$2.32 returned/\$1 spent	??

1) <https://www.durhamnc.gov/878/Waste-Disposal-Recycling-Center>

2) <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/02/climate/biden-social-cost-carbon-climate-change.html>

3) Assuming Fairoaks is 2% of the population of Carrboro