

Zero Waste Event Planning Guide



Produced by
Seven Generations Ahead

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INTRODUCTION - Making Zero Waste Easy

Zero waste events are a great way to show your commitment to the environment while creating a model of zero waste for your guests. The key to a zero waste event is careful planning so that all materials used and disposed of are reusable, recyclable, or compostable. By thinking ahead of time about all the materials your guests will be using and disposing of, it's easy to plan waste out of the event.

This zero waste event planning guide will give you the resources and tools to easily reduce waste at your next event. You will be walked through the steps needed before your event, during your event, and after your event. By using this guide, you will:

- Learn how to easily incorporate zero waste best practices into your event
- Discover how zero waste can be both environmentally and economically beneficial
- Explore case studies of conferences, communities, and universities that have successfully moved toward zero waste
- Start planning aspects of your own zero waste event
- Explore a variety of tools for planning your zero waste event, including:
 - Recycling and composting information specific to Chicagoland
 - Vendor and budget information for ordering reusable and compostable service ware
 - Methods & worksheet for tracking event waste diversion
 - Event planning checklist

This event planning guide will introduce you to strategies for reducing waste, whether your event is small or large, business or fun. A number of examples of zero waste events will be cited in this guide and/or included as case studies at the end. Here are a few example events:

Event	Description	Approx. # of Attendees	Waste Concerns
Oak Park Microbrew Review	Annual zero waste street festival	3,000	Food and beer vendors Need liquid disposal
GreenTown Conferences	2-3 day community conferences	150-400	Breakfast, lunch, snacks, and beer tasting
River Forest Green Block Parties	Blocks that elect to make their parties zero waste and are provided with the resources to do so	50 per party	Supplies provided to help the block sort, recycle, and compost
University of California-Berkeley Athletics Program	Athletic events	11,000+	Concessions, vendors, water bottle disposal

As you can see, zero waste event planning can apply to all types of events, of all sorts and sizes. From a block party to a large street festival, reducing waste follows the same basic principles. Know that each opportunity to hold a zero waste event makes a difference both for the environment and through the opportunity to show others that this is achievable.

DEFINITIONS – The Case for Zero Waste

What is Zero Waste?

The Zero Waste International Alliance states: **“Zero Waste is a goal that is ethical, economical, efficient and visionary, to guide people in changing their lifestyles and practices to emulate sustainable natural cycles, where all discarded materials are designed to become resources for others to use.”**

Why Zero Waste?

- Nearly half of all U.S. landfills are full or have been closed because of groundwater contamination.
- Establishing new landfills as a long-term strategy is not sustainable due to pollution (methane emissions, other greenhouse gas leaks, groundwater pollution, etc.), high landfill siting and maintenance costs, inadequate landfill closing accountability, and lack of interest among residents to live near sites.
- **To achieve a sustainable system of managing our resources, communities must incorporate nature's law, waste = food, and channel materials into reuse and new production.**
- The linear model of consumerism (extracting virgin resources for products and packaging, then discarding these resources to landfills or incinerators) is a primary cause of global resource depletion and associated environmental, climate, and social problems.

Key Components of Zero Waste

- Source reduction: Eliminates waste at its source. This includes choosing products that come with little or no packaging, such as beer kegs instead of bottles, or other types of bulk items. Source reduction also eliminates unnecessary items like frilly toothpicks, paper doilies, and inedible garnishes. Product stewardship is an important part of source reduction and emphasizes selecting materials with their best end use in mind (i.e. if materials cannot be reused, recycled, or composted, then these materials should not be purchased or used).
- Recycling: Processes used materials into new products to divert waste from the landfill. Recycling helps to conserve natural resources, reduce air and water pollution, generate less solid waste, and reduce the year-to-year costs of extracting and manufacturing new products.
- Composting: Turns organics such as food scraps, yard waste, and paper back into soil that can be used to grow new plants and crops. Organics account for a *significant* component of solid waste. Furthermore, the mixing of organics with traditional waste at landfills generates an immediate combustion of methane, a greenhouse gas that is 110 times more potent in the near term (over a 20-year period) than carbon dioxide, making food residual diversion an important global warming mitigation strategy.
- Liquid diversion: Diverts liquid from the landfill by collecting it beforehand. This helps to prevent groundwater contamination by chemical leachates and also keeps pests out of dumpsters.

Common Terms

- Garbage Landfill: Replace the word garbage with landfill. Garbage implies a mix of everything hidden in a large black can. Zero waste asks you to think of what is in that can that should/could be somewhere else.
- Upstream/Downstream:
 - Upstream: Preventing waste creation at its source (the best scenario).
 - Downstream: Once waste has been created, handling it in an environmentally responsible way by re-channeling materials into reuse and new production.



- Resource recovery: When discarded materials are viewed in the context of global resource depletion, resource recovery refers to a rerouting of these valuable materials to create a cyclical system of reuse, like the one found in nature.
- Landfill diversion: Keeping valuable resources out of the landfill by using less, reusing, recycling, composting, and more.
- Resource Recovery Stations: **These are what you might consider “waste” sorting stations at a zero waste event or venue.** At a zero waste event there is no such thing as a waste bin or trash can. You'll only find a Resource Recovery Station, a fully-loaded sorting center complete with collection bins for all types of recyclable items, compostable and organic items, and the little waste that cannot be reused, recycled, or composted.

PRE-EVENT PLANNING

For a zero waste event to feel easy and achievable for attendees, advance planning is required to set things up in a simple way. This guide contains tools and suggestions to help with planning your event. Remember that the more preparation you do ahead of time, the less you need to do the day of your event. This guide is a long one, but the goal is for you to keep things simple. Decide what you want to take on and read those sections that will help you reach your goal. * [See Appendix A for Zero Waste Event Timeline and Checklist](#). Samples of information sheets, venue maps, waste tracking tools, and more are also noted in this guide and will help you along the way as you plan your event.

❖ Venue Selection

Zero waste events are more common than ever with all types of venues and events working to be zero waste. If you have not yet chosen your venue, consider that some event locations can help to make zero waste planning easier. Venues that have experience in reducing waste or other sustainability practices will already have some of the key components in place, including sorting/collection containers and contracts with a hauler to take compostable materials following the event (e.g. a sustainable restaurant like Marion Street Cheese Market).

In many cases you may already have a venue and vendors set up for your event when you begin thinking about zero waste. If so, it is important to work as far in advance of your event as possible to plan how to set up your event site and prepare your vendors for supporting your zero waste goals. In this planning guide we will address both vendor requirements and how to map your event venue for Resource Recovery Stations.

❖ Minimizing Waste Upstream

Vendor and Caterer Requirements

For a zero waste event to be successful, you need to control all the types of waste generated at your event. In addition to collecting recyclables, this means all food vendors must be required to use washable, reuseable items or compostable food service items (and collect these for composting). It is important to have event vendors/caterers be part of the zero waste plan. They can help keep waste out of your event and ensure that what waste is generated can be recycled or composted.

- Starting weeks to months before the event, think through all of the materials and components of the event in order to significantly reduce the amount of overall waste generated upstream.

- If possible, conduct a waste audit or assessment to determine which unsustainable materials end up in the landfill most frequently. Consider entirely avoiding and banning these non-recyclable and non-compostable products at your event, such as plastic bags and wraps, as well as single-use plastic water bottles and polystyrene (Styrofoam).
- Decide whether you will require vendors/caterers to provide their own reusable or compostable serving ware (plates, cups, etc.) or whether you (the event organizer) will provide these items.
* See Appendix D for Zero Waste Guide to Purchasing Reusable and Compostable Serving Ware.

TIP: Whenever possible, use caterers that offer reusable items for serving and eating food, such as tablecloths, silverware, glasses, mugs, plates and cloth napkins that can be washed and reused. If a caterer must use paper napkins, ask or require that they use ones made from 100% post-consumer recycled content. If the caterer is unable to provide reusable materials, consider hiring another vendor **to provide these. If reusables aren't an option for the caterer or vendor that you select**, use compostable or recyclable materials. Note that the benefits of using compostable items will not be fully realized unless these items are actually composted by an industrial composting facility.

Zero waste information packet: Provide an information packet to all vendors/caterers **regarding the event's** recycling and composting plans. This sheet should outline the benefits of zero waste, as well as your expectations and guidelines for vendors participating in the event. It should emphasize the importance of source reduction and waste minimization as a first step when planning a zero waste event. The packet should also include a list of acceptable items and food guidelines for your event.

List of acceptable items: This portion of the information packet should include a list of acceptable products and supplier information, as well as a list of prohibited materials, such as polystyrene (Styrofoam), plastic water bottles, cups or utensils. This list should be provided even if the event is providing these supplies.

- The list should prioritize reusable products, followed by compostable or recyclable products. When listing preferred recyclable materials, items made from post-consumer recycled content should be prioritized.
- This list should indicate an event ban on non-recyclable and non-compostable products, such as plastic bags and wraps, as well as single-use plastic water bottles and polystyrene (Styrofoam).
* See Appendix C for Preferred Materials and Composting Guidelines.

Food guidelines: The information packet should also include any food guidelines for your event. Below are some areas to consider incorporating into your event food guidelines.

- Consider how you can ensure that food at your event is not only consumed and disposed of in a **sustainable way ("front of the house" operations), but is also prepared in an environmentally-friendly and waste-minimizing way ("back of the house" operations)**. For example, you can ask that caterers recycle any cooking oil and charcoal used for making event food.
- Consider choosing caterers that provide **bite-size or finger foods that don't require utensils**, and use entrees that can be served in large containers. However, be aware that buffet-style food serving can actually generate more waste, as people are more apt to load up their plates. What method of food containment do you think will best suit your event? Weigh the benefits and costs of different food serving set-ups.
- Require that vendors/caterers provide drinks and condiments (water, tea, sugars, ketchup, salad dressings, etc.) in bulk instead of in individual packages and servings, so that they can be used with reusable cups and containers. If drinks or condiments cannot be provided in bulk, require that vendors/caterers buy those that are sold in compostable or recyclable containers.

- Ask that vendors/caterers serve fewer meat, dairy, and greasy food items, as these are less easily compostable, and in the larger picture, take a greater toll on the environment than other types of food. Also encourage caterers to serve local, organic, and sustainable food whenever possible.

Signed zero waste contract: Ask vendors/caterers to sign a contract based on your agreed-upon event materials, food, and recycling and composting guidelines. The below bullets are example contract requirements:

- **“Zero waste policies for the event are: no bottled or canned beverages may be served; all supplies used must be reusable, recyclable or compostable; event sorting bins must be used accordingly for disposing of waste.”**
- **“Vendors must use locally grown, organic ingredients wherever possible in event servings. Vendors are asked to provide local, organic farms/supplier names for publication in event program and signage.”**
* See Appendix B for Sample Zero Waste Guidelines for a Non-Food Vendor.

Reusable/Compostable/Disposable Serving Ware

As you plan your zero waste event, it is important to understand the costs and benefits of using reusable, compostable, or disposable products. In general, durable and reusable wares are the most environmental option unless a commercial composting facility is available. Even then, the environmental impact of compostables is debatable given the number of resources necessary to manufacture these goods. If you do choose to use compostable products, make sure they are certified compostable by the Biodegradable Products Institute. Specifically, Land & Lakes Compost Facility in Chicago requires that compostable service ware be ASTM 6400 or 6868 certified.

	Disposable	Compostable	Reusable
Initial cost	- \$	+/- \$\$	+ \$\$\$
Long term cost	- \$\$\$	- \$\$\$	+ \$
Convenience	+ High (no sorting, goes into landfill)	- Low (sorting and education needed, can be sorted with food scraps)	+/- Medium (sorting needed, easy for people to recognize these items)
Sustainable	No	Can be (with the proper materials and conditions)	Yes (with the proper materials)

The following is a list of variables to consider:

- Reusable is the most sustainable choice, as they can last for years and years. Once purchased the savings begin to add up, as event organizers no longer need to purchase new serving ware for each event.

- Compostable is the next best thing to reusable. Made of biodegradable material (such as sugar cane bagasse, corn, and wheat straw), compostables can break down into components that are used to create rich soil. To reap the benefits of compostable goods, however, you must industrially compost them. Ensure that the compostable ware you select meets ASTM 6400 or 6868 compostability standards in order to be accepted by Land & Lakes Compost Facility in Chicago.
- Disposable serving ware is cheaper upfront than compostable and reusable, **and it's easy for attendees** to throw them in the landfill bin. That being said, there is not much else going for disposable serving ware. The long term cost of disposables is far higher than reusable, and they take up a lot of space in our landfills, contributing to increased pollution.
- Recyclable serving ware, while not included in the table above, can be an alternative to disposable. However, in Illinois it is challenging to find plastic that is actually recyclable (most plastic ware is #6, which cannot be recycled in most areas). Additionally, these items must be clean to be recycled so it is typically not practical for an event.
- One of the goals of zero waste is to eliminate waste at the source. Reusable serving ware meets this goal far better than needing to produce and perhaps compost serving ware for every event throughout the year.
- The cost savings from switching to reusable can be used to cover additional storage and labor costs.

* See Appendix C for Preferred Materials and Composting Guide.

* See Appendix D for Zero Waste Guide to Purchasing Reusable and Compostable Serving Ware.

❖ Marketing, Publicity, and Invitations

Publicity Campaign

Pre-event, during event, and post-event publicity decisions are all important opportunities for furthering the message of zero waste. Use your publicity efforts to acquaint and remind attendees of zero waste strategies and to emulate these by using alternatives to printed publicity materials.

Pre-event publicity: Pre-event publicity campaigns can include the following message:

"We are striving to make this a zero waste event with the goal of 90%+ **waste diversion**."

Incorporate waste diversion messages by using:

- An official event website
- An official event Facebook account or event page
- An official event printed material (flyer, poster, postcard, etc. made from recycled content)
- Other publicity through Twitter, YouTube, press release, newsletters, ads, etc.

During event publicity: Include the following message during your event to showcase diversion efforts:

"[Event Name] is helping to reduce our impact on the environment by diverting at least (50% or 75%) of our waste from the landfill. Help us reduce waste by using the Resource Recovery Stations around this event to compost and recycle. Thank you for contributing to a greener [Community Name]."

Here are some ideas for spreading your zero waste messages at the event:

- Provide signage at all Resource Recovery Stations
- Create a Sustainable Practices Pavilion or booth with information and activities about event diversion efforts (e.g. a game showing how to dispose items at the event) * [See Appendix E for Sample Sustainable Practices Pavilion Sheet \(Oak Park Microbrew Review\)](#).
- Banner (not one-time-only use, made from recycled and recyclable material)
- Stage announcements
- Other methods (e.g. mascot, flash mob, stage game helping attendees learn correct sorting methods)



Invitations, Tickets, and Registration: Electronic vs. Paper/Mailing

To reduce waste upstream, consider online and email invitations. Use an electronic system for guest responses and registration. The following are a few other options to consider for reducing waste:

- If you decide to use paper invitations for a more formal occasion, select those made from post-consumer recycled paper or paper alternatives. Avoid bright-colored, dark-colored, fluorescent or metallic paper - types of paper that cannot be recycled.
- Make a note in the invitation that the event will be zero waste.
- Consider asking attendees to support you by bringing only reusable, recyclable, and compostable materials with them to the event.
- Electronically distribute recycling and composting information to attendees and overviews of your sorting stations so that they can acquaint themselves with the specifications for your event beforehand.
- Provide information on bike paths and bus routes with the invitations you send out, if applicable.
- After those invited have been given some time to RSVP, estimate attendance in order to avoid wasting food. Encourage attendees to bring reusable containers in order to bring leftovers home with them.

* [See Appendix G for Sample Zero Waste Electronic Invitation \(Oak Park Microbrew Review\)](#).

❖ Venue Map and Resource Recovery Stations

For a zero waste event be successful, the venue must be set up so that guests can easily participate. Often this will be the first exposure many of your guests will have to zero waste. Providing consistent sorting containers for Resource Recovery Stations, locating these stations in every area a guest might need to sort waste, using clear signage, and assigning ZW volunteers to sorting stations will all be key to success.



Types of Resource Recovery Stations:

Resource Recovery Stations need to be set up in key locations throughout your event venue, such as by entrances, exits, and eating areas. Each station will need collection bins based on the items you are collecting:

- 1) Reusables, 2) Liquids, 3) Recyclables, 4) Compostables/Organics, 5) Landfill

Consistency of containers: It is important that every sorting station at your event looks the same to avoid confusion for your event guests. Consistency is key. Everywhere that you have a container for landfill (garbage) items, you also need to have containers for every other stream (recycling, composting/organics, liquids, etc.). In some cases it will be necessary to remove or cover existing landfill or recycling containers and plot new zero waste stations needed for event. It is also important that each sorting station have containers in the same order (from left to right). This makes it easier for guests to become familiar with what goes in each container without having to read signs every time.

Mapping the venue:

Determine the number of sorting stations needed using the following formula:

# Attendees	<100	100-500	500-1000	1000-5000	5000-10,000
Recommended # of Stations	1-3	3-5	5-8	8-12	12-15

* Example: Oak Park Microbrew Review 2011: 2,500-3,000 people / 10 ZW stations

We have suggested a range of bins in order to consider other factors, including:

- Quantity of food served and materials distributed.
- Venue layout: consider the number of entrances and exits at your venue, where food tables are located, if there are certain places where people can and cannot eat, and any other restrictions.
- Venue size: avoid having too much **space between stations so attendees won't leave items elsewhere**.

Once you have determined the number of Resource Recovery Stations, you will need to map out their locations within the venue. You might consider having a station wherever there are currently landfill bins. In some cases this is easy to determine. For other events, you will need to consider the layout of the venue and where food and beverages are being served and consumed.

* [See Appendix H for Sample Venue Map \(Oak Park Microbrew Review\)](#)

Procuring Supplies for the Resource Recovery Stations

As with the signs and order of containers at the stations, consistency is key with other supplies. The same signs and the same color bags should be used consistently throughout the venue so that guests can have this as an additional visual cue.

Bags: Color-coded bags help guests properly sort their discards. They also help volunteers collect bags and bring them to the correct hauling destinations. Consider using blue bags for recyclables, green or clear bags for compostables/organics, and black bags for landfill.

Signs: You will want two kinds of signs at your zero waste event:

- Sorting signs at each Resource Recovery Station will help guests know how to quickly and correctly sort their items.
- Educational signs about your zero waste event will also be used to explain why your event is zero waste and the impact this will have.

Sorting Signs: Signage for sorting stations should be very basic and should match throughout your event venue – the focus should be on one large word (RECYCLING, COMPOST, LIQUID, LANDFILL). In some events it may help to include photos of the items that go into each container if there are a limited number of items. Often, the signs can be simple and then the actual items can be taped to the containers to make it very easy for

guests to know which items go where. Consider laminating the signs, especially if you will have future zero waste events. Laminated signs are a lot less likely to get torn off your containers or get wet or messy.

- ❖ Example individual signs for containers, which have a space in the middle to overlay photos of items:



- ❖ Example large sign for Resource Recovery Station:



Educational Signs: Educational signs can be located on tables, bathroom doors, or anywhere else where you think guests might pause long enough to read a few facts.

* See Appendix F for Sample Zero Waste Educational Sign.

Other ZW Supplies:

- Gloves
- Tape - heavy duty for taping materials and signs to bins
- Pens/markers
- Clipboards
- Volunteer identification items (e.g. "Ask Me About Zero Waste" pins, t-shirts)
- Scale(s)
- Measuring sheets/templates

- ❖ Staffing and Volunteers

Zero waste staff and volunteers: Volunteers play a key role in the success of a zero waste event. Each Resource Recovery Station should feature a trained volunteer who assists attendees, ensures that there is no contamination between the bins, and helps to increase public awareness. It is also a great initiative to involve the community and promote local groups. Your team of volunteers could include:

- Local student groups or sports teams
- Local businesses
- Like-minded organizations – this has the added benefit of reducing the learning curve (e.g. Oak Park Microbrew Review, which used Sugar Beet Co-op volunteers)

To determine how many volunteers you need, use the venue map and identify where and when (pre-event, during, and post-event) people need to be assigned. If your event is more than a few hours, you will need to schedule shifts of volunteers. Assign volunteer roles and timeslots in advance. Some volunteers could help with set-up, others could assist in gathering and sorting materials during the event, while others could help consolidate materials in a pick-up location once the event ends. Remember that zero waste is most successful with point people at each station throughout the event. By recruiting and training as many volunteers as possible, you will have a **“Zero Waste Team”** available to assign to various tasks.

* See Appendix I for Sample Volunteer Roles.

Zero Waste Leader: In addition to your team of volunteers, you should assign a Zero Waste Leader. This person is likely to be part of your Event Staff rather than a volunteer. This person oversees all zero waste activity and is trained on all components of your event. The Zero Waste Leader should have a complete set of event information (on a clipboard) that can be easily given to another trained person to take over if needed. This set of information should include: multiple copies of the venue map, volunteer list and schedule, and ZW talking points.

Volunteer training: Volunteers will need to be trained to know how to staff Resource Recovery Stations. In addition to answering basic sorting questions, volunteers may be asked other questions about zero waste.

- Step 1: Determine how complicated the training needs to be. Will it require pre-event training? If so, can the training be held the morning of the event? Or will it work to give a brief training to volunteers at the start of their shifts?
- Step 2: Does the training need to be done in person? On site? Or can it be done via email or through a combination of email and in person?
- Step 3: Develop training that will enable volunteers to engage attendees with ZW questions:
- **“Do you know where this trash goes when it leaves this event?”**
 - **“Do you know where to sort your waste?”**
 - **“Do you have any questions about this zero waste sorting station?”**
 - **“If you avoid single-use materials and use reusable materials instead, you will save valuable resources and prevent unnecessary waste from being incinerated or landfilled.”**
- Step 4: Provide volunteers with a 1-page **“cheat sheet”** with talking points (Appendix J), an item to identify them as a ZW volunteer (button, shirt, hat, etc.), and, if needed, a venue map showing their assigned Resource Recovery Station (Appendix H).

❖ Handling Waste Downstream

Pre-event planning includes identifying what happens to the sorted resources after the event. Who collects and hauls each stream (reusables, liquids, recycling, compostables/organics, landfill, etc.) and where does each stream go?

Handling full sorting receptacles: Before the event, you should identify who will pick up full bags, how often the bags will be collected, and where they will be taken and stored during the event. Note that there may be different arrangements made for each waste stream. For example, the Oak Park Microbrew Review has landfill and recycling collected multiple times during the event by an outside contractor (as determined by the Village of Oak Park), compostables/organics are collected by the zero waste event volunteers and staff and stored nearby until the end of the event, and liquids are dumped in sewers by zero waste volunteers and staff.

Hauler: Know who is hauling the different event waste streams and when they will be picking up the materials. If your event is during the weekend or not on the usual day for hauler pick-up, you will need to either hold the waste until a regular pick-up day or make special arrangements. As an example, **Oak Park's Day in Our Village** festival arranges for a special Sunday pick-up of landfill and recycling items.

End-site identification: Once the event has ended, where are your scraps going? These arrangements need to be made in advance. For large events in the greater Chicagoland area, Land & Lakes Compost Facility in Harborview is an industrial composting site that can accept your compostables/organics. For smaller events, is there an institution nearby that already has organics/compostables hauled that will allow you to include the organics from your event? Or is there an event volunteer willing to haul the organics to Land & Lakes?

Identify measurable recycling, composting, and overall waste diversion goals for the event: How will you measure zero waste success at your event? Will you have qualitative, quantitative, or visual goals and reports? For a qualitative measurement you will need to consider the following:

- WHO: Who will be taking measurements?
- WHAT: Is your plan to weigh individual bags or to count up the total number of bags recycled, composted, and landfilled? Perhaps it is sufficient to count the number of dumpsters filled at the end of the event or get hauler information on the total disposal tonnage.
- WHEN: How often do measurements need to be taken of each waste stream. Is this ongoing throughout the event or will it be possible to measure after the event has ended?
- WHERE: Where are measurements being taken during the event, and will you need a weigh station with a scale?

* See Appendix K for Tracking Waste Diversion.

Celebrating your zero waste success: During the event, consider ways in which you can creatively and visually showcase and measure waste diversion success. The following are a few example methods:

- Construct a thermometer that you can fill in during the event as you divert pounds from the landfill. Once the thermometer has filled up, this could indicate that you have met your diversion goal.
- Collect all recyclables in a centralized location so that attendees can see the bags building up.
- Measure and report financial impact, which could include waste reduction savings (via source reduction, reuse, sales of recyclables, disposal fee savings, etc.). Have posters showing the amount of money saved by being zero waste.
- Calculate the amount of materials reused and number of reuses. Have posters showing the impact of reusing.

DAY OF EVENT

You have completed your weeks of careful planning to reduce the amount of waste coming into and being generated at your event, and you have recruited the necessary zero waste volunteers for event day. Today is the big day – it is time to put your volunteers to work in implementing your zero waste plan.

❖ Event Set-Up

Before the event set-up begins, make sure that the Zero Waste Leader and other key event staff have all the necessary information and resources to run the zero waste event components (Venue Map with Resource Recovery Stations clearly marked [[Appendix H](#)], Sample Volunteer Roles [[Appendix I](#)], Sample Zero Waste Talking Points for Attendees and Vendors/Caterers [[Appendix J](#)]). You should also set up a zero waste home base for supplies (e.g. bags, gloves, extra maps, etc.) and information.

Volunteer arrival: As volunteers arrive to help with set-up, have your Zero Waste Leader in a well-marked and known location to greet volunteers. Make sure volunteers have received training (or provide training if not given in advance), review responsibilities, and have all of the materials/supplies needed for their volunteer shift. Volunteers working at the Resource Recovery Stations should have a set of supplies, including:

- Volunteer identification items (e.g. **“Ask Me About Zero Waste” pins, t-shirts**)
- Sample Zero Waste Talking Points for Attendees and Vendors/Caterers ([Appendix J](#))
- Gloves
- Extra liner bags for containers
- Venue Map with their assigned Resource Recovery Station clearly marked, as well as dumping locations for any waste stream they are expected to remove from their station ([Appendix H](#))
- The contact number to reach the Zero Waste Leader with any questions or problems

Set up Resource Recovery Stations: Work with volunteers and use your venue map to ensure that:

- All Resource Recovery Stations are where they need to be.
- Sorting containers at each Resource Recovery Station are set up in the correct order:
 - Reusables
 - Liquids
 - Recyclables
 - Compostables/Organics
 - Landfill
- Signs are in place on sorting containers and at each Resource Recovery Station. Sample items are taped to collection containers.
- Supplies are at each sorting station (extra bags, tape, gloves, etc.).
- Existing bins are covered/removed if they are not part of **the event’s** Resource Recovery Stations.

Hang/set up zero waste educational signs: Assign a staff person or volunteer to hang educational signs throughout the venue. This person should have a venue map with all areas clearly marked for hanging or placing signs, poster, etc.

* [See Appendix F for Sample Zero Waste Educational Sign.](#)

Allocate compostable serving ware and deliver to vendors: Deliver compostable serving ware to vendors, if applicable. Your event plan should indicate how many to allocate to each vendor. Make sure to give each

vendor the Sample Zero Waste Talking Points for Attendees and Vendors/Caterers ([Appendix J](#)), as well as the contact number to reach the Zero Waste Leader with any questions or problems.

❖ On-Going

Conduct zero waste education: At the beginning of the event, announce and explain zero waste. Briefly explain what your guests can compost and recycle at your event. Point out the locations of the Resource Recovery Stations. Periodically remind attendees of zero waste guidelines through PA announcements. Answer zero waste questions from attendees.

Monitor stations: The Zero Waste Leader and assigned volunteers need to monitor the Resource Recovery Stations, especially if there is not an assigned volunteer for each station. Monitoring/re-sorting each container is important as once someone throws the wrong item in a container, the next 50 people will do the same.

Empty/remove full containers: Bring full bags to end location - ideally, a centralized location where the hauler will pick them up (this can be the job of a few assigned ZW volunteers). If gauging waste diversion efforts quantitatively, weigh/measure/count sorted bags. If applicable, use a weight scale to record weights on measuring template/document (with clipboard & pen).

* [See Appendix K for Tracking Waste Diversion.](#)

Showcase success: On an ongoing basis or at the end of the event, an appointed spokesperson should publicize the zero waste event successes through social media, press releases/media interviews, etc.

Train newly arrived volunteers/staff: The Zero Waste Leader will need to be available throughout the event to train newly arrived volunteers and staff. This includes training the Tear-Down Crew. As an example, staff at the 2011 Oak Park Microbrew Review trained Village-hired McAdams landscaping employees on-site, as the staff did not have access to them prior to the day of the event.

Restock serving ware as needed: Check in with vendors/caterers to ensure that they have enough serving ware (or assign a volunteer to do so).

❖ Tear Down

Final sweep: Take all bags/liquids from ZW stations to dumping area.

Final measurements: Weigh and record all bags.

Clean up: Leave the event venue as clean as possible using eco-friendly cleaning products. After the 2011 Microbrew Review, for instance, staff and volunteers needed to clean up broken glass from dropped reusable drinking glasses.

AFTER THE EVENT

❖ Upstream

As you plan for follow up with attendees (whether in the form of a survey or through thank you's), consider options for reducing waste. Can you use an online survey tool rather than a paper survey? Can thank you's be sent through email rather than through snail mail?

❖ Downstream

- Leftover food: Encourage attendees to bring any leftover food home using reusable containers. Research opportunities to donate any untouched, unopened food to local food shelters, food pantries, or churches. Research beforehand what certain places will accept and how soon after the event they will need the donated food. Generally, food banks in Illinois may be willing to collect perishable, prepared food that they will then immediately deliver to a food pantry, soup kitchen, or shelter that can incorporate the donation into the food distribution program. Consider donating to the Chicago Food Depository (<http://www.chicagosfoodbank.org>).
- Compost any remaining compostable items.
- Haul or take compostables to end site (Land & Lakes).
- Return rented reusables.
- Store extra supplies (waste station materials, reusables, etc.) or donate.

❖ Evaluation

Evaluate internally: Distribute a survey to volunteers, electronically if possible. Consider using Google Forms (free and provides analysis with graphs). The following are questions to consider including in your volunteer survey:

- On a scale of 1-10, how contaminated were the recycling and composting containers, with 10 as most contaminated?
- When during the event were recycling cans too full? [Never/Within the first few hours of the event/Halfway through the event/Near the end of the event/At the end of the event/Nearly Always]
- When during the event were composting cans too full? [Never/Within the first few hours of the event/Halfway through the event/Near the end of the event/At the end of the event/Nearly Always]
- What areas of the facility were underserved for container emptying? [None/Near the entrances/Near the exits/Near the bathrooms/Near vendors/Other]
- On a scale of 1-10, how interested were people in sorting their materials correctly, with 10 indicating highest level of engagement/excitement?
- On a scale of 1-10, how well did the reusable/recyclable/compostable materials and other environmentally friendly materials work for this event, with 10 as the most effective?
- **Overall, what worked as planned? What didn't and why not? (Open-ended)**

Collect feedback from attendees/vendors: Find out how your attendees and vendors were impacted by this event being zero waste. The following are questions to consider for a vendor and/or attendee survey:

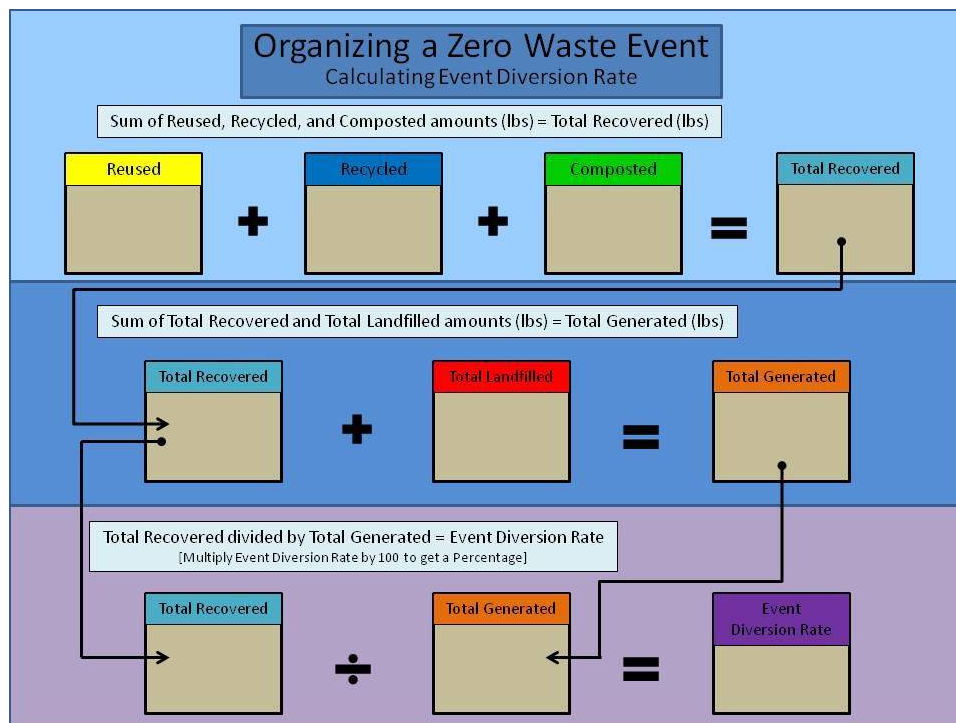
- On a scale of 1-10, how much did you know about zero waste before this event, with 10 as expert level?
- On a scale of 1-10, how well did this event enhance your understanding of zero waste, with 10 as the most exceptional?
- On a scale of 1-10, how clear and helpful were the recycling and composting signage, with 10 as the most clear and helpful?

- On a how were the stations, most
- How informed

with 10 helpful

- On a how you be to zero with 10

- Is there would changing improve a future zero waste event?



scale of 1-10, clear and easy waste sorting with 10 as the clear and easy? helpful and were the ZW volunteers, as the most and informed? scale of 1-10, likely would host your own waste event, meaning most definitely? anything you suggest in order to

In addition to attendee and vendor reports, it is valuable to be able to report the success of your waste diversion. There are scientific measurable results (weighing and tracking the waste streams), and there are more subjective results (estimating that this year you filled ½ of a landfill dumpster and last year you filled 2 whole landfill dumpsters). However you decide to look at your results, having some measure of success is a good idea.

The figure below shows how to calculate your event diversion rate.

Create report: After survey results are collected, it is important to take the time to review and share results. Was your zero waste event a success? Can you identify areas for improvement? Create a report that does the following:

- Showcases waste diversion
- Tracks materials from the event to the recycling or composting facility
- Provides information on how many materials were recycled or composted, as compared to total waste generated, in order to come up with an overall diversion rate for the event
- Explains your zero waste approach and highlights **the consequent cost savings of the event's** zero waste efforts
- Includes attendee and vendor comments

❖ Post Event Publicity and Thank You's

Consider sharing your zero waste event experience. Imagine the impact of:

- Publicizing your zero waste successes and explaining how these successes were measured
- Noting any revisions and recommendations for future zero waste events
- Distributing your observations and experiences via press releases and/or newsletters

Thank your volunteers, vendors, and attendees for participating. Follow-up with electronic thank you notes to continue the trend of zero waste. Consider providing attendees with your post-**report once it's completed**. Lastly, pledge to host your next event as zero waste! You can use your survey responses and experience to implement any necessary changes to **the event's design and planning to make it even easier and to have an even bigger impact**.

ZERO WASTE EVENT CASE STUDIES

GreenTown Conferences – Seven Generations Ahead
Green Block Parties – River Forest Park District & PlanItGreen
University of California – Berkeley Athletics Program
Additional Zero Waste Event Case Studies

Zero Waste Event Case Study GreenTown Conferences – Seven Generations Ahead

GreenTown: The Future of Community is designed to help create sustainable communities. Since 2007, mayors and other elected officials, city managers, public works directors, park district directors, planners, developers, builders, architects, landscape architects and engineers, school leaders – and many others interested in

sustainable development – have gathered to hear inspiring speakers, learn from been-there case studies and discuss actionable steps to make communities more eco-effective.

[ABOUT](#) | [EVENTS](#) | [WHAT MAKES A GREENTOWN?](#) | [SPONSORS](#)

greentown

Greening the Conference

GreenTown: The Future of Community is a carbon neutral event. To offset our impact on the environment, **Viability** has generously donated carbon credits, reducing GreenTown's carbon footprint on the local environment. Viability is committed to increasing the supply of sustainable, fuel-free energy and delivers real solutions to climate change in the form of new wind and solar power generation.

GreenTown is a zero waste event. Thanks to the efforts of Seven Generations Ahead, all waste is either composted or recycled. We are taking further steps to green the event by:

- reducing the amount of printed material used for the conference
- sourcing post-consumer recycled and FSC certified paper
- reducing packaging
- offering recycling
- reducing linen and towel usage
- encouraging walking to and from the venues
- providing locally grown, organic foods where possible





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GreenTown is produced by **a5** and **Seven Generations Ahead**.

Resources:

- www.greentownconference.com
- www.sevengenerationsahead.org

Zero Waste Event Case Study

Green Block Parties – River Forest Park District & PlanItGreen

Goal: To educate and equip River Forest residents with the know-how to practice easy zero waste strategies at community block parties, and to serve as a venue to learn about where trash goes, what can be done to reduce it, and how to backyard compost.

According to Sue Crothers, President of River Forest Park District, many residents were initially overwhelmed at the prospect of incorporating multiple zero waste strategies into community block parties, stating that it would be “too much work.” As a result, the PlanItGreen Core Team has strived to make planning a Green Block Party as easy as possible, providing a multitude of helpful documents so that residents can “do as much or as little as they want.”



Collaborating Organizations:

- Park District of River Forest
- River Forest Parks Foundation (funding body)
- PlanItGreen

Strategies:

- If someone wants to host a block party, they must go online to register it. The registration application allows residents to check a box to make their block party green. If the resident does not select this option, a Park District representative will call the resident and encourage him or her to do so.
- Residents that opt to host a Green Block Party receive a Green Block Party Kit, which contains a variety of helpful documents. These documents keep zero waste information simple and break down the planning process into manageable steps. The host of the Green Block Party also receives a free composter and a free, kid-friendly composting demonstration at the block party.
- Residents hosting Green Block Parties are provided with door hangers to remind residents of the compost demonstration.

Key Milestones:

- October 2011: Pilot 3-block Green Block Party
- Approximately 60 block parties are held each year, half of which have gone green.

Economic Benefits/Cost Savings:

- In 2009, River Forest residents created over 4,300 tons of municipal solid waste, 37% of which was diverted from the landfill. The rest of the waste, much of which is compostable food scraps, is trucked to a landfill in Winnebago County, 80 miles from River Forest. The disposal cost for waste haulers to dump at the landfill is \$50 per ton, while the cost to recycle is much lower at \$30 per ton.
- As a result, an increase in household food scraps and yard waste composting, as well as recycling, has the potential to save money for the Village and its residents through reduced hauling and trucking fees.
- Furthermore, potential secondary cost savings include reduced wear on River Forest streets and less pollution from idling garbage trucks.

Resources:

- <http://www.river-forest.us/residents/block-party-permits>

- http://www.river-forest.us/sitemedia/pdf/Permits/Block_Party_Permit.pdf

Zero Waste Event Case Study University of California-Berkeley Athletics

Goal: To achieve zero waste along with the university by 2020, eliminating all material sent to landfills.

"We all must do our part to preserve our natural resources, and these early efforts are important first steps as we move toward a zero-waste goal at Memorial Stadium," Director of Athletics Sandy Barbour said. "Through awareness and practice, achieving our sustainability objectives will help protect our environment for all to enjoy."

Collaborating Organizations:

- Cal Athletics
- Campus Recycling
- Refuse Services
- Corporate sponsor Recology

Events: Zero Waste Athletic Games

- 11/18/11: Volleyball v. Oregon State
- 12/17/11: Women's Basketball v. Ohio State
- 2/4/12: Men's Basketball v. Arizona State

Strategies:

- Added recycling and composting receptacles to stadium/pavilion
- **Created Marketing Message: "Blue and Gold makes Green!"**
- Cal Athletics' concessions, catering, and merchandizing partners modified menus and packing to help reach zero waste goal

Key Milestones:

- 2/4/11 at Men's Basketball Game: Berkeley Mayor Tom Bates presented a city proclamation lauding Cal Athletics' commitment to waste reduction

Economic Benefits/Cost Savings

- Lin King (Manager of Campus Recycling and Refuse Services) likes to emphasize, besides the obvious **environmental benefits of recycling**, that *"Trash costs the university money; recycling earns us money."* The campus currently pays \$71.47 a ton to landfill the trash — while it earns, on average, \$80 a ton for **recycling paper**. King notes, *"The math is simple: the campus saves almost \$151.47 a ton when you recycle versus throwing it in the trash."*



Additional Zero Waste Event Case Studies

- Boston Conference & Exhibition Center
<http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/conservation/rrr/rogo/documents/boston-cec.pdf>
- Colorado University-Boulder's "Ralphie's Green Stadium"
http://www.cubuffs.com/ViewArticle.dbml?DB_OEM_ID=600&ATCLID=1549812
- Hallsmith Sysco Food Show, Boston 2008
http://www.nerc.org/documents/hallsmith_sysco_case_study_boston.pdf
- Indio International Tamale Festival 2008
<http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/Venues/Implement/IndioEnviroRpt.pdf>
- Lowell Folk Festival
<http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/conservation/rrr/rogo/documents/lowell.pdf>
- National Cherry Blossom Festival
<http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/conservation/rrr/rogo/documents/cherry-fest.pdf>
- Ohio Stadium
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hMrOHMjmXN8&feature=youtu.be>
http://sustainability.osu.edu/assets/files/zerowaste/ZeroWaste_FactSheet_half.pdf
<http://sustainability.osu.edu/zerowastefaq.html>
- Oregon Convention Center
<http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/conservation/rrr/rogo/documents/oregon.pdf>
- Recycling Council of Ontario, Profiles of Zero Waste Events Around the World
<http://zerowasteevents.ca/profiles>
- San Francisco's Moscone Center
<http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/conservation/rrr/rogo/documents/moscone.pdf>
- San Francisco's "Work of Art" Catering Firm
<http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/Venues/Implement/WorkofArt.htm>
- Sodexo Company Rentschler 2009-2010
http://www.nerc.org/documents/sodexo_rentscher_field_case_study.pdf
- SolarFest 2009
http://www.nerc.org/documents/solarfest_case_study.pdf
- Woody Guthrie Folk Festival
<http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/conservation/rrr/rogo/documents/guthrie.pdf>
- Zero Waste South Australia
http://www.zerowaste.sa.gov.au/upload/resources/publications/events/event_waste_audi

[ts_2.pdf](#)

APPENDICES

- Appendix A – Zero Waste Event Timeline and Checklist
 - Appendix B – Sample Zero Waste Guidelines for a Non-Food Vendor
 - Appendix C – Preferred Materials and Composting Guidelines
 - Appendix D – Zero Waste Guide to Purchasing Reusable and Compostable Serving Ware
 - Appendix E – Sample Sustainable Practices Pavilion Sheet (Oak Park Microbrew Review)
 - Appendix F – Sample Zero Waste Educational Sign
 - Appendix G – Sample Zero Waste Electronic Invitation (Oak Park Microbrew Review)
 - Appendix H - Sample Venue Map (Oak Park Microbrew Review).
 - Appendix I – Sample Volunteer Roles
 - Appendix J – Sample Zero Waste Talking Points for Attendees and Vendors/Caterers
 - Appendix K – Sample Tracking Waste Diversion Form
 - Appendix L – Other Zero Waste Event Planning Resources and Websites
-

❖ Appendix A – Zero Waste Event Timeline and Checklist

BEFORE EVENT

Six months to one year before event

- ☐ Select a venue.
- ☐ Identify materials in the event waste stream.
- ☐ Research procurement opportunities for service ware and zero waste equipment.
- ☐ Begin meeting with potential vendors and caterers.

Three to six months before event

- ☐ Decide which zero waste strategies you will employ at your event.
- ☐ Determine which materials you will use at your event (reusable, compostable, or recyclable).
- ☐ Create a zero waste information sheet, an acceptable items list, and a document containing food guidelines.
- ☐ Provide vendors and caterers with the information sheet, item list, and food guidelines.
- ☐ Finalize vendor and caterer event contracts.
- ☐ If applicable, purchase reusable or compostable service ware, or require that vendors provide and use reusable or compostable service ware.

Two to three months prior to event

- ☐ Send out attendee invitations.
- ☐ Begin marketing & publicity.
- ☐ Map venue and existing bins.
- ☐ Explore opportunities for procuring donated items.
- ☐ Select and purchase sorting bins and bags.
- ☐ Create signage to accompany sorting stations.
- ☐ Order additional zero waste equipment.
- ☐ Begin training staff and assemble your Zero Waste Team, including a Zero Waste Leader.
- ☐ Identify end-site locations and haulers.
- ☐ Identify zero waste goals for your event.
- ☐ Determine method(s) for measuring event diversion.
- ☐ Decide how you will showcase diversion success at the event.

One week prior to event

- ☐ If applicable, confirm donation pick-up.
- ☐ Confirm equipment delivery.
- ☐ Confirm hauler schedule.
- ☐ Print signage.
- ☐ Distribute zero waste procedure reminders to vendors and caterers.
- ☐ Provide staff and volunteers with all necessary informational materials.

DAY OF EVENT

- ☐ Train staff and volunteers and equip them with all materials and supplies.
- ☐ Set up sorting stations and weight station, if applicable.
- ☐ Place signage near and on containers.
- ☐ Tape sample items to collection containers.
- ☐ Place necessary supplies at each sorting station.
- ☐ Cover or remove existing bins if they are not part of the Resource Recovery Stations.
- ☐ Hang/set up zero waste educational signs.
- ☐ Situate volunteers near sorting stations and highly trafficked areas.
- ☐ If applicable, allocate and deliver reusable/compostable/recyclable serving ware to vendors.
- ☐ Periodically remind attendees of zero waste guidelines through PA announcements.
- ☐ Monitor Resource Recovery Stations and re-sort any contaminated bins.
- ☐ Empty and remove full sorting bins as needed.
- ☐ Measure and record diversion.
- ☐ Showcase diversion success.
- ☐ Train newly arrived volunteers and staff.
- ☐ Restock serving ware as needed.
- ☐ Conduct and record final diversion measurements.
- ☐ Tear down sorting stations and other zero waste equipment.
- ☐ Clean up.

AFTER THE EVENT

- ☐ Encourage attendees to bring leftover food home using reusable containers.
- ☐ Compost any remaining leftover food.
- ☐ Ensure that compostable, recyclable, and landfill items are hauled to the correct end-sites.
- ☐ If applicable, return rented reusables.
- ☐ Store or donate extra supplies.
- ☐ Gain feedback from staff, volunteers, and attendees.
- ☐ Evaluate zero waste strategies and calculate your event waste diversion rate.
- ☐ Write a summary report.
- ☐ Publicize event successes.
- ☐ Thank staff, volunteers, vendors, and attendees for participating in your event.
- ☐ Plan next zero waste event!

❖ Appendix B – Sample Zero Waste Guidelines for a Non-Food Vendor

Non-Food Vendors Zero Waste Participation Agreement

Dear Vendor:

Thank you for your interest in participating at *[event name]*! We are proud to announce that this event will be a Zero Waste event.

The goal at a Zero Waste event is to plan ahead and distribute only materials that are recyclable or compostable (not any materials that will be landfilled). “Resource Recovery **Stations**” **consisting of** recycling, compost and liquid collection containers will be available to participants at numerous locations throughout *[the event venue]*. As a vendor handing out products at this event, you play a vital part in the success of our Zero Waste initiative.

Vendors attending *[event name]* are required to hand out only recyclable, compostable or reusable materials. Remember, if an item is not recyclable locally, we cannot recycle it, even if your supplier has told you it can be recycled. If you have any questions as to whether your items are considered recyclable or compostable, please call *[event Zero Waste Leader name and contact number]*. We will answer your questions and help you understand your important role in this Zero Waste event. Please note that you will be asked to remove any non-recyclable or non-compostable items from your booth for the duration of the event. You will only be allowed to distribute recyclable or compostable products.

Your signature on the vendor application acknowledges that you will abide by all Zero Waste guidelines and requirements. Our Zero Waste goal is simple to attain if you plan ahead of time the kinds of materials you will be providing to the public at the event. Here are some ideas that can help you achieve this goal:

- Use the least amount of packaging possible or remove the packaging before distributing the item.
- **Use compostable “goodie” bags** rather than plastic bags.
- Use post-consumer (preferred) or recycled content paper for flyers, programs and handouts. Choose to print on paper with the highest recycled content you can find.
- **Do not use “neon” fluorescent or dark-colored papers.** These cannot be recycled.
- Do not use kraft or goldenrod (orange-brownish envelopes)
- Candy wrappers, energy bars, chip bags and packaging from pre-packaged food are landfill items.

We cannot compost or recycle CANDY WRAPPERS of any kind. Please consider the health of our participants and the environment and avoid including individually wrapped candy at your booth. See the attached Guidelines for Containers and Service Ware for Zero Waste Events

Thank you for supporting our Zero Waste goal and we look forward to working with you to make this a successful Zero Waste event.

Sincerely,

[Event Zero Waste Leader]

❖ Appendix C – Preferred Materials and Composting Guidelines

	Preferred Materials	Don't Use These Materials
REUSABLE	Glass	Polyvinyl chloride (PVC)
	Lead-free ceramic/stoneware	Polyethylene terephthalate (PET)
	Bio-based materials	Polycarbonate
	Stainless steel	
	Polyethylene	
	Polypropylene	
COMPOSTABLE*	ASTM D6400 or D6868 certified compostable starch	Compostable foodware that is not ASTM D6400 or D6868 certified
	ASTM D6400 or D6868 certified compostable sugarcane bagasse	
	ASTM D6400 or D6868 certified compostable polylactic acid (PLA)	
DISPOSABLE	Bio-based materials (corn, potato, sugarcane bagasse, perennial grasses)	Fossil-fuel based products (plastic, polystyrene/Styrofoam)
	Unbleached paper made from post-consumer recycled content	Bleached paper made from virgin resources

*Preferred compostable materials are based on Land & Lakes Compost Facility requirements.

COLOR CODE FOR CHART
Most Preferred Materials
Preferred Materials
Avoid These Materials
Do Not Use These Materials

Hauling Compostable Materials

If you are unable to purchase or rent reusables for your event, compostables are the next best choice.

Chicago's Land & Lakes Compost Facility will accept compostables meeting ASTM D6400 or D6868 certification, as well as any food scraps (including bones), cardboard and paper, wood pallets, and non-treated or unpainted wood. Land & Lakes will **NOT** accept wood that has been treated or painted, metal, or plastics other than those meeting ASTM certification.

More Information:

Land & Lakes: Yard & Food Waste Compost Facility
Harbor View, 2000 E. 122nd Street, Chicago, IL 60633

<http://www.land-and-lakes.com> // 773-646-3780

Hours: Monday – Friday, 7:00 am - 3:30 pm; Saturday – Sunday, CLOSED

❖ Appendix D – Zero Waste Guide to Purchasing Reusable and Compostable Serving Ware

Vendor Information	Internet Link	Type of Foodware	Products	Prices*
All Star Party Rental Chicagoland info@all-starpartyrental.com (847) 769-4147 <i>Only single-item prices available online</i> <i>For rent only</i>	http://all-starpartyrental.com/dinnerware.html	Reusable (rented) Porcelain (plate, bowl, cup) Stainless steel (utensils)	10 in. dinner plate Salad/dessert plate Soup bowl Coffee cup Cup Fork Knife Spoon	\$0.50 \$0.40 \$0.40 \$0.40 \$0.50 \$0.30 \$0.30 \$0.30
Ikea Store locations in IL <i>Bulk prices available online</i> <i>Single-item prices available online</i>	http://www.ikea.com/us/en/catalog/categories/departments/eating/18860/	Reusable Stoneware (plate, bowl, mug) Glass (cup) Stainless steel (utensils)	9 in. LUGN plate 6 in. LUGN bowl 8 oz. FARGRIK coffee mug 6 oz. REKO glass cup Utensil set (forks, knives, spoons, teaspoons; 4 of each)	\$0.79 \$0.79 \$0.99 \$1.49 (6 case) \$3.29 (16-piece)
The WEBstaurant Store help@webstaurantstore.com (717) 392-7422 <i>Only bulk prices available</i>	http://www.webstaurantstore.com/	Reusable Polyester & cotton (napkin)	20" by 20" cloth napkin	\$10.49 (12 case)
Dolphin Blue Dallas, Texas (214) 565-0355 (800) 932-7715 <i>Only bulk prices available online</i>	http://www.dolphinblue.com/	Reusable 100% post-consumer recycled #5 plastic (all) Melamine & BPA-free**	10 in. plate 16 oz. bowl 16 oz. cup Utensil set (forks, knives, spoons; 8 of each)	\$22.99 (8 case) \$25.49 (4 case) \$25.49 (4 case) \$21.49 (24-piece)
Green Paper Products Highland Heights, Ohio (216) 990-5464 Toll-free: (877) 341-5464 <i>Bulk prices available online</i> <i>Single-item pricing available online (for some products)</i>	http://greenpaperproducts.com/	All products meet ASTM D6400 or D6868 compostability standards Sugarcane bagasse (plate, bowl) PLA/corn starch (cups, utensils)	10 in. dinner plate 12 oz. bowl 10 oz. hot cup 10 oz. cold cup 6" Fork 6" Knife 6" Spoon	\$63.77 (500 case) \$63.85 (1000 case) \$95.92 (1000 case) \$98.43 (1000 case) \$54.50 (1000 case) \$54.50 (1000 case) \$54.50 (1000 case)
Eco-Products customercare@ecoproducts.com 1 (866) 402-1831 <i>Only bulk prices available online</i>	http://www.ecoproductsstore.com/	All products meet ASTM D6400 or D6868 compostability standards Sugarcane bagasse (plate, bowl) PLA/corn starch (cups, utensils) Recycled paper (napkin)	10 in. dinner plate 12 oz. bowl 8 oz. insulated hot cup 7 oz. cold cup 6" Fork 6" Knife 6" Spoon Recycled lunch napkin	\$68.71 (500 case) \$83.93 (1000 case) \$97.18 (800 case) \$109.67 (2000 case) \$56.35 (1000 case) \$56.35 (1000 case) \$56.35 (1000 case) \$43.99 (2400 case)

* Prices as of 7/24/12.

**BPA-free plastic materials often use alternatives that are not necessarily safer than BPA; for this reason, plastic reusable foodware is less preferable than the other listed types of reusable foodware, which are not made from plastic.

5th Annual Oak Park Micro Brew Review August 18, 2012

Sustainable Practices at this Event

Local and/or Organic Food

All participating restaurants were encouraged to use local farms and suppliers for their event servings. Those utilized are listed below:

- **Barclay's American Grille**
- **Gilbert's Craft Sausages, Plymouth, WI**
- Khyber Pass
- **Mancini's**
- Marion Street Cheese Market
- The Kinderhook Tap
- The Perfect Dinner
- **Winberie's**

Zero Waste Practices

- Zero Waste Stations are set up throughout the event:
 - Attendees are encouraged and coached by volunteers on how to sort their discards into (4) receptacles: Liquid; Recyclables, Compostables, and Landfill.
 - Recyclables and Landfill receptacles are then discarded accordingly into the larger dumpsters maintained by the Village of Oak Park.
 - Compostables are hauled away to City Farm, a sustainable vegetable farm bordering two very diverse Chicago neighborhoods: Cabrini-Green (formerly) and the Gold Coast.
- Compostable plates, napkins, forks and cups were provided to the event by Whole Foods Market, River Forest.
- All brewers were asked to sign off on ZW practices prior to participating (no bottles or cans served; all supplies used must be reusable, recyclable or compostable; resources must be sorted accordingly in all event receptacles).
- All food vendors were also asked to sign off on ZW practices prior to participating (no bottled or canned beverages may be served; all supplies used must be reusable or compostable; no individually wrapped condiments may be

used; absolutely no Styrofoam [#6] items may be used; resources must be sorted accordingly in all event receptacles).

- Instead of selling or providing bottled water at the event, a team of volunteers is filling reusable water coolers with fresh, chilled water from a water re-fill station at Whole Foods, River Forest. Guests can then use their reusable tasting glasses to drink water from these coolers.
- Attempts were made to reduce quantities of printed paper where possible. Guests are encouraged to share event programs and recycle them when exiting, or simply take a one-page event map instead.
- Additional effort and expense is put into event signage each year to make it sustainable as new products come on the market:
 - Signs are reused from year to year when possible.
 - Old plastic/vinyl signs can be re-purposed with a new design to avoid going to the landfill.
 - When ordering new signs, we use a material made from ground up printer cartridges called MicroStrate. These signs are very durable and can be re-purposed year to year to accommodate design changes. Contact **“It’s a Sign” in Oak Park for additional information.**
- This year our new vendor, Taphandles, printed our tasting glasses at a processing plant in Illinois, thereby reducing the truck miles needed for shipment of the glasses.
- We ensure that all inks used for tasting glasses and event t-shirts are compliant with Proposition 65.

Areas for Improvement

There are many ways that we, as the event producers, can continue to improve our sustainability efforts. Here are a few things we hope to address in the coming years:

- **Wristbands.** We have not yet found reasonably priced recyclable wristbands, so this is something we are continuing to explore.
- **Trash brought in from the outside.** The event area is open to the public whether they are attending our event or not, so landfill discards of course still exist in the area.
- **Fewer paper copies of lists at check-in.** This year we have added a mobile check-in option to reduce the number of printed check-ins. For future years, we hope to find a way to go *entirely* paperless.

❖ Appendix F – Sample Zero Waste Educational Sign

This is a Zero Waste Event!

What is Zero Waste?

"Zero Waste is a goal that is ethical, economical, efficient and visionary, to guide people in changing their lifestyles and practices to emulate sustainable natural cycles, where all discarded materials are designed to become resources for others to use."

- Zero Waste International Alliance



Key components:

- ❖ **Source Reduction:** Eliminating waste at the source, before it is created.
- ❖ **Product Stewardship:** Selecting materials with their best end-use in mind. In other words, if materials cannot be reused, recycled, or composted, these materials should not be used.
- ❖ **Recycling:** Processing used materials into new products to divert waste from the landfill.
- ❖ **Composting:** Turning organics such as food scraps, yard waste, and paper back into soil that can then be used to grow new plants and crops.
- ❖ **Liquids:** Diverting liquid from the landfill by collecting it beforehand. This helps to prevent groundwater contamination by chemical leachates and also helps to keep pests out of dumpsters.

Why Zero Waste?

- ❖ The linear model of consumerism (extracting virgin resources for products and packaging, then discarding these resources to landfills or incinerators) is a primary cause of global resource depletion and associated environmental, climate, and social problems.
- ❖ Nearly half of all U.S. landfills are full or have been closed because of groundwater contamination. Establishing new landfills as a long-term strategy is not sustainable due to pollution (including methane emissions, other greenhouse gas leaks, and groundwater pollution), high landfill siting and maintenance costs, inadequate landfill closing accountability, and resistance among residents to live near sites.
- ❖ To achieve a sustainable system of managing our resources, communities must incorporate nature's law, **waste = food**, and channel materials into re-use and new production.



<http://www.davisvoice.com>



<http://www.carolinagreenfair.com>

❖ Appendix G – Sample Zero Waste Electronic Invitation (Oak Park Microbrew Review)

Greetings Seven Generations
Ahead Supporter,

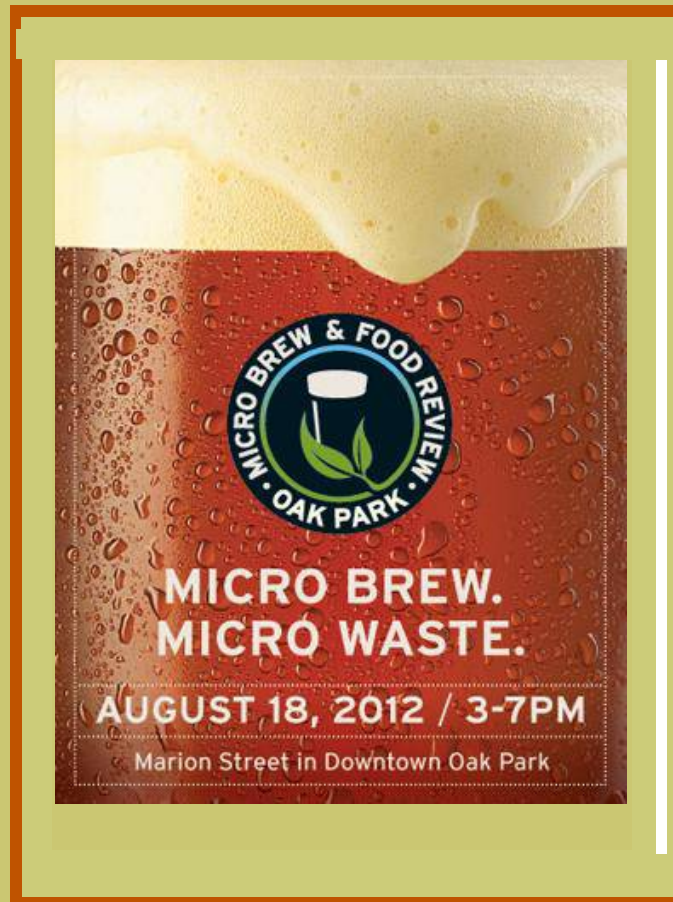
SGA's largest fundraiser, the [5th Annual Oak Park Micro Brew Review](#) will be held August 18, 2012, 3pm - 7pm on Marion Street in Oak Park, IL. As many of you may know, this is also the largest "Zero Waste"

craft beer event in the Midwest, with an emphasis on reducing, reusing and recycling as much as possible in both planning for the event and during the event. Tickets are selling faster than ever this year, so we wanted to send you this special reminder to purchase your tickets soon!

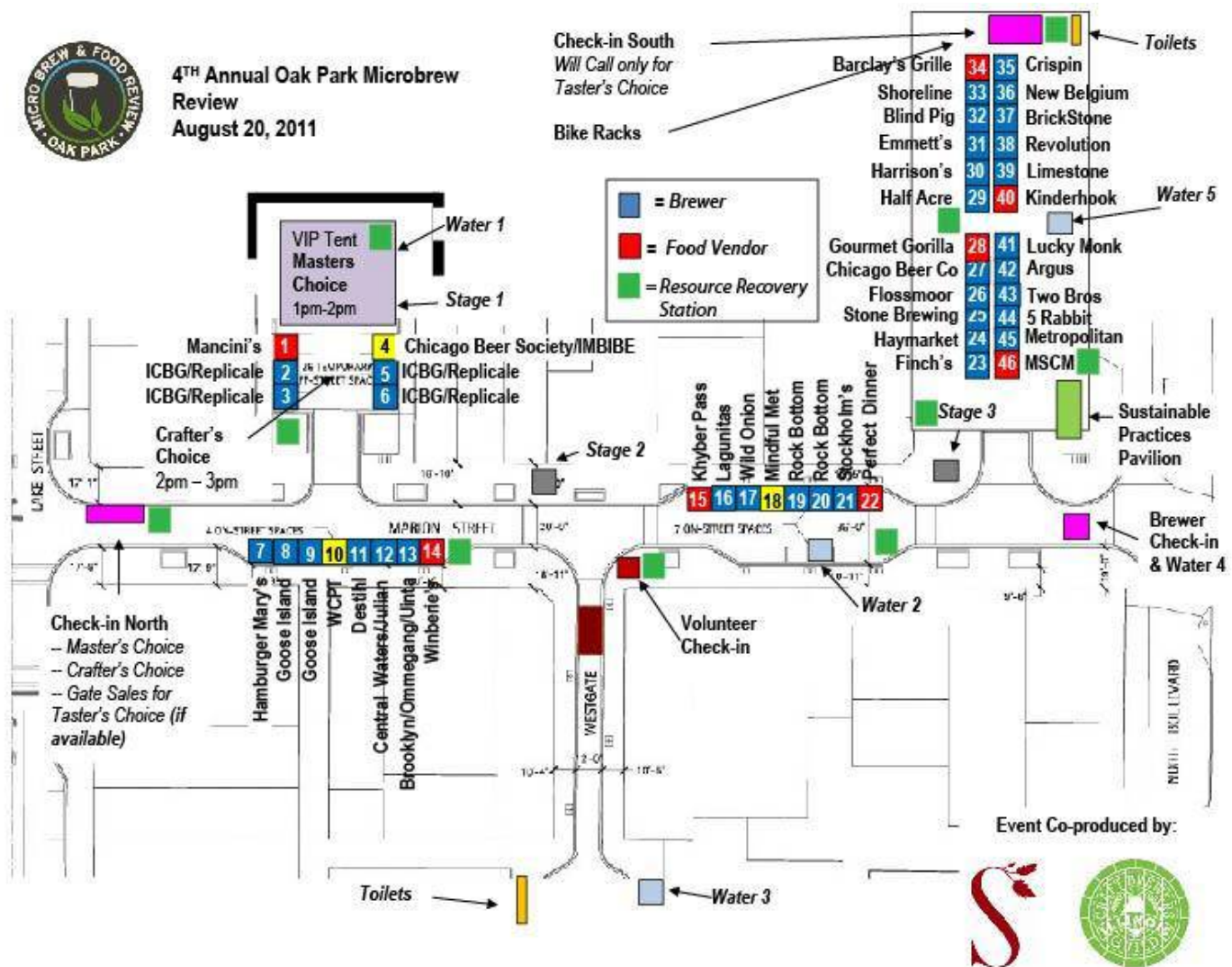
Beyond adding space, brewers and beer to this year's event, we are committed to keeping it a manageable, enjoyable experience for our participants, so all tickets ARE limited. Don't miss out on the fun, purchase your tickets today!

[Click here for details and to purchase tickets.](#)

Hope to see you this Summer!



❖ Appendix H – Sample Venue Map (Oak Park Microbrew Review)



❖ Appendix I – Sample Volunteer Roles

Thank you for volunteering today! Please review the roles below, including the one you've been assigned to, in order to familiarize yourself with the entire zero waste (ZW) event process.

Role Overviews for the Zero Waste Event Team:

- **ZW Event Leader:**
The ZW Event Leader is responsible for overseeing the entire zero waste component of the event. The leader should carry a clipboard with all important documents, such as the venue layout with plotted ZW stations, the volunteer list with assigned positions, the sheet for measuring waste diversion, and the event schedule.
- **ZW Educator/Station Monitor:**
The ZW Educator/Station Monitor educates attendees on how to properly sort their items. Each receptacle is designated to collect a particular waste stream (see signage). Make sure whatever item is being sorted goes into its proper receptacle. If an item isn't properly sorted, rescue that material (with gloves!) and put it in its proper place. Encourage attendees to think about the benefits of recovering these valuable resources.
- **Bag Runner:**
The Bag Runner floats around to each station picking up full bags that are ready to be weighed. When checking each station, look within each receptacle to make sure streams aren't being contaminated. If items have been sorted improperly, rescue the material (with gloves!) and put it in its proper place.
 - 1) When the bag is full, pull it out of its bin.
 - 2) Replace the old bag with a new one (have one of each kind on you at all times).
 - 3) On a label, write the station number that indicates where the bag came from, as well as the waste stream of the bag's contents (recyclable, compostable, landfill, etc.).
 - 4) Look inside the bag to determine if there is contamination. If there is, sort the misplaced items into the proper receptacles.
 - 5) Close bag and attach label.
 - 6) Bring the bag to the weight station if measuring diversion rate. Then bring the bag to the end storage site to wait for hauler pick up.

If Measuring Waste Diversion...

- **Receiver:**
The Receiver receives all bags coming in to be weighed. If measuring distribution data, make sure the runner has put a label on the bag that signifies which station it came from. Check to make sure that the bag isn't contaminated. If it is, sort (with gloves!). If not, give the bag to the Weigher to be measured.
- **Weigher:**
The Weigher is in charge of the scale and making sure that all bags are weighed properly. He/she should report the data to the Recorder. After data is recorded, the weigher will discard the bags into the proper receptacles.
- **Recorder:**
The Recorder is in charge of recording all data from the event on the recording sheet provided. This includes weights and counts for all waste streams that will be measured. Recorder will know which streams require

counts in addition to weights based on the recording sheet provided. Any questions should be directed to the ZW Event Lead.

❖ Appendix J – Sample Zero Waste Talking Points for Attendees and Vendors/Caterers

Q. What is Zero Waste?

A. Zero waste is a philosophy and a design principle for the 21st century. It includes reducing, reusing, recycling, and composting, but goes beyond that by taking a whole system approach to the vast flow of resources and waste through human society.

Zero waste reduces consumption, minimizes waste, maximizes recycling and composting, and ensures that products are made to be reused, repaired or recycled back into nature or the marketplace.

Q. How much of a difference will zero waste really make?

A: Before this event was zero waste, we created _____ pounds/dumpsters of garbage that was sent to the landfill. This year we will reduce that by 90%. Not only are we reducing the amount of waste sent to the landfill, thereby reducing air, soil, and water pollution, but we are also recovering valuable resources that can be repurposed for other uses. Food scraps are being used to create soil and feedstock, liquids go into the sewer to be cleaned, processed, and reused in our fresh water supply, and recycled materials prevent the need to extract new resources for new products. You can make a difference today by helping out.

Q: Why do these plates and cups go into the compost bin instead of the recycling?

A: These items are made of _____ [*corn, sugarcane bagasse, PLA, etc.*] and can therefore be broken down by microorganisms into smaller and smaller parts, eventually becoming soil that can be used for growing more plants. These compostable service ware items meet ASTM 6400 or 6868 compostability standards, meaning that they biodegrade in municipal or industrial composting facilities at a specified rate that is usually 180 days or fewer. Composting thus creates an extremely rich, useful end product that requires less energy than recycling products.

Q: Why is recycling better than throwing things away?

A: Recycling is better than throwing resources away because it:

- a) conserves natural resources by reducing our need to mine for raw, virgin materials,
- b) reduces energy consumption that would be necessary to manufacture new materials from scratch, and
- c) creates less air, soil, and water pollution than manufacturing new products and landfilling products we feel we no longer have a use for.


Appendix K – Tracking Waste Diversion

This sample page from a Waste Diversion Tracking chart shows how to record information on waste diversion as the event is held. Note that there are subsequent pages that document measures for compostables, liquids and landfill.

Organizing a Zero Waste Event
Tracking Waste Diversion

Use this document to collect weights and measurements from each station/receptacle.
All bags should be weighed before they are taken to their respective end-sites.

Waste Stream	Time	Station #	Weight (Weight of Contents Minus Weight of Bucket)	Contaminated? (Y/N – if yes, describe)	Auditor's Name	Notes
Co-mingled Recycling (Plastic, paper, aluminum, etc.)						
Total Weight of Station Collections:						


1

❖ Appendix L – Other Zero Waste Event Planning Resources and Websites

- City of Santa Monica
 - http://www.smgov.net/uploadedFiles/Departments/Public_Works/Solid_Waste/Zero%20Waste%20Guide2011.pdf
- Eco-Cycle
 - <http://old.ecocycle.org/zwevents/moretips.cfm>
- Marin Sanitary Service
 - http://www.marinsanitary.com/component/docman/doc_download/31-zero-waste-event-planning-guide?Itemid=267
- Powell River Regional District
 - <http://letstalktrashteam.files.wordpress.com/2012/03/zerowastefinal.pdf>
 - <http://letstalktrashteam.files.wordpress.com/2011/07/prrd-zwg-draft-sept-2011.pdf>
- Recycling Council of Ontario, Zero Waste Toolkit for Event Coordinators
 - <http://zerowasteevents.ca/home>
- Zero Waste California, Integrated Waste Management Board
 - <http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/Publications/LocalAsst/31006002.pdf>
- Zero Waste South Australia

- <http://www.zerowaste.sa.gov.au/upload/resource-centre/publications/events/2010%20EVENTS%20GUIDE.pdf>