

POLICY BRIEF: Zero Waste Plan for the National Folk Festival



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mayor Jake Day recently announced that the National Folk Festival, hosted by the City of Salisbury September 7th-9th 2018, will be a zero waste event. Typically, zero waste events divert at least 80% of the event's non-hazardous waste from landfills. To accomplish this goal, this proposal outlines a three step Zero Waste Plan for the festival's Green Committee. First, waste stations located throughout the event site will pair trash containers with recycling and compost bins providing green disposal options for attendees. Second, the Folk Festival's Green Committee will work with food vendors prior to the event to assure that material distributed may be easily composted or recycled. Third, a team of zero waste volunteers will remove contamination from recyclable and compostable waste streams. This proposal describes an in-house process for the thoughtful waste reduction of materials at the Folk Festival.

CONTEXT AND IMPORTANCE

Zero waste is the diversion of non-hazardous waste from landfills through recycling, composting, reducing, and reusing. Economic, environmental, and social benefits to zero waste events include lowering event costs by reducing garbage expenses, diverting recyclable and compostable materials from entering the landfill, and reducing methane generation from landfills by diverting and composting organic materials. A zero waste National Folk Festival will increase public awareness of recycling, composting, and waste diversion while promoting a positive sustainability image for the city. Waste reduction will also save the city money by reducing the cost to dispose of garbage sent to the landfill. Hosting a zero waste event conveys leadership in waste reduction and has the ability to protect community health (ZeroWasteNEO, 2015).

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Successful zero waste events provide attendees with easy and convenient waste disposal options. This proposal adapts a three step process that is commonly used in zero waste events for Salisbury's National Folk Festival.

Waste Stations: Event waste stations will provide garbage, recycling, and composting disposal containers for participants. Pairing all three bins assures attendees easy access to all waste

disposal options. Waste stations will be placed in visible, high traffic locations where food and beverages are consumed, throughout concert venues, near rest rooms, and at exits from the event.

Waste stations will be no more than 150 feet apart to ensure adequate coverage. All bins will be clearly labeled with words and pictures as well as staffed with volunteers. Color coding of bins will promote visibility and consistency:

- Recycling: Blue
- Garbage: Black or grey
- Compost: Green or orange

Recyclable materials and garbage will be transported to the Wicomico Landfill utilizing existing city contracts. Disposing of compostable material will require a separate, one time contract. One option is to utilize Blue Hen Organics, a composting company in Millville, DE, approximately thirty miles from the City of Salisbury. Few composting options are available in this area; Blue Hen Organics is the closest and most accessible. Composting for food waste from Blue Hen costs \$50/ton and require the City to transport the material to the facility the Monday following the event.

Food Vendor Requirements: Successful zero waste events require working with food vendors to assure the distribution of (as much as possible) only compostable or recyclable materials. Vending contracts should include zero waste language regarding the types of material that should and should not be distributed.

Education: Education is a key component to any successful zero waste event. As many attendees, volunteers, and vendors will be familiar with zero waste, it is important to provide clear and easily accessible information. Tables with program information will be located in easily visible locations. Effective signage and labeling are vital to the patrons and vendors who will be disposing of waste. The signs must be visible, to the point, and easily navigable.

Community Volunteers: Community volunteers will assure program success by staffing waste stations to assist attendees in disposal decision making. Volunteers will also sort collected material, removing contamination at an off-site sorting location. A minimum of fifty volunteers from local groups such as Salisbury University's Honors College will be necessary to run the program successfully for three days. The Folk Festival Green Team will facilitate recruitment

and training sessions for volunteers prior to the event. This will ensure volunteers understand the zero waste procedures.

Funding: While zero waste events reduce garbage disposal costs, they also create associated financial needs such as additional signage, funding for compost disposal, and promotional materials such as t-shirts for volunteers. Securing corporate sponsors is one way to offset these costs.

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REFERENCES:

Z. (2015). *Zero Waste Event Planning Guide* [Pamphlet]. Cleveland, Ohio: ZeroWasteNeo

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Zero Waste Event Planning Guide 2015 Compiled by Zero Waste Neo:

https://d3n8a8pro7vhm.cloudfront.net/sustainablecleveland/pages/149/attachments/original/1461797795/Zero_Waste_Event_Planning_Guide.pdf?1461797795

Zero Waste Event Planning Guide: Think Recycling

https://www.rethinkrecycling.com/sites/default/files/downloads/events/zero_waste_event_planning_guide.pdf

Seven Generations Ahead Event Planning Guide

https://sevendgenerationsahead.org/images/work/zerowaste/SGA_ZW_Event_Planning_Guide_FINAL

EPA Summary: Lowell Folk Festival Recycling Program (see attachment)