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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Organics Recycling Industries Prepare Strategic Planning Event to  
Improve Circularity of Compostables and Compost**

In late September 2024, 200 stakeholders will gather in Denver, CO to strategize around issues to address the opportunities and challenges food-contact compostable packaging presents for compost facilities, a practice growing in demand, in communities around the US but hitting roadblocks of contamination and acceptance in some locations. The strategic planning event is part of a two-year initiative, ***Improving the Circularity of Compostables and Compost***, a systems change effort [focused](#) on engaging pioneers from all parts of the system to come together to create a shared vision and a collective road map toward optimizing the circular economy of the US composting industry.

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) laws and compostable packaging requirements are growing in popularity, and issues of labeling, upstream design of compostables, downstream compost facility processing costs, and product quality are collectively driving a need for creative and responsible solutions. For the ***Improving the Circularity of Compostables and Compost*** Future Search event, a [Steering Committee](#) of 30 thought leaders are assembling a comprehensive stakeholder participation list to engage at the three-day event September 23-26, 2024, to align on common ground and create action plans for the best paths forward for the compostables and compost industries.

“We are seeking solutions that will be a common denominator for success,” said Frank Franciosi, executive director of the US Composting Council and an organizational steering committee member.” The USCC has been part of this process from the beginning to ensure that the perspectives of compost manufacturing are front and center in the formation of solutions.”

The group is using the [Future Search](#) strategic planning process, a principle-based, highly structured three-day meeting that helps people transform their capability for action very quickly. The Future Search model has been used nationally and internationally for complex systems change work for over 30 years by businesses and industries, communities and organizations. The event is task-focused and will bring stakeholders together from across the system with the intention of generating alignment and co-creating a strategic plan based on

common ground and an emphasis on a preferred future that uplifts the health of the US composting system for all.

“This process has had successful results in many complex systems challenged with a wide diversity of players, and is a good fit for the issues we face in improving the relationships to develop a shared strategy and accountability for composting food and food related packaging materials,” said Susan Thoman of the Compost Manufacturing Alliance, a steering committee member and a member of the Future Search Leadership Team. Future Search has been used recently by the United Nations, large government agencies, universities, and topic-based coalitions like Blue Ridge PRISM.

The Steering Committee has been working collaboratively to guide the purpose of the project and planning of the culminating event, which will be preceded by 14 “Discovery Workshops” focused on the range of realities faced by the various stakeholders in the value chain and solid waste systems for compost and compostable packaging. All the workshops in the series are available on the project’s YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/@ImprovingtheCircularity/videos>

"Now is the time to take a deep drive into our processes to support food diversion for the benefits of our environment and soils. Already, the workshops have brought to light many insights and challenges of creating a circular system," says Clinton Sander, Marketing Manager at A1 Organics.

This event not only addresses the needs within the composting industry, but within packaging groups as well. "The upcoming Future Search event is a unique opportunity for leaders across the composting and compostable packaging industries to collaboratively define a shared vision. By focusing on collective solutions, we can enhance the circularity of compostables and foster a sustainable future for composting. We look forward to seeing what the industries can do together," Ashley Elzinga, Director, Sustainability & Outreach for the Foodservice Packaging Institute.

Invitations to the event are in process. For more information about the Future Search process, or how to attend the event in September, contact the project’s co-facilitators Candy Castellanos Kratz or Arielle Sullivan at [compostablesfuturesearch@gmail.com](mailto:compostablesfuturesearch@gmail.com).

Join the conversation on [LinkedIn](#).

## RESOURCES

[Video](#) informational overview (12-minutes)

Discovery Workshop RSVP [Form](#)

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