



BK ROT

2017 Annual Report



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BK ROT



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"This is one of my favorite places to be at. Now I see that people really care about the environment." - Jazmin, BK ROT Biker & Composter

Our Work

BK ROT is New York City's first community supported bike powered organic waste hauling and composting service. Our project is staffed by local young adults who haul organic waste from small businesses and transform it into high quality compost. Our operations provide accessible, educational jobs for emerging environmental leaders while creating more opportunities for our community to fight climate change.



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Our Values

We work at the intersection of environmental and social injustices impacting our collective health and ecosystem. BK ROT creates space for the leadership of Black, Brown, Undocumented, Migrant, Women, and LGTBQGN young adults, who disproportionately face the consequences of environmental destruction and yet are excluded from tables where solutions are decided on. We are supporting the next generation of environmental justice leaders who will shape our city.

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"Teamwork is everything here. If you don't do your job then somebody else's job gets delayed. It's self-accountability. To bring that out in your personal life is awesome."

-Mikael, BK ROT Biker

Our Impact

61 Tons

Organic waste diverted from regional landfills by our team of bikers in 2017. Working collaboratively, our bikers haul up to 300 lbs per trip from over twelve small local businesses that are committed to sustainability and our community.



60,000 lbs

Locally sourced, handmade compost produced. Working with a multi-bin system, windrows and a solar-powered trommel, we transform rotting food scraps into a living resource that is filled with billions of microorganisms that improve soils.

Our Site
14%

Retail
7%

Distribution

Gardens

8%

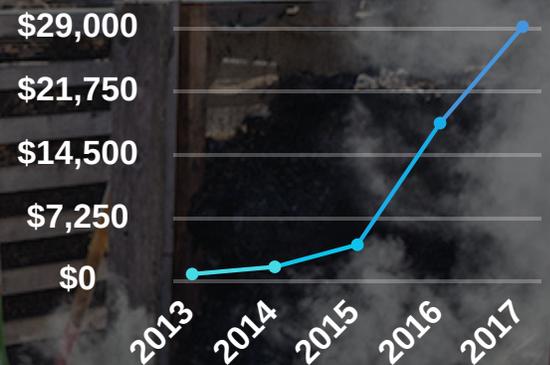
Urban Farms
7%

Public Spaces
3%

Individuals
62%

\$29,000

Income generated for seven part time workers. Our bikers and composters work an average of 4-5 hours per week and are paid \$15 per hour. In Fall 2017 we increased hours per worker to 8-12 hours per week.





"This year I attended a US Composting Council Compost Operations Management Course where I learned how to process bigger volumes of organics. Thanks to the training, this winter I become BK ROT's Operations Manager." - Victor, BK ROT's Most Senior Staff



Letter from the Co-Directors

In the summer of 2013 we were busy deconstructing a Nativity scene in the courtyard of a church where we would build four small compost bins out of repurposed wood. Along with Victor, who then was a junior in high school, we began weekly collections of food scraps from a dozen households and processing a humble 300 lbs a month. In hindsight, there was something visionary about launching BK ROT in a place where people come together each week seeking answers to the meaning of life, death and rebirth. Over the last four years, coming together each Sunday to perform a ritual of transforming food waste into a renewable resource, we've learned just how interconnected our lives are to the health of the microbiology that feels invisible from our daily routines. As we begin to see the affects of climate change here in New York City, we are affirmed in our need to reinforce these relationships and ground ourselves in the work of supporting the conditions for all life.

For us, composting is joyous, powerful, radical work. Joyous as we find ourselves connecting with hundreds of neighbors through producing compost, which renders beautiful wild spaces. Powerful in that the young people who carry out this physically demanding work remind us each week just how much our future rests with their appreciation and commitment to our ecosystems. And radical in that we are directly challenging the legacy and results of the waste industry in NYC.

We are proud that BK ROT is creating new and replicable possibilities. This project is about so much more than just diverting organic waste from landfills. It's supporting the next generation of leaders who will fight to make our city work for the millions of people, creatures and plants that live here. It's keeping resources cycling in our community - ecological, financial and human. It's about open space where people from all walks of life build community and take responsibility for our human impact. It's speaking to the injustice of "disposal communities" and asserting a healthier, more inclusive vision for the future.

Along with our incredible community of supporters, we are dreaming up the next phase of BK ROT. We're looking forward to a year of scaling up diversion rates through partnerships, solidifying our internal structure, and growing the BK ROT family. Join us!

Sandy Nurse
Founder, Executive Director

Renée Peperone
Board of Directors Chair



Our Goals for 2018

Divert 125 Tons of Organic Waste from landfills

Building on our success in 2017 our goal is to process 250,000 lbs of commercial organic waste and community food scraps through our drop off program. Over the years we have generated a waiting list of small businesses that are eager to work with us. Over the winter we will install an Aerated Static Pile system and open up more space for additional windrows to help us meet this demand, build more job opportunities, and increase compost for local use.

Pilot Decentralized Processing through Partners

BK ROT currently processes all the material we haul at Know Waste Lands, our composting site and wildlife garden, which can handle 90 tons annually. To scale up we will partner with gardens that have compost systems and provide them with raw material. The compost produce will remain in those gardens for their use. In February 2018, we began the pilot by bringing material to Myrtle Village Green, a large nearby community garden. Decentralizing our processing will enable us to increase our diversion rates while providing community gardens and urban farms with free compost.

Increase Advocacy

This year we are joining other Zero Waste advocates and NYC-based Micro-haulers in advocating for an inclusive and community informed commercial waste management system. We're demanding that Minority & Women Owned Businesses have pathways for participation in the city's new plan, and for concrete diversion targets for organic waste from landfills be made.

Solidify our Structure

Through dialogues with our Advisory Board and the support of the Lawyers Alliance for New York, in 2017 we formalized our internal structure. We welcomed Cecilia Piñeda, Felicity Slater, and Domingo Morales to our board, created an Executive Director role, and formalized our Operations Manager role. We aim to continue planning for organizational sustainability.



Join us every Sunday from 12-3pm
Know Waste Lands
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