

# PILOT: Adopt a Compost Bin

## GOAL

Engage the campus community in expanding compost bins into more public-facing areas to:

- Help reach our campus waste reduction goal while minimizing contamination
- Increase student awareness of the composting program

## HOW

Individuals and groups were invited to nominate and “adopt” a bin by visually monitoring it daily for contamination (non-compostable items).

**The process included:**

- Site visits with adopters to verify the appropriateness of the proposed location
- Planning signage and options for ongoing education/feedback if needed
- Approval from facility managers, custodial staff, and other operational partners
- Daily monitoring by bin adopters for one month to assess contamination levels
- Where needed, follow-up signage and tabling to help bin users understand proper placement of items

## WHERE

Haven Hall atrium, LSA Student Government office, Hatcher Library study areas, Diag outdoor bin, West Hall student lounge, Chrysler Building student common space, Kresge student locker/break area, Moore Building student area

## WHAT WE LEARNED

- Most of the 11 bins were found to be successful without any additional intervention. These have been added to the existing 1,000 bins on campus as part of our growing compost program.
- Two bins (in the more public areas of Haven Hall with high through traffic) required additional signage, tabling and monitoring.

## NEXT STEPS

- Continue to monitor the challenging locations and evaluate for potential adjustments.
- Launch another round of Adopt a Compost Bin locations and encourage more student engagement to focus on areas of high priority.
- Have ideas for potential pilot locations? [Let us know!](#)

This pilot supports U-M's sustainability goal of reducing waste sent to landfills by 40%.



## WHY DOES CONTAMINATION MATTER?

- Contamination in the compost bins—such as condiment wrappers, sugar packets, and non compostable coffee cups threatens our program.
- Contamination ends up as pollution: plastic doesn't belong in soil.
- With the compost industry taking a harder line against contamination, it is imperative for us to educate and engage our community to protect our composting opportunities.



GET INVOLVED: [ocs.umich.edu](https://ocs.umich.edu)

**M** | OFFICE OF CAMPUS SUSTAINABILITY