

Claire O'Dea
Summer 2023

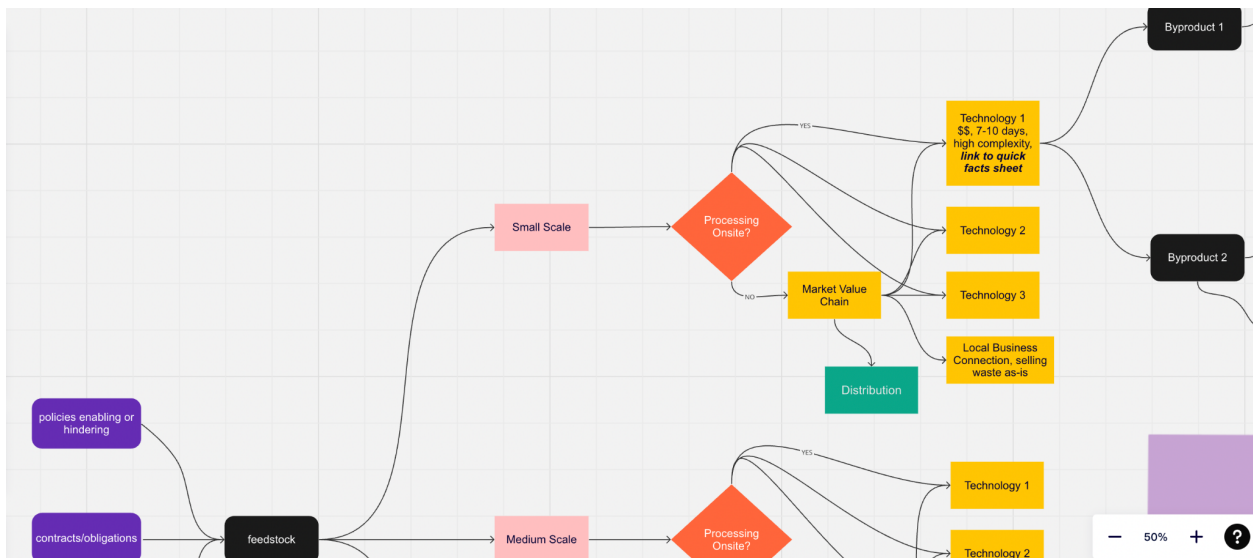
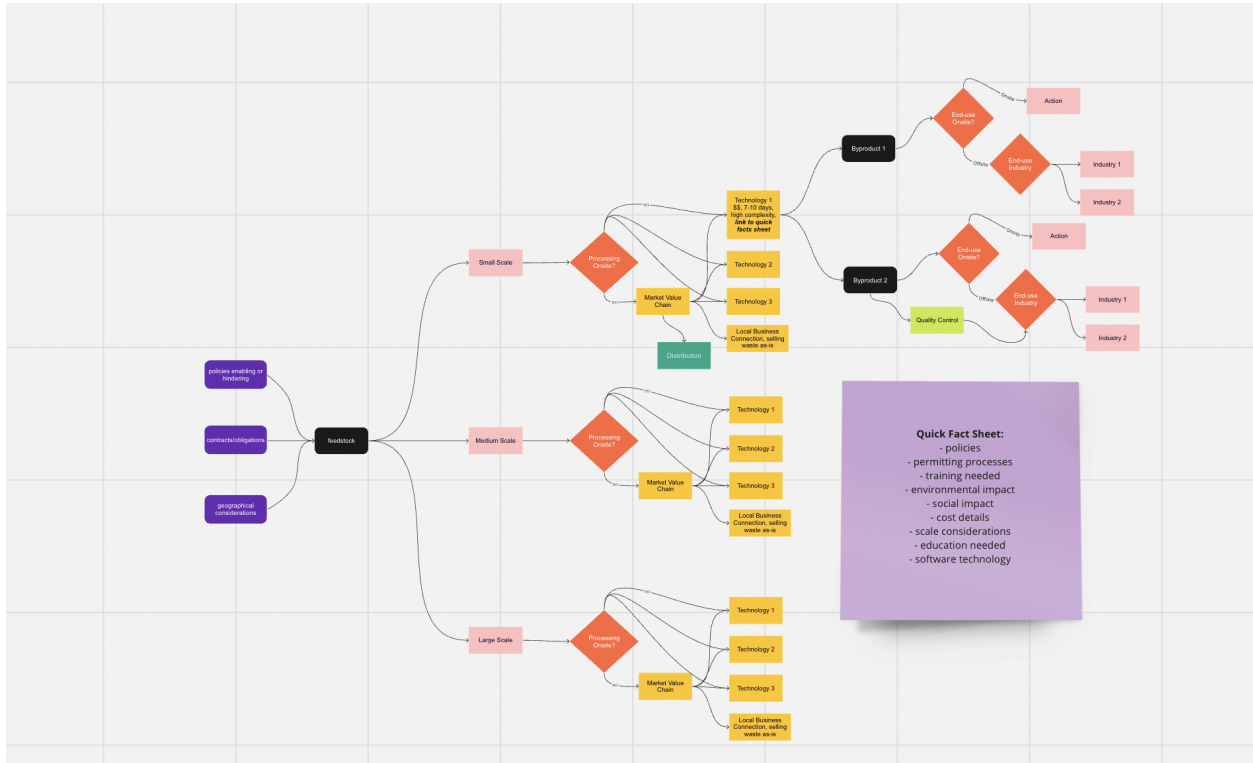
SFSI Summer Internship

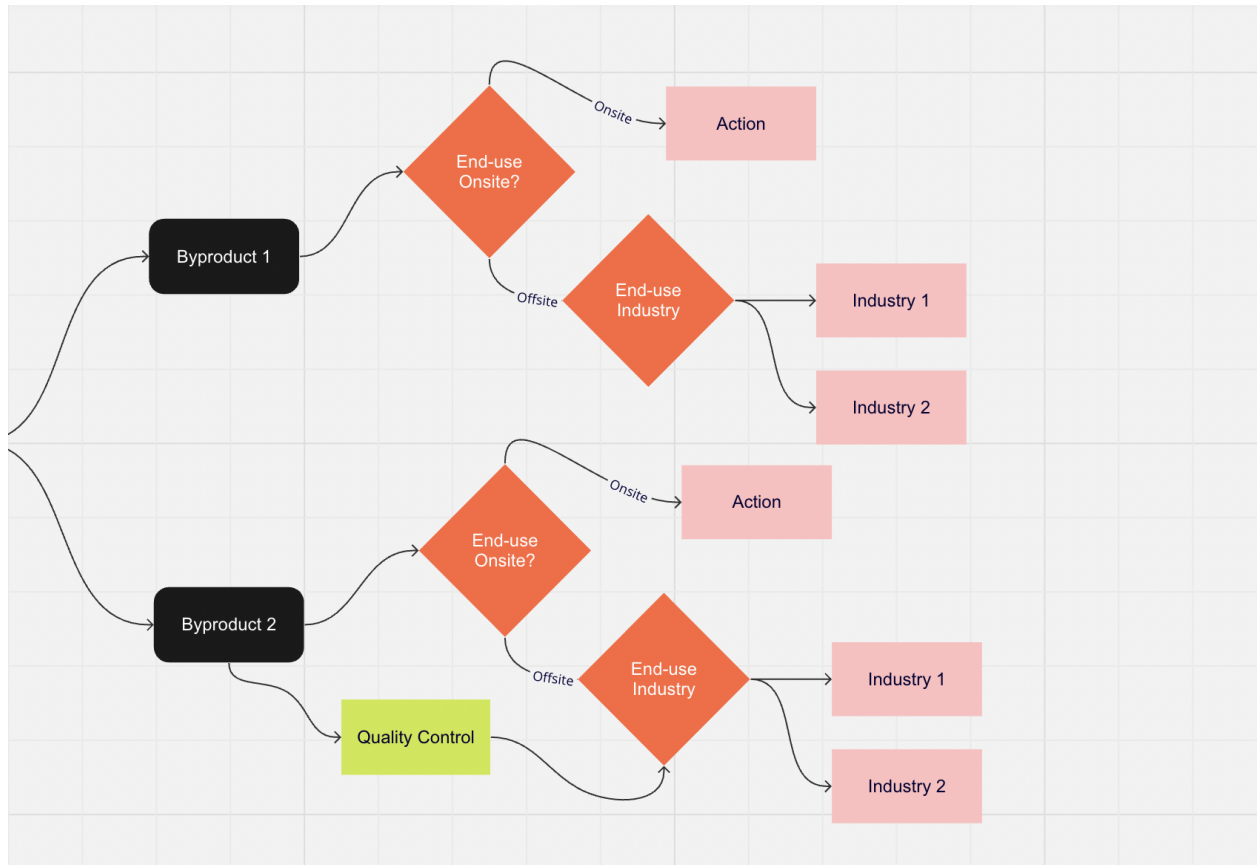
For my summer internship, I worked for Pashon Murray and her company, Detroit Dirt, which was a hybrid position with the in-person portion taking place here on campus working with fellow SEAS student, Angie Sillah and by visiting the campus farm (there is no current workspace area in Detroit as Pashon is working as a consultant right now). This summer, I was part of a team that worked to develop a biomass waste market in Detroit and around the United States (flow chart images below). I had the opportunity to interview Nick Smith-Sebasto from FORSolutions in New Jersey about their patented composting technology and Kelly Rogan from Chomp about the current food waste market and composting technologies for partnering/stakeholder businesses. I was also lucky enough to be able to sit in on an interview with the campus farm that touched on the current state of composting and the ideal future outcomes for the campus farm and a zero waste initiative (photos attached below). I also worked alongside Pashon and Angie to produce slides for a summer camp for the Detroit Library (attached some photos of the slides below) with the goal of engaging student aged children in food waste and composting.

I am grateful for the opportunity this summer to be able to interact with organizations and people who are pushing for a zero waste society by encouraging the elimination of food waste on all different scales. During my conversation with Nick at FORSolutions, we discussed the importance of policy and legislation on the advancement of composting throughout the United States. Education and community outreach are areas that are often overlooked and are incredibly important when aiming for society wide behavior change. I was extremely surprised to find both FORSolutions and Chomp discuss their initiatives with education and community outreach to not only use their technology for environmental benefits, but also for public health and well-being, which often starts with education. I have always had an interest in food systems but this summer experience was the first time I have had the opportunity to view food systems from a waste perspective. Now I see food waste as a resource instead of an end of life in a landfill's perspective. I am grateful for the opportunities I have had this summer and for the connections Pashon Murray provided us to talk to organizations who are working to achieve reductions in food waste. In the United States, there is currently a gap in the biomass waste market with the potential to grow as consumption increases. Having been part of the team trying to develop the market in the form of a flow chart and eventually a toolkit that Pashon can use when individuals or businesses approach and seek out her help was an enriching experience that is unique and on the cutting edge of the markets in the U.S. I am grateful to have had the experience to be part of a team striving to make a difference in food systems and the current state of food waste.

Images Below:

- The flow chart our team made planning out the possible biomass waste market in the United States (this was influenced by our interviews, discussions, and case studies) to develop a toolkit for Pashon to use in consultation with organizations





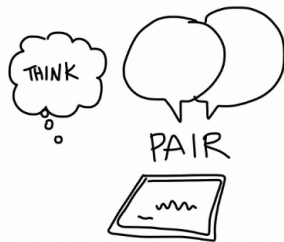
- The slides below were created in collaboration with Build the Change (Future Without Waste Workshop) and the Detroit Library

Zero Waste Activity



Think-Pair-Share: Cause and Effect

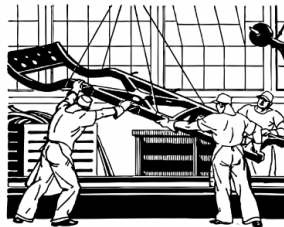
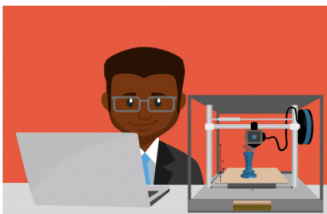
1. How does making less waste affect you and your family?
2. What would happen to your neighborhood if everyone reduced their waste?



Benefits

Business

- No new materials needed
- Use waste to make a product
- Less \$\$\$
- Make less waste



Nature

- Less pollution around the city
- Cleaner environment for animals and plants
- Less waste in streets



What can we do (to reduce biomass waste) at home?

- Finish your food! Food waste accounts for ~25% of landfills
- Go to Eastern Market!
- Start your own garden or small pot of your favorite veggies
- Use leaves from your yard to give nutrients back to your garden



- The photos below were taken of Angie and I on our visit to the campus farm



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