



MONDAY, AUGUST 10, 2009

7:00 P.M. - REGULAR ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING

Community Meeting Chambers, Los Altos City Hall
One North San Antonio Road, Los Altos, California

Any writings or documents provided to a majority of the Environmental Commission regarding any item on this agenda are available to the public on the counter in the mail lobby located at One North San Antonio Road, Los Altos CA 94022 during business hours.

ROLL CALL

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Members of the audience may bring to the Commission's attention any item that is not on the agenda. Please complete a "Request to Speak" form and submit it to the staff liaison. Speakers are generally given two or three minutes, at the discretion of the Chair. State law prohibits the Commission from acting on items that do not appear on the agenda.

CONSENT CALENDAR

These items will be considered by one motion unless any member of the Commission or audience wishes to remove an item for discussion. Any item removed from the Consent Calendar for discussion will be handled at the discretion of the Chair.

1. Commission Minutes
Approval of minutes –Regular Meeting of July 13, 2009

DISCUSSION ITEMS

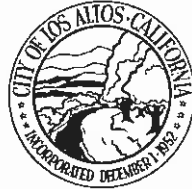
2. Waste Management Services Contract Request for Proposal (RFP)
 - a. Presentation by Consultants
 - b. Opportunity for Public Comments
3. 2009-2010 Environmental Commission Goals and Work Plan
Approved by City Council on July 28 2009 and Staff report
4. Community Greenhouse Gas Inventory Subcommittee Report
Report and discussion on the investigation of the feasibility of performing a community greenhouse gas inventory.
5. Environmental Commission Website Revision Subcommittee Report
Report and discussion on revisions to Environmental Commission website

6. Water Conservation Measures Update
Staff report and update
7. Solar/Photovoltaic Permit Fees and Utilization
Staff Report
8. Items for Discussion
 - a. Environmental Commission table at Community Picnic on September 13, 2009
 - b. *Trees of Los Altos* book give-a-ways at Green Town Los Altos event in September
9. Environmental Commission Volunteers
 - a. Introduction of Environmental Commission Volunteers
 - b. Future projects

COMMISSION REPORTS AND DIRECTIONS ON FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

ADJOURNMENT

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the City will make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting. If you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the Economic Development Coordinator 72 hours prior to the meeting at (650) 947-2620. A sound enhancement system is available in the City Council Chambers. You may check out headsets, which boost the public address signal during the meeting. Please ask for assistance at the City Clerk's desk PRIOR to the start of the meeting or during a break in the meeting.



MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 13, 2009
TO: City Council
FROM: Jim Gustafson, Engineering Services Manager
SUBJECT: **SOLID WASTE LEVEL OF SERVICE PROCESS**

RECOMMENDATION

- A. Receive the Solid Waste Levels of Service memorandum from the Environmental Commission and;
- B. Authorize the City Manager to execute an agreement with Environmental Planning Consultants to prepare the Request for Proposal and;
- C. Direct staff to report back to Council on the feasibility of implementing alternative service components into the RFP and;
- D. Direct staff to obtain final concurrence from Council prior to releasing the RFP

BACKGROUND

On October 28, 2008, Council accepted the report from the Environmental Commission that recommended level of service priorities to be incorporated into the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the solid waste collection franchise agreement that will take effect when the current agreement with Los Altos Garbage Company expires in September 2010. Council took no action to prioritize or approve specific levels of service.

Staff is returning to Council now to propose a process to issue an RFP to solicit proposals from qualified solid waste collection contractors.

DISCUSSION

The Environmental Commission has received additional input from Greentown Los Altos at its December 15, 2008 meeting that resulted in refinement of the initial service level goals. The report is provided as attachment 1. The findings and recommendations from Greentown Los Altos are provided as attachment 2.

Staff believes the most significant change recommended by the Environmental Commission is the goal to attain 75% diversion of solid waste from the landfill by year 2013, and attaining 100%

diversion by year 2020. State law currently requires 50% diversion, with Los Altos currently attaining 54% diversion.

Recently, the City of Palo Alto adopted a goal to attain 100% diversion, with a very broad program that encompasses development activities, retailing, restaurants, commercial activity, special events, and residential. The process required extensive public outreach and management by the equivalent of two full time staff positions for about two years, working with a consultant to develop the RFP. The consultant cost exceeded \$200,000. Palo Alto staff has offered some cost reimburseable assistance to Los Altos should Council decide to pursue a similar process to Palo Alto's.

Staff has also received a proposal from Environmental Planning Consultants (EPC) that would allow Los Altos to pursue all the objectives in the Environmental Commission's memorandum, with the exception of the 100% diversion goal. EPC could guide the City's RFP process, working with staff, Council, and the Environmental Commission, to implement a foodwaste composting program that would probably divert enough waste for the City to attain 75% diversion overall. There is a provision in the City's greenwaste composting agreement with Zanker Resources for the City to incorporate foodwaste composting if desired by the City.

EPC was recently selected by the City of Cupertino to guide its' RFP process on the same timetable as Los Altos' for new collection services. EPC successfully developed the RFP for the Town of Los Altos Hills for solid waste collection service that began last year. They also have performed several rate reviews for Los Altos and other area cities. The fee is expected to not exceed \$25,000, reflecting some savings from common tasks performed for Cupertino. Staff believes EPC can guide the RFP process, incorporate a strategy that will increase service to businesses and residents, increase diversion to exceed state minimums, and do so at a competitive price through the proposal process.

If EPC is selected for this task, the following timetable is proposed:

April 2009	Two public workshops on RFP service levels
May 2009	Environmental Commission and City Council approval of RFP
June 2009	City Council followup meeting (if necessary)
July 2009	Issue RFP
September 2009	Pre-proposal conference
October 2009	RFP Questions deadline
November 2009	Proposals due
December 2009	Initial Review and Shortlist Proposers
January 2010	Interview Proposers
February 2010	City Council Award Contract
September 2010	Start Operations under new contract

ALTERNATIVES

An alternative is to seek other consultants that could guide the RFP process. Another alternative is to adopt a different diversion goal and timetable for achievement.

Attachments:

1. Environmental Commission memorandum of January 13, 2009
2. Greentown Los Altos letter of January 5, 2009



MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 21, 2008
TO: City Council
FROM: Jim Gustafson, Engineering Services Manager
SUBJECT: **SOLID WASTE LEVEL OF SERVICE PROCESS**

RECOMMENDATION

Motion accepting the service priorities recommendation from the Environmental Commission.

BACKGROUND

The current agreement with the Los Altos Garbage Company expires in September 2010 unless it is extended by Council action. After Council direction on May 27, 2008, staff began discussions with the Environmental Commission and more recently with representatives from Greentown Los Altos concerning desired changes in the solid waste collection services to be implemented as part of the Request for Proposals (RFP) process.

Staff has also received suggestions for improved services from many residents, primarily concerning frequency of collection of recyclables, availability of recycling containers in public and commercial areas, and replacement of the 18 gallon bins currently used for residential recycling. There are also ideas for enhancement of hazardous waste collection services, and a desire for more information on the alternatives available for the upcoming contract.

DISCUSSION

The Environmental Commission has prioritized services desired in the new contract, and forwarded a letter for Council consideration. The letter is provided as attachment 1. Concurrent with Environmental Commission consideration, the League of Women Voters provided a letter suggesting support for measures to promote environmentally sound and efficient solid waste management and waste reduction. The League's letter is provided as attachment 2.

Staff expects additional input from Greentown Los Altos in November that could be included for Council consideration in the structure of a new RFP. Greentown Los Altos has scheduled a meeting on November 5 to discuss solid waste matters. If Council accepts the service priorities provided by the Environmental Commission, staff intends to bring any additional items developed by Greentown Los Altos to the Commission for review and possible Council consideration later.

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA

October 28, 2008

ALTERNATIVES

Council could continue this item to the December 9 meeting, and act at that time after the Environmental Commission has reviewed additional information expected from Greentown Los Altos.

Jim Gustafson
Engineering Services Manager

Attachments:

1. Environmental Commission memorandum of September 9, 2008
2. League of Women Voters letter of September 23, 2008

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION SOLID WASTE COLLECTION PRIORITIES

1. WASTE DIVERSION

- A) COMPOSTING
- B) EDUCATION FOR RECYCLING
- C) MORE RECYCLING

2. SERVICE LEVELS - MENU OF SERVICES

- A) FREQUENCY (EXTENDED LIST OF MATERIALS)
- B) BULK ITEM PICK-UP
- C) CONVENIENCE
- D) RELIABILITY
- E) CLEANLINESS

3. COLLECTION SYSTEM

- A) LOW CARBON FOOTPRINT

4. MINIMUM HAZARDOUS WASTE DISPOSAL

- A) MOTOR OIL
- B) BATTERIES
- C) LIGHT BULBS
- D) COAT HANGERS
- E) COMPUTERS

Steve Anderson

- 1. Collection System**
 - A. Low carbon footprint
 - B. Goal: zero waste by 2030
 - C. Reporting to council and consumers
- 2. Service -- Menu**
 - A. Convenience
 - B. Reliability
 - C. Frequency- full list of materials
 - D. Cleanliness
 - E. Bulk item pick-up
- 3. Waste Diversion**
 - A. Composting
 - B. Education recycling
 - C. Recycling information
- 4. Minimum Hazardous Waste Disposal**
 - A. Light bulbs
 - B. Batteries
 - C. Computers
 - D. Coat hangers
- 5. More Hazardous Waste Disposal**
 - A. Pesticides
 - B. Oil base paints
 - C. Other

Ann Coombs

- 1. More Recycling**
 - A. Bigger list of materials for composting
- 2. Reliability**
 - A. Street sweeping
 - B. Closed containers
- 3. Reasonable cost**
- 4. Frequency**
- 5. Extended List of Materials**
 - A. Old bedding
 - B. Shoes
 - C. Coat hangers
 - D. Other items
- 6. Cleanliness**
 - A. Street sweeping
 - B. Closed containers
- 7. Bulk Item Pickup**
- 8. Low Carbon Footprint**
- 9. Minimum Hazardous Waste Disposal**
 - A. Batteries
 - B. Used motor oil
 - C. Other items
- 10. Education for Recycling**
- 11. Convenience**
 - A. Containers in parks
 - B. Containers in shopping areas
- 12. Education for Hazardous Waste Disposal**
- 13. Education for Backyard Composting**

Linda DeMichiel

- 1. Reliability**
 - A. No less reliable than current system
- 2. Frequency**
 - A. No less reliable than current system
 - B. Recycling increased to weekly
- 3. Bulk item pick-up**
 - A. No less reliable than current system
- 4. More recycling (including but not limited to)**
 - A. Household batteries
 - B. Light bulbs
 - C. Cloth
 - D. Coat hangers
- 5. Recycling containers**
 - A. Containers in parks
 - B. Containers in shopping areas
- 6. Cleanliness**
 - A. Reduction of trash in public areas
- 7. Weekly recycling pickup**
 - A. Weekly and fixed day (not menu driven)
- 8. Side yard pickup**
 - A. Menu item with small associated cost
- 9. Education regarding recycling**
 - A. How to recycle non-pickup items
- 10. Hazardous waste disposal**
 - A. At least twice per year
- 11. Menu option**
 - A. Option for smaller can size
- 12. Low carbon footprint**

Hank Cooper

- 1. Waste Diversion**
 - A. First comes education
 - B. Apply know how to increase recycling
 - C. Composting for homeowners
- 2. Hazardous Waste Disposal**
 - A. Motor Oil
 - B. Batteries
 - C. Light Bulbs and fluorescents
 - D. Computers

Patty Rosewater

- 1. Waste Diversion**
 - A. Composting
 - B. Education for recycling
 - C. More recycling
- 2. Service Levels - Menu of Services**
 - A. Frequency (extended list of materials)
 - B. Bulk item pick-up
 - C. Convenience
 - D. Reliability
 - E. Cleanliness
- 3. Collection system**
 - A. Low carbon footprint
- 4. Minimum Hazardous Waste Disposal**
 - A. Motor oil
 - B. Batteries
 - C. Light bulbs
 - D. Coat hangers
 - E. Computers

Elizabeth Chien-Hale David Schink

6. Joint Maintenance Project with Cupertino Union School District "The Bridge"
Authorized utilizing \$31,796 from previously appropriated Maintenance Services Operations Funds for 2008-2009 for City contribution to Bridge Project.
7. Public versus Private Street Ordinance Amendment
Introduced and waived first reading of an ordinance amending Chapter 13.20 of the Los Altos Municipal Code to establish minimum cul-de-sac public street widths, and to prohibit the use of private cul-de-sac streets for all new single family residential subdivisions.

PUBLIC HEARING

8. First Street Underground Utility District
Special Projects Manager Brees briefly reported on the process to form the District.

Mayor Satterlee opened the public hearing and, there being no speakers, closed the public hearing.

Staff responded to Council questions regarding funding.

Motion by Councilmember Packard, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Casas, to introduce and waive further reading of an ordinance establishing First Street Underground Utility District on First Street between Main Street and Edith Avenue. The motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

9. Stevens Creek Trail
Councilmember Carpenter reported on the meeting that she and Councilmember Becker had attended along with representatives from the cities of Mountain View, Sunnyvale and Cupertino.

David Lambourne, Los Altos resident, commented.

Council briefly discussed the route and composition of the regional subgroup. They generally agreed that a staff member should attend meetings of the subgroup as a technical advisor.

Motion by Councilmember Carpenter, seconded by Councilmember Packard to:

- A. Receive report on the four-city meeting of December 19, 2008;
- B. Appoint Councilmember Carpenter as primary and Mayor Satterlee as secondary to represent the Council, and Jeannie Bruins to represent the City, with Kurt Riffle as her alternate, to the working regional subgroup;
- C. Add a potential easement at West Valley Elementary School to City Schools/Cupertino Union School District Task Force meeting agenda; and
- D. Reinstate the task force to revisit the conceptual plan after the three surrounding cities adopt related policies.

Mayor Satterlee offered an amendment to add "postpone" before reinstate in section D. The amendment was accepted.

The motion carried unanimously.

10. Solid Waste Services Request for Proposals (RFP)

Engineering Services Manager Gustafson presented the staff report. He stated that Zanker has agreed to host tours of their landfill and recycling facility. He responded to Council queries relative to diversion goals and methane gas emissions.

Councilmembers disclosed ex parte' communication.

The following residents offered comments:

Don Bray	Amy Parodi	Peg Champion
Stratton Jaquette	Julie Rose	Brad Whitworth
Linda Gass	Susan Russell	
Karen Janowski	Margaret Suozzo	

Council discussion touched on many related areas including organic, hazardous and recyclable waste, composting, disposal sites, rates and pick up schedules. They also discussed options for the size of cans for household garbage and back/side-yard pick up. They would like to see information regarding the environmental cost of hauling, reporting requirements, compliance with sorting garbage and recyclables, insurance and bonding levels, maintenance and age of fleet vehicles to assure good customer service and performance levels with realistic goals.

Motion by Mayor Satterlee, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Casas to:

- A. Authorize the City Manager to execute an agreement with Environmental Planning Associates to prepare the Request for Proposal;
- B. Direct staff to report back to Council on the feasibility of implementing desired service components into the RFP; and
- C. Direct staff to obtain final concurrence from Council prior to releasing the RFP.

The motion carried unanimously.

11. Regional Efforts Related to Disposable, Single Use Carry-out Bags

Mayor Pro Tem Casas, without making specific recommendations, introduced the item noting that the purpose is to support regional goals.

Councilmember Carpenter clarified that she supported a public discussion of this initiative but has not taken a position.

Councilmembers disclosed ex parte' communication.

The following directed comments to the Council:

Julie Rose, representing the Los Altos Chamber of Commerce
Los Altos residents Susan Russell and Jon Baer

Council expressed support for public education and awareness but were concerned that imposing a ban or fee for plastic bags would negatively impact both businesses and residents. They discussed having the Environmental Commission develop a recommendation.

Motion by Mayor Satterlee, seconded by Councilmember Packard, to support a regional approach to reduce single use carry-out bags, oppose a fee approach and to work with the County to find a solution. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Councilmember Carpenter, seconded by Councilmember Becker, to have the Environmental Commission consider as part of their 2009 work plan a recommendation on how to reduce the use of disposable single use carry-out bags. The motion carried 3-2, with Councilmember Packard and Mayor Pro Tem Casas dissenting.

12. FY2008-2009 Mid-year Budget Review

Finance Director Morreale's presentation included midyear budget performance, proactive measures taken to reduce spending and bolster the surplus, and a summary of the budget adjustments. He reviewed the budget calendar highlighting critical dates. Both he and City Manager Schmitz responded to questions relative to budget policy, accounting, projected expenses and fund balances.



AGENDA REPORT

DATE: January 13, 2009
TO: City Council
FROM: Environmental Commission
SUBJECT: SOLID WASTE LEVELS OF SERVICE

RECOMMENDATION

The Environmental Commission fully endorses the recommendations of GreenTown Los Altos (GTLA) related to waste management, specifically:

1. That the city formally adopt the goals related to waste diversion and reduction in the Dec 15 final report to the Los Altos Environmental Commission, as follows:
 - (a) 75% diversion by 2013; 100% diversion 2020
 - (b) Reduce total waste by 5% by 2013
 - (c) Reduce toxins in the environment generated from improper disposal of household hazardous waste and universal waste (U-waste)
2. That the waste management RFP include the specific recommendations related to the trash contract, as follows:

1	Weekly residential curbside collection of food wastes and other compostable material
2	Weekly residential curbside collection of recyclables in a standard rolling cart
3	Smaller garbage can options with lower monthly rates
4	Side-yard pick-up optional rather than standard
5	Curbside collection of household hazardous and universal wastes
6	Commercial food waste and compostables collection service
7	Standard recycling pick-up for commercial and multi-tenant buildings
8	Public education and outreach program
9	Place bins for collection of recyclables and compostables in public areas and schools
10	Structure waste contract with incentives for landfill diversion

BACKGROUND

In August 2008 the City Council requested that the Environmental Commission give input toward the waste management priorities for the upcoming RFP. In response, we submitted a report to the Council listing our priorities. In parallel, the GTLA group has been conducting research, holding community input sessions, and ultimately published a report regarding environmental sustainability issues related to waste management. This report was presented to our commission on Dec 15, 2008. We found the priorities of the GTLA to be in almost complete alignment with the priorities submitted to City Council by the commission in September.

DISCUSSION

The Environmental Commission strongly believes that we need to evolve from a position of “waste disposal” to “waste management.” Given this context, formally adopting the above stated goals as a foundation for all waste management practices is appropriate. Specifically:

- **75% diversion by 2013; 100% diversion by 2020:** This is consistent with the direction the state legislature is moving.
- **Reduce total waste by 5% by 2013:** it is important to focus not only on waste diversion, but also on the reduction of total waste, especially as the Bay Area population grows.
- **Reduce toxins in the environment generated from improper disposal of household waste:** Many of our residents are unaware of all the items that comprise hazardous waste, and are equally unaware of proper disposal.

Eight out of ten of the GTLA recommendations above explicitly match ones made by the Environmental Commission in September. We fully endorse the other two as well, which are:

Recommendation # 1 -- Weekly residential curbside collection of food wastes and other compostable material: GTLA presented information showing that 45% of the trash in the landfill from Los Altos is compostable organic waste. This item alone, if implemented successfully, could increase our diversion from its current 54% level to almost 75%. We strongly endorse this recommendation.

Recommendation # 10 -- Structure waste contract with incentives for landfill diversion: We feel it is extremely important that the waste management company be incented to achieve the city’s waste management goals. By structuring the contract with such incentives, the expertise of the vendor would be directed toward innovative programs to increase diversion and/or decrease landfill. This would be a win-win for both parties, as the vendor has the opportunity to increase profit; Los Altos has the opportunity to reduce landfill.

ALTERNATIVES

Council may choose to reject one or more of the above goals: By rejecting these goals, we forego the opportunity to convey to the community and to our waste vendor the value the city places on responsible waste management. We could also be unprepared for the stronger legislation currently being considered for the state and the country, including AB32 requirements.

Council may choose to reject some of the specific waste recommendations. The two items that were not initially in the Environmental Commission priority list were:

- **Foodwaste as a priority:** We would be rejecting *the single most significant opportunity* for waste diversion and reduction of methane gases in the landfill.
- **Waste Contract incentives:** This contract will ideally be in place for a number of years, and covers services that are increasingly complex and difficult to manage. Imbedding city goals within the contract will result in a strong partnership between the entities, and result in the best service level at the best price.



183 Hillview Avenue
Los Altos, CA 94022

January 5, 2009

Los Altos City Council
1 North San Antonio Road
Los Altos, California 94022

Deputy City Manager

Mayor and Honorable Members of the Council:

Assistant City Manager

The current Los Altos City Council is in the rare position of overseeing the negotiation of a new waste management contract that will shape waste management in Los Altos for years to come. This negotiation represents an opportunity to offer Los Altos a higher level of waste management service with greater environmental benefits, at the best possible price.

City Engineer

The attached GreenTown Los Altos report, *Waste Management: Key Findings and Recommendations*, presents three achievable waste management goals and 10 specific recommendations for Council's consideration in defining the new contract. The Environmental Commission endorsed these goals and recommendations at their December 15, 2008 meeting.

City Planner

City Clerk

City Treasurer

City Attorney

The report, prepared by GreenTown's Green Ribbon Citizens Committee, reflects the committee's research, as well as input from waste management experts, members of the public who participated in GreenTown community meetings, and members of City Council and the Environmental Commission.

City Auditor

City Administrator

We look forward to the opportunity to present our findings and recommendations at the January 13, 2009 City Council meeting. Until then, please feel free to contact me at 650-815-5479 with any questions or comments.

City Director

City Director

City Director

City Director

Thank you for your time and consideration.

City Director

Sincerely,

City Director

City Director

Margie Suozzo
Co-Chair, Green Ribbon Citizens Committee

City Director

City Director



Waste Management: Key Findings and Recommendations January 13, 2009

Executive Summary

The current waste-management contract with Los Altos Garbage Company expires in September 2010. Over the next few months, the city will develop a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a new contract. The negotiation of the new contract presents a timely and critical opportunity for the city to improve waste-management practices in Los Altos and prepare for impending statewide diversion requirements at relatively little additional cost or burden to the city, its residents and businesses.

This report contains the waste-management recommendations of the Green Ribbon Citizens Committee (GRCC), a subcommittee of GreenTown Los Altos. It provides further information and substantiation to the Environmental Commission's Solid Waste Levels of Service Memorandum dated January 13, 2009. It outlines GreenTown's three Proposed Goals and 10 Specific Recommendations, the culmination of research and analysis by GRCC volunteers, and incorporates input from waste-management experts, Commissioners, Council members, and 108 participants who attended two GreenTown community meetings.

Policy Imperatives

Americans are consuming resources at an unsustainable rate. To address the impacts of our consumption on the planet, the State of California has implemented two pieces of legislation relevant to this report:

- AB939 requires local governments to divert at least 50% of the waste generated in their communities by 2000; pending legislative proposals increase the diversion requirement to 75% statewide.
- AB32 sets a statewide cap on emissions of greenhouse gases. Local government waste-management practices are impacted because landfills emit greenhouse gases. The California Air Resources Board Scoping Plan for implementing AB32 requires that local governments divert at least 50% of organic waste from landfills by 2020.

Waste-Management Issues

Our research on the local waste-management system led to four key findings that our goals and recommendations strive to address:

- Our local landfill site at Newby Island is 64% full and expected to close by June 2025.
- Most of the waste sent to the landfill consists of material that can be composted or recycled.
- Nearly 40% of the commercial and residential waste we send to the landfill is organic.
- Our garbage rates are among the highest in the region, yet we receive fewer services than neighboring communities.

Proposed Goals

We recommend that the city adopt and incorporate in the new waste contract RFP the following goals. These goals are achievable and, combined with our specific recommendations, address all four of the waste-management issues.

1. Divert 75% of waste generated in Los Altos within five years of the start of the new contract and achieve zero waste by 2020.
2. Reduce per capita waste generated by 5% within five years of the start of the new contract.
3. Reduce toxins in the environment generated from the improper disposal of household hazardous waste and universal waste.



Specific Recommendations

GreenTown has identified 10 specific recommendations that we believe are key to achieving the proposed goals.

1. **Weekly residential curbside collection of food wastes and other compostable material.** Residential food wastes and other organic materials represent approximately 43% of landfill waste from homes. Composting such waste will be essential to meeting a 75% diversion goal and will result in a significant reduction in landfill greenhouse gas emissions.
2. **Weekly residential curbside collection of recyclables in a standard rolling cart.** Rolling carts are more convenient for both residents and waste collectors to handle than the current rectangular bins. Weekly rather than biweekly collection will increase the amount of recyclables a resident can collect in a cart, making it easier for residents to recycle more waste.
3. **Smaller garbage can options with lower monthly rates.** Expanding the current volume-based refuse rates to include smaller can sizes priced at lower rates than standard 32-gallon service will create additional economic incentives for residents to reduce waste.
4. **Side-yard pick-up optional rather than standard.** Making side-yard pick-up an option, rather than a standard service for which all Los Altos residents currently pay, would offset some of the costs associated with new waste-management services under the new waste contract.
5. **Curbside collection of household hazardous and universal wastes.** Residents do not have a convenient means of disposal and often lack sufficient information regarding proper disposal of these wastes. Offering more convenient collection options would reduce their improper disposal.
6. **Commercial food waste and compostables collection service.** Food waste and other organic material from businesses such as restaurants and grocery stores account for approximately 30% of the commercial waste now sent to the landfill. Accordingly, providing regular pick-up of commercial food waste and other compostable materials is important to our efforts to divert organic materials from the landfill.
7. **Standard recycling pick-up for commercial and multi-tenant buildings.** Most businesses and multi-family dwellings are offered recycling bins only on request. Providing recycling bins for all commercial businesses and multi-family dwellings under the new waste contract would increase collection of recyclable materials.
8. **Public education and outreach program.** Education and outreach provided by the contract waste-hauler about the types of materials collected in each type of recycling and composting bin as well as proper disposal of hazardous and universal wastes would aid in increasing collection of these materials. This effort would complement a city public education and outreach campaign to promote waste reduction.
9. **Place bins for collection of recyclables and compostables in public areas and schools.** Placing receptacles for recoverable wastes in commercial areas, parks and schools, would enable shoppers, school children, club sports participants and others to recycle and compost, rather than send recoverable waste to the landfill.
10. **Structure waste contract with incentives for landfill diversion.** Including specific vendor incentives for achieving goals listed above (e.g., 75% diversion goal over five years) would induce the contractor to work in partnership with the city to maximize recycling and composting and reduce generation of waste and improper disposal of toxics.

Report

GreenTown Los Altos was formed in 2007 to explore local actions to address global environmental issues such as greenhouse gas emissions, air, soil and water pollution and conservation of natural resources, and to more fully examine the impacts of our consumption on the environment.

This report contains the waste-management recommendations of GreenTown's Green Ribbon Citizens Committee (GRCC). It provides further information and substantiation to the Environmental Commission's Solid Waste Levels of Service Memorandum dated January 13, 2009. It outlines GreenTown's three Proposed Goals and 10 Specific Recommendations, the culmination of research and analysis by GRCC volunteers and incorporates input from waste-management experts, Commissioners, Council members, and 108 participants who attended two GreenTown community meetings. At these meetings we received broad citizen input on how Los Altos can improve its waste-management practices. As part of this process, GreenTown educated citizens about the environmental significance of better waste management, and engaged citizens in identifying barriers and developing practical and cost-effective solutions that would have everyday relevance to Los Altos residents.

Policy Imperatives

Americans are consuming resources at an unsustainable rate. If everyone on the planet consumed resources at the rate that we do in the U.S., we would require 5.3 planets to support the world's population.¹ To address the impacts of our consumption on the planet, the State of California has implemented two policies relevant to this report:

- AB939 requires local governments to divert at least 50% of the wastes generated in their communities by 2000; pending legislative proposals increase the diversion requirement to 75% statewide.
- AB32 sets a statewide cap on emissions of greenhouse gases. Because landfills emit greenhouse gases – methane and carbon dioxide (CO₂) – this bill impacts local governments' waste-management practices. The California Air Resources Board Scoping Plan for implementing AB32 requires that local governments divert at least 50% of organic waste from landfills by 2020. Organic waste, when buried in the landfill, generates a significant amount of methane, a greenhouse gas far more potent than CO₂.

Waste-Management Issues

Our research on the local waste-management system led to four key findings that our goals and recommendations strive to address:

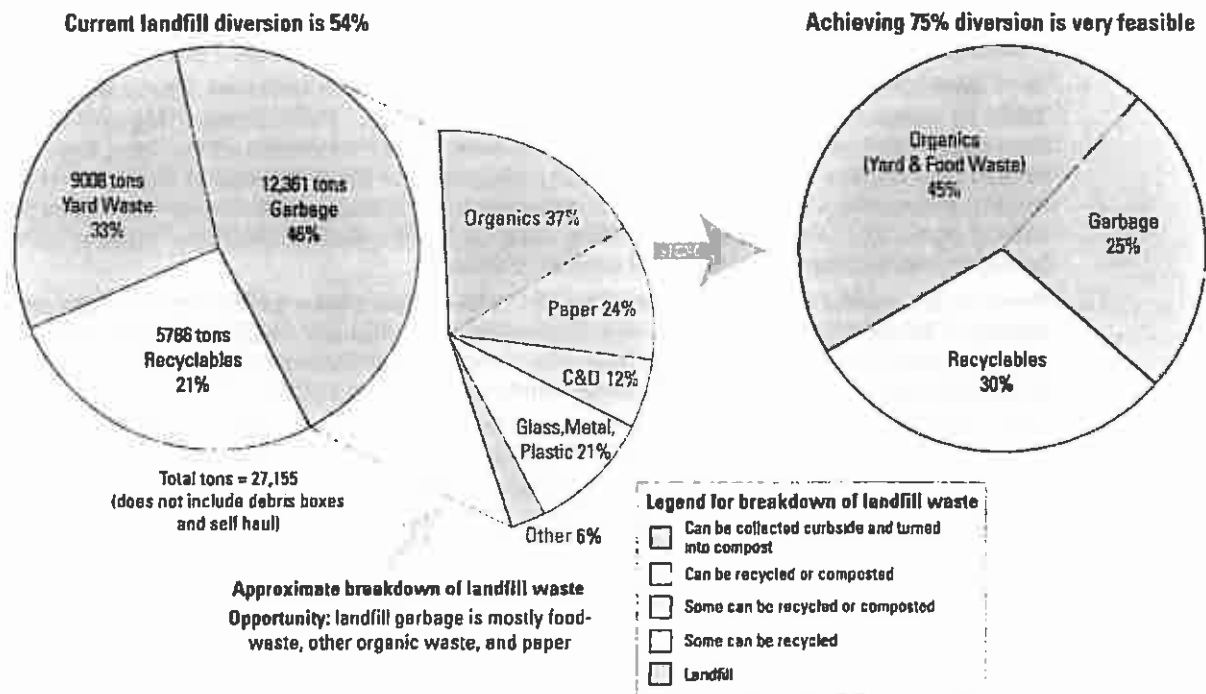
- Our local landfill site at Newby Island is 64% full and, based on projected waste disposal rates, is expected to close by June 2025.
- Most of the waste we send to the landfill consists of material that can be composted or recycled instead (see Figure 1).
- Nearly 40% of the commercial and residential waste we send to the landfill is organic (see Figure 1). Methane is a greenhouse gas that is more than 20 times as potent as CO₂ in its warming effect, when considered over a 100-year timeframe.² In contrast, composting, either at a composting facility or at home, generates little or no methane.
- Our garbage rates are among the highest in the region, yet we receive fewer services than neighboring communities (Figure 2).

Our current waste contract expires in September 2010, and city staff will be developing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a new waste contract in early 2009. This represents an historic opportunity for the city to improve our waste-management practices through the provision of new services and public education, with relatively little added cost or burden to the city and its residents and businesses. Further, improving our waste contract can significantly reduce the amount of waste sent to the landfill and the amount of greenhouse gas emissions we generate from our organic waste.

¹ "Shrink Your Ecological Footprint," Bridget Bentz Sizer, *The Washington Post*, March 12, 2006, p. M05.

² United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, unfccc.int/ghg_data/items/3825.php.

Figure 1: Current and Potential Landfill Diversion Rates



Source: Los Altos Garbage Company provided total tons hauled in 2007. Composition of LAGCo hauled landfill waste based on California Integrated Waste Management Board 2004 statewide waste characterization study.

Figure 2: Comparison of Garbage Service Options and Monthly Cost

City	Residential								Commercial		Waste Company
	monthly cost*	mini can (20 gal)	mini-mini (12/13 gal)	weekly pickup of recyclables	cart for recyclables	food waste	side-yard pickup	bulky pickups per year	recycling	food waste	
Los Altos Hills	\$33.76	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓\$	\$	✓		Green Waste
Los Altos	\$28.11						✓	2	✓		LA Garbage (NorCal)
San Jose	\$26.95	✓		✓	✓			0	✓		Garden City
Palo Alto**	\$26.58	✓		✓	✓		✓	1	✓		PASCO
San Francisco	\$24.76	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓\$	2	✓	✓	Sunset Scav (NorCal)
Berkeley	\$24.00	✓	✓	✓		✓		1	✓		Berkeley Pub. Wks.
Portola Valley	\$23.32	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓\$	\$	✓		Green Waste
Saratoga	\$20.97	✓		✓	✓			1	✓	✓	West Valley Collect.
Cupertino	\$19.83			✓	✓			2	✓		LA Garbage (NorCal)
Los Gatos	\$18.95	✓		✓	✓			1	✓	✓	West Valley Collect.
Seattle	\$17.65	✓	✓		✓	✓\$			✓		Seattle Pub. Util.
Mountain View	\$16.40	✓			✓			3	✓		Foothill Disposal
Menlo Park	\$12.55	✓						2	✓	✓	Allied Waste

* Monthly cost for 32 gallon can residential, cities listed in order of cost

** Palo Alto data does not reflect newest waste contract with GreenWaste to start April 2009.

\$ = extra cost

Proposed Goals

We recommend that the city adopt a set of overarching goals and incorporate these goals into the waste contract RFP. Establishing interim and long-range goals before establishing a new waste contract will be critical in guiding analysis of service requirements and selection of a waste hauler. We recommend:

1. **75% diversion within five years of the start of the new contract and zero waste³ by 2020.** At present, the city's diversion rate (the portion of its waste stream that is diverted from the landfill to be either recycled or composted) is approximately 54% (see Figure 1 above). We believe a goal of 75% is readily attainable as demonstrated in Figure 1. Many nearby communities (see Figure 3) and more than 100 throughout the world have adopted similar goals. Los Altos Hills and Portola Valley currently exceed diversion rates of 75%, largely by maximizing the recovery of organic material.
2. **Reduce per capita waste generated by 5% within five years of the start of the new contract.** Reducing waste at its source is consistent with our city's obligation under the Los Altos General Plan, policy 5.3. This goal offers a specific 1% annual reduction target and is achievable largely through incentive-based garbage pricing and public education.
3. **Reduce toxins in the environment generated from the improper disposal of household hazardous waste and universal waste.** These wastes present significant hazards to human and other species' health. Particularly damaging are heavy metals found in items such as batteries, fluorescent bulbs and thermometers. Achieving this goal requires education and changes in the waste-management services that render proper disposal more convenient.

Figure 3: Waste Diversion Goals Adopted by Bay Area Governments (partial list)

City/County	Percent*	by Year	Zero Waste by
Alameda County	75%	2010	
Berkeley	75%	2010	2020
Oakland	75%	2010	2020
San Francisco	75%	2010	2020
Palo Alto	73%	2011	2021
San Jose	75%	2013	2021

* Percent to be diverted from landfill by given date

Core Strategies

GreenTown identified four core strategies to achieve these goals in the most cost-efficient and effective manner. These strategies have been incorporated into the 10 specific recommendations.

1. **Offer incentives** to motivate residents, businesses and the waste contractor to reduce waste and maximize recycling and composting.
2. **Provide education and outreach.** At two GreenTown public input meetings, education was considered the highest priority. Residents and businesses are eager to improve their waste-disposal practices, but need trusted sources of information to be effective. The city, its contract waste hauler and other partners can share the burden for educating the public.
3. **Expand collection of organic waste – the largest source of landfill waste – as well as household hazardous and universal wastes.** Special attention to these waste sources will be critical to meeting the proposed goals.
4. **Provide service where it is not currently provided,** such as in commercial districts, parks and schools, to take advantage of additional waste-diversion opportunities.

Specific Recommendations

Achieving the proposed goals will require a coordinated set of actions, including vendor and customer incentives, public education and outreach, and changes to our waste-management services. We have

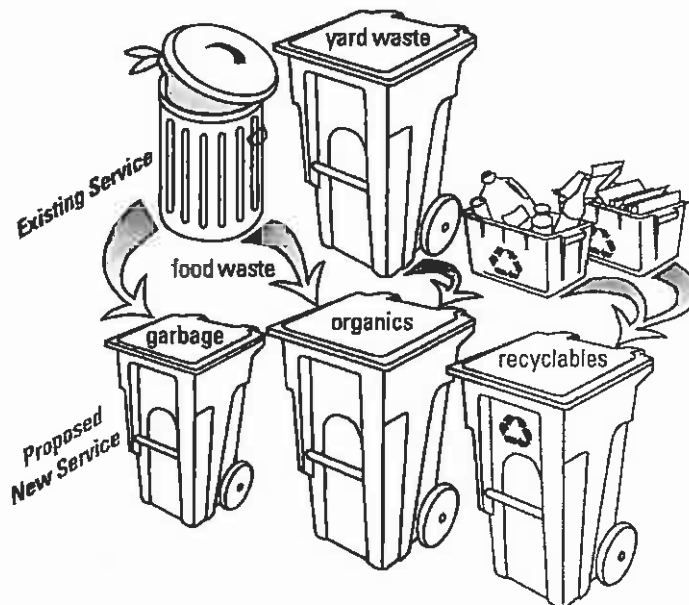
³ Zero waste requires that we maximize our existing recycling and reuse efforts, while ensuring that products are designed for the environment and have the potential to be repaired, reused, or recycled. See zerowaste.ca.gov.

identified 10 specific recommendations – organized by the sector served: residential, commercial and community-wide – for the new waste-management contract. We believe these recommendations are key to achieving a 75% diversion rate within five years of the start of the contract, setting the stage for ongoing improvements in diversion, and helping to achieve the other proposed goals.

Residential Service

1. **Weekly residential curbside collection of food wastes and other compostable material (collected in yard waste bin or separated from garbage at the waste-processing facility).** Residential food wastes and other organic materials such as used paper plates represent approximately 43% of landfill waste from homes. Diverting such waste to a composting facility will be essential to meeting a 75% diversion goal and will result in a significant reduction in landfill methane emissions. Most food waste can be collected in the same bin as yard waste as long as it is collected weekly rather than biweekly. We estimate that nearly 60% of residential food waste and other organics would be diverted from the landfill.⁴
2. **Weekly residential curbside collection of recyclables in a standard rolling cart.** Many communities have adopted a single rolling cart similar to our current yard waste bin (see Figure 4) in place of hand-carried recycling bins of the type used in Los Altos. Rolling carts are more convenient for both residents and waste collectors to handle, and they have a neater curbside appearance than overflowing uncovered bins. Carts may be divided into separate halves for paper and other recyclables (as is done in Mountain View and Sunnyvale), or may combine all recyclables in a "single stream" (as is done in Los Altos Hills and Portola Valley), with the materials being sorted at the recycling facility. Increasing the collection frequency from biweekly to weekly increases the amount of recyclables a resident can collect in a cart, reducing the instances where residents must separately bag excess recyclables, which is inconvenient and may adversely affect recycling rates. We estimate that use of such rolling carts, combined with a weekly collection schedule, would increase the diversion of paper, glass, plastics and metal by 15% to 30%.⁴

Figure 4: Improving Convenience of Recycling and Composting



3. **Smaller garbage can options with lower monthly rates.** To further incent residents to reduce waste and use recycling and composting options, we recommend expanding the current volume-based refuse rates to include smaller can sizes that would be priced at a lower rate than standard 32-

⁴ GRCC analysis based on California Integrated Waste Management Board 2004 statewide waste characterization study, 2007 tonnage hauled as provided by Los Altos Garbage Company and the quantitative results experienced by Portola Valley, Los Altos Hills and San Francisco when they changed waste-management practices.

gallon service. Many other communities offer a 20-gallon "mini-can" and others a 12-gallon "mini-mini-can" (see Figure 2). Pricing can be tiered such that smaller can sizes can be subsidized by rates paid for full-size cans. We estimate this feature will result in approximately a 5% to 10% increase in diversion of residential waste from the landfill; potentially more if combined with the other recommendations presented.⁴

4. **Side-yard pick-up optional rather than standard.** Making side-yard pick-up an optional service, involving an additional fee, rather than a standard service for which all Los Altos residents pay would offset costs associated with new services negotiated under a new waste-management contract. More than half of Los Altos residents do not use side-yard pick-up even though it is part of the standard service. This added fee for side-yard pick-up could be waived for certain qualifying residents, such as disabled persons.
5. **Curbside collection of household hazardous wastes and universal wastes.** Residents do not have a convenient means of disposal and often lack sufficient information regarding proper disposal of household hazardous waste and universal waste. Offering curbside collection and periodic local drop-off opportunities for eligible items would increase collection and reduce improper disposal of these dangerous wastes.

Commercial Service

6. **Commercial food waste and compostables collection service.** Food waste and other organic material (such as used paper plates and corrugated cup holders) from restaurants, grocery stores and others, accounts for approximately 30% of the commercial waste now sent to the landfill. We recommend that the new waste contract provide for regular pick-up of commercial food waste and other compostable material.
7. **Standard recycling pick-up for commercial and multi-tenant buildings.** Under the current contract, businesses and multi-family dwellings must request recycling bins if they want them. The new waste contract should provide recycling bins to all commercial businesses and multi-family building owners/managers as well as on-site assistance in setting up a recycling program. Offering incentives for commercial customers to recycle will also increase the effectiveness of these efforts. If implemented, we estimate these changes in service could improve the recovery of recyclable material from commercial and multi-tenant locations by more than 30%.⁴

Community-Wide Service

8. **Public education and outreach program.** The waste-management company should share responsibility for public education and outreach on the types of materials that can be placed in each type of bin as well as on details on collection and proper disposal of household hazardous waste and universal waste. The waste contract should require that the contractor label all bins to specify acceptable items. Waste hauler responsibility for public education and outreach would complement an effort by the city to provide information on proper waste-management practices and waste reduction.
9. **Place bins for collection of recyclables and compostables in public areas and schools.** At present, there is no standard way to dispose of recyclable or compostable items in commercial zones, parks and schools. We recommend that the city introduce receptacles for recoverable wastes at such locations.
10. **Structure waste contract with incentives for landfill diversion.** The new waste contract should contain specific vendor incentives for achieving a 75% diversion goal in the short-term and zero waste over the long term, as some communities, such as Palo Alto, have done. Such incentives can motivate the contract waste hauler to maximize diversion of recyclable and compostable waste from the landfill.

We believe these 10 recommendations will enable Los Altos to meet the current and future state waste-management requirements and provide residents and businesses with a comprehensive program that is easy to understand and implement and is competitive with the offerings in other cities in the region.

January 7, 2009

The Honorable Megan Satterlee
Mayor, City of Los Altos
One North San Antonio Road
Los Altos, CA 94022

RE: **SUPPORT RECYCLING, OPPOSE SINGLE-USE BAG FEE**

Dear Mayor Satterlee:

Recently, the Santa Clara County Recycling and Waste Reduction Commission forwarded for comment a proposed ordinance that would impose a new 25-cent fee on plastic and paper retail bags. The undersigned organizations – representing grocery stores, neighborhood markets, restaurants, convenience stores, plastic bag manufacturers, and Californians concerned about new fees and taxes - strongly oppose this idea as we believe that this idea is anti-consumer, anti-environment, and anti-business. We also believe that when you are considering the merits of this proposal you should have as much information as possible. To that end, we are taking the opportunity to clarify and respond to some of the arguments put forth by the proponents of this ordinance.

For example, county staff has publicly touted the Republic of Ireland, one of the only jurisdictions in the world to have passed a tax on plastic bags, as a model for this ordinance. You should know that while sales of plastic shopping bags declined almost 90 percent, the sale of other plastic bags increased some 400 percent. Basically, consumers who routinely “re-used” plastic retail bags as trash can liners, pet waste receptacles, and as lunch carriers, now had to purchase a new plastic bag for this purpose.

One can reasonably conclude that an “Ireland-like” tax is essentially a ban on plastic bags as consumers opted not to pay. However, even banning plastic bags outright does not achieve the desired results. You might be interested in the experience from the City of San Francisco’s plastic bag ban. The 2008 San Francisco *Streets Litter Re-Audit* revealed the following:

- Total bag litter increased by 1.5% after the ban
- Plastic bag litter remained the same before and after the ban at only 0.6% of the litter composition
- 51% of the city’s litter composition is fiber-based

Also, sufficient evidence shows that a majority of voters do not support this policy. Attached are the results of a poll conducted June 28 – July 2, 2008 to determine the favorability of a state bill that proposed nearly the same policy that you are considering. **The poll found that 58% of Californians opposed the potential 25-cent fee on plastic bags, and this was well before the economy turned dramatically worse.** The Santa Clara County Recycling and Waste Reduction Commission also heard from many other organizations representing businesses, non-profits and labor which expressed concern about the proposed bag tax. Many of those organizations were unaware that this proposal was being considered and only registered their concerns in the past few weeks.

As you are keenly aware, today's economic climate is challenging for families and businesses throughout the state and a new and costly mandate on consumers and businesses that use single-use bags will only exacerbate this situation. Instead, we encourage you to work with us to develop and implement a comprehensive plastic bag recycling policy that makes sense for the environment and the economy.

We hope that this enclosed information is useful and we look forward to working with you on this important public policy issue.

Sincerely,

Mark Arabo
President
Neighborhood Market Association

Amalia Chamorro
Director, Local Government Affairs
California Restaurant Association

Ted Costa
Chief Executive Officer
People's Advocate, Inc.

John Handley
Government Relations Director
California Independent Grocers Association

Keith Jones
Senior Director, Government Affairs
7-Eleven Convenience Stores

Ryan Kenny
Manager, State Affairs and Grassroots
Progressive Bag Affiliates of the American Chemistry
Council

cc: The Honorable Members of the Los Altos City Council
City Manager, City of Los Altos



ONE COMPANY *Many Solutions*

The City of San Francisco STREETS LITTER RE-AUDIT

2008

PREPARED FOR

The City of San Francisco
San Francisco Environment Department

PREPARED BY



Brown, Vence
& Associates, Inc.

&



July 4, 2008

Executive Summary

The City of San Francisco continues to be known throughout North America for its initiatives to protect the environment. The City has a multitude of waste reduction and waste management programs in place to improve the environment for residents. Such activities as recently moving to "all-plastics" pick ups in the curbside recycling program are examples of how this city achieved a 70% diversion rate by 2007.

In 2007, the City conducted a litter audit. Working with HDR / BVA Engineering, a local San Francisco full service firm, the City audited litter on city streets. HDR / BVA in turn contracted MGM Management, a Canadian environmental consulting firm that has expertise in the area of litter audit work to design the audit to conform with their proven methodology. MGM Management has conducted over a fourteen major litter audits to major North American municipalities since 2002, and has an accumulated data base of over 56,000 litter observations.

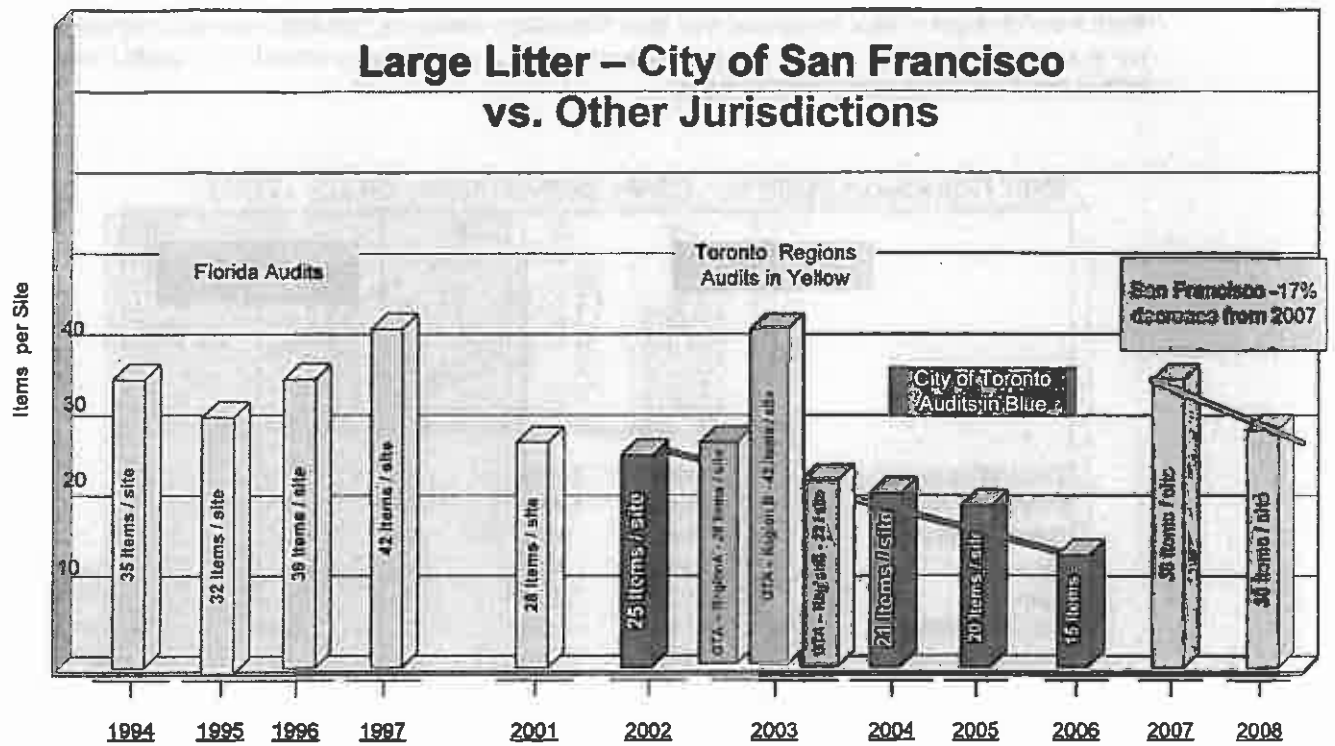
The San Francisco Department of Environment decided that it was necessary to re-audit the 2007 sites in 2008, and to add additional sites to strengthen the litter observations. HDR / BVA Engineering managed and provided trained auditors for the work, while MGM Management provided the audit design, methodology protocols, site selection including new randomly selected sites, data management and data analysis services.

Within this study litter is classified as "large" for those items over 4 square inches in size or as "small" litter for items less than 4 sq. in. Eighty-four sub-categories of large and sixteen sub-categories for small litter were examined.

A total of 3,973 items of large litter were observed by auditors, on San Francisco streets during the April 2008 litter audit.

One hundred and thirty two sites (increased from 105 in 2007) were audited April 7 - 18, 2008. This audit was conducted at approximately the same time of year in 2008 as in the previous audit (conducted April 9 - 20, 2007).

The 2007 audit observed, an average of 36 items of large litter per site; which decreased 17% to 30 items of large litter per site in 2008 (3,973 / 132 sites). The chart below illustrates how the results in the San Francisco litter audit compare with 2007 and with other jurisdictions.



The largest category of large litter observed, at 664 litter pieces was non-branded paper napkins and paper towels. This is a similar result from the 2007 audit, where napkins were the second most significant category (570 pieces of large litter in 2007). Printed paper materials were the second most significant litter category at 380 items, followed closely by miscellaneous paper, last year's most significant large litter category. Miscellaneous paper was the third most significant category in the 2008 litter audit with 318 items observed.

Again in 2008, all fiber based products and items that were observed contributed 51% of the total large litter observed, as compared to 54% in the 2007 audit. Fiber based litter included paper, paperboard, cardboard, towels, napkins, newspapers, books, flyers, printed materials, and business forms, stationary.

Focus on plastic is misplaced

An interesting observation was made in terms of what brands of printed materials are on the ground in San Francisco. MUNI tickets and transfers are a contributor to paper litter on city streets. This observation of transit ticket, receipts and transfers as being a significant contribution to paper litter is consistent with observations made by the consultant in our (other) urban audits. This is an area where action can reduce litter significantly.

The second most significant material type observed was plastic materials. These included miscellaneous plastic, plastic packaging, wrap, plastic bags-retail and non-retail, hot and cold plastic drink cups, plastic jars, bottles, composites, utensils, zip bags, beverage containers, trays, polystyrene cups, confectionary, sweet and snack food packaging, pouches, plates, retail bags, and carrying rings. The most significant single category of plastic litter was unidentified miscellaneous plastic litter; which is litter that is broken or weathered that auditors cannot identify it with certainty; and is assumed to be plastic. Miscellaneous plastic litter accounted for 186 littered items or 4.7 % (compared to 9% in 2007) of total litter. All large plastic litter in aggregate accounted for 953 items observed (compared to 746 in 2007), or 24 % of total large litter observed (compared to 20% in 2007).

Below we compare litter occurrence in San Francisco versus all previous audits completed by the consultant. This allows a comparison to other jurisdictions where litter audits have been done using the same methodology.

San Francisco 2008 vs. Other Jurisdictions (2002 - 2007)¹

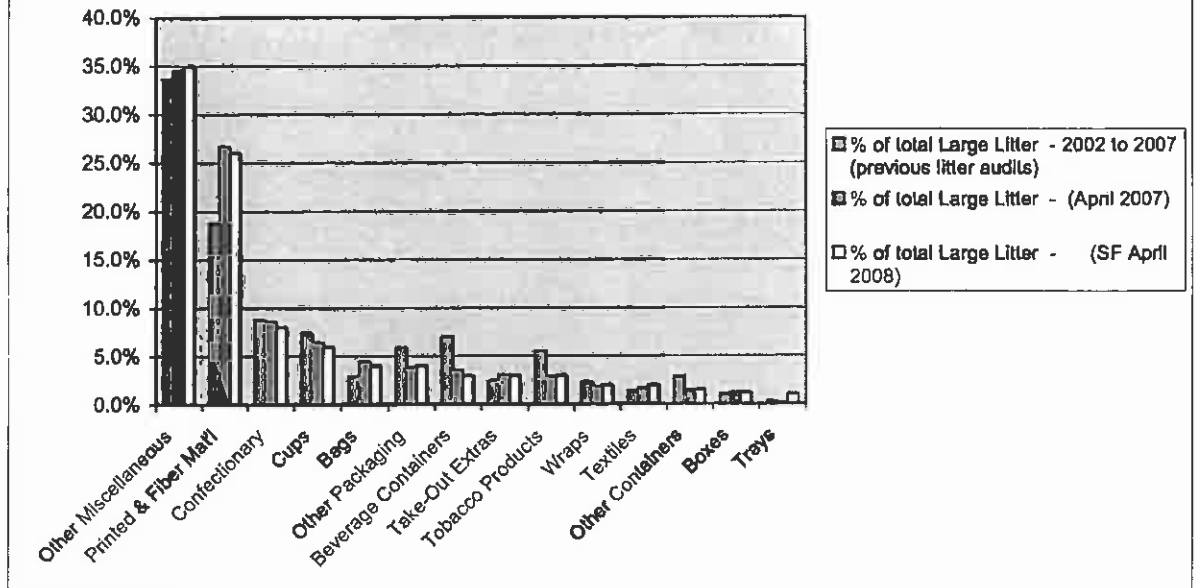
	Observations - 2002 to 2006 (other jurisdictions)	% of total Large Litter - 2002 to 2006 (other jurisdictions)	San Francisco Litter Audit (April 2007)	% of total Large Litter - SF April 2007	% of total Large Litter - SF April 2008
Other Miscellaneous	15,428	33.2%	1,316	34.5%	23.6%
Printed & Fiber Mat'l	8,693	18.7%	1,016	26.7%	31.3%
Confectionary	4,094	8.8%	326	8.6%	7.6%
Cups	3,366	7.2%	243	6.4%	6.4%
Bags	1,232	2.7%	169	4.4%	5.9%
Other Packaging	2,862	6.2%	145	3.8%	3.3%
Beverage Containers	3,420	7.4%	135	3.5%	3.0%
Take-Out Extras	1,076	2.3%	116	3.0%	3.8%
Tobacco Products	2,594	5.6%	110	2.9%	3.7%
Wraps	1,109	2.4%	68	1.8%	3.6%
Textiles	608	1.3%	62	1.6%	1.0%
Other Containers	1,472	3.2%	55	1.4%	2.2%
Boxes	448	1.0%	45	1.2%	3.4%
Trays	88	0.2%	6	0.2%	0.1%
	46,490	100%	3,812	100%	100%

Total bag litter is a small portion of total (5.9% of large items, 3.7% of small)

Bag litter has increased after plastic bag ban

1. Aggregated litter data, Litter audits by MGM Management including:
 City of Toronto, Canada (2002, 2003, 2004 (2 audits), 2005, 2006
 Regional Municipality of Peel, Canada (2003)
 Regional Municipality of York, Canada (2003)
 Regional Municipality of Durham, Canada (2003)

San Francisco - Compared to 2007 & All Audits



Again in 2008, observations of the small litter classification during the San Francisco audit showed a relatively low occurrence of small litter on city streets, as compared to audits performed by the consultant in other cities. In the 2008 audit, 2,335 small litter items were observed (compared to 2,393 in 2007) at 132 sites audited. This averages 18 items per site (compared to 23 in 2007) which is comparable with 21 items / site for the City of Toronto, Ontario, Canada; where considerable clean-up activities and litter abatement efforts have been underway for several years. Averages twice as high as the small litter rate observed in San Francisco in 2007 have been recorded by the consultant in other litter audits.

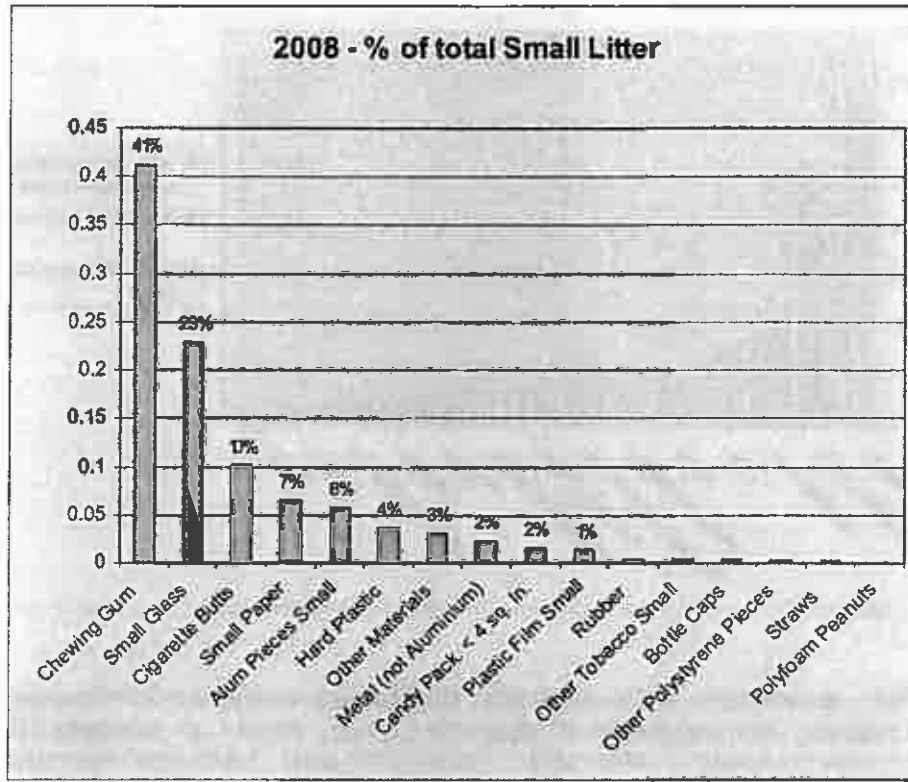
As identified in the 2007 litter audit, gum deposits on San Francisco streets continue to be a significant issue. Gum deposits on sidewalks and roadways cause a sticky and annoying problem for pedestrians. Gum deposits accounted for 39.5% of all the small litter observed during the 2007 audit, and in 2008 a similar observation was noted. In the 2008 litter audit gum deposits were 41% of the small litter observations made (960 gum deposits noted). Glass and paper small litter were also significant contributors to this class of litter.

Small litter is difficult to control, in that it is "manufactured" by a combination of degradation (weather) and man-made activities (vehicle traffic, mowing, etc.).

The small litter results for the 2008 San Francisco audit sites are illustrated below.

Due to the nature of randomly selecting sites and the methodology used for litter auditing of those locations, the consultant is of the opinion that this litter audit is representative of the overall litter occurrence in the City of San Francisco streets, as of April 2008.

2007 San Francisco - Small Litter – by Category



Small Litter Summary

Category	Description	SF 2008		SF 2007	
		Total Small Litter Items Observed	% of Total Small Litter	Total Small Litter Items Observed	% of Total Small Litter
16	Chewing Gum	980	41.1%	946	39.5%
8	Small Glass	535	22.9%	710	29.7%
9	Small Paper	153	6.6%	187	7.8%
1	Cigarette Butts	234	10.0%	135	5.6%
15	Other Materials	73	3.1%	97	4.1%
11	Hard Plastic	85	3.6%	92	3.8%
10	Plastic Film Small	33	1.4%	56	2.3%
2	Other Tobacco Small	9	0.4%	51	2.1%
14	Metal (not Aluminium)	52	2.2%	41	1.7%
	Rubber	10	0.4%	26	1.1%
12	Alum Pieces Small	135	5.8%	19	0.8%
5	Candy Pack < 4 sq. In.	36	1.5%	16	0.7%
6	Polyfoam Peanuts	2	0.1%	8	0.3%
7	Other Polystyrene Pieces	6	0.3%	5	0.2%
3	Bottle Caps	8	0.3%	4	0.2%
4	Straws	4	0.2%	0	0.0%
		2,335	100.0%	2,383	100.0%

Average SF Small Litter Items / site

18

23

3.2.3 Bags

3.2.3 Bags

			2008	2007
	Items	% of Sub-category	% of Total Large Litter	% of Total Large Litter
Plastic bags - no brand ¹	136	57.9%	3.42%	1.11%
Paper bags - not retail	43	18.3%	1.08%	1.88%
Plastic retail bags	25.5	10.9%	0.64%	0.60%
Paper retail bags	14	6.0%	0.35%	0.37%
Zipper bags/ sandwich	10.5	4.5%	0.26%	0.31%
Paper bags - fast food	6	2.6%	0.15%	0.18%
	235	100.0%	5.91%	4.45%

Plastic bag ban has done nothing to reduce bag litter
Plastic retail bags were 0.6% before and after plastic bag ban

Sub-category average (2002 - 2007 - 54,000 observations) 2.80%

- Note: Plastic bags with no clear brand marking included in this sub-category
- Item counts may not equal whole numbers due to averaging.



Discussion:

Plastic bags including retail sacks, zipper bags represented 4.3 % of total large litter (172 items out of 3,973). Plastic bags represented 73% of bag litter, as observed in the 2008 litter audit. Plastic bags with or without brand marking on them (i.e. grocery bags) represented 69% of the litter in this category, and 4% of total litter. Paper bags collectively accounted for 24 % of this sub-category, with non-retail paper bags (like lunch bags) representing 18% of the sub-category.

In 2008, as was also observed in 2007, bag litter in San Francisco was higher (5.9% of total litter) than the consultant's category average for bags in all audits conducted between 2002 - 2007 (2.8%) from other combined jurisdictions.

The Facts on Taxing Plastic Shopping Bags – The Ireland Situation

In March, 2002, the Republic of Ireland imposed a 17-cent tax on plastic shopping bags.

The Irish Ministry of the Environment has marketed this initiative as a 'win'. But has it been a success?

On closer examination by others (including the U.K. government which decided not to introduce a similar tax), the costs far outweigh any apparent benefit. The analysis has shown that:

Plastic Bag Tax Results in More Plastic Used for Bags and Sacks in Ireland after the Tax Than Before It!

	2002	2003	Comment
Tonnes of polyethylene imported for bags	27,347	27,637 (+1.1%)	More Plastic Used Not Less
Tonnes of polypropylene imported for bags	4,628	5,083 (+9.8%)	More Plastic Used Not Less

PIFA, 2004 (also validated by the Scottish Parliament ERDC Committee – Economic and Rural Development Committee) PIFA/Mike Kidwell Associates 2006

- Why? The tax essentially eliminated plastic shopping bags in Ireland but it didn't stop consumers using plastic bags.
- In fact, the amount of plastic used in Ireland increased 10 per cent.(PIFA, 2004) While sales of plastic shopping bags declined almost 90 per cent, there was a dramatic increase in the sale of other plastic bags of 400 per cent. Basically, people buy other plastic bags to use as trash containers since plastic shopping bags are no longer available to be re-used for their trash. (PIFA/Mike Kidwell Associates 2004)
- Independent audit studies show a very high re-use of plastic shopping bags (80%) for a wide range of uses including as trash containers. (Declima Research Canada)

Plastic Bag Tax Doesn't Solve the Litter Problem

- Independent research indicates that plastic shopping bags comprise less than one half of one (0.5%) of litter in Canada. (Reference: The City of Toronto Streets Litter Audit 2004, MGM Management, 2004; Region of Peel Litter Survey 2003, MGM Management, 2003; The Regional Municipality of York 2003 Litter Survey, MGM Management, 2003; Regional Municipality of Durham Litter Survey 2003, MGM Management, 2003).
- In Ireland, prior to the bag tax, the 2001 Annual Report from the Irish National Litter Monitoring System indicated that plastic shopping bags were only .75 per cent of the litter stream. The government, however, indicated to the public that the bags were 5 per cent of the litter stream. (National Litter Pollution Monitoring System: Feb 2002 - Ireland)

- The Irish Government has not proven that there has been any reduction in volume or weight of litter since their bag tax commenced operation.
- The bags were a small component of litter before the tax and after. There seemed to be little if any net impact.
- To single out and tax plastic bags on litter grounds is unfair.

Plastic Bag Tax Doesn't Reduce Waste Going to Landfill

- The Irish Government has not demonstrated any reduction in volume or weight of waste going to landfill since its bag tax commenced operation.
- Retailers have switched to paper bags which will result in thousands of tonnes of extra waste to landfill. All of which has the potential to degrade to CO2 and methane, resulting in additional Greenhouse Gases, unlike plastic.
- Further, as noted, the amount plastic consumed increased 10 per cent.

Plastic Bag Tax Doesn't Save Petroleum Resources

- Majority of petroleum usage (88%) is for fuel for heating, lighting and transportation. **(Number of sources for this. EPA might be most accepted).**
- Reducing plastic shopping bags would have no measurable effect on oil usage. Plastic shopping bags use one tenth (1/10th) of one per cent -- a small fraction of Canada's current usage of petroleum resources. **(CPIA/EPIC)**
- Other alternatives increase usage of petroleum resources. Recent independent study indicates that the manufacture of paper bags requires 220 per cent more energy and produces 300 percent more greenhouse gas emissions than plastic bags. **(A 2004 Ecobilan PwC, Paris Life Cycle Study)**
- Also the weight and volume of paper versus plastic bags has environmental consequences in their transport because it takes 7 trucks to haul 2 million paper bags while it only takes 1 truck to haul the same number of plastic bags. **(A 2004 Ecobilan PwC, Paris Life Cycle Study)**

Plastic Bag Tax Results in Negative Impacts on Retailers

- Retailers in Ireland have reported negative impacts on the loss of in-store carry devices and increased shoplifting. **(RGDATA Ireland)**
- In Ireland, some consumers resorted to using the stores' wire baskets and grocery carts to get their groceries home. These baskets and carts are often not returned at a significant cost to retailers (to say nothing of the new litter problem this has created).
- RGDATA, the trade body representing small to medium-sized retailers in Ireland, reports the loss of 450 wire baskets and carts per month by each retailer on average – a loss of about 24 million euros (about \$35 million CDN) annually.
- There was also an increase in shoplifting as it is now more difficult for retailers to identify who has and hasn't paid for their goods.

- According to the **January 2003 issue of the Irish Retail Trade Journal *Shelf Life***, the tax has led to an increase in 'push outs' (shoppers filling their carts and walking straight out without paying) at a cost to retailers of 10 million euros (\$14.7 million CDN) annually.
- Wire basket and shopping cart thefts in Ireland have increased dramatically resulting in additional security and replacement costs.

Plastic Bag Tax Could Pose Health Risks

- For example, improper care of reusable bags could increase the risk to human health due to the presence of food residues.
- Plastic shopping bags offered by retailers are hygienically packed until they are opened in the store and they are entirely safe to carry food.

Plastic Bag Tax Would Result in Higher Costs & Inconvenience to the Consumer

- A tax would not be welcomed by either consumers or the retail industry.
- Consumers prefer plastic bags because they are light weight, convenient, strong, re-useable, low cost, and water resistant. A move away from plastic shopping bags would cause inconvenience and increase costs for consumers.
- And such a move certainly would not be welcomed by retailers as it would put a huge expense on the industry. If plastic shopping bags were taxed, grocery retailers would have to re-engineer their check-out lines which would cost millions. This expense would be passed along to consumers in the form of higher prices for food and other goods.

Plastic Bag Tax Doesn't Necessarily Lead to Additional Government Revenues

- To avoid paying the tax, consumers will stop using them
- As in Ireland, people will buy other plastic bags to use as trash containers since plastic shopping bags are no longer available to be re-used for their trash.

The Bottom-line

The bag tax in Ireland has been a loss, not a 'win', for consumers, retailers, workers and businesses.

And for the environment, the tax has had a negligible/negative impact.



Unintended Consequences



Ireland is often cited as having *reduced* plastic grocery bag usage by 90+% after taxing each bag.

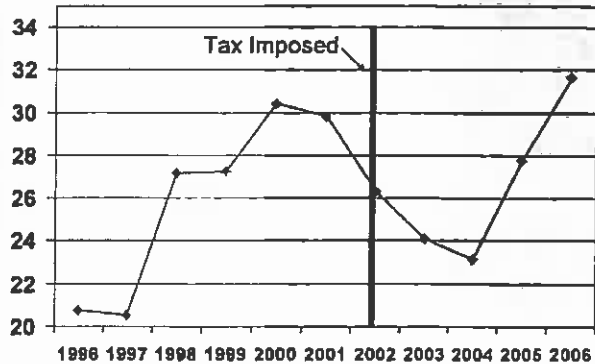
Not told when the statistic is cited is that **sales of other plastic bags shot up 400%** as consumers were forced to purchase replacement bags for the grocery bags they once were able to reuse.



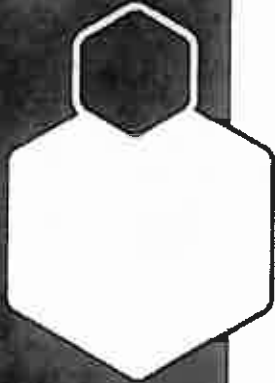
Unintended Consequences



Total Ireland Bag Imports (thousands of tonnes)



Boustead Lifecycle Assessment: Results



	Impact Summary of Various Bag Types (Carrying Capacity Equivalent to 1000 Paper Bags)		
	Paper (30% Recycled Fiber)	Compostable Plastic	Polyethylene
Total Energy Usage (MJ)	2622	2070	763
Fossil Fuel Use (kg)	23.2	41.5	14.9
Municipal Solid Waste (kg)	33.9	19.2	7.0
Greenhouse Gas Emissions (CO2 Equiv. Tons)	0.08	0.18	0.04
Fresh Water Usage (Gal)	1004	1017	58





AGENDA REPORT SUMMARY

MEETING DATE: July 28, 2009

SUBJECT: Environmental Commission FY 2009-2010 Goals and Work Plan

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve Environmental Commission FY 2009-2010 Goals and Work Plan

<p>ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT</p> <p>AMOUNT: NONE</p> <p>BUDGETED: Y _____ N _____</p> <p>FUNDING SOURCE:</p> <p>Finance Director: _____ Russell J. Morreale</p>	<p>ATTACHMENTS</p> <p>Assistant City Manger J. Logan Agenda Report</p> <p>Environmental Commission FY 2009-2010 Goals and Work Plan</p> <p>Feasibility List Summary</p>	<p>PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE Date of Publication</p> <hr/> <p>PREVIOUS COUNCIL CONSIDERATION</p> <p>Date(s): June 9, 2009: Joint Meeting with Environmental Commission and City Council</p> <hr/> <p>CEQA STATUS (If Required)</p> <p>NONE</p>
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Administration/J. Logan

July 20, 2009
Date (Date submitted to CM)

Douglas J. Schmitz, City Manager

Date (Final Sign off Date)



AGENDA REPORT

DATE: July 28, 2009
TO: City Council
FROM: J. Logan, Assistant City Manager
SUBJECT: ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION FY 2009-2010 GOALS AND WORK PLAN

RECOMMENDATION

Approve Environmental Commission FY 2009-2010 Goals and Work Plan

BACKGROUND

On June 9, 2009 the Environmental Commission and the City Council held their annual joint meeting. One of the agenda items was the Commission's Goals and Work Plan for FY 2009-2010. After discussion, Council requested that the Goals be reviewed by staff with a report back on the staff hours and costs of the activities needed to support the Commission to accomplish the Goals and Work Plan.

Executive staff meet to discuss the proposed Goals and Work Plan and analyzed the staff hours and costs needed to support the activities. A matrix of staff hours and costs was then completed for each of the Goals and Work Plan activities. The goals matrix and a Feasibility List Summary were then presented to the Environmental Commission at their meeting on July 13, 2009. After discussion of the matrix data and the Feasibility List Summary, Attachment 2, the Environmental Commission revised their 2009-2010 Goals and Work Plan that was submitted to City Council on June 9, 2009.

DISCUSSION

The revised Goals and Work Plan, Attachment 1, can be supported with existing staff resources, staff hours and require no additional budget. The activities to accomplish the Goals can be combined with the existing department budget allocations and connect into current or planned staff projects. As an example, the activities related to water conservation measures are all occurring within the allocated department budgets and existing department staff projects and program for water conservation.

The revised Environmental Commission 2009-2010 Goals and Work Plan are now submitted to City Council. Staff recommends approval.

ALTERNATIVES

Modify the Environmental Commission FY 2009-2010 Goals and Work Plan
Send back to staff liaison with further directions

Attachment(s):

Environmental Commission FY 2009-2010 Goals and Work Plan

Feasibility List Summary

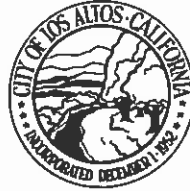
Listed below are goals for the 2009-2010 Work Plan, subject to approval by the City Council.		
Environmental Commission 2009-2010 Goals - revised		Projects in support of goals
1	Work with staff to secure the best value in waste management services for Los Altos.	Participate in RFP process and provide support as appropriate.
2	Implement approved education and outreach programs to achieve waste source reduction for Los Altos.	a) Implement Water Conservation Measures as approved by City Council on June 9 and 23, 2009 b) Implement Sustainable Events education program as approved
3	Develop baselines and progress indicators for Los Altos usage of water, waste, energy, and greenhouse gases.	a) Review ICLEI results for municipal operations greenhouse gas inventory; provide support as necessary. b) Work with city staff and Cal Water to develop baseline and monitor usage of water
4	Greenhouse Gas Inventory for the Community	Investigate feasibility of accomplishing Greenhouse Gas Inventory for the community
	7-28-09	

Feasibility List Summary - revised

Environmental Commission 2009-2010 Goals and Work Plan

1. WASTE MANAGEMENT SERVICES AGREEMENT	Staff	Hours	Total
E. Commission meeting presentation and public comments	Jim G./Consults	sched	
Publicity about EC meeting and public comments	Jim G./Consults	sched	
Follow Timeline for RFP process	Staff	sched	
2. EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH - WATER CONSERVATION MEASURES			
Update website and links	IT, Jon	5+3/mo	
Community group awareness - LAVA, Chamber, C.Foundation, Banners San Antonio and Lincoln Park	Jon/J.	6	6
Publish water reduction data for Los Altos Water District in TC Demonstration Garden	Brian/Jon	6	6
Publish water reduction data within City operations in TC	Damon/Jon	8	8
Publish water reduction articles in TC	MSC/Jon	40	40
Monitor updates from Cal Water on their conservation efforts	Damon/Jon	10	10
	Jon/J.	16	16
	Jon/J.	16	16
	Envir. Comm.		110
SUSTAINABLE EVENTS			
3. BASELINE - ICLEI STUDY - MUNICIPAL OPERATIONS			
Review data and report; attend workshop	Staff		40
determine followup activities	Staff		40
4. BASELINE - GREENHOUSE GAS INVENTORY FOR COMMUNITY			
Investigate the feasibility of accomplishing Greenhouse Gas Inventory for the community	Envir. Comm.	subcommittee	0
	Staff support if needed and available		0
			190 total staff hours

7/28/2009



MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 10, 2009
TO: Environmental Commission
FROM: Jon Maginot, Management Intern
SUBJECT: DROUGHT RESISTANT LANDSCAPING EFFORTS

RECOMMENDATION

Accept this report as an information item.

BACKGROUND

As part of its efforts to encourage water conservation, the City of Los Altos City Council and Environmental Commission has determined that drought resistant landscaping should be used as an educational tool for residents. The City currently has three locations with such landscaping and another location with efforts underway.

DISCUSSION

The three locations with drought resistant landscaping open to the public are Oak Avenue Elementary School at 1501 Oak Avenue, Almond Elementary School at 550 Almond Avenue, and the California Water Service Company maintenance office along Miramonte. The City will also use drought resistance landscaping at the intersection of Springer and Berry.

Almond Elementary

The garden at Almond Elementary is located just beyond the front offices of the school. There is a path which runs the length of the garden allowing visitors to walk through and see the various plants. There are plaques identifying the plants. Plants in the garden include:

Shrubs

Santa Cruz Island Buckwheat
 Toyon
 White Sage
 Pitcher Sage
 Cleveland Sage
 Sticky Monkeyflower
 California Fuschia
 Foothill Penstamon
 Dwarf Coyote Bush
 Coast Silk Tassel
 California Lilac
 Manzanita
 Creeping Strawberry
 Pink Flowering Currant

Flowers

San Miguel Island Buckwheat
 Blue Eyed Grass
 Checkerbloom
 Douglas Iris

Trees

California Buckeye

Grasses

California Fescue
 Blue Oak

Oak Avenue Elementary

The most developed of the public drought resistant landscaping is found at Oak Avenue Elementary School. Located behind the school next to the playground and baseball fields, the garden allows visitors to walk between the various plants and provides plaques with information about each plant. Among the plants found at Oak Elementary are:

Trees

California Bay Laurel
Incense Cedar
Holly-leaved Cherry
Valley Oak
Big Leaf Maple
Coastal Redwood
Douglas Fir

Shrubs

Narrow-leaved Milkweed
Western Redbud
Coffee Berry
Cleveland Sage
Manzanita
Native Rose

Grasses

California Fescue
Deergrass
Buckwheat

Flowers

Wild Lilac
Common Coyote Mint

CalWater Maintenance Office

Located along the sidewalk outside the CalWater Maintenance Office on Miramonte at B Street, the garden provides visitors a clear view of plants and their identification plaques. Plants found here include:

Shrubs

Heavenly Bamboo
Hop Bush
Strawberry Bush
Ericaceae
Mexican Sage
Oleander

Flowers

New Zealand Flax
Lantana
Agapanthus
Carpet Rose

Trees

English Yew

Springer and Berry

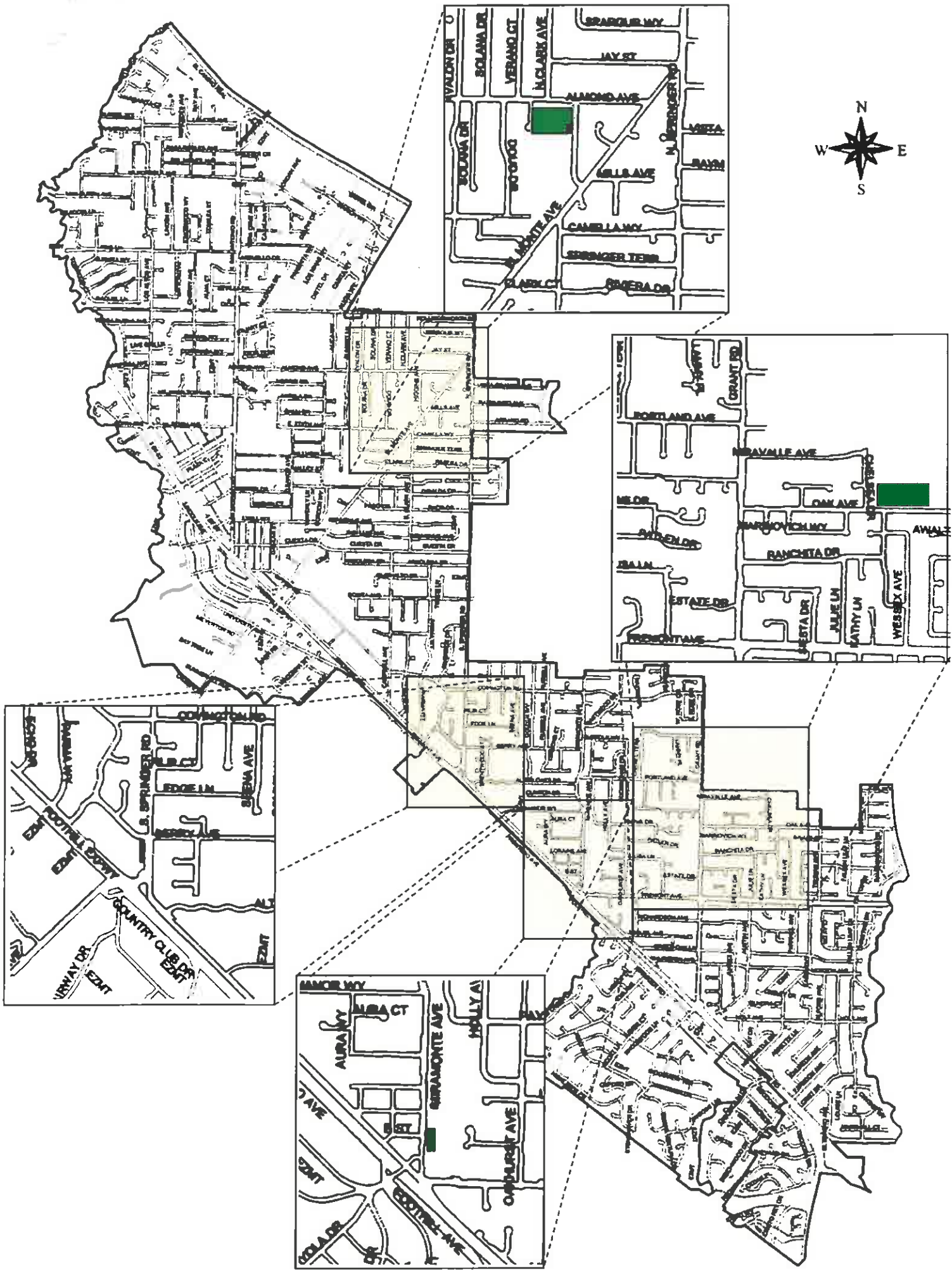
The City owns a strip of land along Springer Road at the intersection with Berry Avenue. The Maintenance Services Department has created designs to implement drought resistant landscaping on this land. The area is accessible by sidewalk which will allow visitors to view the landscaping safely.

The City does not have plans to use drought resistant landscaping at any other locales in the City. There is however the possibility of residents planting and maintaining drought tolerant plants in islands along their street and in their own yards.

Next Steps

Staff and volunteers are working on providing information that can be placed on the Environmental Commission website. Information will include maps of existing landscaping, pictures of various plants, purposes of drought resistant landscaping, lists of drought resistant plants, tips for planting drought resistant landscaping, etc. Other education measures should be considered to inform residents of drought resistant landscaping methods and benefits.

Attachment: Drought Resistant Landscaping Map





MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 10, 2009
TO: Environmental Commission
FROM: Jon Maginot, Management Intern
SUBJECT: **PHOTOVOLTAIC PERMIT FEES REVENUE**

RECOMMENDATION

Accept this report as an information item.

BACKGROUND

The City of Los Altos charges a one-time fee of \$500 for permits to install solar/photovoltaic panels within the City. This is a flat fee regardless of the size of the project. The Commission has asked staff to research the amount of revenue generated by the fees over a single year. This report is to inform the Commission of the results of that research.

DISCUSSION

Previously, the City a fee based on the scope of the project. It was found that inspections required the same amount of time and effort on the part of staff for all projects. Therefore, the fee was established at \$500 per permit. This number was reached as the break-even point for inspections. The cost for the permit is designed to recover costs for plan checks and site inspections.

- The City issued 64 permits in Fiscal Year 2007-2008 and 40 permits in Fiscal Year 2008-2009.
- The City \$29,561.27 in revenue in Fiscal Year 2007-2008 and \$19,975.16 in Fiscal Year 2008-2009.
- The City was recognized by NorCal Solar as having the highest number of new systems installed (109) and the highest number of new systems installed per capita (3.94) for medium-sized (25,000 to 100,000) cities in the Bay Area for 2008. The City had the sixth highest number of new systems installed for all cities in 2008, trailing only much larger cities (San Jose 334, San Francisco 200, Santa Rosa 126, Oakland 121, and Berkeley 111).

