

**CITY OF ALBANY
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda Date: July 20, 2009

Reviewed by: BP

SUBJECT: 2008 Alameda County Waste Characterization Study

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STAFF RECOMMENDATION

For informational purposes only.

BACKGROUND

Stopwaste.Org, with consulting assistance from R.W. Beck, Inc., recently completed the 2008 Alameda County Waste Characterization Study (Study). This Study was conducted as an update to the previous waste characterization studies completed in 1995 and 2000. The studies consist of analysis of solid waste disposal to identify and classify what materials are being disposed of within Alameda County, and provide solid waste composition and quantity results for each jurisdiction within the County.

DISCUSSION

As detailed within the Study, Albany's solid waste disposal comprises 0.5% of the total waste stream within the County. The City's solid waste disposal tonnage has steadily decreased from 11,443 tons disposed in 1995 to 5,968 tons disposed in 2008, equating to a 40% reduction. The Study identifies the City's reduction, along with the 41% reduction by the City of Emeryville, as the greatest percentage decreases within the County.

A total of 69 waste samples from Albany were analyzed as part of the Study to identify waste composition. Analysis results identified three major categories of recyclable and compostable materials currently being disposed of as waste including:

- Organics (47%). A total of 29% of the organics waste is comprised of materials that can be composted. The remaining materials identified within this category are not compostable/recyclable.
- Paper (23%). A total of 7% of the paper waste is comprised of materials that can be recycled, and 16% that can be composted.
- Plastic (11%). A total of 7% of the plastic waste is comprised of materials that can be recycled.

The above findings are similar to that found within the countywide waste composition, including 40% organics, 21% paper, and 10% plastic. Excerpts from the Study are attached to this report.

ANALYSIS

The City's current franchise with Waste Management of Alameda County has facilitated an increase in the amount of waste material diverted from the landfill, including commingled recycling, residential organics food scraps collection, and subsidized organics food scraps collection for the commercial sector. Several programs have recently been established to further increase diversion opportunities for the community including:

- All plastics recycling (#1-7, plastic bags, and film)
- Organics collection at city facilities
- Polystyrene ban
- Public information – brochures, postcards, bill inserts
- Citywide garage sale
- On-call bulky waste collection
- On-call e-waste collection
- Construction and demolition recycling ordinance
- Environmentally preferable purchasing policy
- Support to Stopwaste.org countywide outreach campaigns (paper & organics)

In addition, staff has been working closely with the Albany School District to assist in the “Greening of Albany Schools”. To date, two elementary schools are now utilizing recycling and organics collection. Beginning in the 2009-10 school year, all schools except the high school will utilize recycling and organics collection. This equates to an approximate waste diversion of over 60 yards per week, and should enable a significant decrease in the amount of organics material currently being landfilled.

Further targeting of particular waste streams is required in order to reduce the amount of organics, recyclable paper and plastics entering the landfill. Staff intends to work on a number of projects in an effort to increase diversion of these particular materials including:

- Collaborate with Stopwaste.org to further expand targeted outreach at the countywide level
- Continue outreach to the residential sector, with a focus on organics, plastics and paper
- Continue providing assistance to the schools
- Retain assistance to conduct outreach to the commercial sector regarding organics and recycling service
- Seek grant funding from Stopwaste.org to implement a multi-family sector outreach campaign that includes service setup and associated materials
- Research establishment of a zero-waste goal and accompanying program components

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT

Staff efforts to increase the amount of waste diverted from the landfill provide positive environmental benefits including the recycling and/or reuse of virgin materials, and a reduction in the amount of methane (a greenhouse gas), emitted from landfilled materials.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Projects and programs noted above are funded by waste diversion non-competitive grants from Stopwaste.org.

Attachments

Excerpts from the 2008 Alameda County Waste Characterization Study, Stopwaste.Org