



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the City Council

DATE ISSUED: November 29, 2016 REPORT NO: 16-112
ATTENTION: Honorable Council President and Members of the City Council
SUBJECT: Update on Recycling at City Facilities

REQUESTED ACTION:

None

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Information Only Item

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF ITEM BACKGROUND:

In 2015, the San Diego City Council adopted the Climate Action Plan and the Zero Waste Plan (ZWP), a framework to guide the City toward a more sustainable future. One of the recommendations in the ZWP was to engage City Facilities to increase recycling by utilizing an annual recycling report card and enhancing education and outreach to departments. It was anticipated in the plan that this could result in 1,500 tons of diversion. To reinforce these recommendations, Scott Chadwick, the Chief Operating Officer (COO) issued a memo on May 28, 2015 (Attachment 1), to Department Directors explaining that each department must comply with the City Recycling Ordinance (CRO), identify a Recycling Liaison, write a departmental diversion plan, and achieve at least 50% diversion by 2020. An update would be given annually to the City Council by the Environmental Services Department (ESD).

ESD has taken the lead on implementation of the City facilities diversion efforts. Beginning in November 2015, staff has:

- conducted technical site visits at over 60% of City departments
- held four meetings with the departmental Recycling Liaisons
- met with key staff and stakeholders in other City departments to expound on the goals and objectives of the new program and addressed questions uniquely related to specific departments

This report documents City departments' efforts to outline current diversion practices. The report concludes with an outline of the next steps for the department diversion program.

Background

Assembly Bill 939 (AB 939), the Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989, has been the key driver of solid waste diversion to date. AB 939 required that all local California jurisdictions achieve a 50% diversion rate by 2000 and each year thereafter, and submit an annual update

to CalRecycle of the programs designed to divert materials from disposal to the maximum extent feasible. The City's overall diversion rate has remained in the mid-60s since 2010. The City currently has numerous resource management strategies in place, which include: mandatory recycling for single-family, multi-family residences, commercial facilities (including City buildings), and special events; a Construction and Demolition (C&D) Deposit Ordinance, which requires diversion of at least 65% of project debris; curbside yard trimmings and recycling collection; waste reduction, recycling, and composting education; commercial and residential food scrap composting programs; public space recycling programs; and an environmentally preferable purchasing program (EP3). Furthermore, the City requires franchised waste haulers to provide recycling services to their customers as a requirement of their franchise agreements.

The City's Office Recycling Program started in the late 1980s with ESD providing free recycling containers and pick-up to various City buildings such as City Administration Building (CAB), Development Services Department (DSD), Police Headquarters, Police Academy, Montgomery Field, and numerous other City sites. The program grew over the years and added materials to the recycling stream as recycling markets continued to expand. In 2014, ESD transitioned the pick-up of recyclable materials to the existing custodial staff or contracted custodial staff in City buildings, and has continued to provide technical assistance, education and outreach to City employees in private and public buildings alike.

In 2015, City Council approved both the Climate Action Plan and the ZWP. On May 28, 2015, Department Directors received a memo from the COO explaining that the waste diversion rate for City facilities that utilize the Citywide refuse and recycling collections services contract was 27% and that many City facilities were out of compliance with the City Recycling Ordinance (CRO). The memo further stated that each department in the City of San Diego must comply with the City Recycling Ordinance (CRO) and the ZWP. Directors were required to identify a departmental Recycling Liaison and develop a Departmental Diversion Plan. ESD's responsibilities include providing assistance to departments in the development of their diversion plans, and to present annual reports on the status of the City's facilities progress to City Council.

Initial Planning

In response to the memo from the COO, staff identified and outlined the long-range goals and next steps in order to accomplish the objectives outlined in the memo. The main objective is to engage each City department in discussion and action to increase the City's overall diversion rate as an organization.

The goals identified for year one are:

1. Gain buy-in from City departments
2. Assess and understand current diversion practices at departments
3. Identify obstacles to additional recycling for each individual departments
4. Identify how to overcome identified obstacles
5. Assist departments in creating a working diversion plan

Outreach

Meetings – An initial “Kick Off” meeting for department Recycling Liaisons was held in November 2015 and covered introducing the process, explaining waste and recycling services

available to departments, and identifying obstacles or barriers to increasing recycling at facilities. In early 2016, staff determined it would be in the best interest of this new program to hold quarterly recycling liaison meetings. This would assure proper engagement, feedback, technical assistance, and communication with Recycling Liaisons in order to establish buy-in and provide adequate internal support. To date, there have been four quarterly meetings (November 2015, February 2016, May 2016, and August 2016). At each meeting newly identified obstacles to recycling were discussed and addressed, a template for departmental diversion plans was created (Attachment 2), liaisons were given resources they could take back to their departments, including the cost-saving pricing structure if departments reduce trash service and increase recycling and greenery service, and feedback from participants was received on how to incorporate Zero Waste principles into City employee behavior and departmental culture.

Technical Assistance Site Visits – Technical assistance site visits have been offered to each department. These visits include a walk-through of the facility and providing recommendations on how to better increase waste diversion, and to identify if work stations and common areas are in compliance with the CRO. In less than a year, site visits have been conducted at over 60% of City departments.

Recycling Presentations – Each department is offered one recycling presentation a year by Republic Services, the City's waste and recycling hauler, as outlined in the contract. For large departments that have many smaller meetings or tail gates, ESD staff has provided recycling presentations upon request. In addition, various departmental executive teams have requested detailed departmental diversion program presentations to obtain greater understanding in order to respond appropriately and effectively within the culture unique to each department. Some of these meetings have also included discussions of how to create internal Zero Waste teams or division recycling liaisons to establish reporting structure to the department recycling liaison.

Department Diversion Assessment

There are over 250 City-operated sites served by the Republic Services and many of these City facilities have distinct characteristics that affect the way in which waste and recycling can be managed and tracked. For example, there are locations such as CAB that house multiple departments yet share the same waste and recycling dumpsters. Conversely, there are departments that are decentralized such as Fleet Services, Library, Fire-Rescue, Police, and Park and Recreation. Some of these decentralized locations house City employees and are used for City operations, while other locations' main focus are for public use and benefit. The City has some facilities under contracts with janitorial companies for in-building servicing of cans while other facilities are responsible to empty their own waste and recycling cans. The City also has certain facilities that are serviced by Republic Services as well as the ESD Collections Services Division. In addition to all of these elements, there are still other departments, like Public Utilities Department, that have certain locations without access to dumpster service and thus self-haul material. The City also has contracts with vendors for materials requiring special handling, such as confidential document shredding and hazardous waste. Through the process of site visits, meetings and data gathering, factors and barriers have been identified and it has given staff the information needed to understand the full scope of this program and plan next steps.

Measuring diversion – Initially, departmental diversion rates were being measured by the waste and recycling hauling contract only. It was quickly determined that departments needed to identify their overall generation and disposal, which may come from multiple waste stream outlets. The next step was to identify all of these outlets and the ways in which information was already being reported. Staff is working with Purchasing and Contracting Department to ensure vendor reporting is being received in a way that is easy to assimilate into our system. This includes being able to easily identify which department receives credit for diversion, and the format in which the data is sent. Staff is also working with individual departments to address self-hauling data.

Calculating Diversion – The overall goal is to capture all of the waste stream, both what is being diverted and not diverted. Republic Services submits quarterly diversion reports, but those reports only capture a portion of the overall departmental diversion efforts. As other sources arise, staff have been working to receive this data in a way that can be incorporated into the overall diversion rate of a department. The sources currently capturing data are Republic Services and ESD's Collections Services Division. Sources anticipated to begin capturing data in year two are the various vendors City-wide that collect recyclable material including metal, shredded paper, as well as, self-hauled material from individual departments to landfills and recycling sites. Once this data is incorporated, the City anticipates seeing higher diversion rates. Additionally, staff are working together to overcome barriers such as sites where departments share dumpsters, like CAB, and departments that are partially or fully housed in non-City owned buildings. For the time being, these locations are sharing the building or site-wide diversion rate. Over the next year, the data from these sources will be incorporated into the diversion rates of departments.

Departmental Diversion Plan Development – The 2015 memo from the COO required departments to create a diversion plan. At the second recycling liaison meeting, department diversion plans and timelines were discussed. Department Recycling Liaisons requested a template from which to work.

The template addresses these three core items:

- What diversion practices does the department currently have?
- Is the department in compliance with the City Recycling Ordinance?
- What diversion programs does the department want to pursue in the future to further reduce waste?

These departmental diversion plans allow each department to offer self-imposed deadlines for implementing new diversion programs as well as identify the time needed to come fully into compliance with the CRO. These plans are constantly changing documents because as diversion programs are implemented, and diversion goals increase, documents evolve and are updated. There have already been positive changes throughout many departments including an increase in access to recycling and department-wide outreach and education. It is anticipated that over the next year as these plans get implemented, diversion rates will increase.

Current Diversion Practices

Identifying current diversion practices was the primary focus of the first year of the department diversion program. Below are highlights of City department's diversion practices.

Common diversion practices held in most office buildings include: paired waste and recycling cans with signage, confidential document shredding, toner cartridge take-back program, the City's surplus office furniture program, reusing office supplies, incorporating reusable flatware and silverware into kitchens, and "techotrash" (technotrash) bins which allow departments to divert CDs and disks from the waste stream.

Development Services (DSD) provides 90 gallon recycling cans for large project plans in copy areas and other strategic locations.

Environmental Services (ESD) implemented a model where there are paired common area trash and recycling cans and only desk side recycling cans in offices and cubicles. Additionally, the department has an on-site food scrap composting program, and reusable flatware and silverware use in kitchens.

Fleet Services diversion efforts include: recycling scrap metal, wood pallet recycling, used tires that get recycled or recapped.

Information Technology (IT) ensures all City-issued cell phones, computers, and servers are cleaned of information and recycled.

Library diversion program highlights include: selling or recycling books, confidential document shredding, participation in the City's surplus office furniture program through internally redistributing office furniture and auctioning materials obsolete to the City of San Diego.

Park & Recreation (P&R) diversion efforts include use of Big Belly recycling bins, pairing of waste and recycling cans and dumpsters at some park locations, and greenery recycling.

Police practices co-mingled recycling and pairing in common areas as well as has 88 confidential document shredding carts throughout their facilities.

Public Utilities (PUD) diversion practices include: metal recycling, some greenery and food waste composting, construction material and spoils recycling, bio-solids that are processed as beneficial reuse. PUD's reuse efforts include reusing office supplies, managing excess furniture and equipment through auction, recycling, or the City's surplus office furniture program. PUD also participates in Extended Producer Responsibility (asking vendors to use minimal and returnable packing materials) and using the City's Environmentally Preferable Purchasing to make procurement decisions.

Public Works' highlighted diversion practices include wood scrap recycling, scrap metal recycling, and reuse of tested building material samples.

Real Estate Assets (READ) diversion efforts include Qualcomm Stadium recycling at parking lot events and both airports practice "grass-cycling" which is the process of leaving mowed grass on-site.

Transportation & Storm Water (TSW) highlighted diversion efforts include: technotrash recycling, the recycling of metal, tires, concrete, and greenery material related to the Urban Forestry program.

Next Steps

It will be necessary to build in timelines to refine and review progress and data in order to achieve the best snapshot of departmental and City-wide diversion. In an effort to ensure increased diversion and to achieve 50% diversion by 2020, department recycling liaisons will continue meeting. This will guarantee open communication between departments and staff, and it will provide a central place for liaisons to discuss successes and troubleshoot barriers to implementing their diversion plans.

As this is a new program with a large, evolving scope, the next immediate step will be to create an overall strategic plan. This plan will aid implementation of the City-wide program. Goals include:

1. Coordination to monitor departmental diversion
2. Measuring progress toward increasing diversion and recording that data
3. Tracking ESD outreach to City departments

As progress moves forward, it will be important to collect qualitative data as well as quantitative data in order to include programs that might not be large in volume or weight, but are important, innovative, and solve difficult to recycle waste problems. These sorts of stories and data will serve as milestones on the City of San Diego's road to Zero Waste.

CITY STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S)/OBJECTIVE(S):

Goal #3: Create and sustain a resilient and economically prosperous City.
Objective #4: Prepare and respond to climate change

FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS:

N/A

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY CONTRACTING INFORMATION (if applicable):

N/A

PREVIOUS COUNCIL and/or COMMITTEE ACTIONS:

None

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND OUTREACH EFFORTS:

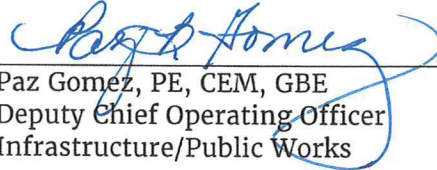
None

KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND PROJECTED IMPACTS:

City of San Diego employees



Mario X. Sierra
Director
Environmental Services Department



Paz Gomez, PE, CEM, GBE
Deputy Chief Operating Officer
Infrastructure/Public Works

Attachment(s):

1. Memo from COO Scott Chadwick
2. Departmental Diversion Plan Template