



Legislation Text

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TO:

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

THROUGH:

Bruce Moe, City Manager

FROM:

Stephanie Katsouleas, Public Works Director

Anna Luke-Jones, Public Works Senior Management Analyst

SUBJECT:

Review of the City's Food Waste Collection Program (Continued from the April 17, 2018 City Council Meeting) (Public Works Director Katsouleas).

RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council receive and file this report regarding the City's food waste collection program.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no fiscal implications associated with receiving this report.

BACKGROUND:

The City currently has a Franchise Agreement with Waste Management (WM) for solid waste hauling services. An overview of these services was provided to City Council on February 6, 2018. The report also included the results from a recent community survey about how residents and businesses feel about the City's current solid waste services and programs. At that meeting, City Council requested that staff return with additional program information and data about the participation rates of residents and businesses for the City's solid waste collection programs and services, including food waste collection.

Also, two specific questions were asked about the residential food waste program:

1. Are there different dedicated carts available for food waste collection and how do other cities handle residential food waste collection other than using plastic bags?
2. If there was a dedicated cart to handle food waste, how would odor and sanitary issues be handled that a city may experience around town (especially if there is a higher participation rate)?

Recall that core solid waste collection services include:

- Trash (gray cart), recycling (blue cart), and organics (green cart) curbside collection.

- Bulky-item collection (those items too large for a cart and not often disposed of).
- At Your Door household hazardous waste collection.
- Other infrequent services such as holiday tree collection, discount composting bins, free composting classes, abandoned item pick-up, sharps by mail, and paper shredding events.

Residential Food Waste Program

The City's (separated) food waste program began as a pilot program with select residential participants in 2012 and was expanded into a citywide program in 2015. Since its inception, Manhattan Beach has diverted approximately 108,200 pounds of residential food waste from the landfill. According to Cal Recycle's 2016 data, the City of Manhattan Beach is one of 74 cities out of 482 (15%) in the State of California that offers a residential curbside food waste recycling program, suggesting that Manhattan Beach is one of only a handful of progressive cities to have embraced residential food waste collection.

Summary and graphical information about the participation rates and tonnages collected for the many of the City's residential solid waste programs is included with this report (Attachment 1). In addition to food waste collection, the attachment highlights 3-cart collection data, bulky item data, at-your-door household hazardous waste, curbside e-waste and shredding event data. These are the most significantly used programs by residents. Other residential programs, while much smaller, are also popular. For example:

- 30-50 people attend the spring composting class, and 10-20 bins are sold each year through the City's discount program.
- In 2017, 25 residents ordered a total of 34 kits under the Sharps-by-Mail program.
- Although the curbside holiday tree collection program does not track the specific number of residential participants, it received 58 tons of Christmas trees in 2017, which is fairly representative of the annual average tonnage.

DISCUSSION:

Staff conducted additional research about other the structure of local jurisdictions' residential food waste programs in reference the questions posed by Council. We found that as of the end of 2016, there are only four other cities in Los Angeles County with residential food waste programs (Calabasas, Redondo Beach, Santa Monica, and Westlake Village) as well as a handful of cities in Orange County. A summary of our findings is included here.

City Council Question #1: Are there different dedicated carts available for food waste collection and how do other cities handle residential food waste other than using plastic bags?

Responses: Locally, cities such as Costa Mesa, Santa Monica and Calabasas encourage residents to combine their yard (green) waste and food waste together into one green cart without conditioning. All three of these cities utilize a typical green cart like those used in Manhattan Beach. Their programs process yard waste, food waste and soiled paper (considered organic) together. For those residents who do not wish to dispose of food waste directly into the green cart, staff suggests wrapping the food in paper (newspaper, junk mail, etc.) or placing it inside a compostable bag. It is the residents' responsibility to purchase compostable bags if they wish to use them as liners.

City Council Question #2: If there was a dedicated residential cart to handle food waste, how would odor and sanitary issues be handled that a city may experience around town (especially if there is a higher participation rate)?

Responses: These same three cities have standard carts for their residential curbside collection similar to those used in Manhattan Beach. While there are no specific “food” collection carts, manufacturers do offer cart types that have a “locking lid” mechanism so that vermin, scavengers, etc. cannot access the cart if the resident chooses to lock it. The lid is called a “gravity lid.” A resident can lock the lid with a padlock and set it out for collection. When the collection truck loads the cart on the hopper and inverts it, the lid is designed to unlock automatically based on gravity.

Costa Mesa and Santa Monica stated that they are not receiving complaints from residents due to odor or sanitary issues. They attribute this to the mixture of yard waste and food waste together, which may minimize foul odors. Residents often line the bottom of their carts with newspaper or junk mail, place yard waste first, then wrap their food waste in paper and “cradle” or layer it with yard waste.

The City of Costa Mesa only provides this service to single family homes; townhomes and condos are exempt from the city’s program because there is not sufficient green waste generated from multi-family parcels to necessitate a 35-gallon cart. Costa Mesa’s hauler is rolling out a cart steam cleaning program this year. For an additional fee (estimated at around \$20 per visit), residents will be able to schedule an appointment for the hauler’s cart cleaning truck to visit and power wash all of their carts. There are other companies in the industry who provide similar cart cleaning services.

The City of Calabasas stated that its curbside mixed yard/food program has produced very little tonnage, which has been attributed to the community’s concerns over soil and odor of the cart.

The City of Redondo Beach offers a curbside composting collection program, which allows residents to place yard, soiled paper and food waste in the same green cart. Their website instructs residents to purchase compostable bags at two local stores as liners for food waste, though a staff member indicated that it is okay if the food is placed in a paper bag. Redondo Beach staff receives a handful of complaints each year from residents who dislike the odor or condition of their green cart from all the mixed yard and food waste. Residents are encouraged to use more paper or yard waste to line or “cradle” the food, request a replacement cart every six months or to clean out their cart in an area where the runoff enters the sanitary sewer. Redondo Beach’s sand section residents who do not have yard waste can still obtain the 35-gallon cart for food waste collection upon request.

Costa Mesa, Santa Monica, Calabasas and Redondo Beach did not provide actual tonnage of food waste collected because their food is mixed with yard waste rather than collected separately. It is also worth noting that in each of these cities, there may be some limits to the type of food that can be disposed of in the green carts; those limitations vary by city. However, the Manhattan Beach program allows all types of food waste to be disposed of because it must be bagged and separated from other green waste before it is placed in the green cart for collection. The City’s green waste program requires clear separation of food waste from other

yard waste because they are recycled in completely different manners (industrial processing vs. agricultural cover).

This report does not highlight other cities' commercial food waste collection programs, primarily because they are mandatory for all cities under AB 1826 (discussed below) and the minimum requirements are the same for all cities. Under our program, in 2017 Manhattan Beach collected 730 tons of food waste from commercial and multi-family properties; this is significant when considering that commercial properties represent only 5% of the City's parcels.

Recent Legislation

In September 2016, the State passed SB 1383 (Short-lived climate pollutants: methane emissions: dairy and livestock: organic waste: landfills). The bill has a goal of:

- A 50-percent reduction in the level of the statewide disposal of organic waste from the 2014 level by 2020.
- A 75-percent reduction in the level of the statewide disposal of organic waste from the 2014 level by 2025.

Manhattan Beach's residential and commercial food waste program will help the City achieve this goal. Although currently in draft text, the SB 1383 definition of "organic waste generator" is a "person or entity responsible for generation of organic waste." Solid waste industry experts assume that mandatory residential food waste programs for residents will be rapidly developed in California within the next five years. In the interim, many cities are still struggling to secure commercial food waste programs under AB 1826, which was enacted in October, 2014. AB 1826 requires mandatory commercial organics (food & green waste) recycling from businesses and green waste recycling from multi-family units (5 or more units) by April 1, 2016. Cities were also required to offer a food scrap recycling program (Manhattan Beach complied early in September 2015). The City of Manhattan Beach started commercial food waste programs in the fall of 2015 and is currently in compliance.

PUBLIC OUTREACH/INTEREST:

Although there has been ample public outreach about the City's food waste collection program in general, public outreach was not conducted for this report.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

The City has reviewed the proposed activity for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and has determined that the activity is not a "Project" as defined under Section 15378 of the State CEQA Guidelines; therefore, pursuant to Section 15060(c)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines the activity is not subject to CEQA. Thus, no environmental review is necessary.

LEGAL REVIEW:

The City Attorney has reviewed this report and determined that no additional legal analysis is necessary.

Attachment:

1. Solid Waste Services and Programs Data