



STAFF REPORT

Meeting Date: April 17, 2012
To: Honorable Mayor & City Council
From: Christian Di Renzo, Senior Management Analyst 
Subject: Request by Councilmember Brucker to Describe the City's Recycling Practices
Attachments: None

INTRODUCTION

This item intends to briefly describe the most common activities of the Solid Waste Utility ("Utility") with particular respect to its recycling practices.

DISCUSSION

The Utility provides collection service to single-family residences and multi-family buildings and since 2004 has contracted with Crown Disposal ("Crown") to process the mixed waste collected by the City from its single and multi-family residential customers. Additionally, the City also contracts with Crown for commercial collection services which include bin service to commercial customers and apartment buildings and roll-off box service. The Alley Maintenance operation is responsible for residential alleys, by managing the maintenance of tree-trimmings, street sweeping, removal of bulky items (on a scheduled basis), and ensuring every alley is cleared twice a month. For the FY 2011/12 budget the Utility staffs 21.66 full-time equivalents and has an operating budget of \$14.6 million.

Recycling

The Utility takes an inventive approach to recovering recyclables from the waste stream. All trash, whether it's residential, multifamily, or commercial, is taken to a material recovery facility (MRF) located in Sun Valley and operated by Crown's sister company, Community Recycling. This renders the program convenient and efficient. In order to successfully meet the diversion mandate imposed by AB 939, city staff and Crown undertook a waste characterization audit in 2005 aimed at assessing the nature of the municipal waste stream. A careful review of the waste provided Crown enough confidence to effectively guarantee a minimum citywide diversion rate of 60%. Crown collects and diverts the following four waste streams: green waste, C&D (construction and demolition), food waste, and mixed-waste. Of these four types all are recyclable by as much as 95% while mixed-waste is more difficult to sort given the variability in the

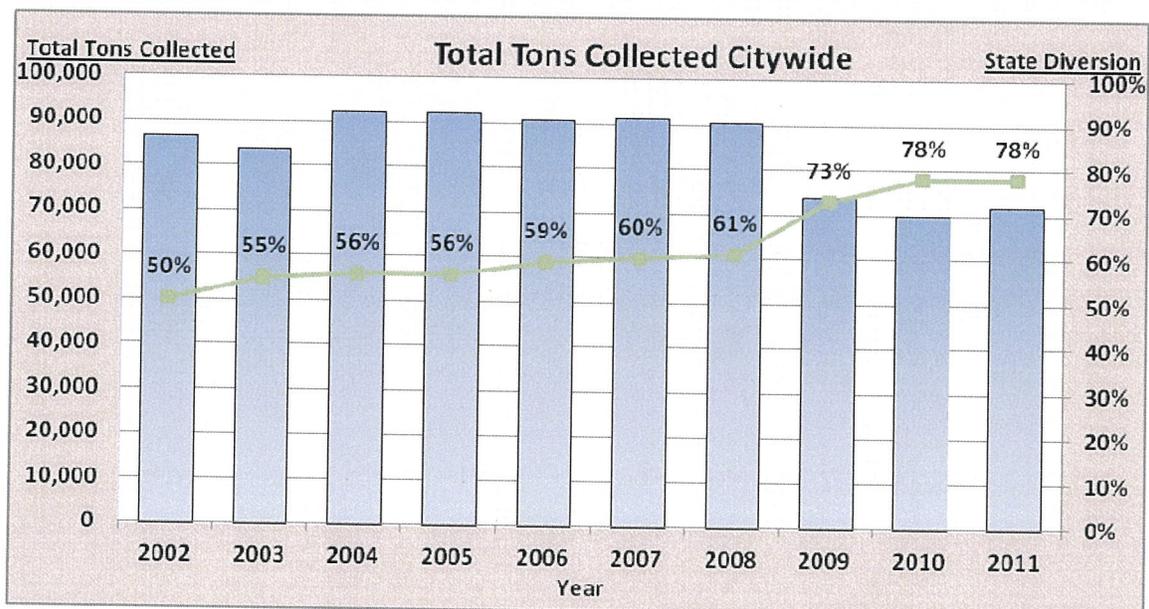
types of material present in the stream and generally is recyclable no more than 40-45%.

At the MRF, all mixed waste such as paper, glass, plastic, and metal is recovered and recycled. Green waste is filtered for contaminants before being diverted to a composting facility in Lamont. This recycling program allows residents and businesses to significantly reduce the amount of trash conveyed to local landfills and helps the City comply with the State's recycling mandate, i.e. AB 939.

AB 939 (California Integrated Waste Management Act) was passed in 1989 as a response to an increasing shortage of landfill capacity throughout California (and the nation) and an upsurge in interest in conserving California's natural resources. The act set a goal of increasing diversion (reuse, recycling and composting) from 10% in 1989 to 50% in 2000. When AB 939 became law, California was diverting only about 10% of the more than 45 million tons of waste generated. Currently the nationwide average for diversion approximates 33%.

Building on the landmark legislation referenced above is AB 341 signed into law and effective as of January 1, 2012. The intent of AB 341 is to achieve a statewide diversion of 75% by 2020 by capturing lost opportunities in the commercial sector. The 75% diversion requirement is a statewide goal, not a local mandate on cities and counties. AB 341 specifically says that CalRecycle (the state agency responsible for overseeing and implementing the legislation's requirements) shall not establish or enforce a diversion rate on a jurisdiction that exceeds the current 50% diversion rate. Jurisdictions that have an existing commercial recycling program that includes all of the elements listed in the legislation are not required to implement a new or expanded program. Nevertheless, staff is consulting with Crown to ensure that current operational commercial collection and diversion practices are adequate.

The mandatory diversion percentage forced cities and counties to track disposal information much more carefully than ever before. Municipalities used this information to expand recycling opportunities for their residents, which in turn led to new markets being developed for the recycled materials. The City's reported historical diversion rate (greatly exceeding the state requirement) is enumerated in the chart below.



Food Waste Program

Crown began piloting a food waste program to specific restaurants citywide in late 2006 and early 2007 in efforts to help the City more readily achieve the aforementioned diversion mandate. Since its full deployment in 2008, virtually every hotel and food establishment has joined the program, boasting a 95% diversion rate on the roughly 900 tons collected each month. Crown collects food waste on a separate route, reverse sorts to remove non-compostables, and transmits the remaining solid waste for composting. Customers are not required to source separate food waste from other material.

E-Waste Roundup and Household Hazardous and Electronic Waste Roundup

While the majority of the City's municipal waste stream is recycled off site at the MRF, there are two events held in the vicinity of the Public Works Administration building, namely the monthly electronic hazardous waste (e-waste) roundup and the annual household hazardous waste roundup held in the early Fall. The former event occurs the first Sunday of the month at the Farmer's Market where all unwanted electronic devices may be disposed of. The City has a no-cost agreement with California Recycles for the collection and proper disposal of said material. The annual household hazardous and electronic roundup, on the other hand, is a joint-activity in partnership with LA County where one may dispose of such items as pesticides, paints, automotive fluids, batteries and much more. At last year's event close to 500 tons of these items was collected.

FISCAL IMPACT

This item has no fiscal impact.

RECOMMENDATION

This item it submitted for informational purposes only.

 David Gustavson
Approved By