



Memorandum

TO: TRANSPORTATION AND
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

FROM: Lori Mitchell

SUBJECT: Integrated Solid Waste Programs
Status Report

DATE: February 10, 2025

Approved

Date

2/21/2025

RECOMMENDATION

Accept the City of San José's Solid Waste Programs 2024 Annual Status Report, including residential and commercial recycling and solid waste collection programs, the local state of recycling, and the Recycle Right public outreach program.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Environmental Services Department's Integrated Waste Management (IWM) Division manages solid waste collection, processing, and disposal for residential, commercial, and City Facilities operations. This memorandum summarizes key highlights related to San José's solid waste management programs. Comprehensive information on initiatives and updates can be found in Attachment A, titled, 'Solid Waste Programs 2024 Annual Status Report'.

Residential Program - The Program serves 336,924 single-family dwelling and multi-family dwelling households through curbside garbage, recycling, junk pickup, and yard trimmings collection. Services are provided by four contractors, making it one of the nation's largest privatized solid waste systems with an annual budget of approximately \$193 million. The City Facilities and Household Hazardous Waste programs are also overseen by Residential Program staff.

One of the most significant initiatives over the last four years has been to measure and reduce single-family dwelling recycling contamination. Since 2020, and every two years thereafter, the City has analyzed the composition of recyclable and non-recyclable (contamination) materials in recycling carts. The 2024 study provided a comparative analysis of the citywide contamination rate over the three biannual studies. Non-recyclable material was found to be at the lowest in 2024 at 41 percent compared to 57 percent in 2022, and 51 percent in 2020. This 28 percent decrease is attributable to the

following outreach tactics and pilot studies: Recycle Right outreach, the larger garbage cart study, in-mold recycling cart lids, and the Contamination and Recycling Tagging project.

Commercial Program - Republic Services provides commercial solid waste collection services to approximately 8,000 accounts at business sites through three separate waste streams: Wet (organic material), Dry (mixed recyclables and non-recyclables), and Customized (recyclables only). Material is processed at Newby Island Resource Recovery Park and GreenWaste Renewable Energy Digestion Facility (also referred to as Zero Waste Energy Development).

Enforcement Program - IWM Environmental Inspectors perform inspections utilizing educational outreach and enforcement tools to facilitate compliance with San José Municipal Code section 9.10. In fiscal year 2023-2024, the team conducted 1,453 inspections and issued 579 inspection reports, 794 warning notices, and 45 administrative citations. In September 2023, City Council directed staff to return to the Transportation and Environment Committee with enforcement options to keep bicycle lanes clear from obstructions. IWM's current program is complaint-based and education-focused, as a more proactive enforcement model was deemed cost-prohibitive. IWM continues to provide education and outreach to discourage set out practices in bicycle lanes. Staff continues to explore pilots and projects to keep carts and set-out material out of bicycle lanes in targeted areas.

Public Litter Can Program - IWM maintains 1,338 public litter cans primarily located in business districts, excluding those at Valley Transportation Authority stops, parks, community centers, and libraries. The price of cans has more than doubled since fiscal year 2019-2020 and the cost of maintenance has risen due to an increase in vandalism.

Waste Diversion - Residential, Commercial and City Facilities programs are included in the City's waste diversion calculations. For fiscal year 2023-2024, the citywide diversion rate was 63 percent. IWM's programs continue to yield high diversion rates, surpassing many other California municipalities.

Senate Bill 1383 Implementation- Senate Bill 1383 is the most significant waste reduction mandate to be adopted in California in the last 30 years. Compliance involves various departments, with ongoing efforts for container labeling, contamination minimization, and engagement with organic waste generators. The City participates in the Santa Clara County Food Recovery Program and California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery grants support key initiatives.

Climate Smart Zero Waste Element - A Zero Waste Element to Climate Smart San José plan will provide a roadmap to both reduce solid waste-related greenhouse gas emissions and landfilled material. Stakeholder feedback was solicited in winter 2024 and staff expect to bring the Zero Waste Element to City Council in 2025.

Next Steps - IWM staff will focus on the following areas in fiscal years 2024-2025 and 2025-2026:

- Finalize the Climate Smart Zero Waste Element
- Construction & Demolition Program improvements, outreach, and education
- Contamination and Recycling Tagging project assessment
- Expand the Compost Hub pilot to the community
- Monitor bills during the legislative session to track potential impacts
- Engage in statewide implementation of solid waste regulations
- Distribute multi-family dwelling tote bags and install enclosure signs; and
- Track and pursue grant opportunities applicable to solid waste programs

COORDINATION

This memorandum has been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office, City Manager's Office, and Budget Office.

/s/
Lori Mitchell
Acting Director, Environmental Services

For questions, please contact Valerie Osmond, Deputy Director, Integrated Waste Management, at Valerie.Osmond@sanjoseca.gov or (408) 535-8557.

ATTACHMENT

Attachment A - Solid Waste Programs 2024 Annual Status Report