



Monterey County

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Board Report

Legistar File Number: 17-0290

March 23, 2017

Introduced: 3/16/2017

Current Status: Draft

Version: 1

Matter Type: General Agenda Item

- a. Receive a status report on the Monterey County Recycling Study Project; and,
- b. Direct Environmental Health Staff to return to the Alternative Energy and Environment Committee with draft policy recommendations to comply with future requirements of the State.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Alternative Energy & Environment Committee:

- a. Receive a status report on the Monterey County Recycling Study Project; and,
- b. Direct Environmental Health Staff to return to the Alternative Energy and Environment Committee with draft policy recommendations to comply with future requirements of the State.

SUMMARY:

In January 2017, staff from Health Department - Environmental Health division, CAO - Contracts/Purchasing division, RMA - Facilities Management, and the Go Green! Monterey County program met to conduct a study of the County of Monterey's recycling processes, infrastructure, and resources, as well as to understand state-mandated legislation that may impact County recycling processes.

Key findings of the recycling study are as follows:

- Individual departments are responsible for both enforcing recycling requirements and providing workstation waste and recycling bins for their staff
- Custodial service agreements for all contracted vendors require custodians to keep waste and recycling separate when disposing of waste at facility dumpster sites if recyclables are properly sorted at workstation bins and common area bins
- If recyclable items and materials are placed in solid waste bins they will ultimately reach a landfill without intervention from waste hauler
- Survey results show there is a necessity for recycling education and training for County Environmental Health staff
- California legislature currently requires mandatory recycling for specified facilities (AB 341) and future implementation of organic waste service for specified facilities (AB 1826)
- California's AB 341 and the Monterey County General Plan (2010) establish a community-wide waste diversion goal of 75%

Staff is recommending that the Alternative Energy and Environment (AEE) Committee direct Environmental Health staff to return to the AEE with a draft policy that will provide a foundation for waste sorting practices and procedures for employees at County facilities.

DISCUSSION:

At the December 7, 2016 Alternative Energy and Environment (AEE) Committee meeting, staff was directed to coordinate a waste and recycling study to determine recycling processes at County facilities. Staff from various departments met to assess County recycling procedures and determine the needs of the County. Activities of the staff working group included: investigating past efforts to implement recycling practices throughout County facilities; researching the end result of solid waste and recyclable materials coming from County facilities; examining County custodial vendor service agreements; and executing a County recycling survey. Staff also researched State legislation to guide recommendations on future policies.

Past County Recycling Initiatives

A memorandum (Attachment A) dated April, 6, 2009 was issued to the County Administrative Officer from former Director of Environmental Health, Allen Stroh. The memo and supplemental documents (Attachment B) provide background, framework and status for a Standardized County Recycling Program (SCRP). At the time the SCRCP was drafted, Facilities Management was tasked with providing containers, overseeing the custodial contractors' actions in regard to recycling, and working with waste haulers to ensure exterior bin service. The memo recommends that each Department Head designate a "Recycle Coordinator" to provide ongoing support to their Department Head and Facilities Management regarding recycling issues. The SCRCP recommends the widespread use of a two-bin system, referred to as a "mini-bin" system. This system is still utilized by many County departments today, where workstations have a "mini" trash can and a larger recycling bin. The purpose of the "mini- bin" system is to encourage recycling and demonstrate the County's commitment to recycling.

Since the release of the SCRCP in 2009, staff has determined that recycling roles and responsibilities have shifted throughout the County. Individual departments are now responsible for both enforcing staff recycling requirements and providing staff with workstation waste and recycling bins. Environmental Health staff has since served as a facilitator for countywide recycling efforts, providing consultation and education to employees. Although the SCRCP provides a comprehensive strategy to implement recycling efforts throughout County facilities, it does not mandate that staff sort waste and recycling as an everyday practice.

Custodial Service Agreements

In 2014, the County Administrative Office, Contracts and Purchasing Division, established Countywide service agreements with custodial vendors to service County facilities. The businesses found in Attachment C were added to the Countywide service agreement, and were assigned specific "Zones" to service. A determination was made by the staff working group that there be a review of all custodial service agreements to ensure there were requirements for recycling. It was found that within the "Cleaning Requirements" of each business' contract, each vendor is required to "empty break-room and desk-side recycle containers and place recycled material in outside recycling dumpster". This requirement assumes that recyclables will be sorted properly at the workstation or the in the breakrooms by County employees; otherwise, recyclable items that are mixed with waste will be placed in a solid waste (garbage) dumpster. All custodial vendors listed on the County wide service agreement received a memo (Attachment D) reminding them of the responsibilities of their contract in regard to recycling.

Waste Flow

Staff consulted with Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority (SVSWA) and Monterey Regional Waste Management District (MRWMD), as well as waste haulers operating in Monterey County, to determine what happens to recyclable items and materials if they are emptied into the solid waste dumpsters. Staff determined that haulers will not separate recyclables from solid waste collection dumpsters before reaching a landfill. This means that all recyclable materials that are mixed in with solid waste at workstations and in common areas will end up solid waste. Staff has created a Solid Waste and Recyclable Materials Flow Chart (Attachment E) which illustrates the process and end result when waste is sorted properly and also improperly.

County of Monterey Recycling Survey

To assess the recycling practices and needs of individual departments throughout the County, staff created a pilot recycling survey. The survey was distributed to County employees who were selected based on their knowledge of department purchasing protocols and understanding of office operations and practices. The survey yielded results for 17 different departments occupying eight facilities throughout the County. Ten departments that provided information are headquartered throughout the Government Center Complex, providing a complete analysis of the recycling practices throughout one of the County's largest facilities. For the "top-line" results of the Survey, see Attachment F.

The results of the survey showed the following:

- The majority of employees represented in the survey have clearly marked recycling bins at their workstations
- About half of the employees represented in the survey either do not know how to properly sort between waste and recycling, or may need reminder training
- One-third of employees represented in the survey only occasionally sort their waste from recycling
- The majority of breakrooms or common areas have recycling bins
- The majority of facilities have collection containers to dump recyclables for the pick-up

Based on the results of the survey, recyclable materials may often not be disposed of properly due to misunderstanding or miscommunication regarding what can and cannot be recycled. The survey would suggest a need for recycling education and training for County employees to modify recycling practices and maximize the amount of County solid waste diverted from the landfill.

California Legislature

California State legislation AB 341 requires mandatory recycling for businesses and public entities that generate four cubic yards or more of waste per week. With the passage of AB 341, the Governor and State Legislature established a policy goal for the State that not less than 75% of solid waste generated be source reduced, recycled, or composted by the year 2020. Additionally, AB 1826 will require commercial businesses and public entities that generate four cubic yards or more (per facility) of *solid waste* to commence *organic waste* (yard waste or food waste) service with a service provider starting on January 1, 2019. The impact to the County is still unknown, however, it is likely that larger County facilities like the Government Center and Schilling Place will be required to offer organic waste disposal.

Adopted in 2010, the Monterey County General Plan (Public Service Element) contains Goal PS-5, which states that the County will maximize the amount of solid waste diverted from local landfills through recycling, composting, and source reduction. Additionally, PS-5.5 specifies that the County shall adopt a 75% waste diversion goal and support composting future efforts. While the County has committed to the State's waste diversion goals on a community-wide scale, there is no known policy or employee guideline that mandates County staff to sort waste and recycling at County facilities.

Conclusions

The implementation of AB 341, AB 1826, and the Monterey County General Plan necessitate the development of County policies and enhanced employee engagement to ensure County facilities are complying with mandated goals to divert waste from landfills. It is recommended that new policies utilize elements of the SCRPs and reflect requirements for all County staff to understand how to sort waste and recycling, and to utilize bins appropriately. Additionally, in anticipation of future requirements of AB 1826, new policies should include the phasing in of organic waste bins in designated locations and education on organic waste. Environmental Health will continue to provide education and outreach to County staff and identify facilities that need to improve waste sorting. Environmental Health staff and Go Green! Monterey County staff will continue to identify and monitor changes in the State's with regards to recycling and organic waste legislature.

To ensure that waste diversion throughout County facilities is being maximized to the extent feasible and to comply with future requirements of the State, staff is recommending that the AEE Committee direct Environmental Health staff to return to the AEE Committee with a draft policy outlining County facility waste procedures for staff.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

Staff from the Health Department - Environmental Health division, CAO - Contracts/Purchasing division, RMA - Facilities Management, and the Go Green! Monterey County program formed the recycling working group. Staff from various departments throughout the County participated in the pilot recycling survey.

FINANCING:

The recommended action will not have a direct impact upon the General Fund. It is unclear at this time what the future financial impacts will be resulting from California AB 1826 requirements to implement organic waste service at specified facilities. Staff will return to the Alternative Energy and Environment Committee with a status update that will include financial information once financial impacts are known.

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Approved by: Nicholas E. Chiulos, Assistant County Administrative Officer

Attachments: A - Memo to CAO on Standardized County Recycling Program; B - SCRPs Presentation - 2009; C - Countywide Custodial Vendors List by Zone; D - Memo to Custodial Vendors; E - Waste and Recyclable Materials Flow Chart; and F - Pilot Recycling Survey "top-line" results