



CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT



March 1, 2022

ITEM TITLE

Waste Reduction Strategic Plan: Approval of the City of Chula Vista's 2022-2035 Waste Reduction Strategic Plan, Chula Vista's Road Plan to Zero Waste

Report Number: 21-0213

Location: No specific geographic location

Department: Economic Development

Environmental Notice: The Project qualifies for a Statutory Exemption pursuant to Section 15262 (Feasibility and Planning Studies) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act State Guidelines. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the activity qualifies for an Exemption pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the California Environmental Quality Act State Guidelines.

Recommended Action

Adopt a resolution approving the 2022-2035 Waste Reduction Strategic Plan, Chula Vista's Road Plan to Zero Waste.

SUMMARY

The City Council of the City of Chula Vista approved a Climate Action Plan in September of 2017 (Resolution 2017-228) which directed staff to develop a Zero Waste Plan for Council consideration. Staff recommends adoption of the Chula Vista's 2022-2035 Waste Reduction Strategic Plan, Chula Vista's Road Plan to Zero Waste (Attachment A) which consists of six key strategic tasks with 39 proposed actions that will further divert the amount of wasted resources Chula Vista residents and businesses send to the Otay Landfill.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The proposed activity has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and it has been determined that the proposed action, approval of the 2022-2035 Waste Reduction Strategic Plan, falls under a Statutory Exemption pursuant to Section 15262 (Feasibility and Planning Studies) of the State CEQA Guidelines. Thus, no further environmental review is required. Notwithstanding the foregoing, it has also been determined that the activity qualifies for an Exemption pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the California Environmental Quality Act State Guidelines.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

The Sustainability Commission reviewed the Zero Waste Plan and recommended its adoption by the City Council.

DISCUSSION

Zero Waste Background

The Zero Waste International Alliance definition of Zero Waste served as a guiding principle in developing this Chula Vista's 2022-2035 Waste Reduction Strategic Plan, Chula Vista's Road Plan to Zero Waste (Plan). It identifies three key sustainability and reduction goals: 1) Reduce the volume and toxicity of waste by eliminating them in the first place; 2) Reuse materials and products for their original intended uses and then reuse them for other uses before recycling; and 3) Recycle or compost all remaining materials to their highest and best use after they have been reduced and reused as much as possible.

The success of Zero Waste efforts requires the concept of "waste" to be redefined. In the past, waste was considered a natural and unavoidable byproduct to be discarded however, today we recognize that these materials are valuable "resources" that can be made available for new uses. These resources are a byproduct of a design methodology that did not consider the total lifecycle of a product or material. In the name of consumer and manufacturer convenience, valuable resources were discarded instead of reused, repaired, or recycled.

Zero Waste is an ideology based on ideas and science that supports a design framework that promotes not only reuse, recycling, and conservation, but also, and more importantly, emphasizes sustainability by considering the entire life-cycle of products that are cradle-to-cradle (circular) not cradle-to-grave (linear). Zero Waste is not necessarily solely 100 percent recycling and composting, but shifts the focus to waste reduction, product redesign, and elimination of wasteful practices.

These planning goals compliment the philosophy of "People, Planet and Prosperity" which the Plan has adopted and serves as the triple bottom line to achieve, social, environmental, and economic sustainability locally and globally.

Chula Vista's Efforts

The City is committed to implementing an overarching waste reduction plan with a goal of 90 percent diversion by 2035 consistent with the 2017 Climate Action Plan. This goal is challenging for a growing city and exceeds the state's goal of 75 percent. Chula Vista's Plan outlines a strategy focused on six key tasks that include 39 specific measurable short-term, medium-term, and long-term actions to reduce, reuse, repurpose, and recycle materials that would otherwise be sent to the landfill. The Plan includes the estimated reduction of wastes in tons diverted from the landfill and made available for new uses with the corresponding reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) from implementing these actions. These actions will be coupled with the City's current waste reduction activities to further enhance efforts to achieve Zero Waste.

The Plan is a living document, which can be modified as needed to better meet waste diversion goals and serve the community. After five years, a reevaluation will be conducted to determine if actions should be discontinued or revised. Chula Vista City Council and the public will remain updated on the ongoing progress and implementation efforts through concise evaluations and reports prepared every three years.

Since the early 1990s Chula Vista has implemented various plans to divert wastes from landfill disposal. Past efforts have included goals, public education programs (businesses and residents), a City operations waste reduction plan, implementing mandatory recycling ordinances, and lobbying for state legislation. The City took an additional step to specifically determine the types of materials that are in its waste stream by conducting a waste characterization study in 2016. This study found that Chula Vista's waste stream composition is comparable to the State of California's waste stream as compared to studies deployed by California's Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) in 2014 and 2018.

Stakeholder Outreach Efforts

To inform the community about this draft Plan, a public outreach campaign was conducted beginning in July that ran through the 60-day formal public comment period from Aug. 2-Sept. 30. Information disseminated focused on creating interest and encouraging the community to read the plan and provide input. Outreach and public engagement efforts included:

- Press releases issued (August and September) to 35 media members (editors/reporters) for newspapers, radio/TV, online media, and key organizations that provide this type of news to their employees and members. An announcement was published in the South County Happenings of the San Diego Union-Tribune.
- Social media posts with Zero Waste-oriented photos and graphics were created and modified for specific use on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Posts were issued by the City's "thinkchulavista" and "CLEAN" outlets twice weekly during the public comment period. Data from the top performing posts show that there were over 18,000 impressions with an estimated reach of over 10,000 people.
- Newsletter articles published in the August and September in the City's Community Newsletter and CLEAN Newsletter.
- CLEAN Sustainability Series live webinar featuring the draft Zero Waste Plan.
- In-person or virtual presentations to community organizations including: Chula Vistas' Chamber of Commerce First Friday Breakfast, Commission on Aging, Healthy Chula Vista Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, Chula Vista Kiwanis, Bonita Kiwanis, Chula Vista Rotary, Chula Vista Women's Club, Chula Vista Chamber of Commerce's Public Policy Committee, Board of Directors and a presentation to the Chamber's members in City Hall Council Chambers which was made available for viewing on the City's website.

Plan Strategies and Actions

The Plan consists of six key strategic tasks with 39 proposed actions. The tasks are interrelated with a strong educational component.

- Task 1 – Promote and Support Reduction and Reuse

This task includes actions to conduct information campaigns to encourage reuse; expand Fix-It clinics to repair consumer products; and work with retail stores and other businesses to reuse and repurpose items routinely discarded.

- Task 2 – Reduce the Use of Toxic Materials

This task aims to conduct an annual campaign with specific information to reduce use of toxic materials and products, creating digital educational campaigns and increase the collection of toxic materials annually at the City’s Household Hazardous Waste Facility.

- Task 3 – Promote and Educate on Zero Waste Principles

Key actions include Zero Waste workshops (live and virtual); collaboration with schools to conduct waste reduction educational sessions and annual workshops during Earth Month; developing a Chula Vista Zero Waste Champion recognition program and creating Zero Waste guidelines for building deconstruction.

- Task 4 – Support the Recycling Industry as an Innovative Engine for Regional Economic Development

Under this task actions are focused on collaborating with local jurisdictions and regional economic development organizations to create partnerships that will promote, attract, and locate materials recycling businesses in Chula Vista and South County; facilitate Recycling Market Development loans for recycling and materials management facilities through a State program; and work with Republic Services to research and develop a Resource Recovery Facility at the Otay Landfill that will serve as a hub for resource recovery and reuse of materials.

- Task 5 – Improve Education in Trash and Recycling Programs

The focus of this task is to reach residents and businesses in Chula Vista by conducting multi-faced “Recycle Right” information campaigns to reinforce behavior change and conduct multiple on-site audits of businesses annually on proper recycling, food waste management and other waste reduction efforts.

- Task 6 – Keep Organic Materials Out of Landfills

This task is focused on the implementation of food waste/organic waste collection and processing programs for residents and businesses in coordination with Republic Services. The approach begins with an education-first approach for compliance, executing an edible food recovery program for food generating businesses, and utilizing smart technologies to increase participation.

How will this plan help Chula Vista?

Estimated results from full implementation of the 6 tasks above would reduce waste tonnage and GHG emissions. The total tonnage of resources diverted from the landfill that this plan proposes will equate to is 84,810 tons annually, this is equivalent to 8,481 Republic Services trash trucks. The estimated corresponding reduction in GHG emissions is 141,353 metric tons and equals nearly 16 million gallons of gasoline combusted annually.

In conclusion, staff requests adoption of the 2022-2035 Waste Reduction Strategic Plan, Chula Vista’s Road Plan to Zero Waste to begin implementing the actions and measures to help the City reduce waste while engaging residents, businesses to thoughtfully reuse and recycle materials and motivate to the use of more durable, repairable, reusable, recycled, and recyclable products.

DECISION-MAKER CONFLICT

Staff has reviewed the decision contemplated by this action and has determined that it is not site-specific and consequently, the real property holdings of the City Council members do not create a disqualifying real property-related financial conflict of interest under the Political Reform Act (Cal. Gov't Code § 87100, et seq.). Staff is not independently aware and has not been informed by any City Council member, of any other fact that may constitute a basis for a decision-maker conflict of interest in this matter.

CURRENT-YEAR FISCAL IMPACT

There is no Current Fiscal Year impact.

ONGOING FISCAL IMPACT

There is no ongoing fiscal impact to the General fund by adopting this plan

ATTACHMENTS

A) Attachment A: 2022-2035 Waste Reduction Strategic Plan, Chula Vista's Road Plan to Zero Waste

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