

Roadmap to a Sustainable Waste Management Future Subcommittee Meeting

Los Angeles County Department of Public Works
900 S. Fremont Ave, Alhambra CA 91803
Conference Rooms B & C

Thursday, August 10, 2017
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

MEETING SUMMARY

Welcome and Introductions

Vanessa Olivas, Public Works

- Attendees were welcomed and participants introduced themselves.
- We have continued to work on the Annual Report to the Board and will be sharing it with the Working Group soon. Attendees were encouraged to bring forward any newly initiated programs or initiatives in their organizations related to the Roadmap so that it may be included in the report.

Video(s) on Source Reduction

Armando Aguilar, Public Works (Presentation begins on slide [#3](#))

- Since the topic of source reduction was the main topic of the meeting, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's definition was shared with the group:
 - "Activities designed to reduce the volume or toxicity of waste generated, including the design and manufacture of products with minimum toxic content, minimum volume of material, and/or a longer useful life."
- Five videos were presented to the group:
 - [Plastic: How it's Destroying Our Planet](#)
 - [Original Unpackaged, a Zero Waste No Packaging Supermarket \(Original Unverpackt\)](#)
 - [Zero Waste Shops Opening All Over Europe](#)
 - [Montreal grocery store aims at producing zero waste](#)
 - [How to Zero Waste Grocery Shop | Bulk Bin Shopping at Whole Foods](#)

Waste Prevention and Source Reduction

- A strategy for reducing waste that is becoming more popular is zero-waste, or zero-packaging grocery stores. These stores have sprung up in the last few years, mainly in Europe but also in the U.S., Canada, and all over the world.

- All jurisdictions have regulations in place to protect food safety. Zero-waste stores work together with their local authorities to ensure their stores and products are safe and hygienic.
- No jurisdictions were found that have regulations that specifically prohibit unpackaged food. However, the way that local authorities interpret food safety regulations does vary.
 - In Germany, bring your own container (BYOC) is allowed, but all containers brought to the store must be disinfected on site before they can be used.
 - In Chicago and Brevard, NC the local health departments do not allow BYOC. They do not have regulations against it, but it is their interpretation of municipal codes that all food must be packaged.
- An academic article on zero-packaging retail, “Barriers and Incentives for Zero Waste Retailers: A Global Stocktake,” studied the barriers and incentives that grocery stores faced when trying to go package-free.
 - The most common regulatory barrier mentioned by retailers was “little government leadership.” Retailers want proactive guidance, clear legislation and multi-stakeholder dialogue on zero-packaging.
 - This lack of clarity can cause customer confusion and deter customers from engaging in zero-waste shopping.
 - Retail staff and cashiers might be reluctant to allow BYOC if they are not clear on the regulations for fear of being held liable for contamination.
 - This situation is similar to the problem with food donation, where people are unaware of the Good Samaritan Act, which protects food donors. The County can help remove this barrier by making the laws clear, communicating them to the industry and the public, and having dedicated staff available to provide guidance to local retailers.
 - “Lack of harmonization of international regulation” was also listed as a barrier. As our food is sourced from all over the world, local retailers do not have control over how their suppliers package food.
 - “Health/hygiene/food safety requirements” was described as a barrier for mainstream grocery retailers, but not by zero-packaging retailers, who see it as part of running a food-related business.
 - “Food waste reduction policies” can also be a barrier, primarily with corporate stores, which often have food waste reduction targets. Packaging is often seen to keep food fresh longer and reduce food waste, so this might make retailers reluctant to ditch the packaging.
 - Incentives for zero-packaging included “Waste prevention legislation” and “Expectation of new legislation.” Retailers are responding to local legislation on reducing waste and want to get ahead of new legislation.
 - “Tax breaks and rebates” were also mentioned as incentive for going zero-waste.
- Participant comments include:
 - It was suggested that the County require contracted food vendors use biodegradable or reusable packaging.
 - The County does not have any laws against BYOC. Residents can already bring their containers to restaurants and stores.

- The University of California, Irvine has a program where students can rent a reusable container provided by their cafeteria for a small fee to take food back to the dorms. The cafeteria then washes the reusable containers when they are returned.
- Bernadette Garcia-Silva will be meeting with the Orange County Health Department and will ask about their regulations on BYOC.
- Changing people's behavior is difficult, but it is possible if we phase out unwanted behaviors without burdening the consumer while providing incentives. The plastic bag ban is an example of what we can do to phase out packaging.
- The Sheriff Department has a surplus of several different types of items from their facilities and they have tried various options to manage them:
 - They have mountains of leftover bullet cases from their shooting ranges. The manufacturer will not take them back and this presents an ongoing challenge.
 - Some broken office chairs under warranty can be fixed by simply contacting the manufacturer.
 - They go through 250,000 shoes a year. They are exploring switching to the "uni-shoe" which comes only in three sizes and lasts much longer.
 - They sold thousands of used buckles on GovDeals.com.
 - Their wood and welding shops can fix and refurbish items such as furniture and bicycles. County Department were made aware of this opportunity.

Breakout Sessions

- County Unincorporated Communities; Regional/Countywide; and Outreach and Education
 - During this meeting, the aforementioned subcommittees met as one group to brainstorm ideas for the planned Smart Business Award (Strategy 4, Initiative B1).
 - It was suggested to avoid using the terms "recycling" and "sustainability," and to instead use "future" and "green leadership" to brand the award.
 - Using a catchy acronym such as ARROW (Award for Reduction and Recycling of Waste) was proposed.
 - The group thought "Smart Business" was a good fit and should be considered as part of the name.
 - Ideas for promoting the program included:
 - Having a panel of businesses (possibly from another jurisdiction) select the County Unincorporated Area award recipients.
 - Allow businesses to self-nominate themselves, especially small businesses.
 - Giving points for/ weight to businesses that have sustainable practices when selecting a contractor.
 - Having students/children through school programs pioneer the efforts and give recognition.
 - Bernadette from Public Health shared their draft program to permit/expand Food Donation efforts.
 - Ideas for additional award criteria included:
 - Tie cost savings and efficiency with greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions (Many businesses do not know or understand the value in GHG emission reductions).
 - With regard to use of technology such as phone apps, we should focus on "prevention." Prevention involves training staff to make selective purchases, manage inventory

better, and help customers by allowing them to customize purchases and delivery methods just for them (e.g., Albertsons has an app for combining couponing with making grocery list on phone).

- County Operations – Waste Prevention and Source Reduction
 - The source reduction code in the CalRecycle Annual Report on County diversion efforts does not have any tonnage currently reported (Strategy 2, Initiative B1).
 - Consider reporting on number of County vendors who practice minimum packaging.
 - Consider incorporating incentives in place of or in addition to requirements in County contracts (Strategy 2, Initiative B3).
 - Discussed the County purchasing policy (Strategy 1, Initiative A1)
 - Consider expanding and revising policy:
 1. Seek assistance from CEO Sustainability Council.
 - Promote policy to departments and employees in general.
 - Discussed AB 1826 and its application to County facilities (Strategy 1, Initiative D1)
 - Promote new ISD FASMA Contract Category to facilities.
 - Conduct further outreach to County departments:
 1. Target large generators in each department.
 - Follow-up for results from past site visits:
 1. Acton Rehab Center (DPH)
 2. Twin Towers, etc. (LASD) [visited before AB 1826 effective]
 - Next Steps
 - Public Works to consider further discussion with ISD about inserting language into Countywide contracts for vendors to use minimal packaging and developing a method to track which vendors are actually practicing this.
 1. Possible procurement contracts that may have packaging:
 - a. Office/cleaning/medical/landscaping/field supplies
 - b. Food
 - c. Computer/medical/communications equipment
 - d. Promotional items

Next Steps and Open Discussion

- A representative from each subcommittee provided a brief summary of their subcommittee's discussions.

The next Subcommittee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 11, 2017 at 9:00 a.m.

Meeting Participants

County Ops	
Maral Tashjian	Beaches & Harbors
Tim Frost	DCFS
Erin Rowland	City of Long Beach
Mike Niewzal	Fire
Dennis Morelos	Internal Services
Alex Mena	Parks & Recreation
Dorcas Hanson-Lugo	Public Health
Narine Meschyan	Public Health
Aldo Ynigo	Public Library
Richard Sigur	Sheriff
Angelica Gunderson	Public Works - EPD
Arlene Morales	Public Works - EPD
Clark Ajwani	Public Works - EPD
Kymberly Lyman	Public Works - EPD
Nilda Gemeniano	Public Works - EPD

CUC, Regional/Countywide and Outreach and Education	
Violet O. Contreras	Alternate Public Defender
Iris A. Regn	Arts Commission
Isaura Campbell	Auditor-Controller
Leigh Behrens	City of Long Beach
Candelaria Rodarte	Internal Services
Lois Giron	Internal Services
Bernadet Garcia-Silva	Public Health
Syed Husain	Public Health
Soyeon Choi	Regional Planning
Armando Aguilar	Public Works - EPD
Charles Darensbourg	Public Works - EPD
Diana Lee	Public Works - EPD
Jalaine Madrid	Public Works - EPD
Kawsar Vazifdar	Public Works - EPD
Larissa Yu	Public Works - EPD
Stacy Harvey	Public Works - EPD
Theresa Hernandez	Public Works - EPD
Tranette Sanders	Public Works - EPD
Vanessa Olivas	Public Works - EPD