

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS
AT 7/19/06 PUBLIC MEETING ON
OAKLAND ZERO WASTE STRATEGIC PLAN

ISSUES SELECTED FOR DISCUSSION AT OUTSET OF MEETING

1. **Advocate Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)** - Should the City of Oakland be a strong advocate for EPR legislation and programs regionally, statewide, nationally and globally?
2. **Land Use Competition** - What actions should Oakland take to retain and expand reuse, recycling and composting service providers?
3. **Local Product Takebacks** -
 - a. Should the City ask or require businesses and institutions to take back designated products and packaging sold in Oakland to facilitate reuse and recycling of those materials?
 - b. What products should be designated initially?
4. **Incentives and New Rules** – Should the City adopt incentives and new rules for businesses, institutions and its own operations to prevent waste from being produced, and encourage more reuse, recycling and composting of discarded materials?

COMMENTS ON ISSUES

1. **Advocate Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)** - Should the City of Oakland be a strong advocate for EPR legislation and programs regionally, statewide, nationally and globally?
 - ◆ Zero Waste is not that simple. Just putting products in manufacturers' hands is no guarantee that they will be re-used.
 - ◆ In advocating for EPR, need to advocate for a system that sets up efficient REUSE programs, not just taking back products and packaging to be crushed or shredded up to be recycled.
 - ◆ There are a lot of things that we need to build into EPR, including ensuring the redesign of products and that products taken back are handled responsibly.
 - ◆ Oakland is in a good position to define EPR the way we want.
 - ◆ How do you propose EPR to happen and be constructive and helpful?
 - ◆ It's hard for local governments to change industry practices. The European Union (EU) adopted EPR approaches for different sectors (auto disassembly highlighted as an example). It's important to leave the design of the programs up to the manufacturers.
 - ◆ Models are key. Need to get information to the media. How do we work together to keep costs down? Need to research EU success and models.
 - ◆ Need to develop "Economic Example Zone" or "Ecological Incubator Zones" where there are reduced taxes and incubator support for businesses working on doing the right things.
 - ◆ This is the 4th largest metropolitan region in the U.S. We should work with the entire region (Alameda County, Marin County, San Francisco, Berkeley) to support EPR. We should require certifications that sustainable businesses are doing what is required. Q – could that be enforced?
 - ◆ If manufacturers are forced to takeback products, they will change their designs and more. Local governments are dealing with the problem, so we need to band together locally to accomplish this.
 - ◆ Material streams recovered need to be pure and consistent.
 - ◆ If manufacturers takeback products, they'll know everything about it.

- ◆ Leverage business to help them respond to local government requirements.
- ◆ WA State government passed the most significant EPR legislation, with the support of local governments. In CA, a new Product Stewardship Council is pursuing this similarly.
- ◆ Are there alternatives to EPR? I'm not a fan. How many manufacturers are there of CDs and DVDs? 1000? If you send those products back to manufacturers, you've destroyed the potential for reuse. If they recycle those, that's not a success.
- ◆ The garbage industry focused on recycling. Repairability and reusability need to be the focus.
- ◆ Electronics – better to send to a central place, with standardized and interchangeable parts to repair and reuse them
- ◆ Require manufacturers to post schematics and blueprints for their products, and identify critical voltages and other specifications to facilitate reuse.
- ◆ EPR should not mean recycling.
- ◆ Unrealistic to ask manufacturers to give schematics.
- ◆ Done for 20 years in chemical industry.
- ◆ Products and packaging – both are important.
- ◆ Encourage business to use biodegradable packaging
- ◆ Are there examples of EPR that don't entail takebacks (e.g., up front fees)?
- ◆ Yes. In CA, there are several Advanced Recycling Fees (ARFs) or deposits. ARFs in CA are on used oil, tires and beverage containers. One of the big questions in EPR circles is whether ARFs are “real EPR” or whether they set up unnecessary government bureaucracies to administer such fees.
- ◆ Takebacks go back to the producer. Deposits and ARFs are designed to get the consumers involved in bringing back the covered products to the designated location.

2. **Land Use Competition** - What actions should Oakland take to retain and expand reuse, recycling and composting service providers Redesign of Products?

- ◆ Wastewater treatment plants are publicly owned and accepted as part of society and built into the infrastructure. The public sector needs to figure out what needs to be done and do it. It may be appropriate for the public to own land for a Resource Recovery Park.
- ◆ An Eco Industrial Park or Resource Recovery Park could provide infrastructure for collection, processing and/or manufacturing activities.
- ◆ In September, the Oakland City Council will be considering the creation of land preservation zones. This is already on the Council agenda. It would be good for people to speak up for this for a balance of Jobs and Housing mix in Oakland. There is a staff report on the City's website. Look under “Meeting Agendas,” Community Economic Development Committee, 6-13-06 (<http://clerkwebsvr1.oaklandnet.com/attachments/13678.pdf>). 17 sub-areas have recommendations – some for transition to other uses than currently zoned.
- ◆ Would a Recycling Zone unfairly be in the lap of West Oakland, taking more of the burden for the entire City?
- ◆ Currently, Oakland has a Recycling Market Development Zone (RMDZ) together with Berkeley, with all industrial zones in both cities theoretically open to industry in this field.
- ◆ Plenty of land is zoned as residential.
- ◆ Some recycling businesses are messy – we can set standards and put them furthest from residents.
- ◆ If zoning can be overcome, strongly support the idea of a Resource Recovery Park.

- ◆ Alcoa is now mining landfills for aluminum – if that’s happening, it must be valuable enough NOT to landfill in the first place. There is increasing demand for aluminum for solar panels (among other things).
- ◆ There’s also a theory that Oakland is already doing a lot to support recycling businesses (e.g., Port of Oakland shipping recycled materials worldwide), and therefore there is a need for more of the region to assume their share of siting needed facilities.
- ◆ What are the most important items to focus on siting locally (e.g., composting facility, C&D processing facility, other)? May not be as much tax revenue as housing.
- ◆ A Resource Recovery Park would be valuable. Rather than mourn the loss of a regional composting facility in Sunol, this would be a positive focus.
- ◆ So much technical information needs to get communicated to the public. We need to think of Zero Waste as a Social Shift and a major social change. Whether EPR or a Resource Recovery Park, we need a public awareness and education campaign for the broader public.
- ◆ Codification and adoption of policies should be done AFTER education of the public.
- ◆ Most of attendees of this Public Meeting work within this industry. Need a different education of the community. Global Warming has tapped a nerve and we’re doing a better job of communicating it.
- ◆ Need to have a discussion with environmental group leaders and push ahead. What sense does it make to drive compost to the Central Valley? If we can’t do it in Alameda County, we can’t do it anywhere in the U.S.
- ◆ May need to do more tax credits to help in siting facilities.
- ◆ See article “Green Goes GrassRoots” in Nation magazine. It says action will only be taken at the local level.
- ◆ EBMUD wastewater treatment plant odor in West Oakland is an environmental injustice issue. Need to compensate those impacted.
- ◆ Consider adopting a Host Fee to communities in which facilities are sited, to help in siting locally unwanted land uses like these. That was done locally for Livermore’s hosting of landfills.
- ◆ People slide into talking about recycling when talking about Zero Waste. Need to focus on REUSE of products and packaging, retaining their form and functions. For the Sunol composting project, materials would have been collected as green waste by garbage collectors. Need to focus on high quality inputs for high quality outputs to achieve Zero Waste. This is NOT just a garbage elimination process.
- ◆ That’s not correct. The Sunol project HAD specific high quality standards.
- ◆ Reuse takes land also. In 2009, Urban Ore lease expires and they are facing zoning challenges again, at same time as they provide good wages for their staff. Alameda County Computer Recycling Center needs industrial zoning. St. Vincent DePaul and E. Bay Depot need industrial zoning.

3. Local Product Takebacks

- a. Should the City ask or require businesses and institutions to take back designated products and packaging sold in Oakland to facilitate reuse and recycling of those materials?
- b. What products should be designated initially?
 - ◆ Items banned from landfills in CA are listed on the City of Oakland’s website, including recommendations on what to do with those items.
 - ◆ Need “stair-stepping” to implement all this.

- ◆ Need a “Craig’s List” for swapping products – doesn’t need to be a physical space. An electronic marketplace or virtual swap meet.
- ◆ There are a number of services available, including FreeCycle, eBay, Excess Access and LA Shares. FreeCycle is more oriented to residents than businesses, and small quantities.
- ◆ CalMax does not provide timely enough response compared to a service like eBay that has a 20 minute turnaround.
- ◆ The City requested StopWaste.org look into this issue. They did a needs assessment for such business and nonprofit transactions. The results were mixed. There seems to be a demand for this, but it’s not clear that business would necessarily use such a service. Instead, StopWaste.org consultants recommended more education, awareness, promotions and marketing needed to highlight tools that already exist.
- ◆ Local example of products taken back by local manufacturer is Pabco Gypsum in Newark and United States Gypsum in Pittsburg. Both take back new wallboard scraps from their customers and incorporate it into new wallboard.
- ◆ Information is not enough. There need to be reasons for business to use such services.
- ◆ Consider funding such services through a regional fee

4. Incentives and New Rules – Should the City adopt incentives and new rules for businesses, institutions and its own operations to prevent waste from being produced, and encourage more reuse, recycling and composting of discarded materials?

- ◆ In Berkeley, there is no charge for businesses to participate in the City’s recycling program. In Oakland, businesses are charged to recycle.
- ◆ Can’t compete with cheap dumps. When dumps are gone, everything will be reused. Garbage is insane.
- ◆ Liked all the ideas the City included on the Draft list. The City should pick programs will have the most impact, or the most immediate impact (e.g., food scraps). We need to show success.
- ◆ Need more positive stories.
- ◆ Provide another bin for reusables in curbside program to encourage reuse.
- ◆ What is the amount of franchise fees in Oakland?
- ◆ Consider having 1 solid waste and 4R (reduce, reuse, recycle, rot) fee to cover all costs needed to provide services in Enterprise Fund
- ◆ Make solid waste fee at least as expensive as Cable TV.
- ◆ City of Oakland has an exclusive franchise until 2012. Waste Management (WM) pays a monthly payment to the City that goes up each year, regardless of the amount of services WM provides. About 35% of fees charged to customers by WM are paid in turn to the City, including a 10% franchise fee which goes into the City’s General Fund, to help pay for all City services. The rest of the money goes to other solid waste and recycling related City programs.
- ◆ More people in Oakland haul their own wastes and recyclables to the WM Davis Street Transfer Station in San Leandro to avoid the City fees. Need to have free recycling before the gate at the Transfer Station.
- ◆ Money paid by WM to City does not rationalize need for more waste to continue. Need an alternative to the existing waste pickup structure.
- ◆ The City should charge fees to customers, instead of WM doing the billing, to municipalize the Cash Flow. San Jose did that in 1985. Ratepayers pay the City, and the City separately pays the collectors and the contracted landfill operator.
- ◆ This is like a public utility.

- ◆ Yes, but not necessarily exclusive.
- ◆ When people talk of providing “free” recycling (reuse and composting) services, these are not done for free by the City franchisee. They are paid for in the rate base. Be careful how “free services” might impact on the services able to be provided by businesses or nonprofits other than the franchisee, if those services actually cost more than the revenues received from sale of the materials or products.
- ◆ Regarding New Rules for Business (iii), businesses generate the majority of waste in Oakland and California. Need to give businesses options to do the right thing.
- ◆ It all comes back to land uses.
- ◆ I own property in Oakland. WM has a sweetheart deal. Get rid of them.
- ◆ I don’t like the lien on property that enforces the mandatory garbage collection Ordinance in Oakland.
- ◆ Once garbage service was mandated, the lien was implemented to provide a corresponding mandate to pay. Mandatory garbage service was needed to keep waste from piling up in people’s yards.
- ◆ David Tam noted that he had recommended the garbage lien in Oakland 34 years ago as a junior analyst in the City. At the time, garbage collection service was cheaper than 1 movie.
- ◆ There are a variety of options for businesses and residents.
- ◆ Need to highlight that you don’t have to pay a solid waste fee if you are a Zero Waste customer.
- ◆ Berkeley never granted an exemption from paying solid waste fees. CIWMB requires weekly garbage collection service. This is a big institutional barrier – how customers get no garbage fee if they are operating as Zero Waste locations.
- ◆ Maybe there should be a public test to get approval to pay no fees for solid waste.
- ◆ Still need to pay for other than solid waste services.
- ◆ San Jose and Fremont both have granted exemption from paying solid waste fees to residents that document that they do not produce any solid waste. The City inspects to confirm that. In Fremont, they pay a nominal fee for the other services other than garbage collection (including recycling and household hazardous waste services).
- ◆ Q – how do you incentivize people to be responsible and do the right thing?
- ◆ How do you change people’s thinking?
- ◆ In the school districts and colleges, there should be competitions for “New Zero Waste Remedies.”
- ◆ Talk to colleges about Zero Waste product design and sustainable architecture to bring into their programs.
- ◆ Convert biomass to clean energy – want to look at. Know of a closed loop system with zero emissions.
- ◆ Consider licensing janitorial services, beyond a certain size building.
- ◆ There’s a Green certification program already available for janitorial services.
- ◆ No one who owns a landfill should qualify for a recycling contract.
- ◆ City of Oakland needs a sustained Zero Waste public information campaign.