

June 13, 2006

Dear Oakland Business Leader:

The City of Oakland has adopted a Zero Waste Goal and is developing a Zero Waste Strategic Plan, which aims to reduce, reuse, recycle or compost all discarded materials by 2020. The City Council is expected to take action on the Zero Waste Strategic Plan as soon as this winter.

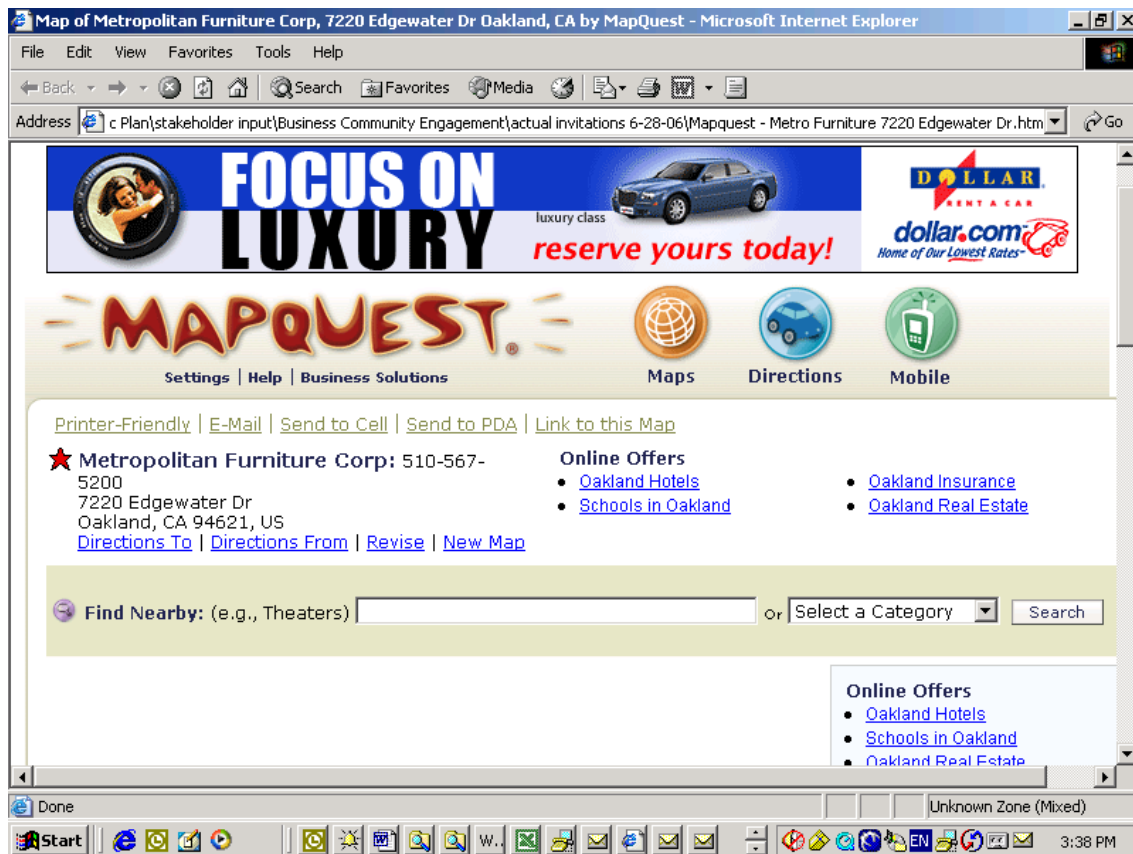
Based on your company's leadership in sustainability, we would like your suggestions as to what should be included in this Zero Waste Strategic Plan, and how we should conduct our outreach to the broader business community in Oakland regarding the Plan.

**City staff will hold a "kickoff" meeting to get input from sustainable business leaders like you, on June 29, 2006 from 8:30 am to 9:00 am at Metro Furniture at 7220 Edgewater Drive in Oakland (see map on reverse).** Continental breakfast will be provided. After the meeting, Metro Furniture will provide an optional, half hour tour of their operations, highlighting their successes and challenges as a manufacturer committed to Zero Waste and overall sustainability.

Your attendance at this meeting will greatly enhance the Zero Waste strategic planning process. To RSVP or ask questions about the meeting or the planning process, please contact Steve Lautze at [slautze@oaklandnet.com](mailto:slautze@oaklandnet.com), or at 510-238-4973.

Sincerely,

Carol Misseldine  
Sustainability Director  
Office of the Mayor



# Zero Waste, Sustainability, and the Oakland Economy

The City of Oakland strives to be a Sustainable City where economic, social, cultural, and environmental needs are addressed in ways that enhance the ability of future generations to maintain a high quality of life. In 1998, the City Council adopted a Sustainable Development Initiative, and the City has initiated a wide range of policies and actions to implement this initiative. More recently, in March 2006, the Council adopted a Zero Waste goal, which commits the City to virtually eliminate garbage by 2020. The City is currently seeking to engage Oakland business leaders in developing a Zero Waste Strategic Plan in order to share critical information, answer questions, and to develop practical, effective measures to address the Zero Waste goal. This plan may be delivered to the City Council for final adoption before the end of this calendar year.

## **What is Zero Waste?**

Zero Waste is a continuous improvement model, similar to zero product defect or zero lost time injury models that are now common to business and industry. The diagram on the other side of this page shows some ways that Zero Waste principles redefine the concept of “waste” in our society. Zero Waste is a model that goes beyond recycling, taking a systems approach to the vast flow of products and materials through society, and seeking ongoing strategic steps to eliminate waste and inefficiency, and mimicking nature in this way. Core Zero Waste strategies can be grouped under three major categories:

- Improving '*downstream*' reuse/recycling of end-of-life products and materials, to ensure their highest and best use
- Pursuing '*upstream*' re-design strategies to reduce planned obsolescence and the volume and toxicity of raw materials and manufactured products, and to promote lower impact or reduced consumption lifestyles
- Actively encouraging use of discarded products and materials to help '*create green business and job opportunities*', including reserving sufficient land for recycling infrastructure and manufacturing

## **Oakland Zero Waste Strategy Options**

Zero Waste strategies being considered for implementation in Oakland include, but are not limited to:

### **Downstream**

- Reduce waste with technical assistance and collaborative problem-solving tools and resources
- Banning disposal of easily recycled or composted items (such as cardboard or landscape trimmings)
- Banning toxic and/or difficult to recycle products, such as expanded polystyrene (styrofoam)

### **Upstream**

- Pursue “producer responsibility”(i.e., take-backs) for toxic bearing electronics or other complex products
- Expand local “green building” design and construction practices, regulations, and/or incentives
- Eliminate existing government incentives for wasting (e.g. tax breaks for natural resource extraction)

### **Creation of Business and Job Opportunities**

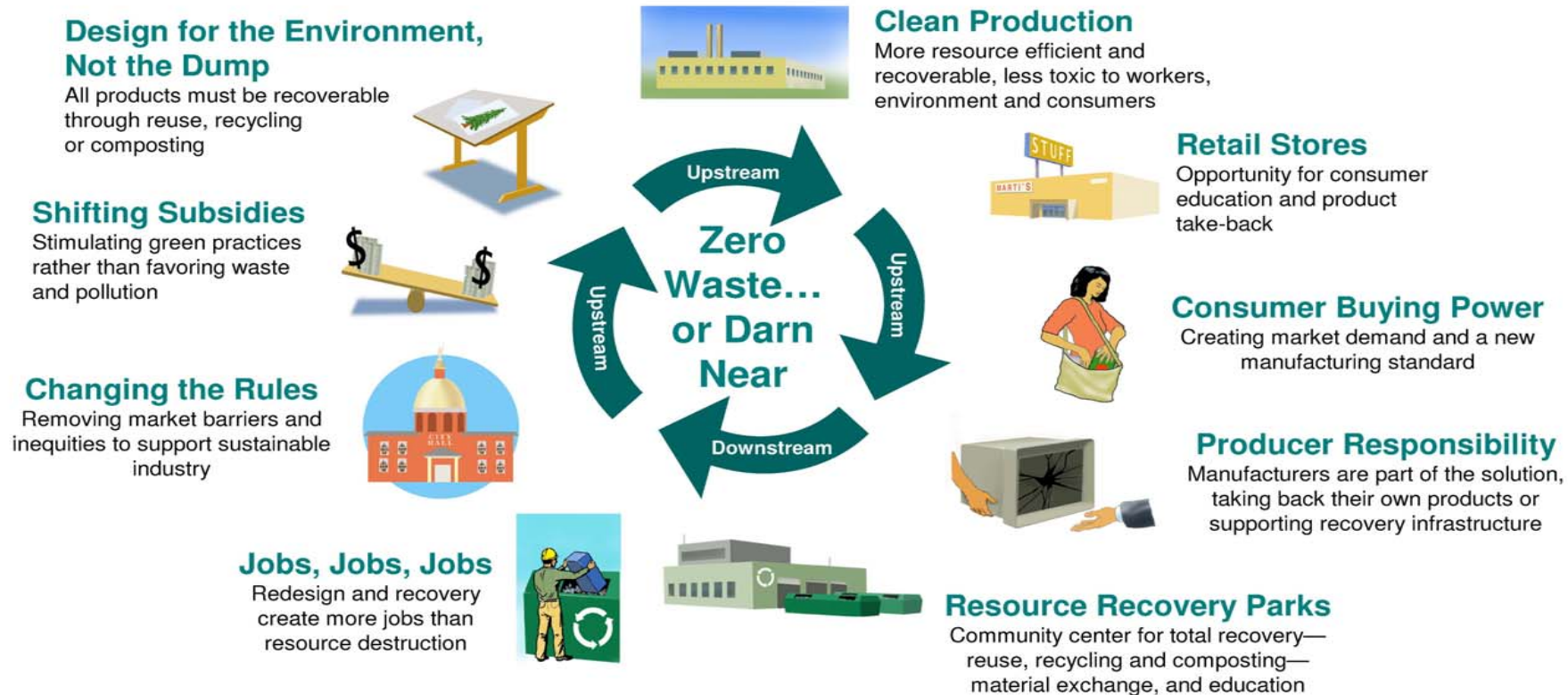
- Low interest loans and grants supporting expanded use of discarded materials to create local business opportunities and 'green collar' jobs
- Job training oriented toward Zero Waste industries and services
- Local and regional land use planning for recycling-based processing and manufacturing businesses

## **Important Questions for Business Leaders:**

1. What is the best way to get your input in developing a Zero Waste Strategic Plan (meetings, on line surveys, fax back survey, other)?
2. What or who needs to be included? What issues should be considered? Who can you recommend or refer?
3. Which approaches or tactics should be avoided?
4. What are the biggest opportunities or obstacles to making your business more in line with Zero Waste?
5. What are your questions for us about Zero Waste, and/or about the ZW Strategic Planning process?

# The Zero Waste Economy

## Designing a Full-Cycle System—Upstream AND Downstream



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[www.ecocycle.org/zerowaste/zwsystem](http://www.ecocycle.org/zerowaste/zwsystem)