



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: February 9, 2010

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Finance Department, Environmental Services Division

SUBJECT: Update On Foodscraps Composting Program

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council receive an update on the Commercial Foodscraps Composting Program.

DISCUSSION:

On November 1, 2009, new solid waste rates went into effect for the City's business sector. In addition to creating greater financial incentives for businesses to recycle more in traditional ways, a new Foodscraps Composting Program took effect. Foodscrap collection and composting services are now available to all businesses in the City. Foodscraps are collected from businesses five days a week by the City's franchised haulers, Allied Waste Services and MarBorg Industries. The material is aggregated at MarBorg's Recycling and Transfer Facility on Quarantina Street, and then hauled by Engel & Gray, Inc. for composting at their commercial composting operation in the City of Santa Maria.

As of the writing of this agenda report, there are 52 businesses participating in the Foodscraps Composting Program. Most program participants have achieved high levels of diversion and have enjoyed substantial reductions in their monthly trash bill. Current data indicates there are approximately 400 restaurants and related food-serving businesses in Santa Barbara with the potential to divert thousands of tons of foodscraps from landfill disposal. This program represents the first of its kind on the South Coast and one of only a handful in California.

Feedback from the business community has been overwhelmingly positive. All businesses participating in the Foodscraps Composting Program are diverting from 60% to 95% of their total waste stream from landfill disposal. Several participants have provided enthusiastic feedback stating that the program is not difficult, in large part due to staff's technical assistance and interface with the franchised haulers. City staff's technical assistance includes training, the provision of free indoor containers, educational material, and serving as a liaison with the haulers.

It takes courage, effort, and organization by business owners, managers, and kitchen staff to make the necessary changes to their daily operations to support this program. Therefore, staff wishes to recognize all of the early adopters of the program, who are listed on the attachment to this report. What follows are some examples of how these businesses are helping to make this program a success.

Pilot Program Participants

City staff prepared for the Foodscraps Composting Program by running a pilot program for approximately two and one-half years. All 12 pilot program participants are identified in the attachment. The pilot program began in April 2007 and produced important operational data while generating substantial community interest. During the pilot program, 12 businesses diverted approximately one million pounds of foodscraps from landfill disposal to the Engel & Gray commercial composting facility in Santa Maria.

Brophy Brothers

Brophy Brothers Clam Bar and Restaurant, one of the busiest and most space-constrained restaurants in the City, has implemented the Foodscraps Composting Program with overwhelming success. As one of the largest waste generators in the City, Brophy Brothers recently reduced its weekly trash collection by over 18 cubic yards and is composting 10 cubic yards of foodscraps. These changes have resulted in savings of approximately \$1,300 per month and the owners are pleased to be doing their part to protect the environment.

Farmer Boy Restaurant

Farmer Boy Restaurant, a local and family-owned business since 1958, was one of the first participants to start the program early in November. After 50 years of landfilling the majority of their waste stream, they are now diverting nearly 90% due to their participation in the Foodscraps Composting Program and an increase in recycling service. The owner is thrilled by the ease and cost savings of the program and has found restaurant staff willing and eager to participate.

Blenders in the Grass

Blenders in the Grass is currently composting at three of their stores in the City, and working toward implementation at the fourth site. These Santa Barbara locations have approximately 15 employees each. By implementing the Foodscraps Composting Program, Blenders in the Grass has managed to reduce their trash from five cubic yards to less than one half of a cubic yard per week. In several cases, the enthusiasm by Blenders in the Grass has led to property management support and composting at businesses with whom they share trash enclosures.

Lazy Acres

Lazy Acres has stood out for their leadership in the Foodscraps Composting Program, as one of the largest generators of waste in the City. With over 220 employees, and 70 yards of waste per week, integrating the Foodscraps Composting Program into their

operation was no small challenge. Lazy Acres now collects compostable materials in all departments, including floral, produce, juice bar, bakery, café, deli, and prep kitchens. These efforts add up to 20 cubic yards of foodscraps per week, increased recycling, and an overall diversion rate of nearly 50%. Their annual savings is approximately \$12,000.

Downey's

Downey's has been one of Santa Barbara's fine-dining establishments since 1982. In early summer 2009, the owner of Downey's contacted the Environmental Services Division regarding the Foodscraps Composting Program with a keen interest in doing the "right thing." His staff has eliminated most of the trashcans in the kitchen, which is evidenced by their high diversion rate of 88% and a reduced monthly trash bill.

Palazzio

The owner of Palazzio recently conveyed to City staff that he now has "almost no trash" since both recycling and composting were established at his restaurant. As a result of the new program, Palazzio's waste diversion has increased from approximately 40% to over 95%. In addition, their trash bill has been reduced by several hundred dollars per month.

All businesses participating in the Foodscraps Composing Program will be recognized in local newspapers in February.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

Recycling municipal solid waste and the City's related efforts to divert material from landfill disposal have considerable beneficial impacts on the environment. The application of compost from foodscraps on agricultural lands in the tri-counties directly benefits local farms and the economy, while reducing the need for petrochemicals in agriculture. The California Environmental Protection Agency recognizes the diversion of foodscraps from landfill disposal as one of its highest priorities in waste management. Foodscraps composting contributes directly to the City's goal of becoming a more sustainable community.

ATTACHMENT: Foodscraps Composting Program Participants

PREPARED BY: Stephen MacIntosh, Environmental Services Supervisor

SUBMITTED BY: Robert Samario, Interim Finance Director

APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office

Foodscraps Composting Program Participants

(Updated January 29, 2010)

1. Alcazar
- 2. Aldo's Restaurant**
3. Backyard Bowls
- 4. Berry Man**
5. Blenders in the Grass (Coast Village)
6. Blenders in the Grass (Mesa Village)
7. Blenders in the Grass (State)
8. Brophy Bros.
9. Cesar Chavez School
10. Chilango's Mexican Food
11. Christine Dahl Pastry
12. Chucks Steak House
- 13. Coffee Cat**
- 14. Cottage Hospital**
15. D'Angelo's Bread
16. Downey's
17. Elements Restaurant and Bar
18. Farmer Boy Restaurant
19. Franklin Elementary
- 20. Harding School**
21. Hope School
22. Hotel Mar Monte
23. Lazy Acres Market
24. Little Town Club
25. Los Arroyos Montecito
26. McDonald's Restaurant (Upper State)
27. Mesa Pizza (Mesa Village)
- 28. Mesa Produce**
29. Mexican Fresh (Mesa Village)
30. Monte Vista School
31. Orfalea Family Foundation
32. Original Enterprise Fish Co
33. Palazzio
34. Paradise Café
- 35. Peabody Charter School**
- 36. Peet's Coffee & Tea (Upper State)**
37. Pizza By Petrini
38. Restaurant Mimosa
- 39. S B Zoological Gardens**
40. Sam's To Go (Mesa Village)
41. Santa Barbara Roasting Company
- 42. Santa Barbara City College**
43. Santa Cruz Markets
44. Savior Faire Catering
45. Shalhoob Meat Co & Jill's Place
46. Shintori Sushi
47. Shoreline Beach Cafe
- 48. Sojourner Cafe**
49. South Coast Deli
50. Starr-King Parent Child Workshop
51. Tuttini
52. Village Catering Inc

* **Bold indicates Pilot Program participant (Begun in April 2007)**