



Agenda Report

TO: CCCSWA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
FROM: LOIS COURCHAINE, PROGRAM MANAGER
DATE: OCTOBER 20, 2009

**SUBJECT: POTENTIAL RESIDENTIAL WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING
OUTREACH PILOT**

SUMMARY

Earlier this year, a Board suggestion was made to explore alternative ways to increase residential waste reduction and recycling efforts, by placing decals with information on solid waste carts. Afterward, there would be an effort of evaluation to explore if the information was effective in obtaining increased diversion. Staff has researched the feasibility of this suggestion and is providing the Board with background information and additional ideas on how to potentially move forward, if the Board so directs.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

1. This item is to elicit Board discussion and direction to staff.

DISCUSSION

Informing CCCSWA residents about various waste reduction and recycling programs, in an attempt to change behaviors regarding waste disposal, is an important part of the strategic goals for the CCCSWA. There are a myriad of techniques for reaching out to the public to change or enhance their recycling and diversion behaviors.

One of our most popular methods of connecting with our customers is through our *Diversions* quarterly newsletter. Although the newsletter, in general, is popular and widely read, it is only published four times per year.

People need to be reminded to divert wastes or recycle properly, on a frequent basis. Therefore, additional outreach methods are often needed in order to capture the continued attention of all customers.

This staff report outlines three different methods of reminding/informing the public about various recycling and diversion opportunities to lessen the environmental impact of materials which have a deleterious effect when improperly disposed.

Outreach Approaches

METHOD	APPROXIMATE COSTS (PER PIECE)	PROS	CONS
Cart Decals	\$1.15 Includes design, printing and affixing to carts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Semi Permanent ▶ Continual reminder ▶ Probably viewed by multiple members of each household 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Message may become obsolete ▶ Five-year life ▶ Most expensive, however if carts are hot stamped at beginning of a new franchise period, the cost would be nil ▶ Limited room on recycle carts
Postcards	\$0.50 Includes design, printing and postage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Less expensive ▶ Easy to produce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ May get tossed without being read ▶ One-time message
Refrigerator Magnets	\$0.34 Includes design, printing and postage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Least expensive ▶ Can be inserted into garbage bill ▶ Can be permanent to semi-permanent ▶ Can be placed where it is viewed frequently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Some refrigerators will not hold magnets (e.g. stainless steel) ▶ Some households may choose not to place magnets

Potential Products

An important aspect of public outreach for any program is being able to measure the effectiveness of the message and method of delivery. Having quantifiable baseline information is critical to being able to measure message effectiveness.

Pharmaceuticals. Although most member agency communities will have unused medication drop-off sites in the near future (staff is looking to full roll-out by mid November), only the Walnut Creek location is currently in place. Because of the newness of this program, this waste may prove problematic in that there may be limited collection data to compare when evaluating the efficacy of the publicity as the amount of material collected cannot be compared to what was collected prior to installation of the drop-off sites.

Electronics. While there is extensive data available regarding electronics collected during our curbside Reuse and Cleanup Days program, that program is only available to residents twice per year. As such, the coordination and timing for sending out multiple informational messages could become challenging. Additionally, if the public information effort is successful, sharp increases in volumes will cause increased cost for collecting and recycling those materials.

Household Batteries. Measuring increases in recycling is more likely to be effective from well established programs, such as household battery collection. The CCCSWA has several years' worth of collection data for this program to use as a baseline for establishing the effectiveness of new outreach methods. Even though many local California governments have battery recycling programs in place, it is generally recognized that only a small percentage of household batteries are being recycled. Therefore, educating the public about this program has the potential to significantly increase the volume of batteries recycled and keep a highly toxic material from interment in the landfill where our waste is delivered. However, like electronics, a successful program will lead to cost increases.

Fluorescent Lighting. The CCCSWA currently has no formal program to collect and recycle fluorescent lights. Because many retailers have chosen not to establish a program, or their staff is uninformed about established programs, the CCCSWA refers most customers to Central Contra Costa Sanitary District's (CCCSD) Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility in Martinez for lighting disposal. CCCSWA has access to baseline collection data from the Martinez facility. The distance from our service area to the HHW facility could minimize the effectiveness of a public information program to have more lamps recycled; the inconvenience of travelling to the Northern part of Central County to dispose of this material could skew the results. The CCCSWA staff believes that fluorescent lighting disposal is a commodity that would best be handled by the manufacturers and distributors of those materials.

Portable Fuel Canisters. It has recently come to staff's attention that partially full and near empty propane canisters are problematic for recycling processors; especially during the summer months when there is an increase in outdoor cooking with portable fuel canister usage. When used canisters, still filled with some amount of fuel, are placed into recycling carts, they are processed along with other residential recyclables. Because of the potential for them to ignite or explode, they pose a severe safety threat to recycling workers, and could cause extensive damage to a sorting facility if a fire or explosion occurred. Because data regarding numbers of canisters is readily available from Pacific Rim Recycling, it is suggested that those volumes be analyzed, as opposed to those from Valley Waste Management where we have no data that exists solely for our portion of commodities that are processed there (our VWM recyclables are mixed with other communities collected materials and the CCCSWA contribution cannot be ascertained). Only recyclable CCCSWA materials—including spent fuel canisters—generated from residences in the south 680 corridor are being processed by Pacific Rim.

Pilot Project Approaches

The initial Board suggestion was to select one community to pilot a potential public education effort. Implementing a pilot program using one commodity (product) and one outreach method can certainly provide valuable data. However, another approach to consider is using one product message on three different outreach methods in three communities. For example, instead of choosing one pilot area of approximately 6500 homes (i.e. Orinda), we could have pilot areas in three similar communities (e.g. Lafayette, Orinda, Moraga), with 2000 homes in each and use a different outreach method (cart decals, postcards or magnets) in each community. This layered approach would provide a wider array of data to measure the effectiveness of a particular message.

Additional Measurement Data

It is intended that all messages sent out—decals, postcards and magnets—would highlight the CCCSWA website as a way for obtaining additional information about our various recycling programs. In addition to being able to measure increases in recycling participation when compared to baseline data, we would also be able to measure the increase in website activity associated with the messages.

Conclusion

Connecting with communities and informing their residents about diversion programs is an integral part of our work. Being able to measure the effectiveness of selected messages is imperative in order to achieve the best results. Selecting a single commodity for increased diversion and utilizing a pilot program approach with varying methods of delivering a single message in different communities has the potential of providing the CCCSWA with a rich base of comparable data for which to plan a wider public education effort in the future on selected products and/or messages.

Staff is seeking the Board's input on which product we should focus our efforts on, understanding that the chosen product needs to have easily accessible and fairly reliable baseline data. After consideration of the foregoing list of possible products for disposal, the staff believes that portable fuel canisters might well fit as the target as little is currently being done to prevent this material from entering the recycling waste stream, they have a deleterious potential if ignited and data on current disposal exists. Staff is also asking that the Board consider utilizing more than one outreach approach (decals, postcards and magnets).

Because we are in the middle of the current fiscal budget cycle, it is suggested that if the Board wishes the staff to undertake an outreach pilot project as is outlined above, it be planned for and included in the 2010/2011 budget. Alternatively, implementation in the midst of the current budget year could certainly be undertaken; however, unbudgeted funds from the current DIF would need to be utilized.