2021-2023 PUBLIC EDUCATION AND RECYCLING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PLAN

Submitted September 2020
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Introduction

The mission of the RethinkWaste Joint Powers Authority (also known as South Bayside Waste Management Authority/SBWMA) is “to serve as solid waste industry leaders in public health, safety and environmental stewardship by providing our ratepayers with innovative cost-effective zero waste programs and Member Agency climate action plan alignment through education, engagement, infrastructure, and policy development.”

Recology San Mateo County (Recology) is the franchised service provider for the RethinkWaste service area through December 31, 2035. Recology is responsible for collecting recycling, organics, and solid waste from approximately 95,000 residences and 11,000 businesses. Recology’s team of dedicated Waste Zero Specialists (WZS) support the companywide success of the recycle, compost, and solid waste programs through comprehensive education and outreach efforts and technical assistance.

While the state of the world has changed significantly with China’s National Sword policy (2018) and the still emerging consequences of the COVID-19 crisis (2020), the public education and outreach focus over the next three years will continue to emphasize the responsible handling, sorting and diversion of all waste streams with a special focus on safe handling practices of lithium-ion batteries and mandated organics diversion. In addition, there is commitment to continue implementing effective outreach and education through new and innovative platforms to keep residents and businesses safe and well informed. As part of this goal, RethinkWaste is responsible for developing and implementing a variety of public education and awareness activities to support the continued success of the recycling, compost, and solid waste programs and services provided by the Joint Powers Authority and Recology.

This three-year 2021-2023 Public Education and Recycling Technical Assistance Plan (Plan) is effective January 1, 2021-December 31, 2023. As specified in section 7.03B of the Franchise Agreements between Recology and each of the RethinkWaste Member Agencies, this Plan details the coordinated efforts that both RethinkWaste and Recology will undertake to ensure that residents and businesses are informed and actively participating in all available recycling, composting, and solid waste programs and services. These specific Franchise Agreement elements are identified in this Plan by the corresponding section number. This Plan encompasses Recology and RethinkWaste’s contractual public education and outreach requirements, and Recology’s commercial, mixed use, and multi-family dwelling (MFD) technical assistance activities.

This Plan was developed by RethinkWaste and Recology staff with collaborative engagement from RethinkWaste’s Public Education and Outreach Subcommittee. As of this Plan writing, this Subcommittee consists of the following members: Board Member Davina Hurt (Belmont), Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Chair Roxanne Murray (San Mateo), TAC Vice Chair ‘Andra Lorenz (Foster City), TAC Alternate Gordon Tong (County of San Mateo), Vicki Sherman (Redwood City), Mia Rossi (Recology Waste Zero Manager), Julia Au (RethinkWaste Outreach and Communications Manager), Emi Hashizume (RethinkWaste Environmental Education Manager), and Joanna Rosales (RethinkWaste Outreach and Communications Coordinator).

RethinkWaste is responsible for developing and implementing certain public education materials, internal containers, and activities associated with the Franchise Agreements. Recology is contractually responsible
for costs associated with producing and distributing specific public education materials prescribed in the Franchise Agreements such as bill inserts, commercial brochures, signage, and posters.

This Plan is an overarching guidance document designed to ensure that all customers are kept apprised of the programs available to them, the benefits of source reduction, reuse, recycling and compost, and the proper handling of household hazardous waste. Public education materials will incorporate visual and graphic images to provide clarity regarding program parameters.

General and targeted outreach campaigns along with social media are incorporated in this Plan to foster positive behavior change for residents and businesses to meet State recycling compliance requirements and diversion rate goals. This Plan is flexible and may be adjusted to accommodate unforeseen circumstances. Each outreach campaign or strategy includes methods to measure effectiveness.

RethinkWaste and Recology will continue to work together along with Member Agency staff, via the Public Education and Outreach Subcommittee, to develop outreach and education efforts designed to engage customers, promote program success, and achieve Member Agencies’ goals.

1. Public Education Section

A. RethinkWaste and Recology Franchise Agreement Requirements

This section provides details on RethinkWaste and Recology’s outreach efforts and responsibilities to promote recycling and diversion related programs and services to residents and businesses in the service area. RethinkWaste leads the development of all public education materials with review and comments provided by Recology. RethinkWaste and Recology will collaborate on the timing of mailings and education campaigns to minimize overall impact to customers and Recology’s Call Center. All outreach and education programs are dependent on adopted RethinkWaste budgets and if there are direct program impacts due to the COVID-19 pandemic or other unforeseen circumstances.

i. Public Education and Promotion

Newsletters – Franchise Agreement Section 7.03(D)(2)

RethinkWaste will produce and distribute the Rethinker newsletter to all single and multi-family residents two times per year. The Rethinker serves as a primary source for public awareness based on recent residential feedback on how they would like to receive information. Each year, one edition of the newsletter will be direct mailed to all residents and one will be included as a bill insert. RethinkWaste will promote and encourage sign-ups for electronic versions of the newsletter to further reduce costs and promote sustainability.

Multi-Family Outreach – Franchise Agreement Section 7.03(D)(3)

RethinkWaste will produce a Multi-Family “Toolkit” for property owners, managers and their tenants. Historically, this Toolkit has included posters, move-in and move-out flyers, postcards, and a property owners/managers guide, all of which are available in English, Spanish, and Chinese. Elements of the Toolkit are typically provided to MFD residents in the Recycling Buddy Bags, which are purchased by RethinkWaste and delivered by Recology. RethinkWaste will continue to support the MFD outreach program by producing and adding supplemental materials, such as an MFD
resident Service Guide, to promote the programs and services available to both property owners/managers and tenants. Additionally, RethinkWaste will also provide for at least one direct mail piece to MFD residents about programs, services, and/or waste reduction tips (e.g. Rethinker newsletter, MFD Service Guide).

Recolology is responsible for distributing materials, including the Multi-Family Toolkit and Recycling Buddy Bags, to property owners, managers, and residents.

**Bill Inserts – Franchise Agreement Section 7.03(D)(11)**

Each Rate Year, RethinkWaste shall develop and produce bill inserts for residential and commercial customers for each Member Agency. The Franchise Agreement allows for the insertion of up to 12 solid waste bill inserts, of which nine are specifically stated. The remaining inserts are left unspecified to allow Member Agencies the flexibility to develop their own bill inserts to promote programs or events specific to their Agency. Therefore, Member Agencies may develop additional customized inserts (at no additional cost) if not all nine prescribed inserts are utilized, or when some are combined. For reference, **Table 1** below provides the Member Agencies’ residential billing cycle with Recology. Residential customers are billed quarterly while commercial customers (which include MFD properties) are billed monthly in most jurisdictions.

Recolology leads distribution of bill inserts to residential and commercial customers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member Agency</th>
<th>Billed Dec. 31 (for service in)</th>
<th>Billed March 31 (for service in)</th>
<th>Billed June 30 (for service in)</th>
<th>Billed Sept. 30 (for service in)</th>
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<tr>
<th>Member Agency</th>
<th>Billed Jan. 31 (for service in)</th>
<th>Billed April 30 (for service in)</th>
<th>Billed July 31 (for service in)</th>
<th>Billed Oct. 31 (for service in)</th>
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<tr>
<th>Member Agency</th>
<th>Billed Feb. 28 (for service in)</th>
<th>Billed May 31 (for service in)</th>
<th>Billed Aug. 31 (for service in)</th>
<th>Billed Nov. 30 (for service in)</th>
</tr>
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*Member Agency billed either directly or through property tax roll. For these customers, Recology only bills residents for extra services such as additional carts. Billing takes place approximately two days prior to the last business day of the month.
Covered bill inserts include:

- **Annual Bulky Item On-Call Collection (BIC) Notice:** BICs are provided twice annually to all residential customers upon request, at no additional cost. Customers can schedule a collection between February 1 and December 31 each year. This service is not provided in January due to collection of holiday trees. This bill insert is sent to single-family residents once per year, typically in the spring.

- **Annual Holiday Tree Recycling (one each for single-family and multi-family households):** This bill insert provides information on the Holiday Tree Recycling program and is sent to both single-family and MFD residents once per year in the last billing cycle of the year for each Member Agency. Recology is required to collect holiday trees from residential customers annually during the holiday season at no additional cost. Residential customers can simply place their trees curbside for collection from January 2 to 31. MFD property owners and managers must schedule the service in advance and can request trees be collected loose in specific locations or request that Recology deliver a large drop box for residents to consolidate trees for collection. This insert will be combined with the Annual “Reduce Holiday Packaging” Notice.

- **Annual “Reduce Holiday Packaging” Notice:** Since the holiday season is a unique time of year that generates an enormous amount of packaging waste, this bill insert is designed to provide information on reducing waste during the holidays. This insert is sent to both single-family and MFD residents once per year in the last billing cycle of the year for each Member Agency. This insert will be combined with the Annual “Holiday Tree Recycling” Notice to promote resource conservation and will also include any holiday collection schedule changes.

- **Compost Giveaway and/or Shredding Event Notice(s) (one each for single-family and multi-family households):** This bill insert promotes both the Recology and RethinkWaste compost giveaway and shredding event programs and is sent to both single-family and MFD customers twice per year. The compost giveaway bill insert can be customized to include Member Agency specific event dates or used to promote shred and/or e-scrap collection events.

- **Commercial Recycling Notice:** This notice is sent to commercial customers (including MFD property owners) twice per year, typically in the spring and fall. The inserts provide information on California State law requirements, including AB 341, AB 1826, AB 827, and SB 1383.

- **Annual Commercial Recycling Awards Notice:** Currently on hold.

**Distribution of Materials – Franchise Agreement Section 7.03(E)**

Recology will disseminate outreach collateral pieces (i.e., mail, deliver door hangers, etc.) and other promotional and educational items provided by RethinkWaste, including the Multi-Family Toolkit, Recycling Buddy Bags, desk-side and other containers for recycling and organic materials.
Service Guide – Franchise Agreement Section 7.03(J)

**RethinkWaste and Recology** work collaboratively to develop, update, and distribute a Service Guide, which may be distributed annually or as deemed necessary. The Service Guide provides a summary of the scope of services available to all residential customers and highlights the full range of program guidelines and participation requirements regarding the services provided by Recology. It also includes other useful information regarding recycling and proper disposal of household hazardous waste. The Service Guide can be mailed to residents and is available online at RethinkWaste, Recology, and Member Agency’s websites. Any direct mail to residents will be funded by RethinkWaste and will be offered in English, Spanish, and Chinese to reach a wider customer base.

A Single-Family Service Guide was last updated in 2019 and was direct mailed to all single-family households between February and April 2020. An MFD Service Guide was created in 2020 and was distributed between August and September 2020. (See the RethinkWaste.org website for current versions of the service guides.)

**ii. Community Events and Programs**

**Confidential Document Destruction Service Event – Franchise Agreement Section 5.07**

**RethinkWaste** will coordinate for Member Agencies the one Confidential Document Destruction Service Event (Shred Event), which is provided to Member Agencies at no additional cost per the Franchise Agreements. The Shred Event can be combined with E-Scrap collection, which is not covered under the Franchise Agreement, and is coordinated by RethinkWaste as a value-added service. Member Agencies may request additional Shred/E-Scrap events, and RethinkWaste will bill the Member Agency for any unrecovered costs.

**RethinkWaste** will broadly promote events through website and social media postings, posters, and electronic flyers for Member Agencies’ websites. Member Agencies will receive request forms for the following calendar year to reserve event dates after the last event of the current calendar year.
Coats for Kids Program – Franchise Agreement Section 5.10
Recology will implement its annual Coats for Kids Program in October/November for interested Member Agencies. The program entails drivers collecting coats from residential customers over a one-week period. In addition, collection receptacles for coats will be delivered to Member Agency facilities, such as city halls and community centers, for collection over a two-week period, upon request by each Agency. Member Agencies will receive information from Recology each fall with more information on how to participate in the program and if there are any changes to normal procedures. Recology will track how many coats are collected to measure the program’s success and distribute the collected clothing items to local non-profits in the community.

Recology and RethinkWaste will jointly promote the program along with participating Member Agencies. These promotional efforts include, but are not limited to, newsletters, website and social media postings, print advertisements, posters, and electronic flyers.

Compost Giveaway – Franchise Agreement Section 5.11
Recology will coordinate all compost giveaway events for Member Agencies. This includes large compost giveaway events where residents are permitted to bring their own container(s) to obtain their desired amount of compost. The first scheduled compost giveaway event (per each Member Agency request) will be provided at no additional cost. Additional events can be requested by Member Agencies at either the costs prescribed in Attachment Q of the Franchise Agreement for a Recology delivery or per the backhaul delivery rate charged by South Bay Recycling.

RethinkWaste will promote events through website and social media postings, posters, and electronic flyers for Member Agencies’ websites. Member Agencies will annually receive a request form to reserve their event(s).

B. California State Law Requirements

This section provides details on the outreach and education requirements RethinkWaste and Recology collaborate on with Member Agencies to satisfy compliance as mandated by California State laws, which currently includes AB 341, AB 1826, AB 827, and SB 1383. Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, some of these efforts may be conducted virtually.

State Assembly Bill (AB) 341 is California’s mandatory commercial recycling law that went into effect on July 1, 2012 to reduce the amount of garbage sent to landfills. The law requires all businesses that generate four or more cubic yards of solid waste and MFDs with five or more units to recycle. Businesses and multi-family complexes are considered in compliance with the law if they participate in the commercial recycling program provided by Recology, self-haul the materials, or arrange for recycling by another party.

State Assembly Bill (AB) 1826 is California’s mandatory commercial organics recycling law that went into effect on January 1, 2016. The law requires jurisdictions to have a commercial organics recycling program in place. As the law stands, businesses that generate two or more cubic yards combined of solid waste, recycling, and organic material per week and MFDs that consist of five or more units are required to have organics recycling. Businesses and MFDs are considered in compliance with the law if they participate in the commercial organics recycling program provided by Recology, self-haul the
materials, or arrange for recycling by another party. At this time, MFDs are not required to divert food waste. Their compliance only requires diversion of landscape materials.

**State Assembly Bill (AB) 827** requires businesses subject to AB 1826 and AB 341 to provide customers with recycling and/or organics collection bins or containers to collect materials generated from products purchased on the premises. These bins need to be adjacent to garbage bins, visible and easily accessible to customers and clearly marked with labels of what goes in each bin. Full-service restaurants, as defined in the law, are exempt.

There are no specific penalties associated with AB 341, AB 1826, or AB 827; however, the responsibility for compliance has been placed on the jurisdictions by CalRecycle, the State’s primary solid waste regulatory agency. Jurisdictional compliance is heavily focused on educational requirements monitored through an annual reporting process to the State.

**State Senate Bill (SB) 1383** establishes targets to achieve a 50 percent reduction in the statewide disposal of organic waste from 2014 levels by 2020, and a 75 percent reduction by 2025. Additionally, there is a requirement that 20 percent of edible food that is currently discarded is recovered for human consumption by 2025. Regulations for SB 1383 were approved November 3, 2020 following a formal rule-making process. Education and outreach factor significantly into the law’s implementation and the Member Agencies have indicated a preliminary interest in tasking RethinkWaste with coordinating these efforts. It is expected that CalRecycle will provide guidance on how to implement the law, including education and outreach for organic waste and edible food recovery. The regulations require specific outreach and record keeping by jurisdictions of all outreach as defined in Article 4 of the regulations.

RethinkWaste and Recology have taken on the responsibility for most outreach efforts and supports Member Agencies in meeting their requirements of the State mandates. RethinkWaste and Recology will continue to develop, design, and disseminate easy to understand and follow educational materials to better inform customers on how to accomplish regulatory compliance. This includes having updated information on websites, informational posts about relevant laws on social media, newsletters, bill inserts, direct mail pieces, and other materials or methods as needed.

Recology WZS will continue to provide outreach and education to communicate State mandates to the commercial sector, which may be conducted through, but are not limited to, on-site waste assessments, customer meetings, trainings and presentations, tabling at community events, and providing education signage and brochures.

**C. Additional Recology Outreach**

In addition to the outreach required in the Franchise Agreement, Recology will continue to educate customers through a variety of other techniques, including social media and tabling events.

i. **Social Media and Website**

Recology WZS in collaboration with Recology’s Social Media Team will utilize social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, and Recology’s Website (Recology.com), to
communicate important updates and stay connected with customers throughout the RethinkWaste service area.

The major topics that will be targeted on these platforms include: service-related updates, product acceptability, State legislation and mandates, seasonal best practices (i.e., green holiday tips), source reduction, the 5 R’s—Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Rot, and success stories highlighting local businesses that go above and beyond earning the honor of a Waste Zero All Star.

**Waste Zero All Stars**

WZS will use social media platforms to highlight and provide recognition to customers that are exemplary in implementing and maintaining sustainable practices. WZS identify customers who exceed source reduction standards, actively participate in both recycle and compost services, and maintain little to no contamination.

WZS collaborate with the All Stars to craft a post highlighting their efforts that is shared on social media channels to help sustainable businesses get more visibility and support. The success of these customers will be leveraged and spotlighted to encourage other businesses to improve their diversion efforts as modeled by the All Stars. Recology’s Social Media Team will review the analytics of these posts to inform and direct future posts and provide feedback to the customer.

![Example of three Waste Zero All Stars from 2019 and their corresponding analytics.](image)

**ii. Community Events**

Historically, Recology has had a strong presence throughout the service area by tabling at community events. During 2019, WZS participated in 33 community events, where they connected with approximately 2,700 people. Community events, which may be organized by Member Agencies, RethinkWaste, Chambers of Commerce, or local businesses, provide an opportunity for...
Recology’s Waste Zero Team to remain visible in the community and provide face-to-face outreach and education to customers.

Recology’s Waste Zero Team will continue to participate in various tabling opportunities, including: Earth Day events, America Recycles Day, Compost Awareness Month, and business sponsored “Lunch & Learn” events.

D. Additional RethinkWaste Outreach Programs

In addition to the outreach required under the Franchise Agreement, RethinkWaste will educate all those in the service area through a variety of supported programs and collect metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of these efforts.

All specific outreach programs will be dependent on adopted RethinkWaste budgets and if there are direct program impacts due to the COVID-19 pandemic or other unforeseen circumstances.

i. Community/General Audience Outreach

RethinkWaste Website
The RethinkWaste website (RethinkWaste.org) serves as a one-stop-shop for information on residential and commercial solid waste reduction programs and services, the Shoreway Environmental Center, as well as current and historical information for Member Agencies and the RethinkWaste Board of Directors. The site was redesigned in 2019 to be more easily navigated and accessible to visitors, as well as staff in charge of site maintenance.

RethinkWaste Social Media
RethinkWaste will utilize its social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) to communicate important messages to residents and businesses.

Educational Materials
RethinkWaste will update and develop, as appropriate, printed outreach collateral for residents and businesses to provide information on programs and services available to them.

Collaborative Outreach
RethinkWaste will support campaigns and programs from partner groups such as Bay Area Recycling Outreach Coalition (BayROC), San Mateo County’s Office of Sustainability, San Mateo County’s Household Hazardous Waste Program, and others as deemed appropriate. Specifically,
RethinkWaste hopes to assist in outreach and education for San Mateo County’s Food Ware Ordinance, which passed in 2020 at the Countywide level for unincorporated areas, with other cities and towns expected to pass the same ordinance. As of this Plan writing, two RethinkWaste Member Agencies have passed this ordinance.

**Public Spaces Program**
With RethinkWaste Board approval, the Public Spaces Pilot became a permanent program in May 2019. RethinkWaste’s Public Spaces Program strives to increase diversion in public spaces such as parks and active downtown corridors by utilizing data from waste audits and community surveys, installation of new receptacles, installation of new signage, and public outreach. The current program works with the cities of San Carlos, Redwood City, and Burlingame.

The progression of the program involves expanding to new public spaces in the jurisdictions currently participating in the program and adding new Member Agencies to the program over the next three years. The program goal is to update signage and/or receptacles for consistency and reinforce the message of proper sorting in public spaces.

The program will identify areas with the highest visibility, diversion potential, and accessibility for service and will invest in new waste receptacles and/or signage for these areas. Program staff will collaborate with RethinkWaste, Member Agency and Recology staff to discuss logistics, service schedules, and information for successful program implementation.

Program staff will collect data from waste audits conducted pre- and post-installation (either signage or receptacle), community surveys, and receptacle observation. Staff will organize and analyze data, report trends and present customized conclusions and solutions for each participating agency as well as summarized program-wide data.

Staff will collaborate with Members Agencies to develop outreach strategies to increase participation in public space diversion. Outreach strategies include, but are not limited to, producing social media content, tabling in public spaces (i.e. parks, farmers markets), blog posts on the RethinkWaste website, short videos, residential bill inserts, and updating receptacle signage to be consistent across all Member Agencies. The immediate focus will be developing outreach material to reinforce proper sorting in the existing program locations and identifying best spaces for signage in newly participating Member Agencies.
Targeted Outreach Campaigns

Proper Battery and Cell Phone Disposal
Recology will collect from single-family residents used household batteries and unwanted cell phones for recycling by placing these items in a clear zip-top bag on top of their black garbage cart on collection day. Multi-family residents can place used household batteries and unwanted cell phones into an orange bucket for Recology collection, if one is provided on-site at their complex. All residents also have the option to dispose of batteries and cell phones at designated drop-off locations, such as the Shoreway Public Recycling Center, local businesses, city halls, and community centers, all of which are identified on a map that can be found on the RethinkWaste website (RethinkWaste.org/Batteries).

RethinkWaste and Recology will continue to do outreach and education on the proper handling of batteries for all residents and businesses with special focus on lithium-ion batteries, via targeted campaigns and through various channels including, but not limited to, bill inserts, seasonal advertising, newsletters, website, digital marketing, and social media.

Other Campaign Ideas
RethinkWaste will provide ongoing residential outreach support and maintenance for existing programs on behalf of the Member Agencies and Recology. Staff plans to accomplish this through targeted behavior change campaigns, print, digital or social media marketing and advertising, updating and developing specific outreach collateral, community events, and any other avenues deemed appropriate. These potential campaigns will target single-family, multi-family, and commercial customers in the RethinkWaste service area. New and unique programs that may be included in the 2021-2023 Plan are:

- **Language-specific outreach** – All outreach will be conducted in English, Spanish, and Chinese as appropriate, but targeted campaigns in specific languages will be considered depending on the goal of the outreach campaign.

- **Focus on MFD residents** – Historically, campaigns have focused on single-family residents. There will be an added focus on promoting messages directly to MFD residents to increase diversion rates.

- **Shoreway Facility ownership** – Educate residents about their direct “ownership” of the Shoreway Environmental Center, and individual stake they have as rate payers, either as a stand-alone campaign or incorporated into other campaigns. It is important for residents and businesses to understand that the way they choose to dispose of items is directly tied to their bills and how the facility operates.

- **Refuse/Reduce/Reuse** – Focus on upstream thinking to reduce the need to think twice about how to dispose of an item. This campaign may include partnerships to encourage reusing and reducing materials through changing purchasing habits and refusing single-use items.
o **“Beyond the Cart” disposal options** – With Bulky Item Collection and Abandoned Waste programs near capacity, educate residents and businesses about alternatives to disposal, which include donation, repair, and utilizing the Shoreway Public Recycling Center and Transfer Station.

o **Legislative/regulatory outreach** – As appropriate and needed, provide legislative talking points and information to the Board of Directors, TAC members, Member Agency staff, and general public.

ii. **Tours/Shoreway Environmental Center Outreach**

**Shoreway Environmental Center Tours Program**

The Shoreway Tours Program continues to be popular since its launch in January 2012, with over 40,000 visitors having toured the Shoreway facility through the end of 2019. Tours give participants an opportunity to observe firsthand what happens to their recyclables, plant materials, food scraps, construction and demolition debris, and garbage at a working materials recovery facility (MRF) and transfer station. Visitors also learn how to practice the 4 Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Rot/Compost), empowering them to conserve resources in their schools, homes, and everyday lives.

School group tours typically occur between September and June. On average, 80 classes of 3rd to 5th graders in the RethinkWaste service area receive free busing to the facility each year. Public Tours were suspended in Summer 2019 due to facility construction projects, but staff intends to reintroduce them in the future when possible. In 2019, public tours averaged 17 attendees per tour.

The Shoreway Tours Program is promoted through emails, newsletters, flyers, the RethinkWaste website, social media, and environment education platforms. RethinkWaste staff will continue to recruit tour participants by outreaching directly to partner organizations, schools, and individual educators. The new scheduling application added to the Tours section of the RethinkWaste website has increased efficiency and ease of tour scheduling for tour participants and RethinkWaste staff.

While tours have historically occurred in person, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and increasing frequency of severe weather conditions, RethinkWaste staff will develop ways to modify and adapt the Tours Program to better fit the shifting needs of the community. Efforts during the three-year period of this Plan may include, but are not limited to, offering virtual tours and supplemental educational resources that will be accessible online to schools and residents.

RethinkWaste will establish a system to collect feedback to further improve the Tours Program for future visitors.
Tour Exhibits and Educational Materials
In Summer 2019, two new, compost-focused sections were added to the Shoreway tour route: the MicroSafari and the Organics-to-Energy (O2E) project. The MicroSafari is an interactive exhibit that allows visitors to observe organisms that live within a compost sample. The sample includes items meant for landfill to clearly convey the difference between compostable and non-compostable materials, while emphasizing the importance of keeping the compost stream clean. The goal of the O2E process is to reduce the amount of organic materials in the landfill, while creating either clean energy or higher quality compost. Both additions will help visitors learn even more about compost and the composting process.

RethinkWaste will update and develop new informational flyers and supplemental materials to promote the various programs and services available at the Shoreway Environmental Center, such as the Tours Program, compost giveaway at the Transfer Station, and general facility information. Underserved schools and schools located in Member Agency jurisdictions with histories of low participation will continue to be targeted in outreach campaigns. In addition, new student worksheets and resources for teachers will be piloted to increase engagement and knowledge retention. (See the RethinkWaste.org website for current teaching tools for educators.)

Shoreway Community Events
In strong collaboration with Recology and South Bay Recycling, RethinkWaste hosts an annual Earth Day-themed public event in April and a complimentary, environmentally themed public event in the fall. Earth Day at Shoreway began in 2012 and the first fall event was held in 2015. Events are free to residents and typically feature facility tours, a compost giveaway, informational booths, Fixit Clinics, DIY workshops, and other activities to encourage visitors to reduce their environmental impact at home and in their community. Public attendance at these past events have exceeded 400 engaged community members. Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, in-person events may shift to a series of virtual offerings, such as workshops and presentations via webinars on a variety of topics. In 2020, RethinkWaste hosted three successful webinars, including one for Earth Day in conjunction with Recology on proper sorting and source reduction.

These events at Shoreway will be promoted to the community through a variety of methods, including posters, advertisements, social media, newsletters, and press releases.

iii. Schools Outreach

In-Schools Program
With RethinkWaste Board approval, the 2018-19 In-Schools Pilot became a permanent program in May 2019. The In-Schools Program provides schools in the RethinkWaste service area with waste infrastructure, equipment, faculty training, technical support, and environmental education to drive
participation and diversion. Priority is given to public elementary schools, with an emphasis on 3rd to 5th grade classes.

**Technical Support and Equipment Provision**

RethinkWaste staff coordinates with a variety of school administrators in the service area, including district facility managers, principals, custodians, yard duty monitors, and teachers to identify the needs of each campus and build individualized action plans. New bins, dollies, signage, and other equipment are recommended, delivered, and implemented to create bin systems customized to each school at no cost.

The In-Schools Program expansion requires close coordination with important partner organizations, such as Recology, San Mateo County Office of Sustainability, San Mateo County Office of Education, and San Mateo County Environmental Health Services. RethinkWaste staff and their partners collaborate on curriculum development, a Food Share Table Program, assistance with (and compost for) school gardens and worm composting, and regular recognition of custodians, green teams and champions.

**Education and Training**

The on-site school technical assistance and new waste infrastructure are paired with student and staff education. RethinkWaste staff conducts in-class presentations and assemblies, supports the establishment of green teams, and monitors the bins during lunch periods to help students practice sorting correctly.

To further reinforce waste education, RethinkWaste staff creates complimentary lesson plans, activities, and supplemental resources for students and teachers to use in-class or for off-site, distance learning. Efforts are being made to adapt as more student learning will take place away from campus. Staff will offer virtual class presentations via video calls and will continue to develop distance learning resources for schools.

Custodial trainings and informational presentations to faculty members help ensure the long-term success of compost and recycling programs. RethinkWaste staff conducts workshops for custodial teams to review proper sorting practices and bin system maintenance, collect feedback and best practices, and to better understand how to provide necessary support. Similarly, school staff meeting presentations are an opportunity to engage teachers and encourage them to act as role models for students and families.
Student Contests
Every spring, RethinkWaste invites students to participate in the annual Trash to Art Contest for 3rd through 5th graders attending schools located in the RethinkWaste service area. The contest challenges individual students and whole classes to create art pieces from items that are normally thrown away. Winners are awarded prizes and recognized in-person at RethinkWaste’s Earth Day event or virtually via a video call celebration and are also recognized at their home city council meetings.

The RethinkWaste Poster Contest is held in the fall. The contest theme varies each year, but always prompts students to think about the 4 R’s. Student winners receive prizes and are recognized at their home city council meetings. The 1st place poster is featured on the side of a Recology truck with routes throughout the winning artist’s city.

E. Monitoring and Evaluation

For each campaign, tracking and measurement of success will be incorporated. Following each campaign, data from regularly provided information from Recology and South Bay Recycling will be used to see if there are changes to service levels, disposal numbers, contamination rates, etc. and compared to previous years if available. Anecdotal information will also be gathered, including, but not limited to, direct feedback from residents, businesses, and Member Agencies.

The development of surveys and other methods to measure both direct feedback and the degree to which targeted communities are being reached may also be considered.

2. Recycling Technical Assistance Section

Recology’s WZS support the companywide success of the recycle, compost, and solid waste programs through comprehensive education and outreach efforts to customers throughout the service area. Outreach and education inspire sustainable behavior adoption and proper sorting techniques resulting in greater program participation and higher quality of materials collected.

Since 2011, Recology’s team of WZS has focused on providing technical assistance to the commercial and MFD sectors to increase diversion rates and ensure the collection of clean, marketable material. In 2019, the WZS conducted over 800 consultations with commercial customers throughout the RethinkWaste service area contributing to the success of Recology’s programs. From 2011 to 2019, Recology has collected over 600,000 tons of recycling and over 900,000 tons of organic material through the successful implementation of targeted outreach approaches and technical tools. The list of approaches and tools delivered to both new and existing customers includes the following: best practice guidelines, informational brochures including education about local and state recycling mandates, MFD Toolkits, on-site and virtual presentations and trainings, social media outreach, solid waste consultations, and on-site assessments.

Recology’s WZS goal is to continue to drive clean material diversion to the Shoreway Environmental Center by implementing new recycling and compost programs, working directly with customers to maximize their existing programs, and assisting the Member Agencies to meet State required mandates. Recology WZS focus on low diversion and/or compost-rich accounts to ensure customers are properly informed about correct diversion practices and that the maximum diversion is being achieved. WZS monitor accounts for
adequate and efficient service levels, Commercial Classification Codes, and historical notes to identify and target accounts for compliance, support, outreach and education.

Recology WZS categorize all commercial accounts by adding a Commercial Classification Code into Recology’s account database system. Some examples of a Classification Code include: Food Service, Hospital, Multi-Family Dwelling, and Office. Commercial Classification Codes are an important tool for providing effective outreach and support to commercial customers by identifying areas of opportunity for increased landfill diversion.

A. Commercial Sector Technical Assistance

The commercial sector has a wide array of business types ranging from tech giants to small local businesses. Regardless of their size or unique characteristics, all new and existing accounts are eligible to receive complimentary Starter Kits that equip and prepare customers to properly sort the accepted materials for each commodity.

Starter Kits include commodity specific signage, blue and green “Slim Jim” and deskside containers, and cardboard deskside containers.

B. MFD Sector Technical Assistance

WZS work in close partnership with MFD property managers to provide extensive information and assistance, including MFD Toolkits. These Toolkits provide property managers and residents with the equipment and information to implement best practices and includes a Property Manager Guide, door-to-door delivery of Recycling Buddy Bags and kitchen compost pails with program guide inserts, informative newsletter articles, and on-site or virtual trainings.

The door-to-door deliveries provide a unique opportunity for Recology’s Waste Zero team to connect with residents and conduct real-time question and answers.
C. Private School and Preschool Technical Assistance

The Franchise Agreements between Recology and Member Agencies does not include recycling, composting, and solid waste collection at public schools within the RethinkWaste service area. However, Recology does provide collection services to private schools within the service area along with extensive educational outreach and technical assistance to the private schools and preschools in the RethinkWaste service area. WZS work directly with the schools to provide internal containers, signage, on-site and virtual presentations for assemblies and in classroom lectures. WZS engage in activities that range from Recology’s sorting game, 5 R’s Dance (always a big hit with the children!), Recycle Pledge, Waste Zero coloring books and crossword searches. In addition, Recology enhances classroom curriculum with the “Better at the Bin is Better for the Future” classroom guide available for teachers. Focused topics include: 5 Rs (Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Rot), Landfill Science, Know Your Plastics!, Recycling and Composting Awareness, Source Reduction, and “What Goes Where.”

D. Presentations and Trainings

Recology WZS tailor presentations and trainings to targeted audiences and proudly offers multi-lingual presentations and trainings. Tailoring presentations and trainings supports improved delivery of sector specific information to meet the differing needs of various stakeholders. These stakeholders include owners, managers, employees, and staff members of churches, custodial services, food service and restaurants, hospitals, hotels, MFDs and Homeowner Associations (HOAs), malls, manufacturing, private schools, preschools, office buildings, and retail/service.

While presentations and trainings have historically been conducted in person, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, utilizing digital platforms to allow continued effective and accessible education to our
customers has begun. Since the start of 2020, Recology WZS have engaged in several virtual presentations and webinars, which have proven to be a successful channel for continuing the conversation and education with customers throughout the RethinkWaste service area and beyond. Over the three-year Plan period, Recology will also develop greater expertise in outreach methods with a specific focus on digital platforms such as webinars, interactive calls, and social media outlets.

E. New Developments

The Peninsula has experienced exponential growth over the past ten years and this development is anticipated to continue. This growth presents a unique opportunity for successful solid waste and recycle plans to be incorporated during the conceptual phase of development. WZS, in collaboration with Recology’s Operations team, work with customers to determine best service levels and container locations to promote seamless service and maximum diversion. Recology will provide technical consultations to customers to guide the development of solid waste and recycling plans. Consultations allow WZS to facilitate successful sorting and proper placement of solid waste to ensure safe and efficient collection by Recology drivers.

Providing equipment and container information to customers at the planning stages of a development help mitigate serviceability, safety, and customer accessibility issues in the future. These collaborative efforts also address diversion requirements and supports Member Agencies in meeting State diversion mandates.

F. Reporting

Recology WZS annually gather commercial account data that is comprised of weekly service levels, diversion percentages, and Commercial Classification Codes. This commercial account data is used to guide outreach and education and allows the WZS to target businesses and MFDs based on the following criteria: diversion potential, organic rich accounts, and State legislation thresholds.

WZS support Member Agency specific reporting efforts by working in close collaboration with the State to report compliance of waste related mandates. To support this effort, WZS track customer account data that includes, but is not limited to, accounts that backhaul, share services, and experience space limitations. These outreach efforts along with notes on each customer interaction are documented in Recology’s customer database system and are reported on according to the Franchise Agreement.