



A Public Agency

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

STAFF REPORT

To: SBWMA Board Members
From: Joe La Mariana, Executive Director
Date: January 27, 2022 Board of Directors Meeting
Subject: Executive Director's Report

Staff and Agency partners continue to be hard at work supporting numerous projects, programs, and facility initiatives. Here are the highlights:

1. **COVID-19 Status Updates:**

The SBWMA and its primary partners continue to take extreme measures to protect our colleagues while continue to provide high quality services.

a. **Recology San Mateo County Operations**

For the first 20 months of the pandemic quarantine, Recology's frontline operations have performed in a relatively seamless fashion due to aggressive early COVID protocols. During the past 6+ weeks, this situation has significantly changed.

The COVID omicron variant has drastically hit Recology's workforce, which in turn, has resulted in an uncharacteristic temporary erosion in their normal service standards as evidenced by numerous recent service complaints throughout our SBWMA service area. This is a situation that neither Recology nor my team finds acceptable, yet the shortage of frontline workers directly due to COVID protocols is our current reality. To cover serious workforce gaps, workers have worked significant overtime and Saturdays in an attempt to fill service gaps. After multiple conversations with Recology's senior managers during this period, I provided a situational update to all SBWMA jurisdictional elected officials, all SBWMA member agency city/county managers, SBWMA TAC members and all SBWMA stakeholders on January 18th. **Attachment A**, a memo from Recology dated January 14, 2022, addresses this most unfortunate scenario.

b. **South Bay Recycling (SBR) Operations**

SBR's workforce has also been dramatically impacted by the pandemic. At one point, their entire office was unavailable for work due to COVID protocols, in addition to many frontline operations workers absent due to COVID omicron variant protocols. Production performance has been negatively impacted in numerous ways.

c. **SBWMA Administrative Program Staff Ops:**

Staff continues to work remotely from home or, when needed, at Shoreway and in some instances the administrative offices, which continue to remain closed to the public. Staff was sent a memo about

in-office working policies, but due to the omicron variant, transition back to a hybrid office schedule has been delayed until it subsides.

2. Administration & Finance:

a. Financial Systems Audit RFQ

The SBWMA released a RFQ for a three-year term for Financial Systems Audits of Recology and SBR. The RFQ closed on January 14, 2022 and multiple responses were received. Staff is currently reviewing and evaluating the proposals and a proposed firm will be presented at the February Board meeting for Board approval.

b. Expiring Operations Agreement RFQ Update

The Shoreway Operations RFQ closed on January 12, 2022 and proposals were received by multiple companies. Staff and consultants are evaluating proposals with the goal of creating a proposer shortlist in March 2022 to engage in parallel negotiations, per the Board-approved project work plan.

3. Committee Updates:

a. Finance Committee Meeting (January 11)

The Finance Committee met to review and discuss the audited financial statements for the six-month period ending December 31, 2020, the 2022 SBWMA Investment Policy, the revised Reserve Policy and SBWMA's operating budget data tables. The Committee also received a bond refunding balance report out.

b. Legislative Committee (next meeting is February 7)

c. Pub Ed/Outreach Committee (no meeting held)

d. Technical Advisory Committee (next meeting is February 10)

e. Zero Waste Committee (December 16)

The Zero Waste Committee met to discuss important topics including: Organics-to-Energy (O2E) project recap, a presentation by Full Cycle Bioplastics (FCB) relating to food waste to plastics technology, and Recology electric vehicle pilot update. FCB is a potential processing partner for the O2E productions offtake materials. Staff has arranged for a tour of the FCB production site currently located at the Google campus on January 21 for interested Board and staff members.

4. Collection and Recycling Program Support and Compliance:

a. SB 1383 Update

On January 4, I was invited to speak on KQED Forum (88.5 FM) to talk about SB 1383 and answer questions about composting along with Kourtnii Brown with that California Alliance for Community Composting. This show was simultaneously broadcast live on all NPR radio stations throughout California. You can listen to the 35 minute radio show here:

<https://www.kqed.org/forum/2010101887168/new-state-law-mandates-composting-to-reduce-emissions-from-food-waste>

All 11 SBWMA Member Agencies successfully adopted SB 1383 compliant ordinances by the January 1, 2022 deadline. Additionally, all Member Agencies have approved MOUs with the SBWMA and the

County Office of Sustainability to carry out many SB 1383 requirements on their behalf. Staff are working with each jurisdiction to collect signed MOUs to include in the SB 1383 Implementation Record that will be provided to CalRecycle.

Other SB 1383 implementation efforts include seeking vendors to provide SB 1383 Outreach & Education, Waiver Management, and Contamination Services to meet compliance requirements through an RFP process. The consultant proposed for Board consideration is SCS Engineers. More information about this is under item 6A. Additionally, the SBWMA is coordinating technical support for Member Agency staff to apply individually for non-competitive grant funds for SB 1383 implementation from CalRecycle.

b. Community Outreach and Environmental Education

You can read more about the many public and environmental outreach activities the team completed in 2021 in 8B of today's staff report. I couldn't be prouder of this team's extraordinary resiliency and commitment in performing their program deliverables during ever-changing circumstances. A job well done folks!

i. Environmental Education (EE) Update

Since November 2021, the EE Team hosted virtual class presentations for several schools: Park School in San Mateo, Hillview Middle School in Menlo Park, Hoover Elementary in Burlingame, Foster City Elementary in Foster City, and Laurel Elementary in Menlo Park. The EE team also conducted in-person lunchtime bin monitoring and waste equipment deliveries at Park School and Foster City Elementary.

In-person activities are currently on hold due to the changing circumstances around COVID-19. The EE team is pivoting back to fully virtual services and is scheduled to provide virtual refresher education to Costaño Elementary in East Palo Alto at the end of January.

Besides class presentations, the EE Team supported a high school waste audit at Sequoia High School in Redwood City and hosted a virtual Sequoia Unified High School District custodial staff training in partnership with Recology San Bruno and the County Office of Sustainability. The EE team is also currently working on other educational offerings for schools, including a new training video for school custodians.

ii. Public Spaces Update

The Public Spaces team has been hard at work this winter. They are collaborating with Redwood City after receiving a request to add signage to existing downtown receptacles that will match signage from the downtown signage pilot that was completed in 2018. Additionally, staff is working with San Carlos to install updated downtown receptacle signage for a block of Laurel where there are compost, recycling and landfill receptacles. The team is also working with Burlingame to add previously unused signage to existing receptacles in parks. The team continues to work on analyzing the data collected from Fall waste audits in Burlingame, Foster City, San Carlos, and San Mateo and will share that information when ready with Member Agency staff. Lastly, staff has conducted preliminary meetings with several Member Agencies regarding "pop-up" outreach opportunities to educate residents about sorting and the Public Spaces Program at parks, downtown areas, farmers markets, and in front of public buildings.

iii. **Shoreway Virtual Tours**

Virtual tours of the Shoreway Environmental Center continue to be offered to both schools, businesses and the general public. All five Fellows have continued acquiring experience in conducting tours, with all fellows having led their first tours independently of veteran staff. Plans to re-launch in-person Public Tours in February 2022 are currently postponed due to the latest surge in COVID-19. However, preparations are still being made for the eventual resumption of in-person offerings.

iv. **Pub Ed and Outreach Update**

Staff conducted an in-person tabling event at the East Palo Alto Farmer's Market at the end of November. During the four hours, staff engaged with over 30 residents on composting, recycling and playing a fun waste sorting game.

For the second year in a row, the SBWMA held a Winter Webinar Show. A total of 27 participants from seven Member Agencies attended the virtual event on December 9. The webinar focused on waste reduction and sorting through fun trivia and waste-renditions of classic holiday songs that the staff created.

5. **Shoreway Operations and Contract Management**

a. **Alternative Fuels Analysis**

The SBWMA continues to work with a consultant to analyze the fuel options for the future collection fleet. Once an analysis is complete, staff will present the report and findings to the Board and present fuel utility / tank options and impacts to the Shoreway facility.

b. **Organics-to-Energy (O2E) Project**

The O2E has been temporarily suspended due to interruptions and issues with Silicon Valley Clean Water accepting liquid organic slurry from the SBWMA. Operations are scheduled to restart March 1, 2022.

c. **Work at Shoreway**

Staff is in the process of making repairs to the MRF wall and transfer station floor which resulted in a Notice of Violation (NOV) from the local enforcement agency (LEA). Temporary repairs to the wall were made in December and the transfer station floor repairs are scheduled for late February.

Respectfully submitted,



Joe La Mariana
Executive Director

Attachments:

Attachment A - Recology memo on January 14, 2022 RE: Omicon impact on collection services



Memo to: Joe LaMariana, Executive Director, South Bayside Waste Management Authority (SBWMA)
Subject: Omicron impact on collection services
From: Mike Kelly, General Manager, Recology San Mateo County (Recology)
Date: January 14, 2022

As the Omicron variant continues to surge in California, disrupting everything from emergency services to transportation to supply chains, Recology is experiencing a heavy impact on its workforce.

Throughout the pandemic, our dedicated employee-owners have worked hard to service our customers by adapting and overcoming many challenges. But the Omicron variant has hit with rapid force, escalating staffing shortages. The need for replacement drivers has been so immediate that we have not had enough time to backfill these specialized positions. Even with thoughtful preparation and planning, our ability to uphold our best-in-class customer service is being challenged.

At the very onset of the pandemic, Recology, as an essential service provider, took many steps to protect both our employees and our customers. But even after completing many proactive health and safety steps and continuing to adhere to all Recology, County of San Mateo, and OSHA Covid-19 guidelines, we have not been able to avoid the impacts of Omicron.

With fewer drivers available, full route coverage has become difficult to maintain, even as we have incorporated extended workdays and additional Saturday routes. Please be assured, we are doing everything possible to service all of our customers.

If we are not able to complete a route, we are prioritizing those stops the following day, so we're advising customers to please leave their containers out. As we are experiencing a larger than usual call volume at this time, customers can also contact our customer service department at RSMC_Notifications@recology.com or by using the "Contact Us" feature on our website at Recology.com/recology-san-mateo-county.

On behalf of our Recology employee-owners, we sincerely apologize for any inconveniences experienced by the SBWMA member agencies, residents, and businesses we serve. Recology remains dedicated to providing quality service to all customers in the SBWMA service area.

We thank you for your patience and understanding as we navigate the continued challenges of this pandemic.