

ROADMAP 2020 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT VIRTUAL MEETINGS

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

The following questions are from the Roadmap 2020 meetings held on August 8, 11, and 13, 2020, and are presented by topics. The questions and answers are provided in a concise manner and not intended to be a transcript of the meetings. Los Angeles County is abbreviated as County throughout this document.

Infrastructure Management

Question: Does Los Angeles have any plans to build industrial compostable facilities for both food waste and "compostable" plastics?

Answer: Organics management and, specifically, facilities and infrastructure are a big priority for the County as part of the Roadmap efforts. One of the biggest challenges in the County is the lack of organics processing capacity. We are working with private developers who are interested in building facilities in and around the County. We are also working with them to help with the siting and permitting of the facilities and to find potential waste that may be sent to these facilities. Anaerobic digestion is our primary mechanism for organics processing, but it is possible there will be additional composting facilities developed in the future as well.

Question: How can we learn more about developing land/facilities for composting sites?

Answer: If you are interested in developing land and composting sites or just learning more about what plans there are, you can reach out to us through the County's Roadmap (RoadmapLA.com) or Conversion Technology (socialconversion.com) websites. We would be happy to discuss in more detail with you the possibility of either developing a new project or finding out more about existing projects.

Question: As each city/County has to find avenues to remove organics from the waste stream, when COVID-19 is in our rearview mirror, is there enough current capacity to process all diverted organics? Is there a plan to expand capacity?

Answer: There is not enough organics capacity in the County to process all diverted organics. One of the current challenges is to develop the capacity in time to comply with the requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 1383. We are doing everything we can to work with developers and others to create new infrastructure or expand existing infrastructure. The County has sponsored legislation this year to help provide additional funding to expand both organics and recycling infrastructure in the County.

Question: Can you talk more about what recycling businesses are being developed?

Answer: The County is one of the State's Recycling Market Development Zones (RMDZ). As part of the RMDZ Program, we assist companies that are trying to establish a new recycling business or expand an existing business by providing resources, such as connecting them with CalRecycle for low interest loans and other partners to facilitate local economic development. Businesses that use recycled materials to create new products are also eligible for the RMDZ program.

Organics Waste Management and Composting

Question: Does the County have any plans on distributing free home compost bins to residents?

Answer: The County provides composting bins; however, they are not free. These composting bins are offered at a discounted price through the County's Smart Gardening Program. After attending one of our Smart Gardening webinars, you will receive an e-mail that explains how to purchase them. These bins may also be purchased directly on the website: lacosmartgarden.square.site.

Question: Will schools and universities be included in plans for organics waste management?

Answer: Schools and universities will be required to comply with organics waste management requirements from SB 1383. The County has limited jurisdiction over schools and universities. However, we do provide some outreach and support services to schools and universities to help them set up organics waste management programs and learn about different technologies that they can use at their facilities. The County, through the Generation Earth program, assists secondary schools with developing and implementing on-site recycling and other programs for reducing and diverting organic waste.

Question: Will there be a composting program, as well as an organic waste program, or will that be part of it?

Answer: We are exploring a variety of programs to manage organic waste that includes everything from composting to anaerobic digestion. We are open to all opportunities for handling various organic waste streams that occur in the County, whether it is commercial or residential waste streams.

For businesses, who are the largest generators of organic waste (e.g., food waste), waste haulers will provide organics waste collection service. The waste haulers will take the food waste to facilities to manage the organics in a sustainable way. There will be new collection systems down the line, and food waste and other organic waste will be

managed differently than they are today. Most organic waste will be collected and diverted as opposed to being landfilled.

For residents, the County's Smart Gardening program offers webinars that cover backyard composting and worm composting and teach you how to set them up at your home. Similar to businesses, residents will also receive curbside organic waste collection services.

Question: Will this Roadmap support multi-scale composting so that community-scale composting can exist in our communities to keep the compost local?

Answer: The County is exploring all opportunities, including composting and anaerobic digestion facilities. One of the options is to establish food waste collection centers operated by local nonprofits. Local non-profits, such as LA Compost, set up these types of programs and partner with community gardens and local schools.

Question: What is 'integrated pest management?'

Answer: Integrated pest management is using organic methods to control pests in your yard or garden rather than using pesticides. It is a more sustainable solution for the environment. For example, using worm tea, which is made from worm composting, on plants can help repel pests. Visit smartgardening.com for helpful links and resources to learn more.

Question: Is there a County composting pickup or drop off?

Answer: The County offers compost/mulch giveaway events throughout the year in various locations across the County. However, these events are on hold now due to COVID-19. Information regarding future events will be available in our newsletter located on our website: pw.lacounty.gov/epd/swims/Residents. Participation is limited to residents of each unincorporated area where events are scheduled.

For residents outside of County jurisdiction, many cities or haulers offer giveaways. Please contact your local city or hauler for more information.

Question: In preparation for recovering more food waste/organics, will the County Water Treatment Facilities be expanding to take more organic materials? Do you see expanded utilization of Wastewater Treatment Facilities as a viable option?

Answer: There are existing digester capacities at some wastewater treatment facilities in the County. For example, the County Sanitation Districts process organic waste at their Puente Hills Materials Recovery Facility that creates a slurry, which is then sent to their Carson wastewater treatment plant. The slurry is co-digested with biosolids to create renewable natural gas that is used to fuel trucks and injected into the pipeline. Wastewater treatment plants can be a good location for processing organic waste.

Question: What is the vision for food waste recovery? Can food waste simply be included in LA County green bins? If not, how will food waste be collected from businesses, multi-family residences, etc.? Who will collect it? Where will it be composted?

Answer: The County has several programs, including the pilot food waste program for businesses and large food waste generators. This food is co-digested through a partnership program with the County Sanitation Districts. As for County unincorporated residents, we are considering including food waste in the green bin. We have three residential service areas (Florence-Firestone, Athens, and Walnut Park) that are currently offering food waste collection as part of their green waste collection for residents. The County will implement curbside organics recycling service throughout the County unincorporated areas over the next year or two. For multi-family residences and businesses, there are other factors to consider. The facilities, which organic material is taken to, is determined by the waste hauler and approved by the County.

The County's goal is to reduce food waste before it becomes disposable waste. The FoodDROP program assists with those efforts by providing a means for businesses in the County unincorporated areas to donate their excess edible food to fight hunger and reduce waste from landfills. Visit FoodDropLA.com for more information. Going forward we are developing a new franchise program that would include source-separated food waste collection for businesses and multi-family residences.

Question: Is food recovery a high priority, and if so, would there be grants available to expand recoverable food collection by local organizations?

Answer: Food recovery is a very high priority. The County encourages food generators to donate edible food to non-profit organizations that can provide the food to those in need. The County offers the FoodDROP program as a resource to connect food generators to nonprofit organizations in their area. In addition, the County is exploring the feasibility of developing a grant program in the future to support the donation of edible food.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Question: Does the County have a plan to reduce two-stroke mow and blowers?

Answer: This is something that the County has been considering for some time as part of our Roadmap effort in order to reduce the disposal of hazardous materials associated with two-stroke engines. The County is looking into switching out two-stroke mowers that are used in landscaping contracts. We are also looking into requiring electric lawn mowers throughout the County unincorporated communities.

Question: Will this Roadmap also look into zero emission garbage truck fleets?

Answer: Existing County waste collection contracts require all automated collection vehicles to use alternative fuel, such as Compressed Natural Gas and Liquefied Natural Gas. Currently, there are no zero-emission collection vehicles on the market, but we are evaluating the use of Renewable Natural Gas, which reduce emissions to near zero. Furthermore, the County will encourage the use of zero-emission trash collection vehicles as they are made available.

Outreach

Question: What is being done to reach out to such groups as Greenpeace who strongly oppose most waste conversion to promote acceptance of thermal conversion technologies?

Answer: Much of our outreach on conversion technologies is through our legislative efforts in Sacramento. As part of the County's efforts in developing proposals for funding new infrastructure, incentives, and diversion credits for conversion technologies, the County is conducting a lot of outreach with environmental organizations like Greenpeace, Sierra Club, Californians Against Waste, etc. This kind of outreach is done on a regular basis.

Question: Will the outreach go in depth to making sure communities, especially communities of color, understand what can be recycled, composted or trashed?

Answer: Our focus is to educate residents of all County communities on the benefits and proper methods for waste disposal and recycling. Reducing contamination and making sure that recyclables are empty, clean, and dry increases the likelihood of those items to be recycled.

It all starts with being able to correctly source separate recyclables. We understand more needs to be done to ensure recyclables are recycled, so we are working on developing outreach in multiple languages.

Question: Are there any programs that will send advisors out to retailers to help in waste reduction and other sustainability goals?

Answer: The County offers the Smart Business Recycling Program, which includes having consultants visit and assist retailers in County unincorporated communities. Due to COVID-19 social distancing protocols, we suspended the in-person visits, but continue to communicate with businesses through virtual meetings. Once the pandemic is over, the County will resume direct contact with these businesses. You can find more information on our website: SmartBusinessRecycling.com or by contacting your local waste hauler.

Question: How will you help lower income communities, who may find it harder to buy reusable items?

Answer: We will help by continuing to conduct outreach events to educate the public on how simple sustainable swaps can be cost-effective and help protect the environment. Through social media, community newsletters, and other outlets we give County residents ideas on what they can do to be more sustainable. For example, we provide tips, such as using reusable water bottles, produce bags, food containers, purchasing food in glass containers that can be reused, and more. In addition, during community events, we hand out reusable items to help get them started.

Partnerships

Question: Are there any existing partnerships for recycling/composting within our school districts that can involve students and community members?

Answer: The County offers the School Garden Program. We work with schools and their students to plant raised bed vegetable and fruit gardens and provide composting bins and gardening tools as well. The Program includes both worm and backyard composting.

The County also offers the Environmental Defenders and Generation Earth environmental education programs for students enrolled in Kindergarten through 12th grade. The Generation Earth Program includes service-learning projects for 6th to 12th grade students. We encourage secondary school students to conduct waste audits and establish programs to reduce waste and encourage recycling on their campus and/or in their community.

Question: Is the County open to partnering with cities?

Answer: The County has several Countywide programs that are operated in partnership with various cities, including our Household Hazardous Waste and Electronic Waste Program and the Smart Gardening Program. The County is very interested in creating new partnerships with cities and other public agencies. For partnership ideas or proposals, please send e-mail to, Roadmap@pw.lacounty.gov.

Single-Use Plastics

Question: What does single-use plastic look like?

Answer: Single-use plastic food ware include, but are not limited to, plastic to-go containers, plastic utensils (forks, knives, and spoons), plastic straws, plastic cups, plastic lids, as well as tiny plastic condiment cups.

Question: Can Los Angeles ban single-use plastics? When might we expect a comprehensive single-use and reusable food ware ordinance for Los Angeles County?

Answer: In October of 2019, the Board passed a motion directing the Chief Sustainability Office along with Public Works and other County departments to work on a single-use plastics ordinance for the County, specifically related to food service ware. We have been working on this ordinance and held a few community stakeholder meetings earlier this year. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the work on the ordinance has been temporarily put on hold until small businesses and restaurants can fully reopen. We expect the effort to develop an ordinance to resume early next year.

Question: Is Los Angeles County working on any programs to develop infrastructure to assist small businesses to adopt reusable food ware in place of single-use food ware?

Answer: As part of the effort to develop a single-use plastics ordinance the County is exploring different implementation strategies. These strategies include options for assisting small businesses to comply with the ordinance and include things like financial incentives for early adopters, tiered implementation timelines and support for related services like mobile dishwashing. Assistance to small businesses will continue to be explored as the ordinance moves forward.

Question: With COVID-19, I see more usage (waste) with plastic to-go containers. Can we entice consumers to pay extra for using these plastic containers? Can we mandate business to use paper containers?

Answer: The County conducts monthly surveys of facilities, and we have seen a surge in the use of plastics because of COVID-19, as businesses are using more plastic and paper for takeout. As part of the single-use plastics ordinance the County is considering making various recommendations, such as fees, to mitigate the use of single-use plastics. The main focus of the ordinance is to not allow the use of plastic. Once the ordinance has been adopted, the County will monitor its effectiveness to determine if additional measures are merited.

Question: Knowing that COVID-19 has significantly increased waste and that we have over ten million people, why wouldn't the County immediately focus on Bring Your Own (BYO) and implement additional plastic bans?

Answer: The County is continuing to promote and encourage BYO, but the main reason for the delay in the single-use plastics ordinance is that it is going to apply to small businesses and restaurants, which are extremely impacted by COVID-19. There is a desire to take some time to allow for some recovery and work closely with those small business as we develop and roll out the ordinance.

We continue to educate residents on BYO through social media and discourage single-use disposal items. An example would be using a bag that is already in your possession to carry reusable cups and/or silverware to use while you are out.

Waste Prevention and Source Reduction

Question: Does zero waste mean nothing goes to landfill or that all divertible material is diverted?

Answer: The County's zero waste plan encompasses various means to divert waste from landfills. The County recognizes there are materials that are recyclable or compostable, but there is a lot of material that is difficult to manage. To reach those higher diversion goals, we realize we need new technologies, such as gasification, pyrolysis, anaerobic digestion, and other technologies we call conversion technologies. Our zero-waste goal (to divert 95+ percent of the waste stream) is important not just to minimize landfill disposal, but also to reduce greenhouse gas impacts and their footprint.

Question: What happens to all blue bin recyclable items currently? Are they recycled locally?

Answer: Recyclables collected by County contracted haulers are processed at over 50 processing and transfer facilities in Los Angeles County and some are exported outside of the County. Materials are sorted and bailed accordingly. Some of that material is exported outside of the County and some are processed by local recycling facilities. Some of the collected items in the blue bin are contaminated (or not recyclable) and cannot be recycled; therefore, must be landfilled. Contamination is a big concern and we are always working towards educating people about how to properly place items in the blue bin.

Question: Where can one recycle plastic film as most stores have removed their film bins?

Answer: Some facilities have suspended recycling certain materials due to a lack of markets. For more information, please visit [Plastic Film Recycling at plasticfilmrecycling.org/recycling-bags-and-wraps/find-drop-off-location](http://plasticfilmrecycling.org/recycling-bags-and-wraps/find-drop-off-location), which helps businesses and residents locate drop-off locations that recycle different types of plastic film.

Question: Can we get the website for LACoMAX and also the website about the County's Recycling Zones info?

Answer: You can access the LACoMAX website by visiting LACOMAX.com. For information on the County's Recycling Market Development Zone, visit rmdzla.com.

Question: Is the County going to look at third party certification of construction and debris facilities to better track what is actually being recycled?

Answer: The County agrees that facility certification is a major part in implementing a successful Construction & Debris program. We are considering different options for facility certification within our new updated ordinance. We are considering third party certification as part of the ordinance.

Question: Is there a site where we can see how much waste has been reduced or diverted, and when you are talking about diversion, is this only organic with these limited programs?

Answer: County residents can visit calrecycle.ca.gov to see how much waste has been reduced or diverted for any county or city within California. Diversion is not just about organic waste. The County focuses on organic waste because it is the largest component of waste in our landfills, comprising of about 34 percent of the total waste currently disposed in landfills. It is very important for us to focus on organics because of the production of greenhouse gases.

Question: Do the Assembly and Senate Bills apply to all California counties?

Answer: These State level Bills do apply to all California counties.

Environmental Justice

Question: What else is being done to protect vulnerable communities to air pollution and other environmental hazards?

Answer: Public Works is working with the County Department of Regional Planning on a new Green Zones ordinance, which provides details for the permitting processes for new facilities and all the mitigation and environmental requirements that will have to be met as part of those permitting processes. The County is taking into consideration the environmental impacts of these facilities to ensure we minimize all environmental impacts.

Question: How will this Roadmap address impacts communities are experiencing from existing facilities?

Answer: For existing facilities that are under the County's jurisdiction, we make sure they are in compliance with permitting requirements and are utilizing best management practices to avoid or reduce impacts. The Green Zones ordinance will require various environmental controls for new facilities and includes a schedule of compliance for existing facilities to implement environmental controls.

Question: Can we shift away from burning trash and look at solar, which is less expensive, to create energy instead?

Answer: California is moving towards getting its energy from renewable sources. We also need to deal with the waste that is being generated. The goal of Roadmap 2020 is to manage waste in a more sustainable way. Waste-to-energy facilities like Southeast Resource Recovery Facility are a significant improvement over landfills and they certainly have significantly fewer greenhouse gas emissions than a landfill. We are also looking into new non-combustion conversion technology facilities, as well as additional recycling and organics waste management facilities. These facilities can create renewable fuels and electricity while also reducing GHG emissions.

Question: What about Environmental Justice regarding Chiquita Canyon Landfill (CCL) and the issues that Val Verde residents are experience?

Answer: Achieving Environmental Justice for communities in the vicinity of solid waste facilities, including CCL, which serves the entire Los Angeles County region, is important to the County, as reflected in the Roadmap. To ensure that the safety, health, and wellbeing of the residents living and working near CCL are protected, the County has established many stringent conditions in the Conditional Use Permit that the operator must abide by. For more information on the required conditions, please visit the Department of Regional Planning website at: planning.lacounty.gov/case/view/project_no_r2004_00559_5_conditional_use_permit_2004_00042_chiquita_canyon.

Household Hazardous Waste

Question: Has the County's Household Hazardous Waste and Electronic Waste Program resumed?

Answer: The County suspended the Household Hazardous Waste and Electronic Waste collection events for more than three months as a precaution to help combat the spread of COVID-19. We worked diligently with our partners at the County Sanitation Districts to develop a reopening plan with safety precautions in place to protect the health and safety of staff and the public. In addition, we worked with the City of Los Angeles for a concurrent reopening of their SAFE (Solvents/Automotive/Flammables/Electronics) Centers, which provide additional outlets for proper disposal. We reopened in mid-July and have seen double and sometimes triple the attendance at our events.

For details on the next event in your area and locations of SAFE Centers, visit CleanLA.com. There is also a SAFE Center in Sun Valley that accepts household hazardous waste and electronic waste from residents.

Extended Producer Responsibility

Question: Is the County considering EPR cradle to grave management for products and waste similar to Colorado's bill approved last month?

Answer: Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is one of the County's top priorities. We feel strongly that EPR is one of the best ways to reduce materials from ever becoming waste. We look for every opportunity to pursue EPR policy at the State level and at the local level. The County supports the implementation of existing EPR programs for paint, mattresses, carpet, and pharmaceuticals. Also, the County partners with the California Product Stewardship Council to pass legislation and create new EPR programs.

Illegal Dumping

Question: How to report empty land to get it clean. Specially with fire season?

Answer: You can report illegal dumping by calling (888) 8DUMPING or 888-838-6746 or you can send us an e-mail at dumping@pw.lacounty.gov. You can also download our Smartphone app "The Works" for Android and Apple. If it is on private land, then we will refer it to the appropriate agency. If it is on public land and within our jurisdiction, the County will take care of it.

Roadmap 2020 Access

Question: Will we have access to the recorded webinar later? Are you going to share these handouts?

Answer: The County will post the recording of a Roadmap 2020 webinar on the Roadmap website, which can be found at RoadmapLA.com. The presentation is also posted on the Roadmap website.

Question: Can you e-mail the notes on this webinar?

Answer: We will post all the Questions & Answers from the webinars on RoadmapLA.com.

Miscellaneous Questions

Question: Do you know if Orange County has plans like you presented today?

Answer: OC Waste and Recycling is our sister agency in Orange County. We are aware that Orange County has offered community meetings in the past on recycling issues. For information on Orange County's sustainability programs, visit their website: <https://oclandfills.com/>.