

Facility and Plan Review Subcommittee
Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management Committee/
Integrated Waste Management Task Force

Minutes of May 17, 2012 Meeting

County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works
Conference Room B
900 South Fremont Avenue
Alhambra, California

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Betsy Landis, Environmental Organization Representative
Mike Mohajer, General Public Representative
Carlos Ruiz, County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works
Gerardo Villalobos, County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:

Charles Modica, City of Los Angeles
Christopher Salomon, County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County

OTHERS PRESENT:

Greg Ainsworth, John Minch and Associates
Martin Aiyetiwa, County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works
Becky Bendikson, City/County Sunshine Canyon Landfill Community Advisory
Committee
Gregg Denson, Architerra Design Group
David Pelsler, City of Whittier's Department of Public Works
Anthony Bertrand, Republic Services, Inc.
Wayde Hunter, North Valley Coalition, Granada Hills North Neighborhood Council
Richard Krumwiede, Architerra Design Group
Dee Lugo, County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health
Linda Lee Miller, County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works
Ken Murray, County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health
Emiko Thompson, County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 11:18 a.m.

II. APPROVAL OF APRIL 19, 2012 MINUTES

A motion to approve the Minutes of the April 19, 2012, meeting as revised was unanimously approved.

III. REVEGETATION AT SUNSHINE CANYON CITY/COUNTY LANDFILL

Mr. Anthony Bertrand, Area Environmental Manager for Republic Services, Inc., (Republic) informed the Subcommittee that representatives of Architerra Design Group (ADG) would be presenting their conceptual plan for sage mitigation at Sunshine Canyon Landfill, and that Mr. Greg Ainsworth, Republic's biologist on sage mitigation efforts would also be available to answer any questions. Mr. Bertrand stated Republic's objective is to have the conceptual plan completed by July 2012, and then determine the best location at the Landfill to conduct a pilot program commencing in the third quarter of this year. The pilot program will be concluded by the fourth quarter of this year, and the next two quarters will be utilized to monitor the pilot program. If the pilot program is proved to be effective, the program will be expanded to the rest of the Landfill.

Representatives of ADG, Richard Krumwiede (President) and Gregg Denson (Director of Design), made a [PowerPoint presentation](#) to the Subcommittee discussing their past project experiences, the complexities of the Sunshine Canyon Landfill, and analysis of their revegetation plan for the Landfill.

Mr. Krumwiede discussed that ADG has experience in:

- Sage scrub and riparian habitat restoration
- Grading of slopes
- Construction of wetland islands and boulder lined channels
- On grade irrigation
- Containerized planting and hydroseeding of slopes
- Trail planning and open space enhancement

Mr. Gregg Denson then discussed key issues facing the Landfill, such as:

- Minimal growth of coastal sage scrub mitigation
- Domination of bare soil and invasive grasses and weeds
- Heavily compacted soils with poor structure and limited nutrients
- Limited ongoing maintenance (bi-annual)
- No irrigation system in place
- Vehicular traffic at mitigation areas only recently controlled

Mr. Denson further discussed their analysis of revegetation efforts at the Landfill, which include, among other things:

- Instituting a weed eradication program
- Limiting vehicle access at mitigation areas to roadways
- Cross-ripping existing soil to 12 inches in depth
- Amending soil according to soils analysis report
- Importing soil and creating microtopography berming
- Providing positive drainage to collection drains
- Stabilizing areas of concentration with boulders/cobbles if necessary
- Developing a weed eradication program
- Hydroseeding and providing a container planting program

Ms. Betsey Landis questioned the suitability of the pilot project beginning in the hot summer months as well as the use of container plants, which are difficult to establish due to over-nutrition and roots constricted in their containers. Ms. Landis also recommended utilizing seeds and native plants.

Mr. Gerardo Villalobos inquired if the pilot project would be located within the City portion of the Landfill, and if the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board would be consulted to ensure the final closure plan remains in compliance with State regulations. Mr. Bertrand stated that the pilot project would be located within the City portion, and that the Water Board will be fully engaged in the process to ensure that the final cover design will be in compliance.

Mr. Wayde Hunter commented that ripping into six feet of top soil on the closed portion of the Landfill could cause air quality problems due to windy conditions in the area. Mr. Hunter also inquired about Republic's plans for revegetating the south facing slope which the local residents have a view of on a daily basis, and Republic's plan in addressing this issue. On the issue of ripping soil, Mr. Bertrand responded by saying that at the time of planting, Republic will carefully work the soil, pre-water, and rip small areas to avoid dust. He further stated that Republic will be considering various solutions to the revegetation problems of the south slope and will keep the community apprised of its progress.

Ms. Landis indicated her concerns about high organic content, such as nitrates, in soil amendments and mulch, which may affect the establishment of plants at the Landfill. Mr. Bertrand noted that he agreed with her comment.

IV. SAVAGE CANYON LANDFILL IN THE CITY OF WHITTIER, FINDING OF CONFORMANCE

Ms. Miller informed the Subcommittee that the City of Whittier filed an application with the Local Enforcement Agency (LEA) on March 12, 2012, for a modified Solid Waste Facility Permit (SWFP) for the Savage Canyon Landfill. Ms. Miller stated that solid waste disposal facilities are required by the Countywide Siting Element (CSE) to obtain a Finding of Conformance (FOC) if they meet certain criteria, which include new solid waste disposal facilities, expansions of existing solid waste disposal facilities, or existing solid waste disposal facilities that institute a significant change to their operation. The last FOC granted to Savage Canyon Landfill was on November 30, 1978.

Ms. Miller further discussed that according to the City of Whittier, the application for a modified SWFP would provide for an increase in the site capacity from approximately 8.1 million cubic yards to 12.5 million cubic yards. There will be changes in the fill elevations in various areas, but the highest final elevation will remain unchanged at 900 feet. The increased capacity will be achieved through:

- An increase in the ratio of waste to dirt from the existing 2:1 to 3:1 due to the use of tarp as an alternative daily cover
- An increase in the compaction rate from the existing 1,000 pounds/cubic yard to 1,400 pounds/cubic yard
- More efficient use of airspace

Ms. Miller pointed out that due to these changes, the Task Force sent a letter to the City of Whittier informing them that an FOC needs to be obtained from the Task Force to ensure consistency with the CSE. Ms. Miller stated that the City responded to the Task Force in a letter, dated May 4, 2012, indicating their position that an FOC is unnecessary because the changes to the SWFP do not meet the applicability specified in the CSE, namely:

- The Landfill is an existing facility listed in the CSE
- The revised grading plan that resulted in an increase in site life involves neither an increase to the maximum permitted elevation, nor a lateral expansion of the permitted boundary
- The modified SWFP permit does not require CEQA compliance for a significant change, although the City prepared an Initial Study and determined there were no adverse impacts
- The changes require only modifications, not a revision
- There is no requested increase in daily permitted capacity

Staff is seeking direction from the Subcommittee on how to proceed. Mr. David Pelsler, the Director of Public Works for the City of Whittier, was introduced by Ms. Miller to discuss the City's position and answer any questions that the Subcommittee may have.

Mr. Pelsler stated that the City of Whittier has been frustrated that the permit renewal process is taking an extraordinary long time. The City has provided multiple submittals of applications, permit documents, including a complete Joint Technical Document and numerous updates of the same over the years while waiting for the LEA to complete the permit renewal process. The basic design and final grading plan have not changed since the mid-1980's. Mr. Pelsler went on to state that it is his belief that an FOC is unnecessary according to the guidelines of the CSE and urged the Task Force to submit a letter of support to the LEA for the permit modification.

Mr. Mike Mohajer stated that modifications to the SWFP would not affect the CSE requirements and the FOC. Mr. Mohajer indicated that the SWFP was issued in 1995, yet the FOC was issued for the facility in 1978. The County Solid Waste Management Plan was revised in 1985, and since then, the requirements for an FOC have changed making it necessary to obtain a new FOC from the Task Force. As stated in the Task Force letter to the City, the said changes in landfill capacity and fill design necessitate an FOC from the Task Force to ensure consistency with the CSE, dated June 1997.

In reviewing the definition of "landfill expansion" in the CSE, Mr. Ruiz cited Section 7.5.1 on page 7-6 of the CSE, which states that "landfill expansion is defined as an increase in the physical dimension of a solid waste landfill, or an extension or renewal of a permit whose expiration date may affect the operation of the facility. A physical expansion may be vertical by increasing the permitted elevation to which solid waste may be disposed and/or horizontal by increasing the permitted boundary in which solid waste may be disposed to areas contiguous or adjacent to the area of the existing operation." Based on this definition, Mr. Ruiz believed the proposed changes qualify as a landfill expansion as the increase in fill design and air space is an increase in the physical dimension.

Citing the same definition in the Glossary of Terms on page x.x. of the CSE, Mr. Pelsler stated that the physical expansion is defined as "vertical by increasing the permitted elevation to which solid waste may be disposed and/or horizontal by increasing the permitted boundary in which solid waste may be disposed." In this case, the proposed changes include neither a lateral expansion of waste limits nor vertical expansion of the highest elevation.

Mr. Ruiz indicated that since it appears more information is needed, he recommended for staff to obtain a copy of the grading plans in order to determine whether the proposed changes meet the definition of physical expansion.

After further discussion, the Subcommittee directed staff to review the CSE and examine the use of the word *expansion* in the document for any discrepancies, assist the City as much as possible, and obtain grading plans in order to make a decision on whether or not this project is an *expansion* based on the definition in the CSE.

V. REVIEW OF THE PRELIMINARY DRAFT COUNTYWIDE SITING ELEMENT

As a continuation of the discussion on the Preliminary Draft (CSE from the previous month, Mr. Aiyetiwa made a [PowerPoint presentation](#) showing areas where staff incorporated the Subcommittee's comments into the CSE. Based on the comments received so far the proposed key changes include removing references to the development of new landfills and/or bioreactors, and aligning the goals and policies to be consistent with the new waste management paradigm.

The new waste management paradigm emphasizes greater efforts being placed on waste prevention, followed by reusing waste materials, recycling and composting, utilizing conversion technology, and lastly using transformation (waste-to-energy) facilities and landfills. The goal of the new paradigm is to have landfill disposal as the last option in order to conserve natural resources, as well as emphasize the importance of conversion technology within the solid waste management strategy.

Mr. Ruiz commented that the CSE is structured so as to indicate that the County will divert as much waste as possible, but in an effort to protect public health and safety, landfills will be utilized as needed.

Mr. Aiyetiwa stated other key changes to the CSE, which include emphasizing the importance of conversion technology within the overall solid waste management strategy, and the importance of Mesquite Regional Landfill and its waste-by-rail system. He concluded his presentation by requesting that once all of the necessary revisions are made to the CSE, he would like to present it to the Task Force in June 2012.

Ms. Landis commented that the Subcommittee needs to review the document again before it can be transmitted to the Task Force. Towards that goal, she would like the document to emphasize the County's commitment to conversion technology, and requested staff to make sure graphs, charts, and tables are easier to read, and that data is updated to demonstrate to the Task Force that the CSE is a solid document and ready to be approved.

VI. OPEN DISCUSSION/PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no discussion/public comment.

VII. NEXT MEETING DATE

June 21, 2012.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.