



**DATE:** September 26, 2014

**TO:** Programs and Administration Committee  
Planning and Organization Committee/ Recycling Board

**FROM:** Gary Wolff, Executive Director  
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**SUBJECT:** Business Assistance Project – Update

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## **BACKGROUND**

The StopWaste Business Assistance project (formerly “The StopWaste Partnership”) has provided individualized waste reduction and diversion assistance to Alameda County businesses since 1998. Until 2010, the program primarily served large businesses with 10 or more cubic yards of garbage service per week. Some of the largest and most high-profile businesses in the county have received assistance from this program, including Ghirardelli Chocolate, the Oakland Coliseum, and more recently Tesla Motors and Kaiser Permanente. The Business Assistance project has evolved over the last several years to address the changing needs of businesses as they seek to comply with ACWMA’s Mandatory Recycling Ordinance 2012-01. To align with the Mandatory Recycling Ordinance (MRO), beginning in Fiscal Year (FY) 2011/12 the StopWaste Business Assistance team has focused its efforts on building awareness and compliance with the Ordinance. To do this, the Business Assistance team has significantly expanded its reach to include all businesses covered by the Ordinance, not just those with 10 or more cubic yards of weekly garbage service.

## **DISCUSSION**

This memo serves to provide a summary of the Business Assistance project and highlight some of the achievements as detailed in the StopWaste Business Assistance Program Fiscal Year 2013-14 Annual Report. A full copy of the report is available at: [http://www.stopwaste.org/docs/SWP\\_FY13-14\\_Annual\\_Report\\_FINAL\\_10\\_1\\_14.pdf](http://www.stopwaste.org/docs/SWP_FY13-14_Annual_Report_FINAL_10_1_14.pdf). Staff will also share a brief presentation at the October 9, 2014 Recycling Board / P&O Committee and Programs & Administration Committee meetings.

### **Overview of Contractors and Services**

Cascadia Consulting Group (Cascadia) and organics specialists from Environmental Science Associates (ESA) were contracted to offer assistance and implement new or increased recycling and organics services at businesses located in jurisdictions participating in the MRO. In the second half of FY 2013/14, the team began engaging businesses in preparation for Phase 2 of the MRO. Phase 2 makes recycling mandatory for all businesses and adds organics separation requirements for food-generating businesses, effective July 1, 2014 in participating jurisdictions. To continue the alignment of services with the MRO, in 2013/14 the Business Assistance project

expanded its reach to include businesses of any size; a first in the history of the project.

Businesses were targeted in two ways: through enforcement referrals such as official notification letters and the Ordinance Help Line, and through proactive targeting of businesses with little or no recycling service, coordinated with City staff. On-site waste assessments, customized recommendation reports with recommended service levels and cost savings estimates, implementation assistance, financial incentives, and recognition were offered free of charge to participating businesses.

#### Highlights from the Past Year

- 714 covered commercial accounts reached in FY13/14.
- Of those businesses reached, 282 received first-time site assessments, with 169 of those businesses receiving follow-up proposals/recommendations.
- A total of 173 businesses began new recycling and/or organics collection programs.
- These changes resulted in an estimated 954 tons of new diversion.
- The estimated net change in cost that these 173 businesses realized was \$155,273 in annual savings, with an overall GHG emissions reduction of 12,565 mtCO<sub>2</sub>e per year.
- 12 businesses were recognized at annual business recognition event hosted at the Zero Net Energy Center in San Leandro, March 13, 2014.
- The team transitioned data management from an Excel based system to the Agency's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, streamlining data entry and allowing the Business Assistance team to view enforcement-related activities for improved customer service and support.

#### Looking Ahead

In FY 2014-15, the Business Assistance team will continue to focus almost exclusively on supporting businesses to comply with the Mandatory Recycling Ordinance. The team will continue to work with businesses that do not yet have recycling or organics service for materials covered by the MRO. Cascadia has expanded its staff capacity to include on-call bi-lingual staff to provide assistance in 5 languages. The team plans to highlight approximately 25 businesses for their waste reduction and diversion accomplishments through social media and e-newsletter features, helping to bolster public awareness of the successes of the MRO. A new multifamily technical assistance pilot has also begun with a goal to implement new organics programs at 40 multifamily complexes.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

This item is for information only.