DATE: March 10, 2016

TO: Programs & Administration Committee
Planning & Organization Committee/Recycling Board

FROM: Wendy Sommer, Executive Director

BY: Justin Lehrer, Senior Program Manager

SUBJECT: Product Decisions Targets Update

SUMMARY

In February the Board approved Assessment Criteria (Attachment A) for use as an internal tool for evaluating the efficacy of current and future Agency projects. The Product Decision targets were recently assessed through this new process, and staff has developed recommendations for inclusion in the FY16-17 Budget.

DISCUSSION

A key objective of this effort is to consider the value of the activities we engage in and whether those activities are the most effective way to support agency priorities and work toward our goals. Some efforts have been effective and successful, and we can consider next steps or advance to new goals. Others have encountered technical hurdles, or other factors outside our influence; in those cases we should not hesitate to adjust the strategy to reflect current needs, conditions, and where we can have the greatest beneficial impact.

Although there are changes proposed for some projects, the purpose of the Product Decisions (PD) work remains intact – to influence decisions about what to manufacture, offer for sale, or purchase in Alameda County. PD emphasizes strategies closer to the top of the reduce, reuse, recycle and rot hierarchy, preventing generation of waste and supporting markets for products developed with recycled content materials.

When the criteria were introduced to the Board for discussion in February, three focus areas were called out as priorities: Organics, Packaging, and Built-Environment. Most PD projects naturally fit into one of the three, and we realize operational efficiencies while also aligning our work with US EPA's priorities for Sustainable Materials Management, which could increase future opportunities for external funding.

Attachment B outlines the key findings and recommendations for each of the seven projects assessed through this process, presented within the relevant priority area. Central themes have to do with recognizing some limits to our reach and influence with certain audiences, consolidating some packaging-related activities, and investing more in effective strategies targeting organics and food – the largest single component in the waste stream, specifically:

- Organics: continue to invest, and expand our efforts on food waste prevention and recovery and use of compost and mulch in the County.
- Packaging: Consolidate Reusable Packaging, Food Service Ware, and Package labeling into one Packaging project for greater efficiency and lower cost.
- Built-Environment: Halt efforts to achieve the current recycled content building materials target and re-focus on support for member agency climate action planning/implementation and continued research on recycled content feedstocks.
- Household Hazardous Waste Alternatives: Move this work into the HHW Facilities Discards Management project in order to focus on attracting more residents to the drop-off facilities.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Committee review the proposed recommendations for the PD Targets and recommend to the WMA Board to direct staff to implement them in the FY 16-17 budget.

Attachments: Attachment A - Project Assessment
Attachment B - Product Decisions – Key Findings & Recommendations

ATTACHMENT A

PROJECT ASSESSMENT

Project/Concept Name (incl. Project #): _____

Priority Area:

☐ Organics ☐ Packaging ☐ Built Environment (Green Building, Landscape, Energy, C&D)

Impact Area: ☐ Landfill Conservation (Prevention or Diversion) ☐ Energy Conservation ☐ Hazardous Waste ☐ Climate Mitigation/Adaptation ☐ Recycled Content / Market Dev ☐ Other (Soil, Water, etc.)

Place in Hierarchy: ☐ Reduce ☐ Reuse ☐ Recycle ☐ Rot

Criteria	**Response** *Yes, No, Maybe*	**Assessment/Comments**
Influence/Geographic Scale Are we positioned to effectively influence the target audience? Can the project be achieved within Alameda County or is broader geographic reach needed (i.e. would this be better pursued via partnerships or a regional, state or federal initiative)?		
Technical Feasibility Aside from cost or other factors, can it be done? Is the technology available and the pieces in place to make it work? (e.g., if goal is recyclable/compostable food service ware, are these products acceptable and processable in local facilities?)		
Timeliness & Leverage Is the project timely given the current societal and political environment and/or internal considerations? Are stars aligned, are there funding or other opportunities to leverage?		

Member Agency, Partner & Funder Alignment Does the project align with or support goals/initiatives of our Member Agencies and other potential partners (e.g., water agencies)? Is there opportunity to collaborate? Is it equitable?		
Innovation & Leadership Is the Agency in a unique position to influence policy, markets, or behavior with this project? Is the project innovative; does it experiment with a new concept/idea? Seed for future funding?		
Measurability Practically speaking, can progress be measured? Note the metric/method.		
Budget Is current project budget sufficient, or is adequate funding readily available? Is there a plan for funding? Ask the same questions of staffing.		
Environmental Impact & Cost Effectiveness Consider the overall magnitude of impact of the project, along with costs to determine the overall "bang for your buck." When feasible, use metrics such as cost per ton (or other).		
Community/Social Impact Consider social and economic impacts on the community. Job creation, other community benefits? What does the community think of the effort? Is public stakeholder effort needed?		
Questions:		
Recommendation:		

ATTACHMENT B

Product Decisions – Key Findings & Recommendations

For the mid-point assessment, each project team considered progress toward the original target, conducted a qualitative review of the project using the assessment criteria (Attachment A), and developed recommendations for a path forward. Below, key findings and recommendations are outlined for each of the seven projects assessed through this process, presented within the relevant priority area (Organics, Packaging, and Built Environment).

Generally, staff recommendations can be summarized as follows:

- **Organics**: continue to invest, and expand our efforts on food waste prevention and recovery and use of compost and mulch in the County.
- **Packaging**: Consolidate Reusable Packaging, Food Service Ware, and Package labeling into one Packaging project for greater efficiency and lower cost.
- **Built-Environment**: Halt efforts to achieve the current recycled content building materials target and re-focus on support for member agency climate action planning/implementation and continued research on recycled content feedstocks.
- **Household Hazardous Waste Alternatives:** Move this work into the HHW Facilities Discards Management project in order to focus on attracting more residents to the drop-off facilities.

I. Organics Priority Area

Supports the Agency Discards Goal of no more than 10% "good stuff" in garbage by 2020 by reducing the overall volume of food waste generated in Alameda County (the largest remaining recyclable component of MSW), and driving demand for recycled compost and mulch. Areas of emphasis include:

- Increasing the availability, access and quality of local, recycled bulk compost and mulch
- Promoting sheet mulch to home gardeners, landscape professionals, cities, and schools
- Preventing food waste and donating edible food generated in institutional kitchens and other high volume food service operations
- Working with food service providers to reduce pre-consumer food waste through tracking technology and training

A. Food Waste Prevention Emphasis

Existing 2020 Target:	Institutional kitchens and high volume food service operators located in Alameda County that participate in technical assistance or other support services from the Authority, reduce food and other inputs by an average of 25% or more from an established baseline.
Progress:	Preventing pre-consumer food waste and donating edible surplus food generated by institutional kitchens / high volume food service operations. • Launched Smart Kitchen Initiative – food waste tracking and technical assistance to 18 large food service operators • Developed Oakland Unified School District food donation guide, now adapted for Livermore Valley (LVJUSD) • Grant funding for food recovery groups
Key Observations	**+** Timeliness – broad awareness of wasted food issue; regional and

from Criteria Review:	national goals, media campaigns to leverage in county **+** Innovation & Leadership – public/private partnership with LeanPath and Food Service companies to influence kitchen norms in this sector
Recommendation:	Prioritize efforts to reduce food waste, which also supports the Agency's discards goal. Expand reach and work with businesses and consumers to reduce wasted food. • Expand audiences; on the ground tactics targeting households w/children • Augment commercial food waste prevention efforts; focus on recovery of surplus edible food through government & community partnerships • Develop county-wide prevention outreach campaigns; leverage broader efforts to change social norms
Revised Goal:	Reduce wasted food and recover edible surplus food generated by commercial food service operators, school districts and households resulting in a 25% reduction in food waste going to landfill from 50 kitchens; recovering edible surplus food from 4 school districts; and reaching 42,000 households with food waste prevention media and outreach targeting families with children.

B. Recycled Content Compost and Mulch Emphasis

Existing 2020 Target:	90% of permitted landscape projects in Alameda County use locally produced or sourced compost and/or local, recycled mulch.
Progress:	Increasing the availability, access and quality of local, recycled bulk compost and mulch and on using it in new large-scale landscape construction. • Met the target through policy and advocacy • Bay Friendly Basics require 1" compost, 3" mulch for permitted projects • CA Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (WELO) requires statewide: 4cy/1000 sf compost and 3" mulch for all new construction over 500 sf
Key Observations from Criteria Review:	± Impact: Organics are a priority, but original target had narrow audience **+** Timeliness: We can leverage the drought and community support to promote sheet mulching **+** Leadership: we helped raise the bar statewide
Recommendation:	Continue this work with a revised goal to include all StopWaste core audiences: at home, at work, at school. • Promote sheet mulch to home gardeners, landscape professionals, cities, and schools • Expand other uses of compost: sedimentation control, biotreatment for stormwater, carbon ranching
Revised Goal:	Apply compost and/or mulch to 1M square feet in Alameda County.

II. Packaging Priority Area

In order to improve internal efficiency, three projects—Reusable Transport Packaging, Food Service Ware, and Packaging Life Cycle Analysis and Labeling—will be combined into one new Packaging project offering education, technical assistance, and financial support to organizations for their efforts to prevent, reuse, and improve the recyclability of packaging materials manufactured, sold, and discarded in Alameda County. Areas of emphasis include:

- Increasing use of reusable transport packaging in the commercial/industrial sector.
- Reducing use of hard to recycle single use disposables at food service establishments.
- Adoption of package labeling best practices for recyclability by Alameda County brand owners.
- Engagement with industry and other stakeholders to support policy and standards development in support of sustainable packaging.

Packaging Project			
Existing 2020 Packaging Targets:	**Reusable Transport Packaging**	**Institutional and Commercial Food Service Ware and Packaging**	**Packaging Life Cycle Analysis and Recyclability Labeling**
	90% of businesses in Alameda County with appropriate shipping and receiving circumstances are utilizing reusable transport packaging when economically advantageous	90% of customers (institutional and commercial) with separate organics collection purchase and use readily recyclable/ reusable/compostable food service ware and packaging.	90% of Alameda County brand owner/manufacturers will incorporate life-cycle metrics into their packaging design process and utilize accurate recyclability labeling (How2Recycle label).
Progress:	Assistance and funding to expand adoption of reusable transport packaging to replace single-use pallets, corrugated boxes, and pallet wrap. • Reached 500 businesses, implemented 25 projects, preventing 5,000 tons of waste (tracked) • Launched new website, www.UseReusables.org featuring 30 success stories, vendor database and cost calculators • Estimated 46% adoption	Assistance and funding to food service businesses and school districts for source reduction of food service ware and related packaging, and use of reusable alternatives. • Implemented "Rethink Disposable" campaign reaching 430 businesses which led to 50 sites that reduced 7.5 tons of single use disposable food ware products. • Developed Compostable Food Ware Purchasing Guide available on www.RecyclingRulesAC.org and adapted by other	Assistance and funding to brand owners to adopt package labeling best practices for recyclability and incorporate life cycle assessment into product packaging decisions. • Developed and published Package labeling guide: http://guides.stopwaste.org/packaging • Provided assistance to locally headquartered national brands for adoption of How2Recycle label on their packaging, and for

	rate for reusables countywide (2014) • Completed 4 year, $500,000 EPA grant	jurisdictions and counties • Produced five videos with Clean Water Fund highlighting business and school success stories	conducting life cycle analysis of packaging materials
Key Observations from Criteria Review:	- Influence – slow adoption process with limited influence, grants are key - Measurability – hard to measure progress; survey based and/or case-by-case approach to determine "appropriateness" which is time intensive	- Feasibility – unresolved technical issues with collection, sorting and processing (recycling or composting) single use food service ware are fatal flaw - Influence – purchasing and manufacture of single-use products happens across county lines + Timeliness – leverage mandatory and TA to incentivize; impact of disposables on local watersheds	- Impact – overall impact efficiency is low due to small universe of target businesses and very slow adoption rate - Influence – low influence over brand owners, who are not likely to alter packaging refresh schedules for our purposes
Recommend-ation:	Identifying and converting 90% of businesses is impractical and would require substantial additional funding. Adjust scope to reflect reduced funding after the EPA grant, and focus on sectors with a proven opportunity for reusables for improved efficiency. • Leverage new website as primary education and outreach tool • Focus on local opportunities with small manufacturers and food production	The target is not achievable without a consistent solution for recycling or composting food service ware. Keep project costs low and continue to encourage adoption of reusable food ware and waste prevention practices. • Participate in policy and technical discussions working to address compostability/recyclability issues with food ware • Continue to promote and incentivize waste prevention and reusable food service ware as preferable alternatives	The target as written is not realistically achievable by 2020, but it is worthwhile to offer support for those businesses that are motivated to improve their packaging. • Continue participation in state and national policy development and industry dialogs related to sustainable packaging • Offer technical assistance as needed to engaged brand owners
Revised Goal:	Assist a minimum of 150 businesses in switching to reusable transport packaging, reusable food service ware, and/or more sustainable packaging, resulting in at least 6,000 tons of measurable waste prevented.		

III. Built-Environment Priority Area

Address the impacts of materials management by influencing the design, construction and maintenance of the built environment. Areas of emphasis include:

- Advocate for greater recycled content in green building codes and standards
- Provide member agencies with innovative policy assistance and support local climate action planning/implementation.
- Support development of market transformation tools (e.g., GreenPoint Rated)
- Research and technical advocacy on topics related to recycled content feedstock for building materials. (e.g., Healthy Building Network)

Note: *Additional PD projects, including all Energy Council projects fall within the Built-Environment priority but are not discussed here as they are externally funded and not part of this assessment process.*

Recycled Content: Building Materials

Existing 2020 Target:	90% of building material supply centers will stock and promote recycled content building materials.
Progress:	Driving the demand for recycled content product purchases in Alameda County. Retailers are stocking recycled content products (e.g., insulation, decking) but are not interested in actively promoting the recycled content attributes alone. • Provided information and convenient tools for the purchase of recycled content products • Encouraged retailers to supply products via an outreach strategy in conjunction with other agency projects • Advocated for recycled content building materials in green building codes and standards
Key Observations from Criteria Review:	- Influence - limited with retailers - Geography - requires regional/national focus to affect change - MA Alignment - Not directly useful to member agencies
Recommendation:	Given limited influence within the retail sector, a shift in approach is recommended. Agency resources are better spent on activities where we can have greater impact and support Member Agencies. Sunset this project and shift resources to 2 new projects: • <u>Codes and Standards</u>: Continue codes and standards development and technical advocacy efforts, to support policy changes that result in increased use of recycled content and broader green criteria. • <u>Building Services & Partnerships</u>: Provide technical and policy assistance to member agencies and support strategic building industry partners.

IV. HHW

Household Hazardous Waste: Point of Purchase Alternatives

2020 Target:	90% of stores that sell products destined for HHW facilities will stock and promote non-toxic/less-toxic HHW alternative products.
Progress:	Promotes the message of "Buy Smart," appropriate use of products and proper disposal at Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facilities • Partnership with Our Water Our World in 40 stores to provide HHW alternatives information • Partnership with PaintCare in 24 stores to provide leftover paint collection and HHW information • Outreach & promotion in support of events and expanded facility hours has been effective
Key Observations from Criteria Review:	- Influence - limited with retailers - Feasibility – alternatives are still technically HHW + Member agencies are seeking more info and access to collection events for their residents
Recommendation:	Since less-toxic alternatives are still HHW, funds are best used to educate the public about what is HHW and where they can dispose of it properly. • Continue external partnerships and alternatives messaging • Combine with HHW Facilities project for administrative efficiency