

TOWN COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

Title: Update on Solid Waste Programs.

Meeting Date: October 19, 2022

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RECOMMENDATION:

No action is required; Town Council may provide comments and direction related to solid waste management and recycling related efforts.

BACKGROUND:

This report provides an update on the Town's solid waste work program. The program over the past year has two areas of focus, as well as areas of continued work. The first being the plan for the closure of the Benton Crossing Landfill, effective December 31, 2022 (see attached Press Release). The second, is program implementation to comply with State recycling mandates. The Town, working with Mammoth Disposal, has made substantial progress in both areas. Town and Mammoth Disposal staff are reviewing recent legislative actions, which are discussed in more detail below. Staff is continuing to manage the Franchise Agreement with Mammoth Disposal.

ANALYSIS:

Status of Town Solid Waste Management Programs

Disposal of Solid Waste

The Town has been working on a plan to address the closure of the Benton Crossing Landfill and the disposal of the Town's solid waste. The goal is to provide continuous solid waste disposal services. The construction of the new transfer station at the current Mammoth Disposal site will provide for the hauling of solid waste to the Russell Pass Landfill operated by the City of Fallon, NV. The sizing of the transfer station will accommodate all the Town's waste stream and has through-put capacity for additional waste. Staff is working with Mammoth Disposal on an updated rate structure based on unanticipated cost increases across the solid waste collection and disposal systems. This includes reviewing rates for out-of-town waste processing and providing options for out-of-town residents to utilize the transfer station. The drop-off of materials for recycling is a free service to all.

The new transfer station and recycling/buyback center will be fully operational prior to the closure of Benton Crossing Landfill at the end of this year. Photos of the construction are attached. A tour of the facilities will be scheduled once construction is complete. Staff has

initiated preliminary discussions on enhanced use of electric based equipment and for base facilities and will pursue future grant funding opportunities when available.

The transfer station and recycling center will have enhanced services. The collection of batteries, paint, oils, light bulbs, clean mattresses, electronics, and white goods for recycling will continue. There are fees for certain items and limits on the amounts of some materials. The new facility will include Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) collection with planned collections twice per week. Changes in State law will require Mono County to have two HHW collection sites. One of the required sites will be at the Mammoth Disposal Transfer Station.

The installation of a new sort line at the recycling buyback center will improve operations for recycling glass, cans, and plastics. The new sort line was purchased with a \$247,500 CalRecycle grant and has been installed (photo attached). Cardboard recycling has increased with the placement of additional collection bins within the community. Cardboard bins are provided at no additional charge for Mammoth Disposal customers and may be used by the public for cardboard recycling. We are experiencing weak recycling markets with substantial drops in value for cardboard and paying to recycle glass. Recycling vendors are also much stricter on only accepting “clean loads” with contaminated loads being charged a disposal fee and transferred to a landfill.

Staff is still working on location, funding, and partners to establish a biomass facility in the region. This effort not only supports the reduction of wildland fire fuel loading but will assist in processing other organic waste materials. The goal is to have a facility that can process a variety of material. This includes woody biomass, residential and business green waste, bio-solids, soiled paper/cardboard, clean construction materials, and other organic based materials. The outputs include renewable energy and biochar, resulting in the long-term sequestering of carbon. Preliminary processing tests of waste show that PFAS (perfluorooctanesulfonic acid) can be reduced to a non-detectable level.

It is anticipated that Mono County will be transitioning operations at the Benton Crossing Landfill to the Pumice Valley Landfill. The Town expects that this will include some services that will be utilized by Mammoth Disposal and Town residents and businesses. This may include disposal of clean construction debris, green waste, larger item recycling (cars, trailers, boats, white goods, etc.). Other services provided at Benton Crossing may also be relocated.

Recycling and Educational Programs

The Town in partnership with Mammoth Disposal is meeting CalRecycle requirements. This includes mandatory recycling at local businesses and multifamily dwellings of five units or more. This includes, at a minimum, cardboard bins and/or containers for cans, glass, and plastics. Grant funding has supported locating new containers in locations throughout the community. A recent \$5,000 grant will be used to improve the community recycling center at Vons.

Community engagement and information on recycling is a priority for CalRecycle. Working with Mammoth Disposal's Sustainability Coordinator, outreach efforts to businesses, restaurants, and schools are having an impact. Through a \$20,000 CalRecycle grant and a \$15,000 CalFresh match, a community composting supported garden at the schools is being implemented. The program is designed to connect local restaurants with the garden program by having compostable materials provided to be used in the garden. Vons and Grocery Outlet are subject to edible food diversion program and are working with the IMACA Food Bank. Placement of "kitchen magnets" in residential units provide information on recycling programs and smaller ones now come with a QR code directing people to up to date information. Informational and educational efforts are ongoing.

High Sierra Energy, with support from Mammoth Disposal, continues to implement the Eastern Sierra Green Business Program with the goal of certifying additional local businesses as "green." The program has a set of metrics (attached) to meet to be certified green. Currently, 18 businesses are certified as green businesses. The program represents a positive means to working directly with businesses to achieve sustainability goals above and beyond State requirements.

Attached is a copy of a recent presentation providing information to reduce, reuse, recycle, and compost as part of the Green Business initiative. Also, a presentation on the "Buoy food reuse product" providing a sample of a replacement container for to-go food service is attached. These types of innovative programs, processes, and materials are playing a greater role in achieving an increased level of sustainability in the waste industry and in our community. The solutions are economically viable and represent more of an incentive-based approach vs. imposing a more punitive regulatory structure. Working together to support this type of approach will ultimately have a greater level of community support and positive impacts.

Other efforts include working with the Water District to place additional water fountain/water bottle filling stations along multi-use paths and in our parks. The stewardship program supported by the Office of Outdoor Recreation, Mammoth Lakes Tourism, Mammoth Lakes Recreation, volunteers, and others had one of the best summers ever. The program not only supports trail maintenance and construction but is responsible for removing tons of trash from our public lands and water ways.

These types of grassroots, business by business efforts are increasing. Town and Mammoth Disposal staff along with community members and organizations are defining and implementing programs to assist in the overall management of waste and increased reuse and recycling in our community. This approach is one that staff supports and hopes to see it being embraced and supported by Town Council.

Legislative Actions

Several solid waste-related bills were signed in to law this year. Attached is an overview of solid waste-related bills prepared by HF&H consultants. Several of the bills were signed as part of the State's larger policy actions to achieve climate goals. Several of the bills place additional requirements on local government. A few bills provide funding for specific

projects and areas to assist in the development of markets and recycling of materials. Staff is still reviewing the impact and actions that will need to be taken by the Town, as well as new opportunities that may be pursued. This review is being done in conjunction with Mammoth Disposal.

Town and/or Mammoth Disposal staff will continue to implement legislative requirements under SB 1383, AB 341, and AB 1826 regarding Mandatory Commercial Recycling (MCR). Staff is working with Mono County on the implementation of AB 1276, which limits the provision of single use foodware accessory items and condiments by restaurants. Staff is working together to identify new and ongoing grant opportunities to support recycling related programs and services. Staff anticipates applying next year under the same CalRecycle grant program used to fund the new sort line to continue to improve recycling operations and services.

RECOMMENDATION:

No action is required; Town Council may provide comments and direction related to solid waste management and recycling related efforts.

Attachments:

- Mono County Press Release on Closure of Benton Crossing Landfill
- Mammoth Disposal/High Sierra Energy Presentation – Certified Green Business
- Bouy Food Re-Use Product Presentation
- HF&H October 2022 Legislative Update (California Bills signed into Law)
- Photos of new Transfer Station construction, new recycling sort line and recycling bins
- Green Business requirements checklist