



City of Berkeley ZERO WASTE COMMISSION Regular Meeting

Tuesday, July 25, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.
City of Berkeley Corporation Yard (Ratcliff Building, Willow Room)
1326 Allston Way, Berkeley

MEETING AGENDA

PRELIMINARY MATTERS:

- 6:00 pm 1. Call to Order by Chair and Roll Call by Secretary
- **Steven Sherman (Vice Chair)**, appointed by CM Rashi Kesarwani, District 1
 - **Christienne de Tournay (Chair)**, appointed by CM Sophie Hahn, District 5
 - **Natalie Wechsler**, appointed by Mayor Jesse Arreguin
 - **Rachel Doughty**, appointed by CM Terry Taplin, District 2
 - **Antoinette Stein**, appointed by CM Ben Bartlett, District 3
 - **Holly Scheider**, appointed by CM Kate Harrison, District 4
 - **Sandra Curtis**, appointed by CM Susan Wengraf, District 6
 - **Swasti Johri**, appointed by CM Rigel Robinson, District 7
 - **VACANT**, appointed by CM Mark Humbert, District 8
- 6:05 pm 2. Approve Meeting Agenda and Order of Agenda Items
- 6:10 pm 3. Approve Draft Action Minutes:
- June 27, 2023 Regular Meeting*
- 6:15 pm 4. Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda
Speakers are allotted up to two minutes. Speakers may be allotted less time at the discretion of the Chair.
- 6:25 pm 5. Commissioner Announcements
Commissioners may make general announcements; no action will be taken.
- 6:30 pm 6. Staff Updates:
- Progress Report on Zero Waste Strategic Plan
 - Progress on SB-1383 Implementation
 - SUDs Ordinance Enforcement
 - Plastic Bag Ordinance

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS:

Members of the public may provide comments at the end of each discussion item and prior to the vote of the Commission on any action items. Speakers are allotted up to 2 minutes.

- 6:50 pm 1. Waste Characterization Study Report (Steven)

Internal

- 7:10 pm 2. Report out from the Sub-Committee to Review Green Building Requirements
- 7:30pm 3. Discuss Legislative Updates
- 7:50 pm 4. Discuss Future Agenda Items
- 8:00 pm 5. Adjournment

INFORMATION ITEMS:

Information items may be moved to discussion but no action will be taken.

- Berkeley Zero Waste: Fees to increase for most customers
<https://www.berkeleyside.org/2023/06/29/berkeley-zero-waste-fees>
- We put dozens of trackers in plastic bags for recycling. Many were trashed.
<https://abcnews.go.com/US/put-dozens-trackers-plastic-bags-recycling-trashed/story?id=99509422>
- California Adds Sweeping Mandates for Certain Plastics, Adding to Its Extended Producer Responsibility Laws With Senate Bill 54 | Insights | Sidley Austin LLP
<https://www.sidley.com/en/insights/newsupdates/2022/07/california-adds-to-its-extended-producer-responsibility-laws-with-senate-bill-54>
- A Framework to Deconstruct the Complexity of Plastic Pollution
<https://5gyres.us10.list-manage.com/track/click?u=343552d26f2313a66f25ede34&id=2c2dd024f7&e=29b6ede1ac>

COMMUNICATIONS:

Communications from the public are included as links or attachments in the agenda packet.

*Indicates material included in the agenda packet

** Indicates material to be available at the meeting



ADA Disclaimer: This meeting is being held in a wheelchair-accessible location. To request a disability-related accommodation(s) to participate in the meeting, including auxiliary aids or services, please contact the Disability Services Specialist at 981-6418 (V) or 981-6347 (TDD) at least three business days before the meeting date. Please refrain from wearing scented products to this meeting.

SB 343 Disclaimer:

Any writings or documents provided to a majority of the Commission regarding any item on this agenda will be made available for public inspection at the Public Works Department located at the address below.

Communications Disclaimer:

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Internal

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Commission Secretary:

Julia A. Heath, Recycling Program Manager,
Zero Waste Division, 1201 Second St. Berkeley, CA 94710
510-981-6357
jheath@berkeleyca.gov

Ridwell

Wasting less, made easy

Ridwell Intro
June 2023



What Is Ridwell?

A convenience service that helps interested households waste less



Our Story: A Father and Son Project

Each week, they helped neighbors reuse and recycle items not collected curbside



Where We Operate

In over 165 jurisdictions in six metropolitan areas

Seattle



Portland



Denver



Austin



The Bay Area



Twin Cities

Becoming a Ridwell Member

1.



Subscribe. Get bin and bags.

2.



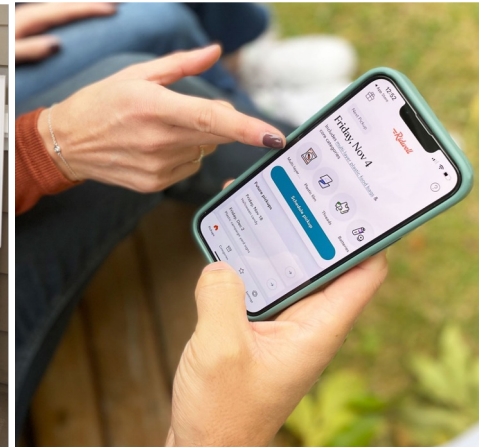
Fill the bags.

3.



Put bags in the bin.

4.



Opt into your pickup.

Repeat steps 2-4 every two weeks.



Our Service

- Membership includes the opportunity for biweekly pickup
- Items we pick up vary in each city depending on what's already accepted curbside AND the availability of properly vetted reuse or recycling partners
- Each pickup opportunity includes a limited set of designated items (usually no more than six) which we define by category type:

Hard-to-Recycle Items



Items that can be recycled just NOT in curbside recycling bins

Reusable Household Items



Donated to local non-profit organizations

Our Operations and Warehouse

Efficient, streamlined service that provides the transportation and distribution of select source-separated items - NOT traditional hauling and processing



Our Community Focus - Sharing Ridwell Benefits

Striving for more equity, accessibility and inclusivity of Ridwell Member benefits

- Participation in community recycling events with cities or local businesses
- Partnerships with cities to provide one-day residential pick up opportunities
- Two different scholarship programs to ensure cost is not a barrier to participating in our service
- Allow membership-sharing



Our Community Focus - Building Local Partnerships

Identifying local organizations' needs, building partnerships, and making it easy for households to donate for reuse and give back to their community

Berkwood Hedge School



Collection of plastic film in support of school fundraiser

Friends of the Alameda Animal Shelter



Pet supplies including unused kitty litter, pet food and toys

SCRAP SF



2,000 + lb of art supplies

Our Bay Area Partners

Local wherever possible, but regional or national when necessary

The image features a map of the United States with two callout boxes. One callout box, located over the Pacific Northwest, contains the Trex logo. Another callout box, located over California, contains the BY FUSION logo. A large central collage contains the following logos:

- goodwill
- FAAS Friends of the Alameda Animal Shelter
- GreenCitizen® MAKING EVERY DAY EARTH DAY SINCE 2005
- ALAMEDA COUNTY COMMUNITY FOOD BANK
- EAST BAY CHILDREN'S BOOK PROJECT
- THE EAST OAKLAND COLLECTIVE
- EVERGREEN IT SOLUTIONS
- CleanEarth
- THE BOOKS GREEN STREET Potential Meets Opportunity Employment For Adults With Disabilities
- THE Crayon INITIATIVE
- scrap a source for the resourceful
- LIONS IN SIGHT of California and Nevada

How We Vet Our Partners

Our vetting process is tailored to match the type of partner organization it is and the types of items they are reusing or recycling

Reuse Partners

- Verify non-profit good standing
- Geographic location (local)
- End-market verification
- Educational resources and data to share with Members

Specialty Recycling Partners

- Industry certification
- Geographic location (local)
- Secure verification of any downstream guarantees
- Site visit

An average of 15% - 20% of identified potential partners make it through our vetting process

The Importance of Transparency

We understand the importance of knowing and trusting that the items we divert are properly recycled



Before we will include any item in our service we FIRST make sure that a vetted and trusted reuse or recycling partner exists

Our Transparency

A public-facing web page that discloses our partners and where our materials go

So, where does it all go?

We work with local, regional, and national partners to divert as much as possible from the landfills.

DENVER

SEATTLE

PORTLAND

MINNEAPOLIS

AUSTIN

BAY AREA

LIGHT BULBS



Plastic film

99.3% diverted material

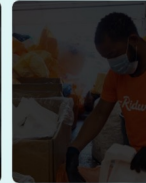
0.7% contamination*

Trex turns your plastic film and wrap into new decking material. That's full circle!

Top contaminants

Paper bubble mailers, mixed material bags

THREADS



*25% industry average—read more about our work on transparency here

Metrics last updated on May 11th, 2023.

BAY AREA PARTNER SPOTLIGHTS

Trex

"Ridwell members are an incredibly valuable source of high quality plastic film, which is a key ingredient in the making of Trex decking. We are thrilled to be working with such a conscientious and passionate community."
- Stephanie, Materials Account Manager

We recycle your plastic film with Trex to turn it into composite decking which can last up to 25 years! After screening and processing, your plastic gets a new life.



Want to join our community to make a difference? [JOIN TODAY](#)



Our Volume and Reporting

Understanding quantities involved with our service and how we can support waste diversion reporting

Material Received	2021 Tons	Partner	Partner Type	Final Use	Final Use Description
Reuse Items					
Eyeglasses	0.6	NW Lions Club Foundation	Local non-profit	Reuse	Used eyeglasses are refurbished/repared by the Lions Club and distributed worldwide to individuals who need them yet cannot afford them.
Jewelry	0.22	Boma Jewelry	Local non-profit	Reuse	Used jewelry was repaired/restored and donated to local women's shelters, or if unusable, recycled as scrap metal with some portion of the money funding programs at local women's shelters.
Metal Caps	0.36	Seattle Recycled Arts	Local non-profit	Reuse	Metal caps donated for use in art projects by the Seattle Recycled Art network of artists.
Pet Leashes	1.21	Auburn Valley Humane Society	Local non-profit	Reuse	Pet leashes donated for reuse and to be distributed to local shelters in the area.
Travel-size toiletries	1.62	Dignity for Divas	Local non-profit	Reuse	Toiletries used in 'Diva Survival Kits' which are distributed to unhoused men, women and children.
Towels	2.1	Compass Housing Alliance	Local non-profit	Reuse	Towels given to unhoused individuals who frequent the Alliance shelters and utilize their services.
Hard-to-Recycle					
CFLs/Mixed Bulbs	10.5	Ecolights Northwest, LLC	Specialty recycler	Recycle	Bulbs are recycled directly by Ecolights using specialty equipment that breaks the bulbs down, removes any hazardous materials, and separates out the glass, metal, and plastic for use in new bulbs or other products.
Latex Paint	35.7	Green Sheen	Specialty recycler	Recycle	Old latex paint is re-processed on-site by GreenSheen, a PaintCare member. The paint is screened to remove impurities, batched with like colors, and then re-dyed. This new paint is sold to participating retailers.
Plastic Film	146.2	Trex	Specialty recycler	Recycle	Plastic films are collected and baled at Ridwell locations, then shipped directly to Trex facilities in the US. Trex's proprietary processes turn plastic films into poly-lumber often used as a wood substitute for building projects, or in decks, lawn chairs, or garden beds
Styrofoam	18.1	Styro Recycle, LLC	Specialty recycler	Recycle	Styrofoam is ground up and run through a densifier machine. This processed material is then sold to manufacturers and turned into plastic products such as picture frames and crown molding.



Discussion

Supplemental Information

Meet Our Members

Ridwell Members

- Aspire to do the right thing and want to divert items beyond those that can be placed in their curbside recycle bins
- Have mobility challenges or busy households and value assistance accessing non-curbside diversion opportunities
- Don't typically take advantage of drop-off programs
- Are willing and able to pay for an optional, supplemental convenience service*



What Our Members Say

Complementary

“Our family wants to recycle everything possible. **Ridwell services are a great addition to curbside recycling.**”

-Celeste

Helpful

“**Ridwell solves recycling problems for people who care about this topic but (like me) have mobility issues** by removing the barriers of seeking out the specialized drop off locations”

-Susan

Convenient

“**Great service to help busy families be a bit greener** and more mindful of waste.”

-Rachel



What Our Partners Say

“Ridwell has been a generous and considerate community partner for Birch Community Services (BCS). Through their non-perishable food drives to helping us sustainably manage plastic film waste. We are appreciative of Ridwell’s mission to present more sustainable waste options while also giving back to the community.”

- Birch Community Services,
Community Development



“Ridwell members give us some of the highest quality plastic we receive from any partner. We are thrilled to be working with such a conscientious and passionate community.”

- Trex, Consumer Education



“Babies of Homelessness is extremely grateful for the donations we received from Ridwell and their customers, During a time when donations fell short and we were navigating diaper supply shortages and price spikes, Ridwell provided 400+ boxes of diapers. This enabled us to continue bulk delivery to our partners in King and Snohomish counties, reaching many families in need.”

- Babies of Homelessness,
Field Operations



Our Path to Multi-Layer Plastic Recycling

We saw a need, identified and vetted a partner, and tested post-consumer feedstock before offering this new hard-to-recycle opportunity to our Members



CITY

Most Berkeley residents will see trash pickup fees rise

Berkeley trash customers with the smallest containers will see the highest percent increase over the next five fiscal years. Officials say their hands were tied by a decades-old ballot measure.

By Alex N. Gecan and Nico Savidge

June 29, 2023, 10:03 a.m.



The Berkeley City Council approved a five-year incremental rate hike for residential waste pickup Tuesday, June 27, 2023.

Credit: Zac Farber

With the city facing new and rising costs for waste management, the City Council approved **a five-year incremental rate hike** for residential waste pickup Tuesday.

Officials previously said the city needs the money to **implement a new state-level organic waste law**, replace its **decades-old transfer station** and, in part, fund some limited street repairs to offset the damage done by waste collection vehicles.

The fees city property owners and tenants pay for sanitation go directly to a dedicated enterprise fund, which funds the sanitation work. City officials said they needed to adjust their rates to keep enough cash in the fund to run citywide sanitation work.

Residents who endeavor to recycle and compost on their own, and have smaller trash containers, said the rate structure — which officials say is a byproduct of a 27-year-old ballot initiative — would hit them at a greater rate.

RELATED STORIES





Innovative or eyesore? New trash cages installed on downtown Berkeley sidewalk

Monthly rates for residential pickup would **increase in increments** over the next five fiscal years, varying by container size. These are the increases for single weekly collections:

- 13-gallon: \$17.78 to \$47.78, or roughly 169%
- 20-gallon: \$27.30 to \$57.30, or roughly 110%
- 32-gallon: \$43.66 to \$73.66, or roughly 69%
- 45-gallon: \$61.38 to \$88.09, or roughly 44%
- 64-gallon: \$87.28 to \$99.60, or roughly 14%, although there would be a decrease for the financial year 2024

Homes with 96-gallon containers would actually see a roughly 9% net decrease by the financial year 2028, from \$130.87 down to \$118.47.

The city is also phasing out two container sizes for residences, 13- and 45-gallon, which the manufacturer no longer makes. The Zero Waste Division's vehicles' automated arms cannot hoist those sizes.



A 2019 rendering shows what Berkeley's waste facility could look like, included in a report outlining three possible visions for the center. Image: City of Berkeley / Zero Waste Collaborative

Rates for short-term bin service would also increase over the next five years.

Under the strictures of Proposition 218, protest letters from a majority of property owners could have blocked the council's vote on the rate changes. Of the required 14,580 protest letters that could have blocked it, the city received 290.

The ballot measure, passed in 1996, requires cities to set fees based on costs of pickup, and the rates for customers with smaller containers have been hovering below the costs of service, officials said previously.

The council unanimously approved the new fee rates. The first set of new rates will take effect in July.

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Comments for this thread are now closed



16 Comments

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Best Newest Oldest



FindTheKernel

7 days ago

The last vote for property assessments was in 2018 when owners voted for streetlight taxes. Of the 9,356 ballots counted, the "yes" votes won by 50.26%, BUT 241 ballots were summarily rejected! Specifically, there was a whole bankers box of "no" votes which the city invalidated because of hate notes written on them. For example, one customer wrote, "There is already plenty of money in the General Fund, pay for this out of that." That got her vote invalidated. or "Please do not increase these fees for low-income homeowners". That one too was thrown in the discard pile! The ballot must be open for inspection for 1 year after the vote for any taxpayer or resident who puts in a request.

o Share >



evilpete

10 days ago

I wonder what out fees would be without the scavengers taking all the profitable recycling.

o Share >



Concernedresidentofearth

11 days ago

Alternate week pickup please! Cut costs in half.

o Share >



whatsit

13 days ago

This pisses me off. First, that they needed 51% of property owners to protest in writing, and I'm willing to bet the vast majority of Berkeley property owners had no idea this was in the works. I only learned of it a couple of weeks ago via a Facebook post. Second, why can't the city learn to think outside the box? Others have previously suggested fewer monthly pickups, lighter-weight trucks, to name just a few ideas. Or they might offer neighbors an easy way to share garbage and recycling, since our bins are rarely filled every week.

I wonder how many lower-income people will just give up their garbage service and find somewhere else to dump their trash?

2 Share >



Susan Black

13 days ago

And for those of us on fixed incomes with everything rising in price....what are we to do? The City of Albany has a senior discount on trash pick up. Here we are just trash

3 Share >



FindTheKernel

→ Susan Black

5 days ago

In Berkeley's, true, inequitable fashion, you may also pay for unfair "non-conforming basement taxes", like selling 1713 Virginia does.

<https://www.realtor.com/rea...>

The new buyer will not know of the unfair levy, since this \$1000 yearly defect is rarely disclosed. Other Berkeley homes are not similarly levied. Recently sold home, 1424 Hopkins, has a full, walkable basement, but no extra taxes for it.

<https://www.realtor.com/rea...>

o Share >



chamelean75

13 days ago

I have a 13 gallon bin. The article said it's being phased out. So does that mean the city is going to come by, take my bin, force me to use a larger trash can and charge me a higher rate?

2 Share >



QfromStarTrek

→ chamelean75

12 days ago edited

Phased out means that if for some reason someone "trashes" your can and you need a replacement, they won't be able to replace it with the same 13 gallon. In the meanwhile they will let you use the smallest bin of all and you, me, and other 13 gallon-ers will be subject to a 169% increase over the 5 years, while the 64 gallon-ers will be given a discount. So much for encouraging zero waste!

And one more thing. by asking the residents to send letters was a clear setup. knowing that very

few will bother to compose a letter and sent it to the city. It would've been more democratic to do an online poll for the residents of Berkeley to vote, but that's to big of an ask for COB :-)

o Share >



whatsit → chamelean75

13 days ago

Yup.

o Share >



PamelaM

13 days ago

This system discriminates against people who separate recyclables, put food waste and garden clippings only in the green bin, do not buy food or anything with a lot of plastic packaging, etc. My black bin could be picked 1 time a month and still only be 1/4 full.

The City of Berkeley could reduce pick ups to every other week and start charging multiple unit properties their full rates, for instance, properties with ADUs.

Also, properties in the hills should be charged more because trucks going up and down hills wear out faster. EBMUD charges more to hills residents because it costs more to pump water uphill, the City of Berkeley should charge more for garbage collection in the hills.

2 Share >



Robert Lauriston

13 days ago

No one's hands are tied. Instead of increasing rates, the city should cut costs by picking up trash only once every two or three weeks. People who have more trash would need to pay for larger or additional bins, increasing the incentive to reduce waste. There would be nothing radical or untested about that: Portland collects trash every other week (see "Residential garbage rates" on Portland.gov), as do over three-quarters of local authorities in England (see "Three quarters of councils collect general waste once a fortnight" in The Guardian). Google "biweekly trash collection" to find many more examples, some in place for over 15 years.

<https://www.portland.gov/bp...>

<https://www.theguardian.com...>

11 Share >



Allen S → Robert Lauriston

13 days ago

Would anyone be interested in organizing around this issue, marshaling some facts around the number of residents who use 13-gallon containers or could do bi-weekly service and see if we might be able to get this reversed?

o Share >



Phyllis Oyama → Allen S

11 days ago

YES. Please contact me via my business address - staff@songtone.com. Thank you!
Phyllis

o Share >



Chris K

→ Robert Lauriston

13 days ago

Exactly. Our family uses a 13-gallon bin that we fill at most every other week. 169% is a *2.7-fold* increase — on what planet is that appropriate for folks who should in fact be rewarded for not producing trash? Add to this the fact that the city's letter offered *zero* concrete reasons for the increase ... just insultingly lazy thinking all around.

2 Share >



QfromStarTrek

→ Chris K

12 days ago

Their ulterior motive is to "borrow" money for repairing the roads as they cannot trick us with any other measure (i.e. failed Measure L).

1 Share >



Thorn A. Fusco

13 days ago

the automated trucks are a disaster for most of the city. cans must be in the street properly spaced out for trucks to pick them up which = no parking left. trash cans block the entire street, taking away all parking on pickup days. this will become a much bigger problem as they expand into busier areas. At what point do