



AGENDA REPORT SUMMARY

Meeting Date: October 25, 2022

Subject Authorization to increase appropriations in the Solid Waste Operating Budget from Solid Waste Fund balance (fund #35) for compost giveaway events

Prepared by: Manny A. Hernandez, Parks & Recreation Director

Reviewed by: Aida Fairman, Environmental Services and Utilities Director

Approved by: Gabriel Engeland, City Manager

Attachment:

1. Compost event flyer
- A. Resolution No. 2022-____

Initiated by:

Staff

Previous Council Consideration:

None

Fiscal Impact:

The following action will cost \$65,120 for the City to provide four (4) free compost giveaway events to the City of Los Altos' residents.

- Breakdown of funds to be used:
 - o \$65,120 Solid Waste Balance
 - o Current Solid Waste fund balance is \$5.2 million
- Amount already included in approved budget: N
- Amount above budget requested: 0

Environmental Review:

Not applicable

Policy Question for Council Consideration:

- Does the Council wish to increase appropriations in the Solid Waste Operating Budget to cover the cost of the four (4) compost giveaway events held by the City that prepares and distributes free compost to Los Altos residents?

City Manager

GE

Reviewed By:

City Attorney

JH

Interim Finance Director

SN



Subject: Authorization to increase appropriations in the Solid Waste Operating Budget for compost giveaway events

Summary:

- The compost giveaway events provide easy and convenient distribution of free compost to Los Altos residents.
- The events were created and previously run by the Maintenance Services Department
- The main cost for this giveaway is staff overtime to prepare the compost for distribution
- Public response to the event and how it functions has been all positive.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends that City Council authorize an appropriation increase in the Solid Waste Operating Budget in the amount of \$65,120 to cover the costs of four (4) compost giveaways in Fiscal Year 22/23

Purpose

To provide funding from the Solid Waste Operating Budget to support the four (4) Compost Giveaway Events that are hosted by the City of Los Altos in April, June, August, and October.

Background

In the Summer of 2020, it came to the attention of City of Los Altos staff that the free compost available at the Smart Station in Sunnyvale was no longer providing it to residents outside of Sunnyvale, Mountain View, and Palo Alto. When this happened, City of Los Altos staff researched a possible solution to getting free compost to residents.

There were challenges in setting up a program in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, so the plan was to start a program in Spring of 2020. The program was for the City to receive compost from Mission Trail Waste Systems (MTWS) at no cost, per the City's agreement with them, and have it available for the public to pick up as needed. Los Altos' residents would contact staff to request bags of compost. The compost requested would be bagged and set aside for pick up by the requester. This system of distribution began in the Summer of 2020 and was managed through phone and email requests to the Maintenance Services Center (MSC).

Starting in 2021, there was a gradual increase in requests for compost through July when Mission Trail advertised the Los Altos program in their residential newsletter. The program was no longer manageable for maintenance staff or MTWS after that, as the requests skyrocketed, so the on-demand program was ended in August, and the "Event" program started in October.



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The first compost giveaway events took place in October and November of 2021 at MSC. Crews would fill 15-20 pound bags of compost for easy pick-up by residents and have additional compost available for self-loading. The pre-filled bags make it easy for older residents to manage, and the staff doing the vehicle loading makes the line of cars go much quicker to get everyone through the event promptly. The event would take place on a Saturday, where residents would drive up, show proof of residency, open their trunk or hatch, where staff would load the number of bags requested, close up and drive away. If residents want more than the maximum number of bags, they can pull up to the compost pile and load as much as they want in containers that they supply and load themselves.

There were four events in fiscal year 21/22 and two events scheduled so far for fiscal year 22/23. The distribution system at events allows maintenance crews to do their daily work during the regular work week and focus on compost distribution at four times a year. The preparation takes two days of Maintenance Worker overtime in the week before each event and additional overtime on the day of the event. This is time spent filling the bags and prepping the distribution stations. Maintenance Worker overtime for past events was charged to the Maintenance Services Department, which is no longer a department after the reorganization of the City's departments that went into effect on July 1, 2022.

Discussion/Analysis

The compost giveaway events are currently happening four times a year. They are being scheduled for the first Saturday of the month in April, June, August, and October. The hours available for free compost pick-up are 8 am to 12pm. This event format is what has been manageable for the maintenance crews in successfully distributing the free compost to the residents. The response for this event has been nothing but positive.

The compost is provided for free by MTWS as part of the agreement with the City. Staff is ordering 60 to 80 cubic yards of compost per event and from that about 1,500- to 2,000 bags of compost are filled. Filling the compost bags takes several work hours over the week leading up to the event from maintenance crewmembers. Most of that time is filling the bags with compost in preparation for quick and easy loading to the residents at pick-up. Some of these work hours are done during the regular work week, but two full days of overtime hours are needed to complete the preparations for this event. The total cost for the preparation and execution of each event are as follows.

• Maintenance Worker Overtime (Preparation)	\$5,200
• Maintenance Worker Overtime (Day of the Event)	\$7,280
• Compostable compost bags (2000)	\$3,800
Total	\$16,280



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For the four compost events the total of overtime and compost bags is \$65,120. This was previously covered in the available overtime budget of the Maintenance Services Department that has since been split between the new departments of Public Works, Environmental Services and Utilities, and Parks & Recreation. At this time there are two more events that are scheduled for FY 22-23 (October 2022 & April 2023).

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends that City Council authorize an appropriation increase in the Solid Waste Operating Budget in the amount of \$65,120 to cover the costs of four (4) compost giveaways in Fiscal Year 22/23.