



Memorandum

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Suja Lowenthal, Second District *SL*

Subject: Green Waste Program

July 8, 2008

REQUESTED ACTION:

Request the City Manager determine whether Long Beach would benefit from the creation of a green waste program located in city boundaries and report back to the City Council within 60 days.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Green Waste is landscape material generally consisting of leaves, grass clippings, weeds, yard trimmings, wood waste, branches, home garden residues, and other miscellaneous organic materials. Currently, green waste is included in solid waste pick-up and incinerated at our Southeast Resource Recovery Facility (SERRF) site. Approximately 30,000 tons of green waste is picked up each year, which is 13% of the total solid waste collected from residents. By creating a green waste program, the City could increase the capacity of solid waste received at the SERRF site, which could then be dedicated to a portion of our multi-family dwellings currently served by private haulers or allow us to enter into additional agreements with surrounding communities, thus providing our residents with further savings on their monthly bill.

City staff has received interest from private vendors looking to use "clean" green waste (not contaminated with non-organic materials) for sale and there may be other opportunities to use green waste for mulch or composting purposes. Many cities in Southern California have green waste programs and some even mulch or compost their green waste, including Santa Monica, San Fernando, Beverly Hills, Culver City and Los Angeles.

There are potentially positive environmental and economic impacts to developing and locating a green waste program in Long Beach. It would be helpful for the Council to learn more about the costs and benefits associated with a green waste program and whether it makes sense to add this facet to our waste management portfolio, given our current policy of sending all types of solid waste to SERRF.