

# Ecological Stewardship and Solid Waste

## Food Composting and Household Hazardous Waste

The Board will be working with its solid waste hauler, Bay View Refuse and Recycling, on possible amendments to the existing contract to provide residents with food composting and providing more convenient disposal of household hazardous waste. A survey, conducted by the District in 2018, revealed strong support from residents to add food composting. At present, residents must take household hazardous waste to the Household Hazardous Waste Facility (HHWF) in Richmond and there is no option for community composting.

## Impact of Changes in Recycling and Draft State Requirements on Organics

There are two major factors that will influence future garbage rates. First, with Asian countries rejecting recyclables – both paper and plastic – there will be increased costs to process these materials and “contaminated” loads will be rejected. Recyclables can be contaminated by liquid residues from metal, plastic, or glass containers and rainwater. Some jurisdictions are refusing to collect or charging residential customers whose recyclables are contaminated. Second, CalRecycle, the state agency with authority to regulate solid waste, has draft regulations which will require substantial increases in diversion of organic matter from landfills. Currently, there is a shortage of composting facilities. New facilities must be brought into operation, with a resulting increase in cost to process green waste.

## Background on 2018 Food Composting Survey

Bay View sent out approximately 2,200 survey cards with the May 2018 invoice asking residents if they wanted expanded garbage service to include weekly pickups of food waste along with green waste. To control vermin, food waste must be picked up weekly. This means that Kensington would move from 24 to 52 pickups/year for green waste. A total of 779 responses were received with 507 wanting the service now, 249 wanting the service in 2012, and 23 either having no response or objected to implementing the service at all.

## Factors Affecting Rates

Rate are a combination of collection and post-collection handling and depend on three main factors:

- **Labor.** Labor and workers compensation costs are major factors for setting rates. Fully automatic haulers use trucks that pickup carts with a side arm and dumps the content into the top of the truck. These trucks can be operated by a single employee and only occasional need to get out of the truck. These haulers have lower workers compensation claims because there are reduced injuries to workers. Bay View uses a “semi-automatic” system where its employees transfer wastes from our containers into containers that can be lifted onto the back of their trucks. The system employed by Bay View is more labor intensive and physically demanding on its employees than the side arm system.

Piedmont uses a semi-automatic system like Bay View’s in which containers are brought by workers and lifted onto the back of the truck and emptied. According to the [Piedmont staff report](#), four bidders met with the city, but only their current provider responded with a proposal in 2017. Waste Management explained its decision not to bid was the requirement for backyard service because, “injury rates create significant personal and financial risk, generating a need for significant rate increases to potentially mitigate this risk.” Piedmont streets were described as narrow and winding

in hilly terrain. Piedmont accepted the bid from its current service company and garbage rates essentially doubled in 2018 with an additional charge of \$42/month for backyard service.

- **Large Commercial Areas.** Areas with large commercial and/or industrial customers can use the income from those businesses to offset residential rates. Kensington has only two small commercial areas.
- **Hard to Serve Areas.** Servicing areas with winding, narrow, and hilly streets take more time. Most jurisdictions charge more for “hard-to-serve” areas, [defined](#) as areas in hilly terrain or narrow streets, descriptions that relate to much of Kensington.
- **Green Waste.** Most jurisdictions limit customers to the amount of green waste that will be picked up without additional charge.
- **Contaminated Recyclables.** Jurisdictions are starting to not pickup or to charge residents to dispose of recyclables that are contaminated with food residue or water.

#### Comparison to 2019 Rates in Nearby Areas

Albany, El Cerrito, and Berkeley all use mechanized pickup of waste, with limitations or additional charges, for backyard service and green waste.

	<b>Kensington</b>	<a href="#">Albany</a>	<a href="#">El Cerrito</a>	<a href="#">Berkeley</a>	Oakland*	<a href="#">Piedmont**</a> 2018
Service	Semi-Automatic	Automatic	Automatic	Automatic	Semi-Automatic	Semi-Automatic
20 gallon	\$43.61	\$39.15	\$37.63	\$27.30	\$43.93	<b>\$79.84</b>
20 gallon with backyard	\$43.61	<b>\$55.02</b>	Only if requested and supported by a note from a doctor	Exemption for seniors and disabled	<b>\$88.39</b>	<b>\$112.17</b>
32/35 gallon	\$47.61	\$43.84	<b>\$49.63</b>	\$43.66	\$49.88	<b>\$84.60</b>
32 gallon with backyard	\$47.61	<b>\$59.71</b>	Only if requested and supported by a note from a doctor	Exemption for seniors and disabled	<b>\$94.34</b>	<b>\$126.93</b>
Additional 64-gall Yard Waste	\$0	\$54	N/A	Limited to one cart (additional containers are 20% less than the cost of comparable garbage container)	\$16.34	N/A

\*Note: Oakland will provide a warning for the first two incidents of compost or recycling contamination. A third incident within 6 months will result in a \$25 fine and a fourth incident will result in a \$50 fine.

\*\*Note: 2019 Piedmont rates were not available as of August 2019

## Comparison to Rates in Central Contra Costa County

Rates in several areas of Central Contra Costa County are posted on the [RecycleSmart](#) website with higher rates for areas of narrow and winding streets. Significantly, those other jurisdictions charge for additional green waste beyond the one 64- or 96-gallon wheeled cart that residents in those areas must use. Kensington is considered a High Fire Hazard area and it is beneficial to have green waste removed.

### 2019 Rates for 20-Gallon Service

	Kensington	Danville	Lafayette	Moraga	Orinda	Walnut Creek
Service	Semi-Automatic	Automatic	Automatic	Automatic	Automatic	Automatic
20-gallon – hard-to serve areas	\$43.61	\$37.24	<b>\$44.60</b>	\$30.66	<b>\$60.57</b>	\$20.03
With backyard service	\$43.61	<b>\$48.18</b>	<b>\$55.54</b>	\$41.60	<b>\$71.51</b>	\$30.97
Additional 64-gall Yard Waste	\$0	<b>\$6.97</b>	<b>\$6.97</b>	<b>\$6.97</b>	<b>\$6.97</b>	<b>\$6.97</b>

### 2019 Rates for 32-Gallon Service

	Kensington	Danville	Lafayette	Moraga	Orinda	Walnut Creek
32-gallon – hard to serve areas	\$47.61	\$39.91	<b>\$49.09</b>	\$35.40	<b>\$65.79</b>	\$23.64
With backyard service	\$47.61	<b>\$50.85</b>	<b>\$60.03</b>	\$46.34	<b>\$76.73</b>	\$34.58
Additional 64-gall Yard Waste	\$0	<b>\$6.97</b>	<b>\$6.97</b>	<b>\$6.97</b>	<b>\$6.97</b>	<b>\$6.97</b>

## Household Hazardous Waste

Kensington residents must transport household hazardous waste to the Household Hazardous Waste Facility (HHWF) located at 101 Pittsburg Avenue in Richmond (Open Wednesday through Saturday 9:00 am –12 pm and 12:30-4:00 pm). Kensington residents are asked to get a permit from Bay View, (510) 237-4614, before using the facility. The purpose of the permit is for Bay View to keep track of the number of residents bringing hazardous waste to the HHWF.

Kensington garbage rates include the costs that Bay View pays for residents disposing of household hazardous wastes brought to the HHWF in Richmond. The HHWF charges by carload, so before going to the HHWF, consider asking neighbors if they have any materials to bring to the HHWF to help lower garbage rates. In addition, consider alternate places which accept certain materials such as the following (as of September 2019,):

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- Home Depot accepts compact fluorescent bulbs (CFBs)
- Best Buy will accept electronic waste for recycling regardless of where you bought it, how old it is or who made it. It may even offer a discount on the purchase of new electronic equipment when old equipment is brought in for recycling.
- El Cerrito Recycling Center and Best Buy accept (certain) batteries and electronics.
- Kelly Moore on San Pablo in Albany accepts paint in original cans with labels

## **Joint Powers Agreement for Certain Areas of Contra Costa County for Managing Household Hazardous Waste**

In the early 1990's, several cities and the County on behalf of certain unincorporated areas, entered into a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) for the post-collection management of garbage as well as hazardous waste. For reasons that have been lost by time, Kensington did not join. The voting members of the JPA are Richmond with three votes and El Cerrito, Hercules, Pinole, and San Pablo with one vote each. The County is a non-voting member representing certain unincorporated areas of West Contra Costa County (El Sobrante, North Richmond, Tara Hills, Rollingwood, East Richmond Heights, Bayview, and Montalvin Manor).

Both the JPA and Bay View Refuse have contracts with Republic Services which manages the transfer station for solid waste, the compost facility, and the HHWF in Richmond. The JPA also has a small satellite collection site for household hazardous waste at the El Cerrito Recycling Center, which is limited to residents of jurisdictions which are members of the JPA. In order for Kensington residents to use this facility, the Center would need to allocate more space for storage and all members of the JPA must agree.

The JPA offers a few household hazardous waste days in different locations within its member areas where JPA residents can drop off hazardous waste. Kensington could host its own event although the cost is estimated to be on the order of \$30,000-70,000. The JPA also offers senior citizens hazardous waste pickup at certain times. Bay View is exploring this option for *all* Kensington residents.

### **Producing Less Landfill**

Here are some suggestions to keep items out of the landfill:

- **Avoid Contaminating Recyclables**
  - Store recyclables in a closed container to prevent rain from entering the container
  - Rinse out glass, metal and plastic containers and let them dry before placing them with other recyclables
  
- **Refuse Plastic**
  - Don't put produce in plastic bags at stores
  - Reuse plastic bags when buying products in bulk
  - Buy products in bulk using refillable containers (check out Fillgood in Albany, 828 San Pablo Ave, Suite 106, Tue - Wed - Thu: 12pm - 5pm and Sat: 10am - 2pm)