



SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Date: 2/26/2026
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Location: Teleconference and
City Hall Downtown Conference Room, 1st Floor
701 Laurel St., Menlo Park, CA 94025

A. Call To Order

Chair McKenna called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

B. Roll Call

Present: Angiel, Hernandez, Hedley, Kissel, Chair McKenna, Vice Chair Meyer
Absent: Hill
Staff: Sustainability Manager Rachael Londer, Management Analyst II Liz Tapia

C. Regular Business

C1. Approve the January 21, 2026, Environmental Quality Commission meeting minutes (Attachment)

ACTION: Motion and second (Hedley/ Kissel), to approve the January 21, 2026 Environmental Quality Commission meeting minutes with updates to item D2, passed 5-1-1 (McKenna abstaining, Hill absent)

C2. Discuss efforts related to Senate Bill 1383 to reduce organic waste (Attachment)

Chair McKenna introduced the item.

Rethink Waste Recycling and Compliance Program Manager Reagan Chung made a presentation (Attachment).

San Mateo County Sustainability Specialist Jack Steinmann made a presentation (Attachment).

The Commission received clarification on requirements for single-family homes, accepted plastics, compostable materials, types of waivers, extra edible food program costs, grant funding, disposable foodware and education programs.

The Commission discussed proper pet waste disposal, compost bags, plastic bags, composting facilities and colored containers for sorting garbage, recycling and organics at city facilities.

C3. Food Systems Ad Hoc Subcommittee report out (Attachment)

Chair McKenna introduced the item.

Commissioners Angiel, Hedley, Hernandez and Chair McKenna made the presentation (Attachment).

The Commission received clarification on voucher amounts, subsidies and funding, eligibility, Fresh

Approach programs and community garden location.

- Brian Schmidt spoke on concerns related to food emissions and alternative food options.
- Jeff Schmidt spoke on concerns related to the Environmental Justice Element and partnerships.

The Commission discussed City plant-based food policies at events, updating the Climate Action Plan, partnering with Ravenswood School District and the Environmental Justice Element.

ACTION: Motion and second (Angiel/ Hedley), to recommend that staff advance recommendation 1 through 10 presented by the food systems ad hoc subcommittee as part of Environmental Justice Element implementation, to consider adding East Palo Alto as a collaborator to recommendation 9 and to add additional recommendation 11 to include the impact of food in the next iteration of the Climate Action Plan, passed 6-0-1 (Hill absent).

The Commission took a recess at 7:36 p.m.

The Commission reconvened at 7:41 p.m.

C4. Update on the electric vehicle (EV) charging rate study (Attachment)

Chair McKenna introduced the item.

Management Analyst II Liz Tapia and Sustainability Manager Rachael Londer made the presentation (Attachment).

The Commissioner received clarification on current user fees, overnight parking, escalation fee, fees by location, level 3 charger rates and rate comparison.

- Brian Schmidt spoke in support of the proposed fees and reviewing fees annually.

The Commission discussed station utilization, escalation fee, overnight charging and overnight parking.

ACTION: Motion and second (McKenna/ Kissel), to recommend that City Council approve staff's recommendation to update the EV charging rates in the master fee schedule to .41 cents per kWh for Level 2 chargers and .51 per kWh for Level 3 chargers, eliminate the session fee, consider a pilot to waive the overnight parking ordinance for EVs that are plugged in and eliminate escalation fee from 12 a.m. to 6 a.m. to allow overnight parking for EV charging in city parking lots, passed 6-0-1 (Hill absent).

D. Reports and Announcements

D1. Reports and announcements from staff and Commissioners

Sustainability Manager Rachael Londer reported out on the City Council priorities survey closing March 4, City Council priority setting session March 21, community funding program applications due March 5, Bay Area Regional Energy Network (BayREN) workshop March 18, Efficiency And Sustainable Energy (EASE) Home Program, advisory body recruitment and Love our Earth Festival April 25.

Chair McKenna reported out on Peninsula Clean Energy community feedback forum March 4 and Bay Area Air District webinar on March 3.

E. Informational items

- E1. 2025-26 Environmental Quality Commission work plan (Attachment)

G. Adjournment

Chair McKenna adjourned the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

Management Analyst II Liz Tapia

Minutes approved at the March 18, 2026 Environmental Quality Commission meeting



A Public Agency

Senate Bill (SB) 1383 Compliance, Menlo Park

February 26, 2026

Reagan Chung
Recycling and Compliance Program Manager



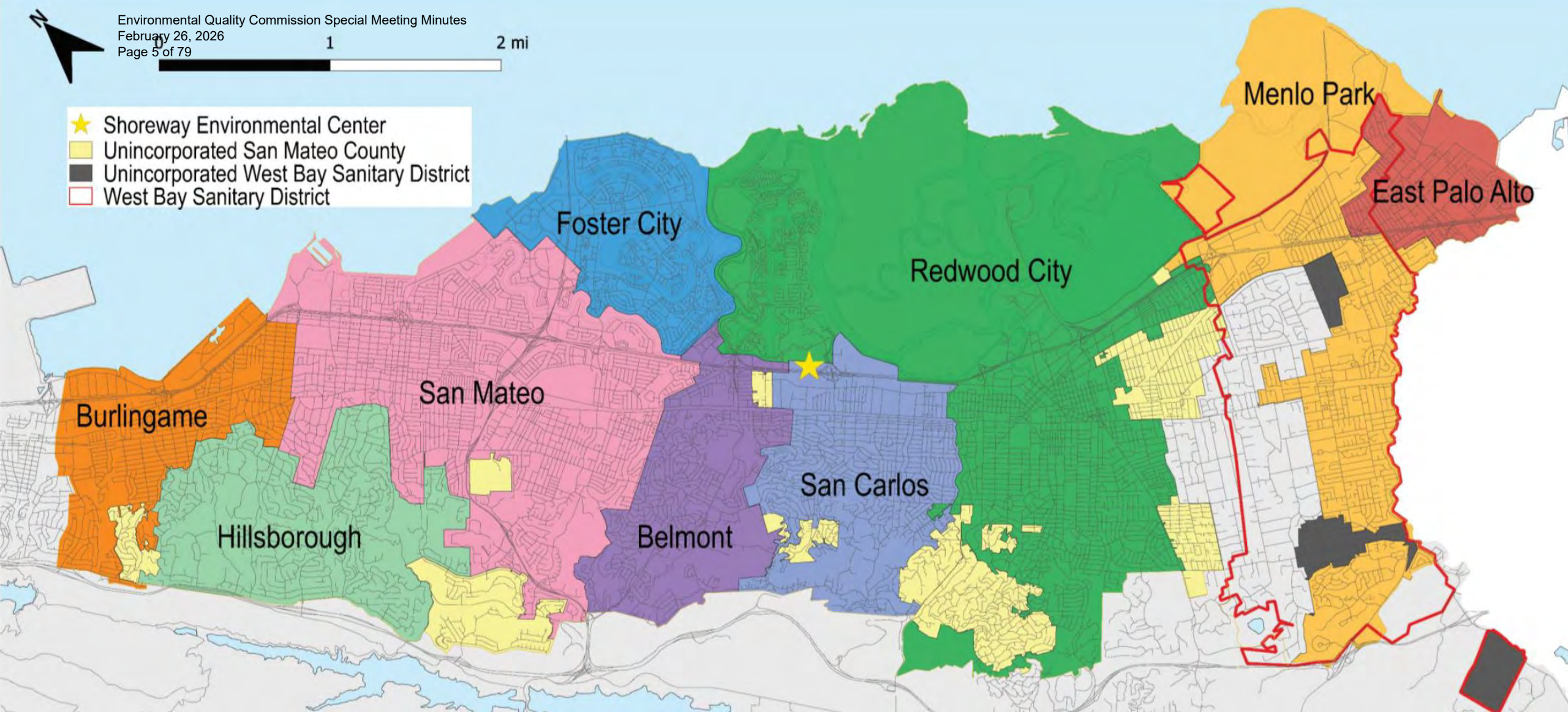


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- ★ Shoreway Environmental Center
- Unincorporated San Mateo County
- Unincorporated West Bay Sanitary District
- West Bay Sanitary District



Who Are We?

RethinkWaste is a joint powers authority formed by eleven local government jurisdictions (**City of Belmont, City of Burlingame, City of East Palo Alto, City of Foster City, Town of Hillsborough, City of Menlo Park, City of Redwood City, City of San Carlos, City of San Mateo, the County of San Mateo and the West Bay Sanitary District**) in San Mateo County, California.



Our Joint Powers Authority (JPA)

RethinkWaste is governed by a [Board of Directors](#) comprised of one elected official from each of our [Member Agencies](#). The [staff](#) is managed by Executive Director Joe La Mariana who reports directly to the Board. Our Board and staff are responsible to the rate payers.





Shoreway Environmental Center

IN
OPERATION
SINCE
1982

- 16 acres in San Carlos – Publicly Owned
- Handles 450,000 tons of waste per year
- **Public Recycling Center; Transfer Station; Materials Recovery Facility (MRF)**
- Recology San Mateo County & South Bayside Industries offices & maintenance facilities

Transfer Station

580

tons of **garbage**/day
or 210,000 tons/yr.

303

tons of **compost**/day
or 110,000 tons/yr.

124

tons of **construction
and demotion
debris**/day or 45,000
tons/yr.



Materials Recovery Facility (MRF)



292

tons of recyclables/day or 76,000 tons/yr.

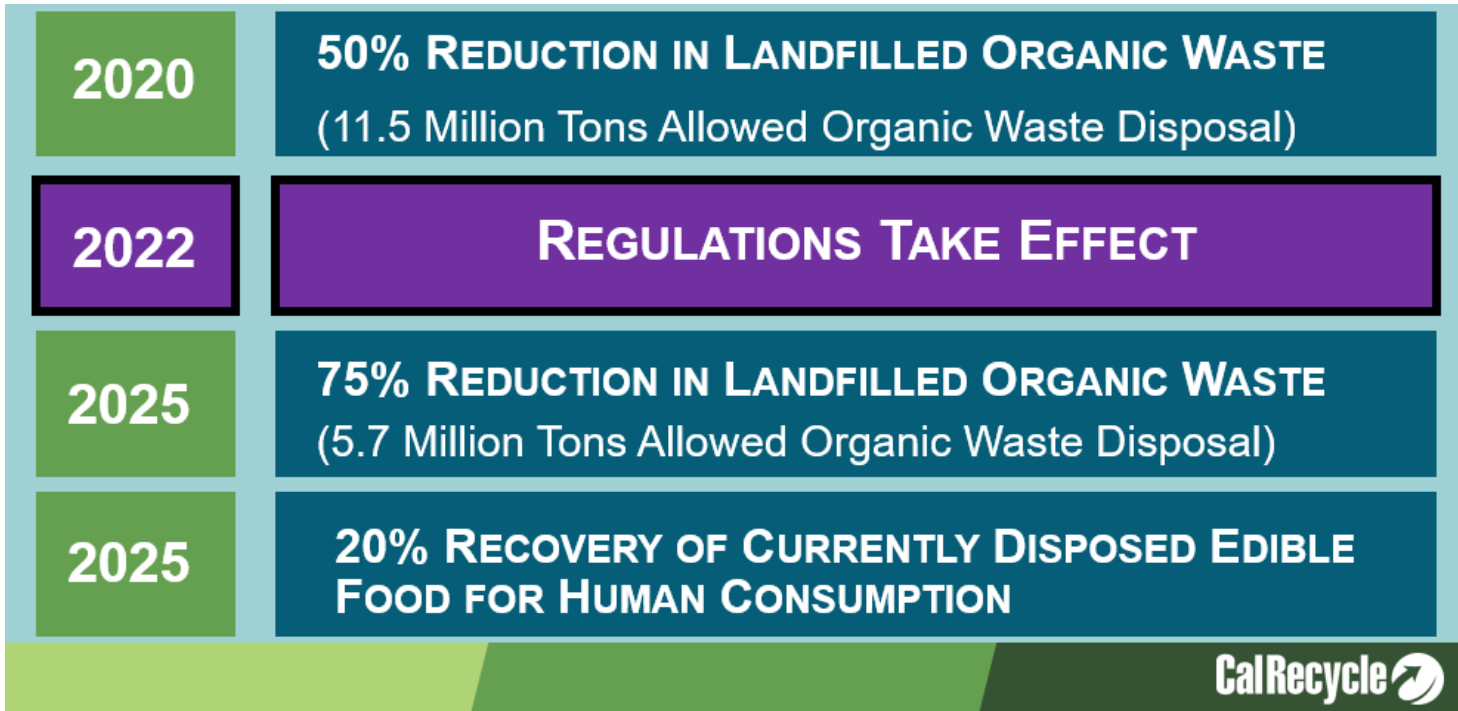
What is SB 1383: Reducing Short-Lived Climate Pollutants in California

- What does SB 1383 mean for residents, businesses, and apartments/condos?

Organics service is required for all customers.



SB 1383 Timeline and Goals



- Reduce organic waste disposal 75% by 2025.
- Rescue 20% of surplus edible food for those that need it by 2025.
- In San Mateo County almost 71% of all waste landfilled by San Mateo County is compost material. Meeting the goals of SB 1383 for 75% requires diversion of about 292,000 tons per year.

What Do Businesses and Apartments in Menlo Park Have to Do?

Step 1: Subscribe to Organics Collection

- Subscribe to and participate in organics collection service. This means providing organic waste collection services for:
 - Employees
 - Tenants
 - Customers

OR

- Self-haul organic waste to a specified composting facility, community composting program, or other collection activity or program.



What Do Businesses and Apartments in Menlo Park Have to Do?

Step 2: Provide Internal Containers

- Provide collection containers for organic waste and recyclables in all areas where disposal containers are provided for customers, except in restrooms.
- If your business does not generate any of the materials that would be collected in a specific container, then you do not have to provide that specific container.



ORGANICS WASTE
RECYCLING



SINGLE STREAM
RECYCLING

What Do Businesses and Apartments in Menlo Park Have to Do?

Step 4: Educate

- To reduce contamination, businesses must provide education to employees, tenants, and customers regarding **how to properly sort organic material into the correct containers.**

Businesses must periodically:

- Inspect organic waste containers for contamination
- Inform employees if containers are contaminated
- Instruct employees about how to properly sort material into the correct containers.

What Do Businesses and Apartments in Menlo Park Have to Do?

Step 4: Educate (continued)

- Supply and allow access to an adequate number, size, and location of containers with the correct labels or container colors.
- Annually educate employees, contractors, customers, and tenants on how to properly sort organic waste into the correct bins, AND
- Provide information to new tenants within 14 days of occupation of the premises (for MFDs/Apartments).

COMMON QUESTIONS

Is compost service required?
Yes. Starting Jan 1, 2022, compost service will be required by California state law. Jurisdictions have the authority to assess a fee for non-compliance.

Will my property receive educational materials to pass out to residents?
Yes. Recology pulls and other educational materials are available to residents at no charge.

What if my apartment/condo complex doesn't have space for a compost bin?
Recology is available to meet on-site to assess the space and determine if there is opportunity to adjust service levels to accommodate a compost container.

Will my compost container smell?
Bagging your compost helps keep odors down and your cart or bin clean. Bags, made of paper or BPI-certified compostable material, are accepted. No plastic bags.

Learn more: RethinkWaste.org/SB1383

BIN & CART SIZES

SIZE	DEPTH	WIDTH	HEIGHT
33-Gallon	24.25"	19.25"	38.50"
44-Gallon	31.75"	24.25"	41.75"
55-Gallon	35.25"	29.75"	43.25"
1-Cubic Yard	29.00"	82.00"	39.00"
2-Cubic Yard	40.00"	82.00"	53.00"
3-Cubic Yard	47.00"	82.00"	62.00"

Weight limits apply. Sizes are approximate.

QUESTIONS?
Contact Recology's Waste Zero Team to learn more about compost and recycling programs.
650.595.3900
GreenYourBin@Recology.com
Recology.com
Para obtener información en español, visite: RethinkWaste.org
有關中文信息，請訪問：
RethinkWaste.org
Printed on 100% post consumer paper. Please recycle again! 08/21

SENATE BILL 1383
New California Law Requires Apartments, Condos & Townhouses to Compost

Recology
San Mateo County
WASTE ZERO
A Public Agency

Rethink waste
San Mateo County
WASTE ZERO
A Public Agency

Download the Recology Mobile App for a convenient way to check service days & access www.recology.com

Recology
San Mateo County
WASTE ZERO
225 Shoreway Rd
San Carlos, CA 94070

Recology.com
(650) 595-3900

Para obtener información en español, visite: Recology.com
有關中文信息，請訪問：
Recology.com

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MULTI-FAMILY/APARTMENT AND CONDOMINIUM SERVICE GUIDE
FOR RESIDENTS OF: Belmont, Burlingame, East Palo Alto, Foster City, Menlo Park, Redwood City, San Carlos, San Mateo, Parts of Unincorporated San Mateo County, and West Bay Sanitary District

Rethink waste
San Mateo County
WASTE ZERO
A Public Agency

RECYCLE
Put clean and dry recyclable items loose in the blue container EXCEPT for shredded paper—place that in a paper bag labeled "shredded paper".
PLEASE DON'T BAG YOUR RECYCLING

- Glass Bottles & Jars
- Plastic Containers, Bottles & Tubs
- Metal Cans & Clean Aluminum
- Clean Paper Products and Cardboard

RECYCLING "BUDDY BAGS"
These are available in clear recycle bags until you're ready to empty them into the cart. Simply use the goal for food scraps and food/beverage soiled paper, then empty the contents into the cart. **GREEN COMPOST CONTAINER**

PLEASE NO PLASTIC PACKAGING OR FLIMSY PLASTICS!

COMPOST
Put food scraps, food & beverage soiled paper, and yard/landscape materials in the green container. **NO glass and plastics (including bioplastics).**

- Food Scraps
- Yard Trimmings
- Food & Beverage Soiled Paper Products
- Kitchen Pail

Residents are provided such bins at no charge, to make it more convenient to collect compostable materials at home. Simply use the goal for food scraps and food/beverage soiled paper, then empty the contents into the cart. **GREEN COMPOST CONTAINER**

WHAT IF YOUR COMPLEX DOESN'T HAVE A COMPOST PROGRAM?
Start! Our program requires compost services for all complexes. See www.recology.com for more information about mandatory organic collection.

LANDFILL
Put non-recyclable, non-compostable, and non-toxic items in the black container:

- Snack Wrappers, Chip Bags, Juice/Soup Boxes
- Foam Packaging & Bubble Wrap
- Plastic Wrap & Bags, Plastic Cutlery, Black Plastic, PLA & Bioplastics
- Diapers, Pet Waste
- Broken Ceramics, Mirrors, Toys

BAG YOUR WASTE & KEEP CONTAINER LIDS CLOSED!
Please remember to bag your waste and keep lids closed. This will help minimize odor and prevent bins and carts from getting into your garage. Need more help knowing which items go into what bin? Get answers at: www.recology.com

What Do Businesses and Apartments in Menlo Park Have to Do?

Step 5: Properly Sort!

Employees, contactors, tenants, and customers **must properly sort organic materials into the correct containers.**



RethinkWaste's Education and Outreach on Behalf of Menlo Park

COMPOST
COMPOSTA | 堆肥
(DESECHOS ORGANICOS)

NO:

- Bio-based & PLA Materials
- Bottles, Cans, & Glass
- Construction Material
- Diapers & Pet Waste
- Dirt, Rocks, & Sod
- Hazardous Waste
- Large/Long Tree Branches & Stumps
- Liquids & Grease
- Palm Tree Leaves
- Plastic Wrap, Cutlery, & Bags
- Plywood & Painted Wood
- Rubber Gloves

Food Scraps, Meat, Bones, Dairy

Food & Beverage Soiled Paper Products

Yard Trimmings, Holiday Trees, Clean Untreated Wood Scraps

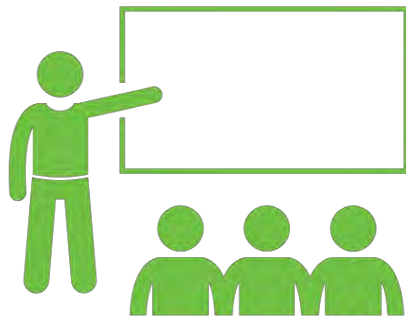
- Trainings and additional signage
- Annual information about your waste collection services

Recology.com | RethinkWaste.org
Looking for a particular item? Visit WhatBin.com.



Getting In Compliance Today

- On-site waste analysis by Recology Team
- Trainings + presentations
- Distribution of internal containers + signage



Menlo Park's SB 1383 Waiver Process

- Starting January 1, 2022, all businesses and apartments are required to ***subscribe to compost and recycling collection services***
 - Unless they have an approved waiver or an alternative service (such as back-haul, self-haul, shared service, or third-party service provider).



There are two types of waivers offered

- **Minimal generation waivers (De Minimis)**
 - Total solid waste collection is more than 2 cubic yards per week, and the amount of organics waste generated is less than 20 gallons per week.
 - Total solid waste collection is less than 2 cubic yards per week, and the amount of organics waste generated is less than 10 gallons per week.
- **Physical Space Waiver** - if your business premises lacks adequate space for organics waste containers, you may qualify for a Physical Space Waiver.

Please visit RethinkWaste.org/waivers
For more information and for the waiver application.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

CONTACT US

SCHEDULE A SHOREWAY
TOUR

ORGANICS COLLECTION WAIVER

Starting January 1, 2022, all businesses and multi-family properties (apartments/condominiums) are required to subscribe to compost and recycling collection services, unless they have an approved waiver or an alternative service (such as back-haul, self-haul, shared service, or third-party service provider).

There are two types of waivers offered:

1. Minimal generation waivers (De Minimis)

- Total solid waste collection is **more** than 2 cubic yards per week, and the amount of organics generated is less than 20 gallons per week.
- Total solid waste collection is **less** than 2 cubic yards per week, and the amount of organics generated is less than 10 gallons per week.

2. Physical space waivers

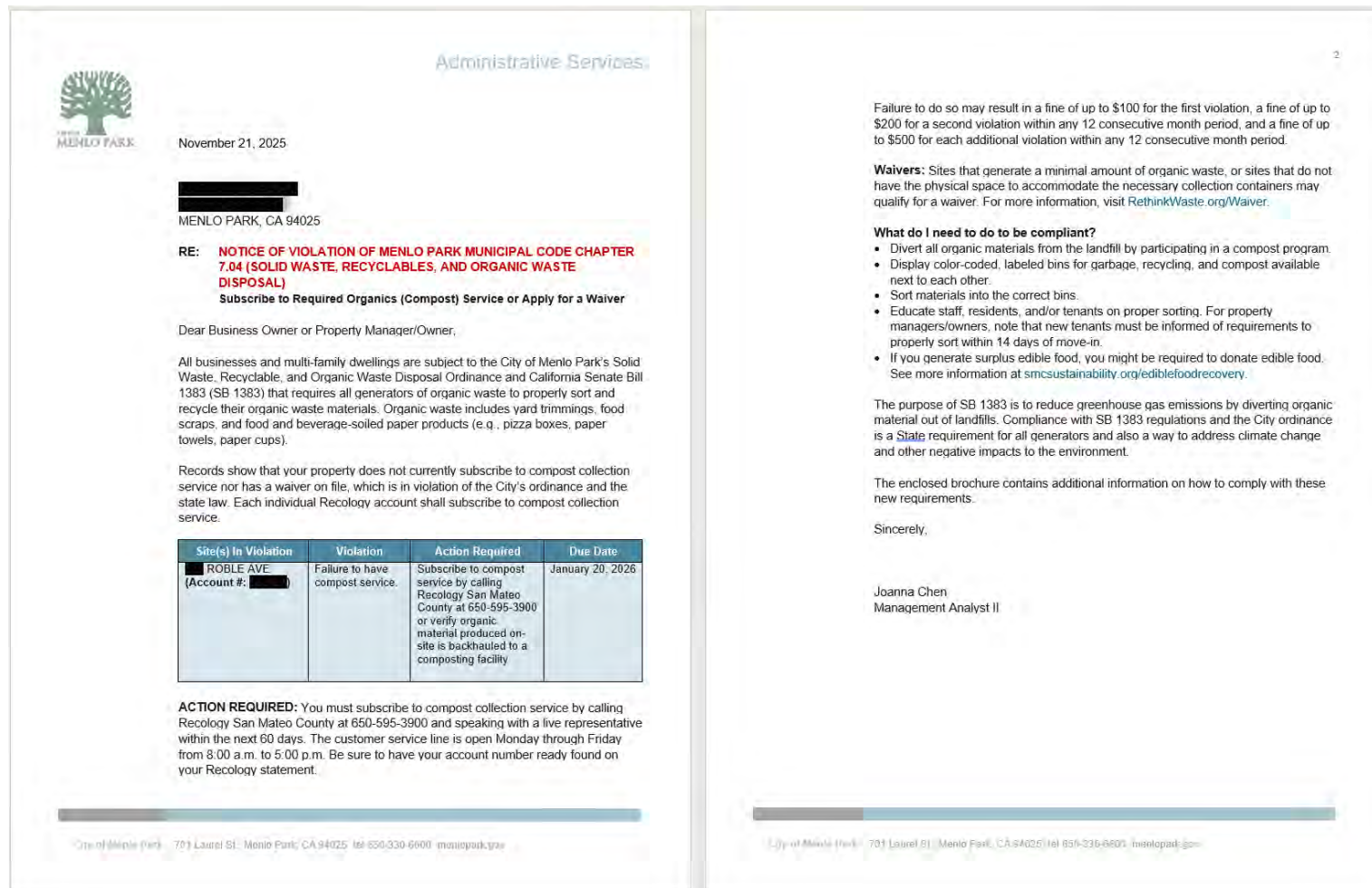
- Physical space constraints prohibit the addition of compost and recycling containers.

Customers with an approved waiver will not be required to subscribe to compost and recycling service for a 5-year period.

[Start waiver application](#)

Menlo Park's Notice of Violation (NOV)

- If your business or apartment receives a letter or Notice of Violation from your local city government, it means **you are required to subscribe to organics waste service. There are no exceptions.**
- Further delay may result in penalties enforced by that local city government.



How is Menlo Park doing?

2025 Quarter 1	Compliance %
Apartments	89%
Commercial Businesses	86%

2026 Quarter 1	Compliance %
Apartments	97%
Commercial Businesses	93%

*Info provided by Alex Rinear at Recology on 2/17/2026



Contact Information

Reagan Chung, Recycling and Compliance Program Manager

650-610-1625

rchung@rethinkwaste.org

Manpreet Chandok, Public Outreach Fellow

mchandok@rethinkwaste.org

Connect with us!

 [Facebook.com/RethinkWaste](https://www.facebook.com/RethinkWaste)

 [X.com/RethinkWaste](https://www.x.com/RethinkWaste)

 [Instagram.com/RethinkWasteOrg](https://www.instagram.com/RethinkWasteOrg)



Reducing Waste through Edible Food Recovery

February 26, 2026

Jack Steinmann
Sustainability Specialist, Waste Reduction



Building a sustainable community that fulfills the needs of the present and the future



What Is Edible Food Recovery?



How Do We Define Edible Food Recovery?

Collection of safe, surplus food that would otherwise go to waste and redistributing it to people in need.

Led by Food Recovery Organizations with expertise in food safety and food insecurity.



What Is Edible Food

Food safe to eat, but not sold or used due to:

- Appearance
- Grade or size
- Surplus supply



What Is Not Edible Food

Food that is:

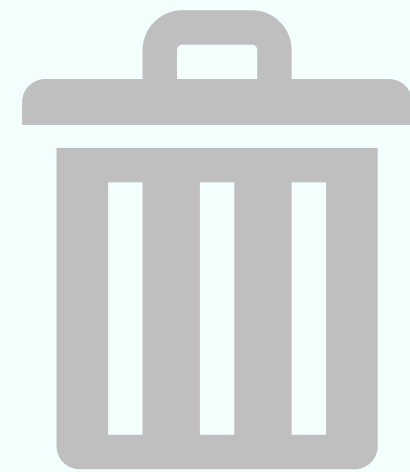
- Moldy or rotting food
- Contaminated or unsafe items
- Inedible scraps (peels, bones, shells)



How It Works



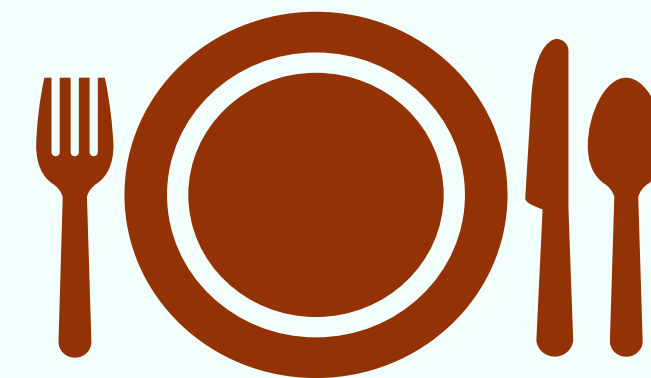
Why It's Important



Waste Reduction



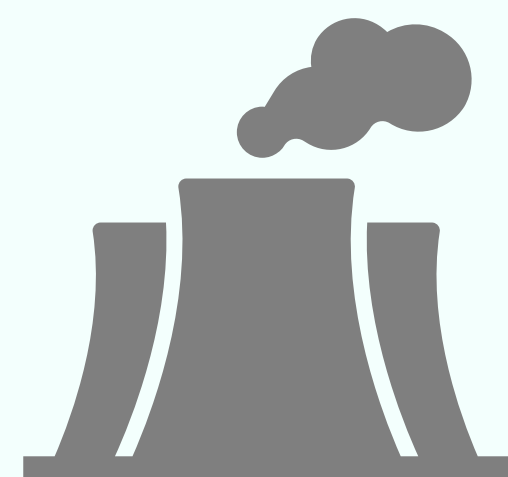
California disposes **23 million tons** of organic waste each year — food makes up 18%.



Food Insecurity



1 in 7 Californians — including 1 in 6 children — struggle with food insecurity.



Climate Impacts



Landfilled food creates **methane**, a **super-pollutant**.



Opportunity



Redirect surplus edible food to **feed people, not landfills**.

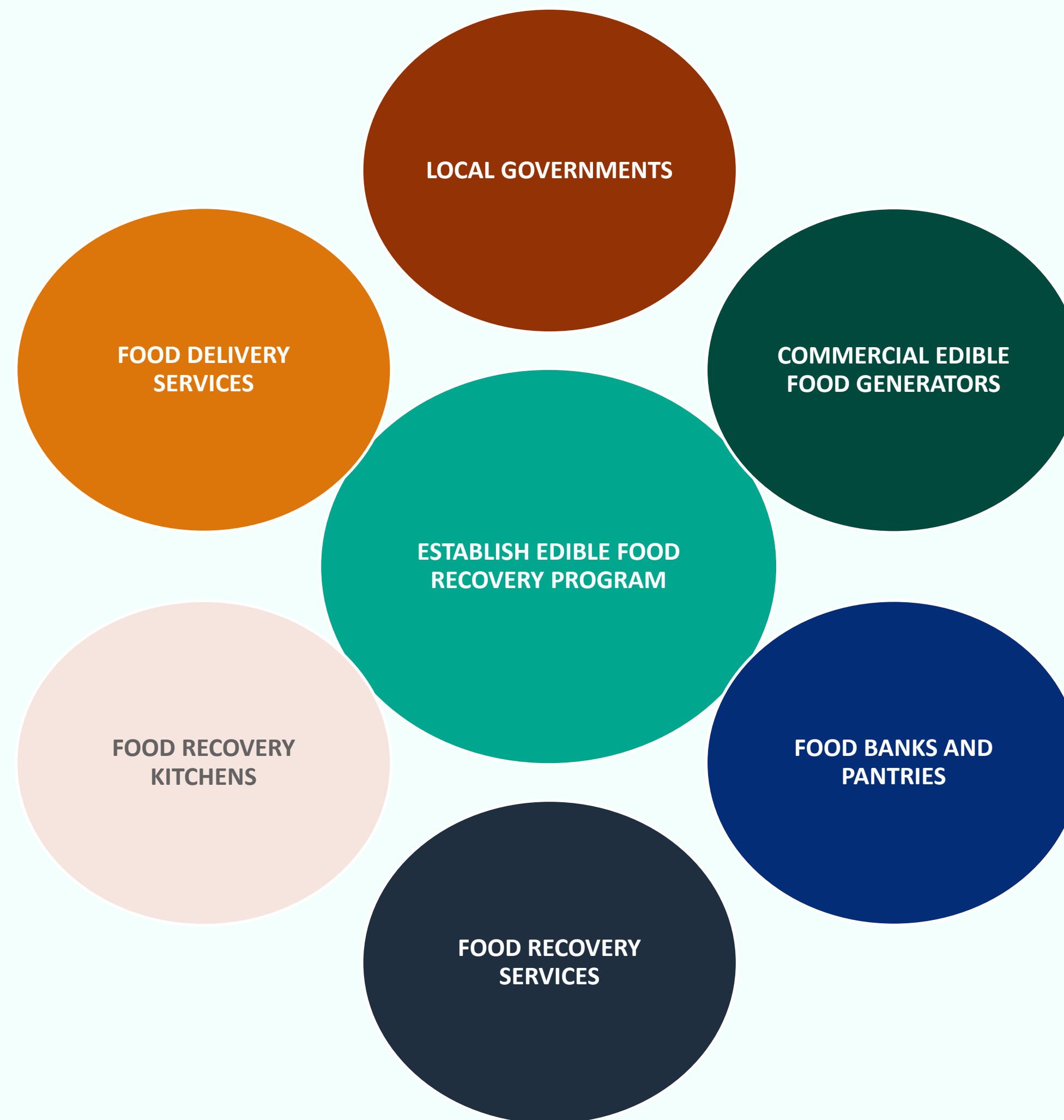


Driven By State Regulations

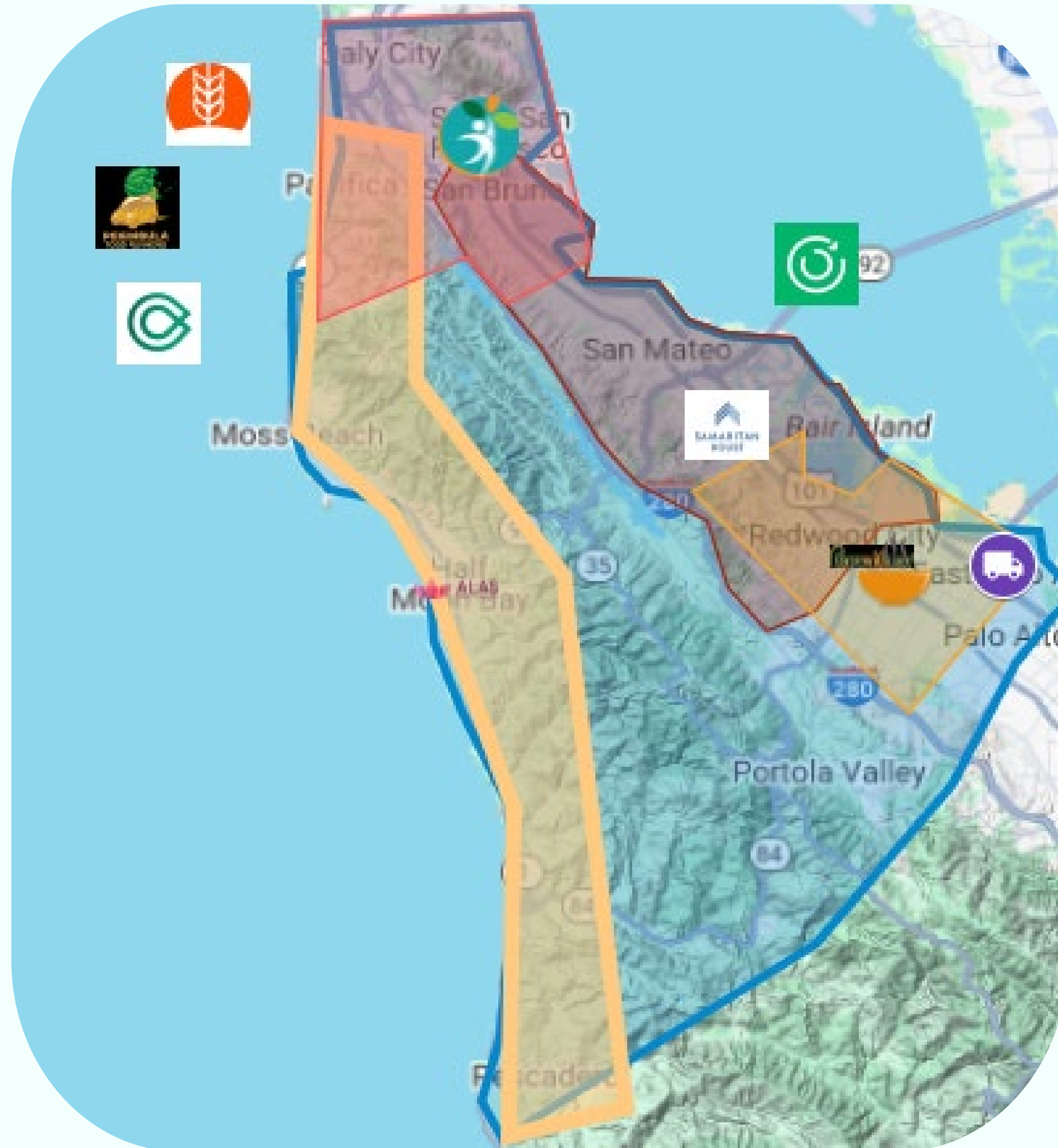


California adopted SB 1383 in 2016 to cut methane emissions, setting statewide goals by 2025:

- **75% reduction** of organic waste to landfill
- **20% increase** of surplus food recovered



San Mateo County Edible Food Recovery Program



The County of San Mateo Sustainability Department leads the countywide program on behalf of all cities and towns in the county.

Program

- Conduct outreach and technical assistance
- Audit businesses for compliance
- Maintain records
- Report to state

Capacity building

- Pilot projects

Coordinate with Food Recovery Organizations (see map)

- Copia
- Loaves and Fishes
- Peninsula Food Runners
- Replate
- Samaritan House
- Second Harvest of Silicon Valley Food Bank



Map: Service areas of food recovery organizations in San Mateo County

Countywide Community Impacts (2018-2024)



REDUCED EMISSIONS

Diverted **millions of pounds of food** from landfills, cutting emissions equivalent to removing **2,770 cars off the road.**



RECOVERED FOOD

32 million pounds of food recovered by food recovery organizations between 2020-2024!



INCREASED CAPACITY

\$3 million of investments in **trucks, storage, and equipment** expanded the ability to recover and distribute food across the County.



MORE FOOD ACCESS

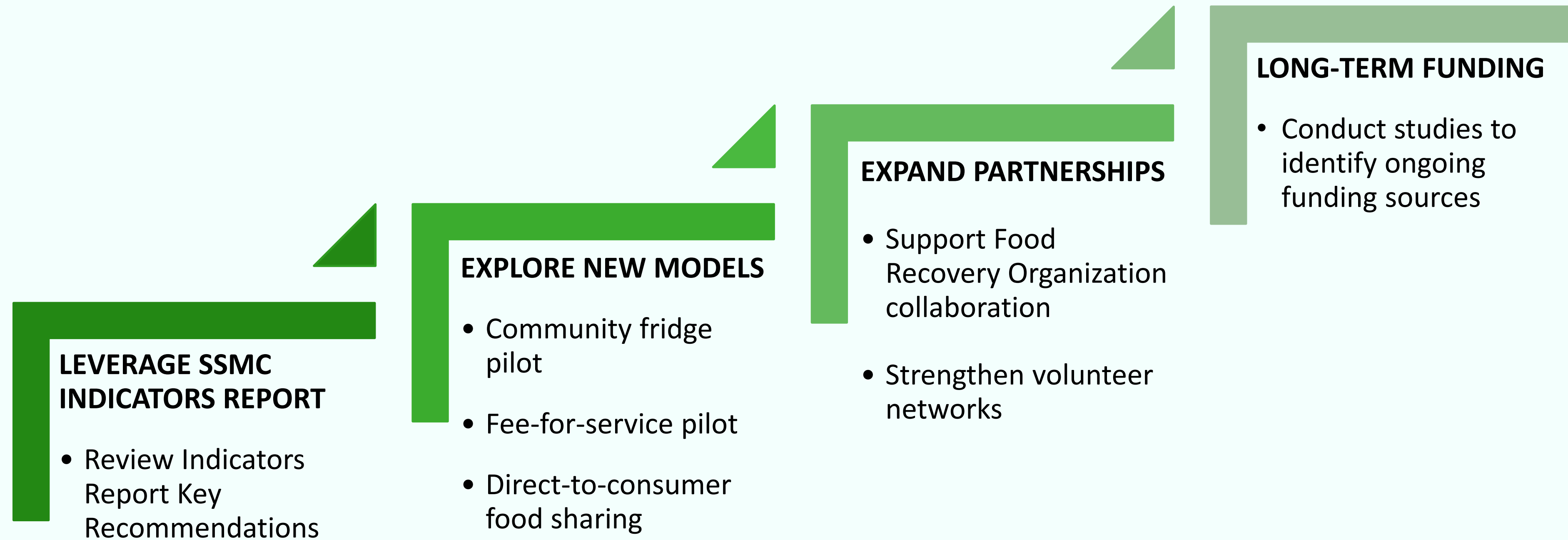
Increase of **fresh food reaching families in need**, helping reduce daily meal costs. Between 2020-2024; **27 million meals** worth of recovered food has been distributed to residents!



Building On The Current Program



Innovative next steps will require collaboration across jurisdictions, food recovery organizations, non-profits, and businesses.



Edible Food Recovery Pilots



Community Fridge

Pilot a new last-mile distribution channel for surplus edible food, strengthening local recovery systems and improving access for low-income residents.



Technical Assistance & Volunteer Support

Provide hands-on support to help food generators meet SB 1383 requirements. Support FROs recruit and manage volunteers.



Earned Revenue

Test a tech-enabled, food recovery revenue model in Burlingame that compensates nonprofits and creates a scalable system for SB 1383 compliance.



A Vision For A Sustainable County





Thank you.

Gordon Tong
Program Manager, Waste Reduction
gtong@smcgov.org

Food Systems Ad Hoc Subcommittee



Agenda

- Background
- Recommendations
- Appendix/Resources



Why Menlo Park Should Eat More Plants



- **Better Individual Health**
 - 40% reduction in heart disease risk
 - 10% lower overall stroke risk
 - Type 2 diabetes prevention and even reversal
 - Reduced risk of certain cancers
 - Promoting a healthy body weight
 - Reducing inflammation
 - Supporting immune function
- **Better Planetary Health**
 - Animal-based foods require more land and water and emit more GHGs, water and air pollution than plant-based foods
 - Raising cows emits high levels of methane and reduction is essential to meeting climate goals
- **Our Environmental Justice Element**

Environmental Justice (EJ) Element

Priority 2: Promote access to high quality and affordable food.

- Goal EJ4 is the second highest community-identified priority.
- Policy EJ4.1: Encourage adequate food access to fresh and healthy foods for all residents, particularly those in underserved communities.*
 - **EJ4.A: Increasing Food Security**
 - EJ4.B: Food Assistance Outreach
 - **EJ4.C: Food Options at City Events**
 - **EJ4.D: Healthy Food Markets**
 - **EJ4.E: Community Gardens**



* The ad hoc subcommittee has recommendations for the items above in bold (A, C, D, and E)

EJ4.A: Increasing Food Security

Work with grocery stores and online food service delivery and meal providers to increase access to high-quality affordable and healthy food (e.g., reduced or waived delivery service fees). Encourage and support the acceptance of SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), CalFresh, and other governmental food assistance programs that increase food security.



Recommendation for EJ4.A: Match CalFresh Benefits Spent on Produce

CalFresh Fruit & Veggie EBT Pilot Program

- Santa Clara, Alameda and other CA counties
- For every \$1 of CalFresh EBT spent on fresh fruits and vegetables receive \$1 back on EBT card
- Requirements:
 - State Waiver to give supplemental benefits
 - Implementation Partner to engage and support merchant is essential
 - Software updates and coding needed for POS
- Implementation Models:
 - credit for future purchase
 - immediate discount of 50%
 - points through loyalty program

Store Specific Vouchers (short term solution)

- \$50/month to approved residents through an application program



EJ4.C: Food Options at City Events

Encourage healthy food options, including vegan and vegetarian options, at municipal buildings and City-participating events. Encourage sourcing food from local small businesses.

Why: Plant-based food options at City events demonstrates Menlo Park's leadership: its commitment to addressing climate change, implementing the EJ Element, honoring our city's commitment to inclusivity, and ensuring that food provided is nourishing to all residents.



Recommendation for EJ4.C: Food Options at City Events

Adopt an ordinance committing the city to **provide plant-based food as the default** at all City-participating events.

- Include **binding procurement standards** that institutionalize sustainability, equity, and health across all purchasing decisions. Be sure to include the following language:
 - Ensure that food providers incorporate educational materials/displays on the benefits of plant-based foods and display them where food is served
 - Prevent food waste through careful planning and donation of any leftover food
 - Prioritize local foods/vendors and healthy whole foods
 - Prioritize reusables as practical or compostables (no single-use plastic)
 - Set up water stations to eliminate plastic water bottles
 - Examples in appendix



If an **incremental approach** is needed:

- **Adopt a resolution** to prioritize nutritious and delicious plant-based meals at City events
- As momentum builds, **transition to plant-based meals as the default**, with meat/dairy available by request, with a binding ordinance to follow.

Recommendation for EJ4.C: Food Options for City Programs

Ensure plant-based menu choices are available at every meal at the City's child care, educational programs, and Senior Center

- Incorporate **weekly menu initiatives** such as “Green Mondays” or “Plant-Powered Fridays” to normalize plant-based meals and build support
- Create **educational materials/displays** on the benefits of plant-based foods and display them where food is served
- As momentum builds, **transition to plant-based meals as the default**, with meat/dairy available by request, with a binding ordinance to follow.



Recommendation for EJ4.C and CAP: Plant-Based Education

In addition to educating the public at City events and programs, **engage the community** about how a plant-forward diet can lead to **better health, cost savings, and a healthier planet**. Ideas for engagement:

- Library displays
- Drawing contests
- Social media/city newsletters
- Community celebrations
- Engage local restaurants and chefs to add plant-based dishes to their menus for a “Plant-Forward Week/Month”
- Example - Mountain View launched a Plant-Based Eating Initiative with recipe submissions, curated resources, and public food events



EJ4.D: Healthy Food Markets

Encourage and facilitate the establishment and operation of a farmer's market(s), farm stands, ethnic markets, and mobile health food markets in underserved communities. Conduct widespread outreach and engagement to advertise these markets.



Recommendation for EJ4.D Relaunch Belle Haven Farmers' Market

Pilot mobile farmers' market to start

- Fresh Approach can provide truck and logistics, coordinating with neighboring communities (e.g. North Fair Oaks)
- Hold market weekly and complement with workshops, tabling, etc.
- Implement Market Match to increase affordability with 50% off produce
- Belle Haven Action & Climate Resilient Communities can provide outreach - suggest school as best site

Consider expanding to larger “on the ground market” as demand grows.



Recommendation for EJ4.D: Gardening and Nutrition Education

Provide workshops in tandem with BH Farmers' Market

Fresh Approach offers:

- 16 week Veggie Rx curriculum and vouchers for produce at farmers' market
- Rain Garden Workshop with free rain barrels and home gardening kits/instruction (see slide 15)
- Cooking demonstrations (see image)
- Youth training and engagement
- All available in English and Spanish

Promotion, Tabling and Additional Workshop Partners:

- MP Library
- Belle Haven Action
- Climate Resilient Communities



EJ4.E: Community Gardens

Encourage and simplify the process of developing community gardens within or adjacent to neighborhoods and housing development sites. Facilitate the creation or enhancement of one community garden within three years of Environmental Justice Element adoption.

Why:

- *“Growing and eating your own fruits and vegetables can have a positive impact on your diet. Gardeners are more likely to include vegetables as part of healthy, well-balanced diets.” Source: Mayo Clinic*
- *Time outdoors can improve physical health and lower stress.*
- *Gardening strengthens social connections and sense of purpose.*



Recommendation for EJ4.E: People's Garden

People's Garden: Planter Box Kits & Home Gardening Workshops

- Climate Resilient Communities (CRC) and Fresh Approach are working on a pilot of project with an initial workshop for late February 2026
 - Project remains a priority for CRC and are paying for an initial 40 planter boxes
 - Fresh Approach is donating space for the workshop and leading the workshop
- Local CBOs are willing to partner with the City to promote and develop this program

Community Garden

- Fresh Approach operates the East Palo Alto Community Garden and could create and manage a similar community garden in Belle Haven with City funding
- City could provide land for garden at the BH community center



EJ3.4, EJ3.E - Partner with Ravenswood School District

Partnering with schools, Ravenswood School District in particular, is mentioned throughout the EJ Element Action Guide.

Food Systems Opportunities:

- EJ3.4 - Coordinate with local school districts...to provide adequate public facilities, improvements, and programs in underserved communities
- EJ3.E - After School Programs Coordination

Other Partnership Opportunities Include:

- EJ2.H - Collaboration for Electrification
- EJ3.D.4 - Identify a partner who can provide a community health clinic in Belle Haven.
- EJ3.G.5 - Communicate with the Ravenswood City School District to enhance an understanding of preferred amenities and activities that can be included at Belle Haven Community Campus.
- EJ6.C - Safe Routes to School



Recommendation for EJ3.4, EJ3.E: Develop Partnership with Ravenswood School District

Develop a partnership with the Ravenswood School District

- Explore the school district's **needs and barriers** to providing fresh, healthy, high-quality food
- Explore ways **schools can support the implementation** of the EJ Element
- Explore ways the **city can support the school district** in implementation (e.g. financial resources, staff training, culinary support, assistance with procurement and supplier connections, education materials for students/parents, case studies, menu design, policy advocacy support)



School Partnerships: Ideas for Action 1/2

Transition to Plant-Based Foods

- Ensure a nutritious and delicious **vegan or vegetarian option** (with adequate protein) is **available every day**
- Invite students to **test and approve** vegan meals (NYC)
- Create vegan meals from a **variety of cultures**, especially those represented in the community (NYC)
- Partner with **local organic farms and ranches** (La Honda-Pescadero Unified) or explore FruitGuys Farm-to-School program
- **Messaging ideas** include “Lean & Green Wednesdays” - reduced meat, increased fruit/veggies (Oakland), “California Thursdays” - focused on local and regional foods (Oakland), “Meatless Mondays” (LA) and “Plant-Powered Fridays”



School Partnerships: Ideas for Action 2/2

School Gardens/Living Schoolyards

- **Hyper-local food supply** that can be shared with children, their families, and the community.
- Potential location for **additional community gardens** that could be deployed cross-generationally.
- An effective and engaging **educational opportunity** for children on the value of nature, food, and understanding sustainability over time.
- Opportunity to integrate **composting initiatives** to nourish the garden.
- Hydroponics?

Nutrition Education

- Educate children on the **health and climate benefits** of a plant-based diet
- Consider leveraging Seeds to Solutions for grade-appropriate instructional materials
- San Mateo County of Education for more resources



Food Systems Subcommittee Recommendation Summary

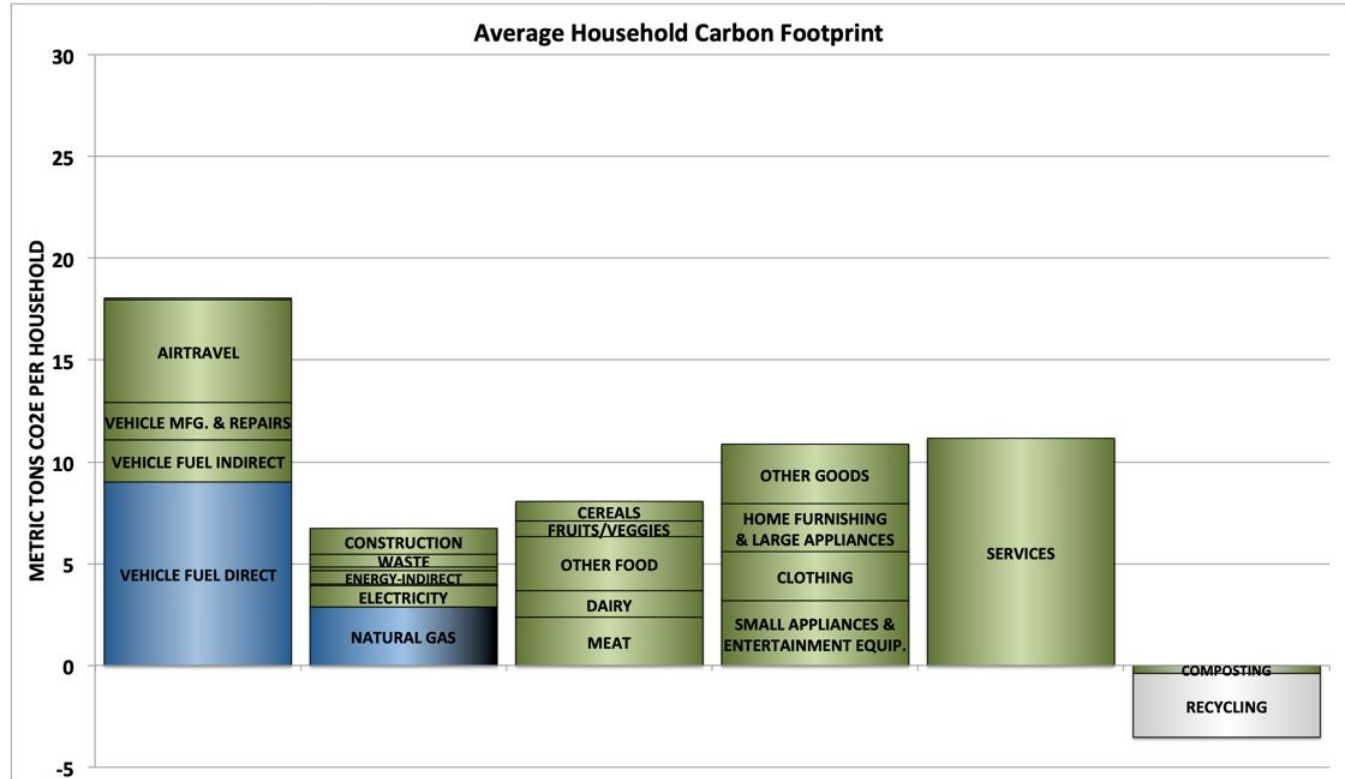
City Policy	Rec#	Subcommittee Recommendation	Est. Cost	Priority	EQC
EJ4.A Food Security	1	Provide a \$50 voucher/mo to 200 households for produce at local markets (p 6)	\$120k/yr*	High	
EJ4.A Food Security	2	Apply for and fund CalFresh Fruit & Veggie EBT Pilot Program (replaces rec #1 in year 2) (p 6)	\$200k/yr*	High	
EJ4.C -City Events	3	City ordinance @ plant-based food as default for all city-participating events (p 8)	\$0	High	
EJ4.C City Programs	4	Ensure plant-based menu choices are available at every meal in City programs (p 9)	\$0	High	
EJ4.D - Healthy Markets	5	Pilot Mobile BH Farmers' Market with Market Match program (June launch) (p 12)	\$50k/yr	High	
EJ4.D - Healthy Markets	6	Provide weekly cooking/gardening workshops at Farmers' Market (p 13 & 15)	\$50-70k/yr	High	
EJ4.D - Healthy Markets	7	Provide Veggie Rx Program 2X/yr to 30 participants/program (p 13) (includes \$20k in vouchers)	\$50k/yr	High	
EJ4.E - Community Gardens	8	Develop and maintain a community garden in Belle Haven (p 15) Cost details: \$50-100k to build, then \$25-75k/year to maintain	\$100k	High	
EJ3.4, EJ3.E, plus EJ2.H, EJ3.D.4, EJ3.G.5, EJ6.C	9	Develop partnership with Ravenswood School District @ implementing EJ Element (p 16-18)	\$0-100k+	Med	
EJ4.C + CAP	10	Educate/engage community @ benefits of plant-forward eating (p 10)	\$0-30k	Med	
		Total Costs for first year (does not include rec #2)	\$370-520k*		

→ **Appendix/Resources**



Consumption-based GHG Inventory

- From the Cool Climate Network, UC Berkeley, 2015
- Full life cycle of goods and services consumed by residents
- Emissions from Dairy and Meat exceed Natural Gas
- Menlo Park's Climate Action Plan not consumption based



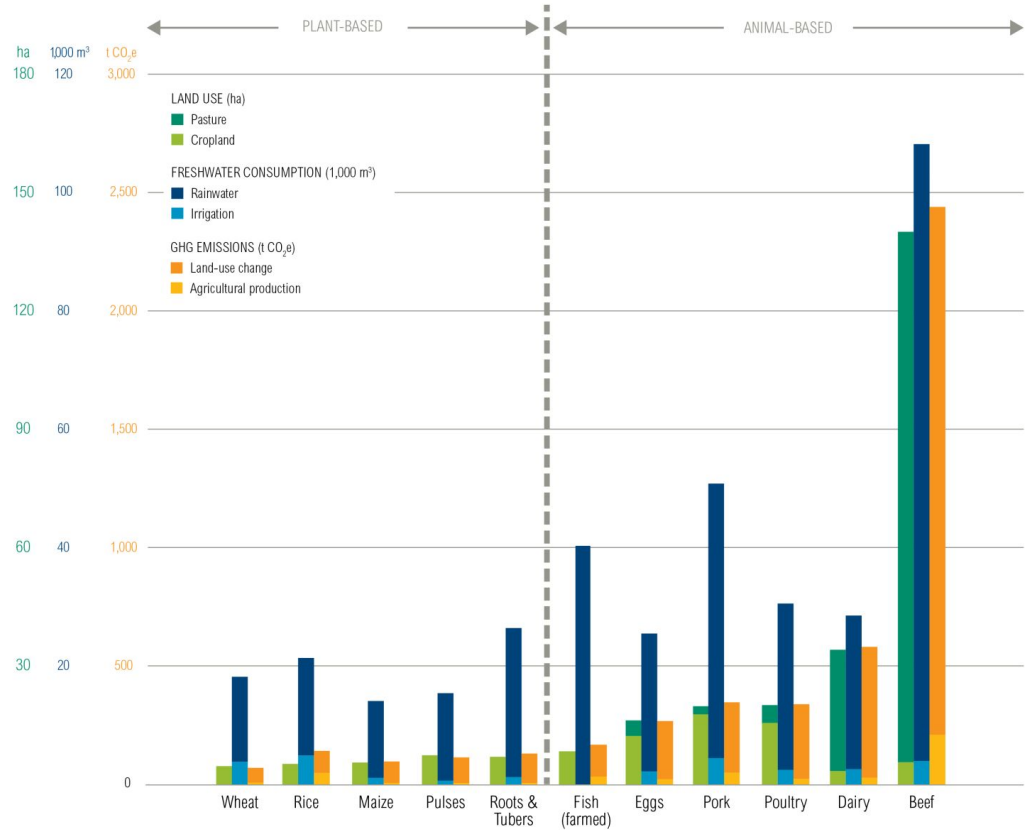
HOUSEHOLD CONSUMPTION		HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS		HOMES		NEIGHBORHOODS	
22,538	Vehicle miles traveled	\$ 177,589	Income before taxes	61%	owner occupied	7,483	Persons per sq.mile
11,311	Air travel miles	2.6	Persons per household	61%	single-detached	2,678	Heating degree days
5,925	kWh electricity	1.9	Vehicles per household	80%	heat natural gas	270	Cooling degree days
525	Therms natural gas	40%	with graduate degree	1959	Avg. year built		
7	Gallons of heating fuel	79%	white householders	1,591	Square feet		
1.08	Short tons of waste						PG&E
0.99	Short tons of recycling						178 gCO ₂ /kWh

Food and Climate

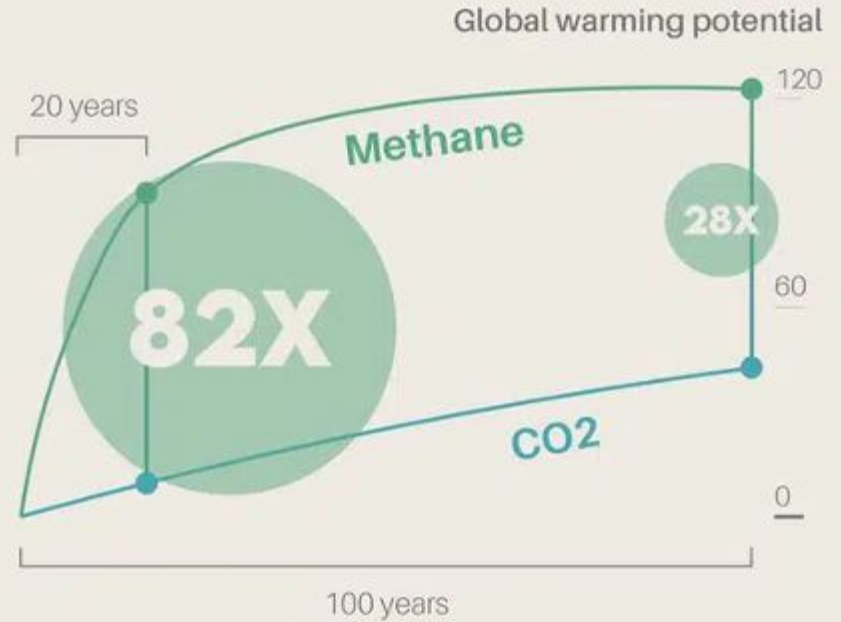
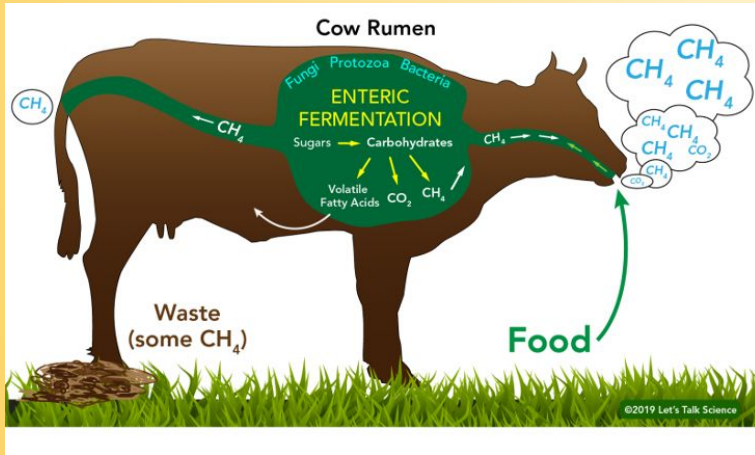
- Animal-based foods use more land, water and emit more GHGs than plant-based foods
- Beef is by far the biggest contributor due to deforestation to clear land for cattle, major land use for feed, and cows belching methane (see next slide) that is far more potent a GHG than CO₂

Animal-Based Foods Are More Resource-Intensive than Plant-Based Foods

PER TON PROTEIN CONSUMED



Plant-based for Reduced Emissions



METHANE IS VERY POTENT ON THE SHORT TERM, MAKING IT A GOOD TARGET TO STAY UNDER 1.5°C.

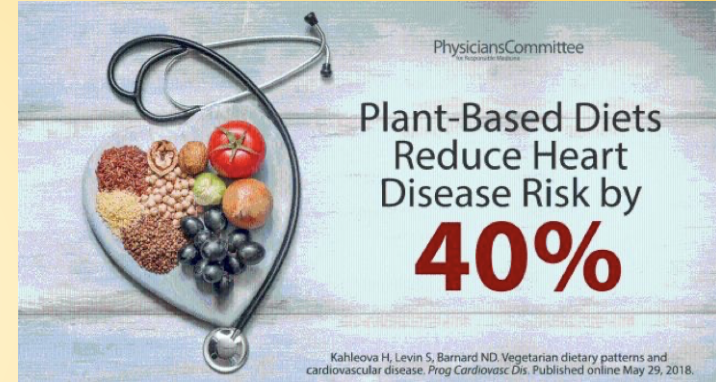
Plant-based for Better Health

Consuming a whole foods plant-based diet is associated with:

- 40% reduction in heart disease risk
- 10% lower overall stroke risk
- Type 2 diabetes prevention and even reversal
- Reduced risk of certain cancers
- Promoting a healthy body weight
- Reducing inflammation
- Supporting immune function

Does it require going vegan?

- No. Any reduction in meat and dairy consumption is beneficial to human and planetary health. It's not all or nothing!



Small Food Markets in Menlo Park

The following smaller food markets in Menlo Park serve primarily lower income residents:

- Soleska Market (on Willow Rd east of 101)
- Mi Tierra Linda (on Willow Rd east of 101)
- El Rancho Market (on Willow Rd west of 101)
- Mi Tienda Supermarket (on Willow Rd west of 101)
- La Hacienda Market (on Menalto in Willows neighborhood)

All welcome CalFresh/SNAP members and accept EBT and could be partners in increasing food security through our recommendations for EJ4.A



Resources (page 1 of 3)

Local Data

- Sustainable San Mateo County's 2025 Indicators Report - <https://sustainablesanmateo.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/SSMC-2025-Indicators-Report-Chapter-1-Food-Consumption.pdf>
- UC Berkeley CoolClimate Network Consumption Based GHG Inventory - <https://coolclimate.berkeley.edu/inventory>
- Menlo Park EJ Element Action Guide - <https://www.menlopark.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/3/community-development/documents/ej-element/appendix-b-ej-element-action-guide-updated-february-2025.pdf>
- Climate Action Plan - <https://www.menlopark.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/3/city-managers-office/documents/sustainability/2030-cap.pdf>

Food Security Programs

- MarketMatch has information about the program, application process and links to partners - <https://marketmatch.org/>
- CalFresh Fruit and Veggie EBT Pilot - <https://www.doubleupca.org/about-ca-fruit-and-veggie-ebt-incentives-copy>
- Foodwise. (n.d.). *Foodwise: Growing thriving communities through the power and joy of local food*. Retrieved [1/30/2026] - <https://foodwise.org>
- Fullwell can provide advisory support and make introductions with potential partners like The Food Trust in San Jose to implement an EBT or coupon based fruit and veggie pilot - <https://www.fullwell.us/>
- Saba Grocers in Oakland has a Fresh5x program that offers \$5 in store credit for every \$1 spent on produce and serves as a food hub to connect local farmers to markets in underserved areas - <https://www.sabagrocers.org/programs#fresh5x>

Farmers' Market

- Fresh Approach offers mobile farmers' markets, gardening and nutrition programming and is already partnering with Belle Haven Action to provide pop up markets in Belle Haven - <https://www.freshapproach.org>

Resources (page 2 of 3)

Procurement

- Greener by Default - empowers institutions to provide sustainable, healthy food as the default - <https://www.greenerbydefault.com>
- The Fruit Guys Farm to School Program - <https://www.fruitguysfarmtoschool.com/>

Sample Policies/Resolutions/Ordinances/Programs

- Plant-Forward Food Procurement Policy from City of Portland (scroll down) and other helpful info from Lewis and Clark Law School - <https://law.lclark.edu/live/blogs/187-plant-forward-food-policy-an-opportunity-for-city>
- Resolution by City of West Hollywood - https://weho.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=&event_id=1544&meta_id=277053
- Resolution by City of Berkeley - <https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2021-07-27%20Item%2022%20Accelerating%20transition%20to%20Plant-Based%20Foods.pdf>
- Mountain View's Plant-Based Eating program - <https://collaborate.mountainview.gov/plant-based-eating>

Guidelines for Cities to Reduce Food Related Emissions

- C40 Cities Food Systems - <https://www.c40.org/what-we-do/scaling-up-climate-action/food-systems/>
- Center for Biological Diversity Guide and Resources to Reduce Food-Related Emissions - <https://takeextinctionoffyourplate.com/climate-friendly-cities>
- Meat of the Matter: A Municipal Guide to Climate-Friendly Food Purchasing by Friends of the Earth - https://www.c40knowledgehub.org/s/article/Meat-of-the-Matter-A-Municipal-Guide-to-Climate-Friendly-Food-Purchasing?language=en_US
- WRI Playbook for Guiding Diners Toward Plant-Rich Dishes in Food Service - https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/sites/default/files/from-crm/19_Report_Playbook_Plant-Rich_Diets_final.pdf
- Plant-Based Treaty's 40 Suggested Proposals - <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hscF9oXzMLmrzqSrBkd1RkiEE26V3KoBh26YqmfGKjI/edit?tab=t.0>

Resources (page 3 of 3)

Gardening

- Mayo Clinic Health System. (2022, July 12). *Dig into the benefits of gardening*. Retrieved from <https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/dig-into-the-benefits-of-gardening>
- UC Master Gardeners of San Mateo County - events, resources, planting calendars - <https://ucanr.edu/site/mgsmsf>
- Fresh Approach manages the East Palo Alto community garden including a community compost hub where food scraps can be exchanged for finished compost - <https://www.freshapproach.org/east-palo-alto-community-garden/>

Community Education

- Acterra's Healthy Plate, Healthy Planet Program - <https://acterra.org/food/healthy-plate-healthy-planet/>
- Acterra's Climate Friendly Kitchens is a free sustainability hospitality program focused on working directly with Bay Area restaurants through personalized on-site consultations and training. Includes menu evaluation, kitchen staff training, menu writing and labeling, etc. - <https://acterra.org/food/climate-friendly-kitchens/>
- Plant-Based Treaty provides helpful starter-guides which could be distributed to the community - <https://plantbasedtreaty.org/vegan-pledge/>
- Kaiser Permanente - The Plant-Based Diet: A healthier way to eat - <https://healthy.kaiserpermanente.org/content/dam/kporg/final/documents/health-education-materials/instructions/plant-based-diet-hi-en.pdf>

School & Education Materials

- Ravenswood School District - <https://capouyab20.wixsite.com/ravenswoodschools>
- Seeds to Solutions for grade-appropriate instructional materials - <https://seedstosolutions.org/>
- San Mateo County of Education - <https://www.smcoe.org/for-educators/environmental-literacy-and-sustainability>



Electric vehicle charging fee study

Sustainability staff



Agenda

- Recommendation
- Background
- Analysis



Recommendation

- Eliminate session fee
- Remove peak times

Fees	Fee amount	Unit
Escalation fee* - 3 hour charging, 15 minute grace period to move the vehicle	\$5.00	Per hour

Charger level	Fee	Unit
Level 2	\$0.41	kWh
Level 3	\$0.51	kWh

*City of Menlo Park employee: Free for first 3 hours with \$5 escalation fee after 15 minute grace period



Background

- July 2019: The EQC recommended that the City Council implement EV charging fees based on findings from pricing study.
- August 2019: City Council directed staff to prepare an update to the City's master fee schedule incorporating the EQC's proposed fees.
- August 2022: City Council adopted an updated master fee schedule that added EV charging fees, the first update since July 2018.



Background

- September 2022: The City began administering EV charging fees.
- August 2023: The EQC recommended staff explore removing some of the fees from City-owned charging stations.
- January 2024: City Council adopted an amendment to the master fee schedule, reducing the EV charging access fee from \$1.00 to \$0.50.
- September 2025: Consultant and staff began to evaluate EV charging fees as part of the cost of services study.
- March 10, 2026: City Council study session on the cost of services study.



Background

Current fees	Fee amount	Unit
Session fee	\$0.50	Per session
Escalation fee - 3 hour charging time frame with a 15 minute grace period to move the vehicle	\$5.00	Per hour

Peak times	Summer Fees (June 1 - Sept 30)	Winter Fees (Oct 1 - May 31)	Unit
Peak (4 p.m. - 9 p.m.)	\$0.23643	\$0.17838	kWh
Part-Peak (2 p.m. - 4 p.m. and 9 p.m. - 12 a.m.)	\$0.17474	\$0.14290	kWh
Off-Peak (12 a.m. - 2 p.m.)	\$0.14217	\$0.10656	kWh



Analysis

- 18 City owned EV chargers
 - 15 Level 2 chargers
 - 3 Level 3 chargers
- Increased costs since 2019
 - Electricity
 - Maintenance
 - Warranty
 - Cloud services
- Aging equipment
- No fee increases since initial 2019 study and 2022 implementation.



Analysis

- Recommended Level 2 pricing of \$0.41 per kWh includes warranty, electricity and maintenance
- Recommended Level 3 pricing of \$0.51 per kWh
 - DC Level 3 chargers have higher warranty and cloud service costs than Level 2
 - More frequent repairs and maintenance
- Escalation fee will stay the same to continue encouraging users to move vehicles
- Session fee will be removed and incorporated in per kWh cost



Analysis

- Eliminating peak time and seasonal pricing
 - Dynamic electricity rates change throughout the day, making it difficult to accurately charge different prices for peak and off peak times.
 - Not a cost recovery structure
 - Risk of overcharging public
 - Difficult to implement administratively



Analysis

- Average session with current pricing Level 2
 - Session length: 2 hours and 17 minutes
 - Station output: ~9.6kW
 - Average energy delivered: 21.88 kWh
 - **Cost**
 - **Summer:** Peak \$5.18, Part-Peak \$3.83, Off-Peak \$3.12
 - **Winter:** Peak \$3.91, Part-Peak \$3.13, Off-Peak \$2.34

- Average session with proposed pricing Level 2
 - Session length: 2 hours and 17 minutes
 - Station output: ~9.6kW
 - Average energy delivered: 21.88 kWh
 - Total cost of average session: **\$8.97**



Analysis

- Average session with current pricing Level 3
 - Session length: 48 minutes
 - Station output: ~52 kW
 - Average energy delivered: 41.6 kWh
 - **Cost**
 - **Summer:** Peak \$9.46, Part-Peak \$6.99, Off-Peak \$5.69
 - **Winter:** Peak \$7.14, Part-Peak \$5.72, Off-Peak \$4.26

- Average session with proposed pricing Level 3
 - Session length: 48 mins
 - Station output: ~52 kW
 - Average energy delivered: 41.6 kWh
 - Total cost of average session: **\$21.22**





Analysis

■ City comparison

City	Level 2 fees
Berkeley	\$0.40 per kWh: 4pm-9pm \$0.30 per kWh: 12am - 4pm; 9pm-12am \$1.50 per session
Palo Alto	\$0.24 per kWh
Redwood City	\$1.67 per kWh
San Jose	\$0.45 per kWh: 4pm - 9pm \$0.35 per kWh: 9pm - 9 am; 2pm - 4pm \$0.25 per kWh: 9am - 2pm
San Mateo County	\$0.23 per kWh

- Average fees for Level 3 throughout Bay Area \$0.57 per kWh



Recommendation

- Eliminate session fee
- Remove peak times

Fees	Fee amount	Unit
Escalation fee* - 3 hour charging, 15 minute grace period to move the vehicle	\$5.00	Per hour

Charger level	Fee	Unit
Level 2	\$0.41	kWh
Level 3	\$0.51	kWh

*City of Menlo Park Employee: Free for first 3 hours with \$5 escalation fee after 15 minute grace period

