



County of Los Alamos

Council Meeting Staff Report

May 17, 2022

Agenda No.:	B.
Indexes (Council Goals):	* 2022 Council Goal - N/A
Presenters:	Angelica Gurule; Juan Rael
Legislative File:	15891-22

Title

Overview of Food Waste Composting Feasibility Study

Board, Commission or Committee Recommendation

On March 17, 2022, the Environmental Sustainability Board unanimously accepted the draft report and unanimously approved the recommendation to implement a food composting system at Bayo Canyon using a windrow system and providing drop off sites for residents and curbside collection for businesses.

Body

On December 3, 2019, staff presented a Waste Stream Overview to the County Council. Included in this presentation was the potential impact of implementing a food waste outreach and diversion program to reduce food waste being sent to the landfill. Council requested staff return with potential scope and costs of a feasibility study including an evaluation of potential composting methods, site locations (composting operation and drop-off options), staffing, and a business plan (capital costs, operational costs and potential revenues). The goal of the study would be to implement an economically sustainable county-wide program for both commercial and residential customers. Staff recommended this option as a second priority step and noted it could be achieved with the remaining 2020 and 2021 fiscal year with a \$100K budget using the Environmental Services fund balance. Council inquired about the potential of a shorter-term solution for food waste composting while the feasibility study is in progress.

On February 18, 2020, staff returned to Council and proposed a feasibility study to evaluate and recommend the most effective and economical site location, capital investments, operational expenses and potential savings and revenues for a program, that most importantly, meets the community needs for both residential and commercial customers.

On August 17, 2020, Los Alamos County advertised a formal competitive solicitation for Food Waste Composting Feasibility Study and Design Services through Request for Proposal No. 21-15. On April 6, 2021, County Council approved the Contract for General Services, Agreement No. AGR21-15 with SCS Engineers, in an amount not to exceed \$270,000.00 plus applicable Gross Receipts Tax to provide Food Waste Composting Feasibility Study and Design Services. The original budget estimate for Phase I, Food Waste Composting Feasibility Study was \$100K. The proposed cost for the study increased to \$110,035.00 (not including Gross Receipt Taxes). Composting System Design Services will not exceed \$159,965.00 (not including GRT) based on the selected composting technology and will require future budget authority, and services are upon request by County only.

SCS Engineers immediately began work with LAC to conduct the food waste composting study. SCS Engineers met with staff frequently and provided official updates to the ESB in effort to obtain public feedback on Food Waste Composting Feasibility project. SCS Engineers provided project updates and received public comment at the following ESB meetings: July 15, 2021, December 16, 2021, January 20, 2022, February 17, 2022, and March 17, 2022. The public comments were typically in

favor of a municipal food composting program. There were questions about potential for polyfluoralkyl substances PFAS, location, types of materials to be accepted, regional partnerships, program cost, compost cost, current zoning of the potential compost site and environmental impacts.

The feasibility study evaluated five (5) food composting technology options: Anaerobic digestion, in vessel, covered aerated static piles, aerated static piles, or windrow composting. The report also analyzed four (4) locations, Bayo Canyon, Overlook Park (2 locations), and Eco Station. Additionally, the study reviewed collection options including curbside collection and drop off sites.

At the February 17, 2022, ESB meeting, SCS Engineers brought forward the final conclusions and recommendation for a municipal food composting program. At this meeting the ESB reviewed the food waste composting options and recommendation.

At the March 17, 2022, ESB meeting, the board moved and approved to accept the Food Waste Composting Feasibility Study draft report and recommended that County Council consider food waste composting option 4. Composting option four is to implement food waste composting using the windrow system at Bayo Canyon and provide drop off sites for residents and curbside collection for businesses.

Fiscal and Staff Impact

Depending on the path forward pertaining to the options presented, there are associated potential rate increases to fund the new service. A more detailed fee discussion is scheduled at the May 24, 2022 Regular Council meeting.

Attachments

- A - Food Waste Composting Feasibility Study Final Report
- B - Food Waste Composting Feasibility Study Presentation