



DATE: November 10, 2025

TO: Council Sustainability Committee

FROM: Director of Public Works

SUBJECT: Preliminary Plan for Compost Hub at the Hayward Community Garden

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council Sustainability Committee (CSC) receives this report on the development of the proposed compost hub and provides comments to staff.

SUMMARY

Senate Bill 1383 requires that jurisdictions annually procure a minimum quantity of organic material that is made from recycled organic waste. Most jurisdictions, including Hayward, will need to procure compost or mulch to meet the requirement. To help Hayward meet its annual procurement requirement, Hayward staff have been working with the Hayward Area Recreation & Parks District (HARD) to create a place called a compost hub, where Hayward residents can pick up bulk compost or mulch throughout the year free of charge. The proposed location for a compost hub in Hayward is an undeveloped part of the Hayward Community Garden that is accessible from Berry Avenue.

FISCAL IMPACT

This item has no impact on the General Fund or Measure C.

The design and development of the compost hub will be paid for with grant funds received from CalRecycle, and any ongoing operation and management costs can be paid for from the City's Recycling Fund. The compost and mulch will be provided by Waste Management of Alameda County (WMAC) per the terms of the Solid Waste Franchise Agreement between the City of Hayward and WMAC.

BACKGROUND

In January 2022, California's Short-Lived Climate Pollutant Reduction Strategy (SB 1383) came into effect. The bill's main goal is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by keeping organic waste out of landfills because when organic material gets buried in landfills, it creates methane, a powerful greenhouse gas. The bill mandates organic waste collection and services for composting across the state and also requires jurisdictions to "procure a minimum amount of products made from recycled organic waste each year." The minimum

quantity is referred to as a jurisdiction's "procurement target," and most jurisdictions will procure compost and mulch in order to meet their target. Targets are based on population and, in 2022, Hayward's target was 12,647 tons per year. This is an exceedingly large amount of material to use annually. In partial recognition of the fact that jurisdictions are struggling to meet their procurement requirements, SB 1383 was amended in 2024 through SB 2346, resulting in Hayward's annual target starting in 2025 to be 4,268 tons per year. While the new target is much lower, it still requires Hayward to procure a very large amount of compost and mulch. For example, 4,268 tons equates to about 6,200 cubic yards of compost. Donating and giving away compost is allowed under SB 1383, and many jurisdictions, including Hayward, host compost giveaway events where residents pick up bagged compost. At one compost giveaway event, Hayward provides the public with 5,000 one-cubic-foot bags, which is about 185 cubic yards of compost. Hayward would need to host more than 32 compost giveaway events every year to meet its new 4,268-ton per year procurement target.

These compost giveaway events are very popular, but require significant staff involvement, are limited in scale and compost distributed, and produce plastic waste. Most jurisdictions are considering expanding these programs in order to help reach their procurement targets, and there are opportunities to partner with community-based organizations when considering how to expand these programs.

In 2023, as part of the new Franchise Agreement with WMAC, Hayward increased the amount of compost provided for its compost giveaways from 5,000 bags of compost to 10,000 bags per year. However, the giveaways still only use a small portion of the City's annual target and many residents are unable to attend the Saturday morning events. Therefore, staff started working with HARD and the Alameda County Waste Management Authority's technical division, StopWaste, in 2023 to explore the potential to create a compost hub in Hayward.

StopWaste describes a compost hub as a site operated by a community-based organization (CBO) or jurisdiction to provide free compost to residents on an ongoing basis. Compost is distributed through a communal compost pile accessible to the public during open hours set by the host site. The hub can also provide educational resources about composting and waste sorting and environmentally responsible gardening. Depending on the host site, there is also the opportunity to connect residents with other services, volunteer opportunities, and educational workshops. Free bulk compost is supplied to the hub by a partnered jurisdiction, counting the distributed compost towards their procurement target.

There are nine compost hubs currently operating in Alameda County, hosted by the following jurisdictions: Albany, Alameda (two hubs), Berkeley, Livermore (two hubs), Piedmont, Pleasanton, and Union City. Only Berkeley's hub has been in operation before SB 1383 took effect in 2022. Oakland is planning to open two hubs in 2026, and San Leandro is planning to open one hub in 2026.

Table 1 below shows the hours of operation, as well as the estimated average amount of compost used per month, and the estimated average monthly costs for compost for seven of the nine hubs operating in Alameda County.

Table 1. Compost Hubs in Alameda County

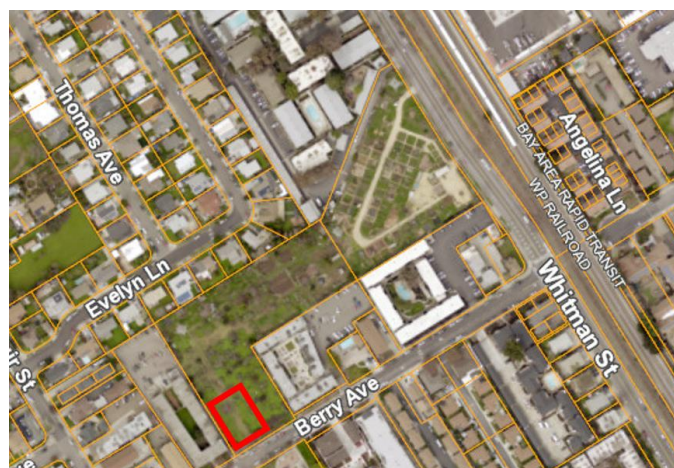
City	Compost Used/Month	Compost Cost/Month	Hours Operated
Alameda	40 Yards	\$1,300	Wed and Sat 10am-5pm
Albany	40 Yards	\$2,000	Sun 12pm-4pm
Berkeley	12 Yards	Costs Built into Franchise Agreement	Always accessible
Livermore	60 Yards	\$1,000	9am -12pm Tues, Wed, Sat 3pm-6pm Fridays
Piedmont	10 Yards	Free as per Franchise Agreement	Fri 8am-5pm
Pleasanton	80 Yards	\$1,250	Always accessible
Union City	90 Yards	\$1,700	Always accessible

If Hayward's hub were to provide residents with 90 cubic yards of compost per month, it would equate to about 17% of Hayward's annual procurement target.

DISCUSSION

The location of the proposed compost hub in Hayward is approximately one-acre of the undeveloped portion of the Hayward Community Garden operated by HARD. The hub area would be accessible from an existing driveway on Berry Avenue. The site is bordered by multi-family dwellings to the east and west and the Eden Greenway across Berry Avenue to the south (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Site of Proposed Compost Hub (Outlined in Red)



This site was chosen because it is underdeveloped land that can be overseen by a community partner due in part to the active community garden. Few sites in Hayward have these characteristics. None of the nine compost hubs currently operating in Alameda

County are staffed full-time. Most hubs are open to the public for limited hours, operating by having someone open the gate to the hub, leave the hub, and return to lock the gate at the end of the hours of operation. Most hubs are located at a community garden, and the jurisdiction that owns the hub arranges with a community gardening group to open the hub and close the hub during the times the group uses the community garden. The Berkeley and Union City hubs are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

No other jurisdiction in the county staffs their compost hub throughout the operating hours. However, HARD and Hayward staff recommend that Hayward's proposed compost hub be staffed for at least the first six months of operation, by a HARD employee or by a volunteer during its hours of operation. To start with, hours of operation could possibly be 9am – 4pm on Saturdays. After six months, hours could be adjusted and if HARD determines the site can function well without staff, then a different operating model could be used. Unlike most of the other compost hubs in Alameda County, the Berry Avenue location in Hayward is near multi-family dwellings and in a neighborhood where illegal dumping regularly occurs. The hub is also located in a part of the garden far from the area that community gardening groups use. Leaving the site open and unattended could result in illegally dumped material being left at the hub, vandalism occurring to the hub, or unwanted visitors occupying the hub and disturbing neighbors.

The City entered into discussions with HARD about creating a hub in 2023 and signed a letter agreement on March 5, 2025, to work on a conceptual design. As part of the agreement, the City hired the RRM Design Group in spring of 2025 to create the conceptual design of the hub. The proposed preliminary design is included as Attachment II and Figure 2 below is from the draft conceptual design shows the basic proposed layout of the hub.

Figure 2. Conceptual Design of Compost Hub



The hub would consist of a paved area with a gate and fencing that includes concrete bunkers to hold compost and mulch. Fencing would match the existing fencing on Whitman Avenue and new landscaping would be installed along the Berry Avenue frontage. Construction would include paving the area, installing bunkers for mulch and compost, landscaping, as well as fencing and gates. More amenities may be included in the future, such as picnic tables and a shelter, depending on costs and the final operating plan.

Upon agreeing on a final design of the hub, an application will be submitted to the Planning Division for modification of the Administrative Use Permit (AUP) for the facility. The AUP approved in 2018 designated Berry Avenue as the front property line of the site, which requires that fencing must be set back 20 feet from the Berry Avenue property line. Staff recommends locating the new fence 10 feet from the property line. The smaller area between the fence and sidewalk, in combination with new landscaping and boulders, is expected to reduce the potential for illegal dumping.

Before applying for a building permit for the hub, staff would prepare a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to formalize the responsibilities and expectations of HARD and the City. Staff expects the MOU will address, but will not be limited to, the following:

- Funding and cost-sharing
- Hours of operation
- Rules for community members accessing free compost
- Staffing
- Litter and illegal dumping abatement
- Liability

Staff is recommending that the City:

- Fund the eventual construction and operation of the hub using grant funds and the Recycling Fund.
- Cover the costs of a staff person to oversee the compost hub using grant funds and the Recycling Fund.
- Utilize its contract with Waste Management of Alameda County (WMAC) to have illegal dumping removed from the Berry Avenue frontage as needed.
- Utilize its contract with WMAC to restock the compost pile with locally produced organic compost and mulch as needed.

Staff anticipates that the site could be operating in fall of 2026 and believes creation of this hub will generate several benefits for Hayward. The compost and mulch distributed at the hub will help the City meet its SB1383 procurement requirements. The surrounding Berry Avenue neighborhood will benefit from converting an undeveloped property that attracts trash and illegal activity into a community asset that also provides eyes on the street which can deter illegal activity. The Hayward community will benefit from having access to free compost and mulch for gardening and landscaping.

Questions for the CSC – Staff would appreciate feedback from the Committee on the following topics:

- Site Design including fencing, landscaping and access.
- Hours of operation.
- Staffing – As noted above, other compost hubs in Alameda County are not staffed.
- Site amenities - Depending on the hours of operation, it may be necessary to provide restroom arrangements and shelter for the staff overseeing the hub.
- Educational Resources –What kind of public education should be offered at the hub?

ECONOMIC IMPACTS

The compost hub is not anticipated to result in any significant economic impact. The creation of the hub could beautify a blighted area of the City, and while cleaner public spaces can create a positive economic impact by increasing the potential of visitors patronizing local businesses, there are no businesses in the immediate area of the hub.

STRATEGIC ROADMAP

This agenda item supports the Strategic Priority to *Champion Climate Resilience & Environmental Justice*, and specifically relates to implementation of the following Project under that heading:

Reduce waste by promoting a circular economy

Project CP6: Continue to identify opportunities for compost hubs and other distribution mechanisms for compost in Hayward.

SUSTAINABILITY FEATURES

Utilizing compost and mulch for gardening and landscaping reduces the need for chemical fertilizers, and can reduce water use. Obtaining compost and mulch from local producers reduces the vehicle miles traveled and energy use to create the compost.

PUBLIC CONTACT

There has been no public contact for this agenda item.

NEXT STEPS

Upon direction from the Committee, Staff will make adjustment to the design and operating plans for the compost hub and move forward with the permitting process.

Prepared by: Jeff Krump, Solid Waste Program Manager
Erik Pearson, Environmental Services Manager

Recommended by: Alex Ameri, Director of Public Works

Approved by:



Jayanti Addleman, Interim City Manager