

RENEW LA

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What's wrong with landfilling?

Landfilling takes trash and throws it into a hole in the ground, covers it with dirt and it continues to biodegrade causing leachate to form which can leach into and contaminate groundwater. It also causes harmful greenhouse gasses to be formed that are often flared into the air. In addition to the harmful emissions caused by particulate matter from diesel trucks transporting the material, odors and vectors are an issue. Worse yet, landfilling ends the useful life of valuable resources that can be returned to beneficial use for our society. These “wastes” can be converted to renewable green energy, alternative fuels, useful chemicals, soil amendments or manufacturing feedstocks.

2. How can we recycle more?

There are very simple steps that can be taken to increase recycling. For example, up to 70% of what's currently collected in the black bins for disposal, is organic in nature. Of this portion, up to 40% is foodwaste, which can easily be added to the green yardwaste bin to create a more nutrient-rich soil amendment that can reduce the need for water while increasing crop yield.

3. Are we talking about burning trash or incineration?

No. Conversion technologies are non-combustion processes that can be either thermal, or bio/chemical. They do not burn trash. Nor do they produce harmful emissions. In fact, they vastly reduce NOx, SOx, Dioxins, Furans and VOCs compared with landfilling. In addition, they are net positive for energy production of clean renewables.

4. Where will these facilities be located?

Approximately seven CT plants are proposed (by 2025), optimally with one located in an industrial area in each of the six refuse collection districts and a seventh where opportunity presents – perhaps in an adjoining jurisdiction through a joint venture. By spreading the facilities throughout the City it greatly reduces truck traffic and its air emissions, creates savings in collection truck routing, and reflects a sense of environmental justice in which all areas of the City participate in handling their MSW. Facilities will be cited opportunistically, to take advantage of

existing City sites, or DWP property with access to transmission lines, for example.

5. What is “Zero Waste?”

Zero Waste is not “zero trash.” It simply means that nothing is wasted because in addition to taking steps to make sure that materials are reused, recycled and reduced to keep them from entering the wastestream to begin with, all residuals are remanufactured, or converted back to beneficial use for society.

6. Do conversion technologies threaten traditional recycling?

Just the opposite. CT is targeted only at the residual material still being disposed at landfills, after recycling. Recent studies commissioned by the California Integrated Waste Management Board have shown that CT actually enhances traditional recycling.

7. How does this system reduce pollution?

It reduces the distance and amount of trucks necessary to deliver waste, reducing particulate matter in our neighborhoods. Conversion technologies create clean, renewable power and alternative fuels that reduce greenhouse gasses and emissions, while reducing our dependence on foreign oil and fossil fuels. Trash is converted to a useful product, not dumped in the ground to further putrefy and put groundwater at risk while creating combustive, greenhouse gasses.

8. What are the economic benefits?

There are many. Conversion technologies produce 10 jobs for every one job associated with landfilling. In addition, there is the potential to create a very large amount of renewable energy from waste, which will help the City to meet its 20% renewable energy goals by 2017 without having to compete with the private utilities for contracts. There are also proposed tax credits for certified “Zero Waste” businesses and for new or existing businesses that locate in Los Angeles and use City-collected MSW as a manufacturing feedstock.

9. Is this just another study?

No. RENEW LA is a “Resource Management Blueprint” for the City of LA for the next twenty years. It is an in-depth action plan with specific milestones and timeframes. In addition to the plan itself, there are thirteen City Council Motions that will be introduced to further the goals of the plan, as well as an Oversight Committee to guide the progress of the plan and update it as legislation, technology other circumstances dictate.

10. Does this get us out of Sunshine Canyon?

It gets us out of ALL landfilling, as we know it. The only material that would be disposed of is inert (and therefore environmentally benign) residual. This residual could be placed in an inert repository and later recovered if desirable. This material can be less than 7% of all trash produced.

11. Who else is doing this?

Europe and Japan rely heavily on conversion technologies to create renewable power and eliminate the need for disposal, as land is very sparse. Germany has banned all organics from landfills. Many EU countries have some form of the “green dot” program, or other resource recovery model. Several MSW composting plants have been built and are in operation today. Two autoclave plants are in construction, including one in Anaheim, CA. Several CT demonstration plants are in operation, including a pyrolysis plant near Hemet that is expanding to 175 TPD. Arkansas has a test facility that produces ethanol, which can easily be converted into hydrogen. San Francisco and Berkley have adopted Zero Waste policies.

12. How many CT plants will we need and where will they be located?

Approximately seven CT plants are planned (by 2025), optimally with one located in an industrial area in each of the six refuse collection districts and a seventh where opportunity presents – perhaps in an adjoining jurisdiction through a joint venture. By spreading the facilities throughout the City it greatly reduces truck traffic and its air emissions, creates savings in collection truck routing, and reflects a sense of environmental justice in which all areas of the City participate in handling their MSW.

13. What type of site is best for one of these CT plants?

- 5-10 acre industrial property zoned M-2 or M-3
- Remote from residential areas
- Surrounded by other industrial operations
- Easy access off freeways and major truck arterials
- Possibly co-located with existing MSW facilities such as transfer stations; or with DWP power plants (as they could use the gas or electricity the CTs generate)

14. Why not just haul the trash by truck or rail to remote landfills in the desert?

For roughly the same cost, we can convert the MSW to renewable energy, clean fuels, and bio-products. This provides the following benefits:

- Reduced truck or rail traffic, congestion and air emissions
- Conservation of resources
- Maximum recycling

- New jobs and stimulation of our local economy
- Best and highest use of resources
- Reductions in greenhouse gases and global warming

15. How does the cost of CT compare to our existing recycling programs?

CT is actually less expensive than many of our existing recycling programs per ton of material recovered. For instance, curbside recycling programs often cost well over \$100 per ton of recyclables recovered. Recycling does not pay for itself, no matter how it is done.

16. Why now?

The era of cheap landfills is coming to an end. Most of the few remaining local landfills will be closing in the next decade, including both the Bradley and Puente Hills landfills. The ultimate choice is between long haul by truck or rail to distant desert landfills, or conversion technology (after maximum resource recovery and recycling). It takes years, even decades to establish such systems. If we don't start now, the City will be stuck with a very few, expensive options.

17. How does DWP fit into the RENEW LA plan?

CT facilities convert organic material into renewable, green energy. The seven CT plants could generate between 100 and 340 MW depending on the mix of technologies. This would provide *up to 30%* of the renewable energy goal targeted by DWP for their Renewable Portfolio Standard program.

18. What is meant by “externalities”?

Externalities in the context of the RENEW LA plan are those costs and benefits attributable to a system of handling MSW that are not typically calculated into the tipping fee. Costs may include additional truck or rail traffic and congestion, air emissions, groundwater contamination, depletion of virgin resources, increased greenhouse gases and global warming, to name a few. Benefits, on the other hand, may include creation of new jobs, reductions in truck traffic and air emissions, generation of renewable energy, and maximum recovery of resources. When all these factors are taken into account, a system based on CT may actually be less expensive than the current system of transfer, truck haul, and landfilling.