



# LOPEZ CANYON ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER INFORMATION PACKET

The City of Los Angeles, Bureau of Sanitation is constructing the Lopez Canyon Environmental Center at the closed Lopez Canyon Landfill. This green recycling facility will process curb-side collected yard trimmings from the East Valley area into valuable mulch and compost.

## **Why a Green Recycling Facility?**

California law (AB 939) required all cities and counties to reduce the amount of waste they sent to landfills by 50% by the year 2000. The City of Los Angeles met and surpassed that goal (report can be viewed and downloaded from the City's website at [www.lacity.org/san](http://www.lacity.org/san)), and has adopted the further goal of reducing landfilled waste by 70% by the year 2015.

One of the largest single components of the City's waste stream is green waste - grass and tree trimmings, leaves, garden waste and other vegetable material. The Bureau of Sanitation operates three other mulching/ composting facilities: the Harbor Mulching Facility in San Pedro, which uses the contents of the Bureau-collected residential green bins in the Harbor area; the Griffith Park Composting Facility, which uses green waste from Griffith Park, biosolids from the Hyperion Wastewater Treatment Plant and animal waste from the Los Angeles Zoo; and the Van Norman Mulching Facility, which uses green waste collected by the City's Bureau of Sanitation and tree trimmings generated by the Bureau of Street Services. The mulch and compost produced by these three facilities is a high-quality product, and is given away free, to large organizations like the Los Angeles Unified School District and to community gardens, City residents, businesses and farmers. There are currently five sites in Los Angeles for residents to pick-up free mulch, view flyer at [http://www.lacity.org/SAN/Mulching\\_Poster\\_and\\_Map.pdf](http://www.lacity.org/SAN/Mulching_Poster_and_Map.pdf)

The Lopez Canyon Environmental Center at the Lopez Canyon Landfill will:

- provide a much-needed green recycling facility for East Valley residents,
- provide the finished product, free, to the local community,
- increase employment opportunities for nearby residents,
- save the City money by operating our own mulch and compost facility, and
- provide an end product that is very beneficial for the environment.

### **What are Mulch and Compost?**

Mulch is an organic material that is used as a ground cover to reduce evaporation, provide ground cooling, and protect seedlings. It can also be used as a soil amendment to improve the texture, the air permeability and the water retention properties of soil.

Compost, a natural, organic soil amendment made by decomposing organic matter, returns the nutrients in vegetation to the soil, without using inorganics or harsh chemicals. Using compost improves the texture, the air permeability, and nutrient retention properties of soil.

### **Why at Lopez?**

Ideally, a recycling facility that composts green trimmings collected from East Valley residents, should be located in the East Valley area. Since this recycling facility is City owned and operated, it should be on City-owned property that is not already reserved for another use. In addition, a green recycling facility requires a large amount of open space, located at a reasonable distance from residential or commercial uses. The upper decks of the former Lopez Canyon Landfill met these requirements.

The facility, located on the northeast upper deck area, is 2,000 feet away from and 300 feet higher than the closest residence. This distance allows us to mitigate noise from the operation to a level that has been generally not noticeable, even in the quiet of Kagel Canyon.

### **How The Facility Works?**

The Bureau's collection trucks take the contents of green bins from the East Valley District to Lopez Canyon Environmental Center. Only green materials are processed at the facility, no bio-solids or animal-waste is used. The green recycling facility operates weekdays, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Currently, the Bureau is processing approximately 110 tons per day (tpd) of green materials plus 40 tpd of brushy material. We plan to eventually increase the capacity of the facility to 300 tpd which is about what is collected in the East Valley District.

The green materials are brought to the recycling area and hand picked to remove large contaminants. It is then loaded into a trommel screen, to screen out material 2 inches or less in size. This 2-inch sized material is later added to the composting process. A conveyor belt transports the larger green trimmings to a picking station where staff removes non-organic materials. The cleaned material is then fed into a grinder to reduce it in size to mostly 2 inches or less. Next, these green trimmings are mixed together with the less than 2-inch trimmings that came out of the trommel screen and laid out on the asphalt pad. Water is added and the pile is mixed using a compost turner. The mixed green trimmings are then placed in rows to start the composting process. These rows, called windrows, are each approximately 20 feet wide, 8 feet high, and 300 feet long.

The composting site, currently being constructed, will consist of an asphalt pad containing perforated pipes that will be connected to an exhaust fan and specialized filter. The windrows will be built over the perforated pipes. The exhaust fan will pull air through the windrows and pump this air through a filter designed to remove volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and hydrocarbons (HCs). This process, called "static aeration" reduces odors. Static aeration composting is being successfully used at the Bureau's Griffith Park Composting Facility. Pulling air through the windrows also ensures that there is enough oxygen to maintain aerobic decomposition, which further reduces odors and speeds up the composting process.

In addition to pulling air through the windrows and filtering it, the windrows will also be turned by machine twice a week. The combination of static aeration and turning will keep odors and air emissions to an insignificant level. Once placed into windrows, material will compost and cure for 30 to 60 days. At the end of this time, a high-quality finished compost will be available for use.

### **What Are The Negative Impacts?**

The Bureau has been working with a Task Force, which includes representatives from the Lake View Terrace Improvement Association, Lake View Terrace Homeowners Association, Northeast Homeowners Association, Shadow Hills Property Owners, Sky Terrace Mobile Home Park, Lake View Terrace Garden Club, Kagel Canyon Civic Association, Judd St. Neighborhood Watch, Valley Horse Owners Association, Pacoima Beautiful, and Blue Star Mobile Home Park, to identify potential negative impacts from the Green Recycling Facility, and find acceptable ways to mitigate these potential impacts. The Task Force identified 7 potential impacts, and proposed the following specific mitigation measures to deal with each one.

**Odors:** The combination of static aeration and windrow turning will reduce odors to an insignificant level.

**Noise:** The Bureau retained Don Behrens, an acoustic, noise and vibration consultant, to study the project and suggest ways to reduce noise levels. Mr. Behrens visited the surrounding community, and calculated the maximum noise levels that project operations could be expected to produce. He determined that only the nearest residents in Kagel Canyon, an unusually quiet residential area, would be able to hear noise from the facility at any time.

Mr. Behrens designed noise mitigation measures, which the City is implementing to reduce operations noise to insignificant levels at the nearest residences. The main noise reduction measure consists of a 12-foot earthen berm around the northeast side of the facility. If nearby residents find that the berm provides insufficient noise reduction, the Bureau could either place an “acoustic wall” around the noise-emitting equipment, or design and install “noise blankets” on individual pieces of equipment; or possibly do both. In addition, the facility will operate on weekdays only, between 8:00 a.m., and 4:30 p.m.

Back-up beepers are a particular problem. For safety reasons, CAL-OSHA requires the use of these beepers, at a minimum volume above ambient noise levels, on certain types of equipment. Mr. Behrens is working with the Bureau to determine if the back-up beepers may be turned down to a lower level. To further minimize the impact of equipment back-up beepers, facility layout and driving patterns through the composting site have been redesigned to require the absolute minimum of backing up.

**Aesthetics:** The Bureau engaged Gene Greene, the landscape architect who helped design the award-winning Japanese Gardens at the Tillman Water Reclamation Plant in the Sepulveda Basin. Mr. Greene also helped design and currently maintains the landscaping on the flood control berm around the Tillman Plant. Mr. Greene designed grading and vegetation on the outside of the 12-foot noise berm to resemble the natural hills surrounding the facility. He will also work with Lopez staff to oversee an ongoing maintenance schedule, which will, over the first several years of facility operations, encourage the establishment of a self-sustaining ecology.

**Dust:** Lopez Canyon Landfill closure activities require water to be sprayed on dry areas to reduce dust. This practice will continue at the Lopez Canyon Environmental Center. In addition, some of the heavy equipment can be equipped with misters that will be used to add water to the compost product as well as to contain any dust within the facility boundary during dry season.

**Stormwater Runoff:** Lopez Canyon Landfill is currently maintained under a comprehensive General Industrial Stormwater Permit, which is overseen by the State's Regional Water Quality Control Board. The infrastructure for stormwater runoff control has been in place for some years. The Lopez Canyon Environmental Center will share this stormwater infrastructure, and will be added to the Lopez Canyon Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan.

**Traffic and Associated Air Emissions:** Lopez Canyon Landfill operations require about 400 truck trips per day in and out of the landfill. More recently, closure operations have occasionally used about 230 truck trips per day in and out of the landfill. Green recycling operations currently have about 24 - 26 truck trips per day (16 - 18 trucks bringing in green materials and 8 - 9 trucks taking out finished product.) At maximum capacity, 300 tons per day of green materials, the facility will require about 45 - 50 truck trips per day (30 trucks bringing in green materials and 15 - 18 trucks taking out finished product.)

This level of truck traffic is far below previous landfill operations, and less than one-quarter of current closure operations. Nevertheless, some small traffic impacts may still be felt on Paxton.

The Bureau is in the process of replacing all of its diesel waste trucks with trucks that use an alternative fuel, Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG). LNG-fuel trucks emit significantly less pollutants than diesel-fuel trucks. The Bureau has already replaced the trucks in its East Valley Service Area, so that trucks serving the Lopez Canyon Environmental Center are LNG fueled.

**Vectors:** A vector is something that does not itself cause disease, but carries and spreads a disease-causing organism. The most common vectors are insects and rodents. The only vectors that may potentially exist at the Lopez Canyon Environmental Center are mosquitoes and flies.

Mosquitoes are a problem only where there is standing water for them to breed in. No standing water is allowed in the Lopez Canyon Environmental Center. Flies are controlled with good housekeeping practices. Rodent abatement measures also continue to be in effect.

The City has committed to implementing these mitigation measures for each of these impacts. A Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for this project has been prepared as required by the California Environmental Quality Act.

### **How Do I Get On The Mailing List?**

You can get on the mailing list by calling Reva Fabrikant at (310) 899-6930, by fax at (310) 394-7864, or by e-mail at [revafab@adelphia.net](mailto:revafab@adelphia.net).