



(707)826-2021 contact@zerowastehumboldt.org www.facebook.com/ZeroWasteHumboldt
Mail: P.O. Box 293, Arcata, CA 95518. Office, by appointment: 839 Ninth Street, Arcata

TIMES-STANDARD

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Attention: Mark Valles, Managing Editor

Zero Waste Action Plan Benefits Eureka

For many years to come, Eureka will benefit from the City's current work on developing a Zero Waste Action Plan. Here are a few of the benefits:

Community Values - To guide a long-term, City-wide effort to change habits and reduce waste, the Plan will integrate Eureka's core community values. Eureka residents are proud of being resourceful, frugal, showcasing the character of their historical homes and buildings, and demonstrating pride in the surrounding natural beauty of the Redwood Coast. Reducing waste is consistent with these Eureka values. The Plan will aid in integrating Zero Waste methods into all aspects of daily community life and the economy; and waste reduction will become a point of pride for inviting visitors to Eureka.

Accurate data is preferred over "green marketing happy talk." - Researching accurate waste data for the ability to establish a baseline will enable the City to monitor and track progress over time. It is necessary to understand how much and what types of waste are generated in Eureka to inform goal-setting, ongoing monitoring, and updating the Plan. Having a regular process of updating the status of waste reduction will strengthen the City's proposals in competitive grants programs.

The often-neglected Waste Prevention and Materials Reuse strategies (The first 2 Rs of reduce-reuse-recycle.) have been overshadowed by Recycling, and will be given priority in the Zero Waste Action Plan.

The process of strategic goal-setting and featured goals are the heart of the Plan. – Establishing measurable goals is the difference between green lip service and actual change. Zero Waste Action Plans include several forms of measurement over time. For a few examples: (a)Tons diverted from the landfill. (b)Pounds of waste generated per person, per day. (c)Costs to invest in new systems and reduced operating costs. (d)Numbers of businesses, shoppers, youth, etc. participating in new waste reducing methods. (e)Performance scorecards are often used to help schools, businesses, and groups with commitment to Zero Waste. (f) New business development using locally collected materials as feedstock for making new products or packaging.

Zero Waste Action Plans are often cross-referenced to inform Climate Action Plans, Transportation Plans (reduced truck hauls for garbage and recycling), and regional energy plans.

The Plan will foster the values-added economic development of the "circular economy" with a Zero Waste emphasis on sustainable materials management, and creating local end-use markets for local recyclable materials closes the Recycling Loop within our region.

Disaster Preparedness – Natural disasters create a huge amount of waste. The Plan will help local government and residents to be better prepared for the highest and best use of debris materials.

A wide range of partners, collaborating organizations, government agencies, public and private resources throughout the region that are also committed to Zero Waste, are identified in the planning process. The different departments of City government who will cooperate with partners will be responsible for reporting regularly on waste reduction progress.

To learn more, contact Maggie Gainer of Zero Waste Humboldt, consultant team assisting the City to develop the Zero Waste Action Plan or go directly to the ZWAP Baseline Survey at www.gozeroeureka.org/survey . Paper surveys are also available at the Community Services Dept. at 1011 Waterfront Drive, Eureka.