Alameda County 2023-24 Waste Characterization Study

StopWaste 1537 Webster Street Oakland, CA 94612

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SCS ENGINEERS

7041 Koll Center Parkway, #135 Pleasanton, CA 94566 707-546-9461

StopWaste is a public agency governed by the Alameda County Waste Management Authority, the Alameda County Source Reduction and Recycling Board, and the Energy Council.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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- Aladdin Transfer Station, operated by Alameda County Industries
- Berkeley Transfer Station, operated by City of Berkeley
- California Waste Solutions Oakland Transfer Processing, operated by CWS
- Community Conservation Center, operated by CCC
- Davis Street Transfer Station, operated by Waste Management
- Fremont Recycling and Transfer Station, operated by BLT Enterprises
- Livermore Sanitation Recyclable Material Transload Facility, operated by Livermore **Sanitation**
- Pleasanton Transfer Station, operated by Pleasanton Garbage Service
- Tri-CED Community Recycling, operated by Tri-City Economic Development Corp
- Vasco Road Landfill, operated by Republic Services

1.0 **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

StopWaste conducts periodic waste characterization studies to understand better the types and quantities of materials disposed of in Alameda County. Using sampling techniques, this study was conducted in 2023 and 2024 and measured the composition of the waste stream by generating sector and material type. This study provides a valuable snapshot in time of the materials that comprise our waste stream and can contribute to priority setting and evaluation of progress towards goals. The study was designed to be comparable with previous countywide waste characterization studies conducted in 2017-18, 2008, 2000, 1995, and 1990 to facilitate tracking of waste disposal trends.

1.1 **STUDY DESIGN**

SCS communicated directly with franchised haulers and facilities to estimate the annual waste quantity disposed within Alameda County by sector. The annual Measure D reports for FY20-21 were used to verify and/or supplement information provided by haulers and facilities. Similar to the waste characterization studies conducted in 2000, 2008 and 2017-18, this study classified waste generated and disposed of in Alameda County as originating from the following sectors: 1) Single-Family Residential, 2) Multi-Family Residential, 3) Commercial, 4) Roll-Off Containers, and 5) Self-Haul. Unlike the previous studies, this study included sampling and sorting of source-separated recyclables (SSR) and source-separated organics (SSO) generated in residential and commercial sectors. Material Recovery Facility (MRF) Residuals were included in the 2017-18 study but excluded in 2023-24 study.

As shown in Table 1, the annual quantity of landfilled waste increased during the 2023-24 study compared to the 2017-18 study, despite a decreasing trend since 1990. However, the total tonnage of material disposed in 2023-24 across all three streams is still less than just the landfill stream in 1990. Landfilled waste generated by the Single-Family Residential and Commercial sectors showed a moderate increase. Roll-Off waste decreased slightly. Multi-Family waste decreased significantly for the 2023-24 study, although this could be due to changing collection practices at Multi-Family properties. Self-Haul waste increased substantially since the 2017-18 study.

 Note: A) Multi-family residential waste quantities included in commercial quantities for 1990. B) SSR and SSO not quantified for prior years.

Manually sorted samples of municipal solid waste (MSW), SSR, and SSO and visually characterized Roll-Off and Self-Haul waste loads were sorted into distinct material classifications and types described in Appendix A.

1.2 **METHODS**

Fieldwork was completed at nine host facilities (five transfer stations, three recycling processing facilities, and one landfill) for 77 days over one year (between June 2023 and June 2024). SSR generated from Livermore was aggregated into separate residential and commercial transfer trailers at the Livermore Transload Facility (where, under their permit, waste materials cannot touch the ground) and sorted at the Aladdin Transfer Station. Manual sorting was used to characterize MSW, SSR, and SSO. Visual characterization of entire waste loads was used to characterize Roll-Off containers and Self-Haul waste.

679 samples of MSW, SSR, and SSO were manually sorted into 72 material types. Table 2 summarizes the number of samples collected by sector from each jurisdiction.

Note: MSW, SSR, and SSO generated in Piedmont is sent to out-of-county facilities; hence, their waste was not included in the sampling plan.

549 waste loads delivered in Roll-Off containers or Self-Haul loads were visually characterized into 72 material types. Table 3 summarizes the number of Roll-Off and Self-Haul waste loads that were visually characterized from each jurisdiction.

1.3 **RESULTS**

Data gathered from field sampling of MSW, SSR, and SSO were summarized to develop waste composition estimates for the Residential and Commercial sectors and the overall countywide waste stream. Waste compositions were compared to the 2017-18 waste characterization study conducted for Alameda County as well as the 2021 CalRecycle Statewide Waste Characterization Study.

Figure 1 presents the distribution of the three waste streams by sector characterized for this study.

Distribution of Waste Streams and Sectors in 2023-24 Figure 1.

Section 5 of this report provides a detailed waste composition and analysis for each of the nine sectors studied. The analysis for each sector also includes a listing of the top ten materials found in the highest proportions by weight. A comparison of the top ten materials by sector within each stream (MSW, SSR, and SSO) found several materials in common as described below:

- Residential and Commercial MSW Of the top ten materials by weight found in the MSW stream, the Single-Family Residential, Multi-Family Residential, and Commercial sectors have the following seven materials in common:
	- 1. Mixed Residue
	- 2. Inedible Food
	- 3. Edible Food Cooked/Baked/Prepared/Bakery/Dairy/Other
	- 4. Compostable Paper Other
	- 5. Plastic Film Other Film
	- 6. Diapers and Sanitary Products
	- 7. Treated Wood Waste
- Roll-Off and Self-Haul MSW Of the top ten materials by weight found in the MSW stream, the Roll-Off and Self-Haul sectors have the following six materials in common:
	- 1. Mixed Residue
	- 2. Treated Wood Waste
	- 3. Uncoated Corrugated Cardboard
	- 4. Gypsum Boards
	- 5. Leaves and Grass
	- 6. Wood Untreated Lumber
- Residential and Commercial SSR Of the top ten materials by weight found in the SSR stream, the Residential and Commercial sectors have the following eight materials in common:
	- 1. Uncoated Corrugated Cardboard
	- 2. Recyclable Paper (no food/liquid contamination)
	- 3. Glass Bottles & Containers Wine/Spirit
	- 4. Folding Cartons & Other Paperboard Packaging
	- 5. Mixed Residue/Other
	- 6. HDPE Containers
	- 7. Plastic Film Other Film (includes Ziplock bags)
	- 8. Other Paper Bags/Kraft Paper
- Residential and Commercial SSO Of the top ten materials by weight found in the SSO stream, the Residential and Commercial sectors have the following nine materials in common:
	- 1. Leaves and Grass
	- 2. Chips, Prunings, Trimmings, Branches, Stumps
	- 3. Inedible Food
	- 4. Edible Food Produce
	- 5. Edible Food Cooked/Baked/Prepared/Bakery/Dairy/Other
	- 6. Mixed Residue/Other
	- 7. Compostable Paper Other
	- 8. Treated Wood Waste
	- 9. Wood Untreated Lumber

Figure 2 presents the disposition by material group (in annual tons) of waste materials generated in Alameda County by waste stream and sector.

Figure 2. Disposition of Material Groups by Stream and Sector (Annual Tons)

The following sections present the composition of materials by material group for each of the waste streams (MSW, SSO, and SSR) and by sector.

$1.3.1$ **Single-Family Residential MSW**

The composition of Single-Family Residential MSW by material group is presented in Table 4. The composition is based on manual sorting of 136 samples collected from multiple facilities representing multiple jurisdictions. Compostable Organics comprises the greatest portion of Single-Family waste destined for landfill disposal followed by Other and Plastic.

Table 4. 2023-24 Single-Family Residential Waste Composition by Material Group

Note: Waste composition based on 136 samples.

Figure 3. 2023-24 Single-Family Residential Waste Composition by Material Group

$1.3.2$ **Multi-Family Residential MSW**

The composition of Multi-Family Residential MSW by material group is presented in Table 5. The composition is based on manual sorting of 67 samples collected from multiple facilities representing multiple jurisdictions. Compostable Organics comprises the greatest portion of Multi-Family waste destined for landfill disposal followed by Other and Plastic.

Table 5. 2023-24 Multi-Family Residential Waste Composition by Material Group

Note: Waste composition based on 67 samples.

Figure 4. 2023-24 Multi-Family Residential Waste Composition by Material Group

Commercial MSW $1.3.3$

The composition of Commercial MSW by material group is presented in Table 6. The composition is based on manual sorting of 226 samples collected from multiple facilities representing multiple jurisdictions. Compostable Organics comprises the greatest portion of Commercial waste destined for landfill disposal followed by Other and Plastic.

Table 6. 2023-24 Commercial Waste Composition by Material Group

Note: Waste composition based on 226 samples.

Figure 5. 2023-24 Commercial Waste Composition by Material Group

Roll-Off Container MSW $1.3.4$

The composition of Roll-Off MSW by material group is presented in Table 7. The composition is based on visually characterizing 142 waste loads delivered in Roll-Off containers from multiple facilities representing multiple jurisdictions. Other comprises the greatest portion of Roll-Off waste destined for landfill disposal followed by Compostable Organics and Paper.

Table 7. 2023-24 Roll-Off Container Waste Composition by Material Group

Note: Waste composition based on 142 samples.

2023-24 Roll-Off Waste Composition by Material Group Figure 6.

Self-Haul MSW $1.3.5$

The composition of Self-Haul MSW by material group is presented in Table 8. The composition is based on visually characterizing 401 Self-Haul waste loads from multiple facilities representing multiple jurisdictions. Other comprises the greatest portion of Self-Haul waste destined for landfill disposal followed by Compostable Organics and Paper.

Table 8. 2023-24 Self-Haul Waste Composition by Material Group

Note: Waste composition based on 401 samples.

$1.3.6$ **Residential Source Separated Recyclables (SSR)**

The composition of Residential SSR by material group is presented in Table 9. The composition is based on manually characterizing 109 Residential SSR samples from multiple facilities representing multiple jurisdictions. Paper comprises the greatest portion of Residential SSR followed by Plastic and Glass.

Note: Waste composition based on 109 samples.

Figure 8. 2023-24 Residential SSR Composition by Material Group

$1.3.7$ **Commercial Source Separated Recyclables (SSR)**

The composition of Commercial SSR by material group is presented in Table 10. The composition is based on manually characterizing 43 commercial SSR samples from multiple facilities representing multiple jurisdictions. Paper comprises the greatest portion of commercial SSR followed by Compostable Organics and Plastic.

Table 10. 2023-24 Commercial SSR Composition by Material Group

Note: Waste composition based on 43 samples.

Figure 9. 2023-24 Commercial SSR Composition by Material Group

$1.3.8$ **Residential Source Separated Organics (SSO)**

The composition of Residential SSO by material group is presented in Table 11. The composition is based on manually characterizing 81 residential SSO samples from multiple facilities representing multiple jurisdictions. Compostable Organics comprises the greatest portion of Residential SSO followed by Other and Paper.

Note: Waste composition based on 81 samples.

Figure 10. 2023-24 Residential SSO Composition by Material Group

Commercial Source Separated Organics (SSO) $1.3.9$

The composition of Commercial SSO by material group is presented in Table 12. The composition is based on manually characterizing 17 residential SSO samples from multiple facilities representing multiple jurisdictions. Compostable Organics comprises the greatest portion of commercial SSO followed by Other and Paper.

Note: Waste composition based on 17 samples.

Figure 11. 2023-24 Commercial SSO Composition by Material Group

1.3.10 Countywide

Figure 12 presents a comparison of the composition of the material groups from the nine sectors assessed for this study. Residential and Commercial MSW has high proportions of Compostable Organics, Other, and Plastic. Self-Haul MSW has high proportions of Other and Inerts. Roll-Off MSW has high proportions of Other and Compostable Organics. SSR has high proportions of Paper and Plastic and Compostable Organics. SSO is dominated by Compostable Organics.

2023-24 Countywide Compositions by Material Group Figure 12. and Generating Sector

Figure 13. Annual Countywide Tonnage by Material Group and Generating Sector

2.0 **INTRODUCTION**

StopWaste conducts periodic waste characterization studies to understand better the types and quantities of materials disposed of in Alameda County. Using sampling techniques, this study measured the composition of the waste stream by generating sector, by disposition (landfill, recycled, composted), and material type. This study provides a valuable snapshot in time of the materials that comprise our waste stream and can contribute to priority setting and evaluation of progress towards goals.

The in-house programs was used to characterize waste from the Residential sector (both Single-Family and Multi-Family). The current 2023-24 study included field sampling of waste destined for landfill disposal from five generating sectors (Commercial, Single-Family Residential, Multi-Family Residential, Roll-Off, and Self-Haul), source-separated recyclables (SSR) from both the Residential and Commercial sectors, and source-separated organics (SSO) from both the Residential and Commercial sectors.

The 2023-24 study utilizes similar field methods that were used in previous studies. The objectives of the 2023-24 Waste Characterization Study were to:

- 1. Quantify the flow of materials within Alameda County, including landfill, organics, and recyclables.
- 2. Identify materials in the landfill, recyclable, and organics streams that most commonly lead to contamination, compromise the quality of recyclables or organics, are most problematic for facilities to sort, or that have inconsistent markets, leading to sorted materials ultimately winding up in landfills.
- 3. Provide data and analyses to measure possible impacts of current programs, providing comparability with previous studies conducted by the Agency.
- 4. Provide data and analyses that allow the Alameda County Waste Management Authority to readily use and/or adapt and apply the data to local conditions.
- 5. Identify waste streams and materials to be targeted for future waste reduction programs.
- 6. Be consistent with California statutory and regulatory requirements for performing waste characterization studies, understanding that material types may be condensed for the Alameda County study as compared to the state study.
- 7. Meet the standards for SB 1383 organics capacity planning.

This study was completed by SCS and its subcontractor Cascadia Consulting Group with the assistance of StopWaste and the staff at each of the host facilities.

2.1 **COMPARISON WITH PRIOR WASTE CHARACTERIZATION STUDIES**

As stated above, one of the important guiding principles for this study was to mirror previous waste characterization studies to facilitate the comparison of results and to track trends and how the disposed waste stream in Alameda County is changing. This section summarizes the similarities and differences between the 2023-24 study and methods of conducting fieldwork used in previous waste characterization studies.

$2.1.1$ **Similarities**

- Waste Generating Sectors: As in prior studies, the 2023-24 study separately analyzed the composition of five waste generation sectors: Single-Family Residential, Multi-Family Residential, Commercial, Roll-Off, and Self-Haul loads. This report presents a waste composition summary for each sector in addition to an overall countywide waste characterization profile.
- In-County Waste: Like previous studies, the 2023-24 study targeted waste both generated and disposed of at facilities in Alameda County. Waste imported or exported out of the county was not included due to the serious logistical obstacles in trying to capture this waste for sampling.
- Disposal Facilities: Fieldwork for the 2023-24 waste characterization study was conducted at most of the same disposal facilities as the 2017-18 study (Aladdin Transfer Station, Berkeley Transfer Station, Davis Street Transfer Station, Fremont Transfer Station, Pleasanton Transfer Station, and Vasco Road Landfill). Facilities added for the 2023-24 study included Community Conservation Center, California Waste Solutions Transfer/Processing, and Tri-Ced Community Recycling. Waste from Livermore was segregated by sector (Residential vs. Commercial) and delivered by transfer trailer to Aladdin Transfer Station where it was sampled and sorted.
- Characterization Methods: Similar to previous studies, the 2023-24 waste characterization study acquired 200-pound samples from targeted collection vehicles and hand-sorted the sample into material types. Roll-Off containers and Self-Haul waste loads were visually characterized using similar methods as the 2017-18 waste characterization study.
- Number of MSW Samples: The 2023-24 study characterized roughly the same number of samples for MSW from each of the five generating sectors as the 2017-18 study. The 2017- 18 waste characterization study collected and manually sorted 250 Commercial waste samples and visually characterized 274 Roll-Off waste loads and 463 Self-Haul waste loads. The 2023-24 waste characterization study collected and manually sorted 226 Commercial waste samples, 136 Single-Family Residential samples, 67 Multi-Family Residential samples, and visually characterized 142 Roll-Off container waste loads and 401 Self-Haul waste loads.

$2.1.2$ **Differences**

A number of changes were made to the study design from 2017-18 to expand the analysis of waste generation in the County.

- Material Categories: The 2017-18 waste characterization study categorized waste into 30 material types for the Commercial MSW, Roll-Off, and Self-Haul sectors. The current 2023-24 study increased the number of material types to 72. A comparison of material categories in the 2023-24 study to the material categories in the 2017-18 study is presented below.
- Use of Data from In-House Programs: The 2017-18 waste characterization study utilized data from the Benchmark Study to characterize both Single-Family and Multi-Family Residential waste sectors. By design, the Benchmark Study focused just on materials collected in residential curbside programs; therefore, only five categories were sampled: Recyclable Materials, Plant Debris, Food Scraps, Food Soiled Paper, and Other. A brief summary of the Benchmark Study is included in Appendix D. The 2023-24 study used field sampling and sorting to characterize the Residential waste stream (both from Single-Family and Multi-

Family) into the same 72 material categories as the Commercial, Roll-Off, and Self-Haul sectors.

- SSR and SSO Samples: The 2023-24 study characterized samples of SSR and SSO from both Residential and Commercial sources. SSR and SSO were not sampled in the 2017-18 study (or any previous studies).
- Exclusion of MRF Residuals: MRF residuals were characterized in the 2017-18 study but excluded in the 2023-34 study.
- Number of Seasonal Sampling Events: The current 2023-24 study conducted field sampling over 77 days over a year (between June 2023 and June 2024). The 2017-18 study included two seasonal sampling events, late summer and early winter.
- Secondary Sorting: The 2023-24 study included secondary sorting of six material types to further understand the types of items in MSW, SSR, and SSO. The five material types targeted for secondary sorting include 1) Paper/Fiber Food Service Ware, 2) Non-Wine/Spirit Glass Bottles and Containers, 3) Tin/Steel Cans, 4) Plastic Containers, 5) Edible Food - Cooked/Baked/Prepared Perishable Items/Bakery/Dairy/Other and 6) Bioplastics. Secondary sorting was conducted on 103 MSW samples, 38 SSR samples, and 15 SSO samples.

2.2 **REPORT ORGANIZATION**

The remainder of this report provides the results of the 2023-24 study as well as the methods used to obtain the data contained in this report. The report is organized in the following sections:

- Study Design: This section contains information on waste quantities by sector and material classifications and types, and host facilities.
- Field Methods: This section describes the field schedule and sampling and sorting protocols (both manual sorting and visual characterization).
- Results: Provides detailed results about the composition of waste disposed of in Alameda County. Waste composition estimates are presented graphically as well as in tables for a more detailed presentation of the data. Results are compared to previous studies and the CalRecycle Statewide Waste Characterization Study in 2021.
- Appendices: The appendices include supplemental materials relevant to the 2023-24 study.

STUDY DESIGN 3.0

3.1 **ANNUAL WASTE QUANTITY**

SCS communicated directly with franchised haulers and facilities to estimate the annual waste quantity disposed within Alameda County by sector for calendar year 2022 (the most recent annual information available). The annual Measure D reports for FY20-21 were used to verify and/or supplement information provided by haulers and facilities. Similar to the waste characterization studies conducted in 2000, 2008 and 2017-18, this study classified waste generated and disposed of in Alameda County as originating from the following sectors: 1) Single-Family Residential, 2) Multi-Family Residential, 3) Commercial, 4) Roll-Off Containers, and 5) Self-Haul. Unlike the previous studies, this study included sampling and sorting source-separated recyclables (SSR) and sourceseparated organics (SSO) generated in the Residential and Commercial sectors. MRF Residuals were included in the 2017-18 study but excluded in 2023-24 study.

Waste haulers generally track the waste quantities collected through their franchised agreements by sector. However, some waste from Multi-Family properties is collected in waste loads from Single-Family households and others combined with Commercial businesses. Additionally, facility representatives provided the quantity of self-haul waste delivered to their facility for landfill disposal.

As shown in Table 13, the annual quantity of landfilled waste increased during the 2023-24 study compared to the 2017-18 study, despite a decreasing trend since 1990. However, the total tonnage of material disposed in 2023-24 across all three streams is still less than just the landfill stream in 1990. Landfilled waste generated by the Single-Family Residential and Commercial sectors showed a moderate increase. Roll-Off waste decreased slightly. Multi-Family waste decreased significantly for the 2023-24 study, although this could be due to changing collection practices at Multi-Family properties. Self-Haul waste increased substantially since the 2017-18 study.

Table 13. Reported In-County Waste Disposal Quantities

 Note: A) Multi-Family residential waste quantities included in commercial quantities for 1990. B) SSR and SSO not quantified for prior years.

Manually sorted samples of municipal solid waste (MSW), SSR, and SSO and visually characterized Roll-Off and Self-Haul waste loads were sorted into distinct material classifications and types described in Appendix A.

3.2 **SAMPLING PROTOCOL**

Fieldwork was completed at nine host facilities (five transfer stations, three recycling processing facilities, and one landfill) for 77 days over one year (between June 2023 and June 2024). SSR generated from Livermore was aggregated into separate Residential and Commercial transfer trailers at the Livermore Transload Facility (where, as stipulated in their permit, waste materials cannot touch the ground) and sorted at the Aladdin Transfer Station. Manual sorting was used to characterize MSW, SSR, and SSO. Visual characterization of entire waste loads was used to characterize Roll-Off containers and Self-Haul waste.

679 samples of MSW, SSR, and SSO were manually sorted into 72 material types. Table 14 summarizes the number of samples collected by sector from each jurisdiction.

Jurisdiction	MSW			SSR			SSO	
	RES-SF	RES-MF	COM	RES-SF	RES-MF	RES-MF	RES	COM
Alameda	5	7	8	6		3	9	
Albany	$\overline{2}$		3			1		
Berkeley	$\overline{7}$		23	10		9	7	3
Castro Valley SD	5	$\overline{2}$	4	6		1	6	
Dublin				3		$\overline{2}$	$\overline{2}$	
Emeryville		3	5					
Fremont	21		44	10		9	19	
Hayward	14	4	12			6	$\overline{7}$	$\overline{2}$
Livermore	10		15	8		3		
Newark	$\overline{4}$		10					
Oakland	34	28	46	40	3	4	13	5
Oro Loma SD	14	12	9	6		$\overline{2}$	8	1
Piedmont	\ast	\ast	\ast	\ast	\ast	\ast	\ast	\ast
Pleasanton	9		21				3	
San Leandro	4		15	5		$\overline{2}$	6	
Union City	7		11	10				
	136	67	226	106	3	43	81	17
Total	429			132			98	
	679							

Table 14. Number of Manually Sorted Samples By Waste Sector and Originating Jurisdiction

Note: MSW, SSR, and SSO generated in Piedmont is sent to out-of-county facilities; hence, their waste was not included in the sampling plan.

549 waste loads delivered in Roll-Off containers or Self-Hauled were visually characterized into 72 material types. Table 15 summarizes the number of Roll-Off and Self-Haul loads that were visually characterized from each jurisdiction.

Jurisdiction	ROLL-OFF	SELF-HAUL				
Alameda	6	17				
Albany						
Berkeley	3					
Castro Valley SD	3	10				
Dublin						
Emeryville	3	$\overline{2}$				
Fremont						
Hayward	51	99				
Livermore	29					
Newark						
Oakland	28	183				
Oro Loma SD	6					
Piedmont		3				
Pleasanton						
San Leandro	13	85				
Union City						
	142	401				
Total		543				

Table 15. Number of Visually Characterized Waste Loads by Originating Jurisdiction

4.0 **FIELD METHODS**

Fieldwork at each host facility was scheduled in order to sample and sort waste for a typical week and as such avoided special events, rain, or other activities that could impact the normal waste received at a facility. Table 16 summarizes the fieldwork schedule for the fieldwork.

4.1 **EQUIPMENT**

The equipment used to carry out the fieldwork at each of the host facilities was either the same or similar throughout the project. Equipment used to carry out this study is as follows:

- Containers Numerous trash containers of varying sizes were used for weighing waste samples and placement of sorted waste components. Each container was tare-weighted at the start of each new field sampling and sorting event.
- Sort Table The sort table was a piece of plywood that was impermeable and capable of supporting waste samples. The plywood was mounted on sawhorses about four feet from the ground.
- Scales Factory-calibrated scales were used to weigh waste samples and sorted waste components; scales recorded weight to the nearest 0.01 pound.

Scale, PPE, and Data Sheet

- Personnel Protective Equipment (PPE) Protecting the health and safety of all project staff was the number one priority of the project. Field staff were required to wear steel/composite toe shoes or boots, safety glasses, reflective safety vests, and puncture resistant gloves at all times when participating in fieldwork. Additional safety equipment was made available for personal comfort including ear plugs, dust masks, and coveralls.
- Data Forms SCS created a separate data collection form called a Sort Data Sheet for each waste sample hand-sorted and a Visual Data Sheet for each visually characterized waste sample (Appendix B). The forms contained fields to capture information on the waste sample, including the waste generating sector and hauler information and was used to record waste component weights.

4.2 **SAMPLE SELECTION**

The integrity of this project started with selecting the right samples for characterization at nine host facilities that received materials targeted for study by the County. SCS employed a number of procedures and quality control measures to confirm that the samples obtained for sorting were representative of the targeted waste streams disposed of at each of the host facilities.

SCS appointed a Sampling Manager (from SCS staff) to oversee selection and collection of each waste sample. This individual utilized the site-specific sampling plan to identify which trucks to stop for further waste screening. The Sampling Manager monitored trucks entering each facility. Based on the sampling plan, the Sampling Manager randomly stopped trucks and interviewed the driver to obtain details on the waste contained in the vehicle and the jurisdiction of origin. SCS staff worked closely with operators at the host facilities to identify trucks to collect sample loads, direct trucks to the sorting location, confirm their origin, and adhere to safe working conditions.

If the sample met the criteria for sampling and sorting, the Sampling Manager would direct the driver of the truck to a designated area where the entire waste load would be discharged. The SCS Sampling Manager would then visually inspect the waste to confirm the waste load should be sampled. In most instances, only one waste sample was obtained from each truck originating from a targeted jurisdiction. In some cases, two samples were taken from the same truck when not enough waste samples for a particular day could be obtained from unique waste vehicles.

$4.2.1$ **Sample Gathering**

At the direction of the Sampling Manager, samples were collected in one of two ways:

- 1) The vehicle driver would discharge a portion of the waste collected in the truck on the ground next to the sorting location; or
- 2) The vehicle driver would discharge the entire load of waste materials from the truck and a host facility heavy equipment operator would obtain a sample of waste from a randomly selected "section" of the waste pile¹ that would be transported to the sorting area.

The waste sample would be placed in tared 32-gallon trash containers and the weight of the sample would be recorded. Consistent with ASTM International's Standard Test Method of Characterizing Unprocessed Solid Waste,2 each sample was weighed until approximately 220 pounds of waste materials were obtained. Each waste sample was labeled with the sector and originating jurisdiction.

220-pound sample

$4.2.2$ **Manual Sorting**

The sorting and weighing program for waste samples entailed the use of one sorting crew comprised of six people and an SCS Crew Supervisor. The basic procedures and objectives for sorting (as described below) were identical for each sample, each day. Sorting was performed as follows:

1. The sort crew transferred approximately 220 pounds of refuse onto the sorting table and began sort activities. Large or heavy waste items, such as bags of yard waste, were torn open, examined and then placed directly into the appropriate waste container for subsequent weighing.

¹ The waste pile was visually divided into six sections (1-6) and samples were obtained from a randomly selected section.

² ASTM International: Standard Test Method for Determination of the Composition of Unprocessed Municipal Solid Waste; D 5231-92 (reapproved 2003)

- 2. Plastic bags of refuse were opened and sort crew members manually segregated each material item, according to categories defined in Appendix A, and placed the material into the appropriate waste container. These steps were repeated until the entire sample was sorted.
- 3. At the completion of sorting each waste sample, the waste containers with the sorted materials were moved to the scale where SCS staff weighed each container and recorded the net weight on the Sort Data Sheet. Measurements were made to the nearest 0.01 pounds.
- 4. After the weight of each waste category had been recorded, the waste was piled near the sorting area for transport to the disposal area.

This four-step process was repeated until all of the day's waste samples were characterized. Waste samples were maintained in as-disposed condition or as close to this as possible until the actual sorting began. Proper site layout and close supervision of sampling was maintained to avoid the need to repeatedly handle waste materials.

Members of the sorting crew were fully equipped with high visibility vests, puncture/cut resistant gloves, safety glasses, and Tyvek suits.

Consistent with good practice in waste sampling programs, efforts were made to minimize sampling bias or other impacts on the integrity of the database.

$4.2.3$ **Visual Characterization**

A number of host facilities receive a significant amount of material from Roll-Off containers and Self-Haul vehicles. These materials are not conducive to manual sorting and obtaining a 220-pound sample of this material would skew the waste characterization results due to the size and weight of much of this material. As a result, this material was visually characterized.

The SCS Sampling Manager would select visual loads to characterize and conduct interviews with the drivers to confirm the origin of the sample. When a load was identified for sampling and characterization, the driver would be directed to a separate area near the working face/disposal area to discharge the entire load. The driver would be directed to spread the load out as much as possible so a complete and comprehensive visual inspection could be performed. The SCS Sampling Manager would walk around the entire discharged waste load and make notes on the materials present in the sample. Based on each material's volume, the SCS

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Sampling Manager would estimate the percent composition of each of the material components in the sample. For each sample visually characterized, the volumes were converted to weights using volume-to-weight conversion factors maintained by CalRecycle on its website (Appendix C).

5.0 **RESULTS**

This section provides the detailed results of the 2023-24 Countywide Waste Characterization Study. The results presented in this section include the composition for the individual waste sectors and the overall countywide waste stream; and comparisons to previous waste characterization studies conducted for Alameda County as well as the 2021 CalRecycle Statewide Waste Characterization Study.

Results presented for 2023-24 herein are based on field sampling, which involved manually sorting and visual characterization of waste destined for landfill disposal (MSW), SSR, and SSO into 72 material types. Field sampling was conducted between June 2023 and June 2024 at multiple facilities:

- MSW 429 samples were acquired and sorted for this study: 226 from Commercial loads, 136 from Single-Family Residential loads, and 67 from Multi-Family Residential loads.
- SSR 152 samples were acquired and sorted for this study: 43 from Commercial loads and 109 from Residential loads.
- SSO 98 samples were acquired and sorted for this study: 17 from Commercial loads and 81 from Residential loads.
- Self-Haul Waste 401 loads were visually characterized.
- Roll-Off Waste 142 containers were visually characterized.

Consistent with previous studies, the composition of each waste sector is presented individually and then combined proportionately for an overall countywide waste composition.

Waste sector compositions developed for this study are then compared to results from previous waste characterization studies completed for Alameda County, where applicable. The 2023-24 waste compositions are also compared to the most recent statewide waste characterization completed by CalRecycle in 2021.

5.1 **SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL MSW**

$5.1.1$ **2023-24 Waste Composition**

Single-Family homes in Alameda County generate about 239,100 tons of waste for landfill disposal annually. Figure 14 below presents the Single-Family Residential MSW stream by material group.

Figure 14. Single-Family Residential Waste Composition by Material Group

Table 17 presents the ten materials with the highest proportions of Single-Family Residential MSW, representing in total 67.4 percent. Table 18 presents a detailed composition of Single-Family Residential MSW based on 136 manually sorted waste samples.

Table 18. Detailed Single-Family Residential Waste Composition

Table 18 (continued). Detailed Single-Family Residential Waste Composition

Note: Waste composition based on 136 samples.
Comparison to Previous Studies

Table 19 provides a summary comparison of the Single-Family waste composition derived from previous waste characterization studies conducted since 1995. To facilitate a historical comparison, material types were converted to one of five classifications from the 2017-18 study which used the Benchmark Study.

The Benchmark Study sampled individual carts rather than acquire 200-pound samples from waste collection vehicles, as specified in ASTM D5231-92(2016) - Standard Test Method for Determination of the Composition of Unprocessed Municipal Solid Waste. Different sampling methods combined with different material categories compromises a direct comparison of the 2023-24 study to the 2017-18 study. Table 19 is presented for informational purposes.

Table 19. Historical Single-Family Residential Waste Composition

* Number of carts sampled from StopWaste in-house Benchmark Study.

As shown in Figure 15, recyclable and compostable materials have generally declined since 1995, although recyclable materials and food scraps have increased since the 2017-18 study. Food soiled paper has decreased significantly.

Figure 15. Single-family Residential Waste Composition Since 1995

Table 20 provides a summary comparison of the annual waste tonnages by material type disposed of by Single-Family residences for each of the study years. Similar to the composition, the tonnage of recyclable materials and food scraps have increased since the 2017-18 study.

Table 20. Historical Annual Single-Family Residential Waste Tonnage

Note: Annual waste quantities rouned to nearest 100 tons.

As shown in Figure 16, recyclable materials and food scraps have increased since the 2017-18 study.

Figure 16. Annual Single-Family Residential Waste Tonnage

$5.1.3$ **Comparison to 2021 California Statewide Waste Characterization**

Table 21 provides a summary comparison of the 2023-24 Alameda County Single-Family Residential MSW composition to the 2021 CalRecycle statewide Single-Family Residential MSW composition. Statistically significant differences between the 2023-24 study and the 2021 studies are indicated when there is no overlap of the 90 percent confidence intervals and are noted as:

- $+$ " when the material proportion is greater for Alameda County than California statewide.
- "-" when the material proportion is lower for Alameda County than California statewide.

Table 21.Single-Family Residential Waste Composition: 2023-24 Alameda County vs. 2021 CalRecycle

5.2 **MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL MSW**

$5.2.1$ **2023-24 Waste Composition**

Multi-Family properties in Alameda County generate about 63,100 tons of waste for landfill disposal annually. Figure 17 below presents the Multi-Family Residential MSW stream by material group.

Figure 17. Multi-Family Residential Waste Composition

Table 22 presents the ten materials with the highest proportions of Multi-Family Residential MSW, representing in total 64.3 percent. Table 23 presents a detailed composition of Multi-Family Residential MSW based on 67 manually sorted waste samples.

Table 23. Detailed Multi-Family Residential Waste Composition

Table 23 (continued). Detailed Multi-Family Residential Waste Composition

Note: Waste composition based on 67 samples.

$5.2.2$ **Comparison to Previous Studies**

Table 24 provides a summary comparison of the Multi-Family MSW composition derived from previous waste characterization studies conducted since 1995. To facilitate a historical comparison, material types were converted to one of five classifications from the 2017-18 study which used the Benchmark Study.

The Benchmark Study sampled individual carts rather than acquire 200-pound samples from waste collection vehicles, as specified in ASTM D5231-92(2016) - Standard Test Method for Determination of the Composition of Unprocessed Municipal Solid Waste. Different sampling methods combined with different material categories compromises a direct comparison of the 2023-24 study to the 2017-18 study. Table 24 is presented for informational purposes.

Table 24. Historical Multi-Family Residential Waste Composition

* Number of carts sampled from StopWaste in-house Benchmark Study.

As shown in Figure 18, recyclable and compostable materials have generally declined since 1995, although recyclable materials and food scraps have increased since the 2017-18 study for Multi-Family Residential waste. Food soiled paper has decreased significantly.

Figure 18. Multi-Family Residential Waste Composition Since 1995

Table 25 provides a summary comparison of the annual waste tonnages by material type disposed of by Multi-Family residences for each of the study years. Contrary to the composition results, the decrease in waste generated from the Multi-Family sector shows only a modest increase in recyclable tonnage since the 2017-18 study. Similar to the composition, the tonnage of food scraps has increased since the 2017-18 study.

Table 25. Historical Annual Multi-Family Residential Waste Tonnage

Note: Annual waste quantities rouned to nearest 100 tons.

As shown in **Figure 19**, recyclable and compostable materials have declined in relative proportions since 2008 for the Multi-Family sector. The proportion of food scraps decreased for the first time for this study.

$5.2.3$ **Comparison to 2021 California Statewide Waste Characterization**

Table 26 provides a summary comparison of the 2023-24 Alameda County Multi-Family MSW composition to the 2021 CalRecycle statewide Multi-Family MSW composition. Because the 2021 CalRecycle statewide report did not present a standard deviation or 90 percent confidence intervals for materials in the Multi-Family waste stream, the "+" and "-" indicate where the 2017-18 material proportions fall outside the 90 percent confidence limits for the 2023-24 study, which may not be statistically significant.

Table 26.Multi-Family Residential Waste Composition: 2023-24 Alameda County vs. 2021 CalRecycle

5.3 **COMMERCIAL MSW**

2023-24 Waste Composition $5.3.1$

Commercial businesses and organizations in Alameda County generate about 220,200 tons of waste for landfill disposal annually. Figure 20 presents the commercial MSW stream by material group.

Figure 20. Commercial Waste Composition by Material Group

Table 27 presents the ten materials with the highest proportions of Commercial MSW, representing in total 55.0 percent. Table 28 presents a detailed composition of Commercial MSW based on 226 manually sorted waste samples.

Table 28. Detailed Commercial Waste Composition

Table 28 (continued). Detailed Commercial Waste Composition

Note: Waste composition based on 226 samples.

$5.3.2$ **Comparison to Previous Studies**

Table 29 provides a summary comparison of the Commercial waste composition derived from previous studies. To facilitate a historical comparison, material types were converted to the material types of the current study. Table 30 provides a summary comparison of the annual Commercial MSW tonnage destined for landfill disposal. For both Table 29 and Table 30, statistically significant differences between the 2023-24 study and the 2017-18 studies are indicated when there is no overlap of the 90 percent confidence intervals. Statistically significant differences are noted as:

- "+" when the proportion has increased from the 2017-18 study to the 2023-24 study.
- "-" when the proportion has decreased from the 2017-18 study to the 2013-24 study.

Material groups that have *increased* since the 2017-18 study include:

- Plastic (by proportion and annual tonnage)
- Textiles/Other (by annual tonnage only)
- Inerts (by proportion and annual tonnage)
- HHW (by proportion and annual tonnage)

Material groups that have *decreased* since the 2017-18 study include:

• Compostable Organics (by proportion only)

Material types that have *increased* since the 2017-18 study include:

- Uncoated Corrugated Cardboard (by proportion and annual tonnage)
- Recyclable Glass Bottles/Containers (by annual tonnage only)
- Other Ferrous (by annual tonnage only)
- Wood Pallets (by proportion and annual tonnage)
- Textiles/Leather (by annual tonnage only)
- Treated Wood Waste (by proportion and annual tonnage)
- Other Small Consumer Electronics (by annual tonnage only)
- Medical Waste/Sharps (by proportion and annual tonnage)

Material types that have *decreased* since the 2017-18 study include:

- Recyclable Paper (by proportion and annual tonnage)
- Plastic Bottles and Containers (by proportion only)
- Plastic Bags (by proportion and annual tonnage)
- Other Non-Ferrous Metal (by proportion only)
- Food (by proportion only)
- Compostable Paper (by proportion and annual tonnage)
- Clean Dimensional lumber and Engineered Wood (by proportion and annual tonnage)

Material Components		Commercial Waste Composition					
Alameda County 2023-24	Alameda County 2017-18	1995	2000	2008	2017-18	2023-24	
Paper		22.6%	20.0%	8.5%	10.1%	9.0%	
Uncoated Corrugated Cardboard Paper Grocery Bags Other Paper Bags/Kraft Paper	Uncoated Corrugated Cardboard / Kraft Paper	6.2%	7.0%	2.1%	3.7%	$4.6\% +$	
Recyclable Paper (no food/liquid contam) Folding Cartons & Other Paperboard Pkg	Recyclable Paper (no food/liquid contamination)	16.4%	13.0%	6.4%	6.4%	4.4% \Box	
Plastic		5.9%	8.1%	9.5%	7.5%	10.8%	
PETE Containers Containers PETE Thermoform Containers HDPE Containers PP #5 Containers Other Plastic Containers (3, 4, 6, 7)	Bottles and Plastic Containers	1.2%	2.1%	2.0%	4.4%	3.5% \blacksquare	
Grocery/Merchandise Bags "Reusable" Compostable Produce (pre-checkout)	Plastic Bags	NA	NA	1.1%	2.3%	0.6% \Box	
Other Film (inc Ziplock bags)	Other Film	4.7%	6.0%	6.4%	0.8%	6.7%	
Glass - Non Wine/Spirit - CRV Bottles & - Non Wine/Spirit - Non CRV Containers - Wine/Spirit	Recyclable Glass Bottles/Containers	2.4%	2.0%	1.9%	1.6%	1.9%	
Metal		5.0%	5.3%	3.9%	3.1%	3.4%	
Aluminum Cans - CRV Aluminum Cans - Non CRV	Aluminum Cans	0.3%	0.4%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%	
Tin/Steel Cans	Steel Food/Beverage Containers	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%	
Other Ferrous	Other Ferrous	3.5%	3.6%	2.5%	1.2%	1.9%	
Other Non-Ferrous	Other Non-Ferrous	0.5%	0.6%	0.5%	0.9%	0.5%	
Compostable Organics		25.40%	26.70%	51.40%	39.7%	31.6%	
Leaves and Grass Chips, Prunings, Trimmings, Branches, Stumps	Yard Waste	4.9%	4.1%	4.3%	2.3%	3.3%	
Food	Food Waste	14.9%	16.2%	26.1%	21.4%	17.1%	
Compostable Paper - Packaging Compostable Paper - Pizza Boxes Compostable Paper - Other	Compostable Paper	NA	NA	18.0%	9.3%	5.7% _	
Wood - Untreated Lumber	Clean Dimensional Lumber & Eng. Wood	5.6%	6.4%	2.1%	6.4%	3.1%	
Wood - Pallets	Pallets	NA	NA	0.9%	0.3%	2.4%	÷
Textiles/Other		4.9%	4.4%	3.8%	4.1%	5.0%	
Cloth and Clothing Shoes, Purses, Belts Other	Textiles/Leather	4.9%	2.6%	3.1%	3.8%	4.5%	
Carpet	Carpet	NA	1.8%	0.7%	0.3%	0.5%	

Table 29.Historical Commercial Waste Composition

Table 29 (continued). Historical Commercial Waste Composition

Table 30.Historical Commercial Waste Annual Tonnage

Table 30 (continued). Historical Commercial Waste Annual Tonnage

Figure 21 presents the composition of the Commercial material groups from the current and previous four waste characterization studies (2017-18, 2018, 2000, and 1995) in graphic form.

Figure 21. Historical Commercial MSW Composition

Figure 22 presents the annual Commercial tonnage by material group for the current and previous four studies.

Historical Annual Commercial MSW Tonnage Figure 22.

$5.3.3$ **Comparison to 2021 California Statewide Waste Characterization**

Table 31 provides a summary comparison of the 2023-24 Alameda County Commercial MSW composition to the 2021 CalRecycle statewide Commercial MSW composition. Statistically significant differences between the two studies are indicated when there is no overlap of the 90 percent confidence intervals and are noted as:

- "+" when the material proportion is greater for Alameda County than California statewide.
- "-" when the material proportion is lower for Alameda County than California statewide.

5.4 **ROLL-OFF CONTAINERS**

$5.4.1$ **2023-24 Waste Composition**

About 157,000 tons of waste is disposed of in Roll-Off containers in Alameda County annually. Figure 23 presents the Roll-Off MSW stream by material group.

Table 32 presents the ten materials with the highest proportions of Roll-Off MSW, representing in total 83.6 percent. Table 33 presents a detailed composition of Roll-Off MSW based on 142 visually characterized waste loads.

Table 33. Detailed Roll-Off Container Waste Composition

Table 33 (continued). Detailed Roll-Off Container Waste Composition

Note: Waste composition based on 142 samples.

$5.4.2$ **Comparison to Previous Studies**

Table 34 provides a summary comparison of the Roll-Off waste composition derived from previous studies. To facilitate a historical comparison, material types were converted to the material types of the current study. Table 35 provides a summary comparison of the annual Roll-Off MSW tonnage destined for landfill disposal. For both Table 34 and Table 35, statistically significant differences between the 2023-24 study and the 2017-18 studies are indicated when there is no overlap of the 90 percent confidence intervals. Statistically significant differences are noted as:

- "+" when the proportion has increased from the 2017-18 study to the 2023-24 study.
- "-" when the proportion has decreased from the 2017-18 study to the 2013-24 study.

Material groups that have *increased* since the 2017-18 study include:

- Paper (by proportion and annual tonnage)
- Plastic (by annual tonnage only)
- Metal (by proportion and annual tonnage)
- Inerts (by proportion only)
- **Electronics** (by proportion and annual tonnage)

Material groups that have *decreased* since the 2017-18 study include:

• Other (by proportion only)

Material types that have *increased* since the 2017-18 study include:

- Uncoated Corrugated Cardboard (by proportion and annual tonnage)
- Other Ferrous (by proportion and annual tonnage)
- Yard Waste (by proportion only)
- Wood Pallets (by annual tonnage only)
- Textiles/Leather (by annual tonnage only)
- Treated Wood Waste (by proportion and annual tonnage)
- Brown Goods/White Goods (by proportion and annual tonnage)
- Computer Related Electronics (by proportion only)
- Tires (by proportion only)

Material types that have *decreased* since the 2017-18 study include:

- Untreated Lumber (by proportion only)
- Carpet (by proportion only)

Table 34 (continued). Historical Roll-Off Container Waste Composition

Table 35.Historical Roll-Off Container Waste Tonnage by Material Type

Table 35 (continued). Historical Roll-Off Container Tonnage by Material Type

Figure 24 presents the composition of the Roll-Off material groups from the current and previous four waste characterization studies (2017-18, 2018, 2000, and 1995) in graphic form.

Figure 24. Historical Roll-Off Container Composition

Figure 25 presents the annual Roll-Off container tonnage by material group for the current and previous four studies.

Comparison to 2021 California Statewide Waste Characterization

MSW disposed of in Roll-Off containers was not characterized as a separate sector of the 2021 CalRecycle statewide waste characterization study.

SELF-HAUL 5.5

$5.5.1$ **2017-18 Waste Composition**

About 450,200 tons of waste is Self-Hauled by the generator to a disposal site in Alameda County annually. Figure 26 presents the Self-Haul MSW stream by material group.

Table 36 presents the ten materials with the highest proportions of Self-Haul MSW, representing in total 83.1 percent. Table 37 presents a detailed composition of Self-Haul MSW based on 401 visually characterized waste loads.

Table 37. Detailed Self-Haul Waste Composition

Table 37 (continued). Detailed Self-Haul Waste Composition

Note: Waste composition based on 401 samples.

$5.5.2$ **Comparison to Previous Studies**

Table 38 provides a summary comparison of the Self-Haul waste composition derived from previous studies. To facilitate a historical comparison, material types were converted to the material types of the current study. Table 39 provides a summary comparison of the annual Self-Haul MSW tonnage destined for landfill disposal. For both Table 38 and Table 39, statistically significant differences between the 2023-24 study and the 2017-18 studies are indicated when there is no overlap of the 90 percent confidence intervals. Statistically significant differences are noted as:

- "+" when the proportion has increased from the 2017-18 study to the 2023-24 study.
- "-" when the proportion has decreased from the 2017-18 study to the 2013-24 study.

Material groups that have *increased* since the 2017-18 study include:

- Paper (by proportion and annual tonnage)
- Plastic (by annual tonnage only)
- Metal (by proportion and annual tonnage)
- Compostable Organics (by annual tonnage only)
- Inerts (by proportion and annual tonnage)
- **Electronics** (by proportion and annual tonnage)

Material groups that have decreased since the 2017-18 study include:

• Other (by proportion only)

Materials that have *increased* since the 2017-18 study include:

- Uncoated Corrugated Cardboard (by proportion and annual tonnage)
- Other Ferrous Metals (by proportion and annual tonnage)
- Yard Waste (by proportion and annual tonnage)
- Textiles/Leather (by proportion and annual tonnage only)
- Gypsum Board (by annual tonnage only)
- Treated Wood Waste (by proportion and annual tonnage)
- Brown Goods/White Goods (by proportion and annual tonnage)
- Computer Related Electronics (by proportion and annual tonnage)
- Tires (by proportion and annual tonnage)

Materials that have *decreased* since the 2017-18 study include:

- Untreated Lumber (by proportion only)
- Carpet (by proportion and annual tonnage)

Table 38.Historical Self-Haul Waste Composition

Table 38 (continued). Historical Self-Haul Waste Composition

Table 39 (continued). Historical Self-Haul Waste Tonnage by Material Type

Figure 27 presents the composition of the Self-Haul material groups from the current and previous four waste characterization studies (2017-18, 2018, 2000, and 1995) in graphic form.

Figure 27. Historical Self-Haul MSW Composition

Figure 28 presents the annual Self-Haul tonnage by material group for the current and previous four studies.

Figure 28. Historical Annual Self-Haul MSW Tonnage

$5.5.3$ **Comparison to 2021 California Statewide Waste Characterization**

Table 40 provides a summary comparison of the 2023-24 Alameda County Self-Haul MSW composition to the 2021 CalRecycle statewide Self-Haul MSW composition. Statistically significant differences between the 2023-24 study and the 2017-18 studies are indicated when there is no overlap of the 90 percent confidence intervals and are noted as:

- "+" when the material proportion is greater for Alameda County than California statewide.
- "-" when the material proportion is lower for Alameda County than California statewide.

5.6 **RESIDENTIAL SOURCE-SEPARATED RECYCLING (SSR)**

$5.6.1$ **2023-24 Waste Composition**

About 139,100 tons of Residential SSR are generated annually. Figure 29 presents the Residential SSR stream by material group.

Figure 29. Residential SSR Composition by Material Group

Table 41 presents the ten materials with the highest proportions of Residential SSR, representing in total 69.8 percent. Table 42 presents a detailed composition of Residential SSR based on 109 manually sorted samples.

Table 42. Detailed Residential SSR Composition

Table 42 (continued). Detailed Residential SSR Composition

Note: Waste composition based on 109 samples.

5.7 **COMMERCIAL SSR**

$5.7.1$ **2023-24 Waste Composition**

About 54,500 tons of Commercial SSR are generated annually. Figure 30 presents the Commercial SSR stream by material group.

Commercial SSR Composition by Material Group

Table 43 presents the ten materials with the highest proportions of Commercial SSR, representing in total 78.3 percent. Table 44 presents a detailed composition of Commercial SSR based on 43 manually sorted samples.

Table 44. Detailed Commercial SSR Composition

Table 44 (continued). Detailed Commercial SSR Composition

Note: Waste composition based on 43 samples.

5.8 **RESIDENTIAL SOURCE-SEPARATED ORGANICS (SSO)**

$5.8.1$ **2023-24 Waste Composition**

About 202,800 tons of Residential SSO are generated annually. Figure 31 presents the Residential SSO stream by material group.

Table 45 presents the ten materials with the highest proportions of Residential SSO, representing in total 93.6 percent. Table 46 presents a detailed composition of Residential SSO based on 81 manually sorted samples.

Table 46. Detailed Residential SSO Composition

Table 46 (continued). Detailed Residential SSO Composition

Note: Waste composition based on 81 samples.

5.9 **COMMERCIAL SSO**

$5.9.1$ **2023-24 Waste Composition**

About 48,900 tons of Commercial SSO are generated. Figure 32 below presents the Commercial SSO stream by material group.

Table 47 presents the ten materials with the highest proportions of Commercial SSO, representing in total 87.6 percent. Table 48 presents a detailed composition of Commercial SSO based on 17manually sorted samples.

Table 48. Detailed Commercial SSO Composition

Table 48 (continued). Detailed Commercial SSO Composition

Note: Waste composition based on 17 samples.

FURTHER ANALYSIS 6.0

6.1 **DISPOSITION OF WASTE MATERIALS**

To assess the sorting behavior of residents, businesses, and organizations, the annual tons derived from the compositions of the three streams (MSW, SSR, SSO) and generating sectors (Single-Family, Multi-Family, Commercial, Roll-Off (RO), and Self-Haul (SH)) were combined to assess the quantity of each material type and group that is placed in each bin or brought to a facility by self-haul.

Figure 33 presents the disposition by material group (in annual tons) of waste materials generated in Alameda County by waste stream and sector.

Disposition of Material Groups by Stream and Sector (Annual Tons) Figure 33.

Figure 34 presents the disposition by material group (in proportion) of waste materials generated in Alameda County by waste stream and sector.

Almost half of Compostable Organics generated in the county are currently being source-separated for composting. Similarly, almost half of Paper and Glass generated in the county is currently being source-separated for recycling.

Additional figures representing each material group and the individual materials within each group are presented in Appendix E.

Figure 34. Disposition of Material Groups by Stream and Sector (Proportion)

Single-Family Residential Waste

Figure 35 presents the disposition by material group (in annual tons) of waste materials generated by the Single-Family Residential sector in Alameda County.

Figure 36 presents the disposition by material group (in proportion) of waste materials generated by the Single-Family Residential sector in Alameda County.

Figure 36. Disposition of Material Groups by the Single-Family Residential Sector (Proportion)

Almost 70 percent of Compostable Organics generated by the Single-Family Residential sector is currently being source-separated for composting. Similarly, almost 80 percent of Paper and Glass generated by the Single-Family Residential sector is currently being source-separated for recycling.

Additional figures representing each material group and the individual materials within each group for the Single-Family Residential sector are presented in Appendix F.

Commercial Waste

Figure 35 presents the disposition by material group (in annual tons) of waste materials generated by the Commercial sector in Alameda County.

Figure 37. Disposition of Material Groups by the Commercial Sector (Annual Tons) Figure 36 presents the disposition by material group (in proportion) of waste materials generated by the Commercial sector in Alameda County.

Figure 38. Disposition of Material Groups by the Commercial Sector (Proportion)

Almost 35 percent of Compostable Organics generated by the Commercial sector is currently being source-separated for composting. Similarly, almost 35 percent of Paper generated by the Commercial sector is currently being source-separated for recycling.

Additional figures representing each material group and the individual materials within each group for the Commercial sector are presented in Appendix G.

6.2 **DONATABLE/NON-DONATABLE FOOD VS. EDIBLE/INEDIBLE**

Samples of MSW, SSR, and SSO were categorized as Edible Food and Inedible Food. Edible Food was further categorized into four material types:

- Produce
- Meat
- Cooked/Baked/Prepared/Bakery/Dairy/Other
- Packaged/Non-Perishable/Shelf stable

Initial field efforts categorized Edible Food as Donatable Food to be comparable to the 2021 CalRecycle statewide waste characterization study.3 However, midway through field sampling, it was realized that StopWaste preferred to categorize Edible Food as if it were ever edible regardless of the condition found in samples to more accurately reflect food waste reduction efforts.

³ In the CalRecycle study, in order to be consider Donatable food, it had to be in edible condition at the time of the sort (i.e. no mold, not partially eaten) and in its original, unopened packaging. While this is accurate to reflect whether food can be donated or not, it classifies a large quantity of wasted food as Inedible. Therefore, for the purposes of the study, Edible is classified as any food that could have been eaten at one point in time even if not in its current condition. Inedible is only foods that are not traditionally considered edible, such as bones and peels.

Table 49 presents the composition of food into in both Donatable and Edible formats for MSW, SSR, and SSO streams. SSR and SSO samples were mostly from the Single-Family Residential sector.

Information presented in Table 49 is presented graphically in Figure 39 (MSW), Figure 40 (SSR) and Figure 41 (SSO).

Figure 39. Composition of Food in MSW: Donatable vs Edible

In general, Inedible Food decreased about seven percent in all sectors when categorizing food as Edible regardless of its condition. Cooked/Baked/Prepared Perishable Items/Bakery/Dairy/Other had the largest increases when categorizing food as Edible vs. Donatable.

SSR has very little food. Inedible Food decreased substantially for the Single-Family Residential sector when classified as Edible vs. Donatable. The change in Commercial food categorization did not change significantly from Donatable to Edible. Data for SSR in the Multi-Family sector is not available.

Figure 41. Composition of Food in SSO: Donatable vs Edible

Commercial food changed significantly when categorized as Edible instead of Donatable for SSO. Data for Multi-Family SSO is not available.

6.3 **BAGGED VS. NON-BAGGED SSR**

During four days of sampling and sorting residential SSR at the CWS Transfer/Processing Facility, SCS sorted materials that were bagged separately from non-bagged (loose) materials for each of the 41 samples. The bagged and non-bagged material weights were combined to generate complete samples that were incorporated into the composition derived for countywide Residential SSR (Section 5.8 of this report).

Figure 42 presents the material groups for the bagged and non-bagged portions of Residential SSR. Also presented in Figure 33 are the material groups for countywide Residential SSR and countywide Residential MSW for comparison.

Figure 42. Bagged and Non-Bagged Residential SSR by Material Group

To further assess contamination levels of bagged and non-bagged Residential SSR, the individual material types were classified into six material groups:

- Recyclable Paper includes paper material types acceptable in curbside recycling collection programs: Uncoated Corrugated Cardboard, Paper Grocery Bags, Other Paper Bags/Kraft Paper, Recyclable Paper (no food/liquid contamination), Folding Cartons & Other Paperboard Packaging, Other Paper/Fiber – Packaging, Aseptic Cartons, and Gable-top Cartons.
- Recyclable Plastic includes plastic material types acceptable in curbside recycling collection programs: PETE Containers, PETE Thermoform Containers, HDPE Containers, PP #5 Containers, and Other Plastic Containers (3, 4, 6, 7).
- Recyclable Metal includes metal material types acceptable in curbside recycling collection programs: Tin/Steel Cans and Aluminum Cans (both CRV and Non-CRV).
- Recyclable Glass includes glass material types acceptable in curbside recycling collection programs: Glass Bottles and Containers (both Wine/Spirit and non-Wine/Spirit, and both CRV and Non-CRV).
- Compostable Organics Green Waste, Food, Compostable Paper, and Wood. These materials are not acceptable in curbside recycling collection programs.
- Other Material types not classified above.

Figure 43 presents the summary of bagged and non-bagged Residential SSR based on 41 samples. Bagged SSR is 53.1 percent recyclable by weight. Non-bagged SSR is 78.9 percent recyclable by weight.

Figure 43. Comparison of Bagged vs Non-Bagged Residential SSR

Table 50 presents a detailed composition of bagged and non-bagged Residential SSR based on 41 manually sorted samples.

Table 50. Detailed Residential SSR Composition: Bagged vs. Non-Bagged

Table 50 (continued). Detailed Residential SSR Composition: Bagged vs. Non-Bagged

Note: Waste composition based on 41 samples.

6.4 **SECONDARY SORTING**

Six material components were identified for secondary sorting:

- Paper/Fiber Food Service Ware
- Plastic Containers
- Glass Bottles & Containers Non-Wine/Spirit
- Edible Food Cooked/Baked/Prepared Perishable Items/Bakery/Dairy
- Bioplastics

The purpose of the secondary sorting was to provide greater insight into the types of items and their uses that are categorized in each material component. With the exception of the Edible Food component, SCS counted the number of items within each secondary sort classification. This allowed the average number of items per pound disposed to be calculated, which provided the information to estimate the number of items generated annually in Alameda County.

The following tables provide a summary of the secondary sorting results by stream:

- Table 51 presents secondary sorting results for MSW
- Table 52 presents secondary sorting results for SSR
- Table 53 presents secondary sorting results for SSO

Table 51.Summary of Secondary Sorting Results for MSW

A Examples of Plastic Grocery Food Containers includes yogurt, peanut butter, and produce containers.

B Examples of Plastic Takeout Containers includes clamshells and black bottom/clear top containers.

$6.4.1$ **MSW - Paper/Fiber Food Service Ware**

$6.4.2$ **MSW - Plastic Containers**

$6.4.3$ **MSW - Glass Bottles & Containers – Non-Wine/Spirit**

MSW - Edible Food – Cooked/Baked/Prepared Perishable $6.4.4$ **Items/Bakery/Dairy/Other**

$6.4.5$ **MSW - Bioplastics**

Table 52.Summary of Secondary Sorting Results for SSR

A Examples of Plastic Grocery Food Containers includes yogurt, peanut butter, and produce containers.

B Examples of Plastic Takeout Containers includes clamshells and black bottom/clear top containers.

$6.4.6$ **SSR - Paper/Fiber Food Service Ware**

$6.4.7$ **SSR - Plastic Containers**

SSR - Glass Bottles & Containers – Non-Wine/Spirit $6.4.8$

$6.4.9$ **SSR – Tin/Steel Cans**

SSR - Edible Food – Cooked/Baked/Prepared Perishable Items/Bakery/Dairy/Other

SSR - Bioplastics

A Examples of Plastic Grocery Food Containers includes yogurt, peanut butter, and produce containers.

B Examples of Plastic Takeout Containers includes clamshells and black bottom/clear top containers.

SSO - Paper/Fiber Food Service Ware

SSO - Plastic Containers

SSO - Glass Bottles & Containers – Non-Wine/Spirit

SSO – Tin/Steel Cans

SSO - Edible Food – Cooked/Baked/Prepared Perishable Items/Bakery/Dairy/Other

SSO - Bioplastics

END OF REPORT

Appendix A

Material Components

Appendix B

Field Data Sheets

Comments:

Appendix C

Volume to Weight Conversion Estimates

Volume-to-Weight Conversion Factors U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Office of Resource Conservation and Recovery April 2016

EPA's 1997 report, "Measuring Recycling: A Guide for State and Local Governments", was a guide to facilitate standardization of MSW data collection at the local level, which included volume-to-weight conversion factors for comparing recovery efforts between municipalities, regions and states. The factors are also valuable when planners work with the national recovery data presented in EPA's sustainable materials management report series.

This document provides updates to the volume-to-weight conversion factors found in the 1997 report Appendix B.

The goal of this update is to identify more current secondary data measurements of the various products. Of particular interest are products known to have been source reduced through light weighting since the early nineties such as plastic, glass and metal packaging. Some factors included on the original table are excluded from the revised table due to lack of updated data. Primary data collection was not performed.

The original Appendix B table included 12 materials categories; the updated table provides factors for 15 material categories, including the following.

- Appliances
- Automotive
- \bullet Carpeting
- **Commingled Recyclables**
- Electronics
- Food
- Glass
- \bullet Metals
- Municipal Solid Waste
- Paper
- Plastic
- Textiles
- Wood
- **Yard Trimmings**
- Construction & Demolition Debris $(C&D)$

All of the categories include multiple products and/or density measurements. Four product categoriescarpeting, commingled recyclable material, electronics and construction and demolition debris—are new. Previously lead-acid batteries and scrap tires were separate categories but are combined into the single category "Automotive" in the updated table.

Other differences include the removal/addition of products within some of the categories to better reflect the current recycling industry. For example, eliminating "Tab Card" and adding "Mixed Paper" to the paper category reflects the move toward commingled recyclables collection. The addition of "Electronics" reflects the growth in these products since the original table was published.

 $\mathbf{1}$

The updated factors are shown in the table below.

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- Oregon Department of Environmental Quality. 2007 Oregon Material Recovery and Waste Generation Rates Report September 2008 $\mathbf{1}$ 08-LQ-092. Attachment B: Measurement Standards and Reporting Guidelines 07-LQ-134.
- http://www.deq.state.or.us/lq/pubs/docs/sw/MRAttachmentB.pdf
- $\overline{}$ Department of Ecology, State of Washington. Coordinated Prevention Grant Conversion Sheet. March, 2014. www.ecy.wa.gov/pubs/1107016.pdf
- $\overline{\mathbf{a}}$ Factor developed using lead per battery data from Battery Council International. Recycling Rates 2009 to 2013. April 2014. http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/batterycouncil.org/resource/resmgr/BCI_Recycling_Rate_Study_200.pdf applied to battery composition data from Sulllivan, JL and Gaines, L. 2010. A Review of Battery Life Cycle Analysis: State of Knowledge and Critical Needs. October 2010. Center for Transportation Research, Energy Systems Division, Argonne National Laboratory ANL/ESD/10-7.
- 4 Keep America Beautiful. Volume-to-Weight Recycling and Trash Conversion Factors Report. December 2013.
- Rubber Manufacturers Association (RMA). 2013 U.S. Scrap Tire Management Summary. November 2014. 5
- http://www.rma.org/download/scrap-tires/market-reports/US STMarket2013.pdf
- 6 California Integrated Waste Management Board. Targeted Statewide Waste Characterization Study: Detailed Characterization of
- Construction and Demolition Waste. June 2006.http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/publications/Documents/Disposal%5C34106007.pdf Brown Goods: larger, non-portable electronic goods that have some circuitry. Examples include microwaves, stereos, VCRs, DVD players, radios, audio/visual equipment, and non-CRT televisions (such as LCD televisions). Computer-related Electronics: electronics with large circuitry that is computer-related. Examples include processors, mice, keyboards, laptops, disk drives, printers, modems, and fax machines. Other Small Consumer Electronics: portable non-computer-related electronics with large circuitry. Examples include personal digital assistants (PDAs), cell phones, phone systems, phone answering machines, computer games and other electronic toys, portable CD players, camcorders, and digital cameras
- Keep America Beautiful, Recycle-Bowl Competition. Accessed February 2015. http://recycle-bowl.org/wp-content/uploads/Recycle-Bowl-Estimating-Data-Fact-Sheet.pdf
- Great Forest, Volume to Weight Conversion Ratios for Commercial Office Waste in New York City, January 2013, Primary data: \bf{a} Commingled; large commercial properties (500,000 sq. ft - 1m sq. ft) in the New York metropolitan area http://www.greatforest.com/files/FileUpload/files/Great%20Forest%20-%20Waste%20Conversion%20Paper%20-
- 9 US EPA Electronics Waste Management in the United States Through 2009. May 2011.
- 10 WasteCare Corporation. Some Typical Loose and Baled Weights of Various Materials. Accessed April 2015.
- http://www.wastecare.com/Products-Services/Balers/aboutbalers.htm.
- 11 The Aluminum Association. U.S. Aluminum Beverage Can Recycling.
- http://www.aluminum.org/sites/default/files/section_images/UBCRecyclingRate2013.pdf
- 12 The Association of Postconsumer Plastic Recyclers (APR). Model Bale Specifications. http://www.plasticsrecycling.org
- 13 Caldwell, Maggie. Recycling Plastic Film and Shrink Wrap. May 16, 2014. http://www.federalinternational.com/blog/recy
- 14 Caterpillar Performance Handbook. 40th Edition. January 2010.
- 15 Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Data provided by professional composter. 2015. Source separated organics food scraps, nonrecyclable paper (paper plates/towels/etc) and compostable plastics.
- 16 Minnesota Department of Administration 2015 hauler records (excludes organics).
- 17 Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. 2013 MPCA MSW Landfill Annual Report Data.
- 18 California Integrated Waste Management Board. Targeted Statewide Waste Characterization Study: Detailed Characterization of Construction and Demolition Waste. June 2006
- 19 Tellus scaled down by factor from Florida C&D study Converting C&D Debris from Volume to Weight: A Fact Sheet for C&D Debris Facility Operators, University of Florida, 2000.
- 20 Florida Dept of Environmental Protection http://www.dep.state.fl.us/waste/categories/recycling/cd/canddmain.htm
- 21 CalRecycle. 2014 Generator-Based Characterization of Commercial Sector Disposal and Diversion in California. September 10, 2015. http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/Publications/Documents/1543/20151543.pdf
- Organics putrescible material hauled by a contracted third party to a permitted facility mainly engaged in producing compost or mulch, or in anaerobic digestion of organics. Minor mechanical separation of contaminants or recyclable materials may occur at the facility prior to composting or digestion.
- 22 Goldstein, Nora. "Food Scraps Composting Laboratory". BioCycle. January 2013, Vol. 54, No. 1, p. 33.
- https://www.biocycle.net/2013/01/22/food-scraps-composting-laboratory/
- 23 U.S. EPA. Standard Volume-to-Weight Conversion Factors. Last updated: February 28, 2006. https://www.epa.gov/smm/metricswaste-reduction
- 24 National Center for Electronics Recycling (NCER). http://www.electronicsrecycling.org/
- Mixed monitors and TVs: total pounds collected divided by total units collected.

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Appendix D

Summary of StopWaste Benchmarking Study

StopWaste Benchmarking Project:

Purpose: to provide the residential and commercial rate payers of Alameda with an annual picture of their progress towards "Less than 10% good stuff in the garbage."

- Collect between 1600- 2000 samples from residential accounts annual
- Collect at least 1000 samples from commercial accounts representing selected sectors.

Residential Sampling Protocol:

The sampling protocol for the residential component of the project aligns closely with the sampling protocol followed by the RSR Contest- minus the bin labels and lid flips at adjacent addresses.

- 1. Select random number "x" for day-
- 2. Go to the "xth" address on the route
- 3. Note the set out- if nothing is set out skip and go to the next "xth" address
- 4. If just organics and recycling bins or just organics or just recycling bins are set out (no garbage) flip lids of set out bins to check for contamination and note size of set out bins and note "zero good stuff in garbage" on the data sheet.
- 5. If all three bins are set out, note size of bins, check recycling and organics for contamination, and pull garbage for sorting
- 6. If just garbage bin is set out pull sample and note absence of recycling and organics bins.
- 7. Garbage sample should be whatever is present in trash bin up to 96 gallons.
- 8. Sort sample into five categories, trash, recyclable, plant debris, compostable paper, foodscraps; weigh categories and record.

Commercial Sampling Protocol:

- 1. Go to nearest address on route
- 2. Confirm business type at the address
- 3. Once business type has been confirmed locate waste bin/cart
- 4. If waste bin/cart is not present, if access to bin is denied, or if there is less than 96 gallons available to sample go to the next address
- 5. If waste bin/cart is present locate recycling and organics bins/carts and check for contamination
- 6. Pull 96 gallon sample from waste bin (if material is loose in bin/cart load into labeled bags)
- 7. Sort sample into five categories, trash, recyclable, plant debris, compostable paper, foodscraps, weigh categories and record.
- Commercial Business "Types"
	- o Office/Professional (125 samples)
	- o Shared Office Settings (125 samples)
	- o General Retail (100 samples)
	- o Strip Mall/Shared (100 samples)
	- o Restaurants (at least 150 samples with potential to split into fast food vs. sit down establishments)
	- o Schools, Community Colleges, Universities (100 samples)
	- o Industrial/light manufacturing (100 samples)
	- o Shipping/receiving (100 samples)
	- o Grocery (100 samples)

Appendix E

Summary of Disposition Charts by Material Group All Streams

Paper

Plastic

Glass

Compostable Organics

Textiles/Other

Inerts

Electronics

HHW

Other

Appendix F

Summary of Disposition Charts by Material Group Single-Family Residential Sector (MSW, SSR, and SSO only)

Paper

Plastic

Glass

Metal

Compostable Organics

Textiles/Other

Inerts

Electronics

HHW

Other

Appendix G

Summary of Disposition Charts by Material Group Commercial Sector (MSW, SSR, and SSO only)

Paper

Plastic

Glass

Metal

Compostable Organics

Textiles/Other

Inerts

Electronics

HHW

Other

