



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Proposed Operational Modifications at Capistrano Greenery

Q: Why is OCWR composting and why are operational modifications at the Capistrano Greenery needed?

A: The composting operation has been implemented in response to new legislation that aims to keep organic waste out of landfills and instead recover and repurpose it as a resource. Prior to this legislation taking effect, OC Waste & Recycling (OCWR) received green waste from residential curbside bins from throughout Orange County. Waste haulers or other companies chipped, ground and cleaned up this green waste, then brought it to the landfill. This Processed Green Material (PGM), was previously used as Alternative Daily Cover (ADC) instead of soil to cover the refuse every day. Beginning in 2020, two pieces of legislation (SB 1383 and AB 1594) require diversion of organic materials from landfill disposal and caused PGM used as ADC to no longer count as diversion from disposal, thereby creating a need for organics management infrastructure, such as composting facilities.

By composting this material instead of disposal or use as ADC, OCWR is reducing greenhouse gas emissions, saving valuable landfill capacity and creating a renewable resource that can be used as a soil amendment and for erosion control. In addition, converting the green waste into compost will be attributed to recycling and assist cities to achieve the state-mandated recycling targets. OCWR's compost facilities provide a local option to manage organic wastes rather than sending organic materials elsewhere, potentially out of County.

OCWR is now proposing various operational modifications at the Capistrano greenery to use improved technologies and to improve efficiency and throughput to better serve OC residents and local cities with meeting organics diversion requirements from the state.

The use of Covered Aerated Static Pile (CASP) technology will increase throughput while also allowing the active composting process to be covered, resulting in increased water efficiency and improved odor and emissions controls. The ability to chip and grind on site will also allow OCWR to manage waste streams from public haulers that has not been processed off site, thereby improving efficiency in its management of organic waste streams. Acceptance of additional feedstocks, including food waste, will also allow OCWR to divert additional types of organic wastes from the landfill and better serve the County and cities in meeting state organics diversion goals.

Q: Will the proposed operational modifications result in any major changes from the existing operation?

A: The proposed operational modifications to the Capistrano Greenery composting operation will not result in major changes as compared to the existing operation and larger landfill operation. Compostable organic wastes that would otherwise be disposed in the landfill or used as ADC will instead be directed to the Capistrano Greenery and managed with improved technologies

including CASP. Although additional organic waste materials and feedstocks may be accepted and processed on a daily basis, CASP will also reduce water usage and improve odor and emissions control by allowing the active compost process to be covered. Chipping and grinding activities will not be noticeable as compared to the larger landfilling operation.

Q: Will the proposed composting operation generate any noticeable odors that I will be able to smell from my home?

A: The Capistrano Greenery is located approximately 1,170 feet from the closest homes. OCWR will continue to implement odor and operational control measures and project design features, in compliance with all State, regional and local regulations and requirements, to ensure that the proposed composting operation does not result in any significant odor impacts to the community. OCWR implements an Odor Impact Minimization Plan (OIMP) for the facility which is reviewed and updated in accordance with the appropriate regulators. In addition, the use of CASP allows the active composting process to be covered, thereby resulting in improved odor and emissions control.

Q: What happens during the composting process?

A: Incoming green and compostable organic waste is placed into piles called windrows. Covered Aerated Static Pile (CASP) technology utilizes a tarp system equipped with a blower allowing the entire active composting process to remain covered. The active piles are covered with a tarp and the blower aerates the piles within the tarp, facilitating the composting process. OCWR monitors the piles and process carefully to ensure all processing requirements are met. The tarp serves as an emission control, reduces processing time, conserves water, and reduces odors and vectors as compared to open air windrow composting.

Q: How long will it take to make the compost, from the time the organic waste is brought to the site until the finished compost is ready for use?

A: Whereas open windrow composting takes approximately five months to complete, the CASP composting process will take approximately 3-4 months to complete. This includes approximately 2-3 months for the active composting phase and a 1-month curing phase, where the compost stabilizes and becomes a finished compost product. The shorter processing time allows more material to be processed at the facility using the same amount of space.

Q: Does composting result in any fire risk?

A: If not properly managed, composting operations can result in on-site fires as the green and other compostable organic waste heats up and begins to decompose. However, OCWR's operational plan exceeds the minimums for fire safety and compliance. OCWR monitors the operation consistently, taking temperature measurements. The composting operation is surrounded by other graded areas at the landfill that will act as a large fire break. In addition, OCWR has worked very closely with the Orange County Fire Authority to ensure the composting operation including the proposed operational modifications meets all requirements for water lines, water pressure and fire hydrants for fire safety. The proposed operational changes do not result in any changes to this existing condition.

Q: With the proposed operational modifications, how many new truck trips will the composting operation generate?

A: The green and compostable organic waste is already being received at the landfill for use as ADC or burial, so delivery of the material will generate very few new truck trips. With the proposed

operational changes, the Capistrano Greenery will generate in total approximately 50 two-way truck trips per day. A portion of these trucks are already coming to the landfill and will instead be diverted to the greenery.

Q: Are there any health risks associated with the greenery operation?

A: The Capistrano Greenery only conducts composting, taking organic wastes and turning it into reusable compost, through the composting process. OCWR composting operations meet all rules and regulations for sufficient temperature and duration in order to ensure the reduction of pathogens and incoming material is screened to minimize any physical contaminants. Using CASP, the entire active composting process is covered, further reducing potential odors and air emissions, and reducing water usage by minimizing evaporation. OCWR compost is certified by the U.S. Composting Council's Seal of Testing Assurance Program (STA) to meet specified standards, which provides consumers with confidence and knowledge of what is in the compost and how it was produced.

Q: Will the public be able to drive to the landfill and buy compost?

A: The public can currently request free STA-certified compost and mulch from the Capistrano Greenery. Please visit the website link to schedule a pick-up appointment:

www.oclandfills.com/compost.

Q: How is this different from the Prima Deshecha Landfill and recent proposed project to increase daily tonnage at the landfill?

A: Although co-located, the Capistrano Greenery is a separate facility and is permitted separately from the landfill. This proposed project is only for the Capistrano Greenery, which has its own independent CEQA document and has separate utility from the landfill. The greenery operation takes organic waste materials that would otherwise be buried or used at the landfill and diverts them for composting, producing a renewable resource and keeping organic wastes out of the landfill. This facility helps OCWR and local municipalities meet state-mandated organic waste diversion goals under SB 1383.

Q: What kind of environmental documents are required for this project under the California Environmental Quality Act? What do I do if I want to provide comments?

A: In compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Capistrano Greenery operates pursuant to a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) approved by the Orange County Board of Supervisors on May 5, 2020. OCWR has prepared an Addendum to the MND for the proposed operational changes, demonstrating that there are no new or worsened environmental impacts. The Addendum is located on the OCWR website at www.oclandfills.com/CapoGreeneryCEQA. OCWR invites the public to provide any comments on the Addendum. OCWR will accept comments from December 5, 2023 – January 4, 2024. Submit comments in writing to OCWR CEQA Review, at: OCWR-CEQAReview@ocwr.ocgov.com or by mail to: OC Waste & Recycling (c/o CEQA Review), 601 N. Ross Street, 5th Floor, Santa Ana, CA 92701.

Do you have more questions? You can submit questions online, email or call:

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RESOURCES

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