

Kensington Emergency Preparedness Committee June 2020

Research on Bay View Refuse Vegetation Debris Program and City of Berkeley Fire Fuel Chipper Program.

VEGETATION DEBRIS COLLECTION STUDY - June 2020

1. Kensington Bay View Refuse:

Telephone call with Bay View Refuse and Recycling. Spoke with Kim on May 29, 2020.
Green Waste:

- Technically there is an unlimited quantity of green waste allowed for pick-up.
- Vegetation is planned for twice a month for each resident - not designed for large tree removals or big stumps.
- One person has to be able to lift the bundle and load into the truck.
- 3-4 feet long segments fit in the trunk easily
- Goes to the compost facility in Richmond for processing - no chipping by Bay View
- They try to accommodate all the debris prepared for their pick-up. If their truck is full, they may not be able to take it all at once. Call them if it's not all picked up and they will come back the next day or they pick it up at the next scheduled pick-up.
- No additional cost. The cost is included in Refuse fees.

2. City of Berkeley

Berkeley Chipper Program: Information via the website and via email request for information to Parks Department.

- The Chipper Program is in addition to the once a week curbside plant debris/food scrap bin that is typically either 32 gal or 64 gal per residential fee paid.
- The Berkeley Chipper Program is part of Fire Fuel Program. The program serves a designated area of the Berkeley Hills where the residents in those areas pay a "Fire Fuel Surcharge" for the service. This is an additional charge to their base refuse fee and collected through their refuse bills. The additional fees typically range from \$21.60 (32 gal can base) to \$43(64 gal can base) per household per year. The range of cost is tied to the size of the trash can being paid for at each house in their base refuse charges.
- The chipper program serves a hillside area that includes 5,904 homes in the Fire Fuel zone
- Cost: The program generates \$129,860/year in revenue and costs \$150,472 to implement (shortfall of \$20,612). The cost detail includes Personnel \$103,576 Non-Personnel \$29,146 and Internal costs \$17,750.
- The program includes 2 plant debris pick-ups a year (June 1 to Sept 18) scheduled for all 8 designated areas within the Fire Fuel zone.
- Loose vegetation must be in bio-plastic compostable bags and weigh less than 25 pounds. (Note: these are special bags and cannot be used for the regular curbside plant debris program and must be picked up at local Fire Stations in advance).
- **Branches must be less than 5" in diameter.**

- The program also includes the Vegetation Bin Program: Residents can reserve debris bins that can hold up to 30 cubic yards. All bins are placed on the street and available for everyone in the neighborhood regardless of who ordered the bin.
- The funds for the program are collected through the refuse billing system and the program is administered by the Forestry Division of the Parks and Waterfront Department. The work is completed with in-house staff and supplemented by an outside contractor with temporary staff that are hired for 4 months every summer to complete the work.

Telcon with Susan Wengraf on June 10, 2020

- There can be scheduling challenges with yard work and timing of the pick-up. People need to schedule their gardener to do the work prior to the pick-up days - can be difficult.
- Susan thinks the chipper program starts too late in the season - June to Sept. A better window of time would be May to August.
- She's not sure how many people actually use the program. Doesn't know the participation rates. She rarely sees plant debris piled up in her street prior to the pick-ups.
- Also, getting the special bags from the fire stations can be challenging, especially when the fire stations are closed to the public now with COVID.
- Recommends a trial project if being envisioned by Kensington.

Lisa's comment: I remember people would sometimes have the yard clean-ups well in advance of the pick-up which creates a condition of dry debris piled up along the curbs - sometimes for weeks - which reduces parking spaces in the neighborhood and adds fuel to the fire danger. Requires good management and oversight.