September 15, 2010

To: Jim Binder, ARI

From: Emily Renzel, Coordinator, Baylands Conservation Committee

I would like to submit the following suggestions for inclusion in your feasibility analysis.

Park Issues

1. The prevailing winds from March to October are from the Northwest. During the winter months, the wind is less regular. The prevailing winds are Northwest, changing to southeast during storms. (1975 Refuse Area EIR pages 50-51) Impacts of noise, odors, and dust from this AD facility will impact the park. Can this be mitigated? How much will it cost?

2. Unless garbage excavated for the AD facility is transported to another landfill, adding it on top of an already high landfill will definitely impact the park experience - especially when it will overlook this industrial facility. Slopes are already pretty steep. Will they be made even steeper?

3. Currently the road between the Renzel wetlands and the Bay is part of an at grade loop contemplated in the Byxbee Park Design. It is a logical connection to the bicycle overcrossing of Highway 101. Where will that bicycle and pedestrian traffic go?

4. Currently the 20 parking spaces provided for the 30 acres of Byxbee Park that has been opened so far are barely adequate - often being fully used with resulting excess cars parking along the road. When the remaining 100 acres of park is open, where can additional parking be located if needed?

5. When the Regional Water Quality Control Plant expanded in 1987, they were required to landscape and irrigate a 125’ deep area of adjoining parkland. That area will be usurped by the proposed AD facility? How will the RWQCP be screened from the park, not to mention the AD facility? How much will it cost?

6. The aforementioned landscaping currently provides the only sheltered wildlife corridor from the Bay to the Renzel wetlands? How will the loss of this corridor be mitigated?

7. The pipeline from the Bay to the Renzel wetlands, part of a beneficial use project runs down the middle of the road which will be covered by the AD facility. How will this be protected and how much will it cost?

8. The part of the Renzel wetlands closest to Byxbee Park is managed for the Endangered Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse and cannot receive too much fresh water. How will drainage from the proposed AD site and reconfigured landfill be managed to avoid impacts to this Endangered Species? How much will that cost?

9. How much will it cost to do modifications to the park plan and Baylands Master Plan which must be reviewed by the Parks & Recreation Commission, the Planning Commission and the City Council?
Technical Issues

1. All assumptions should be clearly reported - not hidden in 6 pt type footnotes.

2. How will trucks, tractors, and other vehicles circulate throughout the process and the site? If an access has to be created along Embarcadero Way, currently unpaved, how much will that cost? How much screen landscaping will be removed from the RWQCP? How will drainage from the roadway be managed to avoid runoff into the Renzel wetland?

3. Will night lighting be required and how will that impact wildlife?

4. The noise analysis should include prevailing wind, acoustical resonance of multiple concrete bunkers. If a green roof is built as envisioned by project proponents, will there be an echo effect?

5. Much of the proposed site is underlain by former sludge beds? What impact might that have?

6. Since Palo Alto currently does not have a residential food waste program, we don’t know how much material will come from that. How can this facility rely on design volumes of feedstocks?

7. Typically 30% of Food Waste/MSW is removed as contaminants. Where will those be disposed of and what is the cost and ghg impact?

8. What will be the marketability of the end products? How far will they need to be trucked? What are the costs and ghg impacts?

9. Currently our hauler, GreenWaste, has the rights to our Food Waste/MSW. What are the ramifications of that?

10. If every million dollars in bonded indebtedness results in a 1% rate hike, what will be the impact of this facility on garbage rates?

11. Materials Flow. If, in fact, 60,000 tons of feedstock must flow through this facility (c. 164 tpd or 678 cy/day), how much land is needed for 1) four days feedstock reserve; 2) enough digesters to process the materials; 3) enough land for post-digestion curing. What is the residency time and how much can each digester hold? How will the first in, first out process work for curing compost as it will come out of the digesters at different times? Will there be multiple piles of different ages of compost? How does this impact site circulation?

12. What are the environmental and financial impacts of cutting into existing landfill? Please include the volume of material that would have to be removed and the cost of disposal at our remaining design capacity and the cost of disposal at Kirby Canyon if we don’t have capacity. Include appropriate gate fee costs as this material will use landfill capacity that would otherwise generate gate fees. We have already lost between $1.7 and $2 million in gate fees during the commercial ban for this study. Presumably new daily cover and final cover will be required. How does that affect the contours of the park?
13. What impact will this have on our put or pay contracts at SMaRT Station and Kirby Canyon?

14. What is the cost of the necessary redesign of Byxbee Park to meet both park needs and the requirements of Cal Recycle (formerly CIWMB)? How will drainage be handled? How much will the reconfiguration cost?

15. Recently there was a radio special on an anaerobic digestion facility on a dairy farm. That farmer was required to spend several hundred thousand dollars extra to control NOx from the methane run generators? I understand that the landfill methane used at the RWQCP is very dirty, requiring extra maintenance. Will the compost methane be similar and how much will the additional processes cost to prevent air pollution and clean the fuel?

16. The Feasibility Study should include independent verification of any claims made by various vendors with respect to capital and operating costs, energy issues, and environmental problems such as noise, dust and odors. Proponents have been relying on information provided by one vendor and those costs (per a footnote) did not include site preparation and paving, or required machinery such as tractors, grinders, screeners, and loaders.

17. The General Fund has generally charged rent to enterprise funds for use of General Fund land. CMR 165:10 identified the cost to buy 5 properties totalling 8.3 acres along Embarcadero Way - clearly industrial comparables - at a low price of $22 million and a high of $37 million. That comes out to $2,650,602/acre to $4,457,831/acre. Nine acres would be valued then at $23,855,418 to $40,120,479. I believe rent is typically 10% of land cost which would mean an annual rent of $2,385,542 to $4,012,048 for 9 acres or $0.507/sf/mo to $0.852/sf/mo Staff may argue that the Embarcadero Way properties are developed whereas the parkland is not. However, a California Supreme Court decision found that parkland should be valued at its highest and best use. Otherwise, parks would always lose in any comparisons.

18. The service road which currently runs around the entire landfill/Byxbee Park will be interrupted by location of the proposed AD facility. Current policy is that vehicles are supposed to use the service road and then workmen are supposed to walk onto the park from the Service Road. Will the interruption of the service road result in more trucks using park trails to reach monitoring wells?

19. The Closure Plan for the landfill shows several monitoring wells in the area for the proposed AD facility. How will those be handled if the area is excavated and used for AD? How much will it cost to adapt the monitoring wells to AD activities?

20. Proponents of the AD facility have been touting a Green Roof. Such roofs cost a minimum of $25 to $40 per square foot, plus there is on-going maintenance required. How much will a green roof in a liquefaction zone cost?

21. The windrow composting facility is currently located on an uncapped portion of the landfill. What are the logistics of capping that part of the landfill? What are the costs of continuing that composting facility for landfill cover material if the operation has to be moved to a capped area?