



Miramar Landfill A public asset that benefits all San Diegans

San Diego residents and businesses send more than a million tons of waste a year to Miramar Landfill for disposal or recycling. Far more than a “dump,” Miramar Landfill is a complicated structure precisely engineered to maximize space and minimize toxic liquid and gas emissions. The only public landfill in San Diego, it is a valuable asset to the City – producing energy and revenue, providing community services and promoting environmental preservation and recycling.

Rigorous standards and innovation: Miramar landfill opened in 1959, on a site no one would choose for a landfill today. Its 1400 acres feature streams, rare wetlands and fault lines. It is close to homes, businesses, major roads and the Navy’s Miramar Air Station. Despite the sensitive location, the City has operated the landfill for five decades with no significant accident or leakage. Beyond rigorous standards, the Miramar staff has developed new techniques for handling waste that minimize environmental impacts -- making San Diego a world leader in waste management.

A money-maker for the City: The landfill is a self-supporting, revenue-producing enterprise. Miramar operates as a business, charging fees for services rather than taxes, and brings in about \$6 million a year more than it costs to operate. All the revenue goes into the City’s Refuse Disposal Fund (RDF), which is separate from the tax-supported General Fund. Through the RDF, the landfill funds many vital community services (see list on the next page).

A renewable energy source: Miramar landfill also provides its own power source – electricity created from gas generated under the surface as trash decomposes. The captured gas produces enough electricity to be self-sufficient and also power the City’s wastewater treatment plants and sewage processing.



Miramar Landfill A public asset that benefits all San Diegans

City Services Funded by Miramar Landfill

SERVICE	DESCRIPTION	COST
Maintaining Closed Landfill and Burn Ash Dumps	Maintenance and monitoring of 16 closed landfills and older sites where unsorted trash was burned	\$3 Million
Illegal Dumping Cleanup	In 2010, crews cleaned up 14,476 illegal dumps in streets, alleys and canyons	\$1.8 Million
Code Enforcement	Solid waste code enforcement officers ensure that the litter, recycling and dumping laws are enforced	\$1.7 Million
Public Trash Receptacles	270,000 stops per year to collect waste from public trash cans	\$1.2 Million
Community Cleanups	Pickups for large items and extra waste that will not fit into curbside bins	\$685,000
Community Outreach and Education	Education and outreach for schools, businesses, and neighborhoods, promoting “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle” programs	\$140,000
Dead Animal Pick-up	Pick-up of almost 4,000 animals in streets and alleys per year	\$120,000

Direct Public Services

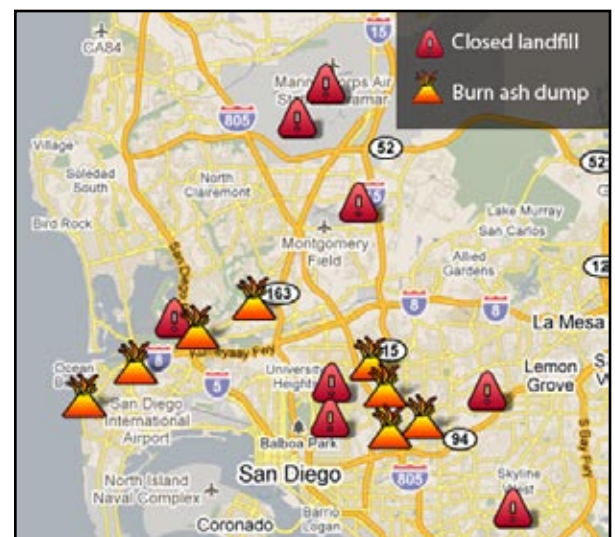
Miramar provides residents and small businesses with an affordable place to take trash. By contrast, the private landfill in San Diego, Sycamore Canyon Landfill, charges \$64 per ton compared to \$31 per ton at Miramar.

Dozens of small businesses use Miramar, including builders, landscapers, haulers, and maintenance companies who use the landfill to dispose of debris and yard waste that dumpsters can't accommodate. As an added service to the community, Miramar waives its disposal fees for non-profits, such as the Salvation Army and Goodwill.

Miramar staff also run the Greenery, where they process yard and food waste to produce mulch and compost, available to city residents free or at low cost. The Greenery also produces and sells wood chips in a variety of colors. Besides the benefit for individual gardens and landscaping, these products are used in San Diego's parks and public spaces and to prevent erosion at local closed landfills.

Miramar Landfill operates the largest native plant nursery in California, growing plants to replace any disturbed by the landfill and to sell or donate to the public to promote our natural ecosystem. The plants help provide badly needed habitats for endangered native animals.

Closed landfills: Monitoring and maintenance funded by Miramar



Miramar Landfill

A public asset that benefits all San Diegans



Environmental Protection

Miramar Landfill was expected to be full by 1995, but the City staff's innovative design, engineering, and recycling efforts have extended the life by 27 years, with closure now projected for 2022. That has allowed the city to avoid siting and developing a new landfill for almost 3 decades.

Landfills always contain toxic substances and other materials that can leach into groundwater supplies without vigilant maintenance. The Miramar staff has received many industry awards for operating the landfill efficiently and with minimal environmental impact. Miramar was the first municipal landfill in the US to achieve certification of an "Environmental Management System" from the International Organization of Standardization (ISO). The City administration dropped that management system in 2010, just before seeking bids to privatize the landfill.

Beyond merely minimizing negative impacts on the environment, Miramar has provided environmental benefits to the city by increasing the amount of materials that are recycled, producing clean energy and preventing erosion and runoff in parks with Greenery products.



Endangered and Threatened Species at the Miramar Landfill

California Gnatcatcher
San Diego Fairy Shrimp
San Diego Button Celery
Least Bell's Vireo
San Diego Mesa Mint

Del Mar Manzanita
Spreading Navarretia
Willow Monardella
Golden Eagle



Miramar Landfill

A public asset that benefits all San Diegans



Future Uses of the Miramar site

San Diego has leased the Miramar landfill site from the Navy since 1959. The lease expires in 2045, but the landfill will reach capacity and close 23 years before that, at current usage rates. Important decisions must be made in the near future regarding new uses for the site.

There are many productive and profitable options the City could implement with minimal financial outlay. The environmental impacts of these options will need to be evaluated, and some may not be viable. However, it is important that the public be involved in the debate and decisions about the use of this sensitive site.

POTENTIAL USE	DESCRIPTION	BENEFIT TO CITY
Solar Power	New technology allows for solar covers for closed landfills that do not require construction	Clean electricity for homes and businesses and revenue from electricity sold to the grid
Wind Power	Could be built on areas of leasehold not used for landfilling	Clean electricity for homes and businesses and revenue from electricity sold to the grid
Waste-to-Energy	Processing of unsorted trash to produce electricity	Clean electricity for homes and businesses and revenue from electricity sold to the grid. With enough capacity, this process could replace the need for landfills
Reclamation	Excavation of closed landfills to reclaim materials that can be recycled or sold	Revenue from selling recovered materials and removal of trash from closed landfill sites
Materials Recovery	Recycling station capable of handling almost all materials	Revenue from accepting waste and revenue from sale of materials to expanding markets
Transfer Station	Collection of waste and consolidation to make transportation of waste more efficient	Revenue from acceptance of waste and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions



For more information, please contact

Normita Rodriguez

nrodriguez@onlineCPI.org

(619) 584-5744 ext. 62

www.onlineCPI.org