

Proposal to Collect Commercial Organic Material

Submitted to the City of Oakland by



Civicorps





June 25, 2014

Oakland City Council
Oakland City Hall
1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza
Oakland, CA 94612

Re: Proposal to Collect Commercial Source-Separated Organic Material in the City of Oakland

To the esteemed Oakland City Council Members,

Civicorps would like to propose a comprehensive solution to collect the City of Oakland's commercial organics, effective July 1, 2015. This proposal builds on Civicorps' social enterprise model, which combines rigorous academics, paid job training, and career and college counseling to help vulnerable Oakland youth cultivate a path towards a productive place in society.

Under the commercial organics collection contract, Civicorps interns would collect organic material, and provide customer service and outreach to all commercial accounts in Oakland. These interns would receive valuable, paid job-training experience after earning an accredited high school diploma through the Civicorps Corpsmember Academy, an Oakland Unified School District-approved charter school.

Currently, Civicorps serves 164 organics accounts in Oakland, using two driver interns and two part-time staff trainers. This is in addition to 273 recycling accounts. Without these accounts, the interns will lose job training opportunities that could have prepared them for a union job in the Bay Area.



Conversely, by contracting with Civicorps for citywide commercial organics collection, the City of Oakland can help Civicorps employ an additional 10 paid interns in collection, as well as five paid interns in customer service and outreach. During the ten-year contract, approximately 150 economically-disadvantaged Oakland youth will have access to job training, thereby gaining the experience they need to transform their lives and become productive members of the community.

Furthermore, Civicorps can help the City of Oakland move closer to its Zero Waste goal. Building on its 30 years of experience providing diversion services to Oakland businesses, Civicorps is uniquely positioned to help both large and small organics producers effectively implement source-separated organics programs. Civicorps projects that it can divert 18,000 tons per year of material, based on current collection levels.

What is Civicorps?

Civicorps has been working with Oakland youth for over 30 years. It is the only combined Academic and Professional Pathway program in the East Bay, offering students an accredited high school diploma with paid job training. Approximately 85% of corpsmembers live in Oakland, primarily in the West and East Oakland neighborhoods.

The demographics of Civicorps corpsmembers represents some of the most vulnerable youth in the community. Virtually all corpsmembers live in poverty; in addition, 20% are Foster Youth, 31% have had court involvement, and 28% are parents of young children. Ethnically, 72% are African-American, 18% are Latino, 5% are Asian Pacific Islander, 4% identify as mixed race, and 1% are Caucasian. Many have lost family and friends to the endemic violence in Oakland's most economically-disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Despite these challenges, students enroll in Civicorps because they are ready to transform their lives. In the 2012-2013 academic year, Civicorps achieved a 74% graduation rate, which is among the highest in Oakland. After graduation, corpsmembers enroll in Civicorps' college and job training programs and compete for paid internships. The largest portion of interns join the Civicorps Recycling Program, making it a vital component of Civicorps' job training efforts. One year after graduation, 82% of graduates are in college and/or employed.

This is possible because Civicorps works closely with students to help them earn the tools they need – a diploma and job training experience – to embark on family-sustaining careers. In fact, Civicorps operates the only not-for-profit, free-of-charge Class B (with air brakes) Truck Drivers training course in Oakland. While in the Civicorps training program, corpsmembers begin to earn wages, usually for the first time in their lives.

Diversion Experience

Civicorps has been collecting recyclable material – primarily glass bottles and aluminum cans – in Oakland since 1988. The collection work is used as job training for corpsmembers and interns providing valuable work experience.

In 2005, Civicorps expanded its program to collect single-stream recycling from commercial customers, co-mingling cans, glass and plastic bottles, paper, and cardboard under the City of Oakland's open market commercial recycling rules. Last year, Civicorps collected, sorted, baled, and sold over 1,458 tons of recyclables, averaging 5.6 tons per day. On average, 20 interns work full-time on the sorting and baling lines.

Today, Civicorps services 273 recycling accounts, ranging from small businesses to large accounts, such as the University of California, Oakland Coliseum, Oracle Arena, Claremont Hotel, and East Bay Regional Parks District. Civicorps operates four daily recycling routes, staffed with one driving intern and one assistant.

Civicorps' single-stream collection system is designed with customer convenience and cost in mind, with the goal of maximizing diversion. Since Civicorps collects aluminum, plastic, and glass containers comingled in the same container, customers do not need to sort their materials.

This positively impacts the volume of material collected, lowers costs for commercial businesses, helps Civicorps attract new customers, and maximizes the sales of recyclables.

One year ago, Civicorps began collecting commercial source-separated organics from small restaurants, food service operations, hotels, and other commercial establishments in Oakland. Currently, Civicorps services 164 organics accounts, collecting approximately 25 tons of organic material per day. The organics routes are serviced by two driver interns, who are supported by two part-time trainers.

The expanded commercial organic collection contract is an ideal opportunity to expand Civicorps' social enterprise model, allowing Civicorps to operate seven organics routes serviced by 10 collection interns, two union drivers, several trainers, and five customer service interns.

Targeting Organics Diversion

Civicorps' 30 years of experience providing service to hundreds of commercial accounts in Oakland place it in a unique position to expand organics collection to all commercial customers. In order to meet the City of Oakland's Zero Waste goals, Civicorp recognizes that a significant number of small Oakland commercial accounts will need to add organics collection service on July 1, 2015.

In Oakland today, haulers commonly offer organics collection in large, two- to four-cubic-yard bins. However, these large bins are only realistic for larger restaurants, produce markets, nursing homes, and other major organics producers. Small businesses, such as cafés and local restaurants, often require 32-gallon, 64-gallon, or 96-gallon cart service; these small businesses have not historically had many organic service options.

Oakland's large commercial organic accounts represent 60% of the material stream, but only comprise one-third of customers who need organic service. The remaining two-thirds are small organics generators. Civicorps comprehends the variable collection needs of small and large Oakland businesses, and has tailored this proposal to ensure customers receive excellent organic service at a competitive price.

Collecting Commercial Organics

Civicorps proposes to collect all Commercial Organics material from businesses in the City of Oakland to help the City achieve its Zero Waste goals while providing Civicorps clients hands-on job training to help them achieve a better future.

Civicorps can collect Oakland's commercial organics utilizing four routes serviced by a rear-end loading vehicle, and two routes serviced by a front-end loading vehicle. Two organics collection interns will be dedicated to each rear-end loading route, assisted by part-time trainers. Due to the technical specifications of operating front-end loading vehicles, Civicorps will hire two experienced drivers from the Teamsters Local 70 to service front-end loading routes.



Collection operations will be overseen by Bruce Groulx, Senior Recycling Programs Manager at Civicorps. Bruce currently oversees organics and recycling collection at Civicorps and is instrumental in the training of collections interns.

Bruce has approximately 28 years of experience in diversion and collection programs. Bruce was the CEO, and then president, of Tri Cities Economic Development Corporation (Tri-CED) from 1986 to 2002. In this capacity, Bruce helped implement curbside recycling and green waste collection programs in Union City, as well as residential recycling collection in Hayward. In 2007, Bruce joined Civicorps to supervise and manage collections operations. He currently oversees 31 Civicorps intern-employees. If Civicorps is awarded Oakland’s commercial organics collection contract, Bruce will oversee the startup, management, and ongoing operations.

Alan Lessik, Executive Director of Civicorps, will oversee management of the contract and serve as the main point of contact for the City. Alan has served as Executive Director of Civicorps since 2011 and is responsible for strategic planning, program development, and external relations. Alan has approximately 29 years of management and director-level experience with not-for-profit organizations.

Routes and Vehicles

Civicorps will service all accounts using new vehicles powered by Compressed Natural Gas (CNG). CNG vehicles reduce greenhouse gas emissions by as much as 22% compared to diesel vehicles. Furthermore, newer trucks are designed to be lighter and more efficient, reducing the impact on Oakland streets.

Civicorps has mapped Oakland’s commercial organics collection routes and has determined that the majority of accounts can be serviced by rear-end loading vehicles equipped with a heavy tipper. This will enable Civicorps to collect material from the variable-sized carts and bins encountered on a single collection route, maximizing efficiency and reducing the number of trucks going down a given street.

While the majority of accounts will be served by rear-loading vehicles, some larger accounts will require front-end loader service. Due to technical specifications, front-end loader accounts would be serviced by experienced union drivers, hired from the Teamsters Local 70.

Service Type	Vehicle Description	# of Vehicles
Commercial organic bin and cart service (carts and smaller bins 2 yards and under)	CNG-fueled, rear-end loading vehicle with a heavy tipper	5*
Commercial organic bin service (larger bins over 2 yards)	CNG-fueled, front-end loading vehicle	2
Bin delivery and exchange	CNG-fueled flatbed truck	1
Route Supervision	CNG-fueled GMC pickup	2

* Includes ones backup vehicle, to ensure service is not interrupted during necessary vehicle maintenance.

Collection Containers

Civicorps will provide new, green carts and bins for the organics collection. Civicorps interns, aided by their route supervisor, will deliver the carts and bins to all commercial customers prior to contract initiation. Civicorps can provide 10-yard roll off boxes to collect organics at City-sponsored special events.

Throughout the term of the contract, customers will be able to order additional or replacement containers, or schedule container repair. Civicorps will dedicate one collection intern to conduct bin cleaning, repair, swapping, replacement, and delivery.

According to Civicorps' preliminary analysis of service levels and routing needs, the following carts and bins will be provided to Oakland customers:

Container Type	Size	# of Containers
Carts	32-gal	32
	64-gal	1,024
	96-gal	283
Bins	1yd	77
	1.5yd	80
	2yd	118
	3yd	67
	4yd	17

Processing Organics: Anaerobic Digestion

Civicorps is committed to finding the best and highest use for Oakland's organic material. All organics will be delivered to the East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD), which will use the material as feedstock for its anaerobic digesters, creating renewable energy from Oakland's commercial organics.

Currently, Civicorps collects approximately 25 tons per day of commercial source-separated organics, which are hauled to a composting facility in Modesto, CA.

Beginning in the Fall of 2014, Civicorps will bring these 25 tons to EBMUD for processing and anaerobic digestion. By keeping the commercial organics in Oakland, Civicorps will not only minimize greenhouse gas emissions related to trucking, but will also ensure Oakland benefits from the clean, renewable energy that can be harnessed from organic material.



If awarded the expanded commercial organics collection contract, Civicorps expects to divert 18,000 tons per year – providing even more energy-rich organic material for EBMUD's anaerobic digesters.

EBMUD's anaerobic digestion program has become a model for wastewater treatment plants across the country. In 2012, EBMUD's facility at 2020 Wake Avenue became the first wastewater treatment plant in North America to produce more renewable energy onsite than is needed to run the facility. Surplus energy is sold to the Port of Oakland, displacing grid-source electricity.

Civicorps' organics collection program is an ideal opportunity to expand green energy production in Oakland while providing high-quality job training to the City's most vulnerable youth.

Billing, Customer Service, and Outreach

Civicorps proposes to conduct all billing and customer service in-house, providing interns additional opportunities to learn skills that will prepare them for in-demand careers in office environments.

Civicorps has offered office-based job training for approximately 25 years. If awarded the Oakland commercial organic collection contract, Civicorps can employ five customer service interns, in addition to three full-time staff members and trainers. Customer service interns would be trained on answering phones, assisting customers with service and billing questions, issuing bills, maintaining accounts, and other highly-sought office skills.

The commercial organic collection customer service office would be located on the second floor of the Civicorps Schools facility at 101 Myrtle St., where Civicorps currently has 2,265 square feet of empty space.

Civicorps' customer service department would be overseen by Brian Hickey, who possesses over 16 years of experience in customer service, accounting, auditing, and not-for-profit management. Brian has worked as Civicorps' Chief Financial Officer since 2008. If awarded the organics collection contract, Brian would be responsible for establishing customer service operations, overseeing the training of interns, and managing customer service operations throughout the contract term.

Billing System

Civicorps is currently billing \$3 million in customer accounts annually for its two social enterprises. Recognizing that many businesses prefer auto-billing as opposed to monthly invoices, Civicorps has identified a cloud-based system with auto-billing capabilities.

This is an ideal opportunity to train customer service interns on the use of cloud-based billing systems commonly encountered in the workplace. For customers who prefer invoices, Civicorps has the capability to issue such invoices monthly.

Website

Civicorps will implement a dedicated website for its commercial organics collection operations, where Oakland customers can review services, send emails inquiries to customer service, and elect auto-billing options.

Community Outreach: Organics Diversion Specialists

Community outreach and education are essential to the successful implementation of an organics collection program. Civicorps is therefore excited to provide Organics Diversion Specialist training to its customer service interns.

Customer service interns will fulfill a dual role: on a rotating basis, interns will spend part of their hours working in the customer service office, and part of their hours in the field conducting outreach as Organics Diversion Specialists.

For the first year of the organics collection program, Civicorps will provide three to four Organics Diversion Specialists. This heavy level of outreach will be essential to program startup, since many new customers will need guidance in implementing their program. After implementation, Civicorps projects a need for one to two Organics Diversion Specialists on an ongoing basis.

Organics Diversion Specialists will be assisted in the field by a trainer, who will be on hand to guide them in their outreach efforts.

The Organics Diversion Specialists will conduct on-site visits to help commercial and institutional customers successfully implement organics programs. This includes distributing educational posters and cart stickers, advising businesses on cart placement, and helping to train staff on proper sorting habits. Civicorps interns will practice in-person customer service skills while thinking creatively and helping the environment.



Civicorps can offer Oakland businesses two sizes of organics sorting posters: 11” x 17” and 8.5” x 11” for smaller spaces. Organics Diversion Specialists will help businesses hang posters in optimal areas to educate customers and staff on proper sorting habits. The Specialists will also provide sorting stickers for business to affix to their carts, which graphically depict the proper material to dispose in the organic bin. Posters and cart stickers are employed in other Bay Area communities and help encourage program compliance.

Pricing

Civicorps can offer Oakland businesses a competitive rate of \$157.41 per yard for the collection and processing of organic material. This figure includes processing all organic material at EBMUD.

Civicorps’ price compares to \$181.49 per yard offered by the incumbent hauler (comprising of \$157.81 per yard to collect organics and an additional \$23.48 per yard to process at EBMUD).

At a \$24.08 per yard savings, Civicorps can still ensure that Oakland’s energy-rich organic material is put to the best and highest use – all while providing valuable job training and educational opportunities to vulnerable West and East Oakland youth.

Conclusion

Civicorps has been providing diversion services in Oakland for over 25 years. This commercial organics collection contract will help Civicorps expand its successful social enterprise model and increase job training opportunities for Oakland youth.

By working together, Civicorps and the City of Oakland can help our vulnerable young adults to not only envision a better future, but to seek a path out of poverty through job opportunities. In addition, this partnership will bring our community closer to Zero Waste and provide our businesses a competitive rate for organics collection services.

Thank you for considering this proposal. Please feel free to contact me if you have further questions.

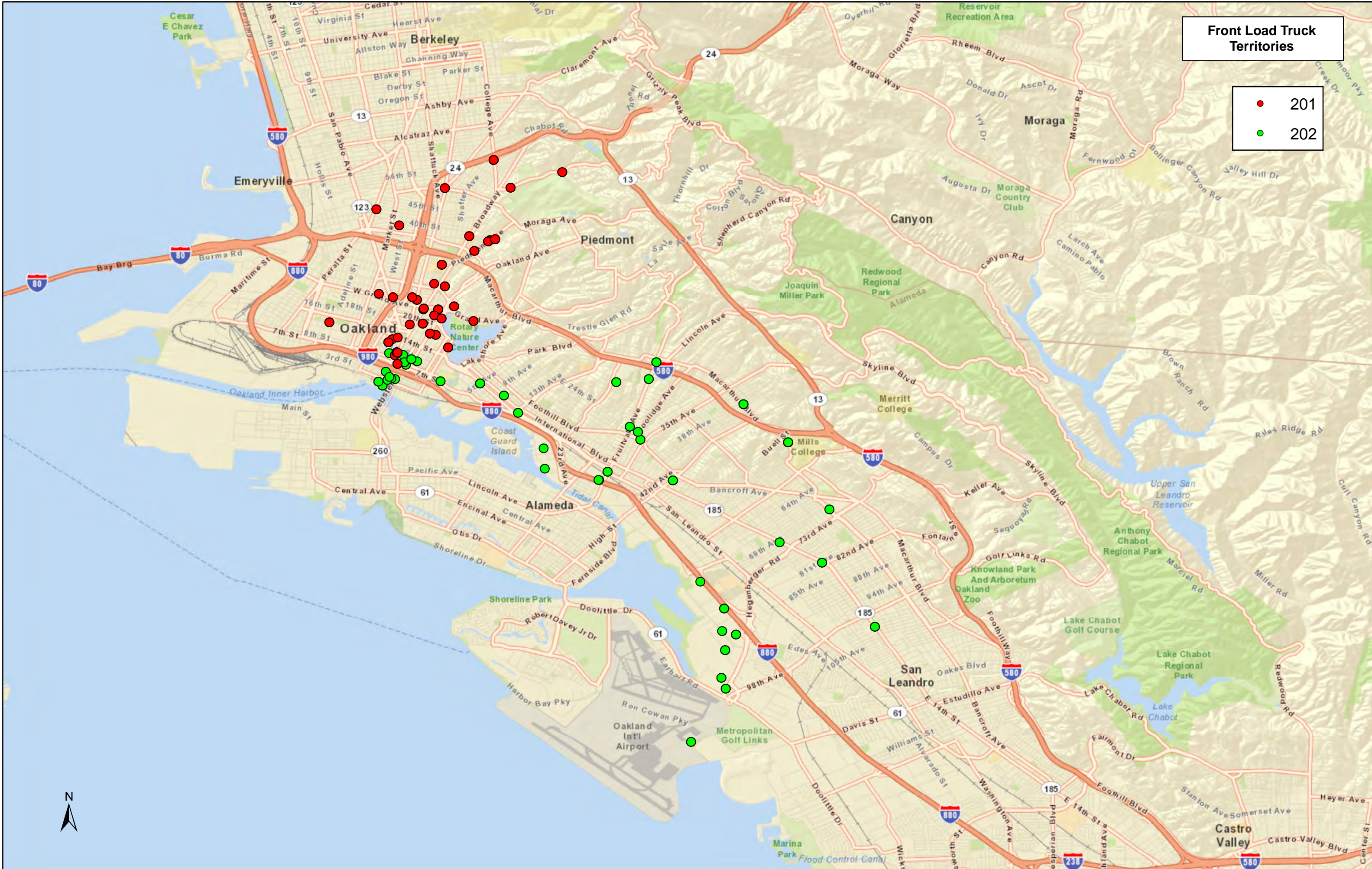
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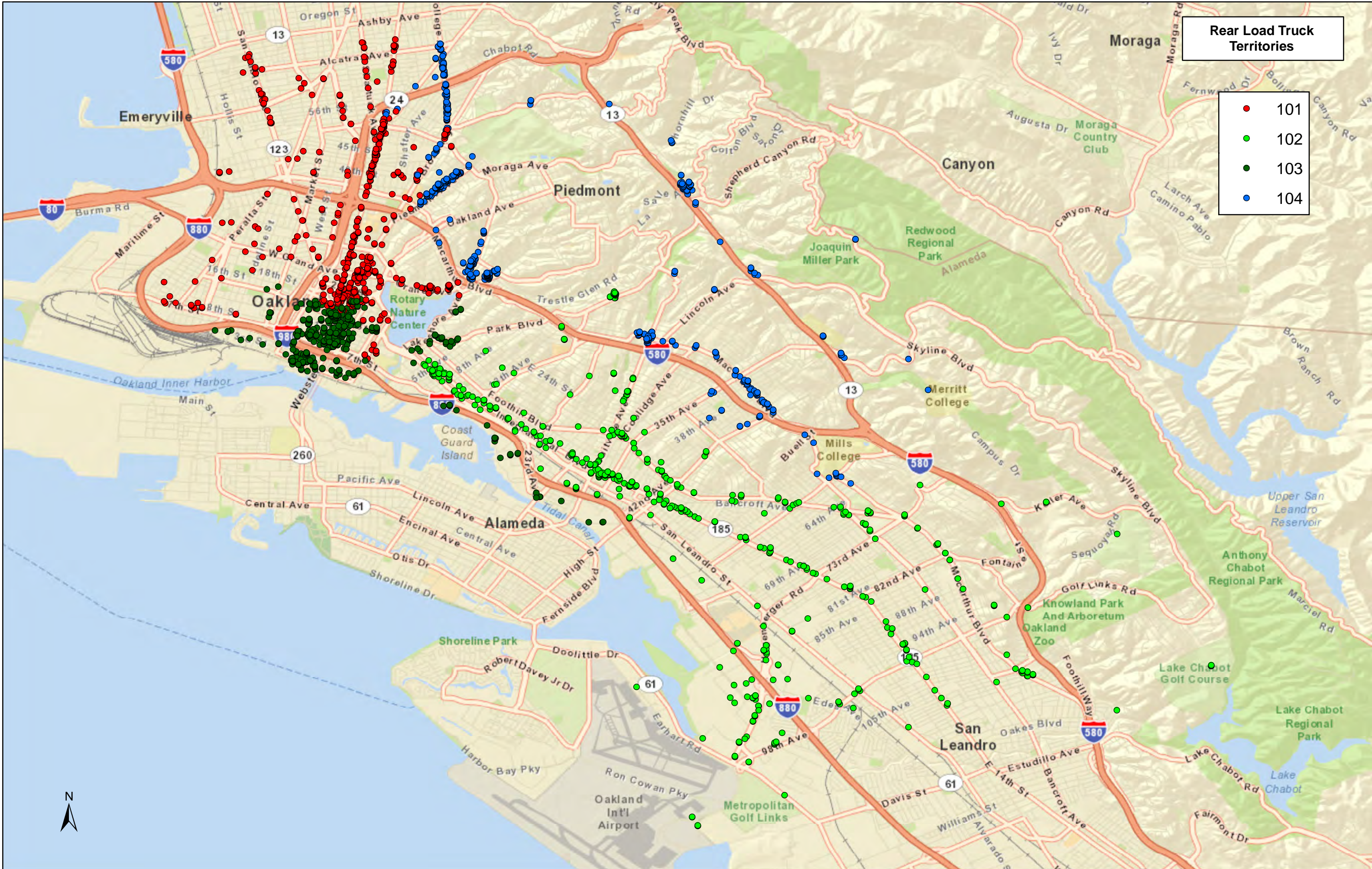


Alan Lessik
Executive Director
Civicorps Schools

Front Load Truck Territories

- 201
- 202





Rear Load Truck Territories

- 101
- 102
- 103
- 104