Your business could reduce waste disposal costs and protect natural resources by recycling and composting. Here are some easy to implement tips to make recycling and composting work for your businesses.

A. Set up indoor waste stations that are easy to understand and use. Indoor containers are an essential part of convenient recycling, composting, and trash collection. Provide and maintain appropriate, color-coded, and clearly labeled bins. The City can provide you with labels that properly identify which bins take what materials.

B. Train your staff. Make sure that whoever takes out the trash understands how the waste stations are organized. This way they won’t undo the recycling efforts of your employees by mixing the different waste streams back together again when taking out the trash. Janitorial crews may need additional tools, such as a 2- or 3-bag cleaning cart, in order to easily keep the contents of each bin separated.

C. Keep a clean and organized outdoor trash enclosure. Keeping your trash enclosure clean and fully accessible, not only minimizes the risk of health code violations and improves the appearance of your property, it also encourages tenants and employees to use it correctly. If your enclosure is a mess, users will avoid putting materials in the correct bin, which will compound waste collection problems.

D. Need more information or technical assistance? Contact El Cerrito Recycling at 510-559-7686 or East Bay Sanitary at 510-237-4321.

The West County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Collection Facility accepts hazardous waste from certain businesses in West County. Businesses that qualify as “small quantity generators” (generating less than 220 pounds or 27 gallons of HHW per month) can dispose of hazardous materials conveniently and safely at the West County facility. Businesses must make arrangements for proper disposal. To check to see what your options are, please contact the Household Hazardous Waste Facility at 888-412-9277.
Since January 2014, retail establishments in El Cerrito (including grocery and department stores, and other retail establishments) are prohibited from distributing single-use “carry out” plastic bags. Restaurants and nonprofit charitable re-use businesses are exempt. A similar statewide ban (Proposition 67) was passed by California voters in November 2016.

Food service businesses in El Cerrito are also prohibited from using expanded polystyrene (EPS) food ware (often referred to by the brand name “Styrofoam”). Food service businesses must use compostable, recyclable, or reusable food ware.

The City has instituted these bans because both single-use bags and EPS food ware have been found to be significant contributors to water pollution and are particularly dangerous to marine life. Approximately one million single-use plastic bags end up in the Bay each year. For this reason, the Regional Water Quality Control Boards have mandated that cities and counties throughout California reduce the amount of litter entering storm drains and waterways.

Litter counts show a strong connection between plastic bag bans and a reduction in litter. Over the past five years in communities with these bans, plastic bags found during litter counts on Coastal Clean-up Day have significantly declined, according to the Watershed Project. For instance, litter counts in Richmond indicate that plastic bags as a percentage of litter have dropped from nearly 20% in 2011 to below 5% in 2015.

For more information or to read the ordinances in their entirety, please visit www.el-cerrito.org/bagsandfoam or contact the Operations & Environmental Services Division at (510) 215-4350.