



City tests environmentally-friendly solar-powered trash bins

In an effort to take advantage of the benefits of solar technology, the City recently installed two Big Belly® solar-powered trash compactors in Alamo Plaza as part of a pilot program to reduce the frequency of collecting waste in the downtown area.

The Big Belly® trash containers utilize solar energy to compress and compact trash and provide additional capacity. The City's Downtown Operations Department will test the Big Belly® system for 30 days and evaluate its effectiveness at the conclusion of the pilot period. If the Big Belly® compactors prove to be effective, the City will determine through the upcoming budget process expansion opportunities for the system.

"Environmentally-friendly technology like the Big Belly® solar-powered trash compactor provides the City great flexibility with collection in one of our highest pedestrian-traffic areas," said Paula Stallcup, director of Downtown Operations. "This system also provides the City innovative opportunities to keeping the downtown area clean."

The City already has implemented a number of environmentally-sensitive best practice initiatives in its facilities and operations. In 2004, the City began retrofitting traffic and pedestrian signals, replacing incandescent bulbs with light emitting diodes, saving approximately \$750,000 in electricity costs. The Development and Business Services Center utilizes green building and energy reduction components. Many of the non-public safety vehicles within the City fleet (31 percent) use hybrid technology or alternative fuels, reducing the costs associated with fuel consumption and decreasing pollution. City Council recently passed a resolution supporting the establishment of a green building policy for new City-owned facilities that will allow these structures to be designed and constructed to the highest possible green building aspects with budget.

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