



## **GreenTown is on a Mission – New Waste Services**

by Anabel Pelham  
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Nothing is more powerful than a good idea *and* the research data to back it up. Volunteers and leaders of Green Town Los Altos saw that reality come true on Tuesday August 9 as Louie Pelligrini, president of Mission Trail Waste Systems outlined the implementation of the new garbage contract. Los Altos can achieve a 78 percent dispersion rate with the new contract, representing the culmination of months of data gathering, community input, collaboration with city leadership and negotiation for a better way of managing the city's garbage and moving toward a greener Los Altos. In many ways it has been a paradigm shift for Los Altos.

Green Town Los Altos is widely recognized as the “green roots” organization that educated and enlightened the Los Altos Environmental Commission and did the work on the Green Ribbon Citizen's Committee to make all of this possible. Green Town Los Altos is mentioned in the August 18th front-page story of the *Los Altos Town Crier* as the guide to recommendations for this change.



**Figure 1 Audience at Mission Trail Event - 8/9/10**

The new contract, which started September 1<sup>st</sup>, will move Los Altos into a state-of-the-industry system. Ultra modern natural gas trucks will automatically collect a variety of new square color-coded “carts” that are 32, 64, and 96 gallons plus a new mini 20-gallon

option as well. Blue carts are for mixed recyclables, green are for organics (compostables and yard trimmings), and gray are for garbage. The trucks will roll at 7:00am (and not earlier) to the relief of many later sleepers. Two times a year large items in "bulk" bags (like giant garbage bags) will be taken. There will be an additional \$10.00 fee for carts that must be collected in yards and alleys (except for the disabled), although the "alley fee pick-up charge" is currently being debated by the City Council.

The new truck drivers are experienced, as 18 of the 22 Los Altos Garbage Company teamster workers will join the Mission Trail team. Old cans are to be placed upside down next to the new carts and will be picked up by the new Mission Trail workers. Garbage collection rates will be the same for the first year and Mission Trail will be distributing comprehensive lists to customers describing what may be placed into the color-coded carts and how best to divide and dispose. The byword phrase is: REDUCE, RECYCLE, REUSE and ...ROT! Bulky waste items will be collected at special fee rates and a recycling and an "organics service" will be provided to commercial customers at no charge. A weekly collection service for residential garbage, recyclables and organic materials is planned so customers need not remember what gets collected when. Household hazardous wastes will be collected at no charge and the Mission Trail [web site](#) offers detailed and clear information on how to contain and place hazardous items for pick up.

Mission Trail has served Bay Area communities for sixty years and members of the Pelligrini family live in Los Altos. The company also offers on-line billing and free consulting assistance to help local businesses reduce waste. For more information visit: [www.missiontrail.com/LosAltos/residential.html](http://www.missiontrail.com/LosAltos/residential.html)