

INLAND VALLEY
Daily Bulletin

Pomona moves to ban new businesses in this industry

By [Monica Rodriguez](#), Inland Valley Daily Bulletin

Posted: 06/07/17



Pomona City Council has given preliminary approval to a proposed ordinance banning the establishment of new waste and recycling facilities and the expansion of existing facilities in the city. Photo: Monica Rodriguez

POMONA, CA - Pomona has taken the first steps to [ban new waste and recycling businesses and the expansion of existing facilities](#) in the city.

It was a process that took years and the involvement of many people seeking to make Pomona a place with a cleaner environment, residents say.

Council members granted the preliminary approval Monday. The proposal is expected to return to the council July 10 for a final vote.

For years, Pomona residents have called upon city leaders to do more to regulate such businesses. Then [in 2014, members of Clean and Green Pomona — a group of residents and](#)

[business people seeking improvements in the city's industrial areas, especially in southeast Pomona — went before the City Council.](#) The group complained of the odors, dust, traffic, vermin and wear and tear on city streets.

Waste and recycling businesses represent a fire danger, they said.

The City Council appointed a committee of residents to work on the issue in addition to establishing a separate City Council committee.

The Rev. Julie Roberts-Fronk, pastor at First Christian Church in Pomona and a leader with Inland Communities Organizing Network, or ICON, said following the vote she was “pretty pleased and very grateful. . . . It’s been decades this is a problem.

Before the vote, council members conducted a public hearing. Among the speakers was resident Linda Hinojos, who lives near several waste and recycling facilities. She said she remembers being at City Hall with her father as far back as 1999 — she was 12 — when he called on City Council members to address the nuisance problems stemming from the neighboring businesses.

“You have an opportunity to take a stand,” Hinojos urged.

She called on city leaders to bolster code enforcement to better monitor the activities of such businesses.

Lawyers for some recycling businesses, including SA Recycling, a company that has a facility in south Pomona and other locations, also attended the meeting.

Jeff Farano, a lawyer for SA Recycling, suggested adding language so that the proposed ordinance would not apply to scrap metal recycling and to the Pomona Valley Transfer Station.

Farano said the new regulations would hurt SA Recycling, a permitted company that handles scrap metal, among other materials, that would become legal nonconforming uses.

Lawyers are concerned the city will attempt to take their property and put them out of business, Assistant City Attorney Andrew Jared said. Those fears are unfounded, he said. The businesses are expected to comply with the proposed ordinance and the conditions set in their permits.

Councilwoman Ginna Escobar supported the ban but suggested making amendments that included exempting metal recycling facilities and waste transfer stations, drawing a passionate reaction from Councilwoman Cristina Carrizosa.

“I think what I just heard is preposterous,” Carrizosa said. “It’s an insult to the community.”

Carrizosa called on Escobar and Councilwoman Adriana Robledo to take a stand in support of the community, which spent countless hours crafting a solution, rather than businesses that may have provided support during election season.

Some residents asked that the city take steps so that businesses don't leave the city and create the same problems in other communities.

"That's very altruistic, but nobody thinks of us," Carrizosa said. The city needs to look out for the interests of its residents, she said.

"We're going to send a message to the region that in Pomona, it's not business as usual," she said.

Robledo, who supports the ban, said she did not intend to offend anyone.

"In no way ever are decisions being made to insult any of our residents," Robledo said. "The decisions I make are solely my own."

She's not interested in attracting additional waste and recycling businesses, Robledo said, but she also doesn't want to set up obstacles for existing businesses and doesn't "want to set them up for failure."

Finding a way to increase code enforcement, something that residents regularly request of the council, is also something the council must address, Robledo said.

Mayor Tim Sandoval, who prior to seeking elected office was chairman of the related City Council-appointed committee, said he couldn't support Escobar's motion.

"This community has spoken," he said. "This community has been speaking for tens of years."

He asked whether other nearby cities have these types of businesses in their communities.

"We should take our fair share of waste and recycling," Sandoval said. "But we should not be a dumping ground."

Sandoval addressed the charge that the city was moving rapidly.

"There's been no rushing," he said. "So the idea we're doing things without thinking things through is not true."

Council members voted on Escobar's motion but it was voted down 2-5, with Escobar and Robledo casting the yes votes. Sandoval made a motion calling for the ban as presented by city staff and was supported by Carrizosa. The motion was approved on a 6-0-1 vote with Escobar abstaining.

After the vote, Escobar said neither she nor Robledo owe favors. She is simply looking for the best solution to the problem and attempted to find a solution that "isn't reactive."