

CIGARETTES OUT: TOSS THE HABIT, NOT THE FILTER

FIGHT TOBACCO WASTE TODAY

ABSTRACT

Tobacco waste in Alameda County—especially around Lake Merritt and MacArthur Boulevard—poses environmental and health risks, with enforcement of the flavored tobacco ban remaining inconsistent. This pilot study, aligned with the Policy Research Center for Tobacco and the Environment’s mission, includes four phases: stakeholder engagement, implementation of tobacco-specific waste receptacles, compliance assessment of the flavored tobacco ban, and data-driven policy development with community advocacy. The study aims to reduce litter, identify enforcement gaps, and promote environmental justice through targeted interventions and public engagement. Findings will inform local policy and may serve as a scalable model for broader tobacco waste reduction efforts.

METHODOLOGY

01 Community and Stakeholder Engagement

Focus groups and surveys will be conducted with residents, environmental organizations, and city officials to understand attitudes toward tobacco waste and gather insights on the design and placement of receptacles.

03 Compliance Assessment with Flavored Tobacco Ban

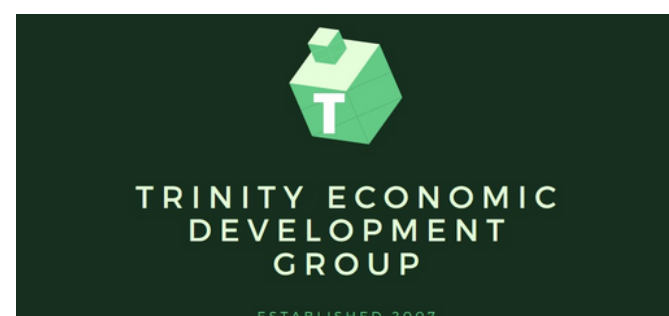
Surveys and observations will be used to assess smoke shop compliance with the flavored tobacco ban and identify enforcement challenges.

02 Tobacco Waste Receptacle Program Implementation

Receptacles designed for specific tobacco waste will be installed in high-traffic areas. Weekly data collection will monitor waste volume and receptacle usage to assess the program's effectiveness in reducing litter.

04 Analysis, Policy Development, and Community Advocacy

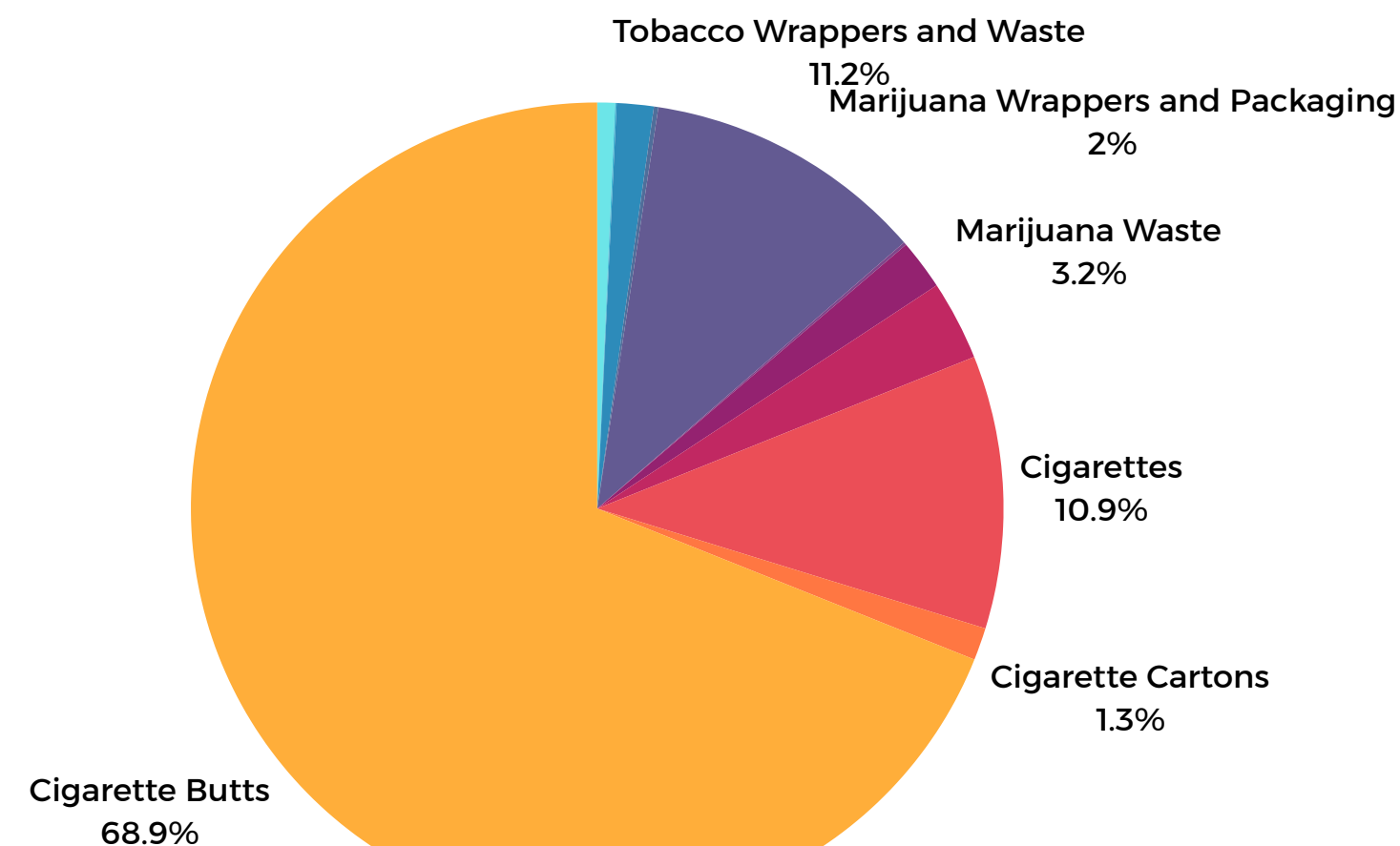
Data analysis will compare pre- and post-program waste levels, and a policy proposal will be created based on findings. A community advocacy campaign will promote new ordinances to address tobacco waste.



BACKGROUND

Tobacco waste in Alameda County, particularly around Lake Merritt and MacArthur Boulevard, has been previously found to lead to significant environmental harm. Cigarette butts, vape pods, and other tobacco products pollute local ecosystems and pose potential health risks.

Cleanups around Lake Merritt and the 8400 Block of Macarthur from April 2024 to August 2024 were conducted. These aimed to assess the amount of tobacco waste consumed and littered by Alameda County Residents as well as what type of tobacco waste was being littered. It was found that 69% of the collection was cigarette butts, while 11% of the collection was cigarettes. Additionally, 11% of the collection was Tobacco waste and wrappers.

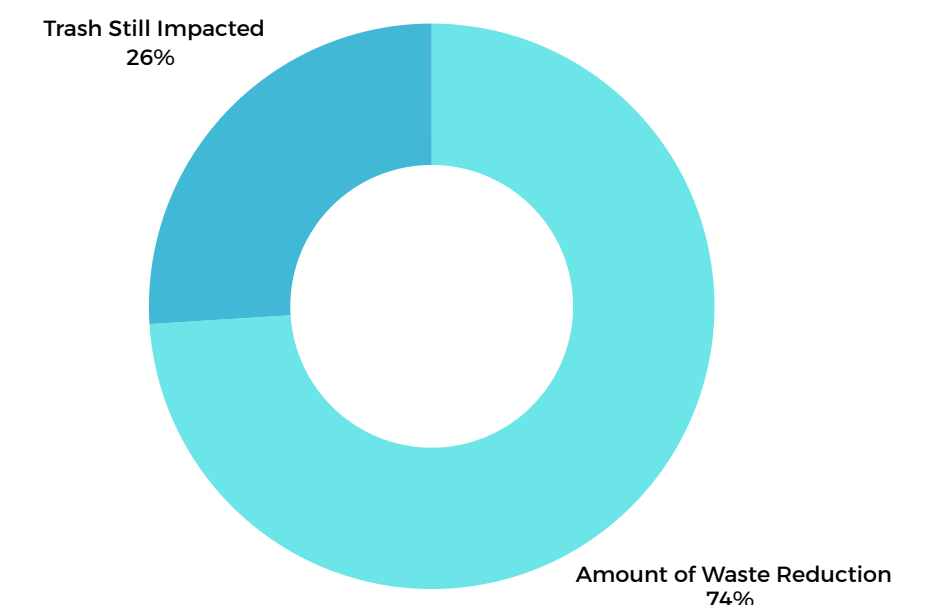


DISCUSSION

This project aims to reduce tobacco-related pollution while promoting stronger enforcement of existing tobacco regulations. By engaging the community and stakeholders in the design and implementation of the receptacle program, we ensure the program is tailored to local needs. The findings will inform policy recommendations supporting environmental and public health goals, with the potential for larger-scale interventions across Alameda County. The success of this pilot could provide a model for statewide policy development to address tobacco waste.

PROJECTION

With the implementation of these receptacles, we expect there to be a reduction in the amount of tobacco waste found in our public spaces. According to a study by Keep America Beautiful a 74% reduction in tobacco waste will be realized by employing tobacco waste removal practices using receptacles..



The implementation of the receptacles alone accounted for a 50-60% reduction in all total waste, further proving the effectiveness of tobacco receptacles in public areas to improve environmental conditions and frequency of tobacco waste removal.