

To address the growing waste challenges in the city and nation, the **5 Gyres Institute** joins 25 other LA based environmental and community organizations in launching **TrashBlitz LA**, a project designed to empower people to generate data-driven solutions to plastic pollution on a local level.

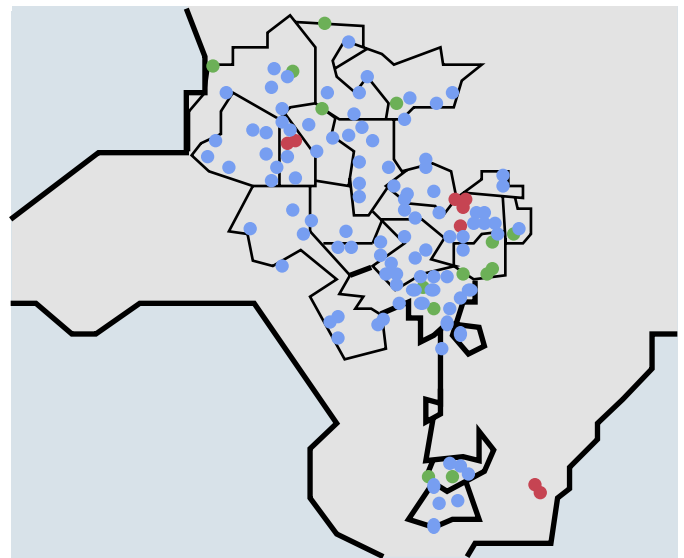
What is TrashBlitz LA?

Utilizing technology to track data through a mobile web-based app, TrashBlitz mobilized hundreds of Angelenos in collecting information on urban waste - categorized by type, material and brand - across the LA watershed. The data from TrashBlitz LA will provide critical insights and a convening platform for policymakers, business owners, urban planners, and community groups exploring collaborative solutions to the growing issue of plastic pollution and waste. Passing AB 1080 and SB 54 will be one of the key ways that we can help cut back on the trash collected!

Volunteers from neighborhoods across LA helped collect the data, sampling over the course of three weeks in 120 randomly selected sampling points across LA's 15 City Council districts. The findings, which are designed to be open source (highlights below) show a clear and immediate need to push for policy change that centers around source reduction, including through legislation like AB 1080 and SB 54.

Full List of Participating TrashBlitz Organizations

The 5 Gyres Institute, Greenpeace, Heal the Bay, Friends of the LA River, Surfrider-Long Beach, Surfrider-Los Angeles, Algalita Marine Research and Education, The Bay Foundation, Sierra Club, Loyola Marymount University, Treepeople, Team Marine, Los Angeles Waterkeeper, Padres Pioneros, Pacoima Beautiful, Climate Reality Project, Azul, LA Maritime Institute, Adventures in Waste, El Nido, Plastic Pollution Coalition, Global Green, The Ace Hotel



● Special event ● Surveyed ● Not Surveyed

TrashBlitz LA surveyed 110 sites in three weeks of active data collection across the city, along the Los Angeles River, and coastal beaches throughout the county. These produced top lists of product and packaging types, as well as associated brands. Cigarette butts topped the list, accounting for more than a quarter of the items collected, followed by miscellaneous plastic fragments, food wrappers, bottle caps and miscellaneous plastic foam, cups, straws, bags, pens and pen caps, and tobacco wrapping. These single-use throw away items are consistently top of the list in other litter surveys. In addition, we identified associated brands, with 6 of the top 10 brands being cigarette companies, the remainder include McDonalds, Wrigley, Starbucks and misc.

While we had hoped for 120 randomly selected sites, which is sufficient to creating representative maps of trash distribution in the Los Angeles by item category, we successfully surveyed 104 of those sites with an additional 6 sites as special events. In the future, council districts will require additional sampling to make qualifying statements about the types of trash items they are plagued with.

TrashBlitz LA Top 20 items in 2019

item	count	percent
cigarette butts	4,024	25.45%
misc plastic fragment	2,979	18.84%
food wrapper	1,773	11.21%
bottle caps and rings	1,338	8.46%
misc plastic foam	1,084	6.85%
cup	883	5.58%
straws	598	3.78%
misc plastic film	458	2.89%
lids	408	2.58%
other bags	345	2.18%
stationary, pens, pen caps	313	1.98%
tobacco packaging/wrap	280	1.77%
beverage bottles	227	1.43%
take-out food containers	225	1.42%
other bottles	180	1.13%
pieces (newsprint, books, etc)	173	1.09%
sachet	160	1.01%
forks, knives, spoons	134	0.84%
textiles, clothes, sheeting, gloves	121	0.76%
strapping bands	105	0.66%

Ocean Conservancy Top 10 Items in 2018

items	count	percent
cigarette butts	842,837	34.75%
food wrapper	345,241	14.23%
plastic bottle caps	286,678	11.82%
plastic beverage bottles	242,534	10.00%
metal beverage cans	168,855	6.96%
straws, stirrers	144,464	5.95%
glass beverage bottles	111,682	4.60%
plastic grocery bags	96,815	3.99%
metal bottle caps	93,917	3.87%
other plastic/foam packaging	92,209	3.80%

Cigarette butts topped the list, accounting for more than a quarter of the items collected, followed by miscellaneous plastic fragments, food wrappers, bottle caps and miscellaneous plastic foam, cups, straws, bags, pens and pen caps, and tobacco wrapping. These single-use throw away items are consistently top of the list in other litter surveys.



TrashBlitz LA Top 20 brands

brands	count	percent
marlboro	938	36.76%
camel	486	19.01%
newport	162	6.35%
parliament	140	5.48%
starbucks	109	4.27%
pall mall	83	3.25%
mcdonald's	77	3.01%
wrigley	77	3.01%
misc	70	2.74%
swisher sweets	60	2.35%
snickers	55	2.15%
coke	51	1.99%
crystal geyser	46	1.80%
gatorade	35	1.37%
corona	33	1.29%
modello	32	1.25%
cheeto	29	1.13%
frito lay	24	0.94%
backwoods	22	0.86%
dutch	22	0.86%

TrashBlitz LA Top 10 Materials

material	count	percent
plastic	11,852	68.84%
paper	4,018	23.33%
metal	397	2.30%
glass	271	1.57%
foam	229	1.33%
other	213	1.23%
fabric	98	0.56%
cardboard	85	0.49%
chemicals	19	0.11%
rubber	18	0.10%
wood	16	0.09%

In addition, we identified associated brands, with **6 of the top 10 brands** being cigarette companies, the remainder include **McDonalds, Wrigley, Starbucks** and misc. While we had hoped for **120 sites**, which is sufficient to create representative maps of trash distribution in the Los Angeles by item category, **we successfully surveyed 104 sites**. In the future, council districts will require additional sampling to make qualifying statements about the types of trash items they are plagued with.