



MEMORANDUM

To: Zero Waste Advisory Commission

From: Dave Sullivan, ZWAC Construction and Demolition Committee Chair and
Bob Gedert, Director, Austin Resource Recovery (ARR)

Subject: Construction and Demolition Committee 2014 Summary

Date: January 14, 2015

The purpose of this memo is to summarize actions of the Construction and Demolition (C&D) Committee of the Zero Waste Advisory Commission (ZWAC) and the resulting City Council action for calendar year 2014 as required by current bylaws.

Background

ARR estimates that debris from C&D account for approximately 20 percent of city-wide waste. The ARR Master Plan recommends developing a construction debris ordinance, requiring most C&D debris to be collected and processed by private sector service providers. This ordinance should significantly increase the diversion of C&D debris. This ordinance will be developed based on stakeholder input, including the building industry and private sector service providers. The ARR Master Plan suggests the following components for this ordinance:

- Adopting policies to increase reuse, recycling and composting of products used in remodeling and new construction;
- Requiring larger project building permit holders to provide diversion plans;
- Transitioning to higher rates of diversion requirements; and
- Registering C&D debris facilities and haulers.

The ARR Master Plan also suggests that ARR will provide technical assistance to C&D debris generators in support of the ordinance; including:

- Training in soft demolition, deconstruction, and building materials reuse;
- Promotion of building adaptive reuse;
- Information on recycling and reuse outlets and deconstruction services; and
- Information about rates and services available voluntarily provided by private sector service providers and nonprofits.

Status

By consent on Dec. 11, 2014, the Austin City Council approved on a resolution initiating amendments to the City Code to reduce C&D disposal using as a foundation an Ordinance Intent Document proposed by the Zero Waste Advisory Commission (ZWAC). The (ZWAC) and its Construction and Demolition (C&D) Committee developed the Intent Document over several months of staff briefings and stakeholder input.



The C&D Committee received briefings on C&D in Austin and best practices in other cities. ARR staff held two stakeholder meetings to collect community input. External stakeholders include construction contractors, haulers, processors and professional associations. In addition, ARR collaborated with the Planning and Development Review Department, Austin Energy Green Building, Austin Public Works Department, Austin Code Department, Austin Economic Development Department, and the Office of Sustainability to develop draft ordinance provisions.

The proposed ordinance will be known as the Construction Material Management Ordinance (CMMO). The first step in developing the CMMO was to adopt an Intent Document outlining the requirements for the CMMO, which was developed in the fall of 2014 by the staff and C&D Committee, and adopted by the ZWAC on November 12, 2104. The intent of the CMMO is to require affected projects to reduce waste and to divert materials at project sites to resource recovery. Over time, the ordinance will require gradually greater diversion for affected projects, subject to feedback from the community, the maturation of resource recovery markets, and realized cost impacts on household affordability. Specifically, the Intent Document calls for studies of the effects of the CMMO in 2020 and 2030 before moving up in recovery rates on any impacts on household affordability and on the condition of local markets using recovered materials.

Affected projects will be able to choose between two ways of meeting the ordinance requirements. One way is to send less than a specified weight of material per project area to landfills. The other is to divert at least a specified percentage of the C&D materials generated through recycling, reuse or salvage. Table 1 summarizes the graduated performance requirements.

Table 1 CMMO Performance measures

	Initial	2020	2030
Disposal Rate (lbs/sq ft)	< 2.5	< 1.5	< 0.5
Diversion Rate	50%	75%	95%

The ordinance would initially affect a relatively few number of projects. Later, the ordinance would affect smaller construction and renovation projects as well as additional demolition projects. Table 2 summarizes the sizes and types of projects that would be affected by the ordinance over time.

Table 2 CMMO affected projects

	Initial	2020
New or Renovation (sq ft)	5,000	1,000
Commercial Demolition	All	All
Residential Demolition	None	All

Additional Details

Many of the materials used on construction and demolition projects can be reused or recycled. Some materials include:



- Wood products
- Scrap metal
- Concrete
- Cardboard packaging
- Plastics
- Building components like doors, windows, cabinets

The CMMO will help keep a large volume of these materials out of the landfill. In addition, this ordinance is expected to boost economic development by helping develop local marketplaces for these materials.

The CMMO staggers implementation of C&D requirement over time. Demolition of commercial buildings, which include multifamily buildings, generates large amounts of recyclable material for which resource recovery infrastructure exists or will exist based on trends. On the other hand, demolition of a single-family home generates smaller quantities of materials, which are more difficult to recycle. Waiting until 2020 to require diversion from single-family demolition projects gives local processing and deconstruction operations time to mature.

Similarly, waiting until 2020 to require diversion for projects as small as 1,000 square feet will give processing operations time to mature; thus, for commercial construction and renovation projects, initially only projects of 5,000 or more square feet need comply. Currently a relatively small number of projects accounts for the majority of the area permitted for construction or renovation in Austin. Focusing on these projects would divert large quantities of material while affecting only about 12% of all projects. In addition, the Planning and Development Review Department has a quick turnaround process for construction permits for less than 5,000 square feet. Exempting small projects will not interfere with the quick turnaround. In addition, city administrators will have more time to establish efficient procedures.

Once in effect, the City will track compliance with the ordinance. Before the construction or demolition project begins and before a permit is issued, affected parties will be required to acknowledge that their project is required to meet the diversion requirements of this ordinance. After the project is complete, the permittee will report how much material was recycled or reused in comparison to how much was disposed. This allows the City to determine if the project's diversion rate met ordinance requirements.

Next Steps

In 2015, the actual CMMO will be written and go through a review process to enter sections 15 and 25 (the Land Development Code) in the City Code. Also in 2015, ARR and the ZWAC will consider and adopt rules for implementing and tracking the CMMO. It is expected the CMMO will go into effect in 2016.