



## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Zero Waste Advisory Commission

**From:** Cathy Gattuso, ZWAC URO Phase 2 Committee Chair

**Subject:** Universal Recycling Ordinance Committee 2014 Annual Report

**Date:** January 14, 2015

The purpose of this memo is to summarize actions of the Universal Recycling Ordinance (URO) Phase 2 Committee of the Zero Waste Advisory Commission (ZWAC) for calendar year 2014.

### Summary

Between June 2013 and March 2014, the ZWAC URO Committee and staff conducted four formal committee meetings, as well as 10 additional stakeholder group meetings to develop proposed amendments to the URO and Administrative Rules that would expand recycling and composting requirements to other commercial properties. On June 12, 2014, Council adopted the proposed amendments to the URO and Administrative Rules, including an additional amendment expanding the organics phase in timeline from two years to three years.

### Background

On April 25, 2013 Council amended the Universal Recycling Ordinance (URO) as part of Austin's Zero Waste goal to achieve a 90% reduction in landfill waste disposal by 2040. The URO was expanded to require all non-single family properties to develop a recycling program to:

- Collect at least five materials (paper, plastic resins PETE and HDPE, aluminum, cardboard, and glass),
- Educate employees and tenants, and
- Submit an annual Recycling Plan to Austin Resource Recovery ("the Department").

Additionally, properties considered to be a food enterprise with a food permit are required to divert compostable materials. Staff gathered input through a collaborative stakeholder process to shape amendments to the Administrative Rules. This process included providing quarterly updates to the Universal Recycling Ordinance Phase 2 Committee.

## **Summary of Process and Council Action**

Stakeholder meetings averaged twenty-five (25) stakeholders per meeting including but not limited to: private haulers, grocers, retailers, hotels, hospitals, property managers, restaurants, and industrial properties. ZWAC committee members, stakeholders, and ARR staff discussed the potential impacts to the business community and practical implementation steps to achieve Zero Waste goals. With staff assistance and input, the Committee developed and forwarded to the full commission recommendation to amend the ordinance and administrative rules. On May 14, 2014, the full ZWAC approved the proposed amendments with a modification to the organics diversion timeline, extending phase-in from two to four years. On June 12, 2014, Council adopted the proposed amendments with an additional amendment by Council Member Morrison to expand the organics phase in timeline from two years to three years.

## **Primary Revisions**

Key amendments to City Code Chapter 15-6, Universal Recycling Ordinance included:

- a) Revising the term “Property Owner” to “Responsible Party,” defined to better reflect the business operator of impacted properties.
- b) Revising the term “compostable” to “organics diversion” to be inclusive of the hierarchy of beneficial use of food scraps (food donation, etc.).
- c) Expanding the organics diversion phase in timeline from a two-year (2016-2017) to three-year phase in (2016-2018).

Key amendments to the Department Administrative Rules include:

- a) Providing details for organics diversion, including the hierarchy of beneficial use. Amendments provide flexibility for partnerships with local farms, food donation and composting.
- b) Providing clarification for requirements for affected properties who receive landfill trash and recycling services from the City of Austin.
- c) Developing reporting credits for reuse and reduction to reflect Hierarchy of Beneficial Use
- d) Relocating and grouping existing language throughout document for increased clarification.

Stakeholders were notified of Council action via email and through the City of Austin website.

Cc: Bob Gedert, ARR Director  
Sam Angoori, PE, ARR Deputy Director  
Tammie Williamson, AICP, ARR Assistant Director  
Jessica King, ARR Strategic Initiatives, Manager