



Organics Diversion in Austin: Transforming Wastes to Resources



Aiden Cohen, Business Outreach Program Manager
Teresa Chapman, Senior Waste Diversion Planner





Agenda

- ❖ **Universal Recycling Ordinance: Organics Diversion**
- ❖ **Stakeholder Concerns**
- ❖ **Diversion Study - Organics in Austin**
- ❖ **Organics Diversion Implementation**
- ❖ **Compost Pilot and the Organic Baseline Study**
- ❖ **How can you help ?**



Universal Recycling Ordinance (URO) Organics Diversion

Nov. 2010 - Universal Recycling Ordinance established

Sept. 2012 - Revised Ordinance and Admin. Rules

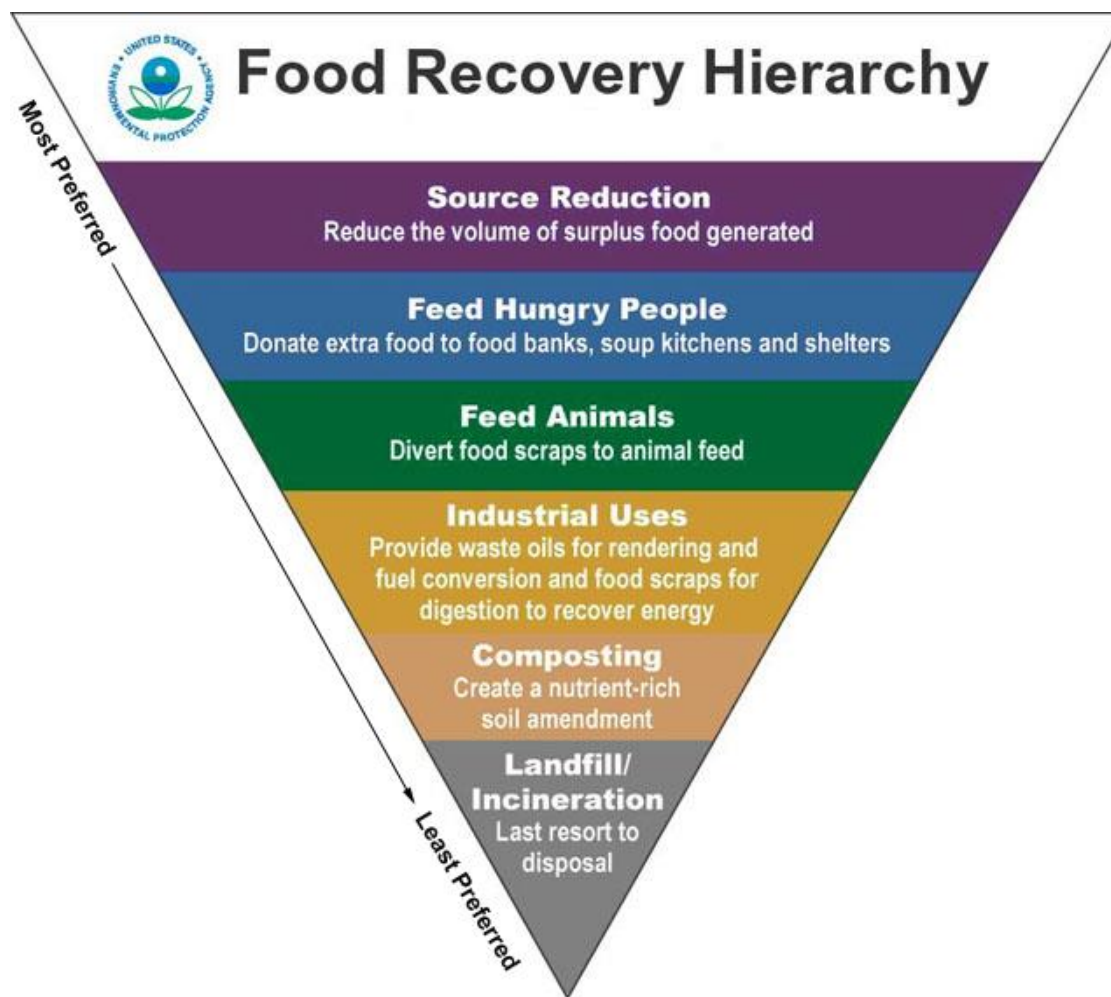
Apr. 2014 - Revised Organics Amendments

Organics revisions to URO, 2+ years

- 11+ public meetings
- 2 pilot programs, 2 waste composition studies
- ~180 unique stakeholders involved
- Impacts staff's ability to focus on implementation



Organics Diversion Hierarchy



Some of the best organics diversion programs will not result in compost!



Stakeholder Concerns

Austin's Market Challenges

- Hauler Infrastructure, Competition and Vehicles
- Compost Processing Capacity
- Potential Conflicts with Other City Ordinances (e.g. parking, health codes, design criteria)



Specific Business Concerns

- Space for Collection
- Cost of Collection and Processing
- Not Enough Organics, Not Worth the Cost
- Labor Costs, Training, Added Time, Ick Factor



Previous Recommendations and Council Action

Staff recommended

- 5-year implementation (Oct. 2016-Oct. 2021)
- Due to stakeholder concerns of market capacity, infrastructure and adequate competition

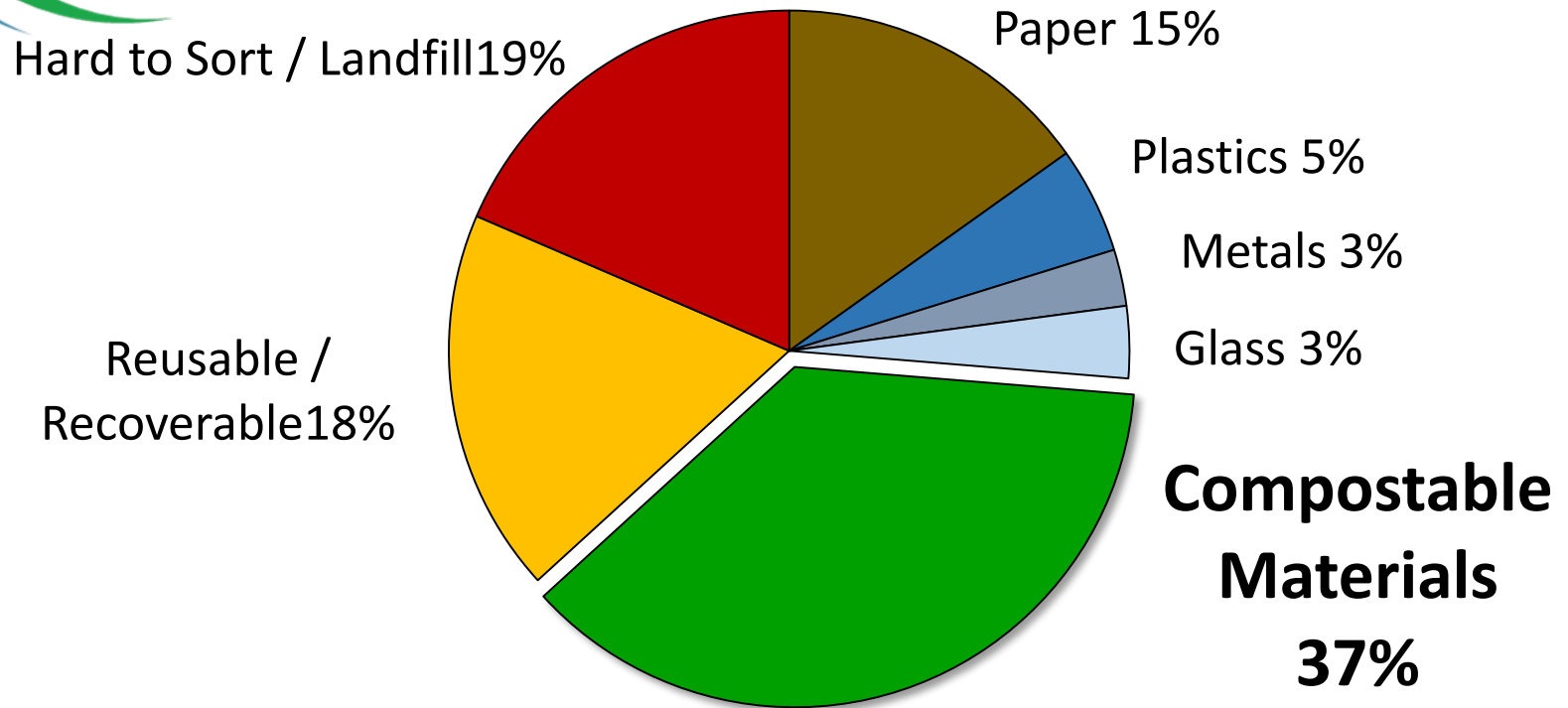
ZWAC recommended

- 2-year implementation (Oct. 2016 – Oct. 2017)
- Desire to reach Zero Waste more quickly

City Council approved – **Current requirements**

- 3-year implementation (Oct. 2016 – Oct. 2018)

Austin's 2015 Community Diversion Study



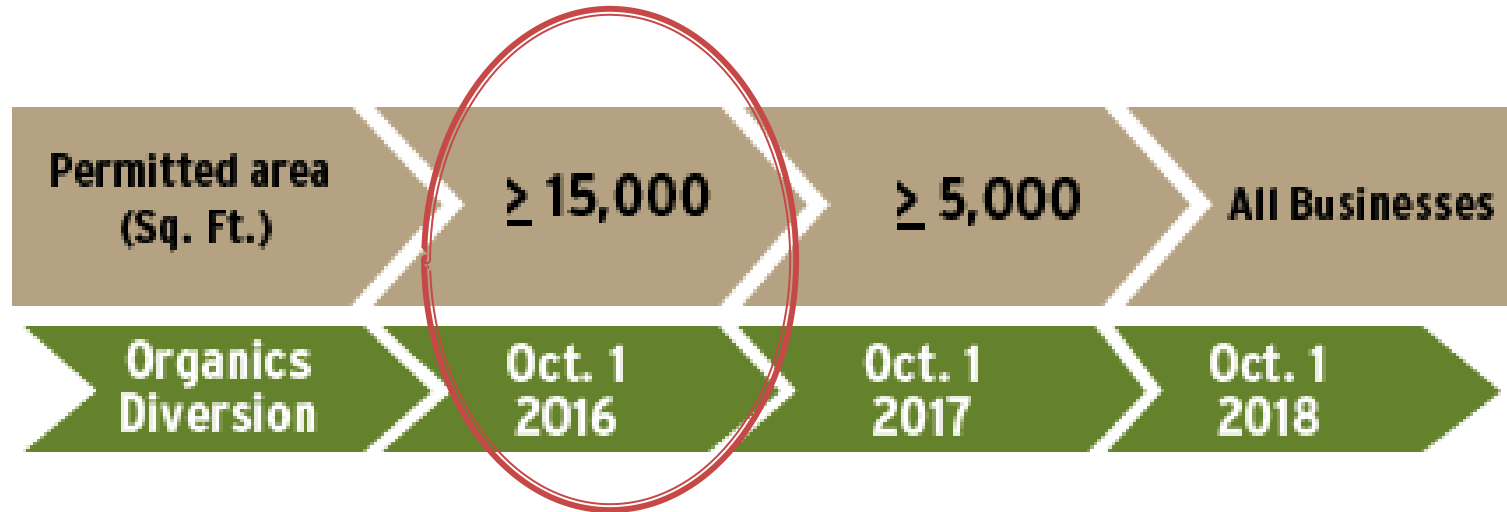
Other Key findings:

- ARR controls less than 15% of materials generated.
- Private haulers control nearly 85% of materials generated



Universal Recycling Ordinance Implementation (URO)

Organics Implementation Timeline:



Note: Organics requirements apply to businesses with a food permit.



Food Permitted Businesses

- 5,000+ businesses will be affected by Oct. 1, 2018
- 5,872 registered food permits from Health Dept.
- Different challenges (restaurants, grocery, daycare, assisted living, manufacturing, hotels, catering, etc.)





Organics Diversion

Responsible parties shall:

1. Establish an organics diversion program
2. Provide convenient access to organic diversion services
3. Post signs and provide education
4. Submit Organic Diversion Plan by Feb. 1
5. Adopt multiple organic diversion methods



Organics Diversion Methods

Examples of Organics Diversion Methods:

- Documented Reductions
- Food Waste Prevention Program
- Donate to feed people or animals
- Food Recovery Program
- Yellow Grease Collection Program
- Eliminate Single-Use Materials
- Back-of-House Organic Compost Collection
- Front-of-House Organic Waste, Compost Collection
- Other Innovative Practices

Best Practice Examples

ZERO WASTE TIP SHEET COMMERCIAL FOOD SERVICE

Restaurants, cafeterias, grocery and catering

SAVE MONEY, REDUCE WASTE AND COMPLY WITH THE UNIVERSAL RECYCLING ORDINANCE

Conduct a food waste assessment to measure and track the amount, type and reason for food generation and disposal. For a quick assessment, look in containers and document the weights and types of food scraps at the end of service.

A food policy is a plan, which can guide food and is required to help the City of Austin meet goals.			
Deadline	Oct. 1, 2018	Oct. 1, 2019	Oct. 1, 2020
Business Size	< 10,000 Sq. Ft.	> 10,000 Sq. Ft.	All

SET-UP YOUR KITCHEN (BACK OF HOUSE) FOR ZERO WASTE:

- 1. Disposal Stations:** Landfill trash, compost and recycling containers should be located near each other and be clearly marked. Recommend black for trash, blue for recycling and green for organics.
- 2. Staff Training:** Using disposal containers correctly is critical to the success of your program. Clearly communicate expectations and hold employees accountable. Use signs, color containers and postcards for quick reminders.
- 3. Green Team Lead:** Designate at least one supervisor or manager to regularly check containers, to ensure items are properly disposed in the correct container.
- 4. Materials:** Replace disposable items with reusable, compostable or recyclable options. For example, we like Styrofoam cups for paper cups and cloth napkins instead of paper.
- 5. Ask Your Staff:** When designing your recycling and composting program, involve staff in the decision making process. Engaged employees can lead to better decisions, improved morale and reduced costs.



REDUCE FOOD WASTE:

- Reduce Over-Purchasing:** Consider face growers and more frequent deliveries to prevent soiled purchases from expiring. Use, can or perfect food or the consider scraps and assemblies or donated to local food services.
- Reduce Prep Waste:** Train staff to use proper food preparation techniques, purchase pre-cut food and reduce batch sizes when reheating.
- Secondary Uses:** If leftover bread can become croutons, leftover fruit can be a dessert topping and vegetable trimmings can form a base for soups and sauces.
- Inventory Management/Mind Your Menu:** Create a system to manage food near expiration. Do more daily specials that use foods near expiration. Consider donating to local charities.

AustinTexas.gov/URO (512) 974-9727



- Posters
- Education
- Labels
- Color Coding of Containers

Downtown Compost Pilot

Central Business District Austin City Hall

- RFP closed July 14
- Evaluation
- Contract early Aug.





Organics Baseline Survey

1. Food Permit List + Random Permit Selection



2. Survey Development + Online Questionnaire



Goal: Measure current practices before URO Organics implementation

Organics Baseline Survey

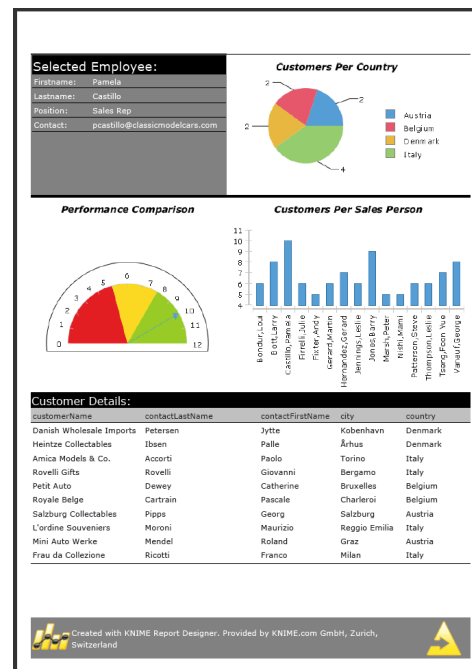
3. Interview Businesses



4. Data Analysis



5. Recommendations





How Can You Help?

1. Support policies that promote organic diversion
2. Clarify the URO establishes Organics Diversion NOT Composting Requirements
3. Offer ARR's Businesses Outreach Team's resources
 - AustinTexas.gov/Organics
4. Share information about our programs
 - Zero Waste Rebate - AustinTexas.gov/ZWBizRebate
 - Lunch & Learns
 - Austin Green Business Leader



How Can You Help?

Zero Waste Business Rebate

- Help promote rebate!
- Businesses can receive up to \$1,800
- Start or expand diversion programs
- Includes organics reduction, food donation and composting services



More rebate information at: austintexas.gov/zwbizrebate

How Can You Help?

Lunch and Learns

- 3 Organic Trainings
- 4 Recycling Trainings
- Others upon request

Organics diversion will be required soon... Are you ready?

ORGANICS DIVERSION INFORMATION EVENT:

Come learn at the
FREE EVENT.

City staff will help you
get prepared by sharing
a range of ideas to divert
organics and answering your
questions.

Tuesday, September 13, 2016
2-3 p.m.

Opal Divines Penn Field
3601 S. Congress Ave., 78704
and

Wednesday, September 21, 2016
3-4 p.m.

Iron Cactus North
10001 Stonelake Blvd., 78759

*To attend this event
please register by visiting
austintexas.gov/uro*

Snacks will be provided

*Two sessions with the same
information for your convenience*

*Staff is available if you would like to
set up a private appointment.
Please contact us at
commercialrecycling@austintexas.gov*





Questions?

More information available:

Web: [AustinTexas.gov/Organics](https://austintexas.gov/organics)

Email: CommercialRecycling@AustinTexas.gov

Phone: 512-974-9727

Teresa Chapman

Waste Diversion Planner Senior

512-974-3037

Teresa.Chapman@austintexas.gov

Aiden Cohen

Business Outreach Program Manager

512-974-1929

Aiden.Cohen@austintexas.gov