



4.11.18

Attention: ZWAC Meeting Board & ARR

Subject: Progress and Status of Curbside Textile Recycling Program

Simple Recycling and ARR executed an agreement approximately a year and a half ago to provide a free, curbside textile collection service for residents of Austin.

Since that time, Simple Recycling has invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in the community and program to change the behaviors of those residents who traditionally have thrown their clothing in the trash.

Simple Recycling has diverted hundreds of thousands of pounds of textiles from the waste stream, created jobs for Austin residents, engaged in educational events at the University of Texas, provides recycling outlets for local non profits like the West Side Animal Shelter and worked with national retailers in Austin for waste diversion initiatives, all at no cost to the city or tax payers.

Simple Recycling has provided transparency and flexibility to alleviate the concerns of City Council through provision of data, flawless contract compliance and acceptance of contract amendments to address various concerns of potential negative local impact.

Throughout this time, none of the non-profit organizations that showed preemptive concern for their donation stream have demonstrated a negative impact or have been willing to offer data or transparency to the city or an independent 3<sup>rd</sup> party audit. We believe that is because, just like in the 100+ other communities with curbside textile collection, they continue to thrive.

The long term viability of any recycling initiative and behavior change in the community requires continuous education and awareness.

Simple Recycling has received great partnership in other communities through coordinated messaging utilizing existing city operated communication channels that we have not seen in Austin. Because of this, the program has suffered due to a lack of awareness and participation.

For perspective, Austin ranked number 112 of 113 annual average pounds per household diverted amongst communities with curbside textile collection services nationwide.

This is not because residents are choosing other recycling outlets, they are choosing the trash can. Almost 3% of Austin's waste stream are materials that could be diverted by Simple

Recycling. This is solely because of a lack of awareness of an option as convenient and simple as the trash can.

As a point of validation, Simple Recycling invested in a small, but costly “refresh mailing” of bags in February of 2018, which lead to a 100% (yes, double) increase in overall participation and diversion from previous months.

We believe that this program can be successful for the Austin community as a whole. We believe the City Council should fulfill their commitments to the Zero Waste plan.

However, for long term success, the city will need to honor terms of the agreement in place, support the program through coordinated communications and give the residents of Austin a convenient curbside alternative to the landfill.

Sincerely,

Adam Winfield  
Simple Recycling, President & Founder