



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

ZERO WASTE ADVISORY COMMISSION

Recommendation Number: 20190710-3A: Regarding the Workforce Diversity Item in the Landfill Criteria Matrix

WHEREAS, the Zero Waste Advisory Commission (ZWAC) reviews, evaluates, and makes recommendations to the City Council regarding City policies relevant to zero waste goals and solid waste handling; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of Austin formed the Waste Management Policy Working Group to examine solid waste policies and contracts; and

WHEREAS, the Working Group recommended that area landfills be scored through the use of a landfill criteria matrix and directed staff to develop criteria to include measures of community impact and social equity, carbon footprint, amount and type of waste, existing levels of hazardous materials at landfill; and

WHEREAS, following a series of stakeholder meetings and a public comment period, Austin Resource Recovery (ARR) presented a landfill criteria matrix and scoring system to ZWAC on October 10, 2018; and

WHEREAS, on October 10, 2018 ZWAC recommended that Council reject the matrix over concerns that community and stakeholder input, particularly since long and short-term community impact, carbon footprint, the presence of hazardous waste, history of community complaints, and social equity were simplified or removed, and therefore the matrix did not accomplish its intended purpose; and

WHEREAS, the landfill criteria matrix was implemented by ARR via the City Manager's Office in Nov 2018, pending a vote of Council as part of a future procurement process.

WHEREAS, the ARR implemented version of the landfill criteria matrix collapsed several proposed items and measures of community and social impact that emerged from the ARR/stakeholder process into two items, each of a single measure, workforce diversity policy (4a), worth 15 points, and living wage and benefits (4b), worth 10 points; and

WHEREAS the current workforce diversity policy measure specifies that the full value of 15 points be awarded for the existence of “affirmative hiring (including a Fair Chance hiring policy) and diversity advancement policies within the landfill operations;” and

WHEREAS the fact of the existence of such policies is inadequate to assess the effectiveness of the practices described by the policies, the broader impact of the policies, and the overall company commitment to diversity and equity practices; and

WHEREAS this broader context is important for assessing community and social impact, particularly in light of the significant role that the waste industry has, both historically and currently, in environmental justice; and

WHEREAS the 501(c)3 nonprofit organization Guidestar, in partnership with the D5 data coalition and the Green 2.0 environmental transparency initiative, has established and implemented a scoring system for organizational diversity practices that has been in place since 2014; and

WHEREAS the legality of the Guidestar measures is well established and these measures are publically available on their website; and

WHEREAS implementing measures based on the Guidestar system would significantly strengthen the value of the workforce diversity item in keeping with much of the stakeholder discussion around the social and community impact item;

NOW, THEREFORE,

Be It Resolved That the Zero Waste Advisory Commission of the City of Austin:


Restates and affirms its recommendation that Council NOT adopt the Landfill Criteria Matrix without significant revision due to the numerous deficiencies noted on October 10, 2018 including the aforementioned areas of long and short-term community impact, carbon footprint, the presence of hazardous waste, history of community complaints, and social equity; and that any revised version be publically posted for at least two weeks of stakeholder consideration, and that Council approval of a revised matrix should only be sought after its official ZWAC review; and

Recommends that any future version of a Landfill Criteria Matrix edit item 4a to the set of measures below, which incorporates items from the Guidestar diversity scoring system, for a more detailed, and thus, discerning, assessment of workforce diversity.

Item 4a. Workforce Diversity Policy	15 points
Measure 1: Organization has a diversity plan and set of policies.	1
Measure 2: Organization shares their diversity statement on company website and/or official public reports.	1
Measure 3: Organization has a diversity committee in place.	2
Measure 4: Organization has a diversity manager or director in place.	2
Measure 5: Organization tracks retention of staff, board, and volunteers across demographic categories including race, ethnicity, gender, and age.	2
Measure 6: Organization tracks income levels of staff, senior staff, and board across demographic categories including race, ethnicity, gender, and age.	2
Measure 7: Organization makes workforce diversity data publicly available via company website or a corporate diversity transparency website.	3
Measure 8: Organization has hiring and/or recruiting efforts aimed at improving equity, including Fair Chance Hiring.	2

Date of Approval: July 10, 2019

Record of the vote: Unanimous on a 6-0 vote; Commissioners Blaine, Hoffman, and White were absent

Attest:  _____