

Resolution: Zero Waste Advisory Commission

Whereas, it is the responsibility of the Zero Waste Advisory Commission to review, evaluate and make recommendations to City Council, City Management and City Staff regarding policies concerning solid waste, recycling, organic management and Zero Waste; and

Whereas, Implementation and/or adherence to City policies must be reflected in the process of planning for future disposal and diversion challenges within the City of Austin by supporting Austin Resource Recovery (ARR), who is responsible for implementing such Policies and Operations; and

Whereas the operations performed by ARR are considered vital to the health and safety of the Citizens of Austin and must therefore adhere to the highest standards possible; and

Whereas, to adhere to such high health and safety standards requires that ARR seek, employ, train, and retain top Employees; and

Whereas, the City of Austin has grown dramatically in population, development and competitiveness over the past five years that identifying, employing, training and retaining top personnel has become extremely challenging within our City and CAPCOG Region; and

Whereas, in 2021 the CAPCOG Region of Texas was awarded two of this Country's most sought after corporate relocations in its history with the decision of Tesla, Inc. and Samsung Electronics to relocate their respective corporate headquarters to our region; and

Whereas, with the national inflation rate currently exceeding 5% and that of the City of Austin approaching 6%, City of Austin employees are experiencing unparalleled 'paycheck erosion'; and

Whereas, over the previous 18 months ARR has experienced an unprecedented exodus of department employees to private sector employers or retirement; and

Whereas, the City of Austin and Austin Resource Recovery (ARR) are finding employee retention extremely challenging due to 'paycheck erosion' and the aggressive private sector recruitment of ARR personnel with higher compensation, 'Sign on Bonuses' and less physically strenuous job descriptions; and

Whereas, the City of Austin and Travis County housing and rental markets have become unaffordable for many City of Austin and Austin Resource Recovery employees due to exorbitant property valuations and rental cost increases; and

Whereas, these property cost increases have dramatically exceeded current employee compensation which make property ownership and rental unobtainable to many City of Austin and ARR employees; **Now Therefore**,

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

Respectfully asks City Management and City Council to formally consider a compensation adjustment for ARR staff and front-line collection crews that is consistent and competitive with CAPCOG area Private Sector Industry peers; and

Be It Further Resolved, that ARR offer tuition assistance for employees seeking Commercial Drivers' License education in return for committing to a two-year employment Agreement with Austin Resource Recovery; and

Be It Further Resolved, that Zero Waste Advisory Commission recommends that City Management consider innovative compensation options such as developing currently owned Austin Resource Recovery property parcels into affordable housing options that provide housing opportunities for City of Austin and ARR employees; and

Be It Further Resolved, that the Zero Waste Advisory Commission recommends that City Management and City Council consider reevaluating and updating the living wage for City of Austin and ARR Employees to meet the hourly wage necessary to afford a one-bedroom rental in the Austin-Round Rock area (per U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Statistics).