

Multifamily Compost Stakeholder Meeting Summary

Meeting Dates:

- 10/6/2022 (9 attendees)
- 10/20/2022 (8 attendees)
- 11/2/2022 (7 attendees)
- 11/14/2022 (11 attendees)

Stakeholders present: Austin Tenant's Council, Austin Apartment Association, multifamily property managers, multifamily residents, environmental advocacy organizations, organics haulers.

FINDINGS: Stakeholder Meetings and Survey

- Composting access needs to be convenient for multifamily residents to divert organic waste.
- Complete education is needed for residents to use composting services correctly to reduce contamination, and to encourage participation. Education should not only include information on how to use compost services, but also on the importance and impact of composting.
- Stakeholders are concerned about how costs may be passed on to residents. While the costs demonstrated in the pilot were not concerning, many fear actual costs may be inflated when passed on to residents if composting requirements are enacted.
- Contamination is a concern for property managers, residents, and processors. There is a lower threshold for acceptable contamination in composting than in recycling, with improper materials like glass having the potential to ruin large quantities of finished product. To discourage contamination, processors charge fees if contamination is detected. These potential fees could drive up the cost of composting service for multifamily properties in an unpredictable manner.
- Stakeholders expressed the need for flexibility with compliance in any requirements, such as waivers for challenging situations like space constraints.
- Multifamily residents responding to the survey:
 - were overall in favor of the addition of composting services, but also expressed concerns with cleanliness, odors, and pests.
 - expressed concerns with contamination and improper use of composting containers. Many mentioned this is a current concern with recycling services that are required by the URO, and that this issue could continue or be exacerbated with the addition of composting.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends amending the URO to include access to composting services at multifamily properties. Staff recommends continuing to engage with stakeholders identified in the resolution to develop these requirements and a timeline for implementation.