

Multifamily Composting: Staff Recommendation

ZWAC – 1/11/2023



Background

- Staff conducted a pilot to test composting at 8 multifamily properties (2021-2022).
- Council passed a resolution directing the City Manager to make recommendations to Council, after the pilot, on possible policy changes to include compost collection at multifamily properties.
- Staff provided recommendation memo to Council.
 - This presentation summarizes the memo.

Pilot Findings

- Resident participation: 30%
- Capacity/unit/week: 0.72 – 5 gallons
- Positive feedback from resident surveys
- Property managers reported challenges with engagement and contamination
- Cost: \$0.80 - \$2.95 per unit per month

Stakeholder Meetings

- 3 Stakeholder Meetings (Oct & Nov)
- 2 URO Committee Meetings (Oct & Dec)
- Attendees:
 - Austin Tenant's Council
 - Austin Apartment Association
 - Multifamily Property Managers / Association Managers
 - Multifamily Residents
 - Environmental Advocacy Organizations
 - Waste Haulers

Findings: Stakeholder Meetings

- Convenient access desired
- Education needed for participation
- Costs a concern, including how costs are passed on to residents
- Contamination a concern, including unpredictable fees associated
- Flexibility desired for any requirements
- Managers concerned with pests, odors, space, and cost

Resident Survey

- Open from Nov – Dec
- ~350 responses



Findings: Survey

- Overall, in favor of adding composting services
- Concerns with cleanliness, odors, pests
- Current composting options not as convenient as curbside service
- Concerns with contamination

Recommendation

- Staff recommends a policy revision to establish standards of compost access for multifamily residents in Austin.
- Over half of Austin residents live in a multifamily property, and Austin's vision is to be a national zero waste leader.
- Establishing convenient access for all residents to divert material is a key component of that effort.

Questions?

