



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Zero Waste Advisory Commission

Recommendation Number (20230322-3): FY24 Budget

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 and heavy brush collection pursuant to its Zero Waste Master Plan Goals; 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, Travis County, Texas and supporting Austin Resource Recovery (ARR), who is responsible for implementing such Policies and Operations; and

Whereas, Unprecedented pandemic and weather events since 2020 have greatly impacted the logistical and financial challenges associated with the daily course of waste and recycling collection throughout the greater Travis, Williamson and Hays county areas; and

Whereas, in 2000 the City of Austin adopted a comprehensive Master Plan for future garbage, recycling, organic and brush collection within the City of Austin, Travis County, Texas area; and

Whereas, The City of Austin has grown dramatically in population, development and competitiveness over the past five years and is in need of disposal options in the northern portion of Austin, Travis County, Texas; and

Whereas, ARR collection routes have been impacted by overgrown tree and limbs encroaching within the collection routes which have caused the unsafe and hazardous collection of the set out garbage, recycling, organic and brush collection containers; and

Whereas, the 2021-22 Austin Resource Recovery Budget was stressed to provide competitive compensation for the support and collection staff needed to minimize employee attrition

and/or maintain ample staffing to conduct ARR's comprehensive garbage, recycling, organic and brush collection programs; and

Whereas, plastic pollution, including microplastics that result from plastic degrading in the environment, is at a crisis level and is a significant threat to ecosystem and human health; and

Whereas, the plastic left unchecked on land often ends up in waterways following storms and the amount of plastic waste revealed by the recent "Trash in Creeks" study by Austin Watershed Protection, as well as waste that has been observed in and along the section of the Colorado River downstream from Austin reveals our city to be derelict in our duty to contain our waste; and

Whereas, it is the goal of the Commission to more closely adhere to our Zero Waste Master Plan's diversion goals while acknowledging the future financial demands of unforeseen weather and environmental events facing ARR in meeting these evolving responsibilities beginning with the 2022-2023 Budget cycle; **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 the financial implications of addressing the City of Austin's current and unforeseen events associated with the responsible implementation of daily waste, recycling, heavy brush and organic recycling collection by initiating adequate funding for the support of these operations within Austin, Travis County, Texas.

Be It Further Resolved the Zero Waste Advisory Commission of the City of Austin; asks City Management and the City Council of Austin, Texas, to proactively and aggressively identify and develop a North Austin Transfer Station to address the enormous growth occurring in this Austin, Travis County, Texas area. The development of a North Austin Transfer Station will provide ARR with operational cost efficiencies and enable the transition to EV collection vehicles which will result in ratepayer savings.

Be It Further Resolved the Zero Waste Advisory Commission of the City of Austin; asks City Management and City Council to support a budget increase that will provide more competitive employee compensation pursuant to market conditions and for the addition of more ARR FTE staffing to support previously stated ARR and Zero Waste Goals.

Be it Further Resolved the Zero Waste Advisory Commission of the City of Austin; recommends the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Budget should include additional funding, through the

Clean Community Fee or other sources, to expand staffing of the Austin Resource Recovery litter abatement program to a level that ensures city-owned land, easements and riparian areas in the Austin community are routinely checked for litter and cleaned up as needed and where resident reports of litter hotspots may be made via Austin 311 and investigated within one week of being reported.

Be it Further Resolved the Zero Waste Advisory Commission of the City of Austin; asks City Management and City Council to responsibly increase ARR's Reserve Fund Balance to meet at a minimum a three month cost of operation reserve.

Be It Further Resolved that the Zero Waste Advisory Commission asks City Management and City Council to implement responsible tree and limb trimming policies within and along City of Austin Right of Ways to insure the safe and efficient collection of garbage, recycling, organic and brush collection from serviced homes.

Resolution Date: March 22, 2023

Sponsor: Gerry Acuna, Chair

Co Sponsor: Cathy Gattuso, Co Chair

Co Sponsor: Kaiba White

Co Sponsor: Ian Steyaert

Co Sponsor: Melissa Caudle

Co Sponsor: Amanda Masino

Date of Approval: March 22, 2023

Record of the vote: Unanimous on a 7-0 vote, Commissioner Barona, Myers, Swantner and Powell were absent.

Attest: _____

