



Recommendation for Action

File #: 23-2740, Agenda Item #: 4.

9/21/2023

Posting Language

Approve an ordinance amending City Code Chapter 15-6 relating to recycling and diversion of organic materials and approving related changes to Austin Resource Recovery Administrative Rules Chapters 8.0 and 11.0.

Lead Department

Austin Resource Recovery.

Fiscal Note

This item has no fiscal impact.

Prior Council Action:

October 17, 2019- Council approved Resolution No. 20191017-028 directing the City Manager to make recommendations to the City Council on possible amendments to the Universal Recycling Ordinance to include organic waste collection at all commercial and multifamily properties.

For More Information:

Richard McHale, Interim Director, 512-974-4301; Gena McKinley, Assistant Director, 512-974-1915.

Council Committee, Boards and Commission Action:

August 9, 2023- the Zero Waste Advisory Commission (ZWAC) voted 6-0 to support adoption of amendments to City Code Chapter 15-6 and Chapter 8.0 of Austin Resource Recovery's Administrative Rules relating to composting and recycling services at multifamily properties.

Additional Backup Information:

BACKGROUND:

City Council adopted the Universal Recycling Ordinance (URO) in 2010 as part of Austin Resource Recovery's Master Plan and the City's Zero Waste goal to divert 90% of solid waste from landfills and incinerators by the year 2040. The URO requires that commercial and multifamily properties provide access to recycling service to employees and tenants and methods of organics diversion to commercial food-permitted business employees. A 2015 Community Diversion Study found that 85% of discarded material generated in Austin comes from the commercial and multifamily sectors and that 37% is compostable.

PROCESS

Austin Resource Recovery staff conducted a pilot to test composting at seven multifamily properties between March 2021 and February 2022. Staff published a report summarizing the findings of the pilot and initiated stakeholder meetings to discuss potential policy changes. Staff led five stakeholder meetings between October 2022 and May 2023 and opened three online surveys to collect feedback on priorities and draft policy language. ZWAC's URO Committee met on October 20, 2022, and December 1, 2022, to discuss the proposed changes.

Stakeholders included apartment managers, multifamily residents, private haulers, and non-profits. ZWAC

URO committee members, stakeholders, and staff discussed concerns about composting at multifamily properties, which included site placement constraints for containers, compostable material contamination, cost of service impacts, and access to composting for multifamily residents. Based on stakeholder feedback, ARR staff developed recommended language for the amended Code and Administrative Rules and presented that to the Zero Waste Advisory Commission.

REVISIONS

Revisions to City Code Chapter 15-6 include:

- a) Adding language to require the responsible party for a premises of which all or part is used for multi-family residential use shall “ensure that tenants and employees have access to composting services.”
- b) Adding language requiring multifamily properties to collect food scraps (including meat, bones, and dairy), food soiled paper, and BPI certified compostable products.
- c) Amending language regarding education requirements to include information and instructions for all diversion methods.
- d) Removing outdated phase-in language.

Revisions to Austin Resource Recovery’s Administrative Rules, Chapters 8 and 11 include:

- a) Adding Capacity Performance Standards for multifamily properties, including that Responsible Parties shall ensure that onsite composting services “are sufficient to accommodate the regular accumulation of organics materials and avoid overflowing containers” and a minimum of one gallon of composting capacity per dwelling unit per week.
- b) Changing the rules regarding convenient access to exterior collection areas, points, and containers to clarify that Responsible Parties shall ensure that “a minimum of one recycling, and when applicable organics diversion, container or other collection point is located within 25 feet of all landfill trash containers.”
- c) Adding a definition of “overflowing container.”