Dumpster Noise Staff Recommendation

Resolution 20260528-052

Austin

Austin Resource Recovery

November 19, 2026

Background – Resolution

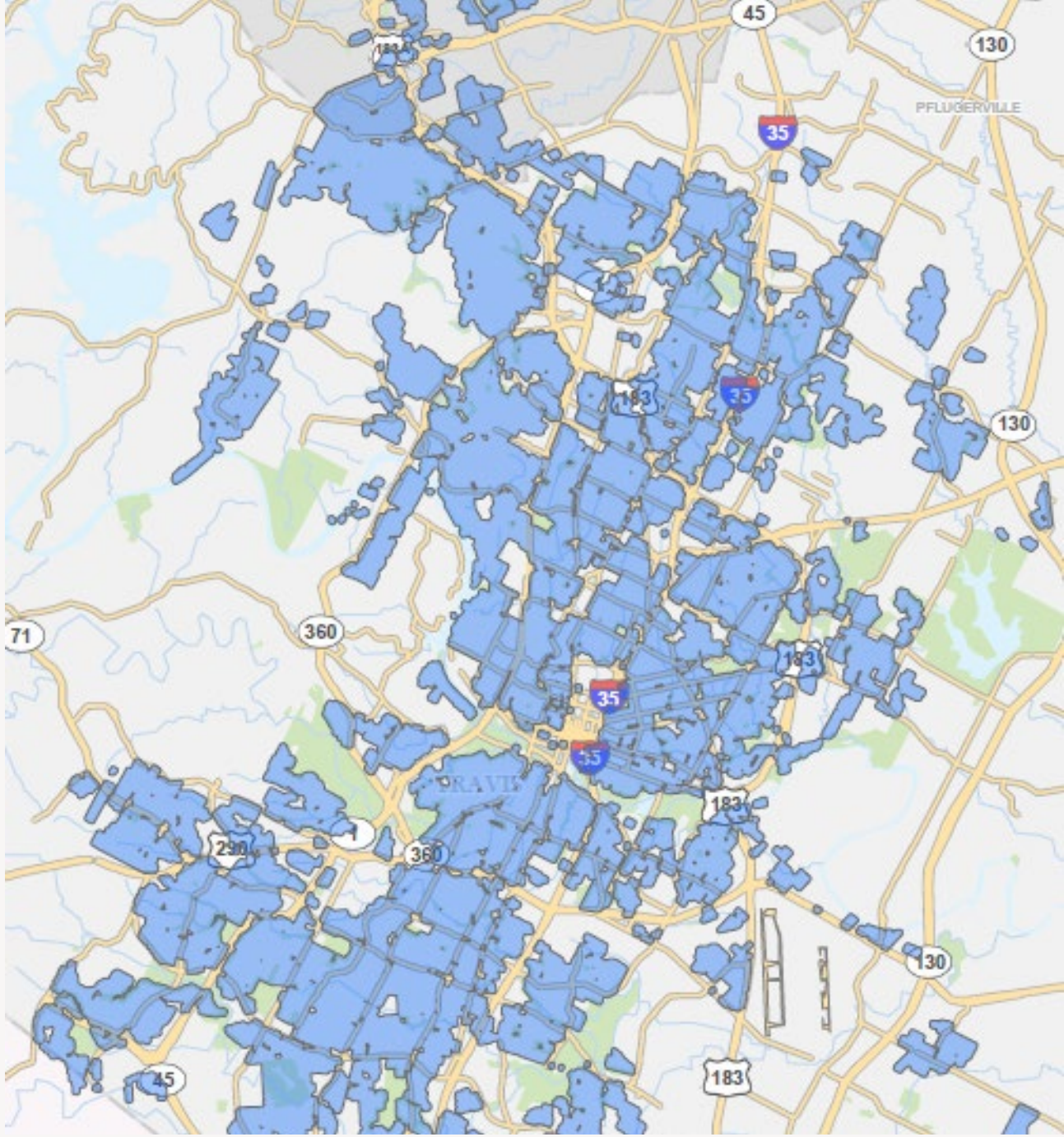
Resolution No. 20260528-052 outlines the following items:

1. Analyze reasonable limits on hours of operation, including restrictions during overnight and early morning hours, and minimum distance requirements between dumpster collection activities and residences, including both single-family and multifamily properties, during certain hours;
2. Review best practices and ordinances from comparable municipalities regarding time-of-day restrictions and minimum distance requirements for commercial dumpster collection;
3. Evaluate the noise levels typically generated by dumpster collection activities and their impact on nearby residents;
4. Evaluate impact on traffic from any changes in applicable City regulations; and
5. Consider stakeholder input from residents, neighborhood associations, tenant associations, businesses, property owners, and waste service providers.

Research and Findings

Reasonable Limits and Restrictions

- Current noise restrictions City Code Chapter 9-2
  - Instruments, construction, and vehicles are restricted
  - **No restrictions affect dumpster collections**
- Map models a buffer 300 feet around property lines of residences



Best Practices from Comparable Municipalities

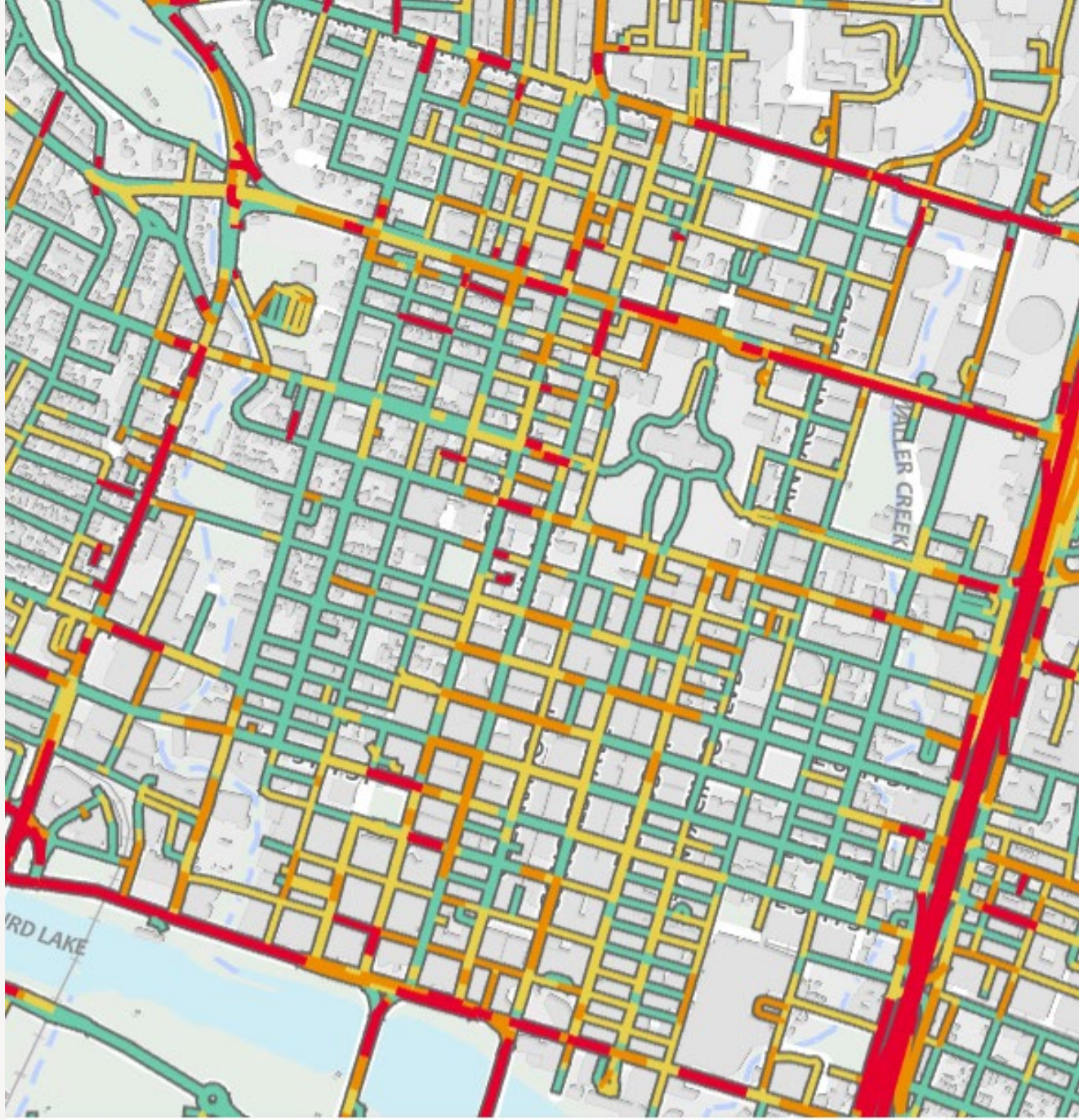
City	Time Restrictions	Distance Restrictions	Enforcement	Variance / Waivers	Central Business District
Dallas	10 p.m. – 7 a.m.	300 feet	Code Department Complaint-based Code must witness violation. Citation issued to driver, property owner, or hauling company	None	No exemption
Fort Worth	11 p.m. – 6 a.m.	300 feet	Environmental Services Department Complaint-based	Director of Code Compliance may grant a waiver	No exemption
San Antonio	10 p.m. – 7 a.m.	200 feet	Solid Waste Department	Automatic variance in absence of complaints	Collection only between 6 p.m. – 10 p.m. and 3 a.m. – 7 a.m.

Noise Levels

- City staff measured the noise generated by dumpster collection using a decibel reader at a multifamily property
  - Took readings using professional decibel meter
  - Two readings taken on the same day for two different dumpsters
- The average reading from 200 feet away was 92.6 dBA
  - This decibel level is similar to a running lawnmower

Traffic

- Lightest traffic is from 8 p.m. – 7 a.m.
- Greatest impact in Central Business District
- Private haulers operate overnight to avoid:
  - Peak traffic hours
  - Pedestrians
  - Parked vehicles and delivery vehicles
  - School drop-off and pick-up

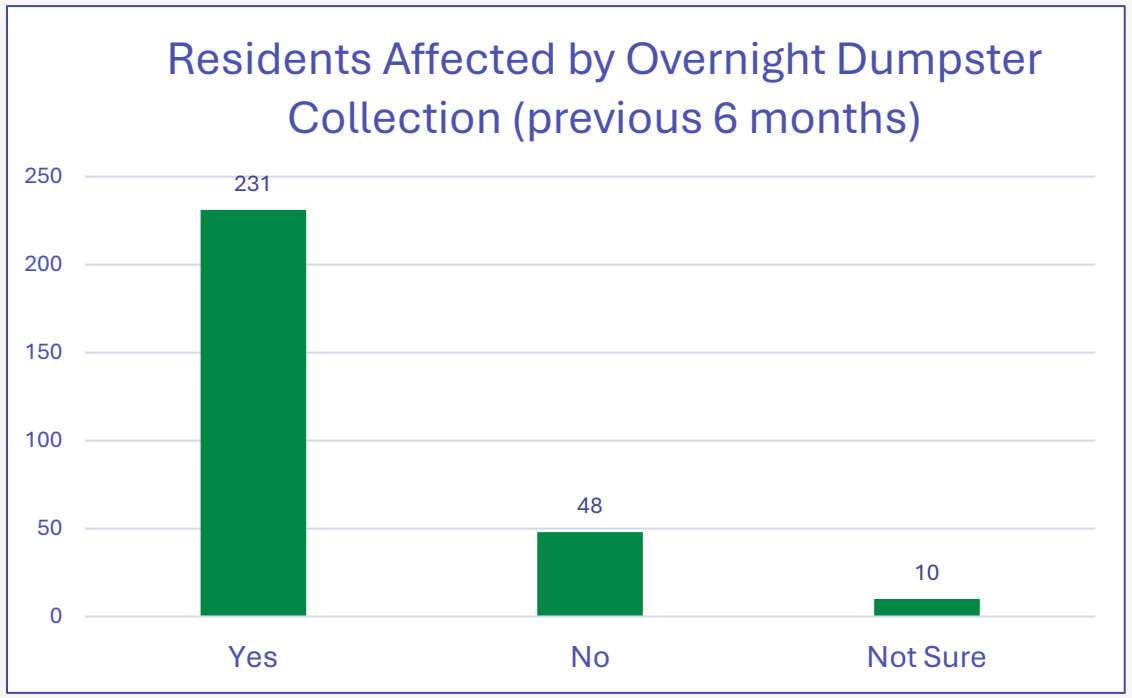


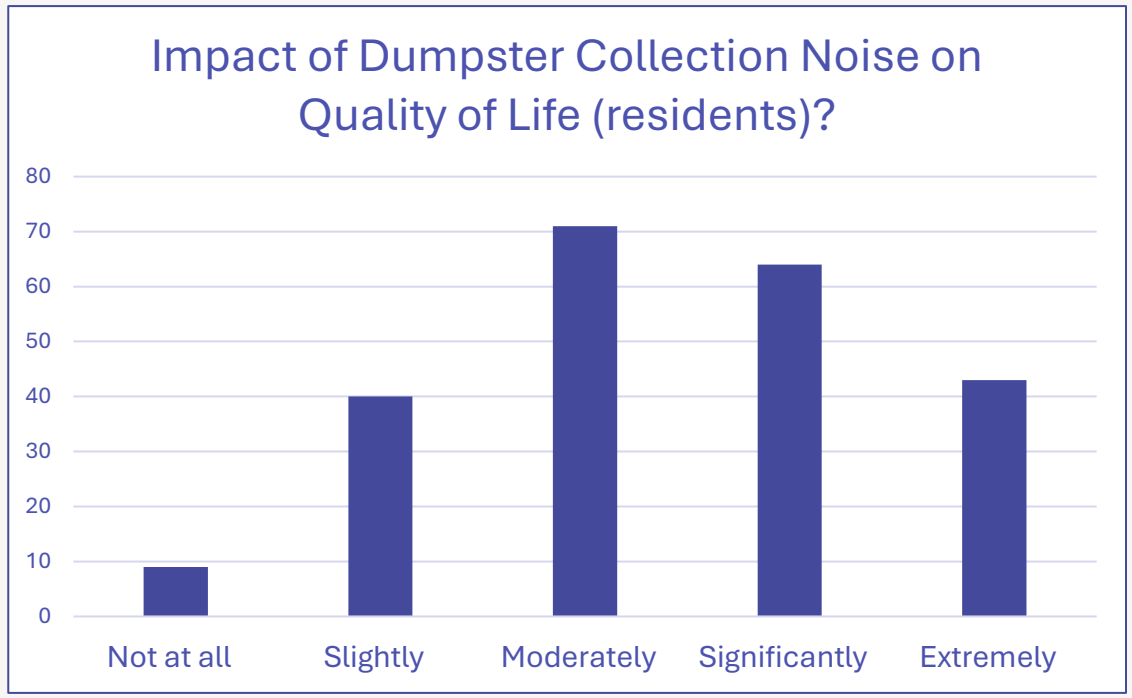
Stakeholder Input

Resident Survey

- Surveys were posted on Speak Up Austin
- **330 total responses**
  - 58% of residents that provided comment supported restricting overnight and early morning dumpster collection
  - 54% reported noise from dumpster collection having moderate to extreme impacts on quality of life
- Several comments cited efforts to remedy the situation by contacting the hauler directly, most with temporary or no effect
- Other residents opposed to rules change expressed concern for increased traffic and disruptions to regular dumpster collection

Resident Survey





Business & Property Owner Survey

- **9 total responses**
- 5 stated that restricting overnight dumpster collections would have “no impact” on their business or property,
- One comment expressed that change to the policy would benefit neighboring residents’ quality of life
- Some concerns expressed about changing the policy:
  - Haulers may raise prices if policy is implemented
  - Restricting overnight dumpster collection may decrease service flexibility and work-life balance for drivers

Hauler responses

- **13 total responses**
- 6 indicated that they do not have dumpsters as part of their collection
- 7 conduct overnight collections and stated restrictions on collection would significantly impact their businesses (nearly all dumpster haulers in Austin)
- Most haulers cited traffic and pedestrian safety as the primary reason for overnight collections
  - Creating route inefficiencies due to traffic could lead to more drivers being on the road, increased costs may be passed onto customers
- A common sentiment was that “a one-size-fits-all restriction could create unnecessary challenges, so there should be flexibility to account for these [different] circumstances.”
- One hauler stated early service for some customers is necessary due to “unique site constraints”

Recommendation

Recommendation:
Amend Licensed Hauler Code

- Amend city code to permit overnight dumpster collections within 300 feet of the property line of residences, including multifamily properties, between the hours of 5:30 a.m. and 10 p.m.
  - Excluding Downtown Contracted Service Area (**§ 15-6-14**)
- Automatic variance or waiver for property granted in the absence of complaints
- Recommended code compliance steps:
  1. Resident issues complaint of overnight collection near a residence (3-1-1).
  2. Austin Development Services (ADS) verifies the location of the complaint is within the prohibited distance of a residence
  3. ADS contacts the private hauler to alert them of the complaint and seek voluntary compliance
  4. If additional ADS verified instances of collection after hours are identified at a property, the private hauler is notified that their variance has been removed and that they must modify their collection time
  5. Continued disturbances result in a citation (Municipal Court)

Next Steps

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- Zero Waste Advisory Commission (ZWAC) – Briefing, November 19, 2026
- CWEP – Discussion and Possible Action, December 9, 2026
- Speak Up Austin Public Comment, Comments Open for 30 days (December 11-January 11)
- ZWAC – Code Amendment Consideration, February 10, 2027
- City Council – Code Amendment Consideration, February 25, 2027

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