

AUSTIN RESOURCE RECOVERY RECYCLING & COMPOSTING EDUCATION

OFFICE OF THE CITY AUDITOR
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BACKGROUND

Austin Resource Recovery (ARR)

- Responsible for collecting trash, recycling, composting, and other items
- Most of Austin's waste stream is collected and managed by private waste haulers
- Adopted plan in 2009 to divert 90% of City's waste from landfills by 2040



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	City	Recently Published Diversion Rate	Year
	Los Angeles	76.4%	2025
	Phoenix	38.4%	2025
	Austin	37%	2024
	Denver	35%	2020
	Minneapolis	34.5%	2023
	San Antonio	33%	2024
	Dallas	20%	2022

Austin's doing better than many of its peers

- ARR updated its plan and offered new services and more education
- ARR customers can divert same material, but rules vary between those contracted with private haulers
- ARR diversion rate in 2024 less than rate a decade ago

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OVERVIEW

FINDING 1

ARR conducts educational outreach but does not base efforts on impact

FINDING 2

ARR does not coordinate recycling and composting messaging across city or with private haulers

OBSERVATION

ARR does not appear to have effective internal communication

FINDING 1

ARR conducts educational outreach but does not base efforts on impact.

- Conducting educational outreach to the community
- Not consistently prioritizing roughly 90 projects and campaigns
- Some educational efforts lack measurable goals or ways to measure impact



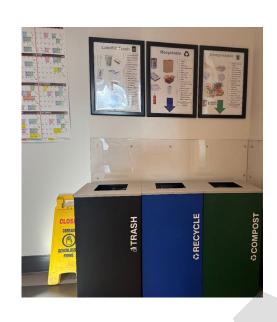
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FINDING 2

ARR does not coordinate recycling and composting messaging across the City or with private haulers.

- Inconsistent signs and bins across City
- Inconsistent coordination education with private waste haulers
- Inconsistent guidance and education shared by private waste haulers and ARR





THESE WASTE BINS FOLLOW ZERO WASTE AT CITY FACILITIES GUIDELINES

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Green-colored bin featuring a recycling symbol



Red-colored bin featuring a recycling symbol



INCONSISTENT MESSAGING WITHIN THE SAME CITY FACILITY



Recycling and trash bins at Roy G. Guerrero Colorado River Park



Recycling and trash bins at City Hall by Council Chambers



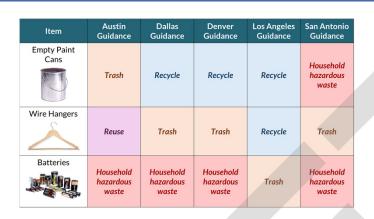
Recycling and trash bins at Branch Park

WASTE BINS VARY IN DESIGN ACROSS THE CITY

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LACK OF ACCESS TO RECYCLING AND COMPOSTING BINS MAY UNDERMINE THE CITY'S WASTE DIVERSION EFFORTS



CITIES HAVE DIFFERENT RULES FOR HOW TO DISPOSE OF CERTAIN ITEMS

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OBSERVATION

ARR does not appear to have effective internal communication.

- Limited ability to prioritize work
- Efforts reactive to others
- Staff excluded from planning discussions



RECOMMENDATIONS

01

- Evaluate projects and priority
- Set measurable goals, and
- Adjust to make progress towards Zero Waste Goal

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- Work with other departments to standardized messaging
- Add educational fees to contracts
- Coordinate messaging with private waste haulers

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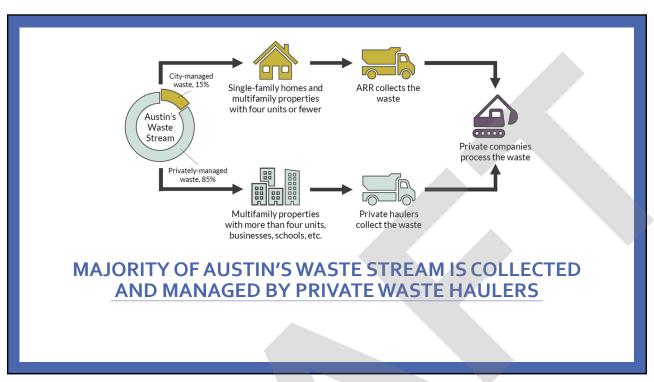


QUESTIONS?



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