



Recommendation for Action

File #: 23-3196, Agenda Item #: 2.

11/2/2023

Posting Language

Approve a resolution adopting the 2023 Austin Resource Recovery Comprehensive Plan.

Lead Department

Austin Resource Recovery

Prior Council Action:

Adoption of Resolution No. 20111215-047 adopting the 2011 Austin Resource Recovery Master Plan; adoption of Resolution Nos. 20050519-044, 20060112-028, and 20090115-050 related to zero waste.

For More Information:

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Council Committee, Boards and Commission Action:

October 11, 2023 - Reviewed by the Zero Waste Advisory Commission (ZWAC) and approved on a vote of 7-0.

Additional Backup Information:

BACKGROUND

In 2011, Council adopted the Austin Resource Recovery (ARR) Master Plan. This update to the 2011 plan is now called the Austin Resource Recovery Comprehensive Plan and guides Austin toward its goal of zero waste by 2040.

PURPOSE

To keep Austin clean and safe, preserve natural resources, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the City has pledged to achieve zero waste by 2040. This means only landfilling items that cannot be reused, repaired, donated, recycled, or composted. The City made this goal in 2011 and remains dedicated to achieving it. Significant progress has been made in the past 12 years, including:

- Providing curbside composting to all 200,000+ of our residential customers.
- Adding food recovery and composting diversion requirements for all food-permitted businesses.
- Requiring construction and demolition projects divert 50% of their waste from the landfill.

Austin's population continues to grow, and the solid waste industry has seen many changes since 2011. In this update to the Austin Resource Recovery Comprehensive Plan, the department has set a road map of how to face these challenges by focusing on people and planet.

This plan update intends to move beyond introducing the idea of zero waste to the community and providing access to landfill diversion opportunities to employees and residents. Growing department infrastructure to facilitate the electrification of the vehicle fleet, introducing on-call collection services for bulky items, and expanding methods of data measurement and collection will be just a few of the key areas the City will work toward in the coming years.

DEVELOPMENT

In 2019, ARR began crafting an updated strategic roadmap towards zero waste by:

- Benchmarking cities across the nation with similar zero-waste goals.
- Analyzing zero waste options, including facilities and infrastructure upgrades, enhancing diversion processes, and affordability.
- Inviting residents, businesses, and organizations to share their ideas, expertise, and feedback.
- Committing to equitable program outcomes.

In June 2019, Council approved hiring a consultant to perform research and help develop the comprehensive plan. ARR and its consultants conducted 14 focus groups and opened two surveys to gather feedback from stakeholders, including residents, business owners, non-profits, educational institutions, and other community members. Through public outreach efforts, ARR learned Austin residents prioritize residential and commercial incentives, policies, enforcement, and clear messaging.

ZERO WASTE ADVISORY COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Staff presented updates to ZWAC during development of the plan on June 12, 2020, October 13, 2021, and June 8, 2022. In May 2023, staff provided ZWAC a draft of the Comprehensive Plan and met with commissioners for feedback. On October 11, 2023, staff presented the final draft document to ZWAC. The commission voted 7-0 to recommend approval of the Comprehensive Plan. Staff will present the final draft document to the Joint Sustainability Committee on October 25, 2023.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends adoption of the Austin Resource Recovery Comprehensive Plan.