



Annual Internal Review

This report covers the time period of 7/1/2016 to 6/30/2017

Zero Waste Advisory Commission

The Commission's mission statement is set forth in [2-1-182 in the Code of the City of Austin TX](#), which states:

The Commission is empowered to review and analyze the policies and resources relating to material discard management in the City, and to advise the City Council on materials management policies and resources. The commission shall provide assistance to the City Council to ensure its residents that the City provides both an economical and environmentally safe system of waste reduction, resource recovery and disposal. The Commission may provide assistance to the city council to protect the public health and quality of the environment through efficient collection, recycling, composting, and disposal of municipal solid waste.

1. Describe the board's actions supporting their mission during the previous calendar year. Address all elements of the board's mission statement as provided in the relevant sections of the City Code. *(Reference all reports, recommendations, letters or resolutions presented to the City Council on mission-specific issues. If some of the elements of the mission statement were not acted on by the board in the past year, the report should explain why no action was taken.)*

July

Parks and Recreation Department Recycling received a briefing from ARR and PARD staff on efforts around recycling in public parks and made suggestions to staff on multiple variables involved.

ARR FY2017 Budget - discussed with staff latest steps in the process for forming the departmental budget for next fiscal year.

ZWAC Internal Annual Report – completed and approved the annually required report (covers July 2015-June 2016) pursuant to Section 2-1-46 of the City Code.

Committee Appointments – appointed Commissioner White to the Organics Management Committee, and appointed Commissioner Rojo to the Universal Recycling Ordinance Committee.

Curbside Organics Collection - Outreach & Education Efforts - received a briefing and slideshow from ARR on education and outreach efforts related to the proposed expansion of organics collection, and made recommendations to staff on multiple variables of the effort.

Recyclables Markets – received a briefing from ARR Director on market conditions and economic fluctuations.

August

Sludge Treatment and Zero Waste Goals - the Commission made a recommendation to City Council regarding land application of biosolids. Record of vote: approved 10-0-0-, Commissioner Bones absent.

Recommendation Number: 20160810-3d: Land Application of Biosolids:

<http://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=260988>

WHEREAS the Austin American-Statesman reported on June 27, 2016 that the City of Austin was exploring the possibility of land applying Class B sewage sludge from its municipal wastewater system in Bastrop County, and

WHEREAS the Austin American-Statesman reported on June 5, 2016 that an earlier proposal to land apply the City's sewage sludge in Fayette County quoted Austin Water Utility employee Jane Burazer as saying that this process "is in the best interest of the environment," and

WHEREAS the article further identified land application of sewage sludge as part of Austin's "zero-waste" philosophy, and

WHEREAS the Zero Waste International Alliance and Austin's Zero Waste Master Plan define Zero Waste as "a goal that is ethical, economical, efficient and visionary... (eliminating) all discharges to land, water or air that are a threat to planetary, human, animal or plant health," and

WHEREAS the Archives of Environmental and Occupational Health reported that land application of sludge is associated with significant increases in reported health problems among exposed communities, including "excessive secretion of tears, abdominal bloating, jaundice, skin ulcer, dehydration, weight loss... general weakness... bronchitis, upper respiratory infection, and giardiasis," and

WHEREAS the Canadian Journal of Infectious Diseases reported that "pathogens are not the only contaminants of concern in sewage sludge... (it) also contains potentially harmful levels of toxic metals and environmentally persistent chemicals such as polychlorinated biphenyls and dioxins," findings echoed by other studies, and

WHEREAS the US Geological Survey determined in 2014 that land application of sewage sludge could contaminate soils and groundwater with chemicals including pharmaceutical drugs and hormone disrupting compounds used in antibacterial soaps, and

WHEREAS there have been a host of other studies and reports determining extensive discharges to the air, water, and land from sewage sludge land application, and

WHEREAS the City of Austin already diverts a substantial proportion of its sewage sludge into a higher and better use—"Dillo Dirt" compost,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Zero Waste Advisory Commission advises the Austin City Council that land application of biosolids, with the exception of compost, should not be considered beneficial reuse or consistent with the City's Zero Waste principles, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Zero Waste Advisory Commission recommends that the Austin City Council take all necessary steps to sustain the Dillo Dirt program after curbside composting is fully implemented, including the possibility of expanding the Dillo Dirt program, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Zero Waste Advisory Commission recommends that the Austin City Council direct the City Manager to convene all necessary city departments to develop a strategic organic materials management plan prior to approving any contracts committing Austin Water Utility's organic products to any vendor, with the exception of a contract that specifically addresses a higher and better use for the 2/3 of biosolids currently being land applied, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Zero Waste Advisory Commission recommends that the Austin City Council direct the City Manager to negotiate but not execute contracts before they have been presented before the relevant Boards and Commissions for discussion and public review.

Recycling in City of Austin Parks - the Commission made a recommendation to City Council regarding unmet needs of recycling and composting in city parks. Record of the vote: approved 9-1-0-1 with Commissioner Joyce voting no, Commissioner Bones absent.

[Recommendation Number: 20160810-3e Recycling and Composting in Parks](#)

WHEREAS the Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) is currently seeking to address the current unmet need of recycling on parkland, and

WHEREAS PARD is a City department and City departments should lead by example in regards to timely and proactive implementation of the Zero Waste Master Plan and the Universal Recycling Ordinance.

WHEREAS Zilker Park is the first metropolitan park to have recycling receptacles installed this year, and is the only park of approximately 130 outdoor parks providing recycling containers for park visitors, and

WHEREAS PARD is addressing this need incrementally with funds in its current operating budget and by providing recycling in a phases, beginning with Aquatic Facilities, Metropolitan Parks, and Athletics Complexes, and

WHEREAS PARD's long term plan is to install new stand-alone recycling receptacles consistent with PARD's standard for trash receptacles, and

WHEREAS PARD has determined that it will also be necessary to increase staffing to meet the minimum amount of time to service and repair items in the parks, and

WHEREAS PARD has submitted an unmet need request in the FY17 budget request for a more comprehensive approach to recycling on parkland, and

WHEREAS this funding request supports priorities 4,5,7 and 8 listed in the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan: to use green infrastructure to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city; to invest in Austin's creative economy; to create a Healthy Austin Program; to revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact, connected city, and

WHEREAS composting is a key piece of reaching 90% diversion city wide and public education and buy-in is necessary, and

WHEREAS industry best practice is placing recycling and composting receptacles next to all trash receptacles

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Zero Waste Advisory Commission (ZWAC) advises City Council to direct PARD to complete rollout of full recycling capabilities to all parks and PARD facilities as well as organics collection in high traffic areas by 2020.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that ZWAC advises the Austin City Council to allocate funding in the FY17 budget for the following increased resources needed to improve recycling in City of Austin Parks: collection cans, collection points, staffing to collect recycled materials, and staff/equipment to transport the recycled materials.

ARR FY2017 Budget - the Commission made a recommendation to City Council to approve the proposed budget and added a request for an accelerated timetable for expansion of residential curbside organics collection. Record of vote: approved 9-1-0-1 with Commissioner Joyce voting no, Commissioner Bones absent. Commissioner Joyce noted her vote to oppose was in support of weekly recycling, but not in support of organics expansion.

Organics Committee Update – received an update on recent staff presentations on Universal Recycling Ordinance, Commercial Food Service Organics Diversion and Central Business District Compost Pilot.

Joint Sustainability Committee Update - Commissioner White, ZWAC member of the Committee reported updates from the JSC, including the JSC's budget [Recommendation no. 20160727-04B](#) supporting residential composting expansion by 2020 with no opt-out ability.

Customer Satisfaction Survey Results and Austin Materials Marketplace - ARR Director provided an update on these projects.

September

Joint Meeting - ZWAC and the Water and Wastewater Commission convened in a joint meeting on September 14, 2016 to discuss biosolids management in relation to a pending contract. A joint working group was formed to study the matter of biosolids management in contact with other City departments and programs and bring back recommendations to the respective commissions at their regular October 12 meetings. WWW Commissioner Turrieta was appointed as Chair of the working group and ZWAC Commissioner Amanda Masino was appointed Co-chair. ZWAC Commissioners White, Guidry, and Hoffman, and WWW Commissioners Blanding, Ho, and Lee made up the rest of the members of the joint working group.

October

Approved Carts Contract - A contract for the purchase of residential garbage, recycling and organics carts was recommended to City Council on a 9-0-0-2 vote with Commissioners Gattuso and Jiampietro absent.

Brownfields Program Update - Commission received an update on the program from ARR staff.

Approved URO Outreach Contract: A contract to secure outreach services from multiple vendors for promotion and education regarding URO requirements was recommended to City Council on an 8-0-1-2 vote with Commissioner Savage recusing due to conflict of interest, and Commissioners Gattuso and Jiampietro absent.

Update from Biosolids Working Group: the Commission made a recommendation to City Council on zero waste policy considerations to be included in biosolids management planning, amended from the joint working group recommendation with the W/WW Commission. Record of the vote: 9-0-0-2 with Commissioners Gattuso and Jiampietro absent.

[Recommendation No. 20161012-003a Policy Recommendations on Biosolids Management](#)

1. Biosolids management should honor the highest and best use hierarchy. The City will strive to treat all wastewater sludge to make compost that meets the United States Compost Council's definition of compost prior to final distribution.
2. Require production of compost that meets or exceeds United States Compost Council Seal of Test Assurance (STA) standards. STA samples shall be collected by independent third parties or City staff and tested by an independent third party.
3. Plastics shall be removed from all final products utilizing best management practices.
4. Under emergency conditions, land application of unscreened compost, Class A biosolids, or Class B biosolids may be made on a temporary basis.
 - A. Emergency conditions are defined as severe fire risk, other imminent threats to health and safety, or imminent risk of regulatory non-compliance that could not have reasonably been foreseen.
 - b. If time permits, plastics should still be predominately removed before land application.
 - c. Emergency application of these lower quality products shall extend only as long as necessary to alleviate emergency conditions.
5. Austin Water staff shall inform the City Council via a Corrective Action Memo within five business days of declaration of emergency conditions. The Memo shall specifically describe the procedure and timeline by which the contractor and staff plan to return to normal operations in the shortest possible timeframe.
6. Austin Water Operations will be conducted in a manner that will keep odors and pests to a minimum. Specific procedures for accomplishing this shall either be included in any contracts prior to final review by Commissions and Council or shall be brought to the Zero Waste Advisory Commission and Water Wastewater Commission within 90 days of the contract's execution.

7. All products produced using biosolids will be clearly labeled to inform the end user of that fact.
8. The Dillo Dirt trademark name and compost quality will remain in City of Austin control, regardless of who produces the product, and should be defined by prescriptive processing requirements determined by Austin Water staff.
9. Austin Water and Austin Resource Recovery should continue to vet and pilot new technologies and management strategies in line with active policies that will improve biosolids handling.
10. Austin Water and Austin Resource Recovery will continue to communicate with other City departments when contracts are being renewed or solicited to ensure any partnering opportunities are explored.
11. Bulking agents should be limited to by-products of other known activities and not include painted or chemically treated lumber, asbestos, or other contaminants inappropriate for compost products or land application.
12. Any contract that impacts these policies should come before the Zero Waste Advisory Commission, in addition to any other relevant Commissions, before they go to City Council for consideration of approval.

Textiles Recycling, Budget Update received a briefing from the ARR Director.

November

Adopted 2017 Schedule of Meetings - Commission unanimously adopted the schedule of meetings for 2017.

Approved Committee Assignments – Commissioner Savage resigned and a committee slot opened on the Universal Recycling Ordinance Committee. Vice Chair Gattuso agreed to chair the committee, with Commissioner Bones remaining and Commissioner Rojo joining as members.

Approved Heavy/Light Duty Vehicle and Equipment Purchase - the Commission unanimously approved the recommendation of these purchases to City Council 10-0 with Commissioner Jiampietro absent.

Opposed City Facilities Dumpster Collection Services Contract to provide dumpster collection services for City of Austin facilities to include non-hazardous class 2 waste collections. Unanimously opposed, 10-0 with Commissioner Jiampietro absent. The following reasons were listed for not recommending the proposed agreement to Council:

- Lack of diversion policies/goal
- Inclusion of the Austin Energy waste which is problematic for reasons that date back to original version of the contract rejected by Council
- Expansion of services
- Tripling of cost
- Lack of information about location of the landfill
- Lack of information about carbon footprint
- Concern about the impact of special events service

Office of Performance Review Update, [re]Manufacturing Hub Update, City Hall Organics Pilot, Parks Recycling/Composting - ARR Director provided an update on these projects.

February

Approved Vehicle Fleet Technology Upgrade – Recommended approval to Council of a contract to provide vehicle fleet with technical upgrades on a unanimous 9-0 vote with Commissioner Bones and Jiampietro absent.

Opposed City Facilities Dumpster Collection Services Contract - After rescinding an action on the item from November 9, 2016 ZWAC meeting, and reviewing the item in four sections, the Commission again voted to not recommend the Request For Proposals SLW0514. Record of the vote: 9-0, Commissioners Bones and Jiampietro absent.

Recommendation No. 20170208-003b: City Facilities Dumpster Collection Services

<http://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=271485>

The commission provided rationale for their vote regarding the areas below:

- City Facilities: Opposition to any of the city waste going to the Austin Community Landfill or San Antonio landfill, or other facilities outside the CAPCOG region. Lack of clarification regarding the benefit of the "Citywide" scope of the agreement, including lack of analysis of cost effectiveness of providing some services in-house. Need to ensure existing contracts are honored fully.
- Emergencies: Lack of explicit diversion and reuse provisions for emergencies.
- Special Events: Unknown impact to small business community.
- Class 2 and non-hazardous waste: All concerns from previous discussions remain unaddressed.
- Overall environmental and community impact, and carbon footprint concerns.

CodeNEXT Advisory Group – Appointed Commissioner Masino to consider ZWAC related impacts of the revisions to the Land Development Code and report back to the Commission with insights.

Approved Annual Reports - Construction and Demolition Committee; Universal Recycling Ordinance Committee; Organics Management Committee The reports were accepted with no objection from the Commission.

Approved Organics Processing Contract - approved the recommendation to Council, a contract to provide organics processing to accommodate the expansion of the residential curbside organics collection program. Record of the vote: 7-0-2-2. Commissioners Acuna and Savage abstaining. Commissioners Bones and Jiampietro absent.

<http://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=271529>

Recommendation No. 20170208-003a: Organics Processing Services

The recommendation was contingent upon the following:

- necessary permits and registrations being obtained
- with the added restriction that no biosolids or compost from biosolids will be mixed with City of Austin food waste or compost from food waste.

Textiles Recycling - ARR Interim Director provided an update on the textiles recycling initiative.

April

Election of Officers - chair and vice-chair elected annually at the first regular meeting after April 1 for a term of 1 year, beginning May 1, ending April 30. Commissioner Acuna for Chair, Commissioner Gattuso for Vice Chair, unanimously approved 10-0 with Commissioner White absent.

Committees and Working Groups – received updates from ZWAC Committee Chairs and made new committee assignments and/or working groups. Commissioner Christopher De Orive joined the Organics Management Committee.

Approved Brownfields Environmental Services Rotation List RFQ - Recommended City Council approve a professional services agreement with various firms to provide environmental engineering and consulting services, on a 9-0-1 vote with Commissioner Joyce abstaining and Commissioner White absent.

Discussed Electronics Recycling Services – Received an update on a future planned procurement of electronics recycling services.

[re]Manufacturing Hub, Textiles Recycling, Travis County Interlocal Agreement, Cart Color - ARR Interim Director provided an update on the projects.

May

Approved Outreach Services Contract for Residential Compost Program – Received recommendations from the Organics Management Committee and provided a recommendation to Council to approve negotiation and execution of a contract to provide information to customers for the planned expansion of curbside residential compost services. 7-0-0-4 vote with Commissioners Bones, Rojo, Joyce and Savage absent.

Universal Recycling Ordinance Committee - Vice Chair Gattuso updated the commission on the URO Committee topics: Reducing contamination and the impact on the MRF of downtime caused by it, as well as other downstream impacts concerning contamination.

[re]Manufacturing Hub – Commission received an update from staff and a consultant on analysis of the proposed Hub after being retained by the City to conduct a feasibility study stemming from the directive from Council detailed in Resolution no. 20160414-003. The Commission asked questions for follow up and opted to possibly make a recommendation at a later meeting.

Department Audit – ZWAC discussed the Office of Performance Management review that is planned for the department and noted the Commission is due for a review of the master plan.

ARR FY2018 Budget Update – Commission received an update on the April 19th budget presentation to Council and the curbside composting program expansion. Staff noted the estimated impact on the diversion rate at full composting rollout as 7% to 8% of an increase in a conservative estimate.

June

Committees – appointed Commissioner Christopher de Orive to serve on the Joint Sustainability Committee, to replace Commissioner Savage who resigned from the Commission.

ARR Budget Update – received an update on the current fiscal year ARR budget.

Recycling Research: received a briefing on findings from Design, Technology and Innovation Fellows research on recycling and composting behaviors and perspectives of Austin residents.

ARR Master Plan, OPM Review, [re]Manufacturing Hub ARR Interim Director provided an update on the projects.

2. Determine if the board's actions throughout the year comply with the mission statement.

The 2016 actions of the Zero Waste Advisory Commission were in full compliance with the Commission's mission statement.

3. List the board's goals and objectives for the new year.

(Make sure the goals and objectives fall within the mission statement of the board/commission.)

- Master Plan Implementation - ZWAC will collaborate with staff by making recommendations to the Austin Resource Recovery Director regarding project implementation.
- Master Plan Implementation - ZWAC will collaborate with staff by making recommendations to the Austin Resource Recovery Director regarding planning on revisions to the Master Plan.
- Master Plan Implementation - Review and improve communication strategies in all areas of Austin to increase and track recycling rates in all ten city council districts and citywide.
- Master Plan Implementation - ZWAC will collaborate with staff by making recommendations to the Austin Resource Recovery Director regarding collaboration with other City departments regarding implementation and promotion of zero waste goals.
- Master Plan Education - ZWAC will receive regular updates on the interlocal agreement between the City of Austin and Travis County regarding expansion to zero waste initiatives, strategies, benefits and costs.
- Zero Waste Economic Development - ZWAC will receive regular updates on efforts to participate in economic development associated with zero waste goals.
- Universal Recycling Ordinance - ZWAC and its Committee will continue monitor implementation of URO ordinance and rules.
- Master Plan Implementation - ZWAC will collaborate with staff by making recommendations to the Austin Resource Recovery Director regarding collaboration with its regional partners to target non-recyclable, non-compostable materials or hard-to-handle materials across the region.
- Construction and Demolition Recycling - the Commission's C&D Ordinance Committee will monitor and report on the progress of the C&D Ordinance.
- ZWAC will make recommendations regarding process and procedures related to zero waste goals.
- ZWAC will continue to review and make recommendations regarding initiatives around citywide expansion (i.e. multi-family properties) of organics diversion, collection and composting, including food waste prevention and recovery.
- ZWAC will work with staff and stakeholders for the contracting of services that further zero waste goals of the department.