



**Austin Public Library Commission: Recycled Reads Working Group:  
RECOMMENDATION 20190826-5a: The Future of Recycled Reads**

Date: August 26, 2019

Subject: The Future of Recycled Reads

Motioned By: Commission Member Ramos

Seconded By: Vice Chair Finney

**Recommendation**

*Support for a collaboration between Recycled Reads and Austin Resource Recovery that would reduce overlap of functions and share space.*

**Description of Recommendation to Council**

*The Austin Public Library Commission recommends that the City work with the Austin Public library staff to develop a plan for Recycled Reads to collaborate with Austin Resource Recovery to recycle books and media efficiently and effectively. This would include sharing space with Austin Resource Recovery at ARR's eventual new location.*

**Rationale:**

For ten years, Recycled Reads at 5335 Burnet Rd. has been operating as a repository for processing and selling materials donated by the public and withdrawn from the Austin Public Library's collection. For a number of years, sales have been stagnant and donations have increased. Total expenses to operate Recycled Reads were \$397,521 in FY 16; \$370,006 in FY17; \$447,235 in FY18; and \$288,645 as of July 31, 2019, with an average annual loss of \$200,000.

Recycled Reads rental lease on Burnet Rd. expires in March 2022.

Recycled Reads space is more than 7000 sq. ft., yet according to APL staff it only requires 2500 sq. ft. to process and sell materials. APL staff have expressed a desire for Recycled Reads programming and sellable materials to be distributed to the various APL branches to ensure accessibility to programs and used books/media across the city which supports the City's Culture and Lifelong Learning Strategic Outcome.

From 2012-2017, Recycled Reads received a stipend per tonnage from Austin Resource Recovery (up to \$60,000), which it no longer receives.

Recycled Reads performs a similar service for the Austin community as Austin Resource Recovery by recycling books and media and has diverted more than 3000 tons (\$200 per ton) of materials from the landfill which supports the City's Zero Waste initiative.

Recycled Reads sends 40 percent of public donations and 70 percent of APL's withdrawals to Goodwill for recycling because Recycled Reads is unable to sell the material due to multiple copies or condition of the material.

Recycled Reads staff spends a considerable amount of time receiving and sorting items that Austin Resource Recovery could receive and process more efficiently.

**Vote**

For: Chair Hanna; Vice Chair Finney; and Commission Members Dabbert, Dwyer, Pardo-Kaplan, Ramos, Self, Smyer, and Williams

Against:

Abstain:

Absent:

Attest: *[Staff or board member can sign]*

  
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