



## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Mayor and City Council

**From:** Bob Gedert, Director  
Austin Resource Recovery Department

Kerry O'Connor  
Chief Innovation Officer

**CC:** Marc A. Ott, City Manager  
Robert D. Goode, Assistant City Manager

**Date:** July 24, 2015

**Subject:** Community engagement opportunity

The purpose of this memo is to invite you to participate in an innovative project to engage the community and increase recycling in the City.

Austin Resource Recovery recently released [an independent study](#) that shows more recyclables are going to the landfill than are being recycled in residents' blue carts. In fact, 44 percent of what is found in Austin's residential trash stream could have been recycled. The study was the first of its kind for the City of Austin and is integral to achieving the Council-adopted Zero Waste goal.

In response to the study results, Austin Resource Recovery is joining forces with the Innovation Office to ask Austin residents for their insights about recycling. Unlike "ideas" which are generally suggestions for solving a problem, "insights" reveal the root of the problem. Insights will help Austin Resource Recovery understand the barriers to recycling and help develop opportunities to increase recycling.

Beginning July 27, Austin Resource Recovery will ask citizens to share their insights for improving household recycling using the following methods:

- Joining the conversation online using a web-based [community insight platform](#);
- Texting their insights; and

- Directly engaging with our staff in places where residents shop, work and play during Speak Week, currently scheduled for mid-August.

Once the community insights have been collected, staff will report back to citizens what we have learned and actions the City plans to take. We invite you to encourage your constituents to participate and share their insights.

If you have any questions, or want to get involved with this community engagement effort, please contact Bob Gedert at 512-974-1926 or Kerry O'Connor at 512-974-1637.