



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mayor and City Council

**THRU:** Elaine Hart, Interim City Manager  
Robert Goode, P.E., Assistant City Manager

**FROM:** Sam Angoori, P.E., Interim Director  
Austin Resource Recovery (ARR)

**DATE:** March 2, 2017

**SUBJECT: Response to Resolution 20170202-045, Simple Recycling**

The purpose of this memo is to provide an update on Austin Resource Recovery activities in response to [Resolution 20170202-045](#) regarding the curbside textile recycling service and related contract with Great Lakes Recycling (doing business as Simple Recycling).

### **Contract Options**

Staff is evaluating all options to modify the contract between the City and Simple Recycling including transferring service, changing the scope of work, or terminating the contract. Staff will be meeting with external stakeholders during the month of March to discuss the feasibility of various options and will provide an update in April.

### **Public Education**

Austin Resource Recovery (ARR) staff initiated a public education effort to clarify that Simple Recycling is a for-profit company that sells materials in markets outside of Austin and to encourage residents to donate to local non-profits. To date, the following actions have been taken:

- ARR worked with the City's Communications and Public Information Office (CPIO) to air a [CityView segment](#) on ATXN and You Tube beginning the week of Feb. 13. Staff worked with Goodwill of Central Texas to include footage of local donation and reuse retail activities.
- The CityView segment and updated messaging about the Simple Recycling service have been distributed through ARR's e-newsletter, via social media and to Zero Waste Block Leaders.
- ARR also made substantial edits to the [Clothing and Housewares Recycling](#) webpage to emphasize the benefits that local reuse organizations provide to our community. The revised language also informs customers that Simple Recycling is a for-profit company. Staff will continue to update this page as the message evolves through stakeholder collaboration.
- ARR is working with a contractor to develop an animated video using whiteboard illustrations to bring attention to the number of textiles going to the landfill; encourage customers to donate

to local organizations; and inform customers about the Simple Recycling service. This type of video is being used since it can be implemented quickly.

- A detailed update with information about current progress and next steps was sent to stakeholders on Feb. 15.

### **Reuse Directory**

ARR is in discussions with a local organization about developing a local reuse directory. This directory would help residents find local organizations where they can donate their used items. Once the partnership is developed, ARR will actively promote this directory through its marketing efforts.

### **Mailing list**

At the Feb. 2 City Council Meeting, there were questions about whether all ARR customers currently receive the Simple Recycling service. The service launched citywide on December 5, 2016 and is available to all curbside customers. Since that time, ARR has discovered that the mailing list provided to Simple Recycling unintentionally left off some customers. Staff is developing a plan to send updated program materials and bags to those customers.

### **Next Steps**

ARR is scheduling a stakeholder meeting for March 8, 2017 at the Asian American Resource Center, 8401 Cameron Road from 2pm to 4pm. The agenda will include:

- **Data Collection Options.** Feedback from stakeholders will be critical in determining what data can be provided to assist in evaluating the program and its impact on non-profit organizations. ARR will discuss the idea of hiring a third-party company to collect and monitor data related to the operations of Simple Recycling and reuse organizations. A third-party firm could address stakeholder concerns about data confidentiality.
- **Future Marketing Plans.** While ARR's current public education effort is underway, staff is also planning for a broader marketing effort. Staff plans to hire a marketing professional to work with ARR, the reuse community and Simple Recycling to develop and implement a marketing campaign that is inclusive of the reuse community and helps reduce materials going to the landfill. Staff will discuss this option with the stakeholders to solicit their feedback. Staff will then work with the City of Austin's Corporate Purchasing Office to issue a Request for Proposals in the coming weeks.

ARR will continue to provide monthly updates to Council throughout this six month process and will report back on the stakeholder discussions.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 512-974-4313 or Jessica King at 512-974-7678.