



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council

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

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

DATE: May 12, 2017

SUBJECT: Response to Resolution 20170202-045, Simple Recycling – Third Update

This memo serves as the third monthly update 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 Discussions Update. Austin Resource Recovery (ARR) executive staff continued meeting with stakeholders to investigate options with the Simple Recycling contract. Staff met with representatives of Goodwill of Central Texas in April. Goodwill representatives agreed to bring nonprofit organizations together to discuss how they could provide a textile recycling program if the Simple Recycling contract were to be cancelled. Goodwill representatives expect to have their first meeting with nonprofit partners in the next couple of weeks.

ARR staff is continuing discussions with Simple Recycling about potential contract amendments. Staff will provide updates on these discussions in a future monthly report.

Marketing Plan. The promotional video by LDRK media is in the final stages of development and will be finalized in the coming weeks. The video will educate residents about the volume of textiles going to the landfill and the options available for handling unwanted items. The video will encourage donations to local organizations first and explain the benefits of donating; curbside collection will be mentioned as a secondary option. The video will also present the benefits of shopping at local charities and thrift stores.

Staff also is finalizing the scope of work for an independent marketing contractor to develop a long-term marketing plan for promoting the local reuse community. Input provided by stakeholders at the previous meeting is being incorporated.

Reuse Directory. ARR staff is working to secure a contract with a local community organization to develop a Reuse Directory to help residents find local organizations where they can donate used items. The proposed contract is in the approval process. Once approved, the directory will be free to use and open to the public. Listings will include information such as a description of the organization, contact information, the organization’s mission, acceptable items and how to donate items.

Data Collection. As previously reported, most stakeholders have indicated that they will not share collection data with the City or a third-party firm. To date, no data has been provided from stakeholders. Without comparative data, staff is not able to evaluate whether donations to local nonprofit organizations have declined.

The contract with Simple Recycling was always intended to supplement, rather than replace private donations in order to lessen the amount of textiles going to the landfill. Based on a [2015 study](#), an estimated 6.6 million pounds of textiles are going to the landfill each year from ARR's curbside customers. Simple Recycling has collected about 314,390 pounds of material since the service began in December 2016.

Simple Recycling Collections

Month	Number of Customers	Material Collected
December 2016	5,192	121,000 pounds
January 2017	4,318	96,700 pounds
February 2017	2,710	52,000 pounds
March 2017	2,386	44,000 pounds

Next Steps. ARR will continue to provide monthly updates to Council throughout this six month process and will report on continued stakeholder discussions. If you have any questions, please contact me at 512-974-4313 or Emlea Chanslor at 512-974-1898.