



## Austin city council approves composting contract

The contract with Organics By Gosh will expand its already existing pilot program

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### Waste Today Staff

Austin city council approved a contract to expand its curbside organics collection and composting program after a debate over how the council's waste contracts were awarded, a report by the *Austin Monitor* says.



The new contract with Organics By Gosh, a composting firm in Austin run by a husband and wife, expands on a pilot program that processed organics collected at the curb from 14,300 homes at no cost to the city. The new program will service 200,000 homes by the end of the three-year contract and will cost the city \$1.51 million.

Council approved the program unanimously, but not before a working group formed in April called for postponement. The group, led by attorney Michael Whellan representing Texas Disposal Systems of Creedmoor, argued that Organics By Gosh failed to answer a number of questions regarding its processing plans and called for council to reevaluate how it awards contracts.

Texas Disposal refuses to enter bids that would require accordance to the city's antilobbying ordinance, the report says. Because of this, the company did not bid on the organics contract.

Whellan claims that Organics By Gosh's 2.79-acre site will be too small for the amount of expected incoming materials and that the site is location in a 100-year floodplain, a violation of a Travis County ordinance. He also states that the company acquired a second site in Bastrop County, which could open the possibility of Organics By Gosh to charge the city an extra hauling fee. He also says that Organics By Gosh is pursuing a third undisclosed, leaving a large amount of questions unanswered.

Donna Gosh, owner of Organics By Gosh, says the accusations are "nonsense." She says Travis County granted her business an exemption from the floodplain ordinance and it does not plan to charge the city any additional hauling fee. Phil Gosh, who also owns Organics By Gosh, says the company is not disclosing its third site's location because of the competitive waste industry.

To create compromise, an amendment to the contract was made that requires council approval between renewals.