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Round Rock Looks Into Claims Of Recycled Items Dumped In Landfill

The city will investigate accusation claims of Central Texas Refuse dumping recyclables in a landfill before expanding its contract.

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Posted Wed, Nov 3, 2021 at 1:07 pm CT

ROUND ROCK, TX — The city of Round Rock will investigate claims of a recycling contractor accused of dumping recyclables in a landfill before considering expanding a contract with the company.

Central Texas Refuse, which has been picking up residents trash — and now recycling— in Round Rock for 30 years, is on track to become the city's sole-source contract for trash and recycling.

Before the city could consider expanding its contract and services with CTR, some urged the city on Tuesday not to rush the decision following accusations of recyclables being dumped into the landfill.



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"We call this sham recycling. It's a big concern of ours," said Robin Schneider, executive director of Texas Campaign for the Environment, who spoke at the meeting Tuesday.

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Schneider said over the weekend she went out to the Williamson County facility where the recyclable sorting takes place to see for herself.

"There were these bales of material straight out of a recycling bin that were baled up. Normally the recycling is taken to the facility, put into the sorting lines and then it is baled into just aluminum or just plastic or just cardboard and paper," she explained.

Trashing recyclables is something CTR and Balcones Resources denies doing.

"We do not currently — nor do we ever — landfill recycling materials. With social media and other things, you can make things look the way you want them to look," Central Texas Refuse General Manager Mike Lavengco told Round Rock elected officials Tuesday.

Michael Thane, director of Utilities and Environmental Services for the City of Round Rock, told CBS Austin the city is looking into the complaints but at this point believes the recyclables taken to the landfill were contaminated items that should have been sorted as trash from the beginning.

Schneider, who is skeptical of claims about contaminated recyclables, said that was not what she saw at the facility over the weekend.

"I clearly saw cans mixed with plastic bottles — that do have value — and it was just a mess," she said.

Other trash and recycling haulers serving Round Rock businesses have expressed frustration with the city's planned move to a sole-source contract saying it shouldn't be done without a bidding process.

Others have argued that it would be unfair to force businesses to use a single provider because they would lose out on the benefit of competitive rates.

Round Rock City Council is expected to discuss and vote on moving to one provider for all commercial trash and recycling pickup at their meeting on Thursday.

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