



Positive Impact on Climate and Community (PICC)

FACT SHEET

Background:

Austin City Council's Climate Protection Resolution No. 20070215-023 calls for City Staff to develop and implement programs to assist citizens, businesses, organizations and visitors in achieving carbon neutrality. It also directs that these programs should include a menu of greenhouse gas reduction strategies for local implementation and funding through the purchase of "carbon offsets," as well as mechanisms and incentives for carbon neutrality among visitors through the purchase of offset credits by travelers, conventions, tradeshow and festivals.

PICC Program Summary:

The City of Austin's Office of Sustainability is partnering with local event organizers to create a greenhouse gas reduction program tied to large events, including annual local festivals. When combined, these events and festivals involve a total of more than 1 million attendees and have a large environmental impact. The Positive Impact on Climate and Community (PICC) program will provide financial assistance for projects that offset carbon through ticket purchases or other funding mechanisms associated with these events and festivals. The money collected will be split between third-party-verified greenhouse gas emission reduction projects in Texas and small projects in Austin that create tangible sustainability and community benefits.

Next Steps:

Collaboration between the Office of Sustainability and event organizer Founding Partners over the coming months will result in defining key elements of the *Positive Impact* Program, including:

- Development of criteria for selecting local projects that provide a positive impact on climate and sustainability benefits for the Austin community
- Specification of pricing, as well as funding mechanisms for purchases
- Identification of initial events that will be part of the program
- Creation of methodology for reporting annual funding and program results.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Which event organizers are participating in this effort?

The following organizations are working together with the City of Austin to develop and finalize program details such as pricing, sales, and project recipients for funding:

- ACL Live at the Moody Theatre
- C3 Presents
- Circuit of the Americas LLC
- South by Southwest, Inc.

After an initial pilot phase, additional organizations will be asked to join in supporting the *Positive Impact* Program with funds collected in conjunction with their events, conferences, conventions, and festivals.

What are Third-Party-Verified greenhouse gas reduction projects and how will they be selected?

These are projects that follow defined protocols, meet specified standards, and result in a measurable reduction in carbon emissions (such as 1 metric ton) that is third-party-verified. Examples of projects in Texas that create verified emission reductions are landfill methane gas destruction, organic waste composting or digestion, and renewable energy projects.

Projects that create large volumes of verified emission reductions do not exist within Austin's city limits, so *Positive Impact* Program partners will be exploring projects that meet those criteria within the state of Texas. In addition to meeting verification criteria, projects will be evaluated on price, the amount of emission reductions achieved, and additional benefits beyond emissions reduction that the projects provide.

While Third-Party-Verified projects are best in advancing carbon neutrality, the Founding Partners in the *Positive Impact* Program place an equally high priority on projects that will benefit the Austin community. For that reason,

approximately half of Program funds will support Third-Party-Verified Projects, while the remaining half will be dedicated to Local Sustainability Projects.

What kinds of projects will qualify as Local Sustainability Projects?

Positive Impact Program partners will work together to identify criteria for Local Sustainability Projects, with an emphasis on local ownership and activities that create measurable environmental benefits. Local projects will not be required to demonstrate third-party-verified greenhouse gas emission reductions, although their greenhouse gas, energy, water, and other quantifiable benefits will be documented. Examples may include projects such as urban forestry, distributed solar photovoltaic or water heating, home weatherization, composting, bike-sharing, rain gardens, or community gardens. Three such programs have already been identified for funding and will be considered for inclusion in the *Positive Impact* Program:

- **TreeFolks** – Non-profit organization TreeFolks will plant 200 trees along biking and jogging trails in 2012, which will offset 1.16 metric tons of carbon equivalent emissions through soil / biomass sequestration annually.
- **Yellow Bike Project** – Yellow Bike Project provides a facility in East Austin for cyclists to repair their bikes. An 11.4 kW solar photovoltaic array is included on the roof of the facility, which will offset 8.4 metric tons of carbon equivalent emissions per year.
- **Foundation Communities** – Local non-profit Foundation Communities partnered with the City to develop M Station, a mixed-use development that provides affordable housing and connections to commuter rail, as well as a 5 kW solar photovoltaic array that offsets 3.7 metric tons of carbon equivalent emissions annually.

How will Local Sustainability Projects be selected?

A publicly advertised Request for Interest will be offered by the City of Austin for participation in the *Positive Impact* Program. A selection panel will review submittals and determine which projects best meet the defined criteria for inclusion in the program. Program partners will individually select projects from the list of approved Local Sustainability Projects to fund on an annual basis. Environmental Defense Fund will provide additional oversight of the *Positive Impact* Program, helping to establish sustainability criteria for local projects and evaluating the performance of those projects over time.

How much will the Program cost and will participation for event-goers be mandatory or voluntary?

The price for investment in the *Positive Impact* Program has not been set and may vary based on event pricing and specifics. Options for event organizers to fund participation in the *Positive Impact* Program may involve inclusion of a portion of individual ticket prices, voluntary donations by ticket purchasers, or sponsorship opportunities for an event. Event organizers will collect funds for the Program and donate proceeds directly to Third-Party-Verified emission reduction and Local Sustainability Projects.

What's the timeframe for implementation of the Positive Impact Program?

City Staff are currently working with Founding Program partners to determine pricing and program details in 2012. Next year, a Request for Interest for local sustainability projects will be offered to identify those eligible for inclusion in the program. *Positive Impact* Program funding mechanisms will be put in place for various events and festivals in 2013. Local Sustainability and Third-Party-Verified emission reduction projects will receive funding in 2014. At the conclusion of 2014, a summary report of funding and project results will be issued.

For more information about the Positive Impact on Climate and Community Program, contact:
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To express interest in submitting your local sustainability project for inclusion in the Positive Impact Program, email sustainability@austintexas.gov.