

Food and Climate Change Addendum

Austin Community Climate Plan

Austin Travis County Food Policy Board

October 9, 2017

Why should food be addressed in our Climate plan?

- The food system is a significant contributor to global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions
- Healthy soil and pasture associated with sustainable agriculture have the potential to sequester large amounts of atmospheric carbon
- Equity issues of food, transportation, land use, and housing.
- The food supply is also particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts.
- Cities across the Nation include evidence-based food and agriculture strategies to reduce emissions in their community climate action plans. San Francisco, NYC, Portland, Minneapolis, Seattle, and more

Process

- Initial Draft – Spring 2017
- Comments and Reviews – Summer 2017
- Finalization – Fall 2017
- Adoption – Winter 2017

The Plan

4 Strategy Areas

1. Reduce Emissions, Support Sequestration and Enhance Resilience in Production
2. Reduce Emissions in Logistics (processing, storage, distribution and retail)
3. Reduce Emissions in Consumption (availability, accessibility, utilization)
4. Reduce Emissions from Food Waste

Hierarchy and Key Focus Areas

- Minimize food waste by maximizing food recovery and diverting all food from landfills
- Promote awareness of the food choices that have the lowest upstream environmental impact
- Support local regenerative agricultural to create a more resilient local food system
- Reduce barriers for residents to obtain climate friendly food.

Strategy 1: Reduce Emissions, Support Sequestration and Enhance Resilience in Production

Category and Action	Actions	Active Stakeholders	GHG Reduction Scope	GHG Reduction Scale
Production – PR1	Preserve prime farmland through the continued support of Conservation Easements, using “right match” land use framework	Travis County TNR Land trusts	Direct	Low
Production – PR2	Allow and support regenerative food production on City/County owned land (under lease contracts of at least 3 year terms)	Private Farmers, City of Austin Real Estate, Parks and Recreation Department, and Watershed Protection	Direct	Low
Production – PR3	Support food producers through incentives within City/County limits to use regenerative agriculture methods and pursue certifications such as organic, holistic management, permaculture, and biodynamic	City / County	Direct	Low
Production – PR4	Create City staff position, or fund County Extension, to provide farmers with technical assistance related to (but not limited to) regenerative agriculture practices, city/county land leases, permitting processes and planning and development code	City of Austin / Travis County	Direct	Low
Production – PR5	Work with Austin Water to offer rebates for farmers to incentivize irrigation water management equipment, water storage, conservation tillage equipment that saves potable water.	Private Farmers, Austin Water Utility	Direct	Low
Production – PR6	Partner with the County Tax assessor's office to ensure land used primarily for agriculture consistently qualifies for ‘agricultural valuation’ in order to retain current farms and lower barriers for new farmers attempting to purchase agricultural land. Extend homestead exemption to all urban farms (with or without residence on-site), including those that are on rented property.	Travis County	Direct	Low
Production – PR7	Develop a comprehensive farmland conservation plan that prioritizes food production while taking into consideration the need for affordable housing. The plan will also include new updated and more specific maps or areas to prioritize farmland conservation	Office of Sustainability, Travis County	Direct	Low
Production – PR8	Remove permitting obstacles that hinder farming operations, such as those related to water usage and irrigation, while ensuring public health.	Development Services, Austin Water Utility	Direct	Low

Strategy 2: Reduce Emissions in Logistics (Processing, Storage, Distribution and Retail)

Category and Action	Actions	Active Stakeholders	GHG Reduction Scope	GHG Reduction Scale
Logistics and Retail - LR1	Enhance Central Texas sustainable food producers' access to Austin consumers by identifying City/County facilities and/or land for collective aggregation, storage and sales/distribution of food. Support Sustainable Food Center Food Hub feasibility study.	Sustainable Food Center, Central Texas Food Bank, Local Farmers, Private Food distributors	Direct	Medium
Logistics and Retail – LR2	Explore partnerships with food logistics companies and Austin Energy to encourage/support electrification of truck refrigeration.	Austin Energy, Private Sector Food Companies and Distributors	Direct	High
Logistics and Retail – LR3	Work with distribution and retail establishments to phase out refrigerants with high ozone depleting potential and global warming potential, as well as explore efficiency and weatherization rebates for improving refrigeration efficiency.	Office of Sustainability, Austin Energy, Grocery Stores	Direct	High
Logistics and Retail – LR4	Explore partnerships with bike delivery / pickup companies (electric and human powered) to directly move local and healthy food to people with zero carbon footprint.	Office of Sustainability	Direct	Low
Logistics and Retail – LR5	Streamline food safety permitting requirements for food retail that doesn't require refrigeration	Austin Public Health	Direct	Low
Logistics and Retail – LR6	Incentivize food processing facilities to support an increase in local food production.	Office of Sustainability	Direct	Low

Strategy 3: Reduce Emissions in Purchasing and Consumption

Category and Action	Actions	Active Stakeholders	GHG Reduction Scope	GHG Reduction Scale
Purchasing and Consumption – PC1	Explore a climate-friendly city food purchasing policy that encourages fruits, vegetables, whole grains and proteins per the hierarchy of protein carbon intensity.	City of Austin Purchasing and Human Resources	Indirect	Low
Purchasing and Consumption – PC2	Continue city support Good Food Purchasing Program and increase efforts to expand partners and participants in the program. Explore adding a “climate-friendly” angle to the program.	GFPP Partners	Indirect	Medium
Purchasing and Consumption – PC3	Incentivize City employee purchases of fruits and vegetables (e.g. incentives for participation in Farm to Work)	City of Austin Human Resources	Indirect	Low
Purchasing and Consumption – PC4	Promote public awareness of a climate-friendly diet through public education campaigns of sustainability considerations of food citywide	Public Health	Indirect	High
Purchasing and Consumption – PC5	Pilot a Nutritious Food Incentive Program to reduce the cost of fresh local produce in existing food retail locations. Could be scaled with public/ private funding.	Austin Public Health and Office of Sustainability	Indirect	Medium
Purchasing and Consumption – PC6	Based on data from the Food Environment Analysis, develop a specific plan to improve transportation, sidewalk and bike routes for healthy food retail access (Safe Routes to Market)	Public Works and Austin Transportation Department, Healthy Food Access Initiative	Direct	Low
Purchasing and Consumption - PC7	Work with the City of Austin Equity Office to do outreach to most vulnerable populations to assess their ideas on how to address food challenges.	Office of Sustainability, Equity Office	Direct	Low

Strategy 4: Reduce Emissions in Waste

Category and Action	Actions	Active Stakeholders	GHG Reduction Scope	GHG Reduction Scale
Waste – W1	Enhance awareness of food waste at the household level through public education campaigns	Austin Resource Recovery	Direct	Medium
Waste – W2	Establish an end-to-end food waste reduction and recovery technology infrastructure to support recovery of food for human consumption (ATCFPB Recommendation 20170522-2)	Austin Resource Recovery	Direct	Medium
Waste – W3	Explore ways to update ARR organic diversion processes and incentives to prioritize feeding humans first	Austin Resource Recovery	Direct	Low
Waste – W4	Research the feasibility of processes to safely handle and treat restaurant waste for animal feed	Austin Resource Recovery	Direct	Low
Waste – W5	Explore ARR expansion of curbside collection of food residuals and other compostable material to multi-family residences	Austin Resource Recovery	Direct	Medium
Waste – W6	Study the potential markets and uses for more compost usage in the region to drive compost value	Austin Resource Recovery	Direct	Medium

Next Steps

- Final Reviews and Comments
- Finalize the Document and Actions
- JSC and FPB pass recommendations for Council adoption