



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mayor and Council

**THRU:** Chris Shorter, Assistant City Manager

**FROM:** Lucia Athens, Chief Sustainability Officer  
Zach Baumer, Climate Program Manager

**DATE:** August 30, 2019

**SUBJECT:** Response to Resolution 20190509-020: Community Climate Plan Update  
Including Response to Resolution 20190808-078: Climate Emergency

### Background

On April 10, 2014, Council adopted Resolution 20140410-024, which established the goal to achieve **net-zero community-wide greenhouse gas emissions by 2050** and directed staff to work with stakeholders to create an action plan to reach this target. Between the summer of 2014 and the spring of 2015, over 60 community stakeholders and staff collaborated to create the first Austin Community Climate Plan.

Community-Wide  
**BY 2050**



In 2015, Council adopted the Austin Community Climate Plan via Resolution 20150604-048. **The Plan includes 130 actions** to be taken by City departments and the community to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in four areas: **Electricity and Natural Gas, Materials and Waste Management, Transportation and Land Use, and Industrial Process Emissions**. Since adoption, the Office of Sustainability has reported implementation progress annually to Council. According to the adopted timeline for the Community Climate Plan, it is to be updated every five years and a revised plan is due in 2020.

This memo provides a response to Council Resolution 20190509-020 which directed staff to **identify a plan and process to complete a Community Climate Plan update by October 2020**. The updated plan will include actions and strategies to **address transportation electrification**. In addition, this memo also addresses some directives in Council-adopted Resolution 20190808-078 declaring a Climate Emergency.

## 2015 Community Climate Plan Successes

The Office of Sustainability, Austin Energy, Austin Transportation, Austin Resource Recovery, Planning and Zoning, Fleet Services, and Capital Metro have been working to implement actions from the Austin Community Climate Plan. Some of the organizational successes include:

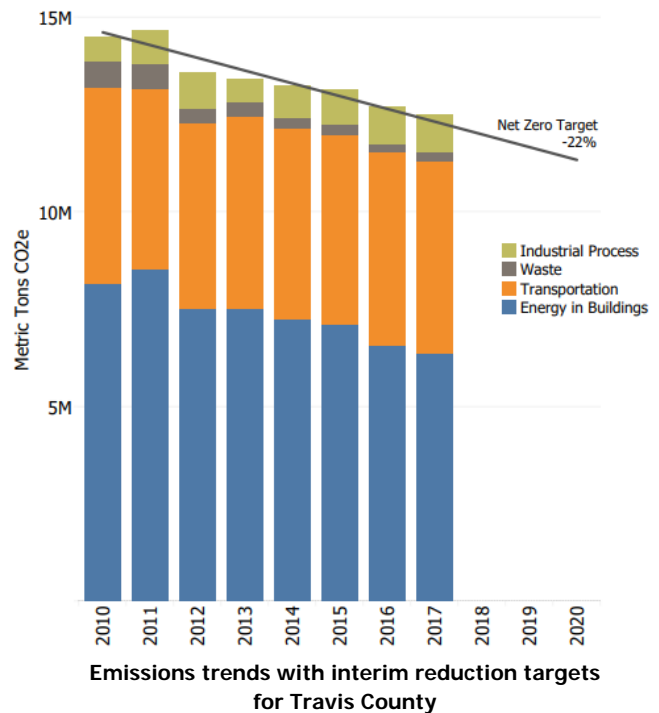
- The “Net-Zero by 2050” goal was adopted across City departments as a North star to aspire to.
- The process to create the original plan engaged many stakeholders and was a great momentum builder for those within and outside the City organization.
- The plan aligned with other existing City plans such as the Austin Energy Resource, Generation and Climate Protection Plan; Imagine Austin; and the Austin Resource Recovery Zero Waste Master Plan. It also influenced goals in subsequent plans, such as the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan.
- The Community Climate Plan is divided into Phase 1 (2015-2020), Phase 2 (2020-2030), and Phase 3 (2030-2050) actions. Over the last four years, implementation of Phase 1 actions can be summarized as follows:
  - Over 94 percent of electricity and natural gas actions are underway.
  - 100 percent of the transportation and land use actions are underway.
  - Over 80 percent of the materials and waste management actions are underway.

Please note that emissions reductions to be achieved through renewable energy generation and energy conservation will be covered separately in the parallel update to the Austin Energy Resource, Generation and Climate Protection Plan. Staff will work diligently to ensure that related sectors of the Community Climate Plan are consistent and aligned with relevant aspects of that plan.

## Community Carbon Footprint Results

The 2010 community carbon footprint baseline was 14.5 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent. In 2017, **community-wide emissions decreased to 12.5 million metric tons despite population growth**. A memo with a full update on this data was transmitted to Mayor and Council on May 22, 2019.

Current projections suggest that Austin will meet the 2020 interim emissions reduction target of 11.3 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent identified in the Community Climate Plan. This will largely result from Austin Energy's demand side management programs and increased renewable energy generation contributing to a lower carbon footprint associated with serving Austin Energy load. **Strategies to reduce emissions from transportation sources and associated land use decisions will be increasingly important to achieve the goal of net-zero emissions by 2050.**



## **Planned Process to update the Community Climate Plan by October 2020**

Since early 2019, the Office of Sustainability has been meeting with community stakeholders, departmental staff, and the Joint Sustainability Committee to discuss options and ideas to revise the Community Climate Plan. **The 2020 Community Climate Plan update will prioritize actions to achieve the highest emissions reductions possible by 2025 and 2030**, which is the timeframe identified as critical to avoiding the worst climate impacts. This revision process will also explore options to set more aggressive interim targets and accelerate emissions reductions, per recent Council direction via the Climate Emergency Resolution.

### Organizational Structure

The Office of Sustainability will manage the Community Climate Plan revision process and provide regular reports to Assistant City Manager Chris Shorter's Health and Environment Outcome Team. This will ensure that City leadership has a complete picture of overarching climate change goals and City-wide mobilization efforts. We will be supported by staff from partnering departments and by community members who volunteer to participate in the process.

The overarching direction for the plan revision will be led by a Steering Committee composed of 10-15 Austin residents who will volunteer to participate in monthly meetings over the course of six months. Each emissions sector will have a dedicated Technical Advisory Group tasked with generating strategies and reduction targets for emissions from that sector. Technical Advisory Groups will have 3-5 City staff and 3-5 community stakeholders; efforts will be made to ensure that equity concerns can be addressed by participants in all groups.

The Steering Committee will establish a charter and planning assignment for each Technical Advisory Group to complete. The Steering Committee will also oversee the entire revision process, ensuring that the combined work of the Technical Advisory Groups will achieve the necessary outcomes over the next 5-10 years.

### Sector Organization & Coordination

The updated Community Climate Plan will focus on five major emissions reduction sectors:

**Transportation Electrification** – Examine ways the City can support and accelerate the transition to zero-emission electric transportation options such as personal electric vehicles, micro-mobility, fleets and public transit, logistics, and new shared mobility. More detail about this work is provided in the section immediately following.

**Transportation and Land Use** – Identify opportunities to effectively and efficiently get Austinites out of single occupancy vehicles by connecting housing with jobs, improving walking and biking safety, and improving access to fast and effective public transit. This area will align with the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan and proposed Land Use Code Update, and will include interim goals and targets that are sufficiently adaptive in the face of evolving technology, markets, and commercial availability.

**Buildings and Energy Codes** – Explore opportunities to improve new building energy efficiency, with a distinct focus on enabling and encouraging net-zero emissions buildings in a way that is sufficiently adaptive in the face of evolving technology, markets, and commercial availability.

**Natural Systems** – Investigate how best to support and enhance green infrastructure, trees, native plants, grasslands, and riparian areas to capture carbon and increase resilience to climate change. This area will align with the Green Infrastructure planning effort currently underway, as well as the existing Urban Forest Masterplan.

**Consumption of Goods** – Focus on reducing life-cycle and upstream greenhouse gas emissions associated with the food, goods, services, building materials, and products that Austinites purchase and consume every day.

#### Specific Focus on Electrification of the Transportation System

Building on the goals of the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan for a 50 percent mode-split, the updated Community Climate Plan will focus on the transition to zero-emissions technology with the creation of a comprehensive Electric Vehicle plan. In addition to electric vehicle ownership, staff will analyze options for shared mobility, fleets and public transit, logistics, and micro-mobility. This effort will include an analysis of scenarios for different EV adoption trends to determine interim greenhouse gas emissions targets. The transportation electrification plan will map options for:

- EV-ready building codes;
- Privately managed EV charging stations, parking, host issues, and access;
- Increasing access to EV charging for residents of multi-family housing, including on-site and off-site charging options (such as DC-Fast charging);
- Dealer engagement and customer experience;
- Shared, Electric, Autonomous Mobility as a service; and
- Micro e-mobility.

As part of the Community Climate Plan revision process, the respective roles for the City of Austin and other community stakeholders (e.g. Capital Metro, CAPCOG, CAMPO, school districts, and others) will be identified. In addition, potential barriers where the City does not exert direct control, as well as opportunities for partnerships with other governments and agencies will be identified. Stakeholders will include City departments such as Austin Energy, Planning and Zoning, Development Services, and the Austin Transportation Department, as well as external groups such as the Public Utilities Commission, TXETRA, and others.

Supporting this work, Austin Energy's planned update to its Resource, Generation and Climate Protection Plan will include the following analysis related to electric vehicles:

- Demand-side management and customer programs as related to EVs
- Distributed energy resource integration (EV, solar, demand response, storage)

### Cross-Cutting Focus on Racial Equity

Climate action has the potential to unlock opportunities for those who need it most. Negative impacts from climate change should not disproportionately impact people of color, and the benefits of converting to a low-carbon economy should be shared equitably. The Office of Sustainability will engage with stakeholders representing communities most impacted by climate change as part of the planning process, per recent Council direction via the Climate Emergency Resolution.

The Office of Sustainability has already begun working with the Equity Office on the best way to address the following issues:

- Including people of color on the Steering Committee and Technical Advisory Groups, so that they are part of the process from the outset.
- Using focus groups to have in-depth conversations about climate action with people of color.
- Engaging “Climate Ambassadors” to collect input from people of color on the revised Community Climate Plan draft.
- Developing strategies that do not create disproportionate burdens and create greater proportional benefit for those in our community who need it most.

### Interaction with other Planning Efforts

The revised Community Climate Plan must be coordinated with other major City planning processes. The Office of Sustainability is aligning the revision process with Austin Energy, Planning and Zoning, Austin Transportation, Austin Resource Recovery, and Capital Metro efforts to ensure that our work supports and informs:

- Austin Energy Generation, Resource, and Climate Protection Plan
- Land Development Code Revision
- Austin Strategic Mobility Plan
- Zero Waste Master Plan
- Project Connect (Capital Metro)

The Office of Sustainability will closely coordinate with these departments to highlight planning areas that impact greenhouse gas emissions, reinforce the goal of net-zero emissions by 2050, and seek opportunities to reduce emissions sooner and maximize benefits to people of color. Currently, the Office of Sustainability is working closely with Austin Energy to delineate and coordinate scopes of work and processes to ensure that plan updates will dovetail one another and eliminate redundancy. We are also working with Austin Transportation to determine how the Community Climate Plan revision can support and reinforce the recently adopted Austin Strategic Mobility Plan.

### Community Engagement and Outreach

Community engagement for the Community Climate Plan revision will involve:

- Including diverse community members from the outset of the planning process through recruitment for participation in the Steering Committee or a Technical Advisory Group.

- Using focus groups to provide deep feedback on barriers and challenges to community adoption of emissions reduction activities. An emphasis will be placed on specific engagement with people of color and traditionally underserved communities.
- Conducting 1-to-1 interviews through “Climate Ambassadors” to gain an understanding of community support and willingness to participate in emissions reduction activities.
- Engaging with Boards and Commissions to solicit feedback and support.

#### Budget and Staffing Resources

The Community Climate Plan revision will require a significant time commitment from four existing staff in the Office of Sustainability, with support from at least 15 existing staff from Austin Energy, Austin Transportation Department, Watershed Protection, and Austin Resource Recovery. The Office of Sustainability also anticipates hiring a Temporary Community Engagement Specialist for the duration of the update process. The expected costs associated with engagement efforts and production of the final plan update will be covered with existing Office of Sustainability budget.

#### **Next Steps**

The Community Climate Plan update process will begin in September 2019 and be completed by October 2020 for Mayor and Council consideration. The Steering Committee will begin meeting in September, followed by Technical Advisory Groups starting to meet in October. The bulk of the work will be completed October 2019 – March 2020, with drafting, reviews, community comment, and approvals occurring in spring and summer of 2020.

The Office of Sustainability will report back to Council with additional information related to the Austin Community Climate Plan as follows:

October 1, 2019: Description of the accountability and reporting structure within the new Assistant/City Manager organizational structure and FY2021 budget process, as well as a proposed timeline and process for semi-regular updates to Mayor and Council regarding climate planning progress.

February 2020: Progress update on lessons learned from EV grid integration efforts, demand response programs and EV rate structures.

May 2020: Recommendations for a community climate awareness campaign.

**CC:** Spencer Cronk, City Manager  
Gina Fiandaca, Assistant City Manager  
Jackie Sargent, Austin Energy General Manager