

## **RESOLUTION NO.**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Austin has established a goal of achieving community-wide net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050; and

**WHEREAS**, Resolution 20190808-078 directed the city manager to provide options for more aggressive interim targets to accelerate the reduction pathway to achieve net-zero by 2050, and to consider a range of innovative and aggressive strategies; and

**WHEREAS**, the City is currently in the process of updating the Austin Community Climate Plan, which outlines the City's goals and methods of reducing community-wide greenhouse gas emissions; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the 2018 Austin Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory, natural gas contributes seven percent of Austin's inventory of greenhouse gas emissions; and

**WHEREAS**, the City has committed to a goal of Zero Waste by 2040; and

**WHEREAS**, Austin Energy plans for at least 65 percent of the power supplied to customers to be from renewable sources by 2027; and

**WHEREAS**, renewable natural gas, also known as biomethane, is gas produced by the decomposition of organic matter under anaerobic (oxygen-free) conditions; and

**WHEREAS**, once biomethane has been purified to quality similar to fossil natural gas, it becomes possible to distribute the gas to customers via the existing gas grid and use within existing appliances; and

**WHEREAS**, the Austin Water Hornsby Bend Biosolids Management Plant (HBBMP) uses biomethane from its sludge treatment process to generate clean electricity to power facility operations; and

**WHEREAS**, Austin Water offsets one hundred percent of facility power consumption at HBBMP using its generated biomethane and is actively studying options for the best use of biomethane, in order to reduce disposal of excess gas by flaring and sustain an economically beneficial program for the City; and

**WHEREAS**, biomethane can be derived from a variety of sources, including landfills and wastewater treatment plants, and such opportunities exist in Austin and the surrounding area; and

**WHEREAS**, Austin Energy offers a GreenChoice program to allow subscribers to opt in to purchasing one hundred percent renewable Texas wind energy at a low cost; and

**WHEREAS**, similar opt in programs from Austin gas providers do not currently exist; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2018, Texas Gas Service gas system leaks were responsible for an estimated 125,045 in metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> in Travis County; and

**WHEREAS**, the 2015 Austin Community Climate Plan contains action item RT-4, to “evaluate technology and cost options for increasing natural gas system leak detection and reduction programs”; and

**WHEREAS**, the City desires to keep energy rates affordable while pursuing environmental leadership and goals; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:**

The City encourages the capture of renewable energy within city facilities where appropriate (as successfully implemented at the Hornsby Bend Biosolids Management Plant), and to do so with a goal of retaining the economic value of such projects for the City and its residents.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The City requests that Texas Gas Service conduct and provide to the city manager by late Spring of 2020 a feasibility analysis of renewable natural gas that addresses:

- Opportunities for methane capture from any and all sources in the Austin area and in the surrounding region;
- The economic benefits of such opportunities for the City, gas providers, and ratepayers; and
- Opportunities and benefits of the use of renewable credits and offsets to support sustainability goals.

The feasibility analysis should include findings identifying:

- A target percentage of biomethane to be incorporated into the throughput of Texas Gas Service;

- A target date by which such percentage will be reached, to include interim goals for adoption;
- Options for a potential opt-in consumer renewable energy program modeled on the Austin Energy GreenChoice program;
- Local opportunities that retain revenue for the City;
- Options for opportunities throughout the local economy; and
- Options for offsets and renewable credits.

All options and recommendations should aim for aggressive sustainability goals while maintaining affordable energy rates for Austin residents.

The City Council requests that Texas Gas Service present the completed feasibility analysis to the Resource Management Commission and to City Council by late spring 2020.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The city manager is directed to provide input in Texas Gas Service's feasibility analysis and facilitate conversations between Texas Gas Service and City departments.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The city manager is directed to evaluate the findings of Texas Gas Service's feasibility study and its recommendations for possible incorporation into the 2020 update to the Austin Community Climate Plan, in addition to any related ideas in consideration for inclusion into the plan.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

Texas Gas Service is requested to evaluate technology and cost options for increasing natural gas system leak detection and reduction programs and to regularly report to the City's Resource Management Commission, at least quarterly, and to City Council, at least annually, an update on leakage rates and efforts to reduce leakage rates.

**ADOPTED:** \_\_\_\_\_, 2020 **ATTEST:**

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Jannette S. Goodall  
City Clerk