

RESOLUTION NO. 20210930-110

WHEREAS, the climate emergency represents an existential threat to the City of Austin, the nation, and the planet; and

WHEREAS, according to the recent report of Working Group I of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *AR6 Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis* (the “WGI Report”), climate change is already causing devastating floods, droughts, heat waves, wildfires, sea level rise, thawing permafrost, melting glaciers, ocean acidification, warming of the ocean, and other harms around the world; and

WHEREAS, according to the WGI Report, the remaining carbon budget that would give a 50/50 chance to keep global warming below 1.5 °C will be used up within 12 years at current emissions levels; and

WHEREAS, in order to meet the threat level of the climate emergency and its effects on the community, the City of Austin must act with urgency and expediency; and

WHEREAS, Austin is a recognized national leader in sustainability and the fight against climate change, and has for years taken steps to create a greener and more sustainable city for its residents; and

WHEREAS, on September 30, 2021, the Austin City Council will vote to approve the 2021 Climate Equity Plan, which sets new or updated goals and recommendations for the city to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions; and

WHEREAS, the previous goal for the City of Austin to achieve net-zero emissions was 2050, and the 2021 Climate Equity Plan accelerates the timeline by a decade to the year 2040, and accelerating achievement of the net-zero goal for

community-wide emissions sets the city up for a greener, healthier, and safer community; and

WHEREAS, Austin City Council has previously directed the City Manager to take specific steps to advance Austin's climate change, sustainability, and resilience goals, including Water Forward, the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan, and Austin Energy Resource, Generation, and Climate Protection Plan; and

WHEREAS, in August 2019 the Austin City Council unanimously approved Resolution No. 20190808-078, declaring a climate emergency in the City of Austin and calling for an acceleration of the timeline for achieving the City's climate goals; and

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 20190808-078 also included direction to the City Manager to provide clarity on leadership responsibilities for climate goals within the organizational structure of the City Manager's Office; and

WHEREAS, the 2021 Climate Equity Plan includes a number of recommendations that may be implemented and/or launched in the short term, and the imperative to act means we cannot wait for the next budget cycle to make investments that further advance the strategies outlined therein; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Sustainability Committee, the Office of Sustainability, and the Equity Office worked collaboratively to assemble a diverse team of Austin community members and an equitable process for engaging the community to develop the 2021 Climate Equity Plan; and

WHEREAS, the 2021 Climate Equity Plan was created by a collaboration of 120 community members and 24 City staff, with additional community input

provided by over 50 interviews conducted by 24 climate ambassadors and over 250 attendees at five community workshops; and

WHEREAS, low-income communities and communities of color in Austin and around the world are the most impacted by extreme weather and pollution despite having contributed least to the drivers of climate change and pollution; and

WHEREAS, the 2021 Climate Equity Plan has determined climate change cannot be solved without racial equity; and

WHEREAS, low-income communities and communities of color must be prioritized to receive the disproportionate benefits of the transition to a pollution-free society to remedy disproportionate harm done historically and presently; and

WHEREAS, the goals and strategies in the 2021 Climate Equity Plan were evaluated to ensure it would lower greenhouse gas emissions while addressing racial equity; and

WHEREAS, successful implementation of the 2021 Austin Climate Equity Plan will depend on focused attention from the City Council and other City leadership, adequate funding, guidance from community advisory bodies, and continued engagement with the broader Austin community; **NOW**,

THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

The Austin City Council affirms its commitment to the new and more aggressive timeline to achieve net-zero community-wide emissions of 2040 outlined within the 2021 Climate Equity Plan.

In adopting the 2021 Climate Equity Plan, the City Council recognizes that how the City of Austin achieves net zero emissions will have a direct impact on the lives of its residents, and therefore directs the City Manager to use the strategies and goals outlined in the 2021 Climate Plan to achieve a just transition that addresses the disproportionate impacts of the climate emergency on low-income communities and communities of color as we meet our emission goals.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to identify and clearly define leadership responsibilities over the implementation of the 2021 Climate Equity Plan, and more generally over the climate emergency and sustainability efforts of the City government, and return to Council with this information by November 1, 2021.

Furthermore, the City Manager is directed to provide at least quarterly updates on the implementation of the 2021 Climate Equity Plan to the City Council during regular work sessions. Updates should include progress on City's own goals as well as community-wide efforts, and report back on regional collaboration activities.

The City Manager is additionally directed to return with an update to the Climate Equity Plan within the next five years.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

In the interest of acting with expediency and treating the climate emergency with the urgency it requires, the City Manager is directed to:

- identify recommendations included in the 2021 Climate Equity Plan that may be brought forward as a midyear budget amendment and present such recommendations to Council by March 1, 2022 or sooner;
- identify recommendations and strategies that do not require a budget amendment and that can be launched by departments in the near term and/or at the regional or five-county scale, and report to Council on the progress and timeline of implementing such recommendations at the first quarterly update; and
- bring forward a list of proposed investments that would advance the city's sustainability and climate goals and further the implementation of the 2021 Climate Equity Plan in advance of the Fiscal Year 2023 budget process.

Within the Fiscal Year 2023 budget process and all future budgets, the City Manager is directed to identify specifically investments related to supporting the city's greenhouse gas reduction efforts to achieve net-zero goals.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to identify and prioritize the strategies and action items within the 2021 Climate Equity Plan that support multiple plan goals and recommendations, have a large impact on emissions reduction, address racial inequities and environmental injustices, are directly beneficial to the local Austin community, and take an innovative approach to one or more of the plan's overarching strategies:

- Green Jobs and Entrepreneurship
- Prioritize Local Community Initiatives

- Regional Collaboration
- Local Carbon Reduction Projects, Carbon Dioxide Removal, and Carbon Offsets

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is further directed to:

- identify potential pilot project opportunities for City of Austin departments and operations to support or incorporate local potential carbon reduction removal projects;
- pursue strategies for further electrifying Austin's airport parking infrastructure and Airline Ground Service Equipment, and develop a stakeholder plan to reduce the airport's operational emissions;
- and evaluate and pursue equitable natural gas reduction strategies and opportunities as outline on page 50 of the plan.

The City Manager is directed to build on the city's existing green jobs programs and leverage the City's workforce development efforts to advance the Climate Equity Plan's equitable green jobs and entrepreneurship goals.

The City Manager is directed to advocate for and monitor climate related federal legislation (such as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Build Back Better Act) and purpose opportunities to assist in the city's climate efforts within legislation that passes.



BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to create a public-facing, accessible dashboard, webpage, or similar mechanism to provide up-to-date information on the methods and metrics on the City's progress in implementing the 2021 Climate Equity Plan and net-zero goals overall. The information presented should include aspects of other City plans (such as the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan and the Austin Energy Resource, Generation, and Climate Protection Plan) that have an impact on reducing community-wide emissions and achieving equity through climate action.

The City Manager is further directed to provide regular accessible public engagement opportunities regarding the implementation of the climate plan, and to evaluate extending the Climate Ambassador program to incorporate the implementation stage of the 2021 Climate Equity Plan. The City Manager is directed to return by November 1, 2021, with a schedule and approach for these public engagement opportunities and plans related to extending the Climate Ambassador program, as part of identifying and defining leadership responsibilities.

The City Council additionally supports updating bylaws for the Joint Sustainability Committee to add additional members to the committee from the Austin community, appointed by City Council. The City Council recognizes and appreciates the role of the Joint Sustainability Committee in advancing the City's climate goals and recognizes the benefit of racial diversity in this work and

commits to appointing new members that will improve racial diversity on the committee.

ADOPTED: September 30, 2021 **ATTEST:**  
Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk