

Food and Climate Change Addendum

Austin Community Climate Plan

Joint Sustainability Committee

September 27, 2017

Why should food be addressed in our 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 low cost, climate friendly food.

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

Action #	Actions
PR1	Preserve prime farmland through the continued support of Conservation Easements, using “right match” land use framework
PR2	Allow and support regenerative food production on City/County owned land (under lease contracts of at least 3 year terms)
PR3	Support food producers through subsidies or incentives within City/County limits to use regenerative agriculture methods and pursue certifications such as organic, holistic management, permaculture, and biodynamic
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
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.
PR6	Partner with the County Tax assessor's office to accurately value agricultural land 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.
PR7	Integrate opportunities for agriculture, appropriate to the scale and density of new Developments, using the Floor Area Ratio (F.A.R.) as the basis for calculation. The garden must be available to building occupants for participation.
PR8	Develop a comprehensive farmland conservation plan that prioritizes food production and affordable housing, which would include new updated and more specific maps of areas to prioritize farmland conservation.
PR9	Remove permitting obstacles that hinder farming operations, such as those related to water usage and irrigation, while ensuring public health.

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

Action #	Actions
LOG1	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.
LOG2	Explore partnerships with food logistics companies and Austin Energy to encourage/support electrification of truck refrigeration.
LOG3	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.
LOG4	Explore partnerships with bike delivery / pickup companies (electric and human powered) to directly move local and healthy food to people with zero carbon footprint.
LOG5	Streamline food safety permitting requirements for food retail that doesn't require refrigeration
LOG6	Incentivize food processing facilities to support an increase in local food production.

Strategy 3: Reduce Emissions in Purchasing and Consumption

Action #	Actions
PC1	Explore a “climate friendly” city food purchasing policy that encourages fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean proteins.
PC2	Continue city support Good Food Purchasing Program and increase outreach efforts to expand partners and participants in the program. Explore adding a “climate-friendly” angle to the program.
PC3	Incentivize City employee purchases of fruits and vegetables (e.g. financial incentives for participation in Farm to Work)
PC4	Promote awareness of a climate-friendly diet through public education campaigns of sustainability considerations of food citywide
PC5	Improve SNAP and WIC enrollment rates and Double Dollar Incentive Program matching benefits for purchasing F&V
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)
PC7	Work with the City of Austin Equity Office to do outreach to most vulnerable populations to assess their ideas on how to address these challenges.

Strategy 4: Reduce Emissions in Waste

Action #	Actions
WM1	Enhance awareness of food waste at the household level through public education campaigns
WM2	Establish an end-to-end food waste reduction and recovery technology infrastructure to support recovery of food for human consumption (ATCFPB Recommendation 20170522-2)
WM3	Explore ways to update ARR organic diversion processes and incentives to prioritize feeding humans first
WM4	Research the feasibility of processes to safely handle and treat restaurant waste for animal feed
WM5	Explore ARR expansion of curbside collection of food residuals and other compostable material to multi-family residences
WM6	Study the potential markets and uses for more compost usage in the region to drive compost value

Next Steps

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