



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Chris Shorter, Assistant City Manager

DATE: November 1, 2019

SUBJECT: **Response to Resolution 20190808-078**
Climate Change Goals Accountability and Reporting Structure

Background

Austin City Council has a long history of leadership in responding to the threats posed by climate change. Council Resolutions adopted to address climate impacts include:

- 20070215-023: Established the goal of carbon neutrality for municipal operations by 2020.
- 20140410-024: Established the goal of net-zero community-wide emissions by 2050.
- 20150604-048: Adopted the 2015 Austin Community Climate Plan to achieve the net-zero goal.
- 20190509-019: Called for recommendations to create a comprehensive, community-wide climate resilience plan that is just, fair, and equitable.
- 20190509-020: Called for strategies to update the Austin Community Climate Plan that include opportunities for electrification of the transportation system.
- 20190808-078: Called for coordinated mobilization by the City to address the causes and consequences of climate change.

The last Resolution listed above, adopted August 8, 2019 and also referred to as the Climate Emergency Resolution, also directs the City Manager to

- 1) Identify leadership and a reporting structure within the new Assistant/City Manager organizational structure to address climate change goals,
- 2) Engage with external stakeholders to prioritize the climate crisis,
- 3) Explore options to accelerate the emissions reduction pathway to net-zero in the upcoming revision to the Austin Community Climate Plan, and
- 4) Identify strategies for climate resilience to extreme events.

This memo provides information about a proposed cross-departmental leadership team and reporting structure to address the City's climate goals. Information about engagement with external

stakeholders and the proposed process for updating the Austin Community Climate Plan was contained in a [memo to Council](#) distributed on August 29, 2019. Our preliminary recommendations for advancing community-wide climate resilience were contained in an August 26, 2019 [memo to Council](#). Additional climate resilience strategy recommendations will be delivered in November.

Organizational Structure to Address Climate Goals

We propose creation of a cross-departmental **Climate and Environment Leadership Team** to be composed of four Assistant City Managers aligned with key leadership representation from eight City Departments, as well as leadership from Austin Energy and Austin Water Utility. Other Department representatives will be invited on an as-needed basis.

Environment and climate issues as well as many SD23 objectives are multi-pronged, requiring systems thinking and a matrix management approach. The proposed Leadership Team is intended to increase collaboration across the City's organizational structure and provide participants with opportunities to bring forward issues and challenges for collective problem-solving. Cross-departmental engagement will be critical to achieving shared outcomes and goals, breaking through barriers, and leveraging opportunities.

The primary goals for this Leadership Team will be to provide executive oversight and support for the upcoming Community Climate Plan revision across City departments, as well as ensure coordinated implementation of the revised plan to achieve emissions reduction goals. The team will also work together to achieve SD23 Health & Environment outcomes related to:

- *Climate change* – community carbon footprint, renewable energy, energy use, mobility, organics diversion, product consumption.
- *Open space* – access to quality parks, trails, and recreational opportunities.
- *Environmental quality* – air quality, water quality in creeks and lakes, the health of the urban forest, water usage.

It is expected that this group will begin meeting in January 2020.

Proposed Climate and Environment Leadership Team Participants:

- City Manager's Executive Team:
 - Chris Shorter, Assistant City Manager for Health & Environment (*Executive Sponsor*)
 - Gina Fiandaca, Assistant City Manager for Mobility
 - Rey Arellano, Assistant City Manager for Safety
 - Rodney Gonzales, Assistant City Manager for Economic Opportunity & Affordability
 - Jackie Sargent, Austin Energy General Manager
 - Greg Meszaros, Austin Water Utility Director
- Department Directors:
 - Ken Snipes, Austin Resource Recovery Director
 - Jorge Morales, Watershed Protection Director
 - Rob Spillar, Austin Transportation Director
 - Denise Lucas, Development Services Director
 - Kimberley McNeely, Parks and Recreation Director

- Officers and additional key staff participants:
 - Lucia Athens, Chief Sustainability Officer (Office of Sustainability)
 - Chris Herrington, Environmental Officer (Watershed Protection)
 - Keith Mars, Community Tree Preservation Division Manager (Development Services)
 - Zach Baumer, Climate Program Manager (Office of Sustainability)

CC: Spencer Cronk, City Manager
Gina Fianduca, Assistant City Manager
Rey Arellano, Assistant City Manager
Rodney Gonzales, Assistant City Manager
Jackie Sargent, Austin Energy General Manager
Greg Meszaros, Austin Water Utility Director
Ken Snipes, Austin Resource Recovery Director
Jorge Morales, Watershed Protection Director
Rob Spillar, Austin Transportation Director
Denise Lucas, Development Services Director
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