

Board/Commission Recommendation
Austin-Travis County Food Policy Board
Recommendation: ()
Austin, TX

WHEREAS, the Austin-Travis County Food Policy Board advocates for a robust, resilient local food system; and

WHEREAS, the harmful effects of climate change, including floods, droughts, heat waves and wildfires, are worsening in the Austin area and around the world; and

WHEREAS, the “Global Warming of 1.5 °C” issued in 2018 by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change illustrates that keeping the average global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius will help to avoid severe effects of climate change, including ecosystems collapsing, that will very likely occur if warming reaches 2 degrees Celsius; and

WHEREAS food systems currently account for 21-37% of total GHGs, and are at the heart of many of the world’s major challenges today including biodiversity loss, enduring hunger and malnutrition, and an escalating public health crisis; and

WHEREAS, communities of color, low-income, and rural populations are most negatively impacted by the existing food system due to systemic racism and structural inequity and face the greatest barriers to accessing healthy, affordable foods, as well as economic opportunity;

WHEREAS, COVID-19 has exposed a woefully under-resourced and undeveloped food system in terms of planning, resiliency and coordination, both locally and beyond; and

WHEREAS, new and innovative collaborative efforts among government, nonprofits, for-profits, and other feeding organizations are taking a leading role in addressing spikes in food insecurity and creating deeper access and reach into food insecure communities, we still need to identify and further develop effective partnerships with diverse public and private sector organizations that can provide needed capital and infrastructure to financially support collaborations, stimulate the food economy, and improve economic stability and ongoing access; and

WHEREAS, The City of Austin with public, private, and community partnerships has invested in critical food system-related initiatives that provide a foundation for developing a robust local food system including: the Good Food Purchasing Program, a comprehensive Food Environment Analysis, a state and local food system-related public policy scan, mapping and protocols for urban agriculture on public lands, updated permitting processes for food production, markets and emergency relief, and investment in food access initiatives with multiplier effects for the local economy (e.g., SNAP enrollment, mobile markets); and

WHEREAS, the inclusion of the food system in the Austin Climate Equity Plan is seen as critical to strengthen our local food system in economically, racially, and environmentally just ways; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin is a member of C40 Cities, a network of global cities committed to addressing climate change; and

WHEREAS, C40 Cities has developed guidance for cities on setting greenhouse gas reduction goals that are based in science and equitable in the global context, and according to that methodology, Austin should follow a steep decline curve to net zero greenhouse gas emissions; and

WHEREAS the Glasgow Food & Climate Declaration was developed in partnership between international networks, subnational governments, UN agencies and non-governmental organizations with the goal to bring to “together all types and sizes of local authorities – from small and medium sized towns to megacities, districts and regions, territories, federal states and provinces – to speak with a unified voice in renewing their commitments to develop sustainable food policies, promote mechanisms for joined-up action and call on national governments to put food and farming at the heart of the global response to the climate emergency.”

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Austin-Travis County Food Policy Board advises in favor of the City of Austin and Travis County’s support of the Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration as governmental signatories.