



Austin Climate Equity Plan

Status Update - June 2022



OFFICE OF
SUSTAINABILITY

CITY OF AUSTIN



Presentation Outline

- Climate Equity Plan Summary
- Implementation Overview
- Recent Efforts
- New Funding & Resources
- Strategy Tracking Dashboard
- Community Climate Ambassadors
- What's Next

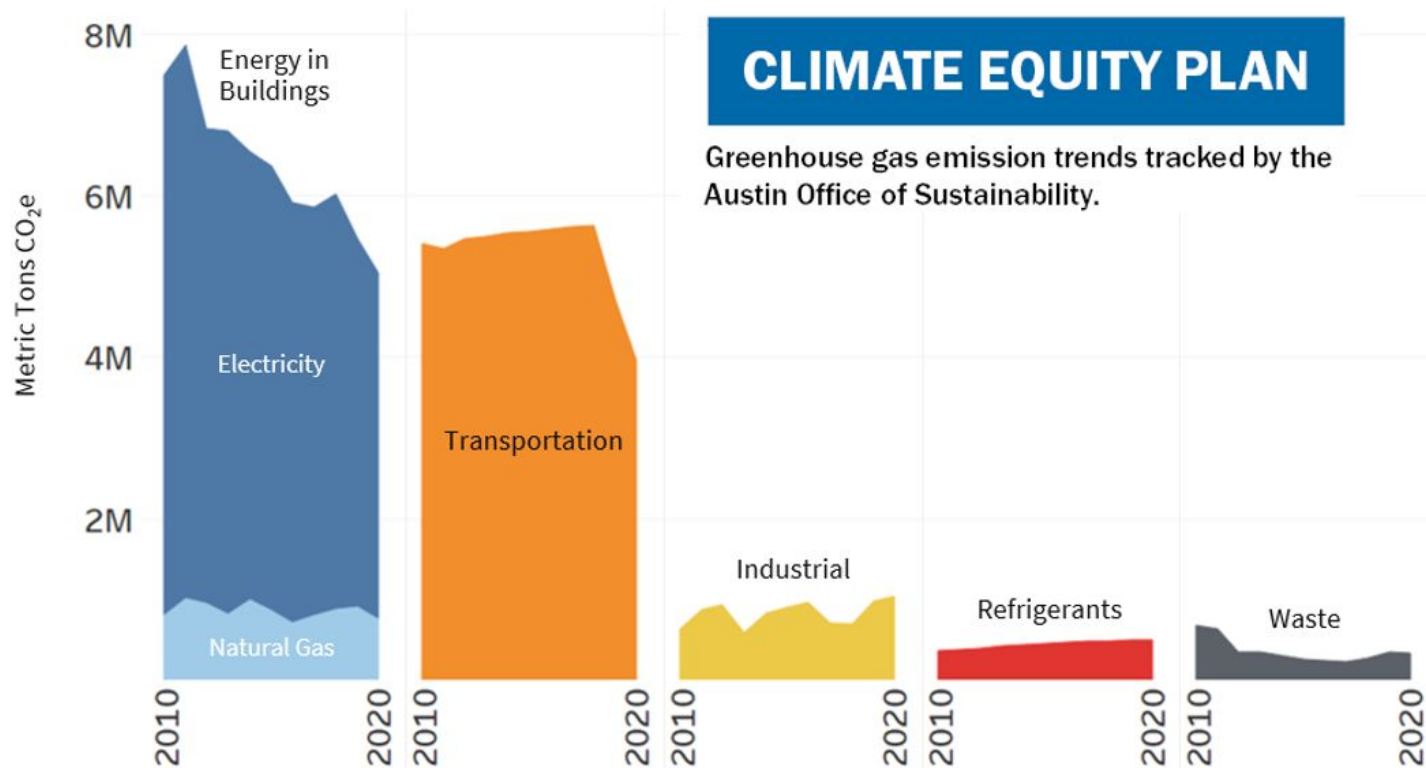


*2/28/22 Workshop with Council – Climate Change and Resilience
identified as the #1 Priority Indicator*

Austin is a National Leader in Climate Action

- Austin is 1 of 4 Major US Cities (+ Denver, Kansas City, San Francisco) that have adopted the most aggressive GHG Reduction goal — **Net Zero by 2040**.
- Austin is 1 of 5 Major US Cities (+ DC, Los Angeles, Portland, Seattle) that have **put equity at the center** of their climate initiatives.
- The Austin Energy Goal of **100% Carbon Free electricity generation by 2035** is in the top echelon of utility goals in the US, very few are more aggressive.
- Austin community-wide GHG emissions **decreased 25% over 10 years** (14.5MMT in 2010 to 10.9MMT in 2020). Per capita emissions decreased 39% over same time period (18.5 tpp in 2010 to 11.3 tpp in 2020).

Austin Community-wide Carbon Footprint

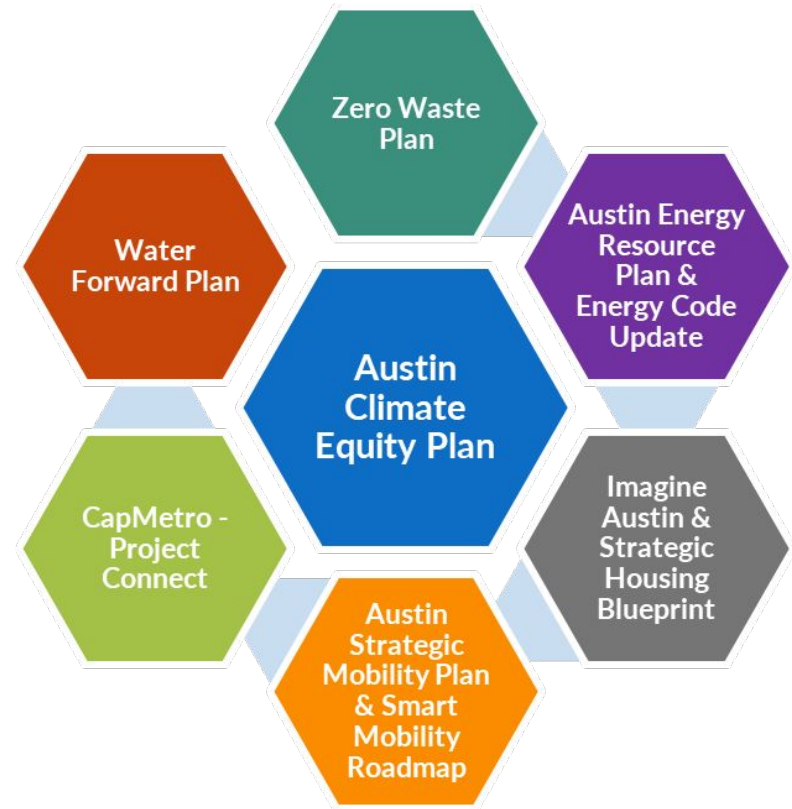


Source: COA Office of Sustainability Community-wide GHG Inventory

Climate Equity Plan Summary

17 Goals – What needs to be accomplished **by 2030** to keep us on track

74 Strategies – What should be implemented in **next 5 years** to make progress



Climate Equity Plan Summary – Overarching Strategies

1

Green Jobs and Entrepreneurship

Create green jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities that expand economic opportunity and inclusion, and build agency and decision-making power in low-income communities and communities of color.

2

Prioritize Local Community Initiatives

Prioritize and support existing community-led organizations, businesses, and programs while working to build a green and just economy and culture.

3

Regional Collaboration

Foster regional collaboration by creating a Texas Climate Collaborative, which will link neighboring counties and peer cities from across the state to share best practices and climate strategies.

4

Carbon Offsets and Carbon Dioxide Removal

Establish clear support and prioritization for local greenhouse gas reduction and carbon removal projects, carbon dioxide removal, and carbon offsets when necessary.

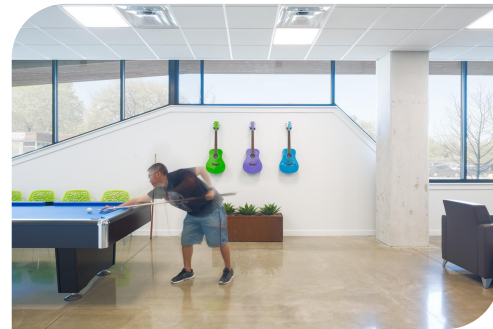
Climate Equity Plan Summary – Plan Focus Areas

5 Goal Areas

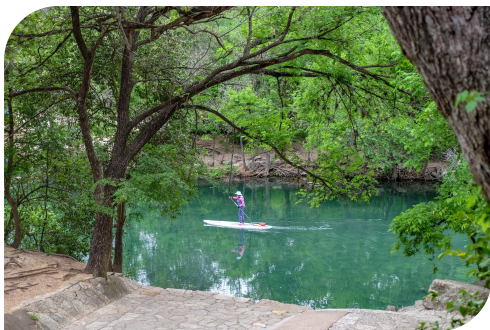
1 Consumption of Goods



2 Sustainable Buildings



3 Natural Systems



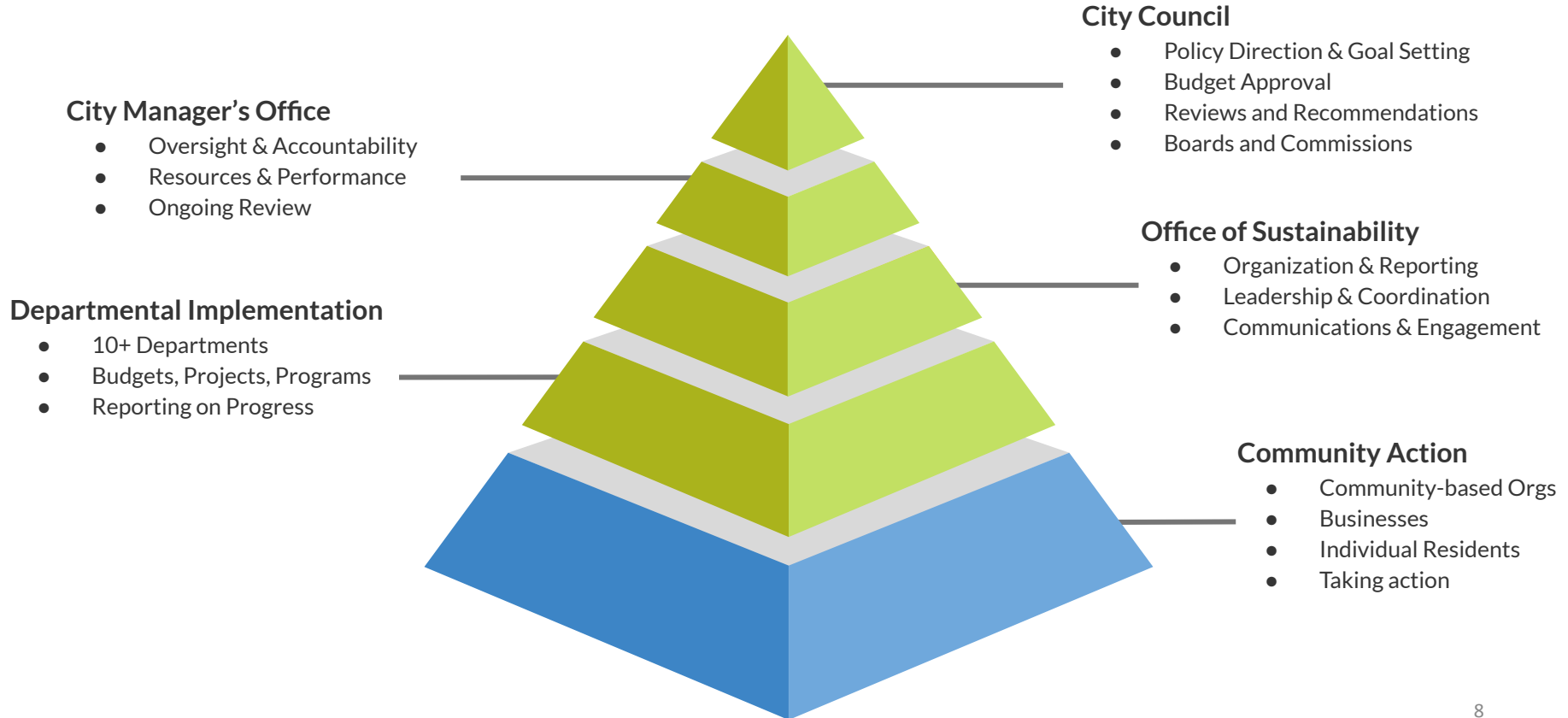
4 Transportation & Land Use



5 Transportation Electrification

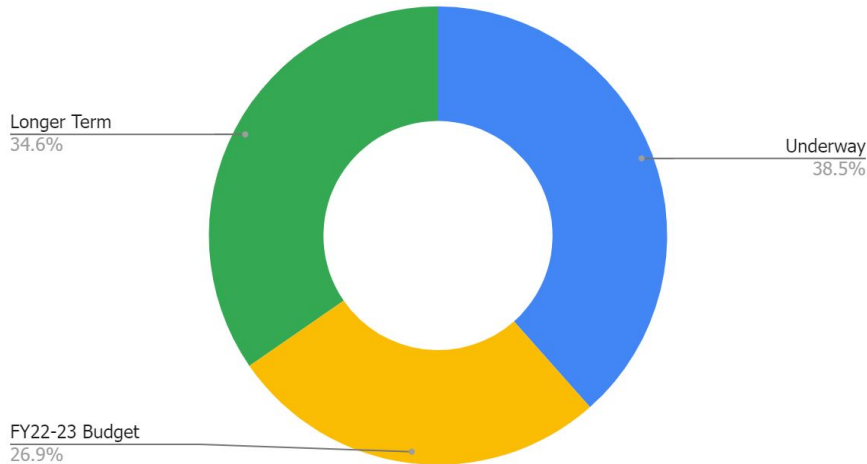


Implementation Overview



Implementation Overview – Stages of Implementation

Strategy Status Snapshot



- Determined the “status” of all 74 strategies, ranging from underway to long-term initiatives:
 - **Underway** = Happening now
 - **FY23 Budget** = In the proposed budget
 - **Longer-term** = 2+ years in the future
- Summary will appear on a new Implementation Dashboard
- Annual status updates

Recent Efforts

- Resilience Hubs Network
- Climate Equity Plan StoryMap
- Austin Youth Climate Equity Council
- USDN TX-NM Regional Meeting
- Rocky Mountain Institute:
Texas Learning Cohorts
- UT Planet Texas 2050:
Collaboration Framework
- Joint Sustainability Committee:
By-laws change with 5 new members
- Ongoing Climate & Environment
Leadership Team internal Meetings



Austin Youth Climate Equity Council showcase

Additional Resources Recently Acquired

Staffing Support

- 4 Existing FTEs Reclassified to HSEM, 2 focused on Resilience Hubs
- FUSE Fellow to support Resilience Hubs
- UT LBJ School – Resilience Hub Network Research Associate

One-time Funding

- **Enhanced Climate Communications Activities** (Promotion of new / existing videos and business outreach programs) – *Raise awareness and support to drive interest and action.*
- **HVAC Contractor Study** (Focus on the state of refrigerant capture and destruction, heat pumps, and guidance on gas vs. electric equipment) – *Research will inform new policies / programs / incentives to drive change in Buildings.*

Implementation Dashboard

- Department reporting on 74 strategies
- Quantitative tracking on 17 goals
- Progress towards Net-zero by 2040
- Equity outcome metrics

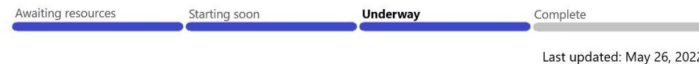
Strategy 4

Protect water resources

Protect quantity and quality of source water for municipal supply and regional environmental flows — especially in the face of climate change-driven threats like heat, drought, flood, and wildfire. Ecosystems cannot function properly and sequester carbon if they don't have the adequate water supply to survive and thrive.

Potential Equity Benefit: + + +

Work Status



City of Austin Partners

- Watershed Protection

What's been done so far?

- Regulatory: protection from development of floodplains and riparian areas along creeks (buffers and easements)
- Land protection: Since 1998 Open Space Bond Program conservation of 34K acres through conservation easements or land acquisition. In 2021 4K acres
- Restoration: Floodplain Reforestation Program in public parcels, approx. 10 acres/yr; ~\$125K/yr. Restoration of urban creeks through Grow Zone program
- Stewardship: shoreline and creek and shoreline community stewardship programs ~\$139K/yr

What's next?

- Regulatory: include restoration provisions for degraded riparian areas
- Land protection: potential open space acquisition bond package focusing on Blackland Prairie in east Travis County including emphasis on creating public greenbelt network along creeks
- Restoration: continue and grow reforestation program: min 10 acres/yr and ~\$125K/yr. Expand Grow Zone program to privately owned land
- Stewardship: continue and grow stewardship program: minimum ~\$139K/yr Community Partners

Equity in Implementation

- Regulatory: restoration provisions will help address existing disparities in creek condition in east and west Austin
- Land protection: if approved, land acquisition will help mitigate open space disparities for communities of color in east Austin
- Restoration: reforestation program selects parks using Community Tree Priority map developed incorporating social vulnerability and a metric
- Stewardship: working with contractor to develop equity strategies for meaningful community engagement

Community Support and Involvement

- Land protection: multi departmental effort (WPD, AW, Offices of Real Estate, Legal Services) and non-profits (TNC, TLC, and HCC)
- Restoration and Stewardship: implemented through contracts with different nonprofits (Keep Austin Beautiful, Tree Folks, The Trail Foundation) and emphasize community participation, stewardship, education and engagement. In collaboration with the Parks and Recreation Department to create additional restoration and reforestation sites.

Challenges and Other Considerations

- Land protection: will require multiple departments in developing the strategies and clarify roles/responsibilities
- Restoration: Drainage Utility Fee only allows for reforestation within the Full Purpose Jurisdiction. Riparian Mitigation Fund current enabling language does not specify restoration activities thus preventing the use of that fund for activities other than acquisition
- Stewardship: staff turnover in non-profits creates difficulties in providing continuity for stewardship programs

Phase 2 Community Climate Ambassadors (2022-23)

- **Paid opportunity** for community members and organizations to **support equitable implementation** of the Climate Equity Plan
- **Engage historically underserved communities** around climate impacts and the implementation of the Climate Equity Plan
- **Prioritize local community initiatives** by allowing ambassadors to design Community Action Projects that benefit their communities



Original 2020 Climate Ambassadors Cohort

Phase 2 Community Climate Ambassadors (2022-23)

Community Climate Ambassadors will:

- Attend monthly meetings
- Participate in workshops
- Engage with their communities
- Design *Community Action Projects*



Recruiting: June 1 - 22 for
10-15 Ambassadors



Program runs:
August 2022 - January 2023



Compensation:
\$1,500 for individuals,
\$3,000 for organizations

What's Next?

- **EDF Climate Corps Fellow – Equity Metrics Analysis**
- **Implementation Workshops – June and July**
- **New Implementation Task Force – Planning Underway**
- **Implementation Dashboard – Coming this summer**
- **Climate Ambassadors 2022-23 – Recruitment & kickoff**
- **Austin's first-ever Food Plan – Kicking off this summer**
- **FY23 Budget Summary – Climate Equity Plan**
- **Supported Projects**
- **Next Council Briefing – Department/Project-Focused**



Solar jobs training program

Thank you!



More information:

austintexas.gov/climateplan
