
Joint Sustainability Committee

2023 Action Plan

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JSC Purpose from Bylaws

The joint committee shall **advise the council on matters related to conservation and sustainability**; and

- **review City policies and procedures relevant to the Austin Community Climate Plan and the Austin Climate Equity Plan**, including planning, implementation, community engagement, goal setting, and progress monitoring;
- **promote close cooperation** between the council, City management, City boards, commissions, committees, and task forces, and individuals, institutions, and agencies concerned with the politics, procedures, and implementation of the Austin Community Climate Plan and the Austin Climate Equity Plan, with the **goal of coordinating all similar activities within the City and the community** in order to secure the greatest public benefit; and forward to the city manager all advisory material that the joint committee provides to the council, the Office of Sustainability, City departments and offices, or City boards, commissions, committees, and task forces.

JSC Purpose in Plain Speak

The JSC advises the City Council and supports coordination among the City and community in implementing the Austin Climate Equity Plan.



Proposed 2023 JSC Action Plan

- 1. Define what JSC considers a “high impact” strategy.** This could include:
 - GHG reduction potential
 - Ability to increase equity in processes and/or outcomes (e.g., strategy would focus on a disinvested/ marginalized group or part of town)
 - Relative implementation progress so far
 - Responsible party’s ability (capacity + willingness) to implement the strategy, where the responsible party could be a City department, community group, etc.
- 2. Create working groups (WGs) to identify high impact strategies per section of the ACEP.** WGs should be diverse and may include JSC members, department staff, and other community members if additional experience/perspectives are needed. WGs could be organized as follows:
 - Sustainable Buildings (energy + materials)
 - Transportation & Land Use + Transportation Electrification (mobility + electrification)
 - Consumption + Natural Systems (food, products, and green infrastructure)

Proposed 2023 JSC Action Plan (cont.)

3. **Working groups make recommendations for priority actions to advance their high impact strategies.** Potential action areas could include:
 - Budget/funding, potentially including a non-City of Austin funding partner
 - Accountability tools (e.g., adding more detail to dashboard, promoting dashboard for increased awareness)
 - Coalition building
 - Policy changes (could be no to low cost)
4. **Recommend priority actions to City Council and home boards & commissions and provide accountability for follow through on actions.**

Proposed 2023 JSC Working Group Action Plan Timeline

Feb	JSC Action – Define “high impact/priority” & establish working groups
Mar	JSC Working groups ID high impact/priority tactics (specific actions) and any immediate budget needs for FY 2023/2024
Mar	JSC Action – Adopt FY 2023/2024 budget recommendations
April	JSC Action – Discuss initial recommendations for priority actions
May	Working Groups refine recommendations
May-June	JSC Action – Adopt implementation resolution(s) on priority actions
June-July	JSC members advocate for recommendations to home boards & commissions and council members
Aug-Sep	Working groups gather information to inform FY 2024/2025 budget recommendations
Sep	JSC Action – Discuss working group ideas on FY 2024/2025 budget
Sep-Nov	Presentations and conversations with key staff in departments responsible for priority actions
Jan	JSC Action – Adopt budget recommendations for FY 2024/2025
Feb	JSC members advocate for recommendations to home boards & commissions and council members

Action Plan Strengths & Opportunities Alignment

The JSC 2023 Action Plan builds on the strengths of the ACEP creation process and past JSC successes as expressed by JSC members:

- **Co-creation** using an open mindset and partnership model that centers equity, builds trust, and faces issues head on
- **Strong JSC leadership and communication**
- **Effective working group facilitation** with accessible online tools
- Ability to **cross-pollinate** across boards and commissions with departments and community networks.

Action Plan Strengths & Opportunities Alignment

...while starting to address challenges as expressed by JSC members:

- **Inconsistent responsiveness, funding, and action from City departments** responsible for ACEP implementation
- **Limited action** from JSC (as a body)
- **Limited engagement** from JSC members with Councilmembers
- **Unclear/vague JSC purpose**
- **Lack of representation** on the JSC

Other Considerations

- It can be easier to design effective community and stakeholder engagement for planning processes, in part because there is a tangible outcome everyone is working towards: the plan. Now that we have the plan, **how do OOS and JSC continue to make participants feel heard and their contributions valued?**
- **How will the JSC working groups be supported?** Do the members and/or OOS staff have capacity to re-create the effective—and resource-intensive—approach used in creating the ACEP?
- **Is there an opportunity to engage Councilmembers and/or their staff during JSC meetings** to reduce JSC members' time commitment outside of meetings and encourage more inclusive discussion (beyond each Councilmember's appointed representative)?
- **Could the JSC develop a ranked list of high impact strategies** that could be pursued as currently prioritized strategies are successfully implemented? This could become an annual process to review high impact strategies of focus each year.