

Joint Sustainability Committee 2023-2024 Budget Recommendations

1. The City of Austin Austin Climate Equity Plan and Austin Strategic Direction place equity at the core of our leadership and sustainability work: the Climate Equity plan is centered around the goal of “equitably reaching net- zero”, and the 2023 Austin Strategic Direction declares “Equity embedded into Austin’s values system means [...] transforming local government from the inside out”. In order to fully achieve these goals, equity work cannot be relegated to a temporary position, and must be recognized and compensated for its importance. To do otherwise would fall short of our own goals of leading by example and decrease capacity. Temporary positions inherently result in staff turnover and loss of knowledge and continuity of this important work. Thus, in order to increase the capacity of the Office of Sustainability to accomplish equity goals as set forth in the Climate Equity Plan and advance equitable outcomes in the City of Austin (2023 Austin Strategic Direction Outcomes: Health and Environment, Government That Works for All), **the Joint Sustainability Committee recommends that the Climate Equity Engagement Associate in the Office of Sustainability become a permanent position.** This entails allocating one additional FTE to the Office of Sustainability. (2023 Austin Strategic Direction Outcomes: Health and Environment, Government That Works for All)
2. Austin Climate Equity Plan Sustainable Buildings Goal 2 says “By 2030, reduce community-wide greenhouse gas emissions from refrigerant leakage by 25%.” Strategy 1 to achieve this goal is “Capture and destroy old refrigerants.” Refrigerant leakage is a significant climate problem because most refrigerants in use today are extremely powerful greenhouse gasses. More information is needed to assess the scope of the problem within Austin and develop effective solutions. **The Joint Sustainability Committee recommends that \$50,000 be allocated for the Office of Sustainability to contract with an entity to conduct an inventory of refrigerants at facilities and develop a plan to manage those refrigerants responsibly on an ongoing basis, and develop a plan and develop recommendations for programs, policies and other strategies to address refrigerant leakage and proper disposal in the Austin community.** (2023 Austin Strategic Direction Outcomes: Health and Environment, Government That Works for All)
3. Austin Climate Equity Plan Consumption Goal 2 says “By 2030, reduce greenhouse gas emissions from institutional, commercial, and government purchasing by at least 50%.” Strategy 1 to achieve this goal is “Measure institutional lifecycle emissions,” which the Office of Sustainability and the Purchasing Department are moving forward and should achieve in FY 23. Strategy 2 to achieve this goal is “Strengthen the City of Austin’s Sustainable Procurement Program to serve as a model for others locally and nationally.” Achieving this next step is important because the City of Austin purchases a large

amount of goods that have embedded greenhouse gas emissions, as well as other environmental impacts. It will also allow for implementation of the next strategy, which is to get large local employers to embrace sustainable purchasing. **The Joint Sustainability Committee recommends that (1) between \$50,000 and \$100,000 be allocated for a contract to develop an updated sustainable purchasing plan for the city; and (2) that 1 additional full time employee be allocated within the Purchasing Department to serve as a Sustainable Purchasing Manager to oversee development of and ongoing implementation of the sustainable purchasing plan.** (2023 Austin Strategic Direction Outcomes: Health and Environment, Government That Works for All)

4. Austin Climate Equity Plan Overarching Strategy OS.3: Regional Collaboration emphasizes the need to create a “Texas Climate Collaborative linking elected officials, City Staff, and utility staff” within Central Texas and across the state to achieve shared climate goals. Additionally, the Funding section of the ACEP states that “new dedicated funding sources that aren’t dependent on the City’s General Fund,” including federal funding and philanthropic partnerships, are needed for full successful implementation of the plan. **The Joint Sustainability Committee recommends that 1 additional full time employee be allocated to the Office of Sustainability to oversee sustainable funding and finance mechanisms to enable the City to tap into multiple sources of funding to implement the ACEP, including grants and competitive funding opportunities, philanthropic funds, green bonds, and new federal funding sources for climate action, including the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the federal Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 funds. Additionally, the Joint Sustainability Committee recommends that between \$200,000 be allocated for a contract with a sustainable finance consultant to assist the City in identifying and assessing high-potential funding opportunities and novel finance mechanisms, including through the possible creation of a new climate-related infrastructure finance authority or regional climate funding collaborative.** (2023 Austin Strategic Direction Outcomes: Health and Environment, Government That Works for All)
5. Austin Climate Equity Plan Transportation Electrification Goal 1 says “By 2030, 40% of total vehicle miles traveled in Austin are electrified, and electric vehicle ownership is culturally, geographically, and economically diverse. This translates to approximately 460,000 electric vehicles on the road.” Strategy 4 to achieve this goal is “Launch an e-bike and electric car-sharing program” that is “centered on low-income communities and communities of color to support functional, low-cost zero-emissions mobility”. Austin Energy already offers individual customers rebates to purchase a qualifying e-bike. However, in order for this program to encourage a higher number of low-income communities and communities of color to purchase and use -bikes, it is important that a higher amount of rebate is provided to these communities. **The Joint Sustainability Committee recommends that: 1) Rebates for e-bikes are increased to include e-cargo bikes in the rebate program, 2) For CAP customers, the rebate is increased and the eligibility requirement that qualifying bikes must be purchased from Austin Energy's approved dealership list be removed and 3) The rebate be**

amended to include a rebate for adaptive e-bikes of up to \$1,400. (2023 Austin Strategic Direction Outcomes: Mobility, Health and Environment)

6. Funding for Equity Ambassadors for the implementation of the ATXWalkBikeRoll. **(Government That Works for All, Mobility, Health and Environment) (Chris will ask how much \$\$ and write up)**The City of Austin Austin Climate Equity Plan and Austin Strategic Direction place equity at the core of our leadership and sustainability work: the Climate Equity plan is centered around the goal of “equitably reaching net- zero”, and the 2023 Austin Strategic Direction declares “Equity embedded into Austin’s values system means [...] transforming local government from the inside out”. Equity Ambassadors were key to development of the ATXWalkBikeRoll plan, but ensuring that the plan is implemented equitably requires ongoing work **(Government That Works for All, Mobility, Health and Environment). The Joint Sustainability Committee recommends \$X in continued funding for Equity Ambassadors for the equitable implementation of the ATXWalkBikeRoll plan.**