



Joint Sustainability Committee

RECOMMENDATION 20230726-XXX

Date: August 23, 2023

Subject: Priorities for implementation of the Austin Climate Equity Plan

Motioned By:

Seconded By:

Recommendation

Description of Recommendation to Council

Natural Systems and Food & Product Consumption Recommendations:

1. *More data and information and more frequent updates to the dashboard is needed to better gauge Austin's state progress on climate goals. Publish a schedule of official updates to the Climate Equity Plan implementation dashboard, including metrics and more formalized equity accounting, to enable the public to see progress toward Austin's climate equity goals. Recommend biannual or quarterly updates.*
2. *Seek out and incorporate indigenous knowledge into the [PARD Recommended Land Management Strategy recommendation](#), with appropriate compensation to contributors for their time and expertise.*
3. *Make permitting paperwork for community gardens available in Spanish and develop a plan to reach the Spanish-speaking community*

Commented [1]: Do we know they haven't incorporated indigenous knowledge?

Commented [2R1]: Good point. I did not see it addressed in the PARD land management presentation, but have asked Staff to clarify.

Commented [3]: Who is this recommended to? Does the city run these gardens?

Commented [4R3]: The city approves permitting for community gardens on city-owned lands, with four unrelated volunteers and a sponsoring nonprofit. Details here: <https://www.austintexas.gov/parks-and-recreation/community-garden-permit-guide>

4. Explore the idea of piloting a sales-tax holiday for thrift store shopping and repair services, similar to the Back to School sales tax holiday weekends, to encourage residents to participate in the circular economy. |
5. Set a disposal rate goal for ARR that declines over time
6. Accelerate goals in the ARR plan: near-term goals should be defined as 0-2 years. 3-5 years is medium-term.
7. Promote climate-friendly food choices within the retail and non-retail programs (Mobile Markets, Healthy Food Pantries and Pop-ups, etc.) by developing incentives for plant-based protein. |
8. Circular economy- pilot re-usable/refillable develop incentives/programs for retail that provide refillable services using lower impact containers |

Commented [5]: JSC feedback: how to implement, who funds, can we coordinate w/ small & minority business groups, fix it clinics - can we include planned obsolescence language. Need to figure out rules about taxes & logistics- is this possible?

Commented [6]: JSC feedback: incentives for retail to provide refillable materials

Commented [7]: Also combat lobbying by meat and dairy industry with education around protein consumption needs

Commented [8]: JSC: in addition to plant based protein, fruits and veg. Incentivize regen ag (over conventional)... need more numbers here

Commented [9R8]: Provide education on plant-based protein, and how much protein is needed (on an environmental basis)

Commented [10R8]: Need to research health and safety regs on this. Add education component.

Rationale:

Natural Systems and Food & Product Consumption Recommendations

1. Data gaps, in particular on the climate equity plan implementation dashboard, exist. Status of the actual implementation is sometimes out of date, and the individual carbon impact of any individual strategy is unknown, making recommendations sometimes difficult to assess. Additionally, equity accounting needs to be formalized.
2. Austin's livable future depends on our ability to create and successfully implement sustainable environmental solutions. Sustainability is at the foundation of traditional ecological knowledge, which can help complement standard western scientific ecological practices. Successful examples of governmental agencies implementing indigenous knowledge and practices include sustainable forestry in the Menominee Forest or Montana's partnership with Salish and Kootenai tribes in Montana in order to better manage fire risk. Austin can draw from these examples to better our city's long term climate resilience. [Natural Systems Goal 1, Strategy 2]
3. Community gardens produce fresh, healthy vegetables, reduce food insecurity and strengthen bonds between neighbors. Community gardens are allowed everywhere in Austin with a permit, but barriers prevent low-income communities and communities of color from participating. [Thirty percent](#) of Austin residents speak a language other than English at home, and the majority of those are Spanish speakers. However, permitting paperwork for community gardens is currently only available in English. |
4. Incentives for resale and thrift shopping can help local businesses while reducing waste and introducing more people to the circular economy. A sales tax holiday specifically for resale, repair and thrift stores has the potential to increase diversion from landfills. [...] [Food and Product Consumption Goal 2, Strategy 4]

Commented [11]: @dimerydavis@gmail.com I need help drafting rationale here- I couldn't figure out how to tie this back to the plan goals

Commented [12]: @dimerydavis@gmail.com will need some help with the rationale here

5. *In order for Austin to meet climate goals, reducing waste in the first place is paramount. A disposal rate goal that declines over time is needed. While simply holding the disposal rate steady would be an improvement on the current trend in the short term (0-2 years), more ambitious goals are needed for 5 years and beyond. It is important to send a clear signal that the city is going to make a strong effort to reduce the amount of waste our community is producing. As more evidence mounts that there are significant environmental and health challenges around plastic recycling, reducing waste in the first place is paramount. [Food and Product Consumption Goal 3, Strategy 1]*
6. *Austin's waste-related emissions are significant and take the form of short term climate pollutants like methane and nitrous oxides that have a large short term impact when compared to carbon dioxide. The draft Austin Resource Recovery Zero Waste Plan lays out near term goals of 3-5 years, but thinking primarily in 5-10-year terms simply is not sufficient to move the needle on emissions. Faster action is both needed and achievable. [Food and Product Consumption Goal 3]*
7. *Incentivizing pro-climate, pro-health food choices can reduce emissions while improving health, but food choices need to specifically take climate into account by providing and encouraging culturally relevant lower carbon alternatives, such as replacing beef with beans, providing alternatives to dairy and cheese. Providing and promoting climate-friendly food choices within the retail and non-retail programs (Mobile Markets, Healthy Food Pantries and Pop-ups, etc.) can help [Food and Product Consumption Goal 1, Strategy 3].*

Vote

For:

Against:

Abstain:

Absent:

Attest: *[Staff or board member can sign]*