

City of Austin  
**Historic Landmark Commission**

**DRAFT**

**Subject: Recommendations on Environmental Sustainability, Council Resolution**

Date: April 3, 2024

*Motioned By: JuanRaymon Rubio*

*Seconded By: Witt Featherston*

Dear Joint Sustainability Committee, Mayor, and Council Members,

In response to Councilmember Ryan Alter's resolution on an Environmental Investment Plan, the Historic Landmark Commission recommends the City Manager consider the role of historic preservation in helping the City reach its climate goals. The current draft of the new Equity-Based Preservation Plan includes the following recommendations that support environmental sustainability:

- **Recognize the significant external costs associated with demolition by adopting policies and practices that incentivize alternatives:** *Increase review fees to offset reduced or eliminated fees for historic preservation efforts.*
- **Make it easier to relocate buildings within Austin:** *Following a Council resolution in fall 2023, work with other City departments and stakeholders to explore how to facilitate local relocation when preserving a building in place is not feasible.*
- **Encourage property owners to retain older buildings by allowing approved demolition permits to be converted to relocation permits:** *Support retention of older buildings and encourage sustainability by streamlining the process to change approved demolition permits to relocation permits. Allow previously paid demolition permit application fees and approved processes to be applied to remodel or relocation permit applications for owners who decide to retain an older building.*
- **Encourage deconstruction and materials salvage when preservation in place and relocation are not feasible:** *In line with Austin's goal of zero waste by 2040, explore and adopt policies, programs, and incentives that incentivize or require deconstruction and materials salvage in light of environmental and health impacts, the loss of cultural heritage, and increased landfill waste. Create a supply of historic-age quality building materials.*

We recommend city staff be directed to identify the impact of these recommendations, consider their inclusion in a future Environmental Investment Plan, and work with city departments to develop proposed ordinances and code changes.

Thank you,

Historic Landmark Commission