

**RESOLUTION NO. 20240418-048**

**WHEREAS**, the City recognizes the critical need for sustainable and affordable housing solutions to address the diverse housing challenges faced by our community; and

**WHEREAS**, the City, in alignment with its commitment to climate action, has established a comprehensive Climate Equity Plan aimed at addressing environmental and social inequities in the community; and

**WHEREAS**, the City's Climate Equity Plan includes a goal of reaching net-zero community-wide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2040 and a goal of achieving net-zero carbon for all new buildings and reducing emissions by 25 percent for existing buildings by 2030; and

**WHEREAS**, the City has also developed a robust Climate Resilience Action Plan, outlining strategies to enhance the resilience of the community in the face of climate change impacts; and

**WHEREAS**, the City seeks to encourage and support the development of affordable housing projects that adhere to the highest standards of energy efficiency, sustainability, and equity; and

**WHEREAS**, passive building is a set of design principles for attaining a rigorous level of energy efficiency while also creating comfortable indoor living spaces that can be applied to all buildings, including single-family homes, multi-family apartment buildings, schools, skyscrapers, and more; and

**WHEREAS**, passive building design can help keep a building cool in hot and humid climates through several strategies including shading, insulation, ventilation, orientation, and shape; and

**WHEREAS**, passive building design saves on heating and cooling compared to traditional buildings, and new builds help reduce energy costs and create a smaller carbon footprint; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2009, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada took an important first step toward their goal of becoming the greenest city in the world, as the first jurisdiction in North America to go beyond green building codes and use architecture itself through passive design to reduce GHGs; and

**WHEREAS**, starting in 2024, Boston adopted a set of sustainability standards that required every new multi-family building to meet passive building requirements; and

**WHEREAS**, in the past years, New York City, Chicago, and several states including Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut have also instituted passive building requirements; and

**WHEREAS**, although no southern state or city in the United States has adopted passive building standards to date, a study performed by Science Direct showed that passive building strategies in warm humid climates can achieve substantial energy and cost savings over standard building techniques; and

**WHEREAS**, Passive Building was developed and shown to be successful in more temperate and colder climates; however, many experts point to the opportunities that may be realized using similar or modified approaches in hot and humid climates; and

**WHEREAS**, sustainable building practices contribute significantly to energy efficiency, reduced environmental impact, and long-term affordability; and

**WHEREAS**, innovative programs such as the Passive House Design Challenge, as demonstrated by the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center, have

successfully incentivized and promoted the construction of energy-efficient and affordable housing units; **NOW, THEREFORE,**

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF AUSTIN:**

The City Manager is directed to explore a passive building pilot program that includes the following:

1. A pilot program of at least four affordable housing projects, including but not limited to permanent supportive housing and multi-family properties, which incentivizes the projects to achieve certification from the Passive House Institute United States.
2. Explore a financial incentive for these projects like those demonstrated in the Passive House Design Challenge established by the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center.
3. Provide annual reports to Council on the progress and impact of the program, including the number of projects certified, energy savings achieved, and any adjustments or improvements recommended.
4. Provide a request to Council for additional resources if needed to complete the pilot program.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The City Manager is directed to monitor the success and efficacy of the passive building pilot and, if measurable energy use reduction and benefits to the occupants are indicated, then provide Council with an analysis and recommendation to expand the building standards city-wide.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The City Manager is directed to report back to Council with a preview of the pilot at the November 19th Austin Energy Utility Oversight Committee meeting and then provide ongoing yearly updates as the pilot progresses.

**ADOPTED:** April 18, 2024 **ATTEST:**



Myrna Rios  
City Clerk