

Joint Sustainability Committee

Resolution 20240708-02: Supporting the Environmental Investment Plan

WHEREAS, the purpose of the Joint Sustainability Committee is “to 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”; and

WHEREAS, it is the duty of the Joint Sustainability Committee to “promote close cooperation between the council, City management, City boards, commissions, committees, and taskforces, 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

WHEREAS, the Joint Sustainability Committee has had working groups for the past two and a half years that have gathered information from city staff, the Austin community and experts and advocates in other cities to identify funding needs to implement the Austin Climate Equity Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Sustainability Committee solicited and received public input on what needs funding through the Environmental Investment Plan to meet existing environmental goals through a written form, at a public hearing on March 27, 2024, and at the April 30, 2024 Joint Sustainability Committee meeting; and

WHEREAS, the public comments received by the Joint Sustainability Committee on the Environmental Investment Plan emphasized the need for action, including more funding to meet a variety of environmental and climate goals established by the City of Austin; and

WHEREAS, on August 8, 2019, the Council unanimously approved Resolution No. 20190808-078 declaring a climate emergency in the City and calling to accelerate the timeline for achieving the City's climate goals; and

WHEREAS, the climate crisis continues to worsen each year and the window of opportunity to preserve a livable climate is rapidly closing due climate tipping points are likely already being reached; and

WHEREAS, it is a scientific fact that greenhouse gas emissions reductions made sooner will yield climate benefits sooner and are therefore more valuable in avoiding tipping points that could make preserving a livable climate impossible; and

WHEREAS, land acquisition, increasing the use of solar energy and battery storage, and tree planting are strategies that are adopted within multiple City of Austin plans (including the

Climate Equity Plan, Water Forward, Austin/Travis County Food Plan, Watershed Protection Strategic Plan, and PARD Land Management Plan and Long Range Plan, and Austin Energy Resource, Generation and Climate Protection Plan) created with substantial public input and adopted by the Austin City Council, and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Joint Sustainability Committee recommends that the Austin City Council adopt Item 93 on the July 18 Council agenda after amending it to include a bond package be put before voters on the November 2024 ballot that will provide funds to implement existing climate and environmental plans. The Joint Sustainability Committee recommends that an Environmental Investment Plan bond of \$250-300 million that funds a combination of land acquisition, solar and batteries for city buildings and operations, and tree planting is appropriate and needed.