



JOINT SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

**REGULAR MEETING
April 23, 2025**

The Joint Sustainability Committee convened in a hybrid meeting via videoconferencing and at Austin Energy Headquarters.

Board Members in Attendance in Person: Kaiba White, Chris Maxwell-Gaines, Jon Salinas, Melissa Rothrock, Isabella Changsut, Charlotte Davis

Board Members in Attendance Remotely: Diana Wheeler, Shelby Orme, Marissa Bell, Alberta Phillips, Anna Scott, Heather Houser, Rodrigo Leal

Board Members Absent: Amy Noel, Chris Crookham, Chris Campbell, Yure Suarez

City Staff in Attendance: Rohan Lilauwala, Braden Latham-Jones, Michelle Marx, Richard Mendoza, Eric Bailey, Marcus Hammer, Barbara Shack

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Kaiba White called the meeting to order at 6:06 pm.

Public Communication

- Tom

1. Approval of minutes from the March 26rd, 2025 meeting of the Joint Sustainability Committee.

- Davis motion, Maxwell-Gaines second, passes on a 10-0 vote (Salinas abstains, Leal and Bell off dais).

DISCUSSION ITEMS

2. 2026 Bond Development Process – Eric Bailey and Marcus Hammer, Capital Delivery Services Department; Braden Latham-Jones, Office of Climate Action and Resilience.

- Scott: How will changes in bond rates affect bond?
- Bailey: If rates go up, total amount available will decrease. Prioritization matrix will help identify the most important things. Rates set on a yearly basis when the funding is needed, when city goes to market.
- White: will GHG assessment be done on all projects? Life cycle? In-house?

- Bailey: one of technical criteria is sustainability/environment. Working through how projects will be scored. Not enough staff to evaluate all projects – could need consultant support (probably available on existing rotation list).
- Davis: how is the size of the bond package decided?
- Bailey: multiple factors: bond capacity of city; how much city can deliver in 6 years. Decided as part of public process, with BEATF, council, etc. In Aug 2026, council will call for bond election – that's when language and total dollar value will be finalized.
- White: what is general range of bonding capacity?
- Bailey: all debts (incl. non-voter approved bonds) affect capacity. When needs assessment was first completed, list was 600 projects, \$10b. Evaluating projects against eligibility, it's now 200 projects, \$4b. Safe assumption that it'll land under \$1b, but work to be done.
- Phillips: How do certificates of obligation fit in?
- Bailey: Not part of 2026 plan, defers to Financial Services Department for further info.

3. I-35 Cap and Stitch Updates – Richard Mendoza and Michelle Marx, Transportation and Public Work

- Phillips: will these be funded by GO bonds or Cos
- Mendoza: working with FSD to look at all funding alternatives (GO, CO, philanthropy, public-private partnerships). Any use of city debt for this project would displace 2026 bond capacity.
- Phillips: how are federal funding pauses affecting projects?
- Mendoza: TxDOT has moved deadline to accommodate federal status.
 - \$15 million paid to TxDOT is funding an environmental assessments: air/water quality, etc. Staff looking at microclimate study on top of caps to look at human experience (urban heat, air, noise)
- Maxwell-Gaines: what is baseline TxDOT project
- Mendoza: TxDOT expanding crossings to 30ft behind curb
- Maxwell-Gaines: what are reasons for selected caps?
- Mendoza: Has to do with topography, vertical clearances, infrastructure, drainage, engineering
- Changsut: were environmentally sensitive materials considered?
- Mendoza: because we're at 30% design, materials (low-carbon concrete, pervious pavers, etc). can be considered moving forward
- White: why are there roads adjacent to it?
- Marx: TxDOT design is to have both frontage roads on the downtown side; they will be signalized every 300-400 ft, which will dictate streets. Would create new crossing at 3rd st.
- Salinas: will there be requirements for trees on TxDOT's baseline condition?
- Marx: depth of deck not sufficient for trees. Exploring plantings, shade structures. TxDOT aesthetics budget available to improve experience of crossing. TxDOT not beholden to local city regulations, but working with City to meet city goals. E.g. bridge over Lady Bird Lake will have bike/ped facility, plus lookouts, landscaping.
- Houser: If we don't do phase 1 now, is there any opportunity to do it in the future?
- Mendoza: Phase 1 must be committed by end of May. Would forego ability to cap at a future date. Phase 2 could be considered through 2033. After 2033, 10 year moratorium on existing construction. Amenities could be added at any point.

- White: How does \$31m/acre cost compare to cost/acre
- Marx: More than land acquisition, will have analysis ready for May 6 council work session.
- Public comment: Tom Wald, Red Line Parkway Initiative, speaks in support of funding the caps.
 - Davis: How does mitigation work?
 - Wald: Noise abatement, green space provision, safe crossings, opportunities for future transit
 - Scott: How will crossings be affected? How would it decrease pollution?
 - Wald: Crossings will be doubled in width, improving their experience will increase their use. Noise pollution will be reduced by caps. Won't improve air quality directly, but by improving bike/walk connections, will reduce pollution.
 - White: Why do TxDOT crossings not count?
 - Wald: They will, but not to extent of caps.

7. JSC officer elections for the 2025-2026 term

- a. Davis motions to nominate White, Scott seconds, passes 13-0
- b. White motions to nominate Davis, Maxwell-Gaines second, passes 13-0

4. Update from the Electric Utility Commission on the Solar for All Program – Kaiba White, Electric Utility Commission

- Meeting is June 3, Southeast Branch Library. Intention for these meetings is to include community voices, those that might be eligible for solar/battery installations.
- Role for JSC members to help guide installations, opportunity to get priorities into program documents.

5. Recommendations for Climate and Sustainability in the 2026 Bond

- Suggestions to have consultant or internal staff conduct analysis, departments prioritize climate equity plan goals.
- White reads recommendation drafted on dais into the record.
- White motion, Davis second, passes 13-0.

6. Recommendation on the I-35 Cap and Stitch

- Commissioners discuss recommendations and write from the dais, White reads full 'be it resolved' text into the record
- Bell motion, Changsut second, passes 11-1-0 (Houser opposed, Rothrock abstain)

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

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ADJOURNMENT

White adjourned meeting at 9:28 pm with no objections.