



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Joint Sustainability Committee

Recommendation Number 20251119-008: Resolution on Funding for Solar and Energy Efficiency Investments at City Facilities

WHEREAS, on August 8, 2019, the Austin City Council adopted a resolution declaring a climate emergency and calling “for an immediate emergency mobilization to restore a safe climate” and directing the city manager to take steps to accelerate local greenhouse gas emissions reductions; and

WHEREAS, on September 30, 2021, the Austin City Council adopted the Austin Climate Equity Plan, which established a goal of reaching net-zero greenhouse gas emissions for the Austin Community by 2040; and

WHEREAS, on December 12, 2024, the Austin City Council adopted the Austin Energy Resource, Generation and Climate Protection Plan to 2035, which reaffirmed energy efficiency, local solar, demand response and customer-sited batteries as priority strategies for meeting Austin’s energy needs; and

WHEREAS, Austin’s Climate Implementation Plan identifies creating a climate revolving fund to invest in energy upgrades to city facilities, capture savings, and reinvest funds for additional investment as a foundational action and identifies installing solar at city facilities one of the few actions to create cost savings for the city; and

WHEREAS, other cities and counties across the country have established revolving funds and successfully implemented them to address challenges; and

WHEREAS, the City of San Antonio has invested \$42 million into its revolving fund for energy efficiency upgrades and solar installations at city properties and the resulting savings are available for additional investments; and

WHEREAS, most City of Austin buildings that could functionally support solar energy installations do not yet have them; and

WHEREAS, many City of Austin buildings are in need of energy efficiency improvements, and other upgrades that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and cut costs; and

WHEREAS, investing in solar energy that is interconnected on the customer's side of the meter yields the greatest financial benefit to the customer; and

WHEREAS, solar installations of all capacity sizes are cost-effective and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and local air pollution; and

WHEREAS, some solar energy developers and installation companies specialize on larger installations and others on smaller installations, while others work on both large- and small-scale solar installations and can balance costs and installation speed by doing some of each; and

WHEREAS, the more solar energy installations the city can fund, the more money it will save; and

WHEREAS, the climate crisis is worsening and the opportunity to avoid catastrophic impacts of global warming is rapidly diminishing; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Joint Sustainability Committee of the City of Austin recommends that the Austin City Council direct the City Manager to move swiftly to issue one or more requests for proposals to install solar energy systems on all City of Austin facilities that have at least 1,500 square feet of space that is viable for a solar energy installation and allow for one or more companies to be awarded contracts to maximize the number of buildings that receive solar installations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Joint Sustainability Committee recommends that the Austin City Council establish a Revolving Climate Building Efficiency Fund to collect financial savings resulting from solar energy installations and energy efficiency upgrades at City of Austin facilities to be used to pay for additional solar energy installations, energy efficiency upgrades, water conservation improvements, and refrigerant leakage mitigation at other city properties.