Austin

MEMORANDUM

To:	Mayor and City Council
Through:	Genesis D. Gavino, Chief of Staff
From:	Zach Baumer, Director, Austin Climate Action & Resilience
Date:	November 19, 2026
Subject:	**Update on the implementation of the Austin/Travis County Food Plan (Resolution No. 20241010-26)**

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide a semiannual update on progress, key milestones, and emerging challenges related to the implementation of the Austin/Travis County Food Plan. This update follows previous updates issued in March 2025, November 2025, and May 2026.

Since the Austin City Council's adoption of the Austin/Travis County Food Plan in October 2024, staff and partners have advanced programs, strengthened partnerships, and elevated Austin's leadership in food systems transformation. This period has focused on building implementation infrastructure while navigating a rapidly shifting funding and policy landscape.

Key Successes

1. **Established and advanced the Food Plan Collaborative.** In June 2026, the Austin/Travis County Food Plan Collaborative launched as a cross-sector network to help translate the Food Plan into coordinated action. The Collaborative has engaged more than 120 participants, including 45 individuals with lived experience of food insecurity, and reached more than 220 community members through meetings and activities. Early accomplishments include launching five active working groups, identifying and advancing community-selected "quick wins," supporting a Food Rescue Mini-Summit for Businesses, and developing a community garden map.
2. **Hosted a Food Rescue Mini-Summit for Businesses**. On October 19, the Food Rescue and Reuse Working Group of the Food Plan Collaborative hosted a Food Rescue Mini-Summit for Businesses. This was the Collaborative's first "quick win," advancing an actionable, near-term priority to connect businesses with food rescue partners. The summit brought stakeholders together to identify barriers and opportunities for food donation and redistribution, helping build partnerships to reduce food waste and improve food access for Austin residents.

3. **Launched Food Plan Implementation Grants**. In 2025, the City of Austin received the Governance Award at the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact Global Forum, which honored cities leading the way in creating sustainable, resilient, and equitable food systems. The awarded $23,000 in funds is now being redistributed through a Food Plan Implementation Grant program, enabling applicants to pursue the goals the community envisions for our food system.
4. **Advanced farmland preservation through the USDA's Regional Conservation Partnership Program.** City staff worked with The Conservation Fund, the Central Texas Food Bank, and other regional partners to apply for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Regional Conservation Partnership Program. As a result, The Conservation Fund was awarded $8.9 million to protect at-risk farmland in 16 counties across Central Texas. The award will help stabilize farmland loss and directly advance several priorities of the Austin/Travis County Food Plan, including long-term farmland preservation, support for small and midsized producers, and improved resilience of the region's food supply.

Next Steps and Conclusion

Over the next six months, staff will support the Food Plan Collaborative in launching priority strategies and establishing performance tracking. Staff will also continue to advance funding strategies, including external grants and innovative financing approaches, strengthen coordination with community partners to mitigate the impacts of funding instability, and continue to elevate Austin's leadership through regional and global partnerships. The Collaborative is planning its first annual summit for May 2027.

Austin continues to make meaningful progress in implementing a more equitable and resilient food system. While external challenges present real constraints, the City's strong partnerships, national leadership, and growing implementation infrastructure position us well to sustain momentum.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Zach Baumer, Director of Austin Climate Action & Resilience, at zach.baumer@austintexas.gov or 512-974-2836.

cc: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager
Erika Brady, City Clerk
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