



AIA Austin

November 3, 2020

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City of Austin

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AIA Austin support for Austin Climate Equity Plan

Dear Climate Equity Plan Steering Committee,

AIA Austin is proud to voice our support for the Austin Climate Equity Plan. Our leadership shares a commitment to the vision and goals expressed in the plan, including reaching net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2040. We also support ideas expressed in the plan for taking climate action that will help to address racial inequality to deliver a cleaner, healthier, more affordable and accessible city for all.

AIA has a long history promoting sustainability in architecture. From the publication of *Environmental Design: Research and Practice* in 1971 to the creation of the Committee on the Environment, COTE, in 1990, the Institute has long been a leader in sustainable design. Our commitment to a better built environment continues in our current programs and planning for what's to come and are actively disseminating info related to the AIA Framework for Design Excellence to our members and allies.

AIA is also committed to moving justice and racial and gender equity decisively from aspiration to action. By harnessing the passion of our members and the broader design community, AIA is taking steps to advance racial justice and equity in our organization, in our profession, and in our communities.

Our organization is committed to taking steps to lower our own carbon footprint and encourage our members to do the same in alignment with the major topic areas of the plan. The actions we are committed to are listed below. We plan to make progress over the next year towards each of these goals.

In addition, we agree to have our name listed and acknowledged by the City of Austin as an Austin Climate Leader.

As part of our commitment to taking action on climate change, we plan to either maintain or implement the following:

Transportation & Electrification:

- Offer flexible work schedules with start times earlier than 8 am rather than later in the morning due to the higher impact of air emissions levels later in the morning.
- Implement a permanent telework policy that allows eligible employees to telework at least once a week.

Sustainable Buildings:

- Engage employees regarding how to save energy and water at work, and at home.

The American Institute of Architects

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- Participate in Demand Response Curtailment programs such as Austin Energy's Load Cooperative agreements or Power Partner Thermostats, reducing the need for additional power generation and keeping the cost of electricity as low as possible for our community.
- Participate in a facility water audit or rebate program, or participate in Austin Water Utility's 3C Business Challenge to determine opportunities to reduce water use (fix leaks, low flow fixtures, aerators, drip irrigation, cooling tower upgrades).

Natural Systems:

- Convert non-native landscapes to native plantings which require less irrigation once established.
- Sponsor employee participation in Adopt a Park, Adopt a Creek, community tree planting, or other outdoor stewardship programs OR donate to a community or school garden OR sponsor an on-site community garden or food forest.
- Add vegetation in order to create shade for outdoor break areas with access to seating such as benches or picnic tables.

Food and Product Consumption:

- Reduce food-related waste by donating unused food (according to Health Department Standards).
- Reduce organic waste sent to landfill by composting organic waste from kitchens, catering and employee meals (food, paper towels, coffee grinds), as well as landscape grass clippings and trimmings.
- Assess options and take steps to reduce carbon impacts from catering, break rooms, on-site vending machines and food service by emphasizing pro-climate, pro-health choices in prepared and retail food options, reducing packaging, plastic service-ware, and landfilled items, and sourcing locally grown foods. Pro-climate, pro-health means ensuring healthy, vegetarian options.
- Adopt environmental and social sustainability procurement standards or guidelines.

We look forward to assisting the City in any way we can moving forward. We understand our influence on the A/E/C industry and do not take it for granted. We will work to support, educate, and assemble our members to affect systemic environmental and social change in Austin.

Sincerely,

Eric Rauser, AIA
President, AIA Austin

Ingrid Spencer
Executive Director, AIA Austin