

# CLIMATE + ENVIRONMENT

Austin has repeatedly been acknowledged as a leading U.S. city in various national sustainability studies. Since he was elected, Mayor Adler's commitment to climate action has been steadfast. He has participated in the Climate Mayor's Steering Committee, leading efforts to affect change not only locally and nationally, but across the globe. In 2015, Mayor Adler attended the signing of the Paris Agreement, the tenets of which later influenced Austin to increase renewable energy usage goals from 55% to 65%.

Over the course of Mayor Adler's term, climate action has become a top priority for Austin, shifting to influence our city's major projects including Project Connect, the Austin Central Library, and many more. Through involvement with the Climate Mayors network and C40 Cities, the City of Austin understands climate as an equity issue and has tackled climate change as an opportunity for innovation.

## *C40*

C40 is a global network of mayors dedicated to taking action on the climate crisis. Austin has been a member since 2006, spanning all of Mayor Adler's terms. He has attended several United Nations COP Conferences around the globe, including the 2015 COP21 meeting in Paris, during which the Paris Agreement was signed. Through C40, Mayor Adler has participated in the Global Youth and Mayors Forum, amplifying the voices of young climate activists around the world.

In 2017, when President Trump pulled the United States out of the Paris Agreement, Austin joined sixty other cities in adopting the Paris Agreement at a local level and continuing the fight against climate change.

## *Climate Mayors*

In December 2019, Mayor Adler joined the Climate Mayors Steering Committee, a network of 470+ mayors from around the country dedicated to taking action on climate change at the local level. The group has aligned themselves with the Paris Agreement,

acknowledging that cities create the most greenhouse gas emissions and that unified local leaders can influence action at the state and federal levels.

### *Climate Equity Plan*

Austin's original climate action plan was adopted by the Austin City Council in 2015, with the goal of achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and the intention of updating the plan every 5 years.

In September 2021, the revised and updated Austin Climate Equity Plan was adopted by Council. The new Climate Equity Plan better addresses the increased speed with which climate change must be addressed, better accounts for Austin's rapid population growth, incorporates new and burgeoning green technology, and addresses racial and socioeconomic equity issues caused by the impacts of climate change.

Between 2010 and 2019, building electricity and transportation were the City's two biggest emission sources. During this time frame, emissions from building electricity use dropped 20%, despite a 20% increase in Austin's population, pushing Transportation toward being the City's biggest emission source.

(Source: [CoA](#); [CoA](#))

### *Austin Energy*

Austin Energy is a leader in adopting innovative technologies, with a goal to match our customer's use with 100% carbon-free generation by 2040, helping the City of Austin reach its goal of becoming a net-zero City. Today, 72% of our energy is carbon-free, and we're on track for that to be 100% by 2035.

The Resource, Generation, and Climate Protection Plan to 2030 is an Austin Energy initiative with the intention of providing safe, reliable utility service to its customers while honing in on the City's climate goals. Through the plan, AE will retire all of its carbon-emitting generation plants and halt the acquisition of any other carbon-emitting assets to pursue renewable energy sources.

(Source: [AE](#); [AE](#); [CoA](#))

### *Green Spaces and Trees*

With community input, Austin PARD created and published their long-range plan for land, facilities, and programs in Austin parks between 2020 and 2030. The purpose of the "Our Parks, Our Future Long Range Parks Plan" is to expand equitable park access, enhance public urban spaces, align programs with community interests, foster sustainable growth, and optimize park operations. It includes 26 Planning Area Recommendations across the City, specifically created to meet the goals of the LRP.

[Waterloo Greenway](#) opened in August 2021 with the beginning of 1.5 miles of trails in an 11-acre park space, acting as the final connector for Austin's 35-acre greenway system. The Greenway is home to playgrounds, a restored Waller Creek, and Moody Amphitheater.

Most recently, with 73% of voters supporting, Proposition B was passed in the November 2021 election, authorizing the City to swap 9 acres of parkland with 48 acres of parkland contiguous with existing parks.

(Source: [Waterloo](#); [Community Impact](#); [CoA](#))

### *EVs*

Our Climate and Equity Plan calls for 40% of all miles traveled to be electric by 2030. To achieve this goal, Austin Energy created the award-winning "Austin Drives Electric Dealership Initiative." It removed barriers of EV adoption by improving the consumer EV buying experience. In doing so, we became the first utility in the United States to offer a live EV inventory browser.

- In January 2020, Austin Energy's EV platforms had 1,732 users. In January 2021, they had 5,295 users, a 205% increase in one year.
- Since the launch of this initiative, ~8,000 EVs have been sold and registered.
- The Plug-In EVerywhere<sup>SM</sup> network has grown to 1,200 charging ports today. Its e-fuel is backed by 100% renewable energy through the utility's GreenChoice program.

(Source: [Austin Energy](#); [ZappyRide](#))

### *Water*

Water Forward is Austin's 100-year integrated water resource plan to develop and implement diverse and environmentally conscious water management strategies to adapt to growth, drought, and climate change and ensure a sustainable, resilient, equitable, and affordable water future for our community for the next 100 years.

With the current iteration of the Water Forward plan approved in 2018, Austin's integrated water resource plan is centered around drought, protecting the Colorado River as our water supply, reusing water, and conservation.

Austin Water has now started the process to complete the first five-year update to the Water Forward plan. Austin Water will be updating this plan in alignment with a community engagement process that includes virtual and in-person workshops, ongoing Task Force meetings, and other events.

(Source: [CoA](#); [SpeakUp Austin](#))