Travis County Climate Action Plan

The County's Roadmap to a Better Future

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Message from the County Judge

Travis County Employees and Residents,

The response to the Climate Crisis has largely focused around city governments. While we applaud the efforts of our peers in City governments, we at Travis County believe that it will take action from cities, counties, states, non-governmental organizations, academia, businesses, and individuals around the globe. Travis County has joined the "We Are Still in Coalition" to declare that we will continue to support climate action to meet the Paris Agreement, we have recognized and echoed the concern of the world's leading climate scientists by making a Climate Emergency Declaration, and now we are taking swift and systemic action at addressing Travis County's organizational contribution to global emissions and climate change.

Hurricane Harvey was a $2.7 billion reminder that climate change has arrived in Texas. Time after time, we have seen the staggering costs of reacting to the impacts of climate change. Today I am announcing that Travis County will be changing our approach to proactively reduce operational emissions, and preempt climate change impacts by planning ahead and adapting to be more resilient. Travis County employees continue to be Leaders in Innovation by rethinking the way we do business, challenging the way things have always been done, and developing solutions to make our operations more efficient and effective.

I am encouraging all County employees to lean in and take part in the actions listed in this plan and support the County's guiding principle of Operational Excellence. The development of this Climate Action Plan also supports the Financial Sustainability guiding principle. Bond rating agencies are asking about local governments' Climate Action Plans when determining bond ratings. Additionally, the costs of responding to disasters are too great to bear consistently, and the CEO of Blackrock, the world's largest investment, firm has declared that "Every government, company, and shareholder must confront climate change."

In the name of equity, fairness, and respect for all peoples, nations, and generations, inaction can no longer be tolerated. Travis County will begin making the changes necessary to ensure the residents of Travis County can continue to thrive tomorrow and for many years to come.

To a brighter future,

Sarah Eckhardt
Travis County Judge

Foreword on Resiliency: County Commissioner Brigid Shea

The same spring we celebrated the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, we also lived through the unprecedented effects of a global pandemic. It is clearly time for us to become more resilient. In that vein, I am delighted to present Travis County's first ever Climate Action Plan. The increasingly damaging effects of climate change have altered all of our thinking, and are forcing us in Travis County to re-examine many things. Among them, our water supply. We know that one of the effects of climate change is that our region will be hotter and drier.

I am proud that Travis County is leading the way with a massive water conservation effort. We have permanently removed the yearly demand for 10,000,000 gallons of drinking water with conservation efforts in just four of our large county buildings downtown. We did this by swapping out the water supply for our air conditioning systems, which are the largest users of water in big buildings. Instead of using treated drinking water, we are using Austin's purple pipe system, which is treated wastewater.

We are building our community resilience around wildfires. In 2019 we conducted Texas' first ever neighborhood-based wildfire evacuation drill and intend to share the lessons learned. We have dramatically improved the effectiveness of our local emergency notification system, WarnCentralTexas, which allows us to reach many more people in times of emergency and climate-related disasters like flooding and wildfires. Travis County proactively adopted a more accurate floodplain map, informed by actual rainfall data in recent years, called Atlas 14. Atlas 14 proves what many people have already observed, which is that flooding is more intense and the floodplains are expanding. By using this improved floodplain map we are preventing new developments from putting people in danger of flooding or drowning.

All of these actions are intended to minimize the harm to our residents. Our Climate Action Plan includes many more examples of programs and actions that we are taking inside the county and beyond. We share with this plan with you as the first step in a process that we know will make our county government and our community more resilient.

Brigid Shea

Brigid Shea
Travis County Commissioner, Precinct 2

Climate Change in Travis County

In order to better understand the local impacts of climate change, the City of Austin Office of Sustainability hired ATMOS Research, led by climate scientist Dr. Katherine Hayhoe from Texas Tech University, to conduct climate models for Central Texas for the 2015 Austin Community Climate Plan. Her study projected climate changes through 2100 to include the following lower and higher emission projections for the Austin area:

- Increases in annual and seasonal average temperatures, with more days over 100° F and more nights over 80° F
- More frequent high-temperature extremes of over 110° F.
- Little change in annual average precipitation, but more frequent extreme precipitation, with more days of more than 2 inches of rainfall within a 24 hour period and increased durations of extreme rainfall.
- A slight increase in the number of dry days per year.
- More frequent drought conditions in summer due to hotter weather.

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Climate Change in Travis County

In 2007, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) stated that in order to avoid the worst impacts from climate change, greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced to 40% below 2005 levels by 2030 and 80% below 2005 levels by 2050. A 2018 IPCC Special Report called for even more stringent emission reductions to avoid the worst impacts.

While Travis County cannot directly alter global emissions, we can be accountable for the impacts of our operations and strive to lead by example, innovate, and work to continuously improve. This plan signifies Travis County's commitment to being part of the solution to the climate crisis and lays out specific activities the County can complete over time.

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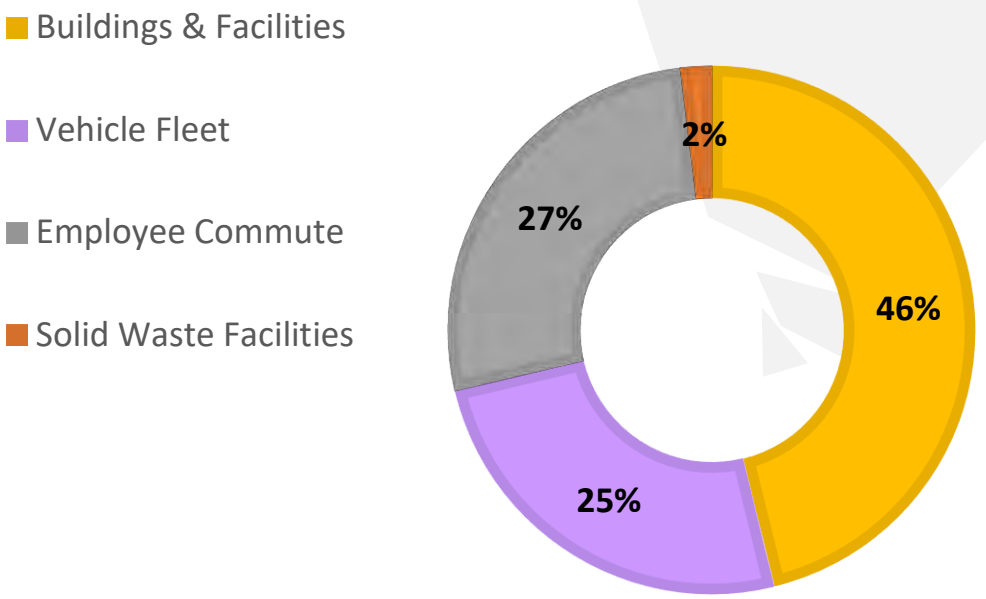
2018 Greenhouse Gas Inventory

Travis County Sustainability staff completed a Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventory to determine the sources and magnitude of emissions produced by Travis County operations and staff. The inventory helps us better understand areas we can focus on to reduce the impact we create as an organization. The inventory was completed using ClearPath.

ClearPath is a powerful, advanced web application for energy and emissions management. ClearPath is the leading online software platform for completing greenhouse gas inventories, forecasts, climate action plans, and monitoring at the community-wide or government-operations scales.

As you can see from the GHG Inventory, the County's largest sources of Greenhouse Gas emissions are buildings and employee commutes.

TRAVIS COUNTY GHG INVENTORY



39,945 Metric Tons of CO_2e

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Inventory Results Explained

The EPA's Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator translates abstract measurements into more relatable terms such as the annual emissions from cars, households, or power plants. Below are the equivalents of Travis County's emissions, as well as how those emissions could be avoided or offset.

CO_2 emissions from

4,494,768	3,923,870	44,013,910	529	4,609
gallons of gasoline consumed	gallons of diesel consumed	Pounds of coal burned	tanker trucks' worth of gasoline	homes' energy use for one year

-or- -or- -or- -or-

Greenhouse gas emissions avoided by

13,587	1,941	1,699,643	8.6	1,517,494
Tons of waste recycled instead of landfilled	Garbage trucks of waste recycled instead of landfilled	trash bags of waste recycled instead of landfilled	Wind turbines running for a year	Incandescent lamps switched to LEDs

-or- -or- -or- -or-

Inventory Results Explained

According to the Texas Transportation Institute, in 2017 each commuter in the Austin area wasted 66 hours per year sitting in traffic at a cost of $1,391 per commuter which leads to a waste of about 25 gallons of fuel per auto commuter.

Electricity provided by Austin Energy is the vast majority of energy used with Travis County. While electricity demand continues to grow across all Austin Energy customer categories (commercial, residential, and industrial), the carbon intensity of electricity has declined. Austin Energy has a goal of generating 100% of electricity from carbon-free sources by 2035 which is included in Austin Energy's Resource, Generation, and Climate Protection Plan.

While building energy use appears to be the biggest area of opportunity, sizable improvements can be made to reduce emissions from both Travis County Fleet vehicles and also from employees commuting in their personal vehicles.

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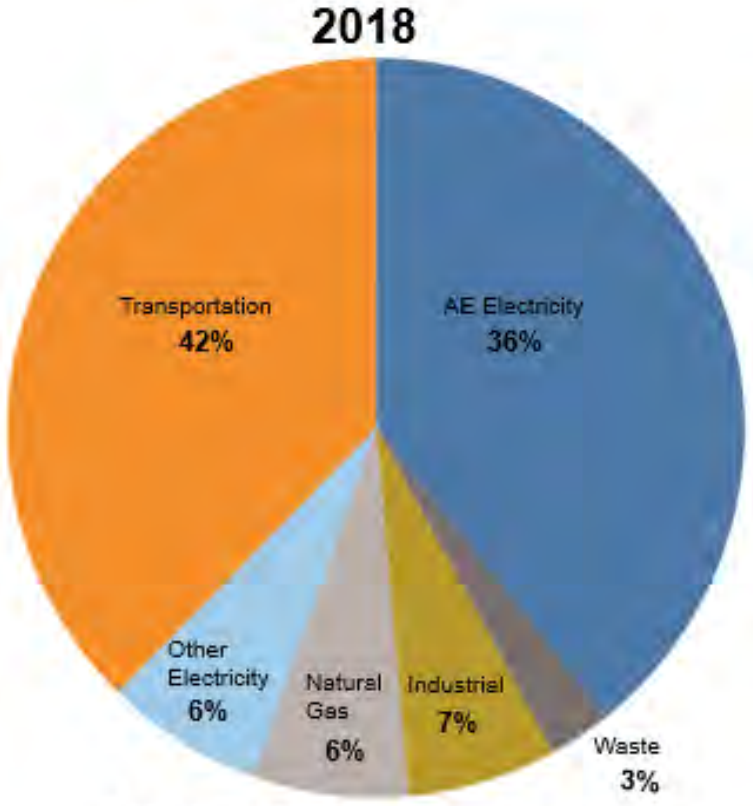
A Shift in Power

As Austin Energy power sources increasingly move to renewables, the share of Travis County's emissions from buildings will decrease in favor of transportation emissions, which are projected to continue to increase and overtake energy as the highest emitting sector by 2030.

Travis County Sustainability staff collaborated with the City of Austin's Office of Sustainability who shared their community-level Greenhouse Gas inventory which was conducted using Travis County as the emissions boundary, so while it is a City of Austin-created inventory, the data looks at Travis County as a community or region.

Like Travis County's operation inventory, the community level inventory shows that the biggest areas of opportunity are transportation and electricity consumption. Specifically, Austin Energy-generated electricity comprises the vast majority of electricity emissions. By supporting Austin Energy's shift to more renewable power Travis County can significantly reduce emissions at an operational and community level.

Travis County Community Level GHG Inventory



13.6 million metric tons CO2e

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Travis County Opportunities

Similar to Travis County's operational Greenhouse Gas Inventory the Travis County Community inventory shows that the majority of emissions stem from consumption of electricity and transportation. As mentioned, as renewable energy production grows, transportation becomes the greatest challenge and opportunity to reducing emissions in Travis County.

Because we have identified and measured our emissions, we can now work diligently to take action to curb those emissions. This Climate Action Plan is the beginning of a new era in Travis County where we measure, plan, act, evaluate, improve, and repeat. This Climate Action Plan is intended to be a living document, updated at regular intervals with completed projects being replaced with new ideas. The Commissioners Court will be responsible for approving this plan, but all County employees will be responsible for implementing, updating, and revisiting the plan.

Plan Development Process

Departmental Participation and Engagement

Travis County Sustainability staff conducted Climate Action Visioning workshops with the leadership teams of all departments that report to the Commissioners Court. During these workshops, leadership teams were given a high-level overview of a Climate Action Plan, the impacts of climate change in Travis County, and the key focus areas: energy, water, recycling and waste, transportation, organizational culture and process improvement, purchasing, and resiliency (see page 13 for more information and examples of the key focus areas).

The leadership teams were given information about the activity ahead of time so that they could brainstorm ideas and solicit staff for input. During the workshops, leadership teams generated ideas that their department or the larger County could take to reduce environmental impacts. After ideas were generated, like ideas were combined, and then leadership staff voted for their favorite ideas to represent what their department/group would like to see as prioritized actions.

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Plan Development Process

The focus areas were used identify broad areas within which staff members could identify actions to take to reduce resource consumption, change employee behaviors, or otherwise reduce operational impacts.

Some of the proposed activities generated from visioning workshops overlapped between two or more focus areas. Additionally, some ideas did not seem to fit within any of the focus areas, for that reason the workshops included an “other” category, so that all ideas could be encouraged.

The key focus areas are intended to be a framework within which County staff can focus their resources and attention to make positive change. The key focus areas were not designed to limit ideas or creativity. When overlapping or non-conforming ideas were proposed, Sustainability staff assigned the idea to a singular focus area based on fit (as determined by Sustainability staff) and consistency with previous idea categorization.

Focus areas such as energy and water use are easily measured and could have visible costs-savings, while others are more challenging to quantify, but success can be demonstrated with case studies, success stories, and qualitative data such as feedback surveys. Though measurement may be simpler in certain focus areas, making changes and process improvements in all of these areas will deliver benefits to Travis County as an organization and also to the residents of Travis County.

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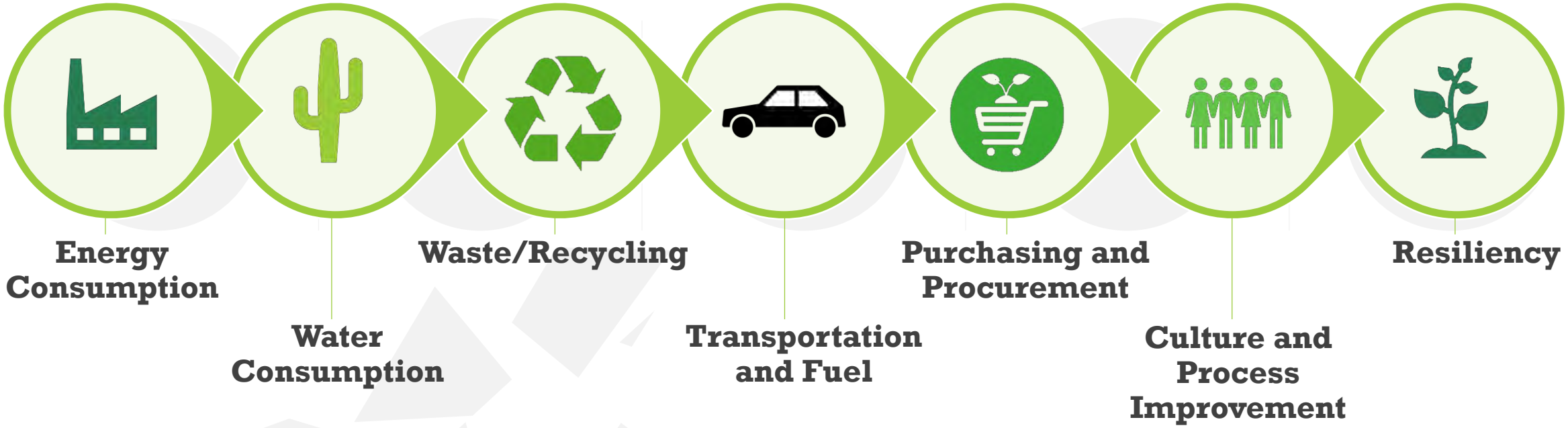
Key Focus Areas



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Key Focus Areas Explained

#1 Energy Consumption – reducing energy consumption by Travis County buildings and operations. An example activity could be updating network-wide defaults, so that computers switch to power-saver after a few minutes of inactivity. Another example could be switching all light-bulbs to LED bulbs.

How to measure: monitor annual total energy use and cost (including per capita energy usage/cost and energy usage intensity)

#2 Water – reducing potable water consumption by Travis County buildings and operations. An example activity could be expanding the use of reclaimed water for building cooling and irrigation of landscaping.

How to measure: monitor annual total potable water use and cost (including per capita energy usage/cost)

#3 Transportation – reducing single-occupancy vehicle trips taken by County employees either commuting to work or traveling in County vehicles, as well as reducing Travis County-related fossil fuel consumption by the County vehicle fleet and by County employee commuting. An example activity could be adding additional electric vehicles to the Travis County fleet.
How to measure: # and % of employees participating in a sustainable commute (walk, bus, work from home) 1+ times per week

How to measure: (fleet) composition (% hybrid/eco, non-hybrid) + # of EV charging stations

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Key Focus Areas Explained

#4 Resiliency Efforts – preparing for the impacts of climate change that are already happening as well as being better prepared for future events. Travis County is projected to see increases in the annual and seasonal average temperatures with more frequent high temperature extremes. Due to the hotter weather, more frequent drought conditions in the summer are projected. While the annual average precipitation is projected to change little, this area can expect more frequent extreme precipitation (> 2 inches of rain in 24 hours). An example activity could be shifting work hours in the summer for field staff to limit workers exposure to the sun in the late afternoon hours.

How to measure: Case study – highlight key resiliency efforts completed – change annually. Storm water/rainwater capacity of new parks, sqft/acres of farmland for local food resilience, rainwater collection, cooling shelters, staff or community engagement on resiliency are all potential opportunities.

#5 Organizational Culture and Process Improvement– adopting or revising personnel or organizational policies that encourage or advance sustainability, employee engagement, and/or more efficient business practices. An example could include adding sustainability or employee volunteerism to performance measures. Another example could include recognition and awards for employees who are exemplary sustainability leaders in their workplace.

How to measure: # of presentations/outreach events and contacts reached by sustainability team programming

How to measure: Case study – process improvements or innovations and the resulting impacts

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Key Focus Areas Explained

#6 Waste/Recycling – reducing the amount of waste produced by County operations as well as cost-savings or revenue generation created by diversion activities. Waste reduction also includes reduction and proper management of universal and hazardous wastes.

How to measure: Diversion rate based on contracted trash/recycling collection services (and cost) as well as case studies highlighting County diversion results.

#7 Purchasing/Sustainable Procurement – continuing progress towards court-adopted Environmentally Preferable Purchasing goals. Progress includes 50% or more of office supply purchases rated as environmentally preferable, staff education and training, incorporating sustainability and environmentally preferable purchasing into contracts, and leveraging Travis County dollars to encourage more sustainability efforts from vendors and contracts.

How to measure: % EPP office supply purchases + process improvements/case studies related to EPP

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When it comes to resource consumption and other emissions-reducing actions, Travis County is not starting from scratch. There are a number of policies and practices already in place that should be acknowledged and celebrated. The pages that follow highlight the efforts Travis County is already doing.

The Auditor's Office has numerous paperless processes, the Facilities Management Department is leading the way with energy-efficient green building practices, and Transportation and Natural Resources (TNR) and Emergency Services have prepared a number of policies to help Travis County be more resilient in the face of severe weather, disasters, and a changing climate. All County departments seem to have already begun taking steps to reduce resource consumption and lessen their impact.

All activities listed include the name of the practice or policy, the responsible department or party, and a link to additional information.

Existing Activities

Photo credit: Russell Hughes

Not Starting From Scratch – Existing County Efforts

Activity or Policy	Responsible Party	Description	Link to Activity/Policy
Travis County Emergency Energy Conservation Policy	Facilities Management Department	The Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) monitors the availability of electrical capacity on the state-wide grid and in cases of extremely high load demand or loss of generation capability, may declare an energy emergency and request users to reduce consumption. Effective response to the notifications is critical to ensure that the grid remains stable and to avoid power outages and/or rolling blackouts.	Travis County Emergency Energy Conservation Policy
Public Utility Commission of Texas Summer Conservation Alerts – Posted on FMD Website	Facilities Management Department	Alerts are used to notify Texans of conditions on the electricity grid, including conservation steps that can be taken to reduce the chance of involuntary rolling outages being needed in the event an Electricity Emergency is declared.	Public Utility Commission of Texas Summer Conservation Alerts
Green Building Policy	Facilities Management Department	Adopted by the Commissions Court to promote consistent application of a sustainable building philosophy. The goal is established to target, to the greatest extent practical, the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) silver level certification for new and renovated facilities budgeted at $1 million or over; to use the principles of LEED to the greatest extent practical and reasonable for renovation and rehabilitation projects budgeted below $1 million; and each project will be assessed for the appropriate certification level with the goal of maximizing long-term benefits, such as operating and maintenance savings, minimizing up-front costs.	Green Building Policy
Travis County Jail Energy Savings Performance Contract	Planning and Budget Office & Travis County Sheriff's Office	The Commissioners Court approved a $27 million Energy Savings Performance Contract with Schneider Electric for energy and water efficiency upgrades at the Travis County Jail which are guaranteed to provide more than $42 million in savings over 20 years as well as resulting significant emissions savings.	Energy Saving Performance Contract Presentation

Energy

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Existing County Efforts

Activity or Policy	Responsible Party	Description	Link to Activity/Policy
Reclaimed Water for Building Cooling (Purple Pipe Project)	Facilities Management Department	Travis County is set to save an estimated 10 million gallons of water per year and also help save thousands of dollars in taxpayer money by using reclaimed water for cooling. The County is connecting to the City of Austin purple pipe of treated wastewater, or reclaimed water, along 11th street in downtown Austin. The Granger, HMS County Courthouse, 700 Lavaca, Criminal Justice Complex (CJC), and Gault buildings have all been connected to the system. As additional buildings are built or acquired in the downtown area, they will be evaluated for their potential to connect.	Travis County Reclaimed Water Use in Community Impact
Civil and Family Courts Facility	Facilities Management Department	At this time, the City of Austin's purple pipe (reclaimed water line) does not extend to the court facility. However, the building will be ready to integrate with the purple pipe once it extends closer to the facility. When the reclaimed water system is connected and of sufficient quality, approximately 90% of the building water will be non-potable captured or reclaimed water. The building is also designed to reuse chiller condensate and to capture rainwater.	Civil and Family Courts Facility Project

Water

Existing County Efforts

Activity or Policy	Responsible Party	Description	Link to Activity/Policy
Commuter Leave Incentive Program	TNR-Sustainability	The Commuter Leave Incentive Program (CLIP) rewards employees who walk, telework, work a compressed work week, or use public transportation for their daily commute to and from work. You accumulate points that translate into leave. The goal of CLIP is to reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality so everyone wins.	Commuter Leave Incentive Program
Commute Connections Program	TNR-Sustainability	Travis County offers a variety of benefits for employees who want to reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality. Benefits include flexible work hours (with supervisor approval), free transit passes, teleworking, bike facilities and showers, a vanpool program, and information on transportation reimbursement accounts where employees can use pre-tax dollars for work-related commuting and parking expenses.	Commute Connections Program
Telework Policy	TNR-Sustainability & Human Resources Management Department (HRMD)	Teleworking is as an alternative work option used to meet the business needs and enhance the productivity of each County department. It is available at the discretion of and upon the approval by an employee's Department Director and with the consent of the employee. Telework is intended to be very flexible to meet the diverse needs of departments. Arrangements may be several hours a day or several days a week or every day for several weeks or months.	Teleworking Policy
Telework Guidelines	TNR-Sustainability	To facilitate Teleworking, TNR-Sustainability has developed guidelines for authorizing, participating in, and administering teleworking.	Teleworking Guide
Alternative Fuel Vehicles Policy	TNR-Fleet	On December 21, 1993, Commissioner's Court approved an AFV policy. The Policy requires increasing levels of participation, and that by model year 2001, 70% of all new vehicle acquisitions be AFVs.	Vehicle and Heavy Equipment Replacement Policy

Transportation and Fuel

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Existing County Efforts

Activity or Policy	Responsible Party	Description	Link to Activity/Policy
Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy	Purchasing Office/TNR-Sustainability & Auditor's Office	In October 2019 the Commissioners Court adopted an Environmentally Preferable Purchasing policy explicitly providing support for purchasing and procuring products and services that have the least adverse effect on human health and the quality of the environment when compared to similar products and services and also taking into account factors such as the Product Life Cycle.	Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy
Purchasing Warehouse for Furniture and Other Reuse Opportunities	Purchasing Office	Travis County's Purchasing Warehouse is full of items that still have value and utility, but are no longer needed by their original users. From office chairs to desks, to filing cabinets and more, the Purchasing Warehouse is bursting with reuse opportunities – and low-cost supplies for County employees.	Contact the Purchasing Warehouse (no website found)
Office Supply Reuse Closet	Green Team Members + Commissioner Shea's Office	Commissioner Shea's office has donated a supply closet for the purpose of office supply reuse. County staff members can send gently used office supplies to the reuse closet and/or request available items to reuse.	Contact Commissioner Shea's Office (no website for office supply reuse)
Recycled Content Paper Available from CARS	Communication and Records Services (CARS)	CARS has a bulk paper contract to achieve competitive pricing for copy paper for all County departments to use. CARS recently added a recycled content paper to their inventory, so that departments have the option to use recycled content paper instead of virgin paper.	Order Paper from the Print Shop (no website for ordering paper)
Online SharePoint Surplus Store	Purchasing Office	The Purchasing Office is currently developing a SharePoint surplus store for County resources and supplies (chairs, case goods, and modular furniture) to repurpose County resources that would otherwise end up at the Purchasing warehouse.	Purchasing Office SharePoint Page
Contract Spend Monitoring	Purchasing Office	The Purchasing Office monitors contract spend to ensure County is competitive pricing for commonly used items. To help the County get the right items at the best price through contracts.	Purchasing Office SharePoint Page

Purchasing/ Procurement

CONSERVE TRAVIS COUNTY

Existing County Efforts

Activity or Policy	Responsible Party	Description	Link to Activity/Policy
Travis County Sustainability Program	TNR-Sustainability	Travis County has dedicated resources and staff to develop a Sustainability Program charged with overseeing waste reduction, revenue generation or cost-saving opportunities, diversion and engagement opportunities for County staff and residents, developing recommendations to reducing County-caused environmental impacts, and driving behavioral change from a mindset of resource consumption to one of conservation.	Travis County Sustainability Program
Recycling Participation Order	TNR-Sustainability & All Departments	Directs all departments of the Commissioners Court to participate in the County recycling program as well as identify volunteers to ensure all departments are represented on the Green Team.	Recycling Participation Order
Xerox Assessment	Information Technology Services (ITS) &Xerox	Travis County ITS is working with Xerox Workplace Services consultants to examine the current state of Travis County printing consumption and fleet, identify efficiency opportunities, and recommend solutions to reduce waste, increase security, and save money and resources.	Xerox Government Solutions
3 Rings for Learning Binder Reuse Program	Green Team & TNR-Sustainability	Started and led by the Green Team, the 3 Rings for Learning Program collects surplus binders from Travis County operations, and Green Team members deliver binders to AISD so that binders can be reused by teachers and students in need of additional supplies.	Green Team Projects

Waste and Recycling

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Existing County Efforts

Activity or Policy	Responsible Party	Description	Link to Activity/Policy
Travis County Guiding Principles Included in Performance Reviews	Commissioners Court + HRMD	Travis County employees are rated on what they do and also how they do it to ensure daily work is aligned with County Guiding Principles. Employee ratings are weighted as 40% of the rating being Goals (the what) and 60% of the rating being the competencies (the how). By including Guiding Principles as part of employee reviews, Travis County leadership is demonstrating the importance of and commitment to these values which are: Equity, Fairness, and Respect; Financial Sustainability, Operational Excellence, and Leaders in Innovation.	Travis County Guiding Principles
Travis County Green Team	All Departments & Employees	Travis County has a Green Team made up of dedicated individuals across the organizational. Green Team members help lead by example in their workspace, share relevant sustainability events or updates, and engage in projects and activities outside of their office to further Travis County sustainability efforts.	Travis County Green Team
Sustainability Included in New Employee Orientation	HRMD	Information on Travis County's Sustainability Program and how employees can participate is included in New Employee Orientation. By including sustainability information in New Employee Orientation, employees learn that sustainability is important to Travis County and that there are a variety of resources available to employees.	New Employee Orientation
Electronic or Paperless Processes	Auditor's Office & HRMD (Respectively)	Travis County has implemented some paperless processes to reduce waste and streamline processes two major functions that have been transitioned to electronic platforms are timesheets and employee performance reviews. Other Auditor's Office functions that have been made electronic include: electronic purchase orders, electronic audit documentation, pay statements, W2's, benefits enrollment, direct deposit, and Auditor's Office-specific administrative forms (employee manual, telework request form, etc.)	Electronic Timesheets and Performance Reviews on SAP/LMS
Electronic Vendor Invoicing for Court Appointed Attorneys	Auditor's Office & Criminal and Civil Courts	A joint project between the Courts and the Auditor's Office replaced paper invoices for Court Appointed Attorneys with an electronic process.	Electronic Invoices for Court Appointed Attorneys

Culture and Continuous Improvement

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Existing County Efforts

Activity or Policy	Responsible Party	Description	Link to Activity/Policy
Flood Mapping and Permitting Program	TNR-Development Services	Adoption of Atlas 14 standards to limit development in the floodplain to ensure new construction is not built in areas that will be prone to flooding events, or is built to a standard to withstand 100 year flood events.	Travis County Code Subtitle 19 Chapter 482
Emergency Operations Plan	Office of Emergency Management	The plan outlines Travis County's responsibility for identifying and mitigating hazards, preparing for and responding to, and managing the recovery from emergency situations that affect our community.	Travis County Emergency Operations Plan
Austin/Travis County Wildfire Protection Plan	Office of Emergency Management	This non-regulatory document develops a regional strategy, aligned with national best practices, to increase wildfire preparedness by restoring and maintaining landscapes, creating and supporting Fire-Adapted Communities, and implementing a risk-based management response to wildfires. The plan is the primary tool that communities and stakeholders should use to prepare for wildfire.	Austin/Travis County Community Wildfire Protection Plan
Hazard Mitigation Plan	Office of Emergency Management	The plan identifies the local hazards, (such as heavy rains and flooding, extreme heat, and wildfire), assesses risks, and identifies mitigation goals and priorities. Hazard mitigation activities are an investment in a community's safety and sustainability. A comprehensive update to a hazard mitigation plan addresses hazard vulnerabilities that exist today and in the foreseeable future.	Travis County Hazard Mitigation Plan
Planting Trees in the Floodplain	TNR-Parks/Tree Folks (non-profit urban forestry group)	Travis County Parks has an agreement with Tree Folks to allow Tree Folks to plant trees along Wilbarger Creek. The goal of tree planting is to increase tree canopy cover, minimize soil erosion, and improve water quality on Wilbarger Creek watershed, which flows into the Colorado River.	Tree Folks Travis County Floodplain Restoration Program

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Existing County Efforts

Activity or Policy	Responsible Party	Description	Link to Activity/Policy
Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan	TNR-Natural Resources	The Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (BCP) is a system of preserves in western Travis County that comprises more than 32,000 acres. The BCP was created to protect eight endangered species and is one of the largest urban preserves in the country. In addition to providing habitat for endangered and species of concern, the preserve provides a number of other ecosystem services such as cleaning our water, filtering pollutants from the air, reducing the risk of flooding and erosion, and lowering temperatures by buffering the urban heat island effect.	Balcones Canyonlands Preserve
Parks Master Plan	TNR-Parks	The mission of Travis County Parks is getting people outside for their health and wellbeing. In addition to enhancing human health, parks provide additional ecological benefits which are indicated in the Parks Master Plan. Goal B: Protect natural and cultural resources. Policy B.2.1: Use best management practices to maintain or restore native woodlands, prairies, riparian zones, and other ecosystems. Policy B.5.1: Acquire land in Floodplain and Low Terraces, Post Oak Savanna, Edwards Plateau, and Blackland Prairie ecoregions and maintain ecological functions	Parks Master Plan
Land Water and Transportation Plan	TNR-Long Range Planning	The Travis County Land, Water & Transportation Plan (LWTP) is a framework for formulating and enacting policies and capital improvement programs to guide growth while protecting critical natural resources in unincorporated Travis County. The plan specifically addresses county services provided through the Travis County Transportation and Natural Resources (TNR) Department, including: Regulating development in floodplains, Mitigating the impacts of wildfire, flood, and other natural hazards, Protecting natural resources within the county's jurisdiction.	Land Water and Transportation Plan

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New Activities

Categorized by timeframe and level of priority

Photo credit: Tom Hausler

As part of the development of this Climate Action Plan, departmental leadership teams were encouraged to identify things that could be done by their department or by the entire Travis County organization to reduce our operational carbon footprint.

Activities are categorized by timeframe:

- Short Term – less than 1 year to implement
- Medium Term – 1-5 years to implement
- Long Term – 5+ years to implement

Activities are also identified as a priority activities or additional activities. Activities were designed as priority if the solution was identified by multiple departments during the Climate Action Visioning workshops.

All activities listed include a description, a measure of success, and primary and back-up contacts to ensure effective implementation.

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Photo credit: Russell Hughes

Short Term

Training and Behavior Changes

Sharing Information and Best Practices

Climate Leadership and Engagement

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Short Term- Priority

Focus Area	Activity	How to Measure	Primary Contact	Back-up Contact	Timeline
Energy	Increase temperature range to use less A/C	Resolution passed by Commissioners Court to raise approved temperature range and adjustment of temperature controls. Look at monthly building energy use and compare to previous years	Facilities Management Department	Facilities Management Department	Short Term <1 year
	Engage employees about energy costs and conservation (light switch signs and other tools to encourage conservation)	Has an education campaign been created and shared with employees at least once per year? Have Green Team members posted signs or resources in their workplace?	TNR-Sustainability & Green Team Members	Facilities Management Department	Short Term <1 year
	Monitor and manage energy use (turn out lights, install additional occupancy sensors, etc.)	Ensure Facilities Master Plan includes mention of energy efficiency projects to be completed for new and existing buildings. Annual reporting of energy use data	Facilities Management Department	TNR-Sustainability	Short Term <1 year
Waste/Recycling	Provide more information on what can be recycled and regular reminders to recycle- Travis Central	Has an education campaign been created and shared with employees at least once per year? Have Green Team members posted signs or resources in their workplace?	TNR-Sustainability & Green Team Members	TNR- Sustainability	Short Term <1 year
	Have custodians collect recycling in all buildings (not just trash)	Ensure equal custodial collection service for recycling and trash at all County facilities and examine impact on overall waste generation and recycling quantities	Facilities Management Department	TNR-Sustainability	Short Term <1 year
	Don't have trash cans in every office – centralized recycling and waste collection	Survey of custodial staff before and after implementation to understand time saved and other duties accomplished. Presence of centralized cans in every work space	Facilities Management Department	TNR-Sustainability	Short Term <1 year

CONSERVE TRAVIS COUNTY

Short Term- Priority

Focus Area	Activity	How to Measure	Primary Contact	Back-up Contact	Timeline
Purchasing/ Procurement	Develop a webpage or reuse platform for County resources and supplies (office supplies, computer equipment, and other small items)	Has a reuse platform been created to share County resources? How many items have been reused through the platform and what is the value of reused items (vs buying new)	Green Team Members	TNR-Sustainability & ITS	Short Term <1 year
Transportation/Fuel #1 Response	Streamline telecommuting process and provide more acceptance/support for telecommuting	# of employees who telework at least once per week. # of departments who allow employees to telecommute	ITS & HRMD	All Managers	Short Term <1 year
Organizational Culture and Process Improvement	Install more water bottle filling stations and encourage reusable bottle use	# of water bottle filling stations installed. # of bottles avoided through refill stations or # of buildings with a refill station	Facilities Management Department	TNR-Sustainability & CARE Program	Short Term <1 year
	Update space standards to use smaller, shared spaces to encourage teleworking and office hoteling	Have space standards been updated with telecommuting in mind? Does each large office location (50+ work stations) have office hoteling space?	Commissioners Court	Department Directors and Office Managers	Short Term <1 year
	Communicate organizational goals on Travis Central – more information about existing programs and goals	Are County goals that all employees can help work toward obvious and accessible on Travis Central?	ITS	All Departments – Share Relevant Goals	Short Term <1 year

CONSERVE TRAVIS COUNTY

Short Term- Additional

Focus Area	Activity	How to Measure	Primary Contact	Back-up Contact	Timeline
Energy	Stop auto-on function for lights – optimize occupancy sensors to ensure they're turning on when needed and turning off when not	Ensure all occupancy sensor-controlled lights have a manual on/off switch. Ensure new occupancy sensors purchased are not overly sensitive and address employee concerns about optimized use/sensitivity	Facilities Management Department	Facilities Management Department	Short Term <1 year
	Use Energy-Star rated servers	Ensure any new servers purchased are Energy-Star rated and have a reduced energy use compared to other servers of equal performance. Include language in server contracts related to energy efficiency	ITS	Purchasing Office	Short Term <1 year
	Track Energy Use – establish baseline usage by facility and/or program. Use the data to support or develop reduction goals	A baseline measurement of energy use by building and annual (or more frequent) reporting. Development of a method for tracking and comparing energy consumption (Energy Use Intensity)	TNR-Sustainability	Facilities Management Department	Short Term <1 year
Water	Install water-saving plumbing features (aerators, low-flow toilets, etc.)	Ensure all new toilets and urinals are water efficient. Include language in plumbing feature contracts related to water efficiency	Facilities Management Department &TNR Parks	Purchasing Office	Short Term <1 year
	Extend the use of reclaimed water in facilities (more reclaimed water usage)	# of buildings using reclaimed water and amount of reclaimed water used (reported annually or as needed)	Facilities Management Department	Facilities Management Department	Short Term <1 year

CONSERVE TRAVIS COUNTY

Short Term- Additional

Focus Area	Activity	How to Measure	Primary Contact	Back-up Contact	Timeline
Water	Fix toilets, sinks, and appliances leak or aren't functioning properly	Campaign to encourage reporting of improperly functioning fixtures and appliances related to water use. Allocation of resources and prioritization	Facilities Management Department	All County Employees Responsible for Reporting	Short Term <1 year
Waste	Recycle all fluids, oils, batteries, etc. from County fleet operations	Quantities of recycled oil, batteries, and other automotive parts reported annually, or as needed	TNR-Fleet	TNR-Sustainability	Short Term <1 year
	Reuse boxes and packing materials. Greater focus on reuse	Has an educational campaign been created as well as resources for employees and Green Team members to participate in more reuse activities?	Green Team &TNR-Sustainability	All County Employees	Short Term <1 year
	Print only when necessary education campaign	Has an educational campaign been created as well as resources for employees and Green Team members to encourage a reduction in printing?	TNR-Sustainability & Green Team	All County Employees	Short Term <1 year
Transportation/Fuel	Charge for parking and lease empty spaces at applicable County locations	Amount of revenue generated by leased spaces. CLIP/Commute Data to show impact on employee commuting behaviors	Commissioners Court &Facilities Management Department	TNR-Sustainability	Short Term <1 year
	Expand the availability of EV charging stations at County facilities	# of EV charging stations installed by Travis County. # of County buildings with access to EV charging stations	Facilities Management Department	TNR-Sustainability	Short Term <1 year
	Minimize single use trips in County vehicles	Encourage carpooling, planning ahead, and being creative and flexible to reduce single trips in County vehicles – education campaign. # of VMT in County vehicles	TNR-Sustainability & Green Team	All County Employees	Short Term <1 year
	Off-peak scheduling – allow flexible schedules so County staff can avoid rush hour/traffic congestion	Pilot off-peak scheduling or flexible schedules and survey staff to gauge impact on traffic congestion and employee satisfaction/stress	TNR-Sustainability	Commissioners Court and All Managers	Short Term <1 year

CONSERVE TRAVIS COUNTY

Short Term- Additional

Focus Area	Activity	How to Measure	Primary Contact	Back-up Contact	Timeline
Transportation/Fuel	Provide information and resources for public transportation use	Are information and resources for County employees to use public transportation obvious and accessible on Travis Central?	TNR-Sustainability	Capital Metro	Short Term <1 year
	Employee education on Commuter Leave Incentive Program (CLIP) and other incentives for reducing single-occupancy vehicle trips	CLIP/Commute Data to show impact on employee commuting behaviors. Is there training available and information accessible and shared with employees about the CLIP program?	TNR-Sustainability	HRMD	Short Term <1 year
	Utilization of gas cards within the County rather the going to County fuel sites to fill vehicles	(Emergency Services –generated idea). Do all departments have access to fuel cards if it's more logical and efficient to fuel vehicles at private stations rather than traveling to County fuel sites?	TNR-Fleet	Emergency Services	Short Term <1 year
Purchasing/ Procurement	Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Training for all TNR staff	Has Environmentally Preferable Purchasing training been provided to all TNR staff?	TNR-Sustainability	TNR Managers	Short Term <1 year
	Practice Environmentally Preferable Purchasing	Environmentally Preferable Purchases included in Annual Sustainability Report. Environmentally Preferable Purchasing language added to contract terms and conditions	TNR-Sustainability	Purchasing Office	Short Term <1 year
	Use Luxury Vinyl Tile (LVT) or other environmentally preferable flooring in more County buildings- less maintenance, lower cost of ownership	Environmentally Preferable Purchases included in Annual Sustainability Report. Environmentally Preferable Purchasing language added to contract terms and conditions	Facilities Management Department	Purchasing Office	Short Term <1 year

CONSERVE TRAVIS COUNTY

Short Term- Additional

Focus Area	Activity	How to Measure	Primary Contact	Back-up Contact	Timeline
Purchasing/ Procurement	Electric and battery operated grounds and custodial equipment (instead of gas-powered)	Impact on overall fuel usage. Are electric and battery powered equipment being used for grounds and custodial operations	Facilities Management Department & TNR-Parks	Purchasing Office	Short Term <1 year
Organizational Culture and Process Improvement	Track and monitor recharging of ozone-depleting refrigerants to identify leaks and take corrective action	Does Travis County have a program or software to track and monitor recharging of ozone-depleting refrigerants used in air-conditioning, refrigeration equipment, and other appliances that contain refrigerants to identify leaks and take corrective action?	Facilities Management Department	TNR-Natural Resources and Environmental Quality (TNR-NREQ) & Commissioner Shea's Office	Short Term <1 year
	Employee education on Commuter Leave Incentive Program (CLIP) and other incentives for reducing single-occupancy vehicle trips	CLIP/Commute Data to show impact on employee commuting behaviors. Is there training available and information accessible and shared with employees about the CLIP program?	TNR-Sustainability	HRMD	Short Term <1 year
	Educate on the benefits of conservation "what's in it for me" for employees	Is there training available and information accessible and shared with employees about general sustainability concepts and the importance of conservation?	TNR-Sustainability	Green Team Members	Short Term <1 year
	Employee workshops to generate ideas and solve programs – rewards and incentives for employees	Is there a platform and incentive for employees to innovate process improvements or solve problems? Case studies on proposed solutions and results	Commissioners Court	All County Employees	Short Term <1 year
	Training for all staff on climate change and what that means in Central Texas	Is there training available and information accessible and shared with employees about climate change in Texas?	TNR-Sustainability	Green Team Members	Short Term <1 year

CONSERVE TRAVIS COUNTY

Short Term- Additional

Focus Area	Activity	How to Measure	Primary Contact	Back-up Contact	Timeline
Organizational Culture and Process Improvement	County programs, activities, and engagement at all County buildings, not just downtown locations	Are County programs, activities, and engagement events offered at a variety of locations beyond the downtown facilities?	CARE Program/HRMD/TNR-Sustainability & Green Team Members	Travis County Training Council	Short Term <1 year
	Provide reminders and education of County Sustainability performance. Measurement and accountability for resource consumption and progress towards goals	Is the Green Steering Committee active and meeting regularly to review performance and goals?	Green Steering Committee	TNR-Sustainability	Short Term <1 year
	Facility design standards include specifications and standards to meet Climate Action Plan goals	Are Facility design standards specifications and standards aligned to meet Climate Action goals?	Facilities Management Department	TNR-Sustainability	Short Term <1 year
	Participate in more strategic planning and thinking – develop plans, engage stakeholders, and make thoughtful and informed decisions	Do all departments have a process for developing plans and engaging stakeholders to make thoughtful and informed decisions?	All County Department Leaders	All County Employees	Short Term <1 year
Resiliency Efforts	Increase planting of native trees in Travis County Parks	# of native trees planted by Travis County in County parks, or on County property	TNR-Parks	TNR-NREQ	Short Term <1 year
	Make sure chiller system is redundant using either multiple chillers or chillers with auxiliary power	Do all chillers have built in redundancy, so that an outage doesn't take the whole system/facility down?	Facilities Management Department	Facilities Management Department	Short Term <1 year

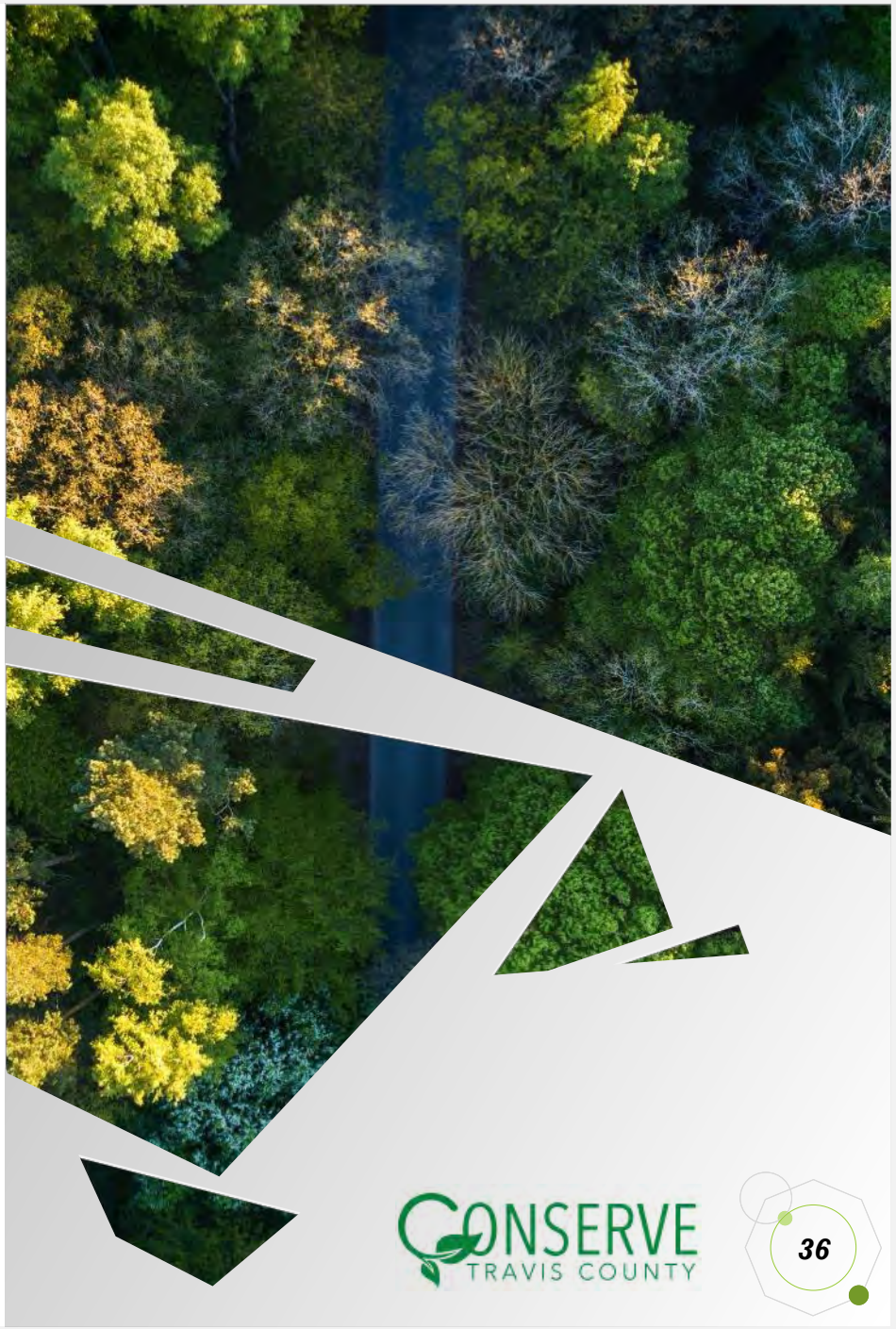
CONSERVE TRAVIS COUNTY

Medium Term Activities

Define Goals and Measurable Targets

Research Best Practices and Lessons Learn

Implement Solutions and Track Results



CONSERVE TRAVIS COUNTY

Medium Term- Priority

Focus Area	Activity	How to Measure	Primary Contact	Back-up Contact	Timeline
Energy	Optimize space heating and cooling controls and use smart thermostats	Ensure all very large office spaces (staff population of 200+) are equipped with smart thermostats and optimized space heating and cooling controls	Facilities Management Department	Facilities Management Department	Medium Term 1-5 years
	Generate and utilize energy from renewable sources (solar, wind, geothermal, etc.). Especially solar on County buildings	Amount of renewable energy generated by Travis County. # of County buildings generating and using renewable energy	Facilities Management Department	Commissioners Court & TNR-Sustainability	Medium Term 1-5 years
Water	Xeriscaping, native plants, and/or SITES certification for landscaping at County facilities	Amount of xeriscaped space at County facilities or # of County facilities utilizing water wise landscaping	Facilities Management Department	Health and Human Services - Ag Extension Office	Medium Term 1-5 years
Waste/Recycling	Compost collection at County buildings – especially in large eating areas (cafeterias, large breakrooms, etc.)	Compost collection available to County employees at all cafeteria/food service locations. Amount of material composted by County employees	TNR-Sustainability	Facilities Management Department	Medium Term 1-5 years

CONSERVE TRAVIS COUNTY

Medium Term- Priority

Focus Area	Activity	How to Measure	Primary Contact	Back-up Contact	Timeline
Transportation/Fuel	Electrification of fleet, vehicles, and equipment	# of EV's as a % of total EV-eligible fleet. Procurement of additional electric equipment	TNR-Fleet & TNR-Parks	TNR-Sustainability	Medium Term 1-5 years
Culture/Continuous Improvement	Greater utilization of electronic files and paperless processes – less paper and printing. Digital storage and records management	Reduction in amount of paper sent to Iron Mountain and reduction in paper and toner consumption. All departments have access to and training on electronics records management	CARS & ITS	Commissioners Court and IT Advisory Committee (ITAC)	Medium Term 1-5 years
	Encourage video conferencing and invest in equipment/resources to support more videoconferencing	Videoconferencing resources and instructions added to Travis Central. # of meetings hosted using Travis County videoconferencing or teleconferencing resources	ITS	All Employees	Medium Term 1-5 years
Resiliency Efforts	Protect existing trees in Travis County (from development or otherwise)	Does Travis County have a policy or mechanisms in place to protect against the removal of trees in Travis County?	TNR-Natural Resources	TNR-Environmental Quality	Medium Term 1-5 years

CONSERVE TRAVIS COUNTY

Medium Term- Additional

Focus Area	Activity	How to Measure	Primary Contact	Back-up Contact	Timeline
Energy	Use energy meters/monitors to show energy usage in real-time – LEED style publicly viewable performance	# energy usage monitors been installed in County buildings and total energy consumption	Facilities Management Department	Facilities Management Department &TNR-Sustainability	Medium Term 1-5 years
	Strategic summer scheduling of staff and a/c to reduce energy use	Do departments offer a summer schedule shift for employees to reduce a/c and energy use? Total energy usage	All County Employees/Managers & Facilities Management Department	Commissioners Court	Medium Term 1-5 years
	Use more effective/efficient insulation throughout County buildings – insulation updates, where needed	Plan for increased or updated insulation at facilities in need. Total energy usage	Facilities Management Department	Facilities Management Department	Medium Term 1-5 years
	County programs for energy efficiency or improvement rebates at home (like the City of Austin)	Does the County offer rebates or resources to residents for energy efficiency improvement or upgrades?	Health and Human Services	County Attorney's Office	Medium Term 1-5 years
Water	Retrofit older buildings with water-efficient fixtures and appliances (sinks, toilets, etc.)	# of buildings retrofitted. Total water usage	Facilities Management Department	Facilities Management Department	Medium Term 1-5 years
	Automatic sensors on sinks and irrigation systems to conserve water	% of sinks installed that are automatic sinks/have sensors and % of irrigation systems that have sensors or automatic shut-off. Total water usage	Facilities Management Department	Facilities Management Department	Medium Term 1-5 years

CONSERVE TRAVIS COUNTY

Medium Term- Additional

Focus Area	Activity	How to Measure	Primary Contact	Back-up Contact	Timeline
Water	Expand purple pipe water reuse to additional facilities	Amount of purple pipe water used (amount of potable water saved) and amount as a % of total water use	Facilities Management Department	Commissioners Court	Medium Term 1-5 years
Waste/Recycling	Comprehensive recycling in all Travis County Parks and TNR Facilities	Do all parks and TNR facilities have access to recycling bins and collection service? Is recycling accessible and obvious throughout the site?	TNR-Parks & TNR-Sustainability	TNR-Sustainability	Medium Term 1-5 years
	Reusable silverware and other reusable options at Murphy's Deli and Luby's	Do food vendors at 700 Lavaca offer reusable options for cutlery and dishes?	Facilities Management Department	TNR-Sustainability	Medium Term 1-5 years
	Hands-free bathroom door openers (to open doors with feet instead of hands/paper towels)	Do high-use bathrooms have hands-free bathroom door openers to increase hygiene and reduce paper towel consumption? % of bathrooms with hands-free door openers	Facilities Management Department	TNR-Sustainability & CARE Program	Medium Term 1-5 years
Transportation/Fuel	Adopt new formula for vehicle replacement to reduce fuel consumption and impact of vehicles	Has the County analyzed the formula for vehicle replacement to ensure vehicles replacement is consistent with County's Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy and adopt a new formula as needed	Commissioners Court	TNR-Fleet	Medium Term 1-5 years
	Change County policy of vehicle use/take home vehicles	Has the County analyzed the policy for taking vehicles home to reduce unnecessary travel, staff time, and fuel usage?	Commissioners Court	TNR-Fleet & Emergency Services	Medium Term 1-5 years

CONSERVE TRAVIS COUNTY

Medium Term- Additional

Focus Area	Activity	How to Measure	Primary Contact	Back-up Contact	Timeline
Transportation/Fuel	Expand the transit network and use of the transit network – encourage more transit-oriented development	How is the County encouraging the expansion of the transit network, more transit usage, and more transit-oriented development?	TNR-Long Range Planning & TNR-Sustainability	Commissioners Court & Capital Metro	Medium Term 1-5 years
	Commute based on zip code – staggered schedules/release based on home location	Does the County release employees based on zip code, or otherwise stagger schedules to avoid peak travel times?	Commissioners Court	HRMD & TNR-Sustainability	Medium Term 1-5 years
	Improve mycommutesolutions website to make site more user-friendly and accessible	Has Travis County staff engaged CAMPO to propose modification to make the mycommutesolutions site more user-friendly?	TNR-Sustainability	Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO)	Medium Term 1-5 years
Purchasing/Procurement	Develop a vendor list for vendors offered recycled products	Does the County have a vendor list for vendors offering Environmentally Preferable Products?	Purchasing Office	TNR-Sustainability	Medium Term 1-5 years
	Use vendors/contracts to full potential- exhaust vendor support, maximize application usage, and otherwise use all of what we pay for?	Are contracts and purchases being used to their full potential?	Auditor's Office	Purchasing Office	Medium Term 1-5 years

CONSERVE TRAVIS COUNTY

Medium Term- Additional

Focus Area	Activity	How to Measure	Primary Contact	Back-up Contact	Timeline
Organizational Culture and Process Improvement	LEED certification or design for all new facilities	Has Travis County's Green Building Policy been updated to include all new facilities?	Commissioners Court	Facilities Management Department	Medium Term 1-5 years
	Migrate data storage from on-site servers to the cloud- reduced staffing and equipment needs	Reduction in onsite servers. Total energy usage	ITS	CARS	Medium Term 1-5 years
	Digital and streamlined purchase request form (PRF)/procurement approval process to allow for digital signatures and approvals prior to a shopping cart being created in SAP	Do all County departments have a paperless and electronic PRF/procurement approval process?	All Department Managers and Executives	ITS	Medium Term 1-5 years
Resiliency Efforts	Increased Emergency Management staff to respond to climate incidents	Does Emergency Management have sufficient staff to plan for and respond to major storm or climate events?	Emergency Services	Commissioners Court	Medium Term 1-5 years
	Research methods to protect and preserve forested areas of Travis County including the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve – ecosystem services and flood mitigation	What actions are being taken to preserve forested areas in the County and reduce the urban heat island effect and flooding?	TNR-Natural Resources	TNR-Natural Resources	Medium Term 1-5 years
	Install climate towers to collect data and monitor trends	Is Travis County accurately collecting data and monitoring climatic trends?	TNR-Natural Resources	TNR-NREQ	Medium Term 1-5 years
	Lead regional discussions or summits on how to plan for climate change and other major changes	Is Travis County participating in regional discussions related to climate planning and adaption?	TNR-Sustainability	Emergency Services	Medium Term 1-5 years

CONSERVE TRAVIS COUNTY

Long Term

Rethinking How We Interact and Connect

Policy Changes and New Ideas

Innovative Technologies or Solutions

CONSERVE TRAVIS COUNTY

Long Term- Priority

Focus Area	Activity	How to Measure	Primary Contact	Back-up Contact	Timeline
Energy	Individual space controls for heating and cooling	Does Travis County use individual space controls for heating and cooling? In which buildings?	Facilities Management Department	Facilities Management Department	Long Term 5+ years
Culture/Process Improvement	Shift County operating hours to a 4-day work week to reduce transportation and energy use	Has Travis County shifted operating hours to a 4-day work week, where applicable?	Commissioners Court	HRMD	Long Term 5+ years

CONSERVE TRAVIS COUNTY

Long Term- Additional

Focus Area	Activity	How to Measure	Primary Contact	Back-up Contact	Timeline
Energy	Earlier blackout of lights (minus safety lighting) in buildings after hours	When is the County light blackout time and what buildings does that apply to? Total energy usage	Facilities Management Department	Commissioners Court	Long Term 5+ years
Culture/Process Improvement	More electronic or virtual services. Reduce the need for customers to drive to access services e.g. remote uncontested or ex parte hearings (JPS)	What in-person services can the County offer electronically to reduce the need to travel	Justice Planning & Commissioners Court	All County Departments	Long Term 5+ years
	County-sponsored incentives for sustainability resources such as incentives for solar panels, EVs, or energy efficiency	Does the County offer incentives for sustainability resources?	Commissioners Court	Health and Human Services & TNR-Sustainability	Long Term 5+ years
Resiliency Efforts	Acquire waste lands and plant trees	# of native trees planted by Travis County in County parks, or on County property. Waste land success stories	TNR-Real Estate & TNR-Parks	TNR-Environmental Quality	Long Term 5+ years
	Expand the prescribed burn program in the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve and Travis County Parks	Are all parklands and preserve space included in the prescribed burn program, as applicable?	TNR-Parks	TNR-Natural Resources	Long Term 5+ years
	Require low impact development for developments in Travis County – on-site wastewater capture	Does Travis County require or incentivize low impact development in the County?	TNR-Development Service & TNR-Environmental Quality	County Attorney's Office	Long Term 5+ years

CONSERVE TRAVIS COUNTY

Measuring Progress and Plan Updates

Progress on the Climate Action Plan implementation will be included in the Annual Sustainability Report presented to the Commissioners Court. Travis County Sustainability staff will work with individual departments for the appropriate points of contact for each activity and provide assistance to the contacts to encourage the implementation of all Climate Action Plan activities.

Unless otherwise directed by the Commissioners Court, Travis County staff will update the Climate Action Plan no less than every two years to ensure Travis County is taking advantage of the technological developments and staying current with the latest scientific and climate knowledge. Additionally, as Travis County completes activities, new activities should be added.

CONSERVE TRAVIS COUNTY

Recommended Next Steps

Plan Implementation

Set Climate Goals

Encourage Plan Adoption

1. Implementation of the Climate Action Plan
2. Set a high-level sustainability goal for the County to work towards (e.g. carbon neutrality, carbon negative operations, resource consumption reduction goal, etc.)
3. Connect municipalities within and nearby Travis County to share resources, best practices, and form a regional climate action working group to make meaningful change across Central Texas and beyond
4. Encourage non-Commissioners Court departments to adopt and commit to all applicable activities listed within the Climate Action Plan
5. Hire a consultant to conduct a vulnerability assessment of County assets to determine an asset's predisposition to be adversely affected by hazards. The vulnerability assessment should encompass exposure, sensitivity, potential impacts, and adaptive capacity of County assets and operations

Photo credit: Tom Hausler

CONSERVE TRAVIS COUNTY

Responding to the challenges of climate change will require a portfolio approach, investing in an array of solutions. Due to advances in technology and also business practices Travis County has the opportunity to make positive change at a regional level.

These next two pages are dedicated to technology advances, trends in addressing climate change, and other innovative solutions that have been developed by organizations and individuals who are blazing bold new trails on the road to emissions reductions.

While some organizations are accountable for their emissions and equipping operations to be more resilient, others are going a step further to account for and undo historical emissions, encourage the development of additional renewable power generation, and provide solutions that benefit others outside of the organization.

Climate Leadership and Innovation

Climate Leadership Trends and Innovations

- Carbon neutrality – when a business or organization produces no net greenhouse gas emissions either via payments/credits and/or by direct measures to reduce emissions produced
- Carbon negative – when a business or organization removes more carbon from the atmosphere than it generates. An example is Microsoft's announcement that the company has a goal to be carbon negative by 2030
- Preserving and restoring natural systems – protecting, managing, and restoring forests, wetlands, and grasslands. Protecting existing natural systems helps keep sequestered carbon within the natural system, and when these natural systems are disturbed or cleared, the sequestered carbon is released. By protecting existing natural systems, and restoring previously cleared or disturbed areas, we can leverage nature's ability to update carbon and other greenhouse gases
- Electrification – shifting power production and vehicles to electricity rather than relying on fossil fuels. Electrification assumes that the power grid will increasingly shift towards renewable energy forms and utilize less fossil fuels
- Equitable outcomes – climate change disproportionately affects lower-income neighborhoods and communities of color. As potential solutions are developed, leaders and implementers should be mindful that solutions are equitable and do not place an undue burden on a specific group or community

Climate Leadership Trends and Innovations

- Renewable Power Purchase Agreement – Electricity and wind energy contracts are known as "Power Purchase Agreements" or PPAs. PPAs are long-term contracts to buy renewable energy in agreed volumes and at prices that meet the needs of the generator and the consumer. These renewable energy agreements provide both parties not only with financially beneficial solutions, but also secure clean renewable energy supplies and enable investment in additional renewable energy developments
  - Other mechanisms for supporting renewable energy and offsetting carbon emissions include Environmental Attribute Commodities (EAC's), Renewable Energy Credits (REC's), and direct energy production (on-site installation of renewable energy generation)
- Regional carbon cap and trade systems or collaborations – seeking opportunities to partner with nearby jurisdictions to build a regional program that would cap and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. An example is the Transportation and Climate Initiative which is a regional collaboration of 12 Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states and the District of Columbia that seeks to improve transportation, develop the clean energy economy and reduce carbon emissions from the transportation sector
- Protect, preserve, and manage natural systems through efforts such as prescribed burns, reforestation, and restorative agriculture
- Crowd-sourced ideas – engaging employees, residents, and innovators to help Travis County identify potential solutions like the Philadelphia's "Ideas We Should Steal Festival" or the North Miami and Van Ale Institute's Climate Change Solutions Contest

Photo credit: Russell Hughes

Thank You!

We'd like to acknowledge the individuals and local governments who provided information, resources, and support to make this Climate Action Plan possible especially:

- Travis County Judge Sarah Eckhardt
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- ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability Staff
- Travis County Departmental Leadership Teams
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CONSERVE TRAVIS COUNTY