

**CITY OF EL PASO, TEXAS  
AGENDA ITEM  
DEPARTMENT HEAD'S SUMMARY FORM**

**AGENDA DATE:** January 24, 2023

**PUBLIC HEARING DATE:** N/A

**CONTACT PERSON NAME AND PHONE NUMBER:** Sam Rodriguez, Aviation Director (915) 212-7301

**DISTRICT(S) AFFECTED:** All

**STRATEGIC GOALS 1:** Create an Environment Conducive to Strong, Sustainable Economic Development

**SUBJECT:**

Discussion and action on the Petition received for amendments to the City Charter entitled "Climate Charter for the City of El Paso."

**BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION:**

The City staff will review the proposed ballot language associated with the Petition received for amendments to the City Charter entitled "Climate Charter for the City of El Paso".

**PRIOR COUNCIL ACTION:**

N/A

**AMOUNT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:**

N/A

**HAVE ALL AFFECTED DEPARTMENTS BEEN NOTIFIED?**  X  YES   NO

**PRIMARY DEPARTMENT:** Aviation

**SECONDARY DEPARTMENT:** N/A

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\*\*\*\*\*REQUIRED AUTHORIZATION\*\*\*\*\*

**DEPARTMENT HEAD:**



**Samuel Rodriguez, P.E., Aviation Director**



# City Clerk

**MAYOR**

Oscar Leeser

**RECEIPT OF PETITION****CITY COUNCIL****District 1**

Peter Svartzbein

**District 2**

Alexsandra Anello

**District 3**

Cassandra Hernandez

**District 4**

Joe Molinar

**District 5**

Isabel Salcido

**District 6**

Claudia L. Rodriguez

**District 7**

Henry Rivera

**District 8**

Cissy Lizarraga

**CITY MANAGER**

Tommy Gonzalez

DATE AND TIME RECEIVED: 7/25/2022 11:02 a.m.

RECEIVED FROM: Ben Deatricks thru Mike Siegel

ORGANIZATION NAME: Ground Game Texas

EMAIL ADDRESS: ben@groundgametexas.org

RECEIVED BY: Laura D. Prine

NAME

Laura D. Prine

SIGNATURE

Laura D. Prine – City Clerk  
City Clerk's Office | 300 N. Campbell | El Paso, TX 79901  
O: (915) 212-0049 | cityclerk@elpasotexas.gov



DELIVERING EXCEPTIONAL SERVICES

# Petition for a City of El Paso Charter Election

A petition to amend the City Charter of El Paso to adopt a climate policy that would create jobs, conserve water, encourage solar power generation, and reduce the City's contribution to climate change. Full text of proposed charter amendment attached. By signing, you agree to receive an updated voter registration form if your registration is not current.

## FOR REGISTERED EL PASO VOTERS ONLY

Date Signed	Printed Name: John Doe Signature: John Doe	Where you're registered to vote	County	Birthdate or Voter Registration No.	Email: (optional) Phone: (optional)
2/10/2022	Printed Name: Felix Arenas Signature: [Signature]	Street Address: [Redacted] El Paso, TX Zip: 79903	El Paso	[Redacted] or Voter #: [Redacted]	Phone: [Redacted] Email: [Redacted]
___/___/2022	Printed Name: _____ Signature: _____	Street Address: _____ El Paso, TX Zip: _____	El Paso	___/___/___ or Voter #: _____	Phone: _____ Email: _____
___/___/2022	Printed Name: _____ Signature: _____	Street Address: _____ El Paso, TX Zip: _____	El Paso	___/___/___ or Voter #: _____	Phone: _____ Email: _____
___/___/2022	Printed Name: _____ Signature: _____	Street Address: _____ El Paso, TX Zip: _____	El Paso	___/___/___ or Voter #: _____	Phone: _____ Email: _____
___/___/2022	Printed Name: _____ Signature: _____	Street Address: _____ El Paso, TX Zip: _____	El Paso	___/___/___ or Voter #: _____	Phone: _____ Email: _____
___/___/2022	Printed Name: _____ Signature: _____	Street Address: _____ El Paso, TX Zip: _____	El Paso	___/___/___ or Voter #: _____	Phone: _____ Email: _____
___/___/2022	Printed Name: _____ Signature: _____	Street Address: _____ El Paso, TX Zip: _____	El Paso	___/___/___ or Voter #: _____	Phone: _____ Email: _____
___/___/2022	Printed Name: _____ Signature: _____	Street Address: _____ El Paso, TX Zip: _____	El Paso	___/___/___ or Voter #: _____	Phone: _____ Email: _____

Return to: Ground Game Texas, P.O. Box 920716, El Paso, TX 79902

Questions: [Luis@GroundGameTexas.org](mailto:Luis@GroundGameTexas.org)

## Number of Unique Valid Signatures on El Paso Climate Change Petition is Estimated to be 21,686

The City of El Paso has determined that the Climate Change petition meets the requirement for the minimum number of signatures of valid voters if the required minimum is 20,000. 36,360 lines of names were submitted on the petition. A random sample of 9,091 of the submitted lines was checked. 3,267 of the sample lines were disqualified on account of being duplicate signatures of registered voters who signed more than once (150), or for other reasons (3,117). The remaining 5,824 sample lines were validated as bearing unique signatures of qualified voters.

Furthermore, using the random sample, the City estimates that there are 21,686 unique valid signatures on the Climate Change petition. The City is 95% confident that the true number of unique valid signatures on the entire petition exceeds 22,048 and is also 95% confident that the true number is less than 21,323. Furthermore, the City is nearly 100% confident that the true number of unique valid signatures exceeds 20,000.



Dear Clerk Prine,

Enclosed are the petitions for a proposed change to the El Paso City Charter. The goal of this change is to provide a better environmental future for the City of El Paso.

A copy of the full language of the proposed change is attached.

We're including 5,236 pages of signed petitions. In our own pre-verification process, we've already identified at least 20,930 registered City of El Paso voters. A list of these voters has been included.

Additionally, please keep the following in mind:

- All signatures for this campaign were collected in the last 180 days. Our collection period started in late January 2022.
- Each petition has a page number at the top of the page. These numbers should run from page 1 to page 5,236.
- Each petition contains room for 8 signatures. While the signature slots are not numbered, we're considering the first signature on the page to be signature 1 and the last signature to be signature 8. In our list of valid signers, you'll find a corresponding page number, signature number, Voter ID number, and name for each valid signer we identified. So, for example, page 47, signature 1 would be the first signature on page 47, and page 47, signature 8 would be the last.
- Our pre-verification process is not complete. All signatures through page 4,050 have been pre-verified, but we currently have 4,000 more signatures left to go through in pages 4,051 to 5,236. We'll be using our own copy of the petitions to finish those as soon as possible. My plan is to get you an additional list of valid signers from these pages by August 1st.
- Our enclosed list of valid signers is intended as a reference to show validated voters, but we may have missed valid petition signers contained in the petitions. We ask that you please check every signature.

I will serve as staff support for this initiative. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns. Additionally, please alert me when your verification process is complete. Thanks so much for your help, and I look forward to hearing the results of your work!

Ben Deatruck

Ground Game Texas

[ben@groundgametexas.org](mailto:ben@groundgametexas.org)

(512) 791-8691

## **CLIMATE CHARTER FOR THE CITY OF EL PASO**

### **BE IT ORDAINED BY THE VOTERS OF THE CITY OF EL PASO:**

Article IX of the Charter of the City of El Paso is hereby created, to be titled "Climate Policy" and to read as follows:

#### **ARTICLE IX — CLIMATE POLICY**

##### **Section 9.1 - CLIMATE POLICY**

It is the policy of the City of El Paso to use all available resources and authority to accomplish three goals of paramount importance: first, to reduce the City's contribution to climate change; second, to invest in an environmentally sustainable future; and third, to advance the cause of climate justice.

##### **Section 9.2 - DEFINITIONS**

- A. Climate change: a phenomenon that includes both (1) the ongoing increase in the overall temperature of the earth's atmosphere, attributed to the greenhouse effect caused by increased levels of carbon dioxide, chlorofluorocarbons, and other pollutants; and (2) the side-effects of that temperature increase, including melting glaciers, heavier rainstorms, and more frequent drought.
- B. Climate jobs: jobs that advance one or more of the City's policy objectives of (1) reducing the City's contribution to climate change, (2) investing in an environmentally sustainable future, and (3) advancing the cause of climate justice.
- C. Climate justice: ensuring that historically underserved communities do not bear a disproportionate share of the negative impacts of climate change, while at the same time investing in those same communities as part of the work to respond to climate change, mitigate its impacts, and build an environmentally sustainable society. For purposes of this analysis, "historically underserved communities" include Black, Indigenous, and people of color; people with disabilities; and people living at or below the poverty line.
- D. Climate impact statement: a statement of how major City decisions impact the City's climate policy. The statement is to be prepared by the Climate Department under the supervision of the Climate Director. The elements of the climate impact statement shall include, at a minimum, the following elements: (1) a statement of how the proposed action fulfills the three aims of the City's climate policy; (2) an analysis of fossil fuel emissions and other climate change impacts of the proposed action; (3) a statement of any climate jobs that will be created by the proposed project; (4) a statement of whether the proposed action will negatively impact any historically underserved communities; and (5) a consideration of alternatives, if any, that would better advance the City's climate policy.
- E. Fossil fuel industry: the companies involved in the fossil fuel economy, including (a) companies that extract fossil fuel products including coal, oil, and natural gas from the earth; (b) companies that transport fossil fuel products; (c) companies that turn fossil fuel products into sellable products, including companies that operate refineries and other fossil fuel production facilities; (d) companies that convert fossil fuel energy into electricity by methods such as burning coal, oil, and natural gas; (e) companies that sell electricity generated by the burning of fossil fuel products; (f) companies that provide services to assist companies that conduct any of the activities described under (a), (b), (c), (d), or (e); and (g) companies that finance fossil fuel activities such as those described above. El Paso Electric shall be considered part of the fossil fuel industry for purposes of this climate policy.



F. Clean renewable energy: energy generated without burning carbon or releasing greenhouse gases. Includes renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, hydroelectric, and geothermal. Includes hydrogen energy that is produced by splitting water by electrolysis ("green" hydrogen) or hydrogen produced by solar-driven processes, but does not include hydrogen energy produced using natural gas ("blue" or "grey" hydrogen) or nuclear ("pink" hydrogen).

## **Section 9.3 - CLIMATE DIRECTOR**

### **Section 9.3-1 — Appointment; Qualifications.**

The City Council, including the Mayor and District Representatives, shall appoint a Climate Director to serve as the lead City representative charged with fulfilling the Climate Policy. Such appointment shall occur at a publicly noticed meeting subject to the Texas Open Meetings Act. The City Council shall fix the Climate Director's compensation.

The Climate Director shall be appointed on the basis of qualifications to fulfill the City's climate mandates of (1) reducing the City's contribution to climate change, (2) investing in an environmentally-sustainable future, and (3) advancing the cause of climate justice. No person shall be eligible for appointment as Climate Director if they have worked in the fossil fuel industry.

### **Section 9.3-2 — Disclosure of investments.**

Prior to taking action to appoint a Climate Director, the City shall request and publish a Personal Financial Statement Report from the candidate, to include all fields included in Form PFS-TEC of the Texas Ethics Commission and to cover both the current calendar year and the prior calendar year.

### **Section 9.3-3 — Accountability; Removal.**

The Climate Director shall report directly to the City Council. The Director may be removed by resolution approved by the majority of the total membership of the City Council, with or without cause.

### **Section 9.3-4 — Representative of the City of El Paso.**

Under the guidance and direction of the City Council and City Manager, the Climate Director shall serve as the City's representative in local, state, and federal proceedings impacting the City of El Paso and its climate policy, including but not limited to proceedings under the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, the Texas Public Utilities Commission, the Texas Railroad Commission, the New Mexico Public Regulatory Commission, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Army Corps of Engineers, the Department of Energy, and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

## **Section 9.4 - CLIMATE DEPARTMENT**

The City shall establish a Climate Department to be led by the Climate Director and provided with sufficient personnel and resources to carry out the Climate Policy and related duties and responsibilities herein described.

The Climate Director shall be the chief executive officer of the Climate Department.



## **Section 9.5 - CLIMATE IMPACT OF CITY DECISIONS**

The Climate Director shall provide the City Council with a climate impact statement prior to any City Council vote affecting the City's Climate Policy. Decisions that require a climate impact statement shall include, but not be limited to: adoption of the City budget and any amendments thereto; zoning decisions; right-of-way permits; new or expanded streets, road, highways, bridges and other significant infrastructure; capital improvement projects including proposed capital improvements put to the public in the form of bond issues; new subdivision approvals; and procurement decisions.

In addition, the City Manager shall collaborate with the Climate Director to prepare an annual climate impact statement for City activities, with specific analysis of the climate impact of each City department. The City Manager shall ensure that the Climate Director has access to City information on an ongoing basis to allow for ongoing monitoring and analysis of the City's climate impact.

## **Section 9.6 - TRACKING CLIMATE EMISSIONS**

The Climate Director shall prepare an annual report on climate impacts for the City of El Paso, to include all emissions generated within the City limits.

The Climate Director shall be authorized to collaborate with outside research institutions and consultants to develop and prepare the annual emissions report.

## **Section 9.7 - CLIMATE JOBS**

### **Section 9.7-1 — Annual goal for climate jobs.**

The City Manager shall collaborate with the Climate Director to create an annual goal for the creation of climate jobs, including specific goals for each City department. This goal shall be announced when the City Manager proposes the City's annual budget.

### **Section 9.7-2 — Preference for climate jobs when new funding becomes available.**

Whenever the City becomes eligible for new funding, including new funding due to tax increases, grants from the Texas government, grants from the United States government, grants from private entities, contracts, or other funding opportunities, the City Manager shall ensure that such funds are used to create climate jobs and associated training programs, whenever such jobs are consistent with funding requirements, City needs, and available resources.

### **Section 9.7-3 — Transitioning current City employees to climate work.**

As part of the City Manager's annual goal for climate jobs, pursuant to Section 9.7.1, the City Manager shall identify opportunities to transition current City employees into positions that would qualify as climate jobs. This requirement shall not be construed to encourage elimination of any existing City employee; rather, the City Manager shall identify opportunities to transition existing personnel into new positions, with equal or superior pay and benefits, that would advance the City's climate policy.

### **Section 9.7-4 — Preference for contractors who advance the City's climate policy.**

The City Manager shall adopt and implement a policy, subject to City Council approval, that will provide a preference for contractors who are able to advance the City's climate policy, so long as

such contractors can provide services in a manner that is consistent with City needs and available resources.

## **Section 9.8 - SOLAR ENERGY**

### **Section 9.8-1 — Solar Power Generation Plan.**

The Climate Director shall create an annual Solar Power Generation Plan for the City of El Paso. This plan shall include a feasibility analysis to describe how the City can develop internal capacity to generate energy for the City through solar power.

### **Section 9.8-2 — Rooftop solar power generation.**

The City Manager shall establish and maintain policies that encourage the development of rooftop solar power generation capacity within the City of El Paso. These policies shall encourage development of rooftop solar power generation using existing City facilities and require both new buildings and retrofitted buildings to include solar power generation capacity whenever feasible.

## **Section 9.9 — RENEWABLE ENERGY GOALS**

The City of El Paso shall employ all available methods to require that energy used within the City is generated by clean renewable energy, with the goals of requiring (1) 80% clean renewable energy by 2030 and (2) 100% clean renewable energy by 2045.

Within one year of the adoption of this Climate Policy, the City Manager and Climate Director shall produce a plan for the City to achieve its renewable energy goals. In developing this plan, the City shall include consideration of public transportation, solar power generation at City facilities, and energy efficiency of City buildings.

The City Manager and Climate Director shall provide a joint, annual report to the City Council to chart progress toward these goals.

## **Section 9.10 — MUNICIPALIZATION OF EL PASO ELECTRIC**

The City of El Paso shall employ all available efforts to convert El Paso Electric to municipal ownership.

In consultation with the Climate Director, the City Manager shall provide the City Council with an annual report to describe the feasibility of converting El Paso Electric into a municipal electric company, including any actions required to advance this objective.

## **Section 9.11 - CLIMATE DISASTER MITIGATION, PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE**

The City of El Paso shall undertake all necessary efforts to prepare city infrastructure to withstand extreme weather conditions and ensure uninterrupted provision of basic services and utilities to City residents.

In consultation with the Climate Director, the City Manager shall create an annual Climate Disaster Mitigation and Preparedness plan. This report shall include provisions to protect water quality and quantity, create a resilient electric grid, and protect residents during extreme weather events.

## **Section 9.12 - WATER CONSERVATION**

### **Section 9.12-1 — Ban on using City water for fossil fuel industry activities outside of the city limits.**

The City of El Paso shall not sell or transfer any water for purposes of fossil fuel industry activities outside of the city limits, or otherwise allow any City water to be used for such purposes, except as provided in Section 9.12-2.

### **Section 9.12-2 — Cancellation of City contracts subject to the ban.**

To the extent that any contracts to sell or transfer City water for fossil fuel industry activities outside of the city limits were enacted prior to adoption of this charter provision, the City Manager shall prepare a report to the City Council, within three months of the adoption of this charter amendment, identifying the relevant contracts and presenting all available methods for cancelling such contracts. To coincide with the presentation required by this section, the City Manager shall schedule a public vote by the City Council to consider cancellation of each applicable contract.

This section shall not be read to permit the City to extend or renew any existing contracts subject to this provision.

## **Section 9.13 - ELIMINATION OF IMPEDIMENTS TO RENEWABLE ENERGY**

The City shall not impose any fees, fines, or other financial or nonfinancial burdens that limit the purchase, use, or generation of renewable energy. Any such fees, fines, or other burdens in existence at the time this charter amendment takes effect are hereby null and void, including but not limited to interconnection fees.

## **Section 9.14 - CLIMATE COMMISSION**

### **Section 9.14-1 — General.**

The Climate Commission exists for the purposes of overseeing the implementation and fulfillment of the City's Climate Policy and related provisions of this article. The Commission shall establish its own procedures within the framework of this charter to carry out these functions.

### **Section 9.14-2 — Functions and duties of the Climate Commission.**

Special meetings shall be held as required for the proper discharge of the duties of the Commission, due notice having been given. Five members of the Commission will constitute a quorum. It shall be the duty of the Commission to: (1) Recommend to the Council adoption of legislation and policy that will advance the City's Climate Policy and related charter provisions; and (2) Investigate matters concerning the City's implementation and fulfillment of the Climate Policy and related charter provisions.

### **Section 9.14-3 — Appointment.**

The Commission shall consist of nine persons appointed by the Council. Each City Council member, including the Mayor, shall nominate one person to the Commission. Appointments shall be for three-year terms. All terms shall commence on February 1st.

As part of the appointment process, each City Council member who nominates a person for appointment shall provide a written statement in support of the nominee's qualifications to serve on the Commission.

If a Commissioner resigns their commission or otherwise ceases to serve on the Commission, the City Council member representing that district shall nominate a replacement in a manner consistent with this charter to complete the remainder of the replaced Commissioner's term.

#### **Section 9.14-4 — Qualifications.**

Commission members shall be members of the El Paso community who have specific expertise and experience that will help the City advance its Climate Policy, with a preference for residents who have been negatively impacted by climate change or who represent communities that have been negatively impacted by climate change. No person who worked in the fossil fuel industry shall be appointed to the Commission.

Members of the Commission must be residents of the City at the time of their appointment and remain a resident of the City throughout their term of office. Commission members must reside in the District represented by that City Council member who appointed them.

#### **Section 9.15-5 — Compensation.**

Members of the Commission shall serve without salary.

#### **Section 9.15-6 — Staff.**

The Climate Director shall be responsible for providing staff support to the Climate Commission.

#### **Section 9.15-7 — Organization.**

The Commission shall elect from its members a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman, each for a term of one year. The Chairman may not be re-elected for successive terms.

#### **Section 9.15-8 — Removal.**

Members of the Commission will not be removed from office except for incompetence or nonfeasance, misfeasance or malfeasance in office, such as neglect of duty or refusal to perform the duties imposed by this Charter. Action may be initiated in writing by any member of the Council or Commission. Any removal will require an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Council.

#### **Section 9.16 - SEVERABILITY**

If any portion of this Article shall be deemed unlawful by a court of law, that portion shall be severed from the Charter and the rest shall continue in force.