

Candidate Questionnaire on Climate and Energy

350 Austin, Solar Austin, Earth Day Austin, Shades of Green

Candidate Name: Pio Renteria

Candidate For: Austin District 3 Council Member

1. What are your top three priorities for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in Austin, and what actions would you take to implement needed changes?

First, I want to transition Austin Energy fully away from fossil fuels as soon as possible.

When I voted in support of the 2027 updates to the Generation, and Climate Protection Plan recommended by the Electric Utility Commission Resource Planning Working Group, we directed Austin energy to report back on the feasibility of reaching 80% use of renewable energy by 2027 and 30% by 2030.

Second, We are one of the fastest-growing metro areas in the nation and now we are the 11th largest City in the United States. The growth we are experiencing is not likely to stop anytime soon. So, we cannot continue to ignore that reality and instead we must commit ourselves to smart planning and to addressing that growth in ways that benefit our communities and protect our environment.

The elevated demand for housing and an outdated land development code have resulted in endless sprawl. That has exacerbated our traffic crisis. And that traffic affects more than just our sanity. It has a devastating environmental impact on our air and our water. That's why we need to build the housing we need, including low-income and affordable housing, in smarter ways and in ways that will help support a multi-modal transportation system with a robust public transit network. That will have the added benefit of reducing impervious cover and helping us address flooding. On council, I have supported building more housing in central Austin and along transit corridors and will continue to do so.

Third, I am a proponent of multimodal transportation options including buses, trains, bicycling, and walking. I have championed initiatives and funding for active transportation improvements like the 2016 Mobility Bond which included \$37.5 million for sidewalks, \$27.5 million for Safe Routes to Schools, \$26 million for urban trails, \$20 million for bicycle infrastructure, and \$15 million for safety-related intersection upgrades.

- 2. As mayor or council member, you will be a member of the Austin Energy Utility Oversight Committee. What will you do to make sure that Austin Energy takes the necessary steps to phase out its use of fossil fuels for power generation by 2030?**

I support transitioning Austin Energy fully away from fossil fuels as soon as possible. When I voted in support of the 2027 updates to the Generation, and Climate Protection Plan recommended by the Electric Utility Commission Resource Planning Working Group, we directed Austin energy to report back on the feasibility of reaching 80% use of renewable energy by 2027 and 30% by 2030. I will continue to monitor progress on that front and will do all I can to help Austin Energy reach those goals.

- 3. Despite declining costs of solar, many low income residents and multi-family housing tenants are challenged to participate in Austin Energy's existing rooftop solar programs. Do you think it is important to expand access to solar by developing targeted programs and policies at Austin Energy? Please explain.**

Absolutely.

When we take on environmental issues, we must consider also consider justice and equity. When Austin Energy built the La Loma Community Solar Farm in my District, I worked with City and Austin Energy Staff to create policies that would allow folks enrolled in the Customer Assistance Program (CAP) to participate in the Community Solar Program. I would continue to support and develop these types of programs. And I would support exploring innovative financing options to allow low-income families to participate in rooftop solar programs.

- 4. Local, distributed scale solar installation has produced values to the utility, community and the local economy. Do you support the expansion of utility investment programs (including rebates) for installing solar locally within the Austin Energy territory? Please explain.**

Yes. I strongly support efforts to make solar accessible to more people.

- 5. What specific role and responsibility do you see Austin taking in responding to local, regional and international impacts of climate change, including preparing for large numbers of people displaced by extreme weather events?**

We must do our part to limit climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. On the regional level, climate change may place more strain on our

already strained water resources. That is why I support efforts to preserve water and protect our watersheds.

Our region is going to continue to experience significant population growth. That growth may be accelerated by displacement from extreme weather events. We must plan for that growth and manage it responsibly by allowing for the construction of housing that is affordable, environmentally sustainable, and located in places where people can easily walk, bike, and use public transit.