



**Chihuahuan
Desert
Climate
Collaborative**
POWERED BY THE CITY OF EL PASO

Climate Action Plan Engagement Series Summit #2

05.07.2025

Purpose of Summit #2

On May 7, 2025, the City of El Paso hosted the second Climate Action Plan summit at the Beast - Eastside Regional Recreation Center, bringing together 63 participants, including youth leaders, residents, nonprofit staff, and community advocates. This event was part of a broader multi-series outreach effort designed to ensure the City's Climate Action Plan reflects diverse community priorities and lived experiences, particularly those of younger generations and historically underrepresented communities.

The Plan addresses greenhouse gas emissions and builds community resilience across key sectors such as water, energy, food, transportation, and public health. To guide this work, the City is convening a series of engagement summits to gather direct feedback and build partnerships across sectors.

The project team opened summit #2 with an overview of El Paso's Climate Action Plan development, covering public voting results for the measures from the previous summit, examples of successful case studies, and a preview of next steps, followed participants contributing ideas through small focus group discussions and written feedback.

The summit's purpose was to:

- Bring partners together to collaborate
- Communicate resource needs to support effective implementation
- Shape implementable actions by identifying priorities, opportunities, and solutions

Throughout the summit, attendees reflected on their lived experiences with climate impacts, shared their perspectives and feedback on what climate action should look like in El Paso. This report summarizes the top themes, voting insights, and measure-specific input that emerged from the event.



Outcomes

A total of 63 attendees participated in this summit.

Collected Input

The following section summarizes the themes raised through the small group discussion.

Table 1 - Alternative Transportation – Walking, Biking, and Transit

Participants discussed the importance of expanding micromobility systems with protected bike paths, improved walkability, and facilities like bike racks, especially in areas like UTEP and Cimarron. There was support for Complete Streets projects, including dedicated bus lanes and narrowing car lanes, modeled after examples in Albuquerque. For car-free hours, attendees suggested piloting this in different parts of the city and promoting the concept using pollution data. Parking minimums were also discussed, with comments supporting their removal in infill areas and replacing street parking with commercial loading zones. Several participants suggested providing free public transit, particularly for students, the elderly, and through programs like “pay as you can” or free days.

Transit-oriented development was supported through incentives for developers and infill development, with suggested locations like Five Points and near bus hubs. Micro-transit projects were discussed as a way to address first- and last-mile barriers, including special event shuttles and UTEP-specific services. Finally, improving frequency and reliability of transit was seen as essential, with recommendations for a real-time tracking app, improved citywide access, and collaboration with businesses to offer shuttle connections.

Table 2 - Zero Emissions Vehicles Transition and Air Quality

Zero Emissions Vehicles Transition

Community members shared practical ideas to make EVs more accessible. When discussing new building policies, people suggested that EV readiness should be paired with solar panels to help close the loop on emissions. Some proposed a simple EV-ready sticker or badge that could be added to homes as a way to signal they are prepared for charging.

For public outreach, there was strong interest in ride-and-drive events, but also a clear need to talk openly about the costs, especially how electricity bills might go up for EV owners. A related suggestion was to host similar events for solar panels so people can learn and ask questions. Promotoras were mentioned as trusted community leaders who could help spread the word and make these events more approachable.

People supported the idea of transitioning municipal fleets to electric and pointed out that school districts should be part of the conversation too. When it came to installing public EV charging stations, there was enthusiasm around turning regular parking lots into shaded solar carports that provide both power and relief from the heat.

There wasn't much discussion around alternative fuel hubs or freight corridors, which may mean those ideas feel more distant from people's everyday lives. The feedback focused more on what people interact with directly charging access, rising energy costs, and how to make the shift feel less intimidating.

Improve Air Quality

Community members spoke directly about the need for better air monitoring, especially near international bridges and in neighborhoods most impacted by pollution. The idea of installing air quality monitors at ports of entry was supported, but participants added that the city should also improve ride share capabilities at the international border to improve pedestrian traffic. This feedback connected air quality to broader transportation challenges and walkability near crossings.

In neighborhoods, participants wanted monitoring efforts to go further. They suggested the city make note of all major polluters and create a database. While data already exists, participants expressed frustration that "something needs to be in respect to the data," meaning the city shouldn't just collect numbers- it needs to act on them. "The city needs to be actively working on improving local air quality and needs to develop an action plan." Maintenance was also raised as a practical concern: once monitors are installed, the equipment needs to be cared for to improve its lifespan.

Freight-related emissions and congestion at the Ysleta Port of Entry were also flagged as major issues. Participants described the current layout as disorganized, with "no place to park on the American side," an inadequate pick-up/drop-off location, and a bus stop "on the opposite side of the road." They recommended including logistics companies in the discussion, adding dedicated bus and biking lanes, and rerouting some freight traffic through Santa Teresa to relieve pressure on the crossing.

This feedback reveals that air quality efforts should be tied to visible improvements, transparency, and meaningful enforcement. Participants also seemed to favor community-based partnerships, but the core message was simple: if the city is going to invest in monitoring, it must follow through with solutions.

Table 3 - Buildings and Energy

Increase Energy Efficiency and Decarbonize Buildings

There is a need for more local energy efficiency programs that are accessible to schools, builders, and city-owned buildings. Rebates should focus on simple, high-impact improvements and be made available to lower-income households. Participants suggested adapting building performance standards to El Paso's desert climate and involving community members early in the process. Common challenges include outdated weatherization software, limited access to existing programs like Project Bravo, and not enough funding. Training programs need to be more affordable and offered in multiple languages. Tools like PACE financing, A-F energy scoring, utility rate cases, and community campaigns like Building Together El Paso were suggested to help move these programs forward.

Install Renewable Energy Systems

The City could install solar on public buildings, rooftops, and parking areas, ideally with battery storage and opportunities for energy aggregation. There is interest in stronger solar-ready policies, but concerns remain about roof readiness, solar scams, and limited utility financing options. The EPE Business Solar program could serve as a model. Community ownership of solar systems was seen as a promising option, especially in areas where solar wouldn't harm natural land. Geothermal energy was also suggested for data centers, along with the idea of retraining oil and gas workers for jobs in clean energy.

Table 4 - Sustainable Agriculture, Waste Management and Climate Action Plan Implementation

Promote Sustainable Food Systems and Waste Management Practices

Implement and Oversee Climate Action

Participants were highly engaged around composting, recycling, and local food systems, with many ideas focused on community-level solutions. For composting, people emphasized the need for education, funding for bins and transportation, and access to land. They saw opportunities to partner with existing programs like Dirty Girl Compost, launch community gardens, and even work with local chefs and restaurants to help make the food system more sustainable. One participant noted composting could support more herbal gardens and make people want to eat more veggies. Others mentioned a fellowship dedicated to compost hubs.

But there were also clear barriers. "Funding" and a "lack of education" came up repeatedly, along with challenges like transportation of compost, managing large items, and water needs, which are especially tricky given that a lot of water is being used for export crops. Participants also said the culture in El Paso is not used to recycling, and that's a hurdle for composting too.

When it came to recycling, people again pointed to the need for simple education using tools like social media. There was a strong sense that the city could use resources already available to us and that fixing local infrastructure, like the glass recycling machine that isn't running, could make a real difference. College students were even suggested to help repair the equipment. Barriers included people not using bins correctly, cost of import/export, and a lack of recycling hubs. Still, participants saw potential for job creation and engagement with local markets and schools.

For food systems, people supported developing food hubs and using water-based growing systems like hydroponics and aquaponics. But they acknowledged that too much salt in the groundwater, infrastructure costs, and resistance to change from farmers were major barriers. El Paso has a lot of land, they said, and schools could grow their own food, but to do that, the city would need to work with local farmers, tribes, colleges, and agriculture institutions.

Food hubs were viewed as a way to bring fresh produce to corner stores, with one suggestion being a community van that sells produce cheaper than grocery stores. However, the process

for starting food hubs was described as too complicated, and many local farmers markets were criticized for not actually selling fresh produce—they're mainly craft-focused. People also raised concerns about contaminants in compost (like pesticides or chemicals), which could become a legal issue if not addressed.

Overall, the feedback showed strong community interest. People are ready to participate, but they want systems that are simple, well-supported, and grounded in partnerships with the local community.

Table 5 - Climate Adaptation and Resilience

Cool Communities and Protect Health

This measure received strong support across all engagement sessions, particularly around tree planting, shading, and building-level strategies to combat extreme heat. Tree planting was discussed during all four sessions in one way or another, highlighting it as a top community priority. However, participants noted a cultural and practical challenge: past water-conservation efforts may have over-emphasized individual conservation to the point that residents see tree planting as a large cost burden. As a result, there was strong interest in city-supported solutions like the reestablishment of a municipal tree farm, which could reduce individual costs and encourage broader participation. A 'tree steward' or 'promotora' system was also suggested to help connect residents to tree planting efforts, leveraging local knowledge and trust. Identified partners included Sembrando Esperanza, UTEP, El Paso Water, and the El Paso Master Gardener program, underscoring a desire to involve community institutions in implementation.

For building codes, participants supported adopting heat-resilient building standards, including cool roofs and reflective materials. However, there were repeated concerns about feasibility and effectiveness without accompanying outreach and oversight: education and enforcement would be critical to making sure the code changes were effective at delivering changes to the community. Several people also pointed to political opposition as a barrier to updating building codes and development standards.

While cool surfaces and reflective infrastructure were included in the proposed actions, that topic did not emerge as a significant point of discussion, suggesting either a gap in public awareness or a lower perceived priority compared to vegetation-based cooling strategies. Similarly, carbon sequestration projects on public lands were not discussed, which may point to the need for additional education or clearer connections to local benefits.

Measure 8: Reduce Flood Risk

Participants supported nature-based solutions like green infrastructure, wetlands, and arroyo stabilization as ways to manage flooding while providing community benefits. People compared El Paso's efforts to other desert cities like Phoenix and Albuquerque, pointing to them as examples of what's possible. The idea of installing green infrastructure along roads and at public facilities was linked to other goals too, like expanding tree canopy and improving stormwater flow. At the same time, financing came up as a challenge, with questions about how these improvements would be paid for.

There was also strong interest in protecting and expanding wetlands, especially around the Rio Bosque Park, which was called out by name. However, some worried that there isn't much land left for these kinds of projects, and that they're often limited to areas right next to the river.

Participants were aware of active efforts by the city to move homes out of flood-prone areas, and this action brought up equity concerns, how land acquisition might affect residents who are already vulnerable. Similarly, there was broad support for using native vegetation to stabilize arroyos, as long as it didn't get in the way of other stormwater needs. People liked the idea of arroyos being used as more green space, but emphasized they should still work for flood control.

Build Drought Resilience and Conserve Water

Community members were interested in creative water solutions but asked important questions about feasibility. For example, using greywater and recycled water for irrigation was generally supported, but participants pointed out that right now, this is mostly limited to institutions, industry, and power production. They wanted to know how everyday residents could tap into this system, and what kind of support might be available.

There were also discussions around the use of solar-powered water capture systems in colonias, especially for generating potable water. Some people were curious, but others raised concerns about cost, technical challenges, and how these systems would actually be set up. There were questions about whether the water would be stored individually, shared in tanks, or available through a subscription model.

In agriculture, people talked about how tough it can be to shift away from traditional practices. There was interest in encouraging more climate-friendly farming, like cover cropping or switching to less water-intensive crops. But participants noted that farmers are working within tight constraints, and they won't take the risk unless they're confident it won't cost them an entire season. Water salinity came up as a big concern, particularly for crops like pecans that are already well-established but water-heavy.

Finally, people supported resilience hubs and emergency response plans, especially when tied to existing local networks. These kinds of efforts were seen as valuable during extreme weather and emergencies, and some participants pointed to models from cities like Houston where community-led hubs made a difference. Trusted nonprofits and local leaders were named as essential partners to make these spaces work.

Table 6 - Considerations for Low-Income Communities and Workforce Needs

Considerations for low-income communities

Community members emphasized the importance of investing in infrastructure across all neighborhoods without causing displacement or gentrification. There were concerns about energy efficiency and solar programs - many residents don't trust people entering their

homes, and there's confusion around solar loans. Participants said more education and word-of-mouth is needed, especially in LIDAC communities.

People also raised concerns about rising taxes and insurance costs after upgrades. At the same time, they pointed to positive programs like UTEP's USDA-funded internship in food and water research. On flooding, some worried that buying out homes and replacing them with parks could break up communities. For water issues, residents stressed the need for local partnerships and education, especially in colonias. Air quality monitoring came up as a major need, and participants called for fair use of public dollars across neighborhoods.

Workforce Considerations for Green Jobs

Participants highlighted several gaps in workforce development related to climate action. For energy efficiency, some weatherization workers had to be trained in Santa Fe due to a lack of local programs. In renewable energy, participants noted that workers trained in rooftop solar often end up working in unrelated jobs, like roofing, because there aren't enough solar installation jobs available. For green infrastructure, there are training programs in places like Tucson, but local job opportunities are limited, making it difficult to sustain a trained workforce. Participants also noted a need for healthy workers in sectors like air quality monitoring and emphasized that education and job programs should use promotoras to engage communities. There is concern about brain drain, as young graduates often leave El Paso, and participants suggested focusing recruitment efforts on low-income communities.

Cross-cutting Themes

The summit brought out several big themes that came up across all the measures discussed. These ideas reflect what participants value, the main challenges they see, and what they think is needed to make El Paso's Climate Action Plan successful. The following five cross-cutting themes synthesize the core messages that emerged from participant input during the engagement.

- **Education and Outreach:** Many participants highlighted the need for more public education and awareness. People shared that programs like weatherization, solar, or energy audits are unfamiliar or not trusted, especially in low-income communities. Trusted messengers and community-based outreach, such as through promotoras or neighbors, were suggested as effective ways to build understanding and participation.
- **Workforce Development and Job Access:** While training programs exist, participants said there are often not enough jobs after people complete them. For example, solar trainees are sometimes working as roofers instead. Others noted a brain drain where El Paso's young people often leave for job opportunities elsewhere. Participants suggested investing in local job creation, especially in climate-related sectors, and recruiting from low-income communities.
- **Equity:** Participants raised concerns that climate upgrades, like solar panels or building retrofits, could raise housing costs or property taxes in ways that unintentionally displace residents. In particular, multifamily housing and LIDAC neighborhoods were mentioned as needing safeguards to prevent gentrification.

- **Infrastructure and Land Use Disconnect:** People repeatedly pointed out that many neighborhoods lack safe and connected infrastructure for biking, walking, and transit. Participants also noted that homes, schools, jobs, and services are often far apart, making it hard to live without a car. Better coordination across agencies and land use planning that supports mixed-use, walkable neighborhoods were seen as essential to long-term success.
- **Access to Funding and Financial Support**
A recurring concern was the need for accessible public funding to help communities adopt clean energy, improve housing, and withstand climate impacts. Many participants mentioned that grants, not just loans, are essential, particularly in lower-income areas. Others cited solar fraud, the high cost of EVs, or the lack of ongoing job funding as major obstacles without better public investment.

Next Steps

The next steps include organizing the third Climate Action Plan Summit in the coming months. This upcoming event will build on the previous discussions, further refining actions.

Appendix

Table 2 – Zero Emissions Vehicles Transition and Air Quality

Support the Zero Emissions Vehicle Transition

Monitor and improve air quality

	Action	Description
1	Implement EV charging policies for new buildings	Develop an EV-charging policy for new residential and commercial buildings that defines requirements for at-home EV charging readiness and new commercial parking lot EV charging.
2	Implement zero-emission and hybrid vehicle ride-and-drive events for community members	Conduct regular ride and drive events to promote awareness of and familiarity with EVs and other clean air vehicles and help local dealerships conduct their own events.
3	Transition municipal fleets to ZEVs	Transition municipal fleets to ZEVs and create a Fleet Electrification Playbook.
4	Install public EV charging stations	Install level 2 and fast charging stations for EVs at public parking lots and set affordable charging rates.
5	Develop alternate fuel hubs for buses and heavy-duty fleet vehicles	Develop alternate fuel production facilities (e.g., green hydrogen, biofuels, renewable natural gas, etc.) that can serve transit fleet operators, local government vehicle fleets, and potentially other large regional fleet operators.
6	Develop alternative fuel freight corridors	Identify and plan for freight vehicle refueling infrastructure needs to support industry transition toward low- or zero-emission freight vehicles.
7	Install air quality monitoring systems at the international bridges	Install air quality monitoring systems at the international bridges to monitor air pollution from freight trucks.
8	Install air quality monitoring systems in communities disproportionately impacted by poor air quality	Install air quality monitoring systems throughout the region to help identify where air quality issues are most pressing. Communities can experience negative health impacts from traffic pollution and dust storms.
9	Reduce freight truck idling	Work with the federal government and transportation and logistics companies to implement strategies to reduce freight truck idling at region's ports of entry.
10	Create, expand or improve designated truck parking areas at El Paso Ysleta Port of Entry to reduce idling	Create a designated parking area at El Paso Ysleta Port of Entry, located at the Ysleta–Zaragoza International Bridge, where truck drivers can park and wait to cross the international bridge instead of idling.
11	Reduce wait times at international bridges	Use Intelligent Transportation Systems to manage wait times at the international bridges and communicate wait times in real-time through official channels, like a website or app.

	Action Title	Description
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1	Implement EV charging policies for new buildings	Pair with solar panels to close the emissions loop Have an ev ready sticker or badge that certifies a home EV ready.
2	Implement zero-emission and hybrid vehicle ride-and-drive events for community members	Educate community on increased electricity rate cost when owning an electric vehicle Educate community on solar panels much like a ride-and-drive event to help address any misinformation Promotoras could be good partners
3	Transition municipal fleets to ZEVs	Partner with school districts to help encourage them to also transition their fleets
4	Install public EV charging stations	Pair with solar panels to close the emissions loop Car parking lots to car ports with shaded solar infrastructure
5	Develop alternate fuel hubs for buses and heavy-duty fleet vehicles	
6	Develop alternative fuel freight corridors	
7	Install air quality monitoring systems at the international bridges	Improve ride share capabilities at the international border to improve pedestrian traffic.
8	Install air quality monitoring systems in communities disproportionately impacted by poor air quality	Make note of all major polluters and create a database Air quality data exists but something needs to be in respect the data. The city needs to be actively working on improving local air quality and needs to develop an action plan. Once installed ensure that the equipment is cared for to improve its lifespan
9	Reduce freight truck idling	
10	Create, expand or improve designated truck parking areas at El Paso Ysleta Port of Entry to reduce idling	Logistic companies need to be part of discussion Current status is a mess with no place to park on the American side, pick/drop off location is not sufficient, bus stop is on opposite side of road. Needs dedicated buses and biking lanes Redirect freight traffic through Santa Teresa
11	Reduce wait times at international bridges	Encourage homeland security to increase their agents at the border to reduce wait times Faster wait times might increase international travel and might increase our local emissions

Table 4 – Sustainable Agriculture, Waste Management and Climate Action Plan Implementation

Promote Sustainable Food Systems and Waste Management Practices

Implement and Oversee Climate Action

غ	Action Title	Description
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1	Capture and upgrade biogas to use as an energy source	Establish Renewable Natural Gas (RNG) facilities at solid waste or wastewater treatment plants.
2	Implement community-wide composting for food and yard waste	Implement composting program to remove food and yard waste from solid waste stream before it goes to landfills.
3	Improve recycling practices	Reduce amount of recyclable materials ending up in landfill through education and outreach on recycling practices and expanding recycling services.
4	Develop a construction and demolition waste diversion ordinance	Develop a construction and demolition (C&D) waste ordinance that requires large construction projects to divert a certain percentage of C&D waste.
5	Use water-based growing systems, such as hydroponics and aquaponics agriculture, to grow food without soil	Work with local farmers, agriculture businesses, and/or community gardens to implement an indoor hydroponic and aquaponic system pilot project to provide local produce. emissions.
6	Develop local food hubs	Construct local food hubs so that communities can get produce and grocery staples from local sources.
7	Educate, incentivize, and provide technical assistance to growers in the region to transition to climate-friendly farming practices.	Cover-cropping and reduced tillage can reduce soil erosion, increase soil water retention, improve soil carbon sequestration, and increase soil health, building resilience against drought.
8	Establish green revolving loan funds to support sustainability projects in public buildings	A green revolving loan fund is an internal capital pool that is dedicated to funding energy efficiency, renewable energy, and sustainability projects that generate cost savings. A portion of those savings are then used to replenish the fund (i.e. revolved) allowing for reinvestment in future projects of similar value.
9	Integrate a climate and sustainability lens into government operations and decision-making	Develop processes to integrate a climate lens into government operations and decision-making.
10	Create a mini-grant program to support neighborhood-level climate action	Create a mini-grant program designed to support local community organizations and businesses in implementing projects that promote sustainability and resilience.

	Action Title	Description
1	Capture and upgrade biogas to use as an energy source	
2	Implement community-wide composting for food and yard waste	Resources: -Education implementation -Funds for bins and resources needed (transportation, etc) -Need land -Marketing Opportunities:

		-Working with programs that already exist (Dirt Girls Compost, etc) -Fellowship dedicated to compost hubs -Farmers use compost for farm lands or export -Community gardens -Lead to community health because more people will want to eat more veggies/ etc. because they can use it for compost -More herbal gardens -Fine dining can be a part of the program -Can make local restaurants more sustainable Barriers: -Funding -Culture in El Paso is not used to recycling -There is a lack of education when it comes to recycling and composting/how to go about it -Transportation of compost -Big compost items and not having facilities to manage them or compost them -Lack of water needed for compost, a lot of water is being used for export crops -Need space/land Partners: -Dirty Girl Compost -Local farmers -Community -Local chefs -Local restaurants
3	Improve recycling practices	Resources: -Social media -Industry mapping -Mapped resources Opportunities: -Can use resources already available to us and we can keep it simple, resources like social media, etc, in order to educate people. -Local markets can participate -More job opportunities -Can use the glass machine to start recycling glass in EP, since we don't recycle glass. The city already has a glass machine that is not running, we can get students from colleges to help fix it Barriers: -People do not use recycling bins correctly -Cost of import/export -Infinite elements (e-waste , etc.) -Lack of hubs Partners: -Local leadership -EPCC -NGO's (non-government organizations)

4	Develop a construction and demolition waste diversion ordinance and explore establishing reuse/recycling facilities	
5	Use water-based growing systems, such as hydroponics and aquaponics agriculture, to grow food without soil	Resources: -Empty facilities Opportunities: -El Paso has a lot of land -Schools can grow their own food Barriers: -Too much salt in the region's groundwater supply for hydroponics -Difficult for farmers to switch their way of doing things -Cost of infrastructure is too high. -Lack of greenhouses -Lack of agriculture in our region -Need local growers Partners: -Irrigation district -EP Water -Local farmers -El Paso City and County -Local tribes -NMSU -EPCC -Texas A&M AgriLife
6	Develop local food hubs	Resources: -Farmers Markets -Farmers/growers -Land Opportunities: -Can have food boxes (box of variety of veggies) available at any corner store -Community van that drives around to sell produce for a cheaper amount than grocery stores -Can bridge grocery stores with farmers to have even small food sections at stores Barriers: -Process for developing food hubs is too difficult, they need to make it simpler in order to implement more hubs. -Most farmers markets in El Paso don't even have fresh produce, they're mainly craft markets. -Contaminants in compost (Pfaster) (pesticides, chemicals, etc), it's difficult to regulate. Can lead to lawsuit. -Not enough growers -Not enough small businesses

		Partners: -Farmers Market in El Paso -Desert Spoon -The city to provide equipment needed -John Deer- grants for equipment -BioChar- carbon market
7	Educate, incentivize, and provide technical assistance to growers in the region to transition to climate-friendly farming practices.	Resources: -Education -Incentivize farmers/growers so need more funding to do so -USDA Opportunities: -Can move away from flooding and water-heavy crops like pecans. Barriers: -Theres's research being done but no partnerships are being made -Farmers have the mindset of 'business as usual' -Farmers not willing to work with others/not adaptable -Lack of education and information being spread -Farmers are not willing to attempt without seeing results, otherwise they can risk a whole growing season. So, you need to show them proof the climate-friendly practices are affective and won't affect their crops Partners: -NMSU -Local ranches -Texas A&M -local farmers markets -Desert Spoon -Patricia Sulliman -Dr.Shu (civil engineer) -Irrigation districts -
8	Establish green revolving loan funds to support sustainability projects in public buildings	
9	Integrate a climate and sustainability lens into government operations and decision-making	
10	Create a mini-grant program to support neighborhood-level climate action	

Table 5 – Climate Adaptation and Resilience

Cool Communities, Protect Health, and Increase Native Ecosystems

Reduce Flood Risk

Build Drought Resilience and Conserve Water

	Action Title	Description
1	Develop a community stewardship program to mitigate heat by increasing tree canopy and shading	Engage volunteers and neighborhood groups in collaboration with public maintenance crews to create a tree stewardship program.
2	Deploy green infrastructure and reduce impermeable surfaces along roads and at critical facilities	Green infrastructure collects and absorbs stormwater runoff before it can enter the sewer system or cause local flooding. Reduce impermeable surfaces and replace with green infrastructure.
3	Expand wetlands and parks to support groundwater recharge	Identify areas, particularly in the floodplain, to expand parks and restore natural areas and wetlands.
4	Adopt a heat-resilient building code	Heat-resilient building codes encourage the adoption of cool roofs and walls to ensure buildings can withstand more extreme temperatures.
5	Develop climate-resilient building codes and development standards	Update building codes to protect occupants and ensure building mechanical, plumbing, and electrical systems are equipped to operate during heat waves, dust storms, and flood events.
6	Strategically acquire land in the 100-year floodplain	Limit development in the floodplain by purchasing land and buying back properties in the 100-year and 500-year floodplains.
7	Adjust the structural design of pavements, bridges, and railways. Use more cool and reflective surfaces (walls, roofs, pavements)	Use pavement binders with a higher temperature grade or use binders that age more slowly. Upgrade components of bridges and railway tracks to account for more thermal expansion and contraction.
8	Develop multi-hazard resilience hubs in vulnerable communities	Resilience hubs can provide communities relief, shelter, supplies, and other resources during and after an emergency or an extreme event.

9	Develop a robust multi-lingual emergency communications response framework and resources	Develop a robust multi-lingual emergency communications response framework for residents, especially residents of low-income and disadvantaged communities.
10	Expand use of recycled and greywater water for irrigation and establish water reclamation projects to capture run-off	El Paso Water already supplies parks, schools, construction, and industrial sites with reclaimed water. Develop additional programs to support residents and businesses to install greywater systems.
11	Stabilize arroyos in steep locations and that show signs of erosion with native vegetation	During heavy rains, flooding and debris flows can exceed the capacity of arroyos, leading to flooding and damage from debris. Use the results of the exposure assessment to identify arroyos that are likely to experience flooding and consider stabilizing the arroyos.
12	Educate, incentivize, and provide technical assistance to growers in the region to transition to climate-friendly farming practices	Cover-cropping and reduced tillage can reduce soil erosion, increase soil water retention, improve soil carbon sequestration, and increase soil health, building resilience against drought.
13	Develop water capture systems that run on solar energy to generate potable water in unincorporated areas and colonias	Develop water capture systems that run on solar energy to generate potable water in unincorporated areas and colonias.
14	Implement carbon sequestration projects on public land	This initiative aims to retain and expand native plant-life, improve soil management, and avoid natural land conversions to effectively capture and store carbon on public lands.

	Action Title	Description
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1	Develop a community stewardship program to mitigate heat by increasing tree canopy and shading	Tree planting was discussed during all 4 sessions in one way or another. The key issue identified across sessions was a need to overcome past water-conservation efforts that may have over-emphasized individual conservation to the point that residents see tree planting as a large cost burden. The reestablishment of a municipal tree farm emerged as a priority during discussions. Sembrando Esperanza, UTEP, EPW, and the El Paso Master Gardener program were identified as key partners. A ‘tree steward’ or ‘promatora’ system was suggested to connect community members to tree planting initiatives.
2	Deploy green infrastructure and reduce impermeable surfaces along roads and at critical facilities	Participants made comparisons to the efforts of other cities like Phoenix, Albuquerque, and Tucson as other cities doing similar efforts. Participants connect the efforts to construct green infrastructure to other action items as a way to create more tree canopy and help manage arroyo stormwater. Comparisons were made between the relatively lawn-like Chamizal Park in El Paso to the relatively tree-full Chamizal Park in Juarez. Problems with financing these improvements were discussed.
3	Expand wetlands and parks to support groundwater recharge	Participants supported the expansion of wetlands and emphasize the need to protect the Rio Bosque park. Participants were concerned there is limited land available for wetland projects, and that the wetland projects are limited to areas close to the river.
4	Adopt a heat-resilient building code	Participants supported adopting building codes, but also emphasized that education and enforcement would be critical to making sure the code changes were effective at delivering changes to the community. Concerns were raised about political opposition to code change proposals.
5	Develop climate-resilient building codes and development standards	Participants supported adopting building codes, but also emphasized that education and enforcement would be critical to making sure the code changes were effective at delivering changes to the community. Concerns were raised about political opposition to code change proposals.
6	Strategically acquire land in the 100-year floodplain	EPW discussed active projects to move homes from flood-prone areas and participants emphasized the equity concerns arising from that land acquisition.
7	Adjust the structural design of pavements, bridges, and railways. Use more cool and reflective surfaces (walls, roofs, pavements)	Did not emerge as a topic of discussion

8	Develop multi-hazard resilience hubs in vulnerable communities	Participants presented the hub model as derived from Hurricane crisis responses in Houston and that the hub model depends on finding active networks already in place to support with city resources. Houston in Action and Sembrando Esperanza were discussed as potential nonprofit partners in effectively developing these hubs, as they require connections to local community leaders to be effective.
9	Develop a robust multi-lingual emergency communications response framework and resources	The importance of multi-lingual communication came up in conversation, but no implementation concerns were discussed.
10	Expand use of recycled and greywater water for irrigation and establish water reclamation projects to capture run-off	Participants viewed current greywater uses as mostly for institutional, industrial, and especially power-production, and asked how more individual residents could be connected to the current network
11	Stabilize arroyos in steep locations and that show signs of erosion with native vegetation	Participants agreed that using arroyos as more green space was an effective community good, but ought not impede other stormwater management concerns.
12	Educate, incentivize, and provide technical assistance to growers in the region to transition to climate-friendly farming practices	Participants discussed the limitations of changes to agricultural practices as depending on market factors, especially with regards to the infrastructural costs of changing to subsurface irrigation in the context of high-salinity water. Discussion centered on the prevalence of surface-irrigation pecan orchards as a cash crop and the need to create/transition to a marketable alternative that can manage the relatively high salinity of local water.
13	Develop water capture systems that run on solar energy to generate potable water in unincorporated areas and colonias	Participants asked questions about the feasibility of solar-powered atmospheric water capture systems in colonias. Participants shared concerns about the technical details and scalability of the project and what kinds of models (subscription models, individual purchases, shared tanks) would be most effective.
14	Implement carbon sequestration projects on public land	Did not emerge as topic of discussion

Table 6 – Considerations for Low-Income Communities and Workforce Needs

Considerations for Low-Income Communities

	Goals	• Could implementation impact some communities negatively more than others? • What are the potential downsides, and how can they be reduced?
1	Promote Walking, Biking, and Riding Transit	Distributional equity: provide infrastructure in all communities without causing gentrification. There is a disconnect in land use. Homes, schools and jobs are not in close proximity.
2	Increase Energy Efficiency and Decarbonize Buildings	Need incentives from government for energy retrofits. Increase in property taxes after building retrofits. Adds burdens to communities. Hard sell in LIDAC communities – lots of education needed. Don't want people entering homes. Need word of mouth to promote audits etc. And see the impact in neighbor houses.
3	Install Renewable Energy Systems	There is wide spread solar fraud. People don't realize it's a loan program. Include ethics note on website. Rents may go up. Taxes and insurances may go up. Avoid gentrification in multifamily housing.
4	Promote Sustainable Food Systems and Waste Management Practices	UTEP is running a internship program which is paid for by USDA grant. Train professionals at the intersection of food and water research. This is a professional development opportunity. Need for food security.
5	Support the Zero Emissions Vehicle Transition	
6	Cool Communities, Protect Health, and Increase Native Ecosystems	
7	Reduce Flood Risk	Buying out flooded homes and replacing with parks causes loss of social cohesion within the community. Breaks community identify. Neighborhoods with frequent flooding often are in blight with several vacant properties.
8	Build Drought Resilience and Conserve Water	Increase in insurance costs after flood events. Need community buy-in for solutions. Partner with promotora. Some colonias are happy with septic tanks do not water infrastructure. Education component involved.
9	Monitor and Improve Air Quality	Air quality monitoring is a major issue. Need a network of monitors across the city with data available to public.

10	Implement and Oversee Climate Action	Equitable reinvestment of public dollars.
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Workforce Considerations for Green Jobs

	Goals	- What workforce development needs exist for jobs in these sectors? - What should we consider to support workforce development in these sectors?
1	Promote Walking, Biking, and Riding Transit	
2	Increase Energy Efficiency and Decarbonize Buildings	WSB trained weatherization techs in Santa Fe as there were no local training programs available.
3	Install Renewable Energy Systems	Need jobs for workers once training is over. For example after finishing rooftop solar training. They are working as roofers due to lack of jobs open to them in solar installation.
4	Promote Sustainable Food Systems and Waste Management Practices	
5	Support the Zero Emissions Vehicle Transition	
6	Cool Communities, Protect Health, and Increase Native Ecosystems	There is a firm in Tucson to train people to take care of green infrastructure. However need jobs in the region to support paid training.
7	Reduce Flood Risk	
8	Build Drought Resilience and Conserve Water	
9	Monitor and Improve Air Quality	Need healthy workers
10	Implement and Oversee Climate Action	Need education through promotora model. Engage in workforce programs through promatora. Overall there is a brain drain. Young graduates leave El Paso.

		Target recruitment in low income communities. Bottom 2 working quartiles.
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- ISDs and school districts need to work together.
- WSB can be employer on record. Pay for internships provided they lead to full time positions. However, job placement is the only metric of success.
- Increase earnings in the region by bringing in high paying jobs.
- Need to promote workforce opps in green industries in high schools.
- Need wrap around services for job seekers.
- Promote apprenticeship and pre- apprenticeship program
- El Paso is low wage family oriented community.
- There is net migration loss. And brain drain. Graduates from UTEP leave the region for work.
- Need to upskill the bottom two quartiles of earners in the region.
- Need advocacy for actions at council meetings
- The benefits cliff effect refers to a situation where a small increase in a person's income leads to a disproportionate loss of public assistance benefits, such as food stamps (SNAP), housing subsidies, Medicaid, or child care support. This sudden loss can make someone worse off financially even though they're earning more.
- Certification exams are very challenging for those who are not native English speakers. They are able to perform the task on site but have a hard time passing the cert exams.

Table 3 - Buildings and Energy

Action Title	Notes
Increase energy efficiency in public buildings	- Schools, builders, and developers need to be brought to the table - A circular system + closed loop should be created - A big positive of this is that the City already owns these
Create a community-wide building energy efficiency and electrification rebate program	- Big miss to not offer simpler solutions -> have small additions incorporated into new construction to prevent needing to go back and update later

Develop a Building Energy Performance Standard for commercial buildings	- The IBC and IRC are model standards for the U.S. but should be adapted to increasingly changing Chihuaha Desert climate conditions - o Phoenix could serve as an example with their cool roofs - Third-party consultant will likely be needed to evaluate what needs to be included in this standard - Need stakeholders to get involved early in the design of utilities - o Could use the MPO program as a model where stakeholders are brought in - o Council of govs should also be tagged in - o Need more of a steering committee approach than an advisory board - Barrier: Existing ordinances from the state -> consultants could help advise next steps - Barrier: The City of El Paso does not have much control beyond its limits - PACE could be used to analyze the worst buildings and determine how to bring these up to the newer standards - Do a feasibility study to know what's in the green vs what's in the red
Develop a residential weatherization program	- Could be consolidated with #2 - Needs to include an education program on common sense energy savings practices -> don't mandate these but use them as suggested ideas for residents to reduce energy use - o Studies have found that adding renewables and improving energy efficiency leads to an overuse of energy because residents think they're OK to do so - o Building Together El Paso is a good example of a behavioral and educational component -> teaches residents the basics of electricity and water to reduce use and energy costs
	- Keep this as a cost-savings conversation -> don't approach this from the climate action angle - Barrier: Many families do not meet program requirements who could benefit from this -> add moderate income residents and renters - Barrier: Limited funding inhibits Project Bravo - The infrastructure is in place -> add funding and this can be expanded - Most states have energy priorities that require utilities to invest in weatherization and energy efficiency -> leads to a whole retrofit

	- Low-income users often don't increase their consumption unless its for heat - Barrier: Current software prioritizes cold weather consumption trends when analyzing where increases are coming from - Farther South its harder for ranking or spending money - Move away from software towards an A-F ranking system - Barrier: DOE priority list has weird restrictions like cinder blocks - City's role in this -> leverage with EPE + Texas Gas for rate case situations - They often don't have the capacity to analyze data themselves - Budgets are bigger for homes outside of the City limits - Manufactured home problems are often insulation + infiltration - Audit program will need initial capital to do full home assessments - Barrier: Federal funds can't be used -> it would need to be a separate entity with its own equipment - Needs to be within EPE priorities to receive grant funding - Chambers need to promote business on the commercial side - Training is expensive and needs to be incorporated into capital needs - Can do through BPI -> piloting tests in other languages - Barrier: Funding for these programs has been the same since 2011 -> pay may increase if the legislature increases standards
Partner with industries to reduce emissions related to industrial activities	- Carbon capture could be done, especially at ports of entry - Also provides nature benefits - Work with Bureau of Economic Geology +

Develop a data center policy that incorporates environmental economic development considerations	- Barrier: Data center owners will not care about rebates or incentives - Data centers will strain El Paso's largely residential electric grid mix - Zoning them as dispersed or grouped together needs to be determined -> spot zoning should be avoided and instead they should be encouraged to build in certain locations - Can data centers be looked at like franchise agreements with the City -> similar to a franchise fee that reinvests into the community - Data centers may be the first to be cut off from the grid if tax legislature pushes SP6's guardrails - o Could backup power in the form of renewables attract them? - Barrier: Public Utilities Commission will treat actions towards specific customers as discriminatory - Barrier: Data centers will want new renewables built because there will be bad press if they use up existing supply - Data centers will likely need some sort of fossil-renewable mix of power - Brackish water can be used for cooling - Data centers should be encouraged to build in Hudspeth to help it economically and reduce overturn - o Could also foster the spilling over of El Paso into Hudspeth - Barrier: El Paso Water was criticized recently for saying yes to a data center - Data centers can bring community programming funding - Barrier: Data centers could drive up property costs and reduce affordability - Barrier: These centers bring few employees in - Barrier: Data centers are land intensive -> impact on surrounding ecosystems and areas needs to be assessed - Could this be extended to other large users? - Barrier: If this policy requires council approval for them to be built it could turn away these center owners - o Policy could be at tiers of energy demand - Barrier: Data centers will need even more land if using renewables - Incorporate nature-based solutions like tree canopy to help cool these centers
Install solar panels on public buildings and public land and shade structures	- Car parks are a lot more ready up front as many rooftops will need to be redone to be solar-ready

	- Incentives and credits are provided through the IRA - El Paso should consider running a solar fest like San Antonio - Use companies that combine roofing and solar - Install batteries alongside solar panels - o Connected Solutions runs program where battery capacity is installed alongside solar to allow residents to sell their energy when they want ▪ CS pays participants for summer enrollment in the program ▪ This opportunity is also open to businesses - o Aggregators can sell group battery energy back to the grid - o Some utilities will buy batteries for their participants -> the utility manages it but it lowers the entry cost for customers ▪ EPE could pay for the first battery to help decentralize the grid - Barrier: Only leverage the City has is proposing what the plan will look like - ITC is a good funding source - govs + non-profits are now eligible
Incentivize battery storage installations	- Barrier: Hard to have battery systems for urban areas → needs to be per building - There needs to be a benefit to the end user such as deploying stored energy to lower bill and get money back through aggregation
Procure renewable energy through utility contracts or subscriptions to meet local government electricity demand	- EPE Business Solar can serve as a model for new programs
Implement solar-ready policies for new buildings	- Barrier: People have a bad taste in there mouth around solar because many have been scammed - o San Antonio has a list of 10 approved solar companies -> El Paso should step in since EPE isn't willing to do this ▪ LEED certified could be used as a standard - New Mexico is incentivizing this through grants - Will have a larger impact than residential because it applies to larger buildings - Incorporate EV ready policy as well -> this will encourage solar to actually be built and EVs to be purchased

-	- Barrier: Low-income roofs are often not up to par - o Funding needs to be available for roof upgrades - Barrier: No money up front for tax credits which don't cover the whole cost and residents will lose benefits if they save up for them (must be under a certain dollar amount in savings) - Barrier: Only allowed to pay utility companies -> can't pay leasing or financing - How far out will these solar systems need to be? - Barrier: Currently there is not enough funding for the demand - 2 year wait in some cases - Bravo is eligible for tax credits to 2031 - could work to be third-party ownership - o Upfront installation cost would be recovered quickly - o Bravo qualifies for solar for its own facilities -> many clients have no clear ownership
Expand use of geothermal energy for facilities	- Can these be incorporated into powering data centers? - Can power data centers with lowest footprint - Eligible for tax credits - Incorporate geothermal requirement into RFP for data centers? - Fracking workforce could be retrained to support this

General Comments:

- Tree action should incorporate a shading component to reduce energy costs

Table 1 – Alternative Transportation

Action Title	Notes
Expand existing micromobility systems for bikes and scooters	Expand existing micromobility systems to promote the use of active transportation options, such as walking, biking, and scooters. Construct protected and/or separated bike paths along major commuting routes.
Implement Complete Streets conversion projects to improve walking, biking, and public transit use	Use Complete Streets to reserve lanes in busy downtown areas or along highways for transit vehicles only so that transit is not slowed by other traffic.
Implement car-free hours to increase pedestrian street access	Identify streets that are either retail/restaurant hubs or overburden communities with unsafe driving, noise, and air pollution and close sections of the street on specific hours or days of the week. This can enhance pedestrian safety, increase foot traffic, and boost local businesses revenue.
Update the zoning code to remove parking minimums	Remove any minimum parking requirements from the zoning code. Allow developers to build without parking spots if they choose.

Explore options to provide free public transit	Provide free public transit to increase transit access across the region.
Build transit-oriented developments to increase access to public transit	Unlike park-and-rides, transit-oriented-developments put retail, restaurants, groceries, other businesses, and/or dense, mixed-use residential housing closest to the transit stop so that all people can easily access shops without a personal vehicle.
Implement micro-transit projects like small shuttles to help people get from home to transit stops	Operate a shuttle program to help close the gap between home/work and transit stops to increase ease of ridership and remove barriers for riders with mobility challenges (e.g., addressing first- and last- mile problems).
Improve the frequency and quality of transit services	Improve transit services by increasing the number of routes, service hours, and drop-off locations.

Expand existing micromobility systems for bikes and scooters

- Facilities for bikes and scooters
- Bikers' safety around drivers
- Amenity accessibility
- Students are a targeted demographic
- Target demographics for public transport
 - o include younger generation and students
- Targeted by population hubs
- UTEP
- Put rack where there are none
- Community developments for stores in
 - o neighbourhoods
- Consider dedicated corridors or large parks
- UT Health conduct needs assessment on
 - o walkability
- Can conduct air quality monitoring
- Protected bike paths should include pylons etc.
 - o not just painted paths
- Driving education to promote the respect for
 - o driver vs biker
- Lack of bike and walk paths
- City of El Paso MPO & Council
- Protected bike paths should
- Need to consider primary stakeholders (TXDOT,
 - o Organizations
- Involve TXDOT
- Involve smaller communities
- Involve students
- Lighting
- Transit facility
- Bilingual everything
- Bike rack
- Cimarron
- Key opportunities: existing commercial,
 - o **residential and entertainment**

Implement Complete Streets conversion projects to improve walking, biking, and public transit use	- Promote the walk or cooter & bike use as method of transportation - Long range development plan - MPO - Dedicated bus lanes - Narrow streets - Pedestrian/ bikers safety and comfort - Roundabouts - Albq. Complete street model - Alameda & Texas ave. good connectivity - Complete streets safer but - Biking modeled by Albq. - Collab with Paso Del Norte (PDN) - Federal funding limit for nonvehicle trans. V state focus on vehicle - Narrowing car lanes (Edgemere) - Congestion caused by public transport/ CO2 emissions/ transit lane - Street design standards - Barrier: Jurisdiction and ownerships across roads and streets
Implement car-free hours to increase pedestrian street access	- Hubs in different parts of the city - Certain hours - MX model of sharing highways - Certain people get certain days - Start promoting and share pollution data to make people have a change of mind to and take care of the globe - Identifying an area in each part of the city for this - Less available parking to incite public transportation

Update the zoning code to remove parking minimums	- Also, an option is implementing a system like Mexico City use to do. “No circula” this program only authorized a certain amount of vehicles to be driven per day - Asphalt: heat islands and aquifer recharge - The fountains are a walkable model - Drunk driving incident reduction - Encourage developers to build parking garages if necessary - Initially will have push back but eventually will adapt - Yes, especially in infill areas as an incentive - Priority - Replace street parking with commercial loading zones - Asphalt: heat islands & aquifer recharge - The fountains are a walkable model - Drunk driving incident reduction - Handicap parking - More bike lanes structured around transit - More density within the city - No parking min. but creating multi form development - Central E.P. an example of parking min with a negative impact - Infill development increase - Business near homes - Business owners support vs. public pushback
Explore options to provide free public transit	- Barrier: not profitable needs subsidy - Provide free transportation for students - EPCC student body uses public transport - o heavily - Direct connections - Fast lanes - Free for students - Elderly - The Fountains - Trolley is a failed ex. - Airport direct/ freelines to hub - First educate the community to only use the car - o for long distance trip and walk or bike use for short distances - Free days for publicity - Pay as you can public transit a possibility?

	- Student ID for free Public Transport in the city - \$ - Education to community - More accessibility hubs - Reliable Public Transportation - App for culture
Build transit-oriented developments to increase access to public transit	- Development in county - How can we incentivize this - Bike paths - Mixed use - Free - Paso Del Norte - Playa Drain Trail - Incentives developers - Infill development (promote) - Tax incentives - Focus on incentivizing developments to provide those options - Parking Garages - Very Situational - Love scenic Sundays, but needs to be community driven - Five points, near bus hubs, should be invested in. - Incentivize developers that prioritize density - TOD hard to get info on - Commercial marketing

Implement micro-transit projects like small shuttles to help people get from home to transit stops	- Possible for handicap gap/drop off stations - Education and advertisement - Bike parking at bus hubs - Starting point downtown but expansion outside - o of that - Austin - Horizon and Cimarron - Special event routes - Work with UTEP to implement shuttles for - o international students crossing bridges
Improve the frequency and quality of transit services	- App - There - Make live updates easier - Way more - Barrier: city sprawl (travel time) - Not part of Tx, culture v NYC - Mitigating the flaws within public transit would - o make the switch to public transit easier - Land development out of our hands mostly - o incentivized by policies/ funding - Downtown a good place to start implementing - o w/ homes and infrastructure - Prioritize to compete with car trip time - Direct lines - Different transit agencies are a barrier - Tx culture promotes personal vehicle usage - o upbringing - Collab with businesses to provide shuttle - o services from parking spots to general areas - State promotes vehicle usage through highway - o expansion - Leadership promotes private vehicle usage - To get on this point the public transportation - o should be faster - Use an app to show where the buses are and - o ETAs - Method of transportation because if you want to - o go from one place to another you need to take the public transit with a lot of time in advance - Increase access, but also need an app that is - o easier to use - Shows the arrival times of buses - Improve Reliability of Public Transit

