

March 22, 2023


Dear Council Members Fuentes, Alter, Vela, and Ellis,

As advocates of improving the built environment and its resiliency in the face of the increasingly devastating effects of natural events, the members of AIA Austin thank you for your proposal of Resolution 20230323-058. We understand that, in the wake of widespread power outages during the freeze event earlier this year, measures such as this are intended to prevent future damage and its negative impact on public safety.

In the spirit of collaboration and efficacy, we would like to offer our assistance in identifying and mitigating some of the unforeseen consequences of this proposal. We would like to be included in the process of creating new electrical infrastructure criteria and testing that criteria to determine the true impacts on development, housing, and affordability—prior to implementing the criteria as a part of an ordinance.

- **Unintended Impacts to Affordability:** In the interest of mitigating any negative impacts of this proposal, we encourage policy makers to consider the potential costs that come with burying overhead lines. In our experience, burying distribution lines can be prohibitively expensive. If this were to be a prescriptive requirement for future development, it could greatly inhibit the construction of affordable housing. AIA Austin members encourage CM Fuentes' office to view this request through the lens of equitable and inclusive housing at every opportunity.
- **Increased Demand on Austin Energy's Resources:** We have seen the strain on Austin Energy's availability with current development in our growing city. Without significant investment and manpower, the requirement to bury power lines could further deteriorate AE staff's ability to keep up with demand.

Like you, the members of AIA Austin are committed to helping the city make sound, safe, and informed decisions for the betterment of the people of our city. We look forward to being a resource to you as you move this proposal forward.



Christy Taylor, AIA
AIA Austin President, 2023