

RESOLUTION NO.

WHEREAS, parks and public spaces play a central role in how residents and visitors experience the City of Austin, bringing people together, offering recreational opportunities, and providing critical environmental benefits that improve the quality of our air, water, and soils; and

WHEREAS, City Council is committed to ensuring equitable access to high-quality parkland and to maintaining a well-resourced, sustainable, and safe parks system; and

WHEREAS, the Parks and Recreation Department's (PAR) *Our Parks, Our Future Long-Range Plan*, which uses 2029 as a planning horizon, identified the importance of adequately funding not only the acquisition and development of new parkland but also the total cost of ownership, including long-term operations, staffing, and maintenance; and

WHEREAS, City Council Resolution No. 20091119-068 adopted the goal to create equitable access for all residents to parks and open spaces, defined as within one-fourth mile for urban core residents and one-half mile for those outside of the urban core; as a ten-minute walk to the park is considered the standard for parks to yield a quality-of-life benefit for residents; and

WHEREAS, PAR has seen substantial growth in acreage, amenities, and service demand over the past decade, including approximately 1,500 new acres and 96 additional parks, yet the Financial Services Department reported in May 2024 that grounds maintenance staffing is not keeping pace with our growing and diverse parks system maintenance requirements resulting in declining levels of service; and

25 **WHEREAS**, the Trust for Public Land annually prepares the ParkScore
26 index to provide a national comparison of park systems across the most populous
27 cities in the United States, and in 2025 Austin ranked 54th with a score of 51.2 out
28 of 100, dropping ten places from 44th in 2024; and

29 **WHEREAS**, the ParkScore is measured by five categories: access,
30 investment, amenities, acreage, and equity, to help city leadership advocate for
31 park resource needs and inform local park improvement efforts; and

32 **WHEREAS**, a July 2025 PARD memo points to consultant findings and
33 recommendations that emphasize the need to pursue multiple revenue avenues and
34 reduce dependency on the City's General Fund to support PARD's vast system of
35 parks, pools, recreation centers, museums, gardens, programming, facilities, and
36 general operating needs; and

37 **WHEREAS**, the City's General Fund is constrained by competing interests
38 and critical services including public safety, public health, libraries, planning,
39 municipal court, and animal services, highlighting the necessity of dedicated
40 supplemental funding sources to sustain and enhance Austin's park system; and

41 **WHEREAS**, City Council Resolution No. 20241121-072 directed the City
42 Manager to convene a team of City staff to explore additional funding sources for
43 parks management, land acquisition, amenities, facilities, and maintenance; and

44 **WHEREAS**, City Council reaffirms its commitment to overcoming these
45 financial limitations and developing a quality parks system that is equitable,
46 financially sustainable, well-maintained, and accessible to residents of all means
47 and resources; **NOW, THEREFORE**,
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BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

The City Manager is directed to assess the feasibility of implementing a dedicated Parks Maintenance Fee, not to exceed \$2.00 per month, as a sustainable and equitable funding source for park maintenance.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

In assessing and developing this Parks Maintenance Fee, the City Manager shall recommend the scope of maintenance and operational services the fee will directly cover, potentially including but not limited to:

1. General Grounds Maintenance:
 - a. Lawn mowing;
 - b. Litter, recycling, and trash servicing;
 - c. Restroom maintenance;
 - d. Tree care and natural area upkeep;
 - e. Preventative maintenance;
 - f. Timely response to work orders; and
2. Maintenance of recreational amenities (e.g. playgrounds, trails, sports fields and courts, pools, and splash pads).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager shall report back to Council with:

1. A proposal that outlines the projected revenues from a potential Parks Maintenance Fee, the maintenance services recommended to be funded, and the levels of service improvements it would support;

- BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

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ADOPTED: _____, 2025 **ATTEST:** _____

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