# RESOLUTION NO.

**WHEREAS**, Austin has been recognized as a "Tree City USA" for over 30 years; and

**WHEREAS**, Austin's Urban Forest Plan was adopted by City Council in 2013; and

**WHEREAS**, American Forests' 2013 report listed Austin as one of the top "Ten Best Cities for Urban Forests;" and

**WHEREAS**, Austin's Climate Equity Plan establishes a goal of 50% tree canopy cover, citywide, by the year 2050; and

**WHEREAS**, the Climate Resilience Action Plan recognizes the importance of tree shade in reducing urban heat; and

**WHEREAS**, City Council passed Resolution No. 20240215-25, calling for historic investment in the City's environmental and climate goals; and

**WHEREAS**, City Council passed Resolution No. 20240321-39 to develop a strategy for street trees and green infrastructure in the right-of-way; and

**WHEREAS**, trees are a critical component of our City's green infrastructure; and

**WHEREAS**, trees are the only part of our infrastructure that increase in value over time; and

**WHEREAS**, healthy trees provide more benefits and live longer, therefore proactive investment in city trees provides significant returns on investments; and

**WHEREAS**, trees lessen the effects of climate change through removing carbon dioxide from the air and providing carbon storage; and

**WHEREAS**, Austin is becoming increasingly hotter due to the climate crisis; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2023 the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Plant Hardiness Zone Maps were updated, shifting our region's zone from 8B to 9A; and

**WHEREAS**, almost 90% of Austin's tree species are moderately to highly vulnerable to climate change; and

**WHEREAS**, extreme heat and cold, flooding and drought test the endurance of our trees on a regular basis, with Winter Storm Mara alone damaging 10.5 million trees; and

**WHEREAS**, cities commonly inventory public assets, and the City's Comprehensive Infrastructure Assessment was first developed in 2014 and is now updated every two years; and

**WHEREAS**, the condition of the City's public trees is unknown due to the lack of data; and

**WHEREAS**, inventories of public trees are common tools used by municipalities to inform decisions and plans for managing public trees; and

**WHEREAS**, sample tree inventories have been conducted over the years in Austin, but a comprehensive public tree inventory has never been accomplished; and

**WHEREAS**, there is a need to collect more granular data about trees and tree health beyond tree canopy data; and

**WHEREAS**, a uniform inventory aids collaboration and data uniformity among City departments and other local governmental entities; and

47    **WHEREAS**, a tree inventory would provide the additional information
48    needed at scale for site assessments and equitable tree planting; and

49    **WHEREAS**, technological advancements through LiDAR and artificial
50    intelligence provide the opportunity to scan trees and other infrastructure quickly
51    and reliably; and

52    **WHEREAS**, tree-scanning provides the opportunity to measure changes in
53    trees over time with objectivity; and

54    **WHEREAS**, cities including Philadelphia, New York City, Los Angeles,
55    Chicago, San Diego, Dallas, and Denton, Texas, recently inventoried their trees;
56    **NOW, THEREFORE,**

57    **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:**

58    The City Manager is directed to explore options for a comprehensive tree
59    inventory with the capability of quickly and reliably analyzing Austin's public
60    trees.

61    **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

62    The City Manager is directed to establish a tree planting and maintenance
63    plan and correlating budget requirements to achieve proactive tree care and robust
64    tree planting to maximize the benefits provided by our city trees and minimize the
65    liability associated with unmaintained trees.

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**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

        The City Manager is directed to report back to Council with proposals and funding amounts for the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 budget process.

**ADOPTED:** _____, 2024  **ATTEST:** _____
                                        Myrna Rios
                                        City Clerk