

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

45 **WHEREAS**, a uniform inventory aids collaboration and data uniformity
46 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.

69 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

70 The City Manager is directed to reexamine the tree and shrub species
71 recommended in Appendix F of the Environmental Criteria Manual and the Grow
72 Green Guide based on the USDA zone designation changes from 8b to 9a and
73 make necessary changes if needed.

74 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

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

77
78 **ADOPTED:** _____, 2024 **ATTEST:** _____
79 Myrna Rios
80 City Clerk