

RESOLUTION NO.

WHEREAS, the post-pandemic economic growth in the Central Texas region has resulted in dramatic growth in population and activity, and the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport (“AUS”), an airport of national and, increasingly, international significance, is among the fastest growing airports in the country in the large and medium hub categories, continuing to achieve and project record high passenger levels; and

WHEREAS, on October 16, 2024, an American Airlines 737 carrying 122 passengers and a Cessna 182 narrowly avoided a mid-air collision, flying past each other less than 350 feet apart; and

WHEREAS, this incident is only the most recent of five near misses at AUS in the past two years; and

WHEREAS, AUS Air Traffic Control (“ATC”) is staffed at under 50% of the Federal Aviation Administration (“FAA”) staffing target, at the very time of increased activity; and

WHEREAS, the AUS ATC staffing shortage has led to FAA-mandated delays for scheduled flights arriving at AUS, inconveniencing passengers traveling through AUS without notifying the City’s Department of Aviation; and

WHEREAS, despite dangerously low levels of staffing and an apparent pattern of near-catastrophe, the FAA has failed to increase the number of air traffic controllers at AUS and, in fact, the number of air traffic controllers has decreased during the past year and certified controllers continue to leave AUS at a rate outpacing the rate at which AUS trainees are able to become certified; and

24 **WHEREAS**, in November 2023, Council unanimously passed a resolution
25 regarding operations at AUS and the creation of a virtual ramp control system that
26 urged the FAA to take immediate action to improve the safety of travelers; and

27 **WHEREAS**, in July 2024, to assist the air traffic controllers affected by the
28 staffing shortage at AUS, AUS requested the expansion of airspace in which
29 private aircraft must report to the AUS control tower, an application that was
30 accompanied by 57 pages of incidents where the AUS control tower had to redirect
31 private aircraft to avoid collisions; and

32 **WHEREAS**, in March 2025, an FAA-mandated ground stop at AUS due to
33 insufficient staffing halted all operations, triggering widespread delays, diversions,
34 and cancellations nationwide; and

35 **WHEREAS**, these staffing-related disruptions are recurring with increasing
36 frequency and intensity, and are placing unsustainable pressure on our already
37 constrained infrastructure; and

38 **WHEREAS**, on May 9, 2025, FAA-imposed arrival rate restrictions
39 persisted for more than six hours, resulting in severe apron congestion and limiting
40 access to available gates; and

41 **WHEREAS**, on May 11, 2025, Traffic Management Initiatives (“TMIs”)
42 led to widespread delays, impacting gate capacity, and resulting in overwhelmed
43 airline and ground operations teams; and

44 **WHEREAS**, on May 21, 2025, additional TMIs caused substantial
45 disruptions to flight schedules and gate assignments; and

46 **WHEREAS**, in November 2024, April 2025, and May 2025, leadership at
47 the Department of Aviation sent letters urging the FAA to address the staffing
48 shortage of air traffic controllers at the Austin Tower; and

49 **WHEREAS**, despite being home to six commercial service airports with
50 international status, including Austin-Bergstrom International Airport, the State of
51 Texas currently has no institutions participating in the FAA's Air Traffic-
52 Collegiate Training Initiative (AT-CTI) program, representing an opportunity for
53 the City of Austin to lead and create a local pipeline for critical aviation workforce
54 needs; and

55 **WHEREAS**, despite requests from Congressman Lloyd Doggett, the FAA
56 has failed to upgrade the airspace levels surrounding AUS; and

57 **WHEREAS**, Congressman Lloyd Doggett has repeatedly called upon the
58 FAA to take additional meaningful steps to improve safety at AUS; and

59 **WHEREAS**, Council deeply appreciates Congressman Lloyd Doggett's
60 leadership and advocacy at the federal level around AUS's needs and air safety;
61 and

62 **WHEREAS**, immediate action by the FAA is required to protect the public
63 traveling in and out of AUS; **NOW, THEREFORE**,
64

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

The Austin City Council urges the FAA to take immediate and comprehensive action to mitigate the dangers and delays caused by the staffing shortage at the AUS control tower, including, but not limited to:

- Prioritize AUS for transfer of air traffic controllers and incentivize air traffic controllers to transfer to AUS;
- Upgrade the airspace levels surrounding AUS to increase the protected airspace and reduce controller workload; and
- Immediately inform the Department of Aviation, Airport Advisory Commission, and Austin City Council of any actions taken to address these requests and safety concerns at AUS, as well as any mandated delays or other adverse consequences to the traveling public at AUS resulting from the staffing shortage.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to update our federal legislative agenda and communicate to our federal delegation our support for legislation that includes these provisions.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to collaborate with the FAA and Austin Community College to explore participation in the AT-CTI and the establishment of an Air Traffic Controller Academy, with the goal of building a local workforce pipeline for air traffic control careers.

ADOPTED: _____, 2025 **ATTEST:** _____
Erika Brady
City Clerk