

## **RESOLUTION NO.**

**WHEREAS**, fashion is an essential piece of Austin’s creative community and is a changing industry that provides opportunities for continued innovation and contributions to our local economy; and

**WHEREAS**, there could be opportunities in the upcoming budget cycle to identify a funding source to support the local fashion industry based on the potential for job and industry growth; and

**WHEREAS**, many central Texas colleges and universities provide apparel courses including the University of Texas at Austin, St. Edwards University, Baylor University, The Art Institute, the San Antonio Art and Design School, Texas State University, the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising, and Texas Women’s University; and

**WHEREAS**, there are approximately 20 local businesses in Austin that sell fabric resources and over 100 self-proclaimed fashion designers in Austin; and

**WHEREAS**, full time fashion designers in Austin make an average salary between \$30,712 and \$65,023, but most local fashion designers have another full time job to support the goal of having a full time career in fashion; and

**WHEREAS**, currently, there are no fashion markets in Austin that operate full time to showcase local design, which has a significant limiting impact on opportunities for local fashion designers; and

**WHEREAS**, key stakeholders in the Austin fashion community have expressed concern that without support from the local government, the local fashion industry may languish, but have also identified opportunities for Austin to potentially become a major fashion hub given the availability of Texas grown cotton and wool for textiles, and the potential partnership between a thriving fashion district and our local film industry's costume needs; and

**WHEREAS**, stakeholders have suggested the City explore the feasibility of backing resources such as a fashion council and a fashion incubator to give designers the tools they need to create successful businesses and fashion labels to have a positive impact on our local economy and culture; and

**WHEREAS**, fashion incubators serve as an invaluable resource for established and aspiring fashion talent by providing business development programs, low-cost design space, opportunities for mentoring, space for collaboration within the fashion community, and can serve as a showroom for local fashion designers; and

**WHEREAS**, Chicago, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Toronto, New York City, Washington DC, Seattle, and other cities across the United States and the

world have fashion incubators, many of which are sponsored by a partnership with a prominent retailer; and

**WHEREAS**, creating a Fashion Working Group as part of the Arts Commission or creating an Austin Fashion Commission could provide the local fashion community with a predictable process for providing input for how to strengthen our local fashion industry, and provide transparency through a public process; and

**WHEREAS**, Austin is a considered a premier city for arts and music, and fostering the fashion industry could result in significant economic benefits for our local economy including creation of creative and manufacturing jobs, tourism, and enhancing our local culture; and

**WHEREAS**, Austin currently has limited capacity for manufacturing and production, and there could be significant opportunities for job and industry growth by enabling education of advanced apparel manufacturing techniques and looking for opportunities to expand apparel manufacturing in Austin; and

**WHEREAS**, the Economic Development Department should study best practices of how other cities have taken an active role in supporting their local fashion industry and the economic benefits that resulted for their local economies; and

**WHEREAS**, a study of the current and potential economic impact of the fashion industry could be undertaken at a reasonable cost by existing city staff, perhaps supplemented as needed by assistance from contracting economists or business analysts; and

**WHEREAS**, one of the factors that drives tourism to Austin is our convention industry, and the Austin Convention Center and Visitors Bureau could provide information regarding our current market for fashion conventions and make suggestions about how we could recruit more conventions in the fashion industry to encourage tourism and make Austin a more visible fashion community across the country; **NOW, THEREFORE**

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

The City Manager is directed to study the economic impact including the potential for future growth of the fashion industry in Austin and work with stakeholders, the Economic Development Department, and the Austin Convention Center and Visitors Bureau to develop recommendations for ways to support the local fashion industry that could include an Austin Fashion Commission or a Fashion Working Group as part of the Arts Commission, potential partnerships to develop a fashion incubator, recruiting and supporting fashion conventions, or other options.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The City Manager is further directed to return to Council with report and costs by January 15, 2015.

**ADOPTED:** \_\_\_\_\_, 2014

**ATTEST:** \_\_\_\_\_

Jannette S. Goodall  
City Clerk

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