

RESOLUTION NO. 20181018-037

WHEREAS, temporary and permanent public plazas provide unique opportunities for enhanced conviviality and community in urban areas; and

WHEREAS, like pocket parks and sidewalk cafés, temporary and permanent public plazas can activate underutilized space with the purpose of creating safe, accessible, family friendly, and social public spaces; and

WHEREAS, Imagine Austin endeavors to “protect and enhance the unique qualities of Austin’s treasured public spaces and places such as parks, plazas, and streetscapes; and, where needed, enrich those areas lacking distinctive visual character or where the character has faded”; and

WHEREAS, Imagine Austin also prioritizes the development of “accessible community gathering places such as plazas, parks, farmers’ markets, sidewalks, and streets in all parts of Austin, especially within activity centers and along activity corridors including Downtown, future Transit Oriented Developments, in denser, mixed use communities, and other redevelopment areas, that encourage interaction and provide places for people of all ages to visit and relax”; and

WHEREAS, the 2008 Families and Children Task Force report recommends that the City Council should “create additional public gathering spaces in downtown and throughout the city and incorporate child-friendly and family-friendly features into existing public spaces”; and

WHEREAS, the South Central Waterfront Vision Framework Plan calls for a temporary public plaza, currently known as the Nightwing Plaza, as an interim strategy in lieu of capital funds for a permanent plaza; and

WHEREAS, efforts are underway to complete installation and begin activation of the Nightwing Plaza, but progress has been slow due to the lack of a streamlined process; and

WHEREAS, while the “Adopt a Median” program’s application process enables private stewardship over public space with continued public access, medians and public plazas are quite different and the City could benefit from creating a separate and more streamlined process for creating, managing, overseeing, and programming temporary and permanent public plazas; and

WHEREAS, additionally, the City does not have a clear process for establishing public-private partnerships to create a temporary or permanent public plaza, nor does it have clear expectations and requirements for programming, accessibility, vendor guidelines, and signage requirements to denote public access;

NOW, THEREFORE,

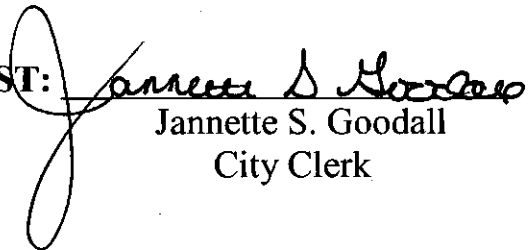
BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

The City Manager is directed to research national best practices for temporary and permanent public plaza programs, with special attention to other programs’ organizational structures, application requirements, contractual agreements, cost-sharing models, accessibility standards, vendor requirements, signage requirements, features that appeal to all ages, and successful methods in which public entities engage private organizations and community groups that participate in the operation, maintenance, and programming of public plazas.

Upon completion of this research, the City Manager is directed to compose a memo that synthesizes these best practices with recommendations for City of Austin implementation, including which City department should oversee the creation and administration of a public plaza program by April 15, 2019.

ADOPTED: October 18, 2018

ATTEST:



Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk