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WHEREAS, Travis County Commissioners Court passed a similar resolution on March 11, 2014; and,

24 **WHEREAS**, the Austin/Travis County Sobriety Center Planning Committee
25 analyzed the costs associated with arrests, bookings, jail time, ambulance transport,
26 and emergency care for public intoxicants and concluded that serving certain
27 individuals in a non-emergency setting would be more cost-effective than arresting
28 and jailing these individuals and would increase sworn officers' time and the
29 availability of care for people who truly need emergency services; and,

30 **WHEREAS**, on September 22, 2016, the City Council authorized the
31 creation and incorporation of the Austin/Travis County Sobriety Center Local
32 Government Corporation (the "Corporation") pursuant to applicable state law; and,

33 **WHEREAS**, the stated mission of the Austin-Travis County Sobriety Center
34 is to enhance public health and public safety by providing an alternative to the
35 emergency room and jail for publicly intoxicated individuals to sober up and,
36 where appropriate, to provide a safe environment to initiate recovery; and,

37 **WHEREAS**, from October 2019 to September 30, 2020, the Sobering Center
38 screened 1,527 individuals and admitted 1,397 clients, of which 22.19% were
39 experiencing homelessness, 19.76% were considered at high risk for a substance
40 use disorder, 35% of individuals were uninsured, and 9.52% were admitted on
41 more than one occasion; and,

42 **WHEREAS**, of those referred to the Sobering Center, 70% were referred by
43 law enforcement, 26.5% were referred by EMS, and 3% were referred by the
44 Sobering Center outreach van; and,

45 **WHEREAS**, the Sobering Center adopts a public health approach to
46 substance use disorders by using a social work model to connect people to a
47 continuum of care; and,

48 **WHEREAS**, since the Sobering Center’s inception, Travis County jail
49 bookings for new Public Intoxication Class C misdemeanors have decreased by
50 45% since FY 18; and,

51 **WHEREAS**, in 2019, the City of Austin adopted the Meadows Mental Health
52 Policy Institute’s report identifying and recommending improvements to the first
53 response system for people experiencing a mental health related emergency,
54 diverting as many as possible to care and treatment, and in 2020 the Austin City
55 Council directed that these recommendations be implemented at full scale in 2021;
56 and,

57 **WHEREAS**, the Austin-Travis County Sobering Center FY 20 Impact
58 Report indicates an overrepresentation of people with substance use disorders and
59 mental health disorders in the criminal justice and medical systems; and,

60 **WHEREAS**, on June 15, 2021, Travis County Commissioners requested that
61 Travis County staff, specifically the county executives of both Justice & Public
62 Safety and Health & Human Services, study the potential for and costs of
63 combining a mental health diversion program with the Sobering Center in
64 collaboration with the City of Austin and key mental health stakeholders; and,

65 **WHEREAS**, Travis County asserted that, “such a program would
66 complement a variety of diversion programs already established within Travis
67 County at every level of the criminal justice process and provide more
68 opportunities for connections to care for those in our community with unmet mental
69 health needs”; and,

70 **WHEREAS**, both the Travis County Commissioners Court and the Sobering
71 Center Local Government Corporation Board are currently engaged in discussing

72 the opportunities associated with a mental health diversion pilot program that could
73 potentially take place at the Sobering Center; and,

74 **WHEREAS**, the Travis County Commissioners Court has taken action to
75 initiate a stakeholder process to form an advisory committee to assist with a feasibility
76 and implementation study for a pilot mental health diversion program with the
77 Sobering Center; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

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

79 The City of Austin expresses its interest in and support of Travis County's
80 initiative to study the opportunities of a mental health diversion pilot program with
81 the Austin-Travis County Sobering Center. The City Manager is directed to
82 participate in the stakeholder process as appropriate.

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85 **ADOPTED:** _____, 2021 **ATTEST:** _____
86 Jannette S. Goodall
87 City Clerk
88