

20 **WHEREAS**, in the last decade, several studies conducted by non-City entities
21 have recommended changes that could make Sixth Street safer for all who live, work, and
22 recreate there, though these reports were apparently never shared with the full City
23 Council; and

24 **WHEREAS**, in 2009, the Responsible Hospitality Institute (RHI) facilitated a
25 process with more than 60 stakeholders from the Downtown faith community, hotels,
26 area colleges and universities, South by Southwest, the real estate industry, and including
27 City staff from the Austin Police Department, Emergency Medical Services, Planning,
28 Solid Waste Services, Law, and other departments; and

29 **WHEREAS**, the resulting report, “Managing the Nighttime Economy,”
30 recommended specific short- and long-term strategies for improving perceptions of
31 safety, creating “visible systems of order,” and achieving other goals essential to
32 maintaining and enhancing a thriving Downtown historic district; and

33 **WHEREAS**, while City Council or staff have initiated and implemented several
34 action items, such as the installation of public restrooms and a Downtown wayfinding
35 system, other major recommendations related to the proposed analysis and action related
36 to the weekend street closure, better lighting, additional placemaking, and others have
37 not been pursued at all or to their fullest extent; and

38 **WHEREAS**, in 2013, SXSW commissioned an outside expert on crowd science
39 to facilitate roundtable conversations with social service providers, business owners and

40 operators, event producers, and City of Austin staff with the purpose of identifying
41 challenges, such as underage drinking and the perception of a lack of safety, in the Sixth
42 Street Historic and Entertainment District; and

43 **WHEREAS**, the resulting report “Austin 6th Street SXSW Report and Analysis”
44 concluded that the area has a reputation for underage drinking and overcrowding, that a
45 majority of the 6th Street crowd are individuals under the age of 21, and that the
46 appropriate entities should take steps to address the perceived lack of safety and the high
47 concentration of bars; and

48 **WHEREAS**, in 2014, Council approved Resolution No. 20140925-081, directing
49 the City Manager to engage relevant stakeholders and City departments to ensure the City
50 is creating a safe and vibrant environment in our Downtown entertainment districts, to
51 examine opportunities and challenges related to achieving that goal, and to report back
52 to Council with any necessary recommended Code changes; and

53 **WHEREAS**, Resolution No. 20140925-081 directed the Manager to explore
54 creating an entertainment license, identifying a lead department to manage the nightlife
55 economy, proposing a timeline for lighting upgrades, and other strategies; and

56 **WHEREAS**, in 2015, City staff issued a responsive memorandum indicating that
57 they had analyzed and did recommend many of these initiatives including the
58 entertainment license; however, at least some of those slated for action – such as the 2016
59 Austin Nightlife Initiative -- did not move forward; and

60 **WHEREAS**, in 2015, the Economic Development Department again
61 recommended to the Economic Opportunity Committee the creation of an Entertainment
62 License to support consistent enforcement of the sound ordinance, safety and security
63 provisions; and

64 **WHEREAS**, most key findings from the studies and stakeholder processes have
65 not yet been fully addressed nor the proposals tested and implemented; and

66 **WHEREAS**, City staff have continued to engage with their peers in other cities to
67 keep abreast of best practices with regard to management of nightlife economies and
68 enhancement of historic and entertainment districts; and

69 **WHEREAS**, recent acts of violence highlight the urgency of taking immediate
70 steps to curb violence in this area of Downtown; and

71 **WHEREAS**, complex factors have led to escalating incidents of gun violence and,
72 accordingly, policy solutions must be multi-faceted; and

73 **WHEREAS**, the Council has taken important steps to address gun violence
74 through community-based prevention and intervention strategies, such as the creation of
75 the Office of Violence Prevention, the seizure of illegal firearms, safe gun storage
76 education, and the support of other critical legislation that could prevent access to
77 firearms by domestic abusers, among other vital efforts; and

78 **WHEREAS**, the City should also implement physical changes and increased
79 expectations and regulations along Sixth Street to increase the success of such anti-
80 violence efforts; and **NOW, THEREFORE:**

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

82 The City Council supports implementing a more comprehensive strategy toward
83 Sixth Street that maximizes its assets, embraces new opportunities, and ensures a safer
84 environment for all. This strategy needs to be multi-faceted and shall build on the
85 previous stakeholder processes and consultant reports. Council’s intent may be further
86 articulated in subsequent Council resolutions.

87 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

88 The City Council directs the City Manager to take the following immediate actions
89 by August 30, 2021:

- 90 1. create an interdepartmental team led by the Entertainment Services Group and with
91 representation from – at a minimum – the Austin Police Department, Austin
92 Transportation Department, Austin Energy, Austin Fire Department, Austin Code,
93 and the Historic Preservation Office;
- 94 2. upgrade existing lighting, if necessary, to provide dramatically brighter spaces
95 along the Sixth Street corridor;
- 96 3. explore and pilot options such as café seating, water barriers, and other “pop up”
97 efforts for temporarily dedicating wider walkways for patrons to move between

98 establishments and eliminating the space where people gather during the weekend
99 closures by using the street for other purposes;

100 4. determine the extent to which earlier findings about underage presence on Sixth
101 Street and underage drinking remain true today;

102 5. briefly list which recommendations noted in the July 17, 2015, staff memo
103 “Response to Resolution No. 20140925-081 – Downtown Entertainment Districts”
104 and from the two consultant reports have been implemented;

105 6. engage with peer cities to identify best practices in entertainment district planning
106 and management and provide additional recommendations to Council based on that
107 research; and

108 7. any other relevant actions deemed to be appropriate by the City Manager.

109 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

110 The City Council directs the City Manager – through the interdepartmental team -
111 - to take the following actions by September 30, 2021:

112 1. suggest a process and program for entertainment licenses that includes safety
113 training for staff and increased coordination and communication with public safety
114 officers; and

115 2. coordinate with the Texas Alcohol and Beverage Commission (TABC) on
116 additional strategies for curbing underage drinking and potentially limiting the
117 presence of underage Austinites on Sixth Street during weekend evenings.

118 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

119 The City Council directs the City Manager – through the interdepartmental team -
120 - to take the following actions and report to Council on the results by October 30, 2021:

- 121 1. initiate development of a nightlife management plan;
- 122 2. analyze Sixth Street weekend closures and develop a list of measures that would
123 need to be met for Sixth Street to be re-opened and propose a corresponding
124 timeline; and
- 125 3. engage with property owners to discuss land use regulations along Sixth Street to
126 determine whether changes might foster more diverse uses along this historic
127 corridor.

128 **ADOPTED:** _____, 2021 **ATTEST:** _____

129 Jannette S. Goodall
130 City Clerk