

29 **WHEREAS**, racial disparities all-too-frequently mirror economic
30 disparities, and therefore a City focused on remedying racial injustice should not
31 restrict opportunities, privileges, or greater safety to those living in single-family
32 dwellings; and

33 **WHEREAS**, Austinites nominated hundreds of streets in every corner of the
34 city for the City’s Healthy Streets Initiative but only a handful of staff-selected
35 locations have been implemented, despite overwhelming support for the initiative;
36 and

37 **WHEREAS**, other cities such as San Francisco, New York, Los Angeles,
38 Chicago, Seattle, Philadelphia, and London have offered their residents Play
39 Streets programs to facilitate greater outdoor activity and community-building; and

40 **WHEREAS**, there are not currently any processes that allow for Austin
41 residents to apply for a permit to create a Healthy Street or Play Street on their
42 block; and

43 **WHEREAS**, the Urban Transportation Commission, Pedestrian Advisory
44 Council, Bicycle Advisory Council, nearly three-dozen diverse community
45 organizations, more than 100 businesses, and more than 800 individuals have
46 expressed their support for a City of Austin Living Streets program that includes
47 better and easier block parties, Play Streets, and Resident-Led Healthy Streets; and

48 **WHEREAS**, Council enthusiastically embraces the Living Streets vision of
49 a suite of street activations that are easily accessible to all Austinites for safe and
50 joyful community-building in all neighborhoods and, as efficiently as possible,
51 wishes to see the Neighborhood Block Party Program improved and a Play Streets
52 Program and a Resident-Led Healthy Streets Program created, as detailed below;

53 **NOW, THEREFORE,**

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

55 Council intends to make block parties easier to organize and more equitably
56 accessible to all residents and neighborhoods. Therefore, Council directs the City

57 Manager to review the Neighborhood Block Party Program (the “Program”),
58 evaluate how to implement the following three goals and their associated
59 strategies, proceed with any of the listed changes that the Manager determines are
60 feasible and can be made administratively, and return to Council by January 21,
61 2022, with drafts of any necessary code amendments or if any additional policy
62 guidance is needed or any of the listed changes are deemed infeasible.

- 63 1. Reduce application barriers. When reviewing strategies to reduce application
64 barriers, the Manager should consider:
 - 65 a. Allowing a simple majority of residents along the proposed closure to
66 approve a proposed block party of eight hours or less;
 - 67 b. Allowing a two-thirds majority of residents along the proposed closure to
68 approve a proposed block party of greater than eight hours;
 - 69 c. Providing flexibility for alternative methods of neighbor notification of
70 the proposed block party, such as the posting of signs or the distribution
71 of door hangers, that can substitute for the current requirement to collect
72 the signatures of 100% of the block’s residents;
 - 73 d. Fixing or replacing the map tool in the AMANDA-based Austin Build +
74 Connect portal that an applicant is currently required to use to indicate
75 the location of the proposed block party;
 - 76 e. Providing an alternative application process for anyone unable to
77 complete an AMANDA- based application, including those with limited
78 technology access or proficiency;
 - 79 f. Providing all block party program information, application forms, and
80 instructions in Spanish as well as English; and
 - 81 g. Continuing to minimize block party permit fees and associated costs to
82 the greatest extent possible and, if feasible, creating a block party permit
83 fee waiver process.

- 84 2. Right-size safety obligations. When reviewing strategies to make sure safety
85 precautions are proportionate, the Manager should consider:
- 86 a. Continuing to require one unobstructed travel lane for emergency vehicle
87 access, and working with the public safety departments to minimize the
88 required width of that lane using a context-sensitive approach that considers
89 factors such as whether the building heights on residential blocks necessitate
90 the use of aerial ladders;
 - 91 b. Allowing resident vehicles to remain parked on the street, as long as the
92 emergency travel lane is maintained;
 - 93 c. Allowing the mandatory street barricades to be unmanned; and
 - 94 d. Ensuring the City continues to supply block party street barricades that are
95 highly visible, reflective, and portable by individual block party organizers;
- 96 3. Make it inclusive and equitable. When reviewing strategies to ensure inclusivity
97 and equity in the Program, the Manager should consider:
- 98 a. Allowing schools and places of worship to be present within a permitted
99 block;
 - 100 b. Developing a block party option for blocks that contain multifamily
101 residential buildings and that are Level 1 or Level 2 street blocks
102 according to the ASMP Street Network Table and Map, and adapting the
103 application process, permit fees, emergency access requirements, and any
104 other provisions for this option to the extent necessary to ensure
105 equivalent public safety and community support for the event;
 - 106 c. If feasible, developing a block party option for blocks that contain mixed-
107 use and/or commercial properties and that are Level 1 or Level 2 street
108 blocks according to the ASMP Street Network Table and Map, again
109 adapting the programmatic provisions as necessary; and

- 110 d. Establishing additional sites for street barricade pick-up/drop-off at
111 geographically dispersed City facilities, to improve equity in the
112 accessibility of these barricades for all parts of town.

113 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

114 Council does not intend for the above strategies to be considered an
115 exhaustive list and supports the City Manager and staff in making additional
116 changes to the Program that align with the goals expressed above. To that end,
117 Council encourages the City Manager to work with past block party permit
118 applicants, community organizations such as Walk Austin, relevant Boards and
119 Commissions, and peer cities to identify any additional updates that could be made
120 that support the goals expressed above.

121 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

122 In addition to easier, more accessible, more equitable block parties, Council
123 desires to make Play Streets and resident-led, one-block Healthy Streets available
124 to Austinites as community-building street activations. Therefore, the Council
125 directs the City Manager to evaluate what is necessary to create new Play Streets
126 and Resident-Led Healthy Streets Programs (the “Street Programs”) as detailed
127 below, proceed with creation and implementation to the extent the Manager
128 determines it is feasible to do so, and return to Council by January 21, 2022, with
129 drafts of any necessary code amendments or if any additional policy guidance is
130 needed or any of the provisions below are deemed infeasible or require additional
131 resources to implement. In developing the Street Programs, the City Manager shall
132 consider:

- 133 1. Establishing that a Play Street is intended to be a recurring, complete street
134 closure that may occur for several hours, multiple times per week;
- 135 2. Establishing that a Resident-Led Healthy Street is intended to be a one-
136 block, on-going, partial street closure to through-traffic while maintaining

137 access for residents and their guests, deliveries, and emergency access,
138 similar to the City’s existing staff-led Healthy Streets;

- 139 3. Requiring a simple majority of residents along the proposed closure to
140 support a Play Street or Resident-Led Healthy Street permit application;
- 141 4. Allowing a Play Street or Resident-Led Healthy Street permit to be valid for
142 up to six months (renewable), as long as compliance with program
143 requirements is maintained;
- 144 5. Establishing that documentation from a simple majority of residents along
145 an approved Play Street or Resident-Led Healthy Street in support of
146 removing the street activation shall be sufficient grounds to revoke the
147 permit and establish a “cooling-off” period of six months during which the
148 same type of permit shall not be approved for the same location;
- 149 6. Striving to design the programs and permit processes to be as
150 straightforward, easy, accessible, affordable, inclusive, and equitable as
151 possible while ensuring sufficient public safety and community awareness
152 and support;
- 153 7. Seeking input from community organizations such as Walk Austin, relevant
154 Boards and Commissions, and peer cities on program design; and
- 155 8. Adopting all feasible options for street barricades that could reduce program
156 costs while maintaining street safety, such as planter boxes.

157 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

158 Council directs the City Manager to create a single, public-facing webpage
159 where residents can find a menu of Living Streets activations that may be available
160 to them in their neighborhood and connects them to the Neighborhood Block Party,
161 Play Streets, and Resident-Led Healthy Streets programs. This Living Streets
162

163 webpage should be made publicly available in time to support the launching of the
164 Street Programs.
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167 **ADOPTED:** _____, 2021 **ATTEST:** _____
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Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk
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