

1 **RESOLUTION NO.**

2 **WHEREAS**, protecting our environment is the foundation for sustaining our  
3 planet, community, and economy; and

4 **WHEREAS**, the City’s Climate Equity Plan identifies finding alternatives  
5 for single-use plastic as a goal; and

6 **WHEREAS**, the City is committed to a zero waste goal to reduce the  
7 amount of trash sent to landfills by 90% by the year 2040; and

8 **WHEREAS**, in response to Resolution No. 20200123-108, the Watershed  
9 Protection Department issued an August 2022 report entitled, “Trash in Creeks: A  
10 field survey of trash intensity and source types in Austin Texas,” which found that  
11 the most encountered items were single-use plastic beverage/food items, some of  
12 which were likely polystyrene; and

13 **WHEREAS**, the same report estimates that each tourist uses an estimated  
14 30 plastic bottles per person for a two-week trip; and

15 **WHEREAS**, multiple cities in the U.S. and elsewhere ban non-reusable  
16 water bottles on city-owned property, and Cape Cod, Massachusetts has extended  
17 this ban to plastic soft drinks as well; and

18 **WHEREAS**, Resolution No. 20080522-024 directed the City Manager to  
19 stop using disposable plastic water bottles within City Hall and to evaluate and  
20 recommend strategies for reducing plastic bottle use in all City operations; and

21 **WHEREAS**, in 2018, approximately 35 million tons of plastic waste were  
22 generated in the United States and only 8.7% was recycled; and

23 **WHEREAS**, in 2020, the City joined the U.S. Plastics Pact to support a  
24 national strategy to create a circular economy for plastics; and

25           **WHEREAS**, the U.S. Plastics Pact released a list of “Problematic and  
26 Unnecessary Materials” that pact members should phase out by 2025, which  
27 included cutlery, straws, and stirrers; and

28           **WHEREAS**, single-use plastic straws and stirrers, due to their small size,  
29 cannot be easily recycled; and

30           **WHEREAS**, plastic ends up in landfills where it can take up to 500 years to  
31 decompose and potentially can leak pollutants into the soil and water; and

32           **WHEREAS**, plastic does not readily biodegrade but instead breaks down  
33 into smaller pieces that turn into microplastics, which are becoming more prevalent  
34 in waterways, wildlife, and humans; and

35           **WHEREAS**, plastics are the most common type of marine debris in our  
36 ocean, waterways, and Great Lakes; and

37           **WHEREAS**, many restaurants provide plastic utensils and single-use  
38 condiments with takeout meals as a standard practice; and

39           **WHEREAS**, an increasing number of customers opt for restaurant delivery  
40 services or takeout and curbside options and may not need plastic utensils; and

41           **WHEREAS**, in 2012, City Council passed Resolution No. 20120816-004,  
42 seeking to conserve water by requiring restaurant customers to request water rather  
43 than having it provided as standard practice during certain stages of drought; and

44           **WHEREAS**, this shift in practice has likely reduced water waste in the  
45 Austin area and the policy offers a useful precedent to address concerns related to  
46 single-use plastics; and

47           **WHEREAS**, Austin Resource Recovery sustainability staff and the Office  
48 of Sustainability conduct outreach among businesses to encourage sustainable  
49 practices and support programs, such as the Green Business Leaders.

50           **NOW, THEREFORE,**

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

52           City Council finds that the use of single-use plastic by restaurants, bars, and  
53 other commercial food or beverage establishments is detrimental to the  
54 environment and strongly encourages those industries to work toward the  
55 elimination of single-use plastics.

56           **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

57           The City Manager shall implement a targeted strategy to reduce the use of  
58 single-use plastic by restaurants, bars, and other commercial food or beverage  
59 establishments. This strategy shall discourage establishments from providing  
60 plastic utensils, straws, stirrers, single-use condiments, and other single-use plastic  
61 items unless the items are specifically requested by the customer and are available  
62 as an alternative by the establishment. Nothing in this resolution shall be read to  
63 direct the City Manager to limit a restaurant, bar, or any other commercial food or  
64 beverage establishments from providing straws and other single-use plastic items  
65 to customers, including those who need them for physical or medical reasons.

66           **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

67           The City Manager shall conduct conversations with restaurant delivery  
68 services that encourage them to add a field to their online platforms that allows a  
69 customer to opt into receiving plastic utensils and report back to City Council on  
70 those conversations by December 1, 2022.

72  
73 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

74 City Council directs the City Manager to collaborate with the Restaurant  
75 Association and other industry leaders on culturally competent public education  
76 campaigns that promote the goals of reducing single-use plastics and avoiding end-  
77 user consumer confusion.

78 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

79 City Council directs the City Manager to work with the Austin Restaurant  
80 Association and other stakeholders to initiate conversations about opportunities to  
81 replace the use of single-use plastics and Styrofoam with biodegradable materials  
82 and shall report recommendations back to City Council by February 1, 2023.

83 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

84 The City Manager shall remind City employees of our zero waste goals and  
85 the City’s policy position discouraging the use of disposable plastic water bottles at  
86 City-owned facilities. The City Manager shall review the information contained in  
87 “Trash in Creeks” and shall provide a recommendation to Council by December 1,  
88 2023, as to whether the City should ban the use and sale of single-use water and  
89 soft drink bottles at City-owned facilities and events that take place on City-owned  
90 land, except in times of emergency; and

91 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

92 City Council directs the City Manager to invite Visit Austin, Austin  
93 Resource Recovery, Austin Water, the Office of Sustainability, and other relevant  
94 departments or entities to brainstorm and explore ways to reduce Austin visitors’  
95 reliance on disposable plastic water bottles, including the possibility of providing

96 visitors with a reusable water bottle upon arrival to the Austin airport, and report  
97 recommendations and next steps back to City Council by December 1, 2022.

98 **ADOPTED:** \_\_\_\_\_, 2022 **ATTEST:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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Myrna Rios  
City Clerk

DRAFT