

**RESOLUTION NO. 20221013-075**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**NOW, THEREFORE,**

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

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

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

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

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

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



**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

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

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

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

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

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

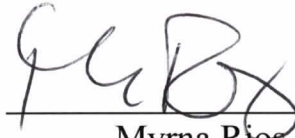
**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

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

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

**ADOPTED:** October 13, 2022

**ATTEST:**

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Myrna Ries', written over a horizontal line.

Myrna Ries  
City Clerk