



**JOINT INCLUSION COMMITTEE (JIC)  
RECOMMENDATION 20230726-002  
CITY EMPLOYEE “WORK-FROM-HOME”/TELEWORK POLICY**

Date: July 26, 2023

Subject: City of Austin Employee “Work-From-Home” Telework Policy

Motioned by: Commissioner Hanna Huang      Seconded By: Commissioner Richard Bondi

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JOINT INCLUSION COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 20230726-002

JOINTLY ENDORSED RECOMMENDATION TO AUSTIN CITY COUNCIL

**WHEREAS**, the ability to telework has the largest impact on women, childcare givers, and those with childcare needs; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Austin has the highest childcare costs in the State of Texas, with impacts felt across the city and telework provides flexibility and helps alleviate pressure on the affordability crisis facing families and childcare givers in Austin; and

**WHEREAS**, telework has direct impacts in opening access to people with disabilities to the City workforce and is crucial to retaining those employees in a healthy and accommodating work environment; and

**WHEREAS**, it is a more inclusive policy to have telework for BIPOC staff and people of color who overwhelmingly report better work productivity and overall health with a flexible telework policy; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Austin's vision for net zero emissions by 2040 prioritizes greenhouse gas emission reduction and calls for 50% of trips to be made by using public transit, biking, walking, carpooling, or avoided altogether by working from home and providing a robust telework policy; and

**WHEREAS**, the Climate Equity Plan states that climate impacts are not felt equally across all communities and that the City of Austin's Interim City Manager's recent orders to revoke work- from-home and severely limit teleworking options will disproportionately impact employees who may not be able to afford transportation costs, child care, and other expenses related to commuting while inflation and affordability issues continue to be of concern when recruiting and retaining city staff; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Austin is struggling to fill many positions and allowing employees to work remotely is a benefit that costs the city nothing and removing this benefit will likely make recruitment and retention of employees even more challenging, and vacancies result in unfulfilled goals and reduced services, which is not in the community's interest; and

**WHEREAS**, the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan aims to decrease emissions of greenhouse gases by encouraging telework and work-from-home initiatives; and

**WHEREAS**, driving contributes to the creation of ground-level ozone, which is a harmful air pollutant that causes and contributes to asthma and other respiratory illnesses; and

**WHEREAS**, driving creates a large amount of plastic pollution from wear on tires and brakes; and

**WHEREAS**, Travis County has implemented a work-from-home policy and 75% of the employees who are eligible to work from home are doing so; and

**WHEREAS**, Austin City Council directed the city manager to research the benefits of expanding the telework option for City of Austin employees in June 2022 to be completed in September 2022, but the city manager never delivered results of the study; and

**WHEREAS**, the Joint Inclusion Committee recognizes that the Interim City Manager's recent orders are partially meant to stimulate economic activity in the City of Austin near its currently underutilized commercial spaces, but that allowing local startups and creative classes to take advantage of the underutilized city office space as incubators and accelerators for their businesses may provide more long-term economic benefits to the City of Austin than having public workers and city staff drive into an office;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, the Joint Inclusion Committee recommends that the Austin City Council direct the Interim City Manager to examine the data collected by Travis County and other similar studies and conduct an evidenced-based assessment before implementing the next phase of standardized in- person work requirements. This assessment should examine the full, affordability, equity, and environmental impacts between the 2022 policy, the Interim City Manager's proposed policy, and a 100% telework as default policy. The Interim City Manager should consider policy and technology changes that expand and improve the city's ability to offer its employees safe, effective, and efficient remote work-from-home options. This assessment must be presented to the Austin City Council; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Joint Inclusion Committee recommends that Austin City Council direct the Interim City Manager to evaluate within six months the benefits of encouraging City of Austin employees to work from home, especially when an Ozone Action Day is forecasted, and to implement this change as quickly as possible.

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ROLL CALL VOTE: 9 – 0

For: African American Resource Advisory Commission: Serita Fontanesi  
Asian American Quality-of-Life Advisory Commission: Hanna Huang  
Commission for Women: Julie Glasser  
Commission on Aging: Richard Bondi  
Commission on Immigrant Affairs: Miriam Dorantes & Melissa Ortega  
Early Childhood Council: Leonor Vargas & Eliza Gordon  
Hispanic/Latino Quality-of-Life-Resource Advisory Commission: Amanda Afifi  
Human Rights Commission: Morgan Davis  
Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities: Jennifer Powell

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

Absent: LGBTQ+ Quality-of-Life Advisory Commission: VACANT at time of vote.

Attest: Jeremy Garza, Staff Liaison, Equity Office:

x Jeremy Garza