

RESOLUTION NO. 20231214-068

WHEREAS, the Austin Public Library has a commitment to equity, to assure that all members of the Austin community have equal access to library services and programs; and

WHEREAS, the Austin Public Library has continuously sought ways to remove barriers and close the opportunity gaps for library users; and

WHEREAS, currently, only Austinites living in Austin's full purpose jurisdiction are entitled to receive a library card free of charge and those who live in the surrounding areas must pay a non-resident card fee of \$120 annually; and

WHEREAS, the non-resident fee affects people who live in Austin's extra-territorial jurisdiction (ETJ) and limited purpose jurisdictions as well as those who work in Austin but live in the surrounding areas, including many former Austinites forced to relocate due to ongoing gentrification and the increase in the cost of housing; and

WHEREAS, the non-resident card fee poses an economic barrier to library access, which does not recognize that the community of Austin includes many people with addresses outside of Austin's full purpose jurisdiction; and

WHEREAS, the ETJ is the unincorporated land within five miles of Austin's full purpose city limit that is not within the city limits or ETJ of another city; and

WHEREAS, the ETJ is the territory where Austin alone is authorized to annex land and represents the City's potential growth boundary both with respect to its future tax base and municipal service area; and

WHEREAS, the City's ordinances and regulations pertaining to land development and the environment, and sometimes health and safety, are extended to Austin's limited purpose jurisdictions, and residents of limited purpose jurisdictions can vote in City Council elections; and

WHEREAS, providing access to Austin Public Library resources, including literacy advancement, workforce and economic development, digital inclusion, science, technology, engineering and mathematics, and computer training to persons residing in Austin's limited purpose jurisdictions and ETJ satisfies a public and municipal purpose, as it benefits the entire City through a more literate, informed, and skilled populace; and

WHEREAS, between 2008 and 2015, state funding allowed the Austin Public Library to waive the non-resident library card fee for people who live outside of Austin; and

WHEREAS, the Austin Public Library created the Library Cards for All Students Program in 2017 in which they partnered with the Austin Independent School District to offer a full-purpose Student Library Card to students, and onboarded the Del Valle Independent School District to the program in 2019, Austin Achieve Public Schools in 2021, Austin Montessori School in 2022, and Manor Independent School District in 2022 to offer a full-purpose Student Library Card to all students enrolled in those schools; and

WHEREAS, on December 17, 2020, the Library Commission recommended that the City give student library cards at no cost to every student in Travis County enrolled in a K-12 educational institution or home school; and

WHEREAS, on August 11, 2021, Council adopted the City's 2021-2022 fee schedule (Ordinance No. 20210811-002), which exempted children who are currently enrolled in any school within Travis County, including private school, daycare, charter, and home school students, from the non-resident library card fee, and have continued that exemption in the City's 2023-2024 fee schedule (Ordinance No. 20230816-007); and

WHEREAS, on November 27, 2023, the Library Commission voted to recommend to Council to expand library access by eliminating the non-resident fee for those who live in the City's limited purpose and extraterritorial jurisdictions;
NOW, THEREFORE,

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

City Council adopts the findings above.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to bring an ordinance to Council for approval no later than the March 5, 2024, Council meeting to amend the fee and fine ordinance (Ordinance No. 20230816-007) to remove the non-resident library card fee for residents of the Austin limited purpose jurisdictions and Austin ETJ from the fee schedule.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to consider developing a comprehensive

outreach and promotion plan to inform residents of limited-purpose jurisdictions and the ETJ about the changes and encourage library card registration.

ADOPTED: December 14, 2023 **ATTEST:** G. Brady for
Myrna Rios
City Clerk