# **RESOLUTION NO.**

WHEREAS, the City declared a climate emergency in 2019; and

WHEREAS, the Climate Equity Plan set a goal for Austin of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2040; and

**WHEREAS**, Strategy FPC.GS3-S4 of the Climate Equity Plan calls for incentives for products with lower negative environmental and social impact; and

WHEREAS, the 2020 National Emissions Inventory from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) found that lawn care equipment emitted large quantities of smog-producing nitrogen oxides, greenhouse gas carbon dioxide, and toxins such as benzene; and

WHEREAS, the EPA report found that lawn care equipment produced a disproportionate amount of fine particulate matter, known as PM2.5, that is particularly harmful to human health; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2020, gas-powered lawn equipment in the United States produced 21,800 tons of PM2.5, which is an amount equivalent to the pollution from 234 million typical cars over the course of a year; and

**WHEREAS**, in February 2024, the EPA finalized rules regarding the level of air pollution, seeking to limit PM2.5 at less than 9.0 ug/m3, and published guidance that the air quality data for Travis County recorded between 2020 and 2022 would be considered non-attainment by this standard; and

WHEREAS, a 2015 study from the Capital Area Council of Governments estimated the cost for ozone non-attainment in Central Texas as \$1 billion annually; and

**WHEREAS**, Travis County ranks 27<sup>th</sup> in the nation for the amount of carbon dioxide produced by lawn and garden equipment; and

WHEREAS, gas lawnmowers and leaf blowers are significant greenhouse gas emitters, releasing over 20 million tons of  $CO_2$  in 2020; and

**WHEREAS**, gas-powered products contribute to noise pollution by producing sound at a level deemed unsafe by the World Health Organization; and

WHEREAS, Environment America's recent report shows refueling lawnmowers results in 17 million gallons of spilled gasoline per year, producing groundwater pollution and harm toward wildlife; and

WHEREAS, electric-powered products have less maintenance and fuel costs over time; and

WHEREAS, the Climate Equity Plan has adopted goals around electrification and decreasing carbon emissions; and

**WHEREAS**, City Council recently passed Resolution No. 20240215-25, calling for an investment in the City's environmental goals; and

**WHEREAS**, Austin Energy already provides a rebate to residents purchasing new electric equipment; and

**WHEREAS**, the current cost difference between electric and gas-powered lawn care equipment after the Austin Energy rebate varies from \$165-\$370; and

**WHEREAS**, there is a need to not only incentivize the purchase of new electric lawn care equipment, but to dispose of existing gas machinery safely; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2022, President Biden signed the Inflation Reduction Act, a federal bill creating federal funding opportunities for environmental programs,

including electric lawn care; and

WHEREAS, cities including Toledo, Louisville, and Salt Lake City have implemented programs that allow residents to dispose of their gas lawn mower in exchange for a rebate for an electric lawn mower; NOW, THEREFORE,

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

The City Manager is directed to explore a program, including utilizing popup events and in-store programs, that allows Austin area residents or small businesses operating in Austin to turn in and properly dispose of gas-powered landscape maintenance equipment in exchange for a rebate for an electric or manual alternative, in an amount that at least covers the price difference between a typical gas versus electric option.

#### **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The City Manager is directed to explore expanding and promoting the current electric lawn care rebate, to better incentivize consumers and professional landscape maintenance businesses to transition away from gas-powered products.

## **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The City Manager is directed to make recommendations for action and implement strategies for community outreach in promotion of the pilot program, in partnership with relevant community stakeholders and groups.

#### **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The City Manager is directed to report back to the City Council with recommendations for a lead department, funding options, and implementation plan to be adopted in the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 budget process.

# **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The City Council amends its state and federal legislative agendas to include supporting legislation related to maximizing local availability of federal resources for the transition away from gas-powered equipment.

ADOPTED:	, 2024 <b>ATTEST:</b>
	Myrna Rios City Clerk
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