

WHEREAS, the City and Council have long prioritized public input and continuous public engagement on issues critical to the well-being of Austin residents; and

WHEREAS, the City has an increasingly diverse constituency that requires an assortment of communication methods to inform and engage as many residents as possible so the City and Council take actions that best represent the needs of Austin residents; and

WHEREAS, the goals of descriptive representation with a district-based council system were anchored in the belief that different parts of the City have different needs and require unique representation for those needs; and

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24 **WHEREAS**, inequities in the availability of time, resources, and
25 institutional familiarity can inhibit the participation of some residents in traditional
26 engagement activities such as testifying at council meetings, commission meetings,
27 or virtual options; and

28 **WHEREAS**, targeted engagement that relies on a diversity of strategies
29 could allow for individuals with a variety of experiences and familiarity with City
30 subject matters to participate in more familiar and approachable settings than a
31 town hall, board meeting, or commission meeting; and,

32 **WHEREAS**, townhalls and other highly visible forms of community
33 engagement may not be the best methods to encourage voices who are unfamiliar
34 or new to face-to-face local government participation; and

35 **WHEREAS**, community members often have questions for council offices
36 that are more effectively answered by staff who have expertise or greater
37 institutional knowledge; and

38 **WHEREAS**, innovations brought about during the pandemic in areas of
39 community engagement could allow residents to be more quickly connected with
40 City staff or other experts while at community meetings; **NOW THEREFORE**,

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

42 The City Manager is directed to provide findings and recommendations on
43 how to support and expand existing community engagement programs to allow for
44 greater levels of engagement in each council district, with regular occurring events
45 and outreach for residents to learn how to navigate City processes and departments.
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47 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

48 The City Manager is directed to identify needs or additional resources for
49 programs such as:

- 50 - CityWorks Academy;
- 51 - SpeakUp Austin;
- 52 - Conversation Corps; and
- 53 - public comment at city council meetings and board and commission
54 meetings.

55 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

56 The City Manager is directed to explore and implement strategies aimed at
57 enhancing user-friendly and accessible online public engagement offerings. This
58 exploration should prioritize the development of digital platforms and tools that
59 facilitate robust participation from all residents, including those facing barriers to
60 traditional engagement methods.

61 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

62 Community events should be coordinated across multiple departments and
63 offer a welcoming, comfortable space to learn more and feel safe engaging in civic
64 dialogue by including elements such as family friendly activities, refreshments,
65 supervised children's activities when possible, interpretation services as needed,
66 and opportunities to interact with departmental staff and council members.

69 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

70 The City Manager is directed to pilot the expansion of facility tours, such as
71 City Hall, for the enrichment of students and the public alike. These tours should
72 offer educational experiences that provide insight into the functions of local
73 government, highlight the importance of civic engagement, and foster a deeper
74 understanding of City operations.

75 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

76 Facility tours should include:

- 77
- all ages;
 - refreshments;
 - educational civics activities;
 - tours of other relevant facilities;
 - robust interaction with staff, when possible; and
 - age-appropriate presentations about the roles of City staff.
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86 **ADOPTED:** _____, 2024 **ATTEST:** _____

87 Myrna Rios
88 City Clerk
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