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Late Backup

RESOLUTION NO.

WHEREAS, due to the success of the MetroRail Red Line, Capital Metro has received \$50 million in grant funding from TxDOT to expand the system, of which \$22 million is proposed to be used to complete the MetroRail Downtown Station and address existing and future passenger capacity; and

WHEREAS, the Downtown Station is located in a high-density, mixed-use downtown neighborhood with approximately 920 residents and more than 5,000 hotel rooms within a five-minute walk of the Downtown Station, and it is surrounded by the Austin Convention Center, the Hilton Hotel, Waller Creek the historic Brush Square; and Park and Brush Square Museums, Waller Creek, the William Sidney Porter (O. Henry) House, Susanna Dickinson Museum, and the Austin Fire Museum; and

WHEREAS, Historic Brush Square was established in 1839 as part of Edwin Waller's original plan for the City and is one of only three remaining original public squares and the home of the Brush Square Museums, which are significant civic and cultural amenities; and:

WHEREAS, the Brush Square Museums include three historically and architecturally significant buildings that hold official city and national designations, including the 1888 O. Henry Museum, the City's first history museum; the 1869 Susanna Dickinson Museum; and the 1938 Austin Fire Station #1, which houses the Austin Fire Museum; and:

WHEREAS, the Downtown MetroRail Station and associated transit plaza abuts Brush Square, which is important an urban green space with heritage trees

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and passive recreation with the potential for enhancement through high-quality landscape and urban design; and:

WHEREAS, the Downtown Station improvements will help Capital Metro to increase the capacity and frequency of service along the Red Line and, eventually, the Green Line and others, thus making better use of our existing transportation infrastructure and expanding transportation options for commuters from multiple City Council districts and surrounding communities; and

~~**WHEREAS**, the Downtown MetroRail Station and associated transit plaza abuts historic Brush Square, one of four public squares designated as part of Edwin Waller's 1839 original plan for the City, and home to three publicly operated museums: the O. Henry, Susanna Dickinson, and Austin Fire Museums; and~~

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WHEREAS, the Austin Convention Center draft master plan calls for a major expansion of the Center to the west; and

WHEREAS, a Capital Metro-convened Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel for the Convention Center recommended expansion "with a design plan to create a convention center district that would include funding for Brush Square, the Red Line Station and Waller Creek so that the entire area becomes an 18-hour district for both Austinites and convention visitors"; and

WHEREAS, Capital Metro's proposed plan to further enhance pedestrian, bicycle, and rail transportation envisions a transit plaza eliminating auto traffic on the section of West Fourth Street between Red River Street and Trinity Street and making Neches Street into a cul-de-sac servicing the Hilton Hotel and park visitors; and

WHEREAS, proposed changes to the Downtown Station—coupled with other developments nearby—may impact traffic circulation, and a comprehensive traffic study is necessary to ensure enhanced mobility and safety for cars, cyclists, and pedestrians in this area; and

WHEREAS, a phased traffic analysis that assesses the feasibility of converting portions of East 5th and Trinity streets to two-way traffic and incorporates assumptions about planned projects and future build-out potential for Interstate Highway 35, the Convention Center expansion, and major private developments in the area would provide information vital to the City, Capital Metro, area residents, and commuters in evaluating the potential impacts of the proposed station and street closure; and

WHEREAS, the new Downtown Station presents an opportunity to collaborate with stakeholders and multiple agencies to shape a long-term vision and identity for the area that includes the Downtown Station, Brush Square, the Convention Center, Waller Creek, and other important public spaces and cultural amenities; and

WHEREAS, preliminary work is necessary to better define this project; and

WHEREAS, the Downtown Austin Alliance has offered to convene stakeholders in a series of facilitated meetings; and

WHEREAS, a transparent community engagement process will help ensure that the redesigned Downtown Station will enhance the Brush Square area and the Convention Center, Waller Creek, and the other public and cultural facilities in the area; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

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

That the City Manager is directed to work with the Downtown Austin Alliance and Capital Metro in this process and to include the relevant city departments (Parks and Recreation, Austin Transportation, Development Services, Economic Development, Public Works, the Convention Center, Office of Real Estate Services, Historic Preservation Office, and Austin Fire Department) to provide feedback regarding project boundaries, guiding principles, timeline and phasing, funding needs and opportunities, and potential leadership roles among the various departments and partnering agencies.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED

That the City Manager is directed to provide the necessary traffic studies and analyses.

ADOPTED: _____, 2016

ATTEST: _____
Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk