RESOLUTION NO.

WHEREAS, on April 22, 2016 174 countries and the European Union signed the Paris Climate Agreement, recognizing the threat of climate change and agreeing to pursue efforts to limit the global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius; and

WHEREAS, on October 8, 2018 the United Nations International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) projected that limiting the global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius will require unprecedented transitions in all aspects of society over the next 12 years; and

WHEREAS, over 700 governmental jurisdictions across the world have recently declared or officially acknowledged the existence of a global climate emergency; and

WHEREAS, the impacts and risks of climate change include increased and intensifying extreme weather events, including those that Austin is particularly vulnerable to, such as wildfires, flooding, and drought; and

WHEREAS, NASA’s Goddard Institute for Space Studies reported global temperatures in 2018 were .83 degrees Celsius warmer than the average temperature between 1951 and 1980, and the past five years are collectively the warmest in modern history; and

WHEREAS, on June 24, 2019 more than 70 health organizations including the American Medical Association and the American Public Health Association declared climate change to be a health emergency and issued a call to action for government, business, and civil society leaders to recognize climate change as a health emergency; and
WHEREAS, in 2014, ATMOS Research and Consulting’s Climate Change Projections for the City of Austin predicted increases in annual and seasonal average temperatures, more frequent high temperature extremes, more frequent extreme precipitation, and more frequent drought conditions in summer due to hotter weather; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin has committed to achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, which is a vital and necessary step towards slowing and stemming warming trends; and

WHEREAS, Austin Energy has committed to 65 percent renewable energy by the end of 2027; and

WHEREAS, on January 11, 2019 Austin was selected as a winner of up to two years of support from Bloomberg Philanthropies as part of the American Cities Climate Challenge; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin has committed to a goal of Zero Waste by 2040; and

WHEREAS, transportation is currently the leading cause of greenhouse gas emissions in Austin, and the City of Austin has taken the following actions to address transportation’s role in climate change: 1) on May 9, 2019 the City Council voted unanimously to include planning and goal-setting for the electrification of Austin’s transportation systems in the upcoming update to the Austin Community Climate Plan; 2) on April 11, 2019 the City Council adopted the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan; 3) on October 5, 2017 the City released the Smart Mobility Roadmap; and 4) on October 5, 2016 the Mobility Committee approved a
roadmap to achieve 100 percent fleet electrification by 2020; and

WHEREAS, on May 9, 2019 the City Council unanimously approved a resolution supporting the Green New Deal and directing City staff to develop recommendations for a comprehensive climate resilience plan; and

WHEREAS, Health and Environment was identified as one of six priority Strategic Outcomes of Austin Strategic Direction 2023, with indicators including climate change and resilience and environmental quality; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin has been at the forefront of sustainability and environmental policy and can be a global leader in emergency climate action by building a climate-resilient and adaptive city for all residents; and

WHEREAS, building a climate-resilient and adaptive society will have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of residents, and will offer protections from the drastic potential consequences of climate change to Austin’s ecosystems and economies; NOW, THEREFORE,

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

Austin City Council declares a climate emergency and calls for an immediate emergency mobilization to restore a safe climate.

The City Manager is directed to determine an accountability and regular reporting structure to City Council on overarching climate change goals and mobilization efforts. The City Manager is also directed to provide clarity on leadership responsibilities for climate change goals within the new Assistant/City Manager organizational structure.

The City Manager is directed to provide support for Council roles in
intergovernmental bodies involved in issues related to climate change including CAMPO, CAPCOG, and CapMetro, to advance and supplement efforts to address climate impacts of policy decisions made by these bodies. The City Manager is also directed to coordinate efforts with partners at the county, state, and federal levels.

As part of ongoing climate mobilization efforts, the City Manager is directed to work with relevant City departments and external stakeholders to develop and present to Council a community awareness campaign plan that builds on the work done by the Office of Sustainability. The goals of a community awareness campaign would include recruiting and training a diverse base of community ambassadors to educate, guide, and prepare communities that are most impacted by climate change. Education should range from helping families engage with methods like recycling to ensuring that Austin residents understand the potential catastrophic effects of the climate crisis, especially for vulnerable communities at home and abroad. The community awareness campaign plan should identify all resources necessary in order for successful implementation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

As part of the upcoming update to the Austin Community Climate Plan, the City Manager is directed to:

- examine existing climate-related objectives (for example, those related to net-zero emissions and renewable energy) and identify the feasibility of accelerating the timelines of achieving the City’s climate-related objectives
- request Council appropriation of sufficient funding for the upcoming update to the Austin Community Climate Plan.
The City Manager is directed to work with relevant departments to promote inter-departmental coordination and to incorporate climate resilience policies during planned updates to City plans with climate impacts, including the Austin Community Climate Plan, the Austin Energy Resource, Generation, and Climate Protection Plan, the Zero Waste Master Plan, the Hazard Mitigation Plan, the Flood Mitigation Plan, Water Forward, the Land Development Code, Public Health Emergency Preparedness plans, and other City plans to ensure climate change and resiliency efforts are strong, effective, and aligned.

The City Manager is directed to work with relevant departments to identify innovative policy approaches to address climate change’s causes and consequences, including the promotion of natural systems, green infrastructure, and carbon sequestration; the role of tree planting as a carbon offsetting strategy; public cooling spaces to combat heat waves; community agriculture and local food access; carbon tax credits; promoting the goals of the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan, including a shift to 50 percent of trips being independent from single occupancy cars, as a means of addressing the climate crisis. The City Manager is also directed to examine existing City plans to identify those that may be outdated.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to promote inter-departmental coordination to ensure that existing emergency management plans offer an aligned approach to the threats of climate change and natural hazards, including wildfire and flooding, and to identify where planning gaps may exist.

Furthermore, the City Manager is directed to identify the support needed to implement the Office of Sustainability’s recommendation to leverage and invest
in established and trusted community facilities in low-to-moderate income areas
to serve as “Resilience Hubs,” and to ensure that new facilities have the capacity
to serve as shelters, evacuation centers, and disaster response hubs during climate
emergencies.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to report back to City Council on an
accountability and regular reporting structure by October 1, 2019. The City
Manager is directed to report on a climate awareness campaign and identified gaps
in City planning by February 1, 2020.

ADOPTED: _____________, 2019  ATTEST: _______________________
Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk