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3 **RESOLUTION NO.**

4 **WHEREAS**, a local state of disaster for the City of Austin was declared on
5 Friday, March 6, 2020 by the City of Austin Mayor and the Travis County Judge,
6 due to the public health crisis related to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19);
7 and

8 **WHEREAS**, the Austin City Council passed Resolution No. 20200312-074,
9 ratifying and extending the local state of disaster declaration indefinitely until such
10 time as it is terminated by order of the Council; and

11 **WHEREAS**, the South by Southwest (SXSW) Festival is a home-grown
12 event and cultural ecosystem that represents both the largest convention to take
13 place in the City of Austin and a network of additional official and unofficial
14 events across the city, which, according to a study conducted by Greyhill Advisors,
15 generated an estimated \$346Million impact on our local economy in 2019; and

16 **WHEREAS**, while an international pandemic crisis necessarily requires
17 intervention and support from state and federal agencies, SXSW represents a
18 unique local event that requires special support and consideration by the City of
19 Austin to address policy, resources, and programming to help stabilize an integral
20 system to our economy; and

21 **WHEREAS**, cancelling SXSW may result in continued and, in some cases,
22 devastating financial losses for members of the Austin community, including
23 service, music, and film workers, small and local businesses, and others; and

24 **WHEREAS**, ensuring the resiliency of our local economy and industries
25 due to an unprecedented public health event is of great value to the City of Austin;
and

26 **WHEREAS**, local needs for this ongoing public health pandemic rapidly
27 change and evolve, requiring a nimble and fast-acting City response; and

28 **WHEREAS**, in a March 22, 2020 memorandum, the City Manager
29 announced a large number of programs, responses, and task forces underway or
30 planned that include many of the recommendations developed for this resolution;
31 and

32 **WHEREAS**, it is the intent of the City Council to offer guidance and reduce
33 any barriers to the City of Austin organization providing quick response to the
34 rapidly-shifting needs of the community during this unprecedented crisis event.

35 **NOW, THEREFORE,**

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

37 The City Council of the City of Austin directs the City Manager to prioritize
38 all necessary resources available to address the public health and economic crises
39 connected to the emergency declaration related to COVID-19. Except as may be
40 provided in the City’s Charter or state law, via this resolution, the City Council is
41 acting to preemptively approve measures to reduce any barriers the City Manager
42 may identify to ensure a quick response to this crisis. To the extent needed to
43 effectuate the goals and priorities below, the Resolutions previously passed by the
44 City Council for the programs described below, are hereby waived or suspended in
45 order to authorize the City Manager to move forward with any of the programs and
46 solutions listed below.

47 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

48 The City Council directs the City Manager to develop programs to support
49 Austinites that have been economically impacted by the public health crisis,

50 including, but not limited to, the small and local businesses, musicians, and
51 workers in the creative, hospitality, service, retail, restaurant, music, child care,
52 construction, and film industries and other associated industries impacted by the
53 COVID-19 related cancellation of major events, including, but not limited to the
54 2020 SXSW Festival.

55 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

56 The City Council directs the City Manager to consider the following:
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58 Connecting Businesses and Residents to Economic Resources

- 59 • Options that can help address short-term impacts while ensuring and
60 maintaining the long-term success and sustainability of the local
61 economy;
- 62 • Options that can help individuals and small and local businesses directly
63 with financial assistance and continuity of service for utilities, housing,
64 and other basic necessities;
- 65 • Coordinating with regional jurisdictions whose residents and businesses
66 will also suffer economic consequences from the SXSW cancellation and
67 COVID-19 crises, especially where collaboration may advantage state
68 and federal support;
- 69 • Providing economic aid for Austinites who do not receive sufficient
70 support or are excluded by federal legislation related to the pandemic;
- 71 • Providing childcare subsidies for income-eligible essential workers in the
72 private sector;
- 73 • Expanding the definition of “emergency worker” to ensure childcare
74 support is available beyond essential city employees to cover a wider set
75 of critical workers, including but not limited to medical facility workers,
76 providers and their support staff, grocery workers, non-city utility
77 workers, construction workers, and childcare facility workers;
- 78 • Identifying funding that can be dedicated and/or repurposed to loan or
79 grant funds for local restaurants and other small businesses, such as child
80 care centers, impacted by closures;

81 Promoting and Reassessing Current City Programs

- 82 • Reassessing other uses of Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) spending that are
83 not currently assigned to active projects;
- 84 • Considering possible options for repurposing existing HOT funds
85 assigned to active projects, including heritage grants and convention
86 center expansion, or delaying pending HOT collections to support the
87 hospitality sector and its workers, defining any necessary state
88 exemptions to allow such uses;
- 89 • Considering possible changes to the Chapter 380 economic incentives
90 program, including but not limited to delaying or suspending the City’s
91 commitments, or providing flexibility for the commitments of businesses
92 impacted by this crisis;
- 93 • Where necessary, and in collaboration with Workforce Solutions,
94 adjusting existing economic development, job placement and workforce
95 development program participation options in order to target those
96 impacted by the current crisis and leverage other public resources;
- 97 • Where necessary, adjusting program eligibility guidelines to target the
98 current crisis;
- 99 • Where necessary, adjusting, delaying, or waiving fees for community
100 services, including waiving the Austin Resource Recovery extra
101 residential garbage fee;
- 102 • Considering waiving fees and delaying required payments from
103 businesses that obtained special event permits, or other types of permits
104 utilized by impacted industries;
- 105 • Considering delaying or suspending compliance deadlines for any notices
106 of violations for non-health/safety-related code infractions scheduled to
107 occur during the time of the City’s declared disaster;
- 108 • Considering contract amendments, where necessary;
- 109 • Considering third-party facilitation services to expedite administrative
110 needs and services to the community;

111 Using Existing Data and Collecting New Data to Drive Decision-Making

- 112 • Exploring using 311 and 211 to gather real-time needs assessments and
113 solution generation from the community;
- 114 • Leveraging the survey capacity of community organizations and the
115 social services sector to obtain survey results that inform choices, as
116 appropriate.

117 All measures should aim to ensure that economic support provided by the
118 City benefits Austin's businesses as well as Austin's workforce (i.e., ensuring City
119 funding can sustain local businesses while also ensuring that employees are
120 supported through a continuing job with fair wages/benefits, access to hire-backs,
121 or access to state and federal benefits)

122 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

123 The City Council directs the City Manager to leverage all public and private
124 options available at the local, state, and federal level to help address the larger
125 public health-related issues of COVID-19 connected to the Emergency Operations
126 Center response, including but not limited to:

- 127 • Exploring options that can provide assistance (including financial, sick
128 leave, etc.) and supplies (including personal protective equipment and
129 essential health and hygiene supplies, etc.) to persons and organizations
130 that provide services to children;
- 131 • Exploring options to the City Council for providing assistance to all
132 organization, personal care assistants, caregivers, and nonprofits and/or
133 small businesses that provide these services for older adults and persons
134 with disabilities which may include:
 - 135 ○ helping nonprofits by using city avenues and/or resources for bulk
136 purchasing of personal protective equipment;
 - 137 ○ identifying and supporting efforts to combat food insecurity;
 - 138 ○ providing transportation resources to those who need medical
139 assistance;
 - 140 ○ providing resources for virtual social participation to reduce
141 isolation and loneliness;
 - 142 ○ providing assistance with sick leave, so that personal care
143 assistants can afford to stay home when they are ill; and
 - 144 ○ other assistance that may be needed so that the people who depend
145 on these services for daily living needs are safe; and

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- Exploring options that can provide assistance (including financial) and supplies (including personal protective equipment) to medical organizations (including smaller practices) that provide medical services.

ADOPTED: _____, 2020

ATTEST: _____

Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk

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