

1 **RESOLUTION NO.**

2 **WHEREAS**, the City of Austin is committed to a Zero Waste goal to reduce
3 the amount of trash sent to landfills by 90 percent by the year 2040; and

4 **WHEREAS**, Austin Resource Recovery (ARR) is the City department
5 charged with residential curbside collection of trash, recycling, and composting,
6 among other services; and

7 **WHEREAS**, Austin Resource Recovery provides collection services for
8 over 200,000 households in the City of Austin; and

9 **WHEREAS**, a global pandemic caused Austin residents to shelter in place,
10 leading to an increase in generated household waste, and between April 2019 and
11 April 2020, ARR saw a 10 percent increase in solid household waste; and

12 **WHEREAS**, solid waste pickup is one of the most dangerous jobs
13 nationwide, with a fatality rate of 33 deaths for every 100,000 workers; and

14 **WHEREAS**, COVID-19 can travel through biohazardous waste and close
15 contact between individuals; and

16 **WHEREAS**, typically, ARR approves 60-90 Family Medical Leave Act
17 (FMLA) requests every calendar year and so far in 2020, ARR has approved a total
18 of 170 FMLA requests; and

19 **WHEREAS**, 33 ARR employees resigned between January 2020 and July
20 2020, which is comparable to annual resignations in past years; and

21 **WHEREAS**, the starting hourly rate for an ARR operator is \$16.00, and the
22 same operator could make a higher starting hourly rate in the private sector; and

23 **WHEREAS**, ARR requires operators to have at minimum a CDL B license
24 and such training is covered by ARR and typically costs \$1,318 per trainee; and

25 **WHEREAS**, Human Resources seeks to engage, attract, develop, support,
26 and retain the best workforce in the country to serve Austin residents; and

27 **WHEREAS**, during the COVID-19 pandemic, certain ARR services, such
28 as bulk collection, have been suspended or reduced due to lack of staffing and
29 COVID-19 precautions;

30 **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:**

31 The City Council directs the City Manager to review current compensation
32 and training practices and explore opportunities to improve ARR operator
33 retention, compensation, and satisfaction.

34 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

35 The City Council directs the City Manager to determine the feasibility and
36 timeline for resuming regular ARR services that are currently suspended or scaled
37 back. The City Manager should err on the side of employee safety and should not
38 resume such services if it is determined that any services pose a true risk to our
39 employees.

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42 **ADOPTED:** _____, 2020

ATTEST: _____

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Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk