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**WHEREAS**, Sixth Street, once referred to as Pecan Street, was a center of Downtown commerce and offered an array of services and businesses; and

**WHEREAS**, bars and nighttime music venues currently dominate the uses on historic Sixth Street; and

**WHEREAS**, especially on weekend evenings, Sixth Street generates large crowds and much activity; and

**WHEREAS**, the area is known to attract and encourage certain at-risk practices, such as excessive binge drinking, which has contributed to the perception of an unsafe and volatile environment; and

**WHEREAS**, while the wide swathe of empty space created by weekend street closures provides opportunities for pedestrians to walk without interacting with vehicles, it also provides ample space and opportunity for less positive activity, including fighting and alcohol-fueled violence; and

**WHEREAS**, Austin Police Department regularly takes possession of illegal guns among individuals present along Sixth Street on weekend evenings; and

**WHEREAS**, in recent months, Sixth Street has been the site of multiple fatal shootings, including a mass shooting on June 12, 2021, that left one individual dead and others seriously wounded; and

**WHEREAS**, in the last decade, several studies conducted by non-city entities have recommended changes that could make Sixth Street safer for all who live, work, and recreate there, though these reports were apparently never shared with the full City Council; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2009, the Responsible Hospitality Institute (RHI) facilitated a process with more than 60 stakeholders from the Downtown faith community, hotels, area colleges and universities, South by Southwest, the real estate industry, and including

city staff from the Austin Police Department, Emergency Medical Services, Planning, Solid Waste Services, law, and other departments; and

**WHEREAS,** the resulting report, “Managing the Nighttime Economy,” recommended specific short- and long-term strategies for improving perceptions of safety, creating “visible systems of order,” and achieving other goals essential to maintaining and enhancing a thriving Downtown historic district; and

**WHEREAS,** while City Council or staff have initiated and implemented several action items, such as the installation of public restrooms and a Downtown wayfinding system, other major recommendations related to the proposed analysis and action related to the weekend street closure, better lighting, additional placemaking, and others have not been pursued at all or to their fullest extent; and

**WHEREAS,** in 2013, SXSW commissioned an outside expert on crowd science to facilitate roundtable conversations with social service providers, business owners and operators, event producers, and City of Austin staff with the purpose of identifying challenges, such as underage drinking and the perception of a lack of safety, in the Sixth Street Historic and Entertainment District; and

**WHEREAS,** the resulting report “Austin 6th Street SXSW Report and Analysis” concluded that the area has a reputation for underage drinking and overcrowding, that a majority of the 6th Street crowd are individuals under the age of 21, and that the appropriate entities should take steps to address the perceived lack of safety and the high concentration of bars; and

**WHEREAS,** in 2014, Council approved Resolution No. 20140925-081, directing the City Manager to engage relevant stakeholders and City departments to ensure the City is creating a safe and vibrant environment in our Downtown entertainment districts, to examine opportunities and challenges related to achieving that goal, and to report back to Council with any necessary recommended Code changes; and

53       **WHEREAS**, Resolution No. 20140925-081 directed the Manager to explore  
54 creating an entertainment license, identifying a lead department to manage the nightlife  
55 economy, proposing a timeline for lighting upgrades, and other strategies; and

56       **WHEREAS**, in 2015, city staff issued a responsive memorandum indicating that  
57 they had analyzed and did recommend many of these initiatives including the  
58 entertainment license; however, at least some of those slated for action – such as the 2016  
59 Austin Nightlife Initiative -- did not move forward; and

60       **WHEREAS**, in 2015, the Economic Development Department again  
61 recommended to the Economic Opportunity Committee the creation of an Entertainment  
62 License to support consistent enforcement of the sound ordinance, safety and security  
63 provisions; and

64       **WHEREAS**, most key findings from the studies and stakeholder processes have  
65 not yet been fully addressed nor the proposals tested and implemented; and

66       **WHEREAS**, city staff have continued to engage with their peers in other cities to  
67 keep abreast of best practices with regard to management nightlife economies and  
68 enhancement of historic and entertainment districts; and

69       **WHEREAS**, recent acts of violence highlight the urgency of taking immediate  
70 steps to curb violence in this area of Downtown;

71       **WHEREAS**, complex factors have led to escalating incidents of gun violence and,  
72 accordingly, policy solutions must be multi-faceted; and

73       **WHEREAS**, the Council has taken important steps to address gun violence  
74 through community-based prevention and intervention strategies, such as the creation of  
75 the Office of Violence Prevention, the seizure of illegal firearms, safe gun storage  
76 education, and the support of other critical legislation that could prevent access to  
77 firearms by domestic abusers, among other vital efforts; and

78       **WHEREAS**, the City should also implement physical changes and increased  
79 expectations and regulations along Sixth Street to increase the success of such anti-  
80 violence efforts; and **NOW, THEREFORE:**

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

82       The City Council supports implementing a more comprehensive strategy toward  
83 Sixth Street that maximizes its assets, embraces new opportunities, and ensures a safer  
84 environment for all. This strategy needs to be multi-faceted and shall build on the  
85 previous stakeholder processes and consultant reports. Council’s intent may be further  
86 articulated in subsequent Council resolutions.

87       **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

88       The City Council directs the City Manager to take the following immediate actions  
89 by August 30, 2021:

- 90       1. create an interdepartmental team led by the Entertainment Services Group and with  
91 representation from – at a minimum – the Austin Police Department, Austin  
92 Transportation Department, Austin Energy, Austin Fire Department, Austin/Travis  
93 County Emergency Medical Services, Austin Code, and the Historic Preservation  
94 Office;
- 95       2. upgrade existing lighting, if necessary, and use temporary lighting to provide  
96 dramatically brighter spaces along the Sixth Street corridor;
- 97       3. explore and pilot options such as café seating, water barriers, and other “pop up”  
98 efforts for temporarily dedicating wider walkways for patrons to move between  
99 establishments and eliminating the space where people gather during the weekend  
100 closures by using the street for other purposes;
- 101       4. determine the extent to which earlier findings-assertions about underage presence  
102 on Sixth Street and underage drinking remain true today;

5. briefly list which recommendations noted in the July 17, 2015, staff memo “Response to Resolution No. 20140925-081 – Downtown Entertainment Districts” and from the two consultant reports have been implemented;

6. engage with peer cities to identify best practices in entertainment district planning and management and provide additional recommendations to Council based on that research;

7. explore the feasibility of creating a dedicated EMS presence during weekend nights with personnel using specialized vehicles for rapid response, treatment, and extrication; and

~~6. and~~

7.8. any other relevant actions deemed to be appropriate by the City Manager.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The City Council directs the City Manager – through the interdepartmental team - to take the following actions by September 30, 2021:

1. suggest a process and program for entertainment licenses that includes safety training for staff and increased coordination and communication with public safety officers; and
2. coordinate with the Texas Alcohol and Beverage Commission (TABC) on additional strategies for curbing underage drinking and potentially limiting the presence of underage Austinites on Sixth Street during weekend evenings.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The City Council directs the City Manager – through the interdepartmental team - to take the following actions and report to Council on the results by October 30, 2021:

1. initiate development of a nightlife management plan;

4.2. review plan for responding to mass casualties;

128 2.3. analyze Sixth Street weekend closures and develop a list of measures that  
129 would need to be met for Sixth Street to be re-opened and propose a corresponding  
130 timeline; and

131 4. engage with property owners to discuss land use regulations along Sixth Street to  
132 determine whether changes might foster more diverse uses along this historic  
133 corridor.

134  
135  
136 **ADOPTED:** \_\_\_\_\_, 2021 **ATTEST:** \_\_\_\_\_

137 Jannette S. Goodall

138 City Clerk