

RESOLUTION NO. 20210826-108

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 20120301-051 approved the policy that all new City facilities and City-sponsored projects oriented to the public include family friendly features, such as creative play spaces, nature-based play areas, and interactive art spaces per the recommendation from the Urban Parks Stakeholder Group; and

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 20170928-057 directed the City Manager to develop a comprehensive City-wide needs and gap assessment of high-quality child care facilities, to explore the feasibility of adding a child care facility to the Austin Community College Highland Campus, and to articulate requirements for the City to lease property to a private child care facility; and

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 20170928-057 also directed the City Manager to identify “desirable geographic areas and/or locations for a high-quality child care facility with access to public transportation, institutions of higher education, or workforce hubs” and to include within the review land owned by the City, Austin Independent School District, and Travis County; and

WHEREAS, an August 23, 2019, memo from Austin Public Health in collaboration with the Quality Child Care & Pre-K3 Resolution Working Group (“August 2019 Memo”) recommended the City develop a policy to include the option for affordable, high-quality child care facilities within requests for proposals, requests for applications, and other competitive processes that the City conducts to lease or develop public tracts; and

WHEREAS, the August 2019 Memo also recommended that child care be presented as an option (with a cost estimate) any time a project is located in an area where quality child care is needed and within any City buildings which would

house a significant number of employees, such as the spaces for the Development Services Department on the Highland Mall campus, the future headquarters for Austin Energy, and the Austin Police Department main headquarters; and

WHEREAS, the August 2019 Memo stated that the Office of Real Estate Services was working with the Strategic Facilities Governance Team to update departmental forms to reflect this new process and to update the Facilities Request Form which departments are required to complete when requesting to renovate space or seeking additional space; and

WHEREAS, the August 2019 Memo confirmed that “on any new Request for Information (RFI)/Request for Proposal (RFP) for real estate needs, the solicitation will include a requested option for a high-quality child care facility, when applicable. Real Estate is working with APH on developing criteria for when this option would be required”; and

WHEREAS, in the July 2019 report prepared by the City of Austin’s consultant, TXP, entitled “Childcare & Economic Development in Austin,” researchers identified the high cost of rent and mortgages as key cost drivers for affordable child care and noted that these costs result in many child care facilities locating far away from working families or closing entirely; and

WHEREAS, child care programs generally operate on slim margins, and increasing the availability of affordable high-quality child care in Austin/Travis County will likely require funding to build spaces for new programs in multi-use developments and to support operating expenses such as offering low- or no-cost leases; and

WHEREAS, the Office of Real Estate Services' current practice is to consider the Austin Public Health recommendations alongside the appropriateness of having a child care facility as part of a public-private partnership (P3), lease, acquisition, or redevelopment project; and

WHEREAS, the Economic Development Department manages some redevelopment projects, and its current process for each City tract is to provide opportunities for the community to identify relevant needs, such as affordable child care, as well as to include any applicable Council priorities established through resolution; and

WHEREAS, the Early Childhood Council's March 10, 2021, recommendation and the March 8, 2021, letter from Early Matters Greater Austin to City Council, both urge the City to include affordable, high-quality child care in its redevelopment projects, citing that the pandemic has further exacerbated our community's shortage of affordable, high-quality child care facilities; and

WHEREAS, these advocates noted that Travis County lost nearly 15% of its quality-rated child care centers serving families with low incomes between March 2020 and September 2020 alone; and

WHEREAS, Success By 6 Austin / Travis County Coalition has recommended strategies for transforming Austin's Early Childhood System, which include co-locating space for affordable, high-quality child care in City and County facilities with low- or no- cost leases and prioritizing the selection of development / re-development proposals that incorporate dedicated space for child care facilities; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY OF AUSTIN CITY COUNCIL:

The Council affirms the policy adopted in Resolution No. 20120301-051 that all new City facilities and City-sponsored projects oriented to the public include family-friendly features, such as creative play spaces, nature-based play areas, and interactive art spaces. This policy shall apply to City-sponsored projects such as third-party development agreements and public-private partnerships oriented to public use. Any deviation from this policy for new City facilities or City-sponsored projects shall require Council approval.

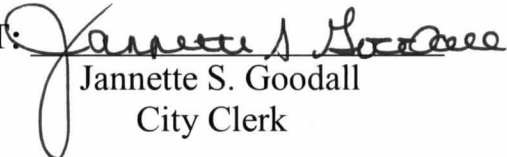
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The Council affirms the Office of Real Estate Services current process that staff include a high-quality child care facility, especially child care facilities that serve infants and toddlers as a requested use in requests for proposals, requests for applications, and other competitive processes associated with public-private partnerships, and in the lease, acquisition, or redevelopment of any City property -- especially in child care deserts and on safe sites, such as those that do not require environmental remediation. The City Manager shall apply this policy to the redevelopment of City-owned land. Should the inclusion of an affordable, high-quality child care facility in these project types be deemed infeasible or not recommended for documented reasons, such as, proximity to other high-quality child care facilities, the City Manager shall provide a written notice to the Council detailing the barrier or challenges associated with this use as soon as that determination is made and prior to the Council's consideration of the project.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

In alignment with the recommendation in the August 2019 memo, any future City projects that will house a significant number of City of Austin employees

should include a cost estimate and option for including an onsite affordable, high-quality child care facility for the Council to consider as part of each project.

ADOPTED: August 26, 2021 **ATTEST:** 
Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk