

BEFORE THE METRO COUNCIL

FOR THE PURPOSE OF AFFIRMING SUPPORT) RESOLUTION NO. 19-5016
FOR OUR REGION’S SHARED VALUES)
) Introduced by the Metro Council

WHEREAS, recent national and local rhetoric and actions have highlighted a climate of racism, exclusion, xenophobia and intolerance; and

WHEREAS, the Metro Council seeks to reaffirm that this is a welcoming region that supports fundamental rights for all of its people; and

WHEREAS, Metro strives to cultivate diversity, advance equity and practice inclusion in all of its work to ensure shared prosperity, a culture of civility and respect is necessary to foster safe, welcoming and thriving communities; and

WHEREAS, Metro recognizes that greater Portland is built upon the ceded land of many groups of indigenous people who have lived here since time immemorial; and

WHEREAS, To address a history of systemic exclusion the region has approved and works diligently to implement a policy to lead with racial equity in its processes and decision-making; and

WHEREAS, white supremacy and white nationalism are contrary to the ideals of the United States, the State of Oregon, and the Metro region, sentiments and actions supporting this ideology must not be tolerated or accepted in our communities and all efforts will be made to counter these ideals and support our whole community including immigrants, refugees, all religions, all genders and sexualities, all races and all people; and

WHEREAS, the Metro Council remains committed to enhancing greater Portland’s economy and ensuring equitable access to economic and employment opportunities, equal pay and livable wages, affordable housing, and transportation choices; and

WHEREAS, the greater Portland region has a longstanding commitment to maintaining environmental quality, addressing the impacts of human-caused climate change and leading on climate action through science-informed decision-making, innovation and investments in reducing and mitigating pollution, global education about the conservation of species, and preparing for the impacts of climate change; and

WHEREAS, vulnerable communities across the region are most impacted by climate change and the detrimental consequences to the health of our environment—especially communities of color and low income communities—a practice of environmental justice must inform all of our actions around development, growth, species conservation, land stewardship and resiliency; and

WHEREAS, Metro is committed to the health and safety of all our residents and will make space for civil dialogue and participation without denigrating, bullying or demeaning other people or their viewpoints; and

WHEREAS, much of this work is based on the region's six desired outcomes, adopted in 2008, including: people live, work and play in vibrant communities where their everyday needs are easily accessible; current and future residents benefit from the region's sustained economic competitiveness and prosperity; people have safe and reliable transportation choices that enhance their quality of life; the region is a leader on climate change, and on minimizing contributions to global warming; current and future generations enjoy clean air, clean water and healthy ecosystems; and equity exists relative to the benefits and burdens of growth and change to the region's communities; now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that:


1. The Metro Council stands with all of our community members regardless of race, creed, national origin, sexual orientation, gender expression, faith, age, ability or other characteristics, and will strive to lift these voices in the actions of this agency to advance racial equity and ensure respectful dialogue in our region; and,
2. The Metro Council will continue to work to advance economic justice in greater Portland; and,
3. The Metro Council will take actions that address climate change, reduce pollution and prepare the Portland region for the future; and
4. The Metro Council will support policies that advance the health and personal safety of the people of greater Portland; and
5. The Metro Council adopts the principles of civility, respect and equity; economic justice; climate action; and health and safety as its primary goals.

ADOPTED by the Metro Council this 26th day of September 2019.



Lynn Peterson, Council President

Approved as to Form:



Carrie MacLaren, Metro Attorney

STAFF REPORT

IN CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION 19-5016, FOR THE PURPOSE OF AFFIRMING
SUPPORT FOR OUR REGION'S SHARED VALUES

Date: Sept. 18, 2019

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Department: Council Office

Presenters: Nick Christensen, Ina Zucker

Meeting Date: Sept. 26, 2019

Length: 5 minutes

ISSUE STATEMENT

While Metro has many broad charges regarding issues of regional concern, it's important to recognize specific goals for the months to come.

The Metro Council is specifically looking at four key areas for the coming year: efforts to combat the white nationalism that challenges our American values of civility and equality; addressing the growing economic uncertainty that could spark recession; action to reduce the impacts of pollution and climate change; and improving public safety in the Portland region.

ACTION REQUESTED

Council feedback and consideration of Resolution 19-5016.

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

At the request of the Metro Council President, this resolution presents an opportunity for the Council to exercise regional leadership. While Metro will continue to work on many areas of metropolitan concern, these would be the top priorities for the current Council.

In an era of growing polarization and divisiveness, the Council has an opportunity to be clear about what Metro stands for: the American values of justice, equity, dignity, economic stability and stewardship of our place in the world for future generations.

With these values under threat, this resolution will make clear the Metro Council's course for protecting and supporting these values in the near term.

POLICY QUESTION(S)

- Are these the right focus areas for the Metro Council?
- Are the focus areas accurately highlighted in the resolution?

- How should this resolution direct the work of Metro’s programs and departments?

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends the Metro Council adopt Resolution No. 19-5016.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

1. Known Opposition/Support/Community Feedback

Metro has heard from many community members that climate action, respect and equity, personal safety and economic justice are priorities in the greater Portland region. A 2019 poll of 1,463 Metro-area voters, with a margin of error of 2.8%, indicated that 63% of voters view climate change as an extremely or very serious problem; 45% viewed racial equity as extremely or very serious.

Conversely, 19% of Metro residents do not view climate change as a serious problem, and 20% said they do not view racial inequality as a serious problem. We also know that there are white nationalists who live in greater Portland who would object to improved racial equity; people who do not support the proposition that all people are created equal; people who do not believe we have a responsibility to leave this place, and this planet, in better shape than we found it. It is likely they would oppose many of the tenets of this resolution.

2. Legal Antecedents

Resolution No. 08-3940, for the purpose of affirming a definition of a “successful region” and committing Metro to work with regional partners to identify performance indicators and targets and to develop a decision-making process to create successful communities.

Ordinance No. 10-1244B, for the purpose of making the greatest place and providing capacity for housing and employment to the year 2030; amending the Regional Framework Plan and the Metro Code; and declaring an emergency.

Ordinance No. 14-1346B, for the purpose of adopting a preferred Climate Smart Communities strategy and amending the regional framework plan to comply with state law.

Resolution No. 16-4708, for the purpose of approving the strategic plan to advance racial equity, diversity and inclusion.

Resolution No. 17-4777, for the purpose of reaffirming Metro’s support for stability, opportunity, safety and justice for all people living in our shared region.

3. Anticipated Effects

Guidance to Metro staff on Council priorities.

4. Financial Implications

Metro has many initiatives underway in FY 19-20 within these four topic areas. Some of those programs include, but are not limited to:

Respect and equity

- Implementation of the Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
- Collaboration with greater Portland's Native American community to develop culturally appropriate processes for Native Americans to access land for cultural events, culturally significant plant harvests and for ceremony space
- Partnerships with community organizations that increase access to nature for communities of color
- Advancing increased presence for communities of color within Metro's workforce
- Support for an accurate count in the 2020 Census

Economic justice

- Implementation of Measure 26-199, the region's \$652.8 million affordable housing bond, which will provide access to affordable housing for 12,000 people at a time upon completion of all buildings
- Implementation of the Construction Careers Pathways Projects, which creates access to job training and a career ladder for women and people of color in the trades, where they have been historically underrepresented
- Continued support for COBID and FOTA programs that promote small businesses in historically oppressed communities
- Respectful benefits to employees, including paid parental leave, which addresses economic, racial and gender disparities in career development for parents
- Improvement of transportation and access to jobs around the region, as economic mobility is linked to commute time

Climate action

- Reform of greater Portland's transportation system to decrease pollution, increase access to transit and other low-emission transportation options and decrease reliance on gasoline-burning vehicles by improving safety and speed for alternative modes
- Conservation and stewardship of species at the Oregon Zoo
- Restoration of habitat and protection of clean water in Metro's portfolio of 17,000 acres of parks and natural areas

- Reform of greater Portland's solid waste system to put greater emphasis on reduction of polluting materials such as plastics, and support for new, innovative ways to reduce the carbon footprint of post-use materials.

Health and safety

- Increased investment in transportation safety, including funding for Safe Routes to Schools, off-street trails and new sidewalks in greater Portland
- Improving access to natural areas so that people from all over greater Portland can enjoy the therapeutic benefits of being close to nature

BACKGROUND

Combatting white nationalism and advancing racial equity

In the 1810s, Black Christians in Charleston, S.C., began congregating in what would eventually be called the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church. In nearly 200 years, the church was visited by Booker T. Washington, Martin Luther King Jr. and countless other Black leaders. In 2015, a man walked into the church and murdered nine parishioners because of the color of their skin.

Three years earlier, a man murdered six worshipping Sikhs in the Milwaukee suburb of Oak Creek. Last year, an alleged white supremacist murdered eleven people at a synagogue in Pittsburgh. And so far this year, at least three alleged white nationalists have murdered religious or ethnic minorities in mass shootings in the United States, the most recent of which was the El Paso shooting of Aug. 3, in which twenty-two people were murdered.

In our own region, 19-year-old Larnell Bruce Jr. was murdered in 2016 by a man who had been a member of a white supremacist prison gang.

There have always been white supremacists in the United States, some on the fringes, some in seats of power. The founding document of this state, the Oregon Constitution, notoriously banned African Americans from even entering Oregon. In 1988, members of a white nationalist gang beat Ethiopian student Mulugeta Seraw to death in southeast Portland because of his race. Oregon has, in its history, explicitly and implicitly told people of color they are unwelcome here.

They oppose the very notion of Jefferson's "All men are created equal" and they oppose the notion that Lincoln's government "of the people" must also be "for the people." They do not seek the "beautiful symphony of brotherhood" of which King spoke.

While it may seem absurd that our nation has reached a point where the values of equality must be adopted as a resolution, the need to do so is emblematic of our current political climate. In fact, just two years ago, the Metro Council passed resolution 17-4777,

expressing the Council's backing of the residents of the Portland region in supporting stability, opportunity, safety and justice for all of those living in our shared region and reaffirmed the Council's commitment to building community trust.

White nationalism is, of course, not the only threat to our region and our nation.

Economic justice

The economic paradigm that has emerged this century has not offered shared prosperity. Since the Great Recession, household wealth in the United States has increased nearly \$50 trillion and more than one-third of that growth, \$16.2 trillion, has gone to the upper 1 percent of households. Workers in the Metro region, and many other parts of the country, can no longer expect that a 40-hour week will provide enough income for basic living expenses.

The Metro Council has many tools at its disposal to combat these trends, most notably its work in improving access to affordable housing, so that Oregonians are not expected to work an unreasonable amount to be able to afford housing.

Climate change

Climate change is also threatening Oregon. Since records started being kept at the dawn of the Industrial Age, all of the planet's ten hottest years have been since 1998. Pollution, particularly from petroleum consumption but also from disposal of waste, is releasing chemicals into the atmosphere that prevent solar radiation from reflecting back into space. The Metro Council has adopted policies to help curb pollution in the Portland region, particularly from tailpipe emissions. But more can be done in all facets of pollution emission to combat the growing harm of climate change.

Personal safety

Finally, there is the matter of personal safety. From Jan. 1 to Sept. 17, 2019, 316 people have died on Oregon roads, including 41 in the city of Portland alone. Metro is a committed partner for many Vision Zero efforts and the Metro Council is committed to improving safety for people who are getting around our region.

ATTACHMENTS

[For work session:]

Is legislation required for Council action? Yes No

• If yes, is draft legislation attached? Yes No

• What other materials are you presenting today?