

12/02/2024

RESOLUTION NO. M-4313

A RESOLUTION of the City Council of the City of Vancouver adopting an Equity and Inclusion Vision Statement and acknowledging its responsibilities to address existing inequities in City policies, programs, services, funding, and services for the benefit of all members of the public.

WHEREAS, the history of Vancouver is comprised of the stories of people across the millennia who have contributed to the land and today's unique and vibrant culture. These stories include patterns of inequality and unequal distribution of resources, power, and economic opportunities seen throughout the United States. Its vulnerable populations continue to face unrectified historical injustices; and

WHEREAS, Washington State has sought to address racial and sex-based discrimination through the Washington Law Against Discrimination, initially passed in 1949 and updated over the years; and

WHEREAS, in 1979, the voters of Vancouver inserted prohibitions on discrimination into the City Charter, which were further expanded in 2015; and

WHEREAS, the City of Vancouver has prioritized the advancement of equity through numerous proactive initiatives, including:

1. In 2020, the City Council adopted equity as a core value;
2. The 2021-23 budget authorized the creation of an Office of Equity and Inclusion with a full-time dedicated staff;
3. In 2019, Reside Vancouver, an anti-displacement strategy, was developed.
4. In 2023, the Council reiterated its commitment by adopting equity as a core value of the 2023-2029 Strategic Plan, embedded equity as a foundation of the updated transportation System Plan and Climate Action Framework, adopted the Fourth Plain for All investment plan, and endorsed an equity framework for the development of the 2025-2045 Comprehensive Plan;
5. The city developed a social vulnerability index to identify disparities in housing, health, education, criminal justice, environment, and employment often correlated with race and vulnerable population status. Identified disparities are addressed through methodologies and strategies, such as equitable programming in city services and long-range planning, resident engagement toolkits, and professional development;
6. Improving representation and participation opportunities for vulnerable populations, including seeking ways to overcome language and accessibility barriers;
7. Ensuring the development and implementation of inclusive recruitment and

- appointment practices for City Boards and Commissions, actively seeking candidates reflective of the city's diversity;
8. Actively monitoring, documenting, and addressing discrimination in the execution of city programs and activities as directed by Section 7.10 of the Vancouver City Charter;
  9. Improving access to and facilitating participation of persons with disabilities within all City services, programs, and facilities;
  10. Identifying, promulgating, and offering professional development programs for City Councilmembers, board and commission members, and City employees to enhance their understanding of and skills to advance equity, cultural competence, trauma-informed interaction and programming, and equitable and inclusive decision-making;
  11. Pursuing and supporting the development and implementation of equitable policies and services, using data and metrics such as the Vancouver Social Vulnerability Index where possible, and pursue continuous improvement in the same;
  12. Supporting and strengthening intergovernmental relations with the Indigenous Tribal Nations; and

AND WHEREAS, many other stories and actions have created Vancouver's current reality.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY OF VANCOUVER THAT:

Section 1. Findings. The recitals set forth above, and the information supplied within ~~Staff Report SR~~ the attached memorandum of October 21, 2024, are adopted as findings in support of the action of the City Council in adopting this resolution.

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Section 2. Vision Statement. The City Council hereby adopts the following Equity & Inclusion Vision Statement:

*The Vancouver City Council is dedicated to creating an environment where individuals can live with dignity and opportunity and contribute to the health and vibrancy of the city. The Council actively works to ensure the safety and well-being of its residents, both physically and mentally and strives to make all aspects of living in the city attainable. In addition, the Council strives for community members to be able to express their true selves and feel a solid connection to the city.*

Section 3. City Council Commitment. The City Council believes that our collective strength lies in our ability to embrace and celebrate our community's richness and is committed to fostering an environment where everyone who calls Vancouver home, their place of employment, or visits, has equal opportunities for prosperity, participation, and quality of life. Consistent with this belief, and in addition to the initiatives outlined above, the City Council affirms its dedication to:

1. Adopting policies consistent with the Vision memorialized herein that recognize and address those historical injustices that have been perpetuated by the code and

- programs of the city, advance equity, eliminate structural and system barriers, and, through its example, extend Vancouver's influence beyond the city organization;
2. Promoting a better comprehension of the ongoing issues related to equity, fairness, and civic involvement and facilitating a practical plan for the City's continuous response to these issues;
  3. Working with all whom we represent and partner with, including residents, institutions, organizations, businesses, and other stakeholders, to achieve more equitable outcomes within the city;
  4. Identifying and developing opportunities to elevate and enhance understanding of the history and stories of Vancouver's current and future vulnerable populations through civic leadership and involvement in community events, collaboration, policy, program, and project recommendations developed through the City's advisory boards, commissions, and authorities.

Section 4. Direction to City Manager. The City Council hereby directs the City Manager to continue the important initiatives outlined above, support the City Council in meeting its commitment to equity and inclusion, and seek new opportunities to advance equity within the resources and authorities provided for in the City Charter and by policy and budget action of the City Council.

Section 6. Effective date. This Resolution shall be effective immediately upon adoption.

ADOPTED at a Regular Meeting of the Vancouver City Council this 2nd of

December, 2024.

DocuSigned by:

*Anne McEnerny-Ogle*

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Anne McEnerny-Ogle, Mayor

Attest: DocuSigned by:

*Natasha Ramras*

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Natasha Ramras, City Clerk

Approved as to form: DocuSigned by:

*Jonathan Young*

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Jonathan Young, City Attorney



# MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** October 21, 2024

**TO:** Anne McEnerny-Ogle, Mayor  
City Council

**FROM:** Ty Stober, City Councilor  
Diana Perez, City Councilor  
Kim Harless, City Councilor

**RE:** **DRAFT City Council Equity resolution**

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In 2023, the City Council endorsed development of a resolution to memorialize a policy statement on equity and inclusion. At that time, the Council formed an ad hoc committee comprised of Councilor Stober, Councilor Perez and Councilor Harless to develop a draft. The Committee worked with the City's Office of Equity and Inclusion, City Attorney and City Manager as well as relied on resources from National League of Cities and other municipal research sources to develop a draft for the full council to consider. A summary of this research and analysis, including relevant definitions, is attached to this memorandum for reference.

Each councilmember was individually consulted on the draft and suggestions and edits were incorporated into the latest version of the draft, which is attached for Councils consideration.

Pending Council's review, discussion and refinement, the final resolution would be returned for Council's formal action as part of a consent agenda at a future meeting.

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### **Attachment**

#### **Section 1. REFERENCES**

- *Commission meetings | Clark County.* (n.d.). Clark County. <https://clark.wa.gov/community-planning/historic-preservation-commission>
- Ellenbecker, L. (2022, November 17). Nikkei Park in North Image neighborhood honors the past. *The Columbian*. <https://www.columbian.com/news/2022/jul/07/nikkei-park-in-north-image-neighborhood-honors-the-past/>
- *James Carty (transcript).* (n.d.). <https://content.libraries.wsu.edu/digital/collection/p16866coll4/id/195/rec/1>
- Shopping, C. a. R. (n.d.). Citizens against reservation shopping. <https://bad-bet.blogspot.com/>

#### **Section 2. DEFINITIONS**

##### **Bias<sup>1</sup>**

A subjective opinion, preference, prejudice, or inclination, often formed without reasonable justification, influences an individual or group's ability to evaluate a situation objectively or accurately.

##### **Cultural competence<sup>2</sup>**

Cultural competence is a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enable that system, agency, or profession to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.

The word culture implies an integrated pattern of human behavior that includes the thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of a racial, ethnic, religious, or social group. The word competence implies the capacity to function effectively.

Five essential elements contribute to a system's institution's or agency's ability to become more culturally competent, which include:

- Valuing diversity
- Having the capacity for cultural self-assessment
- Being conscious of the dynamics inherent when cultures interact
- Having institutionalized cultural knowledge
- Having developed adaptations to service delivery reflecting an understanding of cultural diversity

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<sup>1</sup> Source: International City/County Management Association

<sup>2</sup> Source: Cross et al., 1989

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These five elements should manifest at every level of an organization, including policymaking, administration, and practice. They should also be reflected in the organization's attitudes, structures, policies, and services.

### **Disparities <sup>3</sup>**

A particular type of difference is closely linked with economic, social, or environmental disadvantage. Disparities may adversely affect groups of people who have systematically experienced greater social or financial obstacles based on their racial or ethnic group, religion, socioeconomic -status, gender, age, or mental health; cognitive, sensory, or physical disability; sexual orientation or gender identity; geographic location; or other characteristics historically linked to discrimination or exclusion.

### **Discrimination<sup>4</sup>**

Actions based on conscious or unconscious prejudice favor one group over others in providing goods, services, or opportunities. The unequal treatment of members of various groups based on race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion, and other categories.

In the United States, the law makes it illegal to discriminate against someone based on race, color, religion, national origin, or sex. The law also makes it unlawful to retaliate against a person because the person complained about discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, or participated in an employment discrimination investigation or lawsuit. The law also requires that employers reasonably accommodate applicants' and employees' sincerely held religious practices unless doing so would impose an undue hardship on the operation of the employer's business.

### **Displacement (residents/physical/economic/cultural)<sup>5</sup>**

The involuntary relocation of current residents or businesses from their current residence. This is a different phenomenon than when property owners voluntarily sell their interests to capture an increase in value.

Physical displacement is the result of eviction, acquisition, rehabilitation, or demolition of property, or the expiration of covenants on rent- or income-restricted housing.

Economic displacement occurs when residents and businesses can no longer afford escalating rents or property taxes.

Cultural displacement occurs when people choose to move because their neighbors and culturally related businesses have left the area.

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<sup>3</sup> Source: Department of Health and Human Services (Healthy People 2020)

<sup>4</sup> Source: International City/County Management Association

<sup>5</sup> Source: Municipal Research and Services Center

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### **Equity <sup>6</sup>**

Equity guarantees fair treatment, advancement, opportunity, and access for all individuals while striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups and ensuring that all community members have access to community conditions and opportunities to reach their full potential and to experience optimal well-being and quality of life.

### **Equity Framework <sup>7</sup>**

An Equity Framework provides an intentional process for examining and addressing equity challenges or problems contributing to inequity. This process relies on identifying and engaging all stakeholders, including the intended beneficiaries of policies, programs, and interventions.

### **Inclusion<sup>8</sup>**

Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power.

### **Institutional racism<sup>9</sup>**

Institutional racism refers to the policies and practices within and across institutions that, intentionally or not, produce outcomes that chronically favor one racial group and put another at a disadvantage. It refers specifically to how institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups. The institutional policies may never mention any racial group. Still, their effect is to create advantages for whites and oppression and disadvantage for people from groups classified as people of color.

Examples: Government policies that explicitly restricted the ability of people to get loans to buy or improve their homes in neighborhoods with high concentrations of African Americans (also known as "red-lining"). City sanitation department policies disproportionately concentrate trash transfer stations and other environmental hazards in communities of color.

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<sup>6</sup> Source: International City/County Management Association

<sup>7</sup> Source: Sherri Killins Stewart, EdD; Michelle Stover-Wright, MS; Aisha Ray, PhD

<sup>8</sup> Source: International City/County Management Association

<sup>9</sup> Source: International City/County Management Association

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### **Marginalization / Marginalized Community<sup>10</sup>**

A social process by which individuals or groups are (intentionally or unintentionally) distanced from access to power and resources and constructed as insignificant, peripheral, or less valuable/privileged to a community or “mainstream” society.

Marginalized communities include those who have been historically excluded from involvement in our cities, as well as those continuing to face other barriers to civic participation. This consists of those marginalized by factors like race, wealth, immigration status, and sexual orientation.

Excluded, ignored, or relegated to the outer edge of a group/society/community.

### **Social Equity<sup>11</sup>**

Social equity is the fair, just, and equitable management of all institutions serving the public directly or by contract, the fair and equitable distribution of public services, the implementation of public policy, and the commitment to promote fairness, justice, and equity in the formation of public policy.

### **Social Vulnerability<sup>12</sup>**

Refers to the potential adverse effects on communities caused by external stresses on human health. Such stresses include natural or human-caused disasters or disease outbreaks. Reducing social vulnerability can decrease both human suffering and economic loss.

### **Social Vulnerability Index<sup>13</sup>**

A database that uses U.S. Census data to determine the social vulnerability of every county and tract based on 15 social factors, including poverty, lack of vehicle access, and crowded housing.

### **Systemic Barriers<sup>14</sup>**

It consists of patterns of behavior, policies, or practices that are part of an organization's social or administrative structures and create or perpetuate a position of relative disadvantage for individuals and communities.

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<sup>10</sup> Source: International City/County Management Association

<sup>11</sup> Source: American Society for Public Administration

<sup>12</sup> Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<sup>13</sup> Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<sup>14</sup> Source: Agocs, “Surfacing Racism in the Workplace: Qualitative and Quantitative Evidence of Systemic Discrimination” (2004)



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### **Trauma-informed<sup>15</sup>**

Any setting is “trauma-informed” if the people there realize how widespread trauma is, recognize signs and symptoms, respond by integrating knowledge into practice, and resist doing further harm.

### **Vulnerable Populations<sup>16</sup>**

Groups and communities are at a higher risk for poor physical, psychological, or social health. These barriers are further intensified by social, economic, political, and environmental components. Limitations due to illness or disability can also influence a population's vulnerability.

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<sup>15</sup> Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

<sup>16</sup> Source: Wisner, B., Adams, J. & World Health Organization