



RESOLUTION NO. 40622

1 A RESOLUTION affirming the City Council's dedication and commitment to
2 comprehensive and sustained transformation of all of the institutions,
3 systems, policies, practices, and contracts impacted by systemic racism,
4 with initial priority being given to policing in the City of Tacoma.

5 WHEREAS our nation was founded on systems of racism and slave labor,
6 beginning in 1619 when the first slaves are known to have been brought to the
7 British colony of Jamestown, Virginia, and

8 WHEREAS the abolishment of slavery did not end racism nor the
9 dehumanization and disparate treatment of Black Americans, and instead, new
10 systems of control and oppression were put in place, institutionalizing racism in
11 both the nation's systems and our cultural norms, and

12 WHEREAS the United States has engaged in more than 150 years of work
13 to reform societal structures and restore civil rights and social justice, yet full equity
14 has not been achieved, and

15 WHEREAS, over the course of modern history, high-profile cases across
16 the nation and in Tacoma have repeatedly raised questions regarding the impacts
17 of implicit bias and systemic racism in institutions across all sectors, including
18 policing, and have led to calls for increased transparency and communications
19 from police agencies and the government bodies that oversee them and other
20 public services, and

21 WHEREAS, on February 20, 2007, at the recommendation of the City's
22 Human Rights Commission and pursuant to Ordinance No. 27589, the City
23 Council adopted TMC 1.06.075.B.1, creating and clarifying the role of a Citizen
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Review Panel, which is currently known as the Citizen Police Advisory

1 Committee (“CPAC”), and

2 WHEREAS CPAC is a policy-focused board whose role is to ensure
3 transparency and accountability in the way that the City of Tacoma Police
4 Department (“TPD”) operates, and

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6 WHEREAS CPAC’s duties and responsibilities include reviewing police
7 policy at the request of the City Council or City Manager, and providing community
8 outreach and education through public hearings and committee efforts, and

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10 WHEREAS the Equity and Empowerment framework, adopted by the City
11 Council in 2014, makes equity a consistent guiding principle across the City of
12 Tacoma and calls out specific goals to guide the City’s operational and policy
13 decisions, including a commitment to equity in policy making, and

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15 WHEREAS, in January 2015, the City established an Office of Equity and
16 Human Rights, with a mission to achieve equity in City service delivery, decision-
17 making and community engagement by identifying and eliminating the underlying
18 drivers within our community that perpetuate racial inequity and provide
19 opportunity and advancement for all, and

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21 WHEREAS, in 2015, Project PEACE was generated in response to
22 community concerns about nationwide police-related conflicts to build trust,
23 relationships, and understanding between community members and law
24 enforcement officers in the Tacoma area, and

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26 WHEREAS, through the work of Project PEACE, more than 800 community
members, police officers and City staff took part in six community-wide



1 conversations, resulting in a 2016 report which identified recommendations under
2 11 categories, and is work which continues today, and

3 WHEREAS, on March 4, 2020, Mayor Woodards launched the
4 Compassionate Tacoma initiative, which calls on all leaders, businesses, and
5 residents to commit to making Tacoma a more welcoming, connected, resilient,
6 and vibrant community by listening and serving others with love, and

7 WHEREAS City Council Members have publicly expressed their support of
8 this initiative, and its core values provide a foundation for how the City can engage
9 in the work of ensuring equity and justice, and

10 WHEREAS, through past engagements such as the work done by Project
11 PEACE and grassroots violence prevention efforts, community members have
12 demonstrated their desire and ability to engage with compassion in difficult
13 conversations in order to gain understanding and effect lasting change that
14 increases equitable outcomes, and

15 WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, the City Manager and the Mayor of
16 Tacoma, pursuant to Chapter 1.10 of the Tacoma Municipal Code and
17 Chapter 38.52 of the Revised Code of Washington, proclaimed that an emergency
18 exists caused by COVID-19 ("Proclamation") in the City of Tacoma, and confirmed
19 by the City Council on March 17, 2020, and

20 WHEREAS COVID-19 has shined a light on the deep need for more
21 equitable systems, as "Long-standing systemic health and social inequities have
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put some members of racial and ethnic minority groups at increased risk of getting
1 COVID-19 or experiencing severe illness, regardless of age;"¹ and

2 WHEREAS worldwide demonstrations on systemic racism and brutality in
3 policing renewed after the killings of Ahmaud Arbery, an unarmed Black man living
4 in Glynn County, Georgia, on February 23, 2020; of Breonna Taylor, an unarmed
5 Black woman living in Louisville, Kentucky on March 13, 2020; and of George
6 Floyd, an unarmed Black man in living in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on May 25,
7 2020, and
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9 WHEREAS Manuel Ellis, a 33-year old Black father, brother and son, died
10 in Tacoma Police custody on March 3, 2020, and the Tacoma News Tribune
11 published on June 3rd that the Pierce County medical examiner's report
12 concluded that Mr. Ellis's death was by homicide and that the cause was from a
13 lack of oxygen due to physical restraint, and
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15 WHEREAS increasing community demands for reforms have been seen at
16 an unprecedented scale, with daily, peaceful demonstrations across the City of up
17 to 10,000 people calling for equitable justice and other reforms that would ensure
18 that residents of every race and in every geographic area of the City may have
19 equal access to those conditions which create a sense of safety, and
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21 WHEREAS, these losses of life, as well as the countless others lost to the
22 impacts of systemic racism on public health and safety, are evidence of the limited
23 impacts made by reform efforts, not only in Tacoma, but across the nation, and
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¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/racial-ethnic-minorities.html>



1 WHEREAS disparities by race continue to be seen across the nation and in
2 Tacoma in almost every measure of human health and wellbeing, including
3 perceptions of safety, incarceration and arrest rates, risk of death from homicide,
4 annual income, net worth, access to education, and key indicators of public health,
5 such as maternal and infant mortality, heart disease, and diabetes, and

6 WHEREAS we, as a City, mourn every loss of life, and

7 WHEREAS the institutions and systems formed to protect human life,
8 health, and wellbeing have failed to do so equitably, despite more than 150 years
9 of work to reform societal structures and restore civil rights and social justice, and
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11 WHEREAS the Tacoma Mayor and City Council acknowledged the failure of
12 reform efforts to result in equitable outcomes at the June 23, 2020, Committee of
13 the Whole meeting, described the inequitable current state as unacceptable, and
14 thereby called for a need to transform all of the institutions, systems, policies, and
15 practices impacted by systemic racism, with initial priority placed on policing in the
16 City of Tacoma, and
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18 WHEREAS the City acknowledges that the challenges of dismantling more
19 than 400 years of systemic racism to ensure measurable improvements in the
20 equitable health and wellbeing of all members of the community is an adaptive
21 leadership challenge that will require a radical reimagining of institutions and an
22 innovative and collaborative response, and
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24 WHEREAS, at the June 23, 2020, Committee of the Whole meeting, the
25 Mayor and City Council discussion acknowledged a need for this transformation to
26 begin with creating a shared community understanding of what it means to feel



safe, and acknowledged that the conditions that create a sense of safety may be
1 vastly different for various members of our community, and

2 WHEREAS institutions and systems of the United States, including local
3 governments, have been operating under the influence of racism for centuries, and
4 we, as the City of Tacoma, should not endeavor to transform our systems without
5 first listening to the voices of those which have been marginalized, silenced, or
6 ignored, nor without incorporating the advice of experts in the field of reform and
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8 WHEREAS, at the June 23, 2020, Committee of the Whole meeting, the
9 Mayor and City Council highlighted a need for this work to be community-led,
10 driven by the best practices of reform as defined by national experts, informed by
11 the foundational work of CPAC and Project PEACE, and that it should engage
12 local leaders in this work, including members of the CPAC and Project PEACE
13 Executive Board, and
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15 WHEREAS collective efforts are required for collective change, and to
16 effectively address the root causes of racial inequity named by the Mayor and City
17 Council members at the June 23, 2020, Committee of the Whole meeting,
18 including education, poverty, housing, mental health, economic opportunity and
19 more, a need was expressed to engage and collaborate with all organizations
20 across all sectors in the work of transformation, and
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22 WHEREAS community members serving at all levels in business, faith
23 organizations, education, environment, public health, utilities, libraries, housing,
24 social services, government, police services, and more have acknowledged the
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1 inequities perpetuated by racial injustice and expressed their commitment to
2 transformative change, and

3 WHEREAS leaders across many of these sectors have specifically
4 committed to reimagining community safety, looking at innovative ways that safety
5 could be enhanced, convening conversations on how each agency has a role and
6 can support behavioral health, establishing social service programs that are both
7 preventative and serve acute needs, and creating opportunities to rethink safety in
8 schools, libraries, parks, and other public spaces, and

9 WHEREAS to successfully change systems, we must engage with a deep
10 understanding of the needs they serve and their policies, practices, contracts, and
11 administration, and

12 WHEREAS the TPD performs many necessary public safety services within
13 our community that add to quality of life in Tacoma, and they have had an active
14 role in community conversations and work related to justice and reform, and

15 WHEREAS effectively transforming our systems of policing will require a
16 process that engages with personnel at every level of the TPD to assess our
17 current state, ensures that staffing models provide the ability for officers to both
18 protect and serve through authentic and community-oriented policing, and looks for
19 ways that we can innovate and assist police officers on the front line by identifying
20 alternate models for engaging with emergency calls for service related to societal
21 issues outside of police officers' core training, such as homelessness and mental
22 health crises, and
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1 WHEREAS transformation cannot be done effectively through policy alone,
2 but also requires hiring, training, and accountability systems that align to ensure
3 just outcomes, and

4 WHEREAS an unprecedented act of transformation is an adaptive
5 leadership challenge, where learning is required in each stage of defining the
6 problem, seeking a solution, and working to implement the solutions generated,²
7 and

8 WHEREAS this will require all involved to learn, change, and grow
9 throughout the process, and potentially require those involved or impacted to,
10 “give up things they hold dear: daily habits, loyalties, ways of thinking,”³ and

11 WHEREAS creating and implementing in an innovative model of
12 collaboration and community engagement that is effective, authentic, and
13 transparent will require substantive resources and time, the scale of which are
14 currently undetermined, and

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17 WHEREAS the City acknowledges that it is undertaking this historic work of
18 sustained and comprehensive transformation concurrently with the unprecedented
19 challenges of COVID-19 on public and economic health, and

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21 WHEREAS, while acknowledging these challenges, at the June 23, 2020,
22 Committee of the Whole meeting, the Mayor and City Council expressed an
23 aspiration to create an effective model of transformation, tailored to the specific
24 needs of the Tacoma community, that could set a standard for the nation, and

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² Heifetz, Ronald A. Leadership without Easy Answers, 1994, p. 76.

³ <https://hbr.org/2002/06/a-survival-guide-for-leaders>



1 WHEREAS state and federal government elected leaders and the agencies
2 they oversee are responsible for enacting legislation, allocating funding, and
3 establishing administrative procedures that can have either disparate or anti-racist
4 impacts, and

5 WHEREAS Washington State and the United States government are
6 currently taking action on funding, legislation, policies, and legislative procedures
7 that address justice and accountability in policing, and these actions will certainly
8 impact residents of the City of Tacoma, and

9 WHEREAS the Mayor and City Council hereby affirm their dedication and
10 commit to comprehensive and sustained transformation of all of the institutions,
11 systems, policies, practices, and contracts impacted by systemic racism, with initial
12 priority being given to policing in the City of Tacoma, and

13 WHEREAS the Mayor and City Council commit to a comprehensive
14 transformation process that will establish new practices based on community and
15 expert opinion, as well as past reform efforts, centering the voices of those most
16 impacted by systemic racism; Now, Therefore,

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19 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TACOMA:**

20 Section 1. That the City Manager is hereby directed to keep anti-racism as
21 a top priority in the process of budget development and prioritize anti-racism in the
22 planning of an economic recovery strategy following COVID-19.

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24 Section 2. That the City Manager is hereby directed to prioritize anti-racism
25 in the evaluation of new policies and programs, as well as the sustained and
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comprehensive transformation of existing services, with initial priority being given to policing.

Section 3. That the City Manager is hereby directed to assess the current state of systems in place at the Tacoma Police Department in consultation with police reform experts, and give specific attention to how current policies and existing studies, agency composition, hiring, promotions, staffing levels, training, and accountability systems align to create just outcomes and use this assessment as a foundation for the work of comprehensive transformation.

Section 4. That the City Manager is hereby directed to actively seek and implement interim administrative changes and process improvements that can legally be taken immediately to improve transparency and accountability in policing.

Section 5. That the City Manager is hereby directed to work with the Mayor and City Council to build a legislative platform at the local, state, and



1 federal levels that works to transform institutions impacted by systemic racism
2 for the greater equity and wellbeing of all residents of Tacoma, Washington
3 State, and the United States.
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5 Adopted _____
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8 Mayor

9 Attest:
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11 City Clerk

12 Approved as to form:
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14 City Attorney

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