



## RESOLUTION NO. 40622

1 BY REQUEST OF MAYOR WOODARDS

2 A RESOLUTION affirming the City Council's dedication and commitment to  
3 comprehensive and sustained transformation of all of the institutions,  
4 systems, policies, practices, and contracts impacted by systemic racism,  
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  
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1 Council adopted TMC 1.06.075.B.1, creating and clarifying the role of a Citizen  
2 Review Panel, which is currently known as the Citizen Police Advisory  
3 Committee (“CPAC”), and

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

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

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

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

19 WHEREAS, in 2015, Project PEACE was generated in response to  
20 community concerns about nationwide police-related conflicts to build trust,  
21 relationships, and understanding between community members and law  
22 enforcement officers in the Tacoma area, and  
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1 WHEREAS, through the work of Project PEACE, more than 800 community  
2 members, police officers and City staff took part in six community-wide  
3 conversations, resulting in a 2016 report which identified recommendations under  
4 11 categories, and is work which continues today, and

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

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

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

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

22 WHEREAS COVID-19 has shined a light on the deep need for more  
23 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;"<sup>1</sup> 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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<sup>1</sup> <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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23 WHEREAS community members serving at all levels in business, faith  
24 organizations, education, environment, public health, utilities, libraries, housing,  
25 social services, government, police services, and more have acknowledged the  
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inequities perpetuated by racial injustice and expressed their commitment to  
1 transformative change, and

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

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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

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

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17 WHEREAS effectively transforming our systems of policing will require a  
18 process that engages with personnel at every level of the TPD to assess our  
19 current state, ensures that staffing models provide the ability for officers to both  
20 protect and serve through authentic and community-oriented policing, and looks for  
21 ways that we can innovate and assist police officers on the front line by identifying  
22 alternate models for engaging with emergency calls for service related to societal  
23 issues outside of police officers' core training, such as homelessness and mental  
24 health crises, and

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WHEREAS transformation cannot be done effectively through policy alone, but also requires hiring, training, and accountability systems that align to ensure just outcomes, and

WHEREAS an unprecedented act of transformation is an adaptive leadership challenge, where learning is required in each stage of defining the problem, seeking a solution, and working to implement the solutions generated,<sup>2</sup> and

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

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

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

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

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<sup>2</sup> Heifetz, Ronald A. Leadership without Easy Answers, 1994, p. 76.

<sup>3</sup> <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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7 \_\_\_\_\_  
8 Mayor

9 Attest:  
10 \_\_\_\_\_  
11 City Clerk

12 Approved as to form:  
13 \_\_\_\_\_  
14 City Attorney

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