

Council Business Meeting

December 1, 2020

Agenda Item	Resolution No. 2020-15 Social Equity and Racial Justice – Council Discussion and Action Identification	
From	Adam Hanks	Interim City Administrator
Contact	adam@ashland.or.us ; (541) 552-2046	

SUMMARY

Councilor Graham requested this item be a reoccurring agenda item, at least in the short term to discuss and identify Council actions, both collectively and potentially individually by mutually agreed assignment. The resolution was approved on [July 7, 2020](#) and establishes a formal commitment by the Council, with support from Mayor Stromberg, to recognize and take action to “move forward with purpose in order to provide immediate support for advocacy efforts while putting in place the elements necessary for long-term systemic change”.

A tracking list has been developed and attached to assist Council in monitoring progress and updates on activities/actions relating to the individual items listed in the approved resolution.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED

N/A

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION

Resolution No. 2020-15 was discussed and approved by Council at the [July 7, 2020 Business Meeting](#). At the same meeting, Councilor Graham requested to place this item on reoccurring agendas and Council agreed.

BACKGROUND AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On [August 4, 2020](#), Council discussed the items in Section 2 of Resolution No. 2020-15. Staff and Council assigned to each item and background, status and progress updates can be found in Attachment 1. On [September 1, 2020](#), staff gave progress updates on assigned items.

FISCAL IMPACTS

No immediate financial impacts are associated with the approval of this resolution. It is acknowledged that aspects of this resolution may involve financial commitments from the current or future budgets and those costs will be developed and presented as they come before Council in future meetings.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

This item is a Council policy decision and is supported by staff.

ACTIONS, OPTIONS & POTENTIAL MOTIONS

N/A

REFERENCES & ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Resolution No. 2020-15 Social Equity and Racial Justice Statement Tracking List

Attachment 2: Resolution No. 2020-15 Social Equity and Racial Justice Statement

Resolution No. 2020-15 Social Equity and Racial Justice Statement
Tracking Sheet



Item:	Assigned to:
Section 1.A. Designate Social Equity and Racial Justice as a Value Service in the City of Ashland’s strategic planning process, which will provide an opportunity for focused and sustained attention within the City’s planning, management, and policy structure.	
Completed	
Section 1.B. Proclaim Juneteenth as an annual day of municipal commemoration and partner with communities of color and other local organizations to celebrate African American/Black culture on this day annually.	
12/1 Staff Progress Update: This item will be discussed at the January meeting.	
Section 1.C. Advocate at the state and federal levels for policy reform that includes: a searchable database of officers sanctioned for excessive use of force and other misconduct; a national data collection program to determine the number of people killed or injured by police officers tracked by race, gender, age, and other demographic characteristics; limiting the transfer of military equipment to local jurisdictions; providing more extensive training for police officers regarding de-escalation, intrinsic bias, and procedural justice; and assisting people with mental health or addiction issues who have interactions with law enforcement.	Mayor John Stromberg Councilor Tonya Graham Councilor Dennis Slattery
Section 1.D. Work in the near term as a “Committee of the Whole” to move these efforts forward by assigning tasks outlined in this resolution to individual staff and councilors and reporting back to Council on a regular basis while a more formal process and timeline is developed that includes regular progress reports to Council.	
Completed	
Section 2.A. Support the Ashland Police Department in taking a more active role in on-campus conversations about racial justice at Southern Oregon University and in developing engagement events to help local residents understand APD’s policies regarding use of force and other relevant issues.	Tighe O’Meara, Police Chief
9/1 Staff Progress Update: APD is in the middle of analyzing its community engagement effort. APD has routinely accepted the SOU Football Coach’s invitation to meet with his student athletes and will continue to do so. Chief O’Meara appears as a criminology guest speaker a few times a	



Item:	Assigned to:
<p>year, as requested by the professors. A community town hall is being planned for later in the year to engage BIPOC and concerned members of the community on how APD policies have been informed by recent events and requests.</p>	
<p>Section 2.B. Strengthen our cultural competency and intrinsic bias training program for members of the City Council and City Staff.</p>	<p>Tina Gray, Human Resources Director</p>
<p>9/1 Staff Progress Update: EDI Statement – The first step in creating change that will resonate in the organization is to adopt an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Statement. The statement will set the tone for our existing staff and inform those seeking employment with the City of our organization’s values. Below is a draft statement that is still in the early collaborative stage: “The City of Ashland is committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion. We acknowledge, celebrate, and support our differences across all spectrums, including but not limited to gender, age, race, ethnicity, disability, and sexuality. We strive to foster an environment of respect that encourages diversity in background, opinion, and perspectives. We will continue to look for new ways to further equity in our work and our community by continually challenging ourselves to do better at eliminating bias and making inclusion a top priority. Respect for one another is at the core of everything we do.” Outreach & Engagement – The plan is to engage the community and our employees with a survey about how we can improve equity, diversity, and inclusion. Training/Policies/New Hire Orientation – This will include continually training staff and keep the issue of equality at the forefront so that it permeates our organization at all levels. Managers and Supervisors will receive additional training, so they model EDI for those they supervise and to promote inclusive practices in their everyday work. Job Descriptions need to be updated, making EDI an essential job function for all positions at the City. Policies need to be reviewed and updated with gender-neutral terminology. New hires need to start their career with the City clearly understanding and embracing EDI principles. Partnerships -Continue collaborative partnerships within the community and region that focus on EDI to help us learn and grow and bring back new ideas to the City for implementation.</p>	
<p>Section 2.C. Display Black Lives Matter signs at City-owned locations to offer visible and immediate support for racial justice advocates in our community.</p>	<p>Bill Molnar, Community Development Director David Lohman, City Attorney Councilor Tonya Graham</p>
<p>9/1 Staff Progress Update: Community Development Department staff coordinates permit requirements with Public Works on the installation of signs on City-owned facilities/buildings. Existing building signage will need to be evaluated to ensure new sign installation complies with the size, location and materials standards described in the City’s Sign Code. Additionally, the City Attorney will advise on legal framework to support the ability for the Council’s desired signage content.</p>	
<p>10/6 Staff Progress Update: Government-sanctioned displays or messages in support of particular public policies or viewpoints are allowed only limited circumstances without also allowing displays or messages in support of other, possibly opposing viewpoints. To respond to Sections 2.C</p>	



Item:	Assigned to:
<p>and 2.H of Council’s Resolution on Social Equity and Racial Justice in a way that fits within those limited circumstances, staff requests Council input on the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are the displays referenced in Sections 2.C and 2.H envisioned intended to be temporary or permanent? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. If temporary, what timeframe is intended? b. If temporary, are the referenced displays intended to be tied to a one-time event or to a recurring event such as an annual celebration? 2. What steps should the City in take to involve the community, including BIPOC members of the community in the planning for such displays? 3. Could the referenced displays serve their intended purpose while also being an addition to the City’s Public Art Collection (perhaps similar to the Peace Wall in front of the Ashland Public Library)? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Note: The process for making an addition to the Public Art Collection is prescribed in AMC 2.29; it generally includes a request for proposals, a Selection Panel distinct from the Public Arts Commission, and recommendations to the City Council from the Selection Panel and the Public Arts Commission based on artistic merit and the artist’s experience in producing public art. 4. Is establishing the referenced displays feasible with existing staff and funding? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What should be the dollar limit for such an effort, and which budget funds should bear that expense? b. Might a private fundraising effort be feasible? Might a private donation (as occurred with the Guanajuato Mural along the Calle) be feasible? c. Should a project manager be designated to head up the effort? Could such a project manager be a volunteer from the community, as opposed to City staff? 	
<p>Section 2.D. Continue and enhance our support of the annual celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s birthday.</p>	
<p>12/1 Council Progress Update: Councilor Slattery has reported that the organizing group will move the event to Medford in 2021. He has offered the City’s continued support either for the Medford event or for associated/connected Ashland based activities that support the main Medford event.</p>	
<p>Section 2.E. Connect with Southern Oregon University and its students to better understand the experience of all college students, but particularly students of color, in the City of Ashland as a first step toward improving that experience. Through this process, the City will help all local college students understand the City’s ideals and expectations regarding respect for all people.</p>	<p>Adam Hanks, Interim City Administrator Councilor Dennis Slattery</p>
<p>9/1 Staff Progress Update: APD has routinely accepted the SOU Football Coach’s invitation to meet with his student athletes and will continue to do so. Chief O’Meara appears as a criminology guest speaker a few times a year, as requested by the professors.</p> <p>HR will continue collaborative partnerships within the community and region that focus on EDI to help us learn and grow and bring back new ideas to the City for implementation.</p>	



Item:	Assigned to:
City Administrator meets with SOU President monthly through the Ashland Coalition and will engage President Schott on this concept in upcoming meetings and provide additional information as available	
12/1 Council Progress Update: Councilor Slattery has been in contact with SOU regarding their survey for social equity and racial justice. He anticipates having the results shared with him when available and will present them to the Council.	
Section 2.F. Work with community partners to develop training, incident response, and community acknowledgement programs that help residents and business owners address the long-term, systemic root causes of inequality and racial injustice and celebrate progress.	
Section 2.G. Work with Jackson County and neighboring communities to develop a program that will provide trained mental health professionals for instances where the Ashland Police Department is called upon to serve the needs of people who are suffering from mental health issues and/or addiction.	Tighe O'Meara, Police Chief Councilor Tonya Graham
9/1 Staff Progress Update: APD hosted two crisis intervention (CI) workers from Jackson County Mental Health (JCMH) on August 12, 2020. The workers went on patrol with the downtown officers and made several contacts with community members who are chronically in need of mental health assistance. APD is starting to explore a possible relationship with JCMH to make available more robust CI resources. APD is also starting to explore the feasibility of standing up its own 24/7 CI program using vetted and trained local practitioners.	
Section 2.H. Determine the feasibility of a mural project to provide a mode of artistic expression of our community's commitment to making meaningful, visible, and ongoing progress on issues of social equity and racial justice.	Bill Molnar, Community Development Director Councilor Steve Jensen
9/1 Staff Progress Update: Creation and installation of murals, visible from a public right-of-way, are subject to the process and guidelines established by Council Resolution 2016-29 - A RESOLUTION ADOPTING GUIDELINES FOR THE CREATION AND INSTALLATION OF MURALS. The Public Arts Commission (PAC) has established criteria for approval of wall murals, a list of information describing the mural design application and a process for presentation and review, with final approval by the City Council. Staff will schedule this item on a future PAC agenda in order get input on how best to proceed, including the identification and consideration of possible mural locations for Council consideration.	
Section 2.I. Request a proactive review of the policies that pertain to the standard process of investigating incidents where deadly force is used in Jackson County.	Tighe O'Meara, Police Chief Councilor Tonya Graham



Item:	Assigned to:
<p>9/1 Staff Progress Update: The Jackson County Deadly Force was recently revisited by the Jackson County District Attorney’s office and has been approved by all municipalities and accepted by the State. The plan calls for maximum transparency and outside agency involvement to make sure all aspects of a deadly force encounter are scrutinized. There is likely limited ability to impact change on this. If APD officers were involved in a deadly force incident, best practices would mandate that an outside agency handle the investigation. All other agencies in Jackson County have signed on to this plan, as has APD, so even if we reviewed it and wanted change, the other agencies would still adhere to the plan as currently presented.</p>	
<p>Section 2.J. Review recruiting/hiring practices to address implicit bias with input from leaders of local diversity, equity, and inclusion programs.</p>	<p>Tina Gray, Human Resources Director</p>
<p>9/1 Staff Progress Update: Recruitment & Selection – HR is working with the recruitment software vendor to test a new blind application review feature. We also plan to remove other fields in the application that could potentially reveal the socio-economic status of the applicant, i.e., applicant’s address and educational attendance. Each of these items has the potential for unconscious bias by the hiring manager. By removing unnecessary variables in the application process, we can focus on the specific knowledge, skills, and experience as they relate to the minimum job qualifications. We also want to look at ways to change our selection process in ways that minimize bias. Promotional Opportunities – Improve our internal promotional processes to ensure they are competitive and fair by utilizing panelists with specific training about implicit bias and implementing transparent scoring.</p>	
<p>10/6 Staff Progress Update: HR has compiled a draft Diversity Hiring Guide outlining new hiring protocols and training requirements for staff who participate in hiring panels.</p>	
<p>Section 2.K. Renew the effort with Indigenous leaders in the community to find a solution to the renaming of Dead Indian Memorial Road.</p>	<p>Scott Fleury, Interim Public Works Director Adam Hanks, Interim City Administrator Councilor Rich Rosenthal Councilor Steve Jensen</p>

1 **RESOLUTION NO. 2020-15**

2 A RESOLUTION DECLARING THE CITY OF ASHLAND’S COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL
3 EQUITY AND RACIAL JUSTICE

4 **RECITALS:**

5 A. The Ashland City Council recognizes that the United States’ shameful history of slavery and
6 over 150 years of systemic racism post-slavery has created a legacy of unequal opportunities and
7 higher risk of violence for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) in the United States.
8 The mere presence of this reality should be a concern and top priority for all Americans who
9 value the goal of equality for all people; and

10 B. The Ashland City Council recognizes that intrinsic bias is the foundation on which systemic,
11 institutionalized racism is built and that the work to unwrap and disassemble that bias is work
12 that we must do both as individuals and as a community; and

13 C. The Ashland City Council recognizes that, in spite of the values of equality held by the
14 majority of City of Ashland residents, Ashland has not yet reached the point where it is a
15 comfortable place for people of color to live, work, own a business, and raise their children; and

16 D. The Ashland City Council recognizes that local leaders who have been advocating for racial
17 justice and social equity on behalf of their families and communities cannot and should not be
18 asked to shoulder this work alone. There is work to be done by all Ashland residents, including
19 this Council; and

20 E. We find ourselves in a moment in time similar to, but in many ways distinct from, previous
21 incidents of police brutality that have happened in various locations across our country. What we
22 know from the past is that too often outrage tapers off over time, and there is strong momentum
23 to go back to business as usual. We must use this historic moment to commit to doing the
24 sustained work over time necessary to create a different future for Ashland – a future that is more
25 diverse and authentically welcoming to all who live and visit here; and

26 F. The City of Ashland’s commitment to progress on these issues has been visible through the
27 following efforts which are ongoing:

- 28 1. The Ashland Police Department (APD) is committed to engaging all members of the
29 community in an equitable, professional, and compassionate manner. For years the
30 officers of APD have trained in implicit bias, procedural justice, de-escalation and on
other best practices. APD knows, however, that these are not boxes to be checked and

1 never re-visited, but rather that this work is never-ending and that it needs constant
2 attention and updating. To that end APD is dedicated to continuing its work with
3 community members and groups to move forward in collaboration, while strengthening
4 relationships and fostering mutual understanding.

5 2. The City of Ashland has also begun adapting its employment recruitment and hiring
6 processes and recognizes that more needs to be done to eliminate bias in this area.

7 3. Mayor John Stromberg has signed Ashland on to the Obama Foundation’s “Eight
8 Can’t Wait” program, and Ashland Police Chief Tighe O’Meara has completed a review
9 and revision process related to that commitment; and

10 G. While the City of Ashland has made progress, our community, values, and constitutional
11 ideals call us to be more than we have been and to move forward with purpose in order to
12 provide immediate support for advocacy efforts while putting in place the elements necessary for
13 long-term, systemic change.

14 **NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ASHLAND, OREGON,**
15 **RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:**

16 SECTION 1. The Ashland City Council commits to the following:

17 A. Designate Social Equity and Racial Justice as a Value Service in the City of
18 Ashland’s strategic planning process, which will provide an opportunity for focused and
19 sustained attention within the City’s planning, management, and policy structure.

20 B. Proclaim Juneteenth as an annual day of municipal commemoration and partner with
21 communities of color and other local organizations to celebrate African American/Black
22 culture on this day annually.

23 C. Advocate at the state and federal levels for policy reform that includes: a searchable
24 database of officers sanctioned for excessive use of force and other misconduct; a
25 national data collection program to determine the number of people killed or injured by
26 police officers tracked by race, gender, age, and other demographic characteristics;
27 limiting the transfer of military equipment to local jurisdictions; providing more
28 extensive training for police officers regarding de-escalation, intrinsic bias, and
29 procedural justice; and assisting people with mental health or addiction issues who have
30 interactions with law enforcement.

1 D. Work in the near term as a “Committee of the Whole” to move these efforts forward
2 by assigning tasks outlined in this resolution to individual staff and councilors and
3 reporting back to Council on a regular basis while a more formal process and timeline is
4 developed that includes regular progress reports to Council.

5 SECTION 2. Moving forward, the City of Ashland will:

6 A. Support the Ashland Police Department in taking a more active role in on-campus
7 conversations about racial justice at Southern Oregon University and in developing
8 engagement events to help local residents understand APD’s policies regarding use of
9 force and other relevant issues.

10 B. Strengthen our cultural competency and intrinsic bias training program for members
11 of the City Council and City Staff.

12 C. Display Black Lives Matter signs at City-owned locations to offer visible and
13 immediate support for racial justice advocates in our community.

14 D. Continue and enhance our support of the annual celebration of Dr. Martin Luther
15 King, Jr.’s birthday.

16 E. Connect with Southern Oregon University and its students to better understand the
17 experience of all college students, but particularly students of color, in the City of
18 Ashland as a first step toward improving that experience. Through this process, the City
19 will help all local college students understand the City’s ideals and expectations
20 regarding respect for all people.

21 F. Work with community partners to develop training, incident response, and
22 community acknowledgement programs that help residents and business owners address
23 the long-term, systemic root causes of inequality and racial injustice and celebrate
24 progress.

25 G. Work with Jackson County and neighboring communities to develop a program that
26 will provide trained mental health professionals for instances where the Ashland Police
27 Department is called upon to serve the needs of people who are suffering from mental
28 health issues and/or addiction.

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H. Determine the feasibility of a mural project to provide a mode of artistic expression of our community’s commitment to making meaningful, visible, and ongoing progress on issues of social equity and racial justice.

I. Request a proactive review of the policies that pertain to the standard process of investigating incidents where deadly force is used in Jackson County.

J. Review recruiting/hiring practices to address implicit bias with input from leaders of local diversity, equity, and inclusion programs.

K. Renew the effort with Indigenous leaders in the community to find a solution to the renaming of Dead Indian Memorial Road.

SECTION 3. This resolution is effective upon adoption.

ADOPTED by the City Council this _____ day of _____, 2020.

ATTEST:

Melissa Huhtala, City Recorder

SIGNED and APPROVED this _____ day of _____, 2020.

John Stromberg, Mayor

Reviewed as to form:

David H. Lohman, City Attorney