



Office of Mayor Ted Wheeler
City of Portland

February 12, 2020

Dear Community Partners,

Our planet is in crisis. The science on climate change is indisputable and we see the effects of it every day—from devastating extreme weather events happening all around the world to the impacts we feel close to home, like choking wildfire smoke in the summertime.

However, climate change doesn't impact us equally. Our frontline communities, including Black, Indigenous, and people of color, are disproportionately hit first and worst by the impacts of the climate emergency, and the next generation will be facing the consequences of today's decisions.

Around the world, communities and governments are waking up to the reality: the time to act is now. Experts agree that we need to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees to avoid irreversible, devastating impacts. But what does that mean? The sobering fact is this: global carbon emissions must peak in 2020. This year could not be more important. We must make the right decisions now to bend the curve to protect our communities and save our planet.

Portland has a proud and long legacy of working to address climate change for over 25 years. We were the first city in the U.S. to enact a climate action plan, adopted in 1993, and our local carbon emissions are currently 15% below 1990 levels. But that's not nearly enough. 2020 is our year for putting the policies, strategies and actions in place that will aggressively reduce our carbon emissions.

Significant action is in motion. I have directed City of Portland bureaus to make climate change a key priority in their proposed budgets for the upcoming fiscal year (July 2020 – June 2021). I also directed several City bureaus to launch efforts to reduce emissions from City government operations, including: improving the energy efficiency of our buildings, implementing a 'climate test' to ensure major City decisions are integrating climate action, requiring the offset of carbon emissions from City-related air travel, accelerating the electrification of the City's vehicle fleet, and reducing code and permit barriers to Portland Clean Energy Community Benefits Fund projects.

In October 2019, in response to concerns from youth climate activists and other community members, I directed the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability to work with local groups, residents, City bureaus, and partner agencies to gather more feedback on what Portland should include in its Climate Emergency Declaration. Attached you will find the resulting DRAFT resolution that I will be asking my colleagues on City Council to consider on Earth Day (April 22, 2020), and I welcome your input to help us refine it.

I believe this Climate Emergency Declaration is critical because it signals that the City understands the urgency of the issue and how our role must shift toward taking even bolder actions that center

the communities on the frontlines of climate change. I believe that we must take decisive and collective action to address the climate emergency, which is incumbent upon government and business leaders, large institutions and residents as well. For us to be successful, we all must come together as one city to deepen our actions to combat the climate emergency. This DRAFT Climate Emergency Declaration is meant to articulate how the City of Portland will approach the climate emergency, and the community-centered process we will undertake to develop the next set of actions we will tackle.

Please provide your feedback on the DRAFT no later than **5:00 PM on March 16, 2020** in one of the following ways:

- **Submit** your comments, suggested edits and feedback through the [online comment form](#). A summary of public comments will be posted online periodically for review. Check the [Climate Action website](#) for updates.
- **Call** Amanda Watson, Senior Policy Advisor, Office of Mayor Ted Wheeler, 503-823-3579, or Alisa Kane, Climate Action Manager, Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, 503-823-7082 with questions or to **request** a briefing at one of your community meetings (schedule permitting).
- **Attend** an open house at the next [Fix-It Fair at Floyd Light Middle School](#) on Saturday, February 29th from 10 AM to 2 PM where City staff will be on hand to answer questions and gather your feedback (location: 10800 SE Washington St., Portland, OR.) [Fix-it-Fairs](#) are free City of Portland events connecting community with resources to save money and be healthy including exhibits, workshops, health tests, financial consulting, on-site repair, free lunch and childcare, and much more.

I would like to thank all those who have engaged with us on shaping this DRAFT Climate Emergency Declaration, especially many of Portland's youth and frontline communities. Their activism and leadership have been, and will continue to be, essential in helping the City tackle the climate emergency.

Portlanders never shy away from a challenge, and this climate emergency is no different. It's a significant threat to our community and economy and combatting it will require us to challenge the status quo. Through this bold transition in the way we approach climate action, we lay the foundation of a new era of advancement around social justice and equity; innovation and technology; economic development and job creation; and community health; all while cutting costs and saving money. This will not be easy, but it is the right thing to do. The time is now. Our future can't wait.

Sincerely,



Ted Wheeler, Mayor

DRAFT for PUBLIC REVIEW

Submit your comments, suggested edits and feedback through the [online comment form \[https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/80448\]](https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/80448) by **March 16, 2020**.

RESOLUTION No.

Declare that a human-made climate emergency threatens our city, our region, our state, our nation, humanity and the natural world, and that such an emergency calls for an immediate mobilization effort initiating greater action, resources and collaboration to restore a safe climate. (Resolution)

- A. WHEREAS, the City of Portland recognizes that frontline communities in Portland and worldwide, including Black and Indigenous people, communities of color, immigrants, refugees, low-income individuals and workers, people living with disabilities, youth and individuals experiencing homelessness are often the communities least responsible for contributing to climate change, yet are disproportionately affected by its impacts and will continue to bear a disproportionate burden; and
- B. WHEREAS, the people from frontline communities have the least opportunities to change or benefit from the systems that impact them, including the extractive economy. They must be the ones that benefit first from the transition to a renewable energy economy and be able to lead the planning and implementation efforts to address climate change; and
- C. WHEREAS, Native Nations prioritize the balance between a sustainable environment and the well-being of the people, as they have done for this land since time immemorial and will do so in perpetuity to preserve their culture and protect traditional lifeways; and
- D. WHEREAS, the City recognizes the value of the sovereign voice of Native Nations and the importance of working in partnership with tribal leaders to uphold treaty-reserved lifeways, traditional values, and cultural resources that are jeopardized by the increasing threat of the climate emergency; and
- E. WHEREAS, climate justice acknowledges that urban Indigenous, immigrant and refugee families in Portland are connected with communities in their homelands that are experiencing or are highly vulnerable to the catastrophic impacts of climate change, including in many instances the evacuation of homes; and
- F. WHEREAS, youth will inherit the legacy of today's decisions on climate and youth from diverse backgrounds are organizing locally and worldwide to demand climate justice and government action to mitigate the catastrophic impacts of the

climate emergency and to restore a safe climate; and

- G. WHEREAS, humanity's reliance on fossil fuels negatively impacts the health and safety of local communities surrounding the fuel's extraction site, transportation route and storage facilities and those communities are often disproportionately also frontline communities; and
- H. WHEREAS, mitigating the climate emergency equitably requires transitioning from fossil fuels to a clean, renewable energy system that is ecologically sustainable and equitable for all people, especially frontline communities; and
- I. WHEREAS, a transition to a low-carbon future, and building resilience to the impacts of the climate emergency, is an opportunity to redress historical inequities in our community and must be just; and
- J. WHEREAS, historically racist land use policy and discriminatory real estate, planning and infrastructure investment practices means communities of color and low-income Black and Native American populations in Portland may experience significantly higher ambient temperatures, higher utility bills, poorer air quality and greater risk to health than predominantly white or affluent neighborhoods; and
- K. WHEREAS, people living in homes with insufficient or no insulation and inefficient heating and cooling systems will incur higher energy bills, creating additional burdens on frontline communities that can lead to financial instability and displacement; and
- L. WHEREAS, strategies and programs that keep frontline communities – including businesses and cultural institutions – from displacement is a significant climate change mitigation strategy. As displacement of frontline communities occurs, vehicle miles traveled increase as members seek to maintain their community or are forced to lose it altogether. When frontline communities, businesses and cultural institutions can stay, or move, within the neighborhoods of their choice, access to the foundational components of a thriving community increase; and
- M. WHEREAS, carbon emissions reductions in Multnomah County have plateaued at around 15% below 1990 levels, despite 26 years of climate planning and mitigation policies, programs and investments; and
- N. WHEREAS, transportation emissions are increasing – currently eight percent over 1990 levels, and 14% over their lowest levels in 2012 – and Portland has experienced year-over-year increases in transportation emissions for the past five years, with transportation emissions growing faster than population growth over the same period; and
- O. WHEREAS, the Northwest region has warmed substantially – nearly 2°F since 1900 – leading to warmer winters, decreasing snowpacks, hotter summers, and

heavier storms. Extreme years like 2015 will become more common, increasing the risk of both flooding and drought, water scarcity, large wildfires, warmer stream temperatures, harmful algal blooms, life-cycle effects on salmon, and damage to recreational tourism economies; and

- P. WHEREAS, protecting, restoring and managing our urban natural resources to sequester carbon and build resilience to the impacts of climate change provides benefits to human physical and mental health, as well as protects the intrinsic value of natural ecosystems and biodiversity; and
- Q. WHEREAS, the climate emergency is an existential threat to our community and economy and combatting it will require government agencies, businesses and residents to challenge the status quo and take bold steps to meet the Portland's carbon reduction goals and transition to a just and equitable city.

Declaration

1. NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council declares that a human-made climate emergency threatens our city, our region, our state, our nation, humanity and the natural world, and that such an emergency calls for an immediate mobilization effort initiating greater action, resources and collaboration to restore a safe climate; and
2. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Portland asks businesses, non-profits, academia, large institutions, other governments and residents to rise to the challenge of this emergency by making climate commitments of their own and mobilizing their resources, ingenuity and community wisdom to tackle this existential threat and restore a safe climate; and
3. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Portland will seek to support and advance climate justice and climate action initiatives that are led by the community, especially frontline communities and youth from frontline communities; and
4. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability is directed to collaboratively work with other City bureaus, Multnomah County and community-led organizations to establish a new, ongoing governance structure that prioritizes leadership by frontline communities and youth (especially from frontline communities); and
5. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the resulting governance structure will develop and recommend actions that guide the City in its delivery of community benefits that meet the City and County's 2030 carbon reduction goals, starting with actions that must be taken in the next two years; and
6. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the governance structure will incorporate findings from ongoing climate-related initiatives and community-led efforts related to

sustainable consumption, equitable mobility, carbon pathways analysis, resilience, adaptation, net-zero energy buildings and sector-based emissions analyses which will be used to update the 2020 Climate Action Plan and work with the City and County to propose new pathways for equitably meeting the 2030 carbon reduction goals; and

7. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Portland will pursue partnerships with schools and youth-serving organizations to support a youth-led summit on climate in 2020; and
8. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Portland will involve youth in the development of a proposed climate test – such as a carbon fee or an internal price on carbon – to ensure City bureaus are making informed climate-friendly decisions, particularly for major capital investments and high-carbon-impact decisions, such as fuel and vehicle purchases; and
9. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that because increasing housing supply and options in areas already well served by transit, pedestrian and bike transportation investments is a critical climate change mitigation strategy, the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability and the Portland Bureau of Transportation will identify where and how zoning changes and transportation investments to increase compact development can have the greatest impact on carbon reduction and equitable development outcomes overall; and
10. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that because the ability of residents, local businesses and communities to avoid displacement in the face of population growth and economic changes is a critical climate strategy, the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability will complete the City's first Anti-Displacement Action Plan with the goals of decreasing housing and economic vulnerability and increasing community resiliency; and
11. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Anti-Displacement Action Plan will consider climate impacts by connecting climate data with housing and economic vulnerability, green infrastructure, energy cost, and access to affordable low-carbon transportation options; and
12. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Portland will adopt new policies and development standards to further prevent expansion of new fossil fuel infrastructure, reduce fossil fuel consumption and reduce risk to the community and environment; and
13. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Portland is committed to a just and managed decline of fossil-fuel consumption and equitable implementation of solutions that benefit affected workers, frontline communities and Portland residents broadly; and

14. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Portland will prioritize and advance policies and investments to reduce carbon emissions from the building and transportation sectors – the two largest contributors to local carbon emissions – that put us on a path to reach net-zero carbon before 2050; and
15. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that any policy efforts to decarbonize the building sector will follow the lead of frontline communities and will emphasize improved comfort and utility savings for renters and protections for low-income tenants; and
16. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Portland will work with regional partners to develop and implement programs, projects and policies that reduce vehicle miles traveled, increase active transportation mode share, and accelerate the transition to clean, renewable transportation fuels, including electricity and the infrastructure to support electric vehicles, as well as work with TriMet to secure ongoing funding for a free youth transit pass; and
17. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that to inform the 2020 Climate Action Plan update, Portland will analyze decarbonization pathways to address residual emissions, including but not limited to sequestration and negative carbon technologies, to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050; and
18. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Portland adopts a new target of achieving at least a 50% reduction in carbon emissions below 1990 levels by 2030 and net-zero carbon emissions before 2050. This target complements the existing goals of meeting 100% of community-wide energy needs with renewable energy by 2050 and 100% renewable electricity before 2035. This target will be carried forward into the 2020 Climate Action Plan update; and
19. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Portland is calling on investor-owned utilities, Portland General Electric and PacifiCorp, to deliver 100% clean, renewable energy to all Portland residents and businesses no later than 2030, and to prioritize efforts to protect low-income customers; and
20. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability will update City Council on the progress to implement these directives before the end of 2020.