



TO: Mark Lauzier, Acting City Manager
FROM: Diane Powers, Office of Equity and Human Rights Director, City Manager’s Office
COPY: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: Resolution to Create an Immigrant and Refugee Task Force – January 31, 2017
DATE: January 31, 2017

SUMMARY:

Resolution directing the City Manager to convene a roundtable of immigrants and refugees, to which members of those communities or their advocates are invited; and to establish an Immigrant and Refugee Task Force to further the City’s vision as an inclusive and equitable place to live, work and play.

COUNCIL SPONSORS:

Council Members: Campbell, Lonergan and Walker Lee

STRATEGIC POLICY PRIORITY:

This resolution best aligns with the City Council’s priorities to:

- Ensure all Tacoma residents are valued and have access to resources to meet their needs; and,
- Cultivate a vibrant cultural sector that fosters a creative, cohesive community.

BACKGROUND:

Recent census figures for Tacoma report that 13.4 percent of the City’s population is foreign-born and 19 percent speak a language other than English in their homes. Immigrants and refugees in Tacoma are highly represented from every continent, including Latin America, Southeast Asia, Eastern Europe and the Middle East.

On February 17, 2015, the City Council passed Resolution No. 39116, designating Tacoma as a member of the Welcoming Cities and Counties Initiative which encourages communities across the United States to create more welcoming, immigrant friendly environments that maximize opportunities for economic growth and cultural vitality.

Due to strong interest in the initiative among the City’s Latino residents and community partners, City Council passed Resolution No. 39391, supporting a successful series of Latino Town Halls with the goal of improving the understanding of the needs and concerns of the Latino community in Tacoma. Leaders emerged from these meetings to form the Latino Town Hall Task Force which presented the recommendations of the community to Council.

Recent federal executive orders have created fear and unease among immigrants and refugees across the country and in Tacoma. Building off of the recommendations of the town hall task force, we would like to not only reiterate that Tacoma is, and will continue to be, a Welcoming City, but to amplify and support the voice of our cultural and ethnic communities. We want to provide a forum designed to listen to the needs and concerns of our immigrant and refugee population.

At the January 31, 2017 Study Session, Council Member Campbell shared a Council Consideration Request (CCR) requesting that the City Manager’s Office convene a roundtable of immigrants and refugees, to which members of those communities in Tacoma are invited, and from which a task force can be established. We believe that this Task Force will provide an opportunity for those concerned parties to work with the City in ensuring all Tacoma residents feel valued, secure, and supported and that



we continue to live out our vision for Tacoma to be an inclusive and equitable place to live, work and play.

ISSUE:

Recent federal executive orders have created fear and unease among immigrants and refugees across the country and in Tacoma. Building off of the recommendations of the town hall task force, the sponsors of this resolution would like to not only reiterate that Tacoma is, and will continue to be, a Welcoming City, but to amplify and support the voice of our cultural and ethnic communities. We want to provide a forum designed to listen to the needs and concerns of our immigrant and refugee population

ALTERNATIVES:

The City Council can choose to adopt or reject the resolution.

RECOMMENDATION:

We recommend that the City Manager's Office be directed to convene a roundtable of immigrants and refugees, to which members of those communities in Tacoma are invited, and from which a task force can be established.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact related to this City Council action.