

IN CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION 24-5441 FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROCLAIMING EVERY NOVEMBER AS NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH IN THE GREATER PORTLAND AREA

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Date: October 23, 2024  
Department: COO/GAPD  
Meeting Date: November 7, 2024

Prepared by: Katie McDonald  
([katie.mcdonald@oregonmetro.gov](mailto:katie.mcdonald@oregonmetro.gov)) and  
Ashley Schofield  
([ashley.schofield@oregonmetro.gov](mailto:ashley.schofield@oregonmetro.gov))  
Presenters: Katie McDonald  
([katie.mcdonald@oregonmetro.gov](mailto:katie.mcdonald@oregonmetro.gov))  
Length: 40 minutes

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**ISSUE STATEMENT**

This is an opportunity for the Metro Council to honor and celebrate the rich and diverse tribal cultures, traditions and histories as well as acknowledge the important contributions of Tribes and Native people in this region and beyond by adopting Resolution No. 24-5441 recognizing every November as Native American Heritage Month in the greater Portland area.

**ACTION REQUESTED**

Consideration and vote on Resolution No. 24-5441

**IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES**

Advancing the proclamation to observe every November as Native American Heritage Month in the greater Portland area will uphold the Metro Council's commitment to honor and celebrate the many significant contributions and histories of Tribes and Native people throughout our vibrant region. By recognizing Native American Heritage Month every November, Metro can continue to deepen the understanding of the history and cultural significance of the Tribes and Native people of this land.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

Staff recommends the Metro Council adopt Resolution No. 24-5441

**STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION**

- Council adoption of this resolution will further Metro's efforts to build relationships, promote effective communication and coordination, seek opportunities for partnership with sovereign Tribal partners, and implement its programs and activities within the context of honoring and respecting Tribal rights, cultural,

heritage and traditional life ways.

- Council adoption of this resolution will further Metro’s commitment to advancing racial equity, in particular:
  - Metro meaningfully engages communities of color
  - Metro hires, trains and promotes a racially diverse workforce
  - Metro creates safe and welcoming services, programs and destinations
- Known Opposition/Support/Community Feedback
  - None
- Legal Antecedents
  - Metro Council Resolution No. 15-4663; Metro Council Resolution No. 16-4748; Metro Council Resolution No. 17-4851; Metro Resolution No. 18-4936; Metro Resolution 19-4992; Resolution No. 19-5036; Resolution No. 20-5135; Annual US Presidential proclamations since 1992; Multnomah County Resolution No. 2024-088.
- Anticipated Effects
  - Metro shall recognize every November from now on as Native American Heritage Month in the greater Portland area.
- Financial
  - None

## **BACKGROUND**

Metro recognizes the greater Portland area is built upon the ancestral homelands, villages and traditional use areas of the Tribes, bands and Indigenous People of this region who have been caretakers of these lands we cherish since time immemorial.

Native American Heritage Month is a time to celebrate the rich and diverse Tribal cultures, traditions, and histories as well as to acknowledge the important contributions of Tribes and Native people. This is a time to educate the general public about Tribes, to raise a general awareness about the unique challenges Native people have faced both historically and, in the present, and the ways in which they have worked to conquer these challenges.

It is important for us to never forget Oregon’s and the United States’ history of violence, forced migration, thefts of lands and resources, broken treaties, termination, relocation and other assimilative policies. Through these harmful government policies and practices, many Tribes and Native people were forcibly removed from their homelands in our region, across Oregon and the country. Today, as a result, Portland has one of the country’s largest urban Native populations.

Native American Heritage Month originated from an effort in the 1900s to gain a day of recognition for the significant contributions Tribes and Native communities made to not only establish but grow the United States. Such efforts were made by courageous Indigenous People, including, but not limited to, Dr. Arthur C. Parker, Sherman Coolidge, and Red Fox James. In 1990 President George H.W. Bush approved a joint resolution designating November 1990 as “National Native American Heritage Month.” Since 1995, Presidents have issued annual proclamations which designate November as National Native American Heritage Month.

Over recent years, Metro has strategically created staff positions such as the Parks and Nature Indigenous Community Liaison and Tribal Affairs Liaison to work collaboratively to develop and implement policies and practices that create trust, partnership and enhance access and opportunity with sovereign tribal governments and Indigenous community members. Additionally, Indigenous staff members at Metro have been supported to gather as a resource group to bring enriched educational awareness to Metro staff and the public. These efforts reflect and affirm Metro’s commitment to building a community that fosters a deeper understanding and appreciation for the diversity of culture and history of the Tribes and Native people in our region and our commitment to work with Tribal nations to protect their rights, interests and resources in the greater Portland metropolitan area.

The last time a similar resolution was in front of the Metro Council was in November 2020. Declaring every November as Native American Heritage Month in the greater Portland area will honor and acknowledge the histories, cultures and resiliency of Tribes and Native people in this region and beyond. Metro shall continue its efforts to partner with Tribal nations and the greater Portland Native American community to promote prosperity and well-being through implementing our programs and activities within the context of honoring and respecting tribal rights, cultural heritage and the pursuit of traditional life ways for present and future generations.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Resolution No. 24-5441