

BEFORE THE METRO COUNCIL

FOR THE PURPOSE OF DEMONSTRATING)	RESOLUTION NO. 26-5570
METRO’S SUPPORT FOR SHARED)	
PROSPERITY THROUGH A STRONG)	Introduced by Councilors Ashton Simpson,
REGIONAL ECONOMY AND CREATING A)	Christine Lewis, and Juan Carlos Gonzalez
JOB READY LANDS PROGRAM)	in concurrence with Council President Lynn
)	Peterson

WHEREAS, the greater Portland region is experiencing a period of significant economic transition, as evidenced by the 2025–2026 State of the Economy analyses from the Portland Metro Chamber, and related research, which indicate that regional employment has stagnated or declined in recent years even as the national economy has continued to expand; and

WHEREAS, recent data show that Oregon’s unemployment rate rose to approximately 5.1 percent in 2025, its highest level outside of a recessionary period in over a decade, and the greater Portland region has experienced elevated unemployment relative to national averages; and

WHEREAS, population growth has slowed markedly, with natural population growth declining and in-migration dropping, along with shifting demographics, resulting in concerns about long-term labor force availability and economic vitality; and

WHEREAS, the region’s economic competitiveness has declined relative to peer metropolitan areas, including low national rankings in real estate investment attractiveness and lagging gross domestic product (GDP) and job growth compared to national benchmarks; and

WHEREAS, the current economic challenges facing the region negatively impact the quality of life and financial well-being of residents and businesses throughout the greater Portland region; and

WHEREAS, supporting and expanding a diverse and vibrant regional economy helps to build on our region’s strengths and create a place where all people can thrive; and

WHEREAS, Metro’s responsibilities include supporting a thriving, livable region that attracts people and businesses through investments in parks and natural areas, land use planning, transportation, affordable housing, and efficient waste management; and

WHEREAS, Metro supports economic growth, prosperity and opportunity in the region by operating and maintaining venues and facilities such as the Oregon Zoo, the Expo Center, the Convention Center and P5 Venues; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 1 of Metro’s Regional Framework Plan (RFP) provides “a livable region is an economically strong region” and the RFP contains policies that support a strong economic climate through encouraging the development of a diverse and sufficient supply of jobs, especially family wage jobs, in appropriate locations throughout the region; and

WHEREAS, Metro invests in the greater Portland region’s economic ecosystem by providing various grants, including Transit-Oriented Development grants, brownfields assessment grants, 2040

Planning and Development grants, Large-Scale Community Vision grants, Nature in Neighborhood grants, Community Placemaking grants, Regional Refresh funds, and Community Enhancement Grants among others; and

WHEREAS, Metro has convened regional partners to advance workforce equity strategies including Construction Career Pathways, collaboratively invested in workforce development, built partnerships with local communities, labor and industry, and supported job creation efforts across the greater Portland region; and

WHEREAS, in 2016, the Metro Council adopted Resolution No. 16-4708, which created the Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion that includes convening regional partners to advance racial equity, meaningfully engaging communities of color, and advancing economic opportunities for communities of color; and

WHEREAS, in 2025, Metro Council adopted Resolution No. 25-5458, which directed the Metro Planning, Development and Research Department to identify and develop a work program that describes how Metro would lead a collaborative effort to encourage the development readiness of industrial lands currently inside the Urban Growth Boundary, including an updated inventory to ensure adequate, appropriately sized and ready regional employment land for development; and

WHEREAS, the Metro Council understands that sufficient housing options for all residents support a strong economy and directed the creation of a Housing Production Accelerator Fund in Resolution No. 25-5540, to be funded with a one-time investment of five million dollars of construction excise tax revenue to speed housing production and help address the region's housing crisis; and

WHEREAS, the State of Oregon released its Prosperity Roadmap initiative in 2025 outlining statewide strategies for economic development, including reducing barriers to investment and growth to “amplify regional economic development strategies and support local efforts to utilize unique regional resources, talent pools, and market opportunities to build economic strength around the state;” and

WHEREAS, the Industrial Land Readiness Workgroup at the Westside Economic Alliance in a memorandum dated February 11, 2026, identified the need for collaboration between the business community and the public sector, and the need for a cohesive regional economic development strategy; and

WHEREAS, regional economic analyses conclude that the greater Portland region is at a critical inflection point and that future economic performance will depend on coordinated, strategic action across public, private, and institutional partners to restore competitiveness and support job creation; and

WHEREAS, Metro is currently conducting a required 50-year Future Vision update through a collaborative regional process, and should incorporate a vision for a diverse and inclusive economy for all; and

WHEREAS, the current economic crisis calls for new action and greater collaboration to spur opportunities for economic development and growth across the greater Portland region; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the Metro Council directs the Chief Operating Officer to establish a work plan that includes the following actions to support economic growth within the greater Portland region by June 30, 2026:

1. Create and implement a Job Ready Lands program that engages local partners, leaders and organizations that represent a range of sectors including economic development, business, labor, environment, agriculture, housing and workforce development to set the stage for business growth and expansion by developing a vacant land inventory and prioritizing areas for investment in consultation with Council.
2. Continue to collaborate with local partners to create an updated Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) that includes a coordinated regional strategy for targeted industries that supports racial equity, economic mobility, and shared prosperity for all.
3. Integrate a strategic economic development focus into Metro’s ongoing work, including land use and transportation planning work, venues and tourism, and key Metro functions.
4. Prioritize Councilor and staff participation and leadership in regional and state organizations focused on supporting our region’s economy and shared prosperity.
5. Conduct this work in alignment with Metro’s racial equity and climate goals.

ADOPTED by the Metro Council this 10th day of March 2026.

Lynn Peterson, Council President

Approved as to Form:

Carrie MacLaren, Metro Attorney