



Racial, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

Tuesday, September 1, 2026, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)

Held in the Sharon Bushor Conference Room, Ground Floor City Hall

OR

via Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/96324562039>

Meeting ID: 963 2456 2039

Or Use Phone number: 305-224-1968

Meeting ID: 963 2456 2039

1. Call to Order

2. Adopt Agenda & Minutes

Subject

2.1. August 25 2026

Meeting

September 1, 2026 - Special REIB City Council Sub Committee Meeting - Tuesday,
September 1, 2026, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)

Category

2. Adopt Agenda & Minutes

Department

Racial Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging (REIB)

Type

Recommended Action

3. Public Forum

4. Community Health: Alcohol & Substance Use - Learning from Lived Experiences

5. Equity Impact Assessment: Burlington Forward: A Comprehensive Framework For Safe Public Spaces And A Stronger Community

Subject

5.1. Burlington Forward_REVISED

Meeting

September 1, 2026 - Special REIB City Council Sub Committee Meeting - Tuesday, September 1, 2026, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)

Category

5. Equity Impact Assessment: Burlington Forward: A Comprehensive Framework For Safe Public Spaces And A Stronger Community

Department

Racial Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging (REIB)

Type

Subject

5.2. REIB Impact Assessment Memo_Burlington Forward

Meeting

September 1, 2026 - Special REIB City Council Sub Committee Meeting - Tuesday, September 1, 2026, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)

Category

5. Equity Impact Assessment: Burlington Forward: A Comprehensive Framework For Safe Public Spaces And A Stronger Community

Department

Racial Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging (REIB)

Type

6. Adjournment

Subject**6.1. Motion to adjourn**

Meeting September 1, 2026 - Special REIB City Council Sub Committee Meeting - Tuesday, September 1, 2026, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)

Category

6. Adjournment

Department

Council and Board

Type

Recommended Action

7. Informational and Non-Discrimination Statements

Subject

7.1. This agenda is available in alternative formats upon request. For more information on access, call Lori Olberg, Licensing, Voting and Records Coordinator (802-865-7136)(TTY 802-865-7142). Persons with disabilities who require assistance or special arrangements to participate are encouraged to contact 802-865-7000 (voice) or 802-865-7142 (TTY) at least 72 hours in advance so that proper arrangements can be made. This meeting will also air on Town Meeting TV the Wednesday after the meeting, starting at 8:00 pm and repeating at 1:00 am and 7:00 am the following day. The City of Burlington will not tolerate unlawful harassment or discrimination on the basis of political or religious affiliation, race, color, national origin, place of birth, ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, veteran status, disability, HIV positive status, crime victim status or genetic information.

Meeting

September 1, 2026 - Special REIB City Council Sub Committee Meeting - Tuesday, September 1, 2026, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)

Category

7. Informational and Non-Discrimination Statements

Department

Council and Board

Type



Racial, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

Tuesday, August 25, 2026, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)

Held in the Fletcher Meeting Room, Fletcher Free Library

OR

via Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/96324562039>

Meeting ID: 963 2456 2039

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1. Call to Order

2. Approve Agenda & Minutes

Subject	2.1. August 18, 2026
Meeting	August 25, 2026 - REIB City Council Committee Meeting - Tuesday, August 25, 2026, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)
Category	2. Approve Agenda & Minutes
Department	Racial Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging (REIB)
Type	
Recommended Action	

3. Public Forum

4. Equity Impact Assessment: Burlington Forward: A Comprehensive Framework for Safe Public Spaces and a Stronger Community

Subject	4.1. Burlington Forward Resolution
Meeting	August 25, 2026 - REIB City Council Committee Meeting - Tuesday, August 25, 2026, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)
Category	4. Equity Impact Assessment: Burlington Forward: A Comprehensive Framework for Safe Public Spaces and a Stronger Community

Department	Racial Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging (REIB)
Type	
Subject	4.2. Burlington Forward Resolution Feedback
Meeting	August 25, 2026 - REIB City Council Committee Meeting - Tuesday, August 25, 2026, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)
Category	4. Equity Impact Assessment: Burlington Forward: A Comprehensive Framework for Safe Public Spaces and a Stronger Community
Department	Racial Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging (REIB)
Type	
Subject	4.3. Burlington Forward Revised
Meeting	August 25, 2026 - REIB City Council Committee Meeting - Tuesday, August 25, 2026, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)
Category	4. Equity Impact Assessment: Burlington Forward: A Comprehensive Framework for Safe Public Spaces and a Stronger Community
Department	Racial Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging (REIB)
Type	

5. National and Local Landscape: Alcohol & Substance Use

Subject	5.1. Burlington Emergency Medical Services - Report Focused on Alcohol and Substance Use
Meeting	August 25, 2026 - REIB City Council Committee Meeting - Tuesday, August 25, 2026, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)
Category	5. National and Local Landscape: Alcohol & Substance Use
Department	Racial Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging (REIB)
Type	
Subject	5.2. National Trends & Evidence -Based Approaches (Brandon Marshall PhD, Royce Family Professor of Teaching Excellence in Epidemiology and Professor of Epidemiology at Brown University in Rhode Island)
Meeting	August 25, 2026 - REIB City Council Committee Meeting - Tuesday, August 25, 2026, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)
Category	5. National and Local Landscape: Alcohol & Substance Use
Department	Racial Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging (REIB)
Type	
Subject	5.3. Understanding Substance Use and Drug Policy (Kellen Russoniello, JD, MPH, Director of Public Health, Drug Policy Alliance and Drug Policy Action
Meeting	August 25, 2026 - REIB City Council Committee Meeting - Tuesday, August 25, 2026, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)
Category	5. National and Local Landscape: Alcohol & Substance Use
Department	Racial Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging (REIB)
Type	

6. Adjournment

Subject	6.1. Motion to adjourn
Meeting	August 25, 2026 - REIB City Council Committee Meeting - Tuesday, August 25, 2026, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)
Category	6. Adjournment
Department	Council and Board
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Recommended Action	

7. Informational and Non-Discrimination Statements

Subject	7.1. This agenda is available in alternative formats upon request. For more information on access, call Lori Olberg, Licensing, Voting and Records Coordinator (802-865-7136)(TTY 802-865-7142). Persons with disabilities who require assistance or special arrangements to participate are encouraged to contact 802-865-7000 (voice) or 802-865-7142 (TTY) at least 72 hours in advance so that proper arrangements can be made. This meeting will also air on Town Meeting TV the Wednesday after the meeting, starting at 8:00 pm and repeating at 1:00 am and 7:00 am the following day. The City of Burlington will not tolerate unlawful harassment or discrimination on the basis of political or religious affiliation, race, color, national origin, place of birth, ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, veteran status, disability, HIV positive status, crime victim status or genetic information.
Meeting	August 25, 2026 - REIB City Council Committee Meeting - Tuesday, August 25, 2026, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)
Category	7. Informational and Non-Discrimination Statements
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Minutes Taken by Vicky Luciano

Attendees:

Councilor Laura Sanchez-Parkinson (in person)

Councilor Melo Grant (in person)

Councilor Sarah Carpenter (in person)

Christian Berry, Communications and Community Engagement Manager REIB (in person)

Vicky Luciano, Administrative and Financial Coordinator REIB (in person)

Kelli Perkins, Director (online)

Ed Baker (in person)

Chris McGrath (in person)

Bella Fearn (in person)

André Clark (in person)

Ambrose Moore (in person)

Vivian Bose-Pyne (in person)

Mona Tolba (in person)

Sam Donnelly (in person)

Marsha McCombie (in person)

Julia Ginorio (in person)

Bruce Wilson (in person)

Jess Kirby (in person)

Julie Macaga (in person)

Amshula Jayaram (online)

Kellen Russoniello (online)

Kate (online)

Chief Michael Curtin (online)

Tiffanie Katsuva (online)

Maryan Maalin (online)

Brandon Marshall (online)

- **Call To Order**

- Councilor Sanchez-Parkinson called the meeting to order at 5:38 pm.

- **Approve Agenda & Minutes**

- Councilor Sanchez-Parkinson motioned to approve the agenda and meeting minutes as is. Councilor Carpenter seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

- **Public Forum**

- Julia Ginario a Ward 2 resident and a member of the Police Commission, spoke about the Burlington Police Department's 2025 data. She expressed support for the committee's attention to disparate impacts and data collection but cautioned that data collection alone has not necessarily reduced disparities.
 - She reported that Black residents were 4.8 times more likely to be arrested and 4.5 times more likely to experience police violence than white residents.
 - She recommended that all agencies and personnel involved in enforcement collect demographic information and that regular oversight examine potential disparate impacts.
- Sam Donnelly supported the REIB amendments to Burlington Forward and encouraged the committee to continue emphasizing:
 - Matching the response to the type of conduct involved.
 - Using a 24-hour encampment response period for assessment and outreach rather than automatic removal.
 - Assessing the City's capacity and gaps in shelter, treatment, recovery, behavioral health, outreach, and housing.
 - Ensuring that the appropriate responder is addressing each situation.

- Ambrose Moore thanked REIB for its revisions to the resolution, particularly changes addressing potentially dehumanizing language about people experiencing homelessness, relocation of social services, racial profiling, escalation tactics, and training for public response teams.
- Bella Fearn emphasized the importance of effective services being provided as accessibility is key.
- Bruce Wilson, the Vermont Human Rights Commissioner and longtime community advocate, emphasized the importance of including people directly affected by policies in decision-making. He described his work connecting people with services, restorative justice, youth programs, and community resources and argued that residents experiencing homelessness, substance use, and other challenges should be directly involved in developing solutions.
- Vivian Bose-Pyne encouraged the committee to examine whether Burlington Forward's proposed approaches are supported by evidence, whether affected communities have been meaningfully included in its development, and whether affected communities have been meaningfully included in its development, and whether the City's response addresses the underlying causes of the problems identified in the resolution.
- Ed Baker, who discussed his personal recovery experience and professional work in the field, commended the committee for conducting due diligence and cautioned against developing public health and safety policy based on implicit bias.
- Julie Masuga criticized the Burlington Forward resolution for continuing to frame poverty and homelessness as a public safety problem. She raised concerns about past City responses to encampments and police interactions and argued that increased policing, cameras, and enforcement do not address the underlying causes of homelessness and substance use.
- André Clark raised concerns about racist and stigmatizing public comments directed toward Black residents and emphasized the need for more shelter, public health solutions, mutual aid, and support for Burlington's New American community.
- Community members repeatedly emphasized the importance of:
 - Increasing shelter and housing options.
 - Addressing root causes rather than relying primarily on enforcement.
 - Expanding public health responses.
 - Including people with lived experience directly in policy development.
 - Improving communication and coordination among service providers.
- **Equity Impact Assessment: Burlington Forward: A Comprehensive Framework For Safe Public Spaces and a Stronger Community**
 - Councilor Sanchez-Parkinson emphasized that the committee has spent significant time reviewing the resolution and that REIB staff have invested substantial effort in analyzing the document and developing proposed changes.
 - Councilor Sanchez-Parkinson emphasized that the committee should begin shifting toward a more creative, innovative, data-informed, and community-informed conversation about what Burlington should do going forward.
 - Members discussed the importance of recognizing that many community organizations, service providers, mutual aid groups, and residents have been working on these issues for years and should not be treated as new participants in the conversation.
 - Councilor Grant discussed concerns that residents and communities most directly affected by homelessness, substance use, and enforcement have historically been excluded from policy discussions.
 - The committee plans to return its recommendations to City Council on September 14th
- **National and Local Landscape: Alcohol & Substance Use**
 - Burlington Fire Department/EMS Presentation
 - Battalion Chief Marsha McCombie, Chief Curtin, and Fire Engineer Eric Cassavant presented information about Burlington Fire Department EMS data and operations.

- McCombie explained that EMS data comes from multiple reporting systems, which can create discrepancies between datasets. The department is working toward improving its reporting systems and data collection.
- The department reported 741 EMS calls in July 2026.
- McCombie explained that several categories in the EMS data — such as patient refusals, no signs or symptoms, substance use, alcohol use, and other nontraditional emergency calls — represent a significant portion of the department’s workload.
- In July, approximately 45% of calls fell within five categories associated with patients refusing transport/care, substance or alcohol use, no signs or symptoms, or related circumstances.
- McCombie emphasized that these calls still require a response even when the patient ultimately does not require transportation or medical intervention.
- Councilor Grant discussed the potential value of more detailed geographic data including hexagon maps, to show where calls are occurring and how patterns vary across City Council districts.
 - Marsha McCombie noted that Burlington’s Fire Department is handling a significant volume of calls related to complex social and public health needs in addition to traditional emergencies.
- The committee discussed improving data collection around:
 - Substance use and overdose
 - Language access
 - Age
 - Geographic location
 - Repeat calls and individuals
 - Differences between alcohol, substance use, and overdose-related calls
- Marsha McCombie noted that calls initially dispatched as overdoses may ultimately be categorized differently depending on what EMS finds when they arrive.
- The presentation also highlighted the need to distinguish between calls involving actual medical emergencies and situations where people are seeking assistance with other needs.
- The committee discussed opportunities for greater public education about overdose response, naloxone, and when emergency services should be contacted.
- Community Service Provider Discussion
 - Jess Kirby discussed the challenges people face when attempting to access treatment, shelter, and other services. She emphasized that, despite perceptions that Burlington has numerous low-barrier services, significant barriers remain.
 - Examples discussed included:
 - Limited walk-in access to medications for opioid use disorder
 - Strict clinic hours
 - Difficulties accessing inpatient treatment
 - Requirements for documentation and medical records
 - Transportation barriers, including missed Medicaid rides
 - Long waits and complicated referral processes
 - She emphasized that these barriers can leave people feeling defeated and make it more difficult to access treatment.
 - The discussion emphasized the need for:
 - More low-barrier shelter
 - More accessible treatment
 - Greater coordination among service providers
 - Support for harm reduction
 - Improved access to overdose prevention services

- Greater investment in housing and wraparound services
- National Expert Presentations
 - Dr. Brandon Marshall, professor of epidemiology at Brown University School of Public Health, joined the meeting to provide national research and public health context.
 - Kellen Russoniello, DPA, also provided national perspective on substance use, harm reduction, treatment, and public policy.
 - The presenters discussed evidence surrounding overdose prevention, harm reduction, treatment, criminalization, and public health approaches.
 - Kellen emphasized that criminalization has not resolved substance use or overdose and argues for greater investment in:
 - Comprehensive harm reduction
 - Overdose prevention centers
 - Evidence-based treatment, including methadone and buprenorphine.
 - Mobile crisis intervention
 - Affordable and permanent supportive housing
 - Food, healthcare, and economic supports
 - The discussion emphasized the importance of using evidence-based approaches rather than relying primarily on punitive responses.
- **Adjournment**
 - Councilor Sanchez-Parkinson adjourned the meeting at 7:53 pm.

Resolution Related to

BURLINGTON FORWARD: A COMPREHENSIVE FRAMEWORK FOR SAFE PUBLIC SPACES AND A STRONGER COMMUNITY

WHEREAS, Burlington's downtown, parks, sidewalks, streets, libraries, waterfront, bike paths, and other public spaces are among the City's greatest civic assets. They are the places where neighbors gather, children play, businesses and tourism thrives, visitors form lasting impressions, and community life unfolds every day. Preserving these shared public spaces as safe, welcoming, orderly, accessible, and well-maintained for everyone is among the City's most fundamental responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, the City recognizes that equitable access to public spaces requires attention to the differing experiences, needs, and barriers faced by community members and visitors, including people with disabilities, people experiencing homelessness, children and youth, older adults, New Americans, and historically marginalized racial and ethnic communities; and

WHEREAS, over the past several years, the Burlington City Council has adopted multiple resolutions and initiatives intended to strengthen public safety, improve community well-being, expand access to housing and behavioral health services, and respond compassionately to the challenges of homelessness, substance use, and mental illness; and

WHEREAS, the City of Burlington, together with healthcare providers, nonprofit organizations, businesses, faith communities, neighborhood organizations, educational institutions, and countless volunteers, has committed substantial public and private resources toward emergency shelter, affordable housing, outreach, behavioral health services, recovery programs, harm reduction initiatives, and other efforts intended to assist vulnerable members of our community; and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding these efforts and the extraordinary commitment of those serving our community, persistent public safety concerns, including violence, drug and sex trafficking, property crime, retail theft, and other unlawful conduct, continue to affect many individuals, including those experiencing homelessness, addiction~~substance use disorder~~, and mental illness, ~~continue to be negatively affected by persistent public disorder, criminal activity, violence, repeated overdoses, open drug dealing and use, prohibited camping, vandalism, aggressive or threatening behavior, and other conduct that and unreasonably interfere~~ unreasonably interferes with the use and enjoyment of Burlington's shared public spaces; and

WHEREAS, Burlington is and will remain a compassionate community where residents consistently demonstrate kindness and generosity toward neighbors experiencing homelessness, addiction, mental illness, and other crises. This Resolution builds upon those values; and

WHEREAS, the City Council also finds that allowing individuals to remain in circumstances that jeopardize their health, safety, or dignity without meaningful intervention is neither compassionate nor humane. Lasting compassion requires connecting people to treatment, recovery, housing, supportive services, and, where appropriate, enforcement and accountability for unlawful conduct that harms others or unreasonably interferes with the public's use and enjoyment of shared public spaces; and

WHEREAS, the City Council rejects the false choice between compassion and public safety and affirms that accountability, treatment, housing, recovery, public health, public safety, and public order are complementary, interdependent responsibilities that must be pursued together to advance the public interest and the dignity of every person; and

WHEREAS, the City further recognizes that Burlington cannot reasonably or sustainably serve as the exclusive or primary provider of shelter, behavioral health services, and substance use treatment for individuals from throughout Vermont and outside our state, and that these challenges require sustained partnership among municipalities, the State of Vermont, healthcare institutions, nonprofit organizations, and regional service providers to ensure that responsibility is shared equitably throughout the region; and

WHEREAS, the City recognizes that systemic inequities—including racism, poverty, ableism, discrimination, and unequal access to housing, healthcare, behavioral health services, and economic opportunity—have contributed to the conditions addressed in this Resolution, and that effective public policy should include a focus on reducing disparities while improving safety and well-being for all residents; and

WHEREAS, the City recognizes that children and vulnerable adults who regularly witness open-air drug use, drug transactions, and unmanaged mental health crises in public spaces may experience significant psychological, developmental, and safety harms, including normalization of substance use, exposure to trauma, disruption of a sense of safety and stability, and increased risk of accidental contact with drug paraphernalia or hazardous materials; and

WHEREAS, sustained exposure to visible drug dealing and open-air drug markets in areas frequented by families, including parks, schools, playgrounds, and public transit corridors, can contribute to children's fear, anxiety, and diminished use of public spaces intended for their recreation and education; and

WHEREAS, the presence of individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness or acute mental health crisis in public spaces reflects broader gaps in the City's housing, behavioral health, and crisis response systems, and the City recognizes that effective, compassionate, and adequately resourced responses to these conditions are essential both to protecting the dignity and safety of the individuals experiencing them and to reducing the secondary impacts on public spaces used by children and families; and

WHEREAS, in implementing this Resolution, the City shall ensure its Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging is involved in identifying and addressing disparate impacts on historically marginalized and underserved communities; protecting the dignity and civil rights of all people; and ensuring reasonable opportunities for affected communities to participate in decisions that impact them. The City shall seek to ensure that public safety, public health, housing, behavioral health, enforcement, and policies governing our public spaces are implemented consistently and in ways that do not disproportionately burden any racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, disability, or other historically marginalized community; and

WHEREAS, restoring and preserving Burlington's public spaces requires clearly articulated values, public policy, measurable implementation, meaningful accountability, prioritized enforcement of our existing laws and ordinances, sustained regional partnership, and a continuing commitment by every level of government and every community partner.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Burlington City Council hereby adopts the following policy framework to restore and preserve safe, welcoming, ~~orderly,~~ and accessible public spaces; expand meaningful pathways to housing, treatment, and recovery; strengthen accountability for unlawful conduct ~~and conduct that unreasonably interferes with the use and enjoyment of our shared public spaces;~~ and promote shared regional responsibility for and investment in addressing the complex challenges of homelessness, substance use disorder, and behavioral health challenges.

ARTICLE I

General Policy

Section 1.01. Purpose.

The purpose of this Resolution is to establish a comprehensive policy framework for restoring and preserving Burlington's public spaces as safe, welcoming, ~~orderly,~~ accessible, and well-maintained places for all residents and visitors, while continuing Burlington's longstanding commitment to compassion, dignity, and meaningful support for individuals experiencing

homelessness, substance use disorder, behavioral health challenges, and other circumstances requiring public assistance. To achieve these objectives, Burlington must realign its ~~values and related efforts~~ using evidence, community input, and measurable outcomes to assess existing approaches and develop revised strategies that advance safety, dignity, inclusion, belonging, and equitable access to services. An honest assessment indicates that neither the current nor previous policy frameworks have achieved their intended results, making ~~a revised strategy~~ iesy necessary moving forward.

Section 1.02. General Policy.

It shall be the policy of the City Council that:

A. Burlington's public spaces belong to everyone. Every resident and visitor should be able to use and enjoy the City's parks, streets, sidewalks, libraries, waterfront, bike paths, public buildings, downtown, neighborhood business districts, and other public spaces safely ~~and without unreasonable interference or exposure to unlawful activity and disruptive behavior~~.

B. ~~Compassion without accountability is not compassion.~~ The City Council rejects the notion that ~~public safety requires choosing between compassion and accountability~~ tolerance of unlawful conduct is itself an act of compassion. No individual has the right to engage in unlawful conduct or conduct that unreasonably interferes with the use and enjoyment of shared public spaces. Effective public policy requires both meaningful opportunities for prevention, outreach, treatment, recovery, housing, and supportive services ~~and while consistent enforcement of criminal laws and municipal ordinances~~ consistently, fairly, and in accordance with due process. Enforcement shall focus on unlawful conduct and actual harm, not on a person's housing status, disability, health condition, or other protected characteristic, that protect the public's health, safety, and welfare. The City shall pursue both ~~objectives~~ compassion and accountability simultaneously to ensure that Burlington's public spaces remain safe, welcoming, and accessible to all.

C. Individuals experiencing homelessness, substance use disorder, or behavioral health challenges deserve meaningful opportunities to obtain shelter, treatment, recovery services, and long-term stability. Burlington shall continue advocating for coordinated regional and statewide responses to homelessness, behavioral health challenges, and substance use disorder, recognizing that these challenges extend beyond Burlington's borders and require sustained partnership among municipalities, the State of Vermont, healthcare providers, nonprofit organizations, and other community partners.

D. Decisions affecting public spaces, public health services, municipal resources, and zoning policy shall be guided by objective evidence, public transparency, measurable outcomes, and

accountability to the public. Public accountability requires admitting when systems and policies have fallen short, and when existing ~~social~~ services lack the capacity to deliver the interventions needed for consistent improved outcomes.

ARTICLE II

Protecting Burlington's Public Spaces

Section 2.01. Statement of Intent.

The purpose of this Article is to restore and preserve Burlington and its public spaces as safe, welcoming, orderly, accessible, and well-maintained places that may be comfortably enjoyed by residents and visitors of all ages while respecting the dignity of every person and ensuring that public spaces remain available for their intended public use.

Section 2.02. Public Space Policy.

The City shall prioritize the restoration and preservation of Burlington's public spaces for the benefit of all residents and visitors. Public spaces shall be managed to encourage lawful activity, positive community use, economic vitality, recreation, civic engagement, and public enjoyment.

Public spaces should not merely be accessible; they should be places where residents and visitors choose to gather and should reasonably expect to feel safe doing so.

The City shall make it a top priority to ensure public spaces remain reasonably free from unlawful conduct and conduct that unreasonably interferes with the public's use and enjoyment of those spaces, and that such spaces are well maintained, clean, and reasonably free of graffiti, litter, unattended personal belongings, and other conditions that detract from their safety, accessibility, and public enjoyment. Implementation shall include reasonable procedures to protect and store unattended personal belongings.

Section 2.03. Activation of Public Spaces.

The City finds that well-programmed, well-maintained, and actively used public spaces are among the most effective long-term strategies for promoting public safety, strengthening community life, and discouraging unlawful and disruptive activity.

The City shall expand the activation of Burlington's public spaces through community programming, arts and cultural events, recreational opportunities, family-oriented activities, and partnerships that increase positive public use of parks, downtown, neighborhood business

districts, and other civic spaces. Consistent with the FY27 budget resolution, the City Council requests that the Administration continue coordinating with the City Council's Parks, Arts & Culture Committee to develop and implement these efforts.

Section 2.04. City Hall Park and Organized Activities.

The City Council reaffirms its prior policies regarding the restoration and stewardship of City Hall Park as outlined in the Council's August 2025 resolution concerning the management, activation, and preservation of the Park. The City Council declares again that City Hall Park shall remain one of Burlington's principal civic gathering spaces—welcoming, accessible, well-maintained, and available for the broad enjoyment of residents and visitors.

Within thirty (30) days following adoption of this Resolution, the City Council asks that the City Attorney's Office prepare and submit to the Council any ordinance amendments necessary to clarify where organized activities may occur within City-owned public spaces, establish when permits are required for such activities, and ensure that such activities do not materially interfere with the intended public use of City Hall Park or other public spaces.

The City Council requests that the Administration renew stalled efforts, in accordance with applicable law and constitutional protections, to assist with navigating how to better coordinate social service activities in City Hall Park with other events, programming, and public uses of the Park. ~~secure any available and necessary permits for, or if permits are unavailable, offer alternative locations to unpermitted social service activities where participants could be better served while preserving the Park's role as Burlington's principal civic gathering space.~~ If necessary to identify alternative locations, the City Council asks that the Administration evaluate appropriate indoor and outdoor municipal facilities, including Contois Auditorium where practicable and consistent with operational needs. Any relocation or alternative site for social service activities shall be developed in consultation with affected service users and providers, and reasonable efforts should be made to offer comparable or improved access, accessibility, safety, and continuity of services.

Within sixty (60) days following adoption of this Resolution, the City Council requests that the Department of Parks, Recreation & Waterfront issue a request for proposals seeking one or more vendors, nonprofit organizations, or other qualified operators to activate the patio area located in the northeast corner of City Hall Park through food and beverage concessions, retail kiosks, recreational uses, cultural programming, public amenities, or other uses that increase positive public activity and enhance the visitor experience. Any request for proposals shall encourage creative, seasonal, and year-round activation strategies that promote regular public use of the space and are consistent with City Hall Park's role as Burlington's principal civic

gathering space. Alternatively, the Administration may evaluate repurposing the patio area as a centralized operational hub for public safety personnel, in alignment with similar proven strategies like those implemented at the Fletcher Free Library and the intent of the City Council's September 2024 resolution on establishing a downtown public safety hub, to provide a visible, accessible, and continuous public safety presence within City Hall Park alongside connections to community resources and services.

Section 2.05. Expansion of Public Safety Personnel and Public Space Response Capacity.

The City's sworn police officers, Community Service Officers, Urban Park Rangers, and other civilian public safety personnel continue to perform their duties with exceptional dedication and professionalism in protecting and preserving our public spaces. A number of these roles, particularly sworn police officers, unfortunately continue to face significant challenges to staffing, with available police officers consistently remaining at or below current levels since 2023. As the City continues with long-term efforts to rebuild its public safety infrastructure, there is an immediate need to strengthen the City's visible presence within its public spaces. Accordingly, the City Council requests that the Administration act within sixty (60) days following enactment of the Resolution to present recommendations to the Council on which public safety roles can be most immediately and substantially increased, if even on a temporary basis, to ensure more personnel are assigned to visible public safety and public space response functions. Moreover, the City Council asks that the Chief of Police continue to regularly update the Council's Public Safety Committee on recruitment efforts at the Burlington Police Department.

Immediately following enactment of this Resolution and prior to delivering the above-requested recommendations, the City Council requests that the Mayor take the steps necessary to expand the visible presence of public safety personnel in areas experiencing persistent public safety and public order concerns, which the Mayor's Administration has previously attempted to address through its working group on "hot spots," where ongoing conditions threaten public safety, diminish the public's use and enjoyment of these spaces, and risk undermining the success of generational projects like that at Burlington Square. For this purpose, the Mayor may use, as necessary, the monies allocated by the City Council in the FY27 budget to contract with third-party public safety personnel, including certified police officers. Additionally, to the extent permitted by existing agreements with contracted public safety personnel, such as those currently assigned to patrol municipal garages, the Mayor is authorized to repurpose these personnel to higher priority areas.

Moreover, to the extent practicable and permitted by applicable collective bargaining agreements, the City Council requests that the Administration recruit and organize one or more Public Space Response Teams comprised of City employees and employees of other local organizations committed to the vitality of Burlington who voluntarily elect to participate and successfully complete appropriate training. Public Space Response Teams shall supplement, but not replace, traditional public safety resources by increasing the City's visible presence within public spaces, promoting lawful and welcoming public use, and assisting in the preservation of City property. If the City's unionized staff are interested in this volunteer opportunity, the Council acknowledges the potential need to submit proposals to municipal unions as necessary to accommodate this. While participation would be voluntary rather than mandated, it is the intent of this Resolution that City employees participate on paid time. All public safety personnel and Public Space Response Teams shall receive training in racial equity, implicit bias, de-escalation, disability awareness, trauma-informed practices, cultural responsiveness, and constitutional and civil rights protections.

To the fullest extent permitted by law and consistent with appropriate training and supervision, members of Public Space Response Teams may be authorized to:

- A. Address and intercede conduct that unreasonably interferes with the public's use and enjoyment of Burlington's public spaces, including, but not limited to, the open use of drugs and alcohol, public intoxication, smoking where prohibited, disorderly behavior, and the encumbrance of sidewalks and walking paths;
- B. Issue municipal ordinance citations within the scope of their legal authority;
- C. Issue notices against trespass and take other lawful actions necessary to protect City property and public spaces;
- D. Promote cleanliness and sanitation, identify maintenance concerns, and coordinate the prompt removal of graffiti and other public nuisances; and
- E. Connect individuals experiencing crisis, homelessness, substance use disorder, or other behavioral health needs with appropriate treatment, recovery, housing, and supportive services.

The City Attorney and Chief Administrative Officer shall prepare and submit for Council consideration any ordinance amendments, budget proposals, administrative policies, or other measures necessary to implement this Section.

Section 2.06. Public Safety Cameras and Public Notification.

The City Council finds that visible public safety cameras, when lawfully deployed and appropriately identified, deter unlawful conduct, assist in criminal investigations, and promote public confidence in the safety of Burlington's public spaces.

Within thirty (30) days following adoption of this Resolution, the City Council asks that the Chief Information Officer prepare and submit to the Council a report identifying all City-owned or City-operated public safety cameras currently operating within Burlington's downtown and other public spaces. The report shall identify each camera's general location, operational status, and any significant gaps in camera coverage requiring future consideration, provided that nothing in this Section shall require disclosure of information that would compromise public safety or law enforcement operations and the report will be provided confidentially to the extent permitted by Vermont's Open Meeting Law. Moreover, in carrying out this Section and any future expansion of public safety camera systems, the City shall remain mindful of the importance of protecting individual privacy and civil liberties and shall ensure that the deployment, operation, and management of such systems are conducted in accordance with applicable law and appropriate safeguards governing the collection, retention, access to, and use of recorded data, including but not limited to the City's Fair and Impartial Policing Policy.

The City Council requests that the Administration install and maintain clear, visible signage at appropriate locations notifying the public that public safety cameras are in operation. ~~Such signage shall be designed to deter unlawful conduct while promoting public awareness that public spaces are actively monitored for the protection of residents, visitors, businesses, and City property.~~

Section 2.07. Public Space Stewardship and Graffiti Removal.

Recognizing that clean, well-maintained public spaces contribute to public safety, civic pride, and neighborhood vitality, the City Council requests that the Mayor coordinate with the Council's Community Development & Neighbor Revitalization Committee to establish a public space stewardship program to encourage and support volunteer participation in the prompt removal of graffiti from public spaces and other beautification initiatives consistent with the purposes of this Resolution. In establishing this public space stewardship program, the Administration and CDNR Committee may collaborate with organizations and individuals already volunteering to perform the expanded work called for in this Section. The Council also encourages the Administration and CDNR Committee to work in partnership with Neighborhood Planning Assemblies (NPAs) and neighborhood residents in deciding beautification priorities, especially communities that have historically been underinvested in.

Any program shall provide participating residents with appropriate training, safety guidance, equipment, supplies, and other resources necessary to assist the City in removing graffiti from publicly owned property in a safe, lawful, and coordinated manner.

The City Council reaffirms that the prompt removal of graffiti from privately owned property remains the primary responsibility of the property owner. Any public space stewardship program should also provide a mechanism through which private property owners may authorize trained City employees or approved volunteers participating in the program to enter their property for the purpose of removing graffiti, subject to such reasonable conditions and limitations as the property owner may establish.

Section 2.08. Expanded Partnerships with Nonprofit Organizations and Private Property Owners.

The City Council recognizes that restoring Burlington's public spaces requires meaningful collaboration with businesses, nonprofit organizations, faith communities, and other private property owners whose properties directly influence the experience of surrounding neighborhoods.

Accordingly, the City Council asks the Mayor to develop and make publicly available for private property owners educational materials on:

- A.** Procedures for issuing notices against trespass as authorized by law;
- B.** Crime prevention and environmental design strategies;
- C.** Details on the extent to which private property owners can be held criminally or civilly liable for unlawful or other wrongful conduct permitted to continue on their premises;
- D.** Other available tools to assist property owners in responding to unlawful activity while promoting safe, welcoming, and well-maintained properties.

The City Council further asks the Mayor to engage with nonprofit organizations that provide services to individuals experiencing homelessness, substance use disorder, mental health challenges, or other vulnerabilities, and to relay the City's request that such organizations adopt reasonable expectations for respectful and lawful behavior on the organization's property and within adjacent public rights-of-way and public spaces immediately surrounding the organization's facilities, including expectations designed to discourage conduct that creates public safety risks, interferes with the use and enjoyment of neighboring properties and public spaces, or otherwise adversely affects the surrounding community. The City encourages nonprofit organizations to communicate these expectations in a manner that preserves the

dignity of those receiving services while reinforcing shared responsibility for maintaining safe, welcoming, and accessible neighborhoods.

Section 2.09. Public Space Performance Standards.

Within sixty (60) days following adoption of this Resolution, the City Council requests that the Mayor collaborate with the City Council's Public Safety and Parks, Arts & Culture Committees to adopt measurable performance standards for evaluating the condition of Burlington's public spaces, which shall be publicly posted on the City's Data Hub.

The standards shall include objective performance measures relating to, as appropriate:

- A.** Public safety conditions, including but not limited to the number of incidents, offenses, and arrests in public spaces. Where possible and legally permissible, performance data should be disaggregated by race, ethnicity, age, disability, gender, housing status, and other relevant demographic factors to identify and address disparate impacts;
- B.** Quality-of-life complaints, including but not limited to SeeClickFix reports on cleanliness and sanitation, and graffiti response;
- C.** Public space activation and programming;
- D.** Visitor and resident use of public spaces; and
- E.** Such additional performance measures as the Administration determines appropriate to enable the City Council and the public to evaluate progress over time.

ARTICLE III

Sustainable Intervention and Regional Responsibility

Section 3.01. Statement of Intent.

The purpose of this Article is to establish a sustainable framework for responding to homelessness, substance use disorder, and behavioral health challenges. The City Council reaffirms Burlington's longstanding commitment to ensuring that individuals experiencing crisis are afforded meaningful opportunities to obtain shelter, treatment, recovery services, and permanent housing while recognizing that emergency interventions must ultimately lead to greater long-term stability, independence autonomy, and well-being, and improved health outcomes.

The City Council further recognizes that compassion requires meaningful intervention, measurable results, and shared regional responsibility. Emergency measures are intended to stabilize individuals and connect them to long-term solutions and should not become permanent substitutes for housing, treatment, recovery, or personal stability. The Council acknowledges that meaningful long-term strategies require time and resources to be implemented, and that they should be trauma-informed, culturally responsive, accessible to people with disabilities, and implemented consistently and fairly.

Section 3.02. Establishing Service Capacity.

Within sixty (60) days following adoption of this Resolution, the City Council requests that the Mayor convene representatives of organizations providing emergency shelter, affordable housing, behavioral health services, substance use treatment, healthcare, emergency response, outreach, and other appropriate public and private partners to evaluate Burlington's sustainable capacity to responsibly provide emergency shelter, sanctioned camping, outreach, treatment, recovery services, and related supports. To the extent the City is already convening a group that includes the above-referenced stakeholders, the Administration may expand the scope of that group's work to include developing the assessment called for in this Section.

The assessment shall evaluate available staffing, financial resources, healthcare capacity, emergency response capability, housing availability, case management, sanitation, public safety impacts, fiscal sustainability, and such other operational considerations as may be appropriate.

Based upon that assessment, the City Council requests that the Mayor recommend the maximum number of individuals that Burlington can sustainably and humanely serve at any given time through the coordinated provision of emergency shelter, sanctioned camping, outreach, treatment, recovery services, and related supports. The term "humanely," for the purposes of this Section, shall include but not be limited to consideration of the lived experiences of people accessing services and whether services are accessible, culturally responsive, disability-inclusive, trauma-informed, and effective. The recommendation shall identify the methodology and assumptions used to establish that number and shall include objective indicators by which the City may determine when Burlington has reached or exceeded its sustainable service capacity.

The Mayor may periodically review the recommended sustainable service capacity and recommend revisions to the City Council as conditions, available resources, or regional participation materially change.

Section 3.03. Regional Responsibility.

The City Council affirms that homelessness, substance use disorder, and behavioral health challenges are regional and statewide challenges requiring regional and statewide solutions.

The City Council further finds that current conditions strongly indicate that Burlington is providing services beyond what can be sustainably supported by its existing housing, shelter, behavioral health, public safety, and municipal resources. While the assessment required by Section 3.02 will establish a recommended sustainable service capacity, the City Council finds that immediate action to promote greater regional responsibility should not await completion of that assessment.

Burlington will continue to lead with compassion. Leadership, however, does not require Burlington to serve as the exclusive or primary provider of services for individuals from throughout Vermont.

The City Council requests that the Administration implement equitable policies and procedures to ensure that, when Burlington has reached or exceeded its sustainable service capacity, individuals seeking services are connected with available housing, shelter, treatment, recovery, behavioral health, and other supportive services in other communities, including through transportation assistance where appropriate. The City shall actively work with the State of Vermont, neighboring municipalities, healthcare providers, housing organizations, and regional service providers to expand service capacity throughout the region so that responsibility for serving vulnerable individuals is shared more equitably. Regional responsibility shall be pursued through shared investment and expanded service capacity across municipalities, rather than through exclusion or displacement of individuals based on their place of origin or current residence.

Section 3.04. Expanded Temporary Emergency Shelter Space and Sanctioned Camping.

Within ninety (90) days following adoption of this Resolution, the City Council requests that the Administration designate one or more locations for expanded temporary emergency shelter space or sanctioned camping to be utilized only when necessary to supplement available capacity at established emergency shelters.

Any expanded temporary emergency shelter space or sanctioned camping location shall be subject to approval by the City Council ~~and generally situated outside Burlington's downtown core, waterfront, shared use path network, and heavily utilized public parks~~ and shall be selected with due consideration for surrounding neighborhoods, public infrastructure, environmental impacts, and the availability of supportive services. To best serve individuals able to utilize this location or locations, efforts will be made to designate locations with access to drinking water, toilets, shower facilities and handwashing stations, laundry, electricity, and

dumpsters. To that end, the City Council acknowledges that while temporary emergency shelter space is preferable to sanctioned camping, neither should be considered a permanent housing solution and should be utilized only for the duration necessary to transition individuals to more appropriate ~~placements~~housing options.

Prior to approving any designated locations under this Section, the City Council will expect that the location will adopt and enforce operational standards governing admission, sanitation, security, storage of belongings, code of conduct, outreach, behavioral health services, treatment referrals, housing navigation, transportation, case management, and ongoing program evaluation.

The City Council asks that the Administration establish measurable performance standards for any expanded temporary emergency shelter space or sanctioned camping and shall publish the resulting performance data in an anonymized, publicly accessible format on the City's website no less frequently than monthly. At a minimum, the publicly reported data shall include:

- A. The number of individuals served during the reporting period and cumulatively;
- B. The average daily occupancy and utilization rate;
- C. The number and percentage of participants successfully transitioned to emergency shelter, treatment, recovery programs, permanent supportive housing, permanent housing, or other stable housing placements;
- D. The average length of stay for participants;
- E. The number of emergency service responses to a location; and
- F. Such additional performance measures as the Administration determines are appropriate to evaluate whether a location is functioning as a temporary intervention that promotes health, safety, and successful transitions to more appropriate placements.

Section 3.05. Unauthorized Encampments.

The City Council finds that unauthorized encampments located in areas where camping is specifically prohibited are inconsistent with the policies established by this Resolution.

Consistent with applicable legal requirements and in accordance with the City's Sheltering on Public Lands Policy, the City Council requests that the Administration act more promptly upon discovery of a prohibited encampment, generally within twenty-four (24) hours, to provide notice of a specified date on which the encampment will face ticketing, no trespass orders,

~~other legal action,~~ and removal of any remaining items. This date should be as soon as reasonably practicable following the provision of notice, allowing sufficient time for affected individuals to make alternative arrangements while protecting public health, public safety, environmental resources, and the public's continued use and enjoyment of Burlington's public spaces.

Prior to removal, the City shall make reasonable efforts to identify and offer accessible alternatives, provide adequate notice consistent with applicable law, protect and store personal property, and connect individuals with housing and services. In accordance with the City's policy regarding Ssheltering on Ppublic Llands Policy, encampments noticed for removal will be provided contact information from local social service organizations serving unsheltered residents, the State of Vermont's Coordinated Entry Screening Form with instructions, information on other available community resources, information on the officials responsible for an encampment that is not removed, and details on where any collected personal property will be stored.

For the purposes of this Article, the City Council notes that Section 22-7 of the Burlington Code of Ordinances provides that "[i]t shall be unlawful for any person to camp in any public park in the city." Section 22-1 enumerates the City's parks and Section 22-23 further provides that "the land known as Urban Reserve ... shall be considered a city park subject to this chapter."

To the extent the City does not have sufficient staffing capacity to comply with this Section, the City Council asks that the Mayor's Administration act within sixty (60) days following enactment of this Resolution to present recommendations to the Council detailing how it will promptly increase the number of personnel authorized and trained to provide notices of removal and conduct associated outreach. The recommendations shall identify the staffing, organizational changes, funding, and implementation timeline necessary to ensure that notices of removal are issued consistently throughout the City.

~~The City Council requests that the Administration establish measurable performance standards governing the City's response to prohibited encampments and shall publish the resulting performance data in a publicly accessible format on the City's website no less frequently than monthly. At a minimum, the publicly reported data shall include:~~

~~A. The number of prohibited encampments identified during the reporting period;~~

~~B. The average time between identification of a prohibited encampment and issuance of a notice of removal;~~

~~C. The average time between issuance of notice and removal of the encampment;~~

~~D. The number and percentage of individuals contacted who accepted referrals or were successfully connected to shelter, a sanctioned camping location, coordinated entry, behavioral health services, treatment, recovery services, or other supportive services prior to or following removal of the encampment; and~~

~~E. Such additional performance measures as the Administration determines are appropriate to evaluate the effectiveness of the City's outreach and enforcement efforts.~~

Section 3.06. Accountability and Enforcement.

The City Council reaffirms that every individual is entitled to dignity, due process, and meaningful opportunities to obtain treatment, recovery services, shelter, and supportive services. The City further reaffirms its commitment to prevention, treatment, recovery, and other evidence-based public health interventions.

The City Council rejects the notion that enforcing our laws and ordinances in response to unlawful conduct is an uncaring or unempathetic act, or that tolerance of unlawful conduct is itself an act of compassion. Effective public policy requires meaningful opportunities for treatment and recovery together with consistent enforcement of criminal laws that protect the public and preserve Burlington's shared public spaces.

Accordingly, the City Council declares that Burlington will not tolerate drug trafficking, violent crime, or illegal activity that impacts ~~the unlawful open use of controlled substances, retail theft and other property crimes that frequently support substance use disorder, or other criminal conduct that threatens~~ public safety or ~~unreasonably interferes with~~ the public's use and enjoyment of shared public spaces.

The City Council further declares that enforcement of local and state~~these~~ laws shall remain a priority of the City. The Council supports proactive investigation, lawful detention where appropriate, arrest when supported by the facts and authorized by law, and referral for prosecution of individuals engaged in such criminal activity. Nothing in this Resolution shall be construed to discourage law enforcement officers from taking appropriate enforcement action authorized by law in response to these offenses.

The City shall continue pursuing treatment and recovery for those willing to accept assistance while supporting the investigation, arrest where authorized by law, prosecution, and appropriate proportionate and lawful consequences~~punishment for~~ individuals whose criminal conduct perpetuates addiction, victimizes residents and businesses, or undermines the safety and vitality of Burlington's public spaces, including treatment, diversion, restorative

justice, or other alternatives where appropriate. Refusal or failure to participate in options offered shall not result in the City ceasing efforts to address criminal conduct.

Furthermore, the City Council notes that both the Situation Table and City Circle initiatives were implemented to improve outcomes for individuals at elevated risk of involvement with the criminal justice system, behavioral health crises, substance use, and homelessness, including by reducing emergency department utilization, overdoses, and other preventable harms, while also providing a more immediate and consistent system of accountability for individuals who repeatedly violate municipal ordinances.

The City Council is particularly concerned that the City Circle initiative, which was previously identified by the Mayor's Administration as a key component of Burlington's strategy to improve public safety and accountability, appears to have been substantially curtailed or discontinued. The Council further understands that this change may have been attributable, in whole or in part, to reductions in available funding, and seeks clarification regarding the status of the initiative, the reasons for any changes in its implementation, and whether alternative funding sources or program models have been considered. The Council is also concerned that, to its knowledge, the accountability mechanisms contemplated by the City Circle model, including prosecution or other consequences for participants who failed to comply with restorative justice requirements, have not been meaningfully utilized, and requests information sufficient to evaluate whether the program has operated as originally intended.

Within thirty (30) days of the adoption of this Resolution, the City Council's Public Safety Committee shall prepare and deliver a list of questions to the Mayor's Administration, the City Attorney's Office, and the Community Justice Center, the responses to which shall provide the Council with a comprehensive update regarding the Situation Table and City Circle initiatives, including, at a minimum: (i) the current operational status of each initiative; (ii) participation levels and measurable outcomes for individuals served; (iii) data concerning compliance with restorative justice requirements and any enforcement or prosecutorial actions taken in response to noncompliance, to the extent permitted by law; (iv) the funding sources supporting each initiative, including any reductions or anticipated funding gaps; and (v) recommendations for the continuation, modification, expansion, or replacement of these initiatives based on their first year of implementation.

Section 3.07. Request for Ongoing Assistance From State Public Safety Personnel

Recognizing Burlington's ongoing public safety resource challenges, the City Council calls upon the Vermont State Police to continue partnering with the Burlington Police Department by providing supplemental law enforcement resources in and around the City's downtown and

other locations where additional law enforcement presence is necessary to protect public safety, address criminal activity, and restore public confidence in Burlington's public spaces.

Separately, the City Council calls upon the Vermont Department of Motor Vehicles Enforcement Division to expand traffic enforcement efforts within the City of Burlington's principal transportation corridors, including the new Champlain Parkway, where speeding, reckless driving, excessive engine noise, and other traffic violations have become persistent public safety and quality-of-life concerns.

The City Council affirms that, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law, it welcomes and consents to the enforcement of both the laws of the State of Vermont and the ordinances of the City of Burlington by duly authorized State law enforcement officers operating within the City, consistent with their statutory authority and any applicable intergovernmental agreements governing such enforcement. In addition, state and local law enforcement agencies should coordinate to ensure consistent standards, accountability, community engagement, and compliance with racial equity and civil rights protections.

ARTICLE IV

Public Health Policy and Permitted Uses

Section 4.01. Statement of Intent.

The purpose of this Article is to establish the City's policy regarding the implementation of significant public health initiatives, to reaffirm the City Council's legislative role in establishing zoning policy, and to strengthen collaboration between the City of Burlington and the State of Vermont in addressing public safety, behavioral health, and substance use challenges.

Section 4.02. Public Health Policy and Zoning.

The City Council continues to support accessible, evidence-based public health initiatives that improve individual and community health while recognizing that the location, operation, and long-term impacts of significant public health services should be considered through transparent public processes consistent with the City's Comprehensive Development Ordinance and adopted zoning policy. Zoning decisions shall also consider potential disparate impacts on historically marginalized communities.

The City Council finds that significant public health services ~~with~~ that may have substantial neighborhood impacts should not be established through administrative interpretation where

doing so effectively creates a new principal use not expressly identified within the Comprehensive Development Ordinance.

Section 4.03. Overdose Prevention Centers.

The City Council finds that overdose prevention centers are not presently identified as expressly permitted principal uses within the Comprehensive Development Ordinance.

Accordingly, the City Council declares that any proposal to authorize overdose prevention centers within the City of Burlington should proceed only through amendment of the Comprehensive Development Ordinance following public notice, public hearing, and legislative action by the City Council.

The City Council further declares that, should such an amendment be proposed, overdose prevention centers should not be permitted within Burlington's Downtown Improvement District, as defined by the City's Charter.

The Council stands by its previous acknowledgments that overdose prevention centers may serve populations experiencing significant health disparities. They may also help reduce the amount of public drug use occurring in our shared public spaces. Any consideration of a potential overdose prevention center location shall include an evidence-based assessment of public health outcomes, anticipated community impacts, equity, accessibility, and the potential benefits and risks to people who use drugs and the broader community.

Section 4.04. Syringe Service Programs.

The City Council finds that syringe service programs are a valuable public health strategy but are not presently identified as expressly permitted principal uses within the Comprehensive Development Ordinance and should not be deemed to constitute any currently permitted principal use absent express legislative authorization.

Accordingly, the City Council declares that any proposal to authorize syringe service programs as a principal use should proceed only through amendment of the Comprehensive Development Ordinance through the City's legislative zoning amendment process.

The City Council further declares that while syringe service programs should continue to be supported in Burlington, they should not be permitted within Burlington's Downtown Improvement District. The City Council ~~opposes the continued operation or establishment of syringe service programs within Burlington's downtown core and~~ calls upon the Vermont Department of Health to work collaboratively with the City and local operating partners to

identify an accessible alternative location that better advances public health objectives while supporting the restoration and preservation of Burlington's public spaces.

The City Council further calls upon the Vermont Department of Health to consult and collaborate with the City before establishing, relocating, or materially expanding significant public health services within Burlington so that public health objectives, zoning policy, neighborhood compatibility, and impacts upon public spaces may all be appropriately considered. The Mayor's Administration shall promptly notify the City Council upon learning of State-sanctioned efforts to expand public health services within Burlington.

Additionally, within sixty (60) days following enactment of this Resolution, the City Council's Community Development & Neighbor Revitalization Committee shall begin meeting to develop a resolution that reaffirms, revises, or develops new recommendations from its previously developed report on syringe litter that will further the goals of this Section.

The City Council affirms that the positions taken in this Article regarding an Overdose Prevention Center or Syringe Service Programs are in alignment with Burlington's current comprehensive municipal plan, which acknowledges the difficulties associated with the proximity of drug trafficking and use to those in recovery, and provides in pertinent part that:

[H]igh concentration of social service providers can become easily unmanageable if all stakeholders are not working together, keeping an eye on some of the larger interactions and their implications. For example, the downtown is arguably not the best environment for people recovering from alcohol and drug addiction. The presence of active drug dealing and the highest concentration of drinking establishments in the state create serious challenges for those in recovery.

ARTICLE V

Implementation, Accountability, State Partnership, and Continuing Oversight

Section 5.01. Statement of Intent.

The purpose of this Article is to ensure that the policies established by this Resolution are translated into coordinated action through measurable implementation, public accountability, regular reporting, and continuing oversight by the City Council.

Section 5.02. Partnership with the State of Vermont.

The City Council appreciates the Governor's most recent efforts to support Burlington with additional public safety resources and calls upon the Governor to establish a sustained partnership with the City of Burlington to continue addressing the unique public safety, behavioral health, homelessness, and substance use challenges confronting Vermont's largest municipality.

The City Council requests that the Mayor invite representatives of the Governor's Office and appropriate State agencies to meet annually with the Administration, City Council, State legislators, and other regional leaders to evaluate regional progress, identify barriers to collaboration, and recommend additional actions to strengthen the partnership between the City of Burlington, surrounding communities, and the State of Vermont.

The City Council specifically refers back to the requests included in its August 2025 resolution on City Hall Park and its asks for the following specific actions by the State of Vermont and Governor to support Burlington in addressing chronic safety and health challenges: (1) Convene a county-wide committee of local, county and state law enforcement agencies to develop a coordinated response to drug trafficking and related crimes; (2) Convene youth service providers, schools, and staff from the Agency of Human Services to specifically examine trends among juveniles engaged in violence, drugs, and gun possession to identify strategies to interrupt these trends for at-risk juveniles; and (3) Convene a public health strategy discussion between members of the Department of Health and Department of Mental Health to examine how to remove barriers to treatment and address limited capacity to existing drug treatment centers to support people living with substance use disorder finding easier pathways to treatment and recovery.

The City Council further recognizes the substantial progress achieved through the Chittenden County Accountability Docket, which demonstrated that dedicated judicial resources could promote more timely case resolution, meaningful accountability, improved access to treatment and services, and greater confidence in the administration of justice for harm done to our communities. Accordingly, the City Council requests that the Governor, in coordination with the Chief Justice of the Vermont Supreme Court and other appropriate State officials, continue and, as appropriate, institutionalize this model in Chittenden County by supporting the continued assignment of a dedicated judge, prosecutor, public defender, and necessary court personnel and resources to ensure the prompt adjudication of cases involving repeat offenders and individuals with multiple pending criminal matters.

Section 5.03. Legislative Partnership with the Vermont General Assembly.

The City Council calls upon the members of the Chittenden County Senate and House delegations, together with members of the Vermont General Assembly representing communities throughout the State, to support the enactment and strengthening of laws that advance the purposes of this Resolution.

The City Council further calls upon the General Assembly to work collaboratively with municipalities, public safety agencies, healthcare providers, service organizations, and other stakeholders to enact legislation that:

- A. Strengthens public safety while protecting ~~individual civil~~ rights, advancing equity, and ensuring due process and equal protection under the law;
- B. Expands access to and investment in behavioral health, substance use treatment, recovery services, and permanent supportive housing throughout Vermont;
- C. Promotes equitable regional responsibility for addressing homelessness and behavioral health challenges while ensuring that individuals are not denied access to essential services based on race, ethnicity, disability, income, housing status, or place of origin;
- D. Provides municipalities with appropriate ~~legal authority and~~ resources to restore and preserve public spaces;
- E. ~~Encourages~~Supports timely access to appropriate support intervention for individuals experiencing behavioral health crises or substance use disorder;
- F. Improves coordination among State agencies and municipalities; and
- G. Otherwise advances the purposes of this Resolution.

The City Council further directs the Mayor and the City's legislative representatives to advocate for legislation consistent with these principles and to report to the City Council regarding significant legislative developments affecting implementation of this Resolution.

Section 5.04. Continuing Commitment.

The City Council adopts this Resolution not merely as a response to current conditions, but as a continuing statement of municipal policy intended to guide future legislative decisions, strengthen public confidence in local government, and ~~restore and~~ preserve Burlington's public spaces for future generations.

The City Council believes that the strength of a community is measured not only by how it responds to those in crisis, but also by how faithfully it preserves the public spaces that belong

to everyone. Through this Resolution, Burlington recommits itself to both responsibilities and affirms that they are inseparable from one another. A community is strongest when every person can participate in public life with dignity, safety, and a meaningful sense of belonging.



BURLINGTON VERMONT

To: City Council

From: Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (REIB) City Council Committee (Laura Sánchez-Parkinson, Melo Grant, Sarah Carpenter)

Date: September 1, 2026

Subject: Impact Assessment for the Burlington Forward Resolution

Cc: Mayor's Office, REIB Office

Background

On August 3, 2026, the City Council introduced *Burlington Forward: A Comprehensive Framework for Safe Public Spaces and a Stronger Community* and referred the resolution to four committees, including the Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (REIB) City Council Committee. The City Council's motion stated:

"Refer the resolution to the Committees on Public Safety, REIB, CDNR, and PAC and request a report back to the full Council on any recommended amendments on items within each committee's jurisdiction by September 14, 2026..."

Because the resolution did not identify specific provisions for review by the REIB Committee, the Committee determined that a broader review of the resolution was appropriate. This memo acts as our written report.

To conduct this review in a thoughtful and systematic way, Committee members discussed using the State of Vermont Impact Assessment Tool as a guiding framework. Developed by the Vermont Office of Racial Equity, the tool is designed to help assess the potential impacts of proposed policies, including identifying unintended consequences, considering who may be disproportionately affected, and ensuring that proposed solutions respond to the needs of diverse communities.

Using principles from this framework, the REIB Committee, in collaboration with REIB Office staff, reviewed both the process used to develop the resolution and its content.

Areas for Consideration

Based on this review, the Committee offers three overarching areas for consideration:

- 1. Engage a diverse range of stakeholders early in the process.**

Policy development should include people who are directly affected by the proposed actions, City staff who would be responsible for implementation, and practitioners or experts in the relevant fields. Earlier engagement can help identify potential impacts, strengthen proposed solutions, and build greater understanding and initial buy-in before a proposal reaches the Council.

- 2. Ground proposals in current research and evidence-based frameworks.**

Resolutions addressing complex community issues should draw from current research, established practices, and relevant local and national expertise. Doing so can help avoid outdated concepts or language and prevent the unintended reinforcement of practices that have been debunked.

- 3. Seek legal guidance early when considering proposals with potential legal implications.**

Consultation with the City Attorney's Office can help determine whether proposed actions are legally permissible and practically achievable. Proposals do not need to be fully developed before they are introduced; however, the Council should be cautious about advancing ideas that may create expectations among the public if significant legal limitations could ultimately prevent implementation.

The committee also discussed the content of the resolution and would like to thank Dr. Kelli Perkins and Christian Berry from the Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion and Belonging for their thorough review and feedback (see attachment).

We hope the City Council will consider this recommendation for the Burlington Forward resolution and the development of future resolutions.