

PDX Privacy

June 19, 2019

Mayor Ted Wheeler and Portland City Council
Portland City Hall
1221 SW 4th Avenue, Room 130
Portland, OR 97204

Mayor Wheeler and City Council Commissioners:

PDX Privacy, an organization composed of local residents, advocates for privacy, transparency, and digital rights in the Portland Metro Area. We care deeply about issues related to the collection, use, and potential abuse of personal data by both businesses and government. Therefore, we respectfully submit these comments in support of the Privacy and Information Protection Resolution coming before Portland City Council on June 19, 2019.

Data collected from residents may potentially yield valuable insights to the City, such as the most popular transit routes or ways in which the City can improve its services. Without thoughtful planning and oversight, however, personal information can also be misused or stolen, harming the City's residents and the City's future as an open, transparent, and equitable place to live.

Current technology offers considerable opportunities to accumulate a wide variety of personal data. When combined, the information can provide a detailed picture of a person's life—gender, health, sexual preferences, religious affiliations, travel habits, and relationships, among other aspects. Misuse could lead to a person being manipulated, surveilled, or otherwise mistreated; indeed, marginalized communities are especially at risk for abuse since they don't have as many choices as more affluent persons.

Having guidelines and policies in place related to the collection, secure handling and storage, and timely deletion of data will help to ensure that the City is a good steward of its residents' and visitors' information and will promote trust in the City and its efforts towards privacy and data protection.

PDX Privacy commends the City's efforts in taking proactive steps towards privacy and information protection in the absence of guidance on this issue from the state and federal levels. While we would like to see residents have actionable privacy rights, we believe that the principles outlined in the Privacy and Information Protection Resolution are an important and needed step towards protection of residents' personal information. Therefore, we endorse this resolution.

Sincerely,

Chris Bushick and Michael Miller
on behalf of PDX Privacy

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