

TIGARD, OR
Mayor Jason Snider

Building a City Welcoming for Everyone

In 2014, the Tigard City Council adopted a strategic plan to become “the most walkable community in the Pacific Northwest where people of all ages and abilities enjoy healthy and interconnected lives.” The strategic plan to achieve this brought a much-needed focus on increasing diversity, equity and inclusion among city staff and the community. The City’s efforts have focused on:

- encouraging and supporting a respectful and inclusive culture;
- recognizing and embracing differences;
- identifying and reducing barriers to services; and
- creating opportunities for connection among City staff and with Tigard’s diverse community.

Since its creation six years ago, the plan has produced a range of actions to “fight inequities and to create an inclusive and compassionate city.” Following are examples of actions taken most recently.

Embracing Inclusive Communications and Engagement

Mayor Snider began his tenure in 2019 with the publishing of a City DEI – Diversity, Equity, Inclusion – webpage to hold the city accountable for making measurable change. The page launched with a Mayor’s message of inclusion: “We will stand up to hurtful speech and reinforce efforts to attract a workforce that is representative of our community and our nation.”

Also that year, the City initiated development of a Language Access Plan to provide guidance on when it is appropriate to prepare materials in both English and Spanish. This led to an increase in the number of City documents being available in both languages, documents including the monthly Mayor’s Corner, the popular Annual Finance Report, and Safe Routes to School program information. Along with this, the City is posting Spanish language social media messages on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

Connecting with Nonprofits and Faith-based Groups

Created by the City in 2017, the Community Roundtable brings together leaders of 35 faith-based and nonprofit organizations to discuss challenges such as homelessness, equality, and volunteerism. In 2019, the City partnered with Centro Cultural and St. Anthony’s Church for ¡Ahorre con TriMet!, a one-day event aimed at making it easier for members of the Latinx community to access public transportation. In 2020, the City will launch Los Empresarios de Tigard in support of developing a Latinx business ecosystem that connects business owners and entrepreneurs to business advising services and resources that can help their businesses grow. Partners like MESO, Hacienda CDC, Hispanic Metropolitan Chamber, and Adelante Mujeres, will mentor Latinx business owners interested in both starting and growing companies.

Celebrating a Diverse History

The Tigard Outdoor Museum, part of the Tigard Street Heritage Trail, is under construction with an expected completion date of April 2020. The National Endowment for the Arts, in awarding the city an Our Town grant for the project, noted the Outdoor Museum importance in celebrating the diverse cultures – African-Americans, Native Americans, Chinese, Europeans, Japanese, and Latinx pioneers – responsible for the growth of the city.

Throughout 2020, a display in the Tigard Library's Local History Room will celebrate the passage of the 19th Amendment by profiling eight women in Tigard's history who made significant contributions in the fields of education, politics, the arts, and conservation.

Cultivating a Workforce Representative of the Community

In 2019, the City changed its recruitment process to enhance outreach to diverse populations. This included moving to a blind application screening, where names were removed system-wide to reduce implicit bias in hiring. Every hiring panel now attends bias training prior to participating in selection processes, and every interview includes at least one DEI question. Job postings have been enhanced with more inclusive language and make the City's interest in and value of diversity in the workforce more explicit.

In 2019, International Pronoun Day was celebrated by employees. Throughout the day, staff created pronoun identification stickers for their employee badges, attended a lunch and learn discussion, and watched a staff-made video on the importance of sharing their pronouns.

Supporting Solutions to Affordable Housing and Homelessness

A 2017 Task Force for the Homeless was empowered to develop recommendations for how the City could support the growing homeless community. Based on the recommendations, 32 staff members have completed training and participated in the Homeless Point-in-Time Count. In 2019, the City sponsored Project Homeless Connect, a one-day event providing dental care, vision screening, haircuts, food and clothing, and connections to housing and social services. The City continues to host community meetings on equitable development strategies in English, Spanish, Arabic and Somali.

Partnering on Multi-City Equity Summit

The cities of Lake Oswego, West Linn, Wilsonville, Tigard, and Tualatin hosted the inaugural 2019 Multi-City Equity Summit as one step toward a shared goal of promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion. More than 300 community members spent the day in conversations focused on community issues related to racism, discrimination, and exclusion. This cooperative group of cities, schools and libraries continues to keep the conversations moving forward in their respective communities.

A website devoted to Tigard's DEI efforts is at <https://www.tigard-or.gov/dei/>.

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