

## **Wheat Ridge City Department Practices on Equity, Bias and Inclusion**

### *Administrative Services*

- In July, Human Resources and the City Manager conducted three city-wide employee listening sessions to check in with employees about their thoughts, perspectives and fears following the death of George Floyd and ideas as to how this organization should and could move forward. One initial takeaway was a resource guide for staff to help spur self-education through articles and webinars from existing City providers and partners
- The Administrative Services Department vision and action plan identifies an activity to develop and implement a strategy for enhancing staff diversity.
- When recruiting new staff, names are hidden from staff review during application review phase, the City does not ask for salary history on job applications, and the City does not ask for criminal history on job applications
- The City's website can now be instantly translated on demand into 30+ languages (or as many as Google Translate accommodates). Additionally, the City has added closed captioning for videos on YouTube. Recent outreach meetings have included ASL and Spanish interpretation.
- The City plans to update its style guide and train staff on its use to eliminate gender identifications, references to "citizens", language around ability and other areas of our written and verbal communication.
- The City will conduct antiracism and inclusion training for supervisory staff and above this fall.

### *Community Development*

- Leadership has encouraged open discussions regarding race and equity, and has encouraged participation in the forums hosted by the City Manager's Office.
- Community Development is aware that housing zoning practices have historically been used in some communities to have exclusionary affects. Large lot zoning, for instance, can result in affordability issues that disproportionately impact minority populations. Staff has endeavored to encourage a range of housing densities in appropriate locations throughout the City, which can positively impact housing affordability; however, staff operates with the understanding that zoning driven by City Council through adoption of the Comprehensive Plan and subsequent rezoning ordinances.
- Wheat Ridge has some neighborhoods/subdivisions with private covenants and deed restrictions which historically were used to prevent certain races and ethnicities from buying and residing in certain neighborhoods. Those are privately adopted and enforced restrictions, which the City does not have the ability to amend or enforce. With City Council direction, City Staff could potentially play a role in facilitating processes to legally unwind some of those private restrictions.

### *Municipal Court*

- As to impartiality, racial or otherwise, it's inherent in the nature of courts to be fair and neutral. An independent, fair, and impartial judiciary is indispensable to our system of justice. The judiciary has played, for hundreds of years, a central role in preserving the principles of justice and the rule of law.

- The Colorado Supreme Court developed the Code of Judicial Conduct several decades ago. It establishes standards for the ethical conduct of judges and court staff. It's divided in what are called Canons, which are overarching principles and general in nature. Each Canon is elaborated on or defined through Rules.
- Canon 2 states that a judge shall perform the duties of the judicial office impartially, competently, and diligently. Rule 2.2 specifically addresses bias, prejudice, and harassment. Rule 2.2, which expands on Canon 2, states that a judge and staff shall perform the duties of the office without bias or prejudice. A judge and staff shall not, in the performance of judicial duties, by words or conduct manifest bias or prejudice, or engage in harassment, including but not limited to bias, prejudice, or harassment based upon race, sex, gender, religion, national origin, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, marital status, socioeconomic status, or political affiliation. Judge and staff are to require the lawyers in proceedings before the court to refrain from such conduct. However, these restrictions do not preclude judges or lawyers from making legitimate reference to the listed factors, or similar factors, when they are relevant to an issue in a proceeding.
- Last year, court staff created a mission statement which mandates the fair and impartial resolution of ordinance violations in order to preserve the rule of law and to protect the rights and liberties guaranteed by the State and U.S. Constitutions. Staff, at the same time, developed department values that required respectfulness, efficiency, procedural fairness, and safety to all who come before the court.

#### *Parks and Recreation*

- Parks and Recreation is working on a policy draft for inclusion and equity, which is a National Recreation & Parks Association initiative and racial equity is a component.
- Family locker rooms & specifically the recent addition of speakers, so announcements can be heard – allowing individuals to choose the restroom that makes them most comfortable
- Parks and Recreation is dedicated to the standard that all residents should have access to a park within a 10 minute walk, and Wheat Ridge is current well above the national average.

#### *Police*

- Staff has updated the “Response to Resistance” policy (formerly Use of Force) to ensure more review and oversight
- The department has reached out to and are planning on meeting with NAACP on Sept. 14th
- All members of staff (Sworn and Non-sworn) were assigned and have completed the following annual in-service training on Ethics for Law Enforcement, Anti-Bias, and Racial Profiling
- Staff is documenting and tracking our police contacts and conducting reviews to determine our level of interaction with various demographics.
- The department is focused on its recruitment efforts related to diversity.

#### *Public Works*

- Public Work is committed to a non-discriminatory management of a diverse work force in which managers value the differences in their employees, which includes ongoing development of a work force which reflects the diversity and the composition of the Wheat Ridge community.

- Consistently attending relevant diversity training, usually provided by the Human Resources division.
- Leadership encourages diversity-related topics in need of discussion and the appropriate follow through.