

CITY OF KENT MAYORAL DIRECTIVE

**A Mayoral directive dated October 8th, 2020,
directing all City Departments and employees to
take specific actions on advancing race and equity
issues in the City of Kent.**



**MAYOR
CITY OF KENT**

220 Fourth Avenue South Kent, WA 98032



WHEREAS, I, Dana Ralph, duly elected by the voters to the office of Mayor of Kent and having assumed said position on January 1st, 2018; and

WHEREAS, the Kent community is majority Black, Indigenous and People of Color, is the tenth most diverse community in the nation, more than 130 languages are spoken in the Kent School District, and the City of Kent welcomes and provides services to all individuals regardless of race, ethnicity, country of origin, socioeconomic status, age, sexual orientation, gender identification, disability, religion, veteran status, and any other protected class; and

WHEREAS, the Declaration of Independence provides that all are created equally. Moreover, equal protection under the law is a right provided in both the United States Constitution and the Washington Constitution. However, it is important to acknowledge that forms of systemic and structural racism have existed across the country and locally that have put certain races and ethnicities at a disadvantage as compared to their white counterparts; and

WHEREAS, as a government agency, it is incumbent upon the City to not only proclaim a message of equity, but also to take steps to eliminate barriers to equity, and to ensure government policies and practices are equitable and do not infringe upon the equal treatment and opportunity of all persons who live, work, and visit Kent. The Council declares equity as a foundational requirement of the provision of City services, and, the provision of police services; and

WHEREAS, Over the years, the City has taken steps to enhance collaboration with people of all races, ethnicities, and other protected classes, and to reduce barriers to City services through the following:

- The City has established various task forces and boards to improve multi-cultural relations, including: the Multicultural Task Force (1998-2000); the Diversity Advisory Board (2000-2008); the Mayor's Advisory Team (2008-2014); and the Cultural Communities Board (2015–Present).
- The City initiated Diversity and Inclusion training for all employees around 2006
- The City provided supervisor training to educate hiring managers on implicit bias and best practices regarding applicant screening and interviews in 2012.
- The City provided Respect Training (focused on racial equity) for all employees around 2013
- The City held the Cultural Community Conversations program through 2015 – 2018
- The City hired a Community Engagement Coordinator in 2017 in the Mayor's Office, tasked with enhancing community engagement by promoting collaboration and partnerships, particularly with people of protected classes, underrepresented groups, and immigrant communities.
- The City started the Equity and Inclusion Speaker Series in 2019 which focuses on discussions of race, equity, diversity and inclusion.
- In July of 2020, the Executive Leadership Team attended a two-session training on equity, and similar training will be provided to all City staff in the coming weeks.
- The City analyzes job descriptions and postings and testing processes for barriers to employment that are not relevant to the position, utilizing employees who have completed the "Governing for Racial Equity and Inclusion" training through the Local and regional Government Alliance on Race and Equity; and

WHEREAS, The Police Department has made efforts to ensure equity and respect in the services it provides. Among other things:

- The Police Department has provided ongoing training in the area of equity and implicit bias to officers through the following:
 - Racial Incongruity briefing training (2003)
 - Racial profiling briefing training (2005 & 2006)

- Diversity and Inclusion (2006) (training to all City employees noted above)
- Respect Training (2013) (training to all City employees noted above)
- Cultural Competency block training (2014)
- Fair and Impartial Policing block training (2015)
- Acknowledging and Managing Hidden Bias – outside training (2019)
- Bias Based Profiling periodic briefing training (2019); and

WHEREAS, over 25 years ago, the Police Department established the Kent Police Youth Board. The Youth Board is made up of a diverse group of students in grades 7-12 and emphasizes leaderships skills, drug and alcohol prevention, and health and wellness. The Youth Board presents to classrooms and community groups, and each year, hosts 300 students at the Game of Life Youth Conference.

In, 2012, the Police Department established the Diversity Task Force, a group of community members of various cultural backgrounds, who meet regularly with the Kent Police Department on issues of community concern. The Kent Police Department offers training regarding policing to Task Force Members.

In 2012, the Police Department became a founding member of the Valley Independent Investigation Team (VIIT), a multi-jurisdictional team designed to independently, thoroughly and objectively investigate the most serious incidents involving police officers – one of the first investigative teams of its kind. The creation of VIIT ensures that use of deadly force incidents by a Kent officer are investigated by an outside agency.

In 2014, the Police Department developed a Respect Action Plan. The strategies of that plan are: (1) establish a clear expectation and standards that reinforce a culture of respect and civility; (2) promote a culture of respect and civility through accountability at all levels; (3) enhance communication and leadership engagement; and (4) conduct department functions and events that foster a culture of respect and civility both internally and externally. Several of the trainings noted above were born from that plan; and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding the efforts of the City, and particularly the Police Department to date, recent events throughout the country involving police uses of force in contacts with people of color have brought particular attention to the need for an examination of police training and tactics to reduce the potential for the use of excessive force and ensure that a person's race or ethnicity is not a factor in an officer's determination of whether force is applied or the level of force that is applied; and

WHEREAS, some have called for the defunding of police departments around the nation, with a specific call to reduce the number of police officers employed. The State of Washington ranks last in the nation – 51st when Washington DC is included – in officers per capita. Moreover, the Kent Police Department in particular operates with fewer police officers than nearby Washington cities. Based on 2019 statistics, Seattle, Everett, Auburn, Tacoma, Federal Way, and Bellevue have more officers per 1,000 citizens as compared to Kent (Renton has the same number of officers). For example, Seattle has 1.9 officers per 1,000 citizens, while Kent has 1.24 officers. While Everett has 26.06 calls for service per officer, Kent has 44.79 calls for service per officer. The Council recognizes that reducing the number of officers in Kent will not improve public safety and may draw resources away from community engagement; and

WHEREAS, I, affirm my commitment to the fair and equal provision of all City services, and condemn any conduct that might lead to a differentiation in the opportunity, safety, respect, and confidence our residents, workers and visitors are entitled to based on race, ethnicity, country of origin, socioeconomic status, age, sexual orientation, gender identification, disability, religion, veteran status, and any other protected status; and

WHEREAS, I, affirm my commitment to the fair and equal administration and enforcement of local laws. Neither race, ethnicity, country of origin, socioeconomic status, age, sexual orientation, gender identification, disability, religion, veteran status, nor any other protected status should be a factor in policing, whether it be with regards to initial contacts, conducting pat downs or searches, the referring of cases to prosecutors for filing, or the issuance of infractions; and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding the past efforts of the City, I recognize that more work is warranted, and through this Proclamation, I request the City take further steps to eliminate even the appearance of inequality in the provision of services City-wide, and in particular, in policing; and

WHEREAS, the Chief Administrative Officer has established an Equity Matrix to document, prioritize, and sequence the equity initiatives of my administration and Executive Leadership Team. I fully support the Equity Matrix, and more specifically, request all city leaders take the actions set forth in Sections 2 – 5 of this Proclamation; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, DANA RALPH, MAYOR OF THE CITY OF KENT,
WASHINGTON, DO HEREBY DIRECT AS FOLLOWS:**

MAYORAL DIRECTION

SECTION 1. – Recitals Incorporated. The above Recitals are incorporated into this Mayoral Directive and constitute findings of the Mayor.

SECTION 2. – Strategic Plan. I direct the Chief Administrative Officer to contract with a race and equity consultant to create a race and equity strategic plan for the city that can be executed by staff and measured with benchmarks and metrics.

SECTION 3. – Equity Manager. I direct the Chief Administrative Officer and Human Resources Director to fill the position expeditiously upon adoption of the 2021-2022 budget. This position will assist with the development and execution of the equity strategic plan.

SECTION 4. – Hiring – Promotion – Success. I direct the Human Resources Director to continue their work to eliminate racial barriers and barriers for other protected classes, and establish equity in the hiring, promotion, and success of existing and future employees in all city departments including the Kent Police Department. In particular, the City Council requests the candidate pool and hiring in all departments, including the Police Department, reflect the diversity of the Kent community.

SECTION 5. – Employee Training. I direct the Human Resources Director to continue training for employees in all departments, including the Kent Police Department, to eliminate racism; address implicit bias; enhance cultural competency; and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in the provision of City services.

SECTION 6. – Diversity Task Force. I direct the Police Chief:

- Update the Diversity Task Force's name to "Police Race and Equity Advisory Board."
- Formalize the Advisory Board's existence in a written charter.
- Include in the charter an official role for the task force in the review of applicable Kent Police Department policies and the dissemination of information about and discussion of significant police incidents.
- Include in the charter provisions that ensure new membership on the board over time.
- Provide a copy of the charter to me for review and approval.

SECTION 7. – Police Policies. I direct the Police Chief to establish and/or amend applicable police policies, including use-of-force and duty-to-intervene policies, to strengthen police operations in the areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion to further ensure that officers are delivering culturally sensitive, biased-free service to the community.

SECTION 8. – Legislative Agenda. I direct the Chief Administrative Officer to include in the proposed 2021 legislative agenda for the City Council's consideration the pursuit of state legislation to:

- Assist in the funding of mental health professionals to work alongside police officers in the Kent Police Department and law enforcement agencies across Washington to bring needed resources to people in crisis and reduce the number of incidents to which police officers need to respond.
- Establish standardized use of force reporting requirements for all law enforcement agencies in Washington.
- Provide funding for data collection from law enforcement agencies across Washington to address racial disparity.
- Provide funding to ensure improved communication and access to government for non-English speaking individuals.

SECTION 9. – Effective Date. This directive shall take effect and be in force immediately upon my signature



Dana Ralph

DANA RALPH, MAYOR

October 8, 2020
Date Ordered

KENT
WASHINGTON