

Compilation of the work of the Ad Hoc Equity Steering group into one summary for 2021:

Formed by: RESOLUTION NO. 20-019 Adopted December 2020

A RESOLUTION of the Council of the City of Camas, Washington setting forth the framework for the establishment of an Ad Hoc Equity Advisory Committee

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CAMAS AS FOLLOWS:

A. Council Members Greg Anderson, Ellen Burton, and Bonnie Carter are hereby appointed as members of the Equity Steering Group to assist in the organizing of one or more forms of citizen engagement and develop a series of events through June 2021 designed to promote awareness and raise the community's level of engagement around issues of equity, diversity and inclusion and to encourage a dialogue between Camas residents and its elected officials on these topics. Planning for townhalls or other direct means of communication shall be made in conjunction with City Administration, comply with the Open Public Meetings Act if applicable, and fall within the budget parameters as may be set.

B. The Equity Steering Group shall present their findings to City Council for consideration by no later than December 20, 2021. The findings shall set forth recommendations as to citizen membership and a proposed work plan of a City Ad Hoc Equity Advisory Committee to be established by separate Resolution of this Council, with a Final Report date of such Ad Hoc Committee to be no later than December 19, 2022.

The committee met initially to form our strategy, resources needed, possible methods, and anticipated timeline.

We then met with a group from Camas School District to help us further frame our scope and methods.

**Reference/ partial extract from:**

**CAMAS SCHOOL DISTRICT  
RESOLUTION 19-09**

**School Board Commitment to Equity and Anti-Racism**

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Board of Directors for Camas School District that:

1. The Camas School District Board of Directors stands in solidarity with the Black community, in our schools, district, and nation to condemn this violence and the blatant disrespect by some Americans for Black lives - we see it, we hear it, and we are committed to changing the system.
2. The Camas School District Board of Directors commits to its own work as individuals and our collective work overseeing the district in continuing to become equitable and anti-racist in behaviors, actions, and policies;

3. The Camas School District Board of Directors calls on and commits to working with our local government agencies to strengthen the collective work of diversity, equity, and inclusion in our community. This specifically includes participation in a multi-discipline inter-agency task force by one or more board member representatives.

**LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED**, that the Camas School District Board of Directors shall take specific action to revise its governance tools - goals, guardrails, procedures, and budget - to reflect this focus on equity and anti-racism:

1. The Camas School District Board of Directors commits to a full revision of its Board Goals as part of the current strategic planning cycle, holding diversity, equity, and inclusion at the center of this work. These revised goals will allow monitoring and transparency of progress by the Board and stakeholders.
2. The Camas School District Board of Directors commits to an ongoing review and revision of governance structures to ensure a focus on equity and anti-racism across all Board responsibilities.
3. The Camas School District Board of Directors and staff commit to a quarterly review and revision of existing policies and procedures and hold diversity, equity, and inclusion at the center of all conversations moving forward.
4. The Camas School District Board of Directors commits to holding these resolutions at the center when reviewing and approving the district budget to ensure adequate funding to support this work.

**For committee listening/discussions we used these definitions:**

#### Diversity

*“Diversity” refers to both ...that there are many different kinds of people—and the idea that this diversity drives cultural, economic, and social vitality and innovation. In Camas, diversity is increasing as people move into the area.*

#### Equity

*Equity is defined as “the state, quality or ideal of being just, impartial and fair.” The concept of equity is synonymous with fairness and justice. It is helpful to think of equity as not simply a desired state of affairs or a lofty value. To achieve and sustain equity, it needs to be thought of as a structural and systemic concept.*

#### Equity vs. Equality

*Equity involves trying to understand and give people what they need to enjoy full, healthy lives. Equality, in contrast, aims to ensure that everyone gets the same things in order to enjoy full, healthy lives. Like equity, equality*

*aims to promote fairness and justice, but it can only work if everyone starts from the same place and needs the same things.*

### Inclusion

*Inclusion is the action or state of including or of being included within a group or structure. More than simply diversity and numerical representation, inclusion involves authentic and empowered participation and a true sense of belonging.*

Source: 7 Steps to Advance and Embed Race Equity and Inclusion within your Organization by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

From these we developed the following introductory script and specific Appreciative Inquiry questions we would use throughout all listening sessions. [Appreciative Inquiry is a proven methodology used to catalyze positive change.]

Introductory script we used after introductions at each session:

Thriving communities welcome people with a diversity of thought, income, life stage, ethnicity, and more. City government, representing citizens, sets direction while city staff delivers services equitably to meet community requirements. When organizations work in service of their community, people feel satisfied and fulfilled, benefiting all residents and visitors. They are courageous, willing to take on challenges to create an inclusive environment. Policies are equitably applied, inclusive programs designed and delivered so residents can access regardless of income, life stage, capability, or color.

Standardized questions used at each session were:

1. Describe an experience with city services, practices or policies that met or exceeded your expectations.
  - a. What was the situation? How did it come about? Who was involved?
  - b. How did it affect your perception of the city?
2. Conversely, describe an experience with city services, practices or policies that made you pause and reconsider.
  - a. What was the situation? How did it come about? Who was involved?
  - b. What would you have liked to happen to make it better?
3. It's been a challenging year for many of us. Protests, rallies, disputes over sidewalk art and murals, calls for equity and inclusion have occurred throughout the country and in Camas.
  - a. How has this affected you?
  - b. What could have the city done differently?
4. It's 5 years from now, spring 2026, you're swapping stories with your friends at Piccolo Paradiso. You glance at your FaceBook page and notice the City of Camas is acknowledged as a welcoming, vibrant, engaging community known for equitable and inclusionary practices, policies, and community.

- a. What do you see that's different in Camas today? How do you know the city has made progress?
- b. What was the city's role in this change?
- c. What were the first steps taken in 2021 to create this change in our community?

Groups represented during listening sessions were: Camas community members with different socio-economic levels, ethnicities, gender and sexual orientations, life stages, nationalities, and races.

### **Key learnings**

City services, practices or policies that met or exceeded your expectations.

- Camas Library
- City Administrative and Finance Staff
- Fire/Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
- Police
- Public Works

City services, practices or policies that made you pause and reconsider.

- Fire/EMS questioning
- Effect of social justice events in summer 2020
- Citizen public art as an expression, e.g., chalk
- Shocked and scared by actions and words of some, became more cautious and changed behavior

Future of Camas

- City and local businesses take a stand
- Events to increase cultural awareness held and attended
- Visual cues - flags and symbols

Compiling the information from the sessions, we formed the current state of Camas as:

*Some families and individuals are experiencing a different version of Camas. These are our friends and neighbors who live in similar houses to ours, drive similar cars, work similar jobs and whose kids attend the same schools. However, they don't necessarily feel safe and represented. The "small town feel" that we continuously strive to create becomes one of alienation and anxiety. Opportunities available to some, are limited for others.*

And then, in reviewing these we formed our list of recommendations and an initial action plan for the proposed & recommended Ad Hoc Equity Advisory Committee in the following four themes:

- Safety
- Representation

- Small Town Feel
- Opportunities

To further elaborate on these:

- **Safety**

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- Increase awareness of all in the community, not just the vocalized groups
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- Support diversity using visual cues
  - Host Staff training for diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workgroup and outward with members of the community

- **Representation**

- Update value statements to be more inclusive
- Recruit and retain diverse staff members
- Recruit more diverse boards and commission members

- **Small town feel**

- Create opportunities for personal connection
- Partner with community and cultural organizations to further support efforts
- Host community events, large and small to further support efforts

- **Opportunities**

- Create, recruit and support Equity Advisory Committee for 2022
- Expand partnerships
- Build community awareness

We recommend the following advisory committee composition:

- Ad hoc for 2022, may promote to a standing committee for 2023 and forward
  - No more than 7 - 9 members,
  - Composed of a diversity in socio-economic levels, ethnicities, gender and sexual orientations, life stages, nationalities, and races.
  - Supported with staff for administration matters, coordination, record keeping, etc.
  - Selection and appointment by mayor, confirmed by council early in 2022.
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We, the members of the steering group welcome any questions, and look forward to the implementing steps to move Camas forward.

Ellen Burton  
Bonnie Carter  
Greg Anderson

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Attached for notes, and details to support the committee's report.

## **Observed participants QUOTES**

### **Safety**

*Overall, it (Camas community) doesn't feel welcoming or safe.*

*We felt so unsafe.*

*I feel uncomfortable being exposed in public.*

*It's scary! (The context was it's scary when hearing about some of those far right and/or white supremacist groups.)*

*I can't hide what I look like. I don't feel safe putting up a sign.*

*If black leaders leave (Camas) then it won't be comfortable for me.*

*Pride flags made us feel safe.*

*Can we hold hands here or not?*

*(I'm) not afraid. I don't feel unsafe. ...be visible and move people along.*

### **Representation**

*Representation is huge.*

*Representation is critical. The more the city can do to bring in different groups/entities...It's not organic.*

*Give people a voice.*

*It's very simple...see similar looking people around them increases confidence.*

*Who represents my husband? (From a member of a bi-racial household)*

### **Small Town Feel**

*Does the city still care?*

*(While I) understand needs for systems and procedures, this does take away the personal touch. This is particularly hard for we seniors. We can't operate this way anymore.*

*It's your problem not mine. Deal with it.*

*"Keep Camas, keep Camas"...I laugh. What's the hidden message there? Let's not keep Camas, Camas.*

### **Moving forward**

*Even with all of the concerns, this is the best city where I've lived. The most welcoming city where I live...strong foundation.*

*We all need each other because that's how we're made, why we're here. We have to work together...be cautious, too.*

*I want to see change and that's why I'm here.*

*Knowledge is power. Nothing is worse than not asking! It (asking) will always be appreciated.*

*We need to be braver as a community.*

*Move into the 21st century. No, it's not a small mill town...The residents hold onto this...it's crippling the city.*

*The City needs to have a voice, right is right, wrong is wrong. In some instances they've spoken up. Why is this different?*

*The city has a role in creating policy to bring in...make people feel more welcome.*

*The city needs to be very intentional is what they do...the library is very intentional - messaging (and programs.) The library is for everybody.*

*Values are where your budget is.*

*There is no defense for racial hate crimes.*

**Further committee Notes captured during the process, Possible Actionable items:**

Movies in the park/library - movies that feature different cultures or foreign films

CamTown - add cultural, educational booths

Food Trucks - cultural, minority, woman-owned

Multicultural Festival that includes Sister Cities and large minority populations

We Move, We Roll -Walk/Move - Promote a walk or roll event that includes those with disabilities

Training for staff

Diversity, Inclusion, Equity Team - citizens

Programming at P&R and Library

Expand historical panels

Other religious holidays celebrated

City Statement

Book Discussions - book to movie

Pride flags, American Flag, BLM flag

Freak Alley - Art mural Alley

Business/Employer Focus Articles

Pride Picnic

Current mission statement reads:

Mission Statement

The City of Camas commits to preserving its heritage, sustaining and enhancing a high quality of life for all its citizens and developing the community to meet the challenges of the future. We take pride in preserving a healthful environment while promoting economic growth. We encourage citizens to participate in government and community, assisting the City in its efforts to provide quality services consistent with their desires and needs.