



**CITY OF KIRKLAND**  
Department of Parks & Community Services  
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www.kirklandwa.gov

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## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Kurt Triplett, City Manager

**From:** Lynn Zwaagstra, Director  
Michael Cogle, Deputy Director  
Leslie R. Miller, Human Services Administrator

**Date:** January 17, 2017

**Subject:** Welcoming and Inclusive Community

### Recommendation

That the Council receive information on the stated goal of action steps to keep Kirkland as a Welcoming and Inclusive Community through a specific initiative and discuss possible next steps.

### Background

To emphasize the City of Kirkland's commitment to being a welcoming and inclusive community, Mayor Walen joined the mayors of Bellevue, Issaquah, Redmond and Sammamish in proclaiming the week of September 16 through 25, 2016 as Eastside Welcoming Week. The proclamation (**Attachment A**) was read at the City Council's September 20, 2016 meeting and pronounced that Kirkland was joining communities across the country in celebrating the ways that immigrants and refugees make cities stronger economically, socially, and culturally.

To underscore that this commitment goes beyond immigration and refugee issues, a second proclamation was read at the Council's January 3, 2017 meeting (**Attachment B**), proclaiming Kirkland as a safe, inclusive, and welcoming city for all people.

Key elements of the proclamation stated:

*Kirkland is committed to protecting and serving everyone who resides in, works in, or visits Kirkland without discrimination based on race, religion, color, national origin, sex, age, income or economic status, political affiliation, military status, sexual orientation, or physical, mental or sensory ability"*

*Kirkland believes in the dignity, equality and constitutional and civil rights of all people, and will not tolerate hate, intolerance, discrimination, harassment or any behavior that creates fear, isolation or intimidation;*

*Kirkland's vibrancy and sense of community is stronger for our diversity and shared values of acceptance and respect;*

The Mayor proclaimed that *"Kirkland is deeply committed to promoting a just society that respects and welcomes all people, direct City staff to assist the City Council in developing and implementing a program to communicate the City's values, and invite the community to come together to discuss and support the shared values of diversity and inclusion."*

### **Examples of Short-term and Immediate Actions**

There are an array of actions and initiatives that the City might take or could help facilitate within the community to communicate and support these stated values. Examples of more immediate actions include:

- ✓ City could host a series of trainings, community meetings or Town Hall forums that create stronger community bonds, such as:
  - a. Community conversations to solicit views and ideas about how to keep Kirkland a Welcoming and Inclusive Community
  - b. Education regarding Islam and Muslims
  - c. Advocacy 101
  - d. How to Run for Office 101
  - e. Rapid Response Teams—small groups of folks who will show up at the site of a hate incident or advocate in person when needed.
  - f. Community building through Storytelling
- ✓ Include this initiative as a topic as part of the Community Policing outreach plan that is being implemented in 2017.
- ✓ Engage the Senior Council and Youth Councils to provide ideas and input on this topic.
- ✓ Engage the newly formed Human Services Commission to provide ideas and input on this topic.
- ✓ Join Welcoming America's Welcoming Cities & Counties Cohort. Welcoming America provides a framework for communities large and small to strengthen its economic and social life by creating an inclusive and welcoming community. While the Welcoming America initiative was created to assist communities to connect immigrants and refugees with their neighbors and to the local government, there is an emphasis on long-time residents as well as newcomers.  
Learn more at <https://www.welcomingamerica.org/programs/member-municipalities>.
- ✓ Create a "Safe Place" sign that the City, businesses and individuals could display. An example is included as **Attachment C**.
- ✓ Help promote community events focused on issues of diversity and inclusiveness. An example would be the Candlelight Vigil for All People held downtown on January 20<sup>th</sup>.
- ✓ Send out social media and press announcements about the recent Inclusive Proclamation and subsequent community conversations and actions.

- ✓ Partner with the faith communities and non-profit agencies in Kirkland to foster understanding and support for people in need and people of all ages, incomes and abilities.
- ✓ Kirkland Youth Council could join their Bellevue and Redmond counterparts at the Muslim Association of Puget Sound to learn more about the mosque.
- ✓ Create a follow up proclamation that addresses our Muslim neighbors specifically.
- ✓ Utilize the services of the Eastside Refugee and Immigrant Coalition (The director, Debbie Lacy, is a Kirkland resident.)  
Learn more at: <http://www.ericmembers.org/>

### **Examples of More Extensive Initiatives**

#### A. Turning Outward: The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation Community Conversations Model

The Harwood Institute is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that offers tools to organizations both public and private to build effective community. Their community conversations model is built upon the key premise that organizations must be turned outward, i.e. active and deliberate community engagement. Turning outward helps ensure that public knowledge is informing the work of the City. Key information to gain while engaging with the community includes people's aspirations and main concerns, as well as a better understanding about what diversity and inclusiveness may mean to them.

If the Harwood Institute or a similar organization were engaged, it would be important for the Council to define inclusive community efforts that address many different groups in Kirkland, including people of color, immigrants and Muslim communities.

Resources and services provided by The Harwood Institute including staff training and/or organizing community conversations, summits, or more complex engagement initiatives.

Learn more at <http://www.theharwoodinstitute.org/approach>.

#### B. Bellevue's Diversity Advantage Program Model

Bellevue's Diversity Advantage Program is reflective of Bellevue's vision statement, which states in part that "Bellevue Welcomes the World – Our Diversity is Our Strength." The Bellevue City Council adopted this program in 2014 to address the demographic shifts taking place in their community, including those related to age, place of birth, race and ethnicity, language, income, and disabilities.

Based on extensive community conversations Bellevue has developed six focus areas for the Diversity program:

- cultural competence

- human services
- public safety
- education
- economic development
- civic engagement

Bellevue's Diversity Advantage focuses both on internal systems and engaging the community. Internally, a new city staff position was created to focus on providing city departments with the resources and staff training needed. Externally, the city's new Diversity Outreach and Engagement Administrator focuses on working throughout the community to build partnerships.

In late 2016 the City formed the Bellevue Diversity Advisory Network. This group of residents meets monthly to provide counsel to the city.

Learn more at [http://www.bellevuewa.gov/cultural\\_diversity.htm](http://www.bellevuewa.gov/cultural_diversity.htm).

The ideas listed above are just a sampling of the possible steps that the City of Kirkland might take to put into action the City's values and to ensure a safe, welcoming, and inclusive Kirkland community. Based on feedback and discussion at the Council's retreat, staff will be prepared to return to Council at a future meeting with a proposed list of specific action steps.

Attachments

**PROCLAMATION**

**WHEREAS,** the population on the Eastside has grown rapidly since 2010, increasing by over 79,000 in the last six years; and

**WHEREAS,** 30% of these newcomers have arrived from places outside the United States; and

**WHEREAS,** more than one third of Eastside residents now speak a language other than English at home; and

**WHEREAS,** diversity is the lifeblood of our community, bringing fresh perspectives and new ideas, innovation and entrepreneurial spirit, leadership, and hard workers; and

**WHEREAS,** our success depends on ensuring that all our residents feel welcome here;

**NOW, THEREFORE, WE, THE MAYORS OF BELLEVUE, ISSAQUAH, KIRKLAND, REDMOND, AND SAMMAMISH, WASHINGTON,** proclaim September 16 through 25, 2016, as

**EASTSIDE WELCOMING WEEK**

in our cities and call on all our residents to join together to build stronger communities across the Eastside.



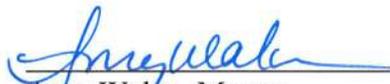
John Stokes, Mayor  
City of Bellevue

September 9, 2016  
Date



Fred Butler, Mayor  
City of Issaquah

Sep 9, 2016  
Date



Amy Walen, Mayor  
City of Kirkland

September 9, 2016  
Date



John Marchione, Mayor  
City of Redmond

September 9, 2016  
Date



Don Gerend, Mayor  
City of Sammamish

September 9, 2016  
Date



## A PROCLAMATION OF THE CITY OF KIRKLAND

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### Proclaiming Kirkland as a Safe, Inclusive and Welcoming City for all People

**WHEREAS**, Kirkland's vision statement describes the City as being a welcoming place to live, work and play, that highly values diversity and is respectful, fair, and inclusive, committed to providing neighborhoods and businesses that meet the needs of a variety of incomes, ages and life styles, with community engagement that creates a sense of belonging through shared values; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Kirkland is committed to protecting and serving everyone who resides in, works in, or visits Kirkland without discrimination based on race, religion, color, national origin, sex, age, income or economic status, political affiliation, military status, sexual orientation, or physical, mental or sensory ability; and

**WHEREAS**, Kirkland believes in the dignity, equality and constitutional and civil rights of all people, and will not tolerate hate, intolerance, discrimination, harassment or any behavior that creates fear, isolation or intimidation; and

**WHEREAS**, Kirkland's vibrancy and sense of community is stronger for our diversity and shared values of acceptance and respect; and

**WHEREAS**, the Kirkland City Council supports these principles and strives to reflect them in their actions as Kirkland's elected leaders; and

**WHEREAS**, Kirkland City employees also support these principles and strive to embody these ideals every day as they provide critical services such as, police, fire, parks, public works and much more in an inclusive and equitable manner to all residents, visitors and businesses in Kirkland;

**NOW, THEREFORE, I**, Amy Walen, Mayor of Kirkland, do hereby proclaim that the City of Kirkland is deeply committed to promoting a just society that respects and welcomes all people, direct City staff to assist the City Council in developing and implementing a program to communicate the City's values, and invite the community to come together to discuss and support the shared values of diversity and inclusion.

Signed this 3rd day of January, 2017

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Amy Walen, Mayor



A sign in Washington, D.C., says "No matter where you are from, we're glad you're our neighbor," in three languages. It's a message that began at a church in Harrisonburg, Va., and is spreading to communities across the country.

*Courtesy of Drew Schneider*

It's a simple sign. One message — "No matter where you are from, we're glad you're our neighbor." Three languages: Spanish, English and Arabic.