



Race and Equity Update: Assessment Report from Ivy Planning Group on City Workplace Culture and 2024-2025 Equity Action Plan

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www.cityofpaloalto.org

OVERVIEW

- Background
- Ivy Planning Group Review of Assessment:
 - Objectives
 - Methods
 - Findings and Key Themes
- Overview of Draft 2024-2025 Equity Action Plan

BACKGROUND

- Summer 2020: City Council adoption of a race and equity framework and ad hoc committees to explore topics related to policing and citywide diversity, equity, inclusion.
- November 2020: City Council adoption of 17 assignments as the initial workplan related to the City's race and equity work
- 2020 onward: Implementation with updates at Policy & Services Committee
- 2022: The City began working with Ivy Planning Group for a Workplace Assessment
- 2024: Based on the Workplace Assessment and other City Council direction, staff compiled a 2024-2025 Action Plan

RACE & EQUITY MISSION STATEMENT

Adopted in November 2020

Equity Mission Statement: The City of Palo Alto is committed to creating a respectful, fair, and professional workplace and city. We will identify prejudices, eliminate inequities, welcome many perspectives, and use a collaborative approach to create an environment that works for everyone. The City's commitment to achieve equity in Palo Alto is the shared responsibility of our residents, organizations, governments, and other institutions.

- Founded in 1990
- Management consulting and training firm
- Focus on diversity and inclusion as a workforce, workplace and marketplace opportunity

Recognized DEI industry leader

- Ivy's co-founders named Top 25 Consultants by *Consulting Magazine*
- Named 2011 Diversity Leader and Diversity Pioneer by *Profiles in Diversity*
- 2018 *Innovations in Diversity Award* for Ivy's Power of Difference Pipeline

The Best of the Best Pick IVY.



DRAFT DEIB Assessment Executive Summary and Blueprint

Prepared by Ivy Planning Group
March 22, 2024



Assessment Objectives and Next Steps

- ▶ Examine and assess the workforce, workplace, and marketplace performance through a diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) lens.
- ▶ Identify opportunities for the City of Palo Alto to achieve a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace, and to enhance the City's ability to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse community.
- ▶ Inform the DEIB Blueprint to drive accountability and change the city has committed to.

Assessment Methods: Qualitative



Document Review

Understand policies and procedures on paper, as they are designed and intended to work. Ivy requested documents related to recruiting, hiring, onboarding, career planning, promotion, performance management, compensation and rewards, DEIB programs, procurement, community engagement, marketing, etc.



29 Interviews

August 2022; Jan 2023; May-June 2023

Conversations with City Council members, leaders, and process owners, to learn about:

- Our organization’s values and goals; how DEIB fits in
- Leader experiences in their own careers, leading others, etc.
- How our policies and procedures are working in practice; how this compares to design and intentions

All 7 City Council members were invited to participate in an interview, and Ivy was able to speak with 6.



28 Focus Groups

187 Participants

July-August 2023

Groups were defined by demographics, and all were asked the same questions. Participation was voluntary and confidential. Selection was random within each demographic group (except *). Focus group participation was about 29% of full capacity, which is lower than Ivy's typical rate of 50% in similar assessments.

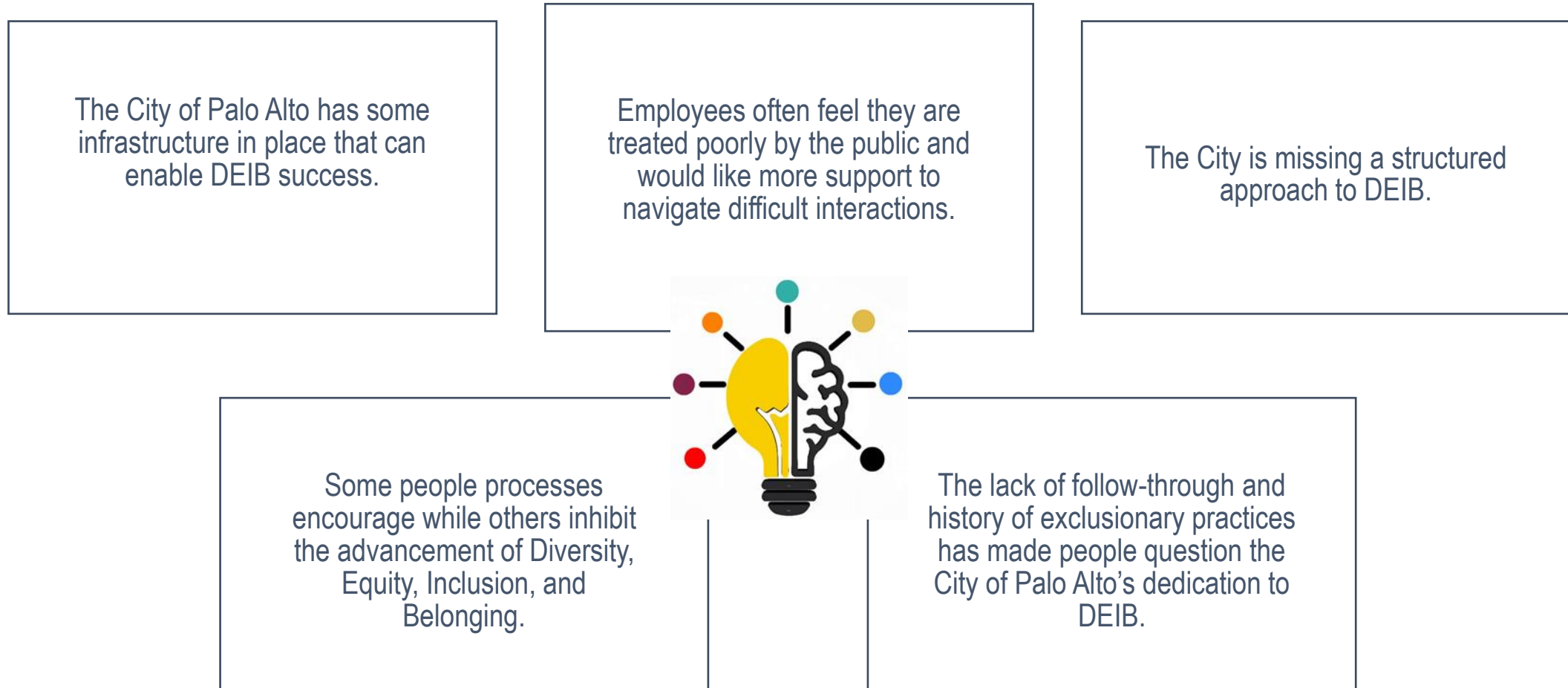
- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| Individual contributors: | Individual Contributors – Sworn Police: | People leaders: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Asian men• Asian women & non-binary• Black and Other POC men• Black and Other POC women & non-binary• Hispanic/Latino men• Hispanic/Latino women & non-binary• White men• White women & non-binary | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Asian & Black men• Hispanic/Latino men• Hispanic/Latino women & non-binary• White men• White women & non-binary | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• POC men• POC women & non-binary• White men• White women & non-binary• Sworn Fire• Sworn Police |
| | Individual Contributors – Sworn Fire: | Other Groups: |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Asian & Black men• Hispanic/Latino men• POC women & non-binary• White men | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• HR• Gen X, Baby Boomers• Millennials, Gen Z |
| | | *Self-identify and volunteer: |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• LGBTQ+ & allies• People with disabilities & allies |



Analysis Methods

- Evaluated on-paper policies through a DEIB lens
- Categorized participant statements by categories using content analysis
- Identified themes and similarities/differences by demographics
- Selected “notable quoteables” to illustrate themes; lightly edited for length and confidentiality

5 Key Themes



Key Theme #1

The City of Palo Alto has some infrastructure in place that can enable DEIB success.

Some leaders speak effectively on the value of diverse perspectives and see their role as advocates.	<p>City Council Members, supervisors, and executive leaders communicate the value diverse perspectives bring to informed decision-making. Some reflected an understanding that cultivating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive culture is pivotal in attracting and retaining employees.</p> <p>When asked to describe their role and responsibility for advancing DEIB, many emphasized the importance of empowering employees and hearing different perspectives.</p>
Many employees conveyed the importance of DEIB and want more dialogue and resources.	<p>Several employees discussed how reflecting the demographics of the community and fostering a welcoming, inclusive environment enhances the City’s ability to serve residents effectively.</p> <p>Employees are eager for the opportunity to talk about uncomfortable topics related to race, gender, and other dimensions of diversity and would like more training to advance DEIB in their departments.</p>
The City has engaged in meaningful work in the community to advance DEIB.	<p>From inclusive playgrounds to creating new policies at the Library that enable people to choose their preferred name, the City has made a meaningful effort to demonstrate social responsibility, engage the community, and be philanthropic. There can be a greater return on these investments if the City decides to be more targeted in its approach.</p>

Key Theme #2

Employees often feel they are treated poorly by the public and would like more support to navigate difficult interactions.

Employees not getting the support they need to work with difficult members of the public.

Individuals across all levels of the City say community members often mistreat them. There is a perception that this level of mistreatment is an expectation in their roles and may also be tied to socioeconomic differences.

Many suggested that higher-level employees do not fully understand the emotional toll and challenges employees face when dealing with the public and that citizens can often be valued over staff. There is an opportunity for the City leadership to set better boundaries with the public on how staff can be treated and prioritize their well-being.

Women and nonbinary individuals, People of Color, People with Disabilities, and those who identify as LGBTQ+ expressed experiencing more harm from Palo Alto community members.

Police would like more vocal and visible support from City leadership and the community.

Some members of the Palo Alto Police Department (PAPD) feel their relationship with the public is strained due to mistrust from the community and intense scrutiny in the media. Some officers feel this has impacted their job satisfaction and overall effectiveness and has deterred qualified applicants from applying.

Key Theme #3

The City is missing a structured approach to DEIB.

Employees do not have clear responsibilities or individual performance measures for DEIB.	<p>Race and Equity efforts were launched by City Council in June of 2020 through actions including a public commitment to confronting systemic racism and bias, adopting a Resolution affirming that Black lives matter and approving a Race & Equity Framework, action plan, and mission statement. Several initiatives and programs were also taken on by various departments and committees throughout the City, including, but not limited to, the Library, Children's Theater, Palo Alto Junior Museum & Zoo, Art Center, Palo Alto Police Department, Human Relations Commission, and City Council's Policy and Services Committee. In October of 2023 the City hired it's first Inclusion and Equity Manager.</p> <p>Despite the previous work, many leaders (i.e., supervisors and executives) say there are no structures to hold them accountable for DEIB. Some recommended including DEIB performance metrics. At all levels of the organization, there is a need to understand individual responsibilities around DEIB.</p>
The City can make a stronger demonstration of its commitment to DEIB.	<p>The City Council's 2023 priorities and the Equity Mission Statement use softer language to refer to diversity and inclusion (i.e., "welcome many perspectives," putting DEIB efforts under the title "Community Health and Safety").</p> <p>Employees across the City, especially women and non-binary individuals, feel they are doing DEIB work without the City Council's or executive leadership's support.</p>
Many City staff are unaware of DEIB efforts.	<p>Many indicated that they had not yet seen the City's Equity Mission statement and were not aware of the DEIB efforts happening with the City. There is an opportunity to better communicate what the City is trying to achieve regarding DEIB.</p>

Key Theme #4

Some people processes encourage while others inhibit the advancement of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging.

With the existing strong value proposition, there is an opportunity to create better strategies for recruiting through a diversity lens.	<p>Employees shared that they are attracted to work for the City for various reasons, including environmental leadership, employee benefits, and stated or demonstrated inclusion of different aspects of their identity (gender, race, LGBTQ+).</p> <p>There is not a formal diversity recruiting strategy or metrics in place to ensure diverse applicant pools. Strategies such as career fairs and internships have been sparsely used and often unsuccessful. Interview and focus group feedback suggested the City could do a better job actively recruiting local talent and establishing specific DEIB recruitment strategies.</p>
Talent assessment best practices are available, yet many employees distrust the interview process and believe bias is prevalent.	<p>According to process owners, best DEIB practices are used in the interview process, including; diverse interview panels, using a standard set of questions for each candidate, and having questions reviewed by the hiring manager and subject matter experts.</p> <p>Some say that candidate evaluations are unstructured and based mostly on popularity and reputation. Many believe the City should teach how to mitigate bias when conducting and scoring interviews.</p>
Pathways for advancement are unclear.	<p>People of Color were most likely to say that the promotion process lacks transparency. Employees mentioned not knowing how to get a position and what they should focus on for improvement.</p> <p>Performance appraisal processes are strong on paper, but many employees shared that performance reviews are inadequate.</p>

Key Theme #5

The lack of follow-through and history of exclusionary practices has made people question the City's dedication to DEIB

Past events are causing some employees to be distrustful of current DEIB efforts.

Some past harm was not addressed adequately and still influences how the City of Palo Alto views DEIB work. Some of these incidents include members of the Police suing the City for the Black Lives Matter mural, past micro-aggressions, and culturally significant events not getting the attention many desire. These past events have resulted in a lack of trust that DEIB efforts are genuine.

Lack of follow through is causing frustration.

Employees across many departments are frustrated that little action has taken place, given the number of plans, assessments, and commitments the City has made. There is a perception that the City of Palo Alto's focus on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging stems from external pressure rather than from a sincere dedication to DEIB.

Employees with disabilities and allies were vocal in calling for improvement and better follow-through. People of Color expressed an increased burden to lead DEIB initiatives.

The history of exclusionary housing practices had a far-reaching impact.

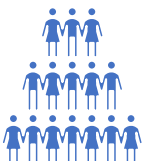
The Palo Alto community and Federal Housing Administration's history of exclusionary and discriminatory housing practices has impacted who can and can't live in the City of Palo Alto. The City is challenged with addressing the exclusion that has occurred and creating new affordable housing policies that improve diversity and welcome all.

DRAFT DEIB Blueprint

City of Palo Alto Equity Mission Statement

The City of Palo Alto is committed to creating a respectful, fair, and professional workplace and city. We will identify gaps, eliminate inequities, welcome many perspectives, and use a collaborative approach to create an environment that works for everyone. The City’s commitment to achieve equity in Palo Alto is the shared responsibility of our residents, organizations, governments, and other institutions.

City of Palo Alto DRAFT DEIB Goals



DEIB INFRASTRUCTURE	WORKFORCE	WORKPLACE	COMMUNITY
The City of Palo Alto has a formal and structured DEIB effort that is well communicated and measured consistent with other strategic initiatives.	The City of Palo Alto has a high-performing, diverse, and inclusive workforce at all levels and across all roles.	The City of Palo Alto has a safe and inclusive culture that values communication, transparency, feedback, and accountability in which every employee is treated fairly and with dignity and respect.	The City of Palo Alto will leverage DEIB to better serve the City’s residents and partner with diverse community partners and suppliers.



DEIB INFRASTRUCTURE

GOAL

The City of Palo Alto has a formal and structured DEIB effort that is well communicated and measured consistent with other strategic initiatives.

STRATEGY	ACTIONS
1. Formalize DEIB roles, responsibilities, and accountability.	<div><div>a.</div><div>b.</div><div>c.</div><div>d.</div><div>e.</div><div>f.</div></div> <p>Every department should have 3 DEIB goals, which include the following: Access to development opportunities, employee satisfaction, surveys/assessments measuring employees’ sense of belonging and psychological safety, inclusive leadership (Active listening, promoting psychological safety, empathy, inclusion decision-making, conflict resolution, etc.), fostering a culture of belonging (provide resources and support for employees to share their experiences and perspectives).</p> <p>Identify and incorporate DEIB responsibilities into existing functions and create a behavioral framework for DEIA that identifies the necessary behaviors for different roles.</p> <p>Establish affinity groups (such as Employee Resource Groups (ERGs), committees, or roundtable discussions) that provide inclusion recommendations for serving City staff and education for their respective groups.</p> <p>Define roles and responsibilities in implementing the DEIB strategy; include City Council and Human Relations Commission.</p> <p>Continue implementing and updating the recommendations of the Black and Brown History and Current Experience report and any similar reports.</p> <p>Embed DEIB into the current performance review process.</p>
2. Increase communication on DEIB.	<div><div>a.</div><div>b.</div><div>c.</div><div>d.</div><div>e.</div></div> <p>Develop a DEIB annual report that reflects progress against DEIB goals, accomplishments, and activities and gives recognition to departments or teams following the DEIB goals and strategies.</p> <p>Add DEIB updates to existing forms of communication, including the employee newsletter, all-hands and manager-specific meetings, and individual notes from the City manager.</p> <p>Create an avenue for receiving feedback on DEIB from City Staff at all levels and departments (e.g., DEIB-specific 360-degree assessment, DEIB office hours, DEIB hotline, or email address).</p> <p>Require leaders to communicate and report on their DEIB progress against their respective DEIB operational plans (See Action 1a).</p> <p>Explicitly state DEIB as one of the City’s core values.</p>
3. Build staff and public DEIB knowledge, skills, and abilities.	<div><div>a.</div><div>b.</div></div> <p>Create an education roadmap by level and function to build the capacity of all employees to execute the DEIB strategy, including; requiring all interviewers and panel members to participate in training on fair hiring practices, removing bias and hiring through a DEIB lens. Create trainings that are accessible, comprehensive, interactive, and personal (Potential topics: building cultural competency, pronouns and creating inclusive language, unconscious bias, and allyship).</p> <p>Develop and conduct a series of DEIB educational offerings for the public, such as Diversity Dialogues, to position the City as a leader or partner in building inclusive communities and healing, recovery, and reconciliation from historical and current social issues.</p>



WORKFORCE

GOAL

The City of Palo Alto has a high-performing, diverse, and inclusive workforce at all levels and across all roles.

STRATEGY	ACTIONS
1. Create and Implement a DEI Recruiting Strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Incorporate DEIB behavioral expectations into job requirements, interview questions, and evaluation criteria.b. Track demographic data (e.g., race/ethnicity & gender) on the applicant phase (e.g., applicants → qualified → referred → interviewed → hired) and determine where, if any, gaps exist by demographic in the City's recruiting and hiring process to make there is not bias in the hiring process.c. Provide recruiters with education and resources for recruiting through a diversity lens.d. Utilize affinity groups (see DEI Infrastructure Strategy 1, Action c) to provide recommendations for recruiting diverse talent.e. Establish a definition of what it means to have a diverse pool.f. Recruit interview panel diversity.
2. Ensure human resource systems are inclusive and equitable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Update HR policies, practices, and systems to ensure they are inclusive, use inclusive language, and are fair (e.g., Create opportunities for employees and the public to identify as non-binary, trans, or genderqueer and to choose their pronouns in employment and City documents; bargain with labor groups to expand the definition of disability to include temporary and invisible disabilities and reinstatement of short-term disability coverage).b. Review policies for converting part-time roles to full-time to ensure they do not disproportionately and negatively impact underrepresented groups. Update policy to allow for employees to work with HR in partnership with their supervisors to receive reasonable accommodations.c. Solicit employee input to identify and implement solutions that address the inclusion needs of specific groups (e.g., gender-neutral bathrooms, accessibility issues, etc.).
3. Ensure fair and equitable systems for hiring and promoting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Assess the equity of all talent management processes. Conduct data analysis to determine the equity of talent management systems processes, including hiring, promotion, compensation, and separation.b. Provide appropriate levels of leadership (e.g., department leaders) with access to the demographic data of their division to allow for action planning to identify and address any inequities by demographic.c. Further define and communicate employee career paths by function/department; require all employees to have individual development plans to make sure employees are fairly developed.d. Develop tools and approaches to increase the likelihood of unbiased and fair selection for hiring, promotions, L&D opportunities, and other key points of access to opportunity (e.g., select anti-bias ambassadors who are empowered to speak up when they observe unconscious bias impacting decisions).

The City of Palo Alto has a safe and inclusive culture that values communication, transparency, feedback, and accountability in which every employee is treated fairly and with dignity and respect

STRATEGY	ACTIONS
1. Update and establish systems, policies, and practices that center the employee experience.	<div><div>a.</div><div>Review benefits to ensure they do not disproportionately and negatively impact underrepresented groups (e.g., consider expanding transportation benefits to allow more employees to access them).</div><div>b.</div><div>Highlight and communicate department achievements and success stories across the City quarterly.</div><div>c.</div><div>Create and communicate an internal policy for when City staff are mistreated by the public. The policy should highlight the importance of employee safety.</div><div>d.</div><div>Create affordable housing for city staff to live in the City of Palo Alto.</div></div>
2. Build consistent performance evaluation.	<div><div>a.</div><div>Create more consistency in how promotions are decided by documenting and sharing promotion policies, procedures, and criteria for advancement.</div><div>b.</div><div>Provide coaching and development for supervisors and leaders who are underperforming on leading their diverse teams.</div><div>c.</div><div>Ensure position reclassification policies are consistently communicated, interpreted, and applied.</div></div>
3. Imbed DEIB into the culture of the City.	<div><div>a.</div><div>Break apart employee survey data by demographic. Require department leaders to include plans to close gaps by the differences identified as part of their operational plans.</div><div>b.</div><div>Establish <i>building more high-quality relationships across difference (age, race, gender)</i> as a leadership expectation.</div></div>



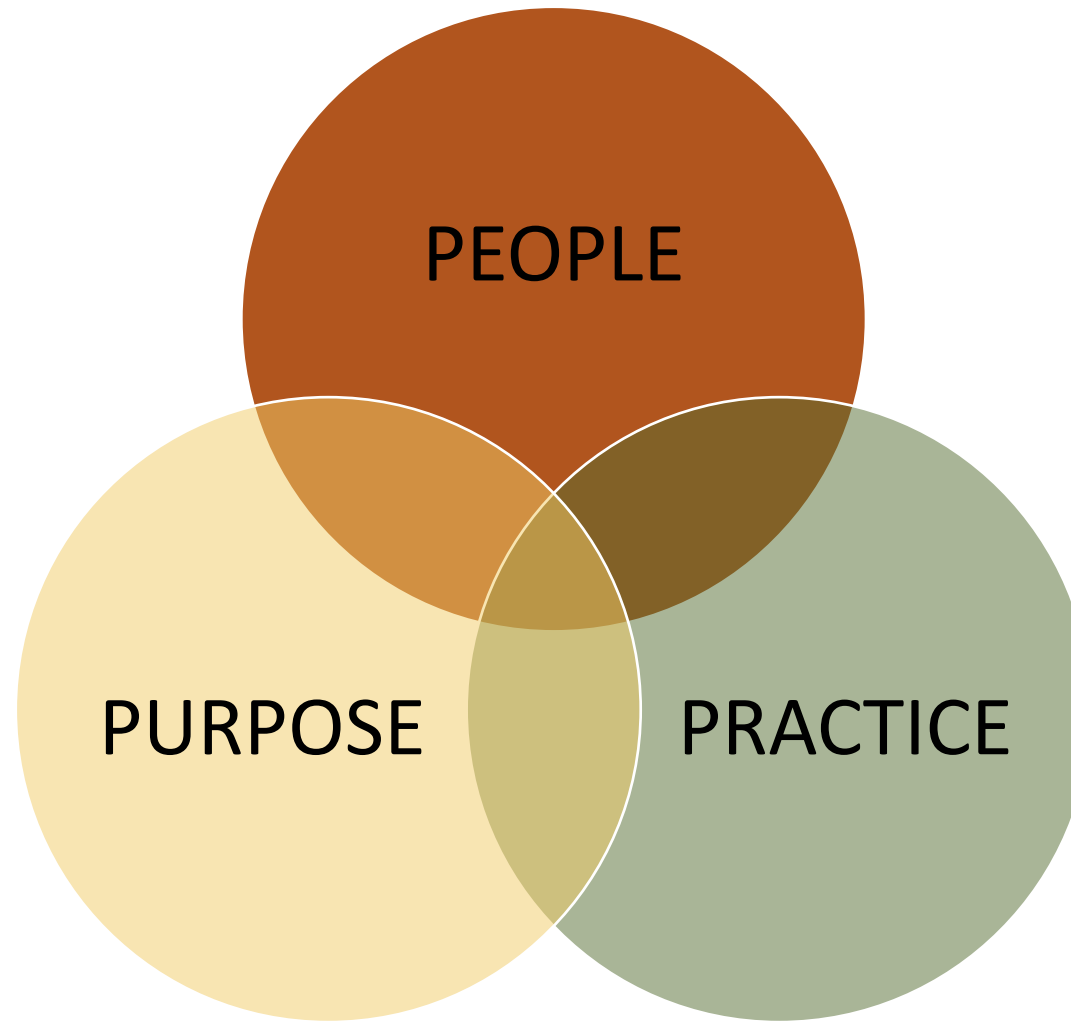
COMMUNITY

GOAL

The City of Palo Alto will leverage DEIB to better serve the City's residents and partner with diverse community partners and suppliers

STRATEGY	ACTIONS
1. Increase supplier diversity efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Establish supplier diversity vision statement and plan and identify how the current disadvantaged business enterprise (DBE) programs support larger supplier diversity efforts.b. Determine if existing DBE participation goals for U.S. Department of Transportation and Federal Aviation Administration-assisted contracts are being met and establish a plan to enhance DBE participation where needed.c. Consider partnering with peer agencies to create a "common app" that allows suppliers to complete paperwork one time that registers them to do business with all agencies.d. Simplify the procurement process and identify barriers to entry.
2. Intentional outreach to diverse communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Understand existing language barriers with the public. Specifically, discover what departments and teams need which specific language translation services to better serve the residents of Palo Alto.b. Create tools and resources on the City of Palo Alto's website for DBE for new, small, and minority-owned businesses looking to offer their services to residents.c. Measure the impact of current community engagement efforts and create goals for which specific communities the City wants to better serve.d. Allow all residents to provide feedback to the City in their language of choice.e. Create more opportunities for feedback from racially diverse and historically marginalized community members by having a suggestion box at every office that has visitors from the public (e.g., libraries, police and fire departments, recreation center, etc.). Let people know that their feedback was received and incorporate feedback into specific outreach initiatives and programs.f. Create a leadership development program that builds communication between diverse leaders and connects leaders with the top issues facing the City of Palo Alto.
3. Build stronger relationships between City staff and the public.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Host a series of public events that let residents get to know different departments and employees working for the City.b. Create a campaign that highlights and recognizes City Staff to the public of Palo Alto.c. Have incentives to encourage city staff to volunteer within the City of Palo Alto to develop new skills and create stronger community connections.d. Create a summer youth employment program that provides opportunities for young people to earn money while gaining meaningful work experience and building relationships with people who work in the City of Palo Alto.

Positive Work Environment: People, Purpose, Practice



Overview of Draft 2024-2025 Equity Action Plan

Objective 1: Cultivating Experiences and Appreciation

Cultivating Experiences and Appreciation: People	
Actions	
1.1	Share information about specific cultural and heritage months and holidays
Cultivating Experiences and Appreciation: Purpose	
Actions	
1.2	Review Citywide events through an inclusion and equity lens; identify gaps
Cultivating Experiences and Appreciation: Practice	
Actions	
1.3	BCC Related: Create a process that includes the HRC for annual calendar setting related to holidays and heritage months
1.4	Annually report progress on DEIB goals, accomplishments, and activities especially giving recognition to departments or teams advancing DEIB strategies (can be combined with other update reports)
1.5	Establish resources for difficult interactions between City staff and the public. The resources should highlight the importance of de-escalation as well as employee safety and support
1.6	Understand existing language barriers with the public. Assess which departments need translation services the most to better serve the public
1.7	Allow all residents to provide feedback to the City in their language of choice

Overview of Draft 2024-2025 Equity Action Plan

Objective 2: Fostering an Inclusive Environment

	Fostering an Inclusive Environment: People
	Actions
2.1	Share DEIB values with New Employees at New Employee Orientation in context of workplace culture
2.2	Conduct Quarterly Interactive DEIB Workshop Trainings for All Employees
2.3	Establish a staff DEIB Committee
2.4	Explore options related to affordable housing for City staff to live in the City of Palo Alto

	Fostering an Inclusive Environment: Purpose
	Actions
2.5	Finalize process for annual City staff demographic data reporting; release the first report online
2.6	Finalize process for annual City Board, Committee, and Commission member demographic data reporting; release the report online
2.7	Break apart employee survey data by demographic(s) and identify any differences; work with department directors to address differences identified
	Fostering an Inclusive Environment: Practice
	Actions
2.8	Create more diverse interview panels (tools and policies)
2.9	Expand demographic data collection related to candidates
2.10	Expand recruitment efforts to attract diverse talent
2.11	Further define and communicate employee career paths by function/department; encourage all employees to have individual development plans to make sure employees are fairly developed

Overview of Draft 2024-2025 Equity Action Plan

Objective 3: Applying an Equity Lens

Applying an Equity Lens (Strategic Review of the Organization through an Equity Lens): People	
	<i>Actions</i>
3.1	Create a space/process for employees to share input and suggest solutions in areas where they see current barriers related to the inclusion needs of specific groups (e.g., gender-neutral bathrooms, accessibility, etc.)
3.2	Begin exploration and understanding of pronoun usage for the City of Palo Alto organization
Applying an Equity Lens (Strategic Review of the Organization through an Equity Lens): Purpose	
	<i>Actions</i>
3.3	Begin to partner with the HRC to work with other commissions to apply an equity lens to their work (will further define with the HRC)
3.4	Finalize CEDAW Ordinance and Present it to the City Council for Adoption

Applying an Equity Lens (Strategic Review of the Organization through an Equity Lens): Practice	
	<i>Actions</i>
3.5	Develop a best practices protocol for writing policies in alignment with the City's inclusive language standards and equity lens. These best practices protocols will be incorporated into Policy 1-01 MGR which establishes guidelines for any City Department writing or revising policies. Once developed the HR team in conjunction with City Departments will plan a five-year review cycle to bring all policies into alignment with these best practices.
3.6	If identified, then begin to implement solutions that address the inclusion needs of specific groups (e.g., gender-neutral bathrooms, accessibility, etc.)
3.7	Coordinate with City departments to learn how they are supporting citywide DEIB efforts
3.8	Work with an external firm to begin analysis and present analytical summary of the RIPA (Racial Identity Profiling Act) Police data



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