

City of Piedmont  
COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

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DATE: February 16, 2021

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Sara Lillevand, City Administrator

SUBJECT: Update on the City’s Commitment to Actively Supporting a More Equitable and Less Biased Community

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BACKGROUND

At its August 3, 2020 meeting, the City Council acknowledged the existence of and unequivocally rejected racism in Piedmont. [The Council also made a public commitment to engage in ongoing work to identify and eliminate systemic causes of racial disparity.](#)

This work was imagined to involve engaging in community conversations about policing in Piedmont; examining and owning the City’s history; as well as a careful review of City missions, values, goals, policies, procedures, and ordinances through the lens of anti-racism.

Engaging in Community Conversations about Policing in Piedmont

As do all City departments, the Piedmont Police Department prioritizes engaging with the community on a spectrum of activities. From day-to-day actions to significant departmental programs, the police department has demonstrated that engaging in community conversations about policing in Piedmont continues to be a priority, as it was prior to the recent national awakening of important policing, social justice and equity conversations. The following are examples of the department’s work in this space:

**Procedural Justice and Implicit Bias Training and Dialogue 2017**

Police Officers in Piedmont have been required to attend procedural justice training which was delivered in 2014 and implicit bias/procedural justice training delivered in 2017. The department extended invitations to members of the Piedmont Appreciating Diversity Committee (PADC) and Piedmont Unified School District (PUSD) to sit in on one of the implicit bias training deliveries with command staff. Representatives of PADC and PUSD accepted the invitation which afforded all the opportunity to have important dialogue.

**Tobacco Grant/ Juvenile Officer Community Engagement 2018 – Present**

PUSD Superintendent Randall Booker and Chief Jeremy Bowers engaged in numerous meetings, with students, PUSD staff, parents and stakeholder groups relative to the

Juvenile Officer Position and Tobacco Grant opportunity. The goal of the public engagement process was to provide an overview of the opportunity, answer questions and seek feedback. Through these inclusive efforts, the City was able to craft a program which took into account various perspectives and concerns about a police officer being housed on PUSD facilities. The Juvenile Officer Position was created which decoupled the officer from always being on campus to being a trained, single point of contact for PUSD staff, students, and parents on an as-needed basis. In addition, the department advocated and worked to obtain funding taken from the City's grant award in the amount of \$50,000.00 to provide Health Education funding for the PUSD.

### **Public Safety Camera Program Outreach 2018 - 2019**

The department, in collaboration with the Public Safety Committee, engaged in community and neighborhood meetings to provide information, listen to concerns, and provide an opportunity for the public to ask questions about the proposed Public Safety Camera Program. The department also sent out a community-wide survey to determine the level of support of the proposed program.

### **Piedmont Police Department Strategic Plan 2020 - 2021**

The Piedmont Police Department initiated plans for a three-year update to its strategic plan in 2020. The department sought the input of a cross-section of community members, faith-based leaders, representatives of community-based organizations and stakeholder groups, educators, and city employees to inform the efforts of producing a plan to guide efforts to exemplify the best of policing.

The development of the three-year strategic plan was a multi-step project that at its inception sought to gather a wide spectrum of input organized during several focus group sessions which included police department staff, other City employees, and the following stakeholders:

- Piedmont League of Women Voters
- Piedmont Public Safety Committee
- Piedmont Seniors
- Piedmont Anti-Racist Diversity Committee (PADC)
- Piedmont Racial Equity Campaign (PREC)
- Corpus Christi Church
- Piedmont Community Church
- Kehilla Synagogue
- Piedmont Unified School District
- Neighborhood Representatives

Chief Jeremy Bowers recently accepted an invitation to participate on a panel discussion hosted by PADC, PREC, and the League of Women Voters of Piedmont, entitled "Reimagining Public Safety: Can Surveillance Be A Fair & Effective Tool?" The Department looks forward to continuing to engage in community conversations about policing in Piedmont.

## EXAMINING AND OWNING PIEDMONT’S HISTORY

The City’s management team has begun ongoing work with Cornelia Sylvester of Bay Area Coaching to understand bias and the historical role racism has played in Piedmont and the community at large in an effort to better lead a city which is a safe, welcoming, and equitable place for all people.

Next concrete steps in this area include updating the history page on the City’s website to include information on the Native American history of the area as well as information on the treatment of African Americans and other racial minorities in Piedmont. The City also intends to move forward with public acknowledgement and an apology for the abhorrent treatment Sidney Dearing and his family received in 1924 which may include a historical marker in the redwood grove where Wildwood and Magnolia Avenues meet.

## REVIEW OF CITY MISSIONS, VALUES, GOALS, POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND ORDINANCES THROUGH THE LENS OF ANTI-RACISM.

As referenced above, internal facilitated work has begun to facilitate staff discussions and assist City of Piedmont Administration in developing goals and pathways to support a more equitable and less biased Piedmont community.

Specifically, Ms. Sylvester’s charge is to provide guidance to the City of Piedmont leadership team on the following:

1. Examination of the City of Piedmont’s history;
2. Review of City policies, procedures, ordinances, values, goals, and mission through an anti-racism lens;
3. Framework for future community conversations

City leadership continues to work collaboratively with the Piedmont Anti-Racism and Diversity Committee (PADC) and has engaged in significant dialogue with the Piedmont Racial Equity Campaign (PREC) particularly in the areas of housing and policing.

## HUMAN RESOURCES

Staff will continue to review, update and improve our recruitment and hiring practices. The list below outlines initial efforts by Human Resources Administrator Stacy Jennings.

- Equal Employment Opportunity statement added to our website.  
<https://piedmont.casellehire.com/jobs/>
- In all recruitment advertising, we have added, “The City of Piedmont is an EOE employer and is seeking a diverse candidate pool for this employment opportunity.”

- We now post our open employment opportunities with a diversity boost through Careers in Government, where our jobs are advertised with a wide array of leading diversity job sites to ensure the maximum exposure to a diverse pool of top qualified candidates: National Diversity Network, African American Job Network, Asian Job Network, disABILITY Job Network, Latino Job Network, Retirement Job Network, LGBT Job Network, Womens Job Network and Veteran Job Network. Additionally, the social media network through Careers in Government (Twitter, Facebook, Linked In and Instagram) utilizes diversity hashtags and tags diversity groups and associations on their social media posts.
- EEO information is hidden from supervisor during review of applications.
- SB1343 training (sexual harassment and discrimination) for all non-supervisory employees was completed by existing employees before 12/31/2020, and added to the onboarding system for new hires going forward.

### FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Fire Department will be hosting a series of virtual training events specifically designed for firefighters to help improve the cultural awareness and safety within the fire service, and especially within fire stations. These sessions will take place on March 5, 9, and 19. Interim Chief Mike Despain has extended an invitation to our regional partners to participate in these trainings at no cost.

### SUMMARY

The City is at the beginning of a long and important journey. As the League of California Cities Board of Directors says in their statement on Equity and Justice for all, “Racial bias has been ingrained in our institutions for decades. It is time instead to embed equity and justice into the fabric of those same institutions. As local government leaders, it is our responsibility to drive the change and accountability that we need to see throughout our society.”