



Mayor Murray's Action Plan



LGBTQ Task Force

INTRODUCTION

The City of Seattle is proud to serve Seattle's strong and historic lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) community. The LGBTQ community is made up of a broad diversity of groups and individuals—people from many backgrounds, with different stories, lifestyles, incomes, housing statuses, and other factors. The community has long fought for the right to be treated equally by the law, for the ability to navigate the city's neighborhoods safely and confidently, for the opportunity to earn a living wage, and to be able to find a safe place to call home.

The City of Seattle also has a history of serving its LGBTQ workforce. In 2011, the City began to offer transgender-oriented medical benefits to its employees, becoming one of the first municipalities in the country to do so. Before the so-called Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) was repealed, City officials signed an amicus curiae brief denouncing DOMA and advocating for marriage equality. The City supports the civic engagement of the LGBTQ community through the Seattle LGBT Commission and continues to engage with LGBTQ community members both within its workforce and throughout Seattle.

While Seattle celebrates and supports the LGBTQ community, there is a sense that certain neighborhoods—in particular those with a rich LGBTQ history and presence—are becoming more diverse, more densely populated, and, in turn, less understanding of Seattle's many LGBTQ communities. Many people feel unsafe or out of place in neighborhoods in which they once felt at home. As efforts to secure equal rights have been increasingly successful, the LGBTQ community is turning to a more cultural focus—working to ensure that their neighbors understand and respect the community's place in Seattle.

Mayor Ed Murray assembled the LGBTQ Task Force to address a rise in reported bias crimes and verbal attacks perpetrated against LGBTQ people, as well as a general and increasing sense of danger among members of the LGBTQ community in Seattle. The Task Force worked to develop a comprehensive set of recommendations aimed at making Seattle safer and more welcoming to the LGBTQ community. These recommendations were organized into four focus areas: Public Safety, LGBTQ Youth, the Built Environment, and Public Understanding. This action plan serves as a response to those recommendations, and provides a meaningful path forward toward better inclusion and understanding of the LGBTQ community.

Many challenges remain. Across the country, and in our region, LGBTQ people of color remain more likely to experience barriers to quality of life, safety, health, and economic well-being. Transgender women of color face higher risk of these, and also of experiencing violence, homelessness, harassment, and unemployment. The City will draw on the success of its Race and Social Justice Initiative and the newly formed Gender Justice Project within the Office for Civil Rights, to ensure that the City is inclusive of the experiences and needs of transgender people and LGBTQ communities of color.

LGBTQ seniors face a unique set of obstacles in their elder years. According to recent studies, LGBTQ seniors experience barriers accessing adequate healthcare, difficulty ensuring financial security, and discrimination in jobs and housing. LGBTQ seniors often feel isolated and in need of community, and many find themselves effectively forced back into the closet as life-long social and institutional supports decrease. The City will consider these unique needs in its delivery of services to seniors.

Nearly 40 percent of homeless youth identify as LGBTQ. Transgender and gender nonconforming youth are at an elevated risk for violence, both in society at large and throughout the emergency housing system. The City will continue its work in concert with the community to combat youth homelessness, while implementing new procedures and best practices to address the specific needs of LGBTQ youth. The City will strive to improve the experience of this population in accessing services, and work toward proven solutions to ending youth homelessness.

Finally, the City will work to ensure that its neighborhoods are safe, welcoming, and thriving urban centers, where all people can find adequate housing and feel like equal members of the Seattle community. The Seattle Police Department, under the progressive leadership of Chief O'Toole, will continue its existing work to implement programs and training to ensure that officers are able to provide appropriate and respectful service to all members of the community, and to keep building trust with the LGBTQ community.

Through creative urban interventions, the support of community efforts and programming, and an enhanced commitment to improving public and institutional understanding of the LGBTQ community, the City is working to create an equitable sense of place that honors both Seattle's history and future.

PUBLIC SAFETY

SUPPORT COMMUNITY-BASED EFFORTS TO ADDRESS VIOLENCE AND INTOLERANCE AND IMPROVE SPD'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE LGBTQ COMMUNITY

Recommendations from the Task Force

The Task Force asked the City to support community-based efforts to address violence and intolerance, and to continue the work being undertaken to improve the understanding and trust between the Seattle Police Department and members of the LGBTQ community. The City will address the three specific recommendations as follows.

Support community-based responses to violence and intolerance.

The Department of Neighborhoods will conduct targeted outreach to LGBTQ organizations for the remaining Neighborhood Matching Fund granting cycle in 2015. Additionally, the Mayor will request an additional allocation in the 2016 budget to the NMF to support this effort over the coming year.

The LGBTQ community itself often is home to organizations and individuals with promising ideas for programs to address the conditions as they exist on the ground. These are often discussed and proposed, but there is not always funding available to help bring these projects into reality, where they can make a real difference in the lives of members of the community.

The City of Seattle does, however, provide funding already for a variety of LGBTQ community projects and nonprofit service providers through the Department of Neighborhoods Neighborhood Matching Fund (NMF). The NMF recently provided funding for the 2015 Trans Pride rally and for the Bayan Pacific Northwest's self-defense and wellness program. Funds awarded through the NMF must be matched by the community through volunteer labor, cash, or donated goods and professional services.

Evaluate Seattle Police Department cultural competency trainings for effectiveness.

The Seattle Police Department will develop an evaluation procedure to measure the efficacy of its academy and advanced-officer trainings on LGBTQ cultural competency and implicit bias.

All members of the community are entitled to just and effective service from law enforcement agencies. The Seattle Police Department (SPD) conducts LGBTQ competency trainings to provide officers with the tools and critical thinking skills to interact with the LGBTQ community effectively, fairly, and courteously—all with the goal of improving relations and building trust between police and the LGBTQ community. An evaluation of the trainings' efficacy will continue building trust between SPD and the LGBTQ community.

Conduct an analysis of existing non-SPD reporting efforts.

The Human Services Department will evaluate the feasibility of investing in and/or partnering with community-based efforts to collect and report incidences of hate-based harassment and assault in the LGBTQ community.

The City of Seattle is committed to addressing hate-based violence and harassment. Annually, the Human Services Department (HSD) invests in services and programs to address domestic violence and sexual assault prevention, intervention, coordinated response, and offenders' accountability programs. These programs range from direct services like legal assistance and housing access, to a dedicated 24/7 victim-advocacy phone line available in 14 languages. These investments address domestic violence and sexual assault in Seattle, but they do not directly address occurrences of verbal and physical assault experienced by the LGBTQ community.

Additional Actions Initiated by the Mayor

In addition to the Task Force's prioritized recommended solutions, the Mayor will pursue the following.

Support efforts to build the relationship between SPD, the LGBTQ community, and local businesses.

The Seattle Police Department will continue its support of the Safe Place program, and will encourage continued investment in the SPD's LGBTQ Advisory Council.

SPD understands the importance of creating and maintaining a strong relationship with all Seattle's communities. Over the course of 2015, SPD launched its Safe Place campaign, which encourages businesses on Capitol Hill to display a sign designating themselves as safe havens for anyone who is a victim of hate-based violence. This important program will remain a priority for SPD.

Through its LGBTQ Advisory Council, SPD engages in and supports ongoing efforts to build trust between the LGBTQ community and police officers, with an emphasis on improving communication, eliminating negative stereotypes, and integrating the needs of the LGBTQ community into the department's training, policies, and procedures. With its Safe Place program, SPD aims to reduce anti-LGBTQ crimes, reduce LGBTQ student bullying and encourage the reporting of anti-LGBTQ crimes. The City will remain committed to these efforts, by continuing to support LGBTQ-centered programming through funding for staff and resources.

Ensure that SPD uses data-driven policing and frequent reviews of the safety situation on Capitol Hill, and responds aggressively to provide appropriate levels of public protection.

The Seattle Police Department will continue its use of the SeaStat program and micro-policing plans to evaluate closely the levels of service necessary to protect the public throughout the year.

SPD already has in place a rigorous program, SeaStat, to use data on a regular basis to evaluate the appropriate levels of service necessary to protect the public. The Mayor asks that SPD continue to implement best practices, consultations with community leaders, and check-ins with business owners, in order to maintain public safety throughout the year and during peak times.

YOUTH

ADDRESS ISSUES UNIQUE TO SEATTLE'S LGBTQ YOUTH

Recommendations from the Task Force

The Task Force recognized the real and unmet needs faced by LGBTQ youth in Seattle. The City will address the three specific recommendations as follows.

Support efforts to improve social service agencies in their work with LGBTQ homeless youth, such as Project EQTY.

The Mayor will request an allocation in the 2016 budget to support the work being done by Project EQTY to improve the capacity of social service agencies to respond to the specific and unique needs of LGBTQ youth.

LGBTQ youth, who comprise nearly 40 percent of homeless youth, have unique needs when accessing and receiving services and housing, and it is in the City's interest that these needs be well understood and prioritized by providers who serve youth in Seattle. As part of the Committee to End Homelessness (CEH) Youth & Young Adults Initiative, the Northwest Network of Bisexual, Trans, Lesbian & Gay Survivors of Abuse (Northwest Network) received a grant in 2014 from the Pride Foundation. The grant launched Project EQTY (Elevating Queer and Trans Youth), a three-year, capacity-building project focused on improving agencies' work with LGBTQ homeless young people. The agencies assisted via Project EQTY included New Horizons, YouthCare, Friends of Youth, Auburn Youth Resources, and The YMCA of Greater Seattle.

In addition to this allocation to Project EQTY, HSD funds non-profit organizations that provide direct services to LGBTQ youth in Seattle, including, Lambert House (drop-in program); Lifelong AIDS Alliance (HEYO program); and the Northwest Network (LGBTQ Youth program). The total investment amount is \$162,402.

Support a special outreach/case-management group to locate and provide support to transgender and gender nonconforming youth in the emergency housing system, and to develop best practices for placements and access through Youth Housing Connection.

The Human Services Department will conduct an evaluation, in concert with appropriate providers, of the feasibility of implementing this outreach/case-management group. Additionally, the Department will work to develop and implement protocols for placements for transgender and gender nonconforming youth via Youth Housing Connection.

Homeless youth who are transgender and/or gender nonconforming face a particularly dangerous and hostile environment in the emergency housing system. Providers report that these youth are harassed and beaten even by others in the LGBTQ community, causing them to be at risk of entering an extremely negative spiral of violence, psychological damage, and other unacceptable outcomes. In order to prevent and interrupt this process, HSD will work with providers to develop a plan to conduct outreach to this group of youth and to prioritize the best and most appropriate emergency housing plans (e.g., rapid re-housing, hotel vouchers) for each given situation.

Support the creation of an LGBTQ equity toolkit for youth.

The Human Services Department will coordinate as appropriate with the King County Committee to End Homelessness to support the development of a toolkit entities could use to ensure cultural competency in programs.

The Task Force identified this project as important to building cultural competency within organizations serving the LGBTQ community, particularly youth. Entities wishing to ensure that their programs are responsive to the community's needs and are administered in culturally competent ways, would be able to do so using a toolkit designed by experts.

Additional Actions Initiated by the Mayor

In addition to the Task Force's prioritized recommended solutions, the Mayor will pursue the following.

Develop a strategy to center the needs of LGBTQ youth.

The Human Services Department will convene an interdepartmental team of City staff and experts to inventory, assess, and coordinate the City's many efforts with respect to LGBTQ youth.

Addressing the needs of LGBTQ youth will require a concerted strategy across City departments and among direct service providers. HSD will help to develop an LGBTQ youth strategy team in partnership with the Seattle Office for Civil Rights (SOCR), the Department of Parks and Recreation, and other City departments to focus on LGBTQ youth public safety, programs, housing and public understanding. This team will be tasked with supporting City efforts to reduce barriers faced by LGBTQ youth in Seattle and ensure LGBTQ youth receive the services and attention they deserve.

Ensure that anti-bullying and suicide prevention programs are being well implemented and are inclusive of LGBTQ youth.

The Human Services Department will ensure that existing programs administered or supported, in whole or in part, by the City are inclusive of the needs of LGBTQ youth.

Programs already exist to address bullying and suicide among young people, and the City participates in these programs to varying degrees, depending on which entities are funding and/or administering the programs. HSD will work to ensure that these programs are implementing best practices for including the unique challenges and needs of LGBTQ young people.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

UTILIZE CREATIVE URBAN DESIGN TO IMPROVE LGBTQ SAFETY, ACCESSIBILITY, LIVELIHOOD AND VISIBILITY, AND INCREASE AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Recommendations from the Task Force

The Task Force found that improvements to the built environment could bring about positive changes for the community and have a real effect in favor of safety and security. The City will address the three specific recommendations as follows.

Incorporate LGBTQ-inspired street design on Capitol Hill.

The Department of Transportation installed rainbow crosswalks on Capitol Hill, and will, at the appropriate time, install additional crosswalks at intersections abutting the Capitol Hill Link Light Rail station.



The Capitol Hill neighborhood holds profound history and importance to the LGBTQ community. To honor that history and signal the continued importance of the LGBTQ community on Capitol Hill, the Seattle Department of Transportation installed 11 rainbow crosswalks in the Pike/Pine corridor prior to Pride celebrations in June. The City plans to install additional rainbow crosswalks at Broadway and John Street in conjunction with the opening of the Capitol Hill Link Light Rail station.

The City will also explore the possibility of installing LGBTQ-themed street signs or markers in Capitol Hill, as a joint effort of the City, community organizations, and other stakeholders.

Create all-gender facilities in City-owned buildings, and evaluate facilities in Cal Anderson Park for safety to transgender and gender nonconforming residents.

The Mayor transmitted to the City Council an ordinance requiring that single-occupant restrooms in City-operated facilities and private places of public accommodation be designated as “all-gender.” The ordinance further clarifies that individuals have the right to use the restroom appropriate their gender identity or expression.

The Department of Parks & Recreation to evaluate best practices other cities have used to address the need for safer restroom facilities for transgender and gender nonconforming people, to consult with representatives of this community in its evaluation, and to develop a plan to address, in particular, any needs for the facilities in Cal Anderson Park.



Everyone has basic needs, including using the restroom; however gender-specific facilities like restrooms often present barriers to transgender and gender nonconforming people. These barriers range from threats to safety, emotional distress, violence and negative health impacts. The City recognizes the importance of creating facilities accessible to all genders in order to remove some of these barriers. To that end, Mayor Ed Murray transmitted legislation to the City Council requiring all-gender designation for all single-occupant restrooms in City-owned buildings and private places of public accommodation. Additionally, the legislation clarifies existing protections which allow individuals to use gender-specific facilities consistent with their gender identity.

The Department of Parks & Recreation will work to identify best practices carried out elsewhere to ensure that facilities are safe for transgender and gender nonconforming people. In so doing, it will consult with representatives of that community, and will develop a proposal to address the facilities in Cal Anderson Park, due to that park's centrality to the community.

Utilize the Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda's (HALA) Roadmap to an Affordable and Livable City, to create more affordable housing in Capitol Hill.

The Office of Housing will evaluate the outcome of the HALA Committee with an eye to preserving existing affordable housing stock in Capitol Hill and promoting new construction of such housing.

The City of Seattle has long demonstrated a strong commitment to expanding affordable housing options on Capitol Hill. Today, Capitol Hill is one of the most popular and fastest growing neighborhoods in Seattle, and, as such, demand for housing is increasing annually. In order to continue to address this need, the City will need to employ innovative solutions to create new housing accessible to all income levels and backgrounds. With that in mind, the Mayor convened the HALA committee to generate an action plan aimed at creating thousands of new affordable housing units across the city. The City's plan is a comprehensive approach that advocates for a shift housing development policy and the recognition of a collective investment in creating and maintaining affordable housing options. The City will utilize the recommendations set forth in the Action Plan to Address Seattle's Affordability Crisis, to find solutions for the dynamic housing needs in Capitol Hill.

Additional Actions Initiated by the Mayor

In addition to the Task Force's prioritized recommended solutions, the Mayor will pursue the following.

Ensure that lighting provision on Capitol Hill is sufficient for crime prevention and the general safety of residents and visitors.

Seattle City Light will conduct an assessment, or will examine recent assessments, of lighting on Capitol Hill, to ensure that best practices are followed to prevent crime and promote safety.

The Task Force's extensive discussion about lighting on Capitol Hill led the Mayor, despite the recommendation not being prioritized over others detailed above, to include this item in the Action Plan. City Light will develop a timeline for conducting the review and/or utilize existing, recent work-products to produce a report on lighting and safety. City Light will further collaborate with the Department of Transportation and with community groups to assess lighting needs.

Ensure that right-of-way and development policies take crime reduction and resident safety into consideration.

The Department of Transportation, Seattle Public Utilities, the Department of Planning & Development, and the Office of Economic Development will coordinate to make recommendations on changes to policy and practices to reduce potential negative effects of uses of the right-of-way and City-owned land on Capitol Hill.

The Task Force also identified that shrubbery, large garbage containers, construction material, and other obstructions potentially create the conditions ripe for criminality. Policies should be evaluated to ensure that proper temporary lighting and other remedies are provided in these circumstances, and that the right-of-way are used and maintained in accordance with best practices. The Office of Economic Development operates a program to coordinate with local businesses to interact with City services and planners, which can bring additional capacity to bear on this question.

PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING

CREATE A CITY OF SEATTLE STRATEGY TO INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING ABOUT SEATTLE'S LGBTQ COMMUNITY

Recommendations from the Task Force

The Task Force focused, finally, on what the City could do to improve the public's understanding of the history, current place, and values of the LGBTQ community. The City will address the three specific recommendations as follows.

Support a public visibility and respect campaign.

The Mayor will support additional funding for the Office for Civil Rights to expand its public visibility campaign surrounding gender justice, to include a broader theme of LGBTQ justice and equality.

A meaningfully planned public education campaign may help increase visibility, understanding and respect for the LGBTQ community. Pulling inspiration from other jurisdictions and the great work of LGBTQ advocates across Seattle and the country, the City intends to fund and create an LGBTQ respect campaign. This campaign will be developed by SOCR's Gender Justice Project, in dialogue with LGBTQ community members, advocates and advisors, and will be launched in the autumn of 2015.

Ensure that all City of Seattle programs, services and public campaigns are inclusive of the LGBTQ community, in particular the Transgender and gender nonconforming community, and LGBTQ seniors.

The Office for Civil Rights will coordinate with relevant departments to ensure that all City programs, services, and public campaigns are culturally inclusive and competent with respect both to the transgender and gender nonconforming community as well as to LGBTQ seniors.

The Office for Civil Rights will further work with the Office for Senior Citizens to undertake a review of other cities' best practices for supporting and meeting the needs of LGBTQ seniors, and to propose programmatic and policy changes as appropriate to address any unmet needs.

The City of Seattle's policies and programs aim to reflect the character, values, and demographics of city residents. The Task Force rightly identified that certain populations have not always received the most attention in this regard. Transgender and nonconforming residents, as well as LGBTQ seniors, face unique challenges, and the City will work to ensure that their concerns and needs are properly incorporated into City policies and programs.

Existing programs in the Office for Civil Rights—in particular the Gender Justice Project—envision a city where a person's gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, and race are no longer determinants of one's ability to navigate the built environment safely, to earn a living wage, access housing, or the ability to achieve healthy life outcomes. Work is currently underway to launch a program to train City staff on best practices for working with

transgender and gender nonconforming community members; this training will support City staff in providing the best service by ensuring inclusivity is a part of every interaction.

Additionally, the Office for Senior Citizens is well placed to evaluate the City's offerings to LGBTQ seniors, and to serve as a central point-of-contact for those in the community seeking information on housing, social support, and other activities. In concert with the Office for Civil Rights, it will undertake a policy and programmatic review process to ensure that this community's needs are adequately integrated into City government.