

## Keep/Modify DEI Chapter Of Comprehensive Plan

1. Promoting Inclusivity and Belonging: The DEI Commission's work helps create a welcoming and accepting community where all residents feel valued.
  - "Let Ellensburg be a city where everyone knows that their presence and contributions and voices are welcome and appreciated, and that they are valued members of our community."
  - "...strengthening a community involves making people feel seen, valued, welcome, and appreciated, and that entities like the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commission help achieve this."

### *Comments added 8/20/25:*

- 31 green, 1 red
- Post its:
  - This contractive process and language has left the LGBTQ community feeling unlifted and unsafe. Please add language around safety!
  - Ideally all residents don't just feel valued but are valued (*someone added a green dot to this to 2nd it*)
  - Please include the voices of the city's marginalized populations i.e. on committee of 6
  - Voices are equally welcome
  - Reminder that the work of the DEI commission is to create an equal playing field, not leverage anyone above anyone else (misconception)
  - It is the job of our government to act on behalf of the vulnerable who cannot defend themselves from bias and a rigged system.
  - Include safety, LGBTQ people heard repeatedly that they aren't real—don't exist. This makes it feel unsafe.

### *Comments added 9/6/25:*

- 28 green, 2 red
- Post its:
  - What would it mean to actually value everyone? (NOTE: someone else wrote on same post it: I second this)
  - It's not just about making folks feel valued— it's trying to move towards actually valuing people
  - Add "the DEI Commission promotes inclusion and belonging → the City and Council should prioritize this too— but they don't always which is why the Commission matters'

- There needs to be representation of what is the role of City government. The role is to support care and represent our community. The DEI is charged with the most socially challenging part and should be empowered
- We all have different needs and strengths. DEI makes sure we are all treated equitable and have a chance to do what we need
- My wife was on Water Street heading south, stopped for a Latino woman crossing with young daughter, man in truck rolled down his window and yelled "Hey Spic, hurry up!" Karen called 911 and reported a racial slur and the Ellensburg cops did nothing. "Free speech" Lee Bates, Ellensburg
- Add "and included"
- So much misinformation on anti DEI side! DEI does not equal affirmative action
- This should not be limited to the Commission, the City needs to do this. (attached with four green dots)
- The City of Ellensburg should want all their residents to feel this way. NOT unique to the DEI Commission (shouldn't be)
- What is outlined in this chapter of the Comprehensive Plan—including the DEI Commission
- And be involved in and creating, participating in local city meetings and activities
- Equity- does not mean \$\$ Too many quote socialism etc.
- How can we do this while making people on the "other side" ALSO feel included and valued?

2. Addressing Historical Inequities and Marginalization: DEI efforts are necessary to address a history of systemic unfairness. The commission's work is seen to correct these issues and ensure everyone is treated as an equal citizen.

- DEI is "meant to address these traditions of unfairness and try to include everyone as equal citizens,"
- Some groups "have been marginalized over the course of history, both at local and global levels."

*Comments added 8/20/25:*

- 27 green, 4 red
- Post its:
  - DEI is not about who gets to use what bathroom. It's about collecting (illegible) and understanding and support. That's why the commission

AND chapter 9 is so important to retain and strengthen and grow (*This one is attached with a red dot*)

- The commission's work is still needed to continue to work on these issues, so that we prevent history from repeating AND keep working to address ongoing inequities in our community.
- You can never correct these issues. Political, cultural and hate prevents it from happening. DB (*signature*)
- Although these issues can't be "corrected" people can and should be educated about historical inequities through community events. LM (*signature*)
- Historic systems of inequality are not merely in the past. Historic inequalities have created present inequalities that must continue to be addressed.
- Equity is also about understanding gaps and disparities by analyzing data and hearing people's experiences, in order to address barriers to participation and well being.
- Marginalized groups continue to experience unfairness due to (red lining, enslavement, high incarceration rates, generational trauma, lingering racism) so the disenfranchisement continues to exist and harm people.
- It is the job of our government to act on behalf of vulnerable residents who have experienced inequity and exclusion.
- Marginalized community members are not safe. They are afraid (*This one is attached with a red dot*)
- Statements made at the city council meeting include "there is no racism in Eburg and hasn't been for decades".
  - Responses to this include: I second this item. Another person said, there is definitely issues of racism speaking as a 1. White man of latino son in law/grand kids 2. Former substitute teacher here 3. Contracted teacher in Mattawa, Othello, Aberdeen but who lives here.

*Comments added 9/6/25:*

- 14 green, 14 red
  - Institutionalized discrimination has existed since the Constitution. We need to recognize it.
  - This is a real, tangible problem currently occurring in our community. BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ people have been assaulted at the high school. Removing DEI language will embolden those who want to commit violence against minorities.
  - This only succeeds if the whole community is changed within the work. The commission is important but they can't do the work alone.
  - No action in this, (#2) just a statement.

- A history that is still impacting people today. (another post it attached to this says: This is crucial)
- Constitution has not been effective in making people be included. I.e. Native Americans, Blacks, Chinese Americans, disabled, Hispanics
- Stats indicate generally up to 10% of any population is LGBTQ. They are also part of our town!
- Addressing historical inequities rarely (if ever) excludes anyone.
- “Groups” doesn’t identify the specificity of identity that have not just been marginalized but actively discriminated against.
- Unfairness does not equal inequity, nor does it capture the violence and harm that ensues
- If we’re going to be equals, we need to be equals. Discrimination (bigotry) is the same regardless of which direction it comes from.
- I hope that if Chapter 9 stays put, that the trainings on diversity are not heavy handed or overtly biased towards trans or other hot-button issues that will antagonize officials on the right.
- These points all fail to address the importance of a designated body for helping raise awareness and facilitate social conversations that help us better understand and care for all members of our community.
- NOTE on first bullet of poster about “equal citizens”: “Equal citizens” suggests the goal has something to do with immigration.
- “Historical” implies inequity is over. Equity and inclusion addresses historical and ongoing issues.
- Marginalization and misrepresentation.
- To address a history of and current systemic unfairness
- Acknowledge difference and needs of different people as well as gaps in understanding
- Adjust “the Commission’s work” to include “and the city of Ellensburg” is a shared commitment OR The commission is designed to uplift this work to ensure these issues are uplifted.
- ATTACHED WITH RED DOT: This isn’t just about the commission— it’s about informing City decisions, practices and policies.

### 3. Supporting the Community Through Programs and Funding: DEI

Commission provides tangible support such as grant funding for various community groups and initiatives as specified in Chapter 9.

- A Licensed Mental Health Counselor noted they are "deeply concerned about the impact that this loss would have on the mental and emotional health of individuals as well as on our overall health as a community."

- Programs "like the Pizza Klatch space at the high school for LGBTQ+ students... are not just beneficial; they are essential. They create tangible spaces of safety and empowerment for the underrepresented."

*Comments added 8/20/25:*

- 30 green, 1 red
- Post its:
  - An equity-driven plan can help to ensure that services and programs across the board are benefiting all segments of the community, particularly those who have not been able to get their needs met.
  - Funding for DEI initiatives ensures that all residents including those in poverty can participate in city services.
  - The budget for the DEI commission helps low income individuals, often including children, to be able to have access to services that they may otherwise not have access to. This creates growth of many forms within our community.
  - I am a LMHC and agree wholeheartedly to this @the LMHC!!
  - It's not just mental health impact, it's a high/much increased risk of suicidality or shortened life due to feeling unsupported/unwanted and worsening socio-economic experience
  - These tangible supports include increasing access to community resources for all community members
  - The DEI budget is \$10,000. The city's budget is \$15 million- a fraction of 1%.

*Comments added 9/6/25:*

- 18 green, 2 red
- Post its:
  - Add something in main bullet about "provides tangible support to help all members feel welcome and uplift members of our community often excluded or marginalized". (POST IT ADDED TO THIS: Up vote this)
  - How can we do this without threatening people who feel demonized by the left, so they also feel included and not guilt-tripped?
  - I'm not a fan of "safe spaces" because they foster segregation rather than community and inclusion
  - The statement is missing nuance related to City decision making and applying an equity lens to their decisions
  - Not sure this relevant to Chapter 9 does not equal DEI Commission
  - School focus on sexuality creates distrust in public
  - I'm curious what grants might be available for anti-DEI folks- how they can be included instead of feeling that groups they don't support or understand are getting benefits they aren't.

- Should emphasize that this can impact EVERYONE'S mental health—DEI impacts community members in ways they don't even realize

4. Benefitting the Entire Community: DEI work strengthens the community. This includes attracting visitors and students who feel welcome, which can positively impact the local economy and make Ellensburg a place where people want to live.

- "I benefit from living in a community where all people are treated fairly and protected from discrimination."
- The commission's work affects the local economy: "If the college fails due to students fearing attending schools here, our economy will tank."

*Comments added 8/20/25:*

- 31 green, 3 red
- Post its:
  - Attracting visitors and students who feel welcome and safe
  - Being a welcoming community invites people in— it is a strength, it isn't only that driving students away is bad for the economy.
  - It is the role of our government to represent especially those who are vulnerable and have been excluded and mistreated. This advocacy affects all other decisions.
  - Initiatives that worked to include/make communities accessible to marginalized folks (ramps, sideways, closed captioning, audio books, etc. etc.) benefit EVERYONE, we all thrive when we care for the most disenfranchised.
  - Strengthening the community through cultural exposure to other ideas, experiences, ways of doing things (*someone added a green dot to this with a checkmark and word "2nd"*)
  - Language very similar to "promoting inclusive and belonging". What's the difference? Economic argument? (*this one has two red dots attaching it to poster*)

*Comments added 9/6/25:*

- 25 green, 3 red
- Post its:
  - DEI is not only a mechanism to RETAIN Ellensburg economy, but a way in which to grow the economy as well by creating opportunity, and overall growth.

- “Contribute and positively impact the local economy” Add: “ I benefit from living in a community where all people feel safe to exist and thrive in our community.”
- I vote for schools but have no children attending them– same reason to support
- My wife and I attended the Rodeo Parade in 2013. A man next to us commented on a CWU cheerleader, she was a “little person”. He pointed and yelled “where did she come from? Look at her, she’s not one of us”. Lee R Bates, Ellensburg
- My view is not captured on the posters. DEI in Ellensburg is based on citizen’s responses and identified need. It is not an abstracted apparatus, got evolved on citizen’s recorded needs that are ongoing and that has borne out based on ongoing interviews.
- If we fail to message that we value and care for all members of our community, we will not attract new industries and people. We will stagnate and decrease our economic development.
- I was conversing with a fellow Rotarian at the Chamber of Commerce. A man heard me mention I’m from Kirkland–“Oh you Westsiders!” was his response. Lee R Bates.
- Students are part of our community as well, regardless of where they come from. We should make them feel welcome.
- NOTE: This post was added to the “Benefitting the Entire Community” statement around the “Which can positively impact the local economy and make Ellensburg....” it says: and raise families.
- Not just about attracting and recruiting people here. We have to retain them and make them want to stay.
- ATTACHED WITH A RED DOT: Allows all community members to participate in and access the community. Feel valued and seen because of this.

## NEW POSTERS ADDED AT COMMUNITY CONVERSATION ON 9/6:

5. The City (as a government entity) should base their decisions and practices in the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion because they need to be responsive to all members of the community and historic discrimination/marginalization still impacts whose voices are heard.

25 green, 2 red

Post its:

- And who “matters’ and how is represented
- Amen
- RED DOT ADDED with this note: All decisions and practices? Some decisions and practices?
- Yes! Responsive and responsible for
- Evidence and research/data driven principles
- Our government only works when all people are under the law equally. Not special application to certain people.
- The city government must consider the impact of all decisions, policies and processes, and how increase, decrease, prevent or otherwise limit access for all members of the community. Chapter 9 provides guidance and the DEI commission provides a representative body this care for the community.
- Representation matters, let's protect and empower all our residents

6. Equity and inclusion should be in the Comp Plan as it, and the DEI Commission, are based on demonstrable and stated needs of residents, which has been reinforced by listening tours and ongoing local issues (eg bullying in the schools based on identity). It is locally specific and attends to system and structural issues.

6 green, 0 red -no post its