



City of Tigard

June 30, 2020

Dear Tigard Community,

As Tigard's Police Chief I felt it was important to write to you directly in this time of great community concern to share with you more about our department and our values as we continue to serve and protect *all* who live, work and play here.

Let me begin by addressing the senseless murder of George Floyd. I was shocked and appalled by what I witnessed in that video and by the officer's lack of emotion, empathy and compassion. The actions of a few that day have caused a nation to question every man and woman wearing a police uniform. Sadly, it is not the first time the police profession has been called into question and it likely won't be the last. Over my 34 years in law enforcement I have seen many instances where police action has eroded public trust, including the beating of Rodney King in 1991. Collectively, we have taken many steps forward since then, but there is clearly a lot of important work still left to do.

I believe police officers should be guardians, not warriors. This model comes from Plato's vision of a perfect society, in which only those with the most impeccable character are chosen to bear the responsibility of protecting the democracy. The power entrusted to a police officer by the community he or she serves is not to be abused or taken for granted.

When I became Tigard Police Chief in 2017, I brought that philosophy with me to this department. Together with my command staff, I conducted a thorough review of where Tigard Police stood, to include hard data (crime statistics, budget, staffing levels), soft data (community and employee surveys), best practices established by the Oregon Accreditation Alliance and a pillar-by-pillar comparison to the six areas identified in the Task Force on 21st Century Policing, which was established by President Obama. Those six pillars are: building trust and legitimacy, policy and oversight, technology and social media, community policing and crime reduction, training and education, and officer wellness and safety. Out of that in-depth review, we developed a 3-5 year strategic plan for this department.

Why is that important?

Because many of the police reform measures that our community, and our nation, are asking for in this current environment have already been in place in the Tigard Police Department for many years. Recently, I made a presentation to the Mayor and City Council explaining that we already meet 7 of the 8 recommendations in the grassroots #8CantWait campaign, and that's only because the 'force continuum' model in #8CantWait is no longer considered best practice. Instead, we follow the guidelines for evaluating excessive force established by

the Supreme Court in *Graham v Connor*, which essentially asks whether the amount of force used was reasonable and necessary.


While Tigard may not be Minneapolis, Atlanta, Seattle, Portland or any other major metropolitan city, we understand that as a police profession, we can still do better. Each police chief must look at his or her own agency to make sure we hire and train the right people, have policies in place that meet or exceed accreditation and best practice standards, that all complaints are investigated impartially and that every application of force is reviewed thoroughly.

In my three years here, I believe we have taken significant strides forward toward greater accountability, transparency and the 'guardian' model we hope to reflect. But right now, these steps may not matter. This is a time for listening; a time to be open and to work together to ensure that our policies and practices align with what this community is asking for.

I have heard from many of you in recent weeks, through virtual chats, emails, phone calls and in-person conversations. Your questions and concerns are valid. I encourage you to visit www.tigard-or.gov/community_for_all to learn more about our policies, practices and training. I welcome, and will continue to welcome, these difficult conversations and I ask you to remain engaged, too. These conversations are the beginning, not the end, in determining our next steps going forward.

Lastly, I want to say that I have a tremendous amount of respect and support for the men and women of the Tigard Police Department and the work they do each day. We will continue to look at the services we provide in this community and evaluate where we can improve.

Respectfully,



Chief Kathy McAlpine
Tigard Police Department