



CITY OF KIRKLAND
CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE
123 Fifth Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033
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MEMORANDUM

To: Kurt Triplett, City Manager

From: Jim Lopez, Deputy City Manager for External Affairs
Erika Mascorro, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Manager
Daniel Lazo, Senior Community Engagement Coordinator

Date: March 24, 2026

Subject: **Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month Proclamation**

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Mayor, on behalf of City Council, proclaims May 2026 as “Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month” in Kirkland.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month celebrates the rich culture and history of the AAPI community annually during the month of May.
- This proclamation aligns with Kirkland’s City values and strong commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB).
- This proclamation is part of the City Council’s adopted 2026 proclamation schedule.

BACKGROUND:

Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month (“AAPI Heritage Month”) is an annual observance in the month of May to celebrate the contributions that generations of the Asian American and Pacific Islander community have made to American history, society, and culture.

Asian/Pacific is a rather broad term that encompasses:

- People from the Asian continent, including Chinese, Indian, Filipino, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, Pakistani, Thai, Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian, Taiwanese, Bangladeshi, Nepalese, Burmese, Indonesia, Sri Lankan, Malaysian, Mongolian, Bhutanese, and Okinawan people; and
- People from the Pacific islands, including the following geographic locations:
 - Micronesia, which includes Marianas, Guam, Wake Island, Palau, Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, and the Federated States of Micronesia; and
 - Polynesia, which includes New Zealand, Hawaiian Islands, Rotuma, Midway Islands, Samoa, American Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Cook Islands, French Polynesia, and Easter Island.

The origin of AAPI Heritage Month dates to the 95th Congress (1977-1978), when five joint resolutions were introduced proposing that a week in May be designated to commemorate the accomplishments of the AAPI community. One of the resolutions, H.J. Res. 1007, was passed by Congress, designating seven days in May beginning on May 4 as Asian/Pacific Americans Week.

In 1979, President Carter issued the first Asian/Pacific American Heritage Week presidential proclamation. In 1990, President George H.W. Bush issued a presidential proclamation designating the entire month of May 1990 as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month. Then, in 1992, Congress permanently designated May of each year as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month.

The month of May was chosen to commemorate the first Japanese immigrants arriving to the United States on May 7, 1843, and to mark the anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869. Most of the workers who laid the tracks were Chinese immigrants.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

According to the 2020 U.S. Census, over 17 percent of Kirkland residents identify as Asian or Pacific Islander. According to the 2023 American Community Survey, Kirkland is home to a diverse population with speakers of many Asian languages, around 5,000 people in Kirkland speak languages other than English, including Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), Korean, Vietnamese, and Tagalog, reflecting a rich cultural heritage that strengthens our community; and

In 2021, the City Council issued a statement that condemned the acts of hate and violence displayed in the rising incidence of anti-Asian hate crimes.¹

Additionally, the City's Human Services Division, part of the Parks and Community Services Department, invests in culturally relevant services for AAPI communities by supporting organizations such as Asian Counseling and Referral Services. For 2025, across all Kirkland-funded programs, these organizations served 2,102 Kirkland residents that self-identified as Asian, Asian American, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander.²

The Kirkland community is encouraged to learn and support more about AAPI Heritage in several ways:

- Read books from the King County Library System that illustrate the AAPI experience³
- Visit the Wing Luke Museum in Seattle's Chinatown International District⁴
- Support AAPI-owned businesses by exploring the Intentionalist's AAPI Guide⁵
- Celebrate the Lunar New Year at the beginning of the year in Kirkland⁶

¹ <https://www.kirklandwa.gov/Government/City-Managers-Office/Kirkland-Stands-With-Asian-Americans-and-Pacific-Islanders>

² <https://www.kirklandwa.gov/Government/Departments/Parks-and-Community-Services/Human-Services/Human-Services-Dashboard>

³ <https://kcls.bibliocommons.com/v2/list/display/209743155/1848190189>

⁴ <https://www.wingluke.org/>

⁵ <https://intentionalist.com/>

⁶ https://www.kirklandwa.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/city-council/agenda-documents/2026/february-17-2026/8h1_other-items-of-business.pdf

This proclamation aligns with Kirkland’s City values and strong commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB). Council has adopted legislation supporting these values, including:

- **Resolution R-5240** (2017) declaring Kirkland a safe, inclusive, welcoming community for all people;
- **Resolution R-5434** (2020) expressing commitments to improving the safety and respect of Black people and approving the framework to create a community committed to examining and dismantling interpersonal, institutional, and structural racism in Kirkland;
- **Resolution R-5548** (2022) adopting the City’s DEIB 5-Year Roadmap;
- **Resolution R-5686** (2025) declaring Kirkland as a welcoming, inclusive, and safe city for the Two Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual Plus (2SLGBTQIA+) people and recognizing their human rights and well-being; and
- **Resolution R-5693** (2025) reaffirming the City’s commitment to being a safe, inclusive, and welcoming community where all people belong.

NEXT STEPS:

Receiving the proclamation will be Judy Siông-iông Tân, President of the Formosan Association for Public Affairs (FAPA) Washington Chapter.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 – 2026 Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month Proclamation



A PROCLAMATION OF THE CITY OF KIRKLAND

Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month May 2026

WHEREAS, Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month is an annual observance to celebrate the contributions that generations of the AAPI community have made to American history, society, and culture; and

WHEREAS, more than 17 percent of Kirkland's residents identify as AAPI, making their presence and influence a vital part of the City's social fabric, economic vitality, and community identity; and

WHEREAS, Kirkland is home to a diverse population with around 5,000 people in Kirkland speaking languages other than English, with speakers of many Asian languages, including Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), Korean, Vietnamese, and Tagalog, reflecting a rich cultural heritage that strengthens our community; and

WHEREAS, the City encourages community members to learn and celebrate AAPI Heritage Month through resources such as the King County Library System's AAPI book collections, the Wing Luke Museum in Seattle's Chinatown-International District, and the Intentionalist's AAPI Business Guide; and

WHEREAS, this observance reflects Kirkland's continued commitment to equity, inclusion, belonging, and community safety as outlined in Resolutions R-5693 and R-5434, while affirming the City's stance against anti-Asian hate and violence; and

WHEREAS, the City of Kirkland reaffirms its dedication to fostering a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment where the cultural heritage of all communities is honored and celebrated.

NOW, THEREFORE, Mayor Kelli Curtis, on behalf of the Kirkland City Council, proclaims May 2026 as Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month in Kirkland, Washington, and encourages the community to uplift Asian American and Pacific Islander voices and reaffirm our shared commitment to building a welcoming community for all.

Signed this 5th day of May, 2026

Kelli Curtis, Mayor