

SUCCESS STORY: FERNDALE, MICHIGAN

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Ferndale, Michigan has long had the community motto “Good Neighbors.” It can be interpreted many ways, but to us it captures the diversity of our residents and guests, the welcoming nature of our city, and the spirit of inclusivity we all share.

Ferndale is located just north of the shared 8 Mile Road border with Detroit, yet it has a unique character all its own. The modestly sized community of four-square miles and 21,000 residents boasts an equal mix of family-friendly neighborhoods, parks and green spaces, an active downtown district with award-winning retail and nightlife, and a small industrial and tech quarter. A city on the rise, Ferndale's revitalization is owed in large part to its LGBTQ+ leaders—past, present, and future—and the lessons they taught in embracing the equality of all races, ages, identities, and nationalities in our city.

Our government has followed suit, working to enact policies and practices that support our LGBTQ residents, businesses, visitors, and staff. In 2017, Ferndale became one of the first municipalities in the nation to permanently display the rainbow Pride flag in City Council Chambers, showcasing its importance and relevance alongside National, State, County, and City flags. Within the following two years, City Council passed an ordinance banning the practice of conversion therapy within city limits; installed the city's first rainbow crosswalk; and developed a unique partnership with Ferndale-based Affirmations, Metro Detroit's community services center for LGBTQ+ people and their allies. As part



of this partnership, the City appointed two staff LGBTQ+ liaisons—based out of City Hall and the Ferndale Police Department—who work one-on-one with community groups, advocate for policies that affect the LGBTQ+ community, advise the Mayor and City Council on LGBTQ+, and work to eliminate bigotry, discrimination, and prejudice on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity within Ferndale.

The City also prides itself on its inclusive policies for employees and their families. Our recruitment efforts for critical positions include advertising and outreach with Pridesource Media Group, helping ensure diversity in our candidate pools. We offer domestic partnership benefits and robust paid parental leave for all, including new adoptive parents. And, as of January 2021, all single-occupancy restrooms in City buildings have been designated all-gender.

Inclusive hospitality and ‘Good Neighbors’ are an essential part of who we are and what we do, and we’re thrilled to be recognized by HRC with a 100 point 2021 Municipal Index score. Come and visit us anytime ... we’ll have our Pride flag waving to welcome you!

**MAYOR MELANIE PIANA
FERNDALE CITY COUNCIL**