



Annual Internal Review

This report covers the time period of 7/1/2015 to 6/30/2016

Asian American Quality of Life (AAQoL) Advisory Commission



The Board/Commission mission statement (per the City Code) is:

The commission shall advise the City Council on issues related to the Asian American Resource Center and will provide on-going guidance and support for the City's Asian American quality of life initiatives.

Describe the board's actions supporting their mission during the previous calendar year. Address all elements of the board's mission statement as provided in the relevant sections of the City Code.

2015-16 Accomplishments

The Asian American Quality of Life Advisory Commission is reporting for the first time on activities since the full commission was seated. We present the AAQoL Advisory Commission's activities in summary form including briefings and presentations. After the initial summary lists, we provide a more detailed accounting of accomplishments through the reports of its working groups, formed to provide sustained attention to the Asian communities' perceived areas of need.

A.1. Commission Actions Summary

- Provided continued guidance on the Asian American Quality of Life (AAQoL) Initiative study and report (Ongoing)
- Created and approved the Commission's FY 2017 Budget Recommendations spreadsheet and companion presentation for submission to the City Manager's Office (May & June 2016)
- Met with Human Resources Department (HRD) staff in September 2015 regarding diverse recruiting strategies and proposed next steps; received presentation from HRD staff regarding their plan to increase Asian representation in HRD positions, provide diversity training, work with departments to create more balance in hiring, connect with all Affinity groups in the City, and develop an annual report for departments in their recruiting efforts (May 2016)
- Recommended authorization to City Council to negotiate and execute an agreement with the successful proposers for the management and operation of the Senior Meals Program at the Asian American Resource Center (April 2016)
- Drafted and approved resolution to encourage the City Council to support threatened immigrant communities (February 2016)
- Drafted and approved resolution calling upon City Council to (1) accept the Small and Minority Business Resource (SMBR) Department MBE/WBE Disparity Study Report and to (2) direct staff to improve program policies and implementations based on feedback recorded in the study and by working closely with MWBE communities, including the minority Quality of Life Commissions (February 2016)
- Approved budget recommendation for a new Public Event Leader position at the Asian American Resource Center (February 2016)
- Approved budget recommendation for the addition of a ¾ time driver position and additional van at the Austin American Resource Center for the Senior Meals Program (February 2016)
- Nominated Commissioner Kotecha to serve on the Joint Inclusion Committee
- Completion of a CPIO-led media training workshop by all Commissioners (November 2015)
- Recommended the top four candidates for the community stakeholder commissioners (October 2015)

- Approved amended by-laws as required for the transition to a new composition of the Commission from seven to 15 members (September 2015)

A.2. Briefings/Presentations to the Commission

- Presentation from the Taiwanese community regarding the AAQoL Initiative (June 2016)
- Presentation from Sally VanSickle of the Commission on Seniors regarding the Age Friendly Austin Plan (June 2016)
- Staff briefing by Suzanne Piper, PARD Financial Manager, on the PARD FY 2017 Financial Forecast (May 2016)
- Staff briefing by HRD on the City of Austin Workforce Trends as an Employer (May 2016)
- Briefing from Jesus Patel, Grant Coordinator with the Economic Development Department, Cultural Arts Division on Arts in Public Spaces events, Cultural Heritage Celebration, and opportunities for artists application (April 2016)
- Discussion with AISD Trustee Julie Cowan regarding an update on the future AISD bond program and school overcrowding and under enrollment issues (April 2016)
- Presentation by Ryan Robinson, City Demographer, on The Asian Community in Austin: A Demographic Snapshot (April 2016)
- Staff briefing on the City's Mobility Talks initiative (April 2016)
- Presentation by Dr. Yuri Jang on the preliminary findings of the AAQoL survey (April 2016)
- Briefing from Anna Bradley, City of Austin Art in Public Spaces, on three open calls for artists (February 2016)
- Presentation from Dr. Yuri Jang on the AAQoL survey final sample composition (December 2015)
- Presentation from Thuan Tran, third grade teacher at Summit Elementary School, on the Vietnamese Dual Language Two-Way program (November 2015)
- Request for assistance from Gi Kim, Chair of the Austin Korean School, to secure a special rate for use of AISD facilities for the Austin Korean School and the Austin Great Wall Chinese School (November 2015)

- Presentation from Olivia Hernandez, Director of Bilingual/ELL at AISD, on AISD's bilingual education programs (November 2015)
- Briefing from Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department on CHIP (September 2015)
- Briefing from HRD on diverse recruiting strategies and proposed next steps (September 2015)

B.1. Working Groups

The AAQoL Advisory Commission accomplishes a great deal of its work through working groups composed of Commission members. The following section highlights the activities of the working groups over the past year.

Community Stakeholder Commissioner Nomination Working Group

Members: Aletta Banks (Chair), Nu Chanpheng, Vince Cobalis

The Community Stakeholder Commissioner Nomination Working Group was formed to nominate candidates for the four Community Stakeholder Commissioner positions. The group invited all current Commissioners to nominate candidates and designed a qualities matrix for the purposes of scoring candidates. Each working group member was tasked with scoring each candidate independently. After the chair tallied the scores, the top scoring candidates were forwarded to the full Commission for approval.

Asian American Resource Center (AARC) Oversight Working Group

Members: Vince Cobalis (Chair), Nu Chanpheng, Thuy Nguyen

Over the past year, the AARC Oversight Working Group has explored improvements to subpopulation data collection, demographics tracking, city department translation service needs, and outreach to get additional communities involved in using the AARC. The group regularly reviews monthly program reports and performance measures and suggests changes for data collection. One major area of work over the past year was oversight of the AARC commercial kitchen construction project. When construction approval continued to be delayed, the group began having monthly updates from Public Works at working group meetings.

Construction work has still not begun. A major milestone was the selection of and transition to new catering contracts for the Senior Meals Program. During that process, the group reviewed standard operating procedures for the caterers.

The group worked on several AARC budget-related items for FY 2017. The group reviewed AARC manager proposals for staffing and recommended budget enhancements for FY 2017. The group brought resolutions to the full Commission in support of the expansion of the Senior Meals Program and the addition of a Public Event Leader FTE. The group also discussed and recommended several other budget enhancements for 2017, including a facilities master plan, outdoor exercise equipment, and a pedestrian bridge to the overflow parking area.

Community Assessment (AAQoL Survey) Working Group

Members: Kara Takasaki (Current Chair), Richard Yuen (Immediate Past Chair), Charles Lu

The Community Assessment Working Group participated in formation of the Asian American Quality of Life Survey efforts, from providing community input into personnel selection, to survey content and language, to outreach strategies, and conveying direct community feedback throughout the process. The final product was a first for the City of Austin – a comprehensive, city-wide community needs assessment of the Asian American community in Austin. It is noteworthy that this study may be the first of its kind in the nation! The group collaborated with Yuri Jang, Ph.D. at the UT Austin School of Social Work and her team of graduate students and volunteers to implement a quantitative-methodology-based effort to gather data for this needs assessment project. In addition, the group collaborated with Marion Sanchez, Community Engagement Consultant in CPIO, to implement a qualitative-methodology-based effort to gather data for this needs assessment project. In both cases, community organizations and volunteers played a very important part to assure optimal outreach. Both methods were highly rigorous in approach, pilot-tested, and gathered data that may be used in a complementary fashion to elucidate a deeper understanding of the needs of Asian community in Austin.

Implementing the needs assessment required collaboration with many city departments and community organizations. Activities included (1) cultivating an all-inclusive approach by collaborating with stakeholder

groups, media outlets, community leaders, etc., (2) developing materials (e.g. brochures, surveys) in multiple languages, (3) utilizing translators to increase engagement and data acquisition, (4) collaborating with the Marketing Research Department to develop culturally-sensitive and appealing branding, and (5) collaborating with the Information Technology Department to develop a social media presence for the project.

The above efforts have resulted in two executive reports, one quantitative and one qualitative, with the potential to generate deeper-level reports to identify subgroup needs within various quality of life areas. Other activities related to reports included (1) collaborating with the City of Austin Demographer to generate Geographic Information System (GIS) maps for data visualization, (2) collaborating with the Information Technology Department to create an information portal for community..., and (3) collaborating with organizations, liaisons, community leaders, volunteers, and media outlets to disseminate research findings.

Education Working Group

Members: Nu Chanpheng (Chair), Janki DePalma, Kirk Yoshida

The Education Working Group formed in the fall of 2016 to explore K-12 areas such as curriculum and supplemental materials on Asian Americans, immigrant children integration issues including bullying, bilingual education classes and programs, assistance for language minority parents, and translation needs. The group met with Olivia Hernandez, Director of Bilingual/ELL at AISD, to discuss possible areas of collaboration, including support of dual language programs and the International Welcome Center. The group has planned a tour of the International Welcome Center to occur in October 2016. The group requested and received demographic data from AISD regarding those served by the 21st Century and Prime Time programs to formulate budget recommendations for the two programs.

Human Resources Diversity Issue Working Group

Members: Thuy Nguyen (Chair), Aletta Banks, Janki DePalma, Sonia Kotecha, Charles Lu

The Human Resources Diversity Issue Working Group seeks to increase parity in City of Austin hiring, focusing on executive and lower-salary jobs.

The group has provided HRD, upon their request, with cultural sensitivity training and diversity inclusion resources. The group requested and received data from HRD to better understand the department's hiring practices related to Asians, including hiring outcomes, advertising efforts, and recruitment strategies. The group has met with multiple HRD staff members on topics such as diversity training, Asian employee training and promotion, and perceived barriers. As a result of the group's collaborative efforts with HRD staff, the City has placed more advertising for positions in Asian community and Asian language media, and the department has assigned an Employee Specialist to provide in-house assistance to AARC patrons and plans to create a brochure on how to apply for city jobs in several languages. In addition, a diversity training session for department directors on unconscious bias was held. The group supports several FY 2017 HRD budget requests, including new Employee Specialist, Diversity Recruiter, and Youth Volunteer Coordinator FTEs.

Business Plan Working Group

Members: Kirk Yoshida (Chair), Aletta Banks, Vince Cobalis, Kara Takasaki

The Business Plan Working Group is tasked with understanding how the City's complex budget process works and with coordinating the Commission's budget recommendation process. The group started by reviewing the city's current year budget to prioritize areas of interest. The group held a budget priority session with Lesley Varghese (the Mayor's Chief of Staff), Esther Martin (Executive Director of the AARC Non-Profit), and Marina Bhargava (Executive Director of the Greater Austin Asian Chamber of Commerce) to get a better understanding of the budget process and to discuss strategies for developing our budget priorities. The group developed a detailed budget recommendation spreadsheet in coordination with the other AAQoL working groups and also created an accompanying budget presentation. Both documents were approved by the Full Commission for submission to the City Manager.

B.2. Working Groups Formed – Not Yet Active

Arts and Culture Working Group

Members: Pramod Patil (Chair), Shubhada Saxena

The Arts and Culture Working Group seeks to (1) encourage Asian Americans in expression of their culture, (2) promote culture-sharing

activities within Asian-American communities and the larger Austin community, (3) provide opportunities and increase awareness for the city to participate in Asian-American cultural activities, (4) identify cultural ambassadors among Asian Americans, and (5) ensure recognition of Asian-American cultural values and expression.

Community Outreach Working Group

Members: Richard Jung (Chair), Ann Okamura, Shubhada Saxena, Kirk Yoshida

The purpose of the Community Outreach Working Group is to reach out to communities that are not currently connected with or represented on the AAQoL Advisory Commission by inviting members to speak to the Commission about their communities, join the working group, and attend Commission meetings. The ultimate goal is to bring forward new leadership for their communities.

Determine if the board's actions throughout the year comply with the mission statement.

The AAQoL Advisory Commission's actions complied with the mission statement of the Advisory Commission.

List the board's goals and objectives for the new calendar year.

2016-17 Goals and Objectives

AAQoL Initiative

One of the AAQoL Advisory Commission's primary goals for the upcoming year will be to produce the final report of the AAQoL Initiative, utilizing results from the survey analysis and community engagement ("Conversations Over Tea") findings. Based on the findings of the AAQoL Initiative, the Commission will recommend improvements and new services along with suggested implementation timelines. Community outreach efforts related to the AAQoL Initiative will be a top priority. The Commission will also seek to conduct a "deep dive" statistical study to focus on particular issues uncovered in the AAQoL Initiative findings, including issues related to mental health and the Asian senior population.

Collaboration

The AAQoL Advisory Commission will seek to strengthen its ties with other city and community organizations by:

- Increasing participation in joint committees and collaboration with other minority Commissions
- Increasing support of and collaboration with Austin Independent School District on language programs and the International Welcome Center (IWC)
- Seeking opportunities to connect with other school districts in the city of Austin
- Increasing collaboration with the Health and Human Services Department for health-related functions at the AARC

Representation

Over the next year, the Commission will continue its work with HRD regarding hiring diversity issues identified and strive to achieve parity in executive and lower-salary jobs. In addition, the Commission will actively seek Asian American representation in the City of Austin's Equity Office and increase Asian American appointments to other city boards and commissions.

Our Communities

In addition to the goal and objectives presented above, the AAQoL Advisory Commission will work to support our communities by:

- Providing outreach to better understand and support refugee, new Asian Immigrants, and other underserved populations
- Continuing to support the Austin American Resource Center (AARC) in on-going programming and the kitchen renovation project
- Providing more language access for Asians at the AARC and other city services
- Continuing to develop diverse programming at the AARC

Acknowledgements by the Chair

The Advisory Commission's Chair would like to note the following exceptional efforts in carrying out the work of the Advisory Commission:

- Vice Chair Vincent Cobalis, who has dedicated an enormous amount of time to keep a vigilant eye on all the efforts of the Advisory Commission to ensure that the work of the Commission did not suffer from neglect. Commissioner Cobalis often attended numerous meetings on behalf of the Advisory Commission and carried the additional burden of covering for the Chair as needed. His selflessness has kept the Advisory Commission on task and moving in the right direction.
- Departing Commissioner Richard Yuen, who has been the driving and caring force behind the Advisory Commission's efforts to ensure the methodological integrity of the survey, but also to ensure the community needs remained at the forefront. Commissioner Yuen was always the most organized and meticulous member of the Advisory Commission. His dedication, keen eye for detail and devotion to this effort will be missed. We know he will continue his efforts to ensure better health and mental health care for all of the residents of Austin and Travis County as the newest Central Health Board Member.
- Commissioner Kirk Yoshida, who has stepped up to handle so many difficult details for the Advisory Commission, including the enormous task of understanding the City's budget process and making sure that the budget recommendations were put together and submitted on time. In a similar vein, his fingerprints and sweat are all over this report. He has almost singlehandedly shepherded and written the AAQoL's Advisory Commission's Annual Review and Work Plan.
- Ms. Sarah Chen, the City's Volunteer Staff Support Liaison for the AAQoL Advisory Commission, who has spent countless hours responding to every Commissioner's request, ensuring communications were flowing, and cajoling the Advisory Commission to remain in compliance with City rules.
- Assistant City Manager Rey Arellano, who has attended so many of the Advisory Commissions meetings and provided necessary insight into the process of supporting the City Council and accomplishing the mission of the Advisory Commission. All the Commissioners are grateful for his willingness to answer any and all questions, no matter how innocent and naïve.