



Annual Internal Review

This report covers the time period of 7/1/2021 to 6/30/2022

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.

2020-21 Accomplishments

Long-Term Accomplishments

- Continue to work with City staff on the Asian American Resource Center (AARC) new performing arts center facility and bridge projects
- Developed and submitted budget recommendations to advance equity in city services and other department activities

- Continued working with cross-stakeholder groups on the activation of the Joint Cultural Committee
- Worked with the Commission Staff Liaison to navigate the transition to in-person and hybrid meetings

Work Groups

The AAQoL Advisory Commission accomplishes a large portion of its work through its work groups. The following section highlights work group activity over the past year.

AARC Oversight Work Group

Commission members: Debasree DasGupta (lead), Vince Cobalis, Kirk Yoshida

Other members: Sona Shah (AARC Manager), Jae Kwan (AARC), Laura Esparza (PARD), Christina Bies (PARD), David Nicks (PWD), Bianca Xoyamayagua-Galvan (AARC), Thuy Nguyen (Community/AISD), Schiller Liao (NAAO rep), Phil Hoang (VACAT), Tony Vo (new AARC Manager)

The AARC Oversight Work Group supports the Mission of the Asian American Resource Center. The Asian American Resource Center's mission is *to create a space of belonging and healing for Asian American communities in Austin and beyond*. The work group reviews and provides advice on AARC programming, strategic plans, staffing, information gathering, and cultural events. A major function of the work group is to assess budget needs at the AARC and make recommendations to the Commission and City Council.

Key 2021-22 Accomplishments

- AARC Phase 2 Master Plan
 - Participated in the February 2022 AARC Phase 2 Programming Discussion with PARD staff and AAQoL commissioners
 - Assisted staff with an extensive Community Engagement process, including outreach to Limited English-Speaking communities. Methods included online and focus group surveys.
 - Focus is on designing a roughly 300-350 seat performance hall. Currently limited bond funding available (\$4 million to \$7 million). Additional funding of up to \$15 million is required.
 - Contracts in place for Architect (Trahan) and CMR (Flintco) by December 2021 to coordinate closely with City staff on design and flow to meet community expectations. Conducted a design charrette in June 2022 for that purpose.
 - Close coordination with Watershed Protection Project, which includes a bridge to City parking lot and other enhancements. Here's the project website for Watershed that includes the

presentation and project

timeline: <https://www.austintexas.gov/LittleWalnutAARC>

- After COVID shutdown, AARC carefully reopened with limited hours and mask requirements.
 - “Welcome back Seniors” event September 30, 2021
 - Limited access, programming, and events in October 2021
 - Implemented new Senior Meals program with Meals on Wheels and More (MOW handles program registration and meals)
 - Implemented transportation program through PARD Transportation
 - Re-established in-person Senior activities (Tai Chi, Qigong, dance, etc.)
 - Holiday celebration 12/15/2021 – in person and livestream, w/ Austin Symphony
 - Review/comment on AARC Annual Report (December 2021)
 - Feedback to AARC on CYE/Budget recommendations
 - New summer youth program “Totally Cool, Totally Art” for summer camps (8-week camp) June – August 2022; two sessions/20 students per session.
- Staffing
 - Sona Shah filled newly created PARD Equity and Inclusion Manager position (October 2021)
 - Event Coordinator, Bianca Xoyamayagua-Galvan became Acting Culture & Arts Education Manager for the 8-month transition
 - During same period, Leila Grace Pandey became the Acting Cultural & Arts Education Supervisor
 - Tony Vo hired as AARC Manager (June 2022)
 - Challenged to fill vacancies (hindered by limited PARD HR support)

Goals for 2022-23

- Continue to monitor progress of the design and construction of AARC Phase 2 Master Plan project. Assist with decisions for prioritizing limited funds available and support efforts to obtain additional funding.
- Rebuild the NAAO Donor Wall with a more durable design
- Advocate for the filling of vacant positions at the AARC and equitable staffing compared with other cultural centers
- Provide advocacy and guidance on continued phased reopening of the facility

- Work closely with AARC staff and City Management to actualize the updated AARC Vision, Values, and Mission as expressed below
- Support the AARC Mission to create a space of belonging and healing for Asian American Communities, embracing the diversity of language, culture, and community

AARC Vision, Values, and Mission

VISION

We envision a society where all people feel like they belong. Our Asian diaspora represents many cultures, languages, ethnicities, nationalities, and migration histories. We recognize that our communities are complex, similar, and different. When we share our cultures, our struggles, and our histories, we offer each other a space to heal and celebrate. When we create community, all communities belong.

VALUES

Diversity - acknowledging our cultures and histories.

Solidarity - recognizing our interconnectedness with ourselves and other communities of color.

Peace - creating space for healing and unity.

Collaboration - building relationships and co-creating.

Intergenerational - connecting through stories.

Celebration - celebrating our intersectional identities and cultures.

MISSION

The Asian American Resource Center's mission is to create a space of belonging and healing for Asian American communities in Austin and beyond. We do this through community collaborations and partnerships; providing rental space; organizing cultural, educational and health wellness programs; and curating art and historical exhibitions. We lead with our values and our vision, so that our diverse communities are supported and connected.

Arts and Culture Work Group

Commission Members: Pramod Patil (Lead), Shubhada Saxena, Hanna Huang, Kuo Yang

The mission of the Arts and Culture Work Group is to work together with folks from various ethnic backgrounds by sharing and celebrating different cultures. High-level goals include:

- Encouraging Asian Americans in the expression of their culture

- Promoting cultural sharing activities within the Asian American community and the larger Austin community
- Increasing awareness of opportunities for the City to participate in Asian American cultural activities
- Working to ensure that the City's arts funding is equitable for the Asian American community

Key 2021-22 Accomplishments

- Hosted an in-person event to celebrate the 'Asian American Heritage Month' in May 2022 through the Asian Creatives of Greater Austin at Native. It was a great success and provided an opportunity for AAPI artists.



- Submitted the funding request for the AAPI music hub/ center to the Austin Economic Development Corporation. The proposal was submitted in collaboration with EQ Austin with a proposed plan as below.

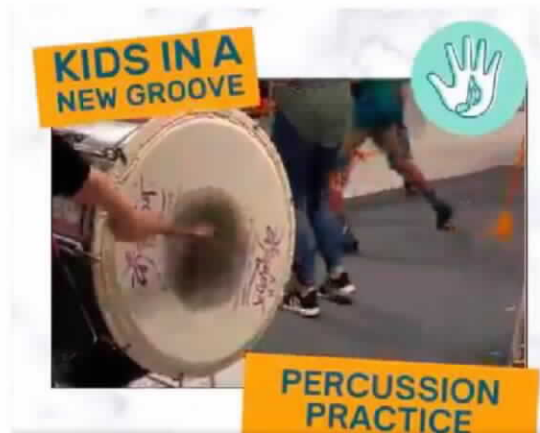


- Participated in AARC's CelebrAsia event and the Chinese New Year event in May 2022 through the Diversity Band. The Diversity Band team worked with the students at the LBJ High School and exposed them to the Indian and African drumming. This was a great collaboration effort and

provided an opportunity to celebrate different cultures. The Diversity Band works across cultures to connect people through music.



- Worked with the youth in 'Partnerships for Children' to teach drumming. Study shows drumming helps with stress relief and inclusivity. Partnership for Children works to bridge the gap between limited government resources and the growing needs of children and families in the care of Child Protective Services (CPS).



- Working with AARC to host an event on August 24, 2022 to provide AAPI artist through the Austin Sister Cities International collaboration.

Goals for 2022-23

- Develop art projects involving different communities of color and mainstream to celebrate togetherness. Such projects can be executed by working with members of the community and/or organizations.
- Explore avenues for displaying Asian art at various public places with input from PARD Museums & Cultural Arts Programs staff

- Explore ways to learn the process for installing new art installations in City public spaces, including parks
- Push for opportunities to make arts funding more equitable for the Asian community
- Continue to collaborate with other community organizations, including the Austin Creatives of Greater Austin (ACGA) to fund the development of a creative music hub & performance space
- Continue to work on the Austin Pune Sister City and Diversity Band to bring Asian art and music to the mainstream

Community Engagement Work Group

Commission Members: Commission Members: Shubhada Saxena/Meena Mutyala (lead), Kirk Yoshida, Hanna Huang, Vince Cobalis

Mission: The Community Engagement Work Group is dedicated to fostering the enhancement and involvement of the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Community within the social fabric of City of Austin services and programs. The work group is guided by the following core principles:

- Diversity: Demonstrating respect for all individuals and valuing the unique perspectives and experiences of the AAPI community
- Community Engagement: Working collaboratively with community members and organizations to achieve positive social change
- Inclusion: Breaking down barriers to meaningful participation and fostering a sense of belonging and access to city services
- Social Justice: Challenging injustice and working toward an equitable society
- Healthy Communities: Work with Austin Public Health to further develop the capacity of community health organizations serving the AAPI community

Key 2021-22 Accomplishments

- Agreed that we need to have effective online communication mechanisms with the community. A community leaders' email list has been established and needs to be maintained / updated. Community leaders act as a channel to disseminate relevant information/ generate action from their community.
- Continued to push for language access initiatives in coordination with CPIO
- Agreed that a newsletter should be issued by the Commission on a quarterly basis – this has not yet been initiated
- Introduction & communication with Miguel Briones of Go! Austin/Vamos! Austin (GAVA) regarding community resilience hubs

- Participated in the following community meetings/activities:
 - June 2022 Town Hall on Public Safety: People with Disabilities & Policing
 - October 2021 workshop on Civil Rights ATX: Combating Hate Violence in the AAPI Community
 - ATX Covid-19 Vaccine Distribution Coalition
 - Video recording of a culturally focused PSA to encourage Covid-19 vaccinations in AAPI communities
 - Capital Metro's January 2022 Equitable Transportation Oriented Development (ETOD) Focus Group

Goals for 2022-23

- Engage the community
 - Host additional tables at community events
 - Continue to develop and implement a strategy for Commission social media outreach with guidance from CPIO and Equity Office staff
 - Continue sending out AAQoL e-news to community connections
 - Continue to work with Austin Asian Impact to compile comprehensive list of AAPI organizations and community leader contacts, including a process to keep the list updated
 - Identify media and creatives that have been effective in communicating with various AAPI community groups from the list above
 - Continue to develop brochures and FAQs to promote the Commission and its work at community events
- Bridge the engagement gap with City departments
 - Provide input to key City departments in engaging with Austin's AAPI community, prioritizing APH, APD, Economic Development Department (EDD), and Austin Public Library (APL)
- Advance projects and initiatives that improve the health outcomes of the AAPI community
 - Continue to advocate for the collection of disaggregated data from APH service providers
 - Continue efforts to break down systemic barriers for smaller organizations to apply for APH funding opportunities
 - Work to hold mainstream service providers accountable for serving the AAPI community and set baseline goals in their contracts for outreach to underserved communities

- Continue to work to improve mental health awareness and services for the AAPI community

Business Planning Work Group

Members: Kirk Yoshida (lead), Vince Cobalis, Sarah Chen

The Business Planning Work Group is tasked with coordinating the Commission's budget recommendation process and other Commission business not covered by the other work groups. The work group meets with City department staff, City Council members, and community organizations to prioritize areas of interest and initiatives and develops budget recommendations for full Commission approval. Throughout the year, the work group meets with City department staff to ensure that funded initiatives progress in a manner that meets the Commission's intent.

Key 2021-22 Accomplishments

- Attended Joint Quality of Life Budget Recommendations Task Force meetings to collaborate and advance equitable outcomes through the budget process
- Attended community Budget Engagement events hosted by the Equity Office
- Developed budget recommendations in conjunction with staff and other stakeholders, matched to the AAQoL Initiative recommendations and City Council strategic priorities
- Explored, but ultimately did not submit, potential budget recommendations related to a mental health case management tool for APH, equitable Carver funding, PARD technology upgrade, and pay increase for City contract staff
- Met with community service organizations, including AACHI, American Gateways, and the North Austin Universal Health Clinic, to discuss funding status and needs
- Submitted budget recommendations through the Equity Office
- Oversaw production of the Annual Internal Review
- Held follow-up discussions with City staff and other stakeholders regarding funded budget items to get updates on how funds are being spent
- Provided a FY 2021-22 budget update to the full Commission, including the status of our funding requests and other budget items of interest
- Held regular communication with City staff regarding the status of budget recommendations and previously funded projects
- Updated Commission on status of the LGBTQIA+ quality of life study
- Continued regular monthly meetings with Assistant City Manager Rey Arellano

Goals for 2022-23

- Continue to work with the Joint Quality of Life Budget Recommendations Task Force to collaborate and advance equitable outcomes through the budget process
- Initiate process for establishing new Commission and work group leadership in anticipation of long-serving members transitioning off in early 2023 due to term limits
- Provide support to the Asian American Employee Network (AAEN) in alignment with their goals
- Broaden the Commission's focus beyond the AARC to include cultural arts and services for AAPI community members in other community centers
- Work with departments on innovative Asian American recruitment efforts
- Continue to connect budget recommendations and other Commission initiatives with City Council strategic direction

Commission Actions Summary

- Recommended a City Proclamation declaring May 2022 as Asian American and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Heritage Month
- Approved the following FY 2022-23 Budget recommendations:
 - Funding for the installation of room dividers in the AARC Ballroom
 - New Community Engagement & Outreach FTE for EDD's Cultural Arts Division Program
 - New AARC Administrative Assistant FTE; request HRD prioritize hiring of vacant AARC positions
 - Increase funding for Asian Pacific Islander focused mental health services
 - Increase funding for immigrant legal services
 - Increase funding for community health navigator services
- Approved the JIC's Final Report on Budget Recommendations for FY 2022-23

Briefings/Presentations to the Commission

- Update from the Communications & Public Information Office on SD23 and the commitment to maintain communication with marginalized communities, Brandi Bufford
- Presentation and Discussion on the Proposed Austin Living Streets Program, Jennifer Conroy

- Presentation from Austin Public Health on API Task Force COVID-19 Response Report, Bihn Li
- Project Connect Presentation, Sam Sargent, Austin Transportation Department
- Equitable Transit-Oriented Development, Laura Keating, Housing & Planning Department; and Anna Lan, Capital Metro
- Rain To River Initiative, Sari Albornoz, Watershed Protection Department
- Equity-Based Preservation Plan, Elizabeth Brummett, Senior Planner, Housing & Planning Department
- Staff Briefing on APD Body-Worn & Dashboard Camera Program, Karla Peredo & Lindsay Southard, Community Engagement Specialist, Office of Police Oversight (OPO)
- Staff Presentation on the Austin Police Department's (APD) Safe Place Initiative, Christian Mendoza, APD Office of Community Liaison
- Staff Presentation on City of Austin's First Comprehensive Food Plan, Sergio Torres-Peralta, Food & Resilience Coordinator, Office of Sustainability
- Update on the Cultural Funding Review Process and Launch Plans for Various Programs, EDD HOT Programs Process Update, Economic Development Department

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

The AAQoL Advisory Commission did not conduct any actions during the year that did not comply with its mission statement.

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

2022-23 Goals and Objectives

Equity

The AAQoL Advisory Commission will work to address structural inequities that are reflected in City staffing and budget allocation.

- Identifying strategies to improve equity of AAPI employment and promotion at the City of Austin
 - Working with individual departments, such as our initial work with the Austin Fire Department (AFD)
 - Supporting the Asian American Employee Network (AAEN) initiatives

- Expanding progress on language access. Limited English-speaking populations need translated documents and language interpretation to fully participate in government
 - Advocating for continuing support, fiscal and otherwise, of the CPIO's translation/interpretation of Asian American languages, and obtain periodic reports on their progress, outcomes, and sustainability, including how public departments will be funded to meet language access needs in the future
 - Collaborating with the Community Action Network (CAN) to make language support (translation / interpretation) available to mainstream City-funded nonprofits

Health

The Commission will continue to support safety net services that address the needs of Asian Americans by:

- Advocating and increasing awareness on unmet mental health needs of Asian Americans, sensitizing available mental health resources in the City such as Integral Care and its Mobile Crisis Outreach Team (MCOT) to the unique mental health needs of the AAPI community in Austin
- Assuring that existing agencies serving Asian Americans, refugees, and immigrants, such as Asian Family Support Services of Austin (AFSSA), Austin Asian Community Health Initiative (AACHI), American Gateways, and GAACC, receive funding to serve our expanding population and improve their access to Integral Care, MCOT, and EMS to address unmet mental health needs
- Advocating for social services for Asian Americans proportional to the population through the current provider network or through redistribution of funding
- Providing advocacy for continuing support, fiscal and otherwise, of the AACHI Community Health Navigator program, and obtaining periodic reports on their progress, outcomes, and sustainability
- Identifying and consolidating information and resources on free and low-cost health clinics, such as the Northwest Austin Universal Health Clinic (NAUHC), and fairs relevant to Asian Americans and identifying ways to disseminate that information in the public domain

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 Quality of Life Commissions
- Continuing to collaborate with APH on mental health and health equity issues

- Expanding community outreach efforts by connecting with community leaders, especially those from ethnic groups not currently represented on the Commission
 - Identifying strategies to standardize and improve Community Outreach
 - Continuing to develop community dialogue opportunities
 - Attending additional events and meetings to promote interest in the Commission and its efforts
- Increasing collaboration and coordination with NAAO and the GAACC to reach the broader AAPI Community
- Seeking relationships with new community organizations that can broaden the Commission network

Our Communities

In addition to the goals and objectives presented above, the AAQoL Advisory Commission will work to support our communities and increase community dialogue by:

- Developing a network of contacts to better understand and support refugee, new Asian immigrants, and other underserved populations
- Continuing to support the AARC facility and the AARC Master Plan, Phase 2 development and the identification of additional funding opportunities
- Actively seeking opportunities to support Austin's LatinX and African American Communities and contributing to the Black Lives Matter dialog, recognizing that both the "modern minority myth" and current anti-Asian racism incidents are intended to separate the minority communities facing common struggles. *Individually, we are one drop. Together we are an ocean. – Ryunosuke Satoro, Asian philosopher*