



Annual Internal Review

This report covers the time period of 7/1/2022 to 6/30/2023

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.

2022-2023 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
- Worked with the Commission Staff Liaison to navigate significant transition of commissioner terms and vacancies
- Participate in the Joint Inclusion Commission in recommendations and resolutions on issues pertaining to diversity and inclusion

Commission Actions Summary

- [Recommendation](#) - 20230321-004: FY23-24 Budget Recommendation on AARC FTE
- [Recommendation](#) - 20230321-005: FY23-24 Budget Recommendation on PARD Language Access
- [Recommendation](#) - 20230321-006: FY23-24 Budget Recommendation on AARC Ballroom Installation
- [Recommendation](#) - 20230321-007: FY23-24 Budget Recommendation on Immigrant Legal Services
- [Recommendation](#) - 20230321-008: FY23-24 Budget Recommendation on Community Health Navigators
- [Recommendation](#) - 20230321-009: FY23-24 Budget Recommendation on APH Language Access
- [Recommendation](#) - 20230321-010: FY23-24 Budget Recommendation on Mental Health Services
- [Recommendation](#) - 20230321-011: FY23-24 Budget Recommendation on APH Contracts
- Recommendation - 20230718-4: 2024 City of Austin General Obligation Bond Program for Cultural Centers in the PARD Museums & Cultural Programs Division

Briefings/Presentations to the Commission

Our commission received key briefings from City staff, local organizations, or other governmental bodies that provide us insight on how programs and projects within the City and how they relate to Asian American Quality of Life.

- August 16, 2022
 - Staff Presentation from the Small & Minority Business Resources (SMBR) Department on the City of Austin's 2022 Disparity Study - by Public Information Specialist Senior Eddie Bynog & Executive Director Edward Campos and/or Assistant Executive Director Tamela Saldana
 - Staff Presentation from PARD Cultural Arts & Programs on the AARC Phase Project – Laura Esparza
 - CapMetro Presentation on Fare Capping & Equifare Transit Equity Programs with Grace Nguyen and Edna Parra
- September 20, 2022
 - Staff Presentation from PARD Cultural Arts & Programs on the AARC Phase Project – Laura Esparza & David Nicks

- Staff Presentation from the ATX Walk Bike Roll project team (ATXWBR) on the joint effort between the Public Works Department (PWD) and Austin Transportation Department (ATD) to update Austin's sidewalk, urban trails, bicycle plans; and guide the direction of City Council's Austin Strategic Mobility Plan (ASMP) by Craig McColloch & Katie Wettick
- November 15, 2022
 - Houmma Garba – Communications & Public Information Office (CPIO), Updates on the Language Access Program
 - David Nicks & Laura Esparza – Parks & Recreation Department (PAR), AARC Phase Two Updates
- December 20, 2022
 - Equitable Transit-Oriented Development (ETOD) Planning Process Presentation: Warner Cook, Erica Leak, Stevie Greathouse - Housing & Planning
- January 17, 2023
 - American Gateways: Daniela Guerrero, Program Support Specialist and Edna Yang
- March 21, 2023
 - Chris Duran from Housing & Planning Department – Presentation on the 40-day Community Needs Assessment to gather input from the community on housing needs and issues for HPD's FY 23-24 Action Plan
 - Austin Asian Community Health Initiative – Presentation on ongoing work, new City contracts, and funding needs from Hailey Easley (Executive Director) and Lucy Nguyen (Program Manager)
- April 18, 2023
 - Austin Transportation Partnership (ATP) on Project Connect Update from Yannis Banks, Manan Garg, and Deron Lozano
- May 16, 2023
 - Housing & Development Department on Affordable Housing, the AHFC Program, and GO Bond Review – James May & Erica Leak
- June 20, 2023
 - Austin Transportation Partnership – Update on the final decision and the selected plans for Project Connection's first construction phase by Yannis Banks, Manan Garg, and Deron Lozano
- July 18, 2023
 - Staff Briefing on Anti-Displacement in Austin from Displacement Prevention Division of the Housing & Planning Department; from Susan Watkins & Marla Torrado
 - Staff Briefing on the I-35 Cap & Stitch from Shannon Riley, Project Coordinator for "Our Future 34 – Austin Cap & Stitch Program"

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. Per the City Clerk's direction, workgroups need a definitive start and end, hence some workgroups did not run for the duration of the period reported on. Workgroups such as the Arts & Culture, Community Engagement, and Business Planning were ended and new work groups with explicit end dates have been or are being proposed to be established.

Budget Workgroup

Workgroup active November 2022 to September 2023

Commission Members: Sarah Chen, Hanna Huang, Kymberlie Quong-Charles, former commissioners include Kirk Yoshida, Vince Cobalis

Citizen Participants: Azra Siddiqi

City Employees: Equity Office Staff Liaisons

Formerly the Business Process Workgroup, which was dissolved in November 2022 after the Clerk's guidance on workgroup guidelines, this workgroup is tasked with coordinating the Commission's budget recommendation process. 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 Accomplishments 2022-2023

- For the FY23 City budget, the following recommendations, some recommended through the Joint Inclusion Commission (JIC) include:
 - PARD - AARC Ballroom Divider funded at \$200,000. This was an item that has been recommended in previous years
 - EDD - Community Engagement & Outreach 1 FTE for Cultural Arts Division Programs, endorsed by Joint Inclusion Commission (JIC)
 - APH - Immigrant Legal Services additional funding of \$250,000 (JIC)
 - Management Services - Conduct Quality of Life Studies funded at \$1.25 million (JIC)
 - Management Services - Community Preparedness & Equitable Communication Strategies funded at \$50,000 as part of JIC

recommendations on addressing Winter Storm emergencies communications

- CPIO - additional funds to keep pace with growing demand for language access program funded at \$67,000
- Watershed Protection - Stormwater improvements at AARC funded Funded at \$140K in FY 2023 capital spending; \$5,561,286 total through FY 2026; Previously funded in FY 2022 capital spending at \$5,180,187 total through FY 2026
- Worked with the Equity Office and JIC for 3 public budget townhalls for citizen input on our budget recommendations for FY24
- FY24 Budget Recommendations passed by our commission in March 2023 include the following with some endorsed by the JIC
 - AARC Front Desk Administrative FTE at \$63,000 ongoing funding, previously recommended
 - AARC Senior Language Access at \$44,000 ongoing funding to expand budgetary dollars for additional language interpretation and translation at the AARC
 - AARC Ballroom Lighting Installation at \$15,000 one-time funding for the installation costs for professional lighting system inherited from the Carver Museum & Cultural Center
 - Immigrant Legal Services (APH) \$250,000 ongoing funding; one-time funding was approved for FY23 (JIC endorsed)
 - Community Health Navigators (APH) at \$150,000 ongoing funding to increase services provided by CHNs; previously requested (JIC endorsed)
 - APH Supplemental Language Access Funding at \$50,000 ongoing to compensate APH contractors who engage in significant direct services work by prioritizing language access to underserved communities (JIC endorsed)
 - AAPI Mental Health Services at \$250,000 ongoing, in addition to the current \$100,000 that was funded in FY20 (JIC endorsed)
 - APH Contracts FTE at \$101,727 ongoing for an additional staff member to help support and manage public health contracts (JIC endorsed)

Goals for 2023-2024

- Compile a one-page document of FY24 budget recommendations to do outreach and share to the AAPI community
- Continue to work with the Equity Office in the community engagement process for FY25 budget recommendation planning; currently townhalls are scheduled for October and November
- Draft and recommend budget recommendations for FY25 for commission action

Community Stakeholder Workgroup

Workgroup active November 2022 to May 2023, extended due to a vacancy in community stakeholder position until September 2023

Commission Members: Fang Fang, Kymberlie Quong-Charles, Sabrina Sha, & Mohsin Lari, previous members commissioners include Sarah Chen and Vince Cobalis

City Employees: Equity Office Staff Liaisons, City Clerk

This workgroup is tasked with engaging the community and implementing a marketing plan to solicit applicants for the open position on the commission. The workgroup will review applications received for the AAQoL commission's community stakeholder openings and bring forth candidates to be recommended for action by August 2023.

Key Accomplishments 2022-2023

- Commissioner Pierre Nguyen was recommended and approved for appointment April 18, 2023
- The workgroup has reviewed over 20 applications in preparation to bring forth another candidate for our upcoming August meeting as well as a backup to fill our final at-large commissioner spot

Goals for 2023-2024

- Filling our final at-large commissioner opening

AARC Oversight Work Group

Established November 2022 - September 2023

Commission Members: Hanna Huang (Current Chair AAQoL), Lily Trieu, Mohsin Lari

Citizen Participants: Vince Cobalis (NAAO), Kirk Yoshida (Chair Emeritus), Schiller Liao (NAAO), Debasree DasGupta (NAAO)

City Employees: Laura Esparza (PARD MCP Manager), Tony Vo (AARC Manager), Christina Bies (PARD), David Nicks (PWD), Bianca Xoyamayagua-Galvan (AARC), Leila Grace Pandy (AARC), Armin Panjvani (AARC)

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 Accomplishments 2022-2023

- AARC Phase 2 Master Plan – Performance Center
 - Received a staff and architect [briefing and program presentation](#) at our September 15, 2022 AAQoL meeting
 - Meet and coordinate with the project team about ongoing timeline and development of [Phase 2](#). Continue to assist and advise staff in community engagement related to the project.
 - Monitor updates related to the project, including the proposed pause on 2024 General Obligation Bonds for Cultural Facilities that would affect the timeline for Phase 2.
 - Passed budget recommendation to
- [AARC Water Quality Project](#) – continue to coordinate with the Watershed Protection Department on the proposed water quality improvement project in Little Walnut Creek that is adjacent to the AARC and City's Rutherford Campus. Preliminary engineering was completed in 2021 and the project is currently in design with construction estimated to begin in 2024.

Goals for 2023-2024

- Re-focus monthly workgroup meetings back to AARC programs, services and needs with core staff at AARC and MCP Division Manager
- Gain a better understanding of how construction or delays to next phases for facilities in the Museums & Cultural Programs Division is impacting programs at all the cultural facilities, particularly with the Mexican American Culture Center and the Carver Museum & Cultural Center all undergoing or beginning to undergo construction and the Dougherty Arts Center facing significant building issues
- Establish a quarterly Phase 2 and Master Plan meeting that focuses more specifically on the development of the next phases of the AARC construction
- Explore options for community supporters of the AARC to establish a Friends group or nonprofit partner to raise additional funds for AARC future phases or programming needs that are not City funded
- Work with the budget workgroup to create budget recommendations for FY25

Public Health & Safety Work Group

Established June 2023 - December 2023

Commission Members: Lily Trieu, Pierre Nguyen, Zahra Shakur Jamal-Hassan, and Kuo Yang

This commission is tasked with investigating public health and public safety challenges the Asian American community faces in Austin. As our newest established workgroup, it has not yet had any key accomplishments.

Goals for 2023-2024

- Establish relationships with local AAPI-serving community groups in the Public Health & Safety space
- Engage and learn from department staff in Austin Public Health Health Equity Unit, Austin Police Department Community Liaisons Office, Homeland Security and Emergency Management, and other relevant departments relating to workgroup task to learn more about how AAPIs are currently being served on programs and issues around Public Health and Safety
- Work with the budget workgroup to create budget recommendations for FY25

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.

2023-2024 AAQoL Goals & 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
 - Request semi-annual report on City staff demographics from Human Resources Department and request presentation to better understand any department hiring gaps and goals
 - Reconnecting with current leadership in the Asian American Employee Network (AAEN) and learn about how to support their initiatives and goals
- Expanding progress on language access. Limited English-speaking populations need translated documents and language interpretation to fully participate in government or receive direct
 - Advocating for and continuing to support, fiscal and otherwise, 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
- Identify and research the gaps in direct services needing language access resources for City programs that are contracted out to vendors
- Recommend and advocate for an Equity Office and programs in the City that are independent of departmental hierarchy and to maintain access to City leadership and executives on issues regarding equity

Public Health & Safety

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

- Supporting initiatives around Stop Asian Hate and programs that advocate upstander training and awareness to help increase AAPI community safety
- Engage with City departments, leaders and our AAPI community on addressing issues concerning personal, business and other safety concerns that may threaten our community
- 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 expansion of funding

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
- Making recommendations and resolutions that take into account issues and solutions that systemically affect communities of color and
- 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 by starting a Community Outreach and Engagement workgroup
- 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 local Asian American organizations and collaboratives such as 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.