



***JOINT INCLUSION COMMITTEE (JIC)
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES***

The JOINT INCLUSION COMMITTEE convened a REGULAR meeting on WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28th, 2024 at 3:00 P.M. CST in the CITY OF AUSTIN at the Boards and Commission Rooms #1101 in City Hall (301 W. 2nd Street, Austin, Texas 78701).

Chair AMANDA AFIFI called the JOINT INCLUSION COMMITTEE meeting to order at 3:06 p.m.

Commissioners in Attendance:

*Hispanic/Latino Quality-of-Life Resource Advisory Commission: Amanda Afifi (Chair)
Commission on Aging: Richard Bondi (Co-Chair)*

Commissioners in Attendance Remotely:

*African American Resource Advisory Commission: Serita Fontanesi
Asian American Quality-of-Life Advisory Commission: Sonny Sin
Commission on Immigrant Affairs: Melissa Ortega
Commission for Women: Julie Glasser
Early Childhood Council: Eliza Gordon
Human Rights Commission: Morgan Davis
LGBTQ Quality-of-Life Advisory Commission: Melissa Taylor
Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities: Jennifer Powell*

Staff in Attendance:

Alejandra Mireles, Community Services Program Coordinator, Equity Office

AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

The first ten speakers signed up prior to the meeting being called to order will each be allowed a three-minute allotment to address their concerns regarding items not posted on the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approve the minutes of the COMMITTEE's REGULAR MEETING on January 24th, 2024.

The minutes were approved on COMMISSIONER MORGAN DAVIS's motion, COMMISSIONER MELISSA TAYLOR's second on a 10-0 vote.

STAFF BRIEFINGS

2. Staff Briefing from *Austin Transit Partnership* on latest developments regarding Austin Light Rail. (Presenters: Lisa Storer, Program Manager, Sustainability and Design, Alvin Livingstone, SVP Engineering, and Yannis Banks, Public Involvement Manager)
See back up for presentation.
Staff in attendance to share advances of Austin's Light Rail Project. Staff shares that the project is continuing, and work is being done in three areas – design, needing to meet National Environmental Protection Act, and receiving funding from the Federal Transit Authority. Staff share that a virtual open house will be available for voluntary feedback.

COMMISSIONER RICHARD BONDI asks a follow up question: will the south section/option 2 will include a pedestrian access; answer, yes at the station and in the changes around 22-29th street from 22nd-27 there would be buses and bike lanes running through the center, while car vehicles would be rerouted.

COMMISSIONER SONNY SIN thanks staff for presentation, asks a follow up question: is safety is being considered around the elevated platform on the south of river; answer, yes, everything is built through an engineering "safety and security analysis" with barriers analysis which includes safe access for businesses below the elevated platform.

COMMISSIONER JULIE GLASSER asks a follow up question: has the team compared the rates of pedestrian injury in TX to other similar cities that will have an inner lane with traffic on both sides; answer, and the benchmark of the mobility is being considered and studied at this time, including traffic, bike, and pedestrian modeling.

COMMISSIONER BONDI asks a follow up question: in considering the two options for the east section of the light rail, does one option make more sense in regard to safety, compared to the other; answer, the team is not considering "pros and cons" of any option at this time because the team is trying to document how intersectionalities like opportunities for multi-mobility, additional green spaces, and providing pedestrian crossways might work.

COMMISSIONER AMANDA AFIFI asks a follow up question, does the design for the elevated platform include designs for multiple points or ways of accessibility (how many elevators will be available); answer, yes, the team included redundancy because of the possibility of failure. Staff shares that the team is still gathering feedback, about these considerations for the basis of redundancy more than one elevator, escalators, try to provide redundancy in accessibility to the trails as well.

COMMISSIONER SERITA FONTANESI asks a follow up question, can you speak a little more about how the project will mitigate displacement and disruption for folks as the project is built; answer, yes, one of the things we seek to do is try to minimize impacts in all our alignments; example of condos that were going to be displaced and the team investigated to see if the city had some anti-displacement funds that could

be used for the project which supported the issue. COMMISSIONER FONTANESI asks a follow up question, are there plans around jobs and hiring marginalized communities who will be disproportionately impacted because of the light rail; answer, yes, the light rail is a big economic driving force in the community and the maintenance facility will bring in a lot of jobs to East Austin. The staff shares that the project has elements of connecting with schools and a component for locally registered DBE disadvantaged business enterprises training as a venue for a matchmaking small with big businesses.

COMMISSIONER BONDI asks a follow up question, when would the project start date be; answer, a very rough estimate would be for the beginning of 2026. Staff shares that the projects currently have an open solicitation for building, with consideration of energy and that this is green field project, the project takes around 6+ years and could be completed in the 2030s.

More questions/feedback can be provided through March 6th at input@atptx.org; or Publicinput.com/austinlightrail to get to online open house.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

3. Alyssa Gooch, Development Coordinator of *American Gateways*, with a 2023-2024 program update and 2024-2025 budget request.

See back for presentation.

Edna Yang, American Gateways has offices in Austin, SA, and Waco and serves clients who are at or below 200% of the poverty level. They are currently the only organization serving the lowest – we do partner the other agencies. Edna shares that part of what American Gateways does is to provide outreach because a vast majority of their clients stay with the organization 5-10 years because of the backlog in immigration court. Edna shares that the organization served 12,000 individuals, with 30 staff and pro bono volunteers who helped donate over \$1 million.

Edna asks that the JIC, through the city budgeting process, request that the City continue to support the funding and then to add the 70K as continued and on top of the contract because of the metrics reached.

COMMISSIONER RICHARD BONDI asks a follow up question, so American Gateways' budget ask is to take the \$70,000 and move it into permanent funding; answer, yes for pro-se legal assistance; permanent funding is immigration legal services.

COMMISSIONER SONNY SIN says thank you because she is an immigrant, and this organization is impacting the quality of life of immigrants. COMMISSIONER SIN asks a follow up question, do you think any increase of cases is due to a technology boom; no, because sometimes those cases go through another process and American Gateways is only meeting 20-27% of the needs in services in the city of Austin. COMMISSIONER SIN asks a follow up question, what happens to the other 80% (who is supporting); answer, we refer other cases to Catholic Charities, Raíces, Equal Justice Center and those organizations are also not able to support most cases. American Gateways also provides efforts in outreach and education so

that immigrants can represent themselves and are not taken advantage of/mistakes are made.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

4. Discussion and possible action item on passing a JIC Recommendation for a City of Austin Resolution Calling for a Ceasefire in the Middle East. (*Sponsored by Commissioners Melissa Ortega and Muneeb "Meebs" Aslam*)
COMMISSIONER MORGAN DAVIS shares the purpose of this recommendation is to support peace in the community because there is a lot of hurting.
COMMISSIONER AMANDA AFIFI shares that history from the February 28th meeting.
COMMISSIONER RICHARD BONDI shares that the recommendations include language of the Joint Inclusion Committee's charter and the ordinance that creates the Joint Inclusion Committee.
COMMISSIONERS GLASSER, FONTANESI, DAVIS, POWELL, and ORTEGA share understandings, possible consequences of, and purposes for recommendation, and agenda item 5's recommendation below. (See audio recording 1hr:02mins:30secs to 1hr:33mins:13secs)
COMMISSIONER AFIFI shares that the JIC could leave the first recommendation with the word ceasefire, remove the word ceasefire from the second recommendation (agenda item 5 below), and add the JIC ordinance.
Recommendation PASSES on **COMMISSIONER MELISSA ORTEGA's** motion, **COMMISSIONER DAVIS' second** on a 7-2 vote (Against: **COMMISSIONERS GLASSER, POWELL**; Off the dais: **COMMISSIONER TAYLOR**).
5. Discussion and possible action item on passing a JIC Recommendation on Combating Antisemitism, Islamophobia, and Anti-Arab Sentiments in the City of Austin and promoting a peaceful resolution for all. (*Sponsored by Commissioners Melissa Ortega and Sonny Sin*)
Recommendation PASSES on **COMMISSIONER JULIE GLASSER's** motion, **COMMISSIONER MELISSA ORTEGA's second** on a 9-0 vote (Off the dais: **COMMISSIONER TAYLOR**).
6. Discussion and possible action item on passing a JIC Recommendation on Transparent Hiring in Executive Leadership. (*Sponsored by Commissioners Melissa Ortega and Sonny Sin*)
COMMISSIONER SONNY SIN shares background information from the Asian American Quality-of-Life Advisory Commission's authoring of the recommendation. **COMMISSIONER AMANDA AFIFI** thanks **COMMISSIONER SIN** and shares that the JIC has been looking into it.
Recommendation PASSES on **COMMISSIONER SERITA FONTANESI's** motion, **COMMISSIONER MELISSA ORTEGA's second** on a 9-0 vote (Off the dais: **COMMISSIONER TAYLOR**).

7. Review and discuss the scope of all current working groups and possible action to update membership.

WORKING GROUPS/COMMITTEE UPDATES

8. Budget Workgroup - updates from the last workgroup meeting on issues related to FY25 and policy matters pertaining to their assignment (*Budget Workgroup Members: Commissioners Richard Bondi, Charles Curry, and Hanna Huang*).

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Drafts of recommendations by March 15 – 16-20 recommendations

ADJOURNMENT: 4:58 p.m.

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The minutes were approved at the MARCH 27, 2024 meeting on COMMISSIONER REBECCA AUSTEN's motion, COMMISSIONER RICHARD BONDI's second on a 9-0 vote (Absent: Early Childhood Council Commissioners Leonor Vargas or Eliza Gordon).