



Annual Internal Review

This report covers the time period of 7/1/2020 to 6/30/2021

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

- Worked with City staff to on project delivery and community engagement related to the Asian American Resource Center (AARC) new performing arts center facility and bridge projects
- Participated in the April 2021 Rally to #Stop Asian Hate at Houston-Tillotson University

- Continued involvement in City hiring initiatives, including the Fire Recruiting Initiative and recruitment of the new Police Chief
- 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
- Engaged with public officials & staff, stakeholders, community leaders, and the public regarding Project Connect and the I-35 Improvement Project
- Participated in events & public service announcements regarding COVID-19 & flu vaccinations
- Responded to incidences of threats and violence against members of the Asian American community
- Initiated a Public Safety/Policing project to monitor police funding initiatives, collect input from the community, and develop Commission recommendations

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), Thuy Nguyen, Schiller Liao (NAAO rep), Phil Hoang (VACAT)

The AARC Oversight 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 2020-21 Accomplishments

- Received presentation from Justin Schneider on the Phase 2 Master Plan community engagement process
- Participated in a visioning session with PARD staff related to the community engagement process for the Phase 2 Master Plan project
- Worked with PARD staff to have Work Group representative Schiller Liao on the design phase RFQ evaluation panel

- Continued to monitor the solicitations, evaluations, and contracts related to the design & construction of the Phase 2 Master Plan project
- Coordinated with City staff to find a solution for the construction of the proposed AARC pedestrian bridge project
- Worked with Councilmember Flannigan on the potential use of a public/private partnership to help develop the AARC campus in conjunction with the neighboring Rutherford campus
- Worked with AARC management to revamp the Senior Meals program & make improvements to other facility programs

Goals for 2021-22

- Continue to monitor progress of the design and construction of the 2nd phase of buildings at the site
- Continue communication with AARC & PARD staff in the community engagement process & implementation
- Continue to provide help with budget and staffing needs that arise in the future
- Advocate for the filling of vacant positions at the AARC
- Provide input into the selection process for the hiring of a new permanent AARC Facility Manager
- Provide advocacy and guidance on continued phased reopening of the facility

Arts and Culture Work Group

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

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
- Work towards ensuring that the City's arts funding is equitable for the Asian community

Key 2020-21 Accomplishments

- Explored avenues for displaying Asian art at various public places with input from Laura Esparza, PARD Division Director of Museums & Cultural Arts Programs
- Initiated a resource list for different City grant opportunities related to arts & culture to be shared with the community
- Explored ways to learn the process for installing new art installations in City public spaces, including parks
- Pushed for opportunities to make arts funding more equitable for the Asian community
- Continued 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 relationship

Goals for 2021-22

- Focus on opportunities towards making arts funding equitable for the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) community
- Possible organization of an 'Asian Festival' for all of Austin and its surrounding areas with the idea of organizing such event by working with different organizations.
- Explore opportunities to work with the AARC and the Greater Asian Chamber of Commerce (GAACC) on possible ways they can assist AAPI artists with event hosting etc. during current difficult COVID-19 times
- Help build database of AAPI artists and available arts-related grants in Austin
- Explore opportunities for possible representation of Asian architecture in each district area
- Develop with 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.

Community Engagement Work Group

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

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 2020-21 Accomplishments

- Assisted with the coordination of the translation of City communications regarding the February 2021 Winter Storm event; held conversations with City staff regarding the development of translated emergency communication templates and future use of paid translators during emergency events
- Created and distributed a newsletter to the community with (1) a statement from the Commission's Community Engagement Work Group to the community regarding the shooting event at three Asian spas in Georgia, (2) Mayor Adler's statement on the aforementioned topic, (3) information on HCR 66 condemning racism against the AAPI community, (4) an overview of the Commission's FY 2021-22 budget recommendations, and (5) information on CapMetro's shuttle service to water distribution sites related to the ongoing effects of the February 2021 winter storm
- Attended three community Budget Engagement events hosted by the Equity Office to assist with the development of Commission budget recommendations
- Participated in a visioning session on Austin Asian Impact, which seeks to develop a well-informed, connected, and aware Asian community in Austin; previewed and provided input on the organization's database of Asian organizations, community leaders, and events in Austin
- Continued to push for language access initiatives in coordination with CPIO; researched what translated materials are available related to emergency notices and in what languages
- Continued to support the North Austin Universal Health Clinic work through reporting requirements and contract issues related to its contract with APH

Goals for 2021-22

- Engage the community
 - Host additional tables at community events

- Plan a future video conference community engagement event, such as a moderated discussion
- 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)
 - Document examples of best practices and/or examples of good engagement for each of the four target City departments
- 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 2020-21 Accomplishments

- Attended Joint Quality of Life Budget Recommendations Task Force meetings to collaborate and advance equitable outcomes through the budget process
- Attended three 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
- 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 2010-21 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
- Adjusted budget recommendations in coordination with Equity Office staff
- Pushed for the development of an equitable funding model for the City's Chambers of Commerce, including the Greater Austin Asian Chamber of Commerce
- Attended briefings with Fire Department Chief Joel Baker and management regarding strategies to improve Asian American representation at Austin Fire

Goals for 2021-22

- Analyze and clean up the results of the strategic planning session to develop additional Commission projects and set priorities; develop a tracking system to show progress on items
- Continue to work with the Joint Quality of Life Budget Recommendations Task Force to collaborate and advance equitable outcomes through the budget process
- Onboard a new Commissioner to the Joint Quality of Life Budget Recommendations Task Force
- Provide input/recommendations, in conjunction with GAACC, to EDD on an equitable funding formula for the minority chambers of commerce

- 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 AFD and other departments on innovative Asian American recruitment efforts
- Continue to connect budget recommendations and other Commission initiatives with City Council strategic direction

Commission Actions Summary

- Support the UT School of Nursing application to boost community immunity through a culturally focused self-management support program to manage chronic diseases
- Recommended support of the African American Resource Advisory Commission (AARAC) recommendations to the City Council on racial equity, African American cultural space investment, and the African American Cultural Heritage District
- Created a Commission Policing/Public Safety project to keep the commission up to date on City developments & develop recommendations for Commission action as appropriate
- Recommended that the City Manager retain APD's Office of Community Liaison within the Department
- Resolution in support of the City of Austin's 2020 Legislative Agenda
- Approved the following FY 2021-22 Budget recommendations:
 - Funding from all available sources to supplement the loss of HOT revenue; develop a long-term solution that diversifies funding for these programs (co-submitted with the Arts Commission)
 - Additional staff position in the Equity Office to serve BIPOC communities
 - Funding for a central pool for city departments to access translation & interpretation services; add funding to the Emergency Operations Center budget for translations, interpretations, and emergency communities to non-English speaking communities
 - Increase funding for immigrant legal services
 - Provide gap funding for Community Health Navigators
 - Provide increased funding for Asian American mental health & services

- Selected a new Community Stakeholder, Zahra Shakur Jamal-hassan
- Approved a resolution denouncing hate crimes & acts of bigotry against Asian Americans and calling upon the City of Austin to confirm its commitment to the safety of its Asian American community
- Appointed Commissioner Molly Wong to the City's Winter Storm Review Task Force
- Approved a recommendation in support of the UT School of Nursing application to boost community immunity through a culturally focused self-management support program to manage chronic diseases

Briefings/Presentations to the Commission

- Overview of 2021 City Budget, Rey Arellano, Assistant City Manager
- Office of Sustainability Presentation on the Austin Community Climate Plan, Celine Rendon, Community Engagement Specialist
- Austin Public Health FY 2020 Budget Recommendations Update & Overview of the Social Services, Laura LaFuente, Program Manager
- Office of the City Auditor Presentation on the Redistricting Commission, Corrie Stokes, City Auditor
- Analysis of the Austin Police Department's Racial Profiling Data Joint Report and update on the new Community Police Review Commission, Cristina Tangredi, Community Engagement Specialist
- Austin Public Health FY2021 Budget, Adrienne Sturup, Assistant Director & Chris Riley, Financial Manager
- 87th State Legislative Agenda, Brie Franco, Intergovernmental Relations Officer
- Update on the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force, Rey Arellano, Assistant City Manager
- Update on the Asian/Pacific Islander (API) Task Force COVID-19 Response & Outreach Effort, Binh Ly
- Presentation on the APD Community Liaisons, GuiMei Fung, APD Community Liaison
- Overview of Asian American Community Engagement Opportunities with Dell Medical Center, Ricardo Garay, Program Manager
- Presentation on the Community Police Review Commission, Amani Seay, Commission Chair

- Update on the Austin Asian Community Health Initiative, Hailey Easley, AACHI Executive Director
- Update on the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force, Hailey Easley, Task Force Member
- Lessons Learned from the Work of the Austin Asian Communities Civic Coalition During the 2020 U.S. Census, Sumit DasGupta
- Update on the AACHI Community Navigator Program, Hailey Easley, AACHI Executive Director
- Update on the American Gateways 2020 City Contract for Immigrant Legal Services, Edna Yang, American Gateways Co-Executive Director of Legal Advocacy
- Update on Language Access from the Communication & Public Information Office, Houma Garba & Marion Sanchez
- Presentation by Parks & Recreation Department Concerning the Department's Proposed Budget
- Update on the North Austin Universal Health Clinic and its Contract with the City for Mental Health Services

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.

2021-22 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
- Continuing to monitor progress for implementation of Equity Office Equity Tool at individual departments

- 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

AAQoL Initiative

AAQoL Advisory Commission will continue to expand awareness of the Quality of Life Initiative and advance community participation through:

- Conducting ongoing Community Dialogue events
- Developing ongoing policy and budget initiatives based on the AAQoL Initiative and City Council Strategic Priorities
- Develop promotional materials, both physical and electronic, to educate the community about the Commission

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
- Continued collaboration with APH on mental health and health equity issues
- Human Resources, including HR Department, AAEN and non-City HR advisor
 - Working with the City HR Department to increase effective outreach
 - Working with AAEN and HR to identify ways to help increase the number of City of Austin executives
- Community outreach, including community leaders, especially those from ethnic groups not currently represented on the Commission
 - Identify 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 goal 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, including advocating for combining the adjacent Rutherford Campus development and the AARC Master Plan, Phase 2 to improve funding opportunities and reduce the overall parking footprint
- 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