



Approaches for Forming a New Human Rights Commission

Listed below are several options by which to consider forming a new Advisory Commission to address issues of equity and inclusion. Each approach includes an overview and key considerations to inform Council's discussion of each. The approaches are meant to help facilitate discussion; different elements can be applied so as to create a new option not listed here.

Option 1: Traditional Approach

The City Council announces a formal recruitment period for the new Advisory Commission. Interested candidates submit a letter of interest, resume, and Commission application. Members of the General Government committee review the applications, select and interview potential candidates, and make a membership recommendation to the full City Council for approval.

Considerations:

- City Council has full oversight and decision-making for Commission membership
- Could populate the commission, establish a work plan, and begin work on commission activities by the end of the year
- Outreach to a diverse pool of potential applicants may be challenging
- A traditional application process may be viewed as intimidating for citizens not already familiar with this kind of process, thus resulting in a smaller pool and/or less diverse slate of applicants
- There would be limited community involvement in establishing the Commission
- This approach can intentionally or unintentionally lead to focusing on representatives from certain groups, as opposed to emphasizing individual characteristics and contributions

Option 2: Participatory Leadership Approach

The City Council hosts a participatory leadership process, including a combination of community-wide conversations and focus groups. Conversations would be designed so as to hear from citizens:

- Desirable characteristics for the commission as a body (i.e. representation from different groups who have been historically and systemically oppressed and/or been subject to racism, diversity in age)
- Commission mission and role (i.e. convene community forums, recommend and advance social justice policies, ensure City departments are delivering services equitably, community education)
- Potential focus areas or work plan items for the first 1-2 years (i.e. City staff training, community listening sessions, review of departmental policies/procedures)
- Desirable characteristics for a commission member (i.e. a person of color, an emerging leader)

The process includes intentional listening and learning elements, including integrating with the series of Council-hosted town halls, "Finding Our Voice on Race and Justice," and informing community members as to what City policies and programs are in place and/or under development to address inequities.

Member Selection Alternative 1: City staff recommends commission members to the General Government Committee, who then recommends to the full Council. Staff's membership recommendation will be based on the participatory leadership process, including having reached out to and interviewed existing local social justice leaders and new participants who engaged in the participatory leadership process.

Member Selection Alternative 2: After having listened to and engaged with a diversity of community members through the participatory leadership process, members of the General Government Committee identify commission members and make a recommendation to the full Council.

Considerations:

- This approach extensively engages citizens, resulting in greater community input to ensure development of a Commission that meets the unique needs of our community
- A thoughtful and intentional participatory approach can build trust among the City, Council, community partners (including those who do or don't feel represented by the final commission membership) and set expectations for what this group can and will accomplish

- There is greater potential for identifying commission members who are both known and unknown to Council and City leadership, providing opportunity for new leaders to emerge
- The City has a platform by which to inform the community of current and planned equity actions
- City staff and the newly appointed commission members have extensive community input on which to draw from and develop a clearly defined role, charter and first-year work plan
- The participatory leadership process would take approximately 6-7 months, with the new commission members welcomed, chartered, and ready to carry out an approved work plan on April 1, 2020
- This approach requires more staff resources; including significant contributions from the Office Performance & Innovation, Human Resources, Communications, and the City Manager's Office
- Staff will need additional resources to support community input gathering and analysis and partner with a more diverse cohort of conversation facilitators and co-hosts

Option 3: Hybrid Traditional/Participatory Leadership Approach

The City Council appoints half of the members of the Commission in a first phase. The second phase includes those five members hosting a participatory leadership process to meet, invite, and “sponsor” five additional members who are new and emerging voices and/or fulfill gaps in perspectives on the Commission.

Phase I Membership Selection Alternative 1: General Government hosts a formal application and nomination process (see the “traditional approach” as outlined above) to identify and recommend to the full Council appointment of the first five members of the Commission.

Phase I Membership Selection Alternative 2: City staff, in consultation with the General Government Committee, identifies and recommends to the full Council appointment of the first five members.

The five original Commission members invite and/or sponsor applicants into an interview process and make recommendation to the City Council on the remaining five members to appoint. After the full commission membership is established, they use input from the Participatory Leadership process to develop the Commission’s mission, scope, and first-year work plan.

Considerations:

- It may be challenging to identify and seek agreement on the phase I commission members
- Those first members need to have established trust and confidence in their hosting an equitable process to identify and select the final five members
- This is a time-intensive approach that would require significant staff resources; in addition to implementing a participatory leadership process, also providing support to the phase one members in hosting the community and selecting the second round of members
- The community and City Council share influence over membership selection
- This process enables a structure in which existing and respected leaders on the Commission actively seek out and bring in new voices and emerging leaders to mentor them as Commission members
- Staff will need additional resources to support community input gathering and analysis and partner with a more diverse cohort of conversation facilitators