



To: Community Livability and Public Safety Council Committee

May 18, 2026

Honorable Chair Madrone and Community Livability and Public Safety Committee Members,

In 2025 the Council directed City staff to do an assessment of the Council Appointed Advisory Body system, and community engagement strategies. At their April 20, 2026 meeting the Social Justice and Equity Commission received a briefing on the assessment of City Council Appointed Advisory Bodies and draft recommendations on opportunities to further support meaningful and inclusive community engagement. Commissioners continued their discussion of the draft recommendations at their May 18, 2026 meeting. This letter is intended to share with you the Commission's discussions regarding these recommendations.

The Commission's discussion centered around the following topics:

- Supportive of shift in recruitment timelines and rolling recruitment to ensure vacancies are efficiently filled and new members are engaged in the work plan development process.
- Additional engagement tools like community academy, community connectors and community collaborators are positive steps in reducing existing barriers to participation for community members. Acknowledged that these will not reduce all barriers but are an improvement on the current system.
- Concerns that community members most impacted by issues might still not have capacity or sense of safety to be able to directly participate.
- Utilizing ad hoc committees and short-term collaborator groups could increase the City's ability to be flexible and nimble in engagement on issues that are emergent.
- Community Academies could be an effective way to build trust, create environments where it is ok to ask questions, and do hands-on learning about City government.
- Consider partnering with schools on Community Academies to provide students with some kind of credit or academic benefit to participation for added value and to encourage youth involvement.
- Consider partnering with local businesses or organizations to bring Community Academy sessions or Community Conversations to the community rather than asking community members to come to City Hall.
- Ensuring that the work of community engagement is not performative. Improve feedback loop and demonstration of how community engagement and feedback have been impactful in policy development and decision making.
- Multidisciplinary approach to problem-solving makes sense and could more effectively collect diverse perspectives on issues, as opposed to groups where everyone is like-minded.

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- Staff time would still be required to engage with connectors and collaborators. Potential reduction in advisory bodies could allow staff to shift their time from support of advisory bodies to supporting other engagement tools.
- Consideration around what incentives community members have to participate in the variety of recommended engagement tools. How do these tools add value for participating community members, not just staff and council receiving community input?
- Consider evaluation of the stipend system and how to provide meaningful compensation for community connectors or collaborators. Ensure that the process to receive stipends is not overly burdensome and prohibitive for participants.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft recommendations for Council Appointed Advisory Bodies and community engagement and provide community perspectives on how the recommendations could support community engagement around policy development and decision-making.

Best Regards,

Robin Rosen-Evans, Chair
Social Justice & Equity Commission

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