



General Government Committee

Approval to Forward to the City Council a Recommendation to Establish a New Social Justice and Equity Commission

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Title

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Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

The Founding Member Work Group will deliver to the General Government Committee their final recommendation for establishing a new Social Justice and Equity Commission and discuss next steps.

City Manager Recommendation:

Recommend to the full Council a recommendation to establish a new Social Justice and Equity Commission as recommended by the Founding Member Work Group.

Report

Issue:

Whether to forward to the full Council a recommendation to establish a new Social Justice & Equity Commission

Staff Contact:

Olivia Salazar de Breaux, Equity and Inclusion Coordinator, 360.753.8343

Presenter(s):

Olivia Salazar de Breaux, Equity and Inclusion Coordinator
Anthony Markland, Founding Member Work Group
Megan Matthews, Founding Member Work Group
Joslyn Nelson, Founding Member Work Group
Rusty Shekha, Founding Member Work Group

Background and Analysis:

On November 2, the City Council approved a process to establish a Social Justice & Equity Advisory Commission (Commission). The approved process included the that the process be led by a Founding Member Work Group (Work Group) made up of community members representing

marginalized populations, with an emphasis on Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.

The Work Group hosted a series of conversations and an online survey to intentionally elevate the voices of marginalized community members. The Work Group heard from members of the LGBTQ+ community, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, members of the disabled community, and members of the immigrant community. Participants talked with one another about what the City can do to make Olympia a more equitable and inclusive community.

After the conversations and surveys were done, the Work Group analyzed and summarized the community input received. With support from the consulting firm Communication Resources Northwest, the Work Group reviewed extensive research on how other cities and counties structure and support similar commissions.

On August 31, the Work Group shared a proposed recommendation for discussion with the Committee at a special work session. The Work Group used input from community members and the findings from their research to craft a proposal that included a Commission name, jurisdiction, scope of work, and a role for the Work Group in the recruitment and appointment process. Attached is a summary of the work session discussion.

The purpose of this agenda item is for the Work Group to deliver to the Committee their final recommendation for establishing a new Social Justice and Equity Commission and discuss next steps.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

There is significant interest in the community to address systemic racism and inequality. Input that staff and City Councilmembers are receiving from community members strongly supports establishing a more inclusive way in which to listen, understand, and respond to the needs of historically marginalized community members. Community members have also shared that the City needs to take intentional actions to foster and repair trust amongst the City and community members.

Options:

1. Recommend to the full Council to establish a new Social Justice and Equity Commission as recommended by the Founding Member Work Group.
2. Recommend to the full Council to establish a new Social Justice and Equity Commission with changes as determined by the General Government Committee.
3. Do not forward a recommendation to the full Council to establish a new Social Justice and Equity Commission.

Financial Impact:

Establishing a new Social Justice & Equity Commission will require dedicated staff to support Commissioners in carrying out their duties and an annual budget to fund outreach and mediation. The City Manager is accounting for these anticipated costs in the 2022 budget process.

Attachments:

Founding Member Work Group Recommendation
General Government Committee Work Session with the Founding Member Work Group Summary
Social Justice & Equity Commission on Engage Olympia