



# Memorandum

**TO:** NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES  
AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

**FROM:** Zulma Maciel

**SUBJECT:** Proposed Equity Roundtable  
Status Report

**DATE:** August 1, 2022

Approved

Date

8/4/22

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Accept the status report of the proposed Equity Roundtable which outlines the scope and membership of this advisory entity to the City Manager's Office and cross-reference to the August 30, 2022 City Council Meeting for approval.

## **OUTCOME**

Acceptance of staff's status report will enable the creation of an equity-centered advisory body to support the organization's goal towards advancing racial equity and examining effective strategies to ensure organizational uptake of those methods within the City. In addition, it will broaden the organization's knowledge and work to include the perspectives of those with lived experience such as LGBTQ+, disabled persons, immigrant, and other underserved communities, and identify what can be done to ensure that residents from these segments of the community fully benefit from living in San Jose.

## **BACKGROUND**

On January 26, 2021, Councilmember Sylvia Arenas led efforts to examine and align the scope and work of the Human Services Commission with the work of the newly formed Office of Racial Equity<sup>1</sup>.

Based on this initiative, the Office of Racial Equity (ORE) researched several advisory groups in other cities and jurisdictions that were connected to equity-type offices. The research goal was to learn how these advisory groups functioned, their membership make-up and criteria for selecting

<sup>1</sup> Council Agenda 1/26/21 Item No. 2.12

<https://sanjose.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=9090560&GUID=0C531B2F-4FC2-4B7C-832A-F3CE9A208ABA>

members, and the scope of work. Staff found that while there are some differences across groups, there were similar characteristics, such as strong language on addressing racial equity and detailing a clear relationship between advisory bodies, City Council, Administration, and the community at large. Additionally, all researched advisory bodies had diverse representation and clarity in the scope of work.

As such, in June 2021, staff met with Councilmember Arenas to propose an alternative advisory body that would include lived experiences of community members and functioned in a way that would provide meaningful input to the City so all residents can benefit from the services and policies that the City offers. Staff did not recommend a commission replacement because commissions are often narrowly focused and can have structural limitations that hinder community engagement. Given the limitations of a City commission structure and the desired intent to address systemic inequities, staff recommended an alternative external body that would make recommendations on administrative policies and practices. An advisory body that would work collaboratively and upstream with the Administration to develop policies and programs.

With support from Councilmember Arenas, ORE worked with several community stakeholders and representatives to co-create an alternative body. ORE staff and the co-creators convened a series of meetings from October 2021 to March 2022. The purpose of these meetings was to develop a framework, scope, and selection process for an originally titled advisory body: *Equity Roundtable*. The co-creators included representatives who lived in San José and were from Black/African Ancestry, Native American, Chicano/Latin/a/o/x, Asian/Pacific Islander, LGBTQIA, senior, youth, and faith-based communities. Many of the representatives also had expertise and knowledge in several areas: disability/access, academia, grassroots, and neighborhood organizing, age and intergenerational bridge building, nonprofit coalitions, and anti-racism.

During the co-creation process, one of the co-creators highlighted that “this process was seen by a broad array of community stakeholders, whose work includes aspects of diversity and equity but whose mission is much broader as an important and valuable part of the evolution of a City seeking to achieve a greater level of equity, inclusion, and responsiveness to its diverse resident population.”

On January 13, 2022, staff and two representatives from the co-creator group, Héctor Sánchez-Flores and Carmen Brammer, presented an initial framework to the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee (NSE). The purpose of the item was to invite NSE Committee members to provide input so that staff and co-creator group can further refine the scope and membership of the proposed Equity Roundtable. The NSE memo<sup>2</sup> outlines several themes that were central in creating a new advisory body and can be found in the analysis section below.

As stated in January’s NSE Committee meeting, the proposed external advisory body would require flexibility in its structure so that it can facilitate equitable engagement and meaningful

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<sup>2</sup> NSE Agenda 1/13/22 Item 2

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contribution to City administrative policies and practices that would benefit historically marginalized communities. The City's existing commission policies and processes are limiting to some community members. For example, Brown Act Commissions must follow State law, which can require meetings to be in person. Conversely, virtual meetings would facilitate broader participants among residents who are unable to participate in person due to childcare, family caregiver responsibilities, and/or transportation issues. The current City commission structure creates engagement limitations of members, thus potentially excluding or limiting the very residents the organization desires to include.

Furthermore, it is important for this advisory body to examine past and current City efforts that were created and developed without meaningful inclusion of marginalized community voice and without the consideration of implications on people within these communities. This body will apply an equity lens that supports the City's efforts on addressing inequity and marginalization. Ultimately, the goal is to bring forth transformative policies where residents can enjoy a civic role and see their contributions. As part of this collaborative process, a subsequent feeling of healing can come from a sense of belonging that all residents and their input is welcomed and respected, regardless of their identities. To accomplish this goal, it will require considering recommendations and intentional inclusions from diverse resident experiences, so all residents recognize San José as their City.

## **ANALYSIS**

Staff considered the perspectives of a variety of stakeholders such as community, non-profit professionals, elected officials, legal advisors, and equity practitioners both in the City and other jurisdictions. The work included:

- Meetings with a co-creator group comprised of diverse community representatives.
- Feedback from the NSE Committee in January 2022.
- Advisement from City's Attorney's Office to ensure membership selection processes and scope of work are within legal parameters.
- In-depth research of three similar local government jurisdictions.

As such, input from these various sources was helpful in the development of the responsibilities and structure of the community advisory body which can be found in Attachment A and delineates the following sections.

- Scope
- Priority Areas
- Meeting Cadence
- Selection Criteria and Membership Composition
- Membership Criteria
- Member Terms
- Member Stipend

Below are brief highlights and lessons learned from other local government advising bodies. These examples served as resources and guides and were considered along with feedback from the co-creator group.

### **City and County of San Francisco, CA**

- The San Francisco Community Equity Advisory Council operates under a defined scope with priority tasks. These five priority tasks are (a) planning department budget and priorities, (b) recovery strategies, (c) housing element and other general plan elements, (d) community engagement, and (e) racial and social equity planning.
- Members must have a wealth of lived experience and skills to allow for in-depth discussions on policies and City resource allocations.
- Partner with community-based organizations and coalitions to recruit nominees with diverse backgrounds.
- Members should have explicit representation across districts, gender identity, and socioeconomic status, have expertise in a wide range of areas, including housing, economic development, homelessness, health, youth, education, community organizing, small business, arts, and culture, and be able to effectively advocate for communities of color and low-income families within these areas.

### **Washington County, OR**

- Washington County's Advisory Council on Racial Equity operates under a defined scope with set goals and has explicit language about supporting capacity building across the organization to center racial equity and diversity and inclusion into strategic plans, legislative agendas, policies, and programmatic priorities, and establishing practices that institutionalizes community engagement for external accountability.
- Advise and provide recommendations to the county's Board of Commissioners and County leadership on targeted inclusion of most impacted demographical groups and DEI best practices.
- County Board appoints members who are county residents, have racial equity expertise, are from a broad range of geographic and demographic groups, and understanding and willing to discuss their racialized experiences.
- Two-year term limit with a six-year maximum for consecutive service.

### **City of Dover, NH**

- The City of Dover's Committee for Racial Equity and Inclusion incorporates a member of the City Council that is appointed by the mayor.
- Incorporates a school board member that that is appointed by the school board.
- Members must represent the demographics of the neighborhoods across the city and have interest, knowledge, and/or lived experience in addressing systemic racism and bias.
- Review disaggregated data, hold listening sessions, and provide City leadership with recommendations that eliminate systemic racism within policy and practice.
- Have set officers and staffing for the advisory body (2 co-chairs, vice chair, secretary, alternate secretary, and designate/hire a part-time City support staff).

As presented at the January 2022 NSE Committee meeting, the themes from the co-creator meetings were as follows:

1. Acknowledge and name the harm and trauma from government's role in past and current systemic racism.
2. Emphasize values such as meaningful, long-lasting change, accountability, transparency, and visibility to both City administration and City Council.
3. City department leaders support practices that embed a racial equity framework and center an understanding of their role in eliminating the impact of systemic racism on residents within their scope and services.
4. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities and accountability for both the advisory body and city staff to track progress, address obstacles, and identify success areas.
5. Focus on policy areas with defined desired outcomes that are shared across City Council, Administration, and Departments.
6. Leverage the City's spirit and dedication in addressing transformational change to overcome policies and practices rooted in systemic racism.

### **Iterative Implementation and Approach**

The initial two years of this advisory body will center action, outcomes, and focus with a continual improvement approach. ORE staff, advisory members, and departmental staff will assess, iterate, and improve procedures and operations as recommendations are made and considered.

Testing and iterating are important as equity practices are constantly evolving and growing. During this phase, the advisory body's role will be to provide continuous feedback to staff. This approach will enhance members experiences, provide equity-centered recommendations to City departments and ensure meaningful department cross-collaboration that measures the impact of changes to policies and practices. To analyze, iterate and improve, staff will monitor the following: (a) member experiences, (b) recommendation output, and (c) Number of advisory body and department meetings. Staff will monitor impact by identifying community indicators that best align with recommendations put forth from the advisory body and applied through City departments.

The scope of this body will include providing input, feedback, and guidance on three to five specific projects within the City's Initiatives Roadmap priority areas per fiscal year with the flexibility to provide recommendations outside of this scope based on emerging issues within the communities they represent.

At the conclusion of this initial two-year implementation phase, Staff will have data that will best inform how this advisory body should function and be integrated within City processes and practices.

Furthermore, ORE recognizes the additional effort required to successfully implement, manage, and monitor the advisory body and the time necessary to prepare City departments for meaningful partnership with the advisory body. ORE will consider the additional workload and prioritize accordingly and assess resource demands during the first year of implementation.

## **CONCLUSION**

In partnership with community representatives, ORE is eager to develop and implement a meaningful advisory body that will engage community members and support the advancement of racial equity in the City organization. ORE is grateful for the collaboration with community partners and the support of the NSE Committee in moving forward with an alternative model that embraces the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion. The development of this advisory board will begin Fall 2022.

## **EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP**

City Administration will implement the creation of this advisory body. Staff may consider Committee and City Council input and may revise Attachment A. In its initial two-year development, both quantitative and qualitative data will be collected to evaluate and iterate for effectiveness. City staff will return to NSE Committee in the Fall of 2023 with a status report related to the implementation of the advisory body.

## **CLIMATE SMART SAN JOSE**

The recommendation in this memorandum has no effect on Climate Smart San José energy, water, or mobility goals.

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

This memorandum will be posted on the agenda website for the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee meeting for August 11, 2022.

## **COORDINATION**

This memorandum was coordinated with the City Attorney's Office.

**CEQA**

Not a Project, File No. PP17-010, City Organizational & Administrative Activities resulting in no changes to the physical environment.

/s/

ZULMA MACIEL

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For questions, please contact Dr. Andre Lockett, Racial Equity Senior Executive Analyst at [Andre.Lockett@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:Andre.Lockett@sanjoseca.gov)

ATTACHMENT A: Community Advisory Responsibilities and Structure

## Attachment A

### Community Advisory Responsibilities and Structure

The advisory body will support city departments, leadership, and staff by providing feedback and making recommendations that center racial equity, diversity, and inclusion—and the intersectionality of LGBTQ+, female, and disabled experiences - in their priorities, policies, project management, and strategies. A critical part of this advisory body's scope will be engaging and providing input within a defined process between Department leadership and City staff. The purpose of this advisory body is to provide input and recommendations that will support and improve City processes, practices, and services that focuses on the lived experiences of historically marginalized communities.

#### Name Revision

After an in-depth research process of other local government advisory bodies and feedback from co-creators, the proposed name of the advisory body will be the Transformative Equity in Action and Community Healing (TEACH) advisory committee. The name revision was a central theme during the co-creation process and represents this advisory body's vision and process.

#### Scope

- Ensure there is connection and accountability of centering equity in all City commissions.
- Have a clearly defined process and expectation guidelines that support the accountability of City departments to provide services and foster environments that align with the advancement of racial equity.
- Provide input, feedback, and guidance on three to five specific projects within the City's Initiatives Roadmap priority areas per fiscal year.
- Ensure City department leaders acknowledge past practices and policies that have burdened many marginalized residents and communities.
- Advise City department leaders on the impact of policies and services, and to substantiate any quantitative metrics used to inform decisions by aligning with community voice and experiences.

#### Priority Areas

For one year, the advisory body will focus on three to five specific projects within the City's Initiatives Roadmap priority areas:

- Covid 19 Pandemic Community & Economic Recovery
- Emergency Management & Preparedness
- Ending Homelessness
- Safe Vibrant, & Inclusive Neighborhoods & Public Life
- Building the San José of Tomorrow with a Downtown for Everyone
- Smart, Sustainable, & Reliable City: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Infrastructure



The advisory body will discuss and agree on their priority projects on an annual basis. By prioritizing a few projects, the advisory body will be able to focus and engage department projects at early stages rather than, for example, at a mid-point or conclusion stage. Departments in these identified projects will be/are expected to have ongoing communication and engagement of how recommendations and feedback have been incorporated.

Additionally, as members of this advisory body will be active community members with lived experience and have a pulse on the current conditions of the communities they live in and support, there will be flexibility within this body's scope to make recommendations to City departmental leadership to focus on projects and emerging issues outside of the City roadmap - especially if there's strong community need.

### **Meeting Cadence**

The body shall hold regular meetings every two months. Additional meetings with departments may be required to gain clarity on project, program, and policy scopes. All meetings of this body shall comply with state and local law in accordance with procedures established by the City Clerk and City Attorney's Office.

In addition to meetings, members may have to review additional documents or materials to better identify gaps and recommendations. Members may also be asked to conduct outreach within their respective communities on an as needed basis as well.

### **Selection Criteria and Membership Composition**

The external advisory body will be a compromised of a group of 10-12 community members dedicated to addressing inequities and structural racism within city projects and policies. Factors that led to this number of members included: (a) manageability: the size of the group being large enough to have sufficient representation but small enough that meeting time is effective and there is productive communication where all voices are heard and (b) sustainability: the body being small enough that everyone can meaningfully engage and not so small that members could be overtaxed and engagement falters.

### **Membership Criteria**

The representation of this community body will embody and represent the values and characteristics of the following:

- Lived experience of having to navigate the structural marginalization within the diverse array of racial, ethnic, and immigrant communities that reside in the city.
- Representation of diverse experiences among different socioeconomic backgrounds.
- Understand systemic racism and have a deep commitment to racial equity.
- Ensure inclusion of age diversity.
- Ensure inclusion of voices across gender, gender identity, and sexual preferences.
- Ensure inclusion of diverse abilities.

- Expertise in but not limited to areas of housing, economic development, homelessness, criminal justice, transportation, immigration/undocumented status, youth, or small business, arts, and culture.

### **Selection Process**

The members of this advisory body will be selected by a diverse group of evaluators comprised of community members, city administration, and City department leadership. ORE staff will implement and facilitate a recruitment strategy for those who will be evaluating applications for this advisory body.

The intent is for ORE staff to work in partnership with the chosen evaluators, City Clerk's Office and City Attorney's Office on the following process:

- Develop questions using the City's existing application platform for Boards and Commissions.<sup>3</sup>
- Accept applications for an approximately three-week period.
- Conduct broad outreach to spread awareness of the application. Utilize the relationships established with the co-creator group to outreach with diverse communities with marginalized histories.
- Work with community groups to offer technical assistance to potential applicants (which may include help with filling out paper applications and language access).
- Once the application period is over, ORE staff will review the applications to ensure membership criteria is met and share qualified applicants to the next round of the evaluation process.
- Convene the evaluation group to evaluate the qualified applications and develop a slate of 10-12 residents that individually and collectively meet the requirements and intent of this advisory body's membership composition criteria and can serve on this advisory body, ultimately, appointing members.
- If there is an unanticipated vacancy within any given term, ORE would convene the selection stakeholder group to re-evaluate the qualified applicant pool received for the active term for candidates to fill the vacancy. If it comes to be that no other applicants meet the criteria or declines acceptance due to the lapsed time, outreach will commence in a similar fashion of the initial recruitment process, with the selection stakeholder group determining qualified applicant status and appointing membership.
- Conditions for removal of a member will require the approval of a majority of the advisory body. The basis for removal will be prolonged absence without notice as set forth in San Jose Municipal Code Section 2.08.060 and the violation of the Code of Conduct in Council Policy 0-4, Consolidated Policy Governing Boards and Commissions.

Staff is committed to integrating innovative and equitable practices, while implementing the standard practices intended to promote fairness, transparency, and ethics that ultimately leads to

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<sup>3</sup> <sup>[1]</sup> The City's application platform includes allows for translation into a variety of other languages. See the Boards and Commissions page for additional information: <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/your-government/departments/city-clerk/boards-commissions>.

the City advancing racial equity with meaningful impact to historically marginalized communities.

## **Terms**

The term length is two years with no more than two consecutive terms. The initial two-year iterative implementation phase will not count as a term.

Staff may consider staggering and increasing term length after completing their evaluation of the effectiveness of the initial two-year term.

Any appointments made to fill unanticipated vacancies shall be for the full remainder of the predecessor's term, to begin the date of appointment. This appointment shall represent a term under the two consecutive term provision unless the appointment is made with less than a year of the term ending. If there is less than a year left in the term, the appointed member may be appointed to two consecutive terms potentially serving up to five consecutive years.

## **Stipend**

Staff recommends that each member receive \$100 stipend every two months totaling \$600 per year. Members would have the option to opt out from receiving a stipend. The stipend would not serve as direct compensation for time spent working on advisory body business. Rather, the intention is to reduce financial barriers to participation by broadly supporting personal expenses required to conduct advisory body business, such as attending meetings and reviewing materials

The stipends would be paid from ORE's budget. The stipend will be paid regardless of attendance at meetings. Administering stipends every two months is a simpler and less time-consuming process than administering them on a per meeting basis. It also recognizes that the body's responsibilities go beyond attending their meetings to include other tasks, such as reviewing documents, conducting outreach, and participating in department specific meetings.

While reviewing memos for similar bodies across the organizations for guidance, City staff recognized an acknowledgement of questions and concerns about how a stipend may impact an individual's eligibility for financial aid (such as housing vouchers). Whether these stipends will affect one's benefits and how it will impact the benefits varies by the type of benefit and an individual's circumstances. If needed, City staff could connect the individual with organizations that can help determine the potential impact of stipends. The individual could decide to opt out of the stipend for any reason.