

Mayor and City Council
City of San José
200 E. Santa Clara Street San Jose, CA 95113

August 20, 2018

Dear Mayor and City Council:

Intro: Below is a summary of the work of the Human Services Commission for FY 2017-2018 under the leadership of Chair Estrada.

Topic	Status
Bylaws	Completed
Promote Disability Culture	Ongoing
Human Trafficking	Ongoing
Children's Rights	Completed
Police Department Cultural Diversity and Competency	Completed
Commission Best Practices	Completed
Additional Work Completed: Immigrations and Customs Enforcement	Ongoing
Additional Work Completed: Protecting Property Rights of People Who Are Homeless	Ongoing
Women's Bill of Rights	Ongoing

Topic: Bylaws and Best Practices

In keeping with City of San José's commission standards and best practices, the Human Services Commission (HSC) worked through the challenges of implementing its first-ever bylaws with the help of our City Manager's Office (CMO) staff and the City Attorney's Office. Additionally, the HSC has developed a clearer vision for both its community leadership role and most effective path going forward. Part of our best practices implementation plan for FY17-18 involved commissioners attending and promoting community events such as a disabilities provider ribbon cutting ceremony, the June La Raza Roundtable meeting, and Census campaigns. Another piece was direct engagement: reaching out to various councilmembers, other commissions, and local leaders in effort to raise awareness and glean invaluable information to bring back to our commission meetings. Through creating more touchpoints with community members, expert presenters, and city leaders, our comprehensive desire for increased visibility, community awareness and quality change is being achieved.

Topic: Promote Disability Culture

The HSC heard from presenters and its own commissioners on current disability rights issues. Additionally, Commissioner Maciel worked tirelessly within her networks to produce a film for the City's upcoming Disability Awareness Day (10/4/18); with a goal of bringing the community and council offices together in both celebration and support for our community members with disabilities. This work plan item will be ongoing due to its importance and encompassing nature.

Topic: Human Trafficking

In November and February, the HSC heard presentations from council staff, the San Jose Police Department (SJPd), the Santa Clara County Prosecutor's Office, and service providers, such as Jose Fuentes from the County District Attorney's Office and Sharon Dhanoa of the South Bay Coalition to End Human Trafficking, on how the City of San José and its partners are handling human trafficking. Most notably, benefits, such as immigration assistance and rehabilitation (in lieu of punishment), are becoming widely available to these victims of all forms of trafficking. This work plan item will be ongoing given its wide-spread severity, constant developments and active community partnerships.

Topic: Children's Rights

For October, the HSC had asked the Asian Americans for Community Involvement to speak about mental health resources available for children. In February, the HSC also heard from Laura Champion and the outstanding efforts by Uplift Family Services. Commissioner Ly provided more background and topical information within certain meetings as well. Most notably, Commissioner Ly led the development and execution phases of the inaugural Children's Rights Showcase (5/26/18) at the Seven Trees Community Center. About 100 community-family members were in attendance. The event raised awareness about children's rights and issues currently affecting our children. It also served as a venue for celebrating what it means to be a child in our diverse city: connecting through play, possessing a spirit of wonder, expressing artistic and cultural uniqueness. The overarching message was 'our children should be having fun without worry'. The event was a such success—where attendees were asking if, and when, we plan to host it again—that is now on the proposed 2018-1019 work plan.

Topic: Police Department Cultural Diversity and Competency

In March and May, the HSC heard testimony from Heather Randal of SJPd Human Resources office, as well as Aaron Zisser of the Independent Police Auditor's office, respectively, on the status and efforts to improve cultural competencies and diversity. There is significant—model—work being accomplished at the SJPd. This topic dovetailed into similar questions of competency within Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) operations being conducted in San Jose communities (see additional work below).

Topic: Women's Bill of Rights

Since being tasked with overseeing the implementation of the Women's Bill of Rights, the HSC has advocated for a budget to carry out the required gender equity analysis—mentioned in the Mayor's June Budget Message. The HSC has been working on re-drafting the bill language to ensure that it is fully inclusive of transgender, non-binary, disabled, and racial diversity. The HSC has heard testimony from a half-dozen community members, organizations, and city staff on how the gender analysis model should look and be effectively executed. As a result, the HSC

has developed a preliminary community survey (approved and temporarily on-hold for translation) in order to solicit feedback on which city departments should be included in our diversity analysis. Additionally, the HSC has advocated for the authorization of a separate Commission on the Status of Women; this would be modeled on the Santa Clara County and City of San Francisco CEDAW ordinances. This work plan item will be ongoing as required in the Women's Bill of Rights directive.

Additional Work Completed

Topic: Immigrations and Customs Enforcement

In response to negative and wide-spread community feedback, the HSC requested that a local representative of the federal ICE office testify before the commission on questionable actions occurring in San Jose. Since early Spring, several follow-up requests have been sent to no avail. As an additional measure to explore and mitigate alleged human rights violations, Commissioner Barocio and Commissioner Dickinson Goodman have undergone Rapid Responder training. This work plan item is being included in the 2018-2019 proposed work plan due to unresolved and ongoing complaints.

Additional Work Completed

Topic: Protecting Property Rights of the Homeless Community

The HSC followed up on community members' request to ascertain alleged property rights abuse during city sweeps of homeless encampments and provisional dwellings. The specific concern was that contracted entities, who are taking possession personal effects after these sweeps, are not giving the rightful owners meaningful access to their belongings—sometimes requiring several days and numerous phone calls to arrange a simple property return. Often times, this personal property is unrecoverable. The HSC looked into these concerns by speaking with service providers, hearing testimony from Anthony King, homeless advocate, and Heather Beretta, Housing Department, and dialoguing with individuals who were formerly homeless. The HSC recommends processing changes as a result.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve our City. We look forward to partnering with City offices in the new fiscal year!

Sincerely,



Thomas Estrada
2017-2018 Chair