



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item-No Attachments (PDF)

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REPORT TO COUNCIL

SUBJECT

Adopt Resolution Establishing a Human Relations Commission and Approve Conforming Amendments to Council Policy 7.2.19 on Boards and Commissions

BACKGROUND

On January 12, 2021, Councilmember Alysa Cisneros sponsored a study issue on the creation of a Human Relations Commission ("Commission") (Study Issue OCM 21-02, Attachment 1). The focus of the Commission would be on "human relations matters that concern public or private opportunities or resources in the community where a community member is treated unfairly due to factors such as race, gender, sexual orientation, citizenship or any other immutable characteristics or protected status." The Study Issue was co-sponsored by Councilmembers Fong, Din, and Melton. The City Council ranked the Study Issue as part of the 2021 Study/Budget Issues Workshop.

At a Council study session on March 22, 2022, staff presented findings from a comparison study of similar commissions. Staff also presented a cost analysis that took into account staffing resources needed to implement the Commission. Based on majority support from Council, the FY 2022/23 Budget added permanent funding resources for the Commission that included the modification of an Equity, Access and Inclusion Manager from Term Limited to Regular Full-Time and the addition of a Senior Office Assistant. At a follow-up study session on August 9, 2022, staff presented Council with a menu of options for forming the Commission and walked Council through each decision point.

EXISTING POLICY

Council Policy 7.2.19 on Boards and Commissions

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The action being considered does not constitute a "project" with the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15378(b)(5) in that it is an organization or administrative activity that will not result in a direct or physical change in the environment.

DISCUSSION

Based on Council direction, staff is presenting a Draft Resolution to create a Human Relations Commission (Attachment 2). Staff also prepared conforming amendments to the Council Policy 7.2.19 Boards and Commissions to incorporate the Human Relations Commission (Attachment 3). Below is a summary of the proposed Human Relations Commission.

Policy Issues and Responsibilities. The Commission would advise Council on policies, systems and programs related to equity, access, inclusion and social justice. It would advise on ways the City

can make its services more accessible to the public and increase transparency. The Commission would promote regular, civil, and authentic communication with diverse groups of residents. Lastly, it would help celebrate and encourage intergroup understanding of the rich cultural diversity in Sunnyvale.

At the August 2022 study session, Council made clear that the Commission should advise Council and not staff. The Commission should focus on policy issues and not interfere with City operations. Likewise, the Commission is not to be a forum for grievances from members of the public. Complaints should continue to be directed to the City Manager and Council.

Commission Size. The Commission shall be comprised of five commissioners.

Eligibility Criteria. Commissioners must be Sunnyvale residents, except that up to one commissioner may be a non-resident that represents a local nonprofit or public agency that serves Sunnyvale residents. There is no current age requirement for commissioners and Council discussed the ability of Sunnyvale youth participating on the Commission. Besides the basic eligibility criteria, commissioners should have the interest and the ability to carry out the responsibilities of the Human Relations Commission. They should also have an appreciation for the diverse demographics of Sunnyvale, including but not limited to geography, race, ethnicity, gender, age, and economic class. In appointing commissioners, Council will strive to reasonably reflect the demographic diversity of the City.

Term of Service. Commissioners may serve up to two four-years terms.

Timeline. If the Council adopts the Resolution creating the Human Relations Commission, staff will begin recruitment efforts early next year. The goal would be to have commissioners appointed before the end of the fiscal year.

FISCAL IMPACT

Funding for the creation of the Human Relation Commission was included in the FY 2022/23 Budget.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Public contact was made by posting the Council agenda on the City's official-notice bulletin board outside City Hall, at the Sunnyvale Public Library, Senior Center, Community Center and in the Department of Public Safety Lobby. In addition, the agenda and report are available at the Sunnyvale Public Library, Office of the City Clerk, and on the City's website.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Adopt Resolution Establishing a Human Relations Commission and Approve Conforming Amendments to Council Policy 7.2.19 on Boards and Commissions
2. Adopt Resolution Establishing a Human Relations Commission and Approve Conforming Amendments to Council Policy 7.2.19 on Boards and Commissions, with modifications
3. Do not Adopt Resolution Establishing a Human Relations Commission

RECOMMENDATION

Alternative 1: Adopt Resolution Establishing a Human Relations Commission and Approve Conforming Amendments to Council Policy 7.2.19 on Boards and Commissions

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Reviewed by: Teri Silva, Assistant City Manager
Approved by: Kent Steffens, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS

1. Study Issue Paper - OCM 21-02
2. Draft Resolution
3. Redlined Amendments to Council Policy 7.2.19 on Boards and Commissions