

Human Relations Commission Proposed Study Issues, Calendar Year: 2026

Date	Working Title	Summary of Scope	Staff Comments
9/11/2025	Addressing the Surge of Jew-Hatred in Sunnyvale: A Call for a Community-Centered Study on Safety and Inclusion	<p>This study will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Document Jewish residents' lived experiences, gaining a clearer picture of the nature and extent of anti-Jewish actions and sentiment. 2) Explore the toll this hatred is taking on Jewish community members' mental health and sense of safety and well-being. By studying the issue, we can create a comprehensive, data-driven foundation for policies and programs that counter hate, foster understanding, and build bridges. Community workshops, educational initiatives, and targeted support for those affected are just a few measures that could arise from this study, all aimed at creating a stronger, more inclusive Sunnyvale. 	<p>Given that the City is preparing to launch the Community Equity Assessment in the coming months, the Staff Liaison suggests that this Study Issue be incorporated into this broader assessment, rather than pursued as a standalone initiative.</p> <p>The Community Equity Assessment will be designed to gather data through various methods including, focus groups and will offer an ideal platform to understand the experiences of our Jewish residents without the need for a separate, stand alone study issue. Through these focus groups, we will be able to engage directly with Jewish community members to explore the nature and extent of the anti-Jewish harassment, including hate-filled graffiti, verbal abuse, bullying, and subtle acts of exclusion. This will allow us to document their lived experiences and gain a comprehensive understanding of how these actions have impacted their sense of safety, mental health, and well-being.</p> <p>Integrating this issue into the broader Community Equity Assessment ensures it is addressed in a data-driven and holistic manner, alongside other key community concerns. The experiences shared by Jewish residents will be analyzed as part of the overall findings, providing a clearer picture of the challenges they face and ensuring their voices are included in the City's broader equity efforts.</p> <p>This approach aligns with Sunnyvale's commitment to inclusion, safety, and community well-being. The findings from the Community Equity Assessment will inform the development of policies, programs, and initiatives to address hate and discrimination--such as community workshops, educational campaigns, and support services for those affected by anti-Semitism may emerge from this process. These efforts can promote understanding, strengthen connections among diverse groups, and build community resilience.</p>

			<p>Given that the Community Equity Assessment already compasses this issue, pursuing a separate study issue may duplicate efforts and create unnecessary administrative work. Embedding it within the scope of the assessment allows for a more efficient and inclusive response that addresses the specific concerns of Jewish residents while also reflecting the broader community.</p> <p>For these reasons, advancing with the Community Equity Assessment will be the most effective path forward, making the proposed Study Issue redundant.</p>
9/11/2025	Amend Policy Manual to Include Religious Observances as Excused Absences	Recognize religious holidays as a valid reason for absence	<p>Currently, approved absences, referred to as "excused absences," are defined in Section 2.G.(II) of the Council Policy 7.2.19 Boards and Commissions. For an absence to be excused, members must provide advance notice to the chair and staff liaison and meet one of the listed qualifying reasons, such as a death in the family, personal illness, board- or commission-related business, personal leave, emergency, employment or military service requirements, or federal and state family leave.</p> <p>To make the policy more inclusive, Council may wish to consider adding religious holidays and observance days as a qualifying reason for an excused absence. This would align with the City's equity and inclusion values by ensuring that commissioners are not penalized for participating in important cultural or faith-based practices.</p>