



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mayor and Council

**FROM:** Mark Washington, Interim Assistant City Manager  
Ray Baray, Chief of Staff

**DATE:** March 4, 2016

**SUBJECT:** Update on the Establishment of the City's Equity Office and Related Initiatives

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The purpose of this memo is to provide an update on staff's progress regarding the establishment of the City's Equity Office and related initiatives. As was mentioned in a previous memo dated December 23, 2015, the City Manager appointed a project team to oversee the creation of the Office. This memo will provide updates on three major components: (1) the Chief Equity Officer recruitment, (2) internal Equity Assessment, and (3) a community engagement or town hall meeting scheduled for early April.

### Chief Equity Officer Recruitment

Last month, staff hired The Hawkins Company to manage the Equity Officer recruitment. Hawkins is an executive search firm with extensive experience in the hiring of talent related to diversity and equity offices/issues around the country. Since the December memo, staff has conducted extensive research into peer city practices and is ready to begin with the stakeholder process to develop the Equity Officer job profile and description. The Hawkins Group will be in Austin on March 8-9, 2016 to "kick-off" this process by meeting with internal stakeholders, including Mayor and Council, the City Manager and his executive management team, all in an effort to receive feedback and suggestions on the role and objectives for this position. Staff will be contacting your offices this week to schedule time either in person or via phone conference for these meetings. After these initial meetings, the Hawkins Group will seek to get additional feedback at a town hall meeting with community stakeholders in early April. It is anticipated that a recruitment brochure and the subsequent advertisement of the position will occur later that month.

### Equity Assessment

Moving on a parallel track, the City is finalizing a consulting agreement with the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE). GARE is a national network of public sector entities working to advance equity at the local government level. They represent over 100 jurisdictions

in 30 states across the nation. Their first objective will be to conduct a racial equity workshop with city leadership, including Mayor and Council and racial equity leaders from among City departments. Those are anticipated to occur within the next 30-45 days. Concurrent work will include an organizational equity assessment with top management, key staff leaders and community stakeholders, which will result in a report with recommendations for the implementation of “quick wins” and longer term equity strategies. Additionally, The Hawkins Company and GARE will work collaboratively on the job profile for the Chief Equity Officer.

### **Community Engagement/Town Hall Meeting**

Undergirding the City’s equity office effort is a robust community engagement strategy. This will be a community-oriented effort, with the goal of including as many local voices to help guide staff’s work. Early next month, both the Hawkins Group and GARE will hold a town hall meeting, both to share information as well as collect feedback on the Equity Officer profile. They will do the same for the development of an equity framework.

As the search firm begins to make contact with Council offices, they will be seeking feedback to ensure they have a thorough, comprehensive inventory of the various community stakeholders that should be invited to the town hall and stakeholder meetings. Staff will keep you apprised of their progress and anticipate providing an update at a future Council Work Session.

### **Related Initiatives**

While the emphasis of the Equity Office has been focused externally to benefit the community, the City Manager recognizes the need to have similar internal efforts to improve the workforce. Over the past few months, the City Manager has engaged department directors in meaningful dialogue on how to heighten our organizational effectiveness. The discussions have resulted in a new initiative that will begin with additional internal development and training for directors and senior leaders in our workforce. As an outcome, we intend to enhance our leadership team competencies to complement our organization’s ability to identify and remove bias, embrace diversity, foster inclusion and ensure equity in our workforce. Donna DeBerry & Associates will be assisting us in this workforce effort. Similar to some Council offices, several executives and staff members have also participated in the People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond’s community-based training on “Undoing Racism.”

Should you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us. Thanks!

cc: Marc A. Ott, City Manager  
Assistant City Managers  
Department Directors