



Annual Internal Review

This report covers the time period of 7/1/2015 to 6/30/2016

(This report is covering the transition date to 10-1 and in accordance with Ordinance No. 20141211-204. This report is due July 31, 2016. Please note that this is to be completed by the Chair of the board or commission. While a board action is not required to complete this form, I highly recommend this be a collaborative effort of the board.)

Human Rights Commission
(Official Name of Board or Commission)

The Board/Commission mission statement (per the City Code) is:

Code of Ordinances: Section 2-1-148-Human Rights Commission

- (A) The Human Rights Commission is established as a local commission on human relations in accordance with Texas Labor Code Chapter 21 (Employment Discrimination) to promote the purposes of Chapter 21 and the City Code and secure for all individuals in the City freedom from discrimination because of race, color, disability, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, or age.
- (B) The commission should be composed of members who as nearly as possible are representative of the several social, economic, religious, cultural, ethnic, and racial groups which comprise the population of the City.
- (C) The Commission shall:
 - (1) advise and consult with the city council on all matters involving racial, religious,

or ethnic discrimination, and devise practices to promote equal opportunity;

(2) serve in an advisory and consultive capacity to all city departments, advisory boards, and regulatory agencies to assure effective compliance with non-discrimination policies and orders, and recommend to the city manager measures to improve the ability of various departments and agencies to insure equal protection of any and all persons and groups against discrimination;

(3) recommend to the city council legislation to aid in programs designed to eliminate prejudice and discrimination and encourage community support for the legislation;

(4) aid in the formulation of local community groups in neighborhoods as needed to carry out specific programs;

(5) initiate and facilitate discussions and negotiations between individuals and groups to lessen tensions and improve understanding in the community;

(6) assist in the enforcement of all laws prohibiting discrimination against persons where jurisdiction is not specifically vested in another agency;

(7) receive and investigate complaints and, as provided by state law, and if necessary, subpoena witnesses and documents needed for investigation of those complaints, and initiate investigations of tensions, acts of prejudice, and practices of discrimination;

(8) conduct public hearings on complaints and investigate and report to the council in writing facts, findings, and recommendations after using persuasion, mediation, and conciliation before any public hearing, and after making certain that any person named in any report of investigation was given the opportunity to be heard before the board with the right to examine and cross-examine witnesses;

(9) institute and conduct educational programs to promote equal treatment, opportunity and understanding, and sponsor meetings, institutes, forums, and courses of instruction to lead to a clearer understanding and solution of human relations problems;

(10) assist in training city employees to use methods of dealing with intergroup

relations that result in respect for equal rights and equal treatment, and cooperate with the local Police Department in developing and including human rights courses in the curriculum of police training;

(11) conduct research, obtain factual data and hold public hearings to ascertain the status and treatment of racial, religious, and ethnic groups in the city and the best means of progressively improving human relations;

(12) provide services and information to the city manager and heads of all city departments and agencies to achieve the purposes of this chapter; and

(13) cooperate with all city, state, county, federal, and other governmental agencies, as well as racial, religious, ethnic, nationality, educational, community, civic, fraternal, benevolent and other groups, associations, societies, and individuals with constructive talents and resources helpful in achieving mutual appreciation of the privileges and the responsibilities of citizenship in a land of freedom enriched by free commerce and full utilization of all human resources from all racial, religious, ethnic and national groups.

For reference, the simplified mission statement adopted by the Commission on February 27, 2012, for purposes of external relations is:

The Austin Human Rights Commission exists to help all City residents live free from discrimination based on race, color, disability, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, or HIV status. The Commission, in partnership with the Austin Equal Employment Opportunity/Fair Housing (EEO/FH) Office, resolves discrimination complaints about employment, housing, goods, and services provided by businesses, disabilities, and HIV status. Preventing discrimination, however, is just as important as remedying discrimination after it has occurred. To this end, the Commission promotes human rights awareness through educational programs and by sponsoring, attending, and speaking at community meetings and events. Public participation at all Commission activities is vitally important and always welcome!

1. Describe the board's actions supporting their mission during the previous calendar year. Address all elements of the board's mission statement as provided in the relevant sections of the City Code.

September 28, 2015:

- Recommended a re-examination of the Human Rights Commission by-laws, and amendment of the by-laws with universal changes to Articles 2, 3, 4, and 7.

November 23, 2015:

- 20151123-5a: Recommended the City Council immediately direct the City Manager to immediately retire the vignette within the current City ethics training module whereby female City employees are portrayed as commandeering a workplace conference room in order to sell beauty products and thereafter review all current and future ethics vignettes to verify that no other vignette reflects stereotypical views of any group of persons protected by the City Code, Texas Labor Code, or applicable federal anti-discrimination statutes.

November 23, 2014:

- 201511235a: Recommended the City Council adopt policies to welcome all refugees seeking asylum to the City of Austin, including refugees from Syria, and to oppose and speak out against discrimination based on national origin and religious faith.

January 25, 2016:

Goal of Community Outreach:

- Commissioner Miller announced that he has attended district meetings sponsored by his appointing Council Member to provide updates about the Human Rights Commission.
- Commissioner Normand announced that she and Commissioner Miguez will participate on a panel presentation on Friday, January 29, 2016 at a Continuing Legal Education Seminar organized by the Austin LGBT Bar Association on the subject of the City's civil rights ordinances.

April 25, 2016:

- 20160425-06c: Recommended City Council boycott both Mississippi and North Carolina by banning official travel to and business with these states, except in cases where the public health and safety are concerned, until such time these laws are overturned or changed and no longer potentially threaten City employees' welfare; and
- If the boycott is passed, the Austin Human Rights Commission asks Mayor Adler to send a letter to the National Basketball Association (NBA) outlining the City's action and encourage the NBA to move their 2017 All-Star Game away from Charlotte, NC.

Goal of Community Outreach:

- Chair Davis Announced she participated in the Fair Housing Conference held in Austin Texas and that she provided the welcome address at the conference as the Chair of the Human Rights Commission.

May 23, 2016:

Goal of Community Outreach:

- Chair Davis announced that she and Commissioner Paula Buls attended a Continuing Legal Education Seminar covering LGBT issues in Criminal Law hosted by the Austin LGBT Bar Association on April 29, 2016. Chair Davis also announced that she participated on the panel as a guest speaker at the CLE.

June 27, 2016:

- 20160627-5a: Recommended the Austin City Council address the gentrification crisis affecting its residents as a matter affecting human rights, devote priority attention to tackle the effects of gentrification, conform all of its policies to minimize its effects, and to affirm gentrification as a human rights issue.

2. Determine if the board's actions throughout the year comply with the mission statement.

All actions of the Human Rights Commission during 2015 and 2016 complied with the mission statement.

3. List the board's goals and objectives for the new calendar year.

Goal #1: Community Engagement

All commissioners will make an effort to attend various community functions to increase the commission's awareness of events impacting the community; commissioners will speak to promote the Human Rights Commission and its purpose at events when possible.

Measure of Success

- Number of community events attended reported by commissioners at each Human Rights Commission meeting.

Goal #2: Best Practices

- All commissioners are committed to increasing our working contact list of individuals with knowledge and understanding of the various issues that are brought to the attention of the Human Rights Commission. The individuals on the contact list will be consulted when researching issues brought before the HRC.

Measure of Success

- All commissioners will make an effort to increase the number of contacts on our list three fold.

Goal #3: Disparate Access

- The commission will promote and secure for all individuals in the City freedom from discrimination because of race, color, disability, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, or age.

Measure of Success

- At least two commission recommendations addressing the issue of gentrification in the city of Austin passed by the commission and submitted to City Council by January 2017.
- At least one recommendation to City Council addressing the allocation of resources and the inclusion of LGBTQ businesses when allocating those resources.

Goal #4: **Continued Engagement with the Austin Police Department**

- The commission will continue ongoing engagement with the Austin Police Department in order to address citizen concerns as they arise in the community.

Measure of Success

- Continued engagement with the Austin Police Department via invitations to APD personnel to attend HRC meetings.

Goal #5: **Address Community Issues Specific to Race, Policing, and Criminal Justice**

- The commission will monitor and take action regarding issues in the community that arise involving the intersection of race, policing, and criminal justice.

Measure of Success

- At least two recommendations to City Council suggesting ways to improve or alter the criminal justice system for the betterment of the community.