



## Annual Internal Review

This report covers the time period of 7/1/2018 to 6/30/2019

### Asian American Quality of Life (AAQoL) Advisory Commission



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

The Commission shall advise the City Council on issues related to the Asian American Resource Center and will provide on-going guidance and support for the City's Asian American quality of life initiatives.

**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.**

### 2018-19 Accomplishments

#### Long-Term Accomplishments

- Continued progress on language access, including:
  - Establishing a \$250,000 pool in 2016 for translations/interpretation
  - Hiring Language Access Coordinator (2019)
  - Training of City staff
  - Translating the City's website into multiple languages

- Issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for multi-language translations (2018)
- Issuing an RFP for multi-language interpretation services (2019)
- Coordinating with Community Action Network (CAN) Language Access Working Group
- Pending rollout of I-Speak system (2019-20)
- Established the Equity Office as a hub for Commission Liaisons for coordination and synergy (Liaison position approved in the 2019 budget)
- Implemented the Equity Toolkit as ongoing analysis for each department
- Successfully supported increased funding for the Health Navigator program
- Successfully supported funding for Asian American Resource Center (AARC) staffing
- Communicated the importance of Bond funding for AARC Master Plan.
- Provided oversight of the AARC Master Plan process

## **Work Groups**

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The AAQoL Advisory Commission accomplishes a large portion of its work through its work groups. The following section highlights work group activity over the past year.

### **AARC Oversight Work Group**

Commission members: Debasree DasGupta (Lead), Peter Chao, Vince Cobalis, Aporajita Ahmed

Other members: Sona Shah (AARC Manager), Sonya Alexander-Harris (HR Rep), Thuy Nguyen, Schiller Liao (NAAO rep), Phil Hoang (VACAT), Hailey Easley (AACHI/AARC Non-profit rep)

The AARC Oversight Work Group reviews and provides advice on AARC programming, strategic plans, staffing, information gathering, and cultural events. A major function of the work group is to assess budget needs at the AARC and make recommendations to the Commission and City Council.

### **Key 2018-19 Accomplishments**

- The work group and Network of Asian American Organizations (NAAO) representatives have been working closely with the Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) in developing a master plan for the next phase of

additional buildings to be constructed at the AARC. Along with the survey conducted by the NAAO, PARD has been hosting community forums to get input from the citizens. The need for a better and larger performance hall has been established although there is debate regarding its size and criteria. There are also plans to build additional classrooms and office space for the center.

- The work group continues to push for the addition of a pedestrian bridge to connect to the overflow parking lot. The current plan is for the Watershed Department to build a bridge as part of the landscape redevelopment the Watershed Department is planning for the property.
- The Commission supported the purchase of a passenger van for the AARC in a prior year. The van was purchased in FY 2018-19 and is being used regularly with two trips a day for the senior meals as well as for errands needed for the center.
- The Commission supported the addition of three positions to the AARC staff in the FY 2018-19 budget. Those positions have been filled and the center has all 11 FTE positions filled as of July 2019.
- Phil Hoang of the Vietnamese American Community of Austin, Texas (VACAT) has joined the work group to work towards having more Vietnamese members making use of the resources available at the AARC. The AARC Manager is also meeting with the Korean Cultural Center and considering attending and making presentations at various Asian centers and events.
- Along with Austin Asian Community Health Initiative (AACHI – formerly the AARC non-profit) and Austin Public Health (APH), the AARC held a collaborative Community Health Fair in April 2019 targeting the most vulnerable communities that have the least access to health services, such as the Burmese and Nepalese communities. The work group plans to provide support and aid for future such health fairs and their effort in trying to create a model for the city.

### **Goals for 2019-20**

- Continue to provide help and advice with the design and construction of the 2nd phase of buildings at the AARC
- Continue to explore ways for better utilization of the kitchen
- Help with beautification plans and the installation of the purchased exercise equipment once the landscaping plans have been developed
- Continue to help identify budget and staffing needs for the AARC

## Arts and Culture Work Group

Commission members: Pramod Patil (Lead), Shubhada Saxena, Peter Chao

Other members: various interested community members for specific projects.

The mission of the Arts and Culture Work Group is to work together with folks from various ethnic backgrounds by sharing and celebrating different cultures. High-level goals include:

- Encouraging Asian Americans in the expression of their culture
- Promoting cultural sharing activities within the Asian American community and the larger Austin community
- Increasing awareness of opportunities for the City to participate in Asian American cultural activities

### **Key 2018-19 Accomplishments**

- “International Hackathon”: The work group assisted with conducting an International Hackathon between Austin and Pune. The hackathon was held on September 8, 2018. More than 20 people participated and many good ideas came out of it. Overall, this event was a great success! This hackathon focused on:
  - Developing ideas/prototype to resolve different issues for the cities of Austin and Pune
  - Engaging citizens of Austin and Pune to engage with each other, start a dialog, and facilitate exchanges
- Austin delegation to Pune: The work group helped plan and participated in the Austin delegation's visit to Pune. The delegation went to Pune for business, education, environment, and cultural-related exchange from September 24-29, 2018. Overall, the delegation visit established a solid relationship between Austin and Pune to enable further dialogue.
  - The delegation included a business group of about 12 led by the Greater Austin Asian Chamber of Commerce (GAACC) and a municipal delegation led by Austin Council Member Alison Alter
  - The delegation also included entrepreneurs from the local Austin area, including people with legal and educational backgrounds
  - The delegation had the opportunity to meet businesses, start up incubators, local nonprofits, Pune University, Pune Chamber of Commerce, healthcare-related companies, Film and Television Institute of India, and more
- Signed Austin-Pune Friendship City agreement: An official sister city agreement signed between Pune and Austin on September 27, 2018. This was a great team effort from the work group, citizen groups, and the City

of Austin. This agreement enabled collaboration and exchanges between these two cities.

- Business and educational exchanges: After the delegation visits, members of various committees engaged in further dialogue. There have been meaningful exchanges happening between Pune and Austin in various areas, including healthcare, education, business, culture, sustainability. Examples include:
  - Student exchanges between Pune University and the University of Texas at Austin in the field of medical research
  - Software business development between companies from Austin and Pune
- Support and participation in Asian Heritage Month: The work group participated and supported the celebration of Asian Heritage Month at the Texas State Capitol on May 1, 2019. It also supported the recognition of local artists of Asian heritage on the day of the event.

### **Goals for 2019-20**

- Help with hosting of delegation from Pune to Austin
- Take the Austin-Pune Friendship City Initiative to the next level and work towards getting the 'Austin Pune Sister City' initiative signed
- Actively participate in the Austin Sister City International (ASCI) Passport to the World event in October 2019
- Explore options to create an opportunity for middle and high school students to showcase Asian arts and culture. Providing a platform or creating events that showcase Asian arts and culture specifically for middle and high school students can encourage more youth to stay connected with Asian art/culture beyond their elementary school years.
- Continuously review opportunities for engaging the Asian American community in the City of Austin's arts and culture landscape and related projects

### **Community Engagement Work Group**

Commission members: Catherina Conte (lead), Kirk Yoshida, Shubhada Saxena, Pooja Sethi, Molly Wang, Kavita Radhakrishnan

Other members: various City staff (CPIO, Budget, Austin Public Health, Austin Police, etc.), community members and organizations as needed for specific initiatives

Mission: The Community Engagement Work Group is dedicated to fostering the enhancement and involvement of the Asian and Pacific Islander (API) Community

within the social fabric of City of Austin services and programs. The work group is guided by the following core principles:

- Diversity: Demonstrating respect for all individuals and valuing the unique perspectives and experiences of the API community
- Community Engagement: Working collaboratively with community members and organizations to achieve positive social change
- Inclusion: Breaking down barriers to meaningful participation and fostering a sense of belonging and access to city services
- Social Justice: Challenging injustice and working toward an equitable society

### **Key 2018-19 Accomplishments**

- Planned and held a Community Dialogue event, co-facilitated by the City Communications and Public Information Office (CPIO), to:
  - Listen authentically to and partner with API communities so that solutions are identified and implemented in partnership
  - Create a forum to acknowledge and honor the knowledge and lived experience of API communities
  - Discuss the priority concerns identified by the community, currently outlined within the AAQoL Initiative report, to create opportunities for discussion regarding community identified solutions to priority concerns
  - Provide guidance to the Commission on priorities for budget requests, in relation to the Initiative or other community identified needs
  - Promote connection among various individuals/groups in the API community
  - Promote trust and accountability from the community to the Commission
- Identified community priority areas for further focus through the Community Dialogue event, including health, mental health, barriers to community services, access to transportation, and senior access issues
- Initiated work on the development of a new Commissioner on-boarding binder to outline the role, responsibilities, community engagement strategies, and other helpful materials
- Hosted a table at the 2019 CelebrAsia to promote awareness of the Commission, solicit community input, and recruit members for the Ambassador Program
- Created e-news follow up for attendees of Community Dialogue event to maintain continued engagement as well as updates on AAQoL activities

### **Goals for 2019-20**

- Continue planning activities and host 2nd Community Dialogue event
- Complete the new Commissioner on-boarding binder
- Host additional tables at community events
- Develop and implement a strategy for Commission social media outreach with guidance from CPIO staff
- Continue sending out AAQoL e-news to community connections
- Develop and implement a plan for direct community outreach and engagement to bring awareness of the Commission within the API community and foster more direct community involvement in City issues
- "Project AISD": Explore ideas for Commission interaction with the Austin Independent School District (AISD) on common issues such as equity and translation/interpretation

### **Business Planning Work Group**

Commission members: Kirk Yoshida (lead), Nguyen Stanton, Shubhada Saxena, Kavita Radhakrishnan, Vince Cobalis, Sarah Chen

Other members: None. The Work Group interacts with City staff and others to gather information to develop recommendations to the Commission.

The Business Planning Work Group is tasked with coordinating the Commission's budget recommendation process and other Commission business not covered by the other work groups. The work group meets with City department staff, City Council members, and community organizations to prioritize areas of interest and initiatives and develops budget recommendations for full Commission approval. Throughout the year, the work group meets with City department staff to ensure that funded initiatives progress in a manner that meets the Commission's intent.

### **Key 2018-19 Accomplishments**

- Attended quarterly Joint Quality of Life Budget Recommendations (JQoLBR) Task Force meetings to collaborate and advance equitable outcomes through the budget process
  - Developed a budget recommendation to increase collection of demographic data at City Departments
- Developed budget recommendations in conjunction with City staff and other stakeholders, linked to the AAQoL Initiative recommendations and City Council strategic priorities

- Submitted budget recommendations through the new template created by the Budget Office for submission to City Council and the City Manager
- Oversee production of the Annual Internal Review
- Held follow-up discussions with City staff and other stakeholders regarding funded budget items to get updates on how funds are being spent
- Provided a FY 2018-19 budget update to the full Commission, including the status of our funding requests and other budget items of interest
- Reduced the number of Commission work groups by moving the Health work group to Community Engagement and converting the Human Resources work group into a project-based initiative
- Initiated discussions in advance of a Commission strategic planning session to be held later in 2019

### **Goals for 2019-20**

- Continue to work with the Budget Office, City Council offices, the Equity Office, and other City departments to increase Commission influence during the budget process
- Continue to work with the JQoLBR Task Force to collaborate and advance equitable outcomes through the budget process
- Solicit more involvement from outside groups such as the NAAO, Dell Medical School (as a potential partner), and Austin Travis County Integral Care (ATCIC)
- Develop an AAQoL Advisory Commission Strategic Plan
- Advance one or more projects through work group coordination and collaboration with a focus on addressing top community-identified priorities such as transportation and mental health

### **Health Work Group**

Note: As of May 2019, the Health Work Group has merged with the Community Engagement Work Group

Commission members: Kavita Radhakrishnan (lead), Vince Cobalis, Catherina Conte, Molly Wang

Other members: Hailey Easley, Sinying Chan, Binh Ly, Veena Vishwanathan, Reshmi Chowdhury, representatives of other health organizations

The purpose of the Health Work Group is to

- i) identify the critical health needs of Asian Americans in Austin and explore strategies to address these health needs,



- ii) address health priority needs of Asian Americans in Austin by planning and implementing action items,
- iii) connect with existing health resources in the city and sensitize them to the unique needs of Asian Americans in Austin.

### **Key 2018-19 Accomplishments**

- In our continued efforts to advocate and increase awareness on unmet mental health needs of Asian Americans, the work group invited a local community mental health expert, Brenda Coleman-Bettie, to educate the work group on strategies for advocating for mental health in the Asian American community. Brenda Coleman-Bettie, a health advocate and executive and a lifelong advocate of mental health issues, spoke about addressing mental health needs in the Asian American community. She provided tactics to consider propagating mental health awareness among the Asian American community and also provided other resources such as Asian American related mental health organizations, podcasts, articles, and public policy initiatives.
- During its September meeting, the work group met at Dell Medical School Center for Place-Based Initiatives (CPBI) Office as a possible partner in our advocacy and community health focus issues. The session was informative as CPBI shared ways to generate ideas and find support to fund ideas in a sustainable manner.
- After all the information gathering for the past year and a half, the work group decided to conduct introspective sessions to evaluate how to implement projects based on the needs identified by the activities of the Health Work Group. Major focus areas included transportation to healthcare facilities and mental health support.
- The work group also became aware of the language issues persisting in the Austin healthcare domain through a presentation by APH's Health Equity Unit (HEU) on how the best-intentioned efforts to address language access gaps can still fail to bridge those gaps. Further recommendations to bridge the gaps were disseminated across the work group and community members.
- The work group conducted its last meeting in February 2019. In an effort to consolidate resources across the Commission and bring health advocacy efforts to fruition, it was decided to merge work groups. Since the mission of the Health Work Group overlapped mostly with the Community Engagement Work Group, a decision was made to merge the two work groups. Many of the Community Engagement Work Group activities, such as soliciting community opinions and needs on health issues most affecting them, awareness, and support for mental health, are directly aligned with the Health Work Group's intended objectives for the 2018-19 year.

### **Goals for 2019-20** N/A

## **Commission Actions Summary**

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- Provided a letter of support for AARC Nonprofit (now known as AACHI) grant application to the Austin Parks Foundation
- Conducted ongoing monitoring of the City's bond program and bond funding for the AARC facility
- Monitored the AARC Master Plan process and provided ongoing oversight
- Organized and supported two Community Dialogue events, one to provide direction for the Commission and the other to develop City budget recommendations
- Monitored the 2019 budget initiatives approved by City Council to assure recommendations are implemented as intended
- Provided continued guidance on the AAQoL Initiative study and report; shared the AAQoL Initiative presentation with the LGBTQ Quality of Life Advisory Commission and others
- Actively participated and coordinated with other Commissions through the Joint Inclusion Committee and the Business Planning Work Group
- Participated in an innovative "mini-grant" process to improve the ability of small non-profits to participate in City funding; lessons learned will inform future contracting processes
- Approved five (5) FY 2019-20 budget recommendations in alignment with City Council priorities
- Approved a budget recommendation in conjunction with other Quality of Life Commissions to improve data collection and data disaggregation in City Departments
- Monitored implementation of budget recommendations for the AARC
- Monitored implementation of budget recommendations for APH
- Explored options for improved utilization of the AARC kitchen
- Used a Special Called meeting to use community feedback to recommend budget priorities
- Voted to support the Austin-Pune Friendship City agreement
- Initiated a City proclamation for Asian Pacific-American cultural heritage month as May 2019
- Provided monthly oversight of the AARC Master Plan and proposed pedestrian bridge
- Provided monthly reports from work groups on an ongoing basis

## **Briefings/Presentations to the Commission**

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- Demographic study of patients using Safety Net Clinics (APH Epidemiologist)
- Language Access Program – ongoing updates
- Reviewed APH and PARD 2019 budgets
- Equity Assessment Report and update (Equity Office)
- Fair Chance Hiring Ordinance
- Water Forward Plan
- Office of Police Oversight report on the police oversight process; one Commissioner assigned to participate in the work group
- Neighborhood Housing and Community Development (NHCD) Department five-year consolidated plan
- City of Austin 2018 Affordable Housing Bond
- Small and Minority Business (SMBR) Department Disparity Study
- Pune Sister Cities program
- Reorganization of City management under City Manager Spencer Cronk, including hiring for Assistant City Managers
- Human Resources Diversity Report
- Monthly review of the AARC Master Plan process; final plan was presented in July 2019
- Presentation from “Stronger Austin” and exploring ways to participate
- Austin Strategic Mobility Plan

### **Determine if the board’s actions throughout the year comply with the mission statement.**

The AAQoL Advisory Commission did not conduct any actions during the year that did not comply with its mission statement.

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

## 2019-20 Goals and Objectives

### Equity

The AAQoL Advisory Commission will work to address structural inequities that are reflected in City staffing and budget allocation.

- Ensuring that front line staff and management reflect the diversity of the population
  - Obtaining regular diversity updates from the Human Resources (HR) Department
  - Supporting the Asian American Employee Network (AAEN) initiatives
- Continuing to monitor progress for implementation of Equity Office Equity Tool at individual departments
- Expanding progress on language access. Limited English speaking populations need translated documents and language interpretation to fully participate in government
  - Advocating for continuing support, fiscal and otherwise, of the translation/interpretation of Asian American languages in the City, and obtain periodic reports on their progress, outcomes and sustainability including how public departments will be funded to meet language access needs in the future
  - Supporting community non-profit access to the vendors and pricing for translation & interpretation services identified through the City RFP processes

### AAQoL Initiative

AAQoL Advisory Commission will continue to expand awareness of the Quality of Life Initiative and advance community participation through:

- Conducting ongoing Community Dialogue events
- Developing ongoing policy and budget initiatives based on the AAQoL Initiative and City Council Strategic Priorities
- Re-assessing Commission structure and strategic direction

## Health

The Commission will continue to support safety net services that address the needs of Asian Americans by:

- Advocating and increasing awareness on unmet mental health needs of Asian Americans, sensitizing available mental health resources in the city such as ATCIC and Integral Care's Mobile Crisis Outreach Team (MCOT) to the unique mental health needs of Asian Americans
- Assuring that existing agencies serving Asian Americans, refugees, and immigrants, such as Asian Family Support Services of Austin (AFSSA), AACHI, American Gateways, and GAACC, are adequately funded to serve our expanding population and improve their access to ATCIC, MCOT, and EMS to address unmet mental health needs
- Advocating for social services for Asian Americans proportional to the population through the current provider network or through redistribution of funding
- Providing advocacy for continuing support, fiscal and otherwise, of the Community Health Navigator program, and obtaining periodic reports on their progress, outcomes, and sustainability
- Identifying and consolidating information and resources on free and low-cost health clinics and fairs relevant to Asian Americans and identifying ways to disseminate that information in the public domain
- Continuing and expanding distribution of flu vaccines to at-risk Asian American and immigrant populations

## Collaboration

The AAQoL Advisory Commission will seek to strengthen its ties with other city and community organizations by:

- Increasing participation in joint committees and collaboration with other minority Commissions
- Increasing support of and collaboration with AISD on language programs and the International Welcome Center (IWC)
- Increasing collaboration with APH for health-related functions at the AARC
- Human Resources (HR), including HR Department, AAEN and non-City HR advisors
  - Working with City HR to increase effective outreach (in addition to AARC office hours)
  - Working to create other events at the AARC that focus on employment with the City (resume writing, interview skills)

- Translating key outreach documents and have interpreters available
- Working with AAEN and HR to identify ways to help increase the number of City of Austin executives and other promotion opportunities
- Expanding work group membership and project-based participation to include individuals from the community as well as subject matter experts. Ideas for the upcoming year include:
  - AARC Oversight, including AARC staff, NAAO representative, and community representative
    - Waiving food permit requirements for senior meal vendors to use the kitchen
    - Improving effectiveness of the HR Employment Specialist position
    - Increasing collaborations with NAAO and Community Organizations
    - Expanding participation from other communities
    - Supporting AARC Strategic Plan
    - Participating fully in the AARC Master Plan, including strategies for utilizing bond funds.
    - Re-evaluating and repurposing HR role
    - Installing intergenerational exercise equipment in Great Lawn
    - Increasing AARC staffing to meet demand
  - Community Outreach, including community leaders, especially those from ethnic groups not currently represented on the Commission
    - Finalizing list of community organizations, leaders, and events to target for outreach efforts
    - Continuing to develop community dialogue opportunities
    - Attending additional events and meetings to promote interest in the Commission and its efforts
    - Strengthening ties with AISD
    - Health Projects, including representatives of APH, ATCIC, People's Community Clinic, and Central Health
      - Reviewing the University of Texas at Austin survey process and available data to determine additional analysis needs

- Addressing shortage of culturally competent Certified Nurses' Aides
- Advocating for increased utilization and funding of Community Health Workers/Health Navigators
- Addressing children's health needs in the AISD system

### Our Communities

In addition to the goal and objectives presented above, the AAQoL Advisory Commission will work to support our communities and increase community dialogue by:

- Providing outreach to better understand and support refugees, new Asian immigrants, and other underserved populations
- Continuing to support the AARC activities and initiatives
- Providing more language access for Asian Americans at the AARC, other City services, and City contracted services (primarily social services)
- Collaborating with CAN (Community Advancement Network) to make language access available to community nonprofit agencies
- Continuing to develop diverse programming at the AARC