



City of Austin



Office of the City Auditor

301 W. 2nd Street, Suite 2130
Austin, Texas 78767-8808
(512) 974-2805, Fax: (512) 974-2078
email: oca_auditor@ci.austin.tx.us
website: <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/auditor>

Date: March 23, 2011

To: Mayor and Council

From: Kenneth J. Mory, City Auditor

Subject: Special Request: Board and Commission Communication with Council

I am pleased to present the results of our work on Board and Commission Communication requested by Audit and Finance Committee on February 22, 2011. The objectives of this special request work were to identify current communication practices between the Boards and Council and communication practices between boards and commissions and Council in other cities.

We surveyed liaisons, chairs, and members of 55 Boards and Commissions [Boards] and received responses from at least one representative of 47. The results of the survey indicated that:

- Most boards communicate on an as needed or as requested basis versus routinely;
- Some suggest action items to Council while others wait for Council feedback;
- Responsibility for communication with Council varies by Board (chair, liaison, or individual appointees to Council offices); and
- Confusion exists among members of the same Board regarding communication with Council (what is communicated and who is responsible).

We also contacted ten other cities regarding Board and Council communication practices and found that three cities had formal processes for communication. In two of those cities an entity (a Council subcommittee in one city and the Mayor's Office in another) is responsible for reviewing a information from Boards and determining whether the information should be shared with the full Council. In the third city, each Board is assigned to a Council Member who performs that role for their assigned Boards.

We appreciate the cooperation we received from representatives of 47 Boards and Commissions we surveyed as well as the staff of the 10 cities surveyed.

cc: City Manager
Assistant City Managers
City Clerk
Public Information Officer