



City Council Staff Report

From: City Manager

Report Type: STUDY SESSION

Lead Department: City Manager

Meeting Date: April 22, 2024

Report #:2403-2702

TITLE

Race and Equity Update: Assessment Report from Ivy Planning Group on City Workplace Culture and 2024-2025 (Calendar Years) Equity Action Plan

RECOMMENDATION

Receive a report from Ivy Planning Group as a follow up to City Council direction regarding an employee assessment that provides information about the City's workplace culture.

BACKGROUND

The City of Palo Alto adopted its Race & Equity mission statement on November 16, 2020 as part of the City's Race and Equity efforts. On that same evening, the City Council voted on 16 other actions/assignments to advance equity work on a range of topics from use of police data to a community summit on gender equity issues. Notably, the City Council decided to continue this work through the Policy and Services Committee on an ongoing basis. Staff has provided updates to the Committee on all of these assignments over the subsequent years. As of the most recent update report in March 2024, there are two partial assignments remaining:

- Assignment C: Starting after the full implementation of the Records Management System (RMS) and the first data collection period, direct Staff to resume annual data collection and analysis of police contact data similar to the previous Stop Data reports.
- Assignment L: Direct Staff, in coordination with the City's overall diversity and inclusion efforts, to conduct a workforce demographic assessment as baseline information and to pursue an employee assessment to measure City workforce culture.

Details on both assignments as well as the other completed assignments are available in the March 2024 Policy and Services Committee Race and Equity Report.¹ As part of Assignment L, staff engaged with Ivy Planning Group to conduct an employee assessment regarding workplace

¹ Policy and Services Committee March 2024 Race and Equity Update Report, item #1:
<https://cityofpaloalto.primegov.com/Portal/Meeting?meetingTemplateId=14205>

culture. This study session presents Ivy's key findings, Ivy's blueprint of actions the City can pursue, and staff's 2024-2025 (calendar years) Equity Action Plan which includes some of the recommended actions from the Ivy Assessment as well as other action items reflecting previous Council direction. The Action Plan is proposed as a list of items staff believes is possible to move forward with existing resources at this time.

ANALYSIS

Ivy Planning Group is an award-winning, full-service management consulting, and training firm that leverages difference as a workforce, workplace, and community opportunity for organizations. Founded in 1990, the Ivy Planning Group has worked with many clients over the years, and they have a passion for leadership development, change management, and using diversity, equity, and inclusion solutions to solve real world problems. The City engaged with Ivy Planning Group for this assignment and to advance the diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging work within the City workplace.

Attachment A contains the Summary Report from Ivy Planning Group detailing their methodology and five key findings. The report also includes their blueprint of possible actions the City can pursue based on the findings. The five key findings based on the qualitative research conducted are as follows:

1. The City of Palo Alto has some infrastructure in place that can enable Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) success.
2. Employees often feel they are treated poorly by the public and would like more support to navigate difficult interactions.
3. The City is missing a structured approach to DEIB.
4. Some people processes encourage while others inhibit the advancement of DEIB.
5. The lack of follow-through and history of exclusionary practices has made people question the City of Palo Alto's dedication to DEIB.

The blueprint that follows the key findings summaries provides a range of possible actions for the City to pursue that require a range of resources. Based on the resources available at this time as well as other existing assignments related to race and equity, staff has compiled the tasks listed in **Attachment B**, the 2024-2025 (calendar years) Equity Action Plan. These actions range in topic as well and are organized into three key objective areas that can be continued year over year even as these initial tasks are completed. Those objective areas are as follows:

- A. Cultivating Experiences and Appreciation
- B. Fostering an Inclusive Environment
- C. Applying an Equity Lens: Strategic Review of the Organization through an Equity Lens

Staff will go forward in moving this Action Plan and looks forward to feedback or discussion from the City Council within this study session and review of the Ivy Planning Group key findings.

FISCAL/RESOURCE IMPACT

Funding for the work described within this report has been appropriated as part of the FY 2024 Operating Budget and funds are still available in the non-departmental allocation set aside for race and equity work. Any additional funding in subsequent years would be requested through the annual budget process and is subject to City Council approval as part of that process.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Ivy Planning Group has presented this report to City staff through an all-hands meeting in March 2024. Staff can continue to share feedback on the material to the City's Equity and Inclusion Program Manager as well.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The City's race and equity activities are not a project under section 15378(b)(25) of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines (administrative activities that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment).

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Ivy Planning Group Assessment Summary

Attachment B: 2024-2025 Equity Action Plan

APPROVED BY:

Ed Shikada, City Manager