



Human Relations Commission 2023-2024 Workplan

Staff Liaison: Minka van der Zwaag, Human Services Manager
Lead Department: Community Services

About the Commission

This workplan covers portions of Fiscal Year 2023 and 2024 (June 1, 2023 – March 30, 2024) for the Human Relations Commission (HRC). The Commission is composed of 7 members who are residents of Palo Alto. Terms are for 3 years. See Palo Alto Municipal Code (PAMC) Sections 2.16 and 2.22. For more information about the HRC please visit our webpage at <http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/gov/boards/hrc>

Current Commissioners

- Kaloma Smith (Chair)
- Adriana Eberle (Vice Chair)
- Katie Causey
- Amy Hsieh
- Michelle Kraus
- Daryl Savage
- Mary Kate Stimmler

Mission Statement

HRC Mission: To promote the just and fair treatment of all people in Palo Alto, particularly our most vulnerable populations. By promoting awareness of issues and enabling conversations that enhance inclusion, the HRC strives to create a community where civility, respect and responsible actions are the norm.

HRC Jurisdiction: Muni Code 2.22.050

(a) The Human Relations Commission has the discretion to act with respect to any human relations matter when the commission finds that any person or group does not benefit fully from public or private opportunities or resources in the community or is unfairly or differently treated due to factors of concern to the commission.

(1) Public or private opportunities or resources in the community include, but are not limited to, those associated with ownership and rental of housing, employment, education and governmental services and benefits.

(2) Factors of concern to the commission include, but are not limited to, socioeconomic class or status, physical condition or handicap, married or unmarried state, emotional condition, intellectual ability, age, sex, sexual preference, gender identity, race, cultural characteristics, ethnic background, ancestry, citizenship, and religious, conscientious or philosophical belief.

(b) The commission shall conduct such studies and undertake such responsibilities as the council may direct.

Prior Year Accomplishments

Goal #1 - Public Safety: Recommended to bring the FBI and community resources to Palo Alto to do community education on hate crimes. In addition, made a recommendation to City Council to increase public awareness and marketing on how to report a hate crime and hate incidents (March 2022). Hosted a Community Listening Session with City Manager Ed Shikada on key qualities of the next police chief and community priorities for the Palo Alto Police Department (March 2022). HRC members participated in the Police Chief interview panel and reported back to the full Commission (August 2022). Presentation on Hate Crimes by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Civil Rights Unit (September 2022). Presentation by Palo Alto Police Chief Andrew Binder on his goals and visions for the Police Department and update on current issues (November 2022).

Goal #2 - Belonging: Joined the Public Art Commission in the selection process for the King Artist Residency at King Plaza to promote culture, identity, belonging, mental health and resilience in Palo Alto, with the special focus on amplifying voices of Latinx and BIPOC community members and mental health service providers (March 2022). Approval of HRC support of Multifaith Peace Picnic and Prayer Services on September 11, 2022, on King Plaza (August 2022). Created a draft Framework on Process for City Recognition of Events, Individuals, and Celebrations to develop recommendations to City Council, in response to the referral from the City Council on Recognizing Key Dates to Advance Race and Equity (September 2022). Formation of an ad-hoc committee for the Council Referral to research the lived experience of Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders (AANHPI), and circulation of the AANHPI Lived Experience Survey (February 2023).

Goal #3 - Public Health: Recommendations passed in response to the City Council referral to the Commission on ways to improve implementation of current City renter protections (November 2022).

Goal #4 - Core Responsibilities: A subcommittee of HRC commissioners and city staff served as the review committee for the Emerging Needs Fund. In 2022, a total of 5 grants totaling \$46,031 was approved (February, June, & September 2022). Reviewed and made funding recommendations to the Finance Committee for 9 grants totaling \$665,459 as part of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funding program for Fiscal Year 2022-23 (March 2022). Recommended to Adopt Amendments to the Community Block Grant (CDBG) Citizen Participation Plan (May 2022). Completed site visits with 16 Human Services Resource Allocation Process (HSRAP) Fiscal Year 2022-23 grantees (August 2022). Hosted a listening session with current Human Services Resource Allocation Process (HSRAP) grantees and past applicants to review the HSRAP application process and procedures (October 2022). Review of the 2022 Human Services Needs Assessment Survey results, and recommendations on the draft Fiscal Year 2024-25 Human Services Resource Allocation Process (HSRAP) Priority of Needs (October 2022).

Goal #5 - Climate Change: Presentation of the draft framework on Climate Impact on Vulnerable Communities in Palo Alto by the Palo Alto Student Climate Coalition. Formation of an ad-hoc subcommittee to work with the Palo Alto Student Climate Coalition to aid in the research phase of the framework (January 2023).

PROJECT/GOAL 1: Core Responsibilities	Funding Programs - Human Services Resource Allocation Process (HSRAP), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Emerging Needs Fund. Continue to review and give input to funding decisions. Priority during this workplan cycle includes a professional Human Services Needs Assessment by a consultant in anticipation of the 2026-2027 HSRAP funding cycle. The Needs Assessment will assess the current human service needs of the Palo Alto community, the role of the program, the goals of the program, and how program impact is measured.			
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
The funding programs provide human services organizations with essential monetary support to serve vulnerable and underserved residents of Palo Alto.	Ongoing	Adhoc HRC subcommittee and staff time for the funding decisions. Funds needed for the hiring of a consultant to complete a Human Services Needs Assessment. Moderate level of staff and adhoc subcommittee time.	Results of Human Services Needs Assessment will provide the HRC, staff and Council with updated and vital information on current human needs in the community, concrete suggestions for changes/additions to the HSRAP priority of needs, application and/or review process, and increased ways in which to measure the effectiveness of the City's funding investment in Human Services organizations.	N/A
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
The Human Services Needs Assessment is a high priority to ensure the HSRAP grant program is serving the Palo Alto community to the best of its ability.	Continue to provide funding recommendations for CDBG and the Emerging Needs Fund as needed.			N/A
PROJECT/GOAL 2: Inclusion and Belonging	Inclusion & Belonging - Explore ways in which the Commission can continue to positively affect the sense of inclusion and belonging in the community. Projects include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The continuation of the AANHPI lived experience survey and the beginning of community outreach, interviews, and listening sessions.• Equity work through partnering with the City on creating policy language and bias training for commissions.• Other projects as identified.			
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
All individuals who live, work or worship in Palo Alto have the right to feel included and valued as members of the community.	Spring-Fall 2023	Adhoc HRC subcommittee and staff time Moderate level of staff and adhoc subcommittee time.	AANHPI Project – After review of the survey, demographics and interview data, the creation of a series of a report and series of recommendations for Council consideration for increased understanding and increased and possible action to improve a sense of inclusion and belonging in the AANHPI community.	N/A

HIGH PRIORITY	LOWER PRIORITY	COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
Compile and report on the results of the AANHPI Survey and continue gathering perspectives from the community through outreach, interviews and listening sessions.	Begin work on partnering with the City to provide bias training for commission and to create equitable policy language and bias training for commissions.	-AANHPI Survey - Council Referral May 2022

PROJECT/GOAL 3: Public Safety	Public Safety - Explore and implement avenues to decrease incidences of crimes in the community. Areas of priority include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hate Crimes • Human trafficking. • Online targeting of youth. • Community conversations. • Training for local businesses and hotels on how to recognize and de-escalate hate crimes and incidents. 			
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
All individuals who live, work or worship in Palo Alto have the right to do so without fear of verbal or physical abuse or attack.	Summer-Fall 2023	Adhoc subcommittee and staff time. Space and marketing for educational programming. Moderate level of staff and adhoc subcommittee time.	Measures may include: How many people attend educational programming, specific actions taken by members of the public to combat hate crimes, and the increased reporting of hate crimes.	N/A
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
Continue partnering with the FBI Civil Rights Unit to create programming that will be used in educational programming.		Begin analysis and consideration of any actions beyond the Community meeting with the FBI.		Council Referral May 2022
PROJECT/GOAL 4: Climate Change	Climate Change - Explore ways in which climate change may disproportionately affect specific populations in the community, especially in the wake of recent flooding, extreme weather conditions, and power-outages. Areas of priority include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibility of City funds to help low-income and vulnerable populations transfer to electric and smart meters. • Continue partnership with the Palo Alto Student Climate Coalition research on the Climate Impact on Vulnerable Communities. 			
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED

Climate change is a priority for the State of California and the City of Palo Alto. Climate awareness and changes in habits help everyone thrive and special attention should be paid to vulnerable populations.	Project began in Spring 2023 and will continue to Fall 2023.	Adhoc subcommittee to work alongside student committee. Lower level of staff and adhoc subcommittee time.	A series of recommendations to be presented to the Council which will inform them of the issues that face low income and vulnerable members of the community that are caused or affected by Climate Change.	N/A
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
Completion and analysis of information presented by the community/student committee.				N/A

PROJECT/GOAL 5: Learning Sessions	Learning Sessions - Engage in learning sessions to gain more understanding on the following topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Public Health - Post-pandemic wellbeing (work, personal loss, mental health, physical health, job loss) of residents. A day of remembrance for those that lost their life to COVID-19 and their loved ones.The lack of community and walkability in South Palo Alto and other under-resourced communities with a focus on zoning, new housing elements, and a timeline for the rebuilding of the complex of business at 3163 Middlefield Road.Issues faced by seniors including affordable housing, elder abuse, food security and access, the digital divide, and affordable and reliable transportation.			
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
Listening sessions are utilized by the HRC to explore an issue with the help of subject matter experts in order to 1) Become informed on the topic(s); 2) Explore whether there is a role for the HRC in addressing/recommending any action.	During the term covered by this workplan	Staff and HRC commissioner time Lower level of staff and adhoc subcommittee time.	HRC discussions, deliberations, actions and recommendation are all well served by the review of information presented by subject matter experts.	N/A
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
Priority level of the individual Listening Sessions will be determined by the HRC at their June, 8, 2023 meeting.				N/A
PROJECT/GOAL 6: Emerging Needs	Emerging Needs - The HRC will identify emerging issues in the community, prioritize those that need further attention and bring any major initiatives, including those that involve significant staff time to the Council for approval. The Commission will also be responsive to future referrals by the Council.			

BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
The HRC has the discretion to act with respect to any human relations matter when the commission finds that any person or group does not benefit fully from public or private opportunities or resources in the community, or is unfairly or differently treated due to factors of concern to the commission.	Ongoing	TBD	TBD	N/A
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
		Lower priority		N/A