

To the Mayor and Members of the City Council

May 3, 2016

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**SUBJECT: CONSOLIDATION OF DIVERSITY, ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEES AND PROGRAMS UNDER THE FORT WORTH HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION**

The City of Fort Worth currently has several committees and programs that focus on diversity, accessibility and inclusion, but these committees and programs tend to have similar and sometimes overlapping objectives. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of these diversity, accessibility and inclusion efforts and a recommendation for consolidating these efforts to improve efficiency, reduce duplicative efforts, share resources and provide better customer service to both our internal and external customers.

DIVERSITY, ACCESSIBILITY, AND INCLUSION COMMITTEES AND PROGRAMS SUMMARY

Fort Worth Mayor's Committee on Persons with Disabilities (MCPWD): The MCPWD was authorized by a resolution adopted by the City Council on May 12, 1981, formally recognizing the committee as one of the City's standing committees. Resolution No. 2034 was adopted by Council on January 17, 1995, changing the title from the Mayor's Committee for the Employment of Persons with Disability to Mayor's Committee on Persons with Disabilities. The MCPWD has been re-organized twice in the last 12 years – in October 2004 by the adoption of Resolution No. 3132 and in July 2010 by the adoption of Resolution No. 3907-07-2010. Comprised of fifteen members, representing both Fort Worth citizens as well as representatives from local social service agencies that serve persons with disabilities, the current mission of the MCPWD is to promote access for people with disabilities in the areas of employment, housing design and accessibility within the community and city government. The MCPWD is staffed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator within the Human Resources Department. Major responsibilities of the ADA Coordinator include: serving as the single point of contact for accommodation requests related to City meetings, serving as the point of contact for the City's ADA Transition Plan, assisting City employees who are seeking accommodations related to their employment, and handling of complaints regarding public accessibility under the American with Disabilities Act.

Diversity Advisory Committee (DAC): The DAC was formed by the City Manager in 2003 as a commitment to recruit, develop, and retain a workforce that effectively serves the diverse Fort Worth community by enhancing workforce representation and cultural competencies. The committee is comprised of fifteen City employees, including the Human Resources Director or designee, an attorney from the Department of Law, the Human Relations Administrator or designee, and twelve additional employees representing a diverse group of City staff. The DAC's primary initiative in recent years has been the development and implementation of diversity forums for City staff. Topics have included: LGBT issues, religion in the workplace, generational differences, and bullying in the workplace.

Fort Worth Human Relations Commission (FWHRC): The Fort Worth Human Relations Commission was created by Ordinance No. 5802 adopted on July 3, 1967 as the Community Relations Commission. The name was changed to the Fort Worth Human Relations Commission by Ordinance No. 6414 on December 28, 1970, and the Commission membership was reduced to 11 members by Ordinance No. 11598 on June 21, 1994. The FWHRC's general power and

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duties include: a) To advise and consult with the City Council and City manager on matters involving racial, religious, or ethnic discrimination; b) to recommend to the City Council and the City Manager measures designed to eliminate prejudice and discrimination; and (c) to promote and encourage communications between and cooperation of all groups interested in bettering community relations. The City's Human Relations Administrator serves as staff liaison to the FWHRC and has oversight over 14 employees that comprise the Human Relations Unit (HRU). The Administrator and HRU staff carry out the policy directives of the FWHRC, support the FWHRC in the performance of its duties, investigate complaints of housing, employment and public accommodation discrimination, as well as develop and implement outreach and education efforts designed to reduce discrimination and promote accessibility, inclusion, and diversity.

ANALYSIS OF DIVERSITY, ACCESSIBILITY, AND INCLUSION COMMITTEES AND PROGRAMS

Currently many efforts of the MCPWD, the DAC, and the ADA Coordinator are being addressed by the FWHRC and the HRU:

- The MCPWD, the FWHRC and the HRU all promote access for those with disabilities. In addition to the HRU's daily work investigating complaints of discrimination in housing and enforcing compliance with the Fair Housing Act and the American with Disabilities Act due to a person's disability, the HRU and the FWHRC have participated in a number of education and outreach activities including: forums held by the MCPWD, hosted training on reasonable accommodations and modifications under the Fair Housing Act, developed and forwarded recommendations for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to the City Council, and hosted screenings of documentaries regarding disability issues. Upcoming activities include: training for City staff on June 6, 2016, on the topics of Fair Housing and Reasonable Accommodations and Modifications; and a film screening event on a disability topic in October 2016 for Disability Awareness Month.
- Many of the topics addressed by the DAC at its forums, such as bullying, LGBT discrimination, and religion, are issues addressed by the FWHRC and the HRU. The FWHRC hosted film screenings of the *Bully Project* for FWISD students and for FWISD Parent Teacher Associations, collaborated with the FWISD's *It's Not Okay* campaign to develop curriculum and host the DAC's Diversity Forum on Workplace Bullying, spearheaded successful efforts to add Sexual Orientation and Transgender, Gender Identity and Gender Expression to the City's Human Relations Ordinance, participated in panel discussions on diversity in employment, and has spearheaded many initiatives, activities and forums designed to better community relations, and foster inclusion and diversity.
- The FWHRC worked with the City's FWTV/Cable division to add closed captions for City Council and Pre-Council meetings, as well as add visual displays in both the Council and Pre-Council Chambers. The FWHRC worked with the City's Webmaster to address accessibility issues related to board and commission applications. The HRU continues to

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work with the ADA Coordinator to address accessibility issues in the City’s forms and processes for City employees with sight impairments. Also, similar to the ADA Coordinator, the FWHRC can receive and investigate complaints regarding discrimination in public accommodations related to City facilities. In fact, the ADA Coordinator recently completed work on an online form to accept grievances about City facilities, only to find out that the HRU already had a similar form.

RECOMMENDATION

To promote efficiencies, reduce duplicative efforts and provide better customer service to both internal and external customers, City staff recommends that the MCPWD and DAC be dissolved and the functions of both Committees be absorbed under the auspice of the FWHRC as standing committees. Currently the FWHRC has the following standing committees:

- Executive Committee
- Employment Committee
- Housing Committee
- Administrator’s Evaluation Committee
- Community Relations Committee

It is recommended that the Community Relations Committee be dissolved and two new Standing Committees be added:

- Mayor’s Committee on Persons with Disabilities – This Committee would be comprised of at least one member from the Fort Worth Human Relations Commission and membership from the former MCPWD, and be responsible for addressing areas of disability concerns, including accessibility and accommodations.
- Committee on Diversity and Inclusion – This Committee would be comprised of at least one member from the Fort Worth Human Relations Commission and include both City employees and Fort Worth residents. The Committee would be responsible for addressing areas of concern that involve diversity and inclusion, including diversity in employment.

Both of the above Standing Committees would forward concerns and recommendations to the FWHRC as a whole, for consideration, discussion or action.

It is also recommended that the ADA Coordinator begin reporting to the Human Relations Administrator by July 2016, and the position be transferred to the Human Relations Unit of the City Manager’s Office as part of the City’s FY2017 budget process. Under the auspice of the HRU, the ADA Coordinator would then work with the FWHRC’s Mayor’s Committee on Persons with Disabilities and the Diversity and Inclusion Committee to address ADA and accessibility issues, work with the Human Relations Administrator to provide reasonable accommodations in the workplace that allow City employees with disabilities the ability to perform their essential job

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functions, and work with the HRU to address complaints of discrimination in public accommodations, including City facilities.

TIMELINE AND NEXT STEPS

If the Council agrees to the consolidation of diversity, accessibility and inclusion committees and programs under the FWHRM, City staff will proceed as follows:

DATE	ACTION ITEM
April 14, 2016	MCPWD informed of the consolidation plan.
April 21, 2016	Meeting with the Chairs and Vice Chairs of both the MCPWD and FFWHRM to discuss consolidation plan, assure the MCPWD of the City's commitment to disability issues, and discuss structure and transition plans for the consolidation.
April 25-29, 2016	Send memo to the Diversity Advisory Committee members to inform them of the consolidation plan, acknowledge and thank them for their service, assure them of the City's commitment to diversity and inclusion, and explain that there might be one or more opportunities for the DAC members to serve on the FWHRM's Committee on Diversity and Inclusion.
May 2-16, 2016	Call a special meeting of the FWHRM to inform them of the consolidation plan, address their concerns and answer their questions, and vote on a resolution abolishing the FWHRM's Community Relations Committee and adding the Committee on Disability Concerns and the Committee on Diversity and Inclusion. Vote on amending the bylaws to include new standing committees.
May 17, 2016	Place two resolutions on the City Council's agenda: one to dissolve the MCPWD as it currently stands and to consolidate its functions under the FWHRM, and the other resolution to approve the FWHRM's amended bylaws.
by July 2016	The ADA Coordinator will begin reporting to the FWHRM, under the supervision of the Human Relations Administrator.

Should you have any questions regarding this Informal Report, please contact Angie Rush, Human Relations at 817-392-6155.

**David Cooke
City Manager**