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Staff Report for Council Consideration to Explore a Local Multicultural Commission

**SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

At the June 6, 2016 City Council meeting the City Council requested to schedule a discussion to explore a possible Multicultural Commission in San Leandro. The item was also discussed at the July 18<sup>th</sup> and September 19<sup>th</sup> meetings. At the September 19<sup>th</sup> meeting, the City Council directed staff to survey other cities with commissions that include a multicultural component in their scope and bring the item back for discussion on October 17<sup>th</sup>.

The City Manager recommends that the City Council review the information in this report, which includes a brief survey of six Bay Area cities and provide direction on next steps and/or additional information or research that is requested from staff.

**BACKGROUND**

The City Council requested staff survey nearby cities that have commissions with a multicultural component in their scope. Staff is also reviewing current San Leandro Boards and Commissions that have a cultural responsibility within their purview.

**Analysis**

Staff identified six cities in the Bay Area that have City commissions with a multicultural component in their scope. This survey is not intended to be exhaustive, but it does provide multiple examples of the ways in which other cities have used commissions to promote multiculturalism. In general, the commissions tend to cover one of more of the following:

- Celebrating diversity and cultural heritage;
- Anti-discrimination efforts;

- Arts and culture; and
- Social and environmental justice.

## 1. City of Novato

### Multicultural Advisory Commission

The Novato Multicultural Advisory Commission acts as a catalyst to encourage respect, understanding, and inclusion of all of Novato's diversity. The Commission seeks to enrich the lives of the community through courageous interpersonal dialogue, and strives to build a safe and strong community through group and individual interaction as well as outreach, activities and education.

## 2. City of Fremont

### Human Relations Commission

The City of Fremont's Human Relations Commission (HRC) promotes and helps create a community environment in which all men, women and children, regardless of race, religion, national origin, gender, disability or sexual orientation, may live, learn, work and play in harmony.

## 3. City of Union City

### Human Relations Commission

The Human Relations Commission helps create an environment in which the human rights of every citizen may live, learn, work and play in harmony and brotherhood, promote people-to-people programs within the Sister Cities, and actively encourage participation of citizens and community organizations in projects involving international friendship and understanding in which each person may realize the highest potential unhampered by discrimination.

## 4. City of Richmond

### Arts & Culture Commission

The purpose of the Arts and Culture Commission is to promote and encourage the development of and interest in the fine and performing arts, and to act in an advisory capacity to the City concerning its artistic and cultural development and the preservation of Richmond's heritage.

## 5. City of Albany

### Social & Economic Justice Commission

The charge of this Commission is to research, analyze, discuss and evaluate a broad range of data and opinions on social and environmental issues affecting the welfare of the residents of Albany as inhabitants of both a local and a global community, and make recommendations to the City Council on positions and/or actions to take to address these issues.

Recommendations to the City Council shall state the relevance, important and/or particular impact that the issue has on the welfare of the residents of Albany.

## 6. City of Oakland

Department of Race and Equity (Budget Allocation: \$150,000)

The Department of Race and Equity was created by city ordinance in 2015. The creation of the Department reflects the city's recognition and acknowledgment that systemic racial disparities exist and that it is time to provide focus and support for their elimination. The Department is tasked with integrating, on a city-wide basis, the principle of ensuring that Oakland is a "fair and just" city, by eliminating systemic inequities caused by past and current decisions, systems of power and privilege, and policies.

The department has five divisions:

- Race and Equity
- Equitable City
- Equity Training
- Equitable Community Engagement
- Project Implementation

Cultural Affairs Commission (Currently on Hiatus)

The Cultural Affairs Commission (CAC) was established by the Oakland City Council on April 30, 1991 by Ordinance No. 11323 C.M.S. for the purpose of advising the Mayor, City Council and City Manager on all matters affecting cultural development in the community. The CAC makes recommendations to fund, assist and promote public awareness of artistic and cultural activities in the city; encourages support for individual artists and arts organizations; participates in community cultural planning processes, and reviews policies and programs which affect arts and cultural development in Oakland.

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

None

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