



Legislation Text

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Presentation from SEED Collaborative, Inc., in Partnership with the Perception Institute, on the Creation of a City of San Leandro Equity and Race Advisory Committee and Discussion of a Proposed Scope of Work for Facilitation Services and Development of an Equity Plan

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On June 1, 2020, the City Council voted unanimously to create an Equity and Race Advisory Committee to provide community input on the issues of equity and race within the community and as they relate to the provision of municipal services. After extensive research and discussions with organizations and individuals throughout the country, including the Race and Equity Alliance of the National League of Cities (REAL), staff recommends the City Council consider and provide feedback on a proposed scope of work from SEED Collaborative, in partnership with the Perception Institute, to facilitate a community-driven Equity and Race Advisory Committee and assist in drafting an Equity Plan.

BACKGROUND

On June 1, 2020, the City Council voted unanimously to create an Equity and Race Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee) consisting of community members that would advise the Council on matters related to Race and Equity in San Leandro. In addition, the Council requested that the Rules Committee discuss the item to help define the role of the Advisory Committee including its composition and mission

On June 24, 2020, the Rules Committee discussed the Advisory Committee. The following components of its mission were presented and discussed:

- The need to receive input from a wide-range of perspectives that is reflective of the diversity of San Leandro as a whole;
- The ability to shine a light on instances of racism and inequity in the community, past and present, in a town hall structure and recommend strategies to address them;
- Make recommendations to support and ensure the equitable delivery of City services as well as the provision of City programs that address inequity and racism and celebrates our diversity; and
- Ensure that accountability is maintained for both City government and all members of our community.

Similar to the Budget Task Force, the Rules Committee believed each council member should be

able to choose residents from their district to be on the Advisory Committee, with the exception of one at-large member. They felt that “Town Hall” meetings would be appropriate so that people across San Leandro could share their personal stories and that the focus should be on racial justice and inclusion.

With the framework provided by the Committee, staff reached out to the Race and Equity Leadership Group of the National League of Cities (REAL). REAL is a Department within the League of California Cities whose mission is to strengthen local government leaders’ knowledge and capacity to eliminate racial disparities, heal racial divisions and build more equitable communities. They do this primarily through three focus areas: a) Training and Technical Assistance, b) Network Building with other local government leaders, and c) Helping organizations establish a field of practice focusing on organizational change. All of these efforts are focused around working with city leaders including City Council and staff.

Organizational change is an important element to the Race and Equity conversation in San Leandro; however, community dialogue is also an important first step. Given REAL’s strength and focus on training and workshops for City Hall staff and elected officials, and their capacity stretched to its limits from many similar requests from cities across the nation, staff felt it important to review additional options for City Council consideration. Of importance was finding an individual or organization that could help facilitate conversations in the community as well as fold in the work of City staff’s internal equity team. Staff felt it was important that these conversations be led by others outside of the City structure, given its own capacity and the potential for perceived bias regarding the provision of services.

Based on recommendations from leaders in the community, public comment at City Council meetings, as well as other experts in the field, staff reached out to several organizations and individuals including: the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE), which is part of the Othering and Belonging Institute of University of California, Berkeley (UC Berkeley); SEED Collaborative; Visions, Inc.; Dr. Tyrone Holmes; Network for Transformational Change; and SEEDS Community Resolution Center. After discussions with each of these service providers, and the specific recommendation of GARE who is equally stretched and unable to assist the City at this time, staff began a more focused conversation with SEED Collaborative (SEED). Based on those discussions, staff requested a proposal from SEED, which is outlined below.

Analysis

SEED Collaborative

SEED Collaborative was co-founded by John A. Powell and Paul Hudson in 2013. Mr. Powell is the Director of the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society and Professor of Law, African American, and Ethnic Studies at UC Berkeley, and is currently the Director of the Othering and Belonging Institute. Mr. Hudson is the former Chairman and CEO of Broadway Federal Bank, a bank holding company founded in 1946. It is the leading community-oriented savings bank in Southern California serving low-to-moderate income communities. Mr. Hudson has also served on the Board of Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the Los Angeles Housing Authority and has served as the President of the Los Angeles NAACP.

The SEED Collaborative supports organizations that are working to create equitable and sustainable

communities using the concept of “*Targeted Universalism*” (described below), as well as organizational development and restorative business and investment strategies. Their proposal is in partnership with the Perception Institute, a consortium of researchers, advocates, and strategists who use research on race, gender, ethnic, and other identities to develop solutions that reduce bias and discrimination, and promote belonging.

SEED’s approach to this effort is firmly based on the concept of Targeted Universalism (TU) co-developed by Mr. Powell. The TU approach entails establishing a universal goal and recognizing that to accomplish that goal, we must acknowledge that as a result of structural inequities, different groups of people are situated differently within society. As a result, there will be different pathways of reaching the agreed upon goal. TU focuses on various barriers along a group or individual’s pathway and suggests structural changes to make reaching a goal smoother. Strategies are designed to accomplish a goal by taking people’s specific situations into consideration, so that they can get what they need when and how they need it, while also moving all together toward the universal goal.

Proposed Scope of Work

Due Diligence, Surveys and Focus Groups

To begin, SEED proposes to conduct interviews, surveys, focus groups, and review City policies and procedures to understand the landscape of the City and the way in which city services are provided.

They propose to conduct individual interviews with council members, senior staff, union leadership, and other internal and external stakeholders such as houses of worship, formal/informal non-governmental organizations and other member groups that represent San Leandro. Additionally, they propose to conduct surveys to allow for a larger sampling of individuals and stakeholders regarding attitudes, beliefs, and opinions on the impact of identity on the work of the City. This will allow them to assess paradigms within the community and our organization, to inform best practices around belonging, respect, and investment, and determine how aligned leadership’s behavior is to the organization’s and community’s goals.

SEED then proposes to conduct focus groups to allow for more in-depth conversations to give different segment groups the opportunity to share input together, such as people of color, union representatives, LGBTQ staff and community, people with disabilities, residents, and community organization representatives. Focus groups will provide a forum for discussions about participants’ experience, including successful strategies, services and programs, potential employment barriers, discrimination, and implicit bias, as well as ideas for systems change.

Group Facilitation and Creation of an Equity Work Group

Once the initial assessment is complete, SEED proposes to assist in forming an Equity Work Group (EWG). This group will review and discuss the due diligence findings, and discuss and decide on structural, policy and practice recommendations.

Group facilitation is an integral component of SEED’s work as it provides a vehicle to receive feedback, ensure group buy-in, create a sense of ownership of the process and outcomes, build trust among the members and between members and Consultant, and provides a platform to reach consensus decisions. EWG members will review due diligence findings and analysis, develop shared goals and ideas, establish priorities, and review and decide on strategies and recommendations.

On-going Consulting

SEED proposes to provide ongoing consultation and counsel--on an as needed basis--to the City's executive leadership team, including the Mayor and City Manager, and the Chief of Police regarding the application, interpretation and communication of issues related to equity, Targeted Universalism, and belonging. They will serve as a thought partner with the City's executive leadership team and the Chief of Police to respond to community interactions, employment barriers and opportunities, and to develop and support proactive actions, strategies and solutions.

Deliverable - Equity Plan

SEED proposes to prepare a City Equity Plan (Plan) that includes the due diligence findings and analysis and EWG approved recommendations.

It is proposed that the Plan would include:

1. **Assessment** - A discussion of the assessment of organizational practices, policies, culture, operations, and structures in relation to:
 - Siloed departments and functions;
 - Knowledge, understanding, trust and communication between segments within the City, and between the community and the City;
 - The work environment and culture of belonging;
 - Any disparities or issues related to access to services; and
 - The safety and well-being of the City's residents.
2. **Recommendations and Strategies** - Recommendations and strategies will include:
 - A statement of agreed upon universal goal, including a public Equity Statement;
 - Targeted strategies to meet the specific needs of critical segment groups that align and drive towards the universal goal;
 - Prioritize recommendations and strategies regarding recruitment, hiring, development, promotion and retention, and allocation of resources to support change, among others;
 - Strategies to foster collaboration, advance equity, and monitor compliance;
 - Policies/Practices that include Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; and
 - Training.
3. **Community Engagement** - Recommendations will include ways in which to promote transparency, encourage engagement and generate buy-in. This section will include steps to ensure community engagement with the Plan, and will suggest and support communications regarding the Plan.
4. **Implementation** - The Plan will include a work plan and timeline for next steps in implementing the Plan. It will also include systems and tools to monitor compliance with the Plan, evaluate performance, and make course corrections.

Although work around equity and race is an on-going effort, it is expected that the beginning of this dialogue and formal portion of this work will take approximately one year, which includes the assessment, surveys and focus groups, selection and discussion among the Equity Work Group, and

development of an Equity Plan. Although it is likely that a staff member(s) will be tasked to assist with this work, SEED has indicated that it will provide its own staffing.

Committee Review and Actions

On June 24, 2020, the Rules Committee discussed the Equity and Race Advisory Committee. No formal action was taken.

Fiscal Impacts

Should the City Council accept this proposal, staff will bring the full contract for approval at the next City Council meeting.

ATTACHMENT

Proposed Scope of Work - SEED Collaborative and the Perception Institute

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