



Date: July 25, 2020
To: Mayor and City Council
From: Eric Figueroa, City Manager
Subject: Options for a Community Based Task Force on Equity and Inclusion

Recommendation

Receive report, hold discussion, and provide direction to staff on the City's role in the establishment of a Community-Based Task Force on Equity and Inclusion. Staff recommends that the City Council choose to initiate a process to either:

- (1) establish a City Task Force on Equity and Inclusion and direct staff to allocate \$10,000 from the City's General Fund to pay for a facilitator to assist the Task Force; or
- (2) direct staff to allocate \$10,000 from the City's General Fund to pay for a facilitator at one or more community town halls focused on Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination strategies.

Background

At the City Council meeting of June 3, 2020, a request was made during Council Comments that an Equity, Inclusion and Social Justice Ad Hoc Subcommittee of the City Council be formed to provide a forum to advance the City Council's policy commitment to support equity and justice for all. The Mayor directed staff to return at a future Council Meeting with an agenda item to establish an Ad Hoc Subcommittee.

On June 27th, while staff was finalizing alternatives for the City Council Ad Hoc Subcommittee, the Martinez Police Department was alerted to a report of flyers containing hate speech left on the sidewalk near the downtown area. The flyers made threats against those supporting the Black Lives Matter movement and contained racially offensive and demeaning language. A copy of the flyer is included as Attachment 1.

The hateful flyers were an affront to the City's adopted values supporting inclusion, diversity, and acceptance. The City's Vision Statement, adopted on June 21, 2017, with the Strategic Plan in the City's FY 2017-19 Budget, reads:

Martinez is an inclusive, family oriented, safe community, with small town waterfront character, diverse neighborhoods, complemented by plentiful parks and open spaces. Martinez has a historic downtown, with a legacy of culture and the arts, fostering a vibrant and sustainable economy, striving for well-maintained infrastructure, and a responsive high performing government.

On June 30th, Mayor Schroder issued a statement (Attachment 2) condemning the hate flyers. The Mayor pointed towards specific resolutions the City Council has adopted to affirm its commitment to promoting unity and inclusiveness, including:

- Resolution No. 025-17, adopted on March 15, 2017, “Declaring the City of Martinez’s Commitment to being an Inclusive, Tolerant, and Supportive Community for Everyone,” (Attachment 3); and
- Resolution No. 111-17, adopted on October 4, 2017, “United Against Hate,” which condemned, “intolerance of any individual or group and hate speech of any kind” and reaffirmed the City’s “commitment to serving and protecting all of our residents, with a high value placed on diversity, equality, and inclusivity.” (Attachment 4)

On July 1st, the City Council took urgency action to adopt Resolution No. 074-20, as a statement on “Equity and Justice for All” (Attachment 5). This most recent resolution – and the aforementioned statements and actions of the Mayor and City Council – are indicative of the City Council’s support for all citizens of Martinez, regardless of race or class.

In addition to the resolutions adopted by the City Council and the request for an Ad Hoc Subcommittee of the Council, numerous members of the community at the City Council meetings of June 17, 2020, July 1, 2020 and July 15, 2020, requested the formation of a community-based anti-racist Task Force to address issues around equity, inclusion, and social justice in Martinez.

At the July 22, 2020 Special Council meeting, staff brought forth an item recommending that the City Council establish a community Task Force on Equity and Inclusion. This recommendation was based on input from the community; the request of the City Council for an Ad Hoc Subcommittee; and the ongoing calls for fairness and representation at the national, state and local levels.

The initial workplan of the Task Force would include three phases with a report date to the City Council proposed for December 2020.

- Phase I: Host single or multiple community conversations to identify issues around Equity and Inclusion.
- Phase II: Review the City's policies, procedures, and programming to evaluate its effectiveness from the perspective of Equity and Inclusion.
- Phase III: Develop a recommendation to the City Council on improvements to City processes, policies, programs and procedures that can be made to further promote Equity and Inclusion.

Staff further recommended that the Task Force on Equity and Inclusion include nine members appointed by the City Council through an application process. The proposed membership criteria included a selection process that would consider geographic diversity, age diversity, ethnic diversity, and advocacy diversity. Applicants to the Task Force would submit a City application form and complete an interview with the City Council prior to the applicant selections. Staff proposed that the City select and fund a facilitator for the initial duration of the Task Force.

During the July 22, 2020 discussion of this item, Councilmembers expressed support for the Task Force, but voiced several concerns with the proposed criteria. The first concern raised was the scheduled duration of the Task Force. Several Councilmembers stated that a three-month period would not be adequate to discuss the complex issues the Task Force would cover. Second, the City Council expressed concern that the application process would potentially limit applicants due to barriers of language and the City's ability to complete outreach in support of the Task Force. Third, the City Council questioned the selection of the facilitator by the City and suggested that this may not be the most effective way to support the Task Force. Fourth, the City Council agreed that the selection process should include some formal input mechanism from the community prior to the appointment of the Task Force. As is required by law (Cal. Gov't Code sec. 40605), the appointment of the Task Force would be made by the Mayor subject to the ratification of the City Council.

During the public comment portion of the item, several members of the community called for the Council to establish a Task Force that addressed racism and prejudice throughout the community and not the narrower topic of equity and inclusion within City policies, procedures and programming. Furthermore, the community members who spoke were concerned that if the Task Force were interviewed only by the City Council, it would not be possible to create an effective Task Force given the racial make-up of the City Council.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Mayor directed staff to return with more details and further options for the appointment of a Task Force.

Discussion

In order to move forward, the City Council may choose one of two paths for the Task Force structure. The City Council can opt for either (1) a City Task Force on Equity and Inclusion which would include an allocation of \$10,000 from the General Fund to pay for a facilitator to assist the Task Force or (2) direct staff to allocate \$10,000 from the City's general fund to pay for a facilitator at one or more community town halls on Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination as a way to start a community conversation on Anti-Racism/Anti-Discrimination that would be outside the City's formal structure.

Each of the two options recommended for Council consideration are discussed below.

Option 1 – City Appointed Task Force on Equity and Inclusion (“City Task Force”)

The first option is to continue with the establishment of a City Task Force on Equity and Inclusion. The clearest and most recent example of a City Task Force in Martinez was the 2010 General Plan Update Task Force that was appointed by the City Council in 2010 through an application process. The specific role of a City Task Force, whether on the General Plan Update or a specific community topic like Equity and Inclusion, is to increase civic engagement on a topic of importance to the community. In this case the charge of the Task Force would be the review of City Policies, Procedures, and Programming with respect to equity and inclusion and subsequently to make recommendations on how to improve City policies, procedures and programming to meet the City Council's goal of equity and inclusion for all. The City Task Force would ultimately work alongside staff to present recommendations to the decision-making body, which is the City Council.

In order to promote the application process to the community, staff would use the normal advertising methods available, which would include the City's website, social media accounts, and local newspaper advertising. In addition, staff would work alongside local advocacy groups and the faith-based community to cross-promote the Task Force application to reach parts of the community who do not normally follow the City's social media accounts or review the City web page. Staff will also provide, where feasible, applications to community members in languages other than English upon request.

Since the Task Force will be making recommendations to the Council and will be a creation of Council action, members of the City Task Force must be appointed by the Mayor and ratified by the City Council. While the ultimate appointment authority rests with

the Mayor and City Council, if the Council chooses to use a City Task Force, staff recommends that the City Council charge the City Manager with the task of appointing a diverse community panel of, 5-7 members to separately interview candidates for the City Task Force (in addition to the interviews conducted by the City Council). The community panel would meet with the City Council at the conclusion of the candidate interviews to make recommendations to the Council as to the make-up of the nine members to be appointed to the City Task Force. The City Task Force would be assisted by City staff liaisons.

Should the City Council choose to institute a City Task Force, staff recommends that the Task Force be permitted to rename itself, revise the target date to make recommendations to the City Council, and make the final selection of a facilitator from among 2 to 4 candidates brought forward by staff. Staff further recommends that the first task undertaken by the City Task Force would be to hold community conversations in September 2020 to help frame its workplan consistent with the objectives of reviewing City policies, procedures, and programming. In the event the Task Force extends the target date to report back to the City Council, the Council should revisit the funding for the facilitator for the City Task Force.

Option 2 – Community Driven Anti-Racist/ Anti-Discrimination Initiative

Members of the community expressed concern that the workplan of the proposed City Task Force on Equity and Inclusion did not go far enough to address systemic problems within the community. Many of the advocates suggested that a community group, created outside the appointment authority of the City Council, would more effectively advocate for those who are faced with systemic injustices. In addition, many of the community speakers noted that the problems of bias in the community go beyond City policies, procedures, and programming but include other institutions within Martinez including the school district, County mental health services, and the community at-large.

If the City Council agrees that a community group, created outside the appointment authority of the City Council, would more effectively advocate for and effect change in the broader community, then an option for the City Council would be to direct the City Manager to assist in arranging one or more facilitated town hall meeting(s) on Anti-Racism/Anti-Discrimination as a way to begin the community conversation. Members of the Martinez community, if they chose, could continue a community conversation on Anti-Racism/Anti-Discrimination on their own terms outside any formal City structure. The

City’s role in this scenario would be limited to funding one or more town halls on anti-racism/anti-discrimination.

While both options may appear similar, the focus of each approach are substantially different. The chart on the following page illustrates some of the key differences of each approach. Due to the focus of the Town Hall, staff does not see an option to combine the two approaches as the essential role of each approach is quite different.

Group	City Task Force Option	Anti-Racism/Anti-Discrimination Option
Subject	Review of Policies, Procedures, and Programing in the City of Martinez	Anti-Racism/Anti-Discrimination Town Hall discussion.
Town Hall	Set by Task Force after selection	Set by City Staff to cover Anti-Racism/Anti-Discrimination
Objective	Return to Council with Specific Recommendations on improvements to City Policies, Procedures and Programing	Set the groundwork for community dialogue on Anti-Racism/Anti-Discrimination. No specific follow up to Council
Membership	Limited members appointed by the Mayor and subject to Council Approval	No specific membership needed to attend workshops or follow up after them

Area of Focus	Limited to City Policies, Procedures and Programing with a planned presentation to the City Council on recommendations to consider.	Any area relevant to the Community's work on Anti-Racism/Anti-Discrimination. This could include other government groups outside the City.
Funding	\$10,000 for a Facilitator to support the City Task Force	\$10,000 for one or more Town Hall meetings

Fiscal Impact

The estimated cost for a facilitator for community Town Hall(s) is \$10,000. City Management is recommending an initial commitment of \$10,000 to facilitate the workings of the City Task Force.

Attachments

- Attachment 1 – Hate Flyer Found in Downtown Martinez on June 27, 2020
- Attachment 2 – Mayor's Statement of June 30, 2020
- Attachment 3 – Resolution No. 025-17 "United Community"
- Attachment 4 – Resolution No. 111-17 "United Against Hate"
- Attachment 5 – Resolution No. 074-20 "Equity and Justice for All"
- Attachment 6 – Draft Application for City Task Force on Equity and Inclusion