



City of Hutto

Agenda

City Council Work Session

Thursday, July 18, 2024 at 6:00 PM

Executive Conference Room

Hutto City Hall

500 W. Live Oak Street

In accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act this meeting agenda is posted for public information, continuously, for at least 72 hours prior to the scheduled time of the meeting on the bulletin board located on the exterior wall of the City Hall building at 500 West Live Oak, Hutto, Texas. This meeting agenda is also accessible via the Internet at huttotx.gov

1. CALL SESSION TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL

3. OTHER BUSINESS

3.1. Annual update and strategic plan update from the Diversity & Inclusion Commission (Kristi Barnes)

3.2. Discussion and possible action related to Work Session topics

4. ADJOURNMENT

5. CERTIFICATION

I certify that this notice of the July 18, 2024 Hutto City Council meeting was posted on the City of Hutto website and the City Hall bulletin board of the City of Hutto on July 15, 2024 before 5:30 P.M.



Laura Hallmark
Laura Hallmark

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AGENDA ITEM REPORT

3.1.



To: City Council
Subject: Annual update and strategic plan update from the Diversity & Inclusion Commission (Kristi Barnes)
Meeting: Thursday, July 18, 2024
Department: Community Services /
Staff Contact:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

STAFF REVIEW:

FISCAL NOTES:

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Hutto DEIB Strategic Plan Draft3 06212024



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Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) Strategic Plan for the city of Hutto, Texas

Draft 3: June 21, 2024



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Executive Summary

A strategic plan is a living ongoing document that will continue to evolve and change over time; it is not static. This initial draft is a starting point that will continue to develop and grow over time.

Hutto's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) strategic plan needs to start with a base of foundational concepts and principles:

1. That this strategic plan will continue to evolve and later include more specific actions
2. That the DEIB plan has to fully support and be integrated with the Hutto's overall strategic plan
3. That upfront we do need to define what we mean by the words diversity, inclusion, equity and belonging
4. We must also define the scope of our DEIB strategic plan. In our case, it will include both external community, and internal city processes and employees

Then after setting the base foundational concepts and principles, we need to propose our initial priority areas. There are five:

1. Establishing an ongoing sustainable structure for the continuing DEIB work
2. Assuring full public engagement in the DEIB work
3. Assuring DEIB engagement in all internal city processes
4. Providing a DEIB focus on economic growth and empowerment
5. Continuing to grow a city-wide culture of community inclusion and belonging

The next steps will be our city leadership fully committing to this long-term continual work and taking the initial first steps outlined to adapt and execute the strategic plan

D&I Commission Background and History

The City of Hutto's Diversity & Inclusion Commission was established by the City Council on July 16, 2020 (Ordinance O-2020-21). The commission was to be comprised of seven members serving 3 year teams appointed by the city council. The stated duties of the commission included:

1. Creating focused recommendations specific to Hutto related to equity and empowerment issues.
2. Actively promoting community awareness and education on the value of diversity.
3. Promoting equity on the basis of economic status, race, color, religion, gender, national origin, ancestry, marital status, lawful source of income, physical or mental disability, familial status, sexual orientation and gender identity.
4. Developing recommendations for actions to strengthen policies, practices, services and programs.
5. Creating a culture and framework of community equity, diversity and inclusion awareness efforts, programs and activities that are available and accessible to all community members.

Accomplishments of the commission for the first 4 years included:

- Worked with city staff to conduct a community survey in May – June 2022 which included several questions about the resident’s perception of diversity and inclusion.
- Received a 3 hour training in August 2022 on overall D&I principles, and the roles and responsibilities of D&I Commissions
- Initiated a wide variety of cultural proclamations and celebrations to recognize the diverse people of Hutto
- Sponsored a 3-hour diversity, equity and inclusion training session for the City Council in January, 2024. A discussion at the end of the training resulted in asking the D&I Commission to develop a recommended DEIB strategic plan.

As diversity and inclusion has now expanded to include equity and belonging for all city citizens and residents, and as the DEIB discussion has become more strategic and critical, the work of the D&I Commission is shifting to become more strategic instead of tactical, resulting in this recommended DEIB strategic plan. The key lesson is that we need to build a strong foundation of a DEIB strategic plan instead of simply “doing things” without a plan.

We recognize and thank the following people for their work on this proposed plan: current D&I Commission members Jacqueline Coleman (Chair), Tara Spoons (Vice-Chair), Cory Denana, Corina Zepeda; City Council liaison Dan Thornton, Commission staff support person Kristi Barnes, and outside consultant Stan Kimer of Total Engagement Consulting by Kimer.

Foundational Concepts and Principles

1. A strategic plan is a living ongoing document that will continue to evolve and change over time; it is not static. This initial draft is a starting point that will continue to develop and grow over time.

Strategic planning is the process of documenting and establishing a direction of your organization —by assessing both where you are and where you're going. The **strategic plan** gives you a place to record your mission, vision, and values, as well as your long-term goals and the action **plans** you'll use to reach them. By nature, this definition underscores the dynamic nature of strategic planning.

2. A DEIB strategic plan must support Hutto’s publicly displayed vision statement and Hutto’s city overall strategic plan.

As stated on the city’s website: *“Hutto is a family-friendly community that provides superior public safety, outstanding fiscal responsibility, diversified economy, and an exceptional quality of life.*

“The City of Hutto acknowledges that the history of discrimination in the United States of America continues to affect the privilege and/or lack of opportunity for people in the City;

and the City of Hutto acknowledges that equality occurs when differences such as race, ethnicity, religion, gender, economic status, sexual orientation/gender identification, veteran status, marital status, language, age, disability, etc. do not determine a person's economic, social, or political access.”

And as the city of Hutto’s strategic plan continues to evolve, the DEIB strategic plan must fully support this plan.

Looking at the current four pillars of the current strategic plan:

- I. **Collaborate for operational excellence and efficiency:** Strives to be a beacon that others can look towards by holding each accountable, achieving leadership alignment, actively seeking efficiency*

For the city to be at the peak of operational excellence and efficiency, it is critical that the city operationalize the best of DEIB principles both in internal practices and external community engagement. With the changing demographics nationally, state-wise and locally, the DEIB business case needs to be understood and executed so that the city’s diverse personnel and resources are utilized in the most effective and efficient manner.

- II. **Maintain financial stability:** Committed to fiscal responsibility, including transparency, long term financial health and alternate funding sources*

Excellent fiscal responsibility and accountability includes executing DEIB principles in the best possible way to both efficiently utilize resources and to avoid missteps that could jeopardize Hutto’s financial well being.

- III. **Grow responsibly and sustainably:** Leverage rapid growth through strategic planning, recruiting revenue-generating businesses, adopting innovative infrastructure*

Hutto currently is a fast growing city with increased business investment and people moving into the city. Most organizations looking to move and grow seek communities that have a strong skilled diverse workforce and that has an inclusive community standing that attracts the best talent. A strong DEIB strategy will enhance economic growth and bring in the very best community-enhancing businesses, educational entities and nonprofits.

- IV. **Create the highest quality of life:** Maintain standing as one of the safest cities in Texas, creating a community that is engaged, tolerant and compassionate about everyone leveraging different perspectives and experiences. Build an environment where everyone can feel they belong and have their voices heard.*

Even with a strong connection between DEIB and the first three pillars, DEIB strategy is fundamental to this fourth pillar. Basically, this summarizes the need for and the goal of building a superlative inclusive environment where everyone feels they belong and can contribute their very best to the life of the city.

As Hutto continues to grow and expand the overall strategic plan, it will be important to incorporate the DEIB strategic plan within the overall strategic plan.

3. It is important to upfront define what is meant by the four words diversity, inclusion, equity and belonging.

Diversity is the wide variety of visible and invisible, shared and different, personal and group characteristics among human beings. Every person is their unique combination of demographics attributes, beliefs and personality styles; and every person is part of Hutto's diversity. Diversity is not "us vs. them" or "the diverse and the undiverse." Every single person is a critical part of our city's diversity.

Inclusion means authentically bringing everyone, including traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities and decision/policy making in a way that shares power and gives everyone a voice.

Equity takes into consideration the fact that social identifiers (race, gender, socioeconomic status, etc.) do, in fact, affect equality. In an equitable environment, an individual or a group should be provided what is needed to give them equal access and opportunity. This may not necessarily be equal to what others are receiving. It could be more or different. This also recognizes the city's statement that "*acknowledges that the history of discrimination in the United States of America continues to affect the privilege and/or lack of opportunity for people in the City.*" Equity is an ideal and a goal, not a process. It ensures that everyone has the resources that they need to succeed.

Belonging is when everyone is truly heard and fully valued. It is an environment of an ongoing culture created to ensure all feel welcome across differences manifested in relationships, conversations, physical space and written word. Everyone feels that are truly a part of something bigger.

4. Upfront we need to define what is the scope of our strategic plan.

Some cities have strategic plans that focus exclusively on community relations and engaging citizens and residents. Some cities have strategic plans that focus only on the internal processes dealing with city employees. But since the relationships between citizens / residents, city elected leadership and city employees are so intertwined and inter-related, the best practice is to develop a wholistic city DEIB strategic plan that incorporates both the

entire community and internal leadership and employee population. This plan will include both.

A key summary statement: For DEIB work to be successful, it must be treated as a collective effort across the municipality. This is because DEIB work is not a single policy or action that can “solve” discrimination, oppression or injustice. It is a mindset and a set of behaviors that must be practiced over and over, in every department, forever. Treating DEIB work as a collective effort will ensure that these behaviors are taking root throughout an organization. It will mean when one person leaves, the municipality’s DEIB work will not disappear with them. Most importantly, it means that we are doing what our constituents are asking of us. *(Page 5 – the Massachusetts Municipal DEI Coalition DEI Guide, 2022)*

The five initial priority areas

In building the City of Hutto DEIB strategic plan, we believe we should focus on five initial priority areas. We will begin with a high level statement for each one with some initial goals and actions, and as the plan evolves, these can be further fleshed out to include detailed action plans along with metrics and measurements to assure accountability and success.

Priority Area 1: Establishing an ongoing sustainable structure for the continued DEIB work.

DEIB strategic work must first begin with establishing a firm foundation to assure the long term sustainability of this critical work. Initial recommendations include:

- Filling the current open positions on the Diversity and Inclusion Commission with diverse and committed citizens who will be excited to help drive the DEIB strategic plan for the city.
- Renaming the D&I Commission to be the DEIB Commission to recognize the importance of equity and belonging in this work, and to better align with the overall city strategic plan.
- Consider forming an expanded DEIB task force or working group to take this work to the next level. The task force should include:
 - Current members of the D&I Commission along with the City Council liaison
 - Key leaders from the city staff as we expand the work to include internal city practice (see priority area 3)
 - Members of our business community, possibly from the Hutto Chamber of Commerce
 - Someone from the educational / ISD system
 - Generational voices (youth, senior citizens ...)

This may also include forming some advisory councils or groups such as the youth community, faith communities and other stakeholders. Various working groups could be led by one member of the D&I Commission or perhaps a citizen leader.

- Continuing to use surveys to measure and ascertain the overall citizen feelings of inclusion and belonging

- Establish an ongoing system of annual review of progress, benchmarks, strategic plan revisions, etc.

Priority Area 2: Assuring full public engagement in DEIB work.

For DEIB initiatives to be their most successful and impactful, the broadest and most inclusive range of residents need to be engaged. Key to wide engagement is frequent and diverse communication of the city’s DEIB initiatives. This included soliciting people to get engaged and soliciting their input in a welcoming and inclusive way. Techniques may include:

- Continuing to use general citizen and resident surveys. For example, the most recent survey included several questions around diversity and inclusion which were fairly positive. Some results included:
 - 62% strongly agreed or agreed that the city attracts people from diverse backgrounds whereas 13% disagreed or strongly disagreed
 - 54% agreed the city values residents from diverse background vs. 13% who disagree.
 - 59% agreed that the city treats all residents with respect vs. 15% who disagree
 - 13% stated that they have personally experienced discrimination of some kind in the Hutto community in recent years, with the largest percentage stating it was based on national origin

These kinds of questions should continue to be asked, but should also be “sliced and diced” and analyzed by diversity area. Are the above answers quite consistent across all genders, races, sexual orientations etc., or do various constituencies reply to these questions significantly differently?

In addition, it is important for the city council to communicate key finding from these surveys and the action plans being put in place to address key issues. The ongoing DEIB strategic plan should look at addressing items pertaining to diversity and inclusion. If residents do not see action being taken as a result of their participation in these surveys, participation could decline.

- Hold focus group sessions with various groups of demographic residents to collect some qualitative and experiential information to accompany the quantitative data from the surveys.
- Hold “listening post” sessions so we can focus on listening to input that all diverse residents of our city would like to provide.
- Consider establishing some focused “advisory councils” (such as a youth council) that can provide input to the D&I Commission and City Council.

Since frequent communications of our DEIB work and messages to the entire community is critical to this work, the city Communications Leader needs to be a key partner with the DEIB Commission.

Priority Area 3: Assuring DEIB engagement in all internal city practices.

It is critical that a full DEIB strategic plan focus on the city's internal practices since DEIB work cannot isolate what is going on within the community from the city's employees, staff and programs. A robust DEIB strategy must be deployed internally realizing the compelling business case for DEIB strategy and execution. Part of this is recognizing that the racial mix in our area is growing in diversity and that a much larger number of younger people identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender.

Areas of the DEIB business case and plan will include:

- Recruiting the very best talent assuring the considered talent pool includes the totality of diverse talent available in the community.
- Then retaining and growing the diverse talent. Creating an inclusive environment where every employee wants to stay, grow and contribute their very best in their city role. This also includes providing all employees equitable access to career growth and promotions.
- Welcoming diversity of thought and ideas. Creating a culture where diverse employees are encouraged to share their perspectives and innovative ideas.
- Leveraging diverse employees to connect with the various diverse aspects of the community at large.
- Leveraging diverse employees to better serve an increasing diverse city population.

This means that city staff need to be strongly engaged with the DEIB strategic work. In addition to the HR team focusing on items such as recruiting and employee engagement, every functional leader reporting to the city manager should be asking themselves, "how does DEIB impact my own function and my work?" DEIB strategies should indeed impact areas such as Parks and Recreation, Police, Public Works, Economic Development, etc.

Priority Area 4: Providing a DEIB focus on economic growth and empowerment

Hutto is one of the fastest growing cities in Texas, with recruiting revenue-growing business as one of the key areas of the overall city strategic plan. Organizations looking to move to or open new facilities within an area ask key questions in their decision making process such as:

- Is this area welcoming and inclusive so that it will be attractive for us to move key people there to help us start the business?
- Is there a well educated, skilled, diverse workforce there for us to recruit from?
- Does the area offer diverse forms of culture and recreation as well as excellent schools where families will want to locate and grow there?

In addition to providing a general welcoming culture for businesses and organizations, the economic DEIB priority area should also assure that all diverse constituencies have equitable opportunity to share in the economic growth. This could include grants to assist underserved communities in establishing and growing businesses and an internal supplier diversity program to assure equity in city contracts with various suppliers.

In this area, Hutto may want to include the Hutto Chamber of Commerce as well as soliciting input from all size businesses within Hutto.

Priority Area 5: Continuing to grow a culture of community inclusion and belonging

One of Hutto's strengths is its community spirit and its "Hippo Pride." The work around building a community of inclusion and belonging should continue with analysis and evaluation to assure that all the diverse parts of Hutto citizenry are included in a positive way. Ongoing events can continue to celebrate the positive aspects of all Hutto's residents in a way that provides awareness and education to all. Activities like Hippo Day, Holidays in Hutto, various monthly proclamations, etc., can be leveraged to continue to build community.

The goal is for all residents to feel included, and for everyone to get the message that our diversity and differences are not something divisive to be feared, but instead make us stronger as a community.

Next Steps

Recommended next steps:

- IMMEDIATE: The City Council vote to rename the Diversity and Inclusion Commission to "Diversity, Inclusion, Equity and Belonging" (DEIB) Commission
- IMMEDIATE: The City Council to reverse a previous action and move the discrimination lawsuit information from the main Council page on the website to a more appropriate website location. Bringing such high visibility to past issues could cause more harm and prevent us from progressing a positive manner, as well as portraying a very negative impression of Hutto to outsiders and potential investors.
- The City Council to review and affirm this start to a DEIB strategic plan, including offering any suggested changes and/or additions
- The City Council, the Mayor and the City Manager to strongly and publicly voice their support for adding a DEIB strategic plan to the city's work.
- The City Council to provide ongoing budgetary resources to assure that this critical work is funded
- The City Manager to designate some focal points to participate in the adding next steps and details to the DEIB strategic plan.
- The City Council, Community Relations and current D&I Commission members work to fill the current open D&I Commission positions with excellent, diverse, committed citizens to continue this ongoing work.
- All parties to start engaging the additional stakeholders to engage them in this work going forward
- All parties to review this plan and determine a timeline on how to stage the recommended actions, with a focus on the items that can be worked on in the next 6 months.

APPENDIX A: Strengths / Weakness / Threats Analysis

As part of the May 14 and 15, 2024 work sessions, the team documented some Hutto strengths, weaknesses and threats that could impact the DEIB strategy and work. It is important to keep these in mind as we progress.

Work session participants included D&I Commission chair Jacqueline Coleman; D&I Commission members Cory Denena, Tara Spoons and Corina Zapeda; City Council interface Dan Thornton; and Community Outreach and Program Manager Kristi Barnes.

Strengths

- An overall growing, attractive community
- One of the safest cities in Texas
- Sense of community pride. “Hippo Pride”
- Close to the big city of Austin, yet a “semi-country” setting and feeling
- Growing diversity of residents
- Strong economic investment especially in the high tech manufacturing and data center areas
- Good police relations with city residents
- Great parks
- Excellent education including public schools and three universities
- Engaged citizens and city staff
- Good cost of living

Weaknesses

- Non-resolution and lingering focus on past occurrences instead of looking forward and working on solutions
- Lack of public meeting and community spaces
- Traffic
- Low voter turnout

Threats to this work

- Coming up with a plan that does not lead to results
- Trying to “boil the ocean” and do too much too fast
- Having unfair expectations – that this work will immediately resolve all past issues. The possibility of not being able to achieve reconciliation
- Doing it in a vacuum and not engaging a wide range of stakeholders
- The “social media tornado” and getting distracted by detractors
- Not getting community buy-in
- Politicization of DEIB efforts based on partisan viewpoints

APPENDIX B: Resources referenced during our May, 2024 work session

While doing this initial work, we referenced a number of documents, including the published DEIB plans of various cities close to Hutto's size. This way we could incorporate some "best practices" instead of feeling we had to develop a plan totally from scratch.

We may continue to refer to these resources as the work continues. They include:

The Massachusetts Municipal DEI Coalition DEI Guide. <https://www.mapc.org/resource-library/ma-municipal-dei-coalition/>

- Excellent general guidelines for conducting municipality DEI work

The City of Dublin, Ohio DE&I Framework. <https://dublinohiousa.gov/diversity-equity-inclusion/>

- We modeled their priority area approach
- They engaged a broad range of community participants in their DEI task force
- They had a strong data-centric approach

City of Irvine, CA Draft DEI Action Plan: <https://www.cityofirvine.org/diversity-equity-and-inclusion>

- They had a great structure that includes a table of goals, strategy, team responsible, metric and status. We may want to incorporate a similar structure when we start getting down to details

City of Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada DEI Strategy and Action Plan.

<https://www.richmondhill.ca/en/find-or-learn-about/diversity-equity-and-inclusion.aspx>

- Included a multi-year plan and a maturity model
- Continual improvement as a foundation
- Cross-functional team

City of Andover, MA DEI Progress Report. <https://andoverma.gov/947/Diversity-Audit-and-Assessment-Report>

- Built after a DEI assessment
- Utilized community focus groups
- Had a multi-year approach with short term and long term goals
- Established a DEI director position
- Involved municipal staff, their Commission on DEI and community volunteers in the process

AGENDA ITEM REPORT

3.2.



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Subject: Discussion and possible action related to Work Session topics
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None