



City Council Report

Date: March 26, 2015
To: City Council
Through: Natalie Lewis, Assistant to the City Manager
From: Ruth Giese, Diversity Office Administrator
Subject: Human Relations Advisory Board—Diversity & Inclusion
Recommendations
Citywide

Strategic Initiatives



Purpose and Recommendation

The purpose of this Council presentation is to provide an overview of the *Mesa Speaks, Mesa Listens: Inclusion & Diversity Report* prepared by the Human Relations Board (approved on October 22, 2014) and to review the listed recommendations outlined in the report. This report includes the City's current activities, as well as future plans, with respect to the suggested actions.

Background

In 1999, the Mesa City Council created the 11-member Human Relations Advisory Board (HRAB) to advise the Council "about racial, religious, ethnic, cultural, disability, or other human relations issues affecting Mesa City government and the delivery of City services" (Mesa City Code Title 2, Chapter 12, section 2-12-2). The Board's purpose also includes recommending policies to eliminate discrimination and prejudice; to promote mutual understanding and harmony; and serving as a public forum for citizen input on issues related to the purpose and functions of the Board.

In their 2013/2014 Work Plan, the Board made it a goal to recommend actions to the City Council and City leadership for Mesa's diverse populations to have equal access to and equal treatment in receiving City services. To assess this goal, they engaged in a process to determine how well Mesa was doing in promoting awareness and respect for diversity within its increasingly diverse and growing community. The four-step, data-driven study process included: documentation of the demographic diversity in the community; a telephone survey conducted in January 2014 of 600 randomly selected Mesa residents on resident satisfaction with life in Mesa and perceptions of discrimination and intolerance; three community dialogues entitled "Mesa Speaks,

Mesa Listens: Community Conversations on Inclusion and Diversity” in late April and early May 2014; and a review of the various existing laws and protections for population subgroups that historically have experienced discrimination.

A report entitled, “Mesa Speaks, Mesa Listens: Inclusion & Diversity Report” was compiled with all of the above listed information, as well as seven recommendations consistent with their mission to create an inclusive, respectful, and equitable community for consideration by Mayor & Council. The Board also suggested specific actions to implement each of these recommendations. The report was approved by the Board at their October 22, 2014 meeting and distributed to Mayor and Council shortly thereafter.

Discussion

The Board's recommendations flow from the survey and the community dialogue data, which led to the following conclusions:

A large majority of Mesa residents enjoy living in Mesa and feel valued and accepted as residents of the community. However, this is not the case for all segments of the population. A community where population subgroups are segregated, excluded, singled out for different treatment, or do not see themselves visibly represented in the community sends strong, subtle messages about whether that group of people and their contributions to the community's identity are valued and welcomed.

The City's commitment to and support for diversity must be active and much more visible to the community. According to the telephonic survey, respondents believe that promoting diversity and inclusion is the responsibility of all the fundamental institutions—parents (92%), schools (84%), local government (79%), churches (75%) and the media (69%). For the City at 79%, current efforts to promote diversity may not be completely apparent to the survey respondents.

The data also pointed to the need for more education related to the cultural identity of the community. The survey question about residents being well-educated about Mesa's diversity received the lowest rating of all of the questions. On a positive note, the data showed that in general people enjoyed living in a multi-cultural community like Mesa.

Finally, the Board recognized that some population subgroups have no legal protection from discrimination at the Federal, State, or local levels of government.

The HRAB offers seven recommendations to address these issues, in addition to specific actions to implement each of these recommendations:

1. Expand communication to population subgroups with the highest percentages of limited English proficiency.
2. Make the City's commitment to welcoming and serving its diverse population more transparent and visible to the public.

3. Engage and learn more about the needs of those population subgroups most alienated from the community (Hispanic/Latino, people with disabilities, and LGBT people).
4. Create ways to bring the community together to learn about and celebrate Mesa's diversity.
5. Create legal protection from discrimination for those subgroups not protected in Federal or State law.
6. Educate the public about the cultural diversity within Mesa to break down barriers and misunderstandings between population subgroups that can lead to discrimination.
7. Expand the City's visible recognition of veterans.

Related Activities

Existing City programs and/or plans that currently address many of the recommendations and suggested actions include: One Mesa community pledge, Mesa's Title VI Implementation Plan, Hometown Heroes Campaign and the Latino Diversity Strategic Plan. These four initiatives, among others, offer similar responses to those listed in the suggested actions by communicating and publicizing Mesa as an inclusive community that embraces diversity. For the full detailed list of Human Relations Advisory Board's summary of recommendations and the City's activities to date, please see Attachment A. Attachment B provides a possible list of anti-discrimination ordinance guidelines.

One Mesa

Mayor Giles introduced the 'One Mesa' community pledge in January 2015. The pledge aims to recognize the diversity of Mesa and acknowledge its role in bringing the community together. It states that everyone has the right to feel valued, understood and respected. Community businesses, organizations, faith-based groups, non-profit groups, individuals, etc. have all been encouraged to make a declaration by signing the pledge. To date, the pledge has received support from City leadership, City Departments, Mesa Public Schools, various diversity groups, businesses and countless individuals. The community pledge is an ongoing initiative that will continue to be promoted and supported at events, public meetings and other community functions. The One Mesa community pledge addresses the recommendation to publicly and visually celebrate City's commitment to embracing diversity, bringing the community together to celebrate diversity and educating the public about diversity to help break down intolerance.

Mesa's Title VI

Mesa's Title VI Implementation Plan was launched in February 2015 by the Diversity Office. As a recipient of federal financial assistance, Mesa is required to

comply with various nondiscrimination laws and regulations, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ("Title VI"). Title VI states that, "No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal Financial assistance." Additional provisions were included in 1975 with the Age of Discrimination Act to extend requirements of Title VI to include the prevention discrimination on the grounds of age, sex, disability and income status. Therefore, Mesa has created a Citywide Implementation Plan that outlines how departments will implement general procedures to meet the stated Federal standards. This plan is a phased approach and will be considered ongoing until otherwise noted from the Federal Government. The Title VI Implementation Plan addresses the recommendation to expand communication to population subgroups, publicly and visually celebrate City's commitment to embracing diversity, and addressing some of the needs of the most alienated subgroups in Mesa (as identified by the report).

The Hometown Heroes Campaign

The Hometown Heroes Campaign is another program offered through the Diversity Office, which launched in October 2014. The Hometown Heroes Banner Program is a living tribute created for the community to recognize and honor Mesa residents and their immediate family members who are serving, or are veterans who have served in the United States Armed Forces. Each banner honors a specific Mesa service person and is displayed on street lamps in Downtown Mesa as a reminder of their dedication to our country. Mayor & Council have stated public support for the program, and have also made contributions to the success of the initial banners. The Hometown Heroes Campaign addresses the recommendation to expand the City's visible recognition of Veterans.

The Latino Diversity Strategic Plan

The Latino Diversity Strategic Plan was initiated in fall 2014 as an analysis of Mesa's efforts towards inclusivity and communication with its Latino population, in addition to being a model for outreach to diverse populations. Guidelines and suggestions for expanding accessibility to the Latino population were included in the plan, which is currently under review. Mesa's Latino community has been identified as the largest minority group at over 27% the population. This assessment focuses on the ongoing commitment to make the City of Mesa a more diverse organization in which to reside and work. The Latino Diversity Strategic Plan addresses the recommendation to publicly and visually celebrate City's commitment to embracing diversity, addressing some of the needs of the most alienated subgroups in Mesa and educating the public about diversity to help break down intolerance.

Although these are significant efforts towards promoting and celebrating diversity in Mesa, there are still some gaps as identified by the Board's recommendations. Mesa is an increasingly diverse community with large numbers of residents that fall within what

are considered protected classes under Federal and State law. There are also Mesa residents that have no protection from discrimination under the law. As stated previously, the Board's view is that all population subgroups should have legal protection from discrimination through a Non-Discrimination Ordinance enforced by the City.

Another task for consideration is the lack of a braille embosser and associated software. Currently, those looking to print documents in braille must utilize the only embosser in the Valley, located at the Burton Barr Central Library in Downtown Phoenix. The availability of a braille embosser would not only benefit the Mesa community, but regional providers in the East Valley as well. The approximate cost for a braille embosser is \$5,000 and software is another \$3,000.

And finally, the Board suggested action to create a gender identity policy for current and future transgender employees. Currently, there are no employment policies specific to a certain subgroup within Mesa, including transgendered employees.

These factors all taken together suggest that Mesa utilizes more than one approach to addressing the issues identified in this report. The Board envisions Mesa as a community that not only includes and respects its diversity, but is enriched by it. The results suggest that although there is much satisfaction with Mesa, there is always more that could be done not only to be more welcoming and inclusive, but to also be enriched by the diversity of the community.

Fiscal Impact

Fiscal impact will be dependent on direction from Mayor and Council. At this time staff does not anticipate material cost, other than a braille printer and associated software, should that be one of the directives from Mayor and Council. All other costs affiliated with HRAB recommendations and City response to date is subjected to staff time and available resources.

Coordinated With

Mesa's Human Relations Advisory Board, City Manager's Office and City Attorney's Office have been consulted and concur with this report.

Attachment A

Human Relations Advisory Board (HRAB) Summary of Recommendations & City Activities to Date

1. Expand communications to population subgroups.

Suggested Actions	Activities (to date)
Provide materials printed in Spanish, Asian and other subgroups, where needed.	Title VI (implementation began Feb. 2015)
Retain Spanish-speaking PIO	City has one fluent, Spanish-speaking PIO staff member. Diversity Administrator is fluent speaking and writing Spanish. And, City has Spanish translation services to use, when needed. In addition, new recommendations being considered within context of Latino Diversity Strategic Plan from CM Luna's Office.
Issue news releases to Spanish media channels.	Title VI and being addressed in the Latino Diversity Strategic Plan.
Purchase a Braille Embosser for Library	No embossers in Mesa. The closest embosser is in central Phx. The approximate cost for the embosser and its software is \$8,000.

2. Publicly and visually celebrate City's commitment to embracing diversity.

Suggested Actions	Activities (to date)
Develop a branding campaign.	Launched "One Mesa" brand and initiative (which includes community pledge) was launched January 2015.

Create opportunities for Council to publicly/verbally demonstrate support of embracing diversity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council has included “fosters inclusion of a diverse community and workforce” to its Strategic Initiatives. • Council participation/attendance at key community meetings celebrating diversity. • Community Pledge was launched Jan. 2015; with goal of Council participating. • Latino Diversity Strategic Plan implementation
Post non-discrimination statement on city’s website.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title VI statement already posted at http://www.mesaaz.gov/titleVI/ • Community Pledge posted onto City’s website and also enables community members to sign on and commit to the pledge.
Find opportunities to add more diverse members to city boards and committees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title VI implementation action. • Latino Diversity Strategic Plan includes Latino outreach component in hiring and outreach to encourage greater Latino participation.
Encourage leadership internships and opportunities for subgroups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mesa Counts on College • Mayor’s Youth Task Force • Latino Diversity Strategic Plan (internal and external initiatives to expand Latino participation in volunteer efforts and leadership positions and training.
Create gender identity management policy for City employees.	
Create evaluation tool within subgroups to monitor standards of inclusivity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HRAB survey completed. • Other external tools, such as Human Rights Campaign, Police Hispanic Community Advisory Group, Mesa Association of Hispanic Citizens.

3. Research and learn about needs of most alienated subgroups in Mesa (Hispanic, Disabled, LGBT).

Suggested Actions	Activities (to date)
Create City advisory board charged with fulfilling this recommendation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HRAB exists and includes a disabilities subcommittee. • Latino Diversity Strategic Plan includes focus groups and outreach with Latino community, seeks partnership with MPS to reach Latino populations, and Mesa Assoc. of Hispanic Citizens.
Hire an ADA Coordinator and Title VI Coordinator for the City.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City decentralized/centralized approach to ADA. Depts. (Engineering, Arts) have ADA experts and Diversity Administrator provides centralized coordination citywide. • Diversity Administrator responsible for Title VI planning and implementation.
Form task force to delve deeper into needs of Hispanic and LGBT communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latino focus groups recommended in Latino Diversity Strategic Plan.
Support Alzheimer's Awareness and Dementia-Friendly community initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Mesa Police Department operates an Alzheimer's Awareness program through a Federal grant. http://www.mesaaz.gov/police/AdultInformationKit.aspx

4. Bring community together to celebrate diversity.

Suggested Actions	Activities (to date)
Plan annual community-wide diversity celebration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three Celebrate Mesa events annually • Dia de los Muertos at Mesa Arts Center annually • Latino Town Hall at Mesa Arts Center annually • Four Community Cinema series conducted each year • ACF annually; Merry Main Street resurgence underway. • Annual Make a Difference Day—sweat-equity contributions to those less fortunate/subgroups. • Latino Diversity Strategic Plan includes request to recognize Hispanic Heritage month activities.

Ensure Council awareness and participation in key diversity meetings and events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity Administrator provided listing; working with Mayor and Council to ensure attendance. • Heightened role for Mayor at 1/18/15 MLK Dinner—One Mesa Pledge. • Mayor/Council participates in annual volunteer event at La Paz de Cristo, have conducted shoe drives.
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5. Adopt legal protection for subgroups not protected in federal or state law.

Suggested Actions	Activities (to date)
Adopt non-discrimination ordinance	See Attachment B for possible guidelines for an ordinance.

6. Educate the public about diversity to help break down intolerance.

Suggested Actions	Activities (to date)
Videotape HRAB meetings, HRAB subcommittee meetings and diversity events and air on Channel 11.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting minutes and copies of presentations provided on City's website. • Existing city events are photographed and posted on Council and City social media, You Tube. • Latino Diversity Strategic Plan recommends use of Channel 11 as recruitment tool, showcasing Hispanic employees and use of social media and printed materials citywide to showcase diversity.
Encourage Mesa Public Schools to host educational events to promote diversity awareness and respect in schools and community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mesa Public Schools signed the One Mesa Community Pledge. • Latino Diversity Strategic Plan suggests partnership with MPS to reach Latino populations.
Create listing of diversity-related advocacy groups and churches and post onto City website.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible project for Diversity Office intern in 2015. • One Mesa Community Pledge is a start. • For Our City Mesa Community Pledge launch. • Latino Diversity Strategic Plan lists and includes outreach to a few dozen local Hispanic organizations.

7. Expand City's visible recognition of Veterans.

Suggested Actions	Activities (to date)
Support/promote Hometown Heroes campaign.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hometown Heroes recognized at 2014 AZ Celebration of Freedom event, just prior to fireworks. • Mayor and Council made public statement of support for program and helped to fund inaugural set of banners. • Banners to become an annual effort; displayed in downtown during Fourth of July/Veteran's Day and Memorial Day.
Post thank you banners on Solid Waste vehicles, City website and utility bills during Memorial Day and Veteran's Day.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City already posts "Thank You" banners on the webpage and on utility bills during Memorial Day and Veteran's Day. • Diversity Office will approach Solid Waste Dept. with idea for truck signs.
Include a Veteran's Memorial in the City Center plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design team selected for City Center program; designs to be honed moving forward.
Create an Annual Veteran's Day Memorial Day Event.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City current helps financially sponsor annual Veteran's Day Parade. • Mayor and Council participate in annual Veteran's Day parade each year. • City helps sponsor annual Royal Air Force celebration at Mesa Cemetery.

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Attachment B: Possible Anti-Discrimination Guidelines

- **Protected classes:** Protected classes in Mesa would include race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information, marital status, familial status and Veteran's status. Note: Gender identity would be further defined to ensure this is sincerely held and part of a person's core identity.
- **Religious Freedom and Expression:** The ordinance would **not** apply to religious organizations, schools, colleges, universities which are, in whole or part controlled, managed or owned by an entity that propagates religion. Also, the ordinance would **not** impact anyone's First Amendment rights to fully practice his/her religion.
- **Employment:** Businesses in Mesa with 15 or more employees would be required to adhere to the ordinance. In addition, employers would be allowed to determine at their option sex-specific facilities (restrooms, shower facilities and dressing facilities) provided that they also provide reasonable accommodations for gender identity to all employees.
- **Fair Housing:** While the ordinance would be expected to expand the protected classes in fair housing laws, it would **not** apply to someone renting a portion of their home where they occupy one of the living areas or to explicit groups, such as senior living, housing for disabled individuals, religious organizations, expressive organizations, non-profits and social clubs.
- **Appeals/Penalty Process:** The ordinance would include a comprehensive, yet reasonable, complaint, appeals and penalties process with civil fines ranging from \$300-\$2500.