

INTRODUCTION

Taking on institutional racism to achieve racial equity requires ongoing, thoughtful dialogue and leadership. Recognizing that black lives matter provides a foundation for acting on our individual and collective responsibilities for human rights. Effectively tackling these difficult issues requires both immediate action while valuing diverse voices in the decision making process now and into the future recognizing that we cannot solve this alone. Several elements were identified to urgently review and engage on including taking immediate steps to review police and public safety standards including police use of force issues. Only by coming together can we create change and address existing barriers. This framework is a starting point for further discussion in addressing racial equity within our community.

PURPOSE STATEMENT

Commit to achieving racial equity in all aspects of our work to address institutional racism and implicit bias, through:

- Acting with urgency through thoughtful dialogue and action.
- Working in unity with community partners and the broader community.
- Acknowledging that this work is more about our community together than it is about each of us as individuals.
- Developing an action plan through data, results, and outcomes.

FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW

The proposed framework is a foundation for next steps in achieving racial equity throughout the City. Overall, our recommended elements could come back to Council at different times so that work could continue to evolve without waiting for all items to come together in one report. The framework would follow the general steps of review, engage, report, and take immediate or near-term action.

FRAMEWORK KEY ELEMENTS AND ACTION PLAN

The following framework and action plan provide clear steps forward as we progress towards racial equity. The elements are focused on general topics areas and are intended to guide work underway, while exploring other steps and approaches. Examples listed are for City Council consideration and further refinement and input. The items listed are intended to provide some focus on immediate actions the City could take, while evaluating and reviewing other areas for further consideration. The first two elements are central approaches overall and are connected through each of the issue-specific elements.

ELEMENTS

1. Police Accountability and Use of Force: Conduct an immediate review, through independent community discussion and recommendations for change in response to the “8 Can’t Wait” campaign. Report these recommendations to the City Council for consideration within the context of existing accountability systems.

2. Community Engagement and Communications: Support thoughtful dialogue by facilitating a series of community conversations throughout this process. Communicate throughout the framework implementation phases of review, engage, report, and action.
3. City Organizational Policies and Decision-Making: Focus on racial equity through thoughtful review of City practices and procedures such as budget and finance, employee conduct, ethics, hiring and promotion practices, training, and other policies and standards.
4. Community Services and Programs: There are several services offered by the City of Signal Hill and policies and practices that both directly and indirectly impact the community. Thoughtfully reviewing these services and policies through a lens of racial equity will help make progress towards addressing the racial inequities that may be inadvertently perpetuated by them in their current form. Examples are:
 - a. Community Services: Review resident and non-resident fees and programs as well as access to City facilities, spaces, and resources.
 - b. Housing/Community Environment: Continue to advance the City Council's priority on housing with a lens towards achieving racial equity by focusing on affordable housing and multifamily housing development.
 - c. Economic Development: Advance work focused on promoting a small business environment that is inclusive and welcoming to all.

ACTION PLAN

Police Accountability and Use of Force

Review police and public safety police practices, including police use of force policies through the "8 Can't Wait" framework.

Options for Consideration

- Review police use of force practices and systems and raise the bar where needed.
- Provide a comparison of the national initiatives like 8 Can't Wait, Police Use of Force Project, and other benchmarks focused on review of police use of force policies.
- Respond to the City Council with a report and recommendations.

In addition to an immediate and time-limited review, a parallel review with reporting to the City Council would address the following issues:

- Review other policing data, procedures and accountability practices, including police hiring practices with a specific focus on best practices.
- Review training standards with a focus on implicit bias, crisis intervention, and cultural diversity training.

Community Engagement and Communications

Engage the community and inform about all elements of the initial framework and action plan.

Options for Consideration

- Facilitated/guided conversations addressing bias and racism.
- Listening to City employees, commissions, and the community at large.

- Engage strategic partners, thought leaders and community connectors on different elements of this work, as needed.
- Explore developing a series of listening sessions and other engagement opportunities such as virtual conversations through the implementation of the initial framework elements and leverage other existing networks to listen and engage.

City Organizational Policies and Decision-Making

Review and implement action plan findings through citywide focus on employee conduct, ethics hiring practices, training, and other policies and standards.

Options for Consideration

- Review and reset standards of conduct and accountability citywide, including but not limited to the Police Department. Specific areas to consider include conducting Citywide implicit bias training and updating the City's Ethics Policy.
- Review the City's budget and finance practices with a focus on racial equity. This would include exploring additional support for community services and human services programs, including emphasis on supporting vulnerable community members.
- Review and reset hiring and promotional practices and further explore concepts such as creating a "blind" job application review that blocks sources of bias, including name, address, and education information.
- Review other City policies through a racial equity lens and amend where needed.
- Based on findings from the action plan, adjust resources to align with what is needed and explore other opportunities.
- Further the efforts of the framework and implement change through the unified commitment of the City's Executive Leadership Team.

Addressing each of the issue areas described above will require engagement with a variety of stakeholders. Staff anticipates refining this framework, identifying issues to be addressed with specific descriptions and venues for review and policy actions.