



CITY OF SIGNAL HILL

2175 Cherry Avenue • Signal
Hill, California 90755-3799

STAFF REPORT

7/8/2025

AGENDA ITEM

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR
AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**FROM: CARLO TOMAINO
CITY MANAGER**

**SUBJECT: DISCUSSION OF PURPOSE AND SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
SUSTAINABLE CITY COMMITTEE AND DIVERSITY COALITION COMMITTEE**

Summary:

At the City Council meeting of May 13, 2025, Mayor Jones received support from Council Member Woods to enable further discussion to review the formation guidelines, staff resources and budget requirements, and other details of the Sustainable City Committee (SCC) and Diversity Coalition Committee (DCC). In response to the City Council's direction, staff developed this report to outline the differences between commissions and committees, explain the formation and purpose of the SCC and DCC, and present estimates of staff resources dedicated to supporting each committee.

The SCC and DCC advance City initiatives related to environmental sustainability and community diversity. Each committee meets regularly and carries out programs aligned with its mission. Staff calculated that supporting both committees requires approximately 764 staff hours per year, with an estimated cost of \$80,536 as well an additional \$10,000 in annual program expenses for the DCC. To further facilitate City Council discussion, staff reviewed examples from other cities and included a sample set of bylaws from the City of Santa Cruz to assist the Council in considering whether to formalize, modify, or reaffirm the structure and responsibilities of these committees.

Staff recommends that the City Council review the information presented in this report and provide further direction. The City Council may also wish to discuss whether the current structure and scope of each committee remain appropriate or if the City Council desires to refine its direction to better align with City priorities and available resources. Potential options for further consideration include reaffirming the current committee structure, revising membership or meeting frequency, adopting formal bylaws, or transitioning certain efforts into City-led programs.

Strategic Plan Goal(s):

Goal No. 5: High-Functioning Government: Strengthen internal communication, recruitment, retention, systems, and processes to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of City services.

Recommendation:

Discuss the proposed City Council request and provide direction to staff as desired.

Fiscal Impact:

There is no fiscal impact associated with the recommended action.

Background:

At the City Council meeting of May 13, 2025, Mayor Jones received support from Council Member Woods to enable further discussion to review the formation guidelines, staff resources and budget requirements, and other similar details of the SCC and DCC. During this meeting, the City Council also requested that staff approximate staff costs to support City committees. Staff drafted this report in response to the City Council's request for a more robust policy discussion and to facilitate the conversation, staff prepared a report that distinguishes the difference between commissions and committees, provides background regarding the formation of the two City committees, and provides information regarding staff costs.

Introduction

Commissions and committees serve different functions within the structure of a city government, and their establishment reflects differences in purpose, authority, and legal framework. Commissions are typically formal bodies established by ordinance or municipal code that may be required by State law and are subject to the Brown Act. Commissions have defined roles and responsibilities related to specific policy areas, such as planning, parks, or public safety. Some commissions, such as a Planning Commission, may also have quasi-legislative authority delegated by the City Council. Members of commissions are generally appointed by the City Council and serve fixed terms, with appointments often subject to public transparency requirements such as the filing of Form 700 statements.

In contrast to commissions, committees are generally more flexible and may be established by a City Council resolution, motion, or administrative action. Committees are typically advisory in nature, with no independent decision-making authority, and may be either standing or ad hoc. Standing committees have continuing subject matter jurisdiction and may be subject to the Brown Act, while ad hoc committees are generally exempt from Brown Act requirements. Committees are often used to facilitate focused discussion or provide recommendations regarding specific topics or projects for a limited time; at the conclusion of a term specified by the City Council, a committee can provide a final list of recommendations to conclude its work.

The City Council established the SCC and the DCC to address specific policy issues of importance at the time. The two committees encourage participation from members and hold publicly noticed meetings in an open session. The committees receive staff support on a regular basis to plan and hold meetings and also to execute certain special events or programs.

Sustainable City Committee (SCC)

On April 22, 2008, the City Council directed staff to implement a sustainable city plan. At that time, staff researched and discussed sustainability plans from other agencies such as Pasadena and Huntington Beach and observed that each city formed an action committee to set goals, objectives, and advance the program through an adopted work plan. Staff found that these committees were typically composed of City staff and community members who meet monthly. Staff further proposed creating such a committee as an "ad hoc", single purpose committee that would meet over a series of months to develop recommendations for City Council consideration.

On June 10, 2008, the City Council established the SCC, consisting of representatives from the City Council, each of the Commissions, and the community at large. The purpose of the SCC was to develop and recommend a sustainability framework that promotes environmentally responsible and financially practical objectives. On February 3, 2009, the City Council approved an Action Plan outlining the activities of the SCC (Attachment A). The SCC has utilized the United Nations Green cities Declaration and Urban Environmental Accords, UEA, a set of 21 action items, as a guiding framework to establish local sustainability goals. In 2010, the SCC selected four action items from the UEA to serve as the foundation for local initiatives, with the goal of completing these goals by June 5, 2012.

Diversity Coalition Committee (DCC)

At its meeting of July 28, 2020, the City Council approved the establishment of the DCC as a means to engage the community and dialogue on various aspects of race and equity. The City Council envisioned the DCC to include various stakeholders from the community. Diversity, as understood and advanced by the DCC, is defined as the entire range of human differences that includes, but is not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, religious affiliation, and national origin. The overarching goal of the DCC is to act as an advisory body on a broad range of topics directly related to issues that affect diversity. The goals of the DCC are focused on three specific areas: education, facilitation, and continuous improvement (Attachment B).

The DCC is intended to provide educational opportunities that foster a better understanding of the diverse cultures, identities, and perspectives represented in the Signal Hill community. Members also work to support and participate in events and activities that celebrate community diversity and promote inclusiveness. As part of its ongoing facilitation role, the group actively engages the community as Diversity and Inclusion Ambassadors. DCC members solicit feedback, encourage dialogue, and relay community perspectives to the City. The group also intended to provide guidance to the City on matters related to diversity and inclusion.

Analysis:

Over the past several years, both committees have initiated events and programs to advance their respective goals. The SCC holds two Mayor cleanup events each year and the City has incorporated recommendations related to recycling and environmental efforts. Similarly, the DCC acts as community ambassadors and engage in community conversations at City parks, hold flag-raising events throughout the year, and plan an annual diversity breakfast.

Each committee holds regular meetings; the SCC meets quarterly and the DCC meets monthly. Each committee establishes the frequency of their respective meetings based on the timing of their self-directed work plans. Staff provides ongoing support to both committees to advance their respective

effort. The City Council requested an accounting of staff time to support the activities of each committee.

Staff Time and Cost Estimates

Based on an estimate of time totaling 286 hours, which primarily includes personnel from the Community Development Department, staff estimates approximate annual cost to support the SCC is \$29,285. For the DCC, staff estimates approximately 478.5 hours of staff time to support this committee; including personnel from the Administration Department such as the Deputy City Manager and Assistant to the City Manager. Staff estimates the annual cost of staff time to be approximately \$51,251. There are additional costs related to City-funded programs and supplies for the DCC that total an additional \$10,000 annually. Based on staff's estimate, both committees require approximately 764 hours of support, totaling \$80,536 along with additional program costs.

Committee Bylaws and Structure

While it is entirely within the City Council's purview to create, modify, or reestablish committees to advance the City's broader policy goals, many local governments choose to embody such direction in an adopted document. For discussion purposes, staff reviewed examples of establishing documents that outlined the role, responsibilities, and duties of their respective committees. Staff has attached an example of committee bylaws from the City of Santa Cruz (Attachment C).

Next Steps:

Staff recommends that the City Council review the information presented in this report and provide further direction. The City Council may also wish to discuss whether the current structure and scope of each committee remain appropriate or if the City Council desires to refine its direction to better align with City priorities and available resources. Potential options for further consideration include reaffirming the current committee structure, revising membership or meeting frequency, adopting formal bylaws, or transitioning certain efforts into City-led programs.

Reviewed for Fiscal Impact:

Siamlu Cox

Attachments:

- A. February 3, 2009, City Council approval of the SCC Work Plan
- B. Draft DCC Work Plan
- C. Sample City of Santa Cruz Committee Bylaws