

City of Portland  
Human Rights Commission  
**Strategic Plan 2012–2015**



*Approved at the  
Human Rights Commission meeting  
of July 11, 2012*

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## City of Portland Human Rights Commission

The Human Rights Commission advocates for and takes positive action toward eliminating discrimination, racism, and bigotry; strengthening inter-group relationships; and fostering greater understanding, inclusion, and justice for those who live, work, study, worship, travel, and play in the City of Portland. The work of the Commission is guided by the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international, national, state, and local principles of human and civil rights.

The Human Rights Commission is appointed by the Portland City Council. Members are volunteers who work without compensation. Current members are:

*Allan Lazo, Chair*  
*Kyle Busse, Vice-Chair*  
*Moloy K. Good*  
*Emily G. Gottfried*  
*Ashley Horne*  
*Héctor López*  
*Abdul Majidi*  
*Stephen Manning*  
*Donna D. Maxey*  
*Christine Rontal*  
*Damon Isiah Turner*  
*Donita Fry*  
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## Executive Summary

The Portland Human Rights Commission works to eliminate discrimination and bigotry, to strengthen inter-group relationships, and to foster greater understanding, inclusion, and justice for those who live, work, study, worship, travel, and play in the City of Portland. In doing so, the Commission is guided by the principles embodied in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Since its inception in 2008, the Commission has taken an active role in promoting dialogue about human rights and in shaping public policies and government practices concerning human rights. In addition to Commission actions, two committees—the Community and Police Relations Committee and the Committee for Inter-Group Understanding—have been powerful advocates for change.

In April 2012, the Commission embarked on a strategic planning process to define its strategy, focus, and direction over the next three years. The strategic planning process was built on the foundation of participation and capitalized on the Commission’s strengths, opportunities, and aspirations.

The Strategic Plan is organized around four primary strategies:

***Discovery Strategy*** — The process of discovery is composed of the collective efforts to identify and assess human rights issues in the City of Portland. Discovery uses the tools of formal assessment: aggregating and synthesizing existing data, monitoring the community landscape, and convening communities to gather information about human rights issues. The Human Rights Commission, in partnership with the community, will prioritize and act on the findings of this discovery strategy to strengthen human rights in Portland.

***Visibility Strategy*** — Visibility is a strategy that coordinates efforts and activities that promote and communicate an understanding of human rights issues in the City of Portland and the role, activities, and accomplishments of

the Human Rights Commission. Visibility as a strategy is a coordinated and systematic approach to using principles of marketing, communications, social media, and public relations with the goal of promoting human rights and the Human Rights Commission. Visibility also includes using personal and organizational connections and partnership development to leverage the collective voice for human rights in Portland.

***Education Strategy*** — Education as a strategy includes all Human Rights Commission activities that create deeper understanding of human rights issues in the City of Portland and that endeavor to effect change in community and public institutional norms. Education is a proactive and priority-driven approach to building and changing the knowledge, attitudes, programs, and policies of the community related to specific human rights issues.

***Advocacy Strategy*** — Advocacy as a strategic focus for the Human Rights Commission has the clear purpose of creating systems change. Advocacy represents collective actions to identify political and policy solutions to address human rights issues. Advocacy, whether initiated from within the Commission or driven by the community, will become increasingly more important as a measure of the effectiveness and strength of the Commission.

## **Organizational Structure**

As part of this strategic planning process, the Human Rights Commission examined best practices of other citizen commissions in search of organizational and practice improvements. Out of this process came a redesign the Commission's operating and committee structure to promote efficiency and accountability.

The history of the Human Rights Commission suggests that the effectiveness of the Commission is based on its ability to respond rapidly to emergent events and to create a flexible structure that adapts to a rapidly changing environment. Further, one of the core strengths of the Commission is the convening of commissioners and community partners with complementary cross-disciplinary skills. For example, convening a team that includes



members with legal expertise, political savvy, communications skills, and community organization skills led to an effective focus on human trafficking, and that focus is moving from awareness and education to policy recommendations.

In this context, moving away from a hierarchical committee structure and toward a functional committee structure will strengthen the effectiveness of the Commission. Borrowing concepts from the literature on matrix management, the Commission structure centralizes decision making at the Commission level and distributes the work to functional committees.

### **Accountability and Transparency**

The Human Rights Commission has a commitment to acting with a high degree of accountability and transparency both to the Office of Equity and Human Rights and to the community. To this end, the Commission will provide: (1) routine communications to the community; (2) semiannual public briefings for citizens, community leaders, media, elected officials, and City office and bureau staff; and (3) annual reports to City Council.

The Strategic Plan that was approved at the HRC monthly meeting on July 11, 2012.

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## I. Background

### HRC History

Portland has a history of having a human relations entity. The first commission was founded in 1948 as the Inter-Group Relations Commission and later became the Portland Human Relations Commission. In 1978, the Portland Commission became the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission (MHRC) when its jurisdiction was expanded to include Multnomah County. The MHRC saw its ups and downs until its final demise in 2003, when, as a program of the Office of Neighborhood Involvement, it was cut from the budget.

In 2006–2007, research was conducted to assess the need for a new commission and to recommend a model for the reconstitution of a human relations entity for the City of Portland.<sup>1</sup> Subsequently, the City passed Ordinance No. 181670 to create the Office of Human Relations and the Human Rights Commission (HRC) in March 2008. The HRC was first convened on November 5, 2008. Then-Mayor Tom Potter described the work of the Commission as “critical to the success and well-being of our community.”<sup>2</sup>

Ordinance No. 184880, effective September 21, 2011, reorganized the Office of Human Relations and created the new Office of Equity and Human Rights (OEHR). In part, the establishment of the OEHR was driven by the Portland Plan’s “Framework for Equity.”<sup>3</sup> Quoting from the document, “The Office of Equity and Human Rights will be a critical implementer of the Portland Plan and will work closely with the Portland Commission on Disability and the Portland Human Rights Commission throughout the implementation of the Portland Plan.”

## **HRC Accomplishments in Brief**

Since its inception, the Human Rights Commission has taken an active role in promoting dialogue about human rights and in shaping public policies and government practices concerning human rights. In addition to Commission actions, two of its committees have been powerful advocates for change.

The Community and Police Relations Committee (CPRC) convened in July 2009 and continue to bring together members of Portland's diverse communities and its police officers to improve community and police relations, further an authentic community policing culture, and promote dignity, understanding, and respect in police and community interactions.

The Committee for Inter-Group Understanding (CIGU) was inspired by Archbishop Desmond Tutu's lifelong work on reconciling communities. CIGU worked to build peace and understanding among groups that have had deeply rooted conflict and honored the need for healing the historic and current harms of injustice and oppression.

The following timeline presents the major achievements of the Human Rights Commission.

## HRC Timeline

### 2009 Accomplishments

The HRC cosponsored a public forum and media event titled “Speak Out Against Hate.” This forum was in response to a school-based hate crime.

The HRC convened to further authentic community policing and has been successful in shaping department policies and procedures.

The HRC provided human rights policy analysis for City Council on the human rights implications of the DREAM Act for Portland citizens and possible actions of local jurisdictions.

The HRC began work on the Inter-Group Dialogue Program, leading to a successful series of events focusing on fostering understanding among different cultural communities.

## 2010 Accomplishments

The HRC provided testimony against passing the Sidewalk Management Ordinance, based on principles in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The HRC participates in ongoing evaluation of the impacts of this ordinance.

On behalf of Commissioner Randy Leonard's office, the HRC provided member representation on the Police Oversight Stakeholder Committee, convened to provide additional recommendations on police oversight in developing City Ordinance No. 184880.

The CPRC gathered information from the Portland Police Bureau and the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office, and held a public hearing on the interplay between local law enforcement and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Recommendations have been distributed to the Sheriff and City Council. Members of the CPRC will continue to meet with the Sheriff to assist with implementation.

The HRC provided human rights policy analysis for City Council on the human rights implications for Portland citizens of Homeland Security's Secure Communities Program and the interplay between local law enforcement and ICE.

*The Oregonian* published an HRC op-ed piece on freedom of religion, highlighting support of Somali Americans and Muslims in our community and the importance of community dialogue. This was part of the HRC's participation in the international celebration of Human Rights Week.

The HRC provided a press statement read at the Secure Communities Initiative press conference in support of the National Day of Action Against SB 1070, requiring local law enforcement agencies in Arizona to enforce federal immigration law.

## 2011 Accomplishments

The CPRC provided a detailed report to the Portland Police Bureau, outlining recommendations for improving the Bureau's use-of-force policy.

The HRC coordinated a public hearing on issues regarding Portland's participation in the Joint Terrorism Task Force to make a recommendation to City Council.

The HRC provided member representation on the Office of Equity and Human Rights' Creation Committee about restructuring the OEHR and selecting a new director.

In partnership with the United Nations Association of Portland, the HRC cosponsored a Human Rights Day event, engaging community members and local policy makers on local legislative issues relative to human rights.

The HRC's CIGU hosted a forum on reconciliation, "Touchstones of Hope: Truth, Healing, and Reconciliation as a Way to Address Historical Trauma."

The CPRC established a seven-member subcommittee to plan a Portland Police Bureau-wide, multisession training about systemic racism and its impacts.

The HRC provided substantive analysis of the Portland Plan draft and presented recommendations to the Portland Plan committee.

## **2012 Accomplishments**

The CIGU hosted a series of Race Talks and cosponsored a Human Rights bus tour to help the community understand the history of human rights issues in Portland.

The HRC's HTTF continued to raise the profile of human trafficking in Portland by cosponsoring a community forum to raise awareness of the issue.



## II. Summary of the 2012 Strategic Planning Process

After a competitive Request for Proposal process, the Human Rights Commission selected Facilitation & Process, LLC, to assist in facilitating a strategic planning process to define the strategy, focus, and direction of the Commission over the next three years. The strategic planning process was designed on the foundation of participation and built on the Commission's strengths, opportunities, and aspirations. The planning process included the following stages conducted over an intense twelve-week period:

- **Discovery**

Through one-on-one interviews, an online survey, a review of historical Human Rights Commission documents, and a review of strategic plans of Human Rights Commissions in other cities and states, a broad outline of strategic priorities was developed. A summary of the assessment was presented to Commission members.

- **Design**

Following the discovery process, a one-day HRC retreat was held to begin designing this plan. Over the course of the day, through subsequent online surveys, and at a second meeting of the Commission, the Commissioners designed a program framework and developed a supporting operational structure to serve as a basis for the plan.

- **Development**

Over the next eight weeks, the Commission developed a formal written Strategic Plan that was approved at the HRC monthly meeting on July 11, 2012.

### **III. Human Rights Commission Strategic Plan**

#### **The Compelling Social Need**

A compelling mandate called into existence the current Human Rights Commission, as the opening words of the “Findings and Recommendations Report: Creation of a Human Relations Entity” suggest:

In Portland, Oregon in 2007, we have no human rights entity that holds us accountable for fulfilling our commitments under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The year 2008 is the 60th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and it is also the 60th anniversary of the founding of Portland’s first human rights entity—the Portland Inter-Group Relations Commission. It is fitting that in 2008 the City of Portland recognize these two important events and accepts its responsibility for ensuring human rights for all, by creating the Human Rights Commission of the City of Portland.<sup>4</sup>

Following the “Findings and Recommendations” report, Portland’s elected officials made the Commission a reality. The Human Rights Commission was established to address the compelling lack of focus on human rights in public policy. Today, nearly three years later, the Commission continues to advocate for human rights in the policy conversations about Portland’s present and its future.

Over the past three years, a collaboration of more than twenty municipal, regional, and community agencies and organizations, with extensive community input, developed a vision for Portland that spans the next two decades. The 164-page Portland Plan was adopted by the Portland City Council through Resolution No. 36918, as amended, on April 25, 2012. Equity serves as one of the foundations of the Portland Plan, and the compelling social need to foster and work toward equity is stated at the outset of the report:

**Advancing equity must be at the core of our plans for the future.** Portland is becoming a more racially, ethnically and age diverse city with more newcomers. At the same time, Portland's diverse communities have not had, and many still do not all have, equitable access to opportunities to advance their well-being and achieve their full potential. Greater equity in the city as a whole is essential to our long-term success. Equity is both a means to a healthy, resilient community and an end from which we all benefit.<sup>5</sup>

City Ordinance No. 184880, which established the Office of Equity and Human Rights, recognizes the Portland Plan as providing a guiding principle for the Human Rights Commission. Identifying equity as core to Portland's future is to be applauded, as is the inclusion of a specific action plan to address the inequities that are present and endemic. However, the concept of civil rights appears in the Plan on only four of its 164 pages, and human rights as a specific construct is absent from the document. Also absent from the Portland

***It must be underscored that the absence of human rights as a focus of the Portland Plan highlights the compelling need for a strong, independent Human Rights Commission.***

Plan are any references to human rights issues that the community has been wrestling with, including police use of force, racial profiling, human trafficking, and gender and sexual orientation bias and violence. Equity and civil rights are a subset of concerns addressed by a human rights agenda.

This Strategic Plan is organized to identify, frame, and appropriately address the human rights concerns of all citizens who live, work, study, worship, travel, and plan in the City of Portland. The Commission identifies that the work of promoting equity is a crucial part of the promotion and protection of human rights, but as a construct it is not fully comprehensive of human rights. Furthermore, Portland will be prosperous only as it identifies, prioritizes, and addresses the root causes of inequity, many of which are grounded in human rights lapses and violations. Therefore, moving forward, the Human Rights Commission seeks to establish an aggressive mission, priorities, and supporting strategies to promote the Portland Plan's "Framework for Equity,"

as well as to promote current human rights issues not mentioned in the Plan, above and beyond compliance with legislated civil rights mandates.

Moving forward, the Commission will establish an aggressive mission, priorities, and supporting strategies to expand the Portland Plan's "Framework for Equity." This Strategic Plan is organized to identify, frame, and appropriately address the human rights concerns of all citizens who live, work, study, worship, travel, and play in the City of Portland.

## **HRC Mission**

The Human Rights Commission works to eliminate discrimination and bigotry, to strengthen inter-group relationships, and to foster greater understanding, inclusion, and justice for those who live, work, study, worship, travel, and play in the City of Portland. In doing so, the Commission is guided by the principles embodied in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.<sup>6</sup>

## **HRC Vision**

The Human Rights Commission envisions our collective action that creates equity, justice, and human rights for all as part of the core fabric of our community.

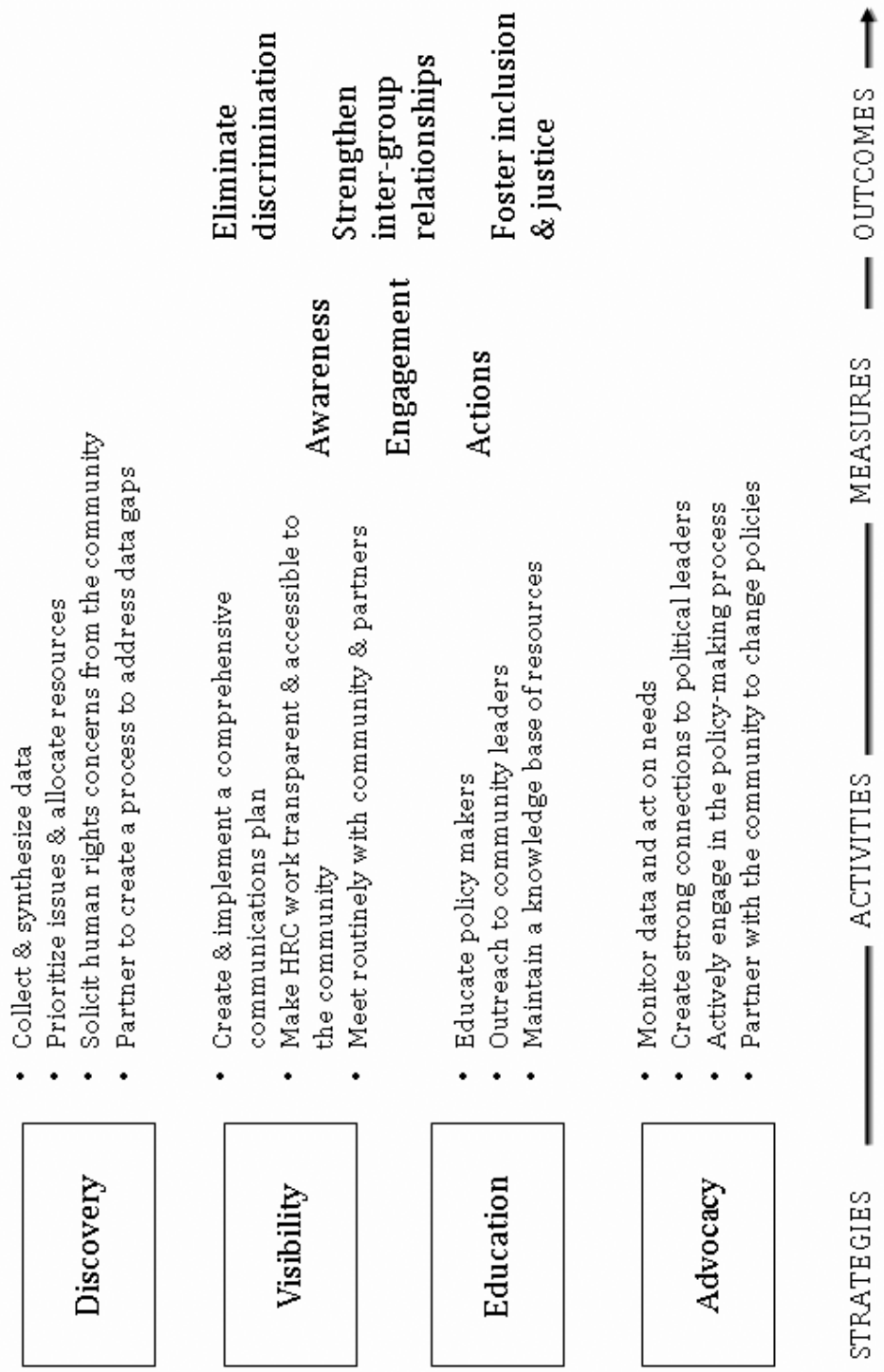
## **HRC Model of Change**

The Human Rights Commission embraces four priority strategies and organizes its collective efforts to develop, implement, and evaluate core activities that will assist our community to build peace and end discrimination (Figure 1). Each of the priorities and supporting activities is designed to address one or more of the components of the HRC mission, specifically: eliminating discrimination and bigotry, strengthening inter-group

relationships, and fostering greater understanding, inclusion, and justice for all of our community.

The following section of the Strategic Plan details the four strategies and activities that operationalize the model for change. It is recognized that the delineation of separate strategies is artificial and that all four strategies are interrelated and build upon each other. To ensure success, the Commission will create a flexible organizational structure that is project-based and adaptive to the changing community environment.

**Figure 1. Human Rights Commission Model for Change**



## **HRC Core Strategies**

### ***Discovery Strategy —***

The process of discovery is composed of the collective efforts to identify and assess human rights issues in the City of Portland. Discovery uses the tools of formal assessment, aggregating and synthesizing existing data, monitoring the community landscape, and convening communities to gather information about human rights issues. The Human Rights Commission, in partnership with the community, will prioritize and act on the findings of this discovery strategy to strengthen human rights in Portland.

### **Rationale**

As the Portland Plan and other data sources amply illustrate, the data related to racial disparities in our community are staggering. Further, under-reported data on various topics—police use of racial profiling,<sup>7</sup> the disproportionality of young people of color in the justice, child protective service, and foster care systems,<sup>8</sup> and human trafficking,<sup>9</sup> to name but a few—are all human rights issues that transcend the data in the Portland Plan. To have a significant impact on promoting and protecting human rights, we need to actively identify human rights issues, develop an understanding of them, and prioritize and act on them.

### **Priority Activities**

- Systematically collect and synthesize data related to community-based human rights issues, and create a framework for prioritizing the issues to support the allocation of resources (time, money, and human capital) to address emerging priority issues.
- Create an ongoing and proactive forum that encourages community-driven human rights issues to be brought to the Commission, and develop strategies to address them.

- In partnership with Office of Equity and Human Rights and other community stakeholders, develop and implement a systematic discovery process for areas where substantive gaps in data exist.

### **Progress Measures and Outcomes**

- Track and report on the outcomes of data collection and other discovery activities such as position papers written, policies advocated, and education and outreach developed.
- Report on the growing inventory and curating of data relevant to monitoring human rights issues for the City of Portland.

### ***Visibility Strategy —***

Visibility is a strategy that coordinates efforts and activities that promote and communicate an understanding of human rights issues in the City of Portland and the role, activities, and accomplishments of the Human Rights Commission. Visibility as a strategy is a coordinated and systematic approach to using principles of marketing, communications, social media, and public relations with the goal of promoting human rights and the Human Rights Commission. Visibility also includes using personal and organizational connections and partnership development to leverage the collective voice for human rights in Portland.

### **Rationale**

The absence of the substantive inclusion of the Human Rights Commission in the Portland Plan is emblematic of the lack of understanding on the part of policy makers, community partners, and the larger community. It is clear that too many in our community do not know about the Commission or what role it plays in fostering an understanding of and advocating for policy change related to human rights. Creating community awareness of the Commission and an understanding of its role is the first step in creating a stronger



leadership role and voice for the Commission. Increasing the visibility of the Commission is the precursor to substantive action to promote human rights.

### **Priority Activities**

- Create and implement a comprehensive communications plan that includes both ongoing and rapid response communications that address branding, messaging, technology, and communications platform, as well as supporting policies and procedures for managing communications.
- Create a process and supporting tools to make the work of the Commission transparent and accessible to the community including: a web-based hub of information and resources, a supporting social media presence, and community-centric and place-based meetings of the Commission.
- Strengthen the regular meeting structures that proactively engage civic leaders, elected officials, community leaders, and the broader community.

### **Progress Measures and Outcomes**

- Track and report on the number and types of media coverage of the Commission and its programs.
- Demonstrate a quantitative increase in the number of community members and organizations engaging with the Commission through outreach, education, and social media (such as Facebook and Twitter), and supporting HRC advocacy initiatives.

### ***Education Strategy —***

Education as a strategy includes all Human Rights Commission activities that create deeper understanding of human rights issues in the City of Portland and that endeavor to effect change in community and public institutional

norms. Education is a proactive and priority-driven approach to building and changing the knowledge, attitudes, programs, and policies of the community related to specific human rights issues.

## **Rationale**

As Brazilian educator Paulo Freire taught, true education is meaningless unless it is the basis for action and change.<sup>10</sup> Since its inception, the Human Rights Commission has held a strong practice base of engaging the community through dialogue and education, as evidenced by the successful inter-group dialogue process that has been adopted by several community-based organizations and the Office of Equity and Human Rights. In this Strategic Plan, the Commission will not only maintain a focus on educating the community through dialogue and training events but will seek to engage the community in the process of systems change. By building a critical consciousness about human rights issues, the Commission will be positioned to partner with the community in a servant-leadership role advocating for change.

## **Priority Activities**

- Create and implement an internal education process to assist in building a strong understanding of human rights within the Office of Equity and Human Rights, within other City offices and bureaus, and among elected officials and their staff members.
- Create and implement an external education process to assist in building a strong understanding of human rights in the community, with a specific focus on working with communities and community leaders capable of leveraging education in the process of advocacy and change.
- In partnership with the Office of Equity and Human Rights and other community stakeholders, establish and maintain a centralized knowledge base of community resources, events, tools, data, avenues for involvement, and other materials that support the self-education of citizens related to human rights issues.

## **Progress Measures and Outcomes**

- Track and report on the number and types of community outreach and educational events sponsored or cosponsored by the HRC.
- Create and report case studies of community or institutional change resulting from the community outreach and educational events.

## ***Advocacy Strategy —***

Advocacy as a strategic focus for the Human Rights Commission has the clear purpose of creating systems change. Advocacy represents the collective actions to identify political and policy solutions to address human rights issues. Advocacy, whether initiated from within the Commission or driven by the community, will become increasingly more important as a measure of the effectiveness and strength of the Commission.

## **Rationale**

Although the Portland Plan includes several direct action areas related to equity and supports a human rights agenda, there are large human rights issues for which the Human Rights Commission must serve as the convener, facilitator, and voice for change. Advocacy as a strategy will at times mean working in partnership with the Office of Equity and Human Rights and with elected Portland officials, or if the civic leaders are reluctant to pursue change, they will find the Commission aligned with the community to speak truth to power. Without change, all of the efforts of the Commission are a diversion of scarce time, money, and human capital. This reality makes the pursuit of advocacy paramount to this Strategic Plan.

**Priority Activities**

- Referencing both the Portland Plan and other human rights issues, routinely monitor data and community events to ensure that the focus of the Commission remains on defined, priority human rights issues.
- Create and implement strong internal and external partnerships with civic leaders, elected officials, community-based organizations, and citizens for the purpose of mobilizing a broad coalition of support to advocate for policies that support significant systems change related to priority human rights issues.
- Identify proactive and measurable human rights policy objectives, and create supporting advocacy campaigns to achieve the objectives.

**Progress Measures and Outcomes**

- Track and report on the number of community partnerships in which the Commission participates for the purpose of advocating for policy change.
- Track and report on the number of policy initiatives undertaken and the resultant changes in public policy and/or changes in government organizational policies and/or procedures.

## IV. Organizational Structure

As part of this strategic planning process, the Human Rights Commission examined best practices of other citizen commissions in search of organizational improvement strategies. This review led to a redesign of the Commission's operating and committee structure to promote efficiency and accountability.

### Operating Structure

Core to the strategic planning process, several changes have been incorporated into the operational design of the Commission. These include:

- **Recruit committed citizens representing the diversity of Portland.**

As the Human Rights Commission is only as strong as the members serving on it, there is a need to ensure that recruitment efforts strive for community representation. In addition, a strong new member orientation program is needed, and must include leadership development and mentoring opportunities.

- **Focus the Human Rights Commission's efforts on doing fewer things, and doing them well.**

Rather than creating an operational structure that addresses every facet of human rights in our community, the Commission has created a flexible structure that focuses on the core ongoing functions of the Commission and addresses emerging issues through the creation of ad hoc committees.

- **Create a partnership between Human Rights Commission members and the Office of Equity and Human Rights staff members.**

To be successful, the Commission must develop a proactive partnership with the Office of Equity and Human Rights staff. Creating stronger

partnerships is being driven by the reorganization that resulted in the creation of the new OEHR.

- **Strengthen governance and decision making.**

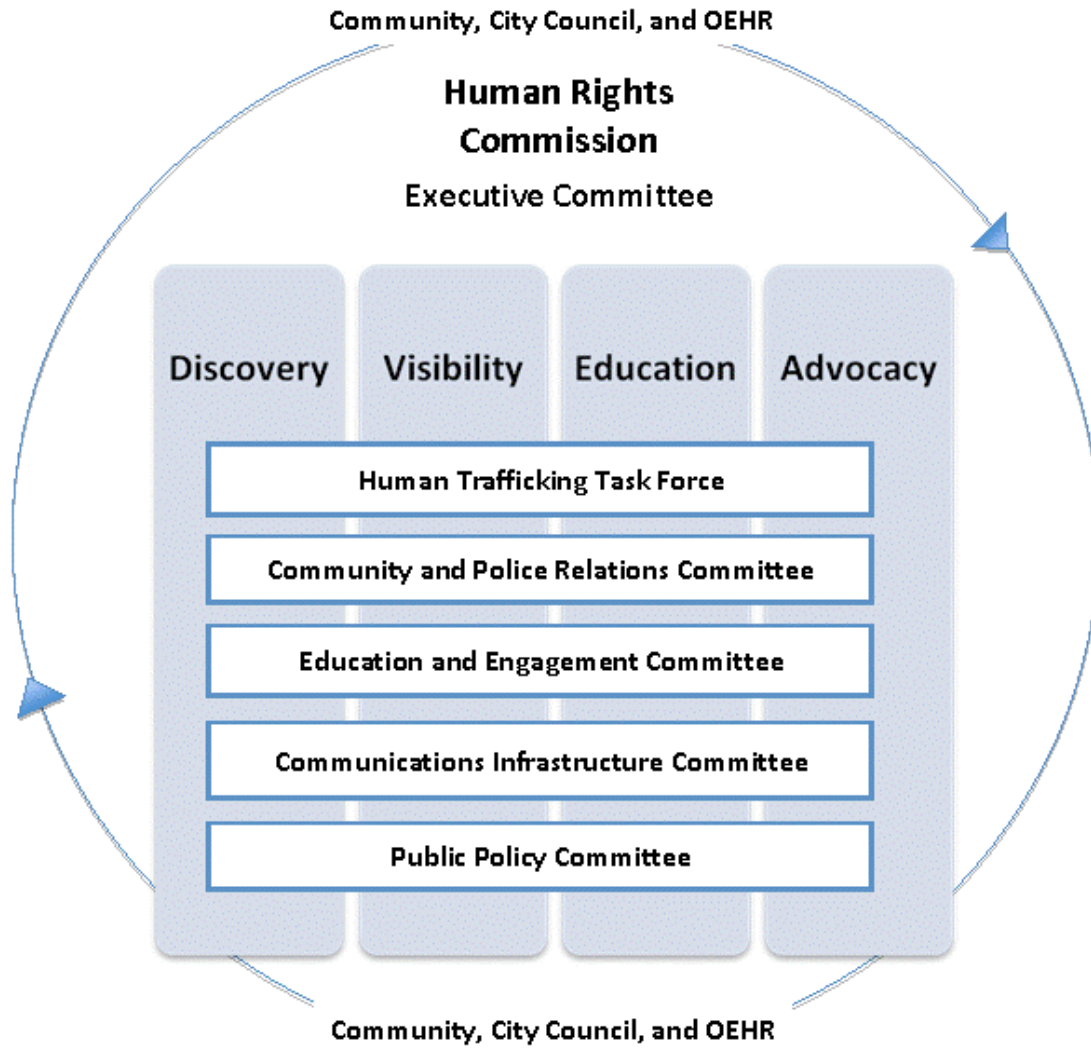
The final practice that informs the reorganization of the Commission is to consider how the work of the Commission is managed by decentralizing governance and decision making through the redesign of the committee structure.

Based on these practices and principles, the Commission will create an organizational structure that can support the development of strategic priorities and activities to promote a robust human rights agenda for Portland.

## **Commission Structure**

To support the implementation of this Strategic Plan, the Human Rights Commission will require a redesigned organization of members into stronger functional committees. The organizational structure of the Commission will include the support of an Executive Committee and functional committees that meet on a regular basis to develop, implement, and monitor strategic focus areas, as illustrated in Figure 2.

**Figure 2. Human Rights Commission Organizational Structure**



## Rationale

The history of the Human Rights Commission suggests that its effectiveness is based on its ability to respond rapidly to emergent events and to create a flexible structure that adapts to a rapidly changing environment. Further, one of the core strengths of the Commission is the convening of commissioners and community partners with complementary cross-disciplinary skills. For example, convening a team that includes members with legal expertise, political savvy, communications skills, and community organization skills led to an effective focus on human trafficking, and that focus is moving from awareness and education to policy recommendations.

In this context, moving away from a hierarchical committee structure and toward a functional committee structure will strengthen the effectiveness of the Commission. Borrowing concepts from the literature on matrix management,<sup>11</sup> HRC structure centralizes decision making at the Commission level and distributes the work to functional committees. As a general rule, the functional committees develop and execute workplans, as well as provide analyses and recommendations related to the HRC functions. These committees are advisory, not decision-making, bodies and convene to execute tasks and serve the strategic decision-making needs of the Commission.

The functional committees are adaptive and are granted the ability to shift priorities and strategies in response to the changing environment. The core to the functional committees is that they convene, act, and then disband when they are no longer relevant or needed.

They also may include outside advisors, citizens, and OEHR staff members to more effectively develop and execute their plans. The size of committees and frequency of their meetings will expand and contract as their focus and workload change. It should also be noted that the functional committees are designed to incorporate a focus on the four priority strategies of the Human Rights Commission—*discovery*, *visibility*, *education*, and *advocacy*. Based on the nature and operating procedures of the functional committees, careful attention will be paid to ensuring that the committees are transparent and accountable to the Commission, the OEHR, and the community at large.



**The Community, City Council,  
and the Office of Equity and Human Rights**

The metaphor that embodies the ethos of the Human Rights Commission is one that places the community, elected City officials, and the Office of Equity and Human Rights as the circle of accountability that surrounds the Commission. This circle suggests that the community informs the actions of the Commission and that the actions of the Commission inform the community's actions. This cycle will be successful when founded on a spirit of partnership and driven by a compelling agenda for progress designed to promote peace and end discrimination.

**The Human Rights Commission** is a volunteer commission whose members are appointed by the Portland City Council. Currently fifteen members serve on the Commission and represent a broad cross-section of Portland's diversity. The Commission receives administrative and program support from the Office of Equity and Human Rights (and did from its predecessor, the Office of Human Relations). The Commission meets the first Wednesday of every month, 4:00 to 6:30 p.m., at the Office of Equity and Human Rights, 421 SW 6th Avenue, Suite 500, Portland, 97204. The meetings are free and open to the public, and fifteen minutes of each meeting are reserved for public comment.

**The HRC Executive Committee** is currently composed of the Commission Chair, Vice-Chair, and the chairs of all ongoing functional committees. This group meets to plan and discuss the work of the Commission. These meetings are closed to the public. To implement this Strategic Plan, the Executive Committee will take a stronger role as a liaison to the Office of Equity and Human Rights, to elected City officials (and their staff members), and to key community leaders. In addition, the Executive Committee will continue its focus on providing leadership and continuity to the Commission.

## **Functional Committees**

The strategic planning process identified several *existing* and *potential* functional committees to implement the strategic priorities of this plan. An Organization and Operations Ad Hoc committee will be responsible for identifying and operationalizing a final committee structure to address the strategic priorities of this strategic plan.

The work of the Organization and Operations Ad Hoc committee will include considering the design of functional committees to address the needs of the Human Trafficking Task Force (HTTF) and the Community and Police Relations Committee (CPRC), as well as emerging needs to coordinate activities related to education and engagement, communications, and public policy.

## **Organizational Priority Activities**

- Establish the Organization and Operations Ad Hoc Committee to design and implement functional committees to address the strategic priorities of this plan.
- Create a process of dialogue with the Office of Equity and Human Rights to negotiate appropriate staffing, fiscal, and other resources required to facilitate the implementation of this Strategic Plan.
- Create an ad hoc committee to align the Human Rights Commissioner job description, Commission bylaws, and Commission operating procedures to effectively implement the changes in organizational structure and operational priorities of this Strategic Plan.
- Create an ad hoc committee to develop a process to measure the performance of the Commission in implementing and achieving the goals of this Strategic Plan.

**Progress Measures and Outcomes**

- Negotiate and maintain the annual memorandum of understanding with the Office of Equity and Human Rights to govern the collaboration and available resources that support the Commission.
- Update and publish online the revised bylaws and operating procedures for the Commission.
- Create and maintain archives of all relevant documents (such as meeting minutes and HRC reports) related to the operation and governance of the Commission.
- Implement the accountability and transparency measures.

## V. Accountability and Transparency

The Human Rights Commission is committed to acting with a high degree of accountability and transparency both to the Office of Equity and Human Rights and to the community. To this end, the Commission will establish the following practices:

- **Routine communications to the community**

As embedded in the activities of this Strategy Plan, the Commission will create regular communications channels, such as through the improved use of technology and a greater focus on regular meetings with the community and community leaders. This increased communication will be supported by the ongoing open access to public meetings and the timely distribution of agendas, meeting minutes, and other resources.

- **Semiannual briefings**

The Commission will host semiannual public briefings for citizens, community leaders, media, elected officials, and City office and bureau staff members to provide an update on Commission activities, progress, and accomplishments. These meetings will be held in venues accessible to the community and will provide a forum through which the Commission might solicit advice.

- **Annual reports to City Council**

On an annual basis, the Commission will provide a written report on Commission activities, progress, and accomplishments. This annual report will be disseminated to the community and will be accompanied by a briefing to the City Council.

## **VI. Conclusion**

The Commission was premised on the fact that Portland needed a “permanent entity that plays a proactive role in affirming human rights and is charged with addressing discrimination and strengthening inter-group and interpersonal relations so that Portland can truly embody its values of diversity and inclusion.”<sup>12</sup> However, it is acknowledged that the HRC operational structure will periodically change based on the shifting political landscape of the City. This Strategic Plan was written during the transition within City government to the newly established Office of Equity and Human Rights. This Plan is designed to bring stability and forward thinking to the Commission. The clear purpose of the Plan is to increase the focus of Portland on both equity and human rights as twin drivers that will decrease discrimination and bigotry, strengthen inter-group relationships, and foster greater understanding, inclusion, and justice for all of our community.

## Organizations, with Abbreviations and Jurisdictions

CCFC	Commission on Children, Family, and Community (Multnomah County)
CIGU	Committee for Inter-Group Understanding (Portland HRC; reorganized to EEC)
CIC	Communications Infrastructure Committee (Portland HRC)
CPRC	Community and Police Relations Committee (Portland HRC)
DREAM Act	Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act (Federal)
EEC	Education and Engagement Committee (Portland HRC) — Human Relations Commission (Portland; reorganized to MHRC)
HRC	Human Rights Commission (Portland)
HTTF	Human Trafficking Task Force (Portland HRC) — Inter-Group Relations Commission (Portland; reorganized to Human Relations Commission)
MHRC	Metropolitan Human Rights Commission (Multnomah County; disbanded)
OEHR	Office of Equity and Human Rights (Portland) — Office of Human Relations (Portland; reorganized to OEHR)
ONI	Office of Neighborhood Involvement (Portland) — Portland City Council
PPB	Portland Police Bureau
PPC	Public Policy Committee (Portland HRC)

## Notes

1. "Findings and Recommendations Report: Creation of Human Relations Entity for the City of Portland," submitted January 3, 2007, Frances Portillo & Lew Frederick, available at <http://www.portlandonline.com/equityandhumanrights/index.cfm?c=50680&a=227364>.
2. Mayor Tom Potter, "Human Rights Commission to Hold First Meeting," Press Release (November 5, 2008), available at <http://www.portlandonline.com/equityandhumanrights/index.cfm?c=50680&a=217321>.
3. "Making Equity Real: A Framework for Equity," Recommended Draft, March 2012, available at <http://www.portlandonline.com/portlandplan/index.cfm?c=56527&a=392035>; see page 18.
4. "Findings and Recommendations Report," note 1, page 3.
5. The Portland Plan was adopted by City Council through Resolution No. 36918 on April 25, 2012. The Plan, including information about its development and continuing evolution, is available at <http://www.portlandonline.com/portlandplan/>; see page 4.
6. The United Nations' "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" begins, "All human beings are born with equal and inalienable rights and fundamental freedoms." It was adopted by General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) on December 10, 1948, and is available at [http://www.un.org/events/humanrights/2007/hrphotos/declaration%20\\_eng.pdf](http://www.un.org/events/humanrights/2007/hrphotos/declaration%20_eng.pdf).
7. For more information, see Portland Police Bureau, "Plan to Address Racial Profiling" (January 2009; updated August 2009), available at <http://www.portlandonline.com/police/index.cfm?c=29870&a=230887>.

8. A concise overview was prepared by the Multnomah County Commission on Children, Family, and Community, “Disproportionality in Oregon” (no date), available at [http://web.multco.us/sites/default/files/ccfc/documents/disproportionality\\_in\\_oregon.pdf](http://web.multco.us/sites/default/files/ccfc/documents/disproportionality_in_oregon.pdf).
9. For more information, see “Modern Slavery in Our Midst: A Human Rights Report on Ending Human Trafficking in Oregon,” prepared by the International Human Rights Clinic at Willamette University College of Law (June 2010), available at <http://www.willamette.edu/wucl/pdf/clp/redacted.pdf>.
10. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage*, trans. Patrick Clarke (Rowman & Littlefield, 1998).
11. See, for example, Robert C. Ford & W. Alan Randolph, “Cross-Functional Structures: A Review and Integration of Matrix Organization and Project Management,” *Journal of Management* 18, no. 2 (June 1992), 267–294, doi:10.1177/014920639201800204.
12. See “Findings and Recommendations Report,” note 1, page 4.



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City of Portland  
**Human Rights Commission**

*Building Peace  
Ending Discrimination*

**Office of Equity and Human Rights**

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