Discussion
This report transmits the items to be discussed with the City Council during its joint meeting with the Human Relations Commission (HRC). The HRC will review its accomplishments for the past year as well as share information on current topics and seek feedback on its major initiatives for the upcoming year.

Attachments:
• Attachment A - HRC-Council Study Session Agenda (DOC)
• Attachment B - HRC Accomplishments (DOCX)
• Attachment C - Human Services Needs Assess (DOCX)

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City Manager Approval: James Keene, City Manager
CITY OF PALO ALTO
MEMORANDUM

TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: CITY MANAGER    DEPARTMENT: COMMUNITY SERVICES

DATE: JULY 25, 2011

SUBJECT: POTENTIAL TOPICS OF DISCUSSION FOR THE JOINT STUDY SESSION SPECIAL MEETING WITH THE HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Below are the proposed topics of discussion for the joint study session with the Human Relations Commission scheduled for August 1, 2011 at 6:00 PM.

1) Human Relations Commission Annual Accomplishments
2) Report on Human Services Needs Assessment
3) Other items
Human Relations Commission Accomplishments

**Annual Priorities**

- **Youth Well Being**
  - To encourage, promote, and collaborate with others in building community understanding and taking actions toward an environment in which youth thrive.

- **Human Services Need Assessment**
  - To increase and update the Commission’s understanding of human needs in our community during the next two years in order to inform our actions in regards to HSRAP, CDBG, and the continuous assessment of Commission priorities and actions.

**Projects**

- Participated in Fall 2010 Human Needs Assessment which solicited feedback on existing and emerging human needs from service providers and local experts in human services needs.
- Reviewed and made funding recommendations for the Human Services Resource Allocation Process (HSRAP).
- Reviewed and made funding recommendations for Community Development Block Grants (first time).
- Supported World Music Day.
- Actively researched issue to help resolve a citizen noise complaint.
- Reviewed Palo Alto Police Department’s Fair and Impartial Policing Policy (including a discussion with Chief Burns).
- Approved volunteer mediators and heard report on the City’s Mandatory Response Program by the Palo Alto Mediation Program.
- Currently conducting a full scale community Human Services Needs Assessment.
**Liaison roles, often involving engagement with the work of these agencies**

- Project Safety Net (established MOU with PSN)
- 41 Developmental Assets
- Palo Alto Youth Advisory Council
- Palo Alto Mediation Program
- Palo Alto Police Department - including Chief’s Citizen’s Advisory Group

**Meetings attended**

- Camp Everytown (two commissioners visited)
- Palo Alto Youth Collaborative, 11/9/10
- Challenge of Nurturing Emotional Intelligence (PTA Council, 12/8/10)
- HRC breakfast sponsored by Santa Clara County HRC (5/29/11)

**Exploring but no action (yet)**

- Intergenerational initiatives
- Youth recognition
Human Relations Commission Subcommittee Progress Report

Human Services Needs Assessment:
Background and Planned Approach

Purpose
In 2011, the Palo Alto City Council requested that city staff and the Human Relations Commission (HRC) collaborate in conducting a citywide human services needs assessment. The purpose of the assessment is to:

1. Determine the human needs in Palo Alto, including current and emerging needs.
2. Determine whether there are gaps between these needs and the services funded by the Human Services Resource Allocation Process (HSRAP).

Desired Outcome
The desired outcome of the human services needs assessment is to provide quantitative and qualitative information about current human needs in Palo Alto so that policy makers can appropriately prioritize and allocate HSRAP funding.

Scope
After reviewing historical information dating back to 1983, the committee has identified the following categories of human needs, which will serve as the framework for the human services needs assessment:

- Basic: food, clothing, shelter
- Functional: mental and physical health
- Safety: spousal and elder abuse; legal protection and support
- Educational: pre-school; after school.
- Disabilities: mental and physical
Cutting across these categories is the question of means testing. Means testing would prioritize HSRAP funding for services that assist low-income residents most in need. Currently, HSRAP funds services for low-income residents and residents that can afford private access. For example, HSRAP funds Adolescent Counseling Services (ACS) in the interest of promoting youth wellbeing and Avenidas regarding the wellbeing of seniors.

**Priority of Needs**
Over the past two decades, the Palo Alto City Council has considered different goals and priorities for HSRAP funding.

At this time, there is no clearly defined policy statement that governs HSRAP funding priorities and allocations. The amount of HSRAP funding and allocation of those funds has been relatively static for at least 20 years.

**Research Methodology**
In order to identify needs and possible service gaps in HSRAP funding, the human services needs assessment will be conducted using both quantitative and qualitative tools to gather data. These tools will potentially include:

- Analysis of demographic data derived from the 2010 census, Palo Alto Service Efforts Accomplishments (SEA) Report, Food Stamp usage reports, and number of free lunch recipients in the Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD).
- Informational interviews with current HSRAP recipients
- Informational interviews with providers that currently do not receive HSRAP funding
- Agency and neighborhood surveys
- Focus groups consisting of clients served by HSRAP-funded and non-HSRAP funded providers.

**Assessment Criteria**
In assessing the efficacy of HSRAP funding, the committee will consider the following criteria:

- Does HSRAP meet needs of those most lacking in social supports?
- Does at least some meaningful fraction of HSRAP support go for affecting the causes of problems, not just ameliorating the effects?
• Are HSRAP funds used to leverage other funds?
• What evidence indicates that HSRAP recipients are accomplishing their purposes?
• Are HSRAP funds spread optimally across the community?
• Is the HSRAP application process itself a barrier to meeting new and emerging needs?

**Time Frame**
The human services needs assessment will be conducted from June 2011 to March 2012. The HRC committee's findings and recommendations will be submitted to the City Council's Policy and Services and/or Finance Committees in April, 2012, before the next cycle of HSRAP funding begins in the fall of 2012.