

## African American Quality of Life Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q: How can I get involved? Can I still join a team? How can my ideas be added?**

**A:** The best way to get involved at this point is to become familiar with the Community Position Paper that was presented to council. It contains all of the recommendations for which the teams are developing implementation strategies. Since the teams have been meeting intensively since early July, it is not efficient to add new members at this time but your ideas about implementing the recommendations are always welcome. The best way to provide input to this process is to identify your area of interest and contact the community co-chair for that committee. Their contact information is [qualityoflife@aaul.org](mailto:qualityoflife@aaul.org).

### **Q: How were team-members chosen?**

**A:** Team members were asked to volunteer based on based on their knowledge and experience in the related area, as well as on their reputations for working effectively and successfully on community projects and prior involvement in the QOL process during the RJW Group Solutions forums. The size of the teams was limited to ensure effective results under short timelines.

### **Q: Where do the recommendations come from?**

**A:** They come directly from the community. The original 26 recommendations were a result of community input given during the Group Solutions Forums. That number was expanded to 58 recommendations during a community town hall meeting held at Huston Tillotson in June.

### **Q: How do we insure that the community's interest is properly protected?**

**A:** The beauty of this process is that no one person or organization has to work alone. The organizations who are at the forefront of the effort; the NAACP, the Austin Area Urban League, the Capital City Chamber of Commerce, Pro-Arts Collective, the Austin Revitalization Authority and the Alliance for African American Health in Central Texas are all long-time community organizations whose mission is to carry out social services, social justice and economic empowerment. These organizations are collectively held accountable by the communities they serve, by the transparency of the process and ultimately, by the results they achieve. Further, each of these organizations has a board of directors to which they report. The members of those boards themselves represent many organizations and individuals in the Austin community.

**Q: What happens if the City and community disagree on matters of implementation ?**

**A:** The roles are clearly defined. It is the responsibility of the community co-chair and team to collaborate with the City Team, communicate the intent of the community recommendations, provide implementation input, be a resource to the City team and where needed, provide additional information from the community. The City team is responsible for producing the final implementation plan, presenting that plan to Council, implementing agreed upon short term solutions as soon as possible, researching identified best practices, providing updates and orientation of existing City programs to the community team. If a disagreement occurs, we try to work through it to reach consensus that is consistent with the community's intent but ultimately, it is the City's responsibility to make sure that the community's recommendations are implemented. It is the community's responsibility to address the council and make clear where disagreements could not be resolved, or what recommendations do not get implemented.

**Q: Is there an effort to address environmental issues?**

**A:** The team is focused on the recommendations that the community identified as priorities. Environmental concerns are being addressed by various agencies that may be a part of the community team, but as those issues were not put on the table as priorities during the process, they are not being addressed at this juncture. But you raise an excellent point. There are many people who want to get involved and if addressing environmental issues is your area of concern (those issues certainly impact the quality of life for all of us here in Austin) you should work with an existing organization in the community, such as People Organized in Defense of the Earth and her Resources (PODER), to make a difference in that area.

**Q: What are the next steps?**

**A:** The teams are continuing to meet to develop implementation strategies. Some of those teams, such as Arts Culture and Entertainment, plan to hold additional meetings in the community to gather more input or update their specific constituencies about progress to date. The co-chairs also plan to have one last meeting with the community before the Council presentation. Be sure to stay tuned to community media to find out when the next community meetings are and if possible, plan to attend and participate. On October 6 (the date may change so stay informed) the implementation plan will be presented to Council. Of course, your attendance at this Council meeting signals to City officials that you take these issues very seriously and that you plan to hold them accountable.

**Q: Is the Quality of life Team/Process going to do anything to help the victims of hurricane Katrina?**

**A:** Each of the organizations is working to aid our brothers and sisters who were displaced by the hurricane.

**Q: How can I support the QOL effort?**

**A:** That's easy. Stay informed, know the recommendations, provide your questions and comments to the team leads, listen and call in to KAZI when we are on the air, and do what you can to make a difference in your sphere of influence. Continue to identify and get involved with other initiatives that will contribute to supporting improving our quality of life. As Magic of Unified Tribe always says "We have to stick together or we'll all fall apart!"