

**2022 CRC Priorities**  
**February 1, 2022**

The Community Relations Commission, in alignment with our charge to “promote an atmosphere of mutual understanding and cooperation among all members of the Worthington community” and acting in an “advisory capacity to Worthington City Council on community issues related to fair and equal treatment for all persons” submits the following 2022 priorities proposal. This proposal seeks to better align the CRC’s activities with the Vision Worthington recommendations that were released in late 2020. We believe that the CRC’s mission best aligns with the vision that Worthington is a diverse and equitable community. Under each bullet from this vision statement, we have identified new or existing activities that the CRC can lead, partner on, and support as well as issues we encourage Council to consider, all aimed at helping Worthington achieve this vision.

**1. Create conditions that increase the diversity of our city to better reflect the racial and ethnic composition of our region.**

***The CRC commits to continue:***

- Engage with the Regional Inclusive housing initiative
  - We believe that full engagement in the regional inclusive housing initiative will provide Worthington with resources and support to begin achieving this vision of diversity in our city.
  - We applaud the city’s sponsorship of this initiative, commit to actively engage in partnership with city officials in this process, and look forward to working with Council as solutions are crafted.
- Participation in Worthington Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation process
  - The CRC commits to fully engaging in partnership with the city, community organizations, individual citizens, and Otterbein University’s TRHT team in this process as we believe this coupled with the inclusive housing initiative will provide our city with the tools we need to change our culture specific to the issue of affordable housing

***The CRC encourages City Council to consider:***

- The CRC strongly encourages the city to fly the Pride Flag at the municipal building during Pride week every year starting in 2022.
  - The city rejected this request from members of the LGBTQ community and the CRC last year.
  - The CRC believes that flying this flag will send a strong statement about how inclusive the City of Worthington is and would be a show of support for the existing and rather large LGBTQ population residing in the city.

***The CRC requests Council’s permission to:***

- The CRC would like to strengthen ties with the faith community and specifically seek out relationships with Congregation Beth Tikvah and the Ahlul Bayt Islamic Center.

- We believe strengthening these ties can enable the city to proactively address issues related to antisemitism and religious discrimination in addition to enhancing the city's ability to respond to contentious issues
- We believe that strengthening these ties will bring new voices and perspectives to conversations around issues of diversity and inclusion in the CRC and city.
- We believe strengthening such partnerships could also complement proposed programming discussed below.

**2. Proactively identify, evaluate, and address policies and practices that negatively affect underrepresented populations.**

***The CRC encourages Council to consider:***

- The CRC encourages Council, in partnership with the MPC/ARB and planning staff, to engage in a comprehensive review of the city's zoning code and land use regulations, including associated development fees.
  - The CRC acknowledges that the City of Worthington has not conducted a comprehensive review of the zoning code since 1971
  - The CRC also acknowledges that other municipalities in the region, including Columbus, which surrounds Worthington, are currently engaging in such reviews and sees tremendous potential and value in conducting such a review concurrently.
  - The CRC sees a strong connection between our zoning code, land use regulations, and development fees and the inclusive housing initiative and wishes to highlight these connections to Council
  - The CRC recognizes that a robust community engagement process will be required to conduct such a review and offers to assist with these efforts in order to ensure equitable and inclusive opportunities for citizens to participate in this process.
- The CRC encourages City Council to amend the city's non-discrimination ordinance to include language from the CROWN Act
  - As Worthington works to make the community more inviting and accessible for diverse groups of people, amending the city's non-discrimination ordinance to include language from the CROWN Act could help send a clear message that hair discrimination will not be tolerated in the City of Worthington
- The CRC encourages City Council to pass anti-Wage Theft Legislation
  - Passage of Wage Theft protections will send a clear message to Workers that the city of Worthington cares about them, going a long way to helping the city seem more welcoming.
- The CRC encourages City Council to engage the Affordable Housing Alliance of Central Ohio's Pay to Stay technical guide and consider this legislation for Worthington

- This legislation will strengthen protections for renters in Worthington and contribute to making Worthington a more equitable and inclusive community
- The CRC offers support to Council in researching these issues, connecting with neighboring municipalities who have or are considering these issues, and seeking community input on these issues.

**3. Create opportunities and remove barriers for people from a wide range of ages, abilities, and income levels to live in our city.**

***The CRC commits to continue:***

- The CRC commits to maintain our support of the city's Age Friendly Initiative

***The CRC requests Council's permission to:***

- The CRC wishes to explore more intergenerational programming and to partner with the Griswold, School district, and other community organizations in doing so
- The CRC wishes to work in partnership with City Council to expand opportunities to engage residents of all ages, identities, and backgrounds in city affairs
  - The CRC does not only want Worthington to be more diverse, we also want all residents to feel compelled to engage civically in the community as well. Working in partnership with Council, we believe we can help create opportunities for more diverse engagement with the city.

**4. Implement policies and foster inclusive environments that increase diversity in public employment, business ownership and community leadership.**

***The CRC encourages the Council to consider***

- The CRC strongly encourages the city to engage in a transparent and inclusive review of city boards and commissions to better understand operations structure, appointment process, terms, and to address the chronic challenge of engaging people of color.
  - The CRC encourages the city to hire an external consultant to lead this initiative and to create an independent commission comprised of current board and commission representatives and citizens that will conduct the review and issue the report with the external consultant facilitating the commission and producing the report; the commission will provide the report content and approval of the final document.
  - We believe this process could transform engagement with the City of Worthington.
  - We propose that the review include the following topics, among others:
    - Onboarding Process
    - Continued Education
    - Succession planning
    - Youth engagement
      - Age 18/25 under appointee
    - Term limits

- The CRC is happy to assist Council in the identification of potential consulting firms to lead this work.

**5. Honor and celebrate our diversity with regular cultural events and multicultural education.**

***The CRC commits to continue:***

- The CRC will maintain current MLK programming

***The CRC requests Council's permission to:***

- The CRC seeks Council's permission to create collaborative regular programming with other city institutions (including the library, MAC, Griswald, Chamber, Partnership, schools) to celebrate other diverse events
  - We seek to invite these organizations to form a coalition to commit to regular programming with rotating leads.

The CRC seeks partnership with the city to promote CRC events and initiatives. We will continue to work with the city to keep our website up-to-date and to promote materials through social media and will continue to ask the city to grant us permission to create CRC social media pages and self-promote our events through this, with approved language. The CRC wishes to partner more closely with the city to enhance the Commission's brand.

The CRC will continue to engage the community through engagement in community activities like the Memorial Day Parade and Market Day, write Op-Eds in ThisWeek, and promote diversity through signage on the Green and will continue to engage the full Worthington community, defining this as the boundaries of the Worthington School District, though, pursuant to our charge, we will only advocate for policy changes in the city of Worthington.