



# BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

AB 5764  
October 20, 2020  
Regular Business

## AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

<b>TITLE:</b>	AB 5764: Cultural Competency Trainings and Community Listening Sessions Appropriation	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only
<b>RECOMMENDED ACTION:</b>	Appropriate funds for cultural competency training and community listening sessions on race and social justice.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution

<b>DEPARTMENT:</b>	Administrative Services
<b>STAFF:</b>	Ali Spietz, Chief of Administration
<b>COUNCIL LIAISON:</b>	n/a
<b>EXHIBITS:</b>	1. Culture Connections, LLC Profile
<b>CITY COUNCIL PRIORITY:</b>	n/a

<b>AMOUNT OF EXPENDITURE</b>	\$ 20,000
<b>AMOUNT BUDGETED</b>	\$ 0
<b>APPROPRIATION REQUIRED</b>	\$ 20,000

## SUMMARY

At the June 16, 2020 Council Meeting, the City Council directed the City Manager to return to the City Council to:

1. "Mandate and appropriate funds for annual training in diversity, implicit bias, cultural awareness or related topics for the city council and all members of city Boards and Commissions; and
2. Authorize and appropriate funds for engaging a consultant or contractor to conduct a series of listening sessions for the community so that we can hear first-hand the stories of minority experiences on the Island, and gather ideas for what we can do to make the island a safe and welcoming place for people of all races and ethnicities."

And at the August 4, 2020 Council Meeting, the City Council adopted the following goal statement for the proposed community listening sessions:

*As we determine the most effective ways to identify and address racial and other discrimination within our community, we must fully comprehend the extent of its impact. A first step is to hear directly from those who have experienced it in our community through listening sessions.*

*Accordingly, a primary goal of the listening sessions is to allow the Mercer Island City Council and the community to hear first-hand accounts of racism and other discrimination in our community. Another*

*goal of the listening sessions will be to learn from members of our community on how to make Mercer Island a more welcoming and inclusive community for all people.*

*These sessions are an opportunity to gather information to guide City Council actions and policies around race, racism, diversity, and inclusion.*

This agenda bill is to request an appropriation for the aforementioned trainings and listening sessions.

### **CULTURAL COMPETENCY TRAININGS**

Staff recommends retaining the services of Dr. Caprice Hollins from Culture Connecting, LLC to conduct the training sessions for City Councilmembers and board and commission members. Dr. Hollins will provide three sessions titled “Understanding Implicit Bias and the Impact of Racial Stereotyping.” The cost for these three trainings is \$10,000, and we are tentatively planning to hold them in the first two weeks in November.

As previously discussed, staff recommends that these trainings have a mix of Councilmembers and board and commission members in each session. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, these trainings will need to be held virtually via the Zoom platform. With the intention of creating a space where people feel comfortable sharing, the capacity for each Zoom training will be limited to allow for more participation and candor. With over 55 people to train, each session will have 15-20 people (including 2-3 Councilmembers in each one).

### **COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSIONS**

Staff also recommends retaining the services of Dr. Caprice Hollins from Culture Connecting, LLC to facilitate two community listening sessions. Again, because of the COVID-19 Pandemic, these listening sessions will need to be held virtually and staff will be working with Dr. Hollins on the format for these sessions. The listening sessions are will be held in the first quarter of 2021. The cost for these sessions and the necessary prep time with our consultant, will be approximately \$10,000.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Once the appropriation has been made, staff and Dr. Hollins will begin preparing for the training sessions and scheduling Councilmembers and boards and commissions members for the trainings. Staff will begin publicizing the community listening sessions once the dates are set, utilizing all normal communication channels and to community groups (i.e. PTA Organizations, One MI – Equity for MI, Mercer Island High School Clubs for Students, etc.) to notify a broader base of residents.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Appropriate \$20,000 from the available fund balance in the General Fund for (1) cultural competency trainings for City Councilmembers and boards and commissions members and (2) community listening session on race and social justice.