

DEI LISTENING SESSION SUMMARY REPORT

City of Redmond

April 2022



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BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Based on results of the recent City of Redmond Organizational Equity Needs Assessment Staff Survey conducted by Chanin Kelly-Rae Consulting LLC, the City of Redmond has identified insights reporting a lower level of engagement in several areas of the workforce and would like to gain deeper insights regarding drivers for these specific lower engagement levels. Several specific gap areas emerged, including having a voice, psychological safety, diverse representation, Senior Leadership's commitment to staff and workplace culture, opportunity for growth, and fair treatment. The City of Redmond is undertaking Listening Session research in order to texturize these findings and gain a broader understanding of DEI experiences and expectations among city staff, with the intention of utilizing findings to strengthen and refine DEI strategy for the City of Redmond.

Topics to be discussed included:

- Understanding current employee perceptions and attitudes around diversity, equity and inclusion and how they are currently reflected within the City of Redmond workplace
- Uncovering perceived gaps and barriers to supporting a diverse workforce and an inclusive and equitable workplace culture
- Identifying key strengths and opportunities to highlight and leverage in DEI strategy
- Ideating around preferred future experience and potential steps to achieve future state

ASSESSMENT DESIGN

Scope

Four (4) 90-minute Listening Sessions, 3-16 participants each (39 participants total); Four (4) individual staff interviews* 30 to 60-minute sessions

Timing

February - March 2022

Location

All groups conducted via video-conferencing

Recruitment

All employees of the City of Redmond were invited to participate. No people with direct reporting relationships in the same group. Random recruitment.

PLEASE NOTE

Qualitative research is conducted among a portion of the total employee population. Research objectives include gaining new and/or deeper employee insights and perspectives through less structured, in-dept discussion in Listening Sessions.

Due to the nature of this type of research, it should be noted that all findings are directional only, and not definitive nor projectable.

Findings cannot be used to size issues or opportunities. Terms such as some, many and a few are used to indicate emphasis, but should not be interpreted in a concrete, quantitative sense.

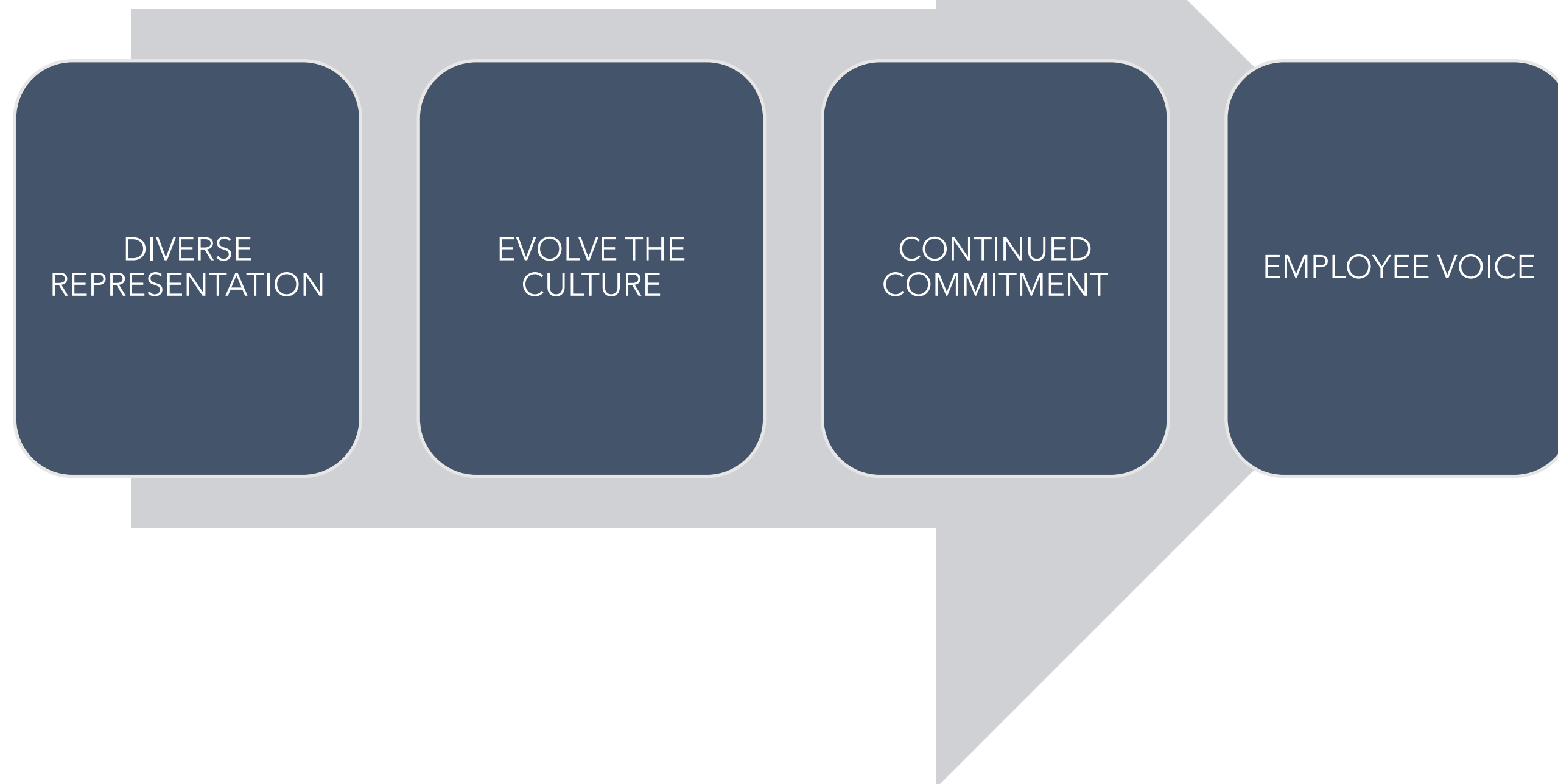
This report includes themes which emerged across groups and individuals, and those which were expressed by more than a few participants. Quotes are provided throughout the report and reflect individual perceptions but are not intended to be representative of the staff as a whole.

These findings as reported herein are a representative sample of the many experiences, insights, and perceptions shared during the Listening Session process.

SUMMARY

- Overall, these City of Redmond employees are very appreciative of the City as an employer. They value the opportunity to create a positive impact for the community, the relationships that they share with their colleagues and immediate supervisors, reasonable pay and benefits, and potential to change the culture of the city government and community that they treasure.
- Many staff expressed a strong sense of individual purpose and department level satisfaction with the services they provide the community.
- Currently, primary pain points are around heavy workloads and burnout. There is also frustration around the inconsistent approach to leadership and mission, the City of Redmond's deeply ingrained culture of fear, and lack of transparency.
- Employees primarily embrace DEI principles and are anxious to see actionable strategies and functional tools put into place at the City of Redmond.
- Many are having very positive daily work experiences at the City of Redmond with supportive managers and colleagues.
- There is frustration around inconsistent messaging and engagement from the Mayor and City Council: no unifying message of direction, lack of alignment between the 2 bodies of leadership, failure to include staff feedback regarding impacts of decision-making, development, and budget impacts. There are perceived biases, favoritism and inequalities.
- Many feel that the Human Resources Department does only the bare minimum in service to the City of Redmond workforce, and that their actions are only those for which they are legally obligated to fulfill.
- Some participants expressed that they feel bullied, isolated, and under constant threat. The high turnover rate is seen as the result of this particular aspect of the City of Redmond workplace culture
- Many staff feel that they are under constant threat in the weeks leading up to, during, and immediately following budget considerations.

EMPLOYEE DEI RECOMMENDATIONS



EMPLOYEE VISION OF DEI AT THE CITY OF REDMOND

- Foundational, integrated DEI strategy, incorporated at all levels of the City of Redmond both internal and external facing policies, processes, and programs.
- DEI principles both modeled and championed by the City of Redmond Mayor and City Council
- Goals, accountability, and metrics
- Dedicated resources for success – financing and allocation of time
- Expanded diversity across staff, particularly in Leadership roles
- Voices heard across all levels, and communication from staff to the Mayor, Director's Team, and the City Council
- Culture of psychological safety that allows staff to share opinions, experiences, and insights without fear of negative personal or professional consequence
- Clear, and consistent communications strategy
- Transparency of goals and actions between City of Redmond and the community
- Partnership with community that reflects diverse perspectives that are also reflected in internal policies, processes, and programs.
- Promote from within the City of Redmond and create opportunities for people to participate in training and development opportunities; currently, everyone works with such heavy loads that no one is ever afforded time to develop.
- Active listening to concerns and showing us that our voice matters and is considered.
- Ensure that respect and equality are reflected in all workforce rules, particularly with remote work as not everyone has access to this model of workplace presence/participation.

CONSULTANT EARLY RECOMMENDATIONS

- The City of Redmond must develop mechanisms that allow for city staff to share experiences, ideas, and insights with the City Council as *they are considered part of those that live, work, and play in the city*.
- The City should assess their current culture and regularly monitor staff sentiment relative to workplace culture.
- Annual Workplace Culture Survey insights should help inform internal DEI strategy.
- City of Redmond staff, Directors Team, and City Council members should receive regular diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) training to occur annually, so that everyone has the tools required to advance DEI in their daily work.
- The City should allocate adequate resources to fully staff government, as the strong perception that operations is in a perpetual crisis mode impacts organizational effectiveness, staff morale, and retention rates.
- The Mayor's Office must communicate more clearly the City of Redmond's Vision for Success, and Roadmap of Goals and Metrics to accomplish ALL objectives, especially DEI goals.
- Staff should be encouraged to communicate across City Departments and engage in actions that promote comradery and increased internal engagement to build a more inclusive workplace culture.
- The Mayor's Office and Redmond Directors must more regularly communicate strategic goals and strategic actions with staff.
- Human Resources should be seen as a value-add in their engagement with staff, intentional engagement efforts should be identified that will result in *better internal customer service* for staff.
- Managers and Leaders must collaborate with staff to identify ways to recognize, celebrate, and honor individual and collective successes.
- All staff should clearly understand the professional progression pathways for their role.
- Employees must see a system with built-in goals, metrics, and accountability in all areas of operations. The City of Redmond should explore tying these goals into Directors Team performance appraisals.
- Transparency around requirements for increases and promotions
- Leadership roles should be filled with people who possess both technical skill, and leadership ability/experience. Leadership Development should be a required training program for People Leaders.





Thank you!

