

ORENS PROPOSAL SUMMARY (TFOGS Final Report)

Format: Self-Standing Office of Resident Engagement and Neighborhood Support

Steering/Oversight Body: Supervised jointly between Mayor's Office and Common Council Executive Committee

Lead Staff Level: Department Head (CG-21)

Description of Mission: "One office that is singularly focused on creating racial equity and social justice through training, support, facilitation and outreach to enable residents to engage at various levels of policy development and project implementation while removing barriers to participation."

Tasks:

BCC Support

- Recruitment of and communication with potential board, commission and committee members
- Orientation, training and support of board, commission and committee chairs and members
- Administrative support for boards, commissions and committees
- Training of staff, Alders, and board, commission and committee members in Legistar
- Facilitate annual evaluation of boards, commissions and committees

Resident Engagement

- Organization and facilitation of neighborhood and community meetings
- Outreach and education about city initiatives in collaboration with other city agencies
- Organizational support for community-led initiatives
- Engage and advocate for new ways for residents to participate in decision making and give prompt and direct feedback on issues that people have expressed interest in
- Provide Language access services

Citywide Communications

- City-wide and District-specific communications on behalf of Council, Mayor and other city departments with no communication staff

DRAFT PROPOSED POSITION STRUCTURE (as of 10/17 meeting)

Format: Director of Resident and Community Engagement (temporarily?) housed within Common Council Office

Steering/Oversight Body: Subunit of Common Council, such as TFOGS Implementation Workgroup or CCEC

Lead Staff Level: Department Head (CG-21)

Description of Mission: Coordination and dynamic management of Common Council Office workflows, BCC support and evaluation, and coordination of citywide resident engagement processes.

Tasks:

Common Council Office Management

- (to be determined)

BCC Support

- Recruitment of and communication with potential board, commission and committee members
- Orientation, training and support of board, commission and committee chairs and members
- Administrative support for boards, commissions and committees
- Training of staff, Alders, and board, commission and committee members in Legistar
- Facilitate annual evaluation of boards, commissions and committees

Resident Engagement

- Organization and facilitation of neighborhood and community meetings
- Outreach and education about city initiatives in collaboration with other city agencies
- Organizational support for community-led initiatives
- Engage and advocate for new ways for residents to participate in decision making and give prompt and direct feedback on issues that people have expressed interest in
- Provide Language access services

Some Initial Questions/Concerns/Thoughts:

- **Is this position envisioned to be permanently integrated into the function of the Common Council Office or temporarily until other resources are secured?**

If the intent of the Council is to eventually hive off a self-standing ORENS as per the TFOGS report, it may be more effective to design an independent director position that is not anchored to the Common Council Office. Rather, it could be a department of one for the time being, which is provided with the legal and institutional provisions that would allow it to have the organizational authority to collaborate effectively with City staff across the organization to improve and design resident engagement processes. The TFOGS proposal designs ORENS as a well-resourced, independent department with several staff members working together to facilitate effective resident engagement, BCC support, and citywide communications.

The Common Council Office retains duties and roles that overlap with, but are not duplicated by, the ORENS positions as conceptualized by TFOGS. If it is the will of the Council to reallocate some of the funds currently allocated to the Chief of Staff position to a director of ORENS position in the 2021 budget, establishing a position that is distinct from the Common Council Office, and allowing Council Office staff to design a plan for how to integrate the core Chief of Staff tasks into existing positions for the time being, may be more effective and less disruptive as the ORENS department is built out and this position shifts out of the Council Office to a self-standing jointly-managed department as detailed in the TFOGS report.

- **If the position is supervised by a subunit of the Common Council alone, rather than a joint body as proposed in the TFOGS report, do they have a sufficient amount of organizational authority and resources to be able to effectively improve citywide resident engagement process in effective collaboration with other City departments?**

This position is envisioned as being able to both analyze and evaluate Citywide processes, and also improve them and institute new ones. In my experience, the practical ability to do this is not a given without a codified joint oversight structure and firmly-established joint authority, as well as having the obligations of all departments involved codified into the MGO. This may mean that a new position established outside of the Common Council Office may be advantageous in this regard as well.

- **Since this director position is envisioned as a “doer”, is CG-21 the appropriate compensation level for it currently?**

In the City, CG-21 staff often direct the work of others rather than necessarily directly implementing projects themselves. One possible alternative to CG-21 is a top-of-the-range CG-18 position instead. That level of employee is also able to supervise staff and manage projects and seems to be widely understood organizationally as a “doer” position. Further, if ORENS starts as a department of one, this level is sufficient to carry out the tasks as they have been articulated, and a CG-21 position could be worked into the department along with additional staff at a later date. There have been/are currently some staff in positions similar to this, where a CG-18 directs and implements a body of citywide work.