



Legislation Text

File #: 20-0751, **Version:** 1

Recommendation to review a report on Racial Equity and Reconciliation Initiative and provide input and policy direction. (Citywide)

On May 25, 2020, George Floyd, a Black man in Minnesota was killed by four Minneapolis police officers. Mr. Floyd's death was senseless and an appalling reminder that racial injustice continues in cities across the country and world. Communities joined together in protests of police violence and system racism, and these protests and public outcry in Long Beach led the City Council to unanimously adopt a Resolution acknowledging Racism as a Public Health Crisis and establishing a Framework for Reconciliation on June 23, 2020. This Resolution has four key components to ending systemic racism in response to community concerns and the framework seeks to foster trust-building and mobilize for action and includes:

1. Acknowledging the existence and long-standing impacts of systemic racism in Long Beach and the country;
2. Listening to accounts and experiences of racial injustice, inequity, or harm to community members, while concurrently compiling local and external data on racial disparities in the community;
3. Convening stakeholders to analyze feedback from the listening sessions and racial disparity data to recommend initiatives that shape policy, budgetary, charter, and programmatic reform; and,
4. Catalyzing action that includes immediate, short-term, medium-term, and long-term recommendations for the City Council's consideration in a Racial Reconciliation Report.

Since June 23, 2020, 13 listening sessions and 4 town hall meetings and have been completed with the community with City employees. The themes and topics raised by community participants have been varied, but center around the nexus between anti-Black racism and community health, housing and homelessness, and policing and public safety, as well as economic inclusion and budget reforms. From employees, we heard the need to address internal City practices around equity in hiring, promotion, and training.

The vision of the Racial Equity and Reconciliation Initiative is that "Race not determine social and economic outcomes for those who live and work in Long Beach." The attached Racial Equity and Reconciliation Initiative report identifies a list of strategies and potential actions to guide the City in attaining its racial equity goals:

1. End systemic racism in Long Beach, in all local government and partner agencies, through internal transformation;
2. Design and invest in community safety and violence prevention;
3. Redesign police approach to community safety; and,
4. Improve health and wellness in the City by eliminating social and economic disparities in the communities most impacted by racism.

The equity goals and strategies presented in the initial report are the result of an extensive outreach and collaboration process between City staff and a wide range of community voices and perspectives that are centered on the experience of Black people and people of color in Long Beach. The process to create these goals and strategies was constrained by a compressed timeline for consideration concurrent with the City's Proposed FY 21 Budget. These goals and strategies proposed are an earnest first step for the City to undertake in the difficult process to correct the disparate impacts of systematic racism in our community.

Although some of the strategies and actions proposed are already being implemented by the City, many new initiatives are included in the Proposed FY 21 Budget. Each of the proposed initiatives included in the report will be evaluated for feasibility, for resources needed for their implementation, and legal reviews will be undertaken, where necessary. These strategies will also be reviewed for consistency with other Citywide goals and policies.

Before the plan is final, the Mayor and City Council will review this report and provide direction to staff regarding the contents, objectives, strategies, and implementation. The ultimate fiscal impact will be determined when the plan is finalized, and when individual tasks for implementation are further reviewed and considered in the FY 21 and future budgets.

The next steps in the Reconciliation process will be devoted to an evaluation of the equity strategies and actions, approved by the Mayor and City Council, and the development of a detailed implementation plan that include actions, funding sources, lead department/staff, and timelines for completion. It is anticipated that implementation of this Initial Reconciliation Report, in particular the goals and strategies, will be a dynamic process that occurs over time. As staff assesses the proposed goals and strategies, as further issues, analysis, or resources are identified, it is anticipated that key initiatives will evolve and be refined over time - within the framework of the established goals adopted by the City Council.

As part of its commitment to continuous engagement with the community, staff will develop a framework for ongoing assessment and feedback into the Implementation Plan, as well as a schedule for routine status updates and engagement opportunities with community members. These engagement opportunities may include monthly updates at the Human Relations Commission meetings, and updates to the broader stakeholder network with regular updates on progress and ongoing opportunities for input and collaboration.

Successful implementation of these initiatives will require a collective effort by the City

Council,
City staff, and community members.

This matter was reviewed by Deputy City Attorney Sarah R. Green on August 1, 2020 and by Budget Analysis Officer Julissa José-Murray on July 31, 2020.

City Council action is requested on August 11, 2020.

Racial inequities will not disappear on their own without direct thoughtful and intentional action by local government. Due to the financial crisis brought about by the pandemic, there are severe challenges and limitations for the City to simultaneously manage, including how to resolve a \$30 million budget shortfall in FY 21. While navigating through these significant financial constraints, the Proposed FY 21 Budget reflects a commitment to addressing racial inequities and creating a more just community where race no longer predicts how well you will do in life.

The Proposed FY 21 Budget includes \$3.3 million in funds to invest in this effort, \$2.5 million in structural funds and approximately \$782,000 in one-time funds. The actual implementation of the recommended programs is anticipated to have a substantial staffing impact beyond the normal budgeted scope of duties, but it is consistent with the existing City Council top priorities to address the Reconciliation efforts. A positive impact on local jobs associated with several of the recommended programs is anticipated.

Approve recommendation.

THOMAS B. MODICA
CITY MANAGER

APPROVED:

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