

RESOLUTION NO. RES-2021-203

RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANTA ROSA DECLARING RACISM A HUMAN RIGHTS AND PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS IN SANTA ROSA.

WHEREAS, racism is a system made out of structures, institutions, policies, practices, norms, and culture that assign value and determine opportunity based on the way people look and/or the color of their skin, resulting in conditions that unfairly advantage those with lighter skin and disadvantage of people of color, including Black/African Americans, Hispanic/Latino/Latinxs, Indigenous or Native Americans, Asian and Pacific Islanders, and others; and

WHEREAS, racism has a negative impact on social determinants of health – defined as the conditions in the places where people live, learn, play, work, worship and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks - and it creates inequities in access to social and economic benefits like access and quality of housing, transportation, education, job opportunities, income, nutritious foods, physical activity opportunities, developing language and literacy skills, having clean air and water, and facing discrimination, and violence; and

WHEREAS, social determinants of health are key drivers of health inequities within Black/African Americans, Hispanic/Latino/Latinxs, Indigenous, Asian and Pacific Islanders, and other people of color placing these populations at greater risk for poor health outcomes, and

WHEREAS, health inequities are differences in health status or in the distribution of health resources between different population groups, arising from the social conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, worship, and age. Health inequities are not fair and can be prevented; and

WHEREAS, health equity is the absence of unfair and avoidable or remediable differences in health among different population groups defined socially, economically, demographically or geographically. It is accomplished when every person has the opportunity to attain his, her, or their full health potential and no one is disadvantaged from achieving this potential because of social position or other socially determined circumstances; and

WHEREAS, data shows that some racial and ethnic minority groups in the United States, experience higher rates of illness and death across a wide range of health conditions, including diabetes, hypertension, obesity, asthma, and heart disease, when compared to their White counterparts; and

WHEREAS, racism also intersects with other forms of prejudice and oppression to increase adverse outcomes including discrimination based on immigration status, gender and sexual orientation, and mental and physical abilities; and

WHEREAS, racism can manifest in different ways ranging from violent attacks to implicit bias, to differential access to resources and lack of opportunities; and

WHEREAS, these lasting negative consequences such as economic instability and poverty, barriers to educational attainment, and overrepresentation in the criminal justice system have a radical effect on the lives of Black/African Americans, Hispanic/Latino/Latinxs, Indigenous, and other people of color living in Santa Rosa and Sonoma County leading to avoidable adverse health outcomes and unnecessary loss of life; and

WHEREAS, the City of Santa Rosa recognizes the City is built upon Pomo, Miwok and Wappo homelands, and that Indigenous nations have lived upon this land since time immemorial, and the land itself carries historical trauma, and that racist policies and dominant cultural norms have aimed to strip tribes not only of land, but of culture, language, and family systems; and

WHEREAS, the City of Santa Rosa recognizes that Africans and South American Indigenous peoples were forcibly brought to this country and enslaved, and Central and North American Indigenous peoples were forcibly removed from their lands and many enslaved, and after the Emancipation from slavery, citizens of this country perpetuated Anti-Black and Anti-Indigenous racism through violence, mass incarceration and racist policies, including redlining, and the social construction of race was used to justify their enslavement as well as the removal of Indigenous peoples off their land, pushing them onto land deemed less desirable; and

WHEREAS, Asian-American/Pacific Islander (AAPI) residents have also experienced racism in Santa Rosa and Sonoma County, through acts of violence, racist policies and practices that led to the destruction of Santa Rosa's Chinatown neighborhood, forceable removal and mass incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II; and other discriminatory practices; and

WHEREAS, anti-Black racism dehumanizes and marginalizes Black/African American people and also affects other communities of color by privileging those with lighter skin; and

WHEREAS, specific physical and behavioral health conditions stemming from racism include depression, anxiety, anger, hypertension, stroke, heart attack, diabetes, maternal death, premature birth, respiratory diseases, and autoimmune diseases; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated racial and social inequities by disproportionately impacting the Hispanic/Latino/Latinx community in Santa Rosa as well as other communities of color throughout the region and by exposing false narratives and unjustified blame regarding the origins of COVID and the violent attacks on members of Santa Rosa's AAPI community; and

WHEREAS, nationally, police violence accounts for more deaths among young Black men than chronic lower respiratory diseases, cerebrovascular disease, influenza or pneumonia – Black men are 2.5 times more likely to be killed by law enforcement than white men, Indigenous women are 2.1 times more likely to be killed by law enforcement than white women, Indigenous men are 1.7 times more likely to be killed by law enforcement than white men, and Black women and Latinx men are 1.4 times more likely than white men and women to be killed by law enforcement; and

WHEREAS, Black men are six times as likely and Latinx men are 2.5 times as likely as white men to be incarcerated at some point in their lifetime; and

WHEREAS, as people of color are more likely to be victims of police violence, they are also more likely to suffer from mental and emotional trauma and death, resulting in lack of overall trust in law enforcement and making it less likely that a person of color will call 911 for help during an emergency situation; and

WHEREAS, witnessing police violence has an impact on both individual and public health, including physical and mental health, and can trigger trauma in those who witness it, both in person and via screen (e.g., television, social media, etc.); and

WHEREAS, among Black and Latinx high school students who are exposed to police violence and other acts of violence, schools see a decrease in grade point average, incidences of emotional disturbance and lower rates of high school completion and college enrollment; and

WHEREAS, living with the threat of discrimination and violence and fear of incarceration creates toxic stress for communities of color and that continued exposure to threatening situations can have lasting negative effects on health, development, well-being and opportunity – reoccurring and persistent exposure to police violence and threats can lead to wear and tear on the body and cause immense stress and PTSD; and

WHEREAS, helping people process the trauma of past injustice and create new narratives based upon equity, fairness, and equal justice can have healing effects, both mentally and physically; and

WHEREAS, the City is committed to creating a culture of inclusion that values equity, diversity, accessibility and transparency and promotes opportunity for all of its diverse citizens in all aspects of City employment, business and services; and

WHEREAS, diversity and a culture of inclusion benefit from the presence, participation and opportunity for full involvement of individuals from different races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, abilities, genders, gender identities or expressions, national origins, religions, beliefs, and socio-economic backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, it is incumbent on all locally appointed and elected policy makers to embrace, nurture, and protect the diversity of our community, and to ensure everyone has the opportunity to enjoy a life free from institutional, structural, systemic and interpersonal racial prejudice, bigotry, bias, derision, and hate; and

WHEREAS, the City of Santa Rosa's vision is "leading the north bay;" and

WHEREAS, the Santa Rosa City Council states that its mission is to "Provide high-quality public services and cultivate a vibrant, resilient and livable City," and that its values include inclusiveness; and

WHEREAS, it is the duty of all Santa Rosa leaders to ensure that the City of Santa Rosa reconciles its legacy of harm and trauma inflicted on marginalized communities; and

WHEREAS, the City of Santa Rosa has taken initial steps to address and reconcile its legacy of harm and trauma inflicted on marginalized communities, including:

- Development and implementation of the Community Empowerment Plan;
- Creation of the City Council Public Safety Subcommittee to address community concerns relating to the Santa Rosa Police Department and developing strategies to address those concerns;
- Development and implementation of inRESPONSE, a crisis response model based on best practices for those in mental and homeless crisis situations.
- Development of the Police Chief's Community Ambassadors Team (C-CAT) to obtain community input on the Police Department's relationship with the community;
- Recruitment and hiring of a Diversity, Inclusion and Equal Employment Officer; and
- Recruitment and hiring of an Equity and Public Health Planner;
- Partnership with the Sonoma County Lowrider Council to create a lowrider "patrol car" and relevant programming, particularly using trauma-informed strategies;
- Development of the Multicultural Roots Project, aimed at increasing visibility of Santa Rosa's people of color and recognize their contributions and impacts made on the community; and
- Creation of a multi-disciplinary team through the Violence Prevention Partnership to respond to community trauma around violence and other community issues; and

WHEREAS, the City still has much work to do to make Santa Rosa an equitable and inclusive place for all to live, work, play, worship, and age.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Santa Rosa declares racism is a human rights and public health crisis affecting our entire community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council commits to working to end racism and healing the harms that this organization has perpetuated.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council supports community efforts to amplify and address issues of racism and engage actively and authentically with communities of color in our City.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Santa Rosa commits to the following:

1. Integrate Health Equity perspectives and solutions in the General Plan Update, Santa Rosa Forward, and other long-range plans to foster a Santa Rosa where anyone, regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, age, disability, immigration status, or sexual orientation, gender identity and expression can live a prosperous and healthy life; and

2. Conduct an anti-racist analysis and incorporate anti-racist strategies, policies,

procedures and practices regarding City budget allocations, governmental structures and resources, and community access to city services and programs; and

3. Collaborate with Sonoma County’s law and justice agencies and the Santa Rosa community to build trust and confidence that public safety is administered equitably and that meaningful discussions are conducted by the Council’s Public Safety Subcommittee on identifying mechanisms for researching and addressing public concerns and safety best practices related to the Santa Rosa Police Department.

IN COUNCIL DULY PASSED this 16th day of November, 2021.

AYES: (6) Mayor C. Rogers, Vice Mayor N. Rogers, Council Members Alvarez, Sawyer, Schwedhelm, Tibbetts

NOES: (0)

ABSENT: (1) Council Member Fleming

ABSTAIN: (0)

ATTEST: _____ APPROVED: _____
City Clerk Mayor

APPROVED AS TO FORM: _____
City Attorney