

CITY OF SANTA ROSA  
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL  
FROM: MAGALI TELLES, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DIRECTOR  
DANIELLE GARDUÑO, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT  
COORDINATOR, COMMUNITY PROGRAMS & ENGAGEMENT  
SUBJECT: DECLARING RACISM A PUBLIC AND HUMAN RIGHTS CRISIS  
IN SANTA ROSA

AGENDA ACTION: RESOLUTION

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RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Office of Community Engagement that the City Council, by resolution, declare racism as a public health and human rights crisis in Santa Rosa.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

On May 5, 2021, staff from the Office of Community Engagement presented the Community Empowerment Plan Listening Sessions Report to the City Council. Included in the report were community feedback, input and recommendations that focused on systemic racism in Santa Rosa. One of the community recommendations was declaring racism as a public health crisis in Santa Rosa:

***“Declare Racism as a Public Health Crisis in Santa Rosa***

The Community recommends the City Council declare racism a public health crisis for the City of Santa Rosa. The City would join the County of Sonoma, along with 145 other cities and counties across 27 states, as well as the American Public Health Association, the American Medical Association, the California Endowment, numerous California universities, the County Behavioral Health Directors Association of California, the County Welfare Directors Association of California, the County Health Executives Association of California, and the California Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems in declaring racism a public health crisis. Additionally, in December 2020, the California State Legislature introduced SB 17, *Office of Racial Equity*, that would allow California to acknowledge the long-standing impacts of systemic racism and to declare racism as a public health crisis.”

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The report concluded by stating that the City of Santa Rosa must address its role in the systemic racism that impacts our communities of color and address its own policies and practices that enable historical institutional racism. This includes making changes that will impact the structure and culture of the organization, adopting a variety of practices, policies and procedures that will change how the City serves all of its residents.

The City Council directed staff to bring a resolution declaring racism a public health crisis in Santa Rosa back to the Council for consideration and adoption.

PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

On May 5, 2021, the Council conducted a study session to receive the Community Empowerment Plan Listening Session Report and provide staff with direction on next steps.

ANALYSIS

Office of Community Engagement (OCE) staff conducted research on similar resolutions from other California jurisdictions. The resolution contains language used by other communities throughout California as well as national, state and local data on systemic racism and health impacts and outcomes related to exposure to racism. The resolution also includes information collected from communities of color throughout Santa Rosa who participated in last year's listening session with staff.

Once a draft resolution was complete, OCE convened an internal working group to review the draft and provide suggested updates, as needed. Included in this working group was the Director of Community Engagement; the Community Engagement Program Manager; one Violence Prevention Partnership Community Outreach Specialist; the Diversity, Inclusion and Equal Employment Officer; a Supervising Planner from Advanced Planning; the Equity and Public Health Planner; and a Community Engagement AmeriCorps VISTA.

The Seed Collaborative also provided input and guidance to staff on the resolution, particularly around recommended action items provided to Council. Seed Collaborative will provide additional action items for the City to consider as they continue their work around diversity, equity and inclusion.

OCE staff has also brought in a graduate intern from the University of San Francisco's Master of Public Health program to develop an evaluation plan for the data and action items outlined in the resolution. This graduate intern will have a plan developed along with a work plan and evaluation tools by May 2022.

FISCAL IMPACT

Approval of this action does not have a fiscal impact on the General Fund.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

This item is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under CEQA Guidelines Sections 15061(b)(3) and 15378 in that no activity is proposed for approval.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Not applicable.

NOTIFICATION

Not applicable.

ATTACHMENTS

- Resolution

CONTACT

Danielle Garduño, Community Engagement Program Manager  
[DGarduno@srcity.org](mailto:DGarduno@srcity.org); 707-543-4696