

RESOLUTION

By Jenkins and Cunningham

Declaring racism a public health emergency in the City of Minneapolis.

Whereas, the vision of the City of Minneapolis states that Minneapolis is “an intentionally compassionate city where each of us can reach our full potential while care for one another, eliminating racial disparities, improving our environment and promoting social well-being” and that the City “lead[s] in innovative and creative ways, focused not only on our present needs but also the success of future generations;” and

Whereas, the mission of the City of Minneapolis states “Our City government takes strategic action to address climate change, dismantle institutional injustice and close disparities in health, housing, public safety and economic opportunities” and City leaders, in partnership with residents help “to ensure all communities thrive in a safe and healthy city;” and

Whereas, the City of Minneapolis recognizes the City is built upon Dakota homelands, and that Indigenous nations have lived upon this land since time immemorial, and the land itself carries historical trauma, and that genocidal policies have aimed to strip tribal nations not only of land, but of culture, language and family systems; and

Whereas, the City of Minneapolis recognizes that Africans were forcibly brought to this country, enslaved, and after the Emancipation of Slavery, citizens of this country perpetuated Anti-Black racism through violence, mass incarceration and Anti-Black policies, including redlining, and that 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, racism has various forms including historical, individual, systemic and that has not only continued to present day, but has been institutionalized to ensure the concentration of material, power and resources into the hands of white bodied individuals; and

Whereas, white supremacy is a political, economic and cultural system in which whites overwhelmingly control power and material resources, conscious and unconscious ideas of white superiority and entitlement across a broad array of institutions and social settings; and

Whereas, racism in all its forms causes persistent discrimination and disparate outcomes in many areas of life, including housing, education, health, employment, public safety and criminal justice; exacerbated further by the COVID-19 pandemic crisis; and

Whereas, a multitude of studies connect racism to inequitable health outcomes for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), including cancer, coronary heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, high infant and maternal mortality rates demonstrating that racism is the root cause of social determinants of health; and

Whereas, leading medical and public health organizations including, but not limited to, the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Public Health Association recognize that systemic racism is a social determinant of health that has profound, negative impacts on the health status of children, youth, adults, and families and that failure to address racism as an urgent public health issue will exacerbate and perpetuate existing health inequities affecting BIPOC communities,

and these organizations have made commitments to work actively to dismantle racism in health care policies and practices; and

Whereas, research has shown that police killings of unarmed Black Americans have adverse effects on mental health among Black American adults overall, and that programs are needed to decrease the frequency of police killings and to mitigate adverse mental health effects within communities when and where such killings occur; and

Whereas, structural racism has increased health and economic inequities for BIPOC communities, exacerbated further by the COVID-19 pandemic crisis; and

Whereas, BIPOC community members in Minnesota experience the trauma of police violence and the vicarious trauma of reliving violent incidents via social media; and

Whereas, studies show that Black people are three times as likely to be killed by police as white people in this country and that “police killings of unarmed Black men were associated with an increase in mental health problems such as depression and emotional issues for Black people living in the state where the killing took place;” and

Whereas, the City of Minneapolis has some of the starkest racial inequities in the country ranking as one of the worst regions for racial inequities in home ownership, poverty, median income, and obtaining a high school diploma; and

Whereas, forty percent of the City of Minneapolis is comprised of BIPOC community members; and

Whereas, the City of Minneapolis’ Strategic and Racial Equity Action Plan (SREAP), adopted in July 2019 includes three policy priorities stating that, “The City will operationalize a strategy to eliminate the disproportionate impact of violence in BIPOC communities;” “The City will reduce involuntary displacement in rental housing for BIPOC communities;” and “The City will increase the number of Minneapolis-based businesses owned by BIPOC; and increase businesses with BIPOC ownership that are still in business after 5 years;” and

Whereas, the City of Minneapolis City Council definition of racial equity states, “The development of policies, practices and strategic investments to reverse racial inequities, eliminate institutional racism, and ensure that outcomes and opportunities for all people are no longer predictable by race;” and

Whereas, being anti-racist means moving and speaking in ways that repair (not simply abandon) more than 500 years of racist policies and practices. Anti-racism means actively participating in dismantling racist systems and institutional practices, as well as addressing personal and interpersonal acts of racism; and

Whereas, embodied anti-racists acknowledge that this history still lives and expresses itself through our bodies today; and

Whereas, City of Minneapolis leadership is committed to ending racism and building an active, anti-racist culture in the City of Minneapolis;

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved by The City Council and Mayor of Minneapolis:

That by declaring racism a public health emergency, the City of Minneapolis will recognize the severe impact of racism on the well-being of residents and city overall and allocate funding, staff, and additional resources to actively engage in racial equity in order to name, reverse, and repair the harm done to BIPOC in this City, including the following actions:

- The City will center the voices, work, and leadership of the communities most directly affected by said racism.
- Provide support to the Racial Equity Community Advisory Committee to conduct and implement an internal evaluation of the City Charter as well as all City policies and procedures to prioritize racial equity with specification on how policies translate into anti-racist action towards City employees, constituents, and community members.
- Address our criminal justice system to stop the profiling and harm done to BIPOC. This includes but is not limited to de-carceration and reserving arrest only for violent and other major crimes, and easing and dismissing cash bail.
- Build and implement a comprehensive public safety system that decentralizes BIPOC over-policing and criminalization and is rooted in the public health approach to keep BIPOC communities disproportionately impacted by community violence safe.
- Develop a comprehensive rapid response protocol to immediate needs and long-term work to address systemic inequities. This includes activating the Office of Emergency Management and Incident Command System, the Health Department, the Division of Race & Equity, and other public facing departments to respond to community stress and trauma.
- Measure the effectiveness of City programming and the return on investment of public dollar allocations in the budget towards advancing racial equity and reporting these results annually.
- Allocate dollars in the Mayor's budget to be directed towards small business development, housing, community-based infrastructure, and other amenities to reverse and repair the harm experienced by BIPOC. This includes making land and housing affordable for BIPOC, prioritizing BIPOC in redevelopment efforts, and ensuring that these communities are not displaced in neighborhood revitalization efforts.
- Establish a long-term sustainable source of City of Minneapolis funding that will restore and increase the availability of high-quality youth development programming for BIPOC youth and young adults with inclusion of a strategic plan to improve program quality and evaluate the impact and reach.
- Develop and implement an annual report with racially disaggregated data on the health of Minneapolis BIPOC, including recommendations for actions to eliminate any disparities and improve overall health.
- Build a workplace culture that promotes racialized repair, cross-cultural relationships, upholds the sacredness of caucus spaces for building community, and shifts the burden of addressing racism off BIPOC.