



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:20-4887

Agenda Item Number: 4.

Agenda Date: 8/20/2020

In Control: City Council A Session

DEPARTMENT: Office of Equity

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Zan Gibbs, Chief Equity Officer

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT: Declaring racism as a public health crisis

SUMMARY:

A draft resolution declaring racism as a public health crisis and establishing stronger efforts to promote racial equity in San Antonio will be reviewed by City Council.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In June of 2020, a first draft of a “Racism as a Public Health Crisis” resolution was created by District 2 Councilwoman Andrews-Sullivan. Additionally, a second draft was created and supported by District 7 Councilwoman Sandoval. The Office of Equity and Metro Health’s Office of Health Equity was asked to merge both drafts received and worked collectively to create one resolution with the guidance of the Community Health and Equity Committee. The draft resolution was created in response to the need to address racism as a public health emergency based on the racial disparities seen in the COVID-19 pandemic.

ISSUE:

The draft resolution aims to address racism as a public health emergency based on the racial disparities seen in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Section 1. That this Council declares racism is a public health crisis, acknowledges that the effects of systemic and structural racism are a public health crisis in San Antonio and commits to advocating for racial justice as a core element of all policies, programs, and procedures. In support of this, Council will increase advocacy to include state and federal legislative priorities for City efforts to further racial equity, and to eliminate all forms of racism, from systemic, to structural, to institutional, to interpersonal, and individual.

Section 2. That this Council supports community-based groups and initiatives that promote racial equity and will work with the community to educate and find innovative solutions to address systemic and institutional racism and provide additional resources to specific efforts to dismantle racism.

Section 3. That City Staff will provide bi-annual presentations updating the community about solution-oriented

policies and programs implemented by the City to improve racial equity.

Section 4. That the City of San Antonio will additionally commit to advancing racial equity efforts by:

- Reviewing policies and procedures for the purposes of eradicating implicit and explicit racial bias and promoting policies and procedures that advance racial equity, including policies and procedures that govern boards and commissions; and
- Engaging historically marginalized communities in the development of policy solutions for local issues related to health equity; and
- Improving data systems in order to disaggregate health data by race/ethnicity and income and facilitate data-informed decision-making processes to address the health disparities in our community; and
- Improving efforts to ensure the creation of racially and economically mixed neighborhoods through planning, housing regulations, and rental assistance programs; and
- Working to mitigate housing and job displacement from driving further racial and income segregation by developing strategic initiatives such as land use and affordable housing finance regulations and housing stability programs; and
- Promoting racially equitable economic and workforce development programs and policies.

ALTERNATIVES:

If the resolution is not approved, City Council will not be able to declare racism as a public health crisis.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact at this time.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the resolution to declare racism as a public health crisis and to establish stronger efforts to promote racial equity in San Antonio.