

THIS PRINT COVERS CALENDAR ITEM NO.: 12

**SAN FRANCISCO
MUNICIPAL TRANSPORTATION AGENCY**

DIVISION: Director of Transportation

BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

Adoption of the Resolution declaring Anti-Black Racism a Human Rights and Public Health Crisis in San Francisco

SUMMARY:

- This item is similar to resolutions passed by other City boards and commissions, asserting that anti-Black racism is a human rights and public health crisis affecting our entire community.
- Data links housing affordability, economic insecurity, incarceration, and development to public health disparities for Black San Franciscans.
- Transportation policies have also played a role in creating a human rights crisis for Black people in San Francisco.
- Staff recommends a series of actions to improve the health and wellbeing of Black people.

ENCLOSURES:

1. SFMTAB Resolution

APPROVALS:

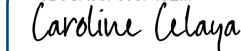
DIRECTOR

SECRETARY

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DATE

December 8, 2020

December 8, 2020

ASSIGNED SFMTAB CALENDAR DATE: December 15, 2020

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PURPOSE

This resolution adds SFMTA to the list of City agencies that denounce the damage of anti-Black racism and commit to actions to improve the health and wellbeing of Black people.

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS AND TRANSIT FIRST POLICY PRINCIPLES

This action supports the following SFMTA Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives:

Goal 3: Improve the quality of life and environment in San Francisco and the region.

Objective 3.1: Use agency programs and policies to advance San Francisco's commitment to equity.

Goal 4: Create a workplace that delivers outstanding service.

Objective 4.1: Strengthen morale and wellness through enhanced employee engagement, support, and development.

Objective 4.3: Enhance customer service, public outreach, and engagement.

Objective 4.4: Create a more diverse and inclusive workforce.

DESCRIPTION

During 2020, several San Francisco City boards and commissions adopted resolutions declaring anti-Black racism a human rights and public health crisis. Following the death of George Floyd, the Human Rights Commission (HRC) passed its "Resolution declaring Anti-Black Racism a Human Rights and Public Health Crisis in San Francisco," and in this resolution the HRC called upon City agencies to "assert that anti-Black racism is a human rights and public health crisis affecting our entire community." The Director of San Francisco's Citywide Office of Racial Equity encouraged the SFMTA to pass a resolution of its own. Over the course of the year, the Board of Supervisors, the Public Health Commission and the Public Utilities Commission all passed similar resolutions.

Research shows a connection between housing security, wealth and health outcomes. Government-sanctioned racial discrimination in lending and the sale and renting of homes has made housing a central feature of racial inequity. Redlining and racial covenants have prevented Black families from building wealth in San Francisco, and led to cycles of disinvestment, segregation, and poverty concentration. Black people have the lowest homeownership rates in San Francisco, and Black households are the most severely cost burdened by housing costs in San Francisco. Black families in San Francisco have the lowest median household income of all groups, and Black San Francisco families are the most likely to lack health insurance. Research documents that economic insecurity causes physical and psychological stress, which can in turn lead to preterm births and chronic health conditions. Black people have the highest mortality rate for nine of the top ten causes of death in San Francisco, and Black San Franciscans have a lower life expectancy than persons of other races/ethnicities. The present COVID-19 public health crisis has highlighted these disparities in its disproportionate impact on Black people.

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San Francisco's Department of Public Health has also recognized incarceration as a public health issue. Black people in San Francisco are 7 times more likely to be arrested than white people, but Black suspects are less likely to have their cases dropped or dismissed than white people. Black drivers and pedestrians accounted for one quarter of all SFPD stops during the last three months of 2019, though Black people make up on 1/20 of the San Francisco population. According to Vision Zero statistics, Black individuals are over-represented in the share of people killed in traffic collisions in proportion to their presence in the San Francisco population.

Transportation and the government have played a role in perpetuating anti-Black racism and the human rights crisis in San Francisco. San Francisco railroad companies discriminated against Black people throughout the City's history, preventing individuals from riding transit and working as transit operators. Government agencies deliberately planned freeways and other transportation infrastructure in traditionally Black communities, leaving a legacy of environmental health stressors. Within the SFMTA, Black employees have conveyed experiences of racism through employee surveys and focus groups, and staff have expressed concern about the lack of Black representation on leadership teams and the application of discipline on Black frontline staff.

Staff have taken this history and context and laid out a pathway in the resolution to redress these harms. After condemning racist practices and policies, the resolution directs SFMTA to move beyond acknowledging injustice and take bold actions. The resolution calls for the agency to re-evaluate its hiring and promotion practices, to disaggregate its data by race, to support the team overseeing the Racial Equity Action Plan, and to hold all employees accountable for anti-Black bias and racial harm, among other actions.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The project team developed the resolution in close coordinating with the Racial Equity Action Plan Project Management Team. This resolution was developed with strong encouragement from the San Francisco Human Rights Commission and the Director of the Citywide Office of Racial Equity.

After its initial draft, the project team collected feedback from a number of stakeholders. Staff from the agency's Finance & Information Technology Strategic Planning team, Sustainable Streets Planning subdivision, and Department Operations Center Equity Team all conducted reviews of the document. Representatives from the agency's Black African American Affinity Group also reviewed the document and provided input. Feedback was very supportive and constructive. Where feasible, suggestions were incorporated into the resolution and specific language was added in response to recommendations.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Because a resolution declaring anti-Black racism a human rights and public health crisis was strongly recommended by the Human Rights Commission resolution of the same title, there was no substantial alternative resolution. Due to the present crisis facing the Black community in San Francisco, the project team did not feel that it was an option to make no resolution.

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Over the course of the project, different options and pathways were considered for the resolution. One pathway might have been a very succinct resolution that recalled the key points from the resolutions passed by other agencies; instead, the project team elected to tell a more comprehensive story by adding more transportation-focused language and clauses specific to SFMTA. At another point, a proposal was made to fold parts of this resolution into a broader document calling for racial equity. However, the project team decided that the particular damage caused by anti-Black racism and the unique impacts on Black San Franciscans required a resolution that spoke to directly to this crisis.

FUNDING IMPACT

As a resolution, this item will not mandate or create any direct changes to capital funds, operating funds, or fiscal year budget for the Agency.

This item has no funding impact to the Agency.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

On November 12, 2020, the SFMTA, under authority delegated by the Planning Department, determined that the Resolution declaring Anti-Black Racism a Human Rights and Public Health Crisis in San Francisco is not a “project” under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations Sections 15060(c) and 15378(b).

A copy of the CEQA determination is on file with the Secretary to the SFMTA Board of Directors and is incorporated herein by reference.

OTHER APPROVALS RECEIVED OR STILL REQUIRED

The City Attorney has reviewed this item.

No other approvals are required for the adoption of this item.

RECOMMENDATION

SFMTA staff recommends that the SFMTA Board of Directors adopt the proposed Resolution declaring Anti-Black Racism a Human Rights and Public Health Crisis in San Francisco.

SAN FRANCISCO
MUNICIPAL TRANSPORTATION AGENCY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

RESOLUTION No. _____

WHEREAS, Racism is a system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of how one looks (which is what we call "race"), that unfairly disadvantages some individuals and communities, unfairly advantages other individuals and communities, and saps the strength of the whole society through the waste of human resources; and

WHEREAS, Anti-Black racism is hostility towards, opposition to, pathologizing of and racism towards Black people and culture, manifested through individual, internalized, interpersonal, institutional or systemic interactions, decisions, processes, and outcomes; and

WHEREAS, Public health studies have concluded that structural racism, not one's race, is the explanation for health inequities; and

WHEREAS, The American Public Health Association (APHA) lists racism as the driving force of the racial wealth gap and educational attainment gap; and

WHEREAS, Black San Franciscans have persistently had poorer health than their fellow residents in a wide array of measures; and

WHEREAS, In San Francisco, Black people have a lower life expectancy than persons of other races/ethnicities; and

WHEREAS, Black people have the highest mortality rate for 9 of the top 10 causes of death in San Francisco; and

WHEREAS, Black birthing people had about 4 out of 100 births, but experienced 50 out of 100 total maternal deaths, and 15 out of 100 infant deaths, over the past 10 years; and

WHEREAS, Black individuals are over-represented in the share of people killed in traffic collisions in proportion to their presence in the San Francisco population, and half of the City's Vision Zero High Injury Network of streets are found in Communities of Concern; and

WHEREAS, Black San Francisco residents are the most likely to lack health insurance; and

WHEREAS, Age-adjusted rate of hospitalizations due to major depression among Black/African Americans is almost 5 times higher than among Asian & Pacific Islanders who have the lowest rate (23.79 vs 4.93 per 10,000 residents). High rates of hospitalizations among Black/African Americans likely result from inadequate access to medical care; and

WHEREAS, Research thoroughly documents that economic insecurity causes physical and psychological stress, which leads to preterm births and chronic health conditions, such as heart disease; and

WHEREAS, Predominantly Black U.S. counties are experiencing a three-fold higher COVID-19 infection rate and a six-fold higher death rate than predominantly white counties; and

WHEREAS, Black people are primarily represented in frontline jobs such as Muni operators and transit fare inspectors, and have remained on their jobs as essential workers through the shelter in place order, leading to higher risk of exposure to COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 is killing Black Americans at alarming rates. In San Francisco, Black residents make up 4.9% of the population, but represent almost 9% of COVID-19 deaths; and

WHEREAS, The alarming rates at which COVID-19 is killing Black people extends beyond comorbidities and can be attributed to decades of spatial segregation, inequitable access to testing and treatment, and withholding racial/ethnicity data from reports on virus outcomes; and

WHEREAS, Black people report experiencing nearly 60% of all hate violence in San Francisco; and

WHEREAS, San Francisco DPH has recognized incarceration as a public health issue; and

WHEREAS, Black people are disproportionately represented throughout the criminal justice system in San Francisco; and

WHEREAS, About 45% of all San Francisco Police Department use-of-force cases involved Black people in 2019; and

WHEREAS, Black drivers and pedestrians accounted for 25% of all SFPD stops during the last three months of 2019 and roughly 40% of nonmandatory searches; and

WHEREAS, Black people make up 4.9% of San Francisco but 41% of those arrested, 43% of those booked into jail, and 38% of cases filed by prosecutors between 2008 and 2014; and

WHEREAS, Black suspects in San Francisco are less likely to have their cases dropped or dismissed than white suspects, and receive longer prison and jail sentences than others; and

WHEREAS, Black women constitute nearly half of all female arrests and experience arrest rates 13 times higher than women of other races; and

WHEREAS, Black people in San Francisco are 7.1 times more likely to be arrested than white people; and

WHEREAS, There is strong evidence establishing the connection between housing safety, security, and affordability to health outcomes as a social determinant of health; and

WHEREAS, Black households have a distinct disadvantage compared to white and Asian homebuyers, as they can only afford 5.3% of home sale listings in San Francisco; and

WHEREAS, Black people have the lowest homeownership rates in San Francisco at 31%; and

WHEREAS, Black people represent 37% of the City's unhoused population, a number that accounts for 5% of all Black residents in the City; and

WHEREAS, Black residents comprise nearly 40% of all public housing residents; and

WHEREAS, Government-sanctioned racial discrimination in lending and the sale and renting of homes—from racial covenants to redlining to exclusionary zoning— has made housing a central feature of racial inequity in the city and the country; and

WHEREAS, Black renter and owner households in San Francisco are the most “severely cost burdened” by their housing costs, with about 25% and 20% spending over half of their income on rent and mortgage, respectively; and

WHEREAS, Black families in San Francisco have the lowest median household income of all groups (\$30,000); and

WHEREAS, The racist legacy of policies like redlining, racial covenants, and the Social Security Act prevented Black families from building wealth, and kept them in neighborhoods with lower access to traditional banking resources and higher concentrations of predatory pay-day loans. These policies explicitly blocked Black people from loans for homeownership and maintenance, as well as access to neighborhoods with good services and jobs, which led to cycles of disinvestment, segregation and poverty concentration among these communities; and

WHEREAS, Despite the abundance of wealth in San Francisco, the racial wealth gap and gentrification have contributed to the mass displacement of Black San Franciscans; and

WHEREAS, Black people were systematically displaced by urban renewal in San Francisco in the 1960s and 1970s which subsequently led to a persistent decline in the Black population; and

WHEREAS, The Black population in San Francisco is the only racial group to consistently decline in every census count since 1970; and

WHEREAS, San Francisco's Black population has declined at nearly four times the rate of the Bay Area, overall; and

WHEREAS, San Francisco has a long history of creating and/or enforcing laws, policies, and institutions that have promoted white supremacy, anti-Black racism, and perpetuated racial inequities in San Francisco, including within our transportation system; and

WHEREAS, Black people did not have the right to ride public transit in California until Mary Ellen Pleasant sued both the Omnibus Railroad Company and the North Beach and Mission Railroad for discrimination and won damages in 1868; and

WHEREAS, Black San Franciscans like Charlotte L. Brown, who filed a lawsuit against Omnibus Railroad and Cable Company due to being continuously forced off a horse-drawn streetcar because of her race, continued to challenge racial segregation on transit in the 1860s; and

WHEREAS, Using the power of zoning and land use, the City, its Planning Department, and other government agencies and private organizations have intentionally advanced policies aligned with white supremacy to segregate, displace, dispossess and extract wealth from Black communities; and

WHEREAS, The San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, formed after World War II by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, pushed for aggressive and strategic redevelopment of neighborhoods occupied by Black and traditionally marginalized communities in the South of Market and Western Addition neighborhoods of San Francisco, using the term “blighted” and “slum clearance” to justify pushing out existing residents and businesses from the area; and

WHEREAS, In the 1950s San Francisco’s freeways were routed through certain neighborhoods, including those with high proportions of Black households, because the federal government gave extra money for projects that removed “blight,” defined as non-white ownership; and

WHEREAS, The demolition of Black- and Japanese-owned homes and businesses and displacement of thousands of residents in the 1950s to construct the Geary Expressway was, according to its Purpose and Need Statement, necessary to “halt Negro advancement” into nearby Pacific Heights; and

WHEREAS, The siting of San Francisco’s freeways, heavy-duty trucking, and heavy rail through neighborhoods with high percentages of Black San Franciscans, such as Bayview-Hunter’s Point, has disproportionately exposed these residents to environmental stressors such as air and soil pollution and traffic noise, which can increase rates of stress, heart attacks, asthma, and pre-mature mortality; and

WHEREAS, Racist hiring, promotion, compensation and retention practices against Black employees in San Francisco have been widely documented; and

WHEREAS, Muni did not hire its first Black transit operator, Audley Cole, until 1941, and it took three months until he was trained to operate a streetcar due to persistent and violent opposition; and

WHEREAS, In the 2018 Employee Survey, frontline employees at the SFMTA, many of whom are Black, provided a job satisfaction rating of 2.9/5; and

WHEREAS, Black employees at the SFMTA have conveyed many experiences of racism within the agency, through employee surveys and focus groups; and

WHEREAS, It is the duty of public officials to ensure that the City and County of San Francisco reconcile its legacy of harm and trauma inflicted on marginalized communities; and

WHEREAS, San Francisco and other cities across the nation are part of a movement to eliminate institutional racism in partnership with the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE), a national network dedicated to achieving racial equity and advancing opportunities for all, which SFMTA has been a member of since 2017; and

WHEREAS, In 2019, the City and County of San Francisco Office of Racial Equity was established; and

WHEREAS, In 2019, the SFMTA hired an Interim Lead of Culture, Equity and Employee Engagement to initiate a plan for organizational culture change and collaboration with SFMTA staff and division leaders; to incorporate an equity framework into the decision making process to help colleagues feel considered, heard, respected and valued; and to act as the agency's Ombudsperson and assist in resolving concerns; and

WHEREAS, In 2019, SFMTA staff formed the Black and African American Affinity Group (BAAAG); and

WHEREAS, The San Francisco Human Rights Commission approved a resolution titled, "Resolution declaring Anti-Black Racism a Human Rights and Public Health Crisis in San Francisco" at its June 25, 2020 meeting; and

WHEREAS, The San Francisco Health Commission approved a resolution titled, "Health Equity Resolution Declaring Anti-Black Racism a Human Rights and Public Health Crisis in San Francisco" at its July 21, 2020 meeting; and

WHEREAS, The San Francisco Board of Supervisors approved a resolution titled, "Resolution declaring Anti-Black Racism a Human Rights and Public Health Crisis in San Francisco" at its August 11, 2020 meeting; and

WHEREAS, On November 12, 2020, the SFMTA, under authority delegated by the Planning Department, determined that the Resolution declaring Anti-Black Racism a Human Rights and Public Health Crisis in San Francisco is not a "project" under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations Sections 15060(c) and 15378(b); and,

WHEREAS, A copy of the CEQA determination is on file with the Secretary to the SFMTA Board of Directors, and is incorporated herein by reference; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Board of Directors concurs with the Board of Supervisors, the Human Rights Commission and the Health Commission, recognizing anti-Black racism as a human rights and public health crisis which particularly impacts the human and civil rights, health and wellbeing of Black individuals, Black families and the Black community; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the SFMTA Board of Directors stands in solidarity with the civil unrest and demands for justice of our fellow San Franciscans and communities across the nation, and affirms that Black Lives Matter; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the SFMTA Board of Directors condemns and apologizes for government practices that have resulted in and continue to have disproportionate impacts upon Black people, including racist, discriminatory, and inequitable transportation planning policies, programs, and government actions such as redlining, exclusionary zoning, racial covenants, urban renewal and discriminatory enforcement of land use policies; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the SFMTA Board of Directors directs all agency staff to move beyond acknowledgement of injustice and take concrete actions that are visible in the reallocation of resources and work program to improve the health and wellbeing of Black people; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the SFMTA Board of Directors asserts that the responsibility for implementing these structures and institutional change falls upon all agency staff, across all levels and functions, and that it should not fall solely or disproportionately upon Black staff who are already burdened with their lived experiences of racism; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the SFMTA Board of Directors directs the agency to examine hiring and promotion practices to address any underrepresentation of Black people in certain staff levels and ensure the workforce reflects the needs of our communities; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the SFMTA Board of Directors supports the creation of a CCSF Office of Racial Equity anti-racist program evaluation framework for all City departments and City grantees; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the SFMTA Board of Directors fully supports SFMTA Race and Equity planning, implementation, and initiatives that lead to structural and cultural transformation of the agency by eliminating anti-Black racism and white supremacy; this includes but is not limited to guidance rendered by the initial resolution offered through the Human Rights Commission such as:

- Disaggregate all data by race and prioritize racial equity in all programs
- Train employees to understand anti-Black racism and how it affects individual and population health
- Acknowledge their complicity in these racist outcomes
- Work with, and center the Black community to dismantle institutionalized, anti-Black racism
- Commit to review all portions of codified ordinances with a racial equity lens
- Commit to conduct all human resources, vendor selection and grant management activities with a racial equity lens, including reviewing all internal policies and practices such as hiring, promotions, leadership appointments and funding
- Commit to advocate for and support local, state, regional, and federal anti-racist policies that advance efforts to dismantle systemic racism in order to improve the lives of Black people
- Require community partners and stakeholders in the education, economic development, employment, housing, and criminal justice {transportation} and safety arenas to recognize anti-Black racism as a public health crisis and to activate the above items.

- Secure adequate resources to successfully accomplish the above activities
- Create an anti-Black racism program evaluation framework for all City departments and City grantees where the data must be produced at least every 2 years for the public as instructed by the legislation that created the Office of Racial Equity; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the SFMTA will sufficiently staff an Office of Race, Equity, and Inclusion (OREI) to oversee and lead SFMTA's race and equity work, initiatives, and implementation of the agency's Racial Equity Action Plan, structuring this office with adequate staff, resources and decision-making authority; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the SFMTA will disaggregate all agency staff data across intersections; race as the underlying foundation along with age, gender, sex, and sexual orientation amongst others; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the SFMTA Board of Directors will ensure full support and authority of Racial Equity Action Planning and accountability teams to oversee Racial Equity Action Plan progress ongoing; and to hold leaders accountable for taking ownership of plan implementation; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the SFMTA's Race, Equity & Inclusion Officer will ensure measurable racial and social equity goals, in alignment with the San Francisco Office of Racial Equity, and report agency-wide progress annually to the SFMTA Board; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the SFMTA will invite agency Affinity Groups and Employee Resource Committees (i.e. Black and African American Affinity Group, Latinx Affinity Group, Asian Affinity Group, White People Working Against Racism, Equity in the Workplace Committee, etc.) to report agency-wide equity activities; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the SFMTA Board of Directors will direct the SFMTA Director of Transportation to hold all employees, especially leaders, accountable for perpetuating anti-Black bias, racial harm and any other forms of racial harm to employees from Black, Indigenous and traditionally marginalized groups. This includes racial microaggressions, bullying and all other types of insidious mistreatment, leading to disparate treatment and outcomes; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the SFMTA Board of Directors will consider adopting future Racial and Social Equity Policies and Resolutions.

I certify that the foregoing resolution was adopted by the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Board of Directors at its meeting of December 15, 2020.

Secretary to the Board of Directors
San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency