



# AGENDA REPORT

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**TO:** Honorable Mayor & City Council

**FROM:** Councilmember Carroll Fife, District 3

**SUBJECT:** Professional Services Contract For Racial Impact Study

**DATE:** May 4, 2023

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## RECOMMENDATION

**Councilmember Fife Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution Awarding A Professional Services Contract To BluSummers, LLC To Conduct A Racial Impact Analysis For An Amount Not To Exceed \$150,000 Utilizing The Funds Allocated For That Purpose In The Fiscal Year 2022-23 Mid-Cycle Budget, Pursuant To Resolution No. 89283 C.M.S., To Study The On-Going Effects Of Public Policy Decisions And Actions Such As Redlining, Displacement Through Eminent Domain, Urban Renewal, And Gentrification On The Black Community In Oakland And To Assess Ways To Redress The Harms Caused Through A “Black New Deal”; And Waiving The Competitive Request For Proposal/Qualifications (RFP/Q) Process Pursuant To Oakland Municipal Code Section 2.04.051.B**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This resolution would award a professional services contract in an amount not to exceed \$150,000 to BluSummers, LLC, with Mason Tillman Associates as a subcontractor, to conduct a racial impact study on the on-going effects of public policy decisions and actions such as redlining, displacement through eminent domain, urban renewal, and gentrification on the Black community in Oakland and assess ways to redress the harms caused through a “Black New Deal”. The Black New Deal (BND) is a framework that seeks to ameliorate the multitude of harms done to Black Oakland residents through policies and reinvestment in the following six areas: housing, economics, education, arts and culture, environment, and public safety.

UC Berkeley Professor, Dr. Brandi Summers is the owner and principal of BluSummers, LLC and has done extensive research on Black communities and urban spaces, race, structural conditions, change over time and the negative impact of racist public policies. Mason Tillman Associates (MTA) is a renowned consulting firm based in Oakland with a focus on disparity studies. Their work analyzes the contracting practices of public and private entities to determine if minority-owned, woman-owned, small, local, and veteran businesses have equal access to public contracting opportunities. MTA will be joining Dr. Summers as a subcontractor in conducting this racial impact study as set forth above and in the original agenda report dated December 8, 2022.

### **REASON FOR SUPPLEMENTAL**

This proposal was originally scheduled to be heard at the December 20, 2022 City Council meeting but the District 3 Office withdrew the item to allow Councilmember Fife to have additional conversations with City staff and other stakeholders. Over the past several months, the District 3 office sought to identify a subcontractor to work alongside Dr. Brandi Summers. Mason Tillman Associates, a consulting firm, which has conducted and is currently conducting disparity studies for the City of Oakland, has agreed to join Dr. Summers, as a subcontractor with 50% participation. The supplemental legislation is amended to reflect MTA's participation. The basic elements of this proposal will not deviate from what was originally proposed but now there will be two very qualified entities to undertake this important and expansive study in a way that meets the City's Local/ Small Local Business Enterprise (L/SLBE) program requirement.

### **POLICY ANALYSIS**

OMC section 2.04.051.B permits the City Council to waive the Request for Proposal/Qualifications (RFP/Q) process for contracts in any amount upon a finding that it is in the best interests of the City to do so. Dr. Brandi Thompson Summers, owner and principal of BluSummers, LLC, is an Associate Professor in the UC Berkeley Geography Department and Dr. Summers' work focuses on Black geographies; urban geography; race and urban aesthetics; design, planning, and architecture; and cultural politics of difference. Dr. Summers is a resident of Oakland and has done extensive research on Black communities and urban spaces, race, structural conditions, change over time and the negative impact of racist public policies. She has also been engaged in the community conversations related to the creation of a Black New Deal.

Mason Tillman was established in 1978 in Oakland, California, by Dr. Eleanor Ramsey, an anthropologist and trained researcher. The firm first worked with transportation agencies nationwide to improve their contracting with minority businesses. Since 1990, Mason Tillman has performed 146 disparity studies, which is 30% of all disparity studies commissioned. MTA performed a disparity study for the City of Oakland in 2017 and is currently conducting a study concerning the City's professional services, procurement, and construction contracting activities pursuant to Resolution 89058 C.M.S.

For the reasons described above, including Dr. Summers' and MTA's unique qualifications and extensive experience, it is in the best interest of the City to waive the RFP/Q process and award the \$150,000 Professional Services Contract as set forth in this Resolution.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

As stated in the December 8, 2022 agenda report, the Council set aside \$150,000 in the FY 2022-23 Mid-Cycle Budget, pursuant to Resolution No. 89283 C.M.S., to contract outside consulting services for a racial impact study and the development of the BND framework. This legislation authorizes a General Purpose Fund (GPF) expenditure of \$150,000 for a Professional Services Contract with BluSummers, LLC to conduct this work.

## **COORDINATION**

In addition to the coordination identified in the original agenda report, the District 3 office has been in conversation with the Department of Employment and Workforce Standards, Office of the City Attorney, and Dr. Eleanor Ramsey, President and CEO at Mason Tillman Associates.

## **SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES**

***Economic:*** The economic impacts associated with decades of dispossession and unequal access to opportunities is one of the critical issues this study will help analyze. In fully assessing the economic impacts of redlining, displacement through eminent domain, urban renewal, and gentrification and how they contribute to present conditions and identifying a path forward through the Black New Deal framework, there will be an opportunity to create greater economic equity in Oakland.

***Environmental:*** One of the six areas of focus identified in the Black New Deal is the environment. The study that would result from approving this legislation can help the City identify and address the disparate environmental impacts as a result of policy decisions and actions. This will allow the City to make a greater effort to prioritize environmental justice and increase environmental sustainability for communities most impacted by pollution, exposure to hazardous materials and contaminants, and supporting clean and sustainable alternatives for those who may not have access.

***Race & Equity:*** The Council's decision to set aside funds for a racial impact study, and now this proposed action to authorize a Professional Services Agreement for development of the study, is for the purposes of advancing racial equity and justice in the City of Oakland. Black Oakland residents are faced with a myriad of issues as identified in the legislation and the agenda report for this item. This legislation allows the City to commission a study that can clearly identify the connection between current conditions and discriminatory public policies and actions that have created the present conditions in a way that will allow for formulation of policies to address the harms caused and as a result create greater equity in our City.

**ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

Councilmember Fife Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution Awarding A Professional Services Contract To BluSummers, LLC To Conduct A Racial Impact Analysis For An Amount Not To Exceed \$150,000 Utilizing The Funds Allocated For That Purpose In The Fiscal Year 2022-23 Mid-Cycle Budget, Pursuant To Resolution No. 89283 C.M.S., To Study The On-Going Effects Of Public Policy Decisions And Actions Such As Redlining, Displacement Through Eminent Domain, Urban Renewal, And Gentrification On The Black Community In Oakland And To Assess Ways To Redress The Harms Caused Through A “Black New Deal”; And Waiving The Competitive Request For Proposal/Qualifications (RFP/Q) Process Pursuant To Oakland Municipal Code Section 2.04.051.B

For questions regarding this report, please contact Rediat Bayeh, Policy Director for Councilmember Fife, at RBayeh@oaklandca.gov.

Respectfully submitted,



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Councilmember Carroll Fife  
District 3