



CITY OF OAKLAND

## AGENDA REPORT

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**DATE:** December 8, 2022  
**TO:** Council Colleagues and Members of the Public  
**FROM:** Councilmember Carroll Fife  
**SUBJECT:** **Professional Services Contract For Racial Impact Study**

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

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”; Waiving The Competitive Request For Proposal/Qualifications (RFP/Q) Process Pursuant To Oakland Municipal Code Section 2.04.051.B; And Waiving The Local/Small Local Business Enterprise (L/SLBE) Program Requirements

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Black Oakland residents are facing a myriad of issues that negatively impact their quality of life in the City. The 2018 Oakland Equity Indicators Report makes clear that the racial group most impacted by disparities in almost all social and economic indicators are African Americans. In Oakland, the median income for Black households is nearly three times lower than that of white households<sup>1</sup>. Black residents in Oakland are the most rent burdened group; are less likely to receive loans than other race groups; are the largest group represented in the unhoused community; have the lowest percentage of business ownership compared to other groups; are faced with loss of community schools due to closures. Additionally, displacement and gentrification has contributed to the loss of Black cultural and community spaces and has led to a steady decline of the Black population in our City.

With the understanding that these difficult conditions are tied to decades of racist and discriminatory policies and practices, the District 3 Office requested an informational report on the impact of financing relationships and housing and zoning and related municipal policies that created the Cypress Freeway, the 7th Street Post Office, the West Oakland BART Station and all redlined areas of Council District 3. The report made clear that there has been an extraordinary

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<sup>1</sup> [2018 Oakland Equity Indicators Report](#)

level of extraction and dispossession from Black communities in our City and that West Oakland, as the area where Black migrants from southern states first settled, is the epicenter of harm.<sup>2</sup>

In the report, staff also made a recommendation that the City contract outside services for a more expansive study to aid in the development of impactful policies. In response to staff's recommendation, the Council set aside \$150,000 in the FY 2022-23 mid-cycle budget to contract outside consulting services to build on the City's racial impact analysis work and chart a path forward by providing a framework for reparative policies, within the six areas identified in the Black New Deal (BND). The BND is a framework that seeks to redress 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.

This resolution would award a professional services contract in an amount not to exceed \$150,000 to BluSummers, LLC, 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 to assess ways to redress the harms caused through a "Black New Deal". 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. Please refer to Attachment A for Dr. Summers' curriculum vitae.

## **BACKGROUND**

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal administration enacted several measures determined to restore economic stability to the nation in the aftermath of the Great Depression. Through programs like the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the federal government allocated billions of dollars to various states to be used as wages for work on public projects and as direct payments to unemployed people, which also funded nationwide work relief projects for artists, musicians, and writers. Programs like the National Recovery Administration (NRA), which tried to standardize business operations and set standards for maximum hours and minimum wages. Relatedly, contemporary practice of homeownership in the US came out of the government programs adopted during the New Deal, like the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC), and later the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and the GI Bill.

These agencies and programs expanded home buying opportunities for white families, fueling white suburbanization, while limiting opportunities for Black families, laying the foundation for an expansive and enduring racial wealth gap. In particular, HOLC's "Residential Security Maps," used maps to classify the riskiness of lending to neighborhoods based on housing age, occupancy, and price, as well as racial and ethnic makeup. These maps eventually contributed to institutionalized racism in the development of different neighborhoods and lending practices among banks and other financial institutions. Because the lowest rated neighborhoods typically housed Black residents, and were shaded with red ink, the maps are popularly associated with the practice of "redlining" - when borrowers were denied access to credit based on the racial composition of their community.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://oakland.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5554637&GUID=A9D503D4-B522-4BEF-9AA4-3E635E8CB945&Options=&Search=>

Redlining started before the 1930s, but it became codified into law and federally sanctioned during the New Deal. By giving federal backing to the idea that proximity to Black people and other people of color necessarily leads to property value decline, these locally-enacted policies created a powerful financial incentive for white people to segregate themselves. In other words, while the tenets of the New Deal were promising for Black Americans, the federal government failed to enforce policies at the local level, and discrimination was allowed to operate widely. In Oakland, government-funded capital improvement projects through the 1960s and 1970s as part of President Johnson's "Great Society" (e.g., urban renewal programs, freeway, and BART construction), irreparably hindered residents of West Oakland, prioritizing the interests of homeowners at the expense of renters, and neglecting West Oakland residential public improvement needs.

### **POLICY ANALYSIS**

In light of this long and complicated history of disposition and unequal distribution of opportunity, it is time for a contemporary Black New Deal that simultaneously addresses intersecting crises in the climate, economic inequity, education, housing, public safety, and arts/culture. Mobilizing what could have been "new" and "great" for Oakland, but with an emphasis on those who are most often left out of the conversation. The District 3 office has already begun doing outreach and conducting community discussions around a BND for Oakland. In February 2022, the District 3 Office hosted the Black New Deal Symposium that brought together community members, scholars, business-owners, and more in a conversation to discuss the on-going impacts of structural racism on Black Oaklanders and what resourcing and creating opportunities for Black people to thrive in our City could look like.

OMC section 2.04.040.B.4 requires the City Administrator to conduct a formal RFP/Q process for professional services contracts over \$50,000, and OMC section 2.04.051.B permits the City Council to waive the 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 and her current research project around race and belonging in Oakland makes her uniquely qualified to conduct a study regarding the policies and practices that have negatively impacted the Black community and ways to ameliorate the harms caused through the BND.

Dr. Summers has initiated the process of becoming a certified Local or Small Local Business Enterprise by, among other things, registering her business, BluSummers, LLC, with the City and obtaining a valid business tax certificate, and registering with iSupplier, the City's centralized vendor database. However, Dr. Summers has not yet been certified as a Local or Small Local Business Enterprise under Oakland's L/SLBE Program guidelines but expects that she will become certified after she has remained fully operational and maintained a valid business

tax certificate for twelve consecutive months. For these reasons, it is in the City's best interest to waive the competitive RFP/Q process and waiving the Local/Small Local Business Enterprise (L/SLBE) program requirements to award a Professional Services Contract to, BluSummers, LLC in an amount not to exceed \$150,000 from the funds allocated for the racial impact study in the Fiscal Year 2022-23 Mid-Cycle Budget, pursuant to Resolution No. 89283 C.M.S.

### **COORDINATION**

This legislation was drafted in collaboration with the Office of City Attorney and the Department of Race and Equity has been consulted.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

As stated above, 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.

### **ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

I respectfully request 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"; Waiving The Competitive Request For Proposal/Qualifications (RFP/Q) Process Pursuant To Oakland Municipal Code Section 2.04.051.B; And Waiving The Local/Small Local Business Enterprise (L/SLBE) Program Requirements

For questions regarding this report, please contact Rediat Bayeh, Policy Analyst to Councilmember Carroll Fife, at RBayeh@oaklandca.gov.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Carroll Fife  
Councilmember, District 3