

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY



CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

**RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_ C.M.S.**

**INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMEMBER NIKKI FORTUNATO BAS**

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**RESOLUTION HONORING CULTURAL AFFAIRS MANAGER  
ROBERTO BEDOYA UPON HIS RETIREMENT FOR HIS  
OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO THE CITY OF OAKLAND AND HIS  
UNWAVERING SUPPORT OF OAKLAND'S ARTISTS AND CULTURAL  
COMMUNITIES**

**WHEREAS**, throughout his career as a cultural practitioner, policy maker, thought leader, and writer, Roberto Bedoya has consistently supported artist-centered cultural practices and advocated for expanded definitions of inclusion and belonging in the cultural sector; and

**WHEREAS**, Bedoya's essays "U.S. Cultural Policy: Its Politics of Participation, Its Creative Potential;" "Creative Placemaking and the Politics of Belonging and Dis-Belonging;" and "Spatial Justice: Rasquachification, Race and the City" have reframed the discussion on cultural policy to shed light on exclusionary practices in cultural policy decision making.; and

**WHEREAS**, Bedoya's robust career and national influence—from his leadership at the National Association of Artists' Organizations in Washington, DC to his service on the board of directors of Grantmakers in the Arts—have contributed a wealth of knowledge and experience to the City of Oakland, the Cultural Affairs Division, and cultural landscape of Oakland's many communities; and

**WHEREAS**, during his tenure as the City of Oakland's Cultural Affairs Manager, Bedoya shepherded the City of Oakland's first Cultural Plan in 30 years, *Belonging in Oakland: a Cultural Development Plan*, with the tagline "Equity is the Driving Force, Culture is the Frame, Belonging is the Goal," which gained national recognition and helped realize what it means to operationalize belonging; and

**WHEREAS**, Bedoya reestablished the Cultural Affairs Commission after a 9-year hiatus – to advise on policy decisions and conduct advocacy for the City's cultural sector; and

**WHEREAS**, during the tumultuous time of COVID-19, Bedoya leveraged over \$1.6 million dollars in federal relief funds – distributing essential grants and professional development support to hundreds of Oakland artists and arts non-profit organizations; and

**WHEREAS**, under Bedoya’s leadership, in accordance with the City’s Cultural Plan and by raising \$1.4M in philanthropic funding, the Cultural Affairs Division developed the Cultural Strategists-in-Government Program, which fosters collaboration between City workers and Oakland artists and cultural workers to bring a new lens to the work of building a fair, equitable and just city for all Oaklanders; and

**WHEREAS**, through the Cultural Strategists-in-Government Program, Bedoya empowered program staff to cultivate new relationships, build trust, and operationalize professional development support for local and emerging artists to broaden and diversify the City’s Public Art Program to reflect all Oaklanders; and

**WHEREAS**, through Bedoya’s entrepreneurship, a partnership with the Akonadi and East Bay Community foundations was established to create The Just City Cultural Fund, which received over \$4M from the Surdna Foundation to advance racial justice work of Oakland artists and cultural organizations over a 9-year period; and

**WHEREAS**, Bedoya’s vision helped establish the Neighborhood Voices Grant Program, including the inaugural Neighborhood Voices for Festivals grant opportunity, which seeks to bring Oaklanders together to create and support a sense of belonging and feed our community’s well-being; and

**WHEREAS**, Bedoya established the first Poet Laureate Program for Oakland, to advance the value of belonging articulated in the Cultural Plan and make poetry more accessible throughout Oakland; and

**WHEREAS**, Bedoya worked to build and strengthen relationships with Oakland’s diverse and celebrated cultural groups, arts organizations, and individual artists by facilitating meaningful dialogue and centering belonging; and

**WHEREAS**, Bedoya's tenacious spirit succeeded in increasing the Cultural Affairs Division’s staff capacity to more effectively support its Commission, Cultural Funding, and Public Art Programs; and

**WHEREAS**, Roberto Bedoya’s national influence and impact as the City’s Cultural Affairs Manager and throughout his career have awarded him such accolades as the 2021 Berresford Prize by United States Artists and prestigious research positions with the Ford Foundation, Urban Institute, Getty Research Institute, New York University, and Arizona State University;

**WHEREAS**, Roberto Bedoya has introduced Oakland’s government bureaucrats and elected officials to an entirely new language to help us communicate why arts and culture matter, teaching us that every City needs a belonging strategy, that place keeping and place knowing are important counterpoints to place-making, and that we must pay attention to the poetic will of a community; and

**WHEREAS**, with Roberto Bedoya leading its Cultural Affairs Division, the City not only experienced a Return on Investment, but Oakland also benefitted from the *other* ROIs - a Return on Influence, a Return on Impact, and a Return on Imagination; and

**WHEREAS**, Roberto Bedoya is a beloved and welcome guest at Oakland’s artistic happenings and parties, where he works the room dropping playful jokes and pearls of wisdom; therefore be it

**RESOLVED:** That the City of Oakland honors Roberto Bedoya upon his retirement for his tireless dedication to Oakland’s Cultural Affairs Division, and to the city’s artists and cultural communities; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED:** That the City of Oakland thanks Roberto Bedoya for his passion, vision, and leadership in cultivating belonging across Oakland’s cultural landscape and our nation.

IN COUNCIL, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA,

PASSED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES - FIFE, GALLO, JENKINS, KALB, KAPLAN, RAMACHANDRAN, REID, AND  
PRESIDENT FORTUNATO BAS

NOES –

ABSENT –

ABSTENTION –

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_

ASHA REED  
City Clerk and Clerk of the Council of the  
City of Oakland, California