



# AGENDA REPORT

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**TO:** Honorable Mayor & City Council

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

**SUBJECT:** Grant Agreement With OakBRITE

**DATE:** March 28, 2024

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

**Councilmember Fife Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution Authorizing The City Administrator To Negotiate And Execute A Grant Agreement With OakBRITE In An Amount Not To Exceed Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) To Support Geoffrey's Inner Circle With Expenses For Lease Or Mortgage Support And For Facilitation Of Arts, Cultural, And Business Incubation Events And Activities**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This legislation would assist in the preservation of Geoffrey's Inner Circle, an iconic and culturally impactful business in our City, while supporting arts, cultural, and business advancement activities through a \$50,000 grant agreement with OakBRITE.

## **BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY**

January 7, 2016, the City Council approved Resolution No. 85958 C.M.S., designating the 14th Street corridor on or within four blocks of 14<sup>th</sup> Street from Oak Street to Frontage Road as the Black Arts Movement and Business District (BAMBD). Opening its doors in 1993, Geoffrey's Inner Circle is a celebrated Jazz and Blues venue that is now a central part of the BAMBD. Along with being a storied entertainment space, Geoffrey's has been running an incubator program for Black-owned small businesses inside of the 410 14<sup>th</sup> Street location for over two decades and even offers the street level, storefront shops to small business owners at below market rates.

Over the years, Geoffrey's Inner Circle has faced countless challenges, including the rising cost of operating a business in the Downtown area and repair and maintenance costs. These issues have been compounded by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and has placed Geoffrey's Inner Circle in a precarious financial position; the business could shutter without assistance from the City.

On June 24, 2021, the City Council approved a \$250,000 allocation in the Fiscal Year 2021-2023 biennial budget in support of the BAMBD for lease support, grants, signage, and program

development for small business incubation. With the approval of this grant agreement Geoffrey's Inner Circle would get mortgage payment assistance using some of the funds designated for the BAMBD.

### **POLICY ANALYSIS**

It is critical to strengthen arts and culture in the City of Oakland, including within the area designated as the BAMBD, to help remedy historical inequities and provide a thriving future, this includes supporting deeply rooted community establishments such as Geoffrey's Inner Circle.

OakBRITE, a registered 501(C)(3) nonprofit organization, has agreed to assist with these objectives and is committed to improving and revitalizing the arts, entertainment, and cultural tapestry of the BAMBD. To accomplish this, OakBRITE will provide direct financial assistance to Geoffrey's to ensure the business remains open and can serve as a venue for programming that bolsters the BAMBD. Furthermore, the grantee will partner with the City Administrator and the District 3 Office to develop a plan for events and activities, including but not limited to, comedy shows, musical and dance performances, business development events that showcase and strengthen the contributions of Black artists, creatives, and institutions for the overall improvement of the BAMBD.

OakBRITE is committed to facilitating the preservation and advancement of the District and the proposed grant agreement will help jumpstart this process.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

This legislation would allocate \$50,000 in designated General Purpose Funds for the BAMBD that have been carried forward from 2021-2023 biennial budget. Per the action taken by Council during the FY 2023-2025 budget cycle, unexpended funds from prior budgets for the BAMBD were carried forward to the current cycle.

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST**

There was no specific public outreach conducted beyond the posting and noticing of this agenda item. However, the D3 office continues to engage with entities in the BAMBD to create a plan for the long-term vitality of the area.

### **COORDINATION**

This legislation has been reviewed and approved by the Office of the City Attorney.

### **SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES**

***Economic:*** By keeping a cornerstone business open and having that space in turn serve the community through the activities described above, this grant agreement sets the stage for the larger effort to revitalize the BAMBD.

***Environmental:*** No direct environmental impacts or opportunities have been identified.

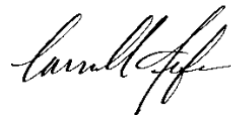
***Race & Equity:*** This proposal would support a 30-year Black owned and operated business to remain open while helping create opportunities for others in the community through arts, cultural, and business incubation efforts.

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

Councilmember Fife recommends that the City Council Adopt A Resolution Authorizing The City Administrator To Negotiate And Execute A Grant Agreement With OakBRITE In An Amount Not To Exceed Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) To Support Geoffrey's Inner Circle With Expenses For Lease Or Mortgage Support And For Facilitation Of Arts, Cultural, And Business Incubation Events And Activities.

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