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Date: May 19, 2020

To: Members of the City Council

Cc: Ed Reiskin, Assistant City Administrator
LaTonda Simmons, City Clerk

Re: Resolution Declaring A Local Health Emergency For Oakland's Black Residents Due To The Spread Of Covid-19 Locally And Its Devastating And Disparate Impact On Oakland's Black Residents Pursuant To Government Code Section 8630, The Oakland City Administrator's Proclamation Of Local Emergency On March 9, 2020, Ratified By The City Council On March 12, 2020, And The Emergency Health Orders Of The Alameda County Health Department And Governor Of The State Of California Related To Covid-19

Dear City Council Colleagues, City of Oakland Staff, and Residents of Oakland:

As the African-American and LatinX members of the Oakland City Council, we submit this memo and accompanying resolution declaring a Local Health for Oakland's Black residents due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is our authentic, lived experiences as Black and LatinX Oaklanders that inform this resolution that seeks to redress the disparities faced by our communities and exacerbated by the Coronavirus pandemic. For the past 9 weeks we have each worked extremely hard to ensure that our districts, including the more than 70% of our residents who are Black or LatinX, are well-informed and well-resourced to survive and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The four of us began meeting in the Fall of 2019 to form the Equity Caucus of the Oakland City Council to jointly advocate for the specific needs and concerns in Oakland's flatland communities. And while we were actively working to bring forward specific policy resolutions as part of the mid-cycle budget process, we appreciate this early discussion brought forward by the President Kaplan, and Councilmembers Bas and Thao. As we continue our work with respect to the Brown Acts limitations, we appreciate that our colleagues similarly recognize that disparities exist, and that the City of Oakland needs to more equitably distribute greater resources to the communities most adversely impacted by the COVID-19 and to processes that center these conversations through the voices of those of us who live daily in these harsh realities. As we often affirm, "those (of us) closest to the problem are closest to the solution."

We who comprise the Equity Caucus live in and represent the districts described in this resolution that are most impacted by COVID-19. The resolution we advance seeks to recognize the efforts that are



already underway even as we affirm the need for increased coordination and priority in the distribution of funding to communities in greatest need. Our Resolution accomplishes several things, including:

1. Expressly includes the LatinX Community in the recognized state of emergency as they have the highest COVID-19 infection rates in Oakland and Alameda County and as they share a similar plight as that of the African American community as it relates to health and economic disparities.
2. Acknowledges the work of many partners across the city already undertaking incredible work to address racial health and economic disparities - especially in the East Oakland zip codes identified as the hardest hit by COVID-19.
3. Proposes specific recommendations for addressing the health that are informed by knowledge and insights of on-the-ground realities in the target zip codes.
4. Maintains a focus to address both the immediate and longer-term impacts of the COVID-19 crisis and the underlying systemic racism that exacerbates COVID-19's impact.

MORE RESOURCES ARE NEEDED TO CONTINUE EFFORTS TO ADDRESS RACIAL DISPARITIES:

Moving forward, it is important to acknowledge existing work to build on the current momentum to address racial disparities and inequity. The list of activities below describes the activities that occurred over the past 9 weeks since declaration of a local COVID-19 state of emergency. Also, detailed here are actions that we as a city must pursue to advance these efforts.

1. **COVID19 TESTING** - To reduce the spread of the virus and reduce the adverse outcomes post-infection, we must have COVID-19 testing readily available and accessible to residents regardless of their health insurance status.

Related Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vice-Mayor Reid and Councilmember Taylor aggressively advocated for additional COVID-19 testing sites in East Oakland, leading to the City opening its first walk-up FREE COVID-19 test site at Roots Community Health Clinic in East Oakland, and its second testing site in East Oakland at Allen Temple Baptist Church, with at least one more testing site planned in Central East Oakland. • Councilmember McElhaney has also been vocal about the need for testing in West Oakland in addition to the drive thru testing location at the Henry J Kaiser Convention Center parking lot, and she is working with Alameda County to help establish a testing site there. • In addition, as a partner with the City, Roots Community Health is conducting free mobile testing for homeless encampments as part of its homeless support services conducted throughout Oakland. • Each of the city's testing locations can accommodate more than 250 tests per day.
Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ensure equitable access to testing for our most vulnerable communities as the City and County expand testing capacity with additional funding resources</i>



2. **Distribution of PPE (masks, gloves, etc.)** - Per the Alameda County Public Health Department's directive for all residents to wear face coverings when out in public, it is important to educate residents and explain the different type of coverings. Fortunately, cloth face coverings are easily made using either a sew or no-sew method with as little as an old t-shirt and scissors (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>). Although cloth face coverings can be made with little (if any) investment, education and outreach is essential for our medically vulnerable Black and LatinX communities.

Related Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councilmembers for District 3, 5, 6, and 7 have all conducted and aggressively promoted education and outreach efforts regarding the need for PPE to hard-to-reach residents in their districts. They distributed many thousands of disposable and reusable masks to community members as part of ongoing COVID-19 education efforts. • Mask distribution has occurred directly as well as through on-the-ground community based organizations, like the Oakland Frontline Healers and the Homies Empowerment Project, additionally through corner stores, grocery stores, and restaurants that serve the target communities. • Moreover, Councilmembers had several conversations with Oakland Police Department leaders to help them develop the strategy of distributing masks to residents not wearing them instead of issuing tickets or fines.
Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Continue sustainable capacity-building into community-based organizations who are on the ground as trusted messengers educating and reinforcing information about how our communities can stay safe - including the use and distribution of PPE.</i>

3. **FOOD SCARCITY** - Unfortunately, in addition to serious health impacts, the COVID-19 pandemic has serious economic impacts on many Oaklanders, including a disproportionate effect on Black and LatinX communities. With so many of our residents losing their jobs, hours reduced, and forced to Shelter in place, they are unsure where their next meal will come from. The City has engaged in direct food distribution and partnerships with many nonprofits and foundations to address food scarcity across the city.

Related Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City of Oakland has increased the capacity of its Food pantry distribution and hot meal distribution in East Oakland. Sites include East Oakland Senior Center and 81st Avenue Library (D7), Rainbow Recreation Center (D6), Fremont High School, and Mercy Brown Bag HQ (D5), and West Oakland Senior Center, Downtown Oakland Senior Center, and West Oakland Library (D3)
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In addition, many CBO partners are on the ground consistently delivering meals to those who are most in need. Partner CBOs include Trybe, East Oakland Collective, Homies Empowerment Project, and many churches across the city. Moreover, through partnerships with nonprofits and philanthropy (e.g., World Central Kitchen, and Eat Play Learn Foundation) more than \$20M was committed to address the food scarcity need for Oaklanders through the end of the summer to ensure that Oakland families don't go hungry. Local restaurants will be paid to make these meals so the program is also a boost to the local small business/ restaurant economy.
Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Ensure equitable distribution of food through the Food Scarcity programs to those who need it most.</i> <i>Strategically use one-time COVID-19 response dollars in ways that bolster the healthy food supply chain so that it is healthy and affordable for residents after the current grant funding runs out.</i>

4. **SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT** - Unfortunately the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting Shelter-in-Place order threatens to put many of our small businesses out of business - especially minority-run businesses which are the majority of the businesses in the flatlands of East and West Oakland. These businesses must be supported during the pandemic so that they can continue to provide jobs to local residents, deliver the much-needed goods and services, and reinvest in the local community.

Related Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In District 5 Councilmember Noel Gallo has been responsive to the needs of small local businesses by connecting them with State and Local resources while they are closed during the shelter in place. In District 3 Councilmember Lynette Gibson-McElhaney has tirelessly engaged with hundreds of business owners throughout the COVID-19 crisis to create solutions to keep the businesses open and save critical city of Oakland jobs. She has spent significant effort supporting businesses along the Black Arts Movement Business District to help them maintain their footing during this precarious situation where they may be facing imminent closure and several Black businesses have either closed or face imminent closure. Councilmembers Taylor and McElhaney engaged with Black Business owners and strategized with the City's ethnic Chambers of Commerce including the Oakland African American Chamber of Commerce, Oakland Latino Chamber of Commerce, Oakland Vietnamese Chamber of Commerce, and the Oakland Chinatown Chamber of Commerce.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District 6 Councilmember Loren Taylor created a registry of District 6 and Black owned businesses, established a phone banking operation to reach out to them and offer assistance, and has worked closely with the City's Department of Economic Development to ensure that those businesses receive City and philanthropic resources. Councilmember Taylor also partnered with the Black Cultural Zone, to help them secure site access for city-owned land to host a recurring pop-up marketplace that will feature local small businesses, giving them a platform that helps them grow and scale which will be important as part of the COVID-19 recovery. In addition, Councilmember, Loren Taylor co-authored the City's COVID-19 Emergency sick leave legislation and successfully advocated for an exemption to be granted to small businesses with less than 50 employees. This was important to ensure that small businesses like those struggling to survive in East Oakland weren't saddled with any additional undue financial burdens as they try to recover financially from the coronavirus.
Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Allocate \$300,000 to the Oakland Multicultural Chambers of Commerce to support their ongoing efforts to support small minority businesses across the city of Oakland.</i> <i>Contribute seed funding to the establishment of Business Improvement Districts in 94605, 94621, 94601, 94607, 94612 zip codes that will support the immediate and longer-term sustainability of vibrant economies in the most economically vulnerable commercial corridors who happen to have a high concentration of Black and LatinX businesses.</i> <i>Revise and adequately resource the Local Small Business Contracting program to implement race-based and non-race-based policies based on the recommendations from the forthcoming Disparities Study on City Contracting.</i>

5. **HARM REDUCTION** - There are many negative environmental factors that persist in our Black and Brown communities in East and West Oakland. These environmental pollutants exacerbate the impacts of COVID-19 and should be removed from our neighborhoods.

Related Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District 7 Councilmember and Vice-Mayor Larry Reid successfully brought before the Council the Emergency legislation to close the loophole that allowed tobacco shops to sell flavored tobacco in Oakland; and most tobacco shops are in the same areas with the highest number of COVID-19 cases and deaths, COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that can have devastating effects on persons
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	<p>with pre-existing health conditions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> District 5 Councilmember Noel Gallo continues to make it a priority to ensure that the streets of Oakland and especially District 5 are safe and clean despite the limited availability of City crews and resources in light of COVID-19. Resources are constrained during the pandemic and those who are the most vulnerable are now faced with additional garbage, debris, and other environmental hazards in their neighborhoods.
Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Increase funding to address illegal dumping, blight reduction, and tree planting in East and West Oakland to address the environmental impacts on health in these geographic areas.</i>

6. **HOUSING/ HOMELESS SUPPORT** - With African Americans counting for over 70% of homeless residents, it is undeniable that homelessness is a racial disparity issue. This disparity is compounded with the racial disparity of COVID19, given the significant potential for COVID-19 to be spread between homeless residents who live in close quarters and do not have an ability to shelter in place. It is a high priority to use available resources to house our homeless residents, especially those who are medically vulnerable.

Related Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District 7 Councilmember, Vice-Mayor Reid advocated and arranged for two hotels in District 7 to house the city's vulnerable unhoused residents, and others are being evaluated for lease/ purchase. In addition, The City of Oakland launched Operation <i>HomeBase</i>, a new COVID-19 isolation trailer program located on Hegenberger Road in East Oakland. The primary goal of Operation <i>HomeBase</i> is to provide a safe place for high-risk people to self-isolate and maintain their safety and health. The target population is Oaklanders who are medically vulnerable and/or 65+ years old, and at risk of serious complications from COVID-19.
Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Aggressively explore and seek ways to support opportunities for lease to purchase arrangements for leveraging COVID-19 relief funds to support longer-term solutions for Oakland's homelessness crisis.</i>

7. **EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT** - The COVID-19 pandemic and shelter in place order, led to the closure of all Oakland Unified School District schools and the transition to distance learning that required students and families to have access to technology and the internet to continue their studies. Of the 50,000 students enrolled in Oakland schools, half lack connectivity at home without a computer and internet access, the vast majority of those students and families being African American and Latino students from low-income backgrounds, including many who are undocumented and/or have special needs.



Related Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor Libby Schaaf and OUSD Superintendent Kyla Johnson-Trammel formed a partnership with education, technology and fundraising entities including the Oakland Ed Fund, and Tech Exchange on the #OaklandUndivided campaign to close the digital divide in city schools, setting a goal of raising \$12.5 million to provide 25,000 laptops and internet hot spots to Oakland families in need. • In less than 24 hours after the announcement commitments were made for more than 95% of the necessary funds, bolstered by a \$10 million commitment from Twitter CEO and Co-Founder, Jack Dorsey. • While the provision of internet hotspots is effective, what will be more effective and sustainable over the run will be the establishment of a city-wide public wifi that enables all children and their families to access the internet.
Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Invest in the development and deployment of a city-wide public wifi that ensures access for all students bridging the digital divide.</i>

CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS TO ADDRESS RACIAL DISPARITIES

Since the COVID-19 crisis began the elected leaders of District 3, 5, 6, and 7 were planning with residents and businesses in their Districts and partnering with other government entities, philanthropic and nonprofits to advocate for essential resources for their Districts and request that the City provide additional resources. Two cross-sector, inter-jurisdictional efforts are described below, the COVID19 Racial Disparities Task Force, and the Economic Recovery Council. We look forward to participating on the following working groups to advance the ideas listed above even further to permanently eliminate racial disparities in Oakland.

1. COVID-19 RACIAL DISPARITIES TASKFORCE

- One of the structured and strategic initiatives that Councilmembers have participated in is the COVID-19 Racial Disparities Task Force convened by Mayor Libby Schaaf, Alameda County, and state leaders. The Taskforce was created to immediately address the racialized impacts of the COVID-19 virus and to create state, county, and local legislation to reduce health disparities for African American, LatinX, and other residents of color.
- The four co-chairs of the COVID-19 Racial Disparities Task Force are: Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf, Alameda County, Supervisor Wilma Chan, Assemblymember Rob Bonta, and Dr. Tony Iton, Senior Vice President, California Endowment.
- The Inaugural members of the COVID-19 Racial Disparities Task Force include Congresswoman Barbara Lee, Supervisor Keith Carson, Councilmember Lynette Gibson McElhaney, Councilmember Loren Taylor, Director James Harris, Director Board of Education, Oakland Unified School District, Natalie Aguilera, Chief Administrative Officer, Native American Health Center, Gabriela Galicia, Executive Director Street Level Health Project, Jane Garcia, CEO of La Clínica de la Raza, Dr. Michael McAfee, President and CEO PolicyLink, Dr. Thu Quach Chief Deputy of Administration and Programs Asian Health Services, Yvette Radford Regional Vice-President of External and Community Affairs Kaiser Permanente, Dr.



Kim F. Rhoads, Associate Professor of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, Affiliate Philip R. Lee Institute for Health Policy Studies.

- The goals of the COVID-19 Racial Disparities Task Force are to:
 - a. Immediately address the disparate impacts of the COVID-19 virus by race
 - b. Address the social determinants that perpetuate racial health disparities
- c.
- The COVID-19 Racial Disparities Task Force will prioritize an immediate response to the disparate impacts of the virus among people of color, particularly African American, LatinX, Asian and Native American residents including those experiencing poverty, immigrants, elders, people with disabilities, formerly incarcerated, and unsheltered residents.
- The strategies that the COVID-19 Racial Disparities Task Force will advance include:
 1. Development of a COVID-19 Vulnerability Index measure to inform decisions to strategically target communities most at-risk for prevention and treatment investments.
 2. Proactive collection and review of demographic data and use to inform targeted equity strategies.
 3. Proactive outreach and promote health check-ins to high-risk populations to identify health issues early and facilitate access to further care if indicated; as well as to advise management of health chronic conditions and exposure to virus, etc.
 4. Interventions to reduce health risk factors for COVID-19 hospitalizations and death, such as medically supportive food, that lower the incidence and severity of common underlying chronic health conditions.
 5. Proactive engagement of entrusted neighborhood leaders, organizations, and health care providers in neighborhoods with high risk to further clarify and remove barriers to services needed to address health disparities, vet strategies, and enlist their assistance in implementation.
 6. Proactive distribution of PPE to community clinics, organizations, and essential businesses serving populations at high risk.
 7. Provision of basic health and safety supplies and provisions to high-risk populations to aid them in sheltering in place and home-based recovery if they become ill.
 8. Provision of isolation space for high risk individuals who cannot safely quarantine at home.
 9. Messaging targeted to high-risk populations, via trusted networks and in languages spoken.
 10. Strategic community test siting in neighborhoods with high-risk populations, partnering with trusted community organizations.
 11. Raising funds and distributing rapid response assistance in neighborhoods with high at-risk populations, through entrusted organizations and existing networks.
 12. The task force will operate under the auspices of the [Oakland Thrives Leadership Council](#), a public-private collective impact council jointly led by Kaiser Permanente, City of Oakland, OUSD, and Alameda County.

2. ECONOMIC RECOVERY COUNCIL

- Mayor Schaaf and Vice-Mayor Larry Reid co-chair the City of Oakland Economic Recovery Council in partnership with Councilmember Loren Taylor; Jose Corona, Eat. Learn. Play

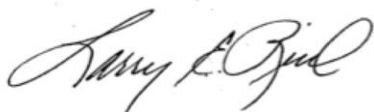


Foundation; Michael McAfee, PolicyLink; and Barbara Leslie, Oakland Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce. James Head, East Bay Community Foundation will facilitate with Micah Weinberg, California Forward as co-facilitator. Research support will be provided by Mills College Center for Transformative Action and the Bay Area Council Economic Institute.

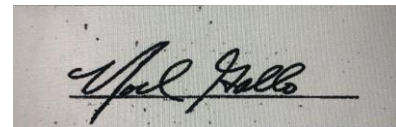
- The purpose of the City of Oakland Economic Recovery Council is to recommend specific local policy and strategies to facilitate economic recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, starting with urgent, short term business and worker needs to re-open and re-hire and then informing longer term goals for a resilient and equitable economy.
- The City's economic recovery efforts will center on people first, investing in community infrastructure and rebuilding a resilient and equitable economy in accordance with its Core Mission and Economic Recovery Principles.
- The work of the City of Oakland Economic Recovery will be grounded in the guiding principle that equity is the best economic model and the mission will be twofold:
 - The Advisory Council will advise on short-term recommendations to local policymakers to help Oakland's businesses and nonprofits re-open quickly and safely and connect Oaklanders with good jobs. This work will be informed by State and County regulations and phasing recommendations to ensure the public's health and safety.
 - The Advisory Council will simultaneously explore solutions for how Oakland can rebuild its economy using equity as the centerpiece. This work will intentionally lead with race and other known biases to identify actions that both local policymakers and private sector partners can take to ensure Oakland's economic recovery is just and equitable.

Colleagues, thank you for your continued commitment and partnership, especially when it relates to advancing real solutions for addressing the racial disparities that persist in our city and are exacerbated in times of crisis. We urge you to approve this substitute motion that advances a better informed and more impactful local health emergency for Black and LatinX residents of Oakland due to COVID-19.

Regards,



Larry Reid, Vice Mayor
Councilmember District 7



Noel Gallo,
Councilmember District 5



Lynette Gibson McElhaney
Councilmember District 3



Loren Taylor
Councilmember District 6

