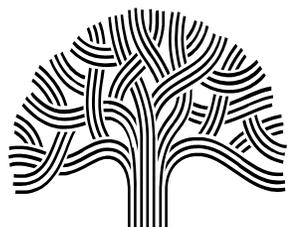# Informational Report On The Activities Of The Department of Race and Equity

Darlene Flynn, Director
**Department of Race and Equity**

CITY OF
OAKLAND

Background

2015 - The Department of Race and Equity (DRE) was created by ordinance sponsored by Councilmember Desley Brooks

The legislation amended Chapter 2.29 of the Oakland Municipal Code (OMC), specifically adding Section 2.29.170

OMC defines equity as just and fair practices, meaning the City serves all residents by promoting fairness and opportunity and addressing inequities through actions developed using equity and racial justice practices.
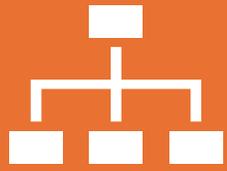
Action focuses on identifying opportunities and challenges in existing department systems, policy, procedures and plans in collaboration with department leadership and staff.

Relies on collaboration with City departments with guidance and technical assistance from DRE.

This engagement provides added benefit of cultivating equity practice within ongoing activities and decision-making processes across the department.

Analysis

Prior to the establishment of the Department of Race and Equity, Oakland had no standards or program focused on advancing equity in City activity outcomes. The department has established a City-wide, multi-level, systemically focused framework and functions.

DRE Activities Overview

DRE works by cultivating a network of staff who advocate got implementation of equity strategies in their areas of responsibility and/or working collaboratively with leadership and other content area experts in their departments.

These volunteers populate Equity Teams and/or lead equity projects in departments too small to have a team and work with DRE staff and department leadership to create Equity Team Action Plans for their departments.

DRE supports Equity Teams to increase awareness about the root causes of disparities and to support data centered equity analysis on policies, programs and procedures that then inform change and action that advances equity.

DRE staff also participate in work groups that shape Citywide policy such as the Equitable Climate Action Plan, Equitable Capital Improvement Plan, the Equity Administrative Instruction and the Inclusive Engagement workgroups.
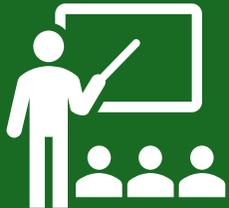
DRE offers ongoing equity capacity building training through the Advancing Racial Equity Academy. Since standing up the program there have been 4,118 attendees at Academy sessions.

DRE does ongoing work to deepen Citywide participation by identifying upcoming equity opportunities through periodic "look-ahead" conversations with department leadership and through Equity Team Action Plans.

Accomplishment Highlights

Digital Equity – IT Department

- DRE supported the IT department with the development of an equity analysis and a map to guide a program focused on working with community partners and tech to address these issues.

- DRE worked with the Greenlining Institute on the development of a grant program that offered community-led organizations the opportunity to promote low-cost Wi-Fi and Data plans, access to free devices, and basic computer skills to underserved communities.

- Oakland's data driven equity approach demonstrated how digital access can be built into how the City delivers opportunity, and it brought the City access to infrastructure investments, including:
  - $15 million Last Mile Broadband Infrastructure Grant to deliver free Wi-Fi to approximately 2,500 affordable housing units
  - $12M Digital Equity Competitive Grant awarded to a Bay Area coalition to expand digital skills training, device access, and technical support services.
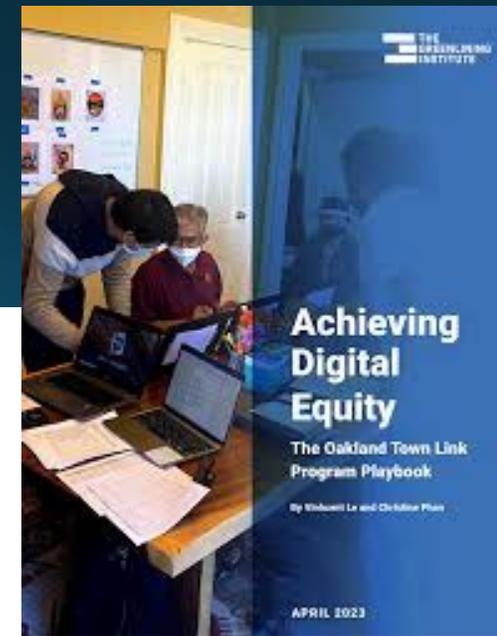
Safe Oakland Streets (SOS) – OakDOT

- 2021 a SOS interdepartmental work group with representatives from OakDOT, Oakland Police Department, the Department of Race and Equity, and the CAO.

- The equity approach created an SOS Plan with the support of elected officials and City departments in the form of high impact actions to increase the delivery of traffic safety improvement projects, policies, programs, and partnerships.

- 2024 OakDOT applied for and was awarded two Highway Safety Improvement Program Grants from Caltrans for SOS to improve safety for in high-risk corridor; these grants total almost 3 million dollars.

- City staff worked with the State and other cities on speed safety cameras legislation to add equity and privacy measures into the bill to address the potential for inequitable impacts and to prevent over-policing in highly impacted communities.

- OakDOT conducted data-driven analysis to identify 18 recommended candidate locations and public stakeholder engagement to inform the required Impact Report and Use Policy for the program.

SAFE OAKLAND **STREETS**

City General Plan Update/Planning & Building

DRE staff has provided support and process improvement consultation to General Plan update effort. All elements and the inclusive engagement processes that were part of the process for Plan development include equity and inclusive engagement best practices.

DRE engaged with Planning and Building in the adoption of the General Plan Phase 1, which included the adoption of:

- Environmental Justice (EJ) Element

- Safety Element Update

- 2023-2031 Housing Element

- Phase 1 Planning Code Amendments

- Phase 1 Final Environmental Impact Report (PDF, 24MB).

Equitable Lead Paint Hazard Program – CAO, Housing, Planning & Building

- DRE has participated in the ongoing lead-based paint settlement workgroup from the beginning of negotiations with Alameda County to reach a distribution agreement.

- DRE managed the Equity Impact Analysis consultant contract for the City Administrator's Office that created the basis for increasing the City of Oakland allocation to a fair share distribution.

- The work on this project is ongoing, and DRE is now working with Housing and Community Development Department on the finalization of the Equitable Lead Paint Program to be launched by year end.

Lead Paint Distribution
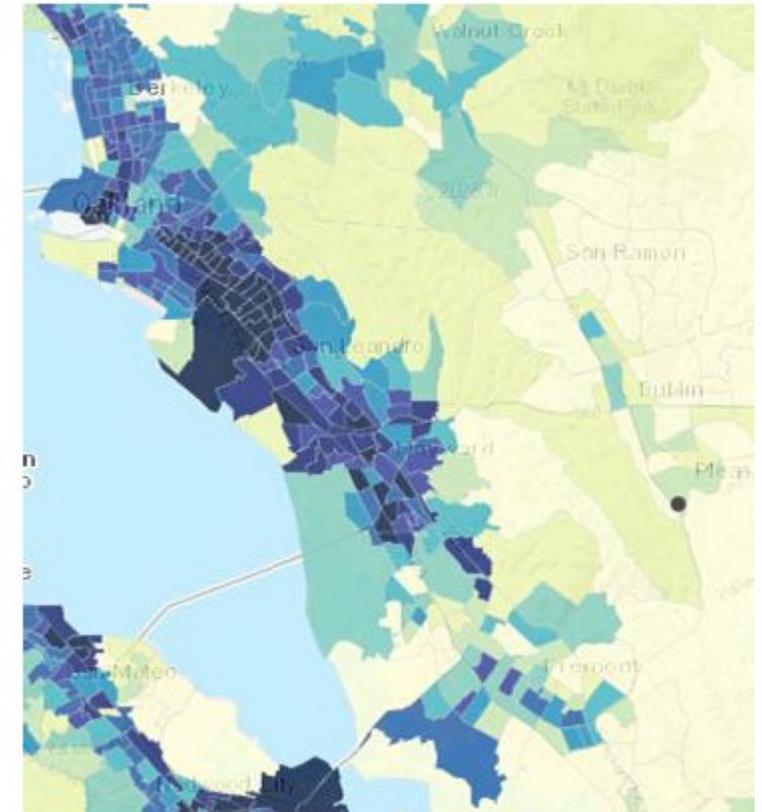
Gender Equity Audit Recommendations – City Auditor

- DRE supported the City Auditor in drafting the Citywide Pay Gender & Equity Audit and recommendations.
- The objective of this audit was to review pay among employees Citywide by race and gender to identify significant differences in pay and identify potential drivers of significant differences in pay.
- The audit found that differences in pay among City employees across different demographic groups were largely due to the compensation of their job classifications and patterns of "occupational sorting".
- DRE has designed a workforce equity dashboard to visualize current city workforce equity outcomes, which queues up looking at root causes with Human Resource Management (HRM) and other key departments to advance solutions that address issues the Auditor flagged.

PERFORMANCE AUDIT OF CITYWIDE PAY EQUITY

City Auditor
Michael C. Houston, MPP, CIA

Audit Team
Assistant City Auditor, Eduardo Luna
Performance Audit Manager, Stephanie Noble
Senior Performance Auditor, Jennifer Lim

November 4, 2024

Workforce Equity – OakDOT

- DRE staff supported the OakDOT equity team and leadership on a 5-year analysis of their hiring and retention outcomes, resulting in a memo with recommendations to address issues that have been shared with the HRM department for follow-up action.

- In addition, DRE collaborated to design a first-in-the-City, formalized Intern Program, including a selection process and onboarding training with an equity component, delivered by Equity Team members. This effort has attracted diversity of representation and provided meaningful preparation that enhances intern capacity and performance.

Hiring Analysis

FISCAL IMPACT

- General Fund Impact -"Tiny mighty" team of 3 (reduced from 4 in 2/25 RIF), City Council restored 1 administrative position through FY25/26 budget action – add effective FY26/27

- DRE's fiscal contributions include favorably impacting two previous bond rating processes, successfully supporting increased allocations of fair share lead-based paint legal settlement and Measure W funds for the City of Oakland, and equity framing that has enhanced State grant applications where equity has been a factor in awards.

Thank you

DEPARTMENT OF
RACE AND EQUITY