



# City of Cambridge

O-8  
IN CITY COUNCIL  
June 8, 2020

MAYOR SIDDIQUI  
COUNCILLOR SIMMONS  
COUNCILLOR ZONDERVAN  
VICE MAYOR MALLON

- WHEREAS: The United States has a long history of racism against the Black community. Through Jim Crow laws, redlining and slavery, racism is woven into the very fabric of American history over the past 400 years; and
- WHEREAS: To this day, racism causes disproportionately high rates of [homelessness](#), [incarceration](#), [poor education](#) and [health outcomes](#), and [economic hardship](#) for Black people; and
- WHEREAS: Last year, more than 1,000 people were killed by police in the United States, and Black people were disproportionately among those killed. Black people accounted for [24% of those killed](#), despite making up only about 13% of the population; and
- WHEREAS: The current COVID-19 pandemic also shows Black people have been disproportionately affected, with the latest data showing that Black individuals have died from the disease at [almost three times the rate](#) of white people, and Black people have tested positive at almost three times the rate of white people in Cambridge specifically, further showing racial disparities and inequities; and
- WHEREAS: The CDC defines public health as the science of protecting and improving the health of people and their communities; and
- WHEREAS: The U.S. Office of Disease Prevention has recognized that discrimination has a negative impact on health in a community; and
- WHEREAS: The Boston Public Health Commission states that racism impacts social determinants of health, including social capital, education, transportation, employment, food access, health behaviors, socioeconomic status, environmental exposure, access to health services, housing, and public safety; and
- WHEREAS: On March 2, 2020, the City Council passed a policy order that asked for a “Racial Equity Impact Statement” to be included on all relevant agenda items; and
- WHEREAS: On April 13, 2020, the City Council passed a policy order to convene an advisory committee to review the impact of the pandemic on local communities of color, to propose ways to better disseminate information, relief, and resources to these communities, to begin collecting data on the neighborhoods that have been hardest hit in an effort to reduce infection rates and improve recovery rates; and

WHEREAS: Acknowledging racism as a public health crisis pushes us as a City to address instances of structural racism that permeate within our schools, health care, housing, criminal justice and workforce, and it also pushes us to reform any systems that perpetuate racism and tackle disparities that have led to poorer health outcomes for Black residents in Cambridge; now therefore be it

ORDERED: That the Cambridge City Council declare racism as a public health crisis; be it further

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to direct the Cambridge Public Health Department to declare racism as a public health crisis; and

ORDERED: That the City Clerk be and hereby is requested to forward a suitably engrossed copy of this resolution to Black Lives Matter Cambridge Chapter, NAACP Cambridge Branch, and the Cambridge African American Heritage Alliance on behalf of the entire City Council.