

RESOLUTION NO.

WHEREAS, a recent study from the Martin Prosperity Institute determined that Austin is the most economically segregated city in the country, and also that Austin ranked 4th nationally for occupational segregation and 5th nationally for educational segregation; and

WHEREAS, the first Regional Affordability Committee included a presentation from the City Demographer (Presentation) stated that the reduction in the local poverty rate from 20.3 percent in 2012 to 17.8 percent in 2013 was at least partially attributable to the displacement of low-income residents, shown by increases in poverty rates in surrounding counties such as Bastrop, which saw an increase from 10 percent to 22 percent over the same period of time; and

WHEREAS, the Presentation included 2013 data from the American Community Survey produced by the United States Census Bureau that shows that 5.4 % of non-Hispanic white children under the age of 5 in the City of Austin were living at or below the federal poverty threshold, where 51.8% of African-American children and 33.0% of Hispanic children in the same age group are living at or below the federal poverty threshold; and

WHEREAS, the infant mortality rate is an estimate of the number of infant deaths for every 1,000 births, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states that this metric is often used as an indicator to measure the health and well-being of a community, because factors affecting the health of entire populations can also impact the mortality rate of infants; and

WHEREAS, according to data from 2010 provided in a presentation from the Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department, white infants have significantly better infant mortality rates in Travis County than in Texas or

across the country, but both Hispanic and African-American have worse outcomes when compared to the average in Texas and in the United States; and

WHEREAS, community advocates including the Austin Immigrant Rights Coalition, Mama Sana/Vibrant Woman, and allgo have urged the City Council to reevaluate existing practices and develop solutions to address inequities within the City of Austin; and

WHEREAS, maternal and infant health outcomes are impacted by all of the social determinants of health, and comprehensive equity tools can help to address all areas where inequities affect our community; and

WHEREAS, equity assessment tools are being developed and implemented in cities, counties, and states across the country including Seattle, Portland, Minneapolis, Iowa, Connecticut, Oregon, Minnesota, and King County, Washington to proactively address equity issues; and

WHEREAS, Seattle has implemented a Race and Social Justice Budget and Policy Filter Supplemental Tool Kit that includes best practices criteria, definitions, and instructions for completing a Racial Equity Impact Analysis during the budget process; and

WHEREAS, Seattle has created work plans and strategies to reduce racial disparity and foster multiculturalism, and addresses five broad areas across all departments including workforce equity, economic equity, public engagement, immigrant and refugee inclusion and access to services, and capacity building; and

WHEREAS, developing a similar equity tool to use across City departments and during the budget process has the potential to address equity challenges in the City of Austin; and

WHEREAS, on March 30, 2015, the Austin Independent School Board of Trustees voted to recommend that the District undertake a self-assessment regarding equity, diversity, and inclusion; and

WHEREAS, Austin would benefit from taking steps to implement an equity assessment tool and other policies to address significant inequities in health outcomes and other disparities that impact quality of life for many low-income communities which are disproportionately communities of color in Austin; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin Health and Human Services Department (HHSD) has a Women, Infant and Children activity within the Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health program that focuses on providing nutritional and preventative health services to targeted women and children to ensure healthy outcomes; and

WHEREAS, HHSD has a Health Equity Working Group that has been meeting for over a year to develop policies to increase inclusiveness and ensure that services provided are both culturally and linguistically appropriate; and

WHEREAS, Council Resolution 20140626-078 (Resolution) initiated a process to evaluate funding levels for the HHSD and social service contracts and to develop a metric to be used as a minimum for funding increases for Health and Human Services and social service contracts in the annual budget; and

WHEREAS, staff from HHSD developed a collaborative working group that coordinated regularly with community stakeholders to develop recommendations, which led to adoption of a policy through Council Resolution 20141211-114 to close the gap in funding for the HHSD including social service contracts, and the development of an index to be used for annual increases in social service contracts; and

WHEREAS, a similar collaborative process that includes staff from HHSD's Health Equity Working Group, HHSD's Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health Program, Central Health and community stakeholders would be invaluable in gathering information about how to address disparities in infant and overall health outcomes for the community and how to develop an assessment tool for addressing racial disparity throughout the city; and

WHEREAS, the primary stakeholder groups to be involved in this process should include Austin Immigrant Rights Coalition, allgo, and Mama Sana/Vibrant Woman in addition to other community organizations and members directly impacted by inequities; and

WHEREAS, the stakeholder group could also collaborate with the City Manager and staff from the City of Austin Budget office to give input on developing citywide policies to address equity issues and develop an equity tool to be used during the budget process; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

The City Manager is directed to provide staff resources for a working group to gather information for improving health outcomes for infants, mothers, and other members of the community. The working group shall meet a minimum of three times and include coordination between staff from the City of Austin Health and Human Services Department, primary stakeholder groups, and other interested individuals and organizations. The working group shall present a progress report including initial recommendations and potential items for budget consideration shall be provided at the Health and Human Services Committee no later than August 3rd, 2015, and shall present a final report to the Health and Human Services Committee no later than December 7, 2015.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is further directed to coordinate with the working group and City of Austin Budget Office staff and other departments to evaluate the impact that existing City policies and practices have on equity, evaluate best practices in other cities, and develop recommendations for addressing current race and socioeconomic-based inequities throughout the City in terms of economics, working conditions, local health outcomes, and participation in public affairs. The recommendations should include, but not be limited to the development of an equity assessment tool to be used by every City department during the budget process. The working group shall present a progress report with initial findings to the Economic Opportunity Council Committee no later than September 14, 2015 and shall present final recommendations to the Economic Opportunity Council Committee no later than December 14, 2015.

ADOPTED: _____, 2015

ATTEST: _____

Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk