



Racial, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

Tuesday, November 18, 2025, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)

Held in the Sharon Bushor Conference Room, Ground Floor City Hall

OR

via Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/96324562039>

Webinar ID: 963 2456 2039

Or Use Phone number: 305-224-1968

Meeting ID: 963 2456 2039

1. Call to Order

2. Motion to Approve Agenda

3. Motion to Approve Meeting Minutes

Subject	3.1. September Minutes
Meeting	November 18, 2025 - REIB City Council Committee Meeting - Tuesday, November 18, 2025, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)
Category	3. Motion to Approve Meeting Minutes
Department	Racial Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging (REIB)
Type	

4. Public Forum

5. REIB Updates

Subject	5.1. Charter Change
Meeting	November 18, 2025 - REIB City Council Committee Meeting - Tuesday, November 18, 2025, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)
Category	5. REIB Updates
Department	Racial Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging (REIB)
Type	

6. 2020 Resolution

Subject	6.1. 2020 Resolution
Meeting	November 18, 2025 - REIB City Council Committee Meeting - Tuesday, November 18, 2025, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)
Category	6. 2020 Resolution
Department	Racial Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging (REIB)
Type	
Recommended Action	

7. Reparations Task Force

Subject	7.1. Reparations Task Force
Meeting	November 18, 2025 - REIB City Council Committee Meeting - Tuesday, November 18, 2025, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)
Category	7. Reparations Task Force
Department	Racial Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging (REIB)
Type	
Recommended Action	

8. Community Forum

9. Adjournment

Subject	9.1. Motion to adjourn
Meeting	November 18, 2025 - REIB City Council Committee Meeting - Tuesday, November 18, 2025, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)
Category	9. Adjournment
Department	Council and Board
Type	
Recommended Action	

10. Informational and Non-Discrimination Statements

Subject	10.1. This agenda is available in alternative formats upon request. For more information on access, call Lori Olberg, Licensing, Voting and Records Coordinator (802-865-7136)(TTY 802-865-7142). Persons with disabilities who require assistance or special arrangements to participate are encouraged to contact 802-865-7000 (voice) or 802-865-7142 (TTY) at least 72 hours in advance so that proper arrangements can be made. This meeting will also air on Town Meeting TV the Wednesday after the meeting, starting at 8:00 pm and repeating at 1:00 am and 7:00 am the following day. The City of Burlington will not tolerate unlawful harassment or discrimination on the basis of political or religious affiliation, race, color, national origin, place of birth, ancestry, age,
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sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, veteran status, disability, HIV positive status, crime victim status or genetic information.

Meeting November 18, 2025 - REIB City Council Committee Meeting - Tuesday, November 18, 2025, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)

Category 10. Informational and Non-Discrimination Statements

Department Council and Board

Type



Racial, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

Tuesday, September 16, 2025, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)

Held in the Sharon Bushor Conference Room, Ground Floor City Hall

OR

via Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/96324562039>

Meeting ID: 963 2456 2039

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Meeting ID: 963 2456 2039

1. Call to Order

2. Motion to Approve Agenda

3. Motion to Approve Meeting Minutes

Subject	3.1. August 2025
Meeting	September 16, 2025 - Agenda v1 - Tuesday, September 16, 2025, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)
Category	3. Motion to Approve Meeting Minutes
Department	Racial Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging (REIB)
Type	

4. Public Forum

5. REIB Updates

Subject	5.1. Staffing
Meeting	September 16, 2025 - Agenda v1 - Tuesday, September 16, 2025, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)
Category	5. REIB Updates
Department	Racial Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging (REIB)
Type	

Subject **5.1. Director Search Update**
Meeting September 16, 2025 - Agenda v1 - Tuesday, September 16, 2025, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)
Category 5. REIB Updates
Department Racial Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging (REIB)
Type
Recommended Action

Subject **5.2. REIB Charter Update**
Meeting September 16, 2025 - Agenda v1 - Tuesday, September 16, 2025, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)
Category 5. REIB Updates
Department Racial Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging (REIB)
Type

Subject **5.3. BIPOC Stakeholder Meeting: Citywide Housing Initiatives**
Meeting September 16, 2025 - Agenda v1 - Tuesday, September 16, 2025, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)
Category 5. REIB Updates
Department Racial Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging (REIB)
Type

6. TCV Updates

7. Community Forum

8. Wrap Up & Motion to Adjourn

Subject **8.1. Motion to adjourn**
Meeting September 16, 2025 - Agenda v1 - Tuesday, September 16, 2025, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)
Category 8. Wrap Up & Motion to Adjourn
Department Council and Board
Type
Recommended Action

9. Informational and Non-Discrimination Statements

Subject **9.1. This agenda is available in alternative formats upon request. For more information on access, call Lori Olberg, Licensing, Voting and Records Coordinator (802-865-7136)(TTY 802-865-7142). Persons with disabilities who require assistance or special arrangements to participate are encouraged to contact 802-865-7000 (voice) or 802-865-7142 (TTY) at least 72 hours in advance so that proper arrangements can be made. This meeting will also air**

on Town Meeting TV the Wednesday after the meeting, starting at 8:00 pm and repeating at 1:00 am and 7:00 am the following day. The City of Burlington will not tolerate unlawful harassment or discrimination on the basis of political or religious affiliation, race, color, national origin, place of birth, ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, veteran status, disability, HIV positive status, crime victim status or genetic information.

Meeting September 16, 2025 - Agenda v1 - Tuesday, September 16, 2025, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)

Category 9. Informational and Non-Discrimination Statements

Department Council and Board

Type

Minutes taken by: Vicky Luciano

REIB City Council Committee

May 20, 2025 5:30 – 7:00 pm

Sharon Bushor Room

Attendees:

Christian Berry, Interim Director REIB (in person)

Katie Greene, Community & Belonging Program Manager REIB (in person)

Vicky Luciano, Administrative and Financial Coordinator REIB (in person)

Councilor Becca Brown McKnight (in person)

Ferene Paris (in person)

Councilor Melo Grant (Virtual)

Councilor Ranjit “Buddy” Singh (Virtual)

Councilor Evan Litwin (Virtual)

Councilor Ben Traverse (Virtual)

p.lopee@gmail.com (no name listed, virtual)

Emma Wall (Virtual)

Lizzy Clements (Virtual)

Michelle Bookless (Virtual)

Charlotte Safran (Virtual)

Christine Hughes (Virtual)

Elizabeth Cornell (Virtual)

Sherwood Smith (Virtual)

Grey Barreda (Virtual)

Jaada Longmore (Virtual)

Mona Tolba (Virtual)

Mary Gannon (Virtual)

Reverend Mark Hughes (Virtual)

Meeting Convened: 5:38 PM

Agenda:

1. Call to Order

- a. Councilor Grant called the meeting to session at 5:38 PM

2. Motion to Approve Agenda

- a. Councilor Singh motioned to approve the agenda. Councilor McKnight seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Motion to Approve Meeting Minutes

- a. Councilor Singh motioned to approve the meeting minutes. Councilor Mcknight seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Public Forum

- a. Members of the public voiced strong support for the REIB and Interim Director Berry and expressed concerns and disappointment for the delay in the naming of the permanent director for the REIB. A few members of the public expressed the need to acknowledge what is happening on a national level. A member of the public asked what is the criteria for being a part of the BIPOC Stakeholders meeting and expressed a need to center the topics affecting BIPOC. Refer to the video.
 - i. Councilor Grant apologized for the delay and expressed they would not be able to make the announcement as it is Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak's announcement to make. Councilor Grant said she would look into the criteria for the BIPOC Stakeholders meetings. She brought up the community forum as another space to bring some topics to have conversations. She expressed an interest in speaking to the members to talk about their concerns. Refer to video.
 - ii. Councilor Mcknight expressed their appreciation of all the words, comments, opinions, thoughts, and frustration that was shared and empathized with all that was said. She expressed that she supports Interim Director Berry as the permanent director. She noted it would be harder for whoever does come in if it is not Interim Director Berry. Refer to video.
 - iii. Councilor Singh echoed the frustrations the members of community expressed and apologized to Interim Director Berry and the REIB staff for being put through the process and expressed gratitude for Interim Director Berry and staff for working through the pressure and staying professional. Refer to video

5. REIB Updates

a. Staffing

i. Director Search Update

- 1. Interim Director Berry informed everyone the staffing process is in the same holding pattern. The 2 program managers for education and health equity can't be hired until the permanent director has been named.
- 2. Councilor Grant informed everyone that the decision for the new director has been named and an announcement will be coming from the mayor but she is not sure when the announcement will be made. Refer to video.

b. REIB Charter Update

- i. Councilor McKnight informed everyone the Charter Change Committee met to fine tune the language for the Charter. She said in the previous meeting they narrowed in on 3 issues to open up for public discussion, if the director should be appointed by the mayor,

how long the appointment should be, and the list of power and responsibilities of the office. Refer to the Charter Change memo below. And the last issue is creating a citizen-led commission or advisory board. Refer to the video. Councilor Grant expressed her concerns about having a commission over an advisory board. Refer to the video. Councilor McKnight expressed she and the other Council members on the Charter Change Committee would be willing to talk about the issues. She mentioned the deadline to get the language fine-tuned would-be early December. Refer to the video. A member of the community asked a clarifying question about who needs to be appointed by the mayor. Interim Director Berry answered that all of the Department heads and some directors are appointed. Refer to the video. Councilor Singh expressed his thoughts on the composition of the board and urged people to give their opinions on the issues brought up by Councilor McKnight. Refer to the video.

c. BIPOC Stakeholder Meeting: Citywide Housing Initiatives

- i. Councilor Grant informed everyone the next BIPOC Stakeholders meeting would be on Wednesday the 24th at 9:00 am. A member of the community presented a few questions for Councilor Grant to bring to Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak. Refer to the video.

6. TCV Updates

- a. No TCVs had any updates.

7. Community Forum

- a. Councilor Grant informed everyone that for the next Community Forum she would like to invite representatives from Food not Cops, Food Not Bombs, Street Cats, and the owners of King Street Laundry as they all do significant amounts of work with the unhoused population. Councilor Grant expressed she would welcome any emails with additional topics for community forum. A member of the public encouraged the City Councilors to have a conversation about what accountability looks like, thanked them for offering their perspectives and offering up what their roles could be and expressed a need for community support, especially white allies. Other member of the community expressed frustration and disappointment in Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak. Another community member reviewed the Declaration of Racism as a Public Health Emergency in 2020 and the Reparations Task Force. Refer to the video.

8. Wrap Up & Motion to Adjourn

- a. Councilor Grant adjourned the meeting at 7:30 pm

Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (REIB)

Date: July 9, 2015

To: Burlington City Council

From: Christian Berry, Interim Director

Re: Recommended Action: Motion to Refer the REIB Proposed Charter Language to the Charter Change Committee

Introduction

This memo proposes the formal addition of the Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (REIB) to Burlington's City Charter and recommends City Council refer the proposed REIB Charter Language to the Charter Change Committee for further action.

Establishing the REIB Office within the city's charter signifies a commitment to advancing racial equity and social justice throughout our city. This initiative aligns with our ongoing efforts to create a more inclusive community, and it addresses systemic inequities that have historically affected the most underrepresented, underserved, and marginalized members of our community.

History of Racial Equity and Social Justice Work in City Governance

The City of Burlington has taken significant strides towards racial equity and social justice since the early 2000s. In 2000, the City Council adopted the Legacy Action Plan, outlining a vision for improving the city's economic, environmental, social, and cultural health for future generations. This plan initially overlooked the urgent need to assess and address systemic barriers related to diversity and racial equity, which were incorporated into the plan in 2010.

In 2011, under the direction of the Social Equity Director, Wanda Hines, a Unity Retreat convened over 50 stakeholders to identify structural barriers and emphasize the necessity of a coordinated, city-supported plan to advance racial equity. This work laid the foundation for future initiatives. A resolution to create a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee was passed by the City Council in 2012 and by late 2013, the city enlisted the Vermont Partnership for Fairness and Diversity to develop a strategic plan addressing racial and ethnic disparities. This plan was adopted in 2014 with the goal of embedding inclusion, equity, and justice into city operations.

In response to identified gaps in Burlington's approach to addressing racial and social disparities, the Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (REIB) was established in 2019. This formal launch created a centralized structure to lead internal systems change efforts and public-facing equity initiatives throughout the city. Tyeastia Green was appointed as the City's first Director of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging in 2020.

Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

Initially, the City of Burlington's efforts to address racial equity were often reactive rather than proactive, leading to a fragmented approach to social justice. Establishing a dedicated Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging provided a centralized focus for racial equity and social justice-based efforts and initiatives, ensuring ongoing attention to issues faced by the most underrepresented, underserved, and marginalized members of our community.

Since its establishment in 2019, the Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (REIB) has emerged as a key driver of systemic equity efforts throughout city governance. The office's work is now integrated into internal policies,

public engagement initiatives, budget planning, education and training, and service delivery. In response to community needs and

organizational gaps, the REIB's strategic and operational responsibilities have expanded. The REIB continues to be relied upon to lead and support equity-based initiatives across departments and within city policies.

Currently, the need for a formal REIB Office is more urgent than ever. National conversations surrounding racial inequality and ongoing attacks on human rights reveal the systemic injustices faced not only by racial and ethnic groups, but also by various underrepresented, underserved, and marginalized groups, including those impacted by socioeconomic status, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, religion, and other factors that result in disparate treatment.

The focus on inclusion and belonging emphasizes the importance of creating a community where everyone feels safe, valued, and supported, irrespective of their backgrounds or experiences. An official Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging would ensure that racial equity and social justice considerations are integral to all city policies and programs, rather than an afterthought.

Justification for Including the Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging and REIB Director position in Burlington's City Charter

Institutionalizing the Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging within Burlington's City Charter offers numerous benefits for future governance. By embedding the REIB Office in the Charter, the city demonstrates an unwavering commitment to prioritizing racial equity and social justice in all aspects of governance and community development. This institutionalization creates a mechanism for long-term accountability, ensuring that city officials and employees remain responsible for promoting equity and belonging in both policy decisions and program implementations.

Furthermore, a chartered REIB Office facilitates a centralized, coordinated approach to equity-based initiatives, effectively breaking down silos between departments while ensuring comprehensive strategies that address systemic inequities. It also allows for dedicated funding and resources, thereby enabling the sustainable development of programs that cater to the needs of the most underrepresented, underserved, and marginalized members of our community. This formal commitment fosters greater public trust and engagement, as community members will feel more included in the decision-making processes knowing there is an office specifically dedicated to their concerns.

With the REIB Office enshrined in the City Charter, considerations of racial equity would be systematically integrated into all city policies, programs, practices, and services, promoting a culture of inclusion throughout municipal governance. The REIB can conduct regular assessments, collect data, and provide ongoing training regarding racial equity, leading to better-informed decision-making by city officials. Moreover, its establishment encourages community engagement and empowerment, creating a platform where voices from various backgrounds can be heard, leading to more impactful initiatives.

Additionally, the REIB can set measurable goals and benchmarks for achieving racial equity, allowing the city to track progress over time and make necessary adjustments to strategies. Ultimately, embedding the REIB Office within the City Charter serves to facilitate a cultural shift towards inclusivity, supporting a broader societal change that values diversity and belonging. In summary, institutionalizing the REIB Office would create a robust framework for addressing systemic issues, contributing to a more equitable and inclusive Burlington for everyone.

Request:

Establishing the Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging within Burlington’s City Charter is a vital step towards fostering an inclusive and equitable community. This formal recognition will ensure that our commitment to racial equity, inclusion, and belonging is embedded in the governance of our city, paving the way for systemic change and accountability. Adding the Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging to Burlington’s City Charter is a crucial step toward reinforcing our commitment to equity and justice.

Proposed Motion: “To waive the first reading of the proposed Charter Change and forward the language to the Charter Change Committee for further deliberation subject to review and approval of the City Attorney’s Office.”

Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (REIB) Charter Language

The City of Burlington shall form an Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion and Belonging and establish a Director of Racial Equity Inclusion and Belonging.

The REIB Director role shall be a permanent position in the City appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council.

1. The REIB Office shall be under supervision, direction and control of director subject to the orders and ordinances of city council
2. The office of racial equity, inclusion, and belonging administrative officer shall have all of the powers, duties, and responsibilities as are provided in the racial equity, inclusion, and belonging director position description.

Subject to the orders and ordinances of the City Council, the Mayor and REIB director shall develop and implement a comprehensive racial equity, inclusion, and belonging strategy for the City of Burlington.

In furtherance of this work, the REIB director shall, subject to the orders and ordinances of the City Council, have the following rights, powers and duties, and implement such alongside all city departments:

1. To work on behalf of the City to advance equity and social justice by championing diversity, inclusion, belonging, and anti-racism;
2. To develop, coordinate, implement, and administer racial equity and inclusion strategies and projects for the City;
3. To recommend to city departments, the mayor’s office, and City Council, policy and program changes to better advance racial equity and inclusion in the City;
4. To enhance representation in city government through decision-making bodies, community engagement initiatives, and policy development process for folks who hold underserved communities;
5. To coordinate and facilitate resident engagement in the City that encourages inclusive spaces for engagement with city government.

Resolution Relating to

MARCH 3, 2026 ANNUAL CITY MEETING – CHARTER CHANGE RE:

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE OFFICE OF RACIAL EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING

Sponsor(s): Charter Change Committee

Introduced:

Referred to:

Action:

Date:

Signed by Mayor:

CITY OF BURLINGTON

In the year Two Thousand Twenty-Five.....

Resolved by the City Council of the City of Burlington, as follows:

1. WHEREAS, the City of Burlington is committed to advancing racial equity, inclusion, and belonging as foundational principles in municipal governance and community life; and
2. WHEREAS, the City recognizes the importance of establishing a permanent Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (“REIB”) to lead, coordinate, and advance this work across all departments; and
3. WHEREAS, the REIB Office plays a critical role in developing strategies, advising policy, and building inclusive community engagement processes that foster equity and belonging for all Burlington constituents; and
4. WHEREAS, the formal creation of this office within the City Charter will strengthen accountability, sustainability, and institutional commitment to this work;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council approves the following amendment to the City Charter and requests that the Mayor warn the following question and place it on the ballot for the Annual City Meeting to be held on March 3, 2026, and that the City Clerk set public hearings on this question in accordance with § 303 of the City Charter and 17 V.S.A. § 2645:

“Shall the Charter of the City of Burlington, Acts of 1948, No. 298, as amended, be further amended as follows?”:

§ 374 Enumerated:

Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

- (a) The City of Burlington shall form an Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (“REIB”) and establish a Director of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging.
- (b) The REIB Director role shall be a permanent position in the City, selected and hired in accordance with City of Burlington Human Resources policies and procedures, and shall report directly to the Mayor.
- (c) The REIB Office shall be under the supervision, direction, and control of the Director, subject to the orders and ordinances of the City Council.
- (d) The Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging administrative officer shall have all of the powers, duties, and responsibilities as are provided in the Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Director position description.
- (e) Subject to the orders and ordinances of the City Council, the Mayor and REIB Director shall develop and implement a comprehensive racial equity, inclusion, and belonging strategy for the City of Burlington.
- (f) In furtherance of this work, the REIB Director shall, subject to the orders and ordinances of the City Council, have the following rights, powers, and duties, and implement such alongside all City departments:
 - To work on behalf of the City to advance equity and social justice by championing diversity, inclusion, belonging, and anti-racism.
 - To develop, coordinate, implement, and administer racial equity and inclusion strategies and projects for the City.
 - To provide consultation to City departments, the Mayor’s Office, and City Council policy and program changes to better advance racial equity and inclusion in the City.
 - To enhance representation in City government through decision-making bodies, community engagement initiatives, and policy development processes for folks who hold underserved community identities.
 - To coordinate and facilitate constituent engagement in the City that encourages inclusive spaces for engagement with City government.

Resolution Relating to

**RACIAL JUSTICE THROUGH ECONOMIC AND
CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

****revised version****

RESOLUTION 5.12

Sponsors: Councilors Hightower,
Hanson, Stromberg, Tracy, Freeman,
Pine, Paul, Paulino, and Carpenter

Introduced: 06/29/20

Referred to: _____

Action: amended; adopted

Date: 06/29/20

Signed by Mayor: 07/13/20

CITY OF BURLINGTON

In the year Two Thousand Twenty

Resolved by the City Council of the City of Burlington, as follows:

1 That WHEREAS, systemic racism is at the heart of our economy and continues to adversely impact BIPOC
2 people across all systems of society, including employment, housing, education, access to health services, the
3 justice system, economic development, and across all systems of government; and

4 WHEREAS, the median wealth of a black family is 1/13th the median wealth of a white family;
5 unemployment rates for African Americans have averaged twice those of whites since data has been recorded;
6 home ownership for black families is a fraction of that of whites; and a study by Vermont Legal Aid found
7 black New Americans may be discriminated against over fifty percent of the time they seek to rent; and

8 WHEREAS black individuals are on average more likely to see negative health outcomes such as
9 hypertension, heart disease, diabetes and asthma, and are less likely to have a primary care provider and less
10 likely to be insured; have been subjected to racist medical theories, unethical sanctioned research, and through
11 environmental racism are more exposed to polluted air, water, and soil; and

12 WHEREAS, COVID-19 has exacerbated the impacts of systemic racism BIPOC communities face as
13 they *disproportionally* have fewer cash reserves, have less access to COVID-19 relief funds, are more likely to
14 be employed as essential workers with limited ability to work from home, are more likely to face eviction or
15 foreclosure, experience barriers to remote education, and are less likely to receive timely COVID-targeted
16 testing or adequate care; and

17 WHEREAS, diverse approaches to public safety through the use of social workers, addiction and
18 recovery specialists, mental health professionals and others prepared and trained to respond to conflict
19 challenges in our community in a variety of ways rather than solely policing, have been shown to decrease
20 crime, increase public safety, and de-escalate potentially dangerous situations for community members and
21 police alike; and

22 WHEREAS, the above approaches can be particularly beneficial to the community when anti-
23 oppression and racial bias trainings and policies are incorporated consistently, as well as when paired with
24 economic justice initiatives; and

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ORIGINAL

DISTRIBUTION:

I hereby certify that this resolution has been sent to the following department(s) on

RESOLUTION RELATING TO

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Adopted by the City Council

....., 20.....

..... Clerk

Approved....., 20.....

..... Mayor

Vol. Page

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25 WHEREAS, the role of the City of Burlington’s public safety employees should be to serve the public,
26 build community trust, and ensure the safety of all community members; and

27 WHEREAS, policing in the United States has its roots in the Fugitive Slave Act and continues to
28 largely protect middle and upper class white communities and their property while over-policing BIPOC
29 communities through disproportionate stops, contact with youth in schools, and targeted community policing,
30 resulting in the disproportionate arrests, uses of force, and incarcerations of BIPOC individuals that have
31 created long-lasting physical, emotional, social and economic damage; and

32 WHEREAS, a significant number of members of the public have shared their experiences and
33 expressed their concern that the Burlington Police Department has failed to equally and safely serve the public
34 or provide sufficient accountability, causing a loss of trust and ultimately leaving BIPOC communities, in
35 particular, less safe; and

36 WHEREAS, significant members of the public have shared their concerns that officers Jason
37 Bellavance, Cory Campbell, and Joseph Corrow have inflicted significant physical harm on members of our
38 community and that these officers’ continued service on the Burlington Police Department makes them feel
39 unsafe; and

40 WHEREAS, Burlington’s number of police officers per capita is more than thirty percent above that of
41 the national average, as well as thirty percent above the median of a survey of university cities with
42 comparable demographic characteristics; and

43 WHEREAS, black students are disciplined at far higher rates in our schools and schools across the
44 country and are far more likely to come into contact with School Resource Officers; and

45 WHEREAS, data collected by the Burlington Police Department reflects racial disparities in policed
46 neighborhoods, contact with youth, traffic stops, search rates, use of force and arrest rates;

47 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council declares racism a citywide health
48 crisis; and

49 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Burlington shall prioritize the eradication of systemic
50 racism in the creation of the municipal budget; and

51 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Burlington Police Department decrease through attrition,
52 allowing officers to elect of their own accord to retire or leave for other reasons, the maximum total number of
53 uniformed police officers by 30% from 105 to 74 uniformed officers; and

54 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the general fund dollars freed up by reducing the number of
55 uniformed officers shall be used to reduce the demand for police services through a variety of social services,

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ORIGINAL

DISTRIBUTION:

I hereby certify that this resolution has been sent to the following department(s) on

RESOLUTION RELATING TO

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Adopted by the City Council

....., 20.....

..... Clerk

Approved....., 20.....

..... Mayor

Vol. Page

* * * * *

Attest:

56 as well as social justice, racial justice, and economic justice initiatives, including a community-based cultural
57 empowerment center, a minority-owned business municipal procurement program, and a capital access
58 program, as well as operational capacity for the Racial Equity, Inclusion and Belonging function as a City
59 Office with at least one staff person in addition to the director and funding for a baseline assessment; and

60 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City shall terminate the Memorandum of Understanding
61 between the Burlington School District and the Burlington Police Department by the end of spring semester
62 2021, ensuring that BPD officers not be used for wellness calls and ending the full-time use of BPD School
63 Resource Officers (SROs). The Council recommends the City and School District come together in the 2020
64 calendar year to identify the functions SROs have performed that do not require law enforcement officers;
65 define a new role that will perform as many of these functions as possible under a restorative practices
66 framework; and create procedures for a coordinated approach between the District, the Community Justice
67 Center, and the BPD to implement restorative practices for all of Burlington's school children, regardless of
68 the school they attend; and

69 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a joint committee of the City Council Public Safety Committee
70 and Police Commission begin an inquiry by July 31 into the question of how to build a healthy and safe
71 community and what institutions we need to reach that goal, and that this inquiry include a full operational and
72 functional assessment of the Burlington Police Department that analyzes who, what, where, and how the
73 department polices and includes a review and analysis of the assessment with full community participation
74 and input, followed by the implementation of a methodical transition to a public safety apparatus that delivers
75 services aligned with the values and vision of the community with the first report to the full Council by the
76 first Council meeting in October 2020; and

77 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the above assessment should include rigorous public process and
78 input and include local groups such as the Racial Justice Alliance, Howard Center, Boys and Girls Club, Anew
79 Place, Spectrum Youth and Family Services and others, and Burlington Police Department participation in this
80 process; and

81 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that trainings or events that explore the roots, impacts and solutions to
82 systemic oppression, including but not limited to systemic racism, are required for City staff at all levels at
83 least two times per year, and three times per year for members of our criminal justice system, for improved
84 awareness of how perceptions and behaviors can be managed from a culturally competent foundation.
85 Trainings and events should be greatly varied and be done in partnership with, as they are able, local racial or

* * * * *

ORIGINAL

DISTRIBUTION:

I hereby certify that this resolution
has been sent to the following
department(s) on

RESOLUTION RELATING TO

.....

.....

.....

Adopted by the City Council

....., 20.....

..... Clerk

Approved....., 20.....

..... Mayor

Vol. Page

* * * * *

Attest:

86 social justice groups to ensure mutual understanding and proactive confrontation of the role of systemic state-
87 sanctioned oppression; and

88 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City establish a task force to consider an apology or
89 reparations for the role that Burlington has played in Chattel Slavery; and

90 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the citizen-led Police Commission be entrusted with access to all
91 complaints about sworn officers and the city-council based Public Safety Committee with all such public
92 complaints with the choice on which ones to follow-up on, and that the complaint form as well as the
93 complaint review process be updated to reflect this; and

94 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Police Commission will be entrusted with and may ask for the
95 collection of additional quarterly demographic-disaggregated data such as officer-citizen encounters; and

96 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Charter Change Committee review and propose amendments
97 to the City Charter that authorize the Police Commission to approve by simple majority any disciplinary
98 decision, including a decision of non-discipline, the Police Chief wishes to implement in a use-of-force case,
99 with such approval including the right to impose a new and different discipline as the Commission deems
100 appropriate; and

101 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City should negotiate for mandatory requirements to report
102 use of force, stronger disciplinary measures and full transparency of disciplinary proceedings in police
103 encounters involving brutal or excessive force, or in cases in which there was a failure to report use of force,
104 in the next contract with the Burlington Police Officer's Association.

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111 lb/EBlackwood/Resolutions 2020/City Council - Racial Justice through Economic & Criminal Justice

112 7/2/20

* * * * *

ORIGINAL

RESOLUTION RELATING TO

DISTRIBUTION:

I hereby certify that this resolution has been sent to the following department(s) on

Racial Justice Through Economic And Criminal Justice

Linda Blanchard, City Attorney's Office

.....

Adopted by the City Council

June 29, 2020

[Signature]

Clerk

Approved July 13, 2020

[Signature]

Mayor

[Signature]
Lori Olberg
Licensing, Voting and Records Coordinator

Vol. Page

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Report of the City of Burlington Reparations Taskforce

Prepared by Pablo Bose¹ and Josie Daigle²
January 2024

I Overview – Taskforce Mandate, Composition and Activities

The Burlington Reparations Taskforce was established in August 2020 through a [City Council Resolution](#). It was created with reference to US Congressional Resolution [H.R. 40](#) and [H. 478](#), which consider reparations on a national and municipal level respectively. The resolution considers city level data across a range of socioeconomic disparities. These distinctions – including in housing access, employment rates, health outcomes, and policing practices – suggest that there are continued and marked differences in socioeconomic outcomes for African Americans and especially the descendants of chattel slavery in the US. The resolution was meant to initiate a study of the historical involvement and impacts of the institution of slavery in the City of Burlington and to develop a proposal to address said history – including the possibility of enacting reparations policies and creating a public apology on behalf of the civic government. The resolution created a taskforce to carry out this mission, whose mandate was to study and create reparations plans, recommendations, and educational outcomes regarding racial histories and contemporary relationships within the city of Burlington, Vermont.

Membership within this taskforce was determined through negotiation by several stakeholder communities. These led to appointments to the taskforce of five members, one each selected by the City Council President, the Vermont Racial Justice Alliance, the Mayor of Burlington, and the Vermont Human Rights Commission, as well as the Director of the City of Burlington’s Racial Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Department³. Current and past members are listed below:

REIB Director:	Kim Carson (2022-) Phet Kheomanyvanh (2021) Tyeastia Green (2020-2021)
VT HRC:	Roy Hill (2022-) Hal Colston (2020-2021)
City Council President:	Rebecca Zietlow (2020-2023)
VTRJA:	Christine Hughes (2020-)
Burlington Mayor:	Pablo Bose (2020-)

The Taskforce also included non-voting guests including experts such as William Darity, a national expert as a Professor of Economics at UNC Chapel Hill as well as participation during meetings by paid consultants including Elise Guyette, Rashad Williams, and Laura Hill.

¹ Professor of Geography and Geosciences, University of Vermont.

² Reparations Taskforce Assistant.

³ Members were selected due to their expertise and experience in various related fields (e.g. Christine Hughes is a longtime racial justice activist, Rebecca Zietlow is a nationally-recognized legal scholar on constitutional law and the Reconstruction Era, Pablo Bose is an urban geographer who studies socioeconomic disparities, Hal Colston was a VT State legislator and council member from Winooski).

Members of the public were also present during warned taskforce public meetings. The activities undertaken by the Taskforce have included monthly meetings throughout much of 2020, the first half of 2021 and again beginning in late 2023, the creation and dissemination of RFPs to solicit appropriate research on reparations-related topics, the selection and oversight of research consultants, deliberation on their reports, presentations to city council, working with researchers at the University of Vermont to supplement these studies, and developing a set of recommendations to present to the City Council of Burlington for this final report. Studies commissioned by the taskforce are included as appendices to this overview and are summarized in section 3.

II Defining Reparations

Scales

Reparations are, in their basic form, the idea that some sort of restitution should be made for a harm or injustice caused to a specific group or individual. There are a wide range of possible kinds of reparations that we can see either proposed or enacted within the US and internationally, distinguished by scale and by type. In terms of scale, reparations might operate at an international level, across borders or, nationally, across state lines. Reparations might also be conceived of in a more insular form in the US within the jurisdiction of an individual state or – as in the case of this taskforce – at a more granular or local level, that of the municipality or town. Reparations can also take on very different forms – typically we tend to imagine reparations in economic terms through cash payments or economic compensation. But there are other kinds of reparations that may take legal, cultural, land-based or more symbolic forms as well.

International reparations are intended to address violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. At this scale, reparations have often been developed in order to promote justice and make efforts to make whole groups or individuals who have experienced harms. Such efforts may emphasize either (or both) monetary compensation and satisfaction of non-material injury. Such international or multilateral actions are often difficult to enact due to the scale and scope of the harms and proposed reparations. Some representative examples include war crimes, art theft, and other violations of international humanitarian laws:

- [UN Standards of Reparations](#)
- [Unidroit Convention on Stolen of Illegally Exported Cultural Objects](#)
- [Luxembourg Agreement](#)
- [The JUST Act- Germany](#)

National reparations refer to some form of repair, whether economic, cultural, social or other (see types of reparations below), based upon historical wrongdoings instigated, supported or condoned by a national government. The intent in such reparations efforts is to deconstruct and repair the nationwide systems and relationships which resulted in this wrongdoing. Such an approach is best highlighted by H.R. 40, a reparations policy proposed in the US Congress which highlights how specific governmental policies have contributed to racial injustice in the past, and how both the legacies of such actions and ongoing federal policies continue to affect modern day

African Americans and especially the descendants of chattel slavery. National reparations can come in almost any form - often economic, but also may include some element of symbolic reparations, as well as the revision or even retraction of certain laws and legal frameworks:

- [Civil Liberties Act of 1988 \(H.R.442\)](#)
- [National African American Reparations Commission Recommendations](#)
- [H.R.6130](#)
- [NAACP Recommendations](#)

Reparations at the state level are structured in a very similar manner to those at the national level, with wider reaching policies oriented towards state specific action rather than national ones. These reparations look at state action as a whole and aim to make a particular state a more equitable place to live. Paralleling national-level reparations, such an approach is often based less on individual cases and actions, but rather seek to address wider-ranging policies which resulted in inequalities currently affecting the state:

- California
 - [Materials and Executive Summary](#)
 - [Policy Recommendations](#)
 - [Approval and Links to Extended Documents](#)
- [New York Senate Bill S1163A](#)
- [Maryland Education Reforms](#)
- [Virginia Victims of Eugenics Sterilization Compensation Program](#)

City level policies are among the most narrowly-defined, concrete and action-oriented level of reparations currently being created, often specifically citing one injustice and taking action to repair it based on that city's actions (or inactions) in creating the situation. Local policy is created to analyze and attempt to repair the city sponsored actions which lead to injustice in the first place. The resulting reparations may consist of monetary reparations for those descendants of enslaved persons, but for some cities, the broader aim is to alter ongoing and future municipal policies in order to both prevent inequality in outcomes and to uplift African American residents of the present and future. Such an approach can include changing policy, investing in business ventures, developing cultural centers, and similar actions (see types of reparations). There are also local-scale reparations carried out by other organizations such as universities, churches, community groups and other entities which attempt to create small scale reparations based specifically on that organization's history and interactions with the institution of slavery. Such examples are usually to be found on a more case-by-case basis and are often less policy based and instead look at more specific scenarios:

- [City of Evanston Local Reparations: Restorative Housing Program](#)
- [Resolution No. 20-128 \(Asheville, NC\)](#)
- [Resolution No. 20210304-067 \(Austin, TX\)](#)
- [Reparations for Burge Torture Victims Ordinance](#)

Types

Legal reparations often arise from court decisions or as a result of legislative policymaking, often in response to specific instances of injustice on an individual or group basis. In some cases, such reparative actions do not necessarily not provide a legal precedent for future actions, though they might be referenced by other jurisdictions. Examples of legal reparations might include responses to instances of police brutality, loss of property, and other similar events. Such actions often take place at the local level rather than at a larger scale:

- [42 U.S.C. 1983 - Civil action for deprivation of rights](#)
- [Reparations for Burge Torture Victims Ordinance](#)
- [Corrective Justice and Reparations for Black Slavery](#)
- [Reparations For Police Violence](#)

Cultural reparations can aid with repairing cultural harms created by both group or individual injustice, as we can see with the legacy of slavery and racial discrimination within the US. This form of reparation can take place with the return of artifacts, establishment of cultural centers, and other cultural goods. This type of reparations can be found across multiple scales, from city-based community centers to nationwide racial education policy:

- [From Slavery to Genocide: The Fallacy of Debt in Reparations Discourse](#)
- [Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990](#)
- [California's Cultural Reparations](#)
- [Providence, RI- Report of Reparations Commission](#)

Economic reparations include a range of different variations, and there are multiple models and forms that these can take. They might include lump sum payments, investments into properties and businesses, and specific payments over time. This is a common form of reparations, and the size and scope of payments as well as eligibility of recipients are often contested and controversial. Economic reparations are, however, one of the most concrete forms of reparative action, in which direct restitution can be made to injured parties. Some of the different institutions that have explored economic reparations (or been called upon to provide them) include governments at various levels, private corporations, non-profit and non-governmental organizations, and educational institutions:

- [Reparations and Persistent Racial Wealth Gaps](#)
- [The Economics of Reparations](#)
- [Georgetown Reconciliation Fund](#)
- [Virginia Victims of Eugenics Sterilization Compensation Program](#)

Land reparations is also sometimes referred to as land repatriation. Land repatriation not only requires giving the physical land back to the original owners but also adding legal and political frameworks to help uphold sovereignty. This form of reparations includes a call to redraw boundaries from the way that a particular area, country or jurisdiction has been historically codified and redefine the way land is structured, and property owned. There is an emphasis in

repatriation on redefining land, property, ownership and mapping through a decolonial lens. This can be done through several platforms, tools and instruments. A key example of this approach is the Indigenous land back rights movement:

- [Reparative Infrastructures](#)
- [Returning Land, Expanding Landscape](#)
- [Land Reparations and Indigenous Solidarity Toolkit](#)

Symbolic reparations primarily take the form of apologies and other ways of seeking forgiveness for past injustices. These include formal announcements, speeches, the creation of a statue, plaque, memorial or tribute, or an official document adopted by a legislature or other institutional body. This form of reparations is often paired with a more concrete form of reparations such as economic restitution. Perhaps the most essential part of this reparative form is documenting an official acknowledgement of wrongdoing and harm:

- [Reconciliation and Reparations](#)
- [Civil Liberties Act of 1988 \(H.R.442\)](#)

III Cases and Models

Various (if limited) examples of reparations in their many forms have appeared throughout modern history, and can be demonstrated in several case studies, as either enacted by governments and organizations or proposed by advocacy groups and victims themselves. One prominent US example are Japanese reparations in response to the unjustified displacement and confinement of and economic harm to Japanese immigrants and American citizens of Japanese descent during the World War 2.⁴ More than 100,000 first- and second-generation Japanese Americans as well as Japanese immigrants were removed from homes and businesses (primarily in California) and placed in relocation centers and eventually internment camps hundreds of miles away. After four decades of activism and struggle, a reparations effort was successful during the 1980s. The actual reparations consisted of returning objects (or the monetary value of said objects) taken during the original internment process (which had been documented by the federal administration) and included no monetary payouts or reparations for the injustice itself but rather for the value of goods and property lost (as long as it was documented).⁵ Victims could file claims and receive some compensation, managed through the Office of Redress Administration (ORA) for Restitution Payment, with a 10-year program and \$20,000 to each eligible person. \$1.6 billion was actually paid out, but very few people actually received the full amount.⁶ This case more represents a local reparations principle, repairing for a specific act/loss in narrow terms of economic loss rather than in terms of the injustice represented by internment itself.

⁴ Yoshida, H. (n.d.). *Redress and reparations for Japanese American incarceration*. . The National WWII Museum | New Orleans. <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/redress-and-reparations-japanese-american-incarceration>

⁵ Sarah L. Brew, Making Amends for History: Legislative Reparations for Japanese Americans and Other Minority Groups, 8(1) LAW & INEQ. 179 (1990).

⁶ GovTrack.us. (2024). H.R. 442 — 100th Congress: Civil Liberties Act of 1987. Retrieved from <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/100/hr442>

Justice for the victims of the Holocaust of Jewish and other populations during WWII also serve as another prominent example of reparative policy. There are several forms of reparations related to the Holocaust. These include economic reparations to those harmed by the Holocaust⁷, symbolic reparations via public apologies, as well as cultural reparations through art return, return of stolen property, and other kinds of restitution⁸. This scale has mainly been transnational, and reparations have often been concluded through treaties between countries and organizations. The United Nations has also been involved in some cases, as many of the actual harms were violations of international law and are matters of international importance⁹. Some can also be considered as a form of national reparations, as some reparative acts were specifically from one country to its residents.

Another significant case (and the one with the most relevance to our work) are reparations for African American communities, referencing a wide range of injustices but generally beginning with the ‘original sin’ of American slavery.¹⁰ Beyond this most prominent example, reparations for African Americans also include the many other longstanding examples of racial injustice including for the victims of Jim Crow laws, racial violence and terrorism such as lynching, disenfranchisement through barriers to political participation (such as poll taxes), racialized housing covenants, blockbusting, redlining and other forms of residential segregation, discriminatory policies in hiring, education and healthcare and other forms of discrimination experienced by African Americans.¹¹ More recently, many efforts at reparation target modern-day disparities, such as the wealth gap, housing inequality, and police brutality that continue to lead to widely disparate socioeconomic injustices based on race. Due to the wide-reaching impacts of racism, it can be difficult to target a distinctive scale and type of reparation, as both harms and policies are felt across many types, scales and levels.¹²

Finally, indigenous reparations are articulated through various processes, including territorial return, access to traditional practices (through hunting and fishing licenses), resource rights (such as oil and gas and mineral rights), land back movements, return of artwork, archeological and cultural artifacts, and monetary payments. It is important to note that such efforts have made little progress beyond proposals and have resulted in few impactful examples of actual reparations.¹³ Those that have occurred have been made primarily on a national scale,

⁷ Goschler, Constantin, “Luxembourg Agreement”, in: Encyclopedia of Jewish History and Culture Online, Original German Language Edition: Enzyklopädie Jüdischer Geschichte und Kultur. Im Auftrag der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig herausgegeben von Dan Diner. © J.B. Metzler, Stuttgart/Springer-Verlag GmbH Deutschland 2011–2017.

⁸ Unidroit Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects Rome, 24 June 1995

⁹ UN General Assembly, Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 9 December 1948, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 78, p. 277, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3ac0.html> [accessed 10 January 2024]

¹⁰ Darity, William A., and A. Kirsten Mullen. *From Here to Equality: Reparations for Black Americans in the Twenty-First Century*, University of North Carolina Press, 2020. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uvm/detail.action?docID=6126519>.

¹¹ Kaplan, Jonathan, and Andrew Valls. “Housing Discrimination as a Basis for Black Reparations.” *Public Affairs Quarterly*, vol. 21, no. 3, 2007, pp. 255–73. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40441462>. Accessed 10 Feb. 2023.

¹² Danielson, Mishael A, and Alexis Pimentel. “Give Them Their Due: An African-American Reparations Program Based on the Native American Federal Aid Model.” *Washington and Lee Journal of Civil Rights and Social Justice*, vol. 10, no. 1, 2004, pp. 89–114., <https://doi.org/https://scholarlycommons.law.wlu.edu/crsj/vol10/iss1/7>.

¹³ Dinab, Shelton, 'Reparations for Indigenous Peoples: The Present Value of Past Wrongs', in Federico Lenzerini (ed.), *Reparations for Indigenous Peoples: International and Comparative Perspectives* (Oxford, 2008; online edn, Oxford Academic, 22 Mar. 2012), <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199235605.003.0003>, accessed 10 Jan. 2024.

with some movements on a state-by-state basis.¹⁴ Indigenous reparations also come in a variety of types, often including land acknowledgements, symbolic, and cultural reparative acts.¹⁵

There are also multiple models considered by governments and academics in this area. One exploratory model created by the United Nations is the UN Standards of Reparations. The UN defines reparations as “adequate, effective and prompt reparation is intended to promote justice by redressing gross violations of international human rights law or serious violations of international humanitarian law.” This definition of reparations is made for more wider ranging injustices, such as Holocaust reparations, justice for those wronged by war crimes, and other wider ranging international incidents. In order to have reparations under the UN’s definition there are 5 conditions: Cessation (assurances and guarantees of non-repetition), Restitution and repatriation, Compensation, Satisfaction, Rehabilitation. These conditions give a step-by-step list of requirements in order to fully gain reparations, highlighting the steps of compensation and rehabilitation. This definition requires the encapsulation of multiple forms of reparations – there cannot just be symbolic or monetary compensation, but a mixture of multiple forms must be employed in order to most fully repair the wrongdoing.¹⁶

Another model was created by Dr. William Darity, an economist specializing in reparations efforts. He calculates economic reparations based on a post-Civil War promise of 40 acres worth of land (which in 2024 would equal roughly \$80,000 per person). Due to his background and work, he mainly focuses on the economic form of compensation, though he has proposed multiple versions of his monetary models, most resulting in a higher sum of reparations. His work is valuable as it gives a variety of options for monetary compensation, often the most difficult part of determining reparations.¹⁷

One current model is that being developed in the State of California. California follows the UN Principles of Reparations definition, as well as the 5 conditions required in order to properly calculate and address reparations. They then break down several racial historical issues and create a step-by-step list of how to address each condition under each category. The reparations favor those descended from slaves, though some of the components apply to all Black Americans who live within California. The goal of these reparations is to take responsibility for the ways in which California and the California government have actively taken part in racism, and to undo some of the long-lasting effects.

The categories which are addressed are listed as Enslavement, Racial Terror, Policies Addressing Political Disenfranchisement, Housing Segregation and Unjust Property Takings, Separate and Unequal Education, Racism in Environment, Pathologizing of African American Families, Control Over Creative, Cultural and Intellectual Life, Stolen Labor and Hindered

¹⁴ Danika Cooper (UC, Berkeley) *Returning Land, Expanding Landscapes*

¹⁵ Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act, Pub. L. No. 101-601, 104 Stat.

¹⁶ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*, 9 December 1948, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 78, p. 277, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3ac0.html> [accessed 10 January 2024]

¹⁷ Darity, William A., and A. Kirsten Mullen. *From Here to Equality: Reparations for Black Americans in the Twenty-First Century*, University of North Carolina Press, 2020. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uvm/detail.action?docID=6126519>.

Opportunity, Unjust Legal System, Mental and Physical Harm and Neglect, and the Wealth Gap. Each of these categories is then separately repaired for using the conditions created by the UN.¹⁸

A similar model can be found in Evanston, IL, which aims to address a specific case of injustice. The city recognizes that the percentage of black homeowners declined precipitously between the 1920s and 1970s, directly as a result of racist and segregationist policies. Evanston's approach has been to adopt an action-oriented form of reparations, with specific focus on housing reparations within the city. The city works both with investments into black housing ownership efforts, as well as lump sum payments to those who can prove evidence of housing discrimination in their family's time living in the city. This is determined by a committee within the city, and the benefits are distributed to those who apply via application, with the city utilizing its cannabis tax receipts to fund the program. The components of the policy include home ownership benefit, through down payment and closing cost assistance for black residents, home improvement benefits consisting of funds to repair, modernize, and improve housing within the city, and mortgage assistance benefits through money for down mortgage principal, interest, and/or late penalties for property. The city recognizes that their discriminatory housing practices (primarily through racial zoning and housing covenants) were assisted by the city and have caused ongoing racialized issues and supported the wealth gap. This model is particularly action oriented, with current, ongoing, steps taken by the city government.¹⁹

Providence, RI, uses the process of Truth, Reconciliation, and Reparations in order to address systematic racism. Eligibility for this program is available to Indigenous people, those of African descent, qualified census tracts and neighborhoods, and residents facing poverty (not reliant of the race of those residing there). This is considered a race neutral reparations policy, though the plan does specifically aim to address racism within the city. This policy is not necessarily a racial or slavery reparations policy, but rather to prevent ongoing inequality within the city. They utilize a 11-point reparations plan, including symbolic, economic, and cultural reparations efforts. By using multiple types of reparative processes, they are able to more fully address various claims, including those that are not entirely race based. They aim to repair for slavery, urban renewal, racist laws, and more. The plan is more specifically broken down in the report on reparations policy overview.²⁰

Another city, Asheville, NC, prepared a resolution suggesting a 3-phase process for reparations, with the steps being Information Sharing and Truth-Telling, Formation of a Reparations Commission, and Finalizing and Presenting the Report. Asheville's taskforce has determined 5 categories they aim to pass reparative policy for: Criminal Justice, Economic Development, Education, Health & Wellness, and Housing. Asheville does not provide direct monetary payouts, and instead aims to create generational wealth. This is an economic based policy which focuses on investments rather than personal compensation. There is also the

¹⁸ Bonta, Rob. "AB3121 Interim Report - Oag.ca.gov." *State of California Department of Justice*, 2022, https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/ab3121-interim-report-executive-summary-2022.pdf?aff_id=1037.

¹⁹ City of Evanston. "Reparations- Restorative Housing Program Guidelines 2021 - City of Evanston." <https://www.cityofevanston.org/>, 2021, <https://www.cityofevanston.org/home/showpublisheddocument/66184/637677439011570000>.

²⁰ Providence Municipal Reparations Commission (2022) Report of The Providence Municipal Reparations Commission

element of symbolic reparations with a formal apology on behalf of the city's participation in systematic racism and slavery.²¹

A final model of reparations was created by the NAACP, which highlights the 40 acres and a mule promises not met during Reconstruction. This would consist of a 40-acre land grant for each family of 3 or more individuals with no taxes for the first 5 years. Under social services, descendants of enslaved people get social security benefits, access to Medicare, and other old age programs earlier (due to disparities in life expectancy). These components are listed as first steps, which must be followed by a systematic overhaul of our social system completed with structural changes. This is a national reparations effort which could not be recreated at a smaller level, particularly the full recall of our social and law system. Similar to Darity, they base their suggestions on the promises which were stolen away post the Civil War but go at this from a slightly more literal approach.²²

IV Challenges and Barriers

There are multiple challenges that we can imagine confronting a reparations effort. Among these are the issues in determining funding, scale and eligibility of recipients. The vastness and entanglement of the entirety of American society in the slave economy means that there are really no parts of the country that can be held blameless in the efforts to address this 'original sin'. In this sense the City of Burlington is implicated in the US history of slavery regardless of the historical presence of actual enslaved persons within its boundaries. Yet – as some of the experts we consulted suggested – is it appropriate for a small city to try and right the wrongs of this historical injustice? Could it actually do so, given the cost and scale of the enterprise?

The very question of who pays for reparations can be one of the biggest challenges faced in getting attempts off of the ground. There are political issues that abound, especially within a country, state and city that is as deeply divided on all fronts to try and engage in such efforts. The very notion of reparations seems to demand proof of both harm and of intentionality to create harm. For a historical wrong, both can be difficult to produce. In order to create a reparations framework, there also needs to be a clear source of funding, with clear parameters of who and where this money goes towards. Determining scale of reparations can also be a clear challenge. Beyond the material and structural challenges, there is also the issue of public perception, and convincing the public that reparations are a valuable use of city funds and time. It is crucial, in any reparations effort to have a robust education and outreach strategy to engage with affected communities.

Finally, determining eligibility for any reparations program will be tricky. How does one go about – at the city level – deciding who is and who is not to be eligible for any such program? Who will be empowered at city hall to declare one applicant legitimate and another not? What types of oversight and appeals processes will be needed? Will there be different kinds of

²¹ Resolution Supporting Community Reparations for Black Asheville, Resolution No. 20-128 (2020)

²² *Reparations*. NAACP. (2022, June 13). <https://naacp.org/resources/reparations>

reparations for different kinds of harms? What sources will funds be drawn from, and will there be potential differences in compensation based on type of harm?

All of these conceptual, structural and institutional issues does not preclude the *necessity* of engaging in reparations work – the moral obligation is clear such challenges notwithstanding. But these challenges need to be addressed seriously and intentionally by the City of Burlington if it is to engage in this effort in good faith.

V Recommendations

Based on our review of the reports commissioned by this Taskforce, our research into the history, scope and scale of reparations efforts, and our own deliberations, we suggest the following next steps for the City Council:

1. Revisit the original City Council Resolution and consider narrowing the scope of what is intended by it. Is the intention to provide specific reparations for the City’s involvement with slavery and if so, who is the intended population meant to be addressed by reparations? If the intent is to provide relief for other populations who are the subjects of racial discrimination, the City Council ought to be clear about this.
2. Do not pursue the issue of racialized covenants as an issue requiring reparations. Our commissioned reports did not find evidence of this practice as a systematic issue within the City of Burlington.
3. Consider the value of the proposed apology for the City to adopt. If this is a symbolic gesture only with no material purpose or impact beyond this, we would suggest this is not a useful action.
4. Consider what funding source would be utilized for providing adequate compensation for any reparations program. The City of Evanston’s approach is one we would advocate exploring further.
5. Develop a strategy for enacting the mechanisms for providing reparations. What city department would be responsible for disbursing compensation? Who would be responsible for determining eligibility?
6. Engage in a strategy for community outreach and education to discuss with the City of Burlington populations what is meant by and what the potential there is (and need) for reparations

VI Appendices

Burlington City Council Resolution 7.06

Consultant 1 Reports – History of Enslaved Persons in Burlington

Consultant 2 Reports – Approach to Studying Racialized Covenants

Consultant 3 Reports – Discrimination and Reparations

UVM Report – Use of Racialized Covenants in Burlington (Pilot Study)
Expert Review of Recommendations
Financial Report

Report Synopses

Census data on enslaved persons in Burlington and Vermont (commissioned report)

This report analyses the history of slavery, and more generally black residency, within Burlington and Vermont more fully. While slavery was immediately outlawed upon Vermont gaining statehood, slavery still very much existed within the state and city, with specific provisions hidden inside state laws allowing for forms of slavery, the utilization of roles as servants and other actions that served to advance racialized divisions within the population. The report also reviews the ways in which Vermont benefited from slavery, financially and otherwise. These effects are wide ranging over time and continue to affect the state today. Another section of report includes vignettes of black Vermonters and Burlington residents and their history in the state, highlighting the struggles and discrimination faced in what was supposed to be a non-slave state. These struggles come both from pre-civil war era US, as well as post reconstruction discriminatory practices done within Vermont. The general outcome of this report is evidence of state sponsored racially based discrimination and further information on Vermont's long history with racism.

Housing record search on racialized covenants (commissioned report on methodology, UVM report detailing search)

This report systematically searches through landholding and lease records, historical land records, archival newspapers, and census data to search for evidence of racialized covenant language within Burlington. The outputs of this report found evidence of some sort of discriminatory covenants on several properties, but there was no specifically racialized language that appear systematically within leases or other historical text. These covenants are suggestive that racialization of housing practices *may* have existed within the city on an individual basis but there is no direct evidence of systematic exclusions on the basis of race.

Overview of discriminatory laws in the US and elsewhere (commissioned report)

This is a series of reports outlining the various ways that reparations are created, and the historical context behind racism in lawmaking. Despite Vermont not being established as a slave state, there were several laws within the state and city which promoted racist ideals. This report also provides an overview of laws created within the wider United States. Another output of this report is the documentation of the history of racial harm in Vermont in areas such as healthcare, wealth disparities, education, incarceration, and land ownership. There is also a major cultural element of this type of discrimination.

Overview of models of reparation (UVM report)

This report outlines the various reparations policies and proposed models from within the United States, as well as internationally. It serves as an example of various ways that reparative policy can be implemented within specific circumstances and provides various historical and cultural definitions of what reparations can mean in a practical sense. This report highlights

potential applied forms of reparations and provides background on reparative policies which have been implemented in the past.