



Legislation Text

File #: 24-1223, **Version:** 1

Resolution to Study a Reparations Program in Ann Arbor to Remediate Historical Injustices and Discrimination Against its Black Residents

Reviewed by: Atleen Kaur, City Attorney

Whereas, Municipal reparations refer to actions taken by a city government to formally acknowledge, address, and remediate historical injustices and discrimination through direct financial restitution, policy reforms, community investments, and public acknowledgments;

Whereas, The City of Ann Arbor wishes to explore establishing municipal reparations for its Black citizens to remediate historical injustices and discrimination flowing from the practice of slavery in the United States;

Whereas, Black residents of the City of Ann Arbor may be direct descendants of slaves brought to the United States;

Whereas, Uncompensated slave labor was common throughout the colonies and many of the early states, and such uncompensated labor was a major cause for the rise of the United States as a strong and wealthy nation;

Whereas, Michigan became a state in 1837 and the first Constitution of Michigan banned slavery, but Black citizens were still subject to injustices and discrimination such as denial of the right to vote and segregation;

Whereas, Before the federal prohibition of racially restrictive covenants, systemic housing discrimination prevented Black families nationwide, and in the City of Ann Arbor, from accessing equal housing opportunities;

Whereas, Local Fair Housing laws were established two decades after the federal prohibition against racially restrictive covenants;

Whereas, Municipal reparations to remediate historical injustices and discrimination that are supported by historical documentation and experiences constitutes a compelling governmental interest;

Whereas, The pervasive extent and nature of the injustices resulting from slavery and segregation require reparations to take many forms, including but not limited to, efforts to ensure that Black citizens have equal access to fair housing, jobs, health care, education, and overall economic development; and

Whereas, The City of Ann Arbor understands that only Black residents can truly determine when and how they are healed from the trauma endured by slaves and their descendants, and it is essential that these voices lead the discussion and decision-making on reparative actions and policies;

RESOLVED, That the City Council directs the City Administrator to identify a funding source for a study regarding the feasibility and process of creating a Municipal Reparations Program to remediate the historical injustices and discrimination against Black residents of Ann Arbor as discussed in the preceding whereas clauses;

RESOLVED, That once a funding source for a study has been identified, Council directs the City Administrator to ensure that the study is conducted and to provide a report regarding the feasibility, process and structure of a potential Municipal Reparations program;

RESOLVED, That the City Administrator's report to Council shall include a harms report (also known as an impact report) regarding the harms to be addressed by the potential Municipal Reparations Program; and

RESOLVED, That the City Administrator shall provide the report to Council as soon as practical, and in any event shall provide a status update to Council no later than December 2024.

Sponsored by: Harrison, Watson, Ghazi Edwin, Disch, and Eyer