



Office of the City Manager

September 6, 2013

To: Honorable Mayor and Councilmembers  
From: Christine Daniel, City Manager *CD*  
Subject: Concerns Raised by the Berkeley Branch of the NAACP

As you are aware, the City received a communication this past December from the Berkeley Branch of the NAACP regarding complaints they received from individuals alleging unfair employment practices by the City of Berkeley. The City takes these allegations seriously and immediately engaged with the NAACP to obtain a better understanding of these complaints.

During our conversations, the NAACP suggested the City of Berkeley contract with Mason-Tillman and Associates (MTA) to look further into these allegations. The City has been in discussions with MTA since March and has recently resolved outstanding scope of work and legal issues surrounding MTA maintaining the anonymity of the individuals they interview. A contract has been sent to MTA for signature and we anticipate the work will commence shortly. As part of their contract with the City, MTA will interview individuals who registered complaints with the NAACP. The goal is to obtain a deeper understanding of these complaints. MTA will also issue a report on their findings which will allow the City to identify areas that merit further review and take appropriate actions to address them.

The Berkeley Branch of the NAACP held a town hall meeting on July 13, 2013, to discuss inequities, disparities and discrimination in the areas of Employment, Education, Housing, Health Care, Mental Health and Criminal Justice in the City of Berkeley. As a follow-up to that meeting, the NAACP sent a letter dated August 27, 2013 to the Council, the Board of Library Trustees, a number of City commissions and others. The letter summarized the results of the town hall meeting and offered a set of suggestions for addressing those issues. We understand that the NAACP will be engaging with various City commissions on the topics identified at the town hall and staff is committed to working closely with the commissions as they prioritize their work in these areas. In addition, we anticipate the in-depth interviews conducted by MTA will provide important information that will inform additional work by the City in the area of employment.

While the City has a long history of actively supporting inclusion and diversity, it is also a fact that racial inequities are a significant part of American culture and Berkeley is not exempt. Knowing this, the City uses many of its resources to help level the playing field by developing and participating in programs to end inequities that can be attributed to race. These programs include: 2020 Vision (to eliminate the achievement gap in Berkeley public schools); the Black Infant Health Program (to reduce the disproportionately high number of low-weight births among African American women), robust affordable housing programs and policies so that individuals of all incomes can live in Berkeley, grants to community-based organizations serving disenfranchised communities and a Police Review Commission that is working on issues related to race and the criminal justice system. While the City is actively addressing these issues, there is much more work to do and the City is committed to achieving our goals in these areas.

We appreciate the communications from the Berkeley Branch of the NAACP as we are always open to constructive ideas about what more the City can do to improve the quality of life for all residents in every neighborhood. Once the interviews have been conducted and we have analyzed the information from the MTA report, we will provide you with a copy as well as an update on next steps.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

cc: William Rogers, Deputy City Manager  
Ann-Marie Hogan, City Auditor  
Zach Cowan, City Attorney  
Mark Numainville, City Clerk  
Matthai Chakko, Assistant to the City Manager