Referral to Administration and/or County Counsel to report to the Board with options for consideration relating to the adoption of a resolution declaring Racism a Public Health Crisis. (Cortese / Chavez)

WHEREAS, throughout our nation’s history, institutional and structural racism and injustice have led to deepening racial disparities across all sectors and have had lasting negative consequences for the County of Santa Clara; and

WHEREAS, Public Health Awareness raises awareness of the relationship between the health of individuals and the health of their communities; and

WHEREAS, studies link racism to adverse health outcomes; and

WHEREAS, areas falling under the public health category include healthy communities, violence prevention, rural health, technology, public health, climate change, and global health; and

WHEREAS, the promotion of healthy communities directly relates to the health of individuals, and encourages expanding public health support networks to decrease racial disparities in health outcomes; and

WHEREAS, communities of color are disproportionally impacted by social detriments of health, such as: increased exposure to lead; poor air quality; lack of safe places to walk, bike, run, live, and inadequate health education; and

WHEREAS, the United States Office of Disease Prevention recognizes that discrimination negatively impacts health outcomes; and

WHEREAS, the negative repercussions of historical racism, including but not limited to discriminatory lending practices of the 20th century known as “redlining,” impact current outcomes regarding access to nutritious food, economic security, educational achievement, rates of lead poisoning, and infant mortality; and
WHEREAS, the continued and unnecessary loss of Black lives, such as George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Tony McDade, Nina Pop, and so many others calls upon the County of Santa Clara to be visible in our outrage, and, more importantly, in our resolve to work for change; and

WHEREAS, a disproportionate number of people of color getting COVID-19 with the County’s COVID-19 Cases Dashboard posted publicly on our Public Health Department’s website displaying disproportionate rates of the coronavirus in our Latino communities in Santa Clara County countywide; and

WHEREAS, our public employees are comprised of a diverse, multicultural and a multiethnic group of people and that every person deserves to live with dignity, be valued for their inherent humanity, and be treated ethically; and

WHEREAS, it is essential to recognize the experiences, honor the history, and highlight the contributions of communities of color, while ensuring that every person has the social, economic and political power to thrive; and

WHEREAS, the County of Santa Clara recognizes that valuing the diversity that exists among our employees is integral to a more productive and capable workforce; and

WHEREAS, the County of Santa Clara recognizes that racism is a public health crisis that affects all members of our society both locally and nationally and deserves action from all levels of government and civil society; and

WHEREAS, the County of Santa Clara has made great efforts to address social inequities that exist, including through the establishment of the Division of Equity and Social Justice (DESJ); and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors will assert that racism is a public health crisis affecting our entire society, and assess internal policies and procedures to ensure racial equity is a core element of the County; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, actions resulting from these declarations should include the County of Santa Clara: (1) incorporating educational efforts to address and dismantle racism, and expand understanding of racism and how racism affects individual and population health; (2) promoting community engagement, actively
engaging citizens on issues of racism, and providing tools to engage actively and authentically with communities of color; (3) committing to review all portions of codified ordinances with a racial equity lens; (4) committing to conduct all human resources, vendor selection and grant management activities with a racial equity lens including reviewing all internal policies and practices such as hiring, promotions, leadership appointments and funding; (5) promoting racially equitable economic and workforce development practices; (6) promoting and encouraging all policies that prioritize the health of people of color and mitigating exposure to adverse childhood experience and trauma in childhood; (7) training of all elected officials and staff on workplace biases and how to mitigate them; (8) partnering and building alliances with local organizations that have a legacy and track record of confronting racism; (9) supporting Local, State, and Federal initiatives that advance social justice and combat racism; (10) encouraging community partners and stakeholders in the education, employment, housing, criminal justice and safety arenas to recognize racism as a public health crisis and to activate the above items; and (11) securing adequate resources to successfully accomplish the above activities; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the County of Santa Clara will encourage other Local, State, and National entities to recognize racism as a public health crisis; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors does hereby support the efforts to address public health disparities due to racial inequities throughout Santa Clara County.