

MEMORANDUM

To: Technical Advisory Committee, Board of Directors
From: Brian O. Martin, AICP, Executive Director
Date: July 16, 2020
Subject: Resolution Ensuring Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in all MVRPC Staff, Committee, and Board of Directors Actions and Supporting Racism as a Public Health Emergency

The Miami Valley is a wonderful Region – a great place to live, work, and raise a family. We are blessed with an abundant fresh water supply with our Buried Valley Aquifer. We have beautiful rivers and creeks that bring many rare and endangered species for our residents and visitors to enjoy. We have a high quality of life and low expense compared to other regions. We have outstanding school districts, trade schools, colleges, and universities that educate our many residents. We have a robust faith community with a variety of different styles of worship and beliefs that feed, educate, and inform our belief in a higher power beyond ourselves. We have a strong and growing business community leading in technology, transportation, education, financial services, health care, manufacturing, and other sectors.

The Miami Valley also has a history of segregation and racism as documented in our Equity Regional Profile in 2017. From 1910 to 1950, the Federal Housing Authority required covenants forbidding sale of houses to African Americans everywhere except for west Dayton and other specific areas. We know about civil unrest here in Dayton and in the Miami Valley. In the 1960's, Dayton and the Miami Valley hosted numerous marches for civil rights, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. made multiple trips to Dayton, Ohio. Our region also experienced the turbulence of riots as well as "white flight" with many leaving Dayton for suburbs.

In recent months, the nation has seen many highly visible reminders of racism that prick the conscious of citizens and news outlets. The recent murder of George Floyd of Minneapolis by policemen, Ahmaud Arbery by two men in southeast Georgia, or the mistaken killing of Breanna Taylor in Louisville, KY also by police, have prompted peaceful demonstrations nationally, across Ohio and in our local communities in opposition to over policing and the mistreatment of African Americans.

The underlying tenants of racism in our country span many centuries. Our Nation's fledgling economy was heavily dependent on slavery for growth. The passage of Jim Crow laws after slavery was abolished. The struggle for ending racial discrimination through civil rights and voting rights in the 1960's. In the end, there is plenty of evidence that racism has not gone away. Instead, it has become entrenched. By failing to talk about it, we enable the problem of racism to continue from one generation to the next.

In July 2017, MVRPC published the Miami Valley Equity Regional Profile. In October 2017, MVRPC launched the Miami Valley Equity Initiative and in 2019, we launched the Institute for Livable and Equitable Communities (ILE). In 2020, we held our first meeting of the Regional Equity Initiative (REI), an initiative that is charged with developing strategies and funding initiatives that reduce racism and increase access to opportunity for all.

In response to the demonstrations and need to encourage progressive policy and institutional change, Boards of Health across the Miami Valley Region, Ohio, and the nation are declaring racism and discrimination a public health crisis. Racism and discrimination impact African American residents by undermining the achievement of the American Dream and inhibiting access to opportunity that everyone should have available to them.

MVRPC's largest government jurisdictions, City of Dayton, Montgomery County, City of Trotwood, City of Piqua, and others have passed or are considering passing resolutions in support of this declaration of racism and discrimination as a public health crisis. Numerous MVRPC associate members have passed resolutions in opposition to racism including University of Dayton, Sinclair College, Greater Dayton Chamber of Commerce, and others.

I urge MVRPC to also take action. Therefore, the staff recommends that the MVRPC Technical Advisory Committee and Board of Directors adopt the attached resolution that encourages removal of discrimination and racism from MVRPC decision making and supports the efforts by our members to declare racism and discrimination as a public health emergency and as such we will take the following actions:

1. Denounce discrimination of any group based upon race, income, jurisdiction, ability, national origin, age, sexual preference or gender;
2. Support racism as a public health emergency in the Miami Valley Region and authorize the Executive Director to work with the various county health boards to address the health and wellness of all of our residents through removing barriers to opportunity and good health;
3. Authorize the Executive Director to develop proactive policies, trainings, and programs that increase a broader understanding of race and diversity among our agency staff, boards, committees, as well as member agencies when appropriate. Members are encouraged to adopt any policies developed to this end;
4. Advocate and support the continued active involvement of the Institute for Livable and Equitable Communities as our regional and community entity that works to remove racism, increase access to opportunity, and increase livability in our communities of the Miami Valley;
5. Continue to support black and minority owned businesses through an aggressive and inclusive purchasing program that ensures fairness and equal opportunity.

RESOLUTION

Ensuring Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in all MVRPC Staff, Committee, and Board of Directors Actions and Supporting Racism as a Public Health Emergency

WHEREAS, the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission is designated as a Voluntary Association of Local Governments by Ohio Revised Code Section 713.21.

WHEREAS, the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) by the Governor acting through the Ohio Department of Transportation in cooperation with locally elected officials for Greene, Miami and Montgomery Counties including the jurisdictions of Carlisle, Franklin, Springboro, and Franklin Township in Warren County and makes transportation policy and funding decisions; and

WHEREAS, the MVRPC Board serves as the policy and decision making body through which local governments guide the federal transportation planning process and other matters for the Miami Valley Region; and

WHEREAS, the Equity Regional Profile published by the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission in July 2017 found that systemic, institutionalized segregation based upon race and nationalization was implemented by the Federal Housing Authority from 1910 through 1950 through housing covenants to keep African Americans and Immigrants from living in any part of the Miami Valley besides the west side of Dayton; and

WHEREAS, the MVRPC Board of Directors and its partners formed the Institute for Livable and Equitable Communities on September 05, 2019 which set aside funding for staff, programs, and projects that eliminate racism and other disparities, increase access to opportunity, and improve livability for Seniors throughout the Miami Valley; and

WHEREAS, this practice of institutional and systemic segregation and racism has harmed certain west side, central city, and other neighborhoods as better jobs, education, health, and food and housing opportunities have been built in other parts of the Miami Valley and have allowed those who could move to have increased access to opportunity; and

WHEREAS, this historic practice of systemic segregation and racism has had harmful effects on every community in the Miami Valley Region as African Americans and immigrants were discouraged from moving through use of restrictive covenants, local ordinances, or other practices by realtors, banks, title companies, neighbors, and local governments over time; and

WHEREAS, racism causes persistent discrimination and disparate outcomes in many areas of life including housing, economic opportunity, infant mortality, employment, food access, environmental protection, and criminal justice; and an emerging body of research demonstrates that racism itself is a social determinant of health; and

WHEREAS, MVRPC governmental and associate members have adopted antiracism policies including the City of Dayton, Montgomery County, City of Piqua, City of Trotwood, Greater Dayton Chamber of Commerce, University of Dayton, Sinclair College, and others that are considering adopting resolutions we urge everyone to take action in support of ending racism as well as advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission's Board of Directors hereby

1. Denounces discrimination of any group or in any form based upon race, income, jurisdiction, ability, national origin, age, sexual preference or gender;
2. Declares that Racism is a Public Health Emergency in the Miami Valley Region and authorizes the Executive Director to work with the various county and municipal health boards to address the health and wellness of all of our residents through removing barriers to opportunity and good health;
3. Authorizes the Executive Director to develop proactive policies, trainings, and programs that increase a broader understanding of race and diversity among our agency staff, boards, committees, as well as member agencies when appropriate. Members are welcome to utilize any policies developed to this end.
4. Advocates and supports the continued active involvement of the Institute for Livable and Equitable Communities as our regional and community entity that works to remove racism, increase access to opportunity, and increase livability in our communities of the Miami Valley.
5. Continue to support black and minority owned businesses through an aggressive and inclusive purchasing program that ensures fairness and equal opportunity.

BY ACTION OF THE Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission's Board of Directors.

Brian O. Martin, AICP
Executive Director

Chris Mucher, Chairperson
Board of Directors of the
Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission

Date