

MEMORANDUM

To: The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
cc: City Council Vice President Sharon Green-Middleton, 6th District

From: Yolanda Jiggetts - Executive Director, Park Heights Renaissance, Inc.

Date: November 20, 2020

Re: City Council Resolution 20-0218R
Recognizing Systemic Racism as a Public Health Crisis

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Park Heights Renaissance, Inc. (PHR) supports City Council Resolution 20-0218R and its purpose of recognizing systemic racism as a public health crisis. If adopted, City Council Resolution 20-0218R would recognize systemic racism as a public health crisis.

PHR applauds the sponsors of this Resolution and agree that this is a public health matter that first must be acknowledged. Secondly, there must be a true commitment to developing long-term, sustainable solutions that address the devastating impacts it continues to have on communities of color. The next steps must include allowing community feedback and participation to map out implementation strategies. And lastly, deployment of the necessary resources needed to effectively support community development organizations and service providers in effectively executing strategies to address the negative impacts that condition to devastate urban communities, such as Park Heights.

Park Heights is the largest urban renewal project in the state of Maryland, with over 30,000 residents. The impacts of systemic racism are evident in Park Heights with some of the highest rates of:

- unemployment
- vacant and blighted properties
- incidents of crime
- behavioral health challenges
- environmental factors such as illegal dumping

PHR is committed to be a convener and collaborative partner in providing action steps, programming and services that support new opportunities for homeownership, further educational attainment, promote safe and healthy neighborhoods, and drive new investment to Park Heights. The resources required to support successful outcomes must be the priority.

PHR supports the passage of Council Resolution 20-0218R and recommends that it be approved by the City Council.

We look forward to being a part of the collaborative and collective leadership to reverse the dramatic impacts that systemic racist practices and policies have on neighborhoods across Baltimore City.