

Statement in Support of Black Lives Matter

On behalf of the San José Small Business Advisory Task Force, we are deeply saddened by the tragedy of the late George Floyd. Racism has been deeply woven into our society for centuries and we are still unable to provide justice to those who are victims of marginalization and oppression simply due to the color of their skin. The death of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and thousands of unnamed Black people has not only affected us at a national level - but on a deeper, local level that has brought the San Jose community closer together during this grieving yet revolutionary time.

The racism that the Black community faces continues to infect the structure of our society on an institutional level and is also known as systemic racism. Systemic racism is not only an issue within our police department, but also persists in all areas of society; from our court system, employment, schools, healthcare, and even to investment opportunities. It is our responsibility as a community to no longer be silent or ignore the injustice and inequality that the Black community is facing as a result of a system that perpetuates a division within society. While we are hopeful that a new system can be implemented and adopted as a solution to our current crises, we must acknowledge that systemic racism must be dismantled, and we must focus our efforts on restructuring the system that further perpetuates racism within our institutions.

As members of the San José Small Business Advisory Task Force, we take pride in being a multi-ethnic group where all of our members are recognized as having equal opportunities and providing valuable contributions to our city. We also take pride in the fact that the City of San José is home to many multi- ethnic communities and multi-ethnic owned small businesses. San José has more than 55,000 small businesses that make up 96.6% of all existing businesses within the city. Sixty percent of these businesses are immigrant owned. As the San José Small Businesses Advisory Task Force, we make it our mission to ensure that the City exercises due diligence in creating equal opportunity and presents all information necessary for small businesses to prosper. Given the system that currently exists, we refuse to ignore the hurdles and hardships that our fellow ethnic and minority-owned businesses face in order to succeed.

As the Small Business Advisory Task Force, we stand with our communities, and particularly encourage patronage, support and involvement with Black owned businesses so that they may continue to thrive and succeed. It is essential to build empathy, to actively listen to the Black community, and to recognize the importance of educating each other on issues that affect communities of color. It is our mission to provide a voice to the small business community within the City of San Jose – working together, we can make change.

Background: The Small Business Advisory Task Force is a body of nine voting members and associate members representing ethnic chambers of commerce and businesses associations dedicated to working with small and local businesses. The Task Force is facilitated by District 1 of San Jose and meets every second Thursday of the month to address and provide direction on city policies and programs to ensure opportunities, growth, and development for small businesses. For more information, visit: <https://www.sjdistrict1.com/small-business-advisory-task-force.html>