

MOTION TO APPROVE EQUITY AND INCLUSION RESOLUTION

“Choose not to look, however, at your own peril. The owner of an old house knows that whatever you are ignoring will never go away. Whatever is lurking will fester whether you choose to look or not. Ignorance is no protection from the consequences of inaction. Whatever you are wishing away will gnaw at you until you gather the courage to face what you would rather not see.”
— Isabel Wilkerson, *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*

*“The new dawn blooms as we free it.
For there is always light.
If only we are brave enough to see it.
If only we are brave enough to be it.”*
— Amanda Gorman

In the aftermath of the violent deaths of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd, calls for justice have motivated the City of Los Angeles and surrounding communities to prioritize diversity and inclusion initiatives to combat the effects of systemic racism on BIPOC residents.

Sunland-Tujunga is known as an area with a history of white supremacy, from the KKK having a presence from the 30's to the 60's, to redlining practices, to racial covenants that kept Black and other racial and ethnic minorities from buying real estate in our community, to our historic participation in colonizing Indigenous People's land and erasing their culture, to white biker gangs keeping minorities out from the 70's to the 90's. While it has been stated that these inequalities are in the past, the lower percentage of Black residents and Black businesses compared to the rest of Los Angeles, and the presence of white supremacists in Sunland-Tujunga such as the SFV Peckerwoods, raise the question as to why these demographic and sociological inequalities persist in the area. Our community is called to understand, acknowledge, and confront our exclusionary and racist past in order to create an equitable and inclusive community that we can all be proud of.

In September 2020, through Executive Order # 27, “Racial Equity in City Government”, the City Council mandates diversity, equity, inclusion and anti-bias training for all members of Neighborhood Councils. As stated in this executive order, “We must marshal every tool at our disposal to ensure that all in our community are given the opportunity to thrive and

reach for their full potential. And while we cannot dislodge structural racism overnight, it is our responsibility to acknowledge hard truths and advance the cause of reform. It is our duty, as Angelenos and public servants, to make Los Angeles reflect the hallowed but often elusive principles that underlie our Republic: that we are created equal and that each of us is entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”

A group of concerned residents of Sunland-Tujunga, responding to the call to “marshal every tool” to “do our duty as Angelenos and public servants,” have crafted a resolution modeled after anti-racist resolutions recently passed by a) the City of Glendale, that acknowledge their history of racist policies, both official and unofficial, and the effects of those policies on creating an historic lack of diversity and a culture of hostility in their community, and b) the City of South Pasadena to commit to diversity, safeguarding Civil Rights, and the safety and dignity of residents.

Community archives scholar Dr. Michelle Caswell discusses the societal impact of underrepresentation of marginalized communities in archives as “symbolic annihilation” and the corrective inclusion of materials that reflect their experience as “representational belonging.” Our goal with this resolution is to work towards identifying these absences, and to expand involvement and representation to actively and intentionally include the broadly diverse Sunland-Tujunga residents in our community leadership and community decision-making processes, to create a culture of belonging. We are confident that our community can join the City of Glendale, the City of South Pasadena and other communities in the region as leaders in the work of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

A large majority of Sunland-Tujunga residents are committed to building a more inclusive, diverse, equitable, and caring community. With this resolution, our community would explicitly acknowledge embedded histories of exclusion, while taking an important step towards unequivocally committing to anti-racism, inclusion, equity, and the celebration of diversity. This resolution will be a catalyst towards addressing the connections between

our community's past, present and future, and will reaffirm our pledge to include all voices, especially those of historically under-represented groups in community decision-making.

Our initial administrative action proposal would be to create an Equity and Inclusion Committee that could facilitate community building activities and events, and recruit historians and other professionals to write a historical context statement that would shed light on our history. The actions of the Equity and Inclusion Committee would serve to identify and enact initiatives and opportunities to embrace our community's shared goal of equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging of all groups and cultures.

Below you will find the text of the proposed resolution. The majority of the language comes from resolutions that have been recently approved by the City of Glendale and the City of South Pasadena. We ask for our Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council to review, discuss, and adopt this resolution.

[1] Michelle Caswell et al., "To Be Able to Imagine Otherwise: Community Archives and the Importance of Representation," *Archives and Records* 38, no. 1 (January 2, 2017): 5–26, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23257962.2016.1260445>.

**A RESOLUTION OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL OF SUNLAND-TUJUNGA, CALIFORNIA
ACKNOWLEDGING SUNLAND-TUJUNGA'S RACIALLY-EXCLUSIONARY PAST AND OUR
COMMUNITY'S COMMITMENT TO EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND BELONGING**

WHEREAS, racial disparities have existed since the birth of this nation, to the detriment of Black communities, Indigenous peoples, and people of color, persisting across wealth, health, education, the criminal justice system, and beyond; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Census reported that the Black or African American population was 1% in contrast to 8.9% for LA City and 8.7% for LA County and 13.4% nationally.

WHEREAS, towns throughout the state of California, along with towns and cities in many other states, excluded—often by social and cultural means, including police profiling and redlining—members of non-white racial and ethnic groups, particularly African Americans, from living in said jurisdictions or even being inside the city limits after sundown; and

WHEREAS, the Ku Klux Klan and other white supremacist organizations established themselves, and held meetings, and patrolled the streets in Sunland-Tujunga; and

WHEREAS, many real estate subdivisions created in Sunland-Tujunga adopted and enforced racially restrictive covenants and deed restrictions that kept African Americans and people of color from purchasing property and living in those subdivisions for several decades in the 20th century in Sunland-Tujunga; and

WHEREAS, Sunland-Tujunga understands the importance of examining what role it has played in institutional racism, both historically and currently, and is ready to embark on a journey towards racial literacy; and

WHEREAS, the Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council envisions a community that fosters diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout every neighborhood in Sunland and Tujunga; and

WHEREAS, the Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council asserts our community's belief that diversity of backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences of the American people – native and immigrant – makes our nation, communities, bonds between neighbors, and economies richer and stronger; and

WHEREAS, the Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council supports citizens' rights under the First Amendment to peacefully protest and to express their viewpoint, without fear of reprisal; and

WHEREAS, Sunland-Tujunga will not tolerate hate crimes of any kind, including, but not limited to, actions taken to repress or intimidate the expression of the viewpoints of others; and

WHEREAS, Sunland-Tujunga does not tolerate hate crimes, harassment, or assault, and believes each person is naturally and legally entitled to live a life without harassment, discrimination, persecution, or assault, whether perpetrated by individuals, groups, businesses, or governments; and

NOW THEREFORE, THE Sunland-Tujunga NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL does hereby resolve, declare, and determine, as follows:

(A) The Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council acknowledges, and condemns all racially-motivated, discriminatory, or exclusionary aspects of our community's history, and deeply regrets the pain, harm, and suffering such policies and actions have caused;

(B) The Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council will continue to engage in individual and collective work to understand the types and effects of bias on individual empowerment and equitable civic representation;

(C) The Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council will commit resources to examine the historical role racial and ethnic exclusion have played in Sunland-Tujunga, by committing resources to have experts in the fields of sociology and history prepare a report to document historical inequalities in Sunland-Tujunga;

(D) The Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council will review and revise its policies, procedures, ordinances, values, goals, and missions through an antiracist lens to foster an unbiased and inclusive environment that is free of discrimination and harassment toward any person or group;

(E) The Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council will commit to requiring all Council members to take part in anti-bias and anti-racism training in order to serve in the Council

(F) The Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council will promote inclusion and equity, and will stand up to bigotry, hatred, intolerance, racism, and violence;

(G) The Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council will unequivocally reject racism in all its forms and will commit to working towards building an antiracist Sunland-Tujunga where people of all races and cultural backgrounds are welcome to live and prosper; and

(H) The Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council will institute the creation of a new Inclusion and Equity Committee that will be tasked with facilitating the actions in connection to this resolution and related motions. The Inclusion and Equity Committee will be added to our Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council's bylaws.

RELEVANT RESOURCES:

City of Glendale's Resolution acknowledging the racially exclusionary past of Glendale:

<https://glendaleca.primegov.com/Portal/viewer?id=1684&type=0>

City of South Pasadena's Resolution affirming the City of South Pasadena's commitment to diversity and to safeguarding the civil rights, safety and dignity of all our residents:

<https://www.southpasadenaca.gov/government/departments/city-clerk/resolution-of-diversity>