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**The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Social Justice Committee
Monday, November 22, 2021 – 6:30PM
*This meeting was conducted via Zoom***

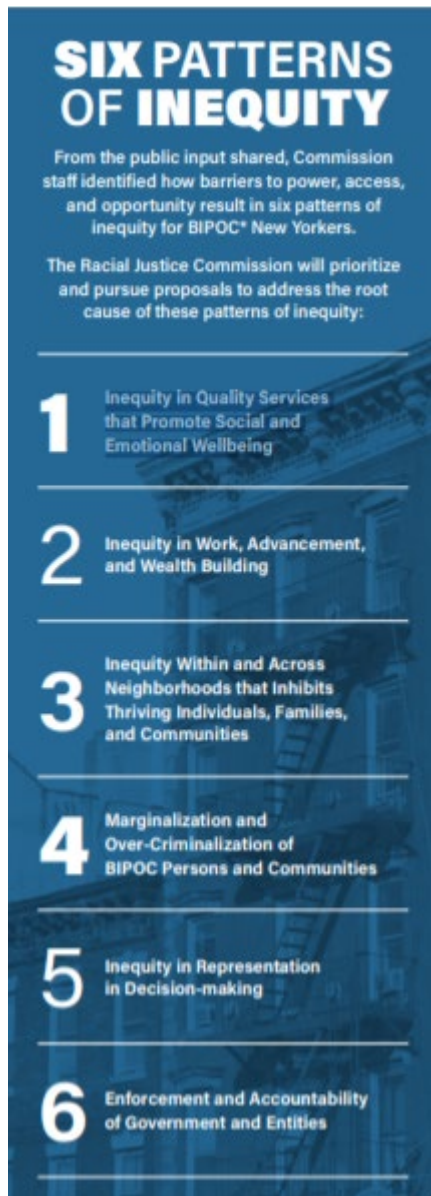
MINUTES

CB8 Members Present: Lori Bores, Sarah Chu, Saundra I. Coleman, Wendy Machaver*, Rita Popper, Barbara Rudder, Russell Squire

*Public Member

1. Presentation by the NYC Racial Justice Commission (RJC)

- **Speaker: Harold Miller, Deputy Executive Director, Racial Justice Commission**
- The RJC was founded earlier in 2021 and has the formal powers of a Charter Revision Commission. RJC was tasked with reviewing the NYC Charter to identify structural racism and recommend changes to improve equity.
- RJC is composed of 11 Commissioners, including Chair Jennifer Jones Austin and Vice Chair Henry Garrido and have been given two years to complete their task.
 - The composition and history of the RJC can be found here:
<https://racialjustice.cityofnewyork.us/about/>
- The RJC was formed in March 2021, began public engagement in the form of public input sessions (both in-person and virtual), released an interim report in October, initiated a second public engagement period in November 2021, and will release a final report in December 2021.
 - The executive summary of the Interim Report can be found here:
https://racialjustice.cityofnewyork.us/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/RJC_NYC4RC_ExecSummary_FIN_lowres.pdf
 - The full Interim Report can be found here: https://racialjustice.cityofnewyork.us/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/RJC_NYC4RC_PrelimRept_FIN.pdf
 - The Commission operates independently from the Mayor's Office and other agencies and will be developing ballot proposals that will be up for a vote in November 2022.
- The Interim Report identified **Six Patterns of Inequity:**



- Mr. Miller’s presentation can be found at the end of the minutes.
- **Summary of Discussion**
 - Concerns were raised about how television programs and the news portray and disproportionately use images of BIPOC people when reporting crime. This concern also extended to the language that NYPD social media uses when it posts about crime or is seeking persons of interest. Mr. Miller responded that the RJC is focused on city government and added that this issue also extends to people with mental health challenges. The government can change its approach by focusing on care v. punishment as well as evaluate whether the language the agencies use marginalize or criminalize communities/groups of people. Along these lines, NYCHA residents have also been labeled as “undesirable.” Mr. Miller found that term offensive and agreed that language means a lot.
 - A question was raised regarding whether RJC will be doing surveys to assess racial disparities in government, school segregation, community boards, or employment. Mr. Miller stated that the addition of surveys is something to consider for the city to have in place. It will remain to be seen if that will be part of the proposals.

- Community members also raised the need to consider racial equity in zoning and environmental justice. With regards to the latter, there are environmental justice issues pertaining to the impact of new development. One side there are jobs and commerce, on the other side, there are health effects and community impacts. Mr. Miller responded that the RJC wants to build a structure that takes racial equity as well as jobs, health, and long-term effects of gentrification into consideration, but the final report may not align with the desires of specific communities.
- A community member raised the importance of understanding our history, how media is weaponized, and how the criminal legal system operates, especially with regards to the inequities of how bail is set. Mr. Miller responded that the RJC is still considering the impact of overcriminalization. However, much of the criminal legal system falls within the jurisdiction of the state. The city can address how public safety is administered and what resources are available to people, so they don't fall into crime.
- The Committee voted to send a letter to the RJC regarding the concerns it raised at the meeting.
- **After the meeting**, Mr. Miller updated CB8 Social Justice Committee Co-Chairs regarding developments in the RJC's ballot proposals and shared the following articles:
 - [NYC Racial Justice Commission Approves Three Proposals for 2022 Ballot](#)
 - <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/new-york/articles/2021-12-09/nyc-racial-justice-commission-proposes-ballot-measures>
 - <https://brooklyneagle.com/articles/2021/12/10/nyc-racial-justice-commission-proposes-ballot-measures/>
 - <https://www.thecity.nyc/2021/12/7/22823408/new-york-racial-equity-ballot-proposal-vote-coming>
 - <https://amsterdamnews.com/news/2021/12/09/nyc-racial-justice-commission/>
- 2. **Old Business** - None
- 3. **New Business** - None

Saundrea I. Coleman and Sarah Chu, Co-Chairs

NYC Racial Justice Commission

Public Engagement Sessions
October - November 2021

About the Racial Justice Commission

State of the City 2021:

Mayor de Blasio announces intent to name a Charter Revision Commission focused on racial justice and reconciliation, with a two-year mandate to identify and root out structural racism.

March 23, 2021:

Mayor announces the formation of the Racial Justice Commission, empowered as a Charter Revision Commission, and appoints 11 Commissioners including Chair Jennifer Jones Austin and Vice Chair Henry Garrido.

April 15, 2021:

Public full Commission meetings begin.

Mission of the RJC

The Racial Justice Commission, empowered with the legal authority of a Charter Revision Commission, will seize the transformative potential of this moment in history to identify and propose structural changes and significant policy reforms that will advance racial justice and equity and begin to dismantle structural racism for all New Yorkers.

This work is necessary because systemic racism has been and continues to shape our reality.

Commission Members

Jennifer Jones Austin, Chair, Racial Justice Commission

Henry Garrido, Vice Chair, Racial Justice Commission

K. Bain, Founder and Executive Director, Community Capacity Development

Ana M. Bermúdez, Commissioner, Department of Probation

Rev. Fred Davie, Executive Vice President, Union Theological Seminary and Chair of the Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB)

Lurie Daniel Favors, Interim Executive Director at the Center for Law and Social Justice at Medgar Evers College

Darrick Hamilton, Founding Director, Institute on Race and Political Economy at The New School and Henry Cohen Professor of Economics and Urban Policy

Chris Kui, former Executive Director, Asian Americans for Equality

Yesenia Mata, Executive Director, La Colmena

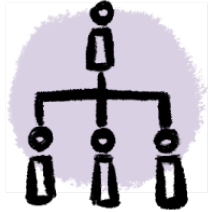
Phil Thompson, Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives

Jo-Ann Yoo, Executive Director, Asian American Federation

About the NYC Charter

- The NYC Charter, also known as the City's constitution, defines the organization, powers, functions, and essential procedures of City government, from elected officials to the budgeting process
- It lays out the fundamental structure of our city's government, controls how decisions are made, and details the budget towards projects in housing and education to human rights and emergency services.

What does the Charter influence?



Organization

Official, Agencies,
City Staff



Process

Laws, Local
Elections, Public
Reviews, Reporting



Representation

Decision-making,
Participation,
Accountability



Resources

Money,
Investments,
Contracting

What We've Done So Far

MARCH 23, 2021

NYC RACIAL JUSTICE COMMISSION FORMED

- Chair, Vice Chair and Commissioners announced

APRIL 15, 2021

COMMISSION BEGINS MEETING

MAY 3, 2021

ADOPTION OF RJC FRAMEWORK

JULY—EARLY SEPTEMBER 2021

FIRST PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PERIOD

- Public input sessions and online survey
- *Transforming Foundations* issue area panel series with thought leaders
- Engagement with City employees and agency leadership

EARLY OCTOBER 2021

RELEASE OF NYC FOR RACIAL JUSTICE INTERIM REPORT

OCTOBER—NOVEMBER 2021

TAKE ACTION! SECOND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PERIOD

- Organize and mobilize your community
- Share your feedback
- Testify in front of the Racial Justice Commission at our upcoming input sessions

DECEMBER 2021

FINAL REPORT, PROPOSED BALLOT MEASURES AND RACIAL JUSTICE ROADMAP

OCTOBER—NOVEMBER 8, 2022

GENERAL ELECTION

- October 7: Last day to register to vote in November 2022 General Election
- October—November 8: Early voting begins and Election Day!

KEY ENGAGEMENT STATS

9
PUBLIC INPUT SESSIONS
(IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL)

260
ATTENDEES

104
INDIVIDUALS TESTIFIED

9
TRANSFORMING FOUNDATIONS ISSUE AREA PANELS

71
THOUGHT LEADERS AND PRACTITIONERS TESTIFIED

1,950
MINUTES OF TESTIMONY AND Q&A

50
ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS WITH COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

1,100+
ONLINE SUBMISSIONS OF INPUT

NYC
RACIAL JUSTICE

NYC
RACIAL JUSTICE
COMMISSION

HESTER ST

What We Heard

Here are the 6 key takeaways we heard:

1. Inequity in Quality Services that Promote Social and Emotional Wellbeing
2. Inequity in Work, Advancement, and Wealth Building
3. Inequity Within and Across Neighborhoods that Inhibits Thriving Individuals, Families, and Communities
4. Marginalization and Over-Criminalization of BIPOC Persons and Communities
5. Inequity in Representation in Decision-making
6. Enforcement and Accountability of Government and Entities

Inequity in Quality Services that Promote Social and Emotional Wellbeing



Emerging themes:

- Lack of quality education for BIPOC
- Decay of and lack of access to affordable low-income housing
- Lack of support for early learning foundations
- Scarcity of mental health services or coordination of care

“I’ve had extensive personal experience with the HRA system and the layers of injustice there, I feel [there is] a huge barrier to folks living and getting access to services that they’re entitled to and moving beyond a situation where they would not need that assistance. There are bureaucratic inconsistencies that create situations where people are barely surviving, and definitely not thriving.”

Inequity in Work, Advancement, and Wealth Building

Emerging themes:

- Inequity in employment
- Lack of economic mobility
- Insufficient preparation for the future
- Unjust procurement
- Lack of access to capital and similar resources



“Because ultimately...the structural change that needs to happen is to not have this trickle-down model. Metrics are trickled down when EDC is the metric of what makes something worthy and the metric of what defines success. If we give billions of dollars in subsidy land or infrastructure support to mega developers, we just hope the effects trickle down. We get just enough jobs of decent quality. It is not supply-side economics, but it is a metaphor of a trickle down a policy making approach, which is racist.”

Inequity Within and Across Neighborhoods that Inhibits Thriving Individuals, Families, and Communities

Emerging themes:

- Resources not distributed equitably
- Responsibilities not distributed equitably
- Racial equity not prioritized in land use decisions
- Lack of community ownership and control



“But I do believe in terms of community, we want to build land trusts, we want to build cooperatives. We want to have community members engage in these comprehensive food policy plans and the re-imagining of the City Charter...”

Marginalization and Over-Criminalization of BIPOC Persons and Communities



Emerging themes:

- Need to reimagine public safety
- Improper focus on punishment instead of care
- Life-long marginalization
- Over-criminalization beyond policing
- Marginalization creating segregation
- Over-reliance on violent or adversarial methods

“For people who are already in jail, jail is not a deterrent for them, they’re already in jail. If they are acting violently, it is because their needs have not been met.”

Inequity in Representation in Decision-making

Emerging themes:

- Lack of community power
- Failure to prioritize racial equity in city decision-making
- Lack of representation in government
- Lack of civic participation

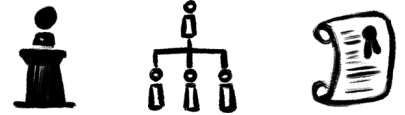


“Even if Community Boards were a lot better, their vote isn't binding. So it ultimately doesn't necessarily matter if you get the best community board really pushing for racial justice. Community Boards don't actually carry the water when it comes to these kinds of issues.”

Enforcement and Accountability of Government and Entities

Emerging themes:

- Laws to protect against discrimination do not work well enough
- Need for stronger enforcement of institutions
- Lack of access to legal services
- Communities' demands often remain unmet
- Lack of transparency or accountability in addressing community input
- Agency tracking not meaningful
- Lack of accountability for police misconduct
- Laws to protect workers' rights are not strong enough



“You have to admit that when you use the term ‘reform’, you’re saying to the world that this works and you just got to tweak a couple of things here and there. Whereas what you’re saying is you really have to redesign this from the ground up with those most impacted. And it can’t be an academic exercise...”

What Happens Next

Identifying and Prioritizing Solutions

Oct - Nov: The Commission staff is formulating ballot measures that will address the concerns heard we've heard from New Yorkers at a structural level

Public Feedback and Comments

Nov: The Commissioners will assess and select potential ballot measures based on a variety of factors and release a draft for public comment

Final Ballot Measure Proposal and General Election

Dec: Final Ballot measures will be released to be voted on in Nov 2022

Let us know what you think!

Continuing the conversation:

1. Which Patterns of Inequity most resonate with you and your experiences?
2. How have these Pattern of Inequity impacted you and your community?
3. Who needs to be involved to address these Patterns of Inequity? (This could include city agencies, elected officials, city staff, etc.)
4. What is your vision for a New York City where these Patterns of Inequity do not exist? What would this city look like? How should the players you've identified act differently?

Stay in Touch



Visit the NYC For Racial Justice website to learn more about the NYC Charter, the Commission, and to send us your thoughts for change at: <http://nyc.gov/racialjustice>



Comments and questions from the public can be sent to racialjustice@charter.nyc.gov



Follow us on social media!

- @RacialJusticeNY on Twitter
- @RacialJusticeNYC on Instagram & Facebook