

Grounded in faith.
Working for justice.



July 14, 2020

Seattle City Council
600 4th Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Seattle City Council Members:

Restorative justice demands action to pave the way for the building of 1,000 new, affordable homes oriented to the Black community in the Central District. The Black lives of Seattle matter: targeting \$50 million for funding for the basic human right of housing moves the needle to achieve the religious principle of a “sufficient, sustainable livelihood for all.”

More than 230 religious leaders signed a letter calling on the council to move accountably and transparently to recognize and honor Black lives and households in our city and face the present economic hardship amidst the pandemic boldly, while confronting rampant inequality. Almost five years have passed since an emergency for people without homes was declared by the then-mayor. The urgency for the Black community of Seattle to maintain their homes has existed since before the turn of the millennium. Now is the acceptable time to deliver on the call by Black religious leaders to confront the “invisible hand” of the capitalist economy at work and join hands to put our Black residents first.

It is high time that the City of Seattle follow its words of racial equity and social justice with a decisive commitment to right a historic wrong that was ignored by various mayoral administrations: namely, the gentrification of the Central District and surrounding areas and the resulting displacement of thousands of households, primarily people of color and particularly, the Black community.

In time, we will be judged by how our front-line workers, a majority of whom are people of color, are treated. We will be judged by how we opened our doors to people experiencing homelessness in one of the richest counties in the richest nation in the world. We will be judged by how we respected and prioritized Black lives by saying that their having an affordable home matters, in Seattle. Finally, we will be judged by our courage or timidity: do our elected leaders bend to the powerful corporate interests who benefit off the backs of city-dwellers, or bend the arc toward justice ever more slightly through doing what is right and restoring the integrity of a city.

I can be reached by e-mail at mramos@thechurchcouncil.org if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Ramos". The signature is written in a cursive style with a blue ink color.

Michael Ramos
Executive Director
Church Council of Greater Seattle