

City of Albany

Proclamation

BLACK HISTORY MONTH - FEBRUARY 2022

It is vital we recognize and celebrate the different races, nationalities, and backgrounds that have shaped our City, like all cities in this state and nation. African Americans are imbued with a unique strength and resilience rooted in their struggles against slavery, many forms of oppression, deep-rooted adversity, and violent opposition to their demands for equality and change, and their contributions and achievements are respected and greatly valued in the City of Albany.

WHEREAS, the month of February is designated Black History Month to remember and reflect on the tribulations faced by the African American community and to learn from their vibrant culture and history and to celebrate their many invaluable contributions; and

WHEREAS, Black History Month grew out of the establishment, in 1926, of Negro History Week by Carter G. Woodson and the Association for the Study of African American Life and History; and

WHEREAS, this celebration acknowledges the important though often untold roles and achievements African Americans have played in our history, identity, culture, economy, literature, inventions, sports, science, medicine and politics; and

WHEREAS, the observance of Black History Month calls our attention to the continued need to battle racism and to build a society that lives up to its democratic ideals; and

WHEREAS, the history and contributions of African-American citizens were consistently overlooked, misinterpreted, and undervalued in the curriculum of public education institutions prior to the Civil Rights Act of 1964; and

WHEREAS, Black History Month reminds us that African Americans' struggles for equal opportunity and against discrimination began hundreds of years ago and have not yet ended; and

WHEREAS, The Black History Month 2022 theme, "Black Health and Wellness" regards how Black people have built systems across the United States to support their physical health and mental well-being while each has been systemically degraded by the dominant society; and

WHEREAS, access to residences is fundamental to health and well-being; and

WHEREAS, restrictive deeds and discriminatory lending and real estate practices prevented Black families from moving into many areas, and economic inequities continue to make it difficult for many African American families to afford to live in neighborhoods with highly successful schools; and

WHEREAS, this history is not remote from Albany but central to it; and

WHEREAS, while nearby cities had redlined neighborhoods that were virtually the only locations where Black families could have homes Albany had no such areas, as shown in Attachment 1, resulting in Albany’s populace having a much lower share of African Americans in the present than nearby cities that were redlined (3.5% Black alone according to the 2020 Census compared to 7.9% in Berkeley, 7.9% in Emeryville, 21.3% in Oakland); and

WHEREAS, the systemic exclusion of African Americans from Albany via redlining was continued on the University of California’s land subsequently occupied by University Village in history explained at https://www.sfchronicle.com/chronicle_vault/article/When-WWII-brought-blacks-to-the-East-Bay-whites-13417228.php and <https://monumenttoextraction.org/stories/worldwar2-housing/> accessed 30 January 2022, summarized and quoted following: and

WHEREAS, the area of residences in University Village was previously part of the larger 1,900 residence Codornices Village, built by the Federal government in World War II to provide homes for shipyard workers and their families that came to the area; and

WHEREAS, the Federal government built Codornices Village even when “The Albany City Council warned of ‘an undesirable element’ (i.e., blacks) that would bring integration to city schools and make Albany ‘like south Berkeley’”; and

WHEREAS, Codornices Village, through the efforts of its residents and manager, went on to become racially integrated leading an administrator to state “‘racial tensions disappeared’ as residents, especially women, shared commonalities such as child rearing”; and

WHEREAS, Codornices Village was therefore one of many examples of the more perfect union our area and country could have had; and

WHEREAS, by 1954 nine of ten residents of Codornices Village were Black “as there were relatively few other options for Black families nearby”; and

WHEREAS, at that time “The National Association of Real Estate Boards succeeded in gutting the pro-housing movement by painting it as dangerously leftist. The University of California chose to abstain from the housing battle, and local governments worked to shut down the Village. The federal government closed the project and evicted the residents by 1956.”; and

WHEREAS, the University of California stated it “would not get involved in the housing business” but after the Codornices Village buildings on its land were vacated chose to do just that by providing them to students as University Village; and

WHEREAS, Albany’s present cannot be understood without understanding its history of housing discrimination; and

WHEREAS, the Albany City Council and the residents of Albany continually have the opportunity to make Albany accessible to and welcoming of African Americans.

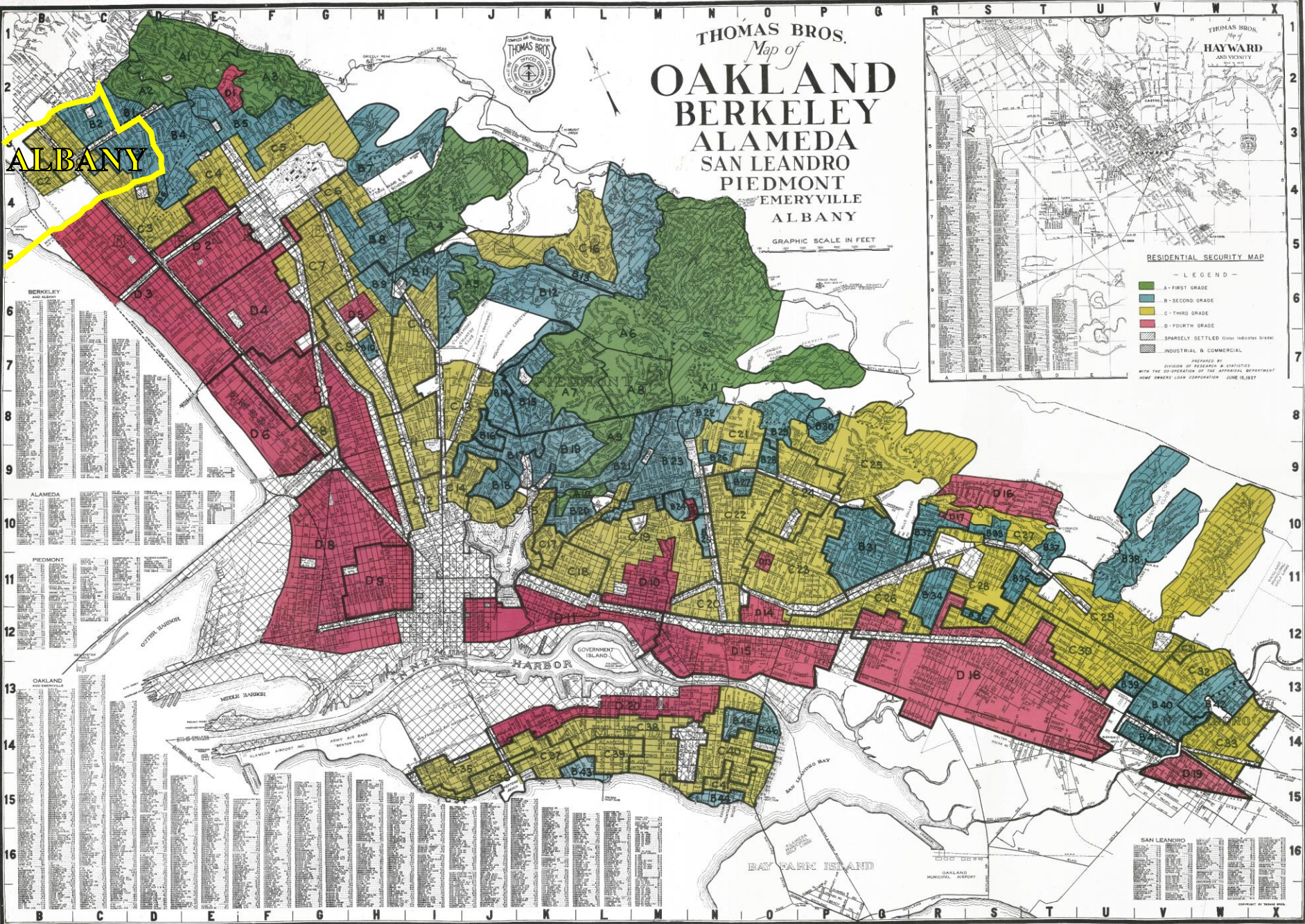
NOW, THEREFORE, the Albany City Council does hereby proclaim February 2022 as Black History Month in the City of Albany, and the City Council acknowledges the contributions of African Americans in our community and recognizes that its and the Albany’s journey to a fully inclusive City and society is not over but rather requires continued attention and support.

Date: February 7, 2022


PRESTON JORDAN, MAYOR

City of Albany Proclamation No. 2022-03







Attachment 1



Basemap scan from <https://s3.amazonaws.com/holc/tiles/CA/Oakland/1937/holc-scan.jpg> by the "Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America" project accessed 30 January 2022

RESIDENTIAL SECURITY MAP

- LEGEND -

-  A - FIRST GRADE
-  B - SECOND GRADE
-  C - THIRD GRADE
-  D - FOURTH GRADE
-  SPARSELY SETTLED (Color Indicates Grade)
-  INDUSTRIAL & COMMERCIAL

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 DIVISION OF RESEARCH & STATISTICS
 WITH THE CO-OPERATION OF THE APPRAISAL DEPARTMENT
 HOME OWNERS' LOAN CORPORATION JUNE 15, 1937

ALBANY

