

Committee of the Whole (1) Report

DATE: Tuesday, November 28, 2023

WARD(S): ALL

**TITLE: ADDRESSING ANTI-BLACK RACISM – KEY FINDINGS FROM
COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS**

FROM:

Michael Coroneos, Deputy City Manager, Corporate Services, City Treasurer and Chief Financial Officer

ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

Purpose

This report provides Council with an account of community consultations with diverse Black communities in Vaughan, leaders and organizations serving these communities and provides the analysis of the data collected from these consultations.

Report Highlights

- Addressing Anti-Black Racism Action Plan is committed to identifying and addressing barriers to the full and meaningful participation of the Black community in services, programs, events and general city life.
- The City consulted with Black individuals, organizations serving the diverse Black communities living in Vaughan and community leaders to collect and analyze data that informs the strategies to address the ongoing challenges of anti-Black racism.
- A total of 81 individuals participated in consultations, focus groups, and 1-1 meetings, both virtually and in-person. Additionally, 108 individuals completed the survey, with 83 of them identifying as Black.

Recommendation

1. That this report be received for information.

Background

Through the development of the Addressing Anti-Black Racism Action Plan, the City is committed to identifying and addressing barriers to the full and meaningful participation of the Black community in services, programs, events and general city life. There is rich diversity within the Black community – with people from different backgrounds, identities and experiences. These different lived experiences and perspectives must drive the Addressing Anti-Black Racism Action Plan. The City will collaborate with Black individuals, organizations serving the diverse Black communities living in Vaughan and community leaders to develop strategies that address the ongoing challenges of anti-Black racism. The process will engage individuals from the Black community, hear their perspectives, and collaboratively develop recommendations for sustainable change.

Previous Reports/Authority

[Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan and Community Consultation – June 1, 2021](#)

[CITY OF VAUGHAN'S DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION PLAN AND MULTI-YEAR ACTION PLAN, April 5, 2022](#)

[SPECIAL COUNCIL \(CLOSED SESSION\) EDUCATION AND TRAINING SESSIONS – MAY 16 AND JUNE 20, 2023](#)

Analysis and Options

The Diversity Institute (DI), in collaboration with the City, developed a survey focused on the following sections:

- Experiences with anti-Black racism in the City: to understand perceptions and experiences of anti-Black racism, as well as senses of belonging and allyship.
- Experiences with City events and services: to understand experiences accessing and using City services, including the supports needed for Black-owned businesses to grow and thrive. This section also aimed to understand the participation of the Black community in City events and their perceptions of inclusion at these events.
- Experiences communicating and engaging with the City: to understand experiences receiving City information, channels used, and opportunities for improvement. Further, to understand perceptions of engagement – whether diverse Black communities believe that the City seeks their input and feedback on initiatives.
- Open-ended questions: embedded throughout sections to provide participants with an opportunity to share recommendations for change related to services, events, communications, engagement, and others. The survey also included

open-ended questions at the end geared towards understanding what the City does well broadly and what can be improved.

- The survey collected demographic information including racial identity, gender identity, sexual orientation, Indigenous identity, whether participants are living with a disability, information on citizenship and newcomer status, age, religion, and language. This accounts for intersectionality, and where possible, DI will disaggregate findings to understand specific experiences and needs across diverse Black communities.

DI held a series of community conversations with individuals from diverse Black communities in the City to understand current experiences and barriers to participation in City initiatives, as well as their recommendations for change. Sessions were held both virtually and in person to provide flexibility for individuals with different needs and preferences.

- March 12: General experiences of Black individuals
- March 14: Experiences of Black Immigrant Individuals
- March 15: Experiences of Black Seniors
- March 27: Experiences of Black Youth
- March 28: Experiences of Black members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community
- March 29: General experiences of Black individuals
- March 30: Experiences of Black Business Owners
- April 12: General Session
- April 20th: Youth in-person session
- April 25th: Adult in-person session

Session planning centred around the following efforts:

Intentional engagement and outreach: In Phase 1 and Phase 2, DI intentionally and proactively reached out to organizations supporting diverse Black communities, as well as individuals part of the Black community, to share project efforts and objectives, and to encourage individuals to participate. This required going into the community and meeting the Black community in spaces they use and through channels they seek information from.

Widespread, accessible and intersectional participation: DI mitigated and addressed barriers to participation in engagement activities for diverse Black communities, including planning around other City events, providing virtual and in-person sessions, considering religious holidays and practices, and others. DI further ensured that sessions considered the intersectional experiences of the Black population

and held sessions specific for Black immigrants, Black youth, Black seniors, Black members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community, and Black business owners.

Respectful and solutions-oriented dialogues: DI created safe and welcoming spaces for Black individuals to share stories, barriers, and experiences of anti-Black racism while focusing conversations on solutions and recommendations for change. This was fostered through pre-session communications on session expectations and goals, mindful facilitation tactics, and trauma counsellor support.

Participation

- Consultations/focus groups/1-1 meetings: across both virtual and in-person sessions from Phases 1 & 2, 81 individuals participated.
- Survey: 108 individuals completed the survey, and 83 of them were Black.
- A total of 81 unique individuals attended the sessions in Phases 1 and 2, which were held either virtually or in person. This figure excludes any repeat attendances within the same session and the presence of DI individuals. However, it does include people who attended multiple different sessions, such as someone who participated in both a virtual and an in-person session.

Financial Impact

There are no financial costs associated with this report.

Operational Impact

DI engaged with City departments to share information about the project, understand departmental responsibilities and activities, and seek staff and leadership perspectives on how they envision their department's work supporting diverse Black communities.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

The Addressing Anti-Black Racism project, including community engagement, is exclusively focused on services offered by the City and within its jurisdiction. Matters outside this scope, while welcome as part of any community discussions and recognized as deeply impactful to the diverse Black communities in Vaughan, were recorded and, where possible, will be provided to the relevant organizations for any subsequent action.

Conclusion

After conducting consultations with diverse Black communities within the City and the leaders and organizations supporting them, relevant and meaningful data was gathered. The findings have been validated with participants and are sufficient for the City to move forward with developing recommendations and an action plan.

For more information, please contact: Zincia Francis, Diversity and Inclusion Officer.

Attachment

1. Addressing Anti-Black Racism - Key Findings From Community Consultations (PDF), Diversity Institute

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