

ANTI-RACISM STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

Recommendation

That the November 7, 2023, Office of the City Manager report OCM02002, be received for information.

Requested Action	Information Only		
ConnectEdmonton's Guiding Principle	ConnectEdmonton Strategic Goals		
CONNECTED This unifies our work to achieve our strategic goals.	Healthy City		
City Plan Values	BELONG. LIVE. THRIVE. ACCESS.		
City Plan Big City Move(s)	Inclusive and compassionate	Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities	Community safety and well-being
Corporate Business Plan	Transforming for the future		
Council Policy, Program or Project Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-Racism Strategy • Community Safety and Well-being Strategy • Indigenous Framework • Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Municipal Response Plan • Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit Action Plan • City of Edmonton's Art of Inclusion Framework 		
Related Council Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • February 22, 2022, Community Services report CS00872, Anti-Racism Strategy • November 8, 2021 Community Services report CS00793, 2021 Anti-racism Grant Program Recommendations • October 28, 2022 Community Services report CS01365, 2022 Anti-racism Grants Program Recommendations • February 7, 2023 Community Services report CS01550, Anti-Racism Community Safety Fund Proposal Recommendation 		

ANTI-RACISM STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

Executive Summary

- This report provides an update on the three priority actions outlined in the City of Edmonton's Anti-Racism Strategy: 1) the Independent Anti-Racism Body, 2) the High Level Anti-Racism Office and 3) Anti-Racism Funding.
- Administration has continued to respond to the needs and priorities of Edmontonians by partnering on the delivery of other initiatives to advance anti-racism work in Edmonton, such as the Council Internship and Anti-Black Racism Action Plan.
- Administration is committed to advancing the work of the strategy, but doing so in relationship and partnership with the community. Implementing the strategy in a meaningful and sustainable way is the priority.

REPORT

On February 22, 2022, the Community Services report CS00872, Anti-Racism Strategy was approved by City Council. The Anti-Racism Strategy outlined three key priorities for Administration, with the wording as follows:

1. **Independent Anti-Racism Body:** A community-driven, equitably resourced body that is independent from other city bodies (such as City of Edmonton Administration, Edmonton Police Service, school boards and districts, etc.) will be established to oversee anti-racism in Edmonton and have the ability to stimulate reflection on and challenge systemic racism at all levels in Edmonton.
2. **High Level Office:** A new anti-racism organization within Administration will be created to challenge racism within the City of Edmonton corporation, including challenging systemic racism, developing a culture of anti-racism, embedding anti-racist action into all processes within Administration, and acting as a collaborative partner with the Independent Anti-Racism Body to co-create a long-term Anti-Racism Strategy and Plan for Edmonton.
3. **Core Operational and Capacity-Building Funding:** In order to strengthen grassroots, BIPOC-led organizations and support them to be more effective with work that empowers BIPOC communities, influences the greater Edmonton culture, and is linked to long-term goals in an Anti-Racism Strategy and Plan for Edmonton; the City will establish funding for core operations, capacity-building and other needs identified through collaborative decision making. The Strategy also calls for sustained anti-racism funding to community organizations, on an equitable basis.

Administration adopted these three actions as the first steps towards building capacity to become an anti-racist organization. This report provides an update on each of these activities and other initiatives that are supporting the City of Edmonton to be a more anti-racist organization.

Independent Anti-Racism Body

In February 2023, the City Manager appointed a 15 person community Advisory Panel. The panel meets bi-weekly to propose formation, structure, governance and finances for the Independent Anti-Racism Body. The Advisory Panel created multiple sub-committees to address the components of developing a new organization including:

ANTI-RACISM STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

- Vision, mission, activities and priorities
- Governance and legal structures
- Staffing, organizational development, budget and resourcing
- Public engagement and validation
- Writing and review

The Advisory Panel is soliciting online feedback from the community on the work completed to date, and is planning engagement sessions with anti-racism organizations as their work progresses.

High Level Office

In 2022, two Senior Executive Advisors for Anti-Racism and Intersectionality and Reconciliation were hired into the City Manager's Office. The Senior Executive Advisors oversee the implementation of the Anti-Racism Strategy and the City's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Municipal Response Plan. While there has been significant work to provide staff training on diversity, equity and inclusion, anti-racism and Indigenous Awareness, the community has called for further capacity development to challenge and address racism within the City of Edmonton.

The High Level Office will liaise across the corporation and with the Independent Anti-Racism Body to advance anti-racism work in Edmonton. The proposed team will include project managers who will work together to advance existing and new anti-racism, intersectionality and reconciliation projects across the corporation, including coordinating the City's response to Anti-Black Racism. The work will be supported by staff who can provide system navigation support for communities to access city services and spaces, alongside research, data, and evaluation expertise to measure the impact of projects within the strategies.

As part of the Fall 2023 Supplemental Operating Budget Adjustment, Administration has prepared a service package to launch the High Level Office, ensuring sustainable resources to address racism and promote anti-racism within the organization.

Anti-Racism Internal Training Update

The City of Edmonton's Respect in the Workplace Team continues to deliver training to City staff, with multiple course offerings throughout the year. In 2023, the team provided 22 sessions to 1,279 staff members. The three instructor-led courses currently offered to City staff include:

1. Introduction to Anti-Racism (7 sessions, 784 participants)
2. Anti-Racism Allyship (8 sessions, 269 participants)
3. Anti-Racism Leadership (7 sessions, 226 participants)

Grants and Funding

City Council has approved \$1.2 million in ongoing Anti-Racism Grants. This program opened for applications between July 2023 and September 2023. The applications are under review through a volunteer community panel with grant announcements to be completed by early November 2023. Administration built on the work on previous anti-racism grant programs.

Administration also launched an Indigenous-led Operating Grant in September 2023. This operating grant will provide Indigenous organizations with funding they can allocate in the way

ANTI-RACISM STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

their organization needs it the most. Another round of Community Safety and Well-Being Strategy (CSWB) grants will also be released this fall, prioritizing four other pillars of the strategy. The CSWB grants will take an equity approach supporting diverse groups to access the funding to meet their community safety and wellbeing needs.

Council Internship

The Civic Youth Fellowship (Council Internship) encouraged youth from diverse backgrounds to gain leadership, grow their professional network, learn new skills in the public sector and experience meaningful mentorship and career development opportunities. The program provided a mechanism for community-based partners to enhance opportunities for diverse youth within municipal government.

In May 2023, an eight week internship program was launched in partnership with Canadian Race Relations Foundation (CRRF), Islamic Family and Social Services (IslamicFamily), the Africa Centre and kihêw waciston Indigenous Centre at MacEwan University. City of Edmonton program participants worked alongside the Office of the Mayor and Offices of the Councillors.

The internship yielded constructive learning experiences for all participants, including the partners. Council offices reported that they learned more about the challenges youth are facing, particularly those from different ethnic backgrounds, and appreciated the lived experience perspective that interns brought to issues. Council Interns shared that they have a new appreciation for the complexity of policy making, and how challenging it is to account for the diversity of constituent perspectives. Since the completion of the program and at the time this report was drafted, six of the thirteen interns have secured part-time or full-time employment, including four within Council Offices, Administration or another government policy office.

Administration is working with community partners, informed by stakeholder feedback, to strengthen the program for future iterations. This will include more structure but continued opportunities for co-learning and collaboration.

Anti-Black Racism Action Plan

In August 2022, Mayor Sohi reaffirmed the City's support for the UN Decade for People of African Descent. The City committed to address issues of racism faced by Edmonton's Black communities and to ensure that an Afro-centric lens was incorporated into the Anti-Racism Strategy. Between December 2022 and March 2023, specialized consultants with lived experience held extensive community consultations, engaging more than 1,000 community members and City employees. The Anti-Black Racism Action Plan, co-created with members of Edmonton's Black communities, was published in June 2023.

The Anti-Black Racism Action Plan contains more than 130 recommendations covering themes such as safety, arts and heritage, race-based data, social development and entrepreneurship. Many recommendations are addressed through various initiatives such as the Economic Action Plan, Affordable Housing Strategy, Sustainable Procurement Policy, Zoning Bylaw Renewal and neighborhood revitalization projects. Most of the Action Plan recommendations align with feedback received from various ethnocultural communities, echoing concerns shared with the Administration about their experiences with racism.

ANTI-RACISM STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

Administration is focussing on five complex, systemic changes:

1. Creating mechanisms for joint planning and accountability to community
2. Enhancing GBA+ to better inform the planning and delivery of City services
3. Ensuring equity for Indigenous and racialized organizations in grant programs
4. Reflecting Edmonton's demographics in City management roles
5. Improving community access to City facilities and spaces

Recognizing that many recommendations fall outside the City's legislated responsibilities under the *Municipal Government Act*, Administration is connecting community organizations with the City's agencies, boards and commissions, and is including community voices when advocating to intergovernmental partners.

Administration is preparing for a convening table where the City and community can work collaboratively to advance the recommendations of the Anti-Black Racism Action Plan. Anti-Black Racism responses will be coordinated through the High Level Office.

Budget/Financial Implications

On February 22, 2022, the Community and Public Services Committee report CS00872, Anti-Racism Strategy was approved by City Council, which included \$2 million in one-time funding for the initial implementation of the three key priorities outlined in the strategy.

This funding has been allocated to:

- The activities of the Independent Anti-Racism Body Advisory Panel
- Developing of the Anti-Black Racism Action Plan
- Community-based events and anti-racism activities
- The Council Internship Pilot
- Enhancing the anti-racism pillar of Community Safety and Wellbeing (CSWB) grants with additional funds for ethnocultural communities

Ongoing funding for this initiative is included in the proposed Fall 2023 Supplemental Operating Budget Adjustment.

Community Insight

The Anti-Racism Strategy was developed through extensive consultation with diverse Edmontonians who shared their lived and living experience with the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee. The culmination of feedback resulted in the three key priorities for the City to take to build its capacity to respond to, and ultimately, eliminate racism in Edmonton.

Since the approval of the Anti-Racism Strategy, Administration continues to organize community conversations with diverse ethnocultural and Indigenous groups to hear lived and living experiences of racism in Edmonton and learn what communities see as viable solutions forward. Many of these conversations indicate that Edmontonians are looking for community-based action and responses. Edmonton's diverse ethnocultural and Indigenous communities want to clearly understand the City's commitments and see them followed up with actions. This has guided the work occurring outside of the three key priorities of the strategy, such as the Council Internship, the City partnering with the community for its first Iftar and the Anti-Black Racism Action Plan.

ANTI-RACISM STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

The Independent Anti-Racism Body Advisory Panel has their own engagement sub-committee that will be soliciting community input and feedback on the vision for the Independent Body in the coming months.

The updates provided in this report continue to be shaped by the information shared in these previous engagements. Administration is committed to a continuous feedback process as implementation continues and the broader strategy is developed. In order to effectively pursue anti-racism, Administration will continue to ground its efforts as guided by the voices that are most impacted.

GBA+

The Anti-Racism Strategy was developed to remove barriers to equity and support racialized, equity-deserving communities with access to the programs, services and support they need to thrive in Edmonton. Anti-racism work is intersectional, and Administration acknowledges that the experiences of Edmontonians vary based on unique perspectives, experiences and identities. Continued efforts are being made to ensure that the committed actions will reflect the needs of these intersectional perspectives, including continuous engagement and soliciting community feedback as the work progresses. This includes learning from City staff, through engagement practices and the City's Employee Resource Networks. This commitment will remain as implementation of the Anti-Racism Strategy continues, and the Independent Anti-Racism Body and High Level Office are developed within the coming year.