

# EDMONTON ANTI-BLACK RACISM ACTION PLAN



**This Anti-Black Racism Action Plan for the City of Edmonton is written in the spirit of the International Decade for Persons of African Descent. Recognizing the pillars of Recognition, Justice, and Development.**

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## INTRODUCTION

*The City of Edmonton acknowledges the traditional & current land on which we reside, is in Treaty Six Territory. We would like to thank the diverse Indigenous Peoples whose ancestors' footsteps have marked this territory for centuries, such as nêhiyaw (Nay-hee-yow) / Cree, Dene (Deh-neyh), Anishinaabe (Ah-nish-in-ah-bay) / Saulteaux (So-toe), Nakota Isga (Na-koh-tah ee-ska) / Nakota Sioux (Na-koh-tah sue), and Niitsitapi (Nit-si-tahp-ee) / Blackfoot peoples. We also acknowledge this as the Métis' (May-tee) homeland and the home of one of the largest communities of Inuit south of the 60th parallel. It is a welcoming place for all peoples who come from around the world to share Edmonton as a home. Together we call upon all of our collective, honored traditions and spirits to work in building a great city for today and future generations.*

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Additionally it is important to acknowledge that the Black communities of Edmonton have been a vital part of the social and economic fabric of Edmonton contributing greatly to its development and success. We acknowledge the tremendous amount of hard work and dedication that the Black communities of Edmonton have put into creating a more equitable society, as well as the countless battles they have fought in the pursuit of justice, recognition, belonging and development.

The city of Edmonton (COE) is enriched by the vibrant and diverse Black communities, composed of many different and unique factions, nuances, and differences. For generations, the Black community has been a vital part of the social and economic fabric of Edmonton, contributing greatly to its development and success.

Since the 1700s, there is a record of Black presence in the Indigenous territories now known as Edmonton, Alberta. The Black legacy in Edmonton includes but is not limited to: figures such as Joseph Lewis, Edmonton's first Black voyageur; Eleanor Ruth Collins, known as Canada's first lady of jazz; and World Cup soccer star Alphonso Davis. Black Edmontonians make significant contributions across multiple sectors, adding to the vibrant and diverse populations that make up the city.

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Black Edmontonians come from many different backgrounds, ethnicities, and religions. From the historic African American population known as the “Black Pioneers,” dating back to the mid-nineteenth century, to more recent migration from across Africa and the Caribbean the Black community of Edmonton brings a multiplicity of perspectives, experiences, and expertise that enriches municipal life.

Edmonton is home to the fastest-growing and youngest Black population in Canada. According to the most recent demographic projections for Canada (August 22, 2022), immigration is projected to remain the main driver of population growth over the coming decades, continuing a trend that began in the early 1990s (Statistics Canada, 2022). By 2041, the Black population in Canada is expected to more than double, from 1.5 million people in 2016 to more than 3.0 million people. These national trends match projections for Edmonton.

As Edmonton prepares today for the future, Black Edmontonians will continue to play a vital role in the success of the city. However, many Edmontonians of African descent report experiencing anti-Black racism. These barriers are felt in all areas of life. Anti-Black racism may impede success across the municipality, potentially harming the progress of Black people, but also preventing the city as a whole from benefitting from the full contributions of its Black members.

The term anti-Black racism was first expressed by Dr. Akua Benjamin. It “seeks to highlight the unique nature of systemic racism on Black-Canadians and the history as well as experiences of slavery and colonization of people of Black-African descent in Canada” (Black Health Alliance). Anti-Black racism is defined as: “Policies and practices rooted in Canadian institutions such as, education, health care, and justice that mirror and reinforce beliefs, attitudes, prejudice, stereotyping and/or discrimination towards people of Black-African descent.”

The recent Vital Signs report (2022) released by the Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF), along with the Edmonton Social Planning Council on systemic racism in Edmonton showed some troubling statistics.

- 13.9% of those who are unemployed identified as Black.
  - Black Edmontonians are 3.6 times more likely to be street-checked than white Edmontonians.
  - 74% of Edmontonians who are of a minority group reported that racism is a problem in the city.
  - 45% of people reported they had experienced or had been a victim of racism.
  - At least 15 attacks on visibly Black Muslim women were reported in Edmonton and Calgary between December 2020 and October 2021.
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In addition, the report revealed an absence of race-based data in many crucial areas, making it more difficult to recognize and address anti-Black racism.

In our What We Heard report, we consulted extensively with Black Edmontonians of all generations, backgrounds, and experiences including youth, City employees, the business community, non-profit workers, students, parents, retirees, and more. We encountered a hard-working community making impact across the city.

We also heard about the many barriers that still exist. Anti-Black racism persists in all areas: we heard about inequitable education; struggles for equal funding for initiatives, programs, and events; lack of access to employment; stereotyping and discrimination; the impact on physical and mental health; poverty and housing; criminalization; and even hate crimes and violence.

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## BACKGROUND: HOW THIS ACTION PLAN CAME TO BE

In response to the communities ongoing advocacy and lobbying, Mayor Amarjeet Sohi supported by City Council of Edmonton made a special proclamation on August 29, 2022, whereby, the City of Edmonton for the first time joined the United Nations and governments across the globe in recognizing that people of African descent represent a distinct group whose human rights must be promoted and protected everywhere.

The proclamation acknowledged the unique identity of the Black communities within Edmonton and emphasized the significance of promoting and safeguarding their human rights on a global scale. The City of Edmonton aimed to foster collaboration with the Black communities to fully enjoy their economic, social, cultural, civil, and political rights, and have equal participation in all aspects of society. In their efforts to combat anti-Black racism within Edmonton, the City took proactive measures by developing an action plan specifically targeting anti-Black racism. The creation of an anti-Black Racism Action Plan represents the first concrete step taken in response to the proclamation. This plan is an initial tangible outcome, designed to directly address and mitigate anti-Black racism within the city of Edmonton.

In 2018 a coalition of Black community members in Edmonton comprised of legal professionals, elders, social workers, and advocates organized and led by the African Canadian Civic Engagement Council, Reez Community Foundation, and the Africa Centre presented to the City Council. These three organizations highlighted pressing concerns and alarming issues shared by the diverse Black communities they serve in the city, emphasizing the need for immediate attention and action. These presented concerns included issues of racism and violence, including gender-based racism, extending to inadequate housing, mental health issues, and inadequate representation of Black people in senior ranks within the City. They highlighted how Black Edmontonians were excluded from employment opportunities, access to funding, and recruitment policies while feeling unsafe in their city. These community efforts were influential in creating new City policies; in 2019, Councilor Andrew Knack signed a bylaw enacting the City's Anti-Racism Advisory Committee (ARAC) to address the tangible detriment experienced by the Black community.

Recruitment of ARAC members began at the end of 2019 and their appointments were finalized in the spring of 2020. Shortly after, measures were declared to respond to the global COVID-19 pandemic, which included withdrawing secretarial support. Thus, the Committee's operations were suspended soon after they had begun.

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In the wake of George Floyd's tragic death during the summer of 2020, approximately 140 citizens addressed the City Council of Edmonton regarding the mistreatment and marginalization of Edmonton's Black communities, especially by policing services. To reassure the community, the City Councilor's and staff highlighted the existence of their Anti-Racism Advisory Committee as a testament to their dedication to addressing these issues.

The Anti-Racism Advisory Committee's operations were reinstated in the fall of 2020, with representatives of Black communities serving on the leadership team as Vice-Chair and Chair of the Public Engagement and Outreach Subcommittee. Simultaneously, the City Council approved a new bylaw that established a Community Safety and Wellbeing (CSWB) Taskforce composed of an independent chairperson, ten community members, and representatives from the City Administration, Edmonton Police Service, Edmonton Police Association, and the Edmonton Police Commission. Committed to making anti-racist changes, the Taskforce was invited to embark on an inclusive, relationship-based process in order to provide actionable strategies for Council regarding community safety and well-being.

During the winter of 2020, multiple hate-motivated attacks against visibly Black Muslim women and girls were reported in Edmonton. This spike in hateful incidents was both shocking and concerning. Although such occurrences had unfortunately taken place in Edmonton before, they had never occurred with such consistency and frequency – averaging one or more monthly for approximately 15 months. Notably, many members of the Black communities particularly the Black Muslim community felt empowered to come forward and alert authorities to the attacks.

Between October 2020 and March 2021, the volunteer members of the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee made a number of impactful education inputs and recommendations to City Council to the benefit of racialized people in Edmonton, including advocating for 'equitable responses' rather than 'equal responses', and that the most marginalized and impacted by racism and intersectional oppressions in Edmonton be included as collaborative partners in decision-making on issues impacting them. Members of ARAC also stood in solidarity with the community members of the Community Safety and Wellbeing Taskforce.

In April 2020, the CSWB Taskforce concluded their work by presenting their "Believe Us": Safer For All report to the City Council, with recommendations that included freezing automatic increases planned for the police budget. The City Council asked the City Administration to develop an implementation report for this. On the 30th of June 2021, community members from the CSWB Taskforce, members of the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee and Black and racialized Edmontonians communicated their frustration that the presented implementation report had lost the voice, needs and essence of what Black communities were fighting for in the summer of 2020.

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As a result, the City Council passed a new motion for the City Administration to return a new implementation report, this time through collaborative decision-making with the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee and Edmonton Police Commission.

Newly elected Mayor Amarjeet Sohi, Edmonton's first brown Mayor, made an inaugural motion for an Anti-Racism Strategy for the City, to address racism and hate-based violence, in response to the attacks against Black visibly Muslim women, and in honour of this intersectional community.

In June, 2021, the City Administration presented an implementation report. In response to community feedback, Councilor Aaron Paquette made a motion, "That Administration work with the Anti-racism Advisory Committee (ARAC) and the Edmonton Police Commission to provide in the next update on the 'Safer for All Strategy' and co-created engagement with Edmonton's BIPOC communities to gather more actionable data points and develop collaborative decision-making processes and understandings in relation to the Task Force recommendations."

In November, 2021, newly elected Mayor Amarjeet Sohi responded to the consistent, frequent, and shocking attacks on visibly Black Muslim women in Edmonton by introducing a motion for the City to co-create an Anti-Racism Strategy with the community. This plan was designed to address hate-based violence in Edmonton through collaborative decision-making involving racialized communities who have been affected by these multifaceted form of violence.

Between December 31 and January 8, a collective of approximately 60 individuals and organizations of African descent, Black Muslim women, Indigenous communities, 2SLGBTQ+ communities, and various racialized community members worked together to establish an anti-racism strategy with attention to key pillars geared towards creating an inclusive approach. This was done in reaction to motions and bylaws implemented with the aim of promoting cooperative decision-making.

The culmination of their hard work resulted in the draft of a collaborative anti-racism strategy.

Together with diverse Black communities, the Mayor's office, City Council, and City Administration, including the work of the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee (ARAC), and the Community Safety and Wellbeing (CSWB) Taskforce, the Black communities have worked hand in hand to drive positive change and foster a city that embraces equity, inclusion, innovation, and anti-racism. It is through the shared efforts, dedication, and commitment that collectively, something great will be able to be achieved.

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## BLACK PRESENCE IN EDMONTON: IN BRIEF

There has been a Black presence in Western Canada since the late 1700s. The most famous individual from this period is John Ware, a Black cowboy who became a successful rancher. During the early 1900-10s, the Canadian government hoped to attract more Americans to settle in Western Canada. As a result, many African Americans migrated to the area hoping to escape racism and segregation. Hundreds of African Americans arrived in response to the federal government's Dominion Lands Act, which was passed in 1872 to encourage settlement on the Prairies.

Many of them settled in rural communities within a 100-mile radius of Edmonton. Amber Valley, located 170 kilometers north of Edmonton, had around 300 community members and was one of the biggest Black settlements in Western Canada. According to the 1911 census, only 30% of early Black arrivals were located in urban areas with 72 people in Calgary and 208 in Edmonton.

White Canadians reacted negatively to the influx of Black migrants, because they were not the White pioneers they had hoped to attract. As a result, a 1911 Order in Council declared them to be “unsuitable” future Canadians. They also faced hostility within the city. Businesses signed an Edmonton Board of Trade petition to discourage more African Americans from homesteading. The Edmonton Police Service formed a “morality squad” to target “social deviants”, which disproportionately profiled Black women in the city. There was a concerted effort from White Canadian society at the time to discourage Black migration.

Black Edmontonians also have a long history of resistance to anti-Black racism. The Negro Welfare Association of Edmonton, formed in 1921, was concerned with the rising unemployment of urban Blacks. “Under the leadership of Black pioneer Ira Day, the organization provided vocational education to Blacks, and lobbied to end discrimination against Blacks in the workforce” (Alberta’s Black Pioneer Heritage). A branch of the United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) was set up in Edmonton during the 1920s, and another one formed in Amber Valley, Alberta during the 1930s.

On May 12, 1922, a Black woman named Lulu Anderson “went to the Metropolitan Theatre to watch a performance of *The Lion and The Mouse*. The theatre staff denied her entry. According to an article in the *Edmonton Journal*, the staff also assaulted her” (Mohamed 2023).

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Anderson hired legal representation to challenge segregation. In November 1922, the judge ruled against her in a case that cemented racial segregation in the province.

In the 1950s, some professional immigrants arrived from the Caribbean, including women recruited by the West Indian Domestic Scheme (1995). The shift in the Canadian immigration policy to a points system instead of an explicit preference for immigrants from Europe resulted in more Caribbean migrants from the 1960s onwards. At the same time, Black farming communities in rural areas were shrinking and early Black settlers were increasingly relocating in cities like Edmonton.

Throughout this time period, Edmontonians of African descent faced discrimination. Unlike the United States where segregation was coded through explicitly racist laws and regulations, in Canada between the 1900s and 1960s, “generic anti-discrimination policies were arbitrarily interpreted” (Nzindukiyimana & O’Connor 2018, 140). “Racial segregation in Canada, therefore, was circumstantial and inconsistent, and was largely reinforced by attitudes and traditions”(140).

These “informal” forms of segregation included housing discrimination; exclusion from clubs, and recreational spaces including golf courses, swimming pools and beaches; as well as from sporting activities such as hockey, where there was a “colour line” excluding Black players. Black people also found themselves turned away from public areas (Palmer 1981). According to Bashir Mohamed’s research, “In 1924, Black patrons were banned by the City of Edmonton from using the Borden Park swimming pool. In the 1920s and 1930s, Edmonton hospitals refused to treat Black patients. In 1938, Rhumah Utendale tried to become the first Black nurse in Edmonton but was refused entry because she was Black” (Mohamed 2023).

The time period from the 1940s-1960s was also marked by increased police surveillance of Black communities. This history of exclusion and discrimination is important in understanding the ongoing inequities today reported by Black people in Edmonton in accessing recreational spaces, confronting police brutality or racial profiling, in accessing equitable education, or in feeling fully welcome in many sites across the city.

By the mid-1950s, there was a thriving Black community in Edmonton. Hatti’s Harlem Chicken Inn, the current site of the provincial court, was a popular meeting spot for musicians and celebrities including local music legend Tommy Banks who would go on to become a Canadian senator (McMaster 2021).

Particularly in the period after the Second World War, these communities formed a number of groups who organized against systemic racism. In 1947, the Alberta Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (AAACP) was formed due to growing concerns about racism.

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While located in Calgary, the group also worked with Black communities in Edmonton. The Council of Canadian of African and Caribbean Heritage (formed in January 1985) as the Council of Black Organizations was an umbrella group with membership drawn from several organizations. Along with addressing racial and human rights issues, these groups also created cultural events including Black History Month, advocated for Black women, published newsletters and community newspapers, created settlement services for immigrants, and formed youth councils (City of Edmonton Archives).

More students and migrants from the African continent began to arrive in the 1990s. These immigration patterns have continued, and today Edmonton has one of the fastest-growing Black populations in Canada.

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# THE ANTI-BLACK RACISM ACTION PLAN

The City of Edmonton has made a commitment to the Black communities to comprehensively tackle the challenges and concerns of historical and current anti-Black racism. This anti-Black racism action plan will serve as a guide and slate of recommendations based on the voices of the Black communities in Edmonton.

The Anti-Black Racism Action Plan endeavors to address these inequities, making concrete recommendations towards eliminating anti-Black racism, increasing access and opportunity, and ensuring that all Edmontonians of African descent are able to live, work, experience joy, and contribute fully. Ensuring a fair, just, and equitable city benefits Edmontonians of all backgrounds and identities.

This work is done in partnership with the City of Edmonton, directed and guided by the community, with one of the goals being to provide support and resources to the Black communities in Edmonton.

The consultants sought to gain a better understanding of the needs of the Black communities by listening and learning. They spoke to numerous community members, consulted with City staff, read relevant reports, and analyzed the current situation to identify what was necessary and desired.

The first part of this report, named the What We Heard report, documents the voices and experiences of Black people in Edmonton. These voices are vital in understanding the impact of anti-Black racism as well as the many community-based solutions and recommendations.

We also reviewed a number of previous reports and current City policies and documents to understand the work that is underway, the status of previous recommendations, and the gaps that still exist. The Anti-Black Racism Action Plan sits alongside many other equity initiatives at the City including the Indigenous Framework, Diversity & Inclusion Framework, all of which are a part of the City's Anti-Racism Strategy. The Anti-Black Racism Action Plan works alongside these other frameworks to enhance inclusion, diversity and equity within the municipality.

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## THE ROLE OF THE MUNICIPALITY

The City of Edmonton has an important role to play in combatting anti-Black racism. In our consultations, we heard many recommendations from Black City employees and from the wider community to improve recognition, access, and employment for people of African descent.

Some of these recommendations such as flying the Pan-African flag during Black History Month and enhancing recognition of the month at City Hall are easily implementable. Some recommendations such as addressing the over-criminalization of Black youth, lack of access to affordable housing, or a disparity in employment opportunities require co-operation from many different partners and institutions across the city.

Still others, such as the inequities in education curricula, disproportionate discipline of Black students, and lack of Black educators at all levels or the disparities in health care based on race require the City to work together with the province and other relevant partners.

Eradicating anti-Black racism is a collective responsibility. Every individual, institution, business, government, and community partner must work together if we are to succeed. This action plan focuses on the leadership of the City in key areas.

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## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

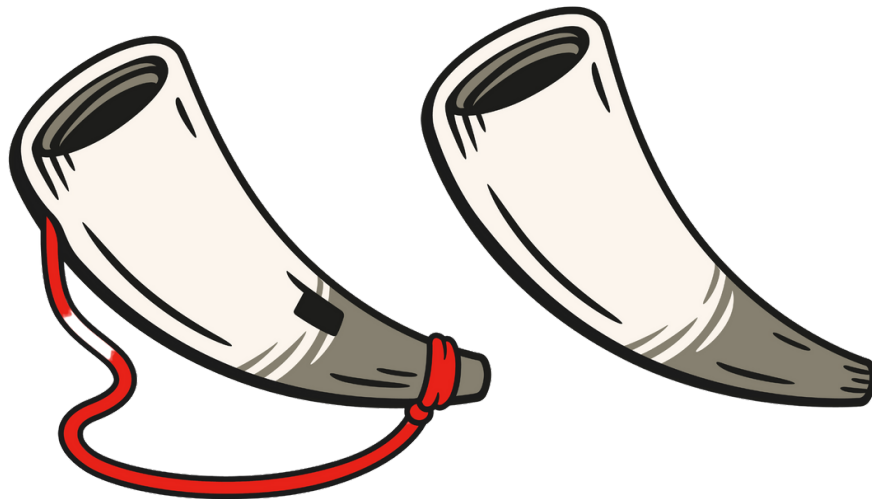
This Action Plan is grounded in collaboration with and accountability to the Black communities of Edmonton. We advocate a model of shared leadership grounded in Africentric principles of collectivity, self-determination, and relationality.

We recognize the many diverse backgrounds and experiences of the Black communities of Edmonton. Black Edmontonians have diverse sexualities and gender identities, speak many different languages, come from many different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, practice a variety of religions, and have varying histories within the city. Black Edmontonians are immigrants, refugees, and established residents of more than a century.

They are leaders and advocates on issues of disability access, LGBTQ2S+ rights, language access, poverty, and come from a variety of economic backgrounds.

To symbolize these principles of listening, collectivity, and diversity, we chose the image of the abeng. An important symbol across the diaspora, the abeng is a ceremonial horn used to communicate across great distances, to call people together, and to announce and celebrate important news. We feel that this image captures our commitment in this plan to amplifying the voices of Black Edmontonians, bringing people together, and taking action.

As the United Nations Decade for People of African Descent comes to a close, this report also uses as a foundation the three principles of the decade: recognition, justice, and development.



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## MESSAGE FROM MAYOR AMARJEET SOHI



City Council is committed to addressing racism in Edmonton. This work is incredibly important, which is why developing an Anti-Racism Strategy to address racism and hate-based violence was my first motion when I took office in November 2021. The Anti-Black Racism Action Plan is the latest step in advancing that strategy and our efforts to create an anti-racist, equitable city.

Combatting racism is critical and at times challenging generational work. It's not just a priority for City Council, it's a necessity for the health and well-being of our city. Racism is pervasive and causes pain and trauma to individuals and communities. I know how hard it is when people struggle to find their place, face barriers that reduce access to opportunities, and have to persevere in order to move forward.

Edmonton's success and advancement relies on the full contributions, engagement, and participation of all of its communities and the people who live here.

Edmonton's Black communities are part of the fabric of Edmonton; they have made immense contributions to our past and present, and play a key role in our future success. They succeed and contribute despite the barriers caused by racism; we are dedicated to creating an anti-racist city in which they can go further and reach new heights.

Thank you to Edmonton's Black communities for their advocacy and engagement in this work and for holding City Council and Administration accountable for doing more—for you, for your communities, and for future generations of Black Edmontonians.

Edmonton is a wonderful city whose strength is its people and its communities. But the true measure of a city is whether every single person who calls this place home has access to the services and resources they need to thrive and feels safe, valued, appreciated, and welcomed. Until that happens, City Council and Administration have work to do to build an Edmonton for all of us.

Mayor Amarjeet Sohi

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## MESSAGE FROM CITY MANAGER ANDRE CORBOULD



Transformative change can happen when people come together to share ideas and their perspectives. Thank you to everyone who provided input and shared their experiences during the engagement sessions earlier this year and for providing further feedback to ensure that the Anti-Black Racism Action Plan fully addresses the needs of Edmonton's Black communities.

This action plan is directed and guided by Edmonton's Black communities. Your thoughtful input and honest feedback about what Administration needs to do to create meaningful change for Black and racialized Edmontonians is invaluable.

From community infrastructure to media, the justice system to cultural recognition, Black business to employment, the recommendations in this action plan cover many different ways anti-Black racism hinders and affects Black Edmontonians and how we can provide equitable access to opportunities, services, and resources.

These areas provide a solid starting point for Administration to address anti-Black racism in the city and to forge an anti-racist future for all Edmontonians. Throughout the process of creating this plan, the City of Edmonton has been listening and learning. We are listening and learning about what we could do more of, what we could do better, and the areas we need to focus on.

As we develop a plan to address these recommendations, we will turn our focus on taking action, and we will continue to listen and learn. Dismantling systemic racism requires collaboration and partnership to achieve progress, and we will continue to work with Edmonton's Black and racialized communities and others to advance this work.

We are dedicated to creating a just and equitable city in which everyone is able to live, work, and fully contribute, and we will continue moving forward towards that goal.

We will be further reviewing the action plan over the coming months and determining a response on the recommendations. This work is important and we want to make sure it is done right. That response and plan on the next steps will come in the fall.

You've helped create a roadmap for moving forward, and the City of Edmonton will step up to do its part and be a strong advocate in encouraging others to do the same.

Andre Corbould  
City Manager

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Edmonton has committed to creating a more equitable future for the Black communities by investing in the communities and increasing representation of municipal leadership as well as increasing and improving transparency, accountability and communication.

The Black communities of Edmonton has raised a variety of issues and challenges including but not limited to: recognizing Black history, upward mobility in employment, providing better access to recreation, investments in community infrastructure, sustained community engagement, review of collective agreements, improve corporate communications, increasing public safety, collection of disaggregated data, and working cooperatively with other levels of government.

For decades, Edmonton's Black community has felt that their voices, history and challenges have not being accurately represented, and adequately acknowledged.

This Anti-Black Racism Action Plan is an initiative that is developed in collaboration with the Black communities in Edmonton. It provides a roadmap of recommendations and actions to be taken by the City of Edmonton to address systemic racism and discrimination faced by the Black community. This plan is designed to ensure that the Black communities have equitable access to services, resources, and opportunities in Edmonton. This plan will identify tangible steps to reduce and eliminate anti-Black racism, such as implementing policy changes, providing training, and investing in community initiatives.

The City of Edmonton's Anti-Black Racism Action Plan will create a platform for the Black communities to realize their desired outcomes. Coordination, collaboration, and collective effort are key elements for the successful implementation of the proposed actions and recommendations. These strategies will help the City of Edmonton reach their goal of embracing diversity and creating an equitable and inclusive city.

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*The action plan is good but there should be a clear commitment on how it will be implemented and who will be impacted. If the action plan is not followed or some elements are not followed in the next 3 years, there should be accountability from the municipality on why the action items were not implemented- Community Member*



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## IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

**E** **Examine:** We must take the time to study the issues, grievances, and concerns that members of the Black communities present, and approach them with an analytical and open-minded outlook so that we can make significant and lasting progress.

**V** **Visibility:** Municipal staff must demonstrate their commitment to the Black communities by being present both online and in person at events, even when there are no clear benefit to the municipality. It is important that the community can observe tangible changes, and this will help to build trust and foster relationships.

**A** **Assess:** The City of Edmonton must construct assessment tools in order to monitor and analyze the plan's progress, alterations, and outcomes. It is essential to scrutinize the efficiency, efficacy, and sensitivity to the problems in order to make sure that the plan is being successfully implemented.

**L** **Listen:** It is essential that the City of Edmonton continue to pay attention to what the Black community is expressing and the obstacles they are dealing with. Without ongoing communication between Edmonton and the Black communities, this plan will not be successful.

**U** **Understand:** Once the issues have been heard, it is essential to have an accurate comprehension of the overall situation and range of difficulties. With a deeper understanding, we will be more equipped to handle the struggles presented by the Black community.

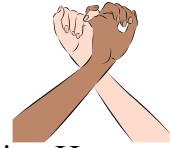
**A** **Apply:** Utilizing the information that has been acquired from prior steps will be of the utmost significance. This is not going to be a straightforward job, however, putting the learned knowledge into practice is essential when it comes to addressing the problems.

**T** **Transform:** Transform systems, governments, and workflows to be innovative and responsive to the continually evolving requirements. This requires adjusting existing procedures to adapt to changing circumstances, as well as introducing new concepts and solutions to address novel difficulties. The old ways of working proved not to be successful.

**E** **Engage:** Maintain the connection with the Black communities throughout the process. Remain in contact with leaders, groups, and all facets of the Black community. Keep the Black community up to date on any alterations and advancements.

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## COMMITTMENT & MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP



Black Edmontonians are represented in many varied roles across the municipality. However, as our What We Heard report documented, there is severe under-representation of Black people employees at senior levels within the City. Black workers also report decreased hiring, promotions, and job mobility compared to other workers.

More broadly, Black Canadians show lower levels of engagement with municipal politics than other groups. The 2022 Statistics Canada report “Portrait of the social, political and economic participation of racialized groups” indicates that only 58% of Black Canadians participate in municipal elections, compared to 71% of the broader population.

Black Edmontonians report feeling alienated from leadership at City Hall; difficulties in navigating many complex systems in engaging with the City; and a lack of representation in decision-making positions that leave people feeling unheard and with their needs unmet. In order to increase belonging and engagement in the municipality, and to create equitable representation at City Hall, we recommend the following:

- 1.1 The City of Edmonton provides funding and resources for a permanent office that is devoted to meeting the needs of the city's Black population.
- 1.2 The City of Edmonton take action to ensure that this office is operational within a period of two years or less.
- 1.3 This office will be consulted when developing municipal policy.
- 1.4 Meaningfully involve and engage with the Black communities to develop the office.
- 1.5 The Municipal Government of Edmonton shall create, finance, and manage a permanent anti-Black racism council composed of representatives from the various Black communities in the city.
- 1.6 Ensure fair and equitable remuneration for members of the council.
- 1.7 Establish terms of reference, structure, and function of council through community engagement.

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## TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY



Transparency and accountability are of utmost importance to the Black communities. Transparency can help to create a level playing field for members of the Black communities. It is also essential for accountability, as it allows for citizens to hold their government officials accountable for their actions. Transparency and accountability create a sense of trust between the Black community and the City of Edmonton.

We recommend:

- 2.1** The City of Edmonton to produce a written commitment to Edmonton's Black communities that includes timelines, and milestones as it relates to the adoption, and completion of the recommendations set forth in this action plan.
  - 2.2** The commitment will outline objectives, duties, and accountability protocols for Municipal personnel working on anti-Black racism programs.
  - 2.3** This commitment to be posted on the City of Edmonton communication channels (website, social media etc).
  - 2.4** Make available in multiple languages that are best fit for the Black community.
  - 2.5** The City of Edmonton to appoint an independent and external body to review, assess, and evaluate anti-Black racism initiatives, programming and complaints to ensure effectiveness and accountability.
  - 2.6** The majority of seats (75%) shall be granted to members of the Black communities.
  - 2.7** The body should be given the authority to investigate, review, and mediate internal and external complaints from citizens and employees. With the end goal of producing a public report.
  - 2.8** The report will include an assessment of success metrics, relevant data, an analysis of what is working and what is not working, an overall evaluation, and community voices.
  - 2.9** The report will be shared publicly.
  - 2.10** A public forum will be available to solicit community input.
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## HIRING & EMPLOYMENT

Through engaging with both community members and City of Edmonton staff and leadership, we discovered that Black employees are drastically underrepresented, particularly in leadership roles. By increasing the representation of Black people in government, policies can be created and implemented which are more reflective of the needs of the Black community. In addition, increasing the representation of Black people in government can lead to the development of better relationships between the Black communities and the government.

We recommend:

**3.1** The City will commission an independent review and gap analysis to assess whether Black municipal employees and racialized employees are receiving equitable salaries.

**3.2** The City of Edmonton will design a program to promote upward mobility for Black employees. This program will provide resources and opportunities to develop the necessary skills, knowledge, and experience for advancement. The program will have components available to prospective employees.

**3.3** Through community engagement, the City will develop a reasonable hiring quota proportionate to the Black population size in Edmonton.

**3.4** The City of Edmonton will assess collective agreements and champion inclusivity, fairness, and provisions for Black employees.

**3.5** The City of Edmonton will work with union reps and leaders to advocate for and on behalf of Black employees concerns.

*After numerous conversations, it was cited that jobs cannot be designated to members of the Black communities due to the AHRA (articles 7 and 8)*

**3.6** The City of Edmonton will communicate with the Province to discuss the Alberta Human Rights Act and its limitations to designating positions (AHRA). With a recommended outcome of repealing this act to provide flexibility and autonomy in decision making with regards to designation of positions.

**3.7** The City of Edmonton will create targeted advertisement (in multiple languages) of City leadership positions to the Black communities.

**3.8** Hiring committees, especially for senior level positions should receive trainings relevant to anti-Black racism, Black history, and anti-racism.

**3.9** The City of Edmonton to take all necessary measures to promote and create a workplace free of harassment, anti-Black racism and discrimination.

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## DATA COLLECTION



Collecting race-based data is one step towards ensuring equity and access within the city of Edmonton. This data allows the municipality to accurately assess the gaps that exist and to respond effectively.

While the collection of data is an important tool in understanding systemic discrimination and its impact, data must also be safeguarded to ensure privacy, and to guard against harmful uses or distribution, such as using data to further marginalize or stigmatize Black communities.

Data gathering must also be used to dismantle systemic racism and must therefore be accompanied by commitments to address disparities.

Black community members, organizations, and experts must be the stewards and decision-makers on the collection, access to, use, and retention of data.

*We need more transparency in seeing data on diversity. We have tried to ask for this but very little progress at this point in increasing our diversity in hiring data behind a percentage for the entire organization. I would like to see it for frontline, mid-management, and executive level. - City Staff*

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- 4.1 Mandate the collection of disaggregated data by race within all municipal departments.
  - 4.2 Establish a cohesive working group to manage and analyze data collected within the municipality according to best practices.
  - 4.3 Collect race-based data on people experiencing homelessness, members of gender diverse communities, and the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community.
  - 4.4 Collect data on the use of City recreational facilities in order to determine equitable distribution of resources.
  - 4.5 Collect disaggregated data related to employment and hiring.
  - 4.6. The Edmonton Police Commission, in collaboration with stakeholders, commission a report to develop clear and comprehensive recommendations around race-based policing data.
  - 4.7 Develop a comprehensive data collection, storage, and privacy plan for the Edmonton Police Service, in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice, the Edmonton Police Commission, the Privacy Commissioner and academic and community stakeholders.
  - 4.8 The Municipality develop a clear consultation and communications plan to inform community around data collection and their rights.
  - 4.9 The Municipality co-ordinate with the Province of Alberta to establish a community-based working group to support the collection of race-based data in the health-care system.
  - 4.10 The Municipality co-ordinate with the province to establish data-sharing guidelines and privacy protections around race-based data.
  - 4.11 Collect disaggregated data related to income, and gender as well as any other related data points.
  - 4.12 Create a working group of Black parents, youth and community groups to review the racially-disaggregated data gathered in Edmonton Public Schools in order to develop disciplinary, educational and other policies that uplift and support Black youth.
  - 4.13 Make all disaggregated data anonymized and available to the public.
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*The systems need to change. There needs to be change to the people that name our streets and more. - Community Member*

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## COMMUNICATIONS & MEDIA

Many Edmontonians of African Descent are Francophone. In addition, many Black residents of Edmonton speak English as an additional language. Other communication challenges include difficulties navigating websites and a lack of distribution of City communications to broader community. In order to improve accessibility to municipal events, news, and programs for community and to enhance the recognition and understanding at City Hall of the Black communities, we recommend the following:

**5.1** The City commit resources to translating and making accessible municipal communications in French. As well as committing to create plain language communications and resources.

**5.2** The City partner with community organizations and community-based media to distribute announcements, job advertisements, funding opportunities, and other communications to ensure a wider audience within the Black communities.

**5.3** The City review existing communications accessibility programs for people with disabilities to ensure the inclusion of all members of the Black communities.

**5.4** The City work with Black journalists, independent media, communications specialists and other experts to develop a Black media strategy and guidelines, including the use of imagery, cultural competence and sensitivity, use of language, and other areas.

**5.5** The City of Edmonton host a media summit with Black journalists, publications, youth, and other communication specialists to learn about the Black media landscape in Edmonton, share narratives and stories from the Black communities to enhance understanding and collaboration, and to build knowledge and engagement in Black communities about City Hall and municipalities.

**5.6** The City to dedicate a reasonable portion of media spending (Advertisement, PR, publicity, TV, Radio) be allocated to Black-owned media.

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## INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION



- 6.1 Further develop partnerships with Provincial and Federal government counterparts as it relates to policy and opportunities related to needs of the Black communities.
- 6.2 Communicate to the Province the urgency of the needs of the Black communities and the support and resources required to be successful.
- 6.3 Communicate to the Province the need to amend the Municipal Government Act to include provisions that address the needs of Edmonton's Black communities.
- 6.4 Communicate to the Province the need for amendments to the Human Rights Act to include the ability to designate positions.
- 6.5 Work with the provincial government to increase the percentage of Black teachers in schools. Work towards a specific percentage based on the number of Black children in the school system.

***“Black communities need to have meaningful influence over what issues are discussed, how they are discussed, whose voices are centered, and what actions are implemented -  
Community Member*”**

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## CULTURAL RECOGNITION



The 2017 United Nations Report of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent recognized the unique contributions of People of African descent to Canadian culture. Black Edmontonians have a historic legacy of contributions in Arts and Culture and continue to enhance the cultural fabric of the city. In order to recognize, enhance, and equitably fund the Black cultural sector in Edmonton, we recommend:

### Recognition and Representation

**7.1** The City of Edmonton create an initiative to recognize and honour the historic and cultural contributions of Edmontonians of African descent, including recognition within the City Hall space and at cultural and public sites across the city.

**7.2** The City include cultural and artistic programming from diverse Black communities at City Hall during Black History Month.

**7.3** Work from diverse artists of African descent should be displayed in City Hall and the City work to build a collection of Black-created art.

### Cultural Sites

**7.4** The City of Edmonton work with Arts organizations, cultural groups, art galleries, museums, and other cultural institutions to promote the inclusion and recognition of Black artists and cultural workers.

**7.5** The City work with Black cultural and artistic groups, artists, and cultural workers in collaboration with museums, galleries and other public sites to develop guidelines and ethics around exhibitions and displays, including the display of cultural or religiously significant objects; language and education materials around historically sensitive and painful materials and exhibitions; and respecting the cultural rights of people of African descent.

### Funding Equity

**7.6** The City review all grant programs to determine whether they equitably award money to Black applicants and work with stakeholders from Black artistic, cultural, and non-profit groups to understand barriers, increase representation, and enhance granting opportunities.

**7.7** Programs applied for or receiving funding from the City must at the application and reporting stages indicate the number of Black people on their board, how many people in leadership positions are Black, and how many service recipients are Black.

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**7.8** The City gather race-based data on cultural and artistic funding programs in order to ensure access and funding equity on an ongoing basis.

**7.9** The City ensure equity in municipal funding and promotion of Black festivals and major cultural events and recognize their economic contributions to Edmonton, and funding them to the comparable level of other events.

**7.10** The City designate money for Black organizations to increase the money granted towards Black cultural events, prizes, festivals, exhibitions, and other Black cultural and artistic activities.

**7.11** The City designate money towards organizations to promote artistic development for Black youth.

\*The Black communities have noted it is important to work with, and consult the Edmonton Arts Council, Edmonton Heritage Council and other relevant stake holders when engaging in this work.

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# POLICING & THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Black people across Canada experience disproportionate levels of policing, surveillance, incarceration and criminalization. Black male youth in particular experience racial profiling not only from police, but in all public areas. Black people are less likely to receive bail or to be entered into diversionary programs. Early encounters with policing for Black youth create a sense of alienation, frustration and exclusion that leads to poorer educational and social outcomes. We heard from Black Edmontonians that there is a lack of trust between the Black community and the police. Black Edmontonians report experiencing over-policing and profiling. Newcomers report difficulties in navigating policing systems and information, concerns about criminalization of mental health, and fear and trauma from previous negative experiences with police.

The 2021 report Safer For All into community safety and well-being in Edmonton made a number of recommendations to reform the police ecosystem in Edmonton and to enhance well-being for everyone in Edmonton. These recommendations include an independent integrated dispatch centre to better direct calls to the appropriate service provider and reduce reliance on front-line policing for mental health and other calls; substantive changes to oversight bodies for effective transparency and accountability; the decriminalization of poverty and reduced policing of the unhoused population; and anti-racism training and cultural changes to policing.

We urge the adoption of the recommendations in this report, developed by a Task Force of experts from community groups, academics, City administration, non-profits, and representatives of the Edmonton Police Service, and a clear and transparent timeline and reporting process to inform the public about the progress of each action item.

In addition we recommend:

## Accountability and Oversight

**8.1** As recommended in our section on data collection and in the Safer for All report, that the Edmonton Police Service, Peace Officers, the Police Commission, the Ministry of Justice, and community stakeholders develop a plan for the gathering, management, and use of race-based disaggregated data including disciplinary data, use of force data, and data on traffic stops.

**8.2** The City and the Police Commission work with the province and the Alberta Human Rights Commission to seek a legal opinion to clarify the current legal status of street checks, “Officer Contact Reports,” and “Observed Reports”.

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**8.3** The City, in collaboration with the Edmonton Police Service, Peace Officers, the Police Commission, the Alberta Human Rights Commission and Black community stakeholders develop an accountable and robust reporting mechanism of police progress on anti-Black racism measures, including reporting to the Independent Anti-Black Racism body around Use of Force incidents, police complaints, and hate crimes.

**8.4** The Edmonton Police Service, Peace Officers, and By Law Officers in collaboration with the Independent Anti-Black Racism body and other community stakeholders, develop an Anti-Black racism and community engagement strategy to be posted on their website.

**8.5** The Edmonton Police Service, Peace Officers, and By Law Officers develop clear action items with timelines and progress markers for combatting Anti-Black racism.

**8.6** The Edmonton Police Service, By Law Officers, and Peace Officers increase transparency by posting relevant policies on their website including Use of Force, Restraints, Mental Health, Disability, Gender-based and Youth engagement policies.

**8.7** The Edmonton Police Service, By Law Officers, and Peace Officers shall work in collaboration with the body referred to in action 1.5 to carry out a thorough review of prior complaints and devise a reliable, responsible and accountable method for receiving officer complaints.

### **Strengthening the Role of the Police Commission**

**8.8** Recommendation 7 in the Safer for All report enjoins the Edmonton Police Commission to “fully exercise its authority to provide strong guidance and oversight to EPS, in order to drive inclusivity and anti-racism in policing.” To take action on this item, we recommend the Police Commission report quarterly to the Independent Anti-Black Racism body on the progress of goals, policies, training, data, and other anti-racism initiatives and develop a communication and consultation policy for Black communities.

**8.9** The Edmonton Police Commission in collaboration with the Independent Anti-Black Racism body develop an Anti-Black racism policy for the Commission to be posted on the website with the other policies.

**8.10** Police Commission training and orientation include training in Anti-Black racism including understanding race and criminalization.

**8.11** The Police Commission hold select meetings and consultations in Black community spaces outside of business hours to ensure ability to engage and participate by all community members;



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## Community Safety and Well-being

**8.12** The City enhance funding and develop a specific budget stream towards non-profit groups and community organizations within Black communities who engage in intervention and crime prevention programs including programming for youth; restorative justice; diversion programming; and other community-based initiatives that offer alternatives to criminalization and incarceration.

**8.13** The City of Edmonton work with health experts, organizations serving people who use drugs and other parties to ensure a robust continuum of voluntary services and supports (e.g. harm reduction, mental health, housing, income support, mobile outreach, etc.) are established with the goal of preventing crises and eliminating the use of ineffective and costly involuntary interventions.

**8.14** The City direct funding towards programs designed to reduce and eliminate punitive and policing interventions into addictions, mental health, and homelessness.

**8.15** The City work with all City facilities on an ongoing basis to implement educational, training, and anti-bias programs to ensure the safe use of recreational and City space for all Black community members free from racial bias and stereotyping that lead to criminalization and racial profiling in these spaces.

## Youth Safety

**8.16** Drawing upon the recently gathered race-based data by Edmonton schools, the City work with the school board, parent groups, and community organizations to review disciplinary data and create a working group to review disciplinary policies and their impact on the criminalization of Black youth.

**8.17** The City work with the school board, parent groups, youth from affected communities, refugee and settlement agencies, and other relevant parties including the Edmonton SRO Research Project to review the impact of SRO programs on Black youth and to develop alternative programs to policing to enhance school safety including funding youth mental health supports and school support workers.

## Hate Crimes

**8.18** Educational and training programs be developed for the Edmonton Police Service, Peace Officers, By Law Officers and Edmonton Police Commission that address the specific intersections of Islamophobia, Gender-Based violence, Disability and Anti-Black racism, particularly as relates to attacks on Black Somali women.

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**8.19** The City work with community groups to develop third party reporting options for hate crimes and incidents of racialized and sexualized violence, recognizing that many vulnerable groups may not feel comfortable reporting to the police.

### **Budgeting**

**8.20** The City develop and implement participatory budget models that allow community input into the allocation of City budget items for public safety and community well-being, recognizing that policing forms only one element of a holistic public safety strategy.

**8.21** The City develop performance-based metrics tied to budget approval for police funding to ensure accountability around reporting disciplinary, use of force, and other measures of interest to the public.

**8.22** The City to consult with the created body referenced in action 1.5 to strengthen practices related to hiring, representation and inclusion of Black law enforcement, Peace Officers, and by Law Officers.

### **8.23**

**(A)** Increase the percentage of Black officers in the EPS, including the management level (use the Black population as an appropriate benchmark).

**(B)** Work with the provincial government to increase the percentage of Black judges.

**(C)** Work with the provincial government to increase the percentage of Black crown prosecutors in the Alberta Crown Prosecution Service.

**(D)** Make use of Black consultants (not merely on matters of racism when it appears they are most likely to be consulted). This would ensure that the input and professional expertise of Black persons are an organic part of various policies and programs.

**(E)** Increase the number of Black commissioners on the Edmonton Police Commission.

**(F)** Ensure that the hate-crimes unit of the EPS is staffed by persons from backgrounds that are susceptible to hate crimes (Muslim, Black, Indigenous, Jewish, LGBTQIA2S+, etc.).

## COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE



A Rice University study from 2020 indicates that “racism has shaped public transit, and it’s riddled with inequities.” In Edmonton, Black people report experiencing harassment and discrimination on public transit; lack of accessibility for people with disabilities and the intersection of ableist and racist discrimination for Black people living with disabilities; lack of transit routes and frequency to Black neighborhoods; lack of shelters and other transit amenities such as lighting in Black areas; and a reliance of transit use by low-income, recent arrivals, youth, and seniors in the Black community that leads to increased vulnerability of those groups to racism on and within the transit system.

We recommend:

### Combatting Racism and Hate Crimes on Transit

**9.1** The City work with the transit union, Transit Peace Officers, Black transit workers, Black riders and relevant community groups to develop anti-racism training for staff and ongoing public campaigns around racism on public transit including zero tolerance for racism on transit.

**9.2** Develop accessible avenues for reporting hate crimes on transit, including third party reporting for those not comfortable in engaging with the police.

### Transit Equity

**9.3** Work with Black community organizations to expand the Ride Transit Program and reduce barriers to application.

**9.4** Review transit infrastructure in Black communities and ensure equitable distribution of routes, shelters, lighting and other safety measures.

**9.5** Collaborate with disability advocacy groups and Black Edmontonians living with disabilities to create training and education around the intersectionality of anti-Black racism with ableism and discrimination (such as not offering equitable services to Black people with disabilities; questioning Black people about their disability; barriers to accessible transit).

**9.6** Work with student and youth groups to ensure the rights of youth are protected on transit and to close gaps in transit accessibility for Black youth including expanding affordable ridership.

**9.7** Continue to work with groups serving Black immigrants and newcomers to reduce barriers to transit, including barriers to accessing low-income passes.

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**9.8** Collaborate with groups serving Black seniors to recognize the safety and accessibility needs of this population on transit and increase funding to ensure affordable ridership.

### **Transit Safety**

**9.9** Expand the work with social service agencies around transit safety to include Black organizations, particularly those working with unhoused people, people with addictions, and people with mental health needs around the diverse needs of people taking transit, reducing criminalization, and supporting safety.

### **Dedicated Accessible Transit Service (DATS)**

**9.10** Review of the disability eligibility every five years with the possibility of elimination of this requirement to continuously prove your status.

**9.11** DATS needs to create inclusive accessible systems for bookings that are more flexible and mirror the service provided by ETS buses.

**9.12** Training of DATS workers in anti-Black racism and anti-ableism.

**” Incentivize other modes of transport besides ETS such as cycling and scooting by improving mixed use paths infrastructure in communities. -Community Member ”**

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# CHILD AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



The Black population in Edmonton is younger than the national average. The median age for the Black population was 29.6 years, while it was 40.7 years for the total population (Statistics Canada, 2019). Young Black Edmontonians report being stereotyped, stigmatized and excluded. They experienced enhanced surveillance, racial profiling and policing in schools and in public spaces. Black youth describe educational experiences where their culture and history is not represented. Black youth desire mentorship, educational and job training, and social opportunities. Culturally representative curricula and programming is vital for Black youth to experience role models, build a strong sense of self and identity, and to overcome barriers to education and employment.

Investing in the development, education, and well-being of youth is crucial for the future of the city.

We recommend:

## Recreation and Programming

**10.1** Increase the availability of culturally relevant and inclusive programming including in the areas of STEM, arts, and technology for Black youth.

**10.2** Ensure the safety and protection of queer and Trans Black youth through availability of programming and access to safe and supportive programs and spaces. Queer and Trans Black youth have higher rates of homelessness, mental health difficulties, and adverse educational and health outcomes due to discrimination.

**10.3** The City work with relevant partners to create sexual health education for Black youth and to be a champion and advocate for these educational opportunities.

**10.4** Ensure awareness and education in all City spaces and for all staff around the criminalization and stereotyping of Black youth. Black youth are frequently singled out, targeted for punishment, or made to feel unwelcome.

**10.5** Work with families and community groups serving Black Muslim youth to ensure access to sports and recreational activities, including gender-specific programming that provides a safe space for girls.

**10.6** Ensure hiring in City spaces and programs represents the diversity of the Black community.

**10.7** Work with the school board and educational partners to advocate for culturally relevant educational programming that supports the learning needs of all Black learners.

**10.8** Communicate with the school board, Catholic schools, and educational partners to raise awareness of and address the adultification of Black youth, particularly newcomer youth who often are placed into the role of caring for their family members, all Black children deserve a childhood: work with recreational and educational partners to ensure access to recreational and after- school programming for Black youth.

**10.9** Create a working group of Black parents, youth and Black-led community groups to review the racially-disaggregated data gathered in Edmonton Public Schools in order to develop disciplinary, educational and other policies that uplift and support Black youth.

**10.10** Work with schools, educational partners and the province to build family supports that reduce child welfare interventions for Black youth.

**10.11** The City to create a mentorship program for youth from Edmonton's Black communities, to increase youth participation, employment equity, and desire to work for the City of Edmonton.

### **Community Well-being of International Students**

**10.12** Work with international student groups to provide improved access to housing.

**10.13** Many international students are precarious and vulnerable. Students report being targeted by predatory and exploitative housing schemes. The City must develop a confidential reporting and complaint mechanism to aid students in reporting unfair housing; increase oversight of housing for international students; and strengthen the Residential Tenancy Act to protect students, provide avenues for complaint and redress, and to penalize landlords.

**10.14** Work with universities and recreational sites such as libraries to develop educational and awareness materials around housing rights for international students.

**10.15** Work with youth, and Black led community organizations to address food insecurities in Black communities. Refer to "Agenda 2023: Edmonton Food Security Report" prepared by Renée Vaugeois Jessica Kinsella.

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## BLACK BUSINESS

Black businesses play a significant role in the Black communities of Edmonton. Beyond the economic and employment impact of businesses, the business community also supports cultural festivals and programs, funds community media, supports events that recognize Black community excellence, and more.

However, according to a Statistics Canada study released in 2023 on Black business owners in Canada, while the number of Black business owners has increased since 2005, inequalities persist. Around 15% of Black business owners live in Alberta. Black people were more likely to be new business owners than white people or other racialized groups. The average Black business owner in Canada is also around six years younger than their white counterparts, at 47 years old compared to 53. The study also showed a gender gap with Black women being left behind. Black business owners show a lower profit margin and had less awareness of financing opportunities.

We recommend:

**11.1** The City to commit to a reasonable percentage of procurement business to be done with Black business owners.

**11.2** The City review business support grant programs and gather disaggregated race-based data on accessibility and funding equity of these programs for Black business owners.

**11.3** Thorough review of the Social-Enterprise Fund (SEF) to address capacity, equity and anti-Black racism.

**11.4** The City develop funding streams to support first-time and young Black business owners and develop mentorship, education, and grant navigation programs to enhance access to funding streams for Black business owners.

**11.5** The City work with educational partners to continue to develop entrepreneurship and employment mentorship programs for Black youth.

**11.6** Develop specific mentorship, education and granting programs for Black women business owners.

**11.7** The City increase their collaboration with the Black business community including inviting business leaders to City Hall on an ongoing basis, recognition of the contributions of the business community, and increased partnerships between the City and Black business leaders. In addition, work to create a permanent Black business registry.

**11.8** The City review procurement policies to ensure equitable access for Black businesses, including providing outreach and education to build capacity in the Black business community.



Safe and accessible housing is a human right. Housing insecurity particularly affects vulnerable Black populations including Black Queer and Trans youth, seniors, immigrant and refugee families, and people from under-resourced communities. Precarious housing affects employment, health, vulnerability to violence and crime, domestic violence, and economic sustainability. Black communities also lack key infrastructure, are vulnerable to gentrification and displacement, and are targeted for surveillance and policing.

**In order to redress the inequity in housing for Black people in Edmonton, we recommend:**

### **Housing Equity**

**12.1** The City invest in affordable, quality housing including pathways to home ownership, housing co-operatives and land trusts.

**12.2** The City undertake a study of vacant public buildings with the goal of redeveloping them for affordable community housing for Black people, particularly Black seniors, newcomers, and Queer and Trans people who suffer increased housing insecurity.

**12.3** The City develop affordable housing on public-owned lands.

**12.4** The City build housing affordability into land regulation and housing density in order to increase the stock of affordable and accessible housing.

### **Discrimination-Free Housing**

**12.5** The City strengthen available avenues for Black tenants to report housing discrimination based on race, and strengthen penalties for landlords who engage in housing discrimination.

**12.6** Agencies that manage public housing must implement Anti-Black racism policies and collect disaggregated racial data on residents in order to gain insight on the experiences of Black tenants and housing access.

**12.7** The City develop home ownership educational programs and supports for Black seniors and other vulnerable populations.



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## Shelter Space and Emergency Housing

**12.8** The City work with organizations that serve the Black unhoused population to increase shelter space, to create emergency housing options within the Black communities, and to address anti-Black racism, stereotyping, and criminalization in shelters and public housing.

## Revitalization

**12.9** Working with residents of Black communities, the City invest in Black community spaces rather than entering the cycle of neglect, gentrification and displacement of Black residents.

**12.10** These efforts include investments in food gardens, community kitchens, recreational spaces, spaces for artistic and cultural expression and businesses.

# BLACK COMMUNITIES APPRECIATION

We, the authors of this report, would like to express our profound gratitude and heartfelt appreciation to the Black communities of Edmonton for their unwavering support and invaluable contributions to our engagement efforts. Without their involvement, dedication, and willingness to share their experiences, this report would not have been possible.

In undertaking this endeavor, we recognize the immense importance of acknowledging the historical and ongoing struggles faced by Black communities. We acknowledge the systemic barriers, discrimination, and marginalization that have persisted for far too long. It is with deep respect and admiration that we extend our gratitude to the Black communities of Edmonton for their resilience, strength, and commitment to positive change.

Throughout this engagement process, we were humbled by the openness and honesty with which the Black communities of Edmonton shared their stories, insights, and aspirations. We listened intently to their voices, amplifying their perspectives, and striving to accurately represent their lived experiences.

The Black communities of Edmonton demonstrated remarkable generosity and patience in helping us navigate complex and sensitive issues. Their willingness to engage in meaningful dialogue, providing us with guidance, recommendations, and constructive criticism, has been instrumental in shaping this report. We sincerely thank them for their trust and for allowing us to be a part of their journey towards justice and equality.

We would also like to acknowledge the numerous individuals, community organizations, and leaders within the Black communities of Edmonton who have been tireless advocates, champions, and catalysts for positive change. Their unwavering commitment to fostering inclusivity, dismantling systemic racism, and promoting social justice has inspired us and countless others.

Furthermore, we express our gratitude to the elders, youth, activists, artists, educators, professionals, and all members of the Black communities who shared their time, expertise, and stories with us. Each contribution, no matter how small, has played a pivotal role in creating a more comprehensive and accurate understanding of the experiences and aspirations of the Black communities of Edmonton.

We dedicate this report to the Black communities of Edmonton, whose resilience, strength, and determination have been an inspiration to us all. It is our sincerest hope that this report serves as a catalyst for meaningful change, promoting justice, equity, and inclusion for all members of the community. Together, we can create a brighter future, one that upholds the values of diversity, respect, and equal opportunity.

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