

For Information

REPORT TITLE: **Region of Peel Anti-Black Racism Update**

FROM: Kathryn Lockyer, Interim Commissioner of Corporate Services

OBJECTIVE

To provide an update to the Diversity, Equity and Anti-Racism Committee on the progress the Region has made in response to the Anti-Black Racism motion passed by Regional Council on June 11, 2020.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- On June 11, 2020, Regional Council declared Anti-Black Racism a crisis in the Region of Peel and passed a motion relating to Anti-Black Racism to renew its commitment to building a *Community for Life*.
 - There are four specific calls to action outlined in the Council Motion to combat inequities for the Black community and other marginalized groups.
 - Several activities to address anti-racism and systemic discrimination are under way (e.g. COVID-19 race and occupation data collection, Community Safety and Well-being Plan, Workforce Census, Courageous Conversation series, Collaboration with local municipalities).
 - On July 9, 2020, Regional Council passed resolution 2020-566 - Recommendations for the Effective Implementation of Calls to Action to Combat Racial Injustice – coming from a communication item on the agenda from the Black Community Action Network of Peel (BCAN) at the June 18, 2020 Diversity, Equity and Anti-Racism (DEAR) Committee meeting.
 - Regular updates on work aimed at removing systemic barriers and anti-racism to enable equitable outcomes for the Region's community and workforce will be provided to the DEAR Committee.
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DISCUSSION

1. Background

On June 11, 2020, Regional Council passed a motion that recognizes Anti-Black Racism as a crisis in the Region of Peel and commits to addressing systemic racism that results in inequities for the Black community and other marginalized groups (see Appendix I for full Council Motion).

On July 9, 2020, Regional Council passed resolution 2020-566 - Recommendations for the Effective Implementation of Calls to Action to Combat Racial Injustice – a communication item on the agenda from the Black Community Action Network of Peel (BCAN) at the June 18 Diversity, Equity and Anti-Racism (DEAR) Committee meeting (Appendix II).

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On July 9, 2020, Regional Council passed resolution 2020-559 regarding Equity and Equity Based Approaches to Further Understand and Create Impact for Equity Seeking Groups Across Peel (Appendix III).

A number of activities have been initiated to address anti-racism and systemic discrimination. Many of the activities respond to the actions outlined in the recent Council resolutions.

2. Findings

The following key actions were outlined in the recent Council resolutions and will form the foundation of staff updates to Council:

- *engage Black communities to address racial inequities related to COVID 19*
- *provide funding to mental health/housing/harm reduction programming to support marginalized groups including the Black community through Peel funded programs*
- *ensure Black led/Black serving social agencies in Peel are funded equitably through the Regional funding mechanisms*
- *request that the local municipalities collaborate with the Region to carry out anti-racism public education*
- *collect equity-based data with respect to the characteristics of program users and make the data available to community organizations working to address equity matters and support the creation of targeted interventions and preventative programs that can safeguard communities from crisis driven programming.*
- *Invest in organizational transformation and an intentional, deliberate focus on equity*
- *Review Regional policies, procedures and practices through an integrated Anti-Racism lens, including a component on Anti-Black racism;*
- *Provide those tasked with the responsibility of leading this work with the support and authority to make change happen*

a) Engaging Black communities to address racial inequities related to COVID-19

i) **Peel Public Health's Health Equity Strategy**

- Peel Public Health is currently collecting race and occupation-based data on COVID-19 cases which have highlighted a disproportionate representation of cases among race categories, including South Asian, Black and Latino (based on data between April and July 2020).
- Peel Public Health is using these data as a starting point for discussion with community partners to inform future COVID-19 response planning and communication.
- Upcoming community engagement efforts to better understand health disparities for COVID-19.

ii) **Community Safety and Well-Being Plan**

- Staff leading the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan (CWSB) are currently planning for continued community engagement about systemic discrimination. This presents an opportunity to align ongoing engagements with Anti-Black racism objectives. Staff will include proposed funding in the 2021 budget submission to further these initiatives.

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iii) *Local Partnerships*

- The Region is working with the City of Brampton, City of Mississauga and Town of Caledon to build a collaborative approach to municipal consultations with Peel's Black communities as well as other diverse segments of Peel's population.
- The Region will support engagement and consultation with the Black community through the Community Response Table (CRT), Community Investment Program funded agencies and other collaborative tables including the Peel Poverty Reduction Committee.
- The Community Response Table (CRT) is comprised of approximately 90 social service agencies who have collectively decided to focus their efforts on anti-racism and systemic discrimination. This group is in the process of re-defining their mandate to focus on systemic change, advocacy in the areas of policing and education, as well as other anti-racism efforts.

b) **Providing funding to mental health/housing/harm reduction programming to support marginalized groups including the Black community through Peel funded programs**

- The Region is working on incorporating an equity approach/lens into the housing services delivery model. Updates will be provided as this work progresses.
- Many programs related to mental health and harm reduction fall under provincial jurisdiction. There is opportunity for Regional Council to advocate to the provincial government for changes in these areas.

c) **Ensuring Black led/Black serving social agencies in Peel are funded equitably through Regional funding mechanisms**

- Applications for the 2020 Community Investment Capacity Fund and Change Fund include priority and outcome alignment criteria to support Black communities to:
 - address racial inequities
 - address systemic discrimination and racial inequities related to COVID19
 - support the development of policies and programs that address inequities in the Black community, Indigenous community, People of Colour and other marginalized and equity seeking groups

Agencies will need to demonstrate alignment to related priorities and/or outcomes in their projects in order to become eligible for funding.

- An equity lens with a focus on managing funding allocations is being piloted to assist with decision-making related to organizations funded through these programs.

d) **Requesting that the local municipalities collaborate with the Region to carry out anti-racism public education**

- The Peel Art Museum + Archives (PAMA) has several activities directed at public education through exhibits and collections that focus on embracing the unique diversity in Peel, including LGBTQ2S+, the Black Canadian community and Indigenous communities.
- PAMA in partnership with The Diversity Round Table and two Co-Curators/Community Leadership Program Ambassadors, have launched a new virtual exhibition called Art Voice! This exhibition showcases youth voices from the Region of Peel expressing themselves through various mediums and offering their unique perspectives. The artists submitted work about home, isolation, struggles with mental health, image and racism, the changing environment, beauty found in nature and everyday life. Their creative expressions reflect the reality of their lives.

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- Discussions have begun about working through PAMA to host an Anti-Racism panel discussion later this year.
- In partnership with the local municipalities and Marketing and Communications, collaborate on public-facing anti-racism education initiatives. This includes but is not limited to:
 - A Diversity, Equity and Inclusion page on the Region's external website
 - Street naming/monuments conventions
 - Education on the history and life experience of the Black Canadian community, Indigenous community and other marginalized groups
 - Education on diversity, equity, inclusion

3. Internal Activities

There are numerous Regional workforce focused activities addressing Anti-Black Racism and systemic discrimination planned and in progress. These include:

a) Courageous Conversations with the Executive Leadership Team

- i) In June 2020, the *Courageous Conversations Series* with the Region's senior leadership was introduced to provide a safe place for Regional staff to increase understanding about
 - i. the lived experiences of racialized and marginalized groups and the impact of these experiences
 - ii. to identify barriers and opportunities to create a diverse and inclusive workplace
 - iii. to provide information and recommendations to address Anti-Racism and Systemic Discrimination in the workplace
 - iv. to provide information to inform the Region's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion strategy and action plans
- ii) The conversation series started with a focus on anti-Black racism and listening to the Region's Black employees. Moving forward, Courageous Conversations will cover different dimensions of diversity (e.g. Indigenous racism, LGBTQ2S+) and will be open to all staff across the organization.
- iii) Themes resulting from these conversations have been documented and identified to inform action planning. Opportunities for action are:
 - Mandatory training on Anti-Racism and Systemic Discrimination
 - Embedding Equity approaches to recruitment and promotion practices
 - Clarify and establish accountability frameworks for people leaders to create a safe work environment for all staff
 - Review existing policies, processes and practices to increase equity for staff

b) Workforce Census

The Region is working with a vendor to conduct its first workforce census survey this Fall. Collecting demographic data on Regional staff will help the organization understand the make-up of its workforce and establish diversity goals. The workforce census will be implemented in October/November 2020. Further updates will be provided to the DEAR Committee throughout the year.

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c) Employment Systems Review

An Employment Systems Review examining policies, practices and systems related to hiring, pay and promotion is planned for early 2021. The intent of this review is to identify systemic barriers that may lead to inequities for employees.

d) Learning and Development

A Diversity, Equity and Inclusion learning framework is being developed in partnership with Human Resources Learning and Development to meet focused education and learning outcomes across the organization. This framework will include compulsory training as well as self-directed training and cover various topics such as unconscious bias, Indigenous culture and history, how to be an ally, anti-racism and systemic discrimination. Various tactics will be developed and deployed to facilitate this learning throughout the organization.

To date, the approach to learning on these subjects has been aligned to various program mandates. For example,

- Public Health has trained staff on Indigenous Cultural Safety and servicing LGBTQ2S+ clients in an inclusive manner.
- Corporately, since 2018 (up until COVID-19) the organization hosted 3 Speaker Series events per year which were open to all staff on relevant topics such as equity, equality and privilege.
- Long Term Care hosts various celebrations of diversity, highlighting different cultures, sharing history, traditions, and food.

e) Communications

Staff have received numerous communications and opportunities to engage in discussion about the Region's approach to addressing anti-black racism and systemic discrimination. These include:

- all-staff emails from the Interim CAO,
- all-staff emails from the Office of Culture and Inclusion,
- Leadership Unplugged sessions called '*What do I say?*' (mentoring for leaders), and
- presentations and discussions at department and division levels.

NEXT STEPS

The Region will continue to move forward with its current activities to address systemic discrimination and anti-racism. The Region will continue to leverage partnerships and community tables to advance this work and collaborate with the local municipalities to ensure a strategic, intentional and action-focused plan that creates an inclusive community for all residents in Peel. A comprehensive plan will be shared with the DEAR committee in the New Year to provide greater clarity on timelines, financial implication and anticipated outcomes going forward.

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RISK CONSIDERATIONS

Through its decisions to adopt the July 9, 2020 resolutions, Council has recognized the principle that we have a responsibility to do better for our community and for each other. To successfully achieve a Community for Life in Peel where everyone enjoys a sense of belonging and access to the programs and services they need, it is important that appropriate efforts, funding, resources and investments are allocated to address anti-racism, systemic discrimination, diversity, equity and inclusion.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

While it is premature to determine specifics, we know that costs will be incurred for education and training, building leadership capacity and potentially for hiring an external consultant to assist with equity initiatives. Future budgets will propose resources required to carry out this work plan.

APPENDICES

Appendix I – Anti-Black Racism Council Motion

Appendix II – BCAN Letter dated June 18, 2020, Providing Recommendations for the Effective Implementation of Calls to Action to Combat Racial Injustice

Appendix III – Resolution 2020-559

For further information regarding this report, please contact Juliet Jackson, Director, Culture & Inclusion, Ext. 6741, Juliet.jackson@peelregion.ca.

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Reviewed and/or approved in workflow by:

Department Commissioner and Division Director.

Final approval is by the Chief Administrative Officer.



N. Polsinelli, Interim Chief Administrative Officer