



UPDATE ON MARKHAM'S STRATEGY TO COMBAT ANTI-BLACK RACISM

Bulletin #1 - January 2021

Message From The Mayor:

With this New Year comes the hope that we will make positive steps here at home, joining the global community to eradicate anti-Black racism, while creating a better and more inclusive society. Our work at the City of Markham to ensure everyone feels welcome has not stopped – we are actively pursuing our goals to combat anti-Black racism.



Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti, Special Advisor Mary Anne Chambers and Activist Sydney Baxter.

Since our launch in July 2020, we have made significant progress on the goals identified in the strategy. Thank you to residents that have shared their thoughts and suggestions with us. Members of Council and Markham staff have completed mandatory eLearning training on identifying and addressing anti-Black

racism. In addition, we held a Council Education Session in December and have conducted interviews for membership on the City's Race Relations Committee. To support the raising of awareness of anti-Black racism, the City will be posting our eLearning module on www.markham.ca for residents to view. Our next steps include starting consultations for our Diversity Action Plan update and the selection of an independent firm to conduct our City's first ever Equity Audit. I would be remiss if I did not thank our Special Advisor, Mary Anne Chambers, for her unwavering support and guidance. I invite you to participate in the consultations to provide your voice, which will help inform our decisions and next steps. Thanks to the Markham African Caribbean Canadian Association (MACCA) and the York Region Alliance of African Canadian Communities (YRAACC), a virtual Black History Month celebration will take place on February 17, 2021. I invite you to join us for the celebration and encourage you to invite others.

Sincerely,



Frank Scarpitti
Mayor

STRATEGY:




Update Diversity Action Plan – Everyone Welcome and that as one of the first steps, the City will begin the consultation process with members of the Black community




Markham Council and staff receive training on anti-Black racism



City of Markham undertake an equity audit



Establish a Mayor's Anti-Black Racism Youth Liaison Committee



Appoint a Special Advisor to provide advice and guidance on measures to address anti-Black racism



Consult with Region of York, York Regional Police, School Boards and other area municipalities to identify opportunities to collaborate on initiatives to combat anti-Black racism and support diversity and inclusion

PROGRESS TO DATE:



Identified anti-Black racism core strategy and received unanimous Council approval



Markham staff, in conjunction with a respected consultant developed a Canadian-specific eLearning module on identifying and addressing anti-Black racism



Completion of mandatory eLearning training for all Markham staff and Members of Council on identifying and addressing anti-Black racism (97% of City staff and Members of Council completed "Let's Talk about Racism: An Introduction to Anti-Black Racism")



Held Council Education Session as a follow up to the eLearning in December



Regular check-in's between Mayor, City Staff and City's Special Advisor, Mary Anne Chambers



Established monthly meetings between senior leadership at the City and the YRDSB to discuss opportunities for collaboration



Conducted interviews for membership on the City's Race Relations Committee. We congratulate the following individuals on their appointment: Madge Logan, Danielle Russell, Tamarie Warner and Claudette Rutherford.



Shared the City's eLearning "Let's Talk about Racism: An Introduction to Anti-Black Racism" with members of the Region of York's Municipal Diversity and Inclusion Group and other public sector organizations



Reviewed and updated status of Diversity Action Plan (2010-2019) recommendations



Amended the City's Respect In the Workplace Policy to strengthen provisions against racial discrimination in the workplace



Preparing Request for Proposal (RFP) to engage consultant to update the Diversity Action Plan

Key segments of the City's "Let's Talk about Racism" eLearning:

The purpose of the eLearning is to raise awareness of the history and impact of anti-Black racism in Canada and to start to identify actions that can be taken to fight racism.



The Struggle for Equality

The struggle for people of African descent against racism has a long history in both Canada and the United States. Here is a brief timeline.

Click on the markers to learn more.



1946

Viola Desmond

Viola Desmond was arrested for sitting in the "whites-only" section of a movie theatre in Glasgow, Nova Scotia.

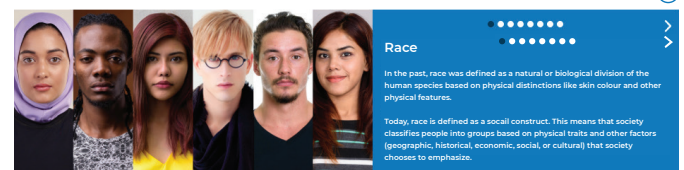
Viola Desmond was commemorated for her civil rights work on the Canadian ten dollar bill in 2018.



The Language Around Racism

Words are important. Before we discuss combating racism, let's take a closer look at the language around racism.

Click or tap the forward arrow for some commonly used terms.



NEXT STEPS:

In order to support the raising of awareness of anti-Black racism and its impact in Canada, the City will be posting the "Let's Talk about Racism" eLearning on www.markham.ca for public viewing

Establishing terms of reference for Mayor's Youth Liaison Committee and commencing recruitment process

Commencing recruitment process to fill vacancy for City of Markham Diversity Specialist

Award Request for Proposal for Diversity Action Plan update, including consultation with members of Markham and York Region Black community

Selection of firm to conduct City's first ever Equity Audit

Leadership Team

Frank Scarpitti, Mayor | Claudia Storto, City Solicitor and HR Director
Andy Taylor, Chief Administrative Officer | Mary Anne Chambers, Special Advisor