

Addressing Anti-Black Racism Action Plan: Community Consultation



The Diversity Institute undertakes research on diversity in the workplace to improve practices in organizations. We work with organizations to develop customized strategies, programming, and resources to promote new, interdisciplinary knowledge and practice about diversity with respect to gender, race/ethnicity, Indigenous Peoples, abilities, and sexual orientation. Using an ecological model of change, our action-oriented, evidence-based approach drives social innovation across sectors.



The City of Vaughan is one of Canada's fastest growing cities with a population of more than 341,600. Incorporated in 1991, Vaughan includes the communities of Concord, Kleinburg, Maple, Thornhill and Woodbridge. This culturally diverse municipality is located in the heart of York Region and the Greater Toronto Area.



Addressing Anti-Black Racism Action Plan: Community Consultation Workbook

Introduction

How can we work together and act to not only identify but address barriers preventing the full and meaningful participation of the Black community in the City of Vaughan when it comes to services, programs, events, and general city life?

Addressing anti-Black racism is a key priority in the City of Vaughan's [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy and Multi-Year Action Plan](#). The development of an Addressing Anti-Black Racism Action Plan is also underway, driven by a commitment to working in collaboration with Black individuals and community leaders living in the city to develop strategies and strengthen partnerships that will address the ongoing challenges of anti-Black racism. Throughout this process, the intersectional identities within the Black community will be respected and honoured.

Your role throughout this process is a vital one and it begins now. It is your right to share your experience accessing City programs and services — what barriers or challenges do you face and what processes should be implemented? What gaps do you see? What opportunities are within reach? What aspirations, ideas or recommendations do you have that will further the mission of addressing anti-Black racism and fostering inclusion in the city? There are many ways to contribute to this effort and bring your voice to the table, including taking a survey or participating in a conversation with other members of the Black community. More information about the feedback channels available to you are provided in this booklet.

Land Acknowledgement

We respectfully acknowledge that the City of Vaughan is situated in the Territory and Treaty 13 lands of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. We also recognize the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat and the Haudenosaunee. The City of Vaughan is currently home to many First Nations, Métis and Inuit people today. As representatives of the people of the City of Vaughan, we are grateful to have the opportunity to work and live in this territory.

Why Community Engagement?

It is critical that the Black community is at the center of the development of the Addressing Anti-Black Racism Action Plan. A community-centred approach, including community consultations, will be used to ensure that the perspectives of the Black community are reflected in the plan.

To ensure a community-centred approach, the City will engage Black individuals and communities through consultations and surveys to seek ideas, perspectives, and recommendations for supporting the Black community in all their diversity and addressing anti-Black racism.

Your Role as Part of the Community Engagement Process

We hope to gain a better understanding of:

1. The barriers and challenges you face when accessing the City's services, programs, and events.
2. Your perception of the current gaps and opportunities for supporting the Black community within the city.
3. Your recommendations for addressing anti-Black racism and fostering inclusion within the scope of the City's jurisdiction.

How can you participate?

There are several ways for you to provide input that will help inform the Addressing Anti-Black Racism Action Plan:

1. As a member of the Black community, you can provide input to the City by participating in the [online survey](#).
2. You can provide your input by taking part in the community consultations/conversations. These consultations/conversations will take place in March 2023. Sessions will be hosted by the Diversity Institute at the Ted Rogers School of Management, Toronto Metropolitan University.
3. Keep in touch with the project [here](#) for additional updates, information, and ways to be involved.

What to Expect during the Community Consultations/Conversations

Participants will join group sessions to discuss issues, ideas, and recommendations for addressing anti-Black racism in the city. These will be facilitated conversations, and to ensure the full participation of all those who attend, facilitators will:

1. Establish guidelines for respectful conversations, set goals and expectations at the start, and explain note-taking purpose and logistics.
2. Promote psychological safety by providing a trained, trauma-informed counsellor, allowing space for mental health breaks if needed, and reminding participants they may exit the conversation at any time.
3. Provide accommodations or alternate methods of perspective-sharing that will allow every person who wishes to participate a chance to contribute.
4. Acknowledge that everyone has different lived experiences.
5. Apply neutral facilitation approaches during consultations and avoid suggesting that there are “right” and “wrong” answers.
6. Hold no space or tolerance for intentionally disrespectful language or behaviour.

Community Conversations: Safe Space Guidelines

All participants are expected to respect the space and the individuals within it. Participants can do so by:

1. Holding space for others
 - This is a judgment-free space. Be respectful and open to the perspectives and opinions of others.
 - i. We need everyone’s ideas to innovate and improve; we understand we will not always agree with each other; we will seek to agree on our differences and understand why.
 - We recognize the need to step up, then step back; if a question is asked or a comment shared, we take a step back to ensure new voices are heard before contributing again.
 - Minimize distractions and be present in the discussion.
2. Holding space for yourself
 - Your opinion matters. Share as much or as little as you like.
 - Monitor your emotions and take time for yourself. If you are feeling uncomfortable, you may step out of the space at any time.
3. Above all, we agree to zero tolerance for behaviour that promotes hate, violence and discrimination against others on any basis.

What will be done with your input?

1. Your input will be used to identify key issues, challenges and opportunities for change.
2. Your ideas will help develop the Addressing Anti-Black Racism Action Plan.
3. The draft plan recommendations will be posted online on the City's website to solicit broader community feedback.
4. The Addressing Anti-Black Racism Action Plan will be reviewed and approved by the City Council, and residents will be informed of the plan for publication.

What can the City do to address the identified issues, and what will the City do with recommendations that are beyond their jurisdiction?

Scope of the Addressing Anti-Black Racism Project, including community engagement, will be exclusively focused on services offered by the City and within its jurisdiction. We recognize that matters outside the scope may be part of community discussion and contain subject matters deeply impacting diverse Black communities in the city. Such information will be collected and, where possible, provided to Council to redirect relevant parties.

Who can you contact for information about the Addressing Anti-Black Racism Action Plan?

You can reach out to Tolulope Ojo, Anti-Racism Specialist through email at tolulope.ojo@vaughan.ca, or phone call at (905) 832-2281.

City Services

The City of Vaughan operates within a two-tier municipal structure, which means there are two levels of government providing services to the community – a local municipality and regional municipality. York Region, the higher level of government, is made up of urban and rural municipalities: Aurora, East Gwillimbury, Georgina, King, Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill, Vaughan and Whitchurch-Stouffville.

Who provides your services?

Region of York (upper tier) provides:	City of Vaughan (lower tier) provides:
• Assistance for businesses • Court services • Family and children services • Forestry • Garbage and recycling • Housing • Long-term care • Paramedics • Planning • Police services • Public health • Regional roads • Social assistance • Transportation • Public transit (YRT/Viva) • Wastewater treatment • Water (drinking) supply to lower tier municipalities	• Animal services • Building permits • By-law and enforcement • City operating and capital budget • Economic development • Fire and rescue services • Parks, forestry and horticulture maintenance (City) • Property tax billing and assessment • Protocol services • Public libraries • Public records and licenses • Recreation and fitness services • Snow removal and salting • Traffic and road signs and signals (City) • Urban design • Waste collection • Wastewater collection and stormwater management • Water (drinking) distribution and infrastructure • Zoning plans examination

Worksheet

Using the worksheet before the Community Consultations/Conversations

This worksheet is created as a self-guided tool. It will not be collected for direct feedback. Instead, we encourage you to use this worksheet ahead of community sessions to reflect on some of the key priorities, recommendations, and action points for the Addressing Anti-Black Racism Action Plan. It may be helpful to think through the questions in this workbook by yourself, or with your friends, family, or other members of the Black community to share ideas. It may be helpful to make notes ahead of time and bring your completed worksheet to share your ideas within the community sessions.

General Consultation Questions

1. Please share your experiences accessing and using City services. Which feel accessible and inclusive and which do not? How can the City ensure that services are inclusive of the Black community? Consider any of the following services:

- [Animal services](#) (e.g., adopt a pet, get a pet license)
- [Building permits](#) (e.g., Application tracking and expediting)
- [By-law and enforcement](#) (e.g., get a parking permit)
- [City operating and capital budget](#) (e.g., tax dollars and City budget)
- [Economic development](#) (e.g., information for starting a business)
- [Fire and rescue services](#) (e.g., protection, prevention, safety and education)
- [Parks, forestry and horticulture maintenance](#) (City) (e.g., boulevards and open spaces, playgrounds, trails, sports fields, playcourts, cemeteries, horticulture displays, litter and debris pick up, snow removal in parks, etc.)
- [Property tax billing and assessment](#) (e.g., tax payments and assistance, assessment information, forms, applications, and resources)
- [Protocol services](#) (e.g., proclamations, flag raising, ceremonies, etc.)
- [Public libraries](#) (e.g., accessing books and services).
- [Public records and licenses](#) (e.g., marriage licenses)
- [Recreation and fitness services](#) (e.g., fitness centers, swimming, sports leagues, camps, leadership programs, city playhouse theater, skating and hockey, etc.)
- [Snow removal and salting](#) (e.g., snow alerts and removal, windrow clearing, requesting winter maintenance on a sidewalk, etc)
- [Traffic and road signs and signals](#) (City) (e.g., curb and sidewalk repair, streetlights, pedestrian crossovers, traffic safety in school zones, speed compliance program, traffic and pedestrian signals, etc.)

- [Urban design](#) (e.g., cultural heritage and urban design plans)
- [Waste collection](#) (e.g., collection management, waste sorting tool, purchasing bins and tags, keeping the city litter-free, leaf and yard waste, waste reduction commitment, first new homeowners, etc.)
- [Wastewater collection](#) (e.g., sewer backup, washing cars and outdoor services, etc.) and [stormwater management](#) (e.g., annual stormwater charge, sewer system, etc.)
- [Water \(drinking\) distribution and infrastructure](#) (e.g., rates and billing, water quality and testing, water shut on and off, etc.)
- [Zoning plans examination](#) (e.g., building permit applications, zoning bylaws and maps, licensing and driveway widening, compliance and restrictions, etc.)

2. Think about how you stay engaged with the City and share your perspectives and feedback on services/events/initiatives. What is working well and how can the City better engage with the Black community and ensure the perspectives of the Black community are included in decision-making?

3. Think about how you receive information from the City and hear about services/events/opportunities (e.g., channels, methods of communication, etc.). What is working well and what can be improved?

4. If applicable: think about your experience starting a business in the city. What supports and incentives do you wish you had? What do business owners in Vaughan need from the City to start and grow their businesses?

5. How can progress toward supporting the Black community and addressing anti-Black racism be measured? What would positive change look like?

6. Are there things that the City is doing well to ensure that the Black community is included in City services/events/initiatives?

7. Please share any other key priorities within the City's jurisdiction you would like reflected in the Action Plan that are specific to the needs of the Black community and addressing anti-Black racism in the city.

8. What core values related to eliminating anti-Black racism should be used when making City decisions (e.g. collaboration, equity, etc)?