

Towards a Healthy City: Addressing Anti-Black Racism in Vancouver



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Executive Summary

“Despite Canada’s reputation for promoting multiculturalism and diversity... Canada’s history of enslavement, racial segregation, and marginalization, has had a deleterious impact on people of African descent which must be addressed in partnership with communities.”

- UN Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent on its Mission to Canada

This project seeks to put forward recommendations which the City of Vancouver (hereinafter referred to as “the City”) can adopt to address anti-Black racism in Vancouver. This project entailed identifying how anti-Black racism impacts Black people and communities and reviewing City policies with a view to ascertaining measures that have been put in place to address anti-Black racism. Policies of City organizations such as the Vancouver Police Department (VPD), Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH), and Vancouver School Board (VSB) were also reviewed. A review of anti-Black equity best practices was also conducted and recommendations were provided based on the literature review, best practice review and interviews held with a handful of Black Vancouverites.

In 2016, the *UN Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent*¹ issued a report expressing concern about anti-Black racism in Canada. They pointed to “Canada’s history of enslavement, racial segregation, and marginalization” as the root of anti-Black racism in Canada. Through this project, we realize that anti-Black racism has far reaching implications on Black Vancouverites, and we understand why the *UN Working Group* is “**deeply concerned about the human rights situation of African Canadians.**” We discover that Blacks experience discrimination in various areas. In terms of income and employment, Black workers have the highest earnings gap compared to other ethnic groups that make up the Canadian workforce. Similarly, white employers and even governmental agencies rarely hire and promote Black people. In Vancouver, the median income of Black Canadians is \$29,000 compared to \$42,000 earned by white Canadians. Immigrants who are white also record increased earnings over time compared to Black immigrants.

With respect to education, curriculum, pedagogy and assessments have steadfastly failed to recognize pertinent issues of anti-Black racism which take place in schools on a daily basis. Black students also have to deal with invisibility and erasure considering that curricula do not include topics about African Canadian contributions to the society or

¹ The UN Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent is a special procedure established by the Human Rights Council to look into issues of racism, discrimination, xenophobia, faced by Africans across the world. The Working Group visited Canada between October 17 and 21, 2016 and issued a report following the mission. See <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Racism/WGAfricanDescent/Pages/WGEPADIndex.aspx>.

about the history of slavery and segregation in Canada. Additionally, Black students do not feel safe in school due to incidences of anti-Black racism (such as the Lord Byng Secondary school incident) which occur within the four-walls of educational institutions and are not adequately addressed or nipped in the bud.

In the criminal justice system, Black people are overrepresented in prisons across Canada. In 2017, the VPD released data which revealed that despite making up one percent of the population, Black people accounted for five percent of street checks conducted. This has therefore caused concern about the manner in which street checks are being carried out. Racial profiling is also a challenge and statistics show that Black males experience racial profiling more frequently than white males. The incident at the 2019 Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences which held at UBC, where Shelby McPhee (a Black student who was attending the conference), was racially profiled and falsely accused of stealing a laptop by two white women, is another case in point.

Accessing housing and grants is another area where anti-Black racism occurs. For housing, studies show that white landlords are usually unwilling to rent to Black people and statistics reveal that Blacks make up about four to five percent of those homeless in the City. Also, the impact of the demolition of Hogan's Alley Block between 1967 and 1971 which effectively displaced Black families, communities and businesses is still being felt today. Although protests against the subsequent demolition of Strathcona, Gastown and China town were successful, it was too late for Hogan's Alley as it had already been demolished. With respect to grants, there are very few grants that specifically foster Black arts, culture and community development within the City. This essentially contributes to the feeling of erasure experienced by Black Vancouverites.

The challenges associated with being Black in Vancouver become manifold when coupled with other dimensions of identity such as gender, sexuality, disability, age, HIV status, etc (that is, intersecting identities). This leads to the occurrence of "double or multiple discrimination" depending on a person's varying identity dimensions. For example, Black women, men and queer persons experience discrimination at the intersection of race and gender. Black women face an unemployment rate of 11% which is nearly twice the national average. Black men are more likely to be singled out by the police because of stereotypes that Black males are criminally minded. It also plays out when Black males are racially profiled and stopped for street checks more often than white males. Also, there are few safe spaces for LGBTQ+ youths in the community and in these spaces, Black queer youths experience anti-Black racism. Even more, Black youths contend with anti-Black racism and homophobia.

In all, these different identity dimensions manifest in multiple forms, and when combined with anti-Black racism, results in a less than desirable life experience for persons affected. This consequently affects the health, well-being and quality of life of Black Vancouverites. Although health-related studies on Black people in Canada have been

rare, some research suggests that income inequalities and other acts of discrimination have negative health effects on Black people. For example, as a result of micro-aggressions and daily acts of racism, Black Canadians experience a higher risk of hypertension and diabetes than white Canadians. Researchers have pointed out that the social determinants of health (income, employment, education, social support, etc.) are disproportionately allocated amongst the Canadian population and that addressing this issue will help reduce health inequities.

We subsequently proceed to the policy review. Canada has established a strong framework to address discrimination and promote equality of all persons regardless of background or identity. Provisions prohibiting discrimination are contained in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms as well as in federal, provincial and territorial human rights laws. In addition, the 1985 Canadian Multiculturalism Act promotes diversity and evinces a commitment to the full participation of all persons in the Canadian society. In the same vein, Vancouver promotes equity and diversity. However, this has not addressed specific challenges faced by members of the Black community. A review of the City's extant policies as well as those of other City organizations reveal that very little has been done to specifically tackle anti-Black racism. However, recent developments with the Equity framework, the Creative City Strategy as well as the development of the Hogan's Alley Block in line with the North East False Creek Plan show that the City is beginning to recognize anti-Black racism as an issue to be addressed. While this is a step in the right direction, the City could and should take steps to holistically tackle anti-Black racism. The first step is to publicly acknowledge the existence of anti-Black racism and its continuous impact on Black Vancouverites, and subsequently establish a reconciliation framework.

A best practice review was conducted with a view to identifying anti-Black racism policies and practices put in place by other municipal governments. In 2010, Halifax issued a formal apology for the demolition of Africville in the 1960's, provided funding, and granted a land trust to the African Genealogy Society for the rebuilding of the Seaview Church, (which now serves as the Africville Museum). Most notable are the steps taken by the City of Toronto to tackle anti-Black racism. In 2018, after in-depth consultations with the Black community, the City of Toronto (CoT) issued a five-year intersectional anti-Black racism action plan. The areas addressed include issues relating to "children & youth development, health & community services, job opportunities & income supports, policing & the justice system, community engagement & Black leadership." The CoT also established the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit which is responsible for rolling out the anti-Black racism action plan and reporting on its implementation to Council. Educational campaigns were also conducted which the aim of raising awareness about anti-Black racism in Toronto, and equipping people to identify it, question it and challenge it. The CoT also set aside \$0.99 million for implementation of the action plan.

We also looked at other jurisdictions in North America. We identified New York City's "*While Black in NYC: Protections against Discrimination for Black New Yorkers*," involving the use of public campaign ads to sensitize Black people about their rights to freedom from discrimination and reminding employers, landlords, business owners about the need to abide by the law. Also, victims of anti-Black racism or discrimination are encouraged to report same to the New York Human Rights Commission, who investigate complaints filed and subsequently sanction perpetrators. Sanctions include paying a fine and/or undergoing compulsory human rights training. Also, the City of Memphis' Office of Business Diversity and Compliance, collaborates with community partners to promote "Black Restaurant Week", an annual event that celebrates Black restaurants, chefs, caterers and cuisines. Another initiative is "My Brother's Keeper" (MBK), a public-private partnership project embarked on by the City of Baton Rouge and about a 100 other cities and tribal nations. MBK aims to provide better opportunities for boys and young men of color, which will propel them to achieve their full potential. Targets include ensuring all young people complete post-secondary education or training and ensuring that young people are safe from violent crime.

The above review reveals that although municipalities like Halifax, New York City, Baton Rouge, and Memphis have put in place some initiatives to address anti-Black racism in one form or the other, only Toronto has developed a comprehensive, holistic and long-term plan to address the various dimensions through which anti-Black racism plays out. Accordingly, in a City of Vancouver context, rather than establishing temporary, short term measures (which do not effectively nip anti-Black racism in the bud), it is best that the City establish an intersectional strategy that specifically addresses challenges faced by Black Vancouverites. A specific strategy is required due to the history of slavery, segregation and discrimination which people of African descent have faced over the course of history. According to the *UN Working Group of Experts*, **"...People of African Descent represent a distinct group whose human rights should be promoted and protected."** They equally expressed concern that **"the category "visible minority" obscures the degrees of disparity in treatment and specific human rights concerns of African Canadians."** Therefore, **singularly adopting an equity framework targeted at promoting equity and inclusion of all races without particularly addressing anti-Black racism in detail will not achieve the desired outcome of ensuring that Black Vancouverites feel safe and included.**

As mentioned earlier, a detailed action plan has been set out by the City of Toronto in line with the recommendations put forward by the UN Working Group Report. Arguments against the City of Vancouver taking this path on grounds that there are far more Blacks in Toronto than in Vancouver do not fully appreciate the extent of the issue at hand. The City's strategy to tackle anti-Black racism should not be based on population considerations, but on the understanding that every Black person faces discrimination at a higher level than other racial groups and that this needs to be addressed irrespective of population size. The City's strategy should communicate that it is committed to

tackling anti-Black racism irrespective of the number of Black people within the community, be it just one Black person or a million Black people. This report therefore seeks to guide the City towards achieving its goal of becoming a healthy city by ensuring that Black Vancouverites feel safe and included.

Immediate Next Steps

Flowing from the above, and in consonance with the Mayor's statement during the 2019 Black History Month celebrations, (about the need to tackle anti-Black racism), the City should take specific actions which can be shared with the wider Black community at Black History Month 2020. The following actions are recommended:

- 1) **Recognition:** Recognize the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024) and formally acknowledge that people of African descent represent a distinct group whose rights must be promoted and protected. Also, work towards implementing recommendations (that are actionable within a municipal context), contained in the report issued by the UN Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent.
- 2) **Reconciliation:** Establish a reconciliation framework for the Black community and issue a formal public apology for the history of discrimination and racism meted out to Black Vancouverites. The reconciliation approach should include granting a land trust to Hogan's Alley Society.
- 3) **Anti-Black Racism Strategy/Action Plan:** Establish a team (office of reparation) consisting of Black City staff who will be responsible for working with the Black community to develop and implement an anti-Black racism strategy or action plan. The office should also be responsible for providing leadership, strategic direction, policy advice and expertise to the City in order to strengthen the delivery of municipal services to Black Vancouverites.
- 4) **Support mechanisms for Black City staff:** Provide culturally safe support systems for Black City staff. This could include providing access to culturally sensitive mental health facilities, providing appropriate avenues for staff to report incidences of anti-Black racism in the workplace and establishing a clear protocol that stipulates how such matters will be addressed.
- 5) **Public campaign ads:** Create and circulate public campaign ads that make it clear to anyone who identifies as Black, that they have a right to live free from discrimination and harassment in Vancouver, and encourage them to report incidences of anti-Black racism to the appropriate City department or governmental organization such as the B.C Human Rights Commission.
- 6) **Funding:** Set aside funding to support the City's anti-Black racism strategy/action plan.²

² It is recommended that the sum of \$532,000 be set aside for the development and implementation of the action plan/strategy.

Findings and Analysis

1. Introduction

This project was carried out for the City of Vancouver's Social Policy and Projects Department and supports the Healthy City Strategy (particularly the goal of ensuring that Vancouverites feel safe and included); Equity Framework; and the City of Reconciliation Framework. The project seeks to contribute to the achievement of the Healthy City goal by developing anti-Black equity recommendations, principles and practices which, if implemented, will ensure that Black people living in Vancouver feel safe and included. More so, ensuring that Black Vancouverites feel safe and included will have a tremendous impact on other goal areas and will lead to better jobs, increased earnings and better health for members of the Black community.

2. Project Overview

2.1. Background and Objective

The City seeks to put measures in place to effectively tackle anti-Black racism. Accordingly, this project aims to achieve the following:

- a. identify how anti-Black racism and racial bias impact Black people and communities;
- b. review the City's extant policies and practices as well as those of other City organizations with a view to identifying policies and practices that address anti-Black racism;
- c. identify emerging best practices from leading jurisdictions the City could adapt to address anti-Black racism and its consequent effects; and
- d. highlight best practices on anti-Blackness equity principles and frameworks which the City can utilize for ongoing engagement and practice.

This report will substantially assist the City to engage better with the Black community and would also help guide the formulation of policies, plans and practices geared towards addressing anti-Black racism in Vancouver.

2.2. Research Methods and Methodology

This project is a product of the sustainability scholars program (Greenest City/Healthy City initiative) between the University of British Columbia and the City of Vancouver. Accordingly, the project methodology was co-designed with Lara Honrado (Assistant Director, Cultural Services) and April Sumter-Freitag at (Social Policy and Projects

Division) at the City of Vancouver. The primary method employed in carrying out this project was a documentary/literature review which entailed the following:

- a. *Review of online journals, articles, and books on the impact of anti-Black racism:* This involved a review of texts and articles that shed light on the effects of anti-Black racism/racial bias on Black people and communities.
- b. *Review of the City's extant policies:* This includes the Healthy City Strategy, the City of Reconciliation Framework, Equal Employment Programme, North East False Creek plan as well as preliminary discussions concerning the Equity Framework and the Creative City Strategy. The literature review involved a review of these policies to determine if they adequately support and foster the well-being of Black persons and communities in Canada.
- c. *Review current anti-Blackness policies (if any) put in place by the City's organizations:* This involved a review of policies put in place by key City organizations - the Vancouver Police Department (VPD), Board of Parks and Recreation (Park Board), the Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) and the Vancouver School Board (VSB) with a view to identifying if and how these policies address anti-Black racism.
- d. *Review of best practices on anti-Blackness policies, actions and frameworks within a municipal planning context:* This entailed a comparative assessment of anti-Blackness equity policies and practices in other jurisdictions.

In addition to the above, qualitative methods were employed through the use of interviews conducted with City staff and selected members of the Black community. Methodology-wise, I employed a phenomenological approach which involved drawing out and understanding the lived experiences of selected members of the Black Community. I also utilized a participatory methodological approach which involved gaining input from both City staff and a handful of Black Vancouverites about how anti-Black racism can be tackled in Vancouver. Critical race and intersectionality theoretical frameworks were applied in understanding the impact of anti-Black racism on Black Vancouverites and in developing recommendations to tackle same.

2.3. Limitations

Due to limitations in time and resources, this project does not include results from direct engagement with the wider Black Community. It is therefore not representative of the expectations of all members of the Black community.

3. Anti-Black Racism in Canada

Anti-Black racism refers to the prejudice, stereotype and discrimination faced by members of the Black community which continuously places them at a disadvantage in comparison to other ethnicities. The history of Blacks in Canada is tied to the slave trade era where Africans were sold as slaves in North America. Between 1820 and 1861 Canada served as a place of refuge for Black persons fleeing slavery from America through the Underground Railroad. These slaves settled in different provinces across Canada, including British Columbia.³ Over the years, the number of Black people in Canada has grown and as at 2016, approximately 1.2 million people reported being Black in Canada and the Black population now makes up 3.5% of the total Canadian population and 15.6% of the visible minority population.⁴

“A group of young people faced discrimination and marginalization. They faced a stark reminder that even in that one place that should be theirs ... that anti-Black racism exists, that unconscious bias exists, that systemic discrimination exists in this country today.”

- PM Justine Trudeau
(Source: Canada's National Observer)

Canada is often regarded as a multicultural country and has received recognition for measures put in place to address issues of discrimination, particularly as they relate to indigenous persons. Notwithstanding these laudable achievements, anti-Black racism still exists in Canada. In 2016, the UN Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent⁵ issued a report expressing concern about anti-Black racism in Canada. They pointed to “Canada’s history of enslavement, racial segregation, and marginalization” as the root of anti-Black racism in Canada.⁶

³ Robin W. Winks, *The Blacks in Canada: A History*, 2. ed., reprinted, Carleton Library Series 192 (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s Univ. Press, 2000).

⁴ Statistics Canada, *Diversity of the Black Population in Canada: An Overview*, Ethnicity, Language and Immigration Thematic Series, 2019, http://publications.gc.ca/site/archive-archived.html?url=http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2019/statcan/89-657-x/89-657-x2019002-eng.pdf. Also, according to the 2016 census, 43,505 Black people lived in British Columbia. It is estimated that by the year 2036, the Black population could represent between 5% and 5.6% of the total Canadian population

⁵ The UN Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent is a special procedure established by the Human Rights Council to look into issues of racism, discrimination, xenophobia, faced by Africans across the world. The Working Group visited Canada between October 17 and 21, 2016 and issued a report following the mission. See <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Racism/WGAfricanDescent/Pages/WGEPADIndex.aspx>.

⁶ “Report of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent on Its Mission to Canada” (United Nations Human Rights Council, 2017).

However, despite the myriad of stories which serve as evidence of the existence of anti-Black racism in Canada, variants of the phrase, “there is no racism in Canada” are heard time and time again. These statements reveal that racism in Canada is obvious to everyone but those who are affected. According to Henry et al⁷:

White Canadians usually ignore evidence of their racial prejudice and their differential treatment of minorities. Victims’ testimonies are unheard and their experiences unacknowledged. Public-sector agencies conduct extensive consultations and then fail to translate their knowledge into substantive initiatives. Government bodies establish task forces and commissions of inquiry on racism to demonstrate their grave concern; their findings and recommendations are ignored. Academics produce empirical studies documenting the ways that racialized and Indigenous peoples are denied power, equity, and rights, and the studies are then buried. Politicians and the power elite rationalize the racial barriers that prevent racialized communities, including Black people, South Asians, Muslims, and First Nations peoples, among others, from fully participating in the political process, education, employment, media, justice, human services, and the arts.

In summary, anti-Black racism exists in Canada as well as in Vancouver, and there is a need to first recognize it and subsequently set out policies and practices to tackle same.

⁷ Frances Henry, Tim Rees, and Carol Tator, *The Colour of Democracy: Racism in Canadian Society* (Toronto: Nelson Education, 2009).

3.1. Impact on Black People and Communities in Canada

Anti-Black racism is a pervasive problem which has far-reaching effects on its victims. These effects manifest in key areas discussed below.

3.1.1. Income and Employment

Canada has had a history of discrimination—although not as prominent as that of the United States. Despite this, discrimination still exists in various forms—particularly in terms of labour and employment.

Canadian Context

- Statistics derived from the 2006 Canadian census revealed that “the average employment income of full-year, full-time, Black workers was \$40,179 in 2005 while the average for all Canadian workers was over \$11,000 greater at \$51,221.1”.⁸
- Black workers experience the largest earnings gap out of all the ethnic groups that make up the Canadian labour force. For instance, research conducted based on the 1996 census data specifically relating to Canadian-born workers, found that Black Canadian females recorded the largest earnings gap and Black Canadian males had the second largest earnings gap out of a total of 26 ethnic groups.⁹
- Studies have also shown that “Toronto employers are significantly less likely to respond positively to an ethnic name applicant than other types of applicants”.¹⁰ Further research extended to Vancouver and Montreal revealed similar results where “applicants with English-sounding names were 35% more likely to receive call-backs than applicants with Indian or Chinese names”.¹¹

⁸ Gervan Fearon and Steven Wald, “The Earnings Gap between Black and White Workers in Canada: Evidence from the 2006 Census,” *Relations industrielles* 66, no. 3 (2011): 324, <https://doi.org/10.7202/1006342ar>.

⁹ Fearon and Wald. See also Krishna Pendakur and Ravi Pendakur, “Colour My World: Have Earnings Gaps for Canadian-Born Ethnic Minorities Changed over Time?,” *Canadian Public Policy / Analyse de Politiques* 28, no. 4 (December 2002): 489, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3552211>.

¹⁰ Philip Oreopoulos, “Why Do Skilled Immigrants Struggle in the Labor Market? A Field Experiment with Thirteen Thousand Resumes,” *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy* 3, no. 4 (November 2011): 148-71, <https://doi.org/10.1257/pol.3.4.148>.

¹¹ Philip Oreopoulos and Diane Dechief, “Why Do Some Employers Prefer to Interview Matthew, but Not Samir? New Evidence from Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver,” *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2012, <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2018047>.

- Another obstacle that racialized immigrants (in this instance, the Black community) face is the fact that foreign qualifications and foreign work experience is not valued unless it is combined with “Canadian work experience”.¹²
- There are also a few Black people working in governmental offices and agencies, and those hired are usually not promoted in the same manner as people of other races.¹³
- Black immigrants often have to resort to the use of social networks in their job search and this has proven to be the most effective strategy in securing employment in the Canadian labour market. Black immigrants in Toronto have categorically stated that the only way to secure employment in Toronto was through a referral.¹⁴ In a particular interview study assessing the lived-experience of English-speaking Caribbean immigrants in Toronto, a participant who had a professional degree and over twenty years of work experience stated thus:¹⁵

“The only thing that has worked for me so far is people that have either known me or that I am familiar with because they have worked with people that I have worked with, otherwise nothing else works. Whether or not you are qualified on paper, the only thing that gets you in is if you know somebody. That seems to be the nature of the game.”

¹² Manjula N Variyam, “Canada’s Skilled Worker Immigration Regulation and Its Impact on the Canadian Economy,” *Law and Business Review of the Americas*, no. 2 (2007): 13.

¹³ Henry, Natasha L. “Racial Segregation of Black People in Canada”. The Canadian Encyclopedia, 28 May 2019, Historica Canada. <<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/racial-segregation-of-black-people-in-canada>. Accessed 25 June 2019>.

¹⁴ Ron Robert Branker, “How Do English-Speaking Caribbean Immigrants in Toronto Find Jobs?: Exploring the Relevance of Social Networks,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 49, no. 3 (2017): 51-70, <https://doi.org/10.1353/ces.2017.0021>.

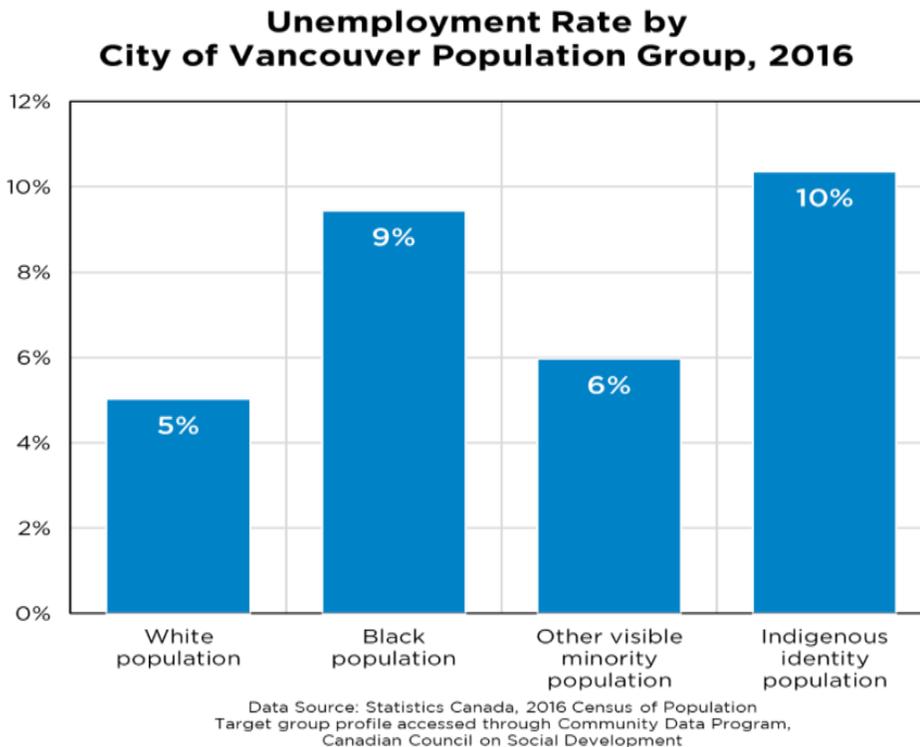
¹⁵ Branker.

The Vancouver Context

- In the Vancouver context, statistics reveal that 21% of Black Canadians in Vancouver are within the bottom 10% of Vancouver’s income distribution compared to white Canadians at 13%.
- Conversely, only 7% of Black Canadians in Vancouver are within the top 10% of Canada’s income distribution compared to 19% of white Canadians.
- Statistics further reveal that Black Canadians are under-represented in higher income brackets. The median income of Black Canadians in Vancouver is CAD29,000 compared to CAD42,000 CAD earned by white Canadians.
- After Indigenous persons, Black persons have the highest unemployment rate in Vancouver.

See illustration below:

Figure 1: Source - City of Vancouver Social Policy Department Presentation on the Development of the Equity Framework



3.1.2. Education

“Black students contend with erasure, which is itself, arguably a form of violence. Both invisibility within curricula and the predominantly white demographic makeup of educators continue to negatively affect Black students. Most education institutions lack content highlighting Canada’s history of slavery and segregation, and they overlook the history of Black institutions and Black resilience more generally. Not only are Black students not seeing themselves reflected and celebrated in the curriculums but the lack of racial representation in school staff is also significant.”

- Robyn Maynard
(Source: The Walrus)

Over the years, anti-Black racism and its attendant inter-generational trauma has resulted in educational inequality. Researchers have attributed the disparity between Black people and whites to the legacy of slavery—because majority of the Black population descended from slaves who were uneducated.¹⁶

Canadian Context

Educational institutions tolerate prejudice, discrimination, and racism. This is compounded by the fact that curriculum, pedagogy and assessments have steadfastly failed to recognize pertinent issues of anti-Black racism which take place in schools on a daily basis. The failure of the curriculum to address this leads to systematic racism and consequent marginalization of Black students in Canadian classrooms.

Anti-Black racism also manifests in academia recruitment processes. Studies show that the Blacks and other people of colour are significantly underrepresented in Canadian Universities.¹⁷ Studies also show that Canadian University executive management teams (consisting of presidents, provost, vice-president, etc.) are overwhelmingly white.¹⁸ Another study revealed that after controlling for other variables like discipline, gender, publication, experience, the likelihood of visible minorities attaining the rank of associate professor reduced by 37%.¹⁹

¹⁶ Graziella Bertocchi and Arcangelo Dimico, “Slavery, Education, and Inequality,” *European Economic Review* 70 (August 2014): 197-209, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0014292114000695?via%3Dihub>.

¹⁷ Canadian Association of University Teachers, “Underrepresented & Underpaid: Diversity & Equity Among Canada’s Post-Secondary Education Teachers” (Canadian Association of University Teachers, April 2018), https://www.caut.ca/sites/default/files/caut_equity_report_2018-04final.pdf

¹⁸ M. Reza Nakhaie, “The Academic Profession in Canada. Department of Sociology”, *University of Windsor* (2001).

¹⁹ M. Reza Nakhaie, “Universalism, Ascription and Academic Rank: Canadian Professors, 1987-2000*,” *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue Canadienne de Sociologie* 44, no. 3 (July 14, 2008): 361-86, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1755-618X.2007.tb01190.x>.

Also, Black students face higher suspensions and expulsions than other students. By way of illustration, between 2015 and 2016, despite accounting for only 8% of the total student population, Black students made up about 22.5% of total suspensions.²⁰ Similarly, in Toronto, Black students accounted for 50% of all expulsions during the 2015 school year compared to 10% of white students.²¹

Vancouver Context:

In the Vancouver context, there is a scarcity of research studies and statistics on anti-Black racism. However, a number of incidents highlighting the challenges faced are mentioned below.

- **Racial Profiling at the 2019 Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences held at UBC:** On June 2, 2019, Shelby Mcphee, a graduate student from Acadia University, Nova Scotia who was attending the Congress Conference which held from June 1-7 at UBC, was racially profiled.²² On June 2, two other white congress attendees falsely accused him of stealing a laptop, photographed him without his consent and demanded to see evidence that he was a congress participant. He was also profiled by congress organizers and the RCMP in the course of investigations which took place in the presence of other congress attendees. In Shelby's words, **"I felt embarrassed ... and I felt there was not a safe place for me at UBC or for my colleagues that had come from the Black Canadian Studies Association."**²³ At the time of this report, the names of his accusers are yet to be publicly released.
- **Anti-Black racism in Vancouver Secondary School:** In November 2018, a white student at the Lord Byng Secondary School in Vancouver made a video (which he posted on a group chat), making threatening, racist statements, including how he hated Black people and hoped they would all die. In his words, ***"I hate n!ggers. I hope all the n!ggers die. I couldn't give a f\$ck about those n\$ggers. Oh my God, they're stinky and f\$cking stupid as f\$ck. I just want to line them all up and just***

²⁰ "PSAC Calls on Government to Take Action Against Anti-Black Racism," Public Service Alliance of Canada, 2018, <http://syndicatafpc.ca/node/6526>.

²¹ "PSAC Calls on Government to Take Action Against Anti-Black Racism."

²² Karin Larsen, "Nova Scotia Student Says He Was Racially Profiled at UBC-Held Congress," CBC News, June 5, 2019, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/nova-scotia-student-says-he-was-racially-profiled-at-ubc-held-congress-1.4668201>.

²³ Larsen.

*chuck an explosive in there and go “kaboom.”*²⁴ Black parents have expressed concerns about the safety of their children in Vancouver schools.

“The Byng case is a stark reminder that racism is, unfortunately, still very much a part of our society and our schools. Statistics Canada is actually reporting a sharp increase in reported “crimes motivated by bigotry”. People of African ancestry are being targeted disproportionately. The school system can’t be complacent in the face of this alarming trend. Schools need to keep focusing on building and nurturing a culture of inclusion that respects and celebrates diversity.”

– Patti Bacchus (Source: *The Georgia Straight*)

²⁴ Marcella Bernado, “Vancouver School Board Reassures Parents after Racist Video Pops Up from Lord Byng Student,” City News 1130, December 18, 2018, <https://www.citynews1130.com/2018/12/18/vancouver-school-board-lord-byng-racism/>.

3.1.3. Health Equity and Well-being

Anti-Black racism also affects the health and well-being of members of the Black community and also leads to health inequalities.

Canadian Context

- In the Canadian context, health-related studies on Black Canadians are rare. Thus, researchers often resort to studies conducted in the United States to fill this lacuna.²⁵
- Studies conducted in the African American context reveal that Black persons who have experienced discrimination or unfair treatment have been associated with different mental and physical health issues. This includes psychological distress, self-esteem, personal control, life dissatisfaction, depression, chronic health problems, disability, and self-reported ill health.²⁶
- Further research also suggests that the income inequalities between Black and white, suggest potential negative health effects.²⁷
- Black Canadians experience higher risks of both hypertension and diabetes than white Canadians and this has been attributed to discrimination faced by Black people on a daily basis.²⁸
- A report released by the Commonwealth Fund in 2017 which evaluated the health care systems of 11 countries, placed Canada among the bottom three countries in terms of health equity.²⁹ Researchers have therefore pointed out that the social determinants

Addressing the inequitable distribution of the social determinants of health will help reduce health inequities

– 2017 Commonwealth Fund Report

²⁵ Lydie A. Lebrun and Thomas A. LaVeist, “Health Status among Black Canadians: Results from a National Survey,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 45, no. 1-2 (2013): 143-55, <https://doi.org/10.1353/ces.2013.0016>.

²⁶ Amy Schulz et al., “Unfair Treatment, Neighborhood Effects, and Mental Health in the Detroit Metropolitan Area,” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 41, no. 3 (September 2000): 314, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2676323>.

²⁷ Patricia Rodney and Esker Copeland, “The Health Status of Black Canadians: Do Aggregated Racial and Ethnic Variables Hide Health Disparities?,” *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved* 20, no. 3 (2009): 817-23, <https://doi.org/10.1353/hpu.0.0179>.

²⁸ Gerry Veenstra and Andrew C. Patterson, “Black-White Health Inequalities in Canada,” *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health* 18, no. 1 (February 2016): 51-57, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10903-014-0140-6>.

²⁹ Nathan C. Nickel et al., “Income Inequality, Structural Racism, and Canada’s Low Performance in Health Equity,” *Healthcare Management Forum* 31, no. 6 (November 2018): 245-51, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0840470418791868>.

of health—income, occupation and education are inequitably distributed amongst the Canadian population. This structure works to the advantage of privileged groups and to the disadvantage of visible minorities such as members of the Black Community. All of these factors have a significant impact on health. The Commission therefore suggests that addressing the inequitable distribution of the social determinants of health will help reduce health inequities. It is also important to point out that the Commonwealth Fund’s report only considered income-related inequities. Researchers have also suggested that the continuous focus on income-related inequities to the exclusion of racial/ethnic inequalities may perpetuate health inequities.

Vancouver Context

There is a scarcity of research studies or statistics which highlight the challenges faced by Black persons in Vancouver in accessing health services or which identify the effect of anti-Black racism on health and well-being. Lived experiences of members of the Black Vancouver community will however be highlighted in Section 6.2 of this report.

3.1.4. Criminal Justice and Street Checks

The impact of anti-Black racism can also be felt in the Canadian criminal justice system. It often occurs in the form of racial profiling.

Canadian Context

- Black people are currently overrepresented in prisons in various provinces across Canada. Between 2010-2011, Black inmates constituted nine percent of the federal prison population although the Black community only made up 2.5% of the entire population in Canada.³⁰
- With respect to street checks, studies show that Black males were stopped and questioned by police compared to white males. A study carried out in Montreal revealed that most of such street checks were arbitrary or malicious.³¹ Black Canadians in Halifax have also admitted to being the subject of continuous “consumer racial profiling” by the police and other security personnel.
- Research conducted by the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission further reveals that 24.7% of Black Canadians reported being stopped and searched in malls compared to 6.2% of white Canadians.³²
- In Toronto, Black people experience racial profiling by police 2-17 times more frequently than whites.³³ This

“if you are person of colour in Vancouver, you are far more likely to be stopped and questioned in the street by the police than your fellow citizens who look white. This grim reality is often referred to as “the crime of walking while Black.”

- Robyn Maynard

(Source: The Vancouver Sun)

³⁰ UN Working Group Report.

³¹ Akwatu Khenti, “The Canadian War on Drugs: Structural Violence and Unequal Treatment of Black Canadians,” *International Journal of Drug Policy* 25, no. 2 (March 2014): 190-95, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugpo.2013.12.001>.

³² Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission. *Working Together to Better Serve all Nova Scotians: A Report on Consumer Racial Profiling in Nova Scotia*. Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission, 2013.

³³ Akwatu Khenti, “The Canadian War on Drugs: Structural Violence and Unequal Treatment of Black Canadians,” *International Journal of Drug Policy* 25, no. 2 (March 2014): 190-95, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugpo.2013.12.001>.

occurrence has been largely based on the stereotype that Black men have a penchant for criminality.

- The consequent result of such racial profiling in terms of street checks and in the criminal justice system is that focusing on vulnerable communities such as the Black community exacerbates issues of poverty, unemployment and income inequality. This ultimately affects the socio-economic prospects of both current and future members of the Black Community.³⁴

Vancouver Context:

- Following a Freedom of Information request, the Vancouver Police Department (VPD), released data on street checks in May 2018. The data contained information about the number of street checks carried out between 2008-2017. It included information concerning the gender and ethnicity of persons who were stopped for such checks. The data revealed that although Black people only make up one percent of the Vancouver population, they accounted for five percent of the street checks conducted. Civil rights organizations have therefore contended that street checks are “being conducted in a discriminatory manner”³⁵ and assert that the street check data is “statistical evidence of discrimination.”³⁶
- The incident mentioned in Section 3.1.2 above concerning Shelby McPhee is a recent illustration of how racial profiling occurs in Vancouver.

³⁴ David M. Tanovich, *The Colour of Justice: Policing Race in Canada* (Toronto: Irwin Law, 2006).

³⁵ “Understanding Street Checks: An Examination of a Proactive Policing Strategy” (Vancouver Police Department, September 2018), <https://vancouver.ca/police/assets/pdf/understanding-street-checks.pdf>.

³⁶ Understanding Street Checks.

3.1.5. Housing and Community

Housing and community are important components of socio-economic advancement because they contribute to wealth generation. Thus, ownership of landed property which can be passed on from generation to generation puts successive generations in financially stable positions. However, anti-Black racism hinders Black people from accessing landed properties, housing and shelter.

Canadian Context:

- Landlords are usually unwilling to rent to visible racial minorities. This was revealed in studies conducted involving paired researchers white, Black, Aboriginal, who sought rental housing from landlords or agents.³⁷ Racial discrimination is also sometimes subtle. “For example, landlords may use economic criteria to exclude certain racial groups”³⁸ and through this, Black people experience the highest levels of discrimination.³⁹
- According to Novac et al, “although there is no recent Canadian research on discrimination in mortgage lending, this does not mean that it does not occur. U.S. studies suggest that Black people are denied home mortgage loans at a higher rate than whites, even when the Black and white applicants have similar qualifications such as income, credit records and other eligible characteristics.”⁴⁰

Vancouver Context

Vancouver is one of the most expensive housing markets in Canada and Black people make up about four to five percent of those homeless in the city.

³⁷ Sylvia Novac et al., “Housing Discrimination in Canada: What Do We Know About It?,” n.d., 7.

³⁸ Preston and Ray 2009; Darden 2004; Novae et al. 2004; Dion 2001; Teixeira and Murdie 1997

³⁹ Novac et al., “Housing Discrimination in Canada: What Do We Know About It?”

⁴⁰ Novac et al.

Hogan's Alley:

Hogan's Alley was a "Vancouver neighbourhood that was home to multiple immigrant communities but was known largely for being home to several Black families, Black businesses (such as Vie's Chicken and Steak House) and the City's only Black church—the Methodist Episcopal Fountain Chapel".⁴¹ According to Compton, "Black settlement started as far back as 1923 and was due to the neighbourhood's close proximity to the Great Northern Railway station where many of the men in the community worked as porters."⁴²

However, due to urban renewal drives that were prominent at the time, Hogan's Alley was destroyed to pave way for construction of the Georgia and Dunsmuir viaducts. This led to the dispersion of a once vibrant Black community in Vancouver. Although the freeway was stopped by Strathcona community activists and Chinatown businesspeople (and Strathcona, Chinatown and Gastown were not destroyed), the damage had already been done with the destruction of the Hogan's Alley Block and the displacement of Vancouver's only Black community. The impact of this action is still being felt today.

"There has been a Black community in Vancouver since before there was a Vancouver."

-Wayde Compton

(Source: Vancouver Heritage Foundation)

⁴¹ See Wayde Compton, "Hogan's Alley," The Canadian Encyclopedia, February 2014, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/hogans-alley> and North East False Creek Plan; Section 3.6

⁴² Compton.

3.1.6. Grants

Grants are important for arts & cultural development and community development projects in Canada. Black communities have reported challenges with the grant application process.

“Grant application processes are difficult. The process is western, colonial and it takes a long time to get the grant. It would be beneficial if the City streamlined the grant application process and made it less cumbersome. The City could also have information sessions that support people and show them how to apply for grants as opposed to leaving people to find information about how to apply online.”

- Cecily-Belle Blain

It has been described as “western” and “colonial” as it often involves a long, tedious process requiring forms of 20-pages to be filled.

Canadian Context:

Although there are grants for culturally diverse arts organizations, grants specifically targeted at encouraging Black arts, culture and community are limited.

Vancouver Context:

As at 2019, there are no grants specifically targeted at fostering Black arts and culture in Vancouver save for the call for artists issued in February 2019, in respect of the mural for the Hogan’s Alley Block.

The 2019 evaluation criteria for community service grants (grants which are issued for projects intending to work with marginalized groups), does not include Blacks in the list of marginalized groups. In the same vein, support for Black people is not specifically listed as a priority area for which community service grants are issued. However, the 2020 organizational capacity building and the direct social services grants have been updated to include Black Canadians as a specific target group.

3.2. Intersecting Barriers

Anti-Black racism coupled with other dimensions of identity such as gender, sexuality, disability, age, HIV status, etc., leads to a combined experience of marginalization termed, “intersectionality”.⁴³ By way of illustration, intersectionality comes to play in situations where Black women and Black transgender people face discrimination arising first, from their identity as a Black person and secondly, from their identity as women and transgender persons respectively. This results in an overlapping system of discrimination that is meted out to such persons who are caught at the intersections of race and gender. The more dimensions of identity a Black person has, the higher the intersectionality challenge.

Accordingly, to develop an anti-Black racism equity framework, it is important to understand the intersectionality challenge faced by Black Vancouverites. Anti-Black racism and gender intersectionality plays out when Black male youth are more likely to be singled out by the police because of stereotypes that Black males are criminally minded. It also plays out when Black males are more racially profiled and stopped for street checks more than white males.

In the same vein, Black females are caught at the intersection of anti-Black racism and gender discrimination. This “double discrimination” leads to situations where “Black women are vulnerable to different kinds of sexual abuse, rape, sexual and reproductive violence and are unable to access police protection in the way white women can”.⁴⁴ Also, “upon suspicion of sex work, Black women have been stopped, beaten, and assaulted by the police.”⁴⁵ Most notably, statistics reveal that Black women in Canada have an unemployment rate of 11%, which is twice the national average.⁴⁶

The Black LGBTQ+ community also faces compounded challenges arising from this dual intersectionality. For one, there are few spaces for LGBTQ+ youths and in these spaces, Black queer youths experience racism. As such, “there are no safe spaces that actually offer safety on the basis of a Black Queer identity.”⁴⁷ Statistics reveal that bisexual and

⁴³ See Kimberle Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics,” *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989, 139-68 for a more extensive understanding of the intersectionality theory.

⁴⁴ Kate Hawkins, “Q&A: Author Robyn Maynard on Anti-Black Racism, Misogyny, and Policing in Canada,” Canadian Women’s Foundation, October 2018, <https://www.canadianwomen.org/blog/robyn-maynard/>

⁴⁵ Hawkins.

⁴⁶ “PSAC Calls on Government to Take Action Against Anti-Black Racism.”

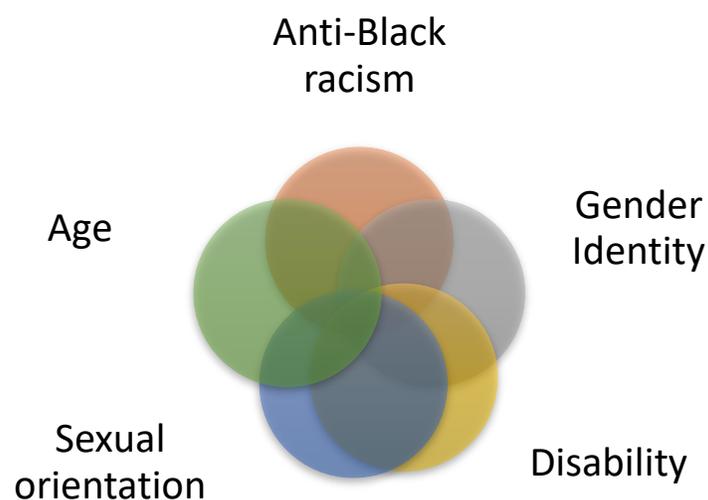
⁴⁷ Adam Benn, “The Black Queer Youth Initiative: Challenging Racism, Stigma and Exclusion,” n.d., 221.

trans people are over-represented among low-income Canadians.⁴⁸ This situation is worsened when coupled with anti-Black racism. In schools, “Queer students of African descent report lower levels of enjoyment and feelings of belonging than all straight and non-racialized LGBTQ students.”⁴⁹ LGBTQ youth also face higher rates of depression and anxiety, as well as higher risks for suicide and substance abuse. The added effects of anti-Black racism can increase the risk.⁵⁰ In addition, most Black queer youth have to deal with culturally ingrained homophobia and anti-Black racism.

The experiences of Black persons who have disabilities or are elderly also reveal the additional layer of marginalization that comes into play when caught in this intersection. Black persons with disabilities have lower chances of securing jobs, and have even more challenge accessing health care facilities due to health inequities arising from income disparity. Elderly Black persons equally face these challenges.

In all, these different identity dimensions manifest in multiple forms and when coupled with anti-Black racism, result in a less than desirable life experience for persons affected. For example, a Black, queer elderly person with disabilities is caught at several intersections and does not enjoy the same quality of life as a white, queer elderly person with disabilities.

Figure 2 - Diagram depicting anti-Black racism and other intersecting barriers



⁴⁸ “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans & Queer Identified People and Mental Health,” Canadian Mental Health Association, accessed July 28, 2019, <https://ontario.cmha.ca/documents/lesbian-gay-bisexual-trans-queer-identified-people-and-mental-health/>.

⁴⁹ Shantal Otchere, “What It’s Like Being Black and Queer in School,” NOW Magazine, June 29, 2017, <https://nowtoronto.com/news/what-its-like-being-black-and-queer-in-school/>

⁵⁰ Canadian Mental Health Association

4. Policy Review

This section will undertake an analysis of the City’s policies and those of key City organizations (the Vancouver Police Department, the Board of Parks and Recreation, Vancouver Coastal Health and Vancouver School Board).

4.1. City of Vancouver

From the analysis conducted, there are several policies that promote equity, diversity and inclusion. However, there is no policy that specifically addresses anti-Black racism and how this impacts Black Vancouverites. This same conclusion was reached by the UN Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent Report on its mission to Canada in October 2016. According to the report, *“Canada has not introduced special measures for African Canadians, despite the disparities and systemic anti-Black racism and discrimination they face in the enjoyment of their social, economic and cultural rights.”* According to the UN Working Group, there is a need to **formally acknowledge that people of African descent represent a distinct group whose rights must be promoted and protected.** However, recent policy developments that seek to address anti-Black racism in one form or the other are also discussed below:

- 1. Healthy City Strategy:** Although one of the goals contained in the strategy seeks to ensure that Vancouverites feel safe and included, there is no specific target or plan to address issues of discrimination or racism (particularly anti-Black racism). Given that this strategy is aimed at promoting the health and well-being of Vancouverites, it is important that targets be set to address issues of anti-Black racism - which includes racism that plays out whilst accessing public spaces and transport systems. It is also important that the City work with VPD to address racial profiling and implement measures to curb over-policing of Black Vancouverites.
- 2. Equity Framework:** The City is currently developing an Equity Framework which will provide an opportunity to formalize the City’s equity-focused work, address key gaps, and promote access, inclusion, cultural safety, and public participation for all staff and residents of Vancouver. The Equity Framework (which is a project borne out of the Healthy City Strategy), seeks to give priority focus to Indigenous people and people who identify as Black or persons of colour, and to also address gender inclusion through an applied intersectional lens. This is the first City policy that specifically identifies anti-Black racism as a distinct issue that needs to be addressed.
- 3. Creative City Strategy:** Also, the Creative City Strategy currently in the works is committed towards addressing equity, access, and inclusion. The equity and access direction of the proposed strategy aims to recognize tangible and intangible cultural heritage redress by amongst other things, including asset management for sites of cultural significance such as Hogan’s Alley. Although the Creative City Strategy recognizes the need to promote programs and trainings on anti-Black racism, there is

a need to specifically encourage and promote Black arts and culture in Vancouver by setting aside funds and grants specifically for this purpose. Failure to specifically make provision for the inclusion of Black arts and culture in Vancouver will do more harm by exacerbating the current situation where Black members of the Vancouver community do not feel included.

4. **Equal Employment Programme:** The City has also put in place an Equal Employment Programme which is aimed at providing assistance to staff members and departments on human rights issues, as well as hiring and retaining diverse qualified staff. However, there are currently only three Black City staff who are overburdened due to the underrepresentation of Black persons in the City resource team. Black City staff are also concerned with issues of safety while carrying out their functions within the City and have indicated that this often contributes to their leaving the City.

5. **The City of Reconciliation framework:** The City of Reconciliation Framework has also been implemented following the designation of Vancouver as a City of Reconciliation on July 8, 2014. Although the framework is targeted at reconciling with aboriginal persons, it has been indicated that “the lessons learnt from these experiences will, with time and understanding, be expanded to encompass all of Vancouver’s diverse cultural communities”.⁵¹

6. **The North East False Creek Plan (NEFCP):** The City has taken some steps to reconcile with Black Vancouverites through the development of the Hogan’s Alley Block as contained in the **North East False Creek Plan (NEFCP)**. The NEFCP arose following the City Council’s decision to take down the viaducts in 2015 and to develop the only expanse of land left in Vancouver. The NEFCP was developed in line with the City’s reconciliation strategy which recognizes that “the future of the City of Reconciliation is to begin strengthening relations through a reconciliation lens with other cultural communities.” The NEFCP is therefore regarded as providing “an opportunity to reconnect through reconciliation, replacing the Georgia and Dunsmuir viaducts with strong cultural, social and physical linkages”. The Plan inter-alia recognizes that the North East False Creek (Hogan’s Alley) was historically the heart of Vancouver’s Black Community. The City now seeks to reconcile with the Black community and remedy the damage that was caused by the urban renewal drive. In line with the NEFCP, the City has been working with the Hogan’s Alley Working Group to establish a cultural centre on the Hogan’s Alley Block which will be welcoming and inclusive. The NEFCP was approved by Council in February 2018 and a design advisory ad-hoc committee was set up to represent the larger Hogan’s Alley Working Group in the design process. Through this engagement process, members of the Black community were able to

⁵¹ “Framework for City of Reconciliation,” Administrative Report (City of Vancouver, September 18, 2014).

provide feedback and make known their expectations regarding the construction of the Hogan’s Alley Block.

6.1. Security of Tenure and Community Land Trust

To promote the long-term involvement of the Black community on the Hogan’s Alley Block, the City is considering entering into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Hogan’s Alley Society to provide a land trust or long-term lease to the Black community. This is predicated on the proposal made by the Hogan’s Alley Society to the City in February 2019. According to the Society, this request is based on the legacy of displacement that unfolded on the Hogan’s Alley Block. They assert that granting this request will provide long-term and self-determined security of land tenure to the Black community, and guard against the possibility of forced displacement.

Tentative response received from the City gleaned from a City Memorandum⁵² reveals that it is not City practice to sell or transfer land on a freehold basis but rather, to transfer land on a long-term basis. The City’s typical approach to developing and managing non-market housing is to lease the land and/or buildings to a non-profit society for a period between 60-99 years. By way of illustration, the City recently released several sites to the community land trust of the Co-op Housing Federation including three sites in West Fraser Lands and one building in SEFC (95 E 1st Avenue). However, discussion on the issue is still ongoing as Council’s decision is being awaited.

Furthermore, discussions with staff at the Special Projects Division revealed that while working on the design of the Hogan’s Alley Block, members of the Black community had raised concerns about the lack of trust between the Black community and the City. Members of the Black community have indicated that granting the land trust, will be a giant step towards rebuilding trust.

⁵² “Northeast False Creek – Staff Response to Questions from Council,” Memorandum (City of Vancouver, February 13, 2018), <https://council.vancouver.ca/20180213/documents/specmemo-NEFC-2017-02-13.pdf>.

4.2. City Organizations

Here, we consider the policies, plans and practices put in place by City organizations such as the Vancouver Police Department, the Board of Parks and Recreation, Vancouver Coastal Health and the Vancouver School Board to specifically address anti-Black racism.

4.2.1. The Vancouver Police Department (VPD)

An analysis of the VPD's policies (contained on the VPD webpage) through an anti-Black racism lens was conducted, particularly with respect to racial profiling. From the review, it appears that although the **VPD's 2018 annual report** states that one of the priorities of the Board is to foster a diverse workforce, only 0.7% of the VPD's workforce identifies as Black. Also, even though the report gives an account of homicide, robbery, murder and other incidents, there is no statistical data which reflects the percentage of crimes which stem from racialized violence.

The VPD Strategic Business Plan 2018 was also reviewed. The Plan consists of four strategic priorities, each of which has 2 strategic goals. Some of these goals include fostering relationships, understanding, and trust within the community; fighting violent crimes and its causes, and addressing community concerns that affect public safety. However, none of the strategies, goals, or activities highlighted in the plan mention the measures put in place to address issues of racialized violence or to investigate the overrepresentation of Black people in street checks and prisons. Also, the diversity programs contemplated in the strategic plan do not include steps to engage with the Black community.

In 2018, the VPD released a report titled, *Understanding Street Checks: An Examination of a Proactive Policing Strategy*. This report was issued following a complaint filed by the Union of BC Indian Chiefs and the BC Civil Liberties Association pointing out the overrepresentation of Indigenous persons and Black persons in the 2008 - 2017 street check data released by the VPD. According to the VPD, the assertion that "street check data is evidence of police discrimination oversimplifies the complex societal factors and historical context of our community". Rather, the VPD asserts that "the rate of street checks is highly correlated to the rate at which offenders are charged." The VPD however acknowledges that those who experience profiling suffer psychologically and at times, physically. They also acknowledge that "early experiences of apparent racial discrimination or racial profiling can have significant, long-lasting impacts and include outcomes such as school dropouts, lower grades, adolescent anger, anti-social behaviour, and lower self-esteem." The report therefore provides a number of recommendations, some of which include:

- Formalizing existing VPD street check standards into policy and ensuring that VPD policy adheres to new provincial standards that are being developed;
- Providing additional training to ensure that VPD officers are utilizing street checks appropriately;

- Committing to publicly releasing VPD street check data annually;
- Furthering existing community relationships to better understand the unique experiences, perceptions and histories of the communities that the VPD serves;
- Establishing a new street check category in the records system to specifically document when officers are dealing with an individual to ensure their safety and well-being.

In addition to the above, in September 2018, the Vancouver Police Board commissioned Pyxis Consulting Group to conduct an independent study into the street check practice between January and July 2019. However, at the time of writing this report, the result of this independent study is unknown.

4.2.2. Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

A review of the **Vancouver Park Board Strategic Framework 2012** was undertaken. The framework indicates that the Park Board’s mission is to provide, preserve and advocate for parks and recreation to benefit all people, communities and the environment. There is however no specific mention of the measures put in place to promote Black arts and culture.

4.2.3. Vancouver Coastal Health

A review of the **VCHA Service Plan 2019/19-2020/21** was undertaken. The Service Plan reveals that VCH’s mandate is to plan, deliver, monitor, and report on health services. VCH acknowledges that it faces a challenge in ensuring that all parts of society and all populations can access health services and enjoy good health. They equally recognize that health inequities continue to be pronounced for people in various population groups, including First Nations communities and people with low socioeconomic status. The VCH therefore indicates its commitment towards tackling health inequities and to working with First Nations Health Authority as a key partner to close these gaps. More so, goal two of the VCH Strategic Plan states thus: “to support the health and well-being of British Columbians through the delivery of responsive and effective health care services” and the objective is to “improve health outcomes and reduce health inequities in the populations we serve”.

However, the strategies put in place to achieve the above goal and objective only relate to Indigenous persons. There is a need to establish a holistic plan that addresses the health needs and concerns of both Indigenous persons and other visible minorities (particularly Black persons).

4.2.4. Vancouver School Board (VSB)

An analysis of the VSB's Strategic Plan 2021 reveals that one of the VSB's goals is to create a culture of shared responsibility by:

- increasing knowledge, awareness, appreciation of and respect of Indigenous histories, traditions, cultures and contributions by all students through eliminating institutional, cultural and individual racism within the Vancouver school district learning communities.
- Respecting and celebrating all forms of diversity.

However, none of these actions specifically address how incidences of anti-Black racism are curbed or handled in schools. Recent developments have however arisen with the motion put forward by trustee Jennifer Reddy to remove the Cecil Rhodes⁵³ monument and any other physical reference to Cecil Rhodes at L'École Bilingue. The motion was unanimously passed by the trustees at the June 24, 2019 meeting. In addition to this, a related motion raised by trustee Jennifer Reddy was unanimously passed. The motion states thus:

- That the VSB acknowledge the systems failure that allowed the plaque to go debated by school staff and board members as neutral, historic, and educational;
- That the VSB report on how this monument was placed on the grounds of L'École Bilingue in 2017 including information about the decision makers, full invoices and contractors;
- That the VSB present a plan for reconciling with the Black and Indigenous People of Color community, Parent Advisory Council (PAC), admin, educators, trustees, and students in order to take responsibility and reconcile; and
- That at the next Policy and Governance meeting, an update on the revision of the VSB's renaming policy will be provided, and that a reconciliation and anti-Black racism lens be used to guide this work.

Also, a motion directing that the VSB's policy include the Board's commitment to non-discrimination and anti-racism was also unanimously passed at the same meeting. It is hoped that these motions will mark the start of impactful changes within the education sector that will address the concerns of Black Vancouverites.

⁵³ Cecil Rhodes is known as the founder of the De Beers diamond empire, was a notorious racist and 19th-century British imperialist. He is reckoned to have set the stage for apartheid in South Africa.

5. Other Jurisdictions

5.1. Halifax “Formal Apology for Africville”



Source: The Coast (by Sue Carter Flinn)
<https://www.thecoast.ca/RealityBites/archives/2010/02/24/photos-an-apology-for-africville>

Africville in Halifax has a similar history to Hogan’s Alley in Vancouver. Black families and communities began settling in the province between the late 1700s and the early 1800s.⁵⁴ Africville has been described as “primarily a Black community located on the south shore of the Bedford Basin, on the outskirts of Halifax.”⁵⁵ Similar to Hogan’s Alley, Black people living in Africville had a thriving, vibrant community. “There were stores, a school, a post office and the Seaview United Baptist Church, which was Africville’s spiritual and social centre”.⁵⁶

Africville however met the same fate as Hogan’s Alley when the City of Halifax decided to relocate the residents of Africville in 1964. The relocation was premised on the need to improve the standard of living of Africville residents. However, Africville residents were not consulted prior to this decision being made and it was discovered that about 80% or more of Africville residents were not contacted by the Halifax Human Rights Advisory Committee (the group that was charged with the task of consulting with the community). Subsequently, the Africville Genealogy Society was formed in 1983, and it sought compensation against the City of Halifax for the loss suffered as a result of the relocation of Africville residents and the demolition of the community. In 1996 Africville became a National Historic Landmark,⁵⁷ and in 2010, a settlement was reached between the Halifax Regional Municipality and the Society. Following this, the City issued a formal public apology for the destruction of Africville and the sum of \$3 million was granted for the reconstruction of Seaview Church on the Africville site, (now known as the Africville Museum).⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Matthew McRae, “The Story of Africville,” Canadian Museum of Human Rights, accessed June 18, 2019, <https://humanrights.ca/story/the-story-of-africville>.

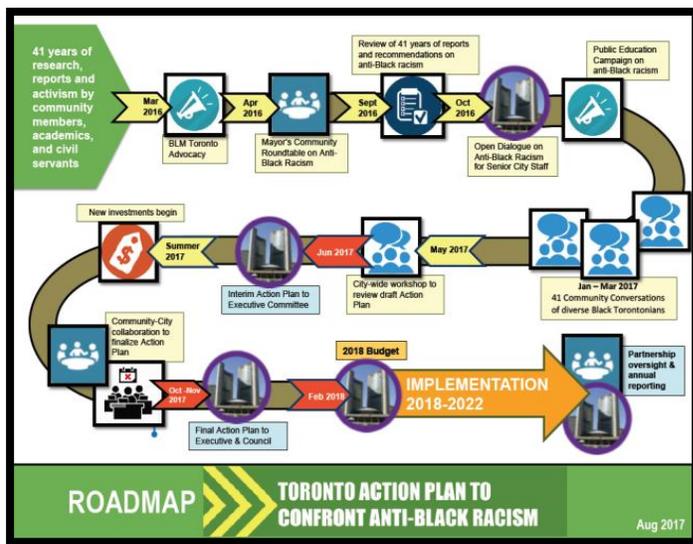
⁵⁵ McRae.

⁵⁶ McRae.

⁵⁷ “Africville: History,” Halifax, accessed August 12, 2019, <https://www.halifax.ca/about-halifax/diversity-inclusion/african-nova-scotian-affairs/africville/history>.

⁵⁸ UN Working Group Report.

5.2. Toronto “Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism”



Source: City of Toronto <https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/get-involved/community/confronting-anti-black-racism/creation-of-the-anti-black-racism-action-plan/>

In 2016, the City of Toronto commenced the process of acknowledging and tackling anti-Black racism. The result of this process was the development of a five-year action plan specifically targeted at tackling anti-Black racism through the application of an intersectional lens. As at today, the City of Toronto is the only municipality to have established a comprehensive anti-Black racism plan.

The action plan consists of five themes, 22 recommendations and 80 actions the City will undertake to address issues relating to children & youth development, health & community services, job opportunities & income supports, policing & the justice system, community engagement & Black leadership. Highlights of the action plan are discussed below, and a detailed summary of the action plan is contained in **Appendix A**.

- In developing the Plan, the City of Toronto reviewed existing reports on anti-Black racism and put their recommendations up for discussion. Also, in conjunction with community organizations, the City held discussions with the Black community with a view to understanding specific challenges faced, and also to ascertain the actions that would be of utmost benefit to the community. In all, these conversations involved about 800 participants who talked about their experiences, and key areas they would like to see addressed.
- Part of the initial steps taken involved a meeting between Mayor John Tory and Black leaders in City Hall to identify systemic barriers within City Hall.
- Also, the Toronto City Council granted the sum of \$400,000 to be invested in Black youth leadership development initiatives led by members of the Black community.
- The City of Toronto together with the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI), created an anti-Black racism awareness campaign with the goal of equipping people to identify and confront anti-Black racism when it occurs.

- The City recognized that “eradicating anti-Black racism is not a task that municipal governments can do alone”. The City equally acknowledged that all hands have to be on deck to tackle the issue - including all levels of government, institutions, businesses, schools, community agencies and individuals.
- The Action Plan is guided by the following principles: *partner with Black communities, engage the diversity of Toronto’s Black communities, drive systemic change.*
- The City set up a Confronting Anti-Black Racism unit which was responsible for rolling out the Anti-Black racism Action Plan and reporting on its implementation to Council. The City also set aside the sum of \$0.995 million to implement the plan and created five positions.

5.3. City of Memphis “Black Restaurant Week”



Black restaurant week is celebrated annually in major cities across the United States. The objective is to highlight and celebrate Black-owned restaurants, caterers and African American, Caribbean and African cuisine. For example, Memphis Black Restaurant Week held between March 3 - 9, 2019 and it was powered by the City of Memphis’ Office of Business Diversity and Compliance.

Source: City of Memphis
https://memphistn.gov/news/what_s_new/black_restaurant_week_returns_for_2019

5.4. New York City “Black in NYC: Protections against Discrimination for Black New Yorkers”



New York City published campaign ads that “make it clear to anyone who identifies as Black, including African American, Afro-Latinx, Afro-Caribbean, and African New Yorkers, that they have a right to live free from discrimination and harassment in New York City.”⁵⁹ In addition, “the ads

Source: NYC Human Rights <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/cchr/media/while-black-nyc.page>

serve to educate entities that have responsibilities, and potential liability, under the law, including housing providers, employers, employment agencies and business owners.”⁶⁰ According to the NYC Human Rights Commission Campaign Press release issued on March 15, 2019, “the “While Black” campaign will run in city bus shelters, subways, NYC Link, community media, storefront posters and on social media through Memorial Day”.

In addition, the NYC Human Rights Commission regularly releases a [“You Have Rights NYC” Video Series](#) which tells the stories of New Yorkers who faced discrimination, approached the Commission and got justice. One of the series focused on Tyrone, a Black New Yorker who was denied housing because the owner believed that “all Black men are criminals”. The Commission encourages people to report (either anonymously or in person), any form of discrimination that they face, regardless of immigration status. In Tyrone’s case, the Commission fined the owner and mandated that she undergo human right’s training.

⁵⁹ NYC Commission on Human Rights, “While Black in NYC: Protections Against Discrimination for Black New Yorkers” <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/cchr/media/while-black-nyc.page>

⁶⁰ NYC Commission on Human Rights

5.5. City of Baton Rouge “My Brother’s Keeper”



Source: Capital Area United Way
https://cauw.galaxydigital.com/agency/detail/?agency_id=57283

My Brother’s Keeper (MBK) is a public-private partnership which was kick-started by the Obama Administration. President Obama challenged mayors and community leaders to put initiatives in place that would help improve the life outcomes of all children, particularly boys and young men of color (BMOC). The City of Baton Rouge and about 100 other cities and tribal nations have taken up this challenge. The MBK Challenge seeks to

achieve the following:

- Ensure all children enter school cognitively, physically, socially, and emotionally prepared;
- Ensure all children read at grade level by third grade;
- Ensure all young people graduate from high school;
- Ensure all young people complete post-secondary education or training;
- Ensure all youth out of school are employed; and
- Ensure all young people are safe from violent crime.

6. Emergent Themes from Interviews with City Staff and Community Engagement

6.1. Interviews with City Staff

The following themes emerged during discussions with City staff:

1. There is a shortage of Black staff within the City and on City advisory committees. This affects the representation of the Black community in decision making processes.
2. Historically, the City has undertaken community engagement through a transactional approach. This therefore leads to situations where the timeline drives the process of community engagement. However, if the City's goal is to have collaborative community engagement, there is a need to let the process drive the timeline by approaching community engagement as a long-term process.
3. Continuity is a challenge that the City usually faces because staffing of projects is temporary. So, when people move on, they take the institutional knowledge and relationships that have been built with communities with them. At times, people who do not have the skill set or the knowledge to keep those relationships are brought in to fill the gap.
4. The City should adopt a reciprocity approach by compensating people for coming to talk to the City about their communities.
5. Due to the operational structure of the City, there are times the City is silent on issues raised by communities. When this happens, communities feel that the City is ignoring, not listening or taking actions that may not be beneficial to them. The City needs to be conscious of this and take steps to reassure communities where necessary.

6.2. Community Engagement:

The following themes emerged during discussions with Black Vancouverites:

1. The City should be a model of how to address anti-Black racism in the work place. The current situation where victims, rather than perpetrators are required to be accountable is counterproductive to the goal of addressing anti-Black racism. There is a need for the City to establish a protocol that ensures that if a Black person comes to the City for assistance or support on any issue, that they are treated in a direct and clear manner as other people coming to the City for similar services. The protocol should also stipulate actions for non-compliance.

2. The Vancouver Coastal Health is currently resistant to change. There is a need to understand that a broad range of treatment is required for the treatment of a cross-section of people. The City needs to urge VCH to enhance staff diversity and also encourage staff training on anti-Black racism.
3. As part of the reconciliation process with the Black community, the City needs to recognize the historical contributions made by the Black community to the larger Vancouver community. For example, people don't talk about how the Black community came out to support and protect Japanese Canadians during the anti-Asian riots.
4. The City should help ensure that environments are welcoming to everyone and that diversity is represented within the City as this affects the sense of self of Black and Indigenous persons.
5. There is a need to go beyond visual activities aimed at placating people. The City should make substantive changes that will show that Black and Indigenous persons have the right to be treated the same way as everyone.
6. There is a lot of racial discrimination in accessing housing in Vancouver. However, because the City is not capturing the data, the picture is not clear. A public survey will reveal the challenges faced by Black people in accessing housing. Also, public service campaigns reminding landlords that discrimination is illegal and setting out fines for discriminatory actions will go a long way to curb racial discrimination in accessing housing.
7. There's a need to have regular anti-Black racism trainings in the work place and to also review hiring practices. Most people either consciously or unconsciously generally avoid relating with Black people in the work place because they believe that they should not be seen networking with Black people as it may make other people feel uncomfortable.
8. The employment equity program has not been effective. The City and other employers need to be intentional about recruiting Black people and not see it as a form of reverse discrimination. The narrative around reverse discrimination suggests that Black people are not qualified but whites are, and this should change. Recruiting and retaining Black staff however goes beyond hiring Black people, to also ensuring that they have a fair chance of promotion just as any other person and that they are provided a healthy working environment.
9. The VPD has adopted a defensive approach to questions raised concerning racial profiling of Indigenous and Black persons. This approach tends to question the lived experiences of people who have been racially profiled. There is a need for the VPD to be proactive about addressing anti-Black racism rather than treating peoples' concerns as made-up stories or lies.
10. In the City and many organizations, the few Black staff employed often have two jobs - their main job on one hand and on the other hand, helping their organization provide

support to Black clients. This leads to situations where Black staff are overworked and underpaid which takes a toll on them.

11. People tend to assume that Black people in Vancouver are non-existent, that there is no history or occurrence of anti-Black racism because the Black population is small.
12. The City should help provide employers with the necessary resources to address anti-Black racism in the work place. This is because in most cases, employers do not know how to address anti-Black racism in the workplace. What often happens is that employers do nothing so as to avoid stepping on people's toes. Providing funding for anti-Black racism trainings is also key in driving this change.
13. There's a need to provide better access to mental health support for Black Vancouverites. As it is, there are only a handful of Black therapists in Vancouver and they are often overbooked. Black people find it difficult to talk to therapists who do not appreciate the challenges and micro-aggressions faced daily as a result of racial discrimination.
14. The City should work with the VSB to recruit more diverse counsellors in schools. Most school counsellors are white, and students find it difficult talking to them about anti-Black racism. More diversity within the school system would help ensure that students can access mental health support.
15. The City should celebrate African Canadians not just during Black history month, but every day. Given that we are within the Decade of People of African Descent, there should be more visual celebration of Black people within the Vancouver community. One of the ways this can be achieved is by providing funding or setting up initiatives to celebrate Black artists.
16. Grant application processes are difficult. The process is western, colonial and it takes a long time to get the grant. It would be beneficial if the City streamlined the grant application process and made it less cumbersome. The City could also have information sessions that support people and show them how to apply for grants as opposed to leaving people to find information about how to apply online.
17. Racial profiling by the police is the worst form of anti-Black racism in Vancouver. Black people are often treated in a degrading manner (handcuffed, held to the ground), when stopped for street checks. This has led to a situation where the average Black person does not trust the police. So, even in situations where Black people need help, they are afraid to approach the police for help or support.
18. The VSB often hires consultants to look into anti-Black racism incidences that occur in schools. The effect of this is that the VSB is unable to track the rate at which these incidences occur. Setting up a procedure within schools to handle anti-Black racism incidences will help the VSB see the bigger picture and schools will be better equipped to deal with, and curtail future incidents.

19. There are no educational resources that assist teachers in teaching students about anti-Black racism and its effects. Teachers have indicated that SOG 123 has been a beneficial resource in teaching students about LGBTQ+ identities, transphobia, and homophobia. Establishing a similar curriculum for anti-Black racism will be highly beneficial as it will provide teachers with concrete resources on what and how to teach their students.
20. There are no educational tools which teachers can use to teach their students about African Canadian history during Black history month and at other times. Most teachers only teach students about Martin Luther King, and at times during Black history month, teachers feel that they have to choose between teachings on Black history or SOGI.
21. There are little or no spaces for Queer people of colour in Vancouver although this is gradually changing.
22. City advisory committees are not diverse. For example, Women's committee and the LGBTQ committee predominantly consist of white persons. So, persons with different identity intersectionality are not represented on the committee.
23. Statistics show that the population of Black people in Canada and in Vancouver is growing. The fact that the Black population in Vancouver is smaller than elsewhere is the key reason why the City should take steps to specifically address anti-Black racism. The relatively small population size of Black Vancouverites suggests that they are more likely to be taken advantage of because their collective voice will not be as forceful as those of Black people in cities like Toronto.

7. Gap Analysis and Conclusion

From the preceding review of the City’s policies as well as those of other City organizations, it appears that more could be done to address anti-Black racism in Vancouver. From a country-wide perspective, Canada has put in place a range of measures to promote diversity and inclusion at the federal, provincial and territorial levels. Special measures geared at advancing the substantive equality of Indigenous peoples have also been established. However, despite the systemic anti-Black racism and discrimination faced by Black people on a daily basis, special measures that address the challenges faced by people of African descent have not been established.

It is however important to recognize that following the UN Working Group report, positive steps have and are being taken at the federal level. In 2018 and 2019, funding was allocated to Black communities to support Black youth, carry out research on the mental health of Black communities and to support the gathering of statistical data on Black communities in Canada.⁶¹ Also, in recognition of the UN International Decade for People of African Descent, the sum of \$25 million was set aside for the Black community in the 2019 federal budget.⁶² Given these laudable steps taken by the federal government, it is important that the effects trickle down to the grassroots and that municipal governments support the federal and provincial governments in providing better outcomes for people of African descent.

In a Vancouver context, continuous neglect of this issue will militate against the effectiveness of the Healthy City Strategy goal which seeks to ensure that all Vancouverites feel safe and included. For one, although the City has indicated that it will take steps to reconcile with other communities, active steps are yet to be taken in this regard. Given the history of racism, discrimination, and segregation suffered by Black Vancouverites over the years, reconciliation with the Black community should therefore be among next steps in the City’s reconciliation movement. Reconciliation must go beyond the acknowledgement of history (space and place - in terms of the Hogan’s Alley Block), but

“Even on the left, the particularities of anti-Black racism are often also hidden by social justice frameworks that lump the experiences of Black people into the broader group of “racialized people”, “racialized women”, or “people of colour”, in a way that downplays the specific experiences of Black people. These experiences are not necessarily shared by all racialized people of all backgrounds.”

- Robyn Maynard

(Source: Canadian Women’s Foundation)

⁶¹ Pierre Myrlande, “Eradicating Structural Racism for Black Canadians,” Policy Options, April 9, 2019, <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/march-2019/eradicating-structural-racism-for-black-canadians/>.

⁶² Myrlande.

should involve an inclusive and participatory process to guide how the Black community can be made to feel safe and included in the Vancouver community. There is particularly a need for the City to first acknowledge the existence of anti-Black racism and subsequently take steps to establish a specific anti-Black racism strategy or action plan. This was also the recommendation of the UN Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent and the working group report was one of the reports that inspired the development of the Toronto Anti-Black Racism Action Plan.

Although measures put in place by other municipalities in North America were discussed in this report, most of such measures are temporary initiatives that do not holistically address anti-Black racism. On the other hand, Toronto's Action Plan is comprehensive as it addresses the diverse needs of the Black community in areas ranging from youth development to and arts and culture. The Action Plan can therefore serve as a best practice policy which the City could consider in developing a specific anti-Black racism action plan for Vancouver. A specific anti-Black racism action plan is needed because as the UN Working group points out, "there is a need to formally acknowledge that people of African descent represent a distinct group whose rights must be promoted and protected". This is especially so considering the history of slavery, discrimination and segregation which Africans have faced over the course of history and which still continues in subtle (and sometimes overt) forms today. Arguments have been put forward that an action plan is not required on the ground that an action plan is more suitable in Toronto than in Vancouver because the Black population in Toronto is higher than that of Vancouver. Whilst it is true that the number of Black people in Toronto outnumber those in Vancouver, it is important to bear in mind that Black people living in various provinces and cities across Canada face the same level of discrimination and should therefore be given the same level of attention irrespective of where they reside. To do otherwise may suggest that the City's preference would be for Black people to live in cities like Toronto where their peculiar needs and challenges are addressed than in Vancouver.

In all, the federal government's decision to officially recognize the International Decade for People of African Descent and to allocate funding to support the Black community, is a step in the right direction. However, much more work needs to be done to enhance the life experience of the average Black person living in Canada. To contribute to the attainment of this goal, the City should establish concrete plans or policies targeted at eliminating anti-Black racism in Vancouver.

8. Long-Term Recommendations

8.1. Recommendations from the Report of the UN Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent and Other Literature

The following recommendations are made pursuant to the literature reviewed in the course of conducting this research. It is recommended that the City of Vancouver:

Formal Apology and Reconciliation

- 1) In line with the UN Working Group Report, recognize the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024) and formally acknowledge that people of African descent represent a distinct group whose rights must be promoted and protected.
- 2) Recognize that tackling anti-Black racism goes beyond diversity and inclusion policies, and acknowledge that equity and diversity principles targeted at protecting visible minorities are grossly insufficient to effectively erase the years of discrimination and racism faced by Black people in Vancouver.
- 3) As part of the reconciliatory process, issue a formal public apology to the Black Community for the historical discrimination, slavery and injustices meted out to them over the course of history and also for the urban renewal drive which led to the displacement of Black people, communities and businesses;
- 4) Similar to the official apology issued to the Chinese Community, ensure that the apology referred to in (3) above, is not confined to simply being words on paper but take specific actions that will give life and sustenance to this apology, not simply to repair past wrongs, but to prevent injustice from ever occurring again;
- 5) Legally recognize the contributions made by African Canadians to the country's growth and development;
- 6) Take steps to strengthen the City's relationship with the Black community through legacy actions including initiating and sustaining a legacy working group to oversee the implementation of the City's reconciliation action plan. The working group should also commemorate the cultural significance of the cultural and living heritage of the Black community by pursuing a UNESCO designation of world heritage site.

Income and Employment

- 7) Specifically take Blacks into consideration when designing anti-poverty strategies;

- 8) In line with the UN Working Group Report, establish targeted hiring policies for people of African descent;
- 9) Create incentive programmes like tax breaks for employers who hire persons of African Descent. Also particularly include Black people in existing practices such as the Community Benefit Agreement (CBA) and the Social Procurement Framework.

Street Checks and the Criminal Justice System

- 10) In line with the UN Working Group Report, work with the VPD to ensure that all forms of racial profiling are discontinued, and ensure that there is a cultural change in law enforcement to one that accords respect to people of African descent.
- 11) In line with the UN Working Group Report, liaise with the VPD to increase the representation of people of African descent in law enforcement and correctional services;
- 12) In line with the UN Working Group Report, liaise with the VPD to monitor the practices of police services through periodic external, independent audits;
- 13) Communicate the need for the VPD to specifically address anti-Black racism in its Strategic plan and take active steps towards addressing same.

Education

- 14) Liaise with the Vancouver Public Library (VPL) to create a section for books that talk about African Canadian and Black history and also encourage the VPL to create an avenue for discussions on Black history during Black History Month and at other times of the year.
- 15) In line with the UN Working Group Report, work with the VSB to ensure that textbooks and other educational materials accurately reflect historical facts as they relate to past tragedies and atrocities, in particular enslavement, to avoid negative stereotypes of people of African descent.
- 16) Liaise with the VSB to incorporate training on anti-Black racism in schools' curriculum, pedagogy and assessments;
- 17) Liaise with the VSB to increase representation of Black people in the school administration system - as teachers, admins, etc.
- 18) Work with the VSB to conduct surveys to get a sense of the sense of belonging felt by Black children enrolled in Vancouver schools and the particular issues they face from an intersectional perspective.

- 19) work with the VSB to recruit more diverse counsellors in schools. Most school counsellors are white, and students find it difficult talking to them about incidences of anti-Black racism that they face in school. More diversity within the school system would help ensure that students can access mental health support.

Grants

- 20) In line with the UN Working Group Report, liaise with the Park Board to provide funding and other resources for African Canadian community-based projects;
- 21) Liaise with the Park Board to provide grants and funding needed to actualize trainings, workshops on anti-Black racism as well as promotion of Black arts and culture in Vancouver;
- 22) Provide adequate avenues for members of the Black community to celebrate Black History Month and other cultural events;
- 23) Work with the Park Board to ensure that grant application requirements should not be difficult to meet;

Health

- 24) Utilize the existing Memorandum of Understanding between the City and VCH as a tool to bring about better health outcomes for people of African Descent.
- 25) Work with the VCH to collect race-based data on how racial/ethnic inequalities perpetuate health inequities;
- 26) Work with the VCH to ensure that strategies put in place include actions targeted at improving the health outcomes and health inequities of both Indigenous Persons and Black people.
- 27) Work with the VCH to organize dialogue sessions with members of the Black community to better understand the challenges and faced and design an action plan to address same.

Housing & Community Land Trust on the Hogan's Alley Block

- 28) Collect race-based data on the accessibility of Vancouver's housing market in order to clearly identify how racial discrimination plays out in accessing housing.
- 29) Grant a community land trust of Hogan's Alley Block to the Hogan's Alley Society

Policies

- 30) In line with the UN Working Group Report, create a department of African affairs at the City to represent the interest of African Vancouverites in the municipal Government;
- 31) In line with the UN Working Group Report, adopt an intersectional framework to analyse and address the multiple forms of discrimination on the basis of race and other grounds that people of African descent face;
- 32) Involve members of the community in anti-Black racism workshops: schools, private employers, as well as City staff;
- 33) Take steps to ensure that the Black community is well-represented within the City's departments and committees and that issues regarding safety are adequately addressed.

8.2. Community-based Recommendations

This section contains recommendations derived from discussions with members of the Black community in Vancouver. They recommend that the City should:

- 1) be a model for how we approach anti-Black racism. The City needs to show that it has a culture of including Black people and not just during Black History Month.
- 2) be deliberate in recruiting more Black staff and providing a conducive environment for them.
- 3) make environments welcoming for people of African descent. This can be achieved by establishing a protocol that ensures that Black people who come to the City are treated in a direct, clear and equal way similar to other people seeking similar services. The protocol should also address how non-compliance will be addressed.
- 4) communicate with VCH, the need for a broader range of treatment and the need to understand that treatment that is required for a broad cross-section of people.
- 5) communicate to VCH the need for diversity in their staffing and the need for training on anti-Black racism.
- 6) recognize the historical contributions made by the Black community. For example, people don't talk about how the Black community supported and protected Japanese Canadians during the anti-Asian riots.
- 7) acknowledge that Black people have lived in Vancouver for a long time and that the City should therefore reflect the diversity of Black and Indigenous persons.

- 8) carry out surveys to generate data concerning racial discrimination in accessing housing and in securing employment. Without this data, it will be difficult to clearly appreciate the challenge at hand.
- 9) review the effectiveness of the current employment equity program. There is a need to be deliberate about this rather than having a passive attitude to work place harassment as a result of anti-Black racism.
- 10) be open to hearing about the challenges being faced by Black Vancouverites and not treat their lived experiences as though they are lies or simply made up.
- 11) focus specifically on addressing anti-Black racism as opposed to solely addressing racism in general.
- 12) provide employers with the necessary resources to address anti-Black racism in the workplace. This is because in most cases, employers do not know how to address incidences of anti-Black racism that occur in the workplace. What often happens is that employers do nothing so as to avoid stepping on people's toes. Providing funding for anti-Black racism trainings is also key in driving this change.
- 13) celebrate African Canadians not just during Black history month, but every day. Given that we are within the Decade of People of African Descent, there should be more visual celebration of Black people within the Vancouver community. One of the ways this can be achieved is by providing funding or setting up initiatives to celebrate Black artists.
- 14) work the VPD to carry out more de-escalation and unconscious bias trainings for the police.
- 15) work with the VSB to set up a procedure for addressing anti-Black racism in schools as opposed to hiring consultants to look into incidences that occur. By setting up a procedure, the VSB will be able to better track the rate at which these incidences occur and be better equipped to deal with and curtail future incidents.
- 16) work with the VSB to set up a similar resource as SOG 123 to teach students about anti-Black racism and its impacts. Teachers have indicated that SOG 123 has been a useful resource in teaching students about LGBTQ+ identities, transphobia, homophobia and establishing something similar for anti-Black racism will be highly beneficial as it will provide teachers with concrete resources on what and how to teach their students.
- 17) work with the VSB to develop African Canadian educational tools and resources that teachers can use to teach their students about Black history during Black history month and at other times.

- 18) enhance the diversity of its advisory committees. For example, Women’s committee and the LGBTQ committee are mainly white, so, persons with different identity intersectionality are not represented on the committee.
- 19) take action regarding the Hogan’s Alley Society request for a land trust.

8.3. Actions from Other Jurisdictions

- 1) Acknowledge that the fight against anti-Black racism begins with and within the City.
- 2) City leadership to meet with Black City staff to identify systematic barriers within City Hall.
- 3) Have conversations with the Black community in Vancouver with a view to finding out what actions will make the greatest difference in their lives.
- 4) Review existing research and reports that address anti-Black racism.
- 5) Establish a team that will be responsible for working with the Black community to develop and implement an action plan specifically targeted at tackling anti-Black racism in Vancouver.
- 6) Create a specific action plan targeted at addressing anti-Black racism in Vancouver (an action plan mirroring the Toronto Action Plan drawn up by the City in collaboration with the Vancouver Black Community will be a good starting point). The action plan could cover the following key areas:
 - a. Better protection and support for Black children and youth;
 - b. establish initiatives that meet the specific needs and aspirations of Black queer and trans youths;
 - c. improve the quality and availability of City programmed community health services for Black Vancouverites;
 - d. Increase employment and training opportunities for Black Vancouverites at the City of Vancouver;
 - e. Support Black-owned businesses to better compete and thrive in Vancouver;
 - f. Implement measures to stop racial profiling and over-policing of Black Vancouverites;

- g. Build a more transparent, accountable and effective police oversight system to better serve Black Vancouverites and to strengthen community trust in police;
 - h. Invest in Black arts and culture
- 7) Create an action plan to confront anti-Black racism and include funding for same in the budget. It is proposed that the City set aside the sum of \$532,000 towards developing and implementing the action plan.
 - 8) Issue public campaign ads that remind Black Vancouverites of their right to freedom from discrimination and encourage victims to seek redress. The ads should also remind employer, business owners and landlords to abide by this law and inform them of sanctions that may be meted out for non-compliance.
 - 9) Issue a public apology for the demolition of Hogan's Alley and the displacement of Black families, communities and businesses.

8.4. Principles for Ongoing Practice and Engagement

- 1) Acknowledge that anti-Black racism is an ongoing challenge in Vancouver that should be addressed and recognize that people of African descent represent a distinct group whose rights must be promoted and protected.
- 2) Actively listen to issues raised by the Black community and create safe spaces for discussions on race and racism.
- 3) Recognize that tackling anti-Black racism goes beyond diversity and inclusion policies, and acknowledge that equity and diversity principles targeted at protecting visible minorities are insufficient to effectively erase the years of discrimination and racism faced by Black people in Vancouver.
- 4) Having recognized the above, actively engage with Black City staff, liaise with Black community organizations and the wider Black community to design a policy or framework that would specifically address anti-Black racism.
- 5) Recognize the need to provide adequate funding for Black community projects that promote Black arts and culture and other initiatives that address anti-Black racism.

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- 11) Vancouver School Board Strategic Business Plan 2021
- 12) Vancouver Coastal Health Service Plan 2019/19-2020/21
- 13) Vancouver Park Board Strategic Framework 2012
- 14) City of Toronto Action Plan to Combat Anti-Black Racism
- 15) City of Baton Rouge "My Brothers' Keeper Initiative"
- 16) City of Memphis "Black Restaurant Week"
- 17) Halifax Regional Municipality's Formal Public Apology for Africville

Appendix:

Summary of City of Toronto Action Plan to Combat Anti-Black Racism

The Action Plan proposes the following actions:

Children & Youth Development:

Increase access to high-quality programs for Black children and youth

- ✓ Develop and implement training on effective programming for Black children and youth, using an Anti-Black Racism Analysis
- ✓ Increase supply and variety of culturally appropriate before- and after-school programs with clear learning objectives, including STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) programs
- ✓ Increase hiring of Black Torontonians and partnerships with diverse Black communities to ensure that children and youth programs reflect the diversity of the communities they serve
- ✓ Develop and implement intergenerational and cultural connections through Black mentorship initiatives

Meet the specific needs and aspirations of Black queer and trans youth

- ✓ Consult on and invest in meeting the specific needs and aspirations of Black queer and trans youth
- ✓ Expand resources for Black queer and trans services providers
- ✓ Work with parents of African descent, service providers and youth to create culturally relevant education and support services for parents of Black queer and trans children and youth

Advocate for better protection and support for Black children and youth

- ✓ Communicate to the Province and the school boards the need for education improvements that support safe and effective learning for students of African descent
- ✓ Collaborate with Provincial and Federal institutions to ensure Black newcomer children reuniting with their parents/caregivers are enrolled in schools and supported.

Health and Community Services

Improve the quality and effectiveness of health and community services for Black Torontonians

- ✓ Increase stable funding to Black community organizations providing essential services to better meet the needs and aspirations of Black Torontonians
- ✓ Replicate and expand effective models of Black-led health and community services to under-served neighbourhoods and populations of Black Torontonians

Strengthen the accountability of health and community services for Black Torontonians

- ✓ Outreach, recruit and hire from diverse Black communities to increase number and retention of health, social and community workers of African descent
- ✓ Develop and implement an outreach initiative to recruit and train diverse Black Torontonians for leadership and governance roles in health and community organizations
- ✓ Advocate and coordinate with funders to require the collection and public reporting of health and community service data disaggregated by race and other characteristics
- ✓ Advocate and coordinate with funders to invest in community capacity to comply with the collection of data disaggregated by race

Improve support models to better address the specific needs of Black seniors, newcomers, people living with HIV/AIDs, people with disabilities, and Francophone women

- ✓ Ensure seniors of African descent are represented in the Version 2.0 of the Toronto Seniors Strategy
- ✓ Increase settlement sector knowledge of programs and services for Black newcomers
- ✓ Ensure Black newcomers are represented in the Toronto Newcomer Strategy and the Integrating Cities Charter
- ✓ Communicate with the Province the need for greater funding support for Black organizations that provide services for people of African descent living with HIV/AIDs
- ✓ Provide culturally appropriate supports to address violence against women of African descent in Francophone communities

Improve shelter and housing conditions to better support Black Torontonians

- ✓ Apply an anti-Black racism analysis to shelter standards and procedures
- ✓ Ensure shelter staff are trained on anti-Black racism as a trigger to mental illness
- ✓ Create safe spaces within new LGBTQ2S shelters for Black queer and trans youth
- ✓ Collect race-based data on homelessness, particularly on the needs of Black queer and trans youth for shelters support services planning

- ✓ Create safe spaces within women's and family shelters for women of African descent

Job Opportunities and Income Support

Increase employment and training opportunities for Black Torontonians at the City of Toronto

- ✓ Outreach to, recruit and hire diverse Black people to increase the number and retention of employees of African descent at the City of Toronto
- ✓ Engage diverse Black experts and community members to develop Anti-Black Racism training for all City staff and leaders with a focus in the areas of Human Resources practices, including recruitment, hiring, and retention
- ✓ Include socio-demographics, including race and gender identity, as part of the City's Count Yourself In employee survey
- ✓ Enhance current City internship programs to include youth of African descent, including Black queer and trans youth
- ✓ Engage Black City staff to create a Black Staff Network to support professional development and engagement

Provide mentorship programs as a pathway to employment and promotion for Black Torontonians

- ✓ Improve access to high-quality training and employment programs for Black youth
- ✓ Work with public and private sectors to create effective career pathways for Black youth by leveraging federal and provincial youth employment funding and addressing the specific needs of young women, young Francophones, youth who have been incarcerated, and queer and trans youth from Toronto's communities of African descent
- ✓ Host employment fairs and skills development programs in community hubs and Black-focused agencies
- ✓ Provide free police reference checks, training and certifications for Black youth to access volunteering and entry-level jobs
- ✓ Target a City-administered youth employment program, funded by the federal and/or provincial governments, to support Black youth with criminal records and integrate funding for these youth to apply for record suspensions
- ✓ Advocate to the provincial and federal governments to remove barriers to applying for criminal record suspensions

Support Black-owned businesses to better compete and thrive in Toronto

- ✓ Target Black-owned businesses and social enterprises for outreach, training and vendor networking as part of the City of Toronto Social Procurement Program
- ✓ Support the start-up and incubation of Black-owned businesses
- ✓ Target development supports for businesses owned by Black women, Francophones, and people who were formerly incarcerated

Policing and the Criminal Justice System

Implement measures to stop racial profiling and over-policing of Black Torontonians

- ✓ Review communication strategies with communities of African descent about the ongoing elimination of carding as a policing practice
- ✓ Review use of force protocols from an Anti-Black Racism Analysis
- ✓ Review police and community training, including Community Crisis Response Programs, to include use of force issues
- ✓ Improve training to equip Law Enforcement Officers with knowledge and skills to better protect and serve diverse people of African descent

Build a more transparent, accountable and effective police oversight system to better serve Black Torontonians and to strengthen community trust in police

- ✓ Mandate the collection and public reporting of race-based data for greater transparency
- ✓ Strengthen community capacity to report and police capacity to investigate Islamophobic, transphobic and anti-Black hate crimes through a Community Police Hate Crimes Advisory Committee
- ✓ Convene a Community and Police Eliminating Anti-Black Racism Team (CAPE-ABR Team) of community and police leaders as a resource to inform the development and implementation of Actions related to policing and the justice system

Invest in alternative models that create better safety outcomes for Black Torontonians

- ✓ Work with community partners to build a coordinated strategy to advance police accountability and community capacity to respond to policing and the criminal justice system, including translation, expansion, and dissemination of “know your rights” information
- ✓ Use an Anti-Black Racism Analysis to develop and implement alternative models of policing that focus on community engagement
- ✓ Use effective alternative models to incarceration such as the use of restorative justice models developed and implemented with elders in Black communities

Community Engagement and Black Leadership

Increase opportunities for Black Torontonians to participate in City decision making

- ✓ Outreach, recruit and appoint diverse people of African descent to City agencies, boards and commissions
- ✓ Outreach, recruit and appoint diverse people of African descent to program-level advisories in City divisions
- ✓ Engage City staff of African descent to provide guidance and leadership to the full implementation of the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism
- ✓ Review and revise the City's complaint processes to ensure that anti-Black racism is addressed at all phases and is aligned with related City instruments, policies and regulations
- ✓ Advertise the City's complaint processes in communities of African descent

Make City spaces more accessible and welcoming to Black Torontonians

- ✓ Leverage City spaces to create a Black community hub in partnership with Black service providers
- ✓ Conduct an audit using an Anti-Black Racism Analysis to evaluate City spaces and programs

Invest in Black arts and culture

- ✓ Report the economic impacts from City-funded, major community festivals
- ✓ Actively engage Black advice to review routes, sites and security and increase the sustainability of Black cultural festivals
- ✓ Increase stable funding and supports for Black arts and culture Outreach to diverse people of African descent to share information about City grants processes, applications and deadlines

Provide public education on issues of anti-Black racism in Toronto

- ✓ Repeat and expand the public education campaign on Anti-Black Racism
- ✓ Provide public education on how anti-Black racism negatively impacts the health of people of African descent including being a trigger for mental illness