ENGAGED INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES – SUMMARY REPORT

JUNE 2021
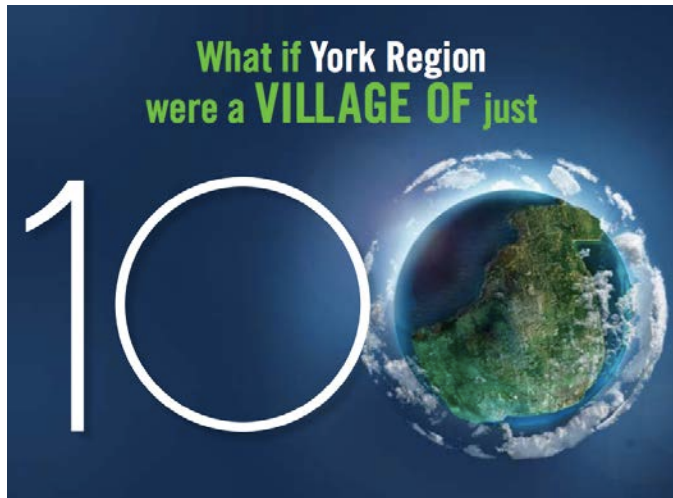
"IF YOU DON'T EAT HAMBURGERS, YOU WILL BE AN AUDIENCE NOT A PARTICIPANT." – LOCAL COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION LEADER

WHY?

YORK REGION

OUR COMMUNITIES

- Lack of specific data
- Our communities are changing
- We want to engage meaningfully with our communities
- Gain better understanding of our communities
- Growth and opportunity

WHY?

- Engage more effectively

- Inform program and policy development

- Ensure reflective and inclusive communications and engagement

- Provide deeper connection and engagement

- Encourage growth, economic opportunity and sense of community belonging

WHAT ARE WE LOOKING AT?

Project focus

Inclusive Engagement – what do we mean?

"Inclusive public engagement is not only the right thing to do, it's what builds strong, sustainable relationships and helps capture a complete range of values and perspectives. Getting diversified public feedback ultimately leads to better decision making and policy discussions. Gaining a full range of perspectives also increases the likelihood of successful implementation of public programming because the entire community takes ownership."

https://www.bangthetable.com/blog/inclusive-engagement/

PROJECT OVERVIEW

PHASE 1 – WHERE WE ARE

REVIEW/REPORT

- This initial phase focused on connecting and gathering information to gain understanding
  - This work entailed two pieces:
    - A collection of conversations with municipal departments and local community organizational leaders
    - The development of a high level demographic snapshot of our communities.

PHASE 2 – WHAT IS NEXT

ENGAGE/LEARN

- This phase will focus on learning and engaging around the key themes and opportunities. Such as:
  - Municipal staff workshops
  - Institutional partner engagement/presentation
  - Engaging on themes through Neighbourhood Network partners and communities
  - Process development for organization listing

PHASE 1 ELEMENTS

Demographic Snapshot

- Based on 2016 Census Data and York Region demographic reports

Municipal & Community Conversations

- 20 conversations across all three municipalities
  - Planning, communications, recreation, economic development, library, HR, culture
- Council engagement sessions (March/April)
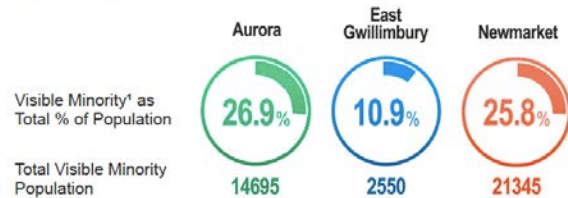- 14 Community organization conversations

Municipal Committee engagement

- Aurora – to come Accessibility and ABR/AR taskforce, Aurora Collaborative Arts Committee
- Newmarket Anti-Black Racism Task Force and Internal D&I
- EG – D&I Committee

DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT

VISIBLE MINORITY - OVERALL

Visible Minority

	Aurora	East Gwillimbury	Newmarket
Visible Minority[1] as Total % of Population	26.9%	10.9%	25.8%
Total Visible Minority Population	14695	2550	21345

[1]From Census - Visible minority refers to whether a person belongs to a visible minority group as defined by the Employment Equity Act and if so, the visible minority group to which the person belongs. The Employment Equity Act defines visible minorities as "persons other than Aboriginal peoples who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour." The visible minority population consists mainly of the following groups: South Asian, Chinese, Black, Filipino, Latin American, Arab, Southeast Asian, West Asian, Korean, and Japanese.

VISIBLE MINORITY – TOP 5

Aurora	East Gwillimbury	Newmarket
Chinese	Chinese	Chinese
West Asian	South Asian	South Asian
South Asian[3]	Black	Black
Black	West Asian[4]	South East Asian[5]
Filipino	Filipino	West Asian

[1]From Census - Visible minority refers to whether a person belongs to a visible minority group as defined by the Employment Equity Act and if so, the visible minority group to which the person belongs. The Employment Equity Act defines visible minorities as "persons other than Aboriginal peoples who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour." The visible minority population consists mainly of the following groups: South Asian, Chinese, Black, Filipino, Latin American, Arab, Southeast Asian, West Asian, Korean, and Japanese.

DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOTS
Households

Households[11]

	Aurora	East Gwillimbury	Newmarket
Proportion of children (under 14) living with one parent	13.9%	10.7%	16.8%

[11] Taken from York Region Census Release Report – Population, Families, Households and Marital Status

THEMES

Theme 1:

Meet people where they are

- Go beyond traditional communications tactics
- Shift from expecting people to come to "us" to meeting people where they already are both physically and online

Theme 2:

Engage with intention

Whether in general engagement or purposeful for a program, policy or strategy engage with an intentional inclusive lens - reach out specifically to underrepresented groups

- Leverage community partners to share and engage

- Develop relationships with community for relationship and trust purpose - shift from transactional focus

THEMES

Theme 3:

Communicate the commitment

- Ensure commitment to DEI and inclusive engagement is clearly articulated and understood internally as a priority
- Wherever communicating with community reinforce commitment both in message and also approach to engagement and communications
- Give clarity across organization and from leadership that working through an inclusive lens is a key priority
- Make it clear and measured expectation

Theme 4:

Make the informal, formal

- Embed this within all work – not just Inclusion and Diversity focused work (and/or HR)
- Shift inclusive engagement and DEI away from side of desk to ingrained in process and systems
- Articulate expectations of inclusive lens to engagement both internal and to external programming partners

THEMES

THEME 5:

Access

Who is invited? Who feels included? Where are there barriers?

- Accessibility speaks not only to physical access, but also to access of processes, programs, people, and place/space. It also deals with how we engage the communities we serve to make them feel welcome and encouraged to participate.

THEME 6:

Engage meaningfully

At times, the ways in which we communicate and engage can themselves become barriers. There is an opportunity to examine how, when, and why we engage and how we can do it with an intention towards creating meaning, trust, and relationships.

This is broken down in 3 areas:

- The relationships we build
- The words we use
- The ways we engage and expectation mismatch

AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Leadership

Who are our leaders? Who is at the decision-making tables? How do we identify leaders?

Broad Community Leadership Development

Explore the idea of a "Community Leadership Development" program in the 3 municipalities and potentially N6 – focused on developing a pipeline of leaders

Municipalities as a Leader, Champion, and Catalyst for Change

Local municipalities have an opportunity to take an increased leadership role in action and change around inclusive engagement

Partnership

Who do we partner with and why? This speaks to the themes of meeting people where they are and engaging with intention. Whether for broad communications strategies or specific engagement opportunities, creating a partnership strategy through an inclusive lens will help ensure more reflective and inclusive involvement

AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Building capacity for community

Similar to partnerships, for many grass roots organizations and members of marginalized communities there may be a lack of clarity on how to engage with their municipalities, what the opportunities are, and the protocols for engagement.

Stories – Breaking Through with Stories

There are incredible stories of impact and potential in our communities. What role can local municipalities play in amplifying and prioritizing these voices?

Creating Spaces and Opportunities for Conversations

As noted in the themes, it is important to look at how and where we engage as a lever for change.

Measuring Success

Traditional areas of measurement (ex: the total number of event attendees) can be a barrier to creating inclusive programming as our communities change.

Collaborative Opportunities

There are two potential areas and a gap that could be a shared opportunity to explore – translation and community development/building/awareness.

WHERE FROM HERE
A shift to Phase 2 – ENGAGE/LEARN

Development and delivery of Municipal workshops

Institutional partner engagement/presentation

Engaging on themes through NNetwork partners

Process development for organization listing

Diverse and inclusive cities and communities have more social, economic and physical resilience in the face of unforeseen challenges because community members are equipped with the values of equity, diversity and inclusion to adapt to changes and create positive opportunities for community-(re)building.

Building Inclusive Cities Case Study – Cities of Migration