

Newmarket Anti-Black Racism Task Force Interim Report



Prepared by: Newmarket Anti-Black Racism Task Force Members with support from Town Staff

Prepared for: Town of Newmarket Council

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Thank you to the Town of Newmarket for creating space for this project. This work was made possible through a variety of contributions and space would not permit us to list them all.

This afternoon,
Let's be thankful for the generosity of spirit
From each of you,
For continuing to give freely of your talents

To do this important work,
That lifts community,
Unites people
And Opens eyes and space

With heartfelt gratitude,
Know that this work,
Your work, our work will bear many fruits
Creating a shiny path for today
And for generations still to come

So that their feet will tread
Where there are fewer thorns
And sharp stones

That from your amazing efforts
This city, our city will work harder to accommodate,
Include, welcome and celebrate all for who they are,
Always, everywhere and every time.¹

¹ Affirmation by Dr. Opiyo Oloya, Newmarket, April 6, 2021

Preamble

The tragic death of George Floyd has ushered in a new era in the global community as we bear witness to the historical and ongoing trauma of anti-Black racism for many in the United States and right here in Canada. In Ontario, we also experience our own challenges with anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism and violence perpetuated – both in policing and across all institutions and systems in our society. From housing, to employment, to education, both Black and Indigenous communities experience negative outcomes as a result of systemic structural racism. This is also felt in the local community and it is not just a large-city challenge. This is a challenge for all communities to grapple with, including ours here in Newmarket.

The Newmarket Anti-Black Racism Task Force (NABRTF) has been mandated to make recommendations to the Town of Newmarket Council as it relates to issues affecting the Afro-descendant community of Newmarket. This Interim Report is subdivided into two sections as follows:

- Section 1 outlines the tasks completed from the inception of the NABRTF until May 2021;
- Section 2 focuses on the themes that were identified during the NABRTF deliberations as well those which emerged from the community engagement processes to date.

The themes and provisional recommendations will be developed and refined for the Final Report. This Interim Report is a record of the work and methods employed, and allows for a retrospective analysis of successes and limitations.

Section 1

1.0 Inception and subcommittees

The first meeting of the NABRTF was held on November 24, 2020. A Chair and Vice Chair were elected and it was agreed that NABRTF meetings would take place monthly (on the first Tuesday). Subcommittees were formed to tackle specific priority areas as follows:

- Subcommittee 1: Consulting with the community to advise Council on matters involving anti-Black racism and racial equity within the Town of Newmarket; and engaging with local groups, businesses, agencies and institutions within Newmarket to support racial equity.
- Subcommittee 2: Sharing with Council and staff any policies and procedures which will enhance racial equity in the Town of Newmarket; and, promoting understanding and acceptance of the diverse Black community residing in Newmarket by advising Council on issues and concerns raised by residents.
- Subcommittee 3: Cooperating and working in partnership with staff, coordinating with institutions and voluntary organizations to promote mutual trust and respect with Newmarket's diverse Black community; and assisting staff as requested in promoting awareness of equity issues going on at the Town and Region; and carrying out programs and initiatives as directed by Council with specific reference to Black communities.

To facilitate the efficiency of the subcommittees, it was decided that subcommittee meetings would be held directly after the conclusion of each whole meeting (or as needed in the case of extraordinary meetings). Each subcommittee assigned a team lead to chair meetings and provide verbal reports at whole meetings.

1.1 Work Plan

A Work Plan was generated to guide the work of the NABRTF. Workflow was divided into two phases in keeping with the two primary milestones of the NABRTF - namely, the production of the Interim Report and the production of the Final Report².

² see Figure 1

Newmarket Anti-Black Racism Task Force (provisional workflow and milestones)

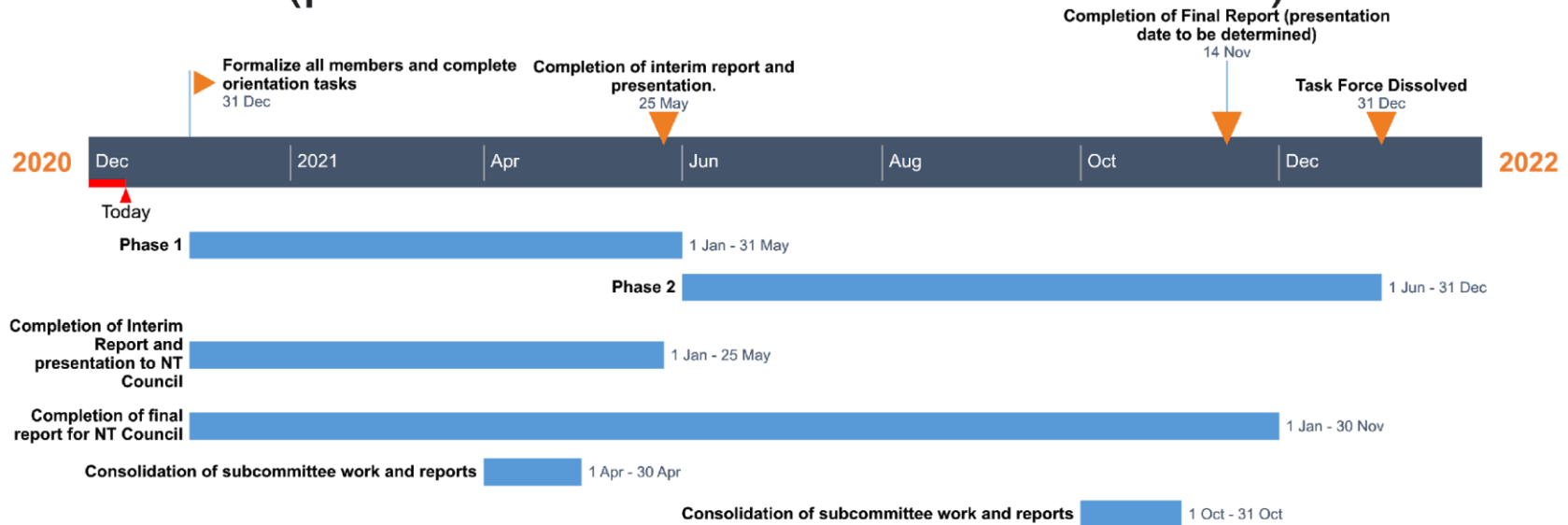


Figure 1 - Gantt chart showing workflow of the NABRTF throughout 2021 subdivided into two phases based on milestones.

Phase 1 - Jan 5, 2021 - May 25 , 2021

Phase 1, which concluded with the submission of this report, encompasses all the preliminary undertakings of the NABRTF and its subcommittees towards the completion of the Interim Report. This includes data gathering and all other activities related to the work of the NABRTF.

Consolidation of Phase 1 work - April & May 2021

It was proposed that April & May would be utilised to consolidate the work of the three subcommittees for production of the Interim Report.

Phase 2 - June 1, 2021 - December 31, 2021

Phase 2 of the Work Plan would follow a similar pattern to Phase 1 with the expectation that feedback from the Town of Newmarket Council and an interim reassessment of the workflow will be completed at the onset of Phase 2.

Consolidation of Phase 2 work - October 2021

It was proposed that October be set aside for integrating the work of both phases of the Work Plan. We anticipate that considerably more effort will need to be allocated to develop and refine the details within the various topic areas from a larger pool of data for assessment, distillation of final recommendations and presentation.

1.2 Limiting factors

The work of the NABRTF has been impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Adaptation to the constantly evolving circumstances was an integral part of the work undertaken which allowed both NABRTF members and the Town of Newmarket staff to manifest their resourcefulness. Impacts included the following:

- Municipal offices and other town facilities remained closed
- Individual face-to-face interactions were limited
- Institutional and community canvassing engagements were limited
- Regular community activities were disrupted
- Access to community meeting spaces and supporting resources such as the Library was disrupted.

1.3 Document sharing and editing

A Google Drive was created to share and edit documents. This greatly increased the efficiency of the workflow above what would have been possible by utilizing non-cloud sharing methods such as emails. A data bank of information has been created by NABRTF members to share information that they consider resourceful.

1.4 Resource videos

One NABRTF member curated an unlisted YouTube playlist to share audiovisual resources. The playlist has been viewed approximately 75 times and contained 525 videos exploring diverse issues within the African and Afro-descendant experience.

1.5 Presentations to the NABRTF

The following presentations have been made to the NABRTF:

1. Gavin Gunter (NABRTF member) delivered a presentation related to Central York Fire Services and a constructive reimagining of diversity as it relates to afro-descendants. January 5, 2021.
2. Engaged Inclusive Communities project. Presenters - Kim Clark, Gazelle and Company & Erin Cerenzia, Neighbourhood Network, February 2, 2021.
3. Confronting Anti-Black Racism. Presenters - Teshini Harrison and Kemba Byam Akinbo (Toronto's Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit), April 6, 2021.

1.6 Community engagement

A multiple-method approach to community engagement was devised to ensure that as wide a cross section as possible from Newmarket's diverse community would be able to inform the NABRTF in its recommendations. These methods provided different levels of anonymity, and were varied based on the technological proficiency required to ensure engagement. The principal methods that were executed during Phase 1 of the work plan included but were not limited to:

1. Conduct individual interviews (named and anonymous).
2. Conduct an online survey of community individuals.
3. Presenters from Toronto's Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit were invited to share best practices and other resource information.

These strategies are limited in their scope and applications and, in principle, constitute an informal engagement process. The data, however, will be combined with other reports and studies to facilitate a robust and comprehensive final report.

1.6.1 Individual Interviews

Provisions were made to conduct individual interviews either in person or via phone or social media and messaging platforms. Interviews were conducted based on a template of standard questions. In the case of anonymous interviews, a random code was used to distinguish interviews. Named interviews provided the opportunity for more detailed responses to be recorded and the opportunity to ask follow-up questions in order to develop some issues more fully. Details not relevant to the substantive issues were excluded from interview transcripts. The greatest efforts have been made to protect the privacy of the information provided and the anonymity of interviewees in keeping with applicable

procedures. To date, a total of 9 anonymous and 4 named interviews have been conducted.

In keeping with the Work Plan, Phase 2 will be dedicated to the development of issues and themes. Consequently, individual interviews will not be actively solicited during Phase 2. One of the key rationales for conducting individual interviews was to provide an avenue for community members to be heard and thereby inform recommendations to the Town of Newmarket Council. The NABRTF views this as an integral part of the healing process as Newmarket continues to build its way towards a more equitable future. The individual interviews also provided 'control group' data on the information being gathered via the online survey by corroborating reports of anti-Black racism that would have otherwise gone unsubstantiated.

1.6.2 Online Survey

An online survey consisting of 22 questions that took approximately 20 minutes in length to complete was developed using Survey Monkey in order to canvass the opinions of individuals within the broader Newmarket community. The survey was open for all to participate, regardless of racial or ethnic background. However, we limited the scope of persons who were solicited to respond to the survey based on if they had lived, worked, conducted business or visited Newmarket. The survey launched on February 27th and remained live through to March 31, 2021. A total of 367 persons responded and these responses have been analyzed and thematic issues identified (see Section 2).

The contribution of the Town of Newmarket staff was significant towards the finalization and promotion of the online survey campaign. The NABRTF also received support from organisations and institutions which chose to partner with the work by assisting in the promotion of the survey. Promotional strategies for the campaign were mainly directed through social media platforms but also included circulation via email lists of partnering organisations, word of mouth, and the circulation of posters and flyer strips in the downtown core of Newmarket. Hard copies of the survey were also made available which could be dropped off by individuals at the Municipal Offices' dropbox.

1.7 Policy and literature analysis

To meet its mandate to review and assess Town policies and procedures, the NABRTF undertook several steps to determine the best way forward. These steps include:

1. Undertake Literature Review
2. Engage in an Environmental Scan
 - a) Review of Towns Demographic Information
 - b) Review of Town of Newmarket Policies
3. Identification of Best Practices

- a) Community Consultations³
- b) Implementation of a Race Equity Impact Assessment Tool

1.7.1 Literature Review

This process commenced with a literature review exercise, to determine what policies and supporting documentation was already in existence and what gaps existed and should be addressed. The literature review included aspects from the Town's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan, Town policies as well as other existing documentation on the subject. The NABRTF also looked at a race equity assessment tool in housing, programs and human resource hiring practices and policies.⁴

1.7.2 Engage in an Environmental Scan

a) Environmental Scan - Review of Demographic Information

The NABRTF also undertook a review of several York Region reports which outlined demographic information about the region's population in an attempt to get a full picture of Newmarket's Black population.

- According to the 2006 census, approximately 6 percent of York Region's population self-identified as Black. Upon inquiry, we found that the Town does not collect demographic information related to race. However, in the most recent employee engagement survey, the Town began collecting optional demographic data.⁵
- Several demographic reports that were created by York Region were reviewed and found to be severely limited with respect to racial categorization. Most reports focused on ethnicity rather than race.
- Other reports for the Region were focused on the top 5 "visible minority groups" in the Region, which does not include the Black community. Other "visible minorities" were grouped together.

The available Statistics Canada data for Newmarket was reviewed.

- The Town of Newmarket does not collect race-based data.
- According to the 2016 census, approximately 2.7 % of Newmarket's population is Black, the breakdown between male and female is roughly 50-50

³ see also subsection 1.6 community engagement and subsection 2.3

⁴ Julie Nelson and Lisa Brooks, "Racial Equity Toolkit: An Opportunity to Operationalize Equity," 2016. Toolkit. https://www.racialequityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/GARE-Racial_Equity_Toolkit.pdf

⁵ Consulted with the Town of Newmarket Healthy Workplace Program Specialist, Human Resources Department

- The Statistics Canada report does not provide additional information about the Town's Black population. As a result, at the time this report was written, there was limited information about the community's ethnic breakdown, income levels, representation among low-income population, education level, languages, and home ownership etc.⁶

The review identified that there was a need for the Town to request a customized demographic report from Statistics Canada, and the data was recently provided by Town Staff. The NABRTF will need time to review and analyze the data from the customized demographic report. It is anticipated that the requested report will provide the Town with enough information to form a baseline understanding of the Town's Black community.

A review of demographic data, in conjunction with information and feedback gleaned from surveys and community consultation should provide the Town with a better understanding of the Black community, and their experience in Newmarket. Further, it will assist the NABRTF to identify hidden barriers to accessing Town services, programs, and employment.

b) Environmental Scan – Town Policies, Programs and Services

A review of the Town's previous equity initiatives was undertaken to understand the current state. The review was aimed at identifying hidden barriers to accessing Town services, programs, and employment. This would include looking at hidden barriers in eligibility criteria, application process, and service delivery models.

The following items are currently being analyzed:

1. How are programs advertised, and how widely?
2. How does eligibility criteria impact members of the Black community?
3. Do programs consider the needs of the Black community? For example, newcomer programs that are substantially focused on English as a Second Language and language acquisition may not serve the needs of Black newcomers who may come from English speaking countries, or have previously acquired English. A higher

⁶ The "Ontario Black Youth Action Plan: Region of York Profile" was reviewed for selected educational and labour market characteristics of Black youth in York Region. We found disparities in employment, housing and income for Black youth compared with the youth population in Newmarket.

percent of people within the Canadian Black population (28.0%) speak French at home compared to the total population (23.3%).⁷

- A review of the Town's human resources policies as they relate to diversity and inclusion, recruitment, retention, and promotion has been initiated.
- It emerged that many of the department's diversity initiatives did not focus on race. However, this is changing as the Town has begun collecting optional demographic and race based data.
- It was recommended that a fulsome review of the Town's recruitment, retention, and promotion policy should be completed and that the following questions be asked:
 1. How and where does the Town post career opportunities?
 2. Is there active outreach to Black and Indigenous communities?
 3. Do career postings explicitly state that the Town encourages applications from Black and Indigenous applicants?
 4. Do employees have an opportunity to be heard without fear of retaliation?
- The Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit of Toronto was contacted and a meeting between the Training Manager and the Town's Human Resources Department was facilitated.

1.7.3 Identification of Best Practices

Municipal best practices regarding the development and implementation of an Anti-Black Racism Strategy and initiatives were identified.

Toronto's Confronting Anti-Black Racism unit (CABR) was contacted on potential issues for further exploration. Our goal for meeting with the CABR unit was to gain insight on the following for best practice:

- a. Human Resource internal policies - recruitment, retention, and promotion
- b. Discrimination and workplace violence ensuring safety - protection from retaliation
- c. Education and training around anti-Black racism and its forms

Two members from CABR presented at the April NABRTF meeting. Core components of the presentation included:

- The Importance of Community Engagement and Consultation
- The Importance of Race Equity Lens

⁷ Diversity of the Black population in Canada: An overview, release date: February 27, 2019.
<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-657-x/89-657-x2019002-eng.htm>

Section 2

2.0 What is anti-Black racism?

The term anti-Black racism was first used by academic and community activist, Dr. Akua Benjamin, whose seminal work looked at the link between race and discrimination for Black Canadians. Anti-Black racism encompasses a range of policies, practices, beliefs and attitudes that are directed at Canadians of African descent that are discriminatory and anchored in their unique experience of colonialism and enslavement. These multilayered systems of oppression impact the social determinants of health like housing, employment, family, culture and education, and have a long lasting impact on mental health and wellness.

2.1 Additional Information and Next Steps

Recognising that there is no need, or desire, to reinvent the wheel, the NABRTF will continue the research process by delving into the 41 years of study which has been done about anti-Black racism in Ontario. Statistics Canada reports and labour market statistics compiled over the years by the relevant authorities will be reviewed. Next steps will include the further analysis of the survey results to determine the main points and emerging themes.

Other areas that deserve consideration include:

1. **International Decade for the People of African Descent (2015-2024)** - what is the Town doing to honour the Decade?
2. **Anti-Black Racism Campaign**
 - Is there an opportunity for the Town to partner with the York Region District School Board?
 - An education initiative aimed at informing Black parents and families of their rights with regards to school discipline.
3. **Continuous Cycle of Awareness and Education** - to support intercultural understanding and dismantle anti-Black racism
4. **Black History Month** - can the Town make this automatic so that there is not an application every year?

The review and analysis of these and other important topics and issues will result in a thematic approach to the presentation of suggested policy recommendations in the Final Report to Newmarket Council.

2.2 Implementation of a Race Equity Impact Assessment Tool

The collective undertakings of the NABRTF have identified the need to develop a Race Equity Framework⁸. This forms the core framework for the recommendations of the NABRTF. Actively talking about race is needed to encourage a culture shift. The following recommendations are being proposed to facilitate this culture shift:

1. Normalize race equity

Use a racial equity framework

Talk about differences between individual, institutional, and structural racism—as well as implicit and explicit bias.

2. Operate with urgency and accountability

The most effective path to accountability comes by creating clear action plans with built-in institutional accountability mechanisms. Act with urgency.

3. Build capacity

While the leadership of elected and top officials is critical, change takes place on the ground, and it is necessary to build infrastructure that creates racial equity experts and teams throughout local and regional government.

4. Partner with other institutions and communities

This is the only way to achieve meaningful results.

5. Operationalize

Implementing racial equity tools facilitates the integration of racial equity into routine decision-making. By asking simple racial equity tool questions, such as “How does this decision help or hinder racial equity?” or “Who benefits from or is burdened by this decision?” on a routine basis, elected officials have the ability to put theory into action.

6. Be data-driven

If it is measured, it can be managed. Measurement must take place at two levels—first, to measure the success of specific programmatic and policy changes, and second, to develop baselines, set goals, and measure progress towards goals. Use of data in this manner is necessary for accountability.

2.3 Themes emerging from NABRTF community engagement initiatives

Some of the recurrent themes which have been identified to date based on the online survey and individual interviews include, but are not limited to, the following:

⁸ See Julie Nelson and Lisa Brooks, "Racial Equity Toolkit: An Opportunity to Operationalize Equity," 2016. Toolkit. https://www.racialequityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/GARE-Racial_Equity_Toolkit.pdf

1. Black Leadership (Council representation, employment, recruitment, hiring, promotion and retention)
2. Education (campaign, awareness, training)
3. Black youth (mentorship and pathway planning)
4. Community engagement
5. Representation and recognition
6. Culture change
7. Income inequality/disparity
8. Support for Black-owned businesses
9. Town Policies and procedures
10. Cross-municipal and Cross sector work (Town working with York Regional Police, School Boards and other municipalities)
11. Acknowledgement and mechanism for reporting and accountability
12. Periodic Town halls and surveys
13. An internal Town equity, diversity and inclusion committee
14. Policing practices

The subsections below provide a breakdown of some of these thematic issues along with related data / information which have been gleaned from the literature review.

2.4 Breakdown of thematic issues and provisional recommendations

2.4.0 Diversity of the Black population in Canada: An overview⁹

This review was conducted in honour of the International Decade for the People of African Descent and Black History Month. This analysis looks at the Black population in terms of their ethnic and cultural origins, places of birth and languages.

Black Canadian presence dates back to the early 1600s.

The Black population is currently 3.5% of Canada's population and projected to be between 5.0% and 5.6% by 2036. Black Canadians comprise 15.6% of the population defined as a visible minority and about half is or has ever been a landed immigrant or permanent resident.

The Black population in Canada is young. Based on 2016 statistics, children under 15 years old represented 26.6% of the Black population, while they represented 16.9% of the total population.

Prior to 1981, the majority of the Black population came from Jamaica and Haiti. Black newcomers now come from about 125 different countries. The top

⁹ "Diversity of the Black population in Canada: An overview," February 27, 2019. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-657-x/89-657-x2019002-eng.htm>

countries of birth for Black immigrants admitted between 2011 and 2016 were Haiti, Nigeria, Jamaica, Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Black immigrants in Canada represent more than 170 different places of birth and more than 200 ethnic or cultural origins with a long established Black population reporting several ethnic or cultural origins. More than 100 languages were reported as a mother tongue.

The 10 most frequently reported origins among the Black population were Jamaican, African, Haitian, Canadian, English, Somali, Nigerian, French, Ethiopian and Scottish. However, African and Caribbean origins are the most common ethnic origins reported by the first and second Black generations in Canada.

In 2016, 94.3% of Black people lived in Canada's census metropolitan areas, compared with 71.2% of the country's total population. Ontario was home to slightly more than half (52.4%) of the total Black population in Canada. Black people represented 7.5% of Toronto's total population.

2.4.1 Education

“A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots.” - Marcus Garvey

Education is what makes a society functional. It is among the first steps in any process of change. Here, we refer to education of the whole Newmarket society and not only to those who participate in the formal schooling system. The concept encompasses all members of our society from the youngest to the oldest. One is never too old to learn.

A shift in the way we educate our society members on issues related to persons of African descent is needed for both those within and outside the Afro-descendant community. Canada takes pride as a land that embraces multiculturalism. Education serves a central role in promoting intercultural understanding needed to create and maintain harmony.

Such efforts will likely yield a greater sense of pride within the Black community in one's own heritage and cultural background. A shift towards the proper acknowledgement of the contributions of persons of African descent to the fabric of Canadian Society and the world is needed to combat the ignorance that allows anti-Black racism to go unchecked.

A 2020 review of the Peel District School Board found Black students are disproportionately subject to disciplinary measures, with Black students making up only 10.2 percent of the high school population but

representing 22.5 percent of students receiving suspensions.¹⁰ A 2020 Statistics Canada survey showed that, across Canada, 94 percent of Black youth ages 15-25 said they wanted to obtain a bachelor's degree or higher level of education, but only 60 per cent believed that they could.

Black students are four times more likely to be expelled from Toronto high schools than white students.¹¹

Recommendations

There is an enormous deficit in the school curricula and in the type of materials that are promoted as it relates to the Pre-colonial / Pre-Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade history of Africa. African history does not begin with the slave trade or colonization by European nations. While it is beneficial to have an accounting of the atrocities of slavery, this singular focus perpetuates the myth that Africa had no history prior to the arrival of Europeans and does a disservice to wider society.

Educational programs for adults within the Newmarket community should continue to have a prominent role in our anti-Black racism strategy. These can take a variety of forms and should also take place outside of Black History month.

Instances of anti-Black racism within the Newmarket educational system should be documented so that ways can be found to proactively disrupt the systems and beliefs that foster inequalities in the treatment of Black youth.

2.4.2 Policing

Black residents are 20 times more likely than a white resident to be shot dead by police in Toronto.¹²

Charges of disparities in policing practices (between Blacks and their counterparts) have been identified in the community engagement processes. A policy review of community policing standards and whatever sensitivity training is provided to staff should be undertaken by the appropriate designated review

¹⁰ Ena Chadha, Suzanne Herbert, and Shawn Richard, "Review of the Peel District School," 2020. Report <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/new/review-peel-district-school-board-report-en.pdf>

¹¹ Currently, race base data from the York Catholic District School Board does not exist. Disaggregated data from the York Region District School Board's "Every Student Count" survey has not yet been made public but will likely be available for review for the Final Report. Available data, however, shows similar trends across school boards in Canada.

¹² See The Regional Municipality of York Police Services Board, Public Board Meeting, "Eradicating Racism and Strengthening Public Trust and Confidence in Policing," April 14, 2021. Report of the Chief of Police. Attachment A shows a summary response of community stakeholder submissions with specific recommendations to the York Regional Police. These recommendations also respond to the limitations that the Black community in York Region observed in "The Black Experience Project: York Region Report" that was published by the YRP in August 2018.

body. This should be done with the aim of amending these policies or procedures to ensure that all Newmarket residents are treated with equal consideration in the monitoring and enforcing of the law.¹³ Recent developments and initiatives will be reviewed, in keeping with the concerns raised by the Newmarket community, for the Final Report.

2.4.3 Income and Unemployment

“Rebalancing the Opportunity Equation”, a 2019 report on income inequality in the Greater Toronto Area states, “Incomes for racialized groups have not increased in 35 years and the income-gap between racialized and White groups has increased...For every dollar a White person in York earns, a racialized person in York earns 66 cents.” (12)¹⁴

Black youth unemployment in Ontario is around 28% – which is double the national average.

Black university graduates earn only 80% for every dollar earned by white university graduates despite having the same credentials.

Of the 64 applications, the White applicant with no criminal record received 20 callbacks, a callback rate of 31.3%. The White applicant with a criminal record received 12 callbacks, a callback rate of 18.8%. The Black applicant with no criminal record, meanwhile, received seven callbacks, a rate of 10.9%. The Black applicant with a criminal record received just one callback out of 64 applications, a rate of 1.6%.¹⁵

2.4.4 Workplace¹⁶

Black workers are twice as likely as Asian workers and four times as likely as White workers to report experiencing racial discrimination in major decisions at work places in Canada.

A study of over 700 Canadian women and men of colour, looked at Emotional Tax—which is the combination of feeling different from peers at work because of

¹³ The York Regional Police Department’s Anti-Racism Action Plan outlines keys areas of commitment to change such as developing an anti-racism strategy (2020), launch of a multi-year anti-racism training program (September 2020), collection of race based data in employment and service delivery, establishment of a Black Community Consultative Roundtable (February 2021) and launch of an annual anti-racism forum.

¹⁴ Mihaela Dinca-Panaitescu, Laura McDonough and Dylan Simone et al, “Rebalancing the Opportunity Equation,” 2019. Report. https://www.unitedwaygt.org/file/2019_OE_fullreport_FINAL.pdf

¹⁵ The Toronto Star, “Black job seekers have harder time finding retail and service work than their white counterparts, study suggests” December 26, 2017. <https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2017/12/26/black-job-seekers-have-harder-time-finding-retail-and-service-work-than-their-white-counterparts-study-suggests.html>

¹⁶ “Report: Empowering Workplaces Combat Emotional Tax for People of Colour in Canada” Jul 24, 2019. <https://www.catalyst.org/research/emotional-tax-canada/>

gender, race, and/or ethnicity, being on guard to experiences of bias, and the associated effects on health, well-being, and ability to thrive at work. A key part of Emotional Tax is being “on guard”—anticipating and consciously preparing for potential bias or discrimination.

Key Findings

Being “on guard” is a shared experience among people of colour at work

33% to 50% of Black, East Asian, and South Asian professionals report being highly on guard to protect against bias.

Of particular importance, 77% of women and men of colour interviewed share common stories of exclusion and being on guard. In many cases, these stories did not come to light until well into the interview—this shows how critical it is to go beyond the surface to understand the multilayered experiences of people of colour.

Emotional Tax is linked to workplace retention issues as 50% to 69% of Black, East Asian, and South Asian professionals who are highly on guard against bias have a high intent to quit.

Emotional Tax threatens health and well-being as 22% to 42% of Black, East Asian, and South Asian professionals who are highly on guard against bias report high rates of sleep problems.

2.4.5 Homelessness

Review of the 2018 “I Count” York Region Report shows Black or African Canadians make up 13% of the homeless population in York Region even though Black population in York Region is 2.5%.¹⁷

2.4.6 Fire Services

The NARBTF will be refining recommendations aimed at improving the recruitment process, hiring and retention of Afro-descendants within the Fire Services. This is of vital importance as Newmarket becomes increasingly diverse.

2.4.7 Street Naming Policy and Other Recognition Initiatives

It was noted that there are few, if any, street names or other notable markers within Newmarket that memorialize the contributions of Afro-descendants. The Town’s Street Naming Policy was reviewed and recommendations aimed at the need to increase these forms of recognition will be developed. Other initiatives

¹⁷ "I Count I'm not Just a Number: York Region's 2018 Homeless Count," 2018. Report. <https://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/attachments/Working%2Btogether%2Bto%2BPrevent%2BReduce%2Band%2BEnd%2BHomelessness%2Bin%2BYork%2BRegion.pdf>

such as the placement of plaques or other markers within the Town are proposed considerations.

2.4.8 Recreation and Cultural Activities

One of the recurring themes from the community consultation process was the need for cultural and recreational activities that are welcoming to the Afro-descendant community. Such consultation with the community was vital to generating recommendations that are needs-based. Community needs to be at the centre. Questions were formulated within the online survey geared specifically to the assessment of these needs. However, one of the key limitations identified from the survey results was the negative impact on such activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic - in many instances being limited or halted altogether.

Periodic consultations (e.g. town hall meetings, surveys and events) are indispensable to ensuring that services continue to benefit all community stakeholders, particularly youth. The NABRTF regards Newmarket youth as central to building on the efforts for sustainable and lasting changes in beliefs, practices and outcomes. Recreational and cultural activities that promote diversity at their core also serve as a major avenue for promoting cross-cultural understanding thereby advancing harmony within the community.

Focus for Recommendations

- ❖ Programming and recreational activities for children and youth
- ❖ Taking an intersectional approach - advocating for queer Black youth
- ❖ Continue to add quality programs and services for the Black community, that are culturally relevant, accessible and affordable
- ❖ Collaborate with schools in Newmarket to support and ensure Black students are treated fairly and equitably.
- ❖ Accountability in Anti-Black racism strategy
- ❖ Mentorship support for Black youth getting into the workforce
- ❖ Community Engagement Events

Recommendations Thus Far

1. That the Town of Newmarket Anti-Racism Task Force connect with the Impact Youth & Cultural Centre and share their flag here in Newmarket (as was done in Bradford), and that we encourage other municipalities to join us.
2. That the Town of Newmarket facilitate free sports/activity clinics that are open to all ages and skill levels with diverse instructors to foster a safe space for families of various backgrounds¹⁸. Increase volunteer base and diverse coaches.

Conclusion

As the NABRTF presses forward towards the production of the Final Report, we pause to reflect and provide acknowledgement to all those who have gone before us to pave paths of reconciliation, hope and trust. The work to confront, tackle and dismantle anti-Black racism is an ongoing one. This Interim Report, albeit an important milestone, is but a singular step in that journey. To come, are the efforts from all segments of the community as we collectively seek to build a harmonious space where all are welcomed, acknowledged, respected and loved.

¹⁸ All sports/one day, Similar to <https://www.sportaurora.ca/Admin/SideMenu/DispSideMenuContentMain.aspx?menuID=266>