

# HALIFAX

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## Item No. 6

Halifax Regional Council  
December 15, 2020

**TO:** Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

**SUBMITTED BY:**

Original Signed by 

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** November 30, 2020

**SUBJECT:** Anti-Black Racism Action Plan Update – December 2020

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### INFORMATION REPORT

#### ORIGIN

On June 9, 2020 Council passed the following motion:

THAT Budget Committee include the following funding in the recast 2020-21 budget: \$53,500 in programming dollars for the Office of Diversity & Inclusion: \$25,000 for special projects plus \$11,000 to support Business Units to advance Public Safety Strategy actions in the Public Safety Office, and use the remaining funds \$300,000 to support anti-Black racism efforts and initiatives with funding to come from the General Contingency Reserve Q421.

Based on that motion, the CAO directed staff to establish an anti-Black racism project charter with a governance committee to move the work forward.

#### LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

*Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, S.N.S. 2008, c. 38*

s. 2 The purpose of this Act is to

(a) give broad authority to the Council, including broad authority to pass by-laws, and respect its right to govern the Municipality in whatever ways the Council considers appropriate within the jurisdiction given to it;

(b) enhance the ability of the Council to respond to present and future issues in the Municipality; and

(c) recognize that the functions of the Municipality are to

(i) provide good government,

(ii) provide services, facilities and other things that, in the opinion of the Council, are necessary or desirable for all or part of the Municipality, and

(iii) develop and maintain safe and viable communities.

## **BACKGROUND**

Anti-Black racism is an everyday structural discrimination that Black people encounter all over the world. It is, as Benjamin (2003) and Kumsa et al. (2014) describe, “a virulent form of racism that is directed against Black people and their resistance to such oppressions”.<sup>1</sup> Anti-Black racism encompasses perennial prejudice, discriminatory attitudes, negative beliefs, stereotyping and other forms of discrimination, overt or covert, directed at people of African ancestry all around the world. This form of racism is uniquely rooted in the particular history of Black people which is informed by the legacies of enslavement and colonization.

Across institutions, the impact of anti-Black racism manifests is felt in the form of:

- Segregation
- Historic omission
- Lack of recognition
- Systemic expropriation
- Negative portrayal in the media and literature

In Halifax Regional Municipality, the impacts of anti-Black racism have been brought to light in instances of negative interactions with communities of African descent including: the relocation of the community of Africville, a variety of human rights complaints and most recently, the Wortley report on Street Checks. In addition to these instances at a corporate level, anti-Black racism remains an everyday reality, with detrimental effects for individuals of African descent within the organization.

Over the past years, HRM has renewed its commitment to addressing anti-Black racism through various initiatives and renewed efforts to addressing anti-Black racism internally and externally.

## **DISCUSSION**

In October 2019 the Chief Administrative Officer set up a working group to provide recommendations on addressing anti-Black racism in HRM. Upon accepting the recommendations of the working group and following the approval of funds from Regional Council, a project charter was established and approved to move the work forward. A project governance team has been established and is meeting to develop their terms of reference, work plan, staffing needs and budget plan. This team will meet on a regular basis to ensure that the goals of the charter are being reached and moved forward.

As identified in the project charter the following will be part of the Anti-Black Racism Strategy and Action Plan along with other initiatives as identified by governance group:

- Through a special Administrative Order, create an African Nova Scotian Advisory Committee, with membership from across the Black communities, to advise the municipality on the impact of municipal policies, programs and services on the Black community;
- Create an Internal African Nova Scotian Advisory Committee;
- Establish a corporate wide anti-Black racism awareness campaign;
- Establish anti-Black racism education program and;
- Develop a corporate anti-Black racism policy.

Staff will return to Regional Council to present the Anti-Black Racism Strategy and Action Plan later in 2021.

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<sup>1</sup> Lorna Akua Benjamin, *The Black/Jamaican Criminal: The Making of Ideology* (PHD Dissertation, University of Toronto, 2003) [unpublished]; Kumsa, M.K. et al., “The Contours of Anti-Black Racism: Engaging Anti- oppression From Embodied Spaces” (2014) 1:1 J Critical Anti-Oppressive Social Inquiry 2; Pon et al, “Who’s Protecting Whom?”, supra note 4. 22

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

None at this time.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

None for this information update.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1: Anti-Black Racism Strategy and Action Plan Project Charter

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A copy of this report can be obtained online at [halifax.ca](http://halifax.ca) or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Tracey Jones-Grant Managing Director Office of Diversity &Inclusion/ANSAIO 902-802-9034.

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1. PROJECT IDENTIFICATION			
<b>Project Name:</b>	Anti-Black Racism Strategy and Action Plan		
<b>Description:</b>	<p>The Anti-Black Racism Strategy and Action Plan will be developed as a result of a renewed focus on the issues surrounding anti-Black racism within the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM). In light of recent events: the death of George Floyd, an unarmed Black man, in the hands of police in the United States, the subsequent global Black Lives Matter movement, and the internal work of the Anti-Black Racism Working Group, HRM has an opportunity to reset and reaffirm our commitment to addressing and eliminating discrimination, in all forms, within our workplace and our community at large. During this critical time, HRM reiterates its commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, and specifically focusing on crucial issues relating to the impacts of anti-Black racism.</p> <p>Anti-Black racism (ABR) has significantly impacted many aspects of our community and has influenced the policies, processes and experiences within the municipal government. The Strategy and Action Plan will focus on relevant, strategic and tangible goals, which address internal gaps and also reflect the needs and interests of external communities.</p> <p>As our society grapples with anti-Black racism on a new level, Halifax Regional Council responded by redirecting funds previously allotted to Halifax Regional Police (HRP) for the purchase of an armored vehicle. On June 9, 2020 Regional Council voted to reallocate \$300,000 of the purchase amount of \$368,000 to supporting a variety of anti-Black racism initiatives. This decision aligns with the work that HRM has initiated over the years including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2010 Africville apology and commitment to compensation and community development;</li> <li>• 2016 to present HRM's commitment to celebrating African Heritage Month;</li> <li>• 2016 Employment Systems Review;</li> <li>• 2018 Diversity and Inclusion Framework;</li> <li>• 2018 Employment Equity Policy Review;</li> <li>• 2019 Street check apology and commitment to action;</li> <li>• 2019 CAO's Zero Tolerance for Anti-Black Racism memo to employees;</li> <li>• 2020 Public statements from CAO &amp; Mayor regarding anti-Black racism;</li> <li>• 2020 Regional Council proclaimed the DPAD and moved staff develop and action plan</li> <li>• 2020 Anti-Black Racism Working Group recommendation report to the CAO; and</li> <li>• 2020 Street Painting of Black Lives Matter (on Alderney Drive and Brunswick Street)</li> <li>• 2020 Road to Economic Prosperity, ANS Economic Action plan endorsed by Regional Council</li> </ul> <p>This project charter outlines the framework for the leadership and coordination of HRM's anti-Black racism initiatives.</p> <p>The ABR Strategy and Action Plan will be developed with a multi-year approach (three-year plan). Initially the focus will be on the development and implementation of five (5) clear and tangible actions within the first year of the strategy. Recommendations and action items will be proposed for years 2 and 3 of the Anti-Black Racism Strategy.</p>		
<b>Project Managers:</b>	Tracey Jones-Grant and Ayo Aladejebi		
<b>Date Prepared:</b>	November 5, 2020	<b>Version:</b>	0.5

2. REVISION HISTORY			
Date	Version	Description	Author(s)
July 9, 2020	0.1	Draft	Grace Aldridge and Tracey Jones-Grant
September 30, 2020	0.2	Revised draft	Tracey Jones-Grant and Ayo Aladejebi
October 3, 2020	0.3	Additional revisions	Tracey Jones-Grant and Ayo Aladejebi
October 13, 2020	0.4	CAO's Office revisions	Tracey Jones-Grant and Ayo Aladejebi
November 5, 2020	0.5	Directors' feedback/revisions	Tracey Jones-Grant and Ayo Aladejebi

3. PROJECT BACKGROUND
HRM recognizes that discrimination and systemic barriers are present in all facets of society; our organization is not immune to the variety of forms that discrimination takes within our communities and beyond. As an organization, HRM acknowledges the unique and nuanced impacts

### 3. PROJECT BACKGROUND

of anti-Black racism (ABR) as a specific form of racism which is experienced by Black people and people of African descent, across the world. Anti-Black racism is a specific form of racism which reinforces attitudes, beliefs, prejudices, stereotypes and other forms of discrimination directed towards Black people which are rooted in the legacy of enslavement and colonization.

It is critical that anti-Black racism is acknowledged by HRM and as a public service organization. HRM believes that our responsibility and commitment to dismantling anti-Black racism has been heightened and calls for a decisive organizational response.

This project charter outlines the framework through which HRM as an organization will channel the path forward towards addressing anti-Black racism.

The approach and context for HRM’s Anti-Black Racism Strategy and Action Plan is one of collaboration and engagement from both internal and external partners. The intent is to build upon previous and ongoing projects, policies, programming and recommendations that have already been implemented within HRM *and* the work currently underway via the Office of Diversity and Inclusion/ANSAIO (African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office) and other specific activities underway across various Business Units. As HRM partners with external stakeholders, the Plan will also leverage decades of community-led efforts to address anti-Black racism and advance an equitable and just society. Several key projects, initiatives, recommendations, policies and data sources will shape the scope of HRM’s Anti-Black Racism Strategy and Action Plan and the specific outcomes that will be overseen by the project team. These include but are not limited to:

- Regional Council’s commitment to addressing anti-Black racism and the acknowledgement of its systemic implications on HRM communities and within the organization.

July 21, 2020 Regional Council motion:

*THAT Halifax Regional Council:*

- 1. authorize the Mayor, on Regional Council’s behalf, to proclaim the years 2015-2024 as the International Decade for People of African Descent and sign the proclamation set out in Attachment 1 to the staff report dated July 14, 2020; and,*
- 2. direct the Chief Administrative Officer to develop an anti-Black racism action plan in support of the Proclamation and return to Regional Council for its endorsement;*

- The CAO’s ongoing commitment to the organization by acknowledging issues relating to ABR and offering support, resources and coordinating various initiatives to combat anti-Black racism. As part of this commitment, the CAO has supported the coordination of learning sessions for municipal staff and Regional Council entitled “Unpacking Anti-Black Racism” with Senator Wanda Thomas Bernard, and provided a mandate to Black employees to create an Anti-Black Racism Working Group and HRM’s proclamation of the United Nation’s International Decade for People of African Descent and commitment to key actions around the pillars of the Decade;
- The Office of Diversity and Inclusion/ANSAIO developed an internal anti-Black racism reflection document entitled “Walking Together: A Journey Towards combatting Anti-Black Racism”, which was circulated to the organization;
- The Office of Diversity and Inclusion/ANSAIO, with the support of Human Resources, continues to assist Business Units on how to support anti-Black racism conversations with municipal staff;
- HRM’s Plan on a Page, Road to Economic Prosperity, an African Nova Scotian Economic Action Plan, African Nova Scotian Integration Strategy, Employment Equity Policy and Program, Corporate Diversity and Inclusion Framework;
- Recommendations from the Anti-Black Racism Working Group entitled “Solving our Problems Together: An Anti-Black Racism Action Plan”;
- Street Check Apology: following the release of Dr. Scot Wortley’s Street Checks report, which was commissioned by the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission, Chief Dan Kinsella issued a public apology to members of the ANS community and presented a path towards an action plan to address the report’s recommendations.
- Employment Systems Review (ESR);
- Report of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent on its mission to Canada; and
- Other internal and external reports, plans and recommendations.

Utilizing a collaborative approach from various subject matter experts and partners, the Anti-Black Racism Strategy and Action Plan will build on the foundation developed based on recommendations and information gathered from the aforementioned list and craft a multi-year plan which introduces the development and implementation of clear and tangible action items. The strategy and plan will focus on identifying and implementing specific goals which address the gaps within our organization and concerns within the community at large.

### 4. Project Objective

The key objectives of the Anti-Black Racism Strategy and Action Plan are to:

## 4. Project Objective

- Address the issue of anti-Black racism in HRM with respect to HRM service delivery.
- Build upon the work that has taken place and that is underway regarding discrimination and barriers and create new and refreshed strategy and action plan to address organizational gaps and needs.
- Develop an ABR lens to guide corporate decision-making.
- Create an ABR Steering Committee to advise on and implement the goals of the ABR Strategy and Action Plan
- Integrate the considerations of both internal and external partners into all recommendations and action items, including recommendations from the Anti-Black Racism Working Group.
- Focus on five (5) tangible, clear goals to be accomplished in year one and craft realistic and impactful recommendations/goals and expectations for subsequent years of the multi-year plan.

Possible five (5) Goals & Action Items for year 1 include:

1. Develop a robust HRM-wide Anti-Black Racism Strategy to address both internal and external ABR-related issues with respect to municipal government service delivery.
2. Create an internal African Nova Scotian Advisory Committee to help coordinate efforts of Business Units around ABR in the workplace.
3. Create an African Nova Scotian Advisory Committee of Council through a special Administrative Order to focus on engagement with and services delivery to communities of African descent.
4. Design and roll out a sustainable corporate-wide ABR awareness campaign.
5. Create and implement training program/speakers' series focused on the topics of ABR and allyship customized and available to Business Units.

## 5. PROJECT SCOPE

The scope of the Anti-Black Racism Strategy and Action Plan includes:

- Review of current work and initiatives underway which may impact the proposed goals of the ABR Strategy and Action Plan.
- Creation of the project team which includes internal mentors and the development of the ABR strategy with specific action items to be completed during the multi-year plan.
- Developing tangible goals and outcomes which reflect internal needs, and which may positively impact services offered or supported by HRM.

The scope of the Anti-Black Racism Strategy and Action Plan excludes:

- Collective agreements already in place.

## 6. PROJECT GOVERNANCE

The scope of the Anti-Black Racism Strategy and Action Plan spans a diverse set of partner groups. To effectively manage the project and to ensure project objectives are achieved, a well-defined project governance structure is required. The following structure outlines the proposed governance model for the Strategy team.

<b>Executive Sponsor</b> Jacques Dubé, CAO	
<b>Project Sponsor</b> Tracey Jones-Grant, Managing Director - Office of Diversity and Inclusion/ANSAIO	
<b>Project Manager</b> Ayo Aladejebi, Senior Advisor, ANSAIO	
<b>Steering Committee (Proposed)</b> Antonio Simmonds, ANSAIO Community Outreach Coordinator	<b>Role</b> Lead, External and Community Engagement
Dean Simmonds, Superintendent, Halifax Regional Police	Lead, Policing
Corey Beals, Deputy Chief	Lead, Fire

6. PROJECT GOVERNANCE	
Laura Nolan, Human Resource Representative	Lead, HR
Amy Siciliano, Public Safety Advisor	Lead, Public Safety
Mapfumo Chidzonga, Diversity and Inclusion Advisor, Planning and Development	Lead, Research and Policy Coordinator
Natasha Nordin, Halifax Transit representative	Lead, Halifax Transit
Russel Brooks employee representative	Liaison to ANS employees in HRM
Breton Murphy, Corporate Communications Representative	Lead, Internal and External Communications
Representative from Racially Visible Employee Caucus (RVEC)	Liaison To RVEC
<b><u>Advisory Committee/Support</u></b>	
Vion Rizzardo, Labour Relations	
Bailey Bowden, HR Representative	
Diversity Champions as required	
Union Leadership (6) – All Union Presidents will be kept informed of the ABR Strategy team’s development and progress and there will be active and open methods of collaboration.	

7. PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS
<p>The following planning assumptions have been defined for the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> HRM’s Senior Leadership and Council is committed to a renewed focus on strategies to address anti-Black racism within the organization.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The Executive Sponsor and Project Sponsor can support the Anti-Black Racism Strategy and will provide oversight and guidance as required.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Partners and subject matter experts will be available to provide support and consultation as required for the duration of the Anti-Black Racism Strategy and Action Plan.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> All outcomes and goals align with HRM’s values and plans, best business practices, policies and procedures.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Key initiatives and projects currently underway (Employment Services Review, Employment Equity Policy and Program and other policy and program reviews/initiatives in Human Resources and in the Office of Diversity and Inclusion/ANSAIO) continue and that awareness of the intersectionality of that work and this project is highlighted to all stakeholders and strategy team members.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> All outcomes and goals align with the principles and purposes of the <a href="#">Nova Scotia Human Rights Act</a> together with HRM’s values and plans, best business practices, policies and procedures.</li> </ul>

8. PROJECT CONSTRAINTS AND DEPENDENCIES
<p>The following constraints have been defined for the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Initially, a fixed budget has been assigned to the development of the Anti-Black Racism Strategy and Action Plan. The project should be developed with this fixed budget in mind.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The project team is committed to having 5 goals identified and completed within year 1 of the project approval.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The steering committee is comprised of experts and representatives who are dedicated to other full-time roles within the organization. Flexibility and awareness of the commitment to this project should be considered.</li> </ul> <p>The following project dependencies have been identified for the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The development and implementation of the Fair Hiring Policy, Employment Equity Program and implementation of the remaining Employment Systems Review (ESR) recommendations and other initiatives should continue with an enhanced level of support. There are direct links between this work and the goals and commitments to the Anti-Black Racism Strategy and Action Plan.</li> </ul>

### 9. FORMAL DELIVERABLES

Name	Due Date
Project Charter development and approval	
Confirmation and approval of year 1 goals and action items	
Draft ABR Strategy and Action Plan analyzed and completed, including the identification of clear success measures for year 1	TBD
Presentation of strategy and action plan to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)	TBD
Formalize commitment to bi-annual report and presentation to SLT and annual report and presentation to Regional Council	TBD
Mid-point assessment and review of progress of year 1 goals	TBD
Development of proposed recommendations/goals for subsequent years	TBD
Completion of year 1 goals and action items	TBD

- The due dates will be updated within 5 days of the project charter approval

### 10. RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

Description/Type	Available Funding
The overall budget for the ABR Strategy is an initial, one-time funding amount, redirected from HRP via Regional Council	\$300,000
<p>The people resource requirements will be fulfilled by the project team. Specific use of the funds are anticipated to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creation of a designated position to support the ABR Strategy and Action Plan. It is anticipated that this will be a non-union term (P1) position within the Office of Diversity and Inclusion/ANSAIO (salary range as of April 1, 2020: \$59,170 to \$82,630);</li> <li>BU-specific activities;</li> <li>Support for external and community projects, activities and initiatives which align with the project plan and are designed to promote the eradication of anti-Black racism;</li> <li>External consultant fees, as identified by the project group, to support the development of the strategy;</li> <li>ABR training, speakers' series and ABR awareness/communication campaign; and</li> <li>Potential costs related to the implementation of various action items from the Anti-Black Racism Working Group.</li> </ul>	

### 11. MILESTONES

Item	Milestone	Date
1	Project Charter approved	
2	Steering committee confirmed	
3	Year 1 goals approved	TBD
4	Presentation to SLT delivered	
5	Communication provided to organization on strategy and plan	TBD
6	Communication to Human Resources and Office of Diversity & Inclusion/ANSAIO presented	TBD
7	Update presented to Regional Council and SLT	TBD
8	Year 1 goals, action items and draft plans for subsequent action items for the multiyear plan completed	TBD

## 12. AREAS OF PROJECT RISK

The following list highlights the primary risks that have been identified for the project:

- Potential impacts on the workforce and project team due to Covid-19 (potential second wave).
- Funding: Future financial requests may go beyond year 1 funding capacities.
- Resource Restraints: The project team is comprised of municipal staff who are dedicated to other fulsome and busy roles. Other work obligations may make it challenging to retain full commitment from the project team. This will also have an impact on the timeline and deliverables.

## 13. CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

Conditions for Success	Person / Group Primarily Responsible to Establish the Condition	Impact if Condition Not in Place
Communication and Awareness: Project team must be committed to frequent, relevant and transparent communication within the team and to stakeholders.	Project Managers, Project Sponsors and Project team	Reduced engagement, lack of support and contributions, inefficient and impractical outcomes, unnecessary delays.
Progress: Business process, policy and program updates, specifically those directly connected to equity, diversity and inclusion matters, continue and are supported. Regular updates and collaborations take place between those project leads and the ABR project team.	Project Managers, Project Sponsors and Project team	Reduced engagement, lack of support and contributions, inefficient and impractical outcomes, unnecessary delays.
Focus on Scope and Action Items: Retaining focus on specific, tangible and relevant scope and action items; the intent of the ABR Strategy and Action Plan is to seek out and address gaps in our organizational approach to dismantling ABR. All action items and goals should be measurable, attainable and actionable in an appropriate timeframe with internal and external stakeholders' needs in mind.	Project Managers, Project Sponsors and Project team	Reduced engagement, lack of support and contributions, inefficient and impractical outcomes, unnecessary delays.

## 14. SIGN OFF

<b>Sponsor Name:</b>	Jacques Dubé
<b>Title:</b>	CAO
<b>Signature:</b>	Original Signed
<b>Date:</b>	November 6, 2020
<b>Sponsor Name:</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	
<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

<b>Project Manager:</b>	Tracey Jones-Grant
<b>Signature:</b>	Original Signed
<b>Date:</b>	November 6, 2020
<b>Project Manager:</b>	

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Signature:	
Date:	