

Seeking Ways of Belonging

Burnaby Anti-Racism Framework

Report of the Social Planning Committee's
Anti-Racism Sub-Committee



Spring 2024

Land Acknowledgement

The City of Burnaby is located on the ancestral and unceded homelands of the hən̓q̓əmi̓nəḥ and Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim speaking peoples. We are grateful for the opportunity to be on this territory.

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Summary

Since its founding as a city, Burnaby has been notable for the ethno-cultural diversity of its residents. Today, Burnaby is considered a hyper-diverse community, and is only one of a handful of Canadian cities without a 'majority ethnic group'. Over half of those who live in Burnaby were not born in Canada, and over 120 languages are spoken by community members. Burnaby is the third highest 'refugee receiving' city in BC and also receives a significant number of 'refugee claimants' each year. The city has evolved from a suburban community to a significant urban centre that is demographically, socially, economically and culturally diverse.

With this hyper-diversity, there has also been a trend toward rising incidents of racism and hate-motivated crimes in Burnaby, a trend seen in other communities in BC and across Canada. The COVID-19 pandemic saw a sharp increase in the number of police reports targeted towards Asian community members, further exacerbating the issue of racism and hate. On May 4, 2021, the City of Burnaby's Social Planning Committee (SPC) received a notice of motion that called for a report on the feasibility and advisability of creating a special task force on anti-racism. The motion was in response to the localized increase in hate crimes in Burnaby. During this time, the City was providing support for community anti-racism initiatives through two community-based anti-racism research projects.

At its meeting on November 08, 2021, Burnaby Council subsequently approved the formation of an Anti-Racism Sub-Committee of the SPC to review the results of the two City-supported community-based research projects, determine a model or framework for a City-led process to address the research findings that pertained to the City, and recommend safe and inclusive avenues for direct community member participation in any initiatives identified in the process, as appropriate. This report presents the findings of the Sub-Committee's work and includes a proposed anti-racism framework.

The report provides:

- » background on Burnaby's history as a hyper-diverse community
- » information on hate crimes and incidents occurring across Canada, BC and lower mainland
- » information on jurisdictional roles in anti-racism work
- » a summary of the process and findings to develop the framework
- » a proposed framework with key areas and actions as recommendations

The proposed key areas and actions of the framework include:

1. **Leadership and Governance**—Setting the tone, recognizing and prioritizing the need for anti-racism work.
2. **Learning and Training**—Building capacity across the City of Burnaby to sustain anti-racism work.
3. **Belonging and Inclusion**—Centering the experiences of racialized Burnaby residents and community members.
4. **Engagement and Evaluation**—Obtaining input, feedback and learning from the experiences from Indigenous, Black and Persons of Colour (IBPOC); clearly communicating and meaningfully reviewing and measuring ongoing anti-racism work.

City staff have identified areas and actions already underway at the City that align with the framework. Other actions would require future consideration and identification of the proper means for public participation (if applicable). Further work to develop an implementation plan is needed to better understand the scope of work in relation to existing and ongoing priorities at the City, help prioritize actions and identify appropriate resources and monitoring over the short, medium and long term.



1.0 Introduction

On November 8, 2021, Burnaby Council endorsed a report from the Social Planning Committee recommending the formation of an Anti-Racism Sub-Committee that would review the results of two City-supported community-based research projects, determine a model or framework for a City-led process to address the research findings that pertained to the City, and recommend safe and inclusive avenues for direct community member participation in any initiatives identified in the process, as appropriate.

This report on a proposed anti-racism framework provides:

- » background on Burnaby’s history as a hyper-diverse community
- » information on hate crimes and incidents occurring across Canada, BC and lower mainland
- » information on jurisdictional roles in anti-racism work
- » a summary of the process and findings to develop the framework
- » a proposed framework with key areas and actions as recommendations

2.0 Background

Before Burnaby existed, these lands were home to the ancestors of several local Central Coast Salish Nations. Today, the descendants of these Nations continue to live in Burnaby and the adjacent municipalities that developed within their traditional territories. These are the hə́ŋqəmiŋə́m and Sḵwə́wú7mesh speaking peoples. Burnaby is also home to Indigenous peoples from other parts of BC, and across Canada.

Since its founding as a city, Burnaby has been notable for the ethno-cultural diversity of its residents. Since 1996, the city has grown by more than 70,000 people with a population of 249,125 in 2021ⁱ. Today, Burnaby is considered a hyper-diverse¹ community, and is only one of a handful of Canadian cities without a ‘majority ethnic group’². Over half of those who live in Burnaby were not born in Canada and over 120 languages are spoken by community members. Burnaby is the third highest ‘refugee receiving’ city in BC, and also receives a significant number of ‘refugee

claimants’³ each year. The city has evolved from a suburban community to a significant urban centre that is demographically, socially, economically and culturally diverse.

Historically, communities in BC (including Burnaby) have experienced racial inequities, exclusion and discrimination within law and policies often on the basis of ethno-cultural origin. For example, land ownership in Burnaby was largely restricted to European residents through a series of discriminatory laws and social practices. Workers of Chinese, Japanese, South Asian, and Indigenous origin were largely restricted to working in very low-paying industries through ‘white only’ labour policies in place at early local employers, such as sawmills and industrial sitesⁱⁱ.

More recently, Burnaby (as with other communities in BC and across Canada) has been experiencing an

1 Hyper-diversity, also known as superdiversity, refers to the unusually high mix of ethnic groups in certain cities and countries. It refers to situations where migrants and ethnic minority groups constitute a high percentage of population; their national origins are highly diverse; and there is a mix of migration status and associated rights (Oxford University Press 2013)

2 Phrasing used by Statistics Canada which indicates that no particular ethno-cultural group accounts for more than 40% of the total municipal population.

3 A ‘refugee claimant’ is defined as a person who is seeking Canada’s protection at the borders (arriving via air, over the border with the United States, via boat etc.) or within the country, rather than those who arrive in Canada already being recognized by the Federal Government as a refugee.

increase in police-reported hate crimes. A **hate crime** is understood in this context as a criminal offence targeting an identifiable group – that is, any section of the public distinguished by race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression, or on any other similar factor. As reported by Statistics Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of police-reported hate crimes increased by 36% in Canada during the first year and 27% during the second year, rising from 1,951 in 2019 to 2,646 in 2020 and 3,360 in 2021. Of these police-reported hate crimes, ones that related to race or ethnicity accounted for 51% of the incidents, the highest amongst the motivation categoriesⁱⁱⁱ.

While most provinces and territories reported increases in hate crimes, Statistics Canada reported that British Columbia had the second-highest increase in hate crimes reported from 2019 to 2020, with an increase of 198 incidents^{iv}. The BC Office of the Human Rights Commissioner further added that the police-reported hate incidents in BC show higher numbers (506 incidents in 2019, 925 in 2020 and 1103 in 2021) than those reported to Statistics Canada^v. In this context, a **hate incident** is a non-criminal action or speech committed against a person or property, where the motive is based in whole or in part upon the same characteristics described in hate crime.

In Burnaby, the Burnaby Detachment of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) reported that the number of reported hate-motivated crimes increased from 20 in 2019 to 43 in 2020⁴. Of these, approximately 63% (27 out of 43) in 2020 were targeted towards Asian community members^{vi}. In Vancouver, the Vancouver Police Department similarly identified a 97% increase in reported hate crimes – from 142 incidents in 2019 to 280 incidents in 2020. Of these, approximately 35% (98 out of 280) were targeted towards Asian community members^{vii}.

At its meeting on May 4, 2021, the SPC received a notice of motion that called for a report on the feasibility and advisability of creating a special task force on anti-racism. The motion was in response to the local increase in reported hate crimes in Burnaby.

During this time, the City was providing support for community anti-racism initiatives through two community-based anti-racism research projects. At its November 8, 2021 meeting Burnaby Council approved the formation of an Anti-Racism Sub-Committee to review the results of the two City-supported community-based research projects, determine a model or framework for a City-led process to address the research findings that pertained to the City, and recommend safe and inclusive avenues for direct community member participation in any initiatives identified in the process, as appropriate.



4 The following year in 2021, there was a decrease in hate crimes reported to the Burnaby RCMP. However, it should be noted that not all hate crimes are reported to police due to language barriers and not feeling comfortable calling the police as commented in the [Burnaby Now](#).

3.0 Anti-Racism and Government Roles

In many countries including Canada, recent movements to recognize and address racial injustices and discrimination have led to increased examination of government efforts to combat racism. For the purpose of this report:

- » **Racism**⁵ is the belief that one group, as defined by the colour of their skin or their perceived common ancestry, is inherently superior to others. It can be openly displayed in jokes, slurs or hate speech, or can be more hidden in unconscious biases. Racism is deeply rooted in attitudes, values and stereotypical beliefs. In some cases, these beliefs have become deeply embedded in systems and institutions that have evolved over time. Racism operates at a number of levels, in particular, individual and systemic.
- » **Institutional** or **Systemic Racism**⁶ consists of patterns of behaviour, policies or practices that create and maintain the power of certain racial groups over others, or reinforce the disadvantage of certain racial groups.
- » **Anti-Racism**⁷ is the practice of identifying, challenging, preventing, eliminating and changing the values, structures, policies, programs, practices and behaviours that perpetuate racism.

This concept of anti-racism has been further defined to Anti-Indigenous, Anti-Black and Anti-Asian Racism specifically as the history and nature of these experiences are unique. This report covers general work on anti-racism but does not cover the details to each specific race. However, it is acknowledged that there is a need for ongoing work to consider experiences directed at Indigenous Peoples within Canada and people of African and Asian descent. In addition, it is important to note that there are broader experiences of hate in Canada not only focused on race but on other identifiers.

3.1 Government of Canada

The federal government plays a role in anti-racism via the Department of Canadian Heritage, which is responsible for many broader policies and programs which play a role in the cultural, civic and economic lives of Canadians. The federal role includes responsibilities in the areas of creativity, arts and culture; heritage and celebration; sport; diversity and inclusion; and official languages. The federal government provides funding to provincial governments and local community service providers for projects and programs that align with federal priorities.

In June 2019, the Government of Canada launched *Building a Foundation for Change: Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy 2019-2022*^{viii}. The strategy aims for the federal government to take an active role in addressing systemic racism and religious discrimination. The Government of Canada has committed to investing \$45 million to implement the strategy, of which \$30 million is focused on community-based projects that aim to address racism and discrimination through the Anti-Racism Action Program (administered by the Department of Canadian Heritage). Today, the implementation of the program continues to provide funding support for local, regional and national initiatives in key areas of employment, social participation and justice.

3.2 Government of British Columbia

The provincial government has jurisdiction to provide public services that support citizens, including multiculturalism and anti-racism initiatives. The Province's efforts are guided by the *Multiculturalism Act* (1996), which directs the government to “*preserve and enhance multiculturalism by promoting cross cultural understanding and recognizing that the diversity of British Columbians as regards race, cultural*

5 BC's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner Glossary

6 BC's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner Glossary

7 Government of British Columbia – Working Glossary

heritage, religion, ethnicity, ancestry and place of origin is a fundamental characteristic of the society of British Columbians that enriches the lives of all British Columbians^{ix}.” This includes providing funding to local service providers and other eligible organizations as well as celebrating and recognizing notable contributions from individuals and organizations towards multiculturalism and anti-racism.

More recently, the provincial government passed the *Anti-Racism Data Act* (given royal assent on June 2, 2022). The Act aims to break down barriers for people to access services, ensure racialized people aren’t disproportionately targeted by racism, and improve services so more people feel safe getting the help they need through data standards^x. Specifically, the provincial Ministry of Citizen Services is tasked with:

- » developing data standards and guidance that protect people’s privacy and give direction for the use and interpretation of sensitive information about identity
- » identifying research priorities to guide the government’s work to identify and eliminate systemic racism
- » developing annual statistics or other information

In addition, the provincial government recently introduced Bill 23 – 2024 *Anti-Racism Act*, which at the time of this report, has received Royal Assent⁸.

The Bill supports the identification and elimination of systemic racism, with a focus on systemic racism specific to Indigenous peoples, and the advancement of racial equity by providing:

- » a provincial anti-racism action plan
- » consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples and engagement with racialized communities
- » a Provincial Committee on Anti-racism
- » requirements for public bodies to take actions with respect to identifying and eliminating systemic racism and systemic racism specific to Indigenous peoples and advancing equity

The provincial government also administers the Resilience BC Anti-Racism Network⁹ (formerly known as the Organizing Against Racism & Hate program) which takes a multifaceted, province-wide approach to identifying and challenging racism. In Burnaby, the Burnaby Together Coalition Against Racism and Hate¹⁰ (administered by Burnaby Family Life) is the recipient of the Provincial funding allocated to building this network. The Coalition’s work includes undertaking the two community-based research projects (described in Section 4.2 of this document).

3.3 Local Governments and the City of Burnaby

As referenced in sections 3.1 and 3.2, the key policies, programs and funding to support anti-racism lie within the mandates of the federal and provincial governments. However, as the government level closest to the people, local governments are on the front line of the impacts of racial injustices and discrimination in their communities, and can play an important role in developing and deepening local solutions to address racism in collaboration with other agencies and community partners.

Municipal governments can augment federal and provincial initiatives by coordinating and directing resources to address gaps and barriers faced by people experiencing racism. For example, the City of Burnaby is a founding member of the Burnaby Together Coalition Against Racism and Hate. Burnaby is one of 36 member communities throughout the province that have established community partnerships, developed a protocol for responding to incidents of racism and hate in their communities and led other community initiatives to address racism. More broadly speaking, other examples of City programs and initiatives on equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism include:

8 Progress of Bills can be found here: www.leg.bc.ca

9 Resilience BC: Anti-Racism Network: <https://www.resiliencebc.ca/>

10 Burnaby Together Coalition Against Racism and Hate. Accessed from: <https://www.burnabytogether.com/>

- » In 1994, Council adopted the City's first **Equity Policy** to expand City's services and hiring practices to better reflect the broad diversity of the Burnaby community. The policy was updated in 2020 to better reflect the expanded understanding of diversity (in all forms)
- » The City is a founding member of the **Burnaby Intercultural Planning Table** (2007)
- » The City is a member of the **UNESCO Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination** (2012)
- » The City is a founding member of the **Burnaby Inter-Faith Network** (2014)
- » Burnaby City Council formally recognized that Burnaby is on unceded Indigenous territory and approved beginning **Government-to-Government relation with local First Nations** (2019)
- » After a multi-year collaborative process, the Indigenous History in Burnaby Resource Guide was published in 2019
- » The City's Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services offer expanded **culturally aware and diverse programming and performances**
- » The City proclaimed the **United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent** in 2021
- » The City offers grants, via the **Festivals Burnaby Granting Program**, to organizations and groups providing programming to recognize Black History Month (annually in February) including family-oriented programming
- » The Burnaby Public Library has completed an **Anti-Racism Climate Audit** in 2022 and is currently implementing an **Anti-Racism Commitments Roadmap**
- » The **Burnaby Village Museum** supports public programs, events and workshops on cross cultural understanding, with recent curation of exhibit spaces on Indigenous education, Chinese Canadian and South Asian history
- » In 2022, the City created its **first Equity, Diversity and Inclusion staff position**
- » In 2023, the City acknowledged the 100th anniversary of the introduction of the *Chinese Exclusion Act* of 1923 and approved a process to review, acknowledge and apologize for its historic discrimination against people of Chinese descent, with the goal of **advancing reconciliation with the Chinese Canadian community**

Other municipalities have taken a wide range of approaches to anti-racism initiatives, publicly signalling their commitment to this work in the broader equity, diversity and inclusion context. Recent examples of this type of work include initiatives in New Westminster, Vancouver, Edmonton and Calgary.

In summary, the work of anti-racism is complex and often contextual to the communities' experiences of racism and discrimination. As a result, local governments rely on working closely with community agencies and members with lived/living experience on anti-racism initiatives as a way to demonstrate support, commitment and response to this work. These communities can often identify local gaps and challenges in the work of anti-racism initiatives that local governments can take action to help resolve.



4.0 Burnaby Anti-Racism Framework Process

4.1 Anti-Racism Sub-Committee Terms of Reference and Membership

The Sub-Committee was tasked with:

1. reviewing the results of two City-supported, community-based research projects in the area of anti-racism
2. developing a framework or model for a City-led process to respond to those findings that pertained to the City
3. recommending safe and inclusive avenues for direct community member participation in any initiatives identified in the above process, as appropriate

Membership on the Sub-Committee included (at the time of selection):

- » Councillor James Wang (Chair)
- » Élie Lubendo, SPC Resident Representative (Vice-Chair),
- » Trustee Ryan Stewart, Burnaby Board of Education
- » Doris Mah, SPC Resident Representative
- » Monique Nelson, SPC Resident Representative
- » Sherman Chan, Burnaby Inter-Agency Council

4.2 Sub-Committee Process

Work Plan

The Sub-Committee's work plan was guided by Grace Lee Boggs¹¹ aphorism "transform yourself to transform the world", with the goal of making sustainable, embodied, and meaningful transformation. With staff support, the Sub-Committee's work took place over 2022 and included:

- » **6 Sub-Committee meetings**
- » **2 training sessions** on Anti-Racism 101 & 102
- » **One-on-one interviews** with Sub-Committee members
- » **Personal learning and reflections** throughout meetings, trainings and presentations
- » **3 presentations to the Social Planning Committee**

The Sub-Committee considered two community-based research projects throughout the meetings:

1. Environmental Scan of Community Supports: Addressing Hate in Burnaby
2. Building Belonging in Burnaby for Racialized Newcomers and Immigrants to Thrive – Understanding and Dismantling Systemic Racism

¹¹ Grace Lee Boggs (1915 – 2015) was a Chinese American civil rights and labour activist. Her support for causes, such as the Black Power movement, feminism, and the environment spanned over 70 years. Most of her activism was concentrated in Detroit, where she met her husband, James Boggs. Together, they became two of Detroit's best-known activists. Throughout her life, Boggs maintained the core belief that if people worked together, they could accomplish positive social change.

Environmental Scan of Community Supports: Addressing Hate in Burnaby

Lead Researcher: Sangeeta Subramanian

Summary

The purpose of the report was to review and confirm existing local and regional supports on addressing hate in Burnaby, as well as to review and update a community protocol¹² developed by the Burnaby Together Coalition to support victims of racism and hate. The environmental scan included:

- » documenting existing local and regional resources, services and systems that support individuals who experience hate or discrimination
- » mapping funding streams supporting the existing resources
- » identifying existing policies and procedures
- » highlighting demographic trends over the past 10 years to understand the changing needs of the community
- » highlighting points of action, identifying opportunities, recognizing notable trends in planning towards a more equitable future, and acknowledging needs and gaps that could benefit from attention and planning

Through conversations with over 45 Burnaby community services agencies, Burnaby's RCMP detachment, and the broader community, the report recommended:

1. consistent use of the definition of “hate crime” and “hate incident” between community service providers and the police detachment in Burnaby. (i.e. standardizing the wide range of terms currently used, including “hate-motivated crimes”, “hate-related crimes”, “hate-related incidents” or “bias-motivated incidents”).
2. proper training in order to better assess, document, and track hate crimes and hate incidents, rather than depending on the perception of the investigating officer and community service providers
3. better coordination and access to services to those that have experienced hate, including ways to reduce barriers for reporting and remove the silos of service supports provided by all agencies (supporting a victim-centred, trauma-informed model¹³)
4. enhance coordination between RCMP and community service providers to collect and publish evidence-based data and trends on local hate crimes and incidents.
5. continual information and awareness about how to report hate crimes and hate-motivated incidents to better capture reporting to appropriate agencies and providing ways for individuals to access resources available to them.
6. funding to build education, support and capacity in implementing the updated community protocol for individuals that have experienced hate.

The final report was presented to the Social Planning Committee and the Burnaby Together Coalition Against Racism and Hate in fall 2022.

12 Burnaby Together Coalition – Community Protocol: <https://www.burnabytogether.com/protocol>

13 Trauma-informed model or practice is a strengths-based framework grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma. Trauma can be experienced physically, psychologically and/or emotionally – the practice focuses on safety for everyone and create opportunities for individuals to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment

Building Belonging in Burnaby for Racialized Newcomers and Immigrants to Thrive **–Understanding and Dismantling Systemic Racism**

Lead Researchers: Dr. June Francis and Dr. Kristina Henriksson

Summary

This report aimed to provide a better understanding on the experiences and obstacles of structural inequities and systemic racism faced by newcomers and immigrants. The report also included a sub-focus research area on Black/African diaspora in Burnaby to support the City's response to the International Decade of People of African Descent. The research scope included:

- » reviewing the latest academic research, benchmarks, leading practices and policies
- » utilizing Census and other survey data
- » reviewing the City of Burnaby's Committee and Council recordings, transcripts and minutes
- » conducting 50+ one-on-one interviews and meetings
- » hosting 100+ participatory focus group interviews, workshops, labs and listening sessions (including multi-lingual)
- » providing presentations and dialogues (in-person and online)
- » putting the most recent data and analysis in context with findings from previous projects (e.g. Burnaby School District Anti-Racism Action Plan)

The report highlighted opportunities for the City to align with provincial initiatives underway as a part of the *Anti-Racism Data Act*. The general themes that pertain to the City included:

- » strengthening transformational leadership through a hiring of a Chief Equity Officer and establishing a steering group
- » creating and embedding a city-wide equity and anti-racism strategy
- » building organizational equity and anti-racism capacity through training and funding capacity building
- » reviewing the City's policies, practices and programs through a racial equity lens
- » leveraging partnerships in the community for equity outcomes
- » conducting a pilot program to support innovation and further learning

Recommendations for the immigrant and settlement service organizations and the social service sectors were also included as part of the draft report.

Note: The final report had not been completed when the sub-committee process was underway in 2022. However, during this time, Sub-Committee members received a presentation by the researchers on their initial findings. The draft of the final report was completed in late 2023.

Considerations for the Framework

The two reports shed light on the different aspects and experiences of racism and hate in Burnaby. These projects utilized some of the existing anti-racism networks active in Burnaby to conduct deeper engagement with stakeholders and community members regarding their lived/living experiences of racism and hate through a trauma-informed approach.

The findings and recommendations from the reports inform the proposed Burnaby Anti-Racism Framework below.

5.0 Burnaby Anti-Racism Framework

"As a City, we strongly condemn racism. Hate and racism have no place in our society. In the wake of COVID-19, we have seen increased attacks against members of ethnic communities around Metro Vancouver and beyond. These attacks will not be tolerated. We take great pride in being a diverse and inclusive City, and are firmly committed to upholding and protecting these values."

– Statement issued by Mayor Hurley and published on the City's website and Mayor's Office social media accounts (May 2020)

5.1 The Goal and Values

Sub-Committee members were asked to identify a goal and values for the proposed framework. These were developed as a way to bring a relational, empathetic and honest approach to doing this work, and to think critically about the questions prompted within each value.

The goal of Burnaby's Anti-Racism Framework is to:

Model, signal and lead the way to an anti-racist Burnaby through clear, publicly communicated commitments on Burnaby's intentions and standards that take a decisive "stand" against racism.

Values:

- » **Reflection** – *We commit to appreciating what's been shared and a willingness to look deeply, to learn, and to both hear the truth and tell the truth about racism in Burnaby.*
- » **Accountability** – *We commit in taking responsibility for anti-racist work in big and small ways, as a municipality.*
- » **Transformation** – *We commit to supporting the necessary changes that embed anti-racism in our processes, structures, practices and guidelines and our people.*

While all individuals have a role to play to work towards combatting racism and aligning with the goal and values of an anti-racism framework, a systemic approach is also needed. For further accountability and consistency, an equity lens should be applied when creating or changing policies or developing programs and services. Individual and City-wide commitments are required to work towards building systems change for anti-racism within the City and the community.

5.2 Key Areas and Actions

The City will not achieve its goals related to anti-racism without determining key areas for action. There are four key areas with proposed action items within the framework. Staff have expanded on the "Proposed Actions" to provide "Staff Comments" and input on initiatives started or already underway through the City's internal equity, diversity and inclusion processes. Staff have also identified future actions for consideration, where it would be assumed that future actions would have staffing and resource implications. In addition, there is a section on "Recommended Means for Public Participation", where the broader Burnaby community could be involved (if applicable). The framework offers an idea of where to start, but this work would be ongoing and would continually evolve.

Key Area #1: Leadership & Governance

The focus on leadership and governance is to set the tone and legitimize the need for anti-racism and prioritizing anti-racism work in this framework. Commitment and support from City and Council leadership is crucial for moving this work forward and achieving systemic change. It is also vital to consider ways to address representation in the governance and civic engagement in a City as diverse as Burnaby is.

A	Proposed Actions	Staff Comments	Recommended Means for Public Participation (if applicable)
ACTIONS UNDERWAY AT THE CITY			
A1	Commit to increased representation of Indigenous, Black and Persons of Colour (IBPOC) in City's advisory bodies and boards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Staff are reviewing and encouraging broader representation on advisory bodies and boards, including opportunities for members to self-identify in application forms. » The Social Planning Committee and the Access Advisory Committee are examples of committees with increased representation from the community. 	
A2	Acknowledge past and present realities impacting IBPOC's participation in civic life by eliminating barriers and providing access to opportunities to represent and participate in various decision-making capacities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » An example of this work is the Reconciliation Framework with Burnaby's Chinese Canadian Community. » The City is currently enhancing access to participation in public engagement through supports such as translation, accessible venues, provision of child minding, and provision of transit passes, etc. This also includes closed captions and assisted listening devices at in-person and virtual meetings. » This proposed action would be further addressed by providing public statements from the City expressing continued commitments to past and present realities of racialized communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Opportunities to acknowledge the historical experiences of other racialized communities within Burnaby, could be further explored. » Engage residents through public engagement processes with staff trained in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), for example, Gender Based Analysis plus (GBA+). » Develop a Translation Policy, including the use of an organizational writing style and guide for language use for City staff.
A3	Audit, review and update existing City policies, procedures and bylaws with an anti-racist lens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Staff have initially reviewed and updated the Code of Conduct Bylaw, Burnaby Procedures Bylaw, Delegation Policy and Proclamation Policy to ensure fairness and respect and to explicitly prohibit racism and discriminatory behaviours and actions. » The City completed an internal EDI assessment and continues to review work in this area towards the development of a City-wide EDI Framework. 	
A4	Commit to increased awareness, information and partnership on anti-racism in Burnaby.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » The City already partners with Burnaby Together Coalition Against Racism and Hate on community-based actions to address racism and hate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Partner with existing agencies to create opportunities to obtain feedback from IBPOC Burnaby residents on ongoing anti-racism initiatives.

FUTURE ACTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

A5	Explore developing a City 'Diversity on Advisory Bodies and Boards' policy that would guide fair and equitable advisory body and board appointment representation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » The City of Vancouver, as an example, adopted a corporate policy^{xi} to achieve diverse demographic composition on all advisory bodies. This includes membership of more women and representatives of equity-seeking groups on advisory bodies. 	
A6	Institutionalize anti-racism by implementing safeguards to consider identity and lived experience in selection criteria for membership on City's advisory bodies and boards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Under the Code of Conduct Bylaw, staff have developed some training. » Further staff training on safeguards and selection criteria would be needed as part of this action. 	
A7	Develop and implement a City anti-racism and anti-discrimination policy that is centred on increasing safety and belonging for IPBOC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » This policy does not currently exist and would require further review to align with the proposed Anti-Racism Framework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » If appropriate, a staff- and community-based working group could be created to help inform the development of an anti-racism and anti-discriminatory policy.
A8	Formalize ongoing financial and in-kind support for the Burnaby Together Coalition on Organizing Against Racism and Hate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Further financial support for the Coalition to implement community-based responses could be considered subject to Council approval. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » As a deliverable, the coalition would report back to the City on anti-racism initiatives conducted within community.
A9	Explore the development of a mentorship program to support the interest of IBPOC members in civic engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » This action was added as a result of feedback at the Social Planning Committee on May 22, 2024. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Further development and ways of engagement would be explored.

Key Area #2: Learning & Training

The intent of this key area is to build capacity across the City to sustain the anti-racism work. Building capacity can go beyond learning and training – it includes making sure that regardless of an individual’s starting place in anti-racism, there are tools and practices in place to support each person’s journey with adequate resources to uphold this important work. Investing time in learning and training to adequately build capacity to ensure competency in anti-racism topics and opportunities will mitigate potential harm in the long term.

Learning and training will help the City take small and transformational steps to changes needed to achieve the framework goals. This includes all levels of leadership (senior management, elected officials, front-line staff etc.) to ensure changes take place on the ground, in all departments across the City.

B	Proposed Actions	Staff Comments	Recommended Means for Public Participation (if applicable)
ACTIONS UNDERWAY AT THE CITY			
B1	Invest in anti-racist training for all staff, Council, advisory bodies and boards. Topics would include: conflict and problem-solving, intercultural communication, unconscious bias, discrimination, prejudice; bystander intervention and de-escalation, trauma-informed practice, identity and power, impacts of racism, and more.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » The City is committed to investing in training in these topic areas and has conducted an internal EDI assessment to inform this work. » Training on some of these topics has been provided to Council and Burnaby’s advisory bodies and boards as part of orientation for newly elected/appointed members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Solicit feedback from racialized community members on areas of knowledge that are important or meaningful to include in the City trainings.
B2	Revise onboarding and training of all new hires, secondments, appointments, etc., to include content on anti-racism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » City staff are continuing to improve these processes as part of ongoing EDI work. 	
B3	Review existing and future job descriptions and requirements to include expectations on anti-racism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » City staff are continuing to improve these processes as part of ongoing EDI work. 	

FUTURE ACTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

B4	Use Burnaby Together Coalition as a trusted information and resource for City staff (e.g. list as a resource on City website).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Distributed via the City’s own communication channels (e.g. website, social media accounts, BurnabyConnect app, internal StaffConnect newsletter, etc). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Receive input to create a welcome wagon¹⁴ or similar to provide information on City-based anti-racism resources to enhance a sense of belonging.
B5	Raise the profile of anti-racism work across the City by posting anti-racism tools and resources developed by partners (e.g. SFU Anti-Racism Alliance; Burnaby Together, Resilience BC) on the City website.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Distributed via the City’s own communication channels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Where appropriate, provide anti-racism training opportunities for the public (e.g. subsidized, supported or financed by the City).
B6	Explore developing an anti-racism module/course/certificate with SFU or other public institution for the City and community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » This action would be explored with subject matter experts on anti-racism within public institutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Where appropriate, offer the module or course to the public as a Burnaby community resource.

¹⁴ Welcome wagons typically consists of a welcome package for new residents that includes information about local services and resources offered within a municipality.

Key Area #3 Belonging & Inclusion

Belonging and inclusion are broad concepts to cover. In this key area, the focus is on enhancing City programs, services and operations by and for Burnaby’s racialized community members. Centering the experiences of racialized Burnaby residents and community members can further support a better process and reflection of offering and accessing City functions. These efforts have the potential to enrich the quality of life for our entire community by ensuring full social participation and social sustainability.

C	Proposed Actions	Staff Comments	Recommended Means for Public Participation (if applicable)
ACTIONS UNDERWAY AT THE CITY			
C1	Expand historical research and representation of Burnaby’s racialized communities (may be in partnership with the Community Heritage Commission).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Initial work has begun with the Reconciliation Framework with Burnaby’s Chinese Canadian Community. The City could also explore similar other historical research and representation projects. » The Burnaby Village Museum and the City’s Community Archives Strategy are both working to expand historical research and representation of Burnaby’s racialized communities (e.g. naming of public places, storytelling, commemorations, language). A staff working group exists with members from Archives, Burnaby Village Museum, Burnaby Art Gallery, Burnaby Public Library and Heritage Planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Leverage lived expertise within partnership agencies (e.g. Burnaby Inter-Agency Council, Burnaby Together, Simon Fraser University Anti-Racism Alliance, etc.) as thought partners. » Convene community-based, topic-specific advisory groups to serve as identity/ community-specific “touch points” that can help inform any of the above (e.g. South Asian History Working Group, other community-based cultural services groups, recreation advisory groups, etc.).
C2	Expand and deepen breadth of cultural performances, events, and artistic opportunities for IBPOC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Initial work has begun for IBPOC events (e.g. Truth and Reconciliation Day) but would be further explored. 	

FUTURE ACTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

C3	<p>Audit and review all public programs and operations using an anti-racist lens, focusing specifically on IBPOC residents' experiences. Audit should aim to identify any practices, behaviours, dynamics or protocols adopted by City operations or programs which undermine belonging, equity, inclusion, and respect of racialized folks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » An external audit of existing City services and programs would require technical skillsets in anti-racism. » The development of a City-wide EDI Framework would consider this action item. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Leverage lived expertise within partnership agencies (e.g. Burnaby Inter-Agency Council, Burnaby Together, Simon Fraser University Anti-Racism Alliance, etc.) as thought partners. » Convene community based, topic-specific advisory groups to serve as identity/ community-specific "touch points" that can help inform any of the above (e.g. South Asian History Working Group, other community-based cultural services groups, recreation advisory groups, etc.).
C4	<p>Encourage the expansion of recreation programming options and community centre access to ensure full participation, access and inclusion of all City of Burnaby residents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » This action would require conducting a review of existing and future recreation program options that are accessible and inclusive for Burnaby residents. The first step would be to identify the implications for staff and resource needs. 	
C5	<p>Explore and integrate IBPOC experiences into Parks redevelopment and revitalization plans, particularly around belonging, safety, and access.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » This action could be explored by identifying and setting up a process for future park redevelopment/ revitalization plans for Burnaby IBPOC residents. 	

Key Area #4: Engagement & Evaluation

Work to continue dialogue, engagement and communication on these topics can provide opportunities to meaningfully obtain input, feedback and expertise of ongoing anti-racism work at the City. There is room to improve mechanisms to report and respond to incidents of racism and/or discrimination in civic facilities appropriately.

D	Proposed Actions	Staff Comments	Recommended Means for Public Participation (if applicable)
ACTIONS UNDERWAY AT THE CITY			
D1	Publicly acknowledge and apologize for past and current measures, decisions, bylaws and policies that have adversely impacted racialized community members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » This action has been initiated through public statements from the City regarding their commitments to past and present realities of racialized communities (e.g. Reconciliation Framework for Chinese Canadians in Burnaby, Community Archives Strategy). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Opportunities to acknowledge the historical experiences of other racialized communities within Burnaby could be further explored. » Leverage lived expertise within partnership agencies (e.g. Burnaby Inter-Agency Council, Burnaby Together, Simon Fraser University Anti-Racism Alliance, etc.) as partners. » Convene community based, topic-specific advisory groups to serve as identity/ community-specific “touch points” that can help inform any of the above (e.g. South Asian History Working Group, other community-based cultural services groups, recreation advisory groups, etc.).

FUTURE ACTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

D2	Leverage expertise of community-based, topic-specific advisory groups to provide feedback on City communications and protocols that ensure inclusive, respectful, and bias-free communication, publications, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » This action would be done with existing agencies. A process on consultation and input with City's Communications and Marketing would be required. » The City's Communications and Marketing team has recently consulted with community agencies regarding a City Translation Policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Future consultation processes could be developed with community agencies, such as the Translation Policy.
D3	Survey the public to establish a reporting mechanism after experiencing racism while attending a civic facility or participating in City-run programs or services. This should include questions to understand how residents would expect the City to respond, and what sort of user experience would be ideal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Survey development and process would need further exploration. Staff have conducted an internal EDI Assessment to establish needs and gaps within City staff. » Further review into the City's surveys and privacy assessments to include anti-racism language would be an important consideration (personal information collection, storage, or use). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Public survey to be hosted through the City's YourVoice public engagement platform.
D4	Establish a communications secretariat to develop a strong narrative on the anti-racist work being done at the City.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » This action would need further exploration on coordinated and centralized communication efforts on anti-racism. Staff and resource implications would need to be identified. 	
D5	Develop a clear reporting system for the public to report instances of discrimination or racism which occur while in a civic facility or attending a city program/service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » This action would need further exploration. Mechanisms to develop feedback on reported items would require appropriate City process, policy and training. 	
D6	Develop a feedback loop so that all reports are directly responded to by the appropriate business area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » A feedback mechanism could be modelled after the reporting mechanism required by the Accessible BC Act. 	

D7	Wherever appropriate, anonymize and share the reported experiences of racism across the organization through a secretariat or body, as well as responses or actions taken to address racism.	» This action would require further exploration on the mechanisms within Action D4 above.	
D8	Establish a scheduled review of reported incidents of racism, and integrate any key action areas into guidelines or protocol to enhance anti-racism, belonging, and safety across all relevant program areas.	» This action of reporting on work processes would need further exploration and coordination amongst departments.	
D9	Develop pathways to obtain feedback from residents regarding past and present City policies and bylaws (e.g. graffiti, transit, public safety) and their relationship to creating a sense of belonging, safety, inclusion, respect, etc.	» Mechanisms to develop feedback on reported items would be needed.	» Means for public participation would be included as part of this action.
D10	Ensure that feedback obtained from residents informs a prompt anti-racist update, revision or redevelopment of city policies, bylaws, etc.	» Processes to provide quality customer service responses regarding feedback would need to be determined.	

6.0 Next Steps

As noted in section 5.2, the City has already started to implement actions that align with the proposed anti-racism framework in several areas. Further work to develop an implementation and monitoring plan with appropriate staffing and resourcing from the City is needed to prioritize and navigate key areas and future actions for consideration. An implementation plan will also assist staff to better understand the scope of work in relation to existing and ongoing priorities at the City. As an interim measure, staff have identified that anti-racism work can be aligned and integrated with existing corporate equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives underway and can serve to augment policies, plans and programs.

7.0 Conclusion

Burnaby is a hyper-diverse community. Understanding the past history of racial inequities, exclusion and discrimination as well as acknowledging rising incidents of racism and discrimination today is not only a challenge in Burnaby, but nationwide. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the impact on race-based hate crimes, and the consequences for individuals and communities are still ongoing and lasting.

The Burnaby Anti-Racism Framework report offers an opportunity for the City to lead efforts on anti-racism and in the broader work of equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging. The framework identifies where the City of Burnaby currently stands on anti-racism and where further work can go. Anti-racism work is complex, iterative, and evolving, all of which can be a rewarding challenge worth pursuing.

8.0 End Notes

- i Statistics Canada. 2023. 1996 and 2021 Census.
- ii Burnaby Village Museum. History of Burnaby Resource guide: Accessed from: <https://www.burnabyvillagemuseum.ca/assets/Resources/History%20of%20Burnaby%20Resource%20Guide.pdf>
- iii Statistics Canada. 2023. Police-reported hate crime in Canada, 2021. Accessed from: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2023026-eng.htm>
- iv Jing Hui Wang and Greg Moreau. 2022. Police-reported hate crime in Canada, 2020. Accessed from: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2022001/article/00005-eng.htm>
- v BC's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner. 2023. From Hate to Hope: Report of the Inquiry into hate in the COVID-19 Pandemic. Accessed from: https://bchumanrights.ca/wp-content/uploads/BCOHR_C_Hate-in-the-pandemic.pdf
- vi Burnaby Now. 2021. Burnaby sees 350% spike in anti-Asian hate crimes during COVID-19: police. Accessed from: <https://www.burnabynow.com/local-news/burnaby-sees-350-spike-in-anti-asian-hate-crimes-during-covid-19-police-3637603>
- vii Drazen Manojlovic. 2021. Report to the Vancouver Police Board. Accessed from: <https://vancouverpoliceboard.ca/police/policeboard/agenda/2021/0218/5-1-2102P01-Year-end-2020-KPI-Report.pdf>
- viii Government of Canada. 2019. Building a Foundation for Change: Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy 2019-2022. Accessed from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/anti-racism-engagement/anti-racism-strategy.html>
- ix Government of British Columbia. Multiculturalism BC. Accessed from: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/multiculturalism-anti-racism/multiculturalismbc>
- x Government of British Columbia. 2022. Anti-Racism Data Act. Accessed from: <https://antiracism.gov.bc.ca/data-act/>
- xi City of Vancouver. 2020. Diversity on Advisory Bodies Policy. Accessed from: <https://policy.vancouver.ca/COUN004.pdf>