



Nora Hendrix Place Mural Muralist: Ejiwa "Edge" Ebenebe: Remember -
Photo: Nadia Carvalho

Addressing Anti-Black Racism and Historical Discrimination: Interim Report

Council Presentation

September 27, 2022



Land Acknowledgement

We recognize we are gathered on the unceded homelands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

We believe that advancing Indigenous sovereignty and Black liberation are deeply and inextricably linked to one another and we remain committed to advancing both.



Photo by Vancouver Archives VANOC

Gratitude and Positionality

- Staff acknowledge the contributions, resilience and strength of Black and African diaspora communities in the face of historic and ongoing injustices and oppression.
- Gratitude to all who have contributed to address racism in Vancouver, including members of the Community Advisory Committee, the research assistant, Internal Staff Working Group, Black, Indigenous and staff of colour who share their personal and professional commitment to the work of anti-racism and cultural redress.



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

- A. THAT Council receive this interim report as an update of work to date on addressing anti-Black racism and historic discrimination.
- B. THAT Council direct staff to conduct further community conversations with a broader cross section of Vancouver's Black and African diaspora communities to inform the finalization of the City's anti-Black racism and cultural redress strategy
- C. THAT Council direct staff to create partnerships with academics and historians to carry out research and analysis of the history of Black and African diaspora communities in Vancouver
- D. THAT Council direct staff to allocate annual funding to community initiatives that further the City's anti-Black racism response.
- E. THAT Council request the Mayor, as Chair of the Vancouver Police Board, to share this interim report and provisional priority actions for information with the Vancouver Police Board.
- F. THAT Council direct staff to share this interim report and provisional priority actions for information with other governmental and public organizations

Cultural Redress: Emerging Approach

- Redress for historic discrimination is an expansive concept that has been implemented in international contexts but is new to the City and in this context aims to build relationships of trust with Black and African diaspora communities.
- City principles and practices for anti-racism and cultural redress are emerging through our work with impacted communities. This work with Black and African diaspora communities marks the recognition that written and unwritten policies, practices and procedures that govern people are not race-neutral and should be addressed according to the impacts they have on communities.
- Cultural redress must be approached in consideration of the perspectives of x^wməθk^wəy' əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətał (Tseil-Waututh) Nations and specific communities seeking cultural redress.



Source: Vancouver Archive. Fielding William Spotts at Hogan's Alley, 1935.

About Anti-Black Racism

Historically, myths and stereotypes were created and used to justify slavery and the torture of enslaved African people.

Anti-Black racism is prejudice, attitudes, beliefs, stereotyping and discrimination that is directed at people of African descent and is rooted in their unique history and experience of enslavement and the legacy of that enslavement suffered by Africans and people of African descent

-

UN Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent



Anti-Black Racism in Canada

- Anti-Black racism has its roots in the colonial systems that created Canada.

"Anti-Black racism is deeply entrenched in Canadian institutions, policies and practices, such that it is either functionally normalized or rendered invisible to the larger white society."

-
Government of Canada

- Structural anti-Black racism lies at the core of many Canadian institutions today and is manifest in the social, economic, and political marginalization of African Canadians.
- Disproportionate numbers of people of African descent continue to live in poverty and poor health, have low educational attainment and are overrepresented in the criminal justice system.



Muralist: Anthony Joseph, Hope thru the Ashes Photographer: Ben Nelms, CBC

Experiences of Black Communities in Canada

- The contributions of Black people can be traced back to generations of Black Canadians that have advanced the economic, political, social, and cultural welfare of Canada, spanning every province and territory – much remains to be done to address the injustices that have and continue to negatively impact these communities.
- Black and African diaspora communities in Vancouver are not a monolith. There are diverse experiences within and among these communities, requiring an intersectional approach to address compounding impacts, and fostering opportunities and priorities important to growth, development and prosperity in these communities.



Impacts of Anti-Black Racism in Vancouver

The Black population in Canada is diverse and comprises 3.5% of Canada's total population, 1.2% of Metro Vancouver, and 1.09% of the City of Vancouver.

Labor market & Economic Disparities: In Vancouver, 29% of Black people experience income poverty, compared to 20% of the overall population.

Inequalities in the Justice System: Black people are grossly overrepresented in mental health incidents, strip searches, and arrests – recent example of the wrongful handcuffing and detaining of retired BC Supreme Court Justice Selwyn Romilly.

Barriers to Educational Achievement: Black residents in the City are less likely to have postsecondary degrees – impacting employment and prosperity.

Black Erasure & Displacement: Targeted revitalization and/or urban renewal has displaced Black communities from Vancouver, including from Hogan's Alley. This dispersal has negatively impacted home ownership, housing tenure and community connections.



Source: Vancouver Archive. View of Hogan's Alley.



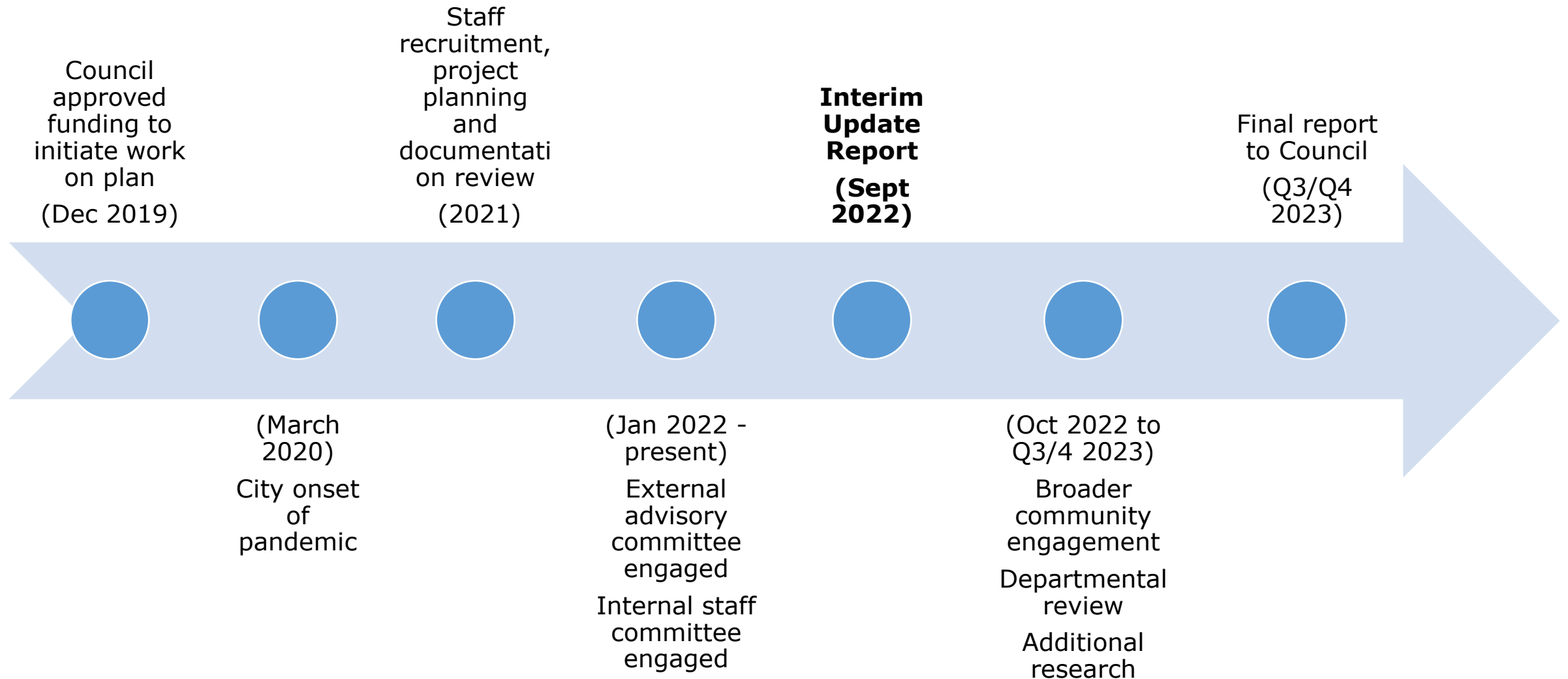
Source: Vancouver Archive. Mrs. Sullivan's House.

COV: Responses to Date

- Canada prohibits racial and other forms of discrimination and intolerance in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Criminal Code, and Federal, Provincial and Territorial Human Rights statutes.
- Addressing anti-Black racism is a Human Rights issue.
- City has acknowledged and celebrated Black History Month since 2011.
- City recognized erasure of Hogan's Alley in the NEFC Plan and outlined commitments to redress in the Plan.
- Equity Framework outlines systemic racism and racial justice as a key component of equity work.
- Council approved a one-time funds of \$200,000 in late 2019 to develop a community-engaged response to historic discrimination and ongoing anti-Black racism.
- Council passed a motion to recognize August 1 as Emancipation Day in Vancouver in 2020.



Project Process to Date



Advisory Committee: Key Areas of Concern

- Access to Jobs and Economic Wellbeing
- Affordable Housing and Spaces
- Justice System: Policing Black Lives
- Education System
- Presence and Visibility



Priority 1: Economic Wellbeing & Prosperity



Partner with Black and African diaspora community members, businesses and social enterprises to address poverty, advance community economic development and prosperity in Black and African diaspora communities.

Priority 2: Addressing Systemic Anti-Black Racism



Work to eliminate systemic racism within City of Vancouver as an employer and service provider to take action against anti-Black racism and advocate to other levels of government, other governmental organizations, non-governmental/public organizations to take action against anti-Black racism.

Priority 3: Improving Impact on Black Communities



The City to provide appropriate resources and direct staff to create ethically sound ways to better understand the experiences of Black community members in Vancouver that include collecting race-based data, to reveal:

- a. How Black people are impacted by City-led programs and initiatives and;
- b. How human resources practices impact Black staff and leadership diversity in the City.

Priority 4: Culturally Relevant Planning Processes



Source: City of Vancouver

The City integrate culturally relevant and safe planning processes for urban development, urban design, public space design, housing development, and preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage of Black and African diasporic people.

Next Steps

- Review draft priorities and recommendations with broader consultation and engagement with Black and African diaspora community members.
- Concurrent engagement with internal City departments.
- A final report with actions, timelines, budget requests and a plan for ongoing reporting to Council will be presented thereafter.



Final Remarks

This Interim Report is an initial step by the City of Vancouver towards cultural redress for Black and African diaspora communities and addressing anti-Black racism. There is a lot of ground to cover to repair harms, build trust, uphold the rights and dignity of Black and African diaspora peoples and to work alongside them in creating prosperous communities.

Precious Fruit Muralist: Pearl Low | 盧寶珠

