

Racism Free Edmonton Action Plan Update

Recommendation:

That the September 15, 2009, Deputy City Manager's Office report 2009DCM054 be received for information.

Report Summary

This report summarizes actions taken by Administration to implement the City Council approved Racism Free Edmonton Action Plan.

Previous Council/Committee Action

- At the September 28, 2009, Agenda Review Committee meeting, the September 15, 2009, Deputy City Manager's Office report 2009DCM054 was postponed to the October 21, 2009, Executive Committee meeting.

- At the September 29, 2008, City Council meeting, the following motion was passed:

That the Racism Free Edmonton Action Plan, as outlined in Attachment 4 of the September 9, 2008 Deputy City Manager's Office report 2008DCM013, be approved.

Report

The approved Action Plan requires that annual reports be provided to City Council.

Racism Free Edmonton is a collaborative, multi-level project to engage various partners in the

elimination of racism in Edmonton. Racism Free Edmonton's approval and implementation addresses the commitments made by the City in its Declaration of Membership in the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination.

The Racism Free Edmonton Action Plan was developed in consultation with the community and approved by City Council. Since its approval, priority has been given to securing funding for the initiative and strengthening relations with and developing the governing structures needed to effectively collaborate with community partners.

The City has been successful in its applications for funding, and has subsequently been awarded the following federal and provincial grants to support implementation of the Action Plan:

- Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Multiculturalism Programs – \$155,906 over three years (2008-2011).
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada, ISAP – \$91,154 over one year (2009-2010).
- Alberta Human Rights Citizenship and Multiculturalism Education Fund – \$101,650 over one year (2009-2010).

In May 2009, the Diversity and Inclusion Branch hired a coordinator and administrator to create and support the governing and operational structures that will drive implementation.

On May 25, 2009, the first meeting of the Chief Executive Officer Committee took place, chaired by the Deputy City Manager. During the meeting,

representatives from Edmonton Police Service, school boards and post-secondary institutions affirmed commitments toward collaborative action directed toward the achievement of the Racism Free Edmonton objectives as well as improved efforts toward inclusion within their own institutions and organizations.

On June 22, 2009, the Racism Free Edmonton Management Committee, chaired by the Diversity and Inclusion Branch Manager, met to review the Action Plan and give preliminary consideration to priorities for action. The Racism Free Edmonton project now incorporates fourteen community and institutional partners committed to addressing systemic and institutionalized racism.

In addition to this planning work, Racism Free Edmonton has supported several community events that highlight the importance of addressing racial discrimination and promoting greater inclusion of racialized groups (see Attachment 1).

In the coming year, the Chief Executive Officer and Management Committees will turn their attention to implementing the various elements of the Racism Free Edmonton Action Plan, including the creation of working groups in each of six priority areas: education, employment, justice & policing, housing, media, and youth (see Attachment 2).

The Diversity and Inclusion Branch provided City of Edmonton representation at the Second Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination Annual Meeting, held in Calgary on March 19,

2009. At the meeting, representatives from 20 municipalities continued to work on a strategy to establish a National Secretariat, possibly in partnership with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

In November 2009, the City of Edmonton was asked to represent Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination at the World Urban Forum 4 in Nanjing, China. Supported by the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, the City presented its Diversity and Inclusion and Racism Free Edmonton initiatives to an international audience.

The Forum theme was Harmonious Urbanization and was attended by thousands of delegates from around the world. The event showcased initiatives and provided educational workshops in the areas of environment, transportation, urban planning, human migration and social integration of diverse populations.

As well, the City of Edmonton has joined with other Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination members in Alberta's Provincial Network of Welcoming and Inclusive Communities. The provincially funded initiative is coordinated through the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association. Diversity and Inclusion Branch provided representation to the first Network Conference September 14 and 15, 2009 in Edmonton.

Through the Network, the City of Edmonton has also been invited to provide input into Alberta Employment and Immigration's consultation regarding the development of its Immigration and Settlement Policy

Framework – Welcoming Communities Program. The City is preparing to propose that the province implement a number of strategies and programs to support municipalities in their efforts to welcome newcomers.

This report has been reviewed by Chief M. Boyd, Edmonton Police Service.

Policy

- C538 – Diversity and Inclusion
- C529 – Immigration and Settlement

Focus Area

Improve Edmonton's Liveability:

- Enhance social connectedness for all citizens;
- Reduce and prevent crime in our: transit, downtown and communities;
- Reduce litter, graffiti and vandalism in target areas;
- Preserve, celebrate and support Edmonton's heritage, arts and culture;
- Improve community engagement and participation.

Public Consultation

The Racism Free Edmonton Action Plan was developed through substantial public consultation with community organizations, institutions and the general public.

Attachments

1. 2009 Community Events
2. Upcoming 2009 – 11 Priorities

Others Reviewing this Report

- Chief M. Boyd, Edmonton Police Service

2009 Community Events

On March 21, the *United Against Racism Gala* was held, a cooperative effort of the Northern Alberta Alliance on Race Relations (NAARR) and Racism Free Edmonton. The event attracted over 140 participants and Mayor Mandel and Councillor Sohi publicly declared the City's commitment to responding effectively to racial discrimination through the RFE Initiative.

As well, the City supported the coordination of three intercultural public education events that promote greater inclusion of racialized groups:

- The *Roundtable Storytelling Event* took place on May 15, 2009 and was attended by 50 people from diverse nations. Participants shared their stories of how they came to be in Edmonton and reflected on what it means to be building community together in Edmonton. The event was jointly sponsored by the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights, and City of Edmonton.
- The June 13 & 14 2009 *Africa Days Festival* was attended by more than 800 people from 11 African countries. The festival included music, dance, food, creative arts, sporting events and an arts marketplace. The event was a joint venture that included the Africa Centre, John Humphrey Centre and Racism Free Edmonton
- On June 27, 2009, during *World Refugee Day*, an awareness and celebration event was held. The event, planned by refugee youth and attended by hundreds of people, was presented by the John Humphrey Centre with support from Racism Free Edmonton. Members of civic and provincial government participated as did representatives of Edmonton Public Schools.

Upcoming 2009-11 Priorities

The first biennial RFE Action Planning Summit is being planned for February 2010. The Summit will provide the opportunity for individuals and groups to come together with institutional leaders and key decision makers to dialogue about issues of racial discrimination and social exclusion. There will also be a public education component to the gathering.

Terms of Reference and resource materials for racism dialogue circles, neighbourhood circles to explore social exclusion and youth dialogue circles are currently being prepared in cooperation with community agencies.

Planning is also underway on:

- a Public Response System to effectively respond to racist motivated incidents in the community;
- the creation of the Racism Free Edmonton Website, which will coordinate information from RFE's 14 community partners;
- public awareness campaigns for December 10 and March 21;
- a Multicultural Recognition Awards program;
- a Youth engagement project;
- information sessions for tenants in various languages; and
- a major public education campaign for 2010-2011;
- coordination of at least 4 community events per year. The next scheduled intercultural event is a Community Citizenship Ceremony, to take place in late 2009 or early 2010; and
- support for a major collaborative event on March 21, 2010, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.