

# Council Memo



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To	<b>City Council</b>
Service Area	Office of the Chief Administrative Officer
Date	Monday, April 19, 2021
Subject	<b>Systemic Racism: Local Data and Municipal Leadership</b>

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This memo provides Council with information about the forthcoming Council Workshop titled *Systemic Racism: Local Data and Municipal Leadership* on April 19, 2021. This workshop follows the November 5, 2020 Council training [Introductory session—Our Shared Journey: Unpacking Systemic Racism](#), which was the first step on a shared learning journey about systemic racism.

On January 25, 2021 when Council voted unanimously to join the [UNESCO Coalition of Inclusive Communities](#), the City of Guelph committed to [10 Common Commitments](#), which cover areas of municipal responsibility. Those commitments are organized into three groupings:

- The municipality as a guardian that respects the public interest
- The municipality as an organization that upholds human rights
- The municipality as a community that promotes diversity

Further, as part of joining the Coalition, the City agreed to develop an action plan. Learning and understanding how systemic racism impacts many of Guelph's residents, visitors, organizations, businesses and institutions is foundational to the ability of Guelph City Council and staff to support lasting, meaningful change.

Ensuring that guiding strategy and policy reflects this change is critical. Part of the City's work is to revise Guelph's Community Plan, and the City is committed to following community leadership in order to co-create an action plan to set the community standard for the elimination of systemic racism.

This work is core to acting on our corporate mission, vision and values and will ensure we are making meaningful progress towards the goals of our Strategic Plan, Guelph. Future Ready in an inclusive and equitable way.

**Workshop Purpose:** More than ever, the Guelph community understands that despite progress, discrimination continues to be a fact of life for many residents. As with any issue, we need to take an evidence-based approach to understanding the problem if we hope to create real solutions. To take that type of approach, we need good quality local data that is accessible to everyone working to make change.

The City of Guelph also has the benefit of being able to learn from internal staff expertise already applying an equity lens to initiatives and services as well as municipal colleagues in our region and across the country who are tackling systemic racism in its many forms and in their own contexts.

**Outcomes of the Workshop:** The outcomes of the workshop are to support Council to:

- Better understand local data about race and discrimination: At this workshop, Councillors will learn about relevant local and other race-related data, including more information about newcomers compiled by the Guelph Wellington Local Immigration Partnership (GWLIP) and Immigrant Services Guelph Wellington. The City's Community Plan team is partnering with the GWLIP on a survey they are conducting to understand local experiences of discrimination in Guelph. The survey is a partnership with eight Local Immigration Partnerships in the region and the results of the data are expected to be available in April/May.
- Learn from municipal best practice: Council will learn from a panel of experts who are doing anti-racism work in municipalities and will talk about ways local governments can contribute to the elimination of systemic racism by supporting community efforts and by looking at municipal policies, services and governance practices.

### **Additional, recommended community-led learning opportunity**

#### **Guelph Black Heritage Society to host Anti-Racism Summit**

The April 19 Council Workshop is intended to give the Mayor and Councillors a better understanding of how members of the Guelph community experience discrimination (depending on survey timing), and to provide a better understanding of the role municipalities can play in applying an equity lens to their own policies, services and governance practices as well as supporting their community to tackle systemic racism.

Equipped with that knowledge, Council will be able to take full advantage of the learning opportunities being presented by the Guelph Black Heritage Society (GBHS) at the inaugural #ChangeStartsNow Anti-Racism Summit from April 29 to May 2, 2021.

This multi-day summit will bring together speakers to address racism with the goal to engage and educate the community, as well as empower them to take action to dismantle racism in all its forms in the Guelph community and beyond.

The City of Guelph Community Plan team is partnering with the GBHS to support a Town Hall on the first day of the Summit for the community to discuss actions and strategies to reach Guelph's goal to set the community standard for the elimination of systemic racism.

Information can soon be found on the [GBHS website](#).

#### **Related Council reports**

July 24, 2020 Council Info report [City of Guelph Commitment to Diversity Inclusion and Anti-racism Initiatives](#)

November 16, 2020 Council training [Introductory Session--Our Shared Journey: Unpacking Systemic Racism](#)

November 27, 2020 Info report [An update on Guelph's commitment to antiracism, diversity and inclusion](#)

January 11, 2021 Info report [Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities](#)

## **Attachments**

None

### **This memo was approved by:**

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