
From: Marisa Carpino
Chief Administrative Officer

Subject: 2024 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report & 2025 Work Plan
File: A-1440

Recommendation:

1. That Report CAO 09-25 regarding the City of Pickering's 2024 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report & 2025 Work Plan be received for information.
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Executive Summary: The purpose of this report is to share the 2024 EDI Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Annual Report, as set out in Attachment 1. The City of Pickering's EDI Strategy outlines four areas of focus that guide collaborative work to enhance equity, diversity and inclusion in Pickering. These four areas are:

1. Education and Awareness
2. Structure and Resources
3. Community Consultation and Engagement
4. Policies, Programs, and Practices
5. Measurement and Accountability

The 2024 Annual Report highlights these areas of focus and some of the key achievements that were driven by them.

Key achievements include: Together We Rise Durham; Black History Month Celebration; International Women's Day Celebration; Pride Durham Annual Pride Parade and Festival; National Indigenous People's Day Big Drum Social; Youth Pride Durham; Emancipation Day Celebration; Pickering Anti-Black Racism Taskforce International Day for People of African Descent Community Celebration; Durham Region Municipal DEI Symposium; 3rd Annual Truth and Reconciliation Community Gathering; and Pickering Anti-Black Racism Taskforce Black Joy Holiday Market.

The annual report is publicly accessible on the City's website and will be promoted through the City's corporate channels to raise awareness and encourage resident involvement in equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives.

2025 Workplan

The EDI team is involved in a number of initiatives planned for 2025 which are also guided by the four areas of focus outlined in the strategic plan. These initiatives include, but are not limited to, EDI focused policies, protocols and trainings, collaborating with equity-seeking groups in Pickering to enhance inclusion and relationship building efforts, and developing internal EDI reference guides.

Relationship to the Pickering Strategic Plan: The recommendations in this report respond to the Pickering Strategic Plan Priorities of Advocate for an Inclusive, Welcoming, Safe & Healthy Community; Strengthen Existing & Build New Partnerships; and, Foster an Engaged & Informed Community.

Financial Implications: There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

Discussion: The City of Pickering is currently implementing its EDI strategy, which was endorsed by Council in 2024 (Resolution #491/24). This endorsement marked a historic milestone for the municipality, as it was Pickering’s first formally-adopted EDI Strategy. The Plan outlines four areas of focus that provide a framework for fostering an equitable, diverse and inclusive community.

In 2024, City staff, in collaboration with the Pickering Anti-Black Racism Taskforce (PABRT) and key community partners, undertook several initiatives aligned with the Strategy. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

Name of Initiative	Description
Together We Rise Durham: Black History Month Celebration	The Region of Durham, in collaboration with Pickering, other local municipalities, and community organizations, hosted a Black History Month celebration at the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex.
International Women’s Day Celebration	The Region of Durham partnered with Pickering and other municipalities and organizations across the region to honour and celebrate the achievements and contributions of women in our communities.
Pride Durham Annual Pride Parade and Festival	The City of Pickering partnered in the 2024 Pride Durham Annual Pride Parade as a walking group with support from more than 15 City staff members from various departments, and members from Pickering committees and taskforces.
National Indigenous Peoples Day Big Drum Social	Durham Community Health Centre partnered with the City of Pickering to bring the Annual Big Drum Social to Esplanade Park. This event is Durham Region’s largest gathering for National Indigenous Peoples Day.
Youth Pride Durham	The City of Pickering partnered with Youth Pride Durham for a safe and inclusion event for 2SLGTQIA+ communities and allies.
Emancipation Day Celebration	The Region of Durham partnered with several community organizations and municipalities across the region, held in

Name of Initiative	Description
	Esplanade Park, to address anti-Black racism through education and celebration of Emancipation Day.
Pickering Anti-Black Racism Taskforce International Day for People of African Descent Community Celebration	The Pickering Anti-Black Racism Taskforce hosted the 2 nd Annual International Day for People of African Descent Community Celebration in partnership with Durham Family Cultural Centre (DFCC), Durham One, and Ifarada Centre for Excellence in Esplanade Park.
Durham Region Municipal DEI Symposium	The Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce, in partnership with City of Pickering and other municipalities hosted the inaugural Durham Region Municipal DEI Symposium at the Durham Region Headquarters to promote a more inclusive and equitable community.
3 rd Annual Truth and Reconciliation Community Gathering	The City of Pickering and the Indigenous Relationship Building Circle, in partnership with various municipalities and libraries, hosted the community gathering in Esplanade Park in commemoration of the ongoing legacy of residential schools. The gathering featured reflections, teachings, and traditions with Indigenous community leaders.
Pickering Anti-Black Racism Taskforce Black Joy Holiday Market	The Pickering Anti-Black Racism Taskforce and DFCC joined the City of Pickering in hosting a holiday pop-up market, which included over 90 Black-owned local businesses, artists, and performers, and had more than 4000 attendees.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy

2024 marked a critical milestone as Council adopted the City's first Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy. This comprehensive, 10-year strategy serves as a guiding framework, outlining five key priority areas:

1. Education and Awareness
2. Structure and Resources
3. Community Consultation and Engagement
4. Policies, Programs, and Practices
5. Measurement and Accountability

To facilitate this work, the City underwent key organizational changes by integrating both the Accessibility and Community Safety & Well-Being staff members and corresponding work plans into the broader EDI portfolio. This integration has not only expanded the EDI team, but also reinforced the interconnectedness of these areas, enabling a more holistic approach to creating a safe, accessible, and inclusive Pickering .

2025 Work Plan

The EDI team will be involved in a number of initiatives planned for 2025 which include, but are not limited to:

A. Education and Awareness

- create an anti-hate public awareness campaign
- become Hidden Disabilities Sunflower (HDS) members by training and maintaining 80% of all City staff through the HDS program, to better equip City staff to interact with community members with hidden disabilities and raise public awareness
- provide interactive lunch and learns for staff on key topics in EDI, including, but not limited to, intersectionality, accessibility, 2slgbtqia+ inclusion, Indigenous relationship building, anti-racism and anti-hate
- provide EDI training for all staff, and provide Indigenous Cultural Awareness training for all managers and supervisors

B. Community Consultation and Engagement

- Facilitate pilot events and annual events to support and celebrate equity-seeking groups in Pickering with community partners, including, but not limited to:
 - Big Drum Social
 - Truth & Reconciliation Day
 - Full day Beading Workshop
 - Drumming Workshop Part 2
 - Youth Workshop with Pickering Public Library
 - Drum Making Workshop
 - supporting Indigenous vendor market fees (ArtFest, Cultural Fusion, Winter Nights)
 - Moccasin Identifier Project
 - Turtle Island Storytelling Honoraria for consultations
 - Pride Movie Night with Pickering Public Library
 - Canada Day Tranquility Tent
 - Emancipation Day in partnership with Durham Region
 - Durham Region Pride Parade
 - Drag Queen Storytime with Pickering Public Library
 - International Women's Day with Durham Region
 - Flag raisings ceremonies to recognize and honour equity-seeking groups in Pickering, including, Red Dress Day, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, Emancipation Day, Pride Month, National Indigenous History Month

C. Policies, Practices and Programs

- create an internal Anti-Hate Reporting Procedure
- review existing policies and procedures with an EDI lens
- create an inclusive language reference guide
- create an inclusive observances calendar

D. Structure and Resources

Onboard an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Specialist who will be dedicated to advising EDI policies, developing new EDI policies and procedures, reviewing existing policies with an EDI lens, and developing public education plans.

E. Measurement and Accountability

Focus on developing qualitative assessment tools such as case studies, success stories, stakeholder testimonials, policy & practice changes, and independent program review.

The EDI Strategy will continue to guide a collaborative approach to embedding the principals of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in the City of Pickering. This Annual Report reflects the City's dedication generating a more inclusive community where all members can thrive.

Attachment:

1. 2024 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report
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Prepared By:

Original Signed By:

Justine Wallace
(Acting) Supervisor Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

Approved/Endorsed By:

Original Signed By:

Mark Guinto
Division Head, Corporate
Communications & Public Affairs

MG:JW

Recommended for the consideration
of Pickering City Council

Original Signed By:

Marisa Carpino, M.A.
Chief Administrative Officer



Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

2024 Annual Report

—City of—
PICKERING





Land Acknowledgment

We acknowledge that the City of Pickering resides on land within the Treaty and traditional territory of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation and Williams Treaties signatories of the Mississauga and Chippewa Nations. This includes Alderville First Nation, Chippewas of Beausoleil First Nation, Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation, Chippewas of Rama First Nation, Curve Lake First Nation, Hiawatha First Nation and the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation. Pickering is also home to many Indigenous persons and communities who represent other diverse, distinct, and autonomous Indigenous nations. This acknowledgement reminds us of our responsibilities to our relationships with the First Peoples of Canada, and to the ancestral lands on which we learn, share, work, and live.

Equity, diversity, and inclusion practices and policies are often conflated with Indigenization, Decolonization and Reconciliation. It is important to recognize that, though they share common ground, Indigenization, Decolonization, and Reconciliation require distinct and focused efforts that address settler colonialism, honour Indigenous self-determination and sovereignty, and advance reconciliation as defined by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

Indigenous peoples have lived on Turtle Island, the land also referred to as North America, as stewards of the lands and waters since time immemorial with their own unique cultures, identities, traditions, languages and institutions. As the City of Pickering advances Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, we honour all Indigenous Peoples as rights holders and commit to building relationships of trust, respect, reciprocity, and friendship.

By actively engaging in relationship building, challenging colonial structures, and centering Indigenous knowledge and perspectives, we are reminded of our roots as Treaty peoples with responsibilities toward one another, protecting and preserving the safety, well-being, and inherent dignity of all people wherever this may be challenged.

Table of Contents

A Message from our Chief Administrative Officer	4
Summary of Events and Initiatives	5
Learning and Education	6
Pickering Anti-Black Racism Taskforce	9
Indigenous Relationship Building Action Plan	12
Community Initiatives and Partnerships	15
Community Recognition	18
Flag Raisings and Ceremonies	18

Meet the Team



Jaclyn San Antonio
Supervisor, Equity, Diversity,
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Elaine Knox
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Summary of 2024 Events and Initiatives

A MESSAGE FROM OUR Chief Administrative Officer

I am very pleased to share the second Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Annual Report - a reflection of the City of Pickering’s commitment to fostering a community that embraces and celebrates diversity, promotes inclusion, and advances equity for all.

The year 2024 marked a critical milestone as City Council adopted our very first Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy. This comprehensive, multi-year strategy serves as a guiding framework, outlining five key priority areas:

- 1. **Education and Awareness**
- 2. **Structure and Resources**
- 3. **Community Consultation and Engagement**
- 4. **Policies, Programs, and Practices**
- 5. **Measurement and Accountability**

To facilitate this work, the City underwent key organizational changes by integrating the Accessibility and Community Safety & Well-Being plans into the broader EDI portfolio. This integration has not only expanded the EDI team, but also reinforced the interconnectedness of these areas, enabling a more holistic approach to creating a safe, accessible, and inclusive Pickering.

Within this report, I am proud to share highlights of the many achievements from the past year, including community events, learning opportunities and resources, and community partnerships. Each milestone represents the collective efforts of City staff, community leaders, and residents who are united in vision and purpose.

As we look ahead, the City remains steadfast in our dedication to advancing EDI initiatives. This report is more than a summary of accomplishments - it is a reaffirmation of our commitment to creating a city where everyone belongs and has the opportunity to succeed, both today and for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Marisa Carpino

Chief Administrative Officer
City of Pickering

- Jan. 22-26:** Mental Health Awareness Week

Jan. 23: Mental Health Awareness Flag Raising

Feb. 1: Together We Rise Durham: Black History Month Celebration

Feb. 3: Cultural Expressions Black History Month

Mar. 5: International Women’s Day Celebration

Apr. 3: International Transgender Day of Visibility Flag Raising Ceremony

Apr. 26: Staff Lunch and Learn: Red Dress Indigenous Beading Workshop

May 1: National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and Two-Spirit People/ Red Dress Day Flag Raising Ceremony

May 27: EDI Strategy Officially Endorsed

May 30: Pride Month Flag Raising Ceremony

Jun. 2: Pride Durham Annual Pride Parade and Festival

Jun. 8: Pickering Public Library Drag Queen Storytime

Jun. 11: Staff Lunch and Learn: Pride and Gender Diversity in the Workplace

Jun. 17: Youth Pride Durham

Jun. 21: National Indigenous Peoples Day / National Indigenous History Month Flag Raising Ceremony

Jun. 21: Durham Community Health Center Big Drum Social

Jun. 22: Youth Pride Durham
- Jul. 26:** Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Training for Council with Allison Hector-Alexander

Aug. 1: Durham Region Emancipation Day Celebration

Aug. 8: Staff Lunch and Learn: Black Canadian History and Activism

Aug. 20: Staff Lunch and Learn: Learning American Sign Language and Providing Accessibility

Aug. 31: Pickering Anti-Black Racism Taskforce International Day for People of African Descent Community Celebration

Sep. 1-30: Orange Shirt Interactive Community Installation

Sep. 17: National Day for Truth and Reconciliation / Orange Shirt Day Flag Raising Ceremony

Sep. 20: Region of Durham Truth and Reconciliation Awareness Walk

Sep. 23: Staff Sharing Circle: Understanding Residential Schools

Sep. 30: 3rd Annual Truth and Reconciliation Community Gathering

Oct. 26: Durham Region DEI Municipal Symposium

Nov. 15, 23, 24: Pickering Anti-Black Racism Taskforce Black Joy Holiday Market

Nov. 19, 20: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Senior Management Training with Allison Hector-Alexander

Nov. 21: Staff Book Club Featuring, “My Mother’s Daughter” by Perdita Felicien

Dec. 9: Staff Lunch and Learn: Learning American Sign Language and Providing Accessibility



Learning and Education



Creating intentional learning opportunities is the first step in integrating equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) within all facets of the workplace and broader community. Focusing on areas such as anti-racism, decolonization, reconciliation, gender diversity, accessibility and social justice aims to challenge our own unconscious biases, address systemic inequalities and enhance cultural understanding.

Addressing and understanding these topics works to dismantle systemic barriers that exist within the public sector. This knowledge can empower staff and community leaders to challenge and change discriminatory practices, policies, and procedures. It allows individuals to develop a deeper appreciation for the diverse perspectives, experiences, and contributions of their colleagues and the communities they serve. This understanding fosters collaboration, empathy and respect, creating a more inclusive and equitable City that serves the needs of all communities.

Lunch & Learn Series

In 2024, staff were invited to respond to calls to action for continuing education with a series of new workshops including:



Red Dress Indigenous Beading Workshop with Janet Dugan and Judith Keesic

In honour of Red Dress Day and National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and Two-Spirit People (MMIWG2S), staff were joined by Indigenous Artisans Janet Dugan and Judith Keesic who guided participants through beading their own Red Dress Awareness pin using traditional beading techniques, and traditional medicines and materials.

Pride and Gender Diversity in the Workplace with Jake Farr

In honour of Pride Month, staff were joined by educator, social worker, and activist, Jake Farr for an open think workshop and discussion on the following topics: Canadian history and the 2SLGBTQIA+ community; transgender history; gender diversity and myths; the distinction between drag shows and drag story time; pride events and why they are important community celebrations.

Black Canadian History and Activism with Channon Oyeniran

Facilitated by historian, author, and educator Channon Oyeniran, participants were provided an overview of the Civil Rights Movement in Canada, that occurred between the 1940s and 1960s. Channon discussed topics including: The individuals who made long-lasting change and improvement for the rights of Black people in Canada; the organizations who made long-lasting change and improvement for the rights of Black people in Canada; and contemporary examples of the power of protest and fighting for the rights of Black people in Canada. This workshop provided an opportunity for attendees to think critically about historical and contemporary activism and the various experiences and contributions of Black people in Canada.

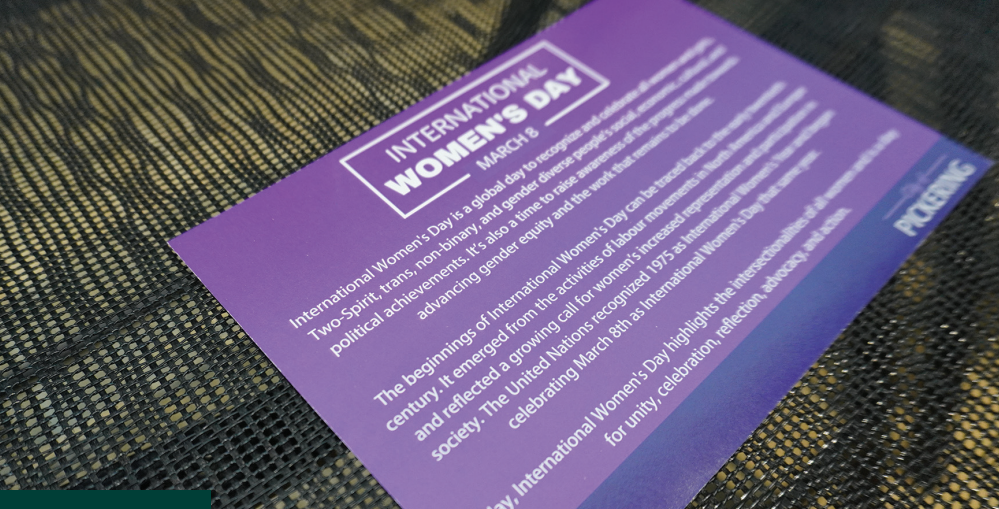
Learning American Sign Language and Providing Accessibility with Victoria Dwight and Nina Winiarczyk

Facilitated by the American Sign Language Coordinator, Curriculum Developer and Lecturer for the Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures at Toronto Metropolitan University, Nina Winiarczyk and ASL-English Interpreter and educator, Victoria Dwight, staff were invited to discover the world of Deaf culture and how to better provide accessibility for Deaf individuals. This participatory workshop encouraged participants to question their assumptions about what it means to be Deaf and provided practical communication tips for interacting with Deaf individuals, including practicing useful American Sign Language signs/phrases and learning about communicative technology.

Sharing Circle: Understanding Residential Schools with Karen Chaboyer

In honour of National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, staff were joined by Karen Chaboyer, Ojibwa mother and grandmother from Rainy River First Nations, a community in northwestern Ontario, and a residential school educator across the Greater Toronto Area. In this session, Karen shared her experiences as a Survivor of residential schools and provided education on how the tragedies of the residential school system across Canada has impacted individuals, families, communities and entire cultures to this day. As a sharing circle, participants were welcomed and encouraged to bring questions, thoughts and reflections to share.





Staff Book Club

In collaboration with the Pickering Public Library, the EDI Team brought a new learning opportunity to colleagues through a staff book club. Participants were provided with the chosen novel to read independently and later gather for a lunch & learn discussion. In November, staff read *My Mothers Daughter* by Perdita Felicien and came together to discuss, dissect, and share their thoughts on the novel.

Education Cards

Education cards were first developed in 2021 as a tool for community engagement and learning. In 2024, the EDI Team expanded this collection to acknowledge various days of significance including, National Day of Remembrance of the Quebec City Mosque Attack and Action Against Islamophobia, Pride Month, and International Day for People of African Descent. Education cards are used to facilitate the dissemination of information and resources, inspire individuals to take action, and promote a culture of continuous learning, engagement, and collaboration towards creating positive social change. These cards were designed to provide concise and impactful information on various topics while including important community resources for individuals seeking knowledge, understanding, and support. Education Cards can be found at the following city locations: City Hall Customer Care Front Desk, Pickering Public Library Central Branch, George Ashe Library, and Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Center.

EDI 2024 Overview

1000+

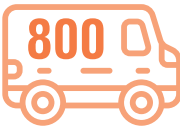
The EDI Team disseminated over **1000 education cards** throughout Durham Region



The EDI Team engaged over **80 staff members** in EDI focused workshops and trainings



The Pickering Anti-Black Racism Taskforce hosted a three-day Holiday Market attended by over **4000 people** across Durham Region



The Indigenous Relationship Building Action Plan supported the City of Pickering's 3rd Annual Truth and Reconciliation Community Gathering attended by over **800 local students** from various elementary and secondary schools and community members



Established in January 2021, the Pickering Anti-Black Racism Taskforce (PABRT) is a Council appointed body of community members, whose mandate is to address and combat anti-Black racism in all its forms within the City of Pickering and broader community. The PABRT actively work to dismantle systemic barriers and discriminatory practices that disproportionately affect Black communities, while aiming to increase understanding and awareness of the historical and contemporary issues faced by Black individuals. PABRT members play a vital role in fostering dialogue, advocating for change, and promoting social justice within the community. In 2024, the PABRT both partnered in and hosted carious community initiatives throughout the year including:

Together We Rise Durham: Black History, Intersectionality and Joy

February 1, 2024: The 2024 Together We Rise Durham: Black History, Intersectionality and Joy Black History Month celebration was hosted by the Regional Municipality of Durham, in partnership with Durham Regional Police Service, Canadian Jamaican Club of Oshawa, City of Oshawa, City of Pickering, Congress of Black Women Whitby/Oshawa, DurhamONE, Lakeridge Health, Municipality of Clarington, Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences, Pickering Anti-Black Racism Taskforce, The Township of Brock, Town of Ajax and Town of Whitby. The celebration took place at the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex in Pickering, bringing communities across Durham Region together for an uplifting evening of music, dance and a panel discussion featuring Debbie Miles-Senior, Dr. Andrew Bernard Thomas, Liza Arnason, and Shellene Drakes-Tull.

Cultural Expressions 17th Annual Black History Month Celebration

February 3, 2024: Cultural Expressions Art Gallery Inc. presented the 17th Annual Durham Black History Month celebration at J. Clarke Richardson Collegiate in Ajax, celebrating the beauty of Black culture and the diversity of the Black experience in Durham region. Hosted by Sean Mauricette, attendees enjoyed performances by Kunle, TracyJ and R.I.S.E. Edutainment and heard from the Black Speaker of the House of Commons, The Honourable Greg Fergus.

International Day for People of African Descent Celebration

August 31, 2024: The Pickering Anti-Black Racism Taskforce hosted the 2nd Annual International Day for People of African Descent Community Celebration in partnership with Durham Family Cultural Centre (DFCC), Durham One, and Ifarada Centre for Excellence in Pickering's Esplanade Park. The day included a Vendor Market with over 25 Black-Owned local businesses, a community Basketball tournament, cultural games and activities, and a painting workshop with local artist Lois on Canvas.

3rd Annual Black Joy Holiday Market and Afro-Caribbean Food Basket Initiative

November 15, 23, 24, 2024: The Pickering Anti-Black Racism Taskforce and DFCC joined the City of Pickering's first night of Winter Nights, City Lights Festival and Santa Claus Parade weekend, bringing the Black Joy Holiday Market to the community as a 3-day initiative beginning on November 15 and concluding with an independent weekend on November 23 and 24 at the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex.

Open to all community members, the holiday pop-up market included over 90 Black-owned local businesses, artists, and performers, and had more than 4000 people attend across its three days. The event coincided with a holiday food basket drive that provided Black families with culturally significant, Afro-Caribbean diasporic food baskets. A total of 24 families experiencing financial hardship and/or food insecurity were identified through community nomination and outreach, facilitated by networks such as the Black Queens of Durham, Black Durham Region Support, Black Durham Community Support, Black Event Connections, Black Moms Connection, and Black Parents Connect Durham.





Indigenous Relationship Building Action Plan



In 2020, the City of Pickering adopted a multi-year Indigenous Relationship Building Action Plan that focused on establishing meaningful and international relationships with diverse Indigenous communities. This led to the formation of the Indigenous Relationship Building Circle (IRBC), a local network of Indigenous residents, Indigenous-led organizations, and allies that come together to provide guidance and leadership on community initiatives that center the voices and honour the contributions, history and cultures of First Nations, Metis and Inuit Peoples.

Responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Call to Action 14 on "...the preservation, revitalization, and strengthening of Aboriginal languages and cultures..." and Call to Action 79 calling on government "...in collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal organizations, and the arts community to develop a reconciliation framework for Canadian heritage and commemoration," the Indigenous Relationship Building Action Plan supported the following community initiatives:

Durham Community Health Centre Big Drum Social

June 21, 2024: In honour of National Indigenous Peoples Day and National Indigenous History Month, Durham Community Health Centre partnered with the City of Pickering to bring the Annual Big Drum Social to Esplanade Park. A traditional celebration filled with music, dance, storytelling, and more, this event is Durham Region's largest gathering for National Indigenous Peoples Day where all are welcome to celebrate, learn, and connect with community.

Truth & Reconciliation Community Gathering

September 30, 2024: In commemoration of the ongoing legacy of residential schools, the IRBC and the City of Pickering hosted a community gathering in Esplanade Park in featuring reflections, teachings, and traditions with Indigenous community leaders. This gathering was presented in partnership with the Region of Durham, the Municipality of Clarington, and the Pickering Public Library. Attendees were invited to learn more about the meaning of Truth and Reconciliation, Indigenous traditions and practices, and cultural reclamation. The day included storytelling and spoken word from poet Sarah Lewis, a omen's





Community Initiatives and Partnerships

Drumming Circle, and various cultural dances from Chris Mejaki, Wynona Maracle, Kylie Soundy, Rielle Lantaigne and the Joly Family. This was Durham Regions largest National Truth and Reconciliation gathering in 2024, garnering participation from over 800 community members, residents, schools, and community organizations.

Orange Shirt Interactive Community Installation

September 1 – 30, 2024: In commemoration of the ongoing legacy of residential schools, the IRBC and the City of Pickering hosted a community gathering in Esplanade Park in featuring reflections, teachings, and traditions with Indigenous community leaders. This gathering was presented in partnership with the Region of Durham, the Municipality of Clarington, and the Pickering Public Library. Attendees were invited to learn more about the meaning of Truth and Reconciliation, Indigenous traditions and practices, and cultural reclamation. The day included storytelling and spoken word from poet Sarah Lewis, a Women's Drumming Circle, and various cultural dances from Chris Mejaki, Wynona Maracle, Kylie Soundy, Rielle Lantaigne and the Joly Family. This was Durham Regions largest National Truth and Reconciliation gathering in 2024, garnering participation from over 800 community members, residents, schools, and community organizations.



Community initiatives and partnerships play a vital role in the City's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy. Creating meaningful relationships with community organizations, partners, and other municipalities provides invaluable resources and support while navigating EDI spaces and discourse. These relationships have resulted in joint programming, sharing of best practices, and achieving a wider impact across communities in the Durham Region. Engaging in equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives with a collaborative approach fosters a sense of community and shared responsibility, leading to sustainable and meaningful outcomes.



International Women's Day Celebration

March 5, 2024: The Region of Durham partnered with municipalities and organizations across the region to host a free event, hosted at the Audley Recreation Centre. Honouring the achievements and contributions of women in our communities, the theme "Women Unite: Celebrating our diverse identities and experiences" was the focus of this event. The celebration featured keynote speaker Dr. Mary Anne Chambers, performances from local artists and a woman-in-business tradeshow.

Pride Durham Annual Pride Parade & Festival

June 2, 2024: The City of Pickering was a proud partner in the 2024 Pride Durham Annual Pride Parade hosted in the Town of Ajax. With support from more than 15 City staff members from various departments, volunteer community members, family and friends, the City of Pickering was well represented while walking alongside the community.

Pickering Public Library Drag Queen Storytime

June 8, 2024: In partnership with Durham Children's Aid Society and Youth Pride Durham, all libraries in Durham Region presented Drag Queen Story Time, featuring two local drag queens. This family-friendly program hosted at the Pickering Public Library Central Branch showcased stories celebrating diversity and inclusion, followed by musical performances and activities for children.

Youth Pride Durham

June 22, 2024: The City of Pickering partnered with Youth Pride Durham to bring a safe, inclusive celebration for youth, children and families who are part of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, as well as allies. This event championed acceptance through an afternoon of performances, music, dancing, and a community resource village.

Emancipation Day Celebration

August 1, 2024: The Region of Durham partnered with several community organizations and municipalities to host an Emancipation Day celebration hosted at the City of Pickering Esplanade Park, featuring live performances from local talent and black-owned local business vendors and organizations. With the theme "Courage from our Heritage, Empowerment for Tomorrow", this celebration was an opportunity to address anti-Black racism through education on Emancipation and create an avenue for community members to connect and learn in a welcoming and engaging environment.

Region of Durham Truth & Reconciliation Awareness Walk

September 20, 2024: The Indigenous Advocacy Subcommittee of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Working Group, in collaboration with the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Division and in partnership with the City of Pickering and Town of Whitby hosted a community walk in recognition of National Day for Truth and Reconciliation at the Durham Regional Headquarters in Whitby.

Durham Region DEI Municipal Symposium

October 26, 2024: The Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce in partnership with the Municipality of Clarington, City of Oshawa, City of Pickering and Town of Ajax hosted the inaugural Durham Region Municipal DEI Symposium at the Durham Region Headquarters. This event served as an opportunity for community leaders, committees, taskforces and working groups across the region to share goals, strategize for longer term sustainability and success and align goals and visions for a more inclusive and equitable Durham.





Community Recognition



Throughout the year, the City of Pickering collaborated with local community organizations to recognize and honour days of significance that aim to foster a culture of respect, understanding, and belonging within our community. These acknowledgements allow both City staff and community members to engage in meaningful conversations and learning that promote awareness and appreciation for different cultures, histories, and lived experiences. Going further, recognizing these days helps to raise awareness of the ongoing challenges faced by marginalized communities, encouraging dialogue and reflection.

2024 Flag Raisings and Ceremonies



- January:** Mental Health Awareness Week
- April:** International Transgender Day of Visibility
- May:** National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and Two-Spirit People/ Red Dress Day
- June:** Pride Month
- June:** National Indigenous Peoples Day/ National Indigenous History Month
- August:** Emancipation Day
- August:** International Day for People of African Descent
- September:** National Truth and Reconciliation Day/ Orange Shirt Day
- November:** Treaties Recognition Week





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