

Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI)

**Report to OPPI Council with
Final Recommendations of the
Anti-Black Racism in Planning (ABRP) Task Force**

September 24, 2021

Prepared for the OPPI by:

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A. Introduction

This report to the Ontario Professional Planners Institute Council consists of 14 recommendations of the Anti-Black Racism in Planning Task Force for approval by Council at their meeting on October 5, 2021.

Further to The Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI) Council Motion in September 2020. The OPPI Anti-Black Racism in Planning Task Force was established to develop a strategy and action plan to remove systemic barriers in planning practice that perpetuate anti-Black racism against Black communities and disproportionately limit employment opportunities for, and representation of, Black planners in the planning profession. By following through on [the Task Force Terms of Reference](#), Task Force Members (See Appendix 1) discussed the issues of anti-Black racism in planning in Ontario along three categories:

- Category #1 - Removing barriers on the journey to becoming a professional planner to address the lack of Black representation in the planning profession.
- Category #2 - Building and sharing knowledge about Black histories and histories of systemic anti-Black racism to educate planners throughout their journey from student to Continuous Professional Learning (CPL).
- Category #3 - Promoting a more informed planning practice that must recognize the diversity of the public and better engage with Black communities to address issues arising from their lived experiences.

Task Force members engaged in conversations from January 2021 to June 2021 following a process of discussion, recommendation development and revision as outlined in the process map developed under the leadership of the Task Force Co-Chairs (See Appendix 2). The Task Force worked with [Viswali Consulting](#) to generate draft final recommendations which were approved by the Task Force at their meeting on June 30, 2021.

In August 2021, the OPPI Anti-Black Racism in Planning Task Force draft recommendations were shared for review and comment with 42 invitees who would be referred to as an Advisory Group to the Task Force. Advisory Group invitees represented seven (7) categories or sectors informing professional planning, and reflected Ontario's regional diversity:

- private sector – planning
- public sector – planning
- public sector – policy
- public sector – education
- Ontario accredited university planning programs and university senior leadership
- professional associations, social benefit organizations, and entrepreneurs
- OPPI affiliate organizations

Advisory Group invitees are from senior levels of management and/or hold leadership roles. They were invited to respond to a series of questions based on their expertise and regarding the feasibility of implementing one or more specific recommendations. Twenty-three (23) out

of 42 Advisory Group members (i.e., 55%) responded to the Task Force’s invitation to provide input into the Task Force recommendations. A report summarizing the findings from the Advisory Group’s responses was prepared by Viswali Consulting, and informed minor revisions to the final recommendations of the Anti-Black Racism in Planning Task Force. Appendix 3 provides the Summary Report of the Advisory Group’s responses (without the edited recommendations – section D as the final revisions are provided in this report to OPPI Council).

One of the many valuable outcomes of the Advisory Group consultation process was identifying the need for a definition of anti-Black racism that could be foundational to the next phase of implementing the Task Force’s recommendation. The following definition, developed by Dr. Afua Benjamin and drawn from the [Black Health Alliance](#) was deemed to be an excellent starting point:

Anti-Black Racism is defined here as policies and practices rooted in Canadian institutions such as, education, health care, and justice that mirror and reinforce beliefs, attitudes, prejudice, stereotyping and/or discrimination towards people of Black-African descent.

In expanding this definition to the context of planning, anti-Black racism is also linked to barriers to employment and higher education and the need for an increased and sustained awareness of Black experiences, those related to the practice of planning and to strengthening and partnering with Black-led communities and organizations to support a more informed practice.

The final recommendations of the Anti-Black Racism in Planning Task Force (See Section B of this report) were approved by the Task Force at their final meeting on September 17, 2021. These recommendations align with OPPI’s overall strategic directions and were organised into four priority areas that emerged as the recommendations were consolidated:

1. Journey to Becoming a Professional Planner <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transforming Planning Education and Educational Outreach• Mentors, Sponsors, and Paid Internships• Addressing Financial Barriers
2. Cultivating Relationships with Diverse Black Organizations
3. Equity-focused Data, Policy Change, and Evaluation
4. Professional Development

The intended next step in this process will be to develop a plan for the implementation of the Task Force’s recommendations according to the timelines provided in Section B of this report.

B. OPPI Anti-Black Racism in Planning Task Force Final Recommendations

#	Detailed Recommendation for the OPPI Council	OPPI Staff and Council Thematic Area	Timeframe ¹		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Career PathProfessional DevelopmentPublic OutreachResearch/DataCurriculum Standards and Policy	Short term (6 months to 1 year completion)	Medium Term (1 to 3 years to completion)	Current and continuing
1. Journey to becoming a professional planner					
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Transforming Planning Education and Educational Outreach					
1.1	Connect directly with Black planning students in accredited university planning programs to better understand Black planning students’ needs and experiences, and conduct a stakeholder analysis and prepare a summary report of findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Career PathPublic Outreach	x		
1.2	Conduct educational outreach to OPPI’s Full and Retired Members and to universities, to bring mid-career or retired professional planners who identify as Black to speak directly to current and prospective Black planning students, so that the students: a) understand what the planners learned in planning school. b) gain exposure to the journey to becoming a professional planner from the standpoint of the professional’s own experience (i.e., the person’s career trajectory), and identify systemic barriers throughout this journey. c) early into their professional career, learn from the experiences of Black planners in specific workplace environments (e.g., municipal planning, consultancy, etc.) and develop a student peer support network.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Career PathProfessional DevelopmentPublic Outreach	x		
1.3	Work with Ontario accredited planning universities to: a) Write a letter addressed to planning schools that recognizes how the high cost of tuition for professional university degree programs is a significant barrier to including a diversity of Black students in the planning profession, and requests a list of resources and information on financial supports available for students (e.g., grants, scholarships, loans, and bursaries for students). b) engage in collaborative research to gather information about the barriers faced by Black planners in seeking employment and regarding the workplace conditions of employed Black planners, to better facilitate a more inclusive professional planning community. c) share information on the school’s progress in addressing anti-Black Racism in planning education to effect change in the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Career PathCurriculum and policy standardsResearch/Data	1.3a	1.3b	Further to 1.3b, some collaboration on research is underway.

¹ Understanding that these efforts will be prepared into an implementation plan; that it will be reviewed on an annual basis; and that they must feed into long-term relationship building, possibly over generations in order to bring these recommendations to full fruition.

#	Detailed Recommendation for the OPPI Council	OPPI Staff and Council Thematic Area	Timeframe ¹			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Career PathProfessional DevelopmentPublic OutreachResearch/DataCurriculum Standards and Policy	Short term (6 months to 1 year completion)	Medium Term (1 to 3 years to completion)	Current and continuing	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Mentoring, Sponsorship, and Paid Internships						
1.4	Develop a directory (on own or in partnership with others) of a wide range of professional planners (RPPs) and Black community-based planners to: a) highlight their specific areas of specialization (e.g., transportation planning, urban design, environmental, social planning, advocacy, etc.) to facilitate mentor and mentee networking opportunities. b) facilitate requests to match RPPs as official sponsors ⁱ to Black planners who are in their pre-candidacy to RPP. ⁱⁱ complement rather than replicate existing planner mentoring programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Career PathProfessional DevelopmentPublic OutreachResearch/Data		x (all)		
1.5	Implement reverse mentoring programs , through existing OPPI mechanisms, and innovate new avenues whereby early-and-mid-career Black planners can inform and mentor executive level planners on various topics of strategic and cultural relevance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Career PathProfessional Development	x			
1.6	OPPI will work closely with educational partners and employers to advocate for a system of paid student planning internships that: a) creates equitable opportunities for OPPI student members who self-identify as Black to have a paid summer student planning internship in their first year of a graduate planning program, or at some point during their 4-year undergraduate degree, and b) encourages accredited university planning programs in Ontario to undertake reviews of their internship programs and monitor outcomes linked to 1.6a. c) calls upon employers to value students and the future of the planning profession through paid student internships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Career PathProfessional DevelopmentPublic Outreach		x (all)		
1.7	Explore the potential for, and then, implement approaches to inform the education of the next generation of planners in K-12 about the planning profession (i.e., what planners do), such as: a) Connect with high school career counsellors in schools where there are planning courses offered already and in schools and with organizations serving Black youth to : <ul style="list-style-type: none">learn what has been effective and how mutual support can be fostered.Invite counsellors and organization representatives to attend sessions at the OPPI annual conference, university planning events, and/or OPPI District events, exchange knowledge, and encourage them to write an article in their professional magazine to promote the planning profession. b) Coordinate with CIP on the promotion of World Town Planning Day to connect university planning students to promote planning among high school students in their locales.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Career PathPublic Outreach		1.7 a, c, d, e, f	1.7b	

#	Detailed Recommendation for the OPPI Council	OPPI Staff and Council Thematic Area	Timeframe ¹		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career Path Professional Development Public Outreach Research/Data Curriculum Standards and Policy 	Short term (6 months to 1 year completion)	Medium Term (1 to 3 years to completion)	Current and continuing
	<p>c) Create an annual in-person planning and problem-solving competition for Grade 10 to 12 students, encouraging students who self-identify as Black to participate, (similar to DECA program see https://www.deca.org).</p> <p>d) Create an OPPI Ambassador program whereby RPPs are trained to give presentations about the planning profession to groups (e.g., including career and high school guidance counsellors; Rotary; other associations with educational and career-influencing potential) when invited to do so.</p> <p>e) Develop educational materials on planning as a profession, suitable for teachers in Grade 9 to 12, to incorporate into the high school curriculum, such as geography and civics subjects, and to offer greater exposure of students to the planning profession.ⁱⁱⁱ</p> <p>f) Build a "Careers in Planning" Website in partnership with PTIAs, CIP, and the PSB and market website through outreach methods noted in 1.7a to 1.7e.</p>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addressing Financial Barriers 					
1.8	<p>To reduce financial barriers of Black planners at different stages of their career journey OPPI will expand the OPPI award, scholarship, and bursary program(s) to include three categories of applicants:</p> <p>(1) Black high school students showing an interest in becoming planners (i.e., essay competition award).</p> <p>(2) Black students in accredited university planning programs who self-identify as Black (i.e., scholarship).</p> <p>(3) Black pre-candidate planners who are experiencing financial difficulty to defray costs associated with candidacy process (i.e., bursary).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career Path Public Outreach 		x	some fundraising underway through OPPI Forum Fridays
2. Cultivating Relationships with Diverse Black Organizations					
2.1	<p>Cultivate relationships and network with organizations and related professions to collaboratively:^{iv}</p> <p>a) Explore how OPPI members can learn from Black communities and reciprocate with information, support, guidance, and education in planning development decision making that affects Black communities.</p> <p>b) Address anti-Black racism in planning and planning-related sectors (e.g., design; heritage; construction).</p> <p>c) Facilitate and encourage OPPI members to develop projects with Black community members and/or neighbourhood-based groups and to investigate potential funding opportunities to enhance Black community benefits.^v</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career Path Professional Development Public Outreach 	2.1a, e	2.1 b, d, f	2.1 c

#	Detailed Recommendation for the OPPI Council	OPPI Staff and Council Thematic Area	Timeframe ¹		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career Path Professional Development Public Outreach Research/Data Curriculum Standards and Policy 	Short term (6 months to 1 year completion)	Medium Term (1 to 3 years to completion)	Current and continuing
	<p>d) On own, or in partnership with others, highlight and recognize past and present accomplishments and key contributions by Black leaders in placemaking and community building, planning, and urbanism, and among Black businesses, the public sector, and community and neighbourhood organizations, throughout the year, and through multiple venues, including awards, prizes, and other methods, for the benefit of the public and future planners.^{vi}</p> <p>e) Recognize the UN General Assembly's proclamation of the International Decade for People of African Descent.^{vii} Design a forum (also with academics) to name and discuss the planning processes that harm Black communities; how to eliminate the harm that has been done and engage in collective healing; and how to "do no harm" in the future, to inform what it means to be an anti-racist planner. An action of the forum could be to inform developing an equitable approach to planning practice.</p>				
3. Equity-focused Data, Policy Change, and Evaluation					
3.1	<p>To address the lack of institutional quantitative and qualitative data on the demographic diversity of OPPI members, planning student populations, and candidates in the process of seeking RPP designation, the OPPI should, as data collection and privacy laws permit:</p> <p>a) gather race-based and equity-related data among the OPPI membership, with their consent, to get a better sense of the diversity of the membership and the ways that they self-identify (i.e., how their identities intersect).</p> <p>b) ask the PSB to collect race-based and equity-focused data on student members (through the accredited universities) and on RPP candidates who enter the examination process, but do not complete the process, and in the spirit of transparency, to share this data with PTIAs.</p> <p>c) encourage accredited university planning programs to collect and share their anonymized race-based, equity-focused, and other demographic data on the diversity of their student planning population, as well as their respective standards of equity, diversity, and inclusion, via open access means.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career Path Curriculum Standards and Policy 		3.1 b,c	3.1 a
3.2	To advocate to the Professional Standards Board (PSB) and to work with the Professional Standards Committee (PSC) for the Planning Profession in Canada to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career Path Curriculum Standards and Policy 			x (all)

#	Detailed Recommendation for the OPPI Council	OPPI Staff and Council Thematic Area	Timeframe ¹		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career Path Professional Development Public Outreach Research/Data Curriculum Standards and Policy 	Short term (6 months to 1 year completion)	Medium Term (1 to 3 years to completion)	Current and continuing
	a) review professional core planning values, core competencies, and code of conduct, and eliminate undue burden, harm, and racism, these values, competencies, codes have on Black communities. b) to address the lack of language on anti-Black racism and anti-colonialism ^{viii} in the Professional Code of Conduct and core competencies, ^{ix} and ensure that it flows through the university-taught planning curriculum and into the professional exam. c) review the application of section 3.9 of the Professional Code of Practice in relation to developing a complaints and discipline process to discipline any OPPI member who displays racist behaviour in terms of word, action, or deed.				
3.3	Update Bylaw 1 of the OPPI, Appendix 1 Preamble, Statement of Values, Professional Code of Practice ^x with inclusive and actionable language that goes beyond “respect” of “diversity” to hold planners accountable to address anti-Black racism and to inform planning education. ^{xi}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum Standards and Policy 			x
3.4	Encourage conversations and actions among planning scholars and practitioners that centre the experiences of Black community members, in the evaluation of policy and planning processes and of the impact of planning outcomes, using criteria drawn from equity principles and the Ontario Human Rights Code with the intention to influence policy at all levels of government.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Outreach Curriculum Standards and Policy 			x
4. Professional Development					
4.1	Create planning courses, professional development opportunities, and written materials that: a) Facilitate the exchange of information, experiences/case studies, and resources (i.e. guide books) on identifying and addressing anti-Black racism, equity, and inclusion, to encourage employers to evaluate their own policy guidelines, proposals and hiring practices, for inclusive language and employment equity. b) Explore ethical and appropriate engagement techniques with Black -led, Black-serving communities and organizations, and historically Black neighbourhoods. Engage with academic institutions to bridge theories informing equitable planning and anti-Black racism with the work and activities of planners, including fostering discussions about alternative forms of planning (e.g., reparative planning, restorative justice, etc) exploring what is being taught in planning schools to address anti-Black racism in planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional Development Career Path Public Outreach 	4.1a	4.1b	4.1c

ⁱ According to the Professional Standards Board ([PSB](#)) website: “Under the standard which PSB administers, [a] Mentor will ideally work with [a candidate] so they can better observe [the candidate’s] growth as a planner. The role of a Sponsor is different, and they cannot be closely associated with [the candidate]. From a practical perspective, each role requires a significant commitment by a volunteer, and it is somewhat difficult for one person to fulfill both.” See Frequently Asked Questions <https://psb-planningcanada.ca/faqs/>

ⁱⁱ While emphasis can be placed on planners who are students and pre-candidate for RPP, OPPI will not negate early and mid-career planners, because those seeking RPP designation are often at different stages of their career and may have experienced career delays.

ⁱⁱⁱ Achieving secondary school curriculum change is very difficult.

^{iv} Potential partners can include the Black Planners & Urbanist Association ([BPUA](#)), the [Ontario Black History Society](#), tenant associations, community land trusts, and the [Afro-Canadian Contractors Association \(ACCA\)](#) among others. [BPUA](#).

^v Obvious funders include [MITACS](#) (university-private/public partnerships); [SSHRC Partnership Grants](#) and [SSHRC Connections Grants](#) (i.e., academic partnerships with non-academic groups and institutions); more need to be identified.

^{vi} Look at [Jane Jacobs Prize](#) (Toronto-focused) and Pioneers for Change awards through Skills for Change (Toronto) as examples. A number of different organizations have Urban Leader Awards; historically, the Canadian Urban Institute had several awards (no evidence of awards since 2017-18). More precedents can be identified.

^{vii} There is a need to explore if an organizing committee exists in Ontario and Toronto to facilitate OPPI’s engagement in connecting to events marking this decade.

^{viii} The OPPI ABRP Task Force should consult with the OPPI Indigenous Planning Advisory Group to decide on appropriate wording.

^{ix} This recommendation and the following Recommendation 2 builds on ABRP Task Force Category #1 Recommendation 13 “Advocate to PSB with PTIAs and CIP to review the professional core planning values, core competencies, and code of conduct, and eliminate the undue burden, harm, and racism, these values, competencies, codes have on Black communities.”

^x See OPPI By Law 1 – Appendix Appendix I: Preamble, Statement of Values, Professional Code of Practice <https://ontarioplanners.ca/become-an-rpp/oppi-membership/oppi-by-law-update/oppi-by-law>. Currently the Statement of Values includes the value: “*to respect diversity*. Members respect and protect diversity in values, cultures, economics, ecosystems, built environments and distinct places” and section 1.1 of the Professional Code of Practice under “The Planner’s Responsibility to the Public Interest” refers to “practice in a manner that respects the diversity, needs, values and aspirations of the public and encourages discussion on these matters.”

^{xi} The AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct notes under Part A. Principles to Which We Aspire, Section 1 Our Overall Responsibility to the Public, paragraph f) “We shall seek social justice by working to expand choice and opportunity for all persons, recognizing a special responsibility to plan for the needs of the disadvantaged and to promote racial and economic integration. We shall urge the alteration of policies, institutions, and decisions that oppose such needs.” This is language that OPPI can consider using. Additionally, consider using the term “equity-deserving” rather than “disadvantaged” or “marginalized group” and see the rationale for this shift in language from the speech by Professor Wisdom Tetty: <https://utsc.utoronto.ca/news-events/inspiring-inclusive-excellence-professor-wisdom-tetteys-installation-address>

APPENDIX 1.

OPPI Anti-Black Racism in Planning Task Force

List of Task Force Members

Andria Leigh, Co-Chair

Eldon Theodore, Co-Chair

Loretta (Laurie) Fisher

Nabil Malik

Jamilla Mohamud

Aimee Powell

Katharine Rankin

Lindsey Soon

Keisha St Louis-McBurnie

Krishon Walker

Manny Zander

Susan Wiggins, OPPI

Ryan DesRoches, OPPI

Rupendra Pant, OPPI

ABRP TASK FORCE
2021 ANTICIPATED ROADMAP

January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November
<div>CATEGORY 1</div> <div>Confirm schedule</div> <div>Removing barriers on the journey to becoming a professional planner to address the lack of Black representation in the planning profession</div> <div>Discussion</div>	<div>CATEGORY 1 +</div> <div>Additional discussion time if required</div> <div>Opportunity to bring in additional voices</div> <div>Review draft recommendations for Category 1</div>	<div>CATEGORY 2</div> <div>Building and sharing knowledge about Black histories and histories of systemic anti-Black racism to educate planners throughout their journey from student to Continuous Professional Learning (CPL)</div> <div>Discussion</div>	<div>CATEGORY 2+</div> <div>Additional discussion time if required</div> <div>Opportunity to bring in additional voices</div> <div>Review draft recommendations for Category 2</div>	<div>CATEGORY 3</div> <div>Promoting a more informed planning practice that must recognize the diversity of the public and better engage with Black communities to address issues arising from their lived experiences</div> <div>Discussion</div>	<div>CATEGORY 3+</div> <div>Additional discussion time if required</div> <div>Opportunity to bring in additional voices</div> <div>Review draft recommendations for Category 3</div>	<div>ADVISORY INPUT</div>	<div>ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS</div> <div>1. How do you understand this discussion item? Share your content knowledge and experiential knowledge.</div> <div>2. What is missing in the description of the item and the proposed initiative? is there something more to elaborate on or specify?</div> <div>3. What do we need our end point (or goal) to be in the journey to addressing this item? (rather than what do we want our endpoint to be...?)</div> <div>4. Who can we bring with us to get us on the journey to help us achieve our goal?</div> <div>REVIEW DRAFT</div> <div>Review and discuss draft action plan for ABRP</div> <div>Report back from Advisory Input</div>	<div>FINAL PLAN</div>		

Appendix 3.

Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI)

**Anti-Black Racism in Planning
Task Force**

Summary of Advisory Group Responses

Revised September 24, 2021

Prepared for the OPPI ABRP Task Force by:

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A. Introduction

The OPPI Anti-Black Racism in Planning Task Force draft recommendations were shared for review and comment with 42 invitees who would be referred to as an Advisory Group to the Task Force. Advisory Group invitees represented seven (7) categories or sectors informing professional planning, and reflected Ontario's regional diversity:

- private sector – planning
- public sector – planning
- public sector – policy
- public sector – education
- Ontario accredited university planning programs and university senior leadership
- professional associations, social benefit organizations, and entrepreneurs
- OPPI affiliate organizations

Advisory Group invitees are from senior levels of management and/or hold leadership roles; they were invited to respond to a series of questions depending on the expertise of their sector and regarding the feasibility of implementing one or more specific recommendations.

This report summarizes findings from the Advisory Group's responses and informs minor revisions to the final recommendations of the Anti-Black Racism in Planning Task Force for review by the Task Force at their meeting in September 2021.

Appendix 1 provides a list of the questions posed to each category of Advisory Group invitee. Appendix 2 provides a list of Advisory Group respondents who provided their input and who consented to have their name, position, and/or company published in this report.

B. Key Considerations

This report highlights key trends and areas for consideration derived from the Advisory Group responses regarding the implementation of the Task Force's recommendations. Advisory Group responses are summarized and are followed by selected quotations.

Twenty-three (23) out of 42 Advisory Group members (i.e., 55%) responded to the Task Force's invitation to provide input into the Task Force recommendations. The most responses, relative to the number of invitees, were received from planners in the private sector. The fewest responses, relative to the number of invitees, were received from the category of professional associations/social benefit organizations/entrepreneurs and, in turn, points to a group that will require concerted outreach efforts by OPPI.

Responses were largely positive and encouraging of OPPI to develop a strong implementation plan for the Task Force's recommendations. Where respondents offered suggested edits to the existing recommendations as well as suggestions for other groups or organizations with which OPPI could conduct outreach to explore mutual benefits, these are included in section D of this report. Several respondents commented in a critical manner and provided additional recommendations that would have required expanding the scope of the Task Force's recommendations. While these

additional recommendations are not included in this report, it is important for OPPI Council to appreciate that these additional recommendations offered ideas for building upon K-12 outreach; addressing financial barriers for Black high school students; ensuring resources for cultivating relationships; and promoting inclusive hiring processes through professional development. In turn, it would be suitable for OPPI Council and staff to review these expanded details and additional recommendations from Advisory Group respondents so that OPPI can better manage the expectations among some Advisory Group respondents, given that some of their expectations may go beyond the OPPI's current organizational mandate.¹

Considering these facts, OPPI Council and OPPI staff are strongly encouraged to revisit the feedback from the Advisory Group when developing an implementation plan and a communication plan for the Task Force's recommendations.

C. Summary of Advisory Group Responses

a) The Task Force meeting its mandate as outlined in the Task Force Terms of Reference.

- It was unanimous; all respondents indicated that the mandate of the Task Force was met. Some additional comments were offered; a selection is provided in the following quotations from respondents.

Selected Quotations from Respondents:

The Task Force recommendations are an impressive piece of work, very comprehensive. There are no glaring omissions from my standpoint; the mandate has been met in my view. – Brian Bridgeman, RPP, Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development, Region of Durham.

Yes, I believe generally the recommendations will begin to meet the Task Force's mandate to remove systemic barriers in the planning practice... I believe OPPI can also assist in bringing more awareness and support beyond the planning profession itself and into the planning practice, particularly into the general BIPOC communities to provide them the knowledge and resources to become more active and engaged in the planning process to ensure planners consider their opinions and that the public interest is met. – David Huynh, RPP, Partner – Bousfields Inc.

[A]ny endeavour to address anti-Black racism should not be engaged in detached from an anti-colonial framework that also seeks to work towards some measure of reconciliation for Indigenous peoples – Jewel Amoah, Human Rights and Equity Advisor, Halton Region District School Board, Halton, ON.

¹ OPPI's mandate was described in the documents sent to Advisory Group invitees.

The project requires further research, engagement, and analysis. What was completed thus far is a good baseline that would help guide future work in this area. - Jay Pitter, Senior Fellow, Equity-Based Placemaking and Benjamin Bongolan, Researcher Planner, Canadian Urban Institute.

The Task Force's recommendations align with the reality that Black Contractors face in the construction industry – an effort to increase representation and success amongst skilled Black professionals. – Afro-Canadian Contractors Association (ACCA)

The [Task Force] Terms of Reference required a broad approach to a number of issues- some general – others specific. The recommendations appear to have captured a considerable discussion and input from the Task Force. While there is some overlap, the organization of the recommendations allows consideration for how some recommendations may also be combined with other matters. – Dana Anderson, Partner, MHBC, Burlington, Ontario.

b) Comments on the general spirit of these recommendations

- Requested edits to specific recommendations within the scope of existing recommendations are presented in Appendix D of this report.
- A common response was that OPPI's next priority should be to develop an implementation plan in a manner that is targeted and with measurable outcomes, and an evaluative framework, and that ensures accountability of OPPI (the organization), OPPI members, and employers in upholding principles of equity and in practicing them.
- One respondent requested the inclusion of a definition for anti-Black racism in the preparation of the final report. A suggested definition that also offers a historical context is provided by the [Black Health Alliance](https://blackhealthalliance.ca/home/antiblack-racism/) and can be expanded upon to address planning specifically (and is provided in the footnotes for consideration by the Task Force).²

² From <https://blackhealthalliance.ca/home/antiblack-racism/> Accessed on August 16, 2021:

“Anti-Black Racism is defined here as policies and practices rooted in Canadian institutions such as, education, health care, and justice that mirror and reinforce beliefs, attitudes, prejudice, stereotyping and/or discrimination towards people of Black-African descent. The term ‘Anti-Black Racism’ was first expressed by Dr. Akua Benjamin, a Ryerson Social Work Professor. It seeks to highlight the unique nature of systemic racism on Black-Canadians and the history as well as experiences of slavery and colonization of people of Black-African descent in Canada.”

In expanding this definition to the context of planning, anti-Black racism is also linked to barriers to employment and higher education and the need for an increased and sustained awareness of Black experiences, in particular, those related to the practice of planning and to strengthening and partnering with Black-led communities and organizations to support a more informed practice.

- The Task Force recommendations are organized in the sequence that they were discussed; however, some respondents preferred that the recommendations be listed in order of priority or intention for implementation. This can be considered in preparing the implementation plan.
- There is recognition given for uplifting Black professionals not simply as members of specific geographic communities, or with specific social and economic affinities, but as individuals, so that they have improved access to choices, support, and guidance that enable them to design their own futures.
- Several respondents from the private and public planning sectors encouraged OPPI to consider how to translate these recommendations for the benefit of Indigenous and People of Colour populations. Their intentions were to ensure there is exploration of how the Task Force recommendations relate to the efforts of OPPI's Indigenous Planning Advisory Committee (IPAC), and with the work of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) committees within some private sector firms that are addressing the needs of Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) among their employees. While these points fall outside of the mandate of the ABRP Task Force, they could be considered by OPPI in relation to its work with IPAC, specifically, and OPPI members, in general.
- There was a question as to what went into the decision to include the names of different platforms and organizations in the two sub-columns under "Relationship building and platforms" linked to the recommendations. It was suggested that the footnotes on the first page of the Task Force recommendations be expanded to offer an expanded explanation or else to exclude them from these recommendations and instead, to add them to the future implementation plan after conversations and agreements are developed with organizations. (See more about this comment in section D).
- It was evident that some respondents interpreted these recommendations as a stand-alone implementation plan when, in fact, it is not. The development of a plan to implement the recommendations is the next step.

Selected Quotations from Respondents:

I believe these recommendations are an important first step in addressing systemic anti-Black racism in the planning profession. I encourage the OPPI and its partners to continue examining the barriers and practices in place that harm Black, Indigenous and other racialized communities, and work to dismantle them. — Ryan Lo, Co-Founder, Urban Minds, Toronto.

I believe the recommendations reflect a thoughtful exploration of the elements of anti-Black racism, systemic barriers and unconscious biases that inform traditional practice in many fields and professions. The recommendations are practical with an effective emphasis on educational and employment opportunity, advocacy and partnerships with organizations, including AMO – Brian Rosborough, Executive Director, AMO

Overall, I would like to commend the OPPI and the Task Force specifically for doing this absolutely essential work and coming up with a series of very useful and important recommendations. The focus on planning school curriculum and outreach to potential post-secondary students are two areas that are particularly relevant to our work as planning educators. The recommendations here are in line with the work the School at Waterloo is conducting as well – Dr. Markus Moos, RPP, Director and Associate Professor, School of Planning, University of Waterloo.

I think the structure of the recommendations is practical and potent...the ways in which the recommendations are positioned will allow us as a School to work actively and more readily with substantive focus. Their comprehensive reach and the breakdown of short, medium and longer term actions is helpful and also mirrors our own efforts... – Dr. Pamela Robinson, MCIP RPP, Director and Professor, SURP, Ryerson.

I believe the recommendations can provide a path for professionals and educators to address concerns of anti-Black racism. However, these represent a starting point to move forward on these issues. The next step of implementation and monitoring will determine whether these recommendations can succeed. – Chad B. John-Baptiste, RPP, Principal, WSP, Toronto.

The recommendations are well organized in four important areas of action – journey to become a professional planner, cultivating relationships with diverse black organizations, equity focused data, policy change and evaluation, and professional development...The only angle missing from these 4 strategic themes is one that could encourage further institutional reflection within the OPPI organizational, leadership and operative structure...As it stands, the action plan is completely outward looking. While “cultivating relationships with diverse black organizations” is an excellent step, I find that a reflection about equity and diversity within OPPI’s governance and operating structures ... could more critically and immediately demonstrate OPPI’s commitment to the taskforce’s mandate. – Dr. Luisa Sotomayor, Associate Professor / Planning Programs Coordinator, Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change, York University, Toronto, ON.

c) Comments regarding the overall feasibility of implementing these recommendations.

- OPPI is encouraged to recognize that relationship building with the wider public and Black-led organizations and community projects, and that sustaining existing organizational relationships, are both integral to the implementation of the Task Force's recommendations. It was noted that some recommendations can be quickly implemented because of existing relationships with organizations whereas others may take more time because of the outreach required to build relationships with different organizations.
- Several respondents suggested that OPPI and/or its members consider engaging in outreach beyond organizations and more directly with Black students, Black Elders, and Black neighbourhoods.
- OPPI is encouraged to identify the different resources required for implementation of the recommendations. Although The Task Force presented recommendations thematically and the recommendations are meant to be reviewed as a body of work, that is, in their entirety rather than in sequence or in order of priority, respondents recommended that for the purposes of implementation, that each recommendation should be prioritized and analysed in terms of the resources required for implementation (e.g., financial, human, and infrastructure requirements) and where there may be overlap, duplication, or synergies in required resources, across the recommendations. There was an interest among respondents as to whether there will be committed resources and/or committees beyond the Task Force, that will oversee action(s) undertaken; this could be considered in developing the implementation plan.
- OPPI is encouraged to remain accountable to its members and affiliate organizations by communicating their progress throughout the implementation of recommendations, perhaps through *Y Magazine*, OPPI Planners Connect, social media posts, or the monthly newsletter.
- OPPI is encouraged to ensure that they are recognized as the leaders (i.e., at the forefront of responsibility) of these recommendations, even when relationship building with potential partners are needed for implementation of the recommendations. The two sub-columns under "Relationship building and platforms" is critical for the implementation of the recommendations; however, it should be made clear that OPPI remains in the leadership role and is accountable for the recommendations. However, if during implementation, OPPI takes more of a support role for some of the recommendations (for example where universities take the lead) then this should be noted during implementation planning.

- There were requests for more overt statements about improving workplace conditions of Black planners because the Task Force recommendations, as a positive outcome, have the potential to increase the diversity in the pool of future planning candidates including, Black planners, Indigenous planners and People of Colour who are planners (i.e., BIPOC planners).
- OPPI is encouraged to link any efforts to improve diversity in hiring and retention practices with professional development opportunities customized for planners in senior management positions and for human resources professionals at planning firms (private sector) and planning departments (public sector). The thought was that small firms do not necessarily have the capacity to engage in this professional development on their own and would benefit from a pooling of resources.
- There were calls for more research to ground the recommendations of the Task Force such as an analysis of barriers faced by Black planners; the intention is to position OPPI to engage in an evidence-based approach to implementation of the recommendations.
- There was strong support for OPPI to advocate for data collection about the diversity in the representation of the planning student population and the professional planner population; however, there was also some scepticism among respondents about whether universities and other entities would gather this data.
- There was encouragement for OPPI to continue to build its relationships with university planning programs as the universities work to conduct outreach to potential post-secondary students to attract future Black planners.
- There was importance placed on recognizing that Black planners are a heterogenous group (i.e., “should reflect Black plurality”) and that this should be reflected in the recommendations.

Selected Quotations from Respondents:

These recommendations are quite doable with the appropriate partners and resources. – Abigail Moriah, RPP, Co-Founder, Black Planning Project.

It has been my experience that special projects require solid planning, terms/mandate, recruiting, training, scaling up, and execution, which always takes longer than original projected...[V]olunteers have limited time to dedicate to projects, so adequate staff/contractor support are required to support volunteers – Beth McMahon, CEO, Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP)

Recommendations do not imply an understanding of Black plurality... There is very little content pertaining to “how” or reference to precedents. Adding this content would make the recommendations more actionable and evidence-based – Jay Pitter, Senior Fellow, Equity-Based Placemaking, Canadian Urban Institute (CUI), and Benjamin Bongolan, Researcher Planner, Canadian Urban Institute (CUI).

I wouldn’t underestimate the importance of OPPI sponsored/led resources to support professional practice in addressing anti-black racism, equity and inclusion...Many firms and organizations do not have the capacity to develop policies, protocols, support professional development or dig into these issues on their own, so having resources that they could draw from would support implementation. I’m constantly shocked by the number of large organizations/firms I work with where the EDI committee or anti-black racism committee is just a small group of volunteers with little support – Craig Lametti, RPP, Principal, Urban Strategies, Toronto.

[Conduct] outreach to Human Resource Personnel [in] both public and private sectors – Thom Hunt, RPP, City of Windsor.

d) Comments regarding the impact of the recommendations and their relevance and how ‘realistic’ they are.

- **A need for metrics**

A common response was that the impact of the recommendations is difficult to measure without an evaluative framework and an effective metric for the implementation of each recommendation. In this vein, it was recommended that OPPI develop metrics to measure how they are meeting the expectations of success for each recommendation. Metrics could be connected to the OPPI’s overall strategic plan and communication plan for knowledge sharing and knowledge distribution as well.

- **Being realistic about organizational timelines and resources**

OPPI is encouraged to track its commitments and to ensure there is capacity among the staff, vendors/consultants, and volunteers, to fully execute the recommendations in the allocated time.

- **Fostering mutual support in membership engagement across affiliate organizations and design professions**

Respondents were heartened that planners, designers, building contractors and affiliate organizations are working on similar efforts in anti-Black racism and that it is important to work in concert with one another when engagement activities are undertaken. Respondents appreciated how OPPI has embarked on staff professional development on equity, diversity, and inclusion.

- **Strength and caution in ‘reverse mentoring’**

While reverse mentoring was encouraged and considered to be impactful, it was also noted that this approach should be undertaken with caution so as not to ask too much of emerging planners, and rather, to put the onus on senior leadership to listen. As such, OPPI's efforts in planning networking events could facilitate a mix of planners at all stages of their career and support leadership among Black emerging planners in determining the purpose for different networking events.

Recommendations are correct in identifying that there has to be access and support throughout one's career for meaningful change to manifest and for regimes to truly be equity seeking...These recommendations will ideally achieve better access and representation to Black professionals in a profession that works alongside the construction industry, leading to support for Black Planners and as possible Black Contractors. – Afro Canadian Contractors Association

The Task Force has developed an action plan, with items for action/deliverables/initiatives and related timelines. However, what is absent from the Plan are some form of accountability metrics, which measure the depth of implementation of the actions as well as the impact that the proposed actions will have on the overall objective of addressing systemic racism within the planning profession. – Jewel Amoah, Human Rights and Equity Advisor, Halton Region District School Board, Halton, ON.

Implementing these recommendations would be impactful for increasing representation (and hopefully retention) of Black planners within the profession, representation in planning education, improving their experience in planning education as well as adding knowledge that planners have about Black communities, removing barriers to accreditation as well as changing what guides and is included in professional development. – Abigail Moriah, RPP, Black Planning Project.

Overall, I believe that all of the actions contained in the Recommendations and Action Plan would have far-reaching benefits for the current and future planning profession, for both Black planners and planning students, as well as the general membership. As a number of recommendations relate to students and academics, I too believe that work done in Ontario would influence planning schools and scholars across the country – Beth McMahon, CEO, Canadian Institute of Planners.

Although comprehensive and creative, the recommendations lack quantifiable targets and metrics, both qualitative and quantitative, diminishing the rigour of the document and ability to monitor and evaluate progress... These recommendations, if strengthened and made more comprehensive and well-resourced, will have an important impact in improving the field of urban planning.” - Jay Pitter, Senior Fellow, Equity-Based Placemaking and Benjamin Bongolan, Researcher Planner, Canadian Urban Institute.

The design professions have a strong link and crossover in the development and engagement processes; thus, we should ensure we also support each others associations’ efforts to address these issues – to help raise the bar all around. We should intentionally collaborate – continuing to share documents, resources, events, etc., in order to be engaged with each other’s efforts and to help support and amplify (and where possible) not duplicate – Ontario Association of Landscape Architects (OALA)

In general, workplaces need to create a safe and supportive environment so that BIPOC planners can thrive. While diverse and inclusive recruitment is a short-term goal, diverse and inclusive retention is a more important long-term goal... The hope is that: ... OPPI is a resource should they (both BIPOC planners and organizations) need assistance. If BIPOC planners feel safe and supported, they will let their fellow BIPOC colleagues [know] that the private sector is a safe environment to flourish and succeed, which will only grow the base of BIPOC planners in the private sector – David Huynh, RPP, Partner, Bousfields Inc.

These recommendations reflect an important step in improving the overall practice of the profession, fostering the next generation of professional planners, and addressing historical practices that undermine the potential of professional planners and the communities they serve – Brian Rosborough, Executive Director, Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)

Improving workplace conditions for Black planners in the private sector in planning: Priority should be on uplifting teams who are doing good work towards this topic. Interest[e]d in making the pivot to address their role in shaping the current dynamic can be engaged as investing partners; however, the majority of attention and development work should go to Black-led and allied organizations who have a reputation before the murder of George Floyd in combating systemic racism and poverty. – Cheryll Case, Principal, CP Planning, Toronto, ON.

I think an effort like this task force has great potential to impact the planning profession overall in Ontario, altering the profession's ecosystem. I expect a very positive response from the membership and full adoption of all recommendations by the different stakeholders in the following years. – Luisa Sotomayor, Associate Professor/Planning Programs Coordinator, Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change, Toronto, ON.

APPENDIX 1 - Questions posed to all Advisory Group members:

1. Based on your review of the Task Force recommendations in the action plan, has the Task force met its mandate as outlined in the Task Force Terms of Reference?
2. Please offer your comments about the general spirit of these recommendations in areas that reflect your professional interests and expertise.
3. Please offer your comments regarding the overall feasibility of implementing these recommendations. Are there any other groups or organizations that OPPI should conduct outreach with the intention of exploring mutual benefits?

Additional questions posed to:

- Private Sector - Planning (Group 1) and Public Sector –Planning (Group 2)
 4. What impact would effective implementation of these recommendations have on:
 - a) eliminating barriers of access to employment for Black planners in the public sector in planning?
 - b) improving workplace conditions for Black planners in the private sector in planning?
- Public Sector – Policy (Group 3)
 4. What impact would effective implementation of these recommendations have on eliminating barriers to access, equity, and inclusion of Black Communities in Ontario as they relate to the work of your unit, and in general?
- Public Sector – Education (Group 4)
 4. Given your expertise, could you please share your thoughts about the potential impact of:
 - a) Recommendation 1.7 that directly addresses finding ways to enhance the success of Black students in K-12 education.
 - b) Recommendation 1.8a) that seeks to reduce financial barriers for Black high school students to increase their access to higher education to enable their future entry into the planning profession.
- Ontario Accredited University Planning programs and University Senior Leadership (Group 5)
 4. Given your knowledge and experience, what impact would these recommendations have on a) Black planning students? b) The planning profession overall?
- Questions for Professional Associations, Social Benefit Organizations, and Entrepreneurs (Group 6)
 4. Given your knowledge and experience, please share your thoughts about the impact of these recommendations, if any, for the populations you serve.
- Questions for Consideration by OPPI Affiliate Organizations (Group 7)
 4. Given your knowledge and experience, please share your thoughts about the impact of these recommendations, if any, for the populations you serve.

APPENDIX 2 - Advisory Group respondents*

* These respondents consented to have their name, position, and company published as members of the Advisory Group informing the recommendations.

Craig Lametti, RPP Principal, Urban Strategies Toronto, ON	Markus Moos, RPP Director, Associate Professor School of Planning, University of Waterloo Waterloo, ON
Dana Anderson, RPP Partner, MHBC Burlington, ON	Abigail Moriah, RPP Co-Founder, Black Planning Project Black Planners and Urbanists Association (BPUA) Toronto, ON
Chad B. John-Baptiste, RPP Principal, WSP Toronto, ON	Brian Rosborough Executive Director Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Toronto, ON
David Huynh, RPP Partner, Bousfields Inc. Toronto, ON	Beth McMahon CEO, Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) Ottawa, ON
Brian Bridgeman, RPP Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development, Region of Durham, Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Region of Durham, Whitby, ON	Aina Budrevics Executive Director Ontario Association of Landscape Architects (OALA) Toronto, ON
Thom Hunt, RPP Chief Planner, City of Windsor & Chair, Regional Planning Commissioners of Ontario Windsor, ON	Zara Brown Co-Chair, OALA DEI Task Force Ontario Association of Landscape Architects (OALA) Toronto, ON
Jewel Amoah Human Rights and Equity Advisor Halton Region District School Board Halton, ON	Gail Shillingford Co-Chair, OALA DEI Task Force Ontario Association of Landscape Architects (OALA) Toronto, ON
Pamela Robinson, RPP Director and Professor, SURP Ryerson University, Toronto, ON	Cheryll Case Principal, CP Planning Toronto, ON
Ryan Lo Co-Founder, Urban Minds Toronto, ON	Jay Pitter Senior Fellow, Equity-Based Placemaking, Canadian Urban Institute (CUI) Toronto, ON
Benjamin Bongolan Researcher Planner Canadian Urban Institute (CUI) Toronto, ON	Afro Canadian Contractors Association (ACCA) Mississauga, ON
Luisa Sotomayor Associate Professor / Planning Programs Coordinator Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change York University, Toronto, ON	