

STAFF REPORT

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF COBOURG



Report to:	Mayor and Council Members	Priority:	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low
Submitted by:	Jamie Kramer, Accessibility Coordinator, Legislative Services, Corporate Services, jkramer@cobourg.ca	Meeting Type: Open Session <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Closed Session <input type="checkbox"/>	
Meeting Date:	August 23, 2021		
Report No.:	Corporate Services-089-21		
Submit comments to Council			

Subject/Title: EDI Strategy – Update on Hosting Public Forums and Town Halls

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council receive this report from the Accessibility Coordinator for information purposes, and;

FURTHER THAT Council approve the four (4) goals for the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy:

1. Identify and address systemic barriers within the Corporation.
2. Create programs to meet the needs of everyone.
3. Engage our diverse communities in a meaningful way.
4. Attract and leverage a diverse workforce.

1. STRATEGIC PLAN

PEOPLE: The Town of Cobourg supports and cares for the Social and Physical Well-Being of its Citizens

PLACES: The Town protects, preserves, and promotes its natural assets, heritage, arts, culture, and tourism.

PROGRAMS: The Town provides efficient and effective corporate, community, and business and recreational services for its residents, businesses, and visitors.

PARTNERSHIP: The Town engages in strong, sustainable public-private partnerships to improve the quality of life for everyone.

PROSPERTIY: The Town plans for, markets, and develops assets for economic growth and financial security.

2. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Members from the public were encouraged to participate in one of three public forums and/or by using the EngageCobourg website to share their thoughts and opinions.

3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the public engagement for the development of the Goals for the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy.

4. ORIGIN AND LEGISLATION

Council Resolutions

On June 29, 2020, Municipal Council passed the following Resolution:

WHEREAS at the Committee of the Whole Meeting on June 22, 2020 Council considered a Notice of Motion from Councillor Emily Chorley and Councillor Adam Bureau, regarding an Equity and Inclusion Policy for the Town of Cobourg; and

WHEREAS the Black Lives Matter movement has highlighted the need for a reaffirmed commitment to confronting racism and removing systemic barriers to equality; and

WHEREAS fostering an inclusive and welcoming community is a key tenant of the Town of Cobourg's annual 'Pride Month'; and

WHEREAS municipal government can play a leading role in helping to achieve gender equality;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council instruct Staff to draft an Equity and Inclusion Policy; and

FURTHER THAT the policy specifically address the Inclusion of Black, Indigenous and People of Colour, women, people with disabilities, newcomers to Canada, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Two-Spirit, Intersex, and Asexual peoples, as well as those who identify as pansexual, questioning, non-binary, and other gender and sexual minorities (2SLGBTQIAP+) community and other visible minorities; and

FURTHER THAT the policy draws upon resources such as 'Advancing Equity and Inclusion: A Guide for Municipalities' and FCM's 'Diverse Voices Toolkit'; and

FURTHER THAT the policy includes annual commitments to Equity and Inclusion training for Town of Cobourg Staff, volunteers and Members of Council, engagement of citizens and advisory committees, and communications on progress; and

FURTHER THAT Council direct Staff to form an Ad Hoc Committee or a suitable alternative with a terms of reference or terms of engagement consisting of citizen members from these diverse minority populations in order to provide input on the development of the Equity and Inclusion Policy, due back to Council on August 24, 2020 Meeting; and

FURTHER THAT the draft policy be presented to Council for consideration by December 7th, 2020.

On September 14, 2020, Municipal Council passed the following Resolution:

WHEREAS at the Committee of the Whole Meeting on September 14, 2020 Council considered a memo from the Municipal Clerk/Manager of Legislative Services regarding Diversity, Inclusion and Equity within the Town of Cobourg; and

FURTHER THAT Municipal Council on June 29, 2020 provided Staff with a direction to draft and present a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy for the Town of Cobourg that will encourage, promote, and insist upon awareness, equality, and acceptance by all residents and Municipal Staff in the Corporation of the Town of Cobourg; and

FURTHER THAT Staff recommend that the Municipal Council not only provide direction for a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy, but that Council engage and establish a leadership approach in responding to a call for more municipal action on supporting Diversity, Inclusion and Equity across the jurisdiction on the Town of Cobourg Community;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council direct Staff to create supporting governance structures with internal and external stakeholders from the Black, Indigenous and People of Colour, women, people with disabilities, newcomers to Canada, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Two-Spirit, Intersex, and Asexual peoples, as well as those who identify as pansexual, questioning, non-binary, and other gender and sexual minorities (2SLGBTQIAP+) community and other visible minorities; in order to identify and develop priorities, strategies and initiatives to support the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion effort in the Town of Cobourg; and

FURTHER THAT Council direct Staff to engage Cobourg's diverse community to help create potential draft terms of reference to advise Council and make recommendations to provide a monitoring and measuring role to help ensure that the Town applies a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion lens to its policies, services and programs; and

FURTHER THAT Council direct Staff to make an application to join the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities (CIM) as a commitment to investing time and resources toward creating a more welcoming and inclusive community in which the CIM network brings together municipalities that want to improve their policies against racism, discrimination, exclusion and intolerance and together, the municipalities undertake initiatives to eliminate all forms of discrimination with a view to building open and inclusive societies; and

FURTHER THAT Council direct Staff to bring forward a report to a December Council Meeting or an earlier meeting presenting a status update on the recommendations approved and outlined within the Staff Report.

On November 2, 2020, Municipal Council passed the following Resolution:

THAT Council receive this Memo from the Accessibility Coordinator for information purposes; and

FURTHER THAT Council reviews the draft Terms of Reference for the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee of Council and provide input, as necessary; and

FURTHER THAT Council directs Staff to begin broad public engagement with the residents of Cobourg on the Terms of Reference for the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee of Council; and

FURTHER THAT Council direct Staff to bring forward a final version of the Terms of Reference for the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee of Council to a future Council meeting prior to the end of 2020; and

FURTHER THAT Council receive the timeline for the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy development for information purposes; and

FURTHER THAT Council participate in the “Initial Benchmarking” step of the development of this strategy.

On December 14, 2020, Municipal Council passed the following Resolution:

THAT Council receive this Memo from the Accessibility Coordinator for information purposes; and

FURTHER THAT Council approves the final version of the Terms of Reference for the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee of Council; and

FURTHER THAT Council authorize the preparation of a By-law to amend By-Law No. 008-2019 to include the Terms of Reference for the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee of Council; and

FURTHER THAT Council appoints two (2) Councillors to sit as Voting Members of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee of Council; and

FURTHER THAT Council directs Staff to begin the application process for the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee of Council; and

FURTHER THAT Council direct Staff to consult with the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee of Council on matters pertaining to the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy for the Town of Cobourg, including public participation; and

FURTHER THAT Council sign the Declaration to join the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities on January 4, 2021 as a commemoration to World Braille Day; and

FURTHER THAT Council direct Staff to bring forward initial budget amounts to be presented at the 2021 Budget review process for Council deliberations; and

FURTHER THAT Council participate in the “Leadership Interviews” as a part of the development of this strategy in the coming months.

On June 28, 2021, Municipal Council passed the following Resolution:

THAT Council receive this report for information purposes, and;

FURTHER THAT Council approve the facilitation of public forums and town halls to help create the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy for the Town of Cobourg, according to Ontario Health Guidelines for COVID-19, and;

FURTHER THAT Council members from the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee participate as moderators and hosts alongside the Accessibility Coordinator, when available.

Canadian and Ontario Legislation

Canada along with its provinces and territories has an exceptional system of human rights laws and ratified international treaties. Nevertheless, as in other parts of the world, racism and discrimination continue to raise barriers against the development of individuals and groups. Racism and discrimination divide communities, pose a serious threat to peaceful coexistence and exchange among and within communities, imperil democratic and participatory citizenship, and entrench and aggravate inequalities within society. Racism and discrimination continue to perpetuate the historical disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal peoples and other diverse groups, many of whom are members of Canada's most economically and socially marginalized communities.

The **Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms** stipulates: "Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability".

Under the **Canadian Human Rights Act**, "all individuals should have an opportunity equal with other individuals to make for themselves the lives that they are able and wish to have and to have their needs accommodated, consistent with their duties and obligations as members of society, without being hindered in or prevented from doing so by discriminatory practices based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, disability or conviction for an offence for which a pardon has been granted."

The **Citizenship Act** provides that all Canadians, whether by birth or by choice, enjoy equal status, are entitled to the same rights, powers and privileges and are subject to the same obligations, duties, and liabilities.

The **Canadian Multiculturalism Act** provides that the "Government of Canada recognizes the Diversity of Canadians as regards race, national or ethnic origin, colour, and religion as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society and is committed to a policy of multiculturalism designed to preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of Canadians while working to achieve the equality of all Canadians in the economic, social, cultural and political life of Canada," (Preamble), affirms that multiculturalism "reflects the cultural and racial Diversity of Canadian society and acknowledges the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage" (section 3(1)(a))

and that it represents “a fundamental characteristic of the Canadian heritage and identity and that it provides an invaluable resource in the shaping of Canada’s future” (section 3(1)(b)).

Provincial and territorial human rights codes are premised on the principle that all human beings are equal in worth and dignity, and are entitled to equal protection of the law, as well as that every person has a right to full and equal recognition and exercise of their human rights and freedoms, without distinction, exclusion or preference based on some or all of the following grounds: race, colour, ancestry, ethnic origin, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, civil, marital or family status, age, religion, political belief, language, ethnic or national origin, social condition, or disability. Discrimination exists where such a distinction, exclusion or preference has the effect of nullifying or impairing such rights, and human rights codes prohibit discrimination and harassment.

5. BACKGROUND

The public consultation for the EDI Strategy Goals began on July 26th, 2021 and run until August 10th, 2021. Additional information sent after will be incorporated into recommendations, programs, and other strategic initiatives related to this process.

Notices about the public engagement times and dates were listed on the Cobourg.ca Diversity and Inclusion page, posted on the social media accounts for the Town of Cobourg, and emailed to the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee of Council as well as organizations in the area that provide services.

A total of twenty (20) persons participated in the (virtual) public discussions; eleven (11) persons participated via EngageCobourg, and an additional fourteen (14) persons participated via phone calls or emails directly to the Accessibility Coordinator. Further, the information was sent to a list of organizations in the area that provide services to historically underinvested communities.

Further public engagement will be conducted with the completion of the recommendations of the EDI Strategy.

The hope is that as the community begins to see the changes that are made, they will engage more with the Town of Cobourg more and be more willing to participate, provide insights, input, and information about specific programs and initiatives to undertake to create a more inclusive Cobourg.

6. ANALYSIS

The following goals were provided to the public for their input:

1. Identify and address systemic barriers within the Corporation;
2. Create programs to meet the needs of everyone;
3. Engage our diverse communities in a meaningful way, and;
4. Attract and leverage a diverse workforce.

Overall, these goals are working towards “A Cobourg that meets the needs of everyone living, working, playing, and visiting.”

The public provided insights and inputs into ideas and strategies that could be under each of the goals.

These goals are the starting point with more actionable items and objectives that have measurable results to be used to achieve them.

These goals were developed based on the information gathered through the data collection phase of the creation of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy.

Often, it was heard through Leadership Interviews, Public Engagement, and our internal Diversity and Inclusion Census, that there needs to be a complete understanding of the structures that are currently in place that may be upholding ideals or perspectives that do not allow for a difference in opinion or a dimension of diversity. This was used to create Goals #1 and #4.

Further, we heard from the Public Engagement, the Initial Benchmarking, and the Leadership Interviews about the need for a wide variety of programs, initiatives, and options for the public to not only be engaged but to gain information on town services from. This was used to create Goals #2 and #3.

These goals were also worded and decided upon based on the key aspects of how diversity and inclusion are a healthy business:

- Talent,
- Innovation and Group Performance, and
- Reputation and Responsibility.

Talent

Diverse organizations are more successful at recruiting and retaining talent. Companies with higher levels of gender diversity and with HR policies and practices that focus on gender diversity are linked to lower levels of employee turnover.¹ Further, an inclusive environment is especially important for employees of color. Fifty to sixty-nine percent of professional Canadians of color who anticipate or consciously prepare for potential bias report a high intent to leave their jobs.²

To work to increase talent, we have created Goals #1 and #4.

Innovation and Group Performance

When companies establish inclusive business cultures and policies, they are more likely to report:³

- 59.1% increase in creativity, innovation, and openness.
- 37.9% better assessment of consumer interest and demand.

Diversity is a key ingredient for better decision-making among teams. Homogenous groups may be susceptible to groupthink, while diverse teams can

¹ Cara C. Maurer and Israr Qureshi, "Not Just Good for Her: A Temporal Analysis of the Dynamic Relationship Between Representation of Women and Collective Employee Turnover," *Organization Studies* (2019).

² Jennifer Thorpe-Moscon, Alixandra Pollack, and Olufemi Olu-Lafe, *Empowering Workplaces Combat Emotional Tax for People of Colour in Canada* (Catalyst, 2019).

³ International Labour Organization, *Women in Business and Management: The Business Case for Change* (2019): p. 21.

leverage a greater variety of perspectives and are likely to consider information more thoroughly and accurately.⁴

To work to increase innovation and group performance, we have created Goals #1 and #2.

In addition, we created the Women in Governance: Mentoring and Leadership Program. We are looking for other opportunities to create program and initiatives to help increase innovation as well.

Reputation and Responsibility

Organizations with inclusive business cultures and practices are 57.8% more likely to improve their reputations.⁵

Employees who view their workplace as inclusive are likely to consider their organization to have ethical value.⁶ As well, persons are more likely to trust an organization or their product if there is a perception of diversity and inclusion.⁷

To work to increase reputation and responsibility, we created Goals #2 and #3.

These goals, while working together, will have different levels of resources throughout the process of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy both to ensure that there is a balance between work done internally to strengthen the capacity of Staff and to ensure that there is a capacity from the personnel to complete tasks externally.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/BUDGET IMPACTS

There are currently no financial implications based on this information.

A more in-depth budget analysis will accompany the entire Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy.

8. CONCLUSION

Staff are pleased that the public took the time to highlight issues, obstacles, and opportunities to create a more inclusive Cobourg. As we use the information gathered through this process to create recommendations, programs, and initiatives, we are excited to be working towards having Cobourg be a leader in the EDI space.

Report Approval Details

⁴ Astrid C. Homan, "Dealing with Diversity in Workgroups: Preventing Problems and Promoting Potential," *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, vol. 13, no. 5 (2019).

⁵ International Labour Organization, *Women in Business and Management: The Business Case for Change* (2019): p. 21.

⁶ Tanja Rabl, María del Carmen Triana, Seo-Young Bryun, and Laura Bosch, "Diversity Management Efforts as an Ethical Responsibility: How Employees' Perceptions of an Organizational Integration and Learning Approach to Diversity Affect Employee Behavior," *Journal of Business Ethics*, vol. 161 (2020): p. 531-550.

⁷ Shelley Zalis, "Inclusive Ads Are Affecting Consumer Behavior, According to New Research," Think with Google, November 2019.

Document Title:	EDI Strategy – Update on Hosting Public Forums and Town Halls
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Aug 13, 2021

This report and all its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Brent Larmer, Municipal Clerk/Manager of Legislative Services- Aug 12, 2021 - 1:08 PM

Tracey Vaughan, Chief Administrative Officer - Aug 13, 2021 - 4:31 PM