

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:	Brent Larmer, Municipal Clerk/Manager of Legislative Services blarmer@cobourg.ca	Meeting Type:	Open Session <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Closed Session <input type="checkbox"/>
Meeting Date:	November 15, 2021		
Report No.:	Corporate Services-126-21		
Submit comments to Council			

Subject/Title: Finalized Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy for the Town of Cobourg

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council receive the report for information purposes, and;

FURTHER THAT Council adopt the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy for the Town of Cobourg.

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

The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy was brought to the Internal Policy Review Team for comments and suggestions. Further, Council had almost four (4) full weeks to present comments and suggestions. Further, the EDI Policy was presented at the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee of Council for comments and suggestions at their October 14th, 2021 meeting.

3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to highlight the changes and provide the final Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy for the Town of Cobourg.

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

As part of the Council Resolution, there was a need for an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy for the Town of Cobourg. The policy was created in tandem with the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy as the guiding document for how the Town of Cobourg will interact and work with the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

The policy was created using the data and information gathered through the creation of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy as well as best practices and principles from other municipality’s policies.

This policy is intended to provide the overarching framework to guide the review and development of other policies, standards, procedures, by-laws, and all elements that guide the Town of Cobourg in order to consistently be incorporating equity, diversity, and inclusion.

The attached policy incorporates all updates and changes based on suggestions from the Internal Policy Review Team, members of Council, and the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee of Council.

6. ANALYSIS

This policy is created specific to the needs of the Town of Cobourg and should be revised in the transition period between phases of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy, every two (2) years, to ensure that it is current, up to date, and has the best information possible. This also coincides with the different Phases of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy to make sure all information is current and relevant to the needs of our staff and our community.

The policy has the following sections:

1. Purpose
2. Policy Statement
3. Definitions
4. Application
 - a. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee
 - b. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy
 - c. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Lenses
5. Training
 - a. Onboarding Training
 - b. Access to Training
 - c. Resources and Repository
 - d. Outside Training and Third Party Organizations
6. Recruitment and Retention
 - a. Recruitment
 - b. Retention
7. Policy Development and Review
8. Privacy and Confidentiality
9. Review Period
10. Scope
11. Administration
12. Cross Reference

The definition section matches that of the Terms of Reference for the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee of Council in order to keep similar language and terms across documents.

Once the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy has been approved by Council, it will be included in the EDI Policy as a quasi-procedure. Further, as the EDI Lenses are created over the next year, with suggestion and input from the EDI Advisory Committee, they will be included into the “Application” section as quasi-procedure as well. These will be linked into the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy as they are created and uploaded to our servers.

This policy should be seen as a guiding document and not set in stone for the areas that are covered by equity, diversity, and inclusion at the Town of Cobourg. Additional topics, areas, programs, goods, and services will be addressed in the EDI Strategy and EDI Lenses to ensure that this document does not need to be updated too frequently.

As new topics are brought forward, Staff will determine if they should be included in a revised version of the EDI Policy or incorporated into other documents.

It is important to ensure that the EDI Policy acts as a guide to implement EDI into all aspects of the Town of Cobourg and not as an interim measure to incorporate EDI into different policies, procedures, programs, goods, services, and information. It is more beneficial to update the specific policies, procedures, programs, goods, services, and information than to use the EDI Policy as a catch-all.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/BUDGET IMPACTS

There are currently no financial implications associated with the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy.

8. CONCLUSION

The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy for the Town of Cobourg is assisting with moving towards a more diverse, equitable, and inclusion area. It is an important part of the journey to have a guiding document to assist with EDI at the Town.