

 <b>COBOURG</b>	<b>THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF COBOURG</b>	
	<b>STAFF REPORT</b>  <b>COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING</b>	
TO:	Mayor and Council Members	
FROM:	Brent Larmer	
TITLE:	Municipal Clerk/Manager of Legislative Services	
DATE OF MEETING:	Monday September 14, 2020	
TITLE / SUBJECT:	Diversity, Inclusion and Equity in the Town of Cobourg	
REPORT DATE:	August 29, 2020	File #:

#### 1.0 STRATEGIC PLAN

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

#### 2.0 RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive the memo from the Municipal Clerk Manager of Legislative Services for information purposes; 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; and

FURTHER 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.

### 3.0 ORIGIN AND LEGISLATION

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.*

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 his or her 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.

#### 4.0 BACKGROUND

This report responds to the above resolution requested by Council.

Within society at this present time there is a need to require a focused effort to advance inclusive, equitable and diverse practices and policies, as patterns of unfair treatment and forms of systemic discrimination are taking place in different representational and participatory practices, language patterns, beliefs, and institutional/organizational procedures. Most recently there has been an important shift within society through significant recognition marking a systemic response to imbalances in accessibility, economic status, religious beliefs, ability, gender and gender identity, geographic location, sexual orientation, race, Indigenous ancestry, age and other similar markers of identity.

The population of the Town of Cobourg is growing, and as is the diversity of individuals and families relocating to start a life within the Town. According to the last two (2) Canadian Census conducted by the Federal Government in 2011 2.7% of the Town of Cobourg’s population identified as a Visible Minority, and

in 2016 4.2% of the population identified as a Visible minority. In five (5) years, this percentage increased by 3%.

The Town of Cobourg has an opportunity to become a leader within the County of Northumberland through creating a community that supports all citizens equally within the Town and be the first to create a dialogue with a goal to start a conversation and lead change to promote a diverse, equitable and inclusive municipality.

## 5.0 ANALYSIS

The primary barrier to embracing diversity and supporting inclusion is personal and individual bias. Personal and individual biases congeal to form the collective biases of a community, and what follows is a systemic model where these biases inform the values system of a community.

The most successful methodology for removing personal and individual bias is the growth of consistent education and awareness. Over time, a result of awareness and education a community's established value system will be challenged by the evolving reduction of biases, as individual awareness and personal knowledge grows amongst all members of the community. In the process of this evolution a community's value system should change to match the emerging awareness. However, embedded practices, ongoing misinformation, and the comfort of an established privilege, makes any change slow.

Further slowing the change needed in a community are the frustrations and conflict felt amongst community members during this evolution. When resistance meets resistance, progress may be slowed to a halt. At this point, it is up to leadership, of a community to guide its members through an acceleration of thoughtful education, compassionate awareness and policy that supports change.

### **Options for Council Consideration:**

There are several opportunities that Council can choose to direct Staff to start and implement as the awareness, education and support starts to grow to embrace a change in our community to foster a leading role in Equity, Diversity and Inclusiveness and these opportunities are as follows:

#### **Start to Listen:**

In order to effectively start to strive and create an inclusive culture it is important to engage with the marginalized community directly and empower their voice in the management of change in our community. It will be important to consult with the community and to provide information, advice and assistance to the

Community and Municipal Council relating the enhancement of community relations and promotion of equity in the Town of Cobourg.

As part of the Council Resolution, Council asked 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, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, which was due back August 24, 2020.

As I, being the author of the Staff Report, started drafting ideas, considerations and potential draft terms of reference on this topic through preforming large amounts of research, it was quickly and accurately discovered that I have no business or any real learned experiences to even consider being anywhere close to an expert in this topic of Diversity, Inclusion and Equity.

I, as Municipal Staff am making the recommendation as part of this report that Municipal Council allow Staff to reach out to the community and those members representing a cross-section of the Town of Cobourg's population through open engagement and dialogue in a respectful atmosphere to develop a mandate for a "Committee" to advise Council and make recommendations and 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.

This outreach to recruit members of the Community to help form a Terms of Reference and Mandate should include for example, members who demonstrate the intention of bringing understanding, expertise and experience of the principles of diversity, inclusion and human rights and have a diverse background covering one or more of the following categories;

- Age i.e. Youth (18-30), Adult (30-65), Seniors (65+)
- Gender and Gender Identity – i.e. Male/Female, etc.
- Sexual Orientation - 2SLGBTQIAP+
- Faith – i.e. Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jewish, Atheist, e.t.c
- Ethno-cultural – i.e. Southeast Asian, Arab, Italian, Polish, e.t.c
- Physical and Mental Ability - i.e. Autistic, Vision Disability, e.t.c

Staff currently is not recommending a minimum or maximum number of members to sit on a the future and potential committee, but Staff recommends that two (2) Members of Council be a part of this process and assist with the committee development.

In addition to the development of a Committee, the Town should start to coordinate an outreach to stakeholders and citizens of the community to allow for individuals to express and write their feelings, a quote, or draw/provide an image that represents an improved and more inclusive future in the Town of Cobourg. This should be developed and considered through an online portal or physical location while maintaining a respectful environment which can be used

to collect ideas and provide direction on Town initiatives, policy development and community feedback on Inclusion, Diversity and Equity. This opportunity and approach to listening will help those who may not be ready to share their experiences, and will still provide an opportunity for their voice to be heard.

#### Join the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities (CIM):

The Canadian Coalition Against Racism and Discrimination (CCMARD) was launched in 2004 as part of the International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities (ICCAR) supported by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The name changed to the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities in 2019. Joining the Coalition and working actively towards the ten (10) commitments is beneficial for municipalities to be able to build respectful, inclusive and diverse societies, for the whole Town and specifically for newcomers, immigrants, refugees, Indigenous peoples, visible minorities, people with disabilities, and the 2SLGBTQIAP+ community.

The main benefit of joining Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination is the opportunity to share best practices with other municipalities, other levels of government, the private sector and civil society organizations, whom have responsibilities in the area of human rights. Joining the Coalition will help the Town of Cobourg to increase accountability to citizens around issues of racism and discrimination, and increased trust, loyalty and respect towards the municipality as the Municipal Council works towards equity, inclusion and appreciation of diversity in the community.

#### **Joining the Coalition:**

There are six (6) steps to join the Coalition:

1. Prepare a case;
2. Adopt a Resolution to Join
3. Sign the Declaration
4. Inform the Canadian Commission for UNESCO
5. Announce your involvement to local partners and residents
6. Agree to develop or adapt a unique plan of action.

Below is the summary of the ten (10) Common Commitments grouped under three (3) categories.

#### **The municipality as a guardian of the public Interest**

1. Increase vigilance against systemic and individual racism and discrimination.

2. Monitor racism and discrimination in the community more broadly as well as municipal actions taken to address racism and discrimination.
3. Inform and support Individuals who experience racism and discrimination.
4. Support policing services in their efforts to be exemplary Institutions In combating racism and discrimination.

#### **The municipality as an organization in the fulfillment of human rights**

5. Provide equal opportunities as a municipal employer, service provider, and contractor.
6. Support measures to promote equity in the labour market.
7. Support measures to challenge racism and discrimination and promote diversity and equal opportunity in housing.

#### **The municipality as a community sharing responsibility for respecting and promoting human rights and diversity**

8. Involve citizens by giving them a voice in anti-racism initiatives and decision-making.
9. Support measures to challenge racism and discrimination and promote diversity and equal opportunity in the education sector, and in other forms of learning.
10. Promote respect, understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity and the inclusion of Aboriginal and racialized communities into the cultural fabric of the municipality.

Below are some municipalities in Ontario that belong to this Coalition with a total of 82 municipalities across Canada being Members:

- Aurora
- Belleville
- Caledon
- Georgina
- Oshawa
- Oakville
- Peterborough
- Newmarket
- Peel
- Ottawa
- Niagara
- Kingston



- Tecumseh
- Thunder Bay
- Sudbury
- Sault Ste. Marie
- London
- Windsor
- Vaughan
- Toronto

### Development of a Community Inclusion and Diversity Strategy/Plan

As part of Council's direction to Staff to start and implement a leadership role in equity, inclusion and diversity, Council should look to provide direction for the creation of a Community Inclusion and Diversity Strategy/Plan. Staff can note that several municipalities listed within the Coalition of Inclusive Communities network have adopted a Community Diversity and Inclusion Strategy or Plan. Such a Strategy seeks to embody the collective potential that comes from achieving fairness and justice for all community members.

The development of a strategy or plan relies on methodology that includes public consultation to capture local perspectives, determine gaps, examine systemic obstacles, and expose the historical progression leading to current challenges. It uses the information gathered to determine a progressive approach to rebuilding a community's values and inclusion and diversity as the highest priority. It should be noted that Public Consultation and the listening stage as outlined within this report will be a very important and essential part of the strategy or plan.

### Key Elements of a Successful Community Inclusion and Diversity Strategy/Plan:

- Diversity and Inclusion Goals: Measurable and achievable strategic outcomes to be implemented at all levels of the organization and throughout the community.
- Policies and Procedures: The establishment of policies and procedures that reflect a commitment to diversity and inclusion, establish best practices in the community, support the community values, and are reviewed frequently for ongoing currency.
- Leadership and Accountability: Support from Council, the CAO, Directors, Management, Human Resources and employees, as well as community and business leaders in a "lead by example" approach that shows commitment to diversity and inclusion.
- Resources, programs, and professional development: Education (supplied in a variety of formats and methods), attractive community programs that share inclusive values and provide opportunities for exposure to the wide range of cultural influences within the Community,

and mechanisms for consistent messaging that portrays inclusivity as the backbone of a strong community.

All options outlined within the analysis of this report can be utilized and implemented if Council wishes to expand upon the previous motion. It is unclear if there will be costs associated with a strategy/plan, but there may need to be dedicated staff time provided in order to deliver the focus, respect and attention that an Inclusiveness, Diversity and Equity program deserves.

Staff over the next months will undertake a review of literature and readings that has been referenced in Council's Resolution in June and take on more research on Municipal Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion strategies, plans and guiding documents to contribute to Cobourg's Community Inclusion and Diversity and Equity Plan.

#### 6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/STAFFING/BUDGET IMPACT

There are no immediate budget and financial implications in joining the Coalition and establishing and implementing the various options within this report. Future actions may require additional staffing resources (or re-aligning of positions), subject to approval through the annual budget process. For example, the responsibilities and duties could be amended on the current Accessibility Coordinator function which currently is a temporary contract.

Based on minimal research on the learnings and experiences of other municipalities in Canada and Ontario, Staff would recommend that dedicated personnel would be beneficial in coordinating the governance structures of internal and external stakeholders, and draft a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Action Strategy or Plan.

#### 7.0 CONCLUSION

With the recommendations contained in this report, staff are encouraging Council to consider expanding the direction that was provided to Staff on June 29, 2020. Staff's overarching recommendation is that Council, through leadership and example, elevate the conversation and pull our larger compassionate community together so that we can build an inclusive future together.

#### 9.0 AUTHORIZATION ACKNOWLEDGMENT (SENIOR MANAGEMENT/CAO)



Brent Larmer  
Municipal Clerk  
Manager of Legislative Services

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Davey', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ian Davey

Treasurer/Director of Corporate Services and Interim CAO