

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:	March 29, 2021		
Report No.:	Corporate Services-033-21		
Submit comments to Council			

Subject/Title: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy: Initial Benchmarking Results

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council receive the report on the Initial Benchmarking through the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy for information purposes.

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

N/A

3. PURPOSE

To inform Council and the public on the data gathered so far during the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy development and discuss the next steps.

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.

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 Town of Cobourg is committed to investigating, analyzing, and determining the best way forward for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. To do this, we are using resources and tools that are internationally renowned for being leaders in this space. This includes The Centre for Global Inclusion.¹ The Centre for Global Inclusion's mission is to serve as a resource for research and education for individuals and organizations and is the body that creates the *Global Diversity and Inclusion Benchmarks: Standards for Organizations Around the World* (GDIB).

The GDIB helps organizations determine strategy and measure progress in managing diversity and fostering inclusion. You can read the most recent version of the GDIB at this link: <https://centreforglobalinclusion.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/GDIB-V.090517.pdf>.

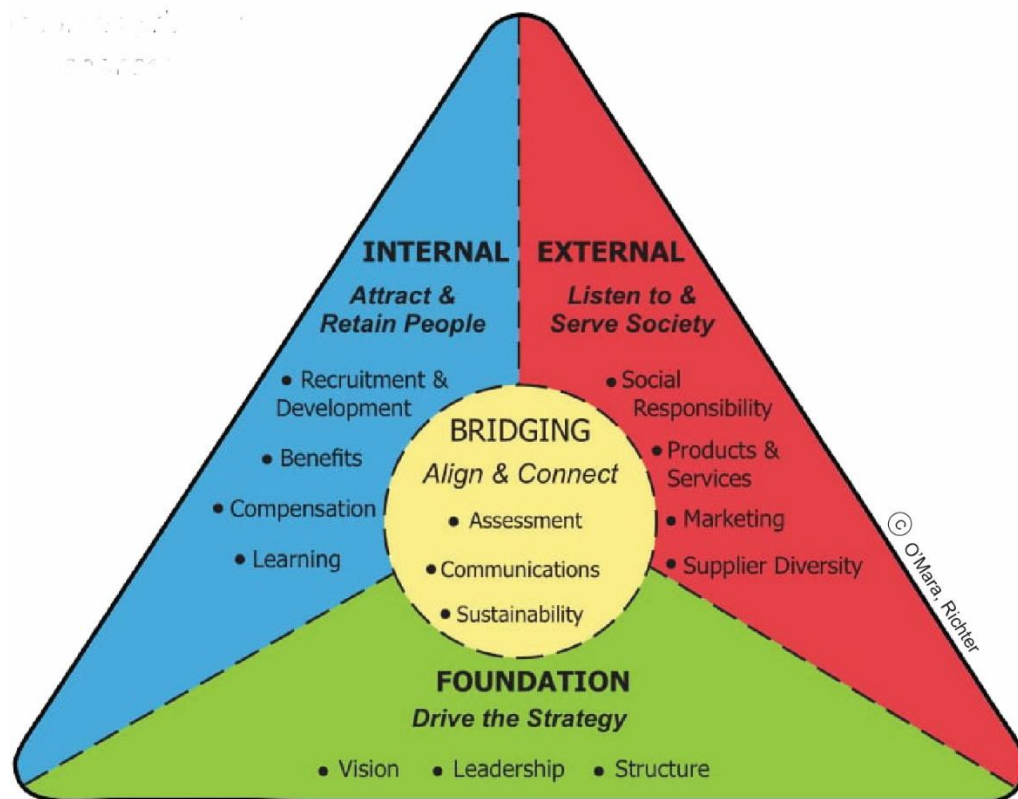
The GDIB offers benchmarks that can help improve the quality of D&I work of all organizations in the world, regardless of how the work is named. Most organizations are motivated to engage in D&I based on a combination of values, knowledge, and goals.

The GDIB uses five (5) approaches to EDI:

1. **Competence:** Focuses on increasing the competence of individuals and organizations to interact effectively in the context of many similarities and differences.
2. **Compliance:** Looks at the laws, rules, codes, guidelines, norms, and the like that indicate how people within and sometimes outside of those entities are expected and/or required to behave.
3. **Dignity:** Includes secular and religious perspectives that recognize the value and worth of every human being and our interdependence.
4. **Organizational Development:** Weighting of performance goals in determining which actions to take to optimize personal and organizational performance.
5. **Social Justice:** Aimed at achieving justice and fairness, ultimately for everyone.

The GDIB Model focuses on the equilateral triangle which symbolizes equality and solidarity or strength. The **Foundation** categories form the base of the triangle. The **Bridging** categories are displayed as a circle in the center connecting the **Foundation, Internal, and External** categories. The lines separating the four (4) groups are different sized dashes symbolizing interconnectivity and reflect the systemic nature of D&I.

¹ <https://centreforglobalinclusion.org/>



Global Diversity & Inclusion Benchmarks

The GDIB has fourteen (14) categories, organized into four (4) groups, to cover the important elements that need to be addressed to create a world-class Diversity & Inclusion initiative.

Each category is divided into five levels, with the benchmarks at Level 5 considered best practice. Most organizations will need to address all the Foundation and Bridging Categories. Organizations may be more selective about which of the Internal and External Categories to address. Addressing all fourteen (14) categories is the most comprehensive and systemic approach.

There are five (5) levels within each category to indicate progress toward the best practices in that category:

- **Level 5: Best Practice:** Demonstrating current best practices in D&I; exemplary for other organizations globally.
- **Level 4: Progressive:** Implementing D&I systemically; showing improved results and outcomes.
- **Level 3: Proactive:** A clear awareness of the value of D&I; starting to implement D&I systemically.
- **Level 2: Reactive:** A compliance mindset; actions are taken primarily to comply with relevant laws and social pressures.
- **Level 1: Inactive:** No D&I work has begun; diversity and a culture of inclusion are not part of organizational goals.

There are a total of 266 benchmarks in fourteen (14) categories and four (4) groups. Benchmarks in Levels 4 and 5 are the most important to strive for; however, it is important to acknowledge that each organization must start at Level 1 or Level 2.

Benchmarks are organizational standards stated as outcomes. Competencies and behaviors describe the actions, steps, skills, knowledge, ability and capability of individuals. Clearly, meeting the higher-level benchmarks will require a high level of competence.

6. ANALYSIS

The Town of Cobourg received permission from the Centre for Global Inclusion to use the GDIB benchmarks as part of the development of the EDI Strategy.

The Town of Cobourg had all of Town Council, the Senior Management Team, and some specific Managers participate in the GDIB Assessment Checklists. A total of twenty-three (23) people participated and rated the categories based on their best knowledge. Using the Global Diversity and Inclusion Benchmark Assessments, assessors determined where the Town of Cobourg is on the Levels provided in the GDIB. The goal is to use the scores to facilitate conversation with examples and to focus on a plan to improve what is done at the Town of Cobourg.

This information will be used in conjunction with all other steps outlined in the development process of the Town of Cobourg's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy and Plan to determine next steps for a more inclusive environment.

None of the information that was provided will be given to the public nor will any identifying information be shared with the others who complete it. All the data will be aggregated for analysis.

The participants were selected because they could provide knowledge on one or more of the 14 categories under the Global Diversity and Inclusion Benchmarks to how the Town of Cobourg "measures" to Best Practices.

As part of the assessments, participants were able to provide "half" scores (1.5, 2.5, etc.), which has impacted the averages of the scoring. Typical rounding principles were used to create the overall scores for each category. The participants were asked to also make note of the benchmarks that they would like to see included and incorporated into the EDI Strategy in the future. These are included as a highlight in the end of this section but will be delved into during the rest of the data collection and analysis process.

The participants rated the Town of Cobourg at the following levels for the fourteen (14) categories:

Category 1: D&I Vision, Strategy, and Business Case

Develop a strong rationale for D&I vision and strategy and align it to organizational goals.

Overall Level: Level 1.5

Category 1 Scoring Explanation

Participants selected many of the benchmarks in the Reactive and Inactive levels. Many participants noted that there is no D&I vision, strategy, or business case but that there is a definition and there are principles of diversity and inclusion that have been adopted based on legislative requirements.

Those who noted the benchmarks in the higher categories clarified that this is what they wish to see and/or perceive to be the case. Further analysis will be used to determine the level of EDI understanding at the Town of Cobourg.

As the Town of Cobourg is starting the journey to be more inclusive, this is not surprising, nor should it be seen as a negative. By engaging in this process, it is clear that these benchmarks and others will be completed in the future.

Category 2: Leadership and Accountability

Hold leaders accountable for implementing the organization's D&I vision, setting goals, achieving results, and being role models.

Overall Level: Level 1.5

Category 2 Scoring Explanation

Participants split their choices in this category between lack of accountability for leaders in D&I, while also saying that leaders would require instructions or scripts to deal with the majority of D&I topics.

In the last two weeks, leaders have been given access to the first training courses to help them on their D&I learning journey. Further training will be provided in the coming months and they will be completing Intercultural Development Inventories to create specific and tailored cultural competency plans for the future.

Category 3: D&I Structure and Implementation

Provide dedicated support and structure with authority and budget to effectively implement D&I.

Overall Level: Level 2.0

Category 3 Scoring Explanation

There was a divide between Level 3: Proactive and Level 1: Inactive for the participants' choices in this category. The selections were around the idea that there is a staff member in place who has D&I knowledge and was hired based on the skills and abilities. In addition, there is some budget allocated for D&I implementation through the training that will be conducted this year.

There should be caution in assigning too high of a score to this section as there is still more work to be done and other programs to implement in the future.

Category 4: Recruitment, Retention, Development, and Advancement

Ensure that D&I is integrated into recruitment, talent development, advancement, and retention.

Overall Level: Level 2.0

Category 4 Scoring Explanation

There were very high selections in this category and very low selections in this category. However, there were many boxes left unchecked on all participant forms as there appear to be no targeted efforts to include equity, diversity, and inclusion in the hiring practices.

A full analysis of the hiring will be conducted as part of the Policy Review Team and the organizational review to provide more insights into this with suggestions

and input from these benchmarks as well as best practices from Human Resources.

Category 5: Benefits, Work-life Integration, and Flexibility

Achieve work-life integration and flexibility.

Overall Level: Level 2.5

Category 5 Scoring Explanation

Many aspects of the selections were chosen with the caveat that these types of flexibility have been incorporated with the beginning of COVID-19 and the need to work from home to create a safe work environment.

Participants stated that they were unsure if this would continue post-pandemic and that some of these options were not available pre-pandemic.

Category 6: Job Design, Classification, and Compensation

Ensure that job design and classification are unbiased and compensation is equitable.

Overall Level: Level 2.0

Category 6 Scoring Explanation

There was a lot of emphasis on job classification in this category being based upon unions and the legislative requirements. Some participants noted that there is more need for auditing and understanding of pay equity in the organizations and others noted that the organizational review may assist with understanding some of these topics.

Category 7: D&I Learning and Education

Educate leaders and employees so they have a high level of D&I competence.

Overall Level: Level 1.0

Category 7 Scoring Explanation

All participants agreed that there has not been a formal education or curriculum for equity, diversity, and inclusion; however, this will be starting in the next few months. Further, there is little awareness and knowledge currently.

As the EDI Strategy is developed and implemented, staff will be provided with multiple training opportunities on a variety of topics to increase their awareness of D&I.

Category 8: Assessment, Measurement, and Research

Ensure that assessment, measurement, and research guide D&I decisions.

Overall Level: Level 1.0

Category 8 Scoring Explanation

As noted by participants, there has been no assessments used to monitor D&I efforts. These benchmarks will start to be achieved and realized during the creation of the EDI Strategy.

The aim will be to increase to Level 2: Reactive and begin to incorporate Level 3: Progressive elements into the assessments we do on D&I moving forward.

Category 9: D&I Communications

Make communication a crucial force in achieving the organization's D&I goals.

Overall Level: Level 1.0

Category 9 Scoring Explanation

Participants noted that there is no organizational effort to incorporate D&I into communications but this is changing as we continue to engage in EDI efforts and create new programs and initiatives.

Category 10: Connecting D&I and Sustainability

Connect the D&I and Sustainability initiatives to increase the effectiveness of both.

Overall Level: Level 1.5

Category 10 Scoring Explanation

Participants noted that there is the beginning of the incorporation of D&I and Sustainability, including becoming a member of the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities through the Canadian Commission of UNESCO. Further, there are some partnerships and volunteering opportunities that create community development.

More of a targeted effort needs to be made on sustainability and the Sustainable Development Goals through the United Nations during the development of the EDI Strategy.

Category 11: Community, Government Relations, and Social Responsibility

Advocate for D&I progress within local communities and society at large.

Overall Level: Level 2.0

Category 11 Scoring Explanation

There was a mix of participant responses of community participation and how the Town of Cobourg works with organizations and community partners. The overwhelming response was that there was involvement, but not in a formalized or in depth way that Staff or Town Council would like to see in the future.

Category 12: Products and Services Development

Embed D&I in products and services development to serve diverse customers and clients.

Overall Level: Level 2.0

Category 12 Scoring Explanation

Participants noted that there has been some alteration of products or services based on feedback from residents in the Town of Cobourg. There are different public engagement opportunities for the residents to provide input into the development of services; however, this is not done for all topics.

Category 13: Marketing and Customer Service

Integrate D&I into marketing and customer service.

Overall Level: Level 1.5

Category 13 Scoring Explanation

There were many aspects in Level 2: Reactive that participants made note that the Town of Cobourg provide. In addition, as many participants noted, all of our customer service are in the process of modernizing and becoming fully accessible for Persons with Disabilities.

Category 14: Supplier Diversity

Promote and nurture a diverse supplier base and encourage suppliers to advocate for D&I.

Overall Level: Level 1.0

Category 14 Scoring Explanation

Participants noted that there were very little considerations for supplier diversity in the procurement process at the Town of Cobourg.

Overall Analysis

Like all organizations who start their journey in EDI, it is important to understand where we currently are and take stock of the current initiatives and projects that are underway at the Town of Cobourg. While there have been efforts towards creating an inclusive environment, they have not always been documented or done on a Corporate wide level.

There are many avenues in which the public can be incorporated and engaged with during this process to ensure that their voices and needs are being heard and met. Through discussions with some of the organizations that service the Town of Cobourg's residents, there are opportunities for the municipality to partner with these organizations to work together to create a more equitable and inclusive environment. We request that any member of the public who wishes to participate or be involved send us an email to diversity@cobourg.ca.

Based on the information gathered through this initial benchmarking exercise, it is clear that there is still work to be done at the Town of Cobourg. As part of this exercise, the participants were asked to highlight the benchmarks that they would like to see implemented as part of the EDI Strategy – or in the long term – to understand where the first steps forward should be. These will be taken into consideration as the data is collected and analyzed to create the full recommendations for an EDI Strategy.

Some of these benchmarks include:

- All the major components of D&I work, including vision, strategy, business case, rational, goals, policies, principles, and competencies, are regularly reviewed.
- Managing D&I is an essential leadership competency and leaders are rated on it.
- The most senior D&I professional is an equal and influential partner on the senior leadership team.
- The organization ensures that annual compensation gap analyses are conducted to confirm that biases based on age, disability, gender,

organizational function, race, and other potential equity issues are dealt with appropriately.

- D&I topics are easily and quickly located on the organization's internal and external websites. Information is thorough, fully accessible, and regularly updated.

There will be opportunities throughout the EDI Strategy to do this type of analysis again to determine the areas that have improved as well as those that have stayed the same. This will allow the public to hold the Town of Cobourg accountable to certain initiatives and objectives while giving Staff measurable and achievable goals.

These benchmarks will be taken into consideration and adapted to the needs of the Town of Cobourg while using the other data and analysis through the EDI Strategy development to ensure that there is a holistic approach.

Staff will provide an update on the process after the next steps have been taken prior to public engagement.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/BUDGET IMPACTS

There are currently no financial or budgetary impacts based on the results of the GDIB. This information will be used to direct the findings of the rest of the data that will come from the EDI Strategy development.

We are grateful and thankful to the Centre for Global Inclusion for creating free resources that can be used to help shape the future of EDI at the Town of Cobourg.

8. CONCLUSION

The Town of Cobourg is working towards creating a more inclusive environment. Using the GDIB Assessment Checklists, we were able to determine the next best steps forward on the EDI journey to creating a tailored approach to diversity for the Town of Cobourg.

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	<u>EDI Strategy - Initial Benchmarking Report - Corporate Services-033-21.docx</u>
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Mar 18, 2021

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

Brent Larmer, Municipal Clerk/manager of Legislative Services - Mar 18, 2021 - 11:46 AM

Tracey Vaughan, Chief Administrative Officer - Mar 18, 2021 - 5:46 PM