 COBOURG	THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF COBOURG
	STAFF REPORT
TO:	Mayor and Council Members
FROM:	Jamie Kramer, CHRP, CCIP™, Accessibility Coordinator
DATE OF MEETING:	October 26, 2020
TITLE/SUBJECT:	Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy
REPORT DATE:	October 16, 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.

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

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

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

Pillar – PROSPERITY – The Town plans for, markets, and develops assets for economic growth and financial security.

2.0 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Specific organizations will be contacted to provide insight and input into the draft Terms of Reference for the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee of Council including:

- Alderville First Nations,
- Big Brothers, Big Sisters Northumberland,
- Canadian Mental Health Association (Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge),
- Community Living-West,
- Horizons of Friendship, and
- Northumberland Pride.

The public will be engaged after this meeting for an appropriate time period before compiling the information for the report in December 2020.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

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.

4.0 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.

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.

5.0 BACKGROUND

This report responds to part of the above resolutions as requested by Council. When first discussed in the last Council report, this was addressed as a Community Diversity and Inclusion Strategy/Plan. For the purposes of this report and moving forward, it will be referred to as an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy.

Employers use Diversity and Inclusion initiatives for a variety of reasons including legislative compliance obligations, increasing innovation, and to increase the bottom line with a more diverse workforce. Using Demographic and Labour Market information from the 2016 Canadian Census through Statistics Canada¹, it is clear that there are marginalized, underrepresented, and underserved groups living in the Town of Cobourg.

In 2016, it was reported that almost 4,000 residents of Cobourg moved to the city from cities within the province of Ontario in the last five (5) years with almost 1,500 in the last year.² With the rising cost of housing³ and the COVID-19 pandemic⁴, there are many people moving out of, and away from, Toronto to some of the smaller communities to either commute into the city or retire. As Toronto is one of the most diverse cities in Canada, this could increase the diverse population in Cobourg in the near future.

The 2016 Census shows us that 4.4% of the population in Cobourg identifies as a Racialized Person (Visible Minority) and 2.3% of the population identifies as an Indigenous Person (Aboriginal).⁵ In Northumberland County, the population is 3.4% and 2.7%, for Racialized Persons (Visible Minorities) and Indigenous Persons (Aboriginals), respectively.

¹ Statistics Canada. 2017. Cobourg, T [Census subdivision], Ontario and Ontario [Province] (table). Census Profile. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017.

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed September 28, 2020).

² Ibid.

³ Khoo, Isabelle. "Here's How Much Young People Need To Make To Survive In Toronto." Toronto Storeys, 10 Dec. 2019, <http://www.torontostoreys.com/cost-of-living-toronto-2019/>.

⁴ Peters, Diane. "Why COVID-19 Has City-Dwellers Trying to Get out of Dodge." TVO.org, 18 June 2020, www.tvo.org/article/why-covid-19-has-city-dwellers-trying-to-get-out-of-dodge.

⁵ Statistics Canada. 2017. Cobourg, T [Census subdivision], Ontario and Ontario [Province] (table). Census Profile. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017.

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed September 28, 2020).

Even with the seemingly “homogenous” community, it is important to celebrate differences that do occur. The importance to encourage and celebrate diversity in “homogeneous” communities allows for Cobourg to⁶:

1. **Remove Other-ness:** This includes acknowledging and respect the cultures and traditions across the world, not just what we see in our community. To do this, we have to move beyond the symbolic celebrations of awareness months such as Black History Month to create true experiences for citizens.
2. **Challenge Assumptions:** Take what people know, or think they know about the world, and introduce new ideas and opinions which challenge the assumptions they have grown up with and honed over their lives. Most people are adaptable and accepting by nature who may need a little nudge to accept something from their norm.
3. **Look outside the Bubble:** Expand the worldview of Cobourg to be inclusive of outside opinions, worldviews, and information that shapes the world around us. We should be able to present facts and arguments from marginalized, underrepresented, and underserved communities to those who may not hear these viewpoints elsewhere.
4. **Celebrate the Diversity around Us:** Few communities, including Cobourg and the greater Northumberland County, are entirely homogenous. This means that we should be seeking out and celebrating the uniqueness and differences in our communities, especially the “invisible” diversity elements.

By embracing diversity in the community, it means creating an environment that allows people to bring their unique thoughts and identities to enhance the cultural and diversity competence of the Town of Cobourg. The Town of Cobourg would only gain from having a diverse workplace and a welcoming community. The development of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy would provide the building blocks for creating an inclusive and welcoming community.

6.0 ANALYSIS

Based on the Council Report and Resolution passed by Council, there were three (3) objectives to assist with creating this update and the overall Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity Policy and Plan. This report is specifically created for two (2) of those three (3):

1. The draft of the Terms of Reference for an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee of Council and;
2. The Development of an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy.

Start to Listen

The first aspect of the report to Council was to start to listen to the community and key stakeholders and rights holders about how to create an inclusive culture.

There were two (2) steps outlined in the Staff Memo for this option, which included:

⁶ Peters, Kylie. “Promoting Diversity in Homogeneous Communities.” YALSA Blog, 2016, <http://yalsa.ala.org/blog/2016/12/17/promoting-diversity-in-homogeneous-communities/>.

1. Create the Terms of Reference for an Advisory Committee for Council, and
2. Community Open Dialogue and Feedback.

Create the Terms of Reference for an Advisory Committee for Council

We started by reviewing various other municipalities' as well as non-profit organization's Diversity Committee of Council's Terms of Reference, including:

- [Clarington](#), Ontario,
- [Dufferin County](#), Ontario
- [Kamloops](#), British Columbia,
- [London](#), Ontario,
- [Oshawa](#), Ontario,
- [Saskatoon](#), Saskatchewan,
- The [Canadian Institute of Mining, Metallurgy, and Petroleum](#), and
- [Truro](#), Nova Scotia.

These helped us understand that there were three (3) options for the type of Advisory Committee that could be formed, which were:

1. **Community Advisory with No Authority:** These Advisory Committees provide insight into ongoing strategies, initiatives, plans, etc. but do not have the authority to advise and/or direct Council and/or Staff.
2. **Community Advisory with Authority:** These Advisory Committees provide insight into ongoing strategies, initiatives, plans, etc. and have the authority to advise and/or direct Council and/or Staff.
3. **Hybrid Advisory Committee:** These Advisory Committees have a mixture of Staff and Community members, specifically from sectors that represent marginalized, underrepresented, and/or underserved communities. These Committees do not have the authority to advise or direct Council, but Staff can use the information to move forward with specific strategies, initiatives, plans, etc.

After reviewing the information, we determined the best course of action forward would be to create a **Community Advisory Committee of Council with Authority (Option #2)**. This will allow citizens and constituents, as well as stakeholders and rights holders from marginalized, underrepresented, and/or underserved communities have a say in moving Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion forward. From here, we developed a Draft Terms of Reference for the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee of Council for the Town of Cobourg, attached as **Appendix A**.

By reviewing this Terms of Reference for the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee of Council, it would allow Staff members to continue engaging with diverse community members and have a strategic body that provides insight, advice, and direction to Staff while pursuing the development of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy.

This Committee of Council will start receiving applications once the Terms of Reference are approved and Council will appoint the full Committee by the end of February 2021. Council will have the opportunity to provide input and direction into the Terms of Reference prior to opening it up to the public.

Development of an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy

Part of the recommendations for Town Council's considerations was to develop a Community Inclusion Strategy, which will be referred to as an "Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy" throughout this report.

While it is crucial to involve the Community in this process, Staff and internal stakeholders and rights holders must be involved as well to assist with the implementation process.

The purpose of this is to inform Council of the entire process and receive approval and support for beginning the first three actions below (Initial Internal Benchmarking, External Benchmarking, and Community Engagement and Feedback) to provide some preliminary information for the December report. **Appendix B** provides the full scope of the timeline that would take place to create an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy.

Very often, municipalities and other organizations will create a plan without involving the appropriate persons or with only speaking to certain members of Staff or the community to draw their goals, objectives, and action steps. This excludes important voices and is not the recommended plan of action.

The Development Process

Based on best practices, and past experience from the Accessibility Coordinator's previous employment, the development process of this plan should include the following:

1. **Initial Internal Benchmarking:** Using the [Global Diversity and Inclusion Benchmarks \(GDIB\)](#), and the corresponding [GDIB Assessment Checklist](#), determine the Town of Cobourg's current level of diversity and culture of inclusion.
2. **External Benchmarking:** Review other Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategies and Plans from other municipalities, non-profit, and for-profit organizations to see the scope of goals and objectives.
3. **Community Engagement and Feedback:** Conduct community engagement and listening sessions to learn about the important topics that should be addressed for the community in Cobourg.
4. **Leadership Interviews:** Interviews with those in top leadership and management positions should be conducted, including with Council, to determine cultural competence as well as their understanding of topics related to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion through their unique experience and lens.
5. **Document Review:** All documents, policies, and processes should be reviewed under an Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) lens to provide insights into any unintentional organizational or systemic barriers at the Town of Cobourg.
6. **Census and Engagement Survey:** Survey the current workforce to learn more about the Diversity within the workplace as well as how engaged and included they feel.

7. **Confidential Internal Focus Groups:** Conduct confidential focus groups with employees to learn more about the obstacles and opportunities for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at the Town of Cobourg.
8. **Strategy Development:** Work with appropriate stakeholders and rights holders to develop the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy/Plan.
9. **Implementation:** Implementing the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy.

This entire process will take approximately eight (8) to ten (10) months, with the hopes of having a completed Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy to present to Council by August 2021 with the aim to begin the implementation process in the Fall of 2021. This is assuming there are no delays due to unforeseen circumstances (such as another lockdown due to COVID-19) and appropriate budgetary allotments provided.

Initial Internal Benchmarking

Purpose: Using the [Global Diversity and Inclusion Benchmarks \(GDIB\)](#), and the corresponding [GDIB Assessment Checklist](#), determine the Town of Cobourg's current level of diversity and culture of inclusion.

The Global Diversity and Inclusion Benchmarks (GDIB)⁷ helps organizations determine strategy and measure progress in managing Diversity and fostering Inclusion. The GDIB Model uses four (4) broad groups and fourteen (14) categories to cover the important elements that need to be addressed to create a Diversity and Inclusion Initiative.

These groups and categories are:

1. Foundation (Drive the Strategy)
 - a. D&I Vision, Strategy, and Business Case,
 - b. Leadership and Accountability, and
 - c. D&I Structure and Implementation.
2. Internal (Attract and Retain People)
 - a. Recruitment, Retention, Development, and Advancement,
 - b. Benefits, Work-life Integration, and Flexibility,
 - c. Job Design, Classification, and Compensation, and
 - d. D&I Learning and Education.
3. Bridging (Align and Connect)
 - a. Assessment, Measurement, and Research,
 - b. D&I Communications, and
 - c. Connecting D&I and Sustainability.
4. External (Listen to and Serve Society)
 - a. Community, Government Relations, and Social Responsibility,
 - b. Products and Services Development,
 - c. Marketing and Customer Service, and
 - d. Supplier Diversity.

⁷ "From Global Diversity & Inclusion Benchmarks: Standards for Organizations Around the World © 2017 Julie O'Mara and Alan Richter. Used with permission. All Rights Reserved.

The GDIB has five (5) levels of assessment which are as follows:

- **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 the 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.

The Town of Cobourg has received permission from the authors to use this as their metric analysis for the EDI Strategy moving forward.

Staff is requesting Council's participation in some of the categories under the GDIB to provide context, input, and insights into the benchmarking.

Using the [GDIB Assessment Checklists](#), the Town of Cobourg can understand their current level of assessment in the GDIB. It should be noted that most municipalities and/or organizations who use this checklist when starting a journey generally rank low in their level assessment. This is to be expected and will mean that there is room to grow and improve moving forward.

External Benchmarking

Purpose: Review other Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategies and Plans from other municipalities, non-profit, and for-profit organizations to see the scope of goals and objectives.

There are different levels of specificity and commitment to Diversity and Inclusion in Diversity and Inclusion Action Plans/Strategies. Municipal government plans generally have an internal focus. The non-profit and for-profit organizations tend to acknowledge the need to have an additional client/customer focus. The Town of Cobourg will aim to do both with their Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy.

The hope is to use similar comparators as with the other external comparators that are used; however, it should be noted that based on preliminary research many small municipalities or comparable demographic and size municipalities have not undertaken this type of work. This further proves that Cobourg will be a leader in this space and may mean that larger areas will need to be used as benchmarks. Where it is applicable, a note on the size of the municipality/organization will be factored in to understand the differences in resources.

Community Engagement and Feedback

Purpose: Conduct community engagement and listening sessions to learn about the important topics that should be addressed for the community in Cobourg.

As noted in the "Public Engagement" section of this document, the public will be engaged on the Terms of Reference for the EDI Committee of Council. There will be a

notice that members of the public can email in any barriers, obstacles, complaints, or compliments to the Town at diversity@cobourg.ca.

More strategic public engagement will be undertaken during the next phases of developing the plan. The information gathered during the next few months will help direct the way in which Staff engages the public as well as reviews documents and information internally.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/STAFFING/BUDGET IMPACT

There are currently no costing or financial implications. If there is any costs associated, these will be further discussed in the report alongside the update report for the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy in December 2020 after receiving the preliminary information and data.

The work of this will be done by the Accessibility Coordinator and will not impact the current staffing of the Legislative Services department.

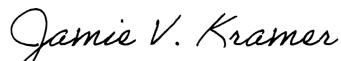
8.0 CONCLUSION

Staff are encouraging Council to provide input into the future of equity, diversity, and inclusion at the Town of Cobourg by providing revisions and insight into the Terms of Reference for the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee of Council.

Staff are further encouraging Council to participate in the Initial Internal Benchmarking to provide insights, context, and a progress report for where the Town of Cobourg currently is and where we will be heading towards next.

Staff will bring back further information by the end of the year, including a final version of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee of Council Terms of Reference.

9.0 AUTHORIZATION ACKNOWLEDGEMENT (SENIOR MANAGEMENT/CAO)



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