

 <b>COBOURG</b>	<b>THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF COBOURG</b>
	<b>STAFF REPORT</b>
TO:	Mayor and Town Council Members
FROM:	Jamie Kramer, CHRP, CCIP™, Accessibility Coordinator
DATE OF MEETING:	December 7, 2020
TITLE/SUBJECT:	<b>Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy</b>
REPORT DATE:	November 23, 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 were 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),

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- Community Living-West,
- Cornerstone Northumberland,
- Horizons of Friendship,
- Multicultural First Aid,
- New Canadians Centre,
- Northumberland Community Legal Centre (Legal Aid Ontario),
- Settlement Services through Northumberland County, and
- Queer Collective.

The public were also provided the opportunity to provide comments and insights not only into the Terms of Reference but the beginning stages of the EDI Strategy as well during this time period.

As a reminder, the public is always encouraged to participate in discussion around equity, diversity, and inclusion at the Town of Cobourg by emailing the Accessibility Coordinator at [diversity@cobourg.ca](mailto:diversity@cobourg.ca).

### **3.0 RECOMMENDATION**

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.

### **4.0 ORIGIN AND LEGISLATION**

Title/Subject: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy

## **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*

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*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*

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

### **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.

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 Canada<sup>1</sup>, 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.<sup>2</sup> With the rising cost of housing<sup>3</sup> and the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>4</sup>, 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. Many persons, including a few from the Legislative Services department, are choosing to move East of Toronto to smaller communities like Cobourg where their money will go further.

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).<sup>5</sup> In Northumberland County, the population is 3.4% and 2.7%, for Racialized Persons (Visible Minorities) and Indigenous Persons (Aboriginals), respectively.

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<sup>1</sup> 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).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> 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/>.

<sup>4</sup> 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](http://www.tvo.org/article/why-covid-19-has-city-dwellers-trying-to-get-out-of-dodge).

<sup>5</sup> 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).

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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 to<sup>6</sup>:

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.

While there are activities being done within each department, these are uncoordinated which limits the impact and efficiency of them on the Town of Cobourg. As there are no facets in place that have a broad overview of the Town of Cobourg, there is a potential that staff members, and the community as a whole, are under-reporting cases of harassment and discrimination.

Without an EDI Strategy, there is a limited ability to measure the business value or the return on investment for those smaller facets of diversity that are being conducted. This also gives us a lack of reliable insight into employee experience as well as how the citizens understand equity, diversity, and inclusion.

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

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The EDI Strategy will work to empower our Mayor and Town Council and our Leadership team, to be able to have meaningful discussions around equity, diversity, and inclusion both in the workplace and the boundaries of Cobourg.

## 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.

1. Start to Listen (Public Engagement),
2. Joining the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities, and;
3. The Development of an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy.

### **Start to Listen (Public Engagement)**

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:

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***

At the Committee of the Whole meeting on October 26, 2020, a draft version of the Terms of Reference for an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee of Council. After this meeting, input from Councillors, other community organizations, and citizens on Engage Cobourg.

In addition, further organizations were reached out to based on their scope of mandate as well as the location they provide services to. As many organizations provide services to Cobourg but have head offices in areas outside of Cobourg. These organizations were asked to provide input via email and/or registration on the Engage Cobourg website and are listed in the "Public Engagement" section of this Council Report.

The final version of these Terms of Reference are attached as **Appendix A**. The Engage Cobourg incorporated the Terms of Reference and general dialogue for understanding issues around equity, diversity, and inclusion in the Town of Cobourg. This was visited a total of 172 times with 4 Engaged Visitors, 43 Informed Visitors, and 123 Aware Visitors. Every participant that said they would like to be involved was sent a personalized email inviting them to stay tuned with the final version of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee of Council Terms of Reference and would be sent the information to apply to be a part of the committee.

This Advisory 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. While the Mandate and information for the Advisory Committee has been outlined, the goal is to have this Advisory Committee provide insight and information to Council, and Staff, to have a diverse and inclusive lens applied to all Town initiatives moving forward.

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To ensure needs of all community members will be met, select Staff members from Northumberland County have been requested to sit as non-voting members (resources) on the Committee to provide context and insight, as well as to combine efforts for specific strategies and projects. The goal of this Committee is to be as collaborative as possible when creating an equitable, diverse, and inclusive Cobourg.

### ***Community Open Dialogue and Feedback***

As part of the opportunity to “Start to Listen”, Staff used Engage Cobourg to begin the conversation about any obstacles, challenges, or opportunities to create a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive town. This information was collected at the same time as the Terms of Reference to begin the dialogue for public engagement.

Staff outlined in the initial report to Council on September 14<sup>th</sup> the option to create an outreach that allowed the community to “express and write their feelings, a quote, or draw/provide an image...through an online portal or physical location.” Due to the rise of COVID-19 cases during the months between September and November this was done completely online to ensure a safe environment. Should cases drop and it is safe to conduct these types of engagement in person again in 2021, this will be incorporated into the public engagement options for the EDI Strategy at that time.

Staff with the assistance of Town Council and the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee of Council for the Town of Cobourg will determine a safe location for this, as well as how it will be monitored and issues raised addressed.

Staff will continue to listen to the community. Once the EDI Committee of Council has been formed, a Town Hall/Public Session will be hosted, either in-person, virtually, or hybrid, to encourage citizens to make their voices heard. The way that public participation will take place will depend heavily on COVID-19 restrictions, cases, and advice from Health professionals.

As previously stated in the Council Report, the public is always welcome to address issues, concerns, or opportunities around equity, diversity, and inclusion by emailing the Accessibility Coordinator at [diversity@cobourg.ca](mailto:diversity@cobourg.ca).

### **Join the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities**

The Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities is a network through the Canadian Commission for UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). This network brings together municipalities that want to improve their policies against racism, discrimination, exclusion and intolerance. Its strength lies in the shared experiences of its members. Together, the municipalities undertake initiatives to eliminate all forms of discrimination with a view to building open and inclusive societies.

In the guide for [New and Established Members of the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities](#), there is a recommendation for new signatory members to sign the declaration to become a member of the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities on an internationally recognized day. The next of these is January 4<sup>th</sup>, which is World Braille Day. It is the recommendation of Staff that the Mayor and Town Council not only sign the declaration to join the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities on this day, but also

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proclaim World Braille Day as a significant day to raise awareness at the Town of Cobourg.

Once becoming a signatory member, the Town of Cobourg is responsible for undertaking actions that address ten (10) Common Commitments. These are the following:

1. Increasing vigilance against systemic and individual discrimination.
2. Monitoring discrimination in the municipality and taking action to address it.
3. Supporting individuals who experience discrimination.
4. Providing police services that are exemplary institutions for fighting discrimination.
5. Providing equal opportunities as a municipal employer, service providers, and contractor.
6. Supporting measures that promote equity in the labour market.
7. Challenging discrimination and promoting diversity and equal opportunities in housing.
8. Involving citizens by giving them a voice in anti-racism initiatives and decision-making.
9. Challenging discrimination and promoting diversity and equal opportunities in education and other forms of learning.
10. Promoting the respect, knowledge, and appreciation of cultural diversity and the inclusion of Indigenous and Racialized communities in the cultural fabric of the municipality.

By signing on, the Town of Cobourg is agreeing to create a Plan of Action for these ten (10) Commitments, which will be our EDI Strategy. It is Staff recommendation that we focus on three (3) of these actions while we develop our EDI Strategy and work to incorporate more as we continue on our journey. The three (3) that are being recommended by Staff are:

1. Increasing vigilance against systemic and individual discrimination.
2. Monitoring discrimination in the municipality and taking action to address it.
3. Involving citizens by giving them a voice in anti-racism initiatives and decision-making.

These initial commitments will begin through further public engagement as well as with the assistance of the newly formed Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee of Council. More information will be provided in 2021 on the full scope of engagement with the public to increase Staff's awareness of the types of discrimination faced by members of the public, as well as our Staff members.

Beginning with these three commitments, the Town of Cobourg will be able to lay a greater foundation to incorporate the remaining seven (7) in the future. While all are important and will have a part to play in the EDI Strategy, the amount of resources and ability to address some of the larger systemic issues will only come with time and further resources. The first three (3) that are being recommended will lay the foundation and framework for how to best implement and address the remaining seven (7).

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Once the Town of Cobourg's EDI Strategy is complete, we will be requested on a yearly basis to provide CCUNESCO with updates on how we are meeting our requirements under the ten (10) Common Commitments. This Annual Report will also be shared with the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee of Council as well as Town Council and the public to demonstrate where we are on the journey and what steps are still to be made. This first report will be completed in 2021 along with the start of the implementation of the EDI Strategy.

It should be noted that by focusing on these three (3) commitments, it does not preclude us from having strategies or recommendations for the other seven (7) commitments in our EDI Strategy. As with these types of commitments, they are intertwined and work together to create a holistic approach to the Town of Cobourg's approach to racism and discrimination.

### **Development of an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy**

At the Council meeting on November 4<sup>th</sup>, the following development process for an EDI Strategy was approved by Council:

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.

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As noted, 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.

The following information is an update on the steps that have been taken already and what is to come in the future for the EDI Strategy to stay within the timeline. This EDI Strategy will meet the requirements under the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities for a Plan of Action.

An aggregate and high level report of all the information collected throughout the entirety of the process will be provided at a later date to Town Council along with some recommended actions for the future. This will allow for all of the steps and information to work together to create a full picture rather than making assumptions or estimations about what will work moving forward based on only pieces of the information.

### ***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)<sup>7</sup> 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.

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.

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

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Using the [GDIB Assessment Checklists](#), the Town of Cobourg will assess their initial levels of equity, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace. Using a mixture of Councillors, Directors, Managers, Supervisors, and Individual Contributors, many persons from the Town of Cobourg were able to participate in this activity. This will include the Fire Department, Police Department, the Cobourg Public Library, and Union representatives.

As the goal of this system is to come to a consensus, only a sample of Staff members from all levels were able to participate; however, through the Inclusion Survey and Confidential Internal Focus Groups, all Staff members will be asked on the topics in a multitude of ways. This will allow us to understand the full depth of where the Town of Cobourg is on its journey and how Staff understands Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

We are still working to collect this information and will use it to shape the future direction of the EDI Strategy. It should be noted that the expectation is that the Town of Cobourg will be on the lower end of the spectrum as there hasn't been a collective effort towards EDI at the Town of Cobourg previously. There are many departments that are making efforts towards EDI in their respective area and that will mean some of the categories have higher levels of activity than others but overall there is a lower level of activity.

While completing the Checklist Assessments, it will be requested of the individuals participating to place an asterisk next to the practices that they wanted to see implemented in the future as goals. These will be taken into consideration during the recommendation and action planning phase of the EDI Strategy; however, it may be that we take smaller steps to work towards those larger goals in the future.

### ***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 should aim to do both with their Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy; however, the variety in the level of commitment will come based on the type of resources that are available, including personnel and budgetary commitments.

The hope was 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.

Many of the EDI plans and strategies for different municipalities have between forty (40) to sixty (60) action items across a multitude of objectives and goals. The municipalities and/or regions that have these strategies have significantly higher populations overall and also higher populations of Racialized Persons. The amount of complexity depends

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on the not only how long the municipality/region has been focusing on diversity but also the size of the personnel working on the project.

While there may be some initiatives that the Town of Cobourg can take based on these other strategies, we are not far enough along on the process to start further along on the journey than we actually are. When that happens, EDI Strategies tend to fail because the expectation is much higher than what can actually be delivered.

### ***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](mailto: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. The public engagement will use the principles of the International Association for Public Participation’s Engagement Spectrum as well as best practices for engaging marginalized and “hard to reach” communities.

Some of these best practice techniques include:

- Hosting events at community centres,
- Providing information or accommodations for child care,
- Hosting events along a bus route,
- Ensuring that these events do not fall on a religious or cultural holiday or event,
- Having language interpreters, including sign language interpretation, available,
- Ensuring the location is barrier-free and accessible for Persons with Disabilities,
- Pairing up persons who are new to the public engagement process with those who have done it before, and
- Allowing people to participate in multiple ways for the same topic (i.e. in person, online, email, survey, etc.).

All of these ideas will be taken into consideration during the creation and implementation of public engagement for the EDI Strategy. As noted at the Committee of the Whole meeting on October 26, 2020, it is important to provide anonymous and/or confidential ways for people to participate and engage with this topic to allow for safety of the persons who are participating. Measures and steps will be made to ensure this is available and an option during the course of public engagement.

### ***Next Steps on the Timeline***

There will be two (2) aspects of the process that will start in the near future simultaneously:

1. **Leadership Interviews:** Interviews with those in top leadership and management positions should be conducted, including with Council, to determine

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cultural competence as well as their understanding of topics related to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion through their unique experience and lens.

2. **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.

The Document Review process will work in tandem with the Corporate Policy Review Protocol process that was discussed at the Committee of the Whole meeting on November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

These next steps will provide insights into what leadership views as the important areas of EDI as well as looking at the documents, policies, and procedures to make sure they are having the intended impact on Staff. These two (2) aspects will help with the future of the EDI Strategy but the direct responses and data captured will remain confidential to protect the privacy of those who are involved in the process.

While we are completing these tasks, we will also be creating the information for:

1. **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.
2. **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.

The information for these steps will be presented at a future Council date for information and consideration. As a note, the information from the different steps will be presented at one time together to provide the most context and information as these steps are to work together to create a full understanding of the scope of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at the Town of Cobourg.

#### **Additional Consideration #1: Intercultural Development Inventory® (IDI®)**

As part of the leadership interviews, it would be beneficial to also have leadership receive information about their cultural competency by using the Intercultural Development Inventory® (IDI®). This tool assesses intercultural competence—the capability to shift cultural perspective and appropriately adapt behavior to cultural differences and commonalities. As part of it, leaders take the assessment and then work with a trained facilitator to develop an action plan to encourage cultural competency growth.

There are two (2) options to participating in the IDI®s. The first option is to find a trained facilitator to conduct these, which could cost around \$18,000 to \$20,000 to conduct with just our current leadership and Town Council. This is a good short-term solution; however, will cost more money in the long run, especially if there are changes within the Management team. The second option is to train two (2) facilitators within the Town of Cobourg to conduct the IDI® assessments in-house. After the initial cost for the training, which is approximately \$2,400 CAD per person (\$1,800 USD per person), the

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assessment only costs approximately \$30 CAD per person (\$21 USD per person) which includes receiving the group aggregate assessment information for the IDI®. Please note that these are approximate numbers as the prices are listed in USD and the CAD exchange rate was used on October 30, 2020.

While currently we are proposing to use it for Leadership and Town Council, going through with Option #2 would allow for more insights into the leadership team on an ongoing basis, especially as we continue on the EDI journey. It would also allow all Advisory Committees, Board, and Supervisors/Managers to have the assessment done to understand their cultural competency in the future. The initial costs of using the IDI for Leadership and Town Council would be approximately \$5,500 CAD.

### **Additional Consideration #2: Training, Education, and Awareness**

Another key component of beginning an EDI Strategy and journey is to conduct training with the appropriate groups on appropriate topics. The main goal currently is to raise awareness for Leadership and Town Council in order to abide by a “top down” approach to inclusion, which works best in organizations to ensure that all staff understand the importance of the strategy and information.

Additional training on Indigenous Awareness and Inclusion should also be conducted for Leadership and Town Council to provide them with the tools and resources for cultural competency that cannot be created in-house. This would include training from Indigenous Awareness Canada, which would cost a total of \$4,300 for all Leaders and Town Council, as well as a few select other individuals.

Further, anti-racism training should be conducted as well through a third party. The Canadian Race Relations Foundation (CRRF) provides a half-day anti-racism workshop that aims to develop capacity for equity, offering a safe space for discussion and conversation about equity, race, and human rights, while simultaneously helping participants navigate differences, diversity, power relationships and conflict. The cost for Leadership and Town Council to participate is \$1,350.

Other training will be done in-house through the expertise and knowledge of the Accessibility Coordinator and Human Resources, as required. This will include Diversity and Inclusion Fundamentals, Unconscious Bias, Accessibility, and Human Rights training among others.

More training will be conducted for all staff members on an ongoing basis, throughout the creation of the EDI Strategy as well as the implementation.

## **7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/STAFFING/BUDGET IMPACT**

As costs may be realized throughout the project, they will be brought on a case by case and project by project basis during the course of developing the EDI Strategy.

Currently, we are requesting a budget of \$12,000 for initial training and professional development for leadership and Town Council. This is to account for the conversion rates from USD to CAD for the IDI® to make sure that we have our bases covered.

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As noted above, EDI Strategies are the most successful when there is stronger cultural competency within the leadership team, which can be developed over time and with assistance. The goal is to conduct the majority of this training for leadership in the first six (6) months of 2021.

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

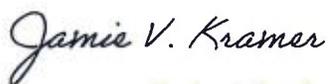
All 2021 budget requests will be brought forward and presented by Staff at the December 8, 2020 Divisional Budget Meetings for Council consideration and deliberation.

## **8.0 CONCLUSION**

Staff has undertaken the first steps in creating an EDI Strategy that will set the Town of Cobourg apart from other smaller municipalities while enhancing the livelihood of those who live here and will live here in the future. It also starts the process of the Town of Cobourg becoming a competitive employer with larger municipalities as more and more persons, especially younger persons, value the corporate social responsibility of an organization when determining where to work.

As the months go on, there will be more data and information collected to provide insights into how the Town of Cobourg can move forward with Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. This information, in combination with joining the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities, will start the process of listening to our citizens about their needs related to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and work towards being an inclusive employer.

## **9.0 AUTHORIZATION ACKNOWLEDGEMENT (SENIOR MANAGEMENT/CAO)**



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