



OAKVILLE

REPORT

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE

MEETING DATE: DECEMBER 11, 2018

FROM: Strategy Policy and Communications
DATE: November 26, 2018
SUBJECT: 2018 Inclusion Initiatives Update Report
LOCATION: Town wide
WARD: Town wide

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RECOMMENDATION:

That the 2018 Inclusion Initiatives Update report from the Strategy, Policy and Communications department be received.

KEY FACTS:

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

- The Town of Oakville is committed to making our community the most livable town in Canada, and we have undertaken several initiatives to increase sustainability and enhance the quality of life in Oakville.
- We are looking to build on the achievements already made in the areas of accessibility and diversity to continue to promote, practice, and respect a culture of inclusion.
- Demographic data highlights the changing nature of the Oakville community where diversity is experienced along all dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs or other ideologies.
- Last year the town partnered with Optimus | SBR and conducted an inclusion assessment for the organization, developed a corporate inclusion statement and identified five key recommended actions and initiatives for a corporate plan to support inclusion in the workplace and community.
- This report brings together the town's inclusion efforts under one report and provides an update on progress to meet the recommended actions, an update on accessibility requirements to meet the province's *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) and diversity and age-friendly programs and initiatives underway to support the town's commitment to inclusion and to ensure we are responsive to the needs of the community.

BACKGROUND:

The town is committed to promoting a culture of inclusion by providing accessible and equitable programs, services and facilities to residents and employees. This is embodied by the town's corporate inclusion statement: The Town of Oakville will champion inclusion through increased opportunities and meaningful engagement to support a workplace and community where all feel respected and welcome.

The town made several key advancements in this commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion:

2003: Council adopted the three key goals put forth by its Diversity Working Group: to develop a program that demonstrates the town's commitment to an inclusive environment; to identify and implement programming to meet the diverse needs of the community; and to consider staffing requirements to carry out the functions of dealing with diversity issues. In response to these goals, the town established an internal Diversity Steering Committee to encourage diversity initiatives and coordinate annual reporting to Council.

2007: Council approved a motion making Oakville a signatory municipality of the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination (CCMARD). There are now 73 municipalities in ten provinces and one territory that have joined CCMARD. Being a signatory municipality has helped us show our commitment to promoting a culture of inclusion.

2012: the town established its first Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2012-2017 to outline the actions the town would take to meet the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA), prevent and remove barriers, and when it would do so. A Corporate Accessibility Steering Committee was established to work on the town's plan and ensure the town met its requirements under the AODA.

2014: the town established an Age-Friendly Committee to lead the age-friendly baseline assessment initiative made up of staff, members of Council and a community member. The concept of Age-Friendly was developed in 2002 by the World Health Organization (WHO) in response to the aging population. Age-Friendly Communities began in Canada in 2006/2007 when the WHO developed the Global Age-Friendly Cities Project.

2017: the town established a Corporate Inclusion Advisory Group, bringing the town's existing staff committees on diversity, accessibility, and age-friendly under one advisory group to better align town efforts to support inclusion. The committee reports to the Office of the CAO with representatives from all town commissions to ensure legislative and corporate requirements are being planned and implemented.

The town launched its new Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2018-2023. The new plan builds on the accomplishments of the town's first plan and incorporates updated requirements under the AODA's Accessible Customer Service Standard. The town is compliant with all requirements to-date, filing successful compliance reports with the province in 2013, 2015 and 2017.

The town maintained its commitment to diversity and accessibility for its workplace and community, as evidenced through Council's strategic plan with the following strategic goals:

- To treat everyone with respect
- To have programs and services that are accessible
- To be highly valued and widely celebrated for the innovative and outstanding way we satisfy the needs of our residents and employees
- To ensure that our staff receives the same level of respect, commitment and caring that they are expected to deliver to the community
- To be the most livable town in Canada

Legislative framework

The town is required to comply with provincial legislation related to equity, diversity and human rights such as the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. Meeting these legislative requirements supports the needs of our diverse community and enhances the town's reputation.

Demographics

Demographic data highlights the diversity and changes taking place in Oakville. Diversity refers to a broad range of attributes including but not limited to social, economic, racial, cultural, disability, geographic, sexual orientation, gender identity and religious factors. According to Statistics Canada's 2016 census data, 36 per cent of Oakville residents are immigrants and one in four Oakville residents has a mother tongue other than English or French, up from one in three reported at the last census (2011). The latest census also indicates that 31 per cent of Oakville residents are part of a visible minority, up from 13 per cent reported in the 2001 census. This is higher than Ontarians (29%) and Canadians (22%) that report being part of a visible minority.

Other demographic information further highlights the diversity in Oakville. Accordingly, 52 per cent of Oakville's population is female and 48 per cent is male; the median age is 42 years old with 19 per cent under 14 years old, 67 per cent between 15 to 64 years old and 17 per cent 65 years old and over. Of Oakville's 54,875 census families, 81 per cent are married couples, six per cent are common-law couples and 13 per cent are lone-parent families. The average household income is \$170,000 and the medium income is \$114,000.

In addition, about 1.85 million or one in seven Ontarians has a disability. In Oakville, that equates to over 30,000 residents, which represents approximately 15 per cent of the community. Over the next 20 years, as the population ages, it is estimated that one in five will have a disability. Further, more than half of the population has a friend or a loved one with a disability and one in three Canadians will experience a mental illness or substance use disorder in their lifetime.

When it comes to demographics for the LGBTQ2+ population, according to Statistics Canada 2014 Canadian Community Health Survey (first survey to include a question on sexual orientation), 1.7 per cent of Canadians aged 18 to 59 consider themselves to be homosexual (gay or lesbian) and 1.3 per cent of Canadians aged 18 to 59 consider themselves to be bisexual. In addition to this data, a sampling of public opinion taken by The Forum Poll among Canadians 18 years of age and older, 5.3% per cent of those who chose to answer said they were LGBTQ2+ and 30% those who said they were LGBTQ2+ said they were partners in a same sex marriage (1.6% in total). While this base data exists, research suggests that the LGBTQ2+ community is reluctant to identify themselves and the numbers would be much higher.

A “Look how we’ve changed” infographic was created to highlight the diversity of our community over time, comparing the demographic changes taking place since 2006, attached as Appendix A. It is also available on the town’s website.

COMMENT/OPTIONS:

Inclusion is about creating an environment where people have both the feeling and reality of belonging and are able to work and live to their full potential. It needs to be mindfully built into an organization’s culture and into the employee experience through deliberate steps in policies and practices that translates to healthier communities and improved social inclusion.

Last year, to help set the town’s inclusion priorities moving forward, staff partnered with Optimus | SBR to conduct an inclusion assessment of town programs, services, practices, and policies. Input was sought from community groups, the town’s Accessibility Advisory Committee and staff to help create a community inclusion strategy to drive future actions. This research led to the identification of five recommended actions and initiatives for a corporate plan to support inclusion:

1. Review membership of Corporate Inclusion Advisory Group
2. Review programs and services using an inclusion lens
3. Develop and implement a human resources plan on inclusion
4. Explore deeper community partnerships focused on inclusion
5. Lead a community engagement process on inclusion in Oakville

This report highlights the town's progress to meet the recommended actions and provides an update (Appendix B) on accessibility requirements to meet the province's *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2018* diversity initiatives (Appendix C) and progress on Oakville's age-friendly baseline initiatives (Appendix D) to support the town's commitment to inclusion.

1. Review membership of corporate inclusion advisory group

The first recommendation identified through the inclusion assessment was to broaden the Corporate Inclusion Advisory Group's membership to better reflect the diversity of the community.

Staff conducted a best practice review of other organizations and did an internal review to better identify groups not represented on the committee.

In early 2018 the new staff advisory group was established with members dedicated to advancing inclusion in both the organization and the community we serve. The staff committee has representatives from a number of diverse communities including visible minority, LGBTQ2+, faith, culture, women, age/term of employment and staff from all levels of the organization. Staff on this group bring a variety of perspectives and skills to enhance inclusion in the organization and community through lived experience, work or volunteer experience and/or knowledge of existing/emerging issues and policy initiatives related to accessibility, diversity and inclusion.

To date, the group has made progress on several key initiatives:

1. Establishing a new designated quiet room at Town Hall for staff to reflect, meditate, pray or take a mental health break
2. Developing a corporate inclusion lens as recommended in the inclusion assessment
3. Preparing an inclusion report to Council and the public
4. Exploring deeper community partnerships focused on inclusion as recommended in the inclusion assessment

2. Develop an inclusion lens and review town programs and services using lens

A lens helps us see things with a new or different perspective from your own, much like a filter or a pair of glasses. The Corporate Inclusion Advisory Group developed an inclusion lens as a tool to prompt staff to think about inclusion in their work. Using the lens will help staff stay responsive to the needs of the community in considering

potential impacts of programs, services and initiatives on the diversity of our employees and community (Appendix E). The inclusion lens will be rolled out to all staff in 2019.

3. Develop and implement a human resources plan on inclusion

The Human Resources department is responsible for leading the town's transformation towards a more diverse and inclusive workplace. To achieve this, the department developed an inclusion plan focused on recruitment, data and metrics, and training and education. Key highlights are noted below. Full details of the plan are included in Appendix C under Human Resources.

Recruitment

This objective aims to address systemic barriers and improve inclusion in recruitment and talent management through two key initiatives:

- 1) **Promotion and branding:** to attract talent from a wide range of backgrounds and develop a more diverse workforce. This includes partnering with cultural groups and organizations that work with diverse communities and attending community and employment events to support building and inclusive talent pipeline. The town posts job ads in plain language to attract a wider pool of candidates and sends job opportunities to a wide variety of organizations that target specific communities beyond standard online job boards.
- 2) **Recruitment and selection process:** to continue to implement measures to ensure fairness in the recruitment and selection process. These include identifying and removing systemic barriers, such as policies and practices that reinforce unconscious bias, stereotyping and other behaviours. Some of the initiatives to improve the process include:
 - Inclusive hiring checklist
 - Inclusive forms
 - Bias-free hiring

Data and Metrics

This objective is to establish measures of diversity and inclusion which will be done through benchmarking diversity within the town's workforce and the community we serve. The town plans to gather information through the 2019 employee engagement survey by including voluntary self-identification questions. We also plan to explore the option of including voluntary self-identification questions at the application stage to determine if the town is attracting a diverse applicant pool.

Comparing the results with Oakville demographics will provide measurements to assess and benchmark for performance moving forward.

Training/Education

This objective is to ensure education and training is provided and ongoing for all employees and management in creating and supporting a culture of inclusion. The town is in the process of developing and implementing the following initiatives:

- Corporate-wide e-learning based solution using the town's learning management system for both staff and management
- Ongoing training modules available through the town's membership with the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion
- LEADS Recruitment 101 training for new hiring managers to include a focus on inclusion and unconscious bias
- Ongoing education and training on inclusion and unconscious bias to managers and supervisors
- New hire orientation to include diversity and inclusion
- Provide existing accessibility training
- Inclusion checklist to evaluate recruitment and employment policies and practices to highlight possible barriers, ensure our recruitment processes are fair and transparent, and promote and support an inclusive work environment
The checklist is included in the Corporate Inclusion Lens

4. Explore deeper community partnerships focused on inclusion

The town partners with community organizations and groups on a number of events and initiatives focused on inclusion that connect newcomers, visible minorities, youth, Indigenous people, people with disabilities, LGBTQ2+, low-income and at-risk families and youth. The town also reaches out to agencies that facilitate broad social connections for individuals, families and groups.

Some of the initiatives the town currently collaborates on include:

- Local Truth and Reconciliation working group with the Oakville Community Foundation, YMCA, Oakville Public Library, and other groups to increase awareness of Indigenous history, heritage and contributions to the Oakville community
- Inclusive volunteer program at the Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts with Oakville Community Living to provide opportunities for people with disabilities to gain work experience

- Reading the Rainbow with Positive Space Network at the Oakville Public Library, a program that gives teens an opportunity to discuss books about LGBTQ2+ characters
- Seniors Working Action Group (SWAG) who provide community presentations on issues that affect seniors

In addition, staff also participate on a number of town and regional groups and at events to promote awareness and celebrate inclusion.

To build on these partnerships and develop new ones, staff will continue to reach out to community-based organizations and groups working on inclusion to explore new opportunities for collaboration, information and knowledge exchange.

5. Lead a community engagement process on inclusion in Oakville

In 2019, staff will lead a community engagement process focused on inclusion with the goal to reach diverse Oakville residents and organizations. This will include people with disabilities, racialized, immigrant and refugee, LGBTQ2+ communities, faith groups and those with intersecting identities.

To help inform this process, staff will look at recent community engagement activities related to inclusion:

- #MyOakville campaign and meetings with 52 community organizations which looked at barriers residents face accessing town recreation and culture programs
- Oakville Community Foundation sense of belonging research and survey results, which examined how people across the town experience belonging
- Oakville Age-Friendly Baseline Study results which looked at support for the health and well-being of older residents including staying involved in the community
- 2019 Citizen Survey results to be conducted in early 2019 to gauge satisfaction with town government, programs and services as well as priorities for future planning

Engagement will be broad to include both in-person and online opportunities for the community to participate.

CONSIDERATIONS:

(A) PUBLIC

The town will continue to engage members of the diverse community we serve and seek opportunities to partner with organizations that represent diverse groups to ensure our programs and services meet the needs of our community.

(B) FINANCIAL

Financial impacts are managed within existing departmental budgets.

(C) IMPACT ON OTHER DEPARTMENTS & USERS

All town departments are involved in promoting and championing inclusion.

(D) CORPORATE AND/OR DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC GOALS

This report addresses the corporate strategic goal to:

- provide outstanding service to our residents and businesses
- treat everyone with respect
- show respect and commitment to employees
- enhance our cultural environment
- enhance our social environment
- have accessible programs/services

(E) COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY

Celebrating inclusion in the workplace and community is a key factor in establishing community sustainability. Research demonstrates that involved and engaged staff and citizens lead to higher levels of satisfaction with government and with quality of life.

APPENDICES:

- Appendix A – Look How We’ve Changed infographic
- Appendix B – 2018 Accessibility Annual Status Update
- Appendix C – 2018 diversity initiatives
- Appendix D – Age-Friendly Baseline Study initiatives update
- Appendix E – Oakville Inclusion Lens

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