



STAFF REPORT
Community Programming & Outreach Services

Title: Indigenous Initiatives, Anti-Racism, Accessibility and Equity – Advancing a Staff Team
Report Number: COM2020-033
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Meeting Type: Council Meeting
Council/Committee Date: December 7, 2020
File: NA
Attachments: NA
Ward No.: City Wide

Recommendations:

1. That Council approve report COM2020-033.
2. That the City advance its work on Indigenous initiatives, anti-racism, accessibility and equity through the creation of a four person dedicated staff team that will provide senior level leadership and internal staff expertise in these areas as described in report COMM2020-033.

Executive Summary

Understanding the character and fabric of the community is essential in order for municipal governments to meet resident needs. Local government is waking up to what members of equity-seeking groups have been saying for decades – that the needs of many in our community are not being met due to discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, ability and other factors that shape identity. System level change is necessary and the time for change is now. Our community is telling us that aiming for diversity and inclusion are not enough; this work must be undertaken using anti-racist and equity approaches. In order to integrate this work into all programs and services offered

by the City of Waterloo, to appropriately support equity-seeking community organizations and initiatives, and to transform the corporate culture of the organization as a workplace, it is recommended that a staff team be created. This team would lead change related to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, anti-racism, and social justice initiatives and accessibility for persons with disabilities. This team would provide a significant contribution to the City's strategic commitments to equity, inclusion and a sense of belonging.

The team structure as recommended consists of a Director, an Indigenous Initiatives Advocate, an Anti-Racism and Social Justice Advocate, and an Accessibility Advocate.

A. Financial Implications

The costs associated with the creation of the proposed FTEs (e.g. salary, fringe benefits, IT/telecommunications, training) is approximately \$520,000. Recognizing we are entering into year two of our three year operating budget, CMT has agreed to deal with these cost pressures internally without adjustment to the budget. Staff will prioritize funding from existing operating FTEs (vacant positions) within the city, AODA contract service rationalization, and operational savings.

B. Technology Implications

Not applicable.

C. Link to Strategic Plan

(Strategic Objectives: Equity, Inclusion and a Sense of Belonging; Sustainability and the Environment; Safe, Sustainable Transportation; Healthy Community & Resilient Neighbourhoods; Infrastructure Renewal; Economic Growth & Development)

(Guiding Principles: Equity and Inclusion; Sustainability; Fiscal Responsibility; Healthy and Safe Workplace; Effective Engagement; Personal Leadership; Service Excellence)

Equity, Inclusion and a Sense of Belonging

The pillar of Equity, Inclusion and a Sense of Belong will be significantly advanced with the approval of this report. This includes:

- Strengthening Waterloo as a diverse and inclusive community through the implementation of tactics that strengthen the engagement of diverse and marginalized populations of all ages, which supports a sense of belonging within our community
- Responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action for municipalities.

- Maximize best practices for inclusion within all city business operations and service delivery.

The Guiding Principle of Sustainability will be used, as the approval of this report will have considered that:

- Actions and decisions are evaluated through a lens of environmental, social and economic sustainability.

D. Previous Reports on this Topic

R&L08-32 Recreation and Leisure Services Master Plan
 CAO2013-012 Waterloo’s Culture Plan: A Catalyst for Culture, Final Report
 COM2019-032 City of Waterloo Response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action
 COM2020-017 Indigenous Reconciliation Action Plan – The Plan Forward

E. Approvals

Name	Signature	Date
Author: Jim Bowman		December 1, 2020
Author: Mark Dykstra		
Author: Beth Rajnovich		December 1, 2020
Author: Pamela Albrecht		December 1, 2020
Director:		
Commissioner:		
Finance:		

CAO



Over the last decade or more, there has been increasing focus placed on the role of municipal governments in Waterloo Region to support equity, diversity and inclusion. The City's Community Culture and Recreation Services Master Plan (2009) and the Culture Plan (2013) identified the need for the City to take on a role in this work, framing it in terms of diversity. In order to begin to meet this community need, the current part-time position of Community Outreach Coordinator was created in 2016 to act as a liaison with a range of community groups, including equity-seeking groups, using a community development model to support diversity and inclusion in our community. This position has taken the lead, supported by other staff, on recent initiatives such the City's preliminary response to the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action and the internally focused corporate diversity, equity and inclusion initiative.

Additionally, the Waterloo City Council has identified Equity, Inclusion and Sense of Belonging as one of the most significant priorities in the City's strategic plan for 2019-2022, calling on all service delivery areas to apply an equity and inclusion lens to their work. The need for this Council priority has been reinforced, as increased attention on the impacts of inequity and racism came to the forefront during the COVID-19 pandemic and through international and local movements such as Land Back Camp and Black Lives Matter.

Given changing community expectations, Council's strategic priorities, and current social realities, staff have identified that the Community Outreach Coordinator position in the Community Services department is no longer the right resource for supporting this critical work. Rather there is need for new staff resources with anti-racism and equity expertise and lived experience, to lead the organization forward in these crucial matters. We are learning that we must approach all City work differently in order to effect positive change in the community and in our workplace. The following report provides background on the City's past and current work connected to diversity, equity, and inclusion and contains recommendations on how we can build on that work in order to achieve equitable outcomes for residents and staff members.

Workplace Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiatives

In 2017, the need to address diversity and inclusion in our workforce came to the forefront, and a Staff Diversity and Inclusion Taskforce was formed. The Task Force recognized the importance of demographic data as a starting point, and so the City's first Diversity

Census was conducted in March 2019. The Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI) administered the census and provided recommendations for organizational change based on the findings. This census provided data comparing our demographic make-up to that of the community, as well as recommendations on how to work toward more proportional representation. The census revealed that not only are City of Waterloo staff demographics not representative of broader community demographics, but that there are also key concerns regarding inclusion and sense of belonging expressed by staff with a disability, staff who identify as racialized and staff who identify as 2SLGBTQ+ (two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and other identities).

To implement CCDI's recommendations, over 40 staff are collaborating across a number of working groups. These groups include the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Steering Group, DEI Resource Group and five other working groups:

- Awareness Working Group
- Communications and Engagement Working Group
- Measurement and Monitoring Working Group
- Inclusive Workplace Working Group
- Respectful Workplace Working Group

The work to date has included foundational staff training on Indigenous and equity issues, reviewing a range of human resources policies and procedures from an inclusion and equity perspective, increasing staff awareness of equity, diversity and inclusion via information sharing about days of observance and celebration, and exploring ways to make city facilities used by staff more inclusive.

The internal equity, diversity, and inclusion work has been done with the goal of setting the organization up for success in the work that needs to be done with the community and other organizations to support broader equity, diversity and inclusion. It is recognized that we need greater diversity of voices within the corporation in order to make our programs and services more inclusive for residents. It is also recognized that there is an abundant amount of foundational work required to be ready to meaningfully embrace a more diverse workforce.

While a large number of City staff have shown their support for this work, everyone who has contributed has done so off the side of their desks. In order to advance change at the rate that is required, dedicated leadership and staff resources are needed to provide the required content expertise, lived experience, change management and project management skills.

Truth and Reconciliation and Indigenous Initiatives

The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015) included Calls to Action to address the harm caused by the residential school system as well as other systemic barriers and inequities faced by Indigenous peoples. The Calls to Action established that municipalities have a responsibility to support reconciliation work directly within their mandates and to further support inter-jurisdictional cooperation in the application of Calls to Action directed at other levels of government, organizations and industries.

In 2019, City Council directed staff to proceed with the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to action specific to municipalities. This included implementing a training program for staff and Council that strives to provide non-Indigenous staff with a true picture of Canada's history and to increase capacity of non-Indigenous staff across the organization to work respectfully and appropriately on Indigenous initiatives in a municipal context.

Further, a territorial acknowledgement was adopted for use at the commencement of Council meetings and other city meetings. While not a specific Call to Action of the TRC, offering a territorial acknowledgement is one small way to demonstrate respect for the ongoing relationships.

In August 2020, Council provided direction to staff to waive rental-related fees associated with the use of City spaces for Indigenous ceremonial and cultural events until a formal policy is approved by Council. The fee waiver took effect immediately, and staff have been working on internal processes to ensure a positive customer service experience, as well as communication tools to ensure the community is aware of the service.

The initial responses to the TRC call to action provide a starting point in the City's journey to develop meaningful relationships and work toward reconciliation with local Indigenous peoples. A more comprehensive approach to reconciliation is required to address systemic inequities, racism, and to support, celebrate and deliver services to Indigenous Peoples in our community.

Within our community, there are many more opportunities to work with local First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities to pursue reconciliation in a number of areas within the City's jurisdiction including economic development, arts and culture, festivals and events, heritage, sport and recreation, parks, and environmental sustainability. This work could include investment in public art and other forms of Indigenous artistic expression; support for Indigenous sport and the inclusion of all Indigenous athletes in all forms of sport; Indigenous content in heritage narratives, which prevent the erasure of Indigenous societies; and collaboration on land stewardship and promotion of sustainability including

access to land for the purpose of ceremony, food gathering and cultural development, is necessary.

Advancement of the Truth and Reconciliation efforts within the municipality have been minimal as there is insufficient internal staff experience to lead this work. Members of local Indigenous communities, as well as other residents, have become frustrated by the slow progress to implement meaningful action. Staff have heard clearly and repeatedly from members of the community, including Indigenous people, that the City requires permanent, dedicated staff, who have expertise, direct lived experience, and cultural understanding. Organizational change to facilitate Indigenization opportunities is not only necessary but also required to promote healing and improve relationships.

Recent events within the local community have solidified and accelerated the need to secure staff with expertise on an urgent basis. In June 2020, members of the local Indigenous communities established the O:se Kenhionhata:tie Land Back Camp in Victoria Park. One of the demands of the camp organizers was the need for local municipalities to create paid, permanent Indigenous staff positions to engage First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities. The camp has received significant support from community members. Land Back Camp organizers have recently moved their camp to the west side of Waterloo Park. They are currently residing in this space and the city has provided operational supports to the organizers. Staff continue to have discussions with other local Indigenous community members, including the First Nations, Métis, Inuit Advisory and Advocacy Circle of Wellbeing Waterloo Region. These conversations reinforce the need for the city to secure internal staff expertise to move forward with reconciliation.

Anti-Racism and Equity

Over the last decade, the City of Waterloo has become more involved in work to serve equity-seeking groups in our community. For example, staff have been involved in the work of the Waterloo Region Immigration Partnership (IP) since its early days. Hosted by the Region of Waterloo, the IP brings together local community members, organizations and businesses to facilitate successful integration and community involvement of immigrants and refugees in our community. City staff contribute to the IP's work through membership on the Belong Steering Group (BSG) and actively participate in BSG initiatives including citizenship ceremonies, local government presentations to English language instruction classes and hosting films as part of the Global Migration Film Festival. The IP takes an intersectional approach, recognizing that race, creed, gender, sexual orientation, ability and more have an impact on inclusion and belonging. The impact of racism and discrimination has become a particular focus, with IP support for a region-wide anti-racism strategy being named in the 2020-2025 Community Action Plan.

Staff have also been active in supporting the local 2SLGBTQ+ community. Staff played a key role in securing a Waterloo location as the first site for SPECTRUM, Waterloo Region's Rainbow Community Space. While this centre has since moved to a larger space in Kitchener, staff have continued to support local 2SLGBTQ+ led organizations by way of funding for arts, culture, and recreational initiatives. As a visible sign of welcome, the City installed a rainbow crosswalk in Willis Way in 2018. In addition, the City of Waterloo is a founding member of the Rainbow Community Council (RCC). Like the IP, members of the RCC have identified the need to address racism and ensure the voices of racialized people are fully included within 2SLGBTQ+ communities.

While support for these activities must continue, they should be seen only as starting points in the municipality's equity focused work. There is much more to be done on a number of fronts, including a range of social justice issues such as poverty, mental health and addictions, and housing. The proposed staff plan (detailed below) will assist to advance the work needed to address these issues.

The local community has also spoken loud and clear. In June of 2020, local leaders from Black Lives Matter Waterloo Region, the African Caribbean Black (ACB) Network and other community leaders organized a very successful Black Lives Matter march in this community. This march was organized in response to the deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd and Regis Korchinski-Paquet. This served as a catalyst for urgent community conversations about anti-Black racism and local governments were called upon to act urgently to dismantle systemic racism.

City staff recognize that if our goal is equitable outcomes for all members of our community, we must tackle racism. City policies, practices and procedures as well as our programs and services need to be examined using an anti-racist lens in order to truly meet the needs of residents who are racialized. The City must also be prepared to support region-wide anti-racism work by ensuring we have staff with the necessary knowledge and skills to support larger initiatives and implement recommendations locally. Such staff would also be an asset at collaborative tables such as the IP and RCC who count on the expertise of partners around the table to move initiatives forward.

Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities

The City of Waterloo has a lengthy history of serving community members with disabilities. Through a purchase of service arrangement, City of Kitchener Inclusion Services staff have worked in both cities to facilitate inclusion of people with disabilities in recreation programming, by assessing overall accessibility of programs, facilitating individualized accommodations and designing programs for people with disabilities. The most heavily resourced piece of this work is the Every Kid Counts program, which

provides one-on-one support to children with disabilities attending City-run camps, during the summer, winter break and March break.

Inclusion Services staff also support corporate compliance with legislation governing accessibility, including the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA, 2005). A component of municipal compliance involves seeking advice from an accessibility advisory committee. Inclusion Services staff act as the staff liaison to the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC).

A review of the Inclusion Services Purchase of Service arrangement with the City of Kitchener, conducted in 2019, concluded that additional resources were needed to maintain current service levels, particularly in the area of AODA compliance and GRAAC support. As such, staff recommend that the City of Waterloo continue with the purchase of service agreement with Kitchener for recreation-related supports, given efficiencies and specialization. However, a staff person within City of Waterloo (Accessibility Advocate outlined below) should be taken on to support the organization with AODA compliance, act as staff liaison to GRAAC, and engage in other equity-focused efforts to identify and remove barriers within City programs and services. This shift will greatly increase the capacity of the City (from 30% of an FTE to a full FTE in house) to address accessibility. Expertise in the identification and removal of barriers, as well as lived experience would be important components of this position. Staff will return to Council at a later date with a report on the details of a purchase of service agreement with City of Kitchener for Inclusion Services related to recreation.

The AODA standards address many key areas of service delivery in the Province of Ontario, including customer service, information and communication, transportation, employment and the design of public spaces. While these standards address many of the services provided by municipalities, they represent the minimum requirements. Additional staff resources would position the City of Waterloo to both meet and move beyond the minimum toward excellence in inclusion of persons with disabilities, both in our community and our workforce.

To date, the Manager of Community and Neighbourhood Services has been responsible for the purchase of the service arrangement. Bringing corporate accessibility and AODA compliance in-house would allow the City to re-position the role to better serve the entire organization, while at the same time clearly identifying accessibility work as equity work. It is also important to note the intersection of experiences of inequity with those of disability. Given inequitable health outcomes experienced by racialized people, as well as other marginalized groups, rates of disability are higher in these communities. Including accessibility within the scope of this team will allow staff to work within both an accessibility framework, as well as equity and anti-racism frameworks, to best meet community needs. Staff will maintain strong ties with City of Kitchener and other

neighbouring municipalities in order to maintain consistencies in service delivery in ways that the community has come to expect.

Staffing Model Proposal

Given the need for further internal staff expertise and lived experience in the areas of Indigenous initiatives, anti-racism, accessibility for persons with disabilities, and equity staff believe the creation of an internal staff team dedicated to this work is a top priority and it is critical that this work begin as soon as possible. To that end, staff are recommending the creation of an Indigenous Initiatives, Anti-Racism, Accessibility and Equity team that will play a leadership and advisory role to staff and Council. The team will have a combination of the skills needed to lead change in a large organization as well as lived experience of racism and oppression. Their work will enhance and promote the guiding principles of the City's Strategic Plan.

Mandate

The mandate of this dedicated staff team would be to:

- Provide leadership to the Corporate Management Team (CMT), Operational Leadership Team (OLT) and others in the organization, to identify and eliminate systemic barriers and inequities, including those based protected grounds under the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC), such as race, ability, gender identity, sexual orientation, age and religion.
- Lead CMT and the Director of Human Resources in the ongoing work of creating a more inclusive workplace culture and a diverse workforce through foundational changes to policies, practices and accountability mechanisms.
- Provide leadership for the City of Waterloo staff Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiative.
- Work with CMT and staff to enhance the City's engagement with members of the community who have been traditionally excluded from municipal decision-making with a focus on equitable access to municipal supports and services.
- Advise on recommendations and actions that support the corporation's response of the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action.
- Support corporate AODA compliance, serve as the liaison for GRAAC, and provide leadership on accessibility and inclusion for persons with disabilities.
- Facilitate the development and implementation of City policies, partnerships and programs related to a range of social justice issues (e.g., poverty, housing, mental health and addictions) through an equity framework.

- Collaborate with other levels of government and government organizations on relevant initiatives, such as the Region of Waterloo's Anti-Racism Initiative, Wellbeing Waterloo Region's Belonging initiative, and the KW4 Health Teams Homeless and Precariously Housed Reference group to support system level change.
- Act as a liaison between the City and community organizations with an equity focus.
- Lead the development of a Community-focused Equity and Inclusion Strategy (as outlined in City of Waterloo Business Plan, p.43) and provide oversight for implementation across the corporation.
- Recommend new municipal programs and initiatives or changes to existing ones that will support marginalized members of the community as well as community organizations focused on Indigenous initiatives, anti-racism, and accessibility and social justice. Responsible for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on our progress. This team will report directly to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), and work in collaboration with CMT and OLT within the corporate structure.

The Team

Staff propose a new team that comprises:

Director of Indigenous Initiatives, Anti-Racism, Accessibility, and Equity

- Provide leadership and expertise to City Council, CMT, management and staff on Indigenous initiatives, anti-racism, accessibility and social justice within an equity framework.
- Serve as a member of the extended corporate management team (ECMT) to support organizational accountability for forward movement on equity, diversity and inclusion.
- Provide leadership for the City of Waterloo staff team described below, working within an equity, and anti-racism framework.
- Foster strong and mutually beneficial relationships with people and organizations working on reconciliation, anti-racism and equity, including working with other local governments.

Indigenous Initiatives Advocate:

- Through collaboration and engagement with local First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities as well as the application of Indigenous knowledge and traditions, provide recommendations to the Director, CMT and Council in response to the

Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015) and provide recommendations that support the development and implementation of corporate responses.

- Foster strong and mutually beneficial relationships with local First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities.
- Make recommendations on changes to City policies, practices and procedures in order to remove colonial and racist practices with the goal of increasing access to City services for local Indigenous communities.

Anti-Racism and Social Justice Advocate

- Provide leadership in the development of a sustained process to identify, disrupt and eliminate systemic barriers, inequities and racism within the city.
- Foster strong and mutually beneficial relationships with Black and other racialized communities, along with other equity-seeking communities including but not limited to 2SLGBTQ+ communities, immigrants and refugees.
- Lead city involvement and response for other social justice issues using an equity framework.
- Make recommendations on changes to City policies, practices and procedures to support anti-oppression and anti-racism approaches in service delivery.

Accessibility Advocate

- Provide leadership on the identification and removal of barriers that prevent full participation of persons with disabilities in the programs and services the city provides.
- Supports Human Resources with disability related accommodation requests as needed and supporting an accessible and inclusive work environment for staff with disabilities.
- Ensures corporate compliance with legislation, including Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), and associated standards
- Acts as a staff liaison to the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC).
- Fostering strong relationships with local community members and service providers.

Staff believe that given the urgency to secure internal expertise in these areas, the recruitment process for the Director should begin immediately, using external recruitment specialists, with an incumbent in place by first quarter of 2021. Recruitment for the other positions would take place during 2021 under the guidance of the Director of Indigenous Initiatives, Anti-Racism, Accessibility and Equity, with the support of the Director of Human Resources. Staff that are currently supporting equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives will support a smooth transition of responsibilities to the new team as members come online.

At this point, staff see the proposed staff scope being open to changes and revisions as the Director, once hired, will provide valuable insight into the roles of the team to ensure the needs of the community and the City's workforce are met. It will be important for the organization to remain flexible and open to feedback and input from the Director and the community.

Success of the Team

The work of this team will be challenging and not clearly understood by key stakeholders within the organization and external to the organization. In order to address some of these challenges, some considerations for this team are:

- Staff will utilize an external recruiter for the Director role, and other roles where identified by the Director. It will also be necessary to appropriately promote the job opportunity to reach as many candidates possible.
- The Director will be mentored directly by the CAO to provide an understanding of corporate culture, practices and team dynamics. The Director will also work closely with Human Resources leaders.
- The Director will be provided with an external coach (of their choosing) to serve as an independent advisor as they begin to move this work forward within the organization.
- Regularly scheduled sessions will occur with the Director, team and all members of the CMT to ensure ongoing alignment and active support for the team's works in conjunction with full city leadership teams.
- This staff team will work directly with external advisory committees/organizations or groups to provide them with personal and professional support and guidance to ensure the accountability of their work is in line with work of the community.
- Additional supports will be in place for all members of the staff team on the advice of the Director in conjunction with the guidance of CMT.