

Priorities Committee Meeting_Oct22_2019

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE AND UPDATE

Diversity and Inclusion Policy Development

Report Purpose

To provide an update and obtain feedback from Priorities Committee on the development of the proposed Diversity and Inclusion and Inclusive Hiring Policies.

Our Prioritized Strategic Goals

Goal 1 - Build strong communities to support the diverse needs of residents

Goal 6 - Provide facilities and services that are available and accessible to residents

Goal 7 - Provide opportunities for public engagement and communication

Report

Background:

Intergovernmental Affairs (IA) and Human Resources (HR) are co-leading the process to develop a diversity and inclusion policy and an inclusive hiring policy. A cross-departmental steering committee and working group were established to accomplish this work.

The main focus to date has been to plan and execute public and internal engagement processes to inform both policies:

Public Engagement

A diversity and inclusion specialist was contracted to facilitate the public engagement. Five sessions were held as focus groups involving subject matter experts and representatives from organizations and three sessions were open to the public. In total there were 55 participants representing 23 organizations. Individual conversations were also held with the Strathcona Chamber of Commerce and an Indigenous Elder.

Working group members met with the Accessibility Advisory Committee and Youth Advisory Committee to provide an update and obtain their input on the County's proposed approach to diversity and inclusion. Follow-up meetings with the council committees, including the Seniors Advisory Committee, are planned for the fall.

A public survey is currently underway to gauge public perception about diversity in the community. Completion and analysis of the survey is targeted for early November 2019.

Employee Engagement

In fall 2018, HR led eight discovery sessions with people leaders in Strathcona County to get their input on diversity and inclusion. Following the discovery sessions, five employee sessions were held in July and August 2019 to further the conversation and validate the key themes heard from the discovery sessions. In total, 110 people leaders attended the discovery sessions and 115 employees attended the employee sessions.

The 2019 Employee Engagement survey included 4 questions on diversity and inclusion to enhance our understanding of employee's perception of diversity and inclusion in the workplace. The survey results provide baseline data to verify the County's position on the Diversify and Inclusion Continuum (Enclosure 1, page 7).

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Other Public Engagement

The County has heard through several past public engagement processes that inclusion is important to the community. A partial list of previous engagements includes:

- Community Hub
- Youth Needs Assessment
- Social Framework
- Recreation and Culture Strategy
- Universal change rooms for pools
- GARC renovations
- Work with Indigenous groups/artists/elders etc. (Strathcona Wilderness Centre, Gallery @ 501, Beaver Hills etc.)

What we Heard – Consolidated Key Themes (Enclosure 1: Engagement Report)

The following six themes emerged from the engagement processes:

- Communication – Participants consistently explored the impact of words on a culture's understanding and approach to inclusion. Participants also identified two specific areas in which the County can enhance:
 - use inclusive lens when planning and executing communication; and
 - enhance communication to the public about inclusion in relation to our services and programs.
- Partnering – Participants said the County should consider forming alliances with other municipalities and service providers to remove barriers and offer relevant programs and services locally.
- Accessibility – Participants said an individual's sense of inclusion and connection to County programs and services is dependent on their ability to access affordable and accessible transportation; buildings and facilities; information about services and events; and affordable and accessible housing and safe shelter.
- Inclusive Employment – The participants believed developing an inclusive hiring policy for the County will model the way for other business in the community, with the first step to conduct a thorough audit of County recruitment processes to identify and remove systemic barriers.
- Integration – Participants expressed the importance of an integrated approach to programs and service delivery in the County. They expressed the need for a holistic approach to reducing barriers to inclusion.
- Shifting Perceptions - Participants expect the County to play a greater role in challenging perceptions of the community as a homogenous culture. They recommended focusing on education, creating inclusive spaces, and creating opportunities and events that welcome and celebrate diversity

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Diversity and Inclusion Policy (Enclosure 2)

This is a high-level policy that is designed to guide the County in the development of programs and services going forward. If supported, this policy will enable a diversity and inclusion lens to be applied to programs and services as they are developed and reviewed.

The intent is to bring forward the Social Inclusion policy for rescission at the same time as the Diversity and Inclusion policy.

Inclusive Hiring Policy (Enclosure 3)

The inclusive hiring policy is designed to provide a framework which supports the County in attracting a diverse, engaged and talented workforce. This process will take place in a competitive environment that provides equitable opportunity for participation.

Council and Committee History

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| 2018-11-27 | Council approved "THAT an extension from the end of 2018 to the fourth quarter 2019 for the development of an Inclusive Hiring Policy be approved." |
| 2018-04-10 | Council approved "THAT Administration: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Develop, for Council's consideration by the end of 2019, a broad policy on diversity and inclusion in the County, including an outline of the priority initiatives that would be needed to achieve the outcomes under the policy;b. Undertake internal and external consultation on the proposed diversity and inclusion policy;c. Develop, for Council's consideration by the end of 2018 [extension to 2019 was approved by Council on November 27, 2018], a broad inclusive hiring policy that will address any gaps in the County's current hiring practices;d. Undertake internal and external consultation on the proposed inclusive hiring policy; ande. Include estimated resources in the 2019 budget that would be needed to undertake initiatives to begin implementation of the inclusive hiring policy." |
| 2017-09-12 | Council approved "THAT Administration prepare, for Council's consideration, an Action Plan to be submitted to CCMARD*, based upon the Recommended Action Steps, set out in the September 12, 2017 report, titled Canadian Coalition of Municipalities against Racism and Discrimination." |
| 2017-07-4 | Council approved "THAT administration provide a report to Council, by the end of the first quarter of 2018, on the potential for Strathcona County to introduce an inclusive hiring program that would enhance employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities, and that the report include a plan for consultation with key stakeholders and other municipalities that have undertaken similar programs." |

**Note – CCMARD is now called the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities (CIM)*

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Other Impacts

Policy: To be determined.

Legislative/Legal: None.

Interdepartmental: A permanent Governance model for diversity and inclusion will need to be established.

Master Plan/Framework: To be determined.

Enclosures:

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| 1 | Engagement Report |
| 2 | Draft Diversity and Inclusion Policy |
| 3 | Draft Inclusive Hiring Policy |
| 4 | Diversity and Inclusion and Inclusive Hiring policies update |