

Committee of the Whole (2) Report

DATE: Tuesday, June 21, 2022

WARD(S): ALL

**TITLE: RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE POLICY AND WORKPLACE
VIOLENCE POLICY UPDATES**

FROM:

Michael Coroneos, Deputy City Manager, Corporate Services, City Treasurer and Chief Financial Officer

Wendy Law, Deputy City Manager, Legal and Administrative Services & City Solicitor

ACTION: DECISION

Purpose

To seek approval on amendments to the City's Respectful Workplace Policy and Workplace Violence Policy, as well as a new and separate commitment to members of the public through *The City of Vaughan's Commitment to Human Rights, Equal Access to City Services and a Respectful Environment*.

Report Highlights

- The City of Vaughan is committed to ensuring a respectful work environment, free from harassment and discrimination as well as providing a safe work environment.
- The existing Respectful Workplace Policy and Workplace Violence Policy have been reviewed and revised following consultations with Staff to ensure on-going compliance with all relevant legislative requirements under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.
- Changes under the Respectful Workplace Policy include a DEI focus, expanded definitions, clearer timelines, roles/responsibilities, and reporting. As well, there is a separate commitment to members of a public through *The City of Vaughan's Commitment to Human Rights, Equal Access to City Services and a Respectful Environment*.
- Changes under the Workplace Violence Policy include housekeeping changes as well as expanded/new definitions and clearer direction around reporting workplace violence.

Recommendations

1. That the revised Respectful Workplace Policy (Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination/Harassment), as substantially set out in Attachment 1 be approved.
2. That the revised Workplace Violence Policy, as substantially set out in Attachment 2 be approved.
3. That the new policy statement for members of the public, *The City of Vaughan's Commitment to Human Rights, Equal Access to City Services and a Respectful Environment*, set out in Attachment 3 be approved.

Background

The City of Vaughan has established Respectful Workplace and Workplace Violence programs to prevent and address Workplace Harassment, Discrimination and Violence through proactive measures. These programs ensure that the City effectively addresses and responds to complaints or incidences of discrimination, harassment, or workplace violence in accordance with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and the *Human Rights Code*. The *Occupational Health and Safety Act* requires employers to have these policies and to review them as often as necessary and at least annually. These programs include detailed policies, procedures for implementation and training for all staff.

Previous Reports/Authority

Updates to the Respectful Workplace Policy (Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination/Harassment) and Workplace Violence Policy were previously presented to the Finance, Administration and Audit Committee on April 1, 2019, and approved by Council on May 1, 2019. [Click here](#) to view the April 1, 2019 report.

Analysis and Options

Staff have reviewed the existing programs and have updated the attached policies and respective procedures to reflect the updates. The amendments to the policies and procedures are not necessarily substantive in nature but reflect important changes and housekeeping updates in the spirit of continuous improvement and to comply with Ontario's *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA) and the Ontario *Human Rights Code*.

1. Respectful Workplace Policy (Human Rights and Anti-Harassment/Discrimination)

Key Updates:

- The Policy has been amended to reflect new language and terms, including the City's commitment to protect human rights and maintain a respectful environment
- The Policy has also been updated to include reference to a Guide & Procedure that provides detailed information on what is discrimination and harassment

including Code-based and race-based harassment and sets out the process for filing a complaint and the investigation process.

- The amendments also reflect an increased time limit from 6 months to one-year for filing complaints, and a provision that findings of the investigation will be shared with the respective parties.
- The Policy outlines the roles and responsibilities of People Leaders, Management, Human Resources, and employees, and mentions consultation with the Diversity and Inclusion Officer for Code-based complaints
- An annual report will be provided to the City Manager and Diversity and Inclusion Officer outlining complaints received by the City so the City can ensure it is taking appropriate steps to address discrimination and harassment.
- Overall, the policy updates are user-friendly, better, and more inclusive definitions and the program focuses on remedial action to address workplace harassment including restorative justice and training, where appropriate.

2. Workplace Violence Policy

Key Updates:

- Policy updated to reflect new definitions and legislative requirements
- Overall, policy updates represent minor/housekeeping changes

3. The City of Vaughan's Commitment to Human Rights, Equal Access to City Services and a Respectful Environment

- This is a new policy statement for members of the public outlining the City's commitment to human rights, equal access to City services and a respectful environment.
- Complaints from members of the public who feel discriminated or harassed by a City employee(s) are to be directed to Access Vaughan. A procedure will be developed where the respective Department and Human Resources is contacted to investigate any complaints.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact associated with the approval and implementation of these policies outside the existing approved operating budget.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

There are no regional impacts associated with these policies.

Conclusion

Updates to the attached Respectful Workplace Policy and Workplace Violence Policy were developed by Staff to ensure on-going compliance with relevant legislative requirements under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

It is recommended that Council approve the updated policies and direct the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer and appropriate staff to take the necessary steps to implement the policies effective immediately.

For more information, please contact:

Mark Bond, Acting Chief Human Resources Officer, ext. # 8327

Attachments

1. 13.C.01 Respectful Workplace Policy (Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination/ Harassment)
2. 13.C.03 Workplace Violence Policy
3. The City of Vaughan's Commitment to Human Rights, Equal Access to City Services and a Respectful Environment

Prepared by

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Approved by



Michael Coroneos, DCM Corporate Services, City Treasurer and Chief Financial Officer

Reviewed by



Nick Spensieri, City Manager



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