



Committee of the Whole (1) Report

DATE: Tuesday, October 31, 2023

WARD(S): ALL

TITLE: CITY OF VAUGHAN'S DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION
PLAN - ANNUAL REPORT (APRIL 2022 – OCTOBER 2023)

FROM:

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

ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

Purpose

To provide an annual update on the progress and challenges in implementing the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan and Multi-Year Action Plan.

Report Highlights

- This report is a progress of DEI initiatives from April of 2022 to October of 2023.
- The City of Vaughan approved the 2022-2026 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan in April 2022.
- The City was awarded the 2022 Excellence in Diversity & Inclusion by HR Canada.
- The City has made significant advancements in fostering an inclusive culture, implementing data-driven initiatives, promoting equitable employment, strengthening Indigenous relations, championing equity, and enhancing accessibility standards.

Recommendation:

1. That this report be received for information.

Background

The City of Vaughan takes pride in its diverse communities and recognizes their invaluable contributions to our cultural, economic, and social fabric. In our commitment to promote inclusivity and respect, we ensure that all citizens, employees, businesses, and visitors are afforded accessible opportunities for meaningful engagement and participation. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan (DEI Plan) is a road map to this commitment, targeting systemic discrimination and inequities in service access, civic participation, and broader community involvement.

Instrumental in the formation of the DEI Plan was the guidance of the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force. Their insights have been paramount in refining our approach to ensure our programs, services, hiring, and tendering practices genuinely reflect and cater to the diverse needs of our residents. As the DEI Plan unfolds, we are making significant strides in several key focus areas geared towards realizing our overarching mission of comprehensive equity and inclusivity.

Highlights of Progress to Date (April 2022 to October 2023)

Fostering and Embedding a Culture of Belonging:

- Updated the City's Respectful Workplace, Accessibility, and Workplace Violence policies.

Data-Informed Decision-Making:

- Developed and implemented the DEI segment within the employee engagement survey.

Equitable Employment:

- Introduced and successfully executed DEI, OHRC, Truth and Reconciliation, and AODA courses, with impressive completion rates.

Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation:

- Progressing towards an MOU and formalizing a land acknowledgment.
- Organized insightful sessions to mark Indigenous History Month.
- Established the symbolic Friendship Garden.
- Organized the meaningful Sisters in Spirit Vigil and celebrated achievements via the Culture Day award.

Achieving Equity:

- Anti-Racism: The Addressing Anti-Black Racism project is on track for completion by January 2024.
- Support for the LGBTQ2S+ Communities: Celebrated inclusivity with the installation of a Pride Rainbow Crosswalk.

Continued Accessibility Excellence:

- Launched the development of the 2023-2026 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, which is expected to be implemented in Q4 of 2023.
- Developed Annual Accessibility Status Reports for 2020, 2021, and 2022.
- Initiated the Information and Communication Accessibility Project to meet compliance with requirements set out in the Information and Communication standard of the integrated [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](#) (AODA).
- Spearheaded Project SEARCH, in partnership with Recreation, Animal Services, Human Resources, Facility Management, Infrastructure Delivery, Parks Forestry and Horticulture, Transportation and Fleet Management, and Vaughan Public Libraries, to develop and implement empowering internships catering to those with learning disabilities, offering them immersive experiences across diverse departments.

Previous Reports/Authority

[Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan and Community Consultation, Committee of the Whole \(1\), June 1, 2021](#)

[INDIGENOUS LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT, Committee of the Whole \(1\), June 1, 2021](#)

[City of Vaughan's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan and Multi-Year Action Plan, Committee of the Whole \(1\), April 5, 2022](#)

[PROJECT SEARCH – EMPLOYMENT FOR PERSONS WITH DIFFERENT ABILITIES, Committee of the Whole \(2\), June 21, 2022](#)

["Project SEARCH" Implementation Report, June 2023](#)

Analysis and Options

Accessibility

Accessibility remains a rapidly evolving area where service demand surpasses current staff resource capabilities. We are proactively collaborating across various departments to leverage internal support and resources wherever possible. The Site Plan review process, as required by the AODA, is a prime example illustrating the need for accessibility considerations to be woven seamlessly into every facet of our operations from inception.

Inclusive Programs and Services: Recreation Services continues to roll out programs and services that reflect the diverse requisites of those with disabilities. Project SEARCH is one area that has been highly successful however, it lacks staff and funding support at this time.

Accessible Infrastructure and Facilities: In partnership with infrastructure and facilities, we are committed to meeting accessibility standards required by the AODA. Our efforts include bringing existing infrastructure up to accessibility standards, incorporating accessibility into new project plans, and conducting accessibility assessments to identify and address barriers. We prioritize engaging individuals with disabilities in all Site Plan reviews, ensuring inclusion in all relevant new projects and retrospectively applying this approach to existing ones. Our goal is to create accessible and inclusive spaces that cater to everyone, ensuring all voices are heard and needs are addressed.

Accessibility Training and Education: We are continuing to ensure the City's staff is well-versed with accessibility, inclusivity, and the stipulations of AODA. Education not only increases awareness of accessibility, but also emphasizes the role in creating an inclusive environment for all, especially those with disabilities.

Community Engagement and Collaboration: It is crucial to continuously engage with individuals with disabilities, community agencies supporting them, and other pivotal stakeholders. This helps to collate feedback, pinpoint accessibility barriers, and develop strategies to address them.

Inclusive Engagement

The Addressing Anti-Black Racism Action Plan (ABR) and 20223-2026 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP) projects, supported by the Engagement Team, made significant strides in their community engagement efforts. Marginalized communities have vocalized their desire for engagement but often felt overlooked or bypassed in consultation processes. The ABR and MYAP projects directly addressed this issue by revamping stakeholder lists and cultivating relationships that supported these specific projects and became invaluable for future projects. However, engagement without equity and inclusion can inadvertently perpetuate marginalization, especially for communities whose voices are often undervalued or unheard.

Incorporating DEI principles into engagement is vital to achieving comprehensive outreach and fostering a genuinely inclusive environment. Engagement rooted in diversity, equity, and inclusion captures a broader range of perspectives, experiences, and needs. This approach not only strengthens community trust but also ensures that decisions and initiatives are well-informed, equitable, and resonate with all segments of the population.

It is important to consider the integration of DEI principles in engagement strategy in order to promote innovation and inclusivity.

Project and Change Management

We are proud to highlight the introduction of dedicated Project Management to support DEI initiatives. Recognizing the multifaceted nature of diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts, this strategic approach ensures the effective planning, execution, and tracking of DEI-related endeavours. Additionally, we believe that change management is paramount to the success of our DEI journey by ensuring they drive a cultural transformation. By intertwining project and change management, we are reinforcing our commitment to creating an environment where DEI principles are not just one-time projects but truly transformative.

Financial Impact

The implementation and ongoing support of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Plan have financial implications that need to be carefully considered to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of the initiatives. All requests will be submitted via the City Budget and Business Planning submission and review process.

Operational Impact

We continue to consult and collaborate with multiple departments to prioritize diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility in a cohesive approach. These proactive consultations have enabled us to adequately leverage internal support and resources, ensuring all our projects, from the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan to the Addressing Anti-Black Racism Project, incorporate equity considerations from the outset.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

N/A

Conclusion

The City of Vaughan's commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) is evident in the comprehensive strides made in the DEI Plan, which seeks to address systemic discrimination and inequities across various sectors. The progress made from April 2022 to October 2023, spanning from fostering a culture of belonging to ensuring continued accessibility excellence, underscores the City's dedication to creating an inclusive environment for all its residents.

Given the positive strides, the City will continue to prioritize and invest in DEI initiatives, addressing resource constraints and ensuring continuous community engagement as they arise. The City will also focus on internal capacity building, ensuring that departments are equipped and aligned with DEI principles. By doing so, the City of

Vaughan will enhance its external image and foster an internal environment where diversity, equity, and inclusion are celebrated and upheld.

Please see the attachment for an overview of our DEI Plan Schedule, including past, present, and future.

For more information, please contact: Zincia Francis, Diversity and Inclusion Officer, Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer, ext. 8159.

Prepared by

Zincia Francis, Diversity and Inclusion Officer, Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer, ext. 8159.

Attachments

1. DEI Plan Schedule

Approved by



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

Reviewed by



Nick Spensieri, City Manager

DEI PLAN SCHEDULE			
Recommendations	Status	Start Date	Completion Date
Fostering and Embedding a Culture of Belonging			
Review and revise existing policies and procedures to ensure inclusivity and reduce inequities.	In Progress	2021	
• Respectful Workplace Policy	Complete	2021	2022
• Workplace Violence Policy	Complete	2021	2022
• Recruitment Policy	Not Started		
• Code of Conduct	Not Started		
Include definitions (Appendix) from the Diversity Equity and Inclusion Plan into applicable policies.	Not Started		
Develop policies and staff report to support an inclusive and equitable workplace.	Not Started		
Develop learning opportunities for all people leaders and managers to have the necessary information and skills to follow policies related to DEI.	Not Started		
Develop opportunities for meaningful staff engagement in the City's DEI initiatives, including Employee Resources Groups.	In Progress	2022	
Provide ongoing support to citizen advisory task forces and committees.	In Progress	2022	2026
Develop statement of commitment on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for the City.	Complete	2021	
Data-Informed Decision-Making			
Establish a baseline for City equity data to inform the DEI initiatives.	In Progress	2022	
Establish OKR for DEI initiatives across the City.	In Progress	2022	
Utilize DEI data to inform annual updates to the DEI Plan and corresponding Action Plan.	Not Started		
Aim to achieve best practice for attaching identity-based data to employee profiles (while being mindful of and adhering to the Ontario Human Rights Code and privacy legislation) to establish a baseline and measure progress.	In Progress	2022	

DEI PLAN SCHEDULE

Recommendations	Status	Start Date	Completion Date
Equitable Employment			
Recruitment and Hiring			
Implement targeted job advertisements to increase workforce representation from Indigenous and equity-deserving groups.	On Hold	2021	
Expand recruitment and hiring strategies to increase diversity at SLT and SLTE.	Not Started		
Review the recruitment process and application site to ensure it complies with OHRC, FIPPA and Anti-Racism Data Standards.	In Progress	2021	2025
Develop guidelines to ensure job postings are equitable and inclusive.	Scheduled	2025	
Ensure Equity Statement is included all job postings.	Complete		2021
Develop opportunities (internships, co-ops placements, etc.) to reduce barriers (i.e., Criteria for Equivalency) to hiring applicants from low-income communities and those who are negatively impacted by socioeconomic factors such as income, education, employment, and community safety and social supports.	Scheduled	2025	
Review candidate screening and selection process to limit unconscious bias.	Scheduled	2024	
Explore feasibility of Redacted Application Process to limit unconscious bias in hiring.	Scheduled	2024	
Review and, where necessary, implement changes to the interview and assessment process.	Scheduled	2024	
Expand interview matrix to include DEI competency.	Scheduled	2025	
Include unconscious bias awareness as a proficiency criterion.	Scheduled	2024	
Include emotional intelligence as a proficiency criterion.	Scheduled	2024	
Include understanding and experience of diversity, equity and inclusion as a proficiency criterion for all people managers.	Scheduled	2024	

DEI PLAN SCHEDULE

Recommendations	Status	Start Date	Completion Date
Onboarding			
Ensure onboarding for all staff and for Senior Leaders is inclusive and equitable.	Scheduled	2024	
Provide information on available diversity, equity, inclusion, and human rights-related learning for all staff and new employees at onboarding.	In Progress	2021	2024
Provide information on existing ERGs at onboarding for new employees.	Scheduled	2024	
Retention			
Utilize existing data to analyze and improve promotion and retention, and recruitment and hiring strategies.	Scheduled	2024	
Learning and Development			
Ensure that all staff have access to training on the Ontario Human Rights Code.	Complete	2022	2023
Design and deliver comprehensive Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Learning Plan to all staff aimed at increasing awareness of equity-related training, including:	Complete	2021	2023
· Unconscious Bias	Complete	2022	2023
· Unconscious Bias in Recruiting, Hiring, Retention and Promotions	Complete	2022	2023
· Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Fundamentals	Complete	2022	2023
· Systemic Racism in Canada.	Complete	2022	2023
Expand DEI-related training to topics including but not limited to 2SLBGTQ+ communities, anti-Asian racism, disability, anti-Semitism, etc.	Scheduled	2024	
Provide DEI-related training for Senior Leadership, Mayor and Council.	In Progress	2022	
Performance Management			
Develop and implement DEI learning goals for various levels of the organization.	Scheduled	2025	

DEI PLAN SCHEDULE

Recommendations	Status	Start Date	Completion Date
Succession Planning, Mentorship and Promotion			
Develop strategies to ensure succession planning includes a targeted approach to diversifying leadership.	Scheduled	2024	
Develop targeted opportunities for emerging leaders from Indigenous and equity-deserving groups advancement through existing succession and mentorship programs.	Scheduled	2025	
Achieving Equity			
Anti-Racism			
Engage with diverse Black communities in the City to develop and implement strategy and action plan to address Anti-Black racism.	In Progress	2021	2024
Religious Intolerance			
Engage Jewish communities in Vaughan to identify, develop and support opportunities to build awareness and educate the public to effectively work toward the elimination of all forms of intolerance, discrimination and bigotry.	Scheduled	2024	2026
Engage Muslim communities in Vaughan to identify, develop and support opportunities to build awareness and educate the public to effectively work toward the elimination of all forms of intolerance, discrimination and bigotry.	Scheduled	2024	2026
2SLGBTQ+ Communities			
Engage 2SLGBTQ+ communities in Vaughan to support opportunities to build awareness and educate the public to effectively work toward the elimination of all forms of intolerance, discrimination and bigotry.	On Hold	2022	2026

DEI PLAN SCHEDULE

Recommendations	Status	Start Date	Completion Date
Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation			
Review and develop acknowledgment of Indigenous people and land in consultation with Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.	Complete		2021
Continue to build meaningful relationships with Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation to develop a Memorandum of Understanding.	In Progress	2022	
Foster commitment to enhancing relationships with Indigenous people and land.	In Progress	2021	
Community Engagement and Participation			
Collaboratively work with the Corporate and Strategic Communications department to develop a community engagement and targeted outreach strategy.	In Progress	2023	
Continued Accessibility Excellence			
Develop Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2023 - 2026)	In Progress	2022	2023
Ensure all new employee onboarding materials are in accessible format.	Not Started		
Develop guidelines to ensure learning and development programs meet accessibility standards.	Not Started		
Develop a strategic plan to targeted and intentional approach to recruit, hire and retain people with disabilities.	In Progress	2022	
Update Accessibility Site Plan Checklist.	Not Started		
Universal changerooms at new community centres.	Not Started		