Thursday, September 29, 2016
Regular Meeting - 7:00 P.M.

Boardroom WT-2C and WT-2D
2nd Floor – West Tower

Members:
- Gurratan Singh (Chair)
- Joe Pimentel (Vice-Chair)
- Amaleethan Xavier (Vice-Chair)
- Louis Adams
- Richard Emode
- Gurwinder Gill
- Joanne Leslie
- Cherian Manathara
- Bob Pesant
- Duke Pratt
- Rajinder Saini
- Roop Sandhu
- Hemant Tailor
- Daisy Wright
- Amaleethan Xavier
- Kris Noakes – Peel Aboriginal Network
- Priyanka Sheth – LGBQT Community
- Jeanette Schell – Canada Mental Health Association – Peel
- Regional Councillor Elaine Moore – Wards 1 and 5
- City Councillor Martin Medeiros – Wards 3 and 4
- City Councillor Gurpreet Dhillon – Wards 9 and 10

For inquiries about this agenda, or to make arrangements for accessibility accommodations for persons attending (some advance notice may be required), please contact:
Chandra Urquhart, Legislative Coordinator, Telephone (905) 874-2114, TTY (905) 874-2130

Note: Some meeting information may also be available in alternate formats upon request
Agenda
Inclusion and Equity Committee

Please ensure all cell phones, personal digital assistants (PDAs) and other electronic devices are turned off or placed on non-audible mode during the meeting.

1. **Approval of Agenda**

2. **Declarations of Interest under the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act**

3. **Previous Minutes**

3.1. Minutes - Inclusion and Equity - March 31, 2016

   The minutes of the Inclusion and Equity Committee Meeting of March 31, 2016 were approved by Council on May 25, 2016. The minutes are provided for Committee’s information

3.2. **Note to File - June 23, 2016**

   The notes are provided for Committee’s information

4. **Delegations / Presentations**

4.1. Presentation: *Inclusion and Equity Facilitator Session Workshop.*

   This item was listed on the agenda for June 23, 2016

   To be received

4.2. Presentation, re: *Strategic Plan Finalization - September 29, 2016*

5. **Reports / Updates**
6. **Other/ New Business**


Note: This report was originally considered by Community and Public Services Committee on June 15, 2016. The recommendations were approved at Council on June 22, 2016 and provided for reference purposes.

6.2. Article from the Globe and Mail dated July 13, 2016, re: **Vancouver Embraces Inclusive Transgender Policy.**

*To be received*

7. **Inclusion and Equity Ideas**

8. **Correspondence**

9. **Question Period**

10. **Public Question Period**

11. **Adjournment**

Next Regular Meeting; November 24, 2016
Thursday, March 31, 2016

7:00 p.m.
Bdrm WT-2C and WT-2D
2nd Floor – West Tower

Members:

Joe Pimentel (Vice-Chair)
Amaleethan Xavier (Vice-Chair)
Richard Emode
Gurwinder Gill
Joanne Leslie
Cherian Manathara
Bob Pesant
Duke Pratt
Rajinder Saini
Roop Sandhu
Daisy Wright
Kris Noakes – Peel Aboriginal Network
Priyanka Sheth – LGBQT Community
Jeanette Schepp – Canada Mental Health Association – Peel
Regional Councillor Elaine Moore – Wards 1 and 5
Councillor Gurpreet Dhillon – Wards 9 and 10

Members Absent:

Gurratan Singh (Chair) (regrets)
Louis Adams (regrets)
Hemant Tailor (regrets)
Councillor Martin Medeiros – Wards 3 and 4 (other municipal business)

Staff Present:

Public Services, Recreation and Culture
Donna-Lyn Rosa, Director, Recreation and Culture
Mary Held, Acting Manager, Central Services

Corporate Services Department
Peter Fay, City Clerk
Earl Evans, Deputy Clerk
Chandra Urquhart, Legislative Coordinator
The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m. and adjourned at 9:18 p.m.

1. **Approval of Agenda**

   In response to a question from Gurwinder Gill, Joe Pimentel, Vice-Chair, advised that the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Committee were selected by Members of the Committee through an election process in accordance with the City’s Procedure By-law. At the time, Committee supported a motion to review the position of Vice-Chair annually.

   IEC006-2016 That the agenda for the Inclusion and Equity Committee Meeting of March 31, 2016, be approved as printed and circulated.

   Carried

2. **Declarations of Interest under the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act**

3. **Previous Minutes**

   3.1. Minutes - **Inclusion and Equity** - January 28, 2016

   The subject minutes were approved by Council on March 30, 2016 and provided for Committee’s information.

   It was noted that Jeanette Schepp – Canada Mental Health Association – Peel, was present at the meeting on January 28, 2016.

4. **Delegations / Presentations**

   4.1. Thomas Plant, Director Strategic & Enterprise Services, Office of the Chief Operating Officer, re: **Inclusion and Equity Facilitator Session Workshop**.

   Joe Pimentel, Vice-Chair, introduced Thomas Plant, Director Strategic & Enterprise Services, Office of the Chief Operating Officer. He advised that Mr. Plant would facilitate the ‘Inclusion and Equity - Strategic Planning Workshop’.

   Mr. Plant welcomed everyone. He explained that following his presentation, Committee will participate in discussions and two Visioning Exercises with the intent to develop goals and initiatives that will align with Committee’s mandate. He summarized as follows:

   - Workshop Objectives
     - Develop a strategic roadmap
- Strategic Roadmap
  - Why do we need a strategic roadmap
- Visioning Exercise # 1
  - Defining what inclusion and equity means
- Key Committee Terms of Reference Focus Areas
- Visioning Exercise # 2
  - Setting goals and initiatives

Committee roundtable discussion followed:

Exercise # 1:
- Defining “Equity” and “Inclusion”.
  - Fairness
  - Acceptance
  - Celebrate “success”
  - Feeling safe
  - Placing equal value to qualifications and qualities
  - Inventory and acknowledge
  - Creating/providing opportunities – what everyone brings
  - Enable talents
  - Changing behaviours/attitudes
  - Removing/reducing barriers – culture change/embrace the change
  - Future state perspective doesn’t need “E & I” it is
  - Be the change
  - Reasonable
  - No exclusion
  - Transparency
  - Holistic
  - Humanitarian
  - Bias-free and discrimination-free
  - Respect/Respecting differing perspectives
  - Celebrations across communities
  - Positive experience/outcomes
  - Learning/Embracing
  - Honouring
  - Building
  - Strength
  - Increases accountability
  - Regardless
  - Consciousness
  - Reflective
  - Awareness
  - Parity
  - Accessibility – using strategy/power to create access/opportunities
  - Taking risks/advocating
  - Challenging the status quo/establishment
Exercise # 2 - Brainstorm strategic initiatives for each goal:

- **Promoting Equity and inclusion**
  - To promote equity and inclusion
  - To increase awareness in the community
  - Develop communication strategies/plans/implement educational campaigns
  - Involve appropriate relevant groups/stakeholders (to help with promotion)
  - Understand/participate in different celebrations
  - Analyze/evaluate/explore practices
  - Identify/develop ambassadors (champions) from leadership and non-leadership
  - Be present/participate in process/communicate
  - Conduct surveys/community town halls
  - Promote sameness in schools and across communities
  - Develop a communication plan
    - Corporate
    - SMT
    - Staff
  - Community outreach
  - Fearlessly
  - Micro-Aggression
  - Financial commitment
  - Partnership
  - Hamilton Model
  - Call to action
  - City statement “the value of Equity and Inclusion”
  - Available in different languages
  - Outreach – increasing strategies
  - Internal versus external
  - Lead by example
  - Opening minds

- **Examine the way the City delivers Programs/Services**
  - Develop equitable programs and services
  - Community and City Staff – Survey/Town hall to understand community needs and assess satisfaction with services
  - Conduct a stakeholder analysis (SWOT) to assess current/desired state
    - What’s working well
    - What isn’t working well
    - Gaps/Barriers analysis (i.e. programs/services reflective of community needs etc.)
    - What can we do better
  - Current inventory – where are we?
  - To who – User friendly
- Environmental scan
  - Develop media
- Accountability
- Support the statement
- Identify best practices

- Developing city Programs and Services that align with the needs of Diverse communities
  - Understand our diverse communities (understand the diverse needs of our community)
  - SWOT analysis
  - Develop/implement an action plan
  - Evaluate
  - Engaging the community by going to where they gather
  - Educating staff and community
  - Hiring diverse staff
  - Advertising in common media
  - Be present at “the fold”
  - Championing communities
  - Managing expectations
  - Taking stock annually
  - Recalibration
  - Deliver or support
  - What is the City’s core business

- Building greater awareness of City programs/services across different communities
  - To develop a more effective communication strategy example: engage media/ethnic media
  - Surveys
  - Town hall meetings
  - Speaking opportunities social media
  - Videos
  - Develop partnerships (with different groups)
  - Inclusive advertising
  - Self-promote - City
  - Inspiring people (City staff) to be more engaging and visible in community
  - Using existing tools/strategies and accepting critique
  - Develop Communication Strategy
  - Outreach & engagement program
    - Go to where people are
  - Identification of social media
Mr. Plant advised that the information provided at the workshop would be condensed and included in the minutes.

Committee discussed the need to continue the facilitated session and suggested Mr. Plant facilitate a second workshop at the June 23, 2016 meeting.

The following motion was considered:

IEC007-2016 1. That the facilitated session by Thomas Plant, Director Strategic & Enterprise Services, Office of the Chief Operating Officer, to the Inclusion and Equity Committee meeting of March 31, 2016, re: Inclusion and Equity Facilitator Session Workshop be received; and,

2. That Thomas Plant, Director Strategic & Enterprise Services, Office of the Chief Operating Officer, host a second facilitated session on Inclusion and Equity at the June 23, 2016 meeting.

Carried

5. Reports / Updates

6. Other/ New Business

7. Inclusion and Equity Ideas

8. Correspondence

8.1. Information re: Surrey BC - Diversity Advisory Committee - Terms of Reference.

IE008-2016 That the information to the Inclusion and Equity Committee meeting of March 31, 2016, re: Surrey BC - Diversity Advisory Committee – Terms of Reference be received.

Carried

9. Question Period
10. Public Question Period

11. Adjournment

IE009-2016 That the Inclusion and Equity Committee do now adjourn to meet again on Thursday, June 23, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. or at the call of the Chair.

Carried

______________________________
Gurratan Singh, Chair
Thursday, June 23, 2016

Boardroom WT-2C and WT-2D
2nd Floor – West Tower

Members Present:  Gurratan Singh (Chair)
Joe Pimentel (Vice-Chair)
Cherian Manathara
Roop Sandhu
Hemant Tailor
Daisy Wright
Kris Noakes – Peel Aboriginal Network
Jeanette Schepp – Canada Mental Health Association – Peel
City Councillor Gurpreet Dhillon – Wards 9 and 10

Members Absent:  Amaleethan Xavier (Vice-Chair) (arrived at 7:58 p.m.)
Louis Adams
Richard Emode (regrets)
Gurwinder Gill (regrets)
Joanne Leslie (regrets)
Bob Pesant (regrets)
Duke Pratt
Rajinder Saini
Priyanka Sheth – LGBQT Community (regrets)
Regional Councillor Elaine Moore – Wards 1 and 5 (personal)
City Councillor Martin Medeiros – Wards 3 and 4 (personal)

Staff Present:  Office of the Chief Operating Officer
Thomas Plant, Director Strategic & Enterprise Services
Public Services, Recreation and Culture
Mary Held, Acting Manager, Central Services
Corporate Services Department
Peter Fay, City Clerk
Chandra Urquhart, Legislative Coordinator
The Committee meeting failed to achieve quorum at 7:30 p.m. In accordance with Procedure By-law 160-2004, the meeting was not called to order. The following members were present:

Gurratan Singh (Chair)
Joe Pimentel (Vice-Chair)
Cherian Manathara
Roop Sandhu
Hemant Tailor
Daisy Wright
Kris Noakes – Peel Aboriginal Network
Jeanette Schepp – Canada Mental Health Association – Peel
City Councillor Gurpreet Dhillon – Wards 9 and 10

All items on the agenda will be included on the agenda for the next scheduled meeting. The attending members continued an informal meeting.

Thomas Plant, Director Strategic & Enterprise Services facilitated a discussion with respect to the following:

- Review of Strategic Planning Process
- Roundtable discussion – Validation of March 31, 2016 Roundtable Workshop Results
- Establishing an Action Plan
  - prioritization exercise to identify the top priorities
  - identification of initiative timelines and who is involved
- Next steps: Implementing the Action Plan

Vision Statement as presented:
To fearlessly promote the development of a reflective, inclusive and equitable community by challenging the status quo and celebrating our diversity as both a strength and an opportunity.

Discussion of vision statement focused on priorities, engagement, awareness and responsiveness.

Two options resulted:

1. **Brampton** – a reflective, inclusive and equitable community
2. To fearlessly promote the development of a reflective, inclusive, equitable and just community

Options will be presented for validation at the Committee’s next meeting on September 29, 2016.

The discussion ended at 9:06 p.m.
Inclusion and Equity Committee

Strategic Planning Workshop

June 23, 2016
Today’s Workshop Objectives

• Validate draft Strategic Plan Roadmap
  o Vision Statement
  o Priorities, Goals and Initiatives

• Establish Action Plan
Strategic Roadmap

**Future State**

**Goal**
Facilitate changes in City policies, procedures and services

**Goal**
Raise awareness about diversity by creating opportunities

**Strategic Initiative #1**
Develop an inclusive advertising campaign

**Strategic Initiative #2**
Develop and implement Equity Ambassador Program

**Statement**
Develop staff education strategy to embed equity into everything the City does

**Future State**

**Future State**

**Goal**
Increase communication and outreach

**Strategic Initiative #3**
Develop staff education strategy to embed equity into everything the City does

**Present State**

Flower City is our heritage. City-building is our business.
Strategic Vision

To fearlessly promote the development of a reflective, inclusive and equitable community by challenging the status quo and celebrating our diversity as both a strength and an opportunity.
# Strategic Plan Roadmap

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRIORITIES</th>
<th>ENGAGEMENT</th>
<th>AWARENESS</th>
<th>RESPONSIVENESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goals</td>
<td>Increase communication and outreach directly with community stakeholders in the places they gather, live, work and play to promote and facilitate discussion about equity and inclusion</td>
<td>Raise awareness about diversity by creating opportunities focused on removing barriers to inclusive change</td>
<td>Facilitate changes in City policies, procedures and services that result in greater accountability, transparency and equity for all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Initiatives</td>
<td>Develop new outreach engagement strategies such as surveys and town-halls to more accurately identify and understand the needs of Brampton’s diverse community</td>
<td>Develop and implement public education campaigns that celebrate diversity and promote the celebration of different cultures through cultural events</td>
<td>Develop a comprehensive inventory of City services and programs and undertake a SWOT analysis to assess weaknesses, strengths, opportunities and threats regarding equity and inclusion</td>
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<td>Develop and implement an Equity Ambassador Program to promote diversity, equity and inclusion throughout the community</td>
<td>Develop new communication strategies and plans to increase community awareness about equity and inclusion</td>
<td>Conduct a jurisdictional benchmarking scan to assess and create an inventory of best practices for the incorporation of equity and inclusion into everything that the City does</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop strategic partnerships with different community groups in Brampton to leverage resources to achieve shared community outcomes</td>
<td>Develop an inclusive advertising campaign to promote Brampton’s diversity and facilitate awareness about City services and community initiatives</td>
<td>Develop staff education strategy to embed equity, accessibility and inclusion in the delivery of services, development of programs, policies, procedures and strategies</td>
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</tbody>
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**Flower City is our heritage. City-building is our business.**
Exercise #1

Validate March 31st Strategic Brainstorming Session

• Does the vision reflect what we want to achieve?

• Do the priorities accurately reflect our vision?

• Do the goals embody your ideas about inclusion and equity?

• Do the strategic initiatives align with your feedback from the brainstorming sessions?
Exercise #2
Prioritization

Rank each priority area

Higher Priority

Medium Priority

Lower Priority

Stickers at your tables
Exercise #3
Action Planning

For each goal, discuss the following:

- How many Committee members should be involved? Sub-committees?
- What is required (i.e. resources)?
- What are the timelines?

Record your findings on the flip charts
Inclusion and Equity Committee

Strategic Plan Finalization

September 29, 2016
Today’s Objectives

• Finalize draft Strategic Plan Roadmap
  o Vision Statement
  o Priorities, Goals and Initiatives

• Establish Action Plan
Original Draft Committee Vision Statement

To fearlessly promote the development of a reflective, inclusive and equitable community by challenging the status quo and celebrating our diversity as both a strength and an opportunity.

Revised Draft Committee Vision Statements

1. Brampton – a reflective, inclusive and equitable community

2. To fearlessly promote the development of a reflective, inclusive, equitable and just community
# Strategic Goals & Initiatives

<table>
<thead>
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<td>live, work and play to promote and facilitate discussion about equity and inclusion</td>
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<td>and understand the needs of Brampton’s diverse community</td>
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<td>threats regarding equity and inclusion</td>
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Next Steps

1. Finalize and agree on a Vision Statement

2. Finalize and agree on the Priorities and order

3. Identify strategic initiatives that will require an update for more information from City staff

4. Discuss and establish an action plan with timelines for completion
Date: 2016-05-16

Subject: Endorsement of the Diversity and Inclusion Charter of Peel

Contact: Donna-Lynn Rosa, Director, Recreation and Culture, Public Services, 905.874.2358

Recommendations:

1. That the report from Donna-Lynn Rosa, Director, Recreation and Culture, Public Services, dated May, 16, 2016, to the Community and Public Services Committee Meeting of June, 15, 2016 re: Endorsement of the Diversity and Inclusion Charter of Peel (File: 31/2015), be received; and

2. That the Diversity and Inclusion Charter of Peel be endorsed; and

3. That a copy of this report be forwarded to the City’s Inclusion and Equity Committee for its reference and consideration in developing an Inclusion and Equity Strategy for the City.

Overview:

- The Diversity and Inclusion Charter of Peel is a community-based initiative to foster inclusiveness and equity across the entire region.

- Since 2013, the Diversity and Inclusion Charter has been endorsed by the Region of Peel, City of Mississauga and Town of Caledon, as well as various agencies and boards operating within Peel Region.

- The Charter’s vision is to create an “inclusive Peel Region that values, respects and embraces diversity and equity so that everyone can achieve their full potential." Twelve (12) commitments are included for endorsing organizations to realize this vision.

- The Charter commitments are aligned with existing City initiatives such as the 2016-2018 Strategic Plan and Council’s new Inclusion and Equity Committee.
Background:

In September 2015, the Corporate Services Committee received a delegation from the Regional Diversity Roundtable regarding the Diversity and Inclusion Charter of Peel, and Council subsequently passed Resolution C295-2015 as follows:

CS122-2015 1. That the delegation and presentation from Varsha Naik, Chair, and Amrita Kumar-Ratta, Project Lead, Regional Diversity Roundtable, to the Corporate Services Committee Meeting of September 23, 2015, re: Diversity and Inclusion Charter of Peel be received; and,

2. That staff be requested to report back to the Corporate Services Committee to endorse the Diversity and Inclusion Charter of Peel.

In 2013, Council previously received a delegation on this same matter.

This report recommends Council endorse the Diversity and Inclusion Charter of Peel, and that the Charter serve as a basis for the ongoing work of the City’s Inclusion and Equity Committee and action plan and initiatives to implement Council’s Strategic Plan, particularly the goal of supporting strong communities.

Current Situation:

The Diversity and Inclusion Charter of Peel is a community-based initiative to foster inclusiveness and equity across the entire region, developed by the Regional Diversity Roundtable and Peel Newcomers Strategy Group. Since 2013, the Charter has been endorsed by the Region of Peel, City of Mississauga and Town of Caledon, as well as various agencies and boards operating within Peel Region. The Charter’s vision is to create an “inclusive Peel Region that values, respects and embraces diversity and equity so that everyone can achieve their full potential.”

Twelve (12) commitments are included for endorsing individuals and organizations to realize this vision:

- **Integrating the values of equity and inclusion into** personal lives, work, relationships and participation as residents
- **Supporting vibrant neighbourhoods** where diverse people come together as communities
- **Ensuring equitable and inclusive behaviours, practices, policies**, with regular review
- **Enabling full participation and engagement** by all through equitable access to information, services, opportunities
- **Providing ongoing learning** that facilitates equity and inclusion at individual, organizational and community levels
- **Creating safer spaces that foster mutual understanding**, respect and growth
- **Supporting inclusive leaders** and change champions
Dedicating resources, including people, time and/or money, to equity and inclusion
Building transparent and accountable relationships and systems
Partnering and collaborating to support and build equity and inclusion
Recognizing individuals and organizations implementing best practices in equity and inclusion
Recognizing and celebrating Peel Region’s rich diversity

The Charter’s vision and commitments are consistent with the City’s new Strategic Plan and new Inclusion and Equity Committee responsibilities to:

- provide advice to Council on promoting equity and inclusion as key considerations in the way the City delivers programs and services.
- ensure City programs and services align with the needs of our diverse communities
- build greater awareness of City programs and services across these communities
- develop and monitor the City’s inclusion and equity plan.

The Charter can be used as a foundational element for the ongoing efforts of the Inclusion and Equity Committee to fulfil its mandate and develop an Inclusion and Equity Strategy for the City.

Corporate Implications:

Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications from Council endorsing the Diversity and Inclusion Charter of Peel. Advancing the principles and objectives espoused in the Charter to further the City’s Strategic Plan may have future financial implications and if required, will be addressed through appropriate program and/or project budgets.

Other Implications:

The Charter commitments can be used as touchstones for all aspects of municipal service and program planning, delivery and evaluation.

Strategic Plan:

This report achieves the Strategic Plan priorities by promoting good government and strong communities to facilitate inclusive and equitable City services, activities and governance.

Conclusion:

Endorsing the Diversity and Inclusion Charter of Peel continues Brampton’s commitment to build a municipality and serve its citizens and businesses in an inclusive and equitable way reflecting the strength of the City’s diversity.
Submitted by:

Donna-Lynn Rosa
Director
Recreation and Culture
Public Services

Submitted by:

Mary Held
Acting Manager
Recreation and Culture
Public Services

Attachments:

Appendix 1 – Diversity and Inclusion Charter of Peel
The Diversity and Inclusion Charter of Peel is a regional initiative to foster inclusiveness and equity in Peel. Developed through extensive community consultation, the Charter is a living document that supports the implementation of existing national and provincial legislation.

Peel, comprising of Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga, is amongst the most diverse, fast growing and rapidly changing regions in Canada. This diversity can create both challenges and opportunities. The Charter’s goal is to ensure the full inclusion of all who live, work and play in Peel.

Residents, communities, organizations and governments in Peel seek to cooperatively create change and to strive for the achievement of this Charter’s unified vision.

**VISION**

An inclusive Peel Region that values, respects and embraces diversity and equity so that everyone can achieve their full potential.

**COMMITMENTS**

To realize this vision, individuals and organizations endorsing the Diversity and Inclusion Charter of Peel commit to:

- Integrating the values of equity and inclusion into personal lives, work, relationships and participation as residents
- Supporting vibrant neighbourhoods where diverse people come together as communities
- Ensuring equitable and inclusive behaviours, practices, policies, with regular review
- Enabling full participation and engagement by all through equitable access to information, services, opportunities
- Providing ongoing learning that facilitates equity and inclusion at individual, organizational and community levels
- Creating safer spaces that foster mutual understanding, respect and growth
- Supporting inclusive leaders and change champions
- Dedicating resources, including people, time and/or money, to equity and inclusion
- Building transparent and accountable relationships and systems
- Partnering and collaborating to support and build equity and inclusion
- Recognizing individuals and organizations implementing best practices in equity and inclusion
- Recognizing and celebrating Peel Region’s rich diversity.

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**DIVERSITY** is the presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes, both visible and invisible, within a group, organization or society.

**EQUITY** is a condition or a state of fair, inclusive and respectful treatment that recognizes and acknowledges the accommodation of differing needs and expectations. Equity acknowledges the fact that equal treatment does not always yield equal results.

**INCLUSION** is creating an environment where people have both the feeling and reality of belonging and are able to achieve their full potential.
Vancouver embraces new inclusive transgender policy
theglobeandmail.com – July 13, 2016
Byline: MEGAN DOLSKI

Vancouver has adopted a new policy to support transgender residents that includes the introduction of gender-neutral bathrooms, sensitivity training for staff and a new team in charge of overseeing the changes.

City council voted unanimously on Wednesday to adopt a series of recommendations contained in a report prepared by a pair of consulting groups that specialize in transgender issues, TransFocus Consulting and Equity Labs. The new policy comes a year after Mayor Gregor Robertson called for transgender residents to have equal rights under Canadian law and to have safe access to city space and events.

The city’s policy expands similar measures already in place at the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation and the Vancouver School Board, both which have taken steps to adjust their programming and venues to be more inclusive for the city’s trans community.

“Our purpose was to take what was at the Vancouver Park Board - which is very specific to recreation - and translate it to the city,” said Kai Scott of TransFocus Consulting, who worked on a report presented to city council outlining the recommendations included in the new plan.

Mr. Scott said the policy aims to make sure that the transgender community is considered in the many sectors under the city’s jurisdiction, such as municipal services, housing, grants, neighbourhood and transportation planning and facilities management. “To make sure that whatever plans made going forward cover the very unique needs of trans and gender-variant people,” he said.

The city will begin with five “quick start” recommendations that will be put in place over the next year and a half. These include revising grant priorities to consider the transgender community and updating city event protocols, and then allocating staff to figure out next steps and outline a budget.

In the long term, the report says, the city should ensure that data collection and city communications take the trans community into account, while also leveraging its influence over entities it does not own or operate.

Mr. Scott said that while initially the city will focus on changes that can be implemented quickly and at a low cost, deeper change will come only if the report’s recommendations are heeded over time.

Park board chair Sarah Kirby-Yung said she is happy the city is addressing this issue, and that working and listening to the transgender community will be crucial.
A 2014 report presented to the park board made 77 recommendations to make its services and facilities more accessible and inclusive for transgender people, and the board has since began acting on these suggestions. The city’s new policy draws on that report.

Ms. Kirby-Yung said the city needs to take its time and pace itself as it moves forward. “It takes a little while to effect changes across systems, processes, facilities and things of that nature,” she said. “So I think you want to maintain the momentum but you also have to temper that with some realism - that sometimes things are going to take a little time because you want to take the time get them right.”

Brenna Bezanson, a community liaison officer at PACE Society in Vancouver, an organization that supports the safety and rights of sex workers in the city, said transgender people are overrepresented in marginalized groups.

“Breaking down that marginalization through visibility, through education and cultural competency, will go along way in not only reducing the barriers that trans folks face, but in also changing some of the damaging effects that marginalization has created,” Ms. Bezanson said.

She said she hopes that the report and plan can set a precedent for other cities around the country, maybe even around the world.

Ms. Bezanson, who was consulted as a representative of PACE but also as someone who is transgender and a former sex worker, praised the report’s authors for reaching out to people who understand the issues from a first-hand perspective - something she hopes to see more of in the city.

Originally from Nova Scotia, Ms. Bezanson has lived in Vancouver for the past six years. “I can say that I moved here because I felt safer here. And that’s not to say that Vancouver is perfect, but on a daily basis I see the efforts being made here, whereas I haven’t seen that in other places I’ve lived, at least not in the scale they are happening here.”