



City of
Peterborough

To: Members of the Peterborough Transit Liaison Committee

From: Reem Ali, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisor

Meeting Date: June 22, 2023

Subject: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Report PTLC23-007

Purpose

To provide the Peterborough Transit Liaison Committee with a presentation on how a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (“DEI”) lens can help support Peterborough Transit in fostering an equitable and inclusive community that meets the diverse needs of its evolving demographic.

Background

The Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities (Coalition) is a network that brings municipalities together to improve policies against racism, discrimination, exclusion, and intolerance, to undertake initiatives to eliminate all forms of discrimination, and to build open and inclusive societies.

On November 25, 2019, as per the recommendation outlined in [Report CLSHR19-005](#), City Council unanimously endorsed the Declaration to join the Coalition. On December 9, 2019, Human Rights Day, Mayor Diane Therrien signed the Declaration on behalf of the City of Peterborough making it the 22nd municipality to join the Coalition. Further, on December 14, 2020, as per the recommendation outlined in [Report CSSS20-016](#), City Council approved that staff hire a DEI Officer using funds from the Community Development Program Reserve. The DEI Officer, now the DEI Advisor, was tasked with developing the City’s first DEI Plan, embedding a DEI lens in City operations, and supporting the City in advancing the Coalition’s Ten Common Commitments.

When a municipal council signs the declaration to join the Coalition, it endorses the Coalition’s Ten Common Commitments and agrees to develop a Plan of Action (DEI Plan), which once adopted, becomes integrated into the municipality’s visions, strategies, and policies. The Coalition’s Ten Common Commitments are structured

around three areas of municipal responsibilities that see the municipality: as a guardian that respects public interest; as an organization that upholds human rights; and as a community that promotes diversity. Collectively, the Commitments urge the municipality to drive action against racism and discrimination to build a more inclusive community. This means collaborating with, and empowering Indigenous and racialized communities to help the City work toward: becoming a more inclusive employer, service provider, and contractor; supporting the efforts of community partners, particularly in the policing service, labour market sector, housing, and education sector in challenging and dismantling systemic racism and discrimination; and developing initiatives that promote diversity and create equal opportunities.

For the purposes of this report, definitions of key terms are included at the end.

Applying a DEI Lens

The DEI Advisor is in the process of developing the City's DEI Plan, which will consist of 5 key areas: communications, human resources, training and education, community engagement, and program and policy development. Once the Plan is approved by Council, it will serve to guide staff in applying a DEI lens to their work, which will include the work completed by advisory committees.

In developing the DEI Plan, the Coalition recommends that staff align and link the Plan with existing City plans, policies, priorities, and initiatives including plans that address parks, recreation, transportation, and built environment. Some municipalities opt to also develop/use an equity lens to assess all their programs and services, which intends to support departments in integrating equity and inclusion as a focus into their work. An equity lens invites staff to ask:

- Who is not included in the work you do?
- What could contribute to this exclusion?
- What are you already doing to promote inclusion?
- What can you do differently to ensure inclusion?

Further, an equity lens must be intersectional by considering race, class, gender, and (dis)ability, among other social categories and constructs, as well as the lived and living experiences of the persons who are facing barriers when accessing services. Therefore, special attention must be given to advancing equity and facilitating inclusion and non-discrimination for members of equity-deserving groups and anyone who has been historically marginalized or is at risk of exclusion or discrimination.

Examples of this alignment will be shared in the June 22, 2023, presentation to this Committee. Considerations for the ways in which a DEI lens can be applied to Public Transit will also be shared, including but not limited to the following:

- Assessing the diversity of users and their needs for public transit and the ways in which these intersect, placing some groups at a disadvantage when accessing services in the community.
- Evaluating the access of various groups to public transit and ensuring that it is equitable, fair, accommodating, and serves the needs of community members.
- Supporting inclusive public transit services that are appropriate, safe, and user-friendly and that engage community members, in particular members of equity-deserving groups, in decisions that affect their equal access to services.

Important Definitions

Diversity is the presence of “difference” within a given setting. Differences can arise in our appearances, thoughts, likes and dislikes, values, and identities. Diversity among identities may relate to gender, race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, education, marital status, sexual orientation, ability, and socioeconomic status, to name a few. (Definition taken from A Guide to Employee DEI Surveys by WorkTango).

While ‘equality’ means ‘sameness’, equity means fairness – fair treatment, fair access, fair opportunity and fair advancement for all people. Equity is an approach that ensures everyone is supported in their personal and professional development. Unlike equality, equity does not aim to treat all individuals in the exact same way. Instead, equity recognizes that advantages and barriers exist, and that as a result, different people have different needs. (Definition taken from A Guide to Employee DEI Surveys by WorkTango).

Equity-Deserving Groups: members of a community that face significant collective challenges in participating in society. This marginalization could be created by attitudinal, historic, social, and environmental barriers based on age, ethnicity, disability, economic status, gender, nationality, race, sexual orientation, transgender status, among other elements of diversity. Equity-deserving groups are those that face/identify barriers to equal access, opportunities, and resources due to disadvantage and discrimination and may actively seek social justice. (Definition taken from the City of Peterborough Public Arts Policy).

Inclusion is the act of creating environments in which people feel like they can bring their authentic selves to work. It means everyone feels valued, respected, and appreciated for their unique identities, even when they’re different from others. Inclusion outcomes are met when you, your institution, your policies and programs are truly inviting to all. And extends to the degree in which diverse individuals are able to participate in decision-making processes and development opportunities. (Definition taken from A Guide to Employee DEI Surveys by WorkTango).

Intersectionality, a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, is the way in which social categories such as race, class, gender, age, (dis)ability... etc. overlap to create and exacerbate discrimination and disadvantage. It is not enough to add up the oppressions

and address each one individually. Discrimination isn't limited to a singular axis of oppression. Because many people experience compound discrimination, we must look at what happens at the crossroads – at the *intersection* of these oppressions.

Summary

Applying a DEI lens to public Transit services aligns with the City of Peterborough's responsibilities as a member of the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities. It also links to and supports the implementation of existing City policies, plans, and priorities. The presentation to the Peterborough Transit Liaison Committee will offer recommendations that can support Peterborough Transit in adopting a DEI lens and fostering an equitable and inclusive community that meets the diverse needs of its evolving demographic.

Submitted by,

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