
Subject: Establishment of Diversity Related Advisory Committees

Report to: Corporate Services Committee

Report date: Wednesday, February 17, 2021

Recommendations

1. That the Terms of Reference for the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee, attached as Appendix 1 to Report CLK 1-2021, **BE APPROVED**;
2. That one Regional Councillor **BE APPOINTED** to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee;
3. That staff **BE DIRECTED** to advertise for interested residents to serve on the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee based on the criteria described in Report CLK 1-2021; and
4. That in consultation with the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, staff **BE DIRECTED** to report back to Council on progress and any additional resources required to establish and launch an Anti-Racism Advisory Committee and a 2SLGBTQQIA+ Advisory Committee by September 30, 2021.

Key Facts

- Regional Council passed a motion to join the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities (CIM) on September 19, 2019, and signed a joint declaration to join the CIM along with the 12 Local Area Municipalities on September 18, 2020
- At the Corporate Services Committee meeting held on October 14, 2020, staff were requested to provide a report respecting the creation of a structure of working groups and/or advisory committees to ensure that the communities in Niagara have a part in directing the work related to addressing issues faced by equity-seeking groups
- At its meeting held on December 17, 2020, Regional Council endorsed the establishment of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee and requested establishment of an Anti-Racism Advisory Committee and an 2SLGBTQQIA+ Advisory Committee
- The purpose of this report is to seek approval for a Terms of Reference for the DEI Advisory Committee, and provide membership requirements for consideration for an Anti-Racism Advisory Committee, and a 2SLGBTQQIA+ Advisory Committee

- The DEI Advisory Committee will provide support and guidance for the development of the DEI Action Plan to advance CIM commitments for the Region and 12 Local Area Municipalities
- Phasing the launch of the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee and the 2SLGBTQQIA+ Advisory Committee to occur after the establishment of the DEI Advisory Committee will provide time to establish clear governance, policies, procedures, and coordination between all diversity related Advisory Committees, including the Women's Advisory Committee and the Accessibility Advisory Committee, and to assess resource requirements to support these new committees

Financial Considerations

Costs associated with the creation and maintenance of the Committees include administrative resources and staff time. Additional resources may be required to support the new committees. Staff will report back on financial implications prior to the launch of the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee and the 2SLGBTQQIA+ Advisory Committee.

To remove barriers to participation, policy advice will be sought from the DEI Advisory Committee regarding reimbursement of expenses and/ or per diem support for Committee members with lived experience of marginalization and low income. It is not expected that all Committee members would meet the criteria for reimbursement. Should all members seek reimbursement the projected cost would be \$10,000 for all three Committees.

The estimated budget for the Committees is \$6,000 for 2021, including a provision for Committee member reimbursement. All of these potential costs have been contemplated and can be accommodated within the Council approved 2021 budget for the work associated with joining the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities and will be included in future operating budgets.

Analysis

Background

On September 18, 2020, Niagara Region joined the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities (CIM) and in doing so, has pledged to support the 10 common commitments to build respectful, inclusive, and diverse societies. In order to create a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Action Plan to address these common commitments, Council endorsed

the hiring of a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Program Manager, who began work in late August 2020.

Progress to date has included establishing a corporate DEI Working Group, a corporate DEI Interest Group, a working group of Local Area Municipality representatives, and collaborating with a Diversity Group from Seniors Services. In addition to supporting the creation of the DEI Action Plan, these groups have identified some “quick start” areas to focus on for 2021 and are collaborating to:

- Develop a best practices guide for human resources recruitment, hiring, and promotion
- Compile a list of DEI related training opportunities
- Create opportunities for staff training
- Review current land acknowledgements

A number of training sessions have been launched. Leela MadhavaRau, the Director of Human Rights and Equity at Brock University, facilitated a Diversity & Inclusion Training for Regional Councillors at the end of 2020. An Indigenous Speakers Series for Regional staff will occur in February and March 2021. New leaders in Niagara Region’s Leader’s Edge program will participate in a two-part training called ‘Addressing Bias and Discrimination’, also in February and March 2021.

A Regional staff engagement survey conducted in November 2020, provided the opportunity to establish a baseline of staff demographics regarding race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, and disability. This preliminary data will be used to ensure diverse staff voices are heard in creating the DEI Action Plan, and will guide the measurements of success to be proposed in the DEI Action Plan.

Staff have begun to develop the DEI Action Plan based on the five-step Drivers Model: 1) assess the current state, 2) develop the vision, 3) identify barriers and critical success factors, 4) define goals, objectives, and strategies, and 5) develop a monitoring plan. It is proposed that the diversity related Advisory Committees participate in this process, which will in turn support the development of their work plans for future years.

At its meeting held on December 17, 2020, Regional Council approved a motion to endorse the establishment of a DEI Advisory Committee, and staff were directed to prepare a report respecting a draft Terms of Reference, including membership requirements for a DEI Advisory Committee, an Anti-Racism Advisory Committee, and a

2SLGBTQQIA Advisory Committee for consideration at the Corporate Services Committee being held on February 17, 2021.

Staff recommend that the DEI Advisory Committee be established immediately, and the Anti-Racism and 2SLGBTQQIA+ Advisory Committees have a phased launch date of September 2021 to allow time to establish clear governance, policies, and procedures, and coordination between all diversity related Advisory Committees, including the Women's Advisory Committee and the Accessibility Advisory Committee, and to assess resource requirements to support these new committees.

The Region does not currently have a policy providing for the reimbursement of expenses and compensation for Committee members. Advice will be sought from the DEI Advisory Committee on options to reimburse expenses and/or compensate Committee members, including people with lived experience of marginalization and low income to remove barriers to participation.

It is proposed that members be appointed to the inaugural committees for a period of two (2) years to coincide with the current term of Council. Membership shall be approved by Council in accordance with membership requirements in the Terms of Reference.

Advisory Committee Criteria and Size

Staff researched Diversity, Anti-Racism, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ Advisory Committees that have been established in other Canadian cities, including Hamilton, Vancouver, Windsor, St. Catharines, Peel, and London, and consulted with the Niagara Regional DEI Working Group, to develop the content of the Terms of Reference, the membership criteria, and committee size.

Staff recommend that the DEI Advisory Committee be established with a maximum of eleven (11) members, and the 2SLGBTQQIA+ and Anti-Racism Advisory Committees have between seven (7) and nine (9) members, each including one (1) member of Regional Council. The aim is for each committee to have sufficient diversity and representation while maintaining efficiency. One (1) designated staff member shall serve as staff liaison for each Committee. Other staff may be requested to join meetings or support the work of this committee as the need arises.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee Mandate and Goal

Staff recommend that the mandate of the DEI Advisory Committee is to provide support to staff in the drafting and implementation of a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan and provide recommendations, advice, and information to Regional Council and Regional Staff on matters pertaining to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The recommended goal of the DEI Committee is to address bias and discrimination and its negative impacts on quality of life, safety, health, and inclusion for the diverse communities in Niagara, providing a safe place for all people to voice their opinions in order to work together to promote and foster understanding and inclusion in Niagara.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee Membership

The community members recommended for appointment to the DEI Advisory Committee should represent the diversity of the Region and broad cross-section of residents, including geographical and gender balance. An intersectional approach should be taken to ensure representation by community members with lived experience or service in agencies related to one or more of the following areas:

- Ethnocultural and linguistic diversity
- Francophone
- New immigrants
- Indigenous communities
- 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals
- Individuals with disabilities, including mental health disabilities
- Seniors/older adults
- Individuals living with low income or experiencing homelessness
- Post-secondary students/youth
- Faith-based diversity

It is proposed that four (4) of the ten (10) resident members recommended for appointment to the Committee shall be members of the following other Advisory committees at Niagara Region. There shall be one member each from the Accessibility Advisory Committee, and Women's Advisory Committee. Once the Anti-Racism Committee and the 2SLGBTQQIA+ Committee are established, one representative from each committee would also join the DEI Advisory Committee.

2SLGBTQQIA+ Advisory Committee Membership

The community members recommended for appointment to the 2SLGBTQQIA+ Advisory Committee should come from diverse backgrounds. An intersectional approach should be taken to ensure representation by community members with:

- A history of working to advance equity for the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community
- Experience in considering broader and structural interests of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community
- Representing vulnerable individuals who have experienced the impacts of discrimination on the basis of sex, gender, and/or sexual orientation

It is proposed that the majority of individuals on the 2SLGBTQQIA+ Advisory Committee should be individuals who identify as part of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community. It is proposed that one (1) member of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ Advisory Committee, preferably the Chair or Vice Chair of the Committee, will also be a member of the DEI Advisory Committee. This member shall serve as a liaison between the diversity-related committees and facilitate interactions between them as required.

Anti-Racism Advisory Committee Membership

The community members recommended for appointment to the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee should come from diverse backgrounds. An intersectional approach should be taken to ensure representation by community members with:

- A history of working to advance equity for the Black and/or Indigenous community
- Experience in considering broader and structural interests of the Black and Indigenous community
- Representing vulnerable individuals who have experienced the impacts of racism and discrimination

The majority of individuals on the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee should be individuals who identify as Black, Indigenous, or People of Colour (BIPOC).

It is proposed that one (1) member of the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee, preferably the Chair or Vice Chair of the Committee, will also be a member of the DEI Advisory Committee. This member shall serve as a liaison between the diversity-related committees and facilitate interactions between the committees as required.

Considerations

An alternative option to the above recommendation is to establish all three Advisory Committees at the same time. Staff do not recommend this option based on the following considerations:

- A significant interest is expected for committee members for these three committees. Recruitment of the Women's Advisory Committee resulted in 60 applications. Phasing the start of two committees will allow staff sufficient time to properly review each submission to recommend the most suitable committee members.
- Additional time is required to establish clear governance, policies and procedures, and coordination between all diversity related Advisory Committees.
- At the moment, there is one contract staff and one temporary Intern assigned to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion portfolio, who are also supporting the Women's Advisory Committee, an internal staff working group, a Local Area Municipalities working group, and the development of the DEI Action Plan. Two staff in the clerks department currently support the agenda development and minutes for 14 committees, in addition to their other areas of responsibility.
 - To ensure the committees are supported and can function efficiently, establishing these new committees will require additional staff to provide the research, information, professional expertise, and collaboration required to support the committees. Further time is required to quantify these resource requirements.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

The creation of the diversity-related advisory committees supports Regional Council's Strategic Priorities by **Supporting Business and Economic Growth**, as research indicates that culturally diverse regions are more innovative and economically prosperous. The recommendations, advice, and information provided by these committees will strengthen the Region's ability to create a safe and inclusive community for the increasingly diverse populations living in Niagara, which promotes a **Healthy and Vibrant Community**. The diversity-related advisory committees will help foster a more **Sustainable and Engaging Government** by enhancing Council's ability to provide innovative, and inclusive customer-focused services through reaching and maximizing the assets of Niagara's diverse community members.

Other Pertinent Reports

- [CAO 23-2020](#) – Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee Recommendations
- [CAO 14-2019](#) - Actions & Resources to Join the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities
- [COM 14-2019](#) - Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination (CCMARD)

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee Terms of Reference