

Town of Whitby

Staff Report

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Report Title: The IDEA Project, Journey to Inclusivity Status Update

Report to: Committee of the Whole

Date of meeting: June 12, 2023

Report Number: CAO-15-23

Department(s) Responsible:

Organizational Effectiveness
Community Services Department

Submitted by:

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Community Services

Acknowledged by M. Gaskell, Chief Administrative Officer

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Recommendation:

1. That Council receive Report CAO-15-23 The IDEA Project, Journey to Inclusivity Status Update for information.

Highlights:

- The Town embarked on the IDEA Project as an opportunity to understand the current state of diversity and inclusion at the Town of Whitby, both as an employer and a public service organization.
- The IDEA Project, Journey to Inclusivity, Final Report recommended a report back to Council within 9 months of hiring the first dedicated IDEA staff resource.
- This report provides a status update on the implementation of the recommendations outlined in The IDEA Project, Journey to Inclusivity, Final Report.
- The Corporate IDEA Specialist started with the Town in October 2022. This status update focuses on the work undertaken internally to respond to the recommendations in the IDEA Report.

Background:

- *CAO-01-22 The IDEA Project, Whitby's Journey to Inclusivity, Final Report* was presented to Council in January 2022 and recommended forty-one (41) actions, across five (5) priority categories, to be implemented over a five-year period.
- *The IDEA Project, Whitby's Journey to Inclusivity, Final Report* also recommended two (2) new dedicated staff resources to lead and support the recommended IDEA actions.
- Included in the 2022 budget was the creation of a Corporate IDEA Specialist. The intent of this role is to provide support to the Town as employer as it creates structural change across the full range of services as identified in the action items. This may include training, mentoring, research on best practices, and guidance on matters related to IDEA.
- The Corporate IDEA Specialist started with the Town in October 2022.
- *CAO-01-22 The IDEA Project, Journey to Inclusivity, Final Report* recommended a report back to Council within 9 months of hiring the first dedicated IDEA staff resource.

Discussion:

Report CAO-01-22 The IDEA Report, Journey to Inclusivity, Final Report included a recommendation to establish two (2) staff resources that would steward and lead the work required to respond to the forty-one (41) recommendations in the report as well as advance and support all IDEA efforts at the Town.

Approved by Council in the 2022 budget was the creation of a Corporate IDEA Specialist. The intent of this role is to provide support to the employer as it creates structural change across the full range of services as identified by the recommendations. This may include training, mentoring, research on best practices, and guidance on matters related to IDEA.

Attached is Appendix A: Status Update on the IDEA Project, Journey to Inclusivity Recommendations detailing the status of each action item. In summary, of the forty-one (41) recommendations in the IDEA Report, eleven (11) are internally focused and designated to be led by the Corporate IDEA Specialist, nineteen (19) are externally focused, ten (10) are shared, that is, require the support and leadership of both an internally and externally focused specialist, and one (1) is not applicable.

Status on the internally facing recommendations from the IDEA Project, Journey to Inclusivity is on-going and is supported by staff across the organization. Work completed to date includes, but is not limited to:

- Adopting the AMO Resolution recognizing September 30 as National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Council did not adopt the recommended AMO

resolution, however, did recognize September 30 as National Day for Truth and Reconciliation in 2022 and 2023. **Recommendation J2I:4.**

- The development and release of a corporate policy that encourages the use of an Indigenous land acknowledgement. Policy 400-072 Land Acknowledgement was released in April 2023. **Recommendation J2I:6.**
- Creating the permanent ability to choose virtual or in-person delegations to Council and Committee meetings. This option was approved at a Regular Council Meeting on November 29, 2021 (Resolution #313-21). **Recommendation J2I:9.**
- Establishing a government to nation relationship with First Nations who have traditional and legal rights pertaining to shared territory using United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations and identify specific actions for reconciliation. An initial list of contacts was developed as part of the IDEA project. Since then, corporate lists have been maintained by Strategic Initiatives and Community Services. Recent requests for consultation include naming of the mid-block arterial road, Whitby sports complex public art, and federal grant applications submitted by Strategic Initiatives. **Recommendation J2I:10.**
- Ensure consequences for conduct not supportive of IDEA are clearly defined and enforced through the Respect in the Workplace Policy, including increased opportunities for transparency of the complaint and investigation process while protecting the confidentiality of the parties. Policy 400-060 Respect in the Workplace provides definitions of harassment, bullying, discrimination, and violence in the workplace, and highlights the investigation process. **Recommendation J2I:14.**
- Ongoing review of technology business application requirements that ensure IDEA principles are incorporated in choices and development of technology, including the ability to accommodate names, genders, etc. A recent example of ensuring application requirements for new technology included functionality for gender expression, pronouns, and preferred names, which was deemed as a must have, for the Enterprise Resources Planning (ERP). **Recommendation J2I:37.**

In addition to advancing the recommendations outlined in the IDEA Report, Journey to Inclusivity, the Corporate IDEA Specialist also has and will continue to:

- Partner with Communications and Creative Services to reinforce the value of IDEA through media campaigns on appropriate channels.
- Developed a policy review tool to support the development of new policies through an inclusion lens.
- Developed a cultural calendar and worked with Communications and Creative Services to recognize and showcase significant days both internally (the Wire, Messages without Barriers) and externally to potential applicants/candidates (LinkedIn, Town website).

- Provide support and expert advice to Employee Resource Groups (ERGS) both existing and new. Currently the Town supports four (4) ERGS: WOW (Women of Whitby), GLOW (Gays, Lesbians of Whitby), TOWN (Transitions of Whitby Now), and NewBees (recently hired employees).
- Provide support and expert advice to the Staff Led Diversity and Inclusion Taskforce. There are approximately seventeen (17) staff from across the organization participating in this taskforce. They are committed to advancing IDEA at the Town.
- Participate on the Corporate Policy Review Committee.
- Annual planning, administration, and actioning of the Corporate Diversity and Inclusion training plan. This includes the research and update of existing IDEA eLearning modules on the Town's Learning Management System (LMS).
- Provide expert advice to various stakeholders regarding IDEA as it pertains to staff programs.

Included in the 2023 budget for consideration was the Community IDEA Specialist. The intent of this role is to help the Town of Whitby build relationships and trust with diverse communities that will support continuous improvement of services and achieve the benefits from having a successful and thriving welcoming community. This resource would bring significant experience in community development with diverse communities, and inclusivity, diversity, equity, and anti-racism work in large, complex organizations, preferably municipal government. At the Special Council meeting to approve the annual budget on February 16, 2023, Council approved a motion to remove the Community IDEA Specialist and defer or suspend the work associated with this position. Consequently, at this time, there is limited progress to report on externally facing recommendations made in the IDEA Report, Journey to Inclusivity.

Financial Considerations:

Not applicable

Communication and Public Engagement:

Not applicable

Input from Departments/Sources:

Not applicable

Strategic Priorities:

Advancing IDEA at the Town of Whitby directly responds to the Corporate Strategic Plan's Objectives of People (We will foster an inclusive environment where employees can experience job satisfaction and rewarding careers), Organization (We will be a high performing, innovative, effective, and efficient organization), and Customer (We will provide a consistent, optimized, and positive customer service experience).

Attachments:

