

Information Report



Service Area	Office of the Chief Administrative Officer
Date	Friday, June 25, 2021
Subject	City of Guelph Update on Anti-Racism, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives

Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

This information report serves as the third in a series of updates for Council about how our organization is taking action against systemic racism to ensure inclusivity and equity for everyone in Guelph.

This report builds on the Information Reports from [July 24, 2020](#) and [November 27, 2020](#), the City of Guelph commitment to the [Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities](#), and the Council Workshops of [November 16, 2020](#) and [April 19, 2021](#).

We know that this is a long-term commitment and one that must be made in solidarity and collaboration with community organizations and individuals most affected by systemic racism. The City of Guelph continues to work collaboratively with internal and external partners and stakeholders to address the three previously identified areas of work: 1. Supporting community-driven systemic action through the Community Plan. 2. Creating and maintaining an inclusive workplace through the launch of the Employee Diversity and Inclusion Plan. 3. Acting on Strategic Plan opportunities to embed anti-racism and inclusion practices and principles into our services, service delivery, policies and decision-making processes.

Key Findings

Incidents of racism, past and present, continue to spark calls for change in our community, our country and around the world. At the same time, there is an increased awareness about systemic inequality and an increased desire to create equity of opportunity, safety and inclusion for all.

Through the Community Plan, Employee Diversity and Inclusion Plan and the Strategic Plan, the City is taking action against systemic racism to ensure inclusivity and equity for everyone in Guelph. This work is only possible in collaboration with those most affected and this dialogue must be sustained and open and result in concrete action and change. Given the importance and the community and corporate-wide nature of this work, the CAO's Office is providing centralized leadership and oversight.

Financial Implications

The initiatives highlighted in this report are being undertaken using existing budget. Additional initiatives will come forward for consideration as part of the normal budgeting process.

Report

Details

1. Supporting community-driven systemic action through the Community Plan.

Over the past year, we've been working with community partners and equity-seeking groups in Guelph to [better understand the impacts of systemic racism](#) and find ways to remove barriers to inclusion for people who have historically been marginalized. Using Guelph's Community Plan as a foundation, our ultimate goal is to [set the community standard for the elimination of systemic racism](#).

Community conversations

Through a respectful and thoughtful approach focused on developing relationships first, the City of Guelph has supported several community-led conversations discussing issues of race and discrimination with more in development.

Multiple conversations have taken place and relationships have been built through the initial phase of the work to revise the Community Plan to address systemic racism in our community. Through that relationship-building effort, partnerships have progressed towards community-led conversations with the City playing a supporting role.

a) Guelph Black Heritage Society – #ChangeStartsNow Anti-Racism Summit

The City partnered with the Guelph Black Heritage Society (GBHS) in order to facilitate a Black Community Town Hall as part of the GBHS #ChangeStartsNow Anti-Racism Summit. Session planning was conducted by members of GBHS and Black Lives Matter Guelph with informal representation from Guelph Neighbourhood Support Coalition.

The organizers created a safe space for open dialogue about living and working in Guelph with outreach conducted to and in response from a cross-section of the Black community. Information was shared as to daily experiences and aspirations for true belonging and visibility within the City and community's plans.

There was appreciation for the City of Guelph in supporting this work and the goal that has been established (to set the community standard for the elimination of systemic racism). There was resounding consensus that the session was time well spent, there was deep appreciation for the opportunity to be heard, and that participants would gladly continue engaging on this topic.

In addition to the Black Community Town Hall, there were a number of speakers and learning opportunities as part of the #ChangeStartsNow summit, open to the entire community of Guelph.

b) Guelph-Wellington Local Immigration Partnership (GWLIP)

The GWLIP has been a strong partner in the anti-systemic racism work and have hosted two immigration-focused community conversations to date.

The Community Plan and GWLIP teams have co-facilitated three employee conversations to date. Each conversation had a different focus: immigration, allyship, and the BIPOC community.

Those conversations have been productive. The City will continue to find ways to engage with employees on these important topics, in particular how we can create opportunities for BIPOC-identifying employees to have their voices heard.

c) Future Conversations

Work is underway to support the Muslim Society of Guelph to host an anti-systemic racism community conversation, and outreach continues to a number of other diverse communities to discuss how best to engage on this topic.

d) Next Steps: Sense making

Identifying themes and possible strategies and actions from the results of the community conversations will be community-led in keeping with the overall approach to this work. Those themes and strategies will inform the development of Guelph's action plan to set the community standard for the elimination of systemic racism as part of Guelph's commitment to the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities.

Local data on race and discrimination

In early March, the GWLIP, with support from the Community Plan team, launched a survey to examine the lived experiences of discrimination in Guelph and Wellington. GWLIP developed the survey in collaboration with various Local Immigration Partnerships throughout Ontario and the City of Guelph, with contributions from multiple community partners and organizations.

As of the time of the deadline for this Council report the final analysis of the data is in the process of being analyzed. A report will be released locally with opportunities for deeper learning about what the data tells us and how it can be used to inform the development of the action plan to eliminate systemic racism.

Opportunities for learning led by GWLIP include:

- Small group meetings with City Councillors to present details and address questions
- Presentation of data to equity-seeking groups and community organizations
- Webinar-style event to present data to community groups and service providers
- Presentation of data to City employees

The results of the survey will be beneficial, but it's important for the community to understand that it is only one survey and it has limitations. The survey results can act as a baseline from which we can track trends and progress.

Collaborative Indigenous engagement

The Community Plan team is working collaboratively with Intergovernmental Relations and departments across the organization to improve our understanding of

Indigenous history, treaties, and how better to engage with multiple Indigenous communities respectfully and concurrently.

a) Council workshops

Both Council learning workshops presented by the Community Plan team have included Indigenous voices in order to continue our learning and understanding as a corporation and a community.

b) City and community learning sessions

City employees have been taking steps to improve our understanding of various Indigenous communities which includes the difference between equity-seeking and inherent rights asserting.

Nancy Rowe, a Mississauga, Ojibwe of the Anishinaabek Nation located at New Credit First Nation, Ontario, is an acknowledged elder for this territory, an educator, consultant and a Traditional Practitioner of Anishinaabek lifeways, views and customary practices, who co-facilitated the first Council workshop, has provided two (2) in-depth history and learning opportunities. One was specific for City staff and the second was open to community plan stakeholder organizations.

Coordinating equity and inclusion initiatives

The Community Plan team is working with multiple stakeholder groups to identify initiatives to address inequity and systemic racism. It is imperative that the community have roles in each of the initiatives and that efforts build on each other.

Initiatives identified include:

- City of Guelph engagement projects on multiple topics—City staff are working collaboratively to broaden outreach efforts to include more equity-seeking groups. The Community Plan team is reaching out to community members and organizations to share further opportunities to engage on important City projects and decisions.
- Community Resilience Summit-- Grounded in the Community Plan, the Community Resilience Summit is a gathering of community leaders to encourage a whole community approach to addressing Guelph's most pressing issues. The Summit is being led by Toward Common Ground and its member organizations. The initial focus of the Summit will be to apply a whole community approach to decreasing adverse childhood events and strengthening neighbourhoods and community connections. Equity and anti-systemic racism will be currents that run through the Summit as well as being directly addressed as a culmination of Community Plan anti-systemic racism initiatives.
- Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan—Provincial legislation requires municipalities to create a Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan. Equity and anti-systemic racism are considerations that must be central to Guelph's response to fulfilling the Province's requirements.

Next steps

Community members and partner organizations are steadfast in their commitment to making real and lasting change in our community in the march towards eliminating systemic racism in Guelph.

Next steps include more community-led conversations and engagement as well as opportunities to communicate with Council.

- June: Partner engagement session to map what work already exists or is being planned to eliminate systemic racism in Guelph
- July: Small group Council sessions to provide in-depth presentation of GWLIP survey results as well as further updates on Community Plan progress
- June to October: Further community conversations and engagement, sense making of data, and draft edits to update the community plan
- May to October: Development of an evaluation framework for the Community Plan
- Q4: Presentation about Community Plan progress to Governance Committee of the Whole

2. Creating and maintaining an inclusive workplace through the launch of the Employee Diversity and Inclusion Plan.

The Employee Diversity and Inclusion Plan has a vision of the City of Guelph as a workplace where people feel welcome, valued and engaged in their service to our teams and community. The Plan was developed in 2018, using a consultation with our employees and leaders and using existing employee experience data and best practices in workplace diversity and inclusion. The Plan has three focus areas:

1. Commit to an inclusive culture
2. Flexible mindsets and work practices
3. Networks and partnerships

Commit to an inclusive culture

The Welcome Workplace team was formed with twenty-six employees from across the City including Executive Sponsor, DCAO Trevor Lee. The team has completed two team training sessions and formed a subcommittee to plan/support inclusive employee celebrations including the following:

- March 21 – International Day for the Elimination of Racism
- May 3 – Mental Health Week
- May 31- June 6 - National AccessAbility Week
- June 1 – Pride Month
- June 21 – National Indigenous People's Day
- September 30 – Orange Shirt Day/Truth and Reconciliation Day
- October – Healthy Workplace Month
- December 3 – International Day for People with Disabilities

The Welcome Workplace will begin work to develop Religious Inclusion Guidelines later this year.

The City conducted a pulse check employee engagement survey in Q1 of 2021. The pulse survey included 30 questions measuring employee engagement, drivers of

engagement and COVID-19 questions. The survey provides an opportunity for employees to self-report demographics such as years of service, employee group, position, gender, visible minority, and indigenous persons. The participation rate was 68 per cent, slightly lower than the 72 per cent for the 2019 survey. Overall employee engagement increased by almost 18 per cent to 59.4 per cent fully engaged. Engagement improved across all demographic groups. It does appear that fewer employees opted to self-report their demographic information on this pulse survey and Human Resources will explore this further before the next survey. Action planning is underway at the departmental level. The Welcome Workplace team will review the survey data, including the demographics, and provide input into the corporate action planning process.

Flexible mindsets and work practices

Training and development opportunities for all employees have continued through 2021. The Executive Team completed Unconscious Bias training and the Intercultural Development Inventory assessment. The Corporate Management Team attended a "Building Inclusive Teams" workshop facilitated by the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) in early June. Allyship training for employees was well attended with 54 participants and 7 employees attended a full day Unconference through the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI) on the topic of "Unpacking Cultural Competence". Continued learning opportunities will be provided for all levels of employees through 2021.

Networks and partnerships

The Employee Diversity and Inclusion Plan implementation fosters and develops partnerships with our community to support the City of Guelph with understanding, as well as attracting and developing the next generation of municipal employees. Human Resources continues to promote the value of experiential learning opportunities, internship programs for immigrants, mentorships with Lutherwood and youth focused coop programs to their clients as they support them with forecasting their future talent needs. In 2021, the city has hosted an intern in the Finance department and coop placements in the Information Technology, Environmental Services, Planning and Building Services and Engineering and Transportation Services departments.

3. Acting on Strategic Plan opportunities to embed anti-racism and inclusion practices and principles into our services, service delivery, policies and decision-making

City staff from all corners of the corporation have refocused efforts to consider our services, service-delivery, policies and decision-making. We're learning from others and listening to our citizens and customers to identify and implement changes where there are opportunities to be more equitable. This section of the report highlights some of the efforts underway.

a) Museums and Culture initiatives

Museums and Culture continues to work collaboratively with the community to better understand perspectives of those who have been under-represented, to confront the enduring impact of colonialism, and to support equity, inclusion, and reconciliation as we move forward.

Rapid Response Collecting – The Museum continues to work with Guelph Black Heritage Society to collect, preserve and share the stories, images and objects that document the 2020 Guelph march in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement. This type of collecting will help us to preserve truths about how we are living in this moment. The Museum and Guelph Black Heritage Society are expanding their collaboration to address a gap in the Museum collection representing local Black history.

National Celebration of First Nations, Inuit, Métis People – The City provided event support and virtual space to local Indigenous leaders for their presentation of a local digital event to commemorate the National Day of Celebration of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis People.

John Galt and the Instant City – In partnership with MF2 Musicals, local Indigenous leaders and John Galt scholars, the Museum presented a digital version of John Galt and the Instant City. This musical theatre show revisits the founding story of Guelph and considers the impact of colonization on the people who lived on this land for thousands of years before Galt’s arrival. The show video-streamed from April 23, the anniversary of Guelph’s founding, to May 2, the birthdate of John Galt. It continues to be available for school groups.

Museum education program - The Museum has embarked on an overhaul of its educational programming, with a goal to decentre narratives and incorporate material that supports equity and anti-racism.

b) Equity as a consideration in budgeting and program reviews

The acknowledgment and recognition that systemic racism exists within City policies and practices, and leads to inequitable service delivery outcomes, has created an important opportunity for reflection and understanding across departments. With awareness and understanding, policy and process conversations to make change can begin.

One example is the City’s Budget process, currently focused on net levy increases as the primary decision point can lead to inequitable decisions. The cost of new infrastructure (such as sidewalks and transit routes) is prioritized above equity outcomes such as supporting those in our community that rely on these services for employment and accessible transportation. City service decisions need performance metrics to validate investment value beyond the resulting fiscal impact. Through the Service Rationalization Review, we have asked KPMG to consider how an equity lens can be applied to program reviews for consideration as part of future decision making.

c) Lessons learned from Guelph-Wellington Urban Agriculture Challenge

The recent Guelph-Wellington Urban Agriculture Challenge provided the City with some critical program design and implementation lessons learned. The aim for the challenge was to ensure that diverse audiences knew about and had the confidence to submit an application as part of the challenge program. Through careful and thoughtful communications, the program attempted to lift systemic barriers by using plain language in our program guide and application. Materials were also translated into a number of languages. Lastly, a diverse jury from the community was assembled to carry out our assessment process. Despite a very intentional approach, we learned that our review process did not elevate the ideas submitted

that were aimed at supporting the BIPOC community. This outcome challenged the team to rethink intrinsic biases in our scoring process, as addressing systemic racism is critical to advancing equity in our food system. To further demonstrate support this commitment, additional funding was found to support two projects addressing BIPOC food sovereignty. These two \$2,000 grants were offered as part of the new "Leveling the Ground" fund and partners 10C and Our Food Future will spend additional time with each of these projects to learn and share more lessons from these projects.

d) Improving inclusivity on Guelph's Boards and Committees

In the [November 27, 2020 Information Report](#), the City Clerk's Office, as part of their interest in improving equity, diversity and inclusion, committed to further information gathering regarding the experience of existing and newly appointed committee members, specifically related to their level of engagement, the perception of how their work contributes to City Council's decision-making and whether any barriers to participation exist after being appointed. To facilitate the work of improving committees' inclusivity, the City Clerk's Office has partnered with the Guelph Lab (A partnership between the City of Guelph and the University of Guelph's Community Engaged Scholarship Institute) on a research project to identify ways that the City's boards and committees can be more inclusive and equitable for community members. This work is currently in the scoping phase of the project, which has involved engaging with potential project partners, identifying key themes and questions to be explored and identifying areas for potential improvement and innovation. As part of this phase, the Guelph Lab has been conducting key informant scoping interviews with City staff, committee members and community organizations, systematic review of relevant documentation including terms of reference, advisory committee governance policies and guiding legislation, and a scan of relevant literature.

Following the scoping phase, the Guelph Lab will deliver a project brief to identify next steps and create a work plan to implement the project. It is anticipated that a report back to City Council with findings and recommendations from the project will be made in Q4 2021.

In addition to the work underway with the Guelph Lab, and pending Council's approval of a revised Public Appointment Policy at the July Committee of the Whole meeting, the City Clerk's Office will begin to collect, on a voluntary basis, information relating to race, gender and disability on committee applications. Consistent with a committee's terms of reference and applicant skills, staff liaisons will give priority to applicants from equity seeking groups. Data collected from applications will be reported in the Fall 2021 recruitment report.

e) Showcasing diversity via Guelph Shops

Guelph Shops has been using a variety of our promotional opportunities to ensure we are being as inclusive as possible in our promotions of local business. This includes enhanced efforts to highlight businesses owned by members of the BIPOC community, LGBTQ2 community, Women entrepreneurs, and other diverse owned/run businesses within our city.

Examples include a [recent blog post](#) about predominantly women identified owned/run businesses in the newly formed Woolwich Village district, and another [blog post](#) about the diverse range of authentic cultural food our city has to offer.

A Guelph Shops video campaign is planned to launch later this summer to showcase and support Guelph businesses.

f) Strengthening Indigenous Relations

To further the City's work towards reconciliation, Intergovernmental Services staff has worked cross departmentally to advance relationship-building with First Nation and Indigenous government counterparts. This includes proactive engagement with treaty partners, including representatives from the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and Six Nations of the Grand River. Intergovernmental Services has also connected with key representatives from the Grand River Métis Council, which is the local Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario. These connections have resulted in early progress towards the City's engagement with Indigenous partners on City-led projects that may affect inherent Aboriginal and Treaty rights, as well as opportunities for education for City staff on treaty partner and local Indigenous history.

Intergovernmental Services staff are also working with Legal Services and with Infrastructure, Development and Enterprise Services to update the City's policies on formal engagement with Indigenous governments and to develop tools, resources and an internal protocol for formal engagement on City-led projects. This Indigenous relations work is in the preliminary stages and compliments initiatives currently underway through the Community Plan approach that are aimed at better engaging Guelph's local Indigenous community in the City's projects and decision-making. Strengthening the City's relations with Indigenous counterparts as well as local Indigenous community members is necessary to ensure a holistic approach to engagement and to advance reconciliation in Guelph.

g) Resourcing challenges

In March 2021, the CAO's office posted a 1-year contract role for a Senior Advisor, Equity, Anti-racism and Indigenous initiatives. The successful candidate is to bring an experience-based understanding of equity, inclusion and systemic racism to influence, and inform policy development, project planning, service delivery and program evaluation activities. Duties for this role include leading the City's participation in the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities, including the creation of an action plan which includes strategies, measurable actions and plans for monitoring progress in the effort to eliminate systemic racism and increase equity for all citizens.

Recruitment for this role is ongoing. The competitive job market for similar full-time, permanent roles, and an increased demand for consultant type work in this field, are creating a competitive environment impacting recruitment.

In recognition of the importance of this role for the corporation, Council will receive a request for a permanent FTE for consideration as part of the 2022 budget.

Financial Implications

The initiatives highlighted in this report are being undertaken using existing budget. Additional initiatives will come forward for consideration as part of the normal budgeting process.

Consultations

This report has been developed in consultation with the CAO's Office, Corporate Services, Infrastructure, Development and Enterprise Services, and Public Services.

Strategic Plan Alignment

The work identified in this report directly aligns to the Strategic Plan. Through the Working Together for our Future priority, this work will improve our ability to attract and develop accountable employees who work collaboratively and creatively to deliver services, as well as improve how the City communicates with residents and delivers services. In addition, this work aligns newly updated Building our Future priority to continue to build equitable, strong, vibrant, safe and healthy communities that foster resilience in the people who live here.

Attachments

None

Departmental Approval

None

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