Town of Aurora
Anti-Black Racism and Anti-Racism Task Force
Meeting Agenda

Date: November 17, 2021
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Location: Video Conference

Pages

1. Procedural Notes

This meeting will be held electronically as per Section 19. i) of the Town's Procedure By-law No. 6228-19, as amended, due to the COVID-19 situation, and will be live streamed on the Town's YouTube Channel.

2. Approval of the Agenda

3. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest and General Nature Thereof

4. Receipt of the Minutes

4.1. Anti-Black Racism and Anti-Racism Task Force Meeting Minutes of October 20, 2021 — 1

That the Anti-Black Racism and Anti-Racism Task Force meeting minutes of October 20, 2021, be received for information.

5. Delegations

Note: Anyone wishing to provide comment on an agenda item is encouraged to visit www.aurora.ca/participation for guidelines on electronic delegation.

6. Matters for Consideration

6.1. Memorandum from Manager, Human Resources; Re: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Strategic Action Plan 2021-2024 — 4

1. That the memorandum regarding The Town's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Action Plan 2021-2024 be received; and
2. That the Anti-Black Racism and Anti-Racism Task Force comments regarding the Town's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Action Plan 2021-2024 be received and referred to staff for consideration and further action as appropriate.

7. Informational Items

8. Adjournment

Town of Aurora
Anti-Black Racism and Anti-Racism Task Force
Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, October 20, 2021
Time: 7 p.m.
Location: Video Conference

Committee Members: Mark Lewis (Chair)
Noor El-Dassouki (Vice Chair)
Mae Khamissa
Councillor Harold Kim

Members Absent: Keenan Hull

Other Attendees: Techa Van Leeuwen, Director of Corporate Services
Robin McDougall, Director of Community Services
Phil Rose, Manager, Aurora Town Square
Alicia Cherayil, Collections and Exhibitions Coordinator
Michael de Rond, Town Clerk

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1. Procedural Notes

This meeting was held electronically as per Section 19. i) of the Town's Procedure By-law No. 6228-19, as amended, due to the COVID-19 situation.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

2. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Mae Khamissa
Seconded by Noor El-Dassouki

That the agenda, as circulated by Legislative Services, be approved.

Carried

3. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest and General Nature Thereof

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest under the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.50*.

4. Receipt of the Minutes

4.1 Anti-Black Racism and Anti-Racism Task Force Meeting Minutes of June 16, 2021

Moved by Noor El-Dassouki
Seconded by Mae Khamissa

That the Anti-Black Racism and Anti-Racism Task Force meeting minutes of June 16, 2021, be received for information.

Carried

5. Delegations

None.

6. Matters for Consideration

6.1 Memorandum from Manager, Aurora Town Square; Re: Black History Month – Planning February 2022

Phil Rose, Manager of Aurora Town Square, provided a brief overview of the memo. There was no further discussion.

Moved by Mae Khamissa
Seconded by Noor El-Dassouki

1. That the memorandum regarding Black History Month – Planning February 2022 be received; and
2. That the Anti-Black Racism and Anti-Racism Task Force comments regarding Black History Month – Planning February 2022 be received and referred to staff for consideration and further action as appropriate.

Carried

7. Informational Items

None.

8. Adjournment

Moved by Noor El-Dassouki
Seconded by Mae Khamissa

That the meeting be adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Carried

100 John West Way
Aurora, Ontario
L4G 6J1
(905) 727-3123
aurora.ca

Town of Aurora

Memorandum

Corporate Services Department

Re: **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Strategic Action Plan 2021-2024**

To: Anti-Black Racism and Anti-Racism Task Force

From: Demetre Rigakos, Manager, Human Resources

Date: November 17, 2021

Recommendation

1. **That the memorandum regarding The Town's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Action Plan 2021-2024 be received; and**

2. **That the Anti-Black Racism and Anti-Racism Task Force comments regarding the Town's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Action Plan 2021-2024 be received and referred to staff for consideration and further action as appropriate.**

Background

Under the direction of the Town's Council staff retained LifeWorks to facilitate the development of a multi-year workplace DEI Strategic Action Plan. Dr. Nafeesa Jalal was the lead consultant on this engagement and met with a number of stakeholders including the, then, Chair of this task force. Dr. Jalal's assessment of the input of key stakeholders along with the research findings, conducted by her team, resulted in eight key areas of focus for the Town. They are:

1. Commitment from the Top
2. DEI Recruitment
3. Employee Retention
4. Training and Development
5. Marketing and Advertising
6. Partnerships
7. Data Collection and;
8. Accountability

Each area of focus has a number of specific objectives that will be prioritized by staff to achieve the main goal or key focus area. The complete action plan as presented recently to Council and is attached for your review and comments.

In addition, Dr. Jalal will be presenting to the task force an overview of her approach and summary of her findings.

Staff have began the implementation of the DEI Strategic Action plan and are open to input and comments from the task force that will enhance our efforts to implement the plan effectively.

Attachments

DEI Strategic Action Plan 2021-2024

DIVERSITY EQUITY & INCLUSION

2021–24 Strategic Action Plan

COMMITMENT FROM THE TOP

DEI RECRUITMENT

EMPLOYEE RETENTION

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

MARKETING AND ADVERTISING

PARTNERSHIPS

DATA COLLECTION

ACCOUNTABILITY

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A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER



As the Town of Aurora CAO, my goal is to build and maintain a workforce that is talented, diverse, and committed to fostering a safe, fair, and inclusive workplace and municipal administration. We have made progress in these areas over the past two-and-a-half years, but I know we can do more. My vision is built on a recognition of our current progress and a clear grasp of what could be.

To execute on this vision, we took a comprehensive look at how to (i) ensure that our decision-making reflects and respects the diversity in the community we serve, (ii) support diversity in the programs and services we offer our citizens, and (iii) build a culture that enhances, values, and capitalizes on the diversity in our workforce. We reached one conclusion: we must and can do more.

This *Strategic Action Plan* is a key step in that process. It is organized around eight strategic goals — commitment from the top, DEI recruitment, employee retention, training and development, marketing and communications, strategic DEI focused partnerships, data collection and accountability. Our high-level goals are augmented by actionable steps that provide a clear map forward for the municipality. Internally, the plan further integrates diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) into our hiring, training, and career development programs. It calls on leaders at all levels of the organization to develop operational plans reflective of their current DEI performance and business realities and will hold them accountable for advancing their plans and achieving results.

To be successful, our DEI efforts must be led and managed as an organizational priority. This plan will guide our work over the next few years, help us measure our progress, and hold us accountable.

I hope many of you will recognize that this plan is unlike others we have had in the past. I hope you will also recognize its potential and the will – at all levels of the organization – to make lasting changes. I stand behind it with my commitment to you that, I will work toward an inclusive Town where all feel that they belong.

To create a culture of belonging will require all-hands-on-deck. Please join me.

Doug Nadorozny

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION VISION, MISSION, AND VALUES

DEI Vision

Our workforce is talented, diverse, and committed to fostering a safe, fair, and inclusive workplace and community.

DEI Mission

To foster a culture that exemplifies teamwork, embraces innovation, and values diversity, equity, and inclusion to achieve mission excellence.

DEI Values

The following values hold true to our vision, shape how we carry out our mission, and guide how we are expected to treat one another.

- *We take* the broadest possible view of diversity, including seen and unseen qualities.
- *We acknowledge* life experiences that make individuals unique.
- *We encourage* all employees to use their unique perspectives to help advance our mission.
- *We require* fair treatment, accessibility, and opportunity for advancement for all employees.
- *We expect* our workplace to be an inclusive environment built on mutual trust, respect, and dignity.
- *We incorporate* diversity, equity, and inclusion in our daily work.
- *We commit* to building a workplace where all employees feel safe bringing their authentic selves to work.
- *We pledge* to identify and eliminate barriers to equal opportunity in the workplace.
- *We will foster* diversity, equity, and inclusion in the services we offer consistent with our mandate.

SUMMARY OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION GOALS

Goal 1. Commitment from the Top

Our leaders at all levels promote the vision and business case for DEI by taking actions to increase diversity and equity in the workforce and maintain an inclusive workplace.

Goal 2. DEI Recruitment

Recruit, hire, and develop a high-performing workforce that reflects the communities we serve by optimizing experiences throughout an employee's career.

Goal 3. Employee Retention

We will make every effort to create and maintain an inclusive culture where individuals feel encouraged to stay and grow.

Goal 4. Training and Development

Mature the DEI model to improve the consistency of desired outcomes by strengthening policies and procedures, utilizing technology, and enhancing training.

Goal 5. Marketing and Advertising

The Town will develop a DEI focused branding and advertising strategy that tells the Town's story and supports attracting and retaining diverse candidates.

Goal 6. Strategic DEI-focused Partnerships

The Town will expand alliances with external agencies and service providers to improve talent sourcing and recruitment from diverse groups and people with disabilities.

Goal 7. Data Collection

The Town will continue to use engagement surveys to gauge "inclusion" perceptions from all employees and address gaps through specific action plans.

Goal 8. Accountability

We will develop a dashboard that measures progress on DEI activities and outcomes and share the results on an annual report

1. Commitment from the Top

Our leaders at all levels promote the vision and business case for DEI by taking actions to increase diversity and equity in the workforce and maintain an inclusive workplace.

1.1 Cultural Competency. Ensure every leader in the organization understands the organization's expectation to developing their knowledge, skills and behaviours necessary to develop and maintain authentic relationships with everyone inside and outside the Town

a. Develop and implement a new performance standard for supervisors and managers that focuses on employee career development and the cultivation of an inclusive, and constructive work environment that is committed to enhancing our organizational culture and is built upon transparent communication, mutual trust, and respect.

b. Incorporate DEI goals in both departmental plans as well as individual performance goal setting plans to ensure that goal setting plans reflect not only what we do and produce but also how we do it. e.g. collaboration, respect, empowerment.

c. Incorporate "culture" discussion on the agenda for the Executive Leadership Team so that there is meaningful dialogue and opportunity to address areas of opportunity.

1.2 Employee Engagement Surveys. Deploy engagement surveys and take action on the results and feedback from staff

a. Deploy bi-annual employee engagement surveys while incorporating DEI related questions.

b. Use data to track progress on DEI related initiatives.

c. Champion the employee engagement action planning committee work by encouraging staff to participate and share their views and by implementing the recommendations that the committee presents to improve the organizational culture.

1.3 Best Practices. Select and implement DEI best practices that would be most effective at the Town of Aurora.

a. Develop and implement a mentorship program to leverage the experience of seasoned staff who can mentor younger professionals to succeed in their career.

b. Develop Employee Resource Groups so that interested groups of employees can collaborate and address issues of mutual concern. (e.g. Women's network, young professionals network, LGBTQ+ network)

2. DEI Recruitment

Recruit, hire, and develop a high-performing workforce that reflects the communities we serve by optimizing experiences throughout an employee's career.

2.1 Diverse Job Sites. Ensure talent acquisition practices consistently provide equal opportunity and strive to close representation gaps at all levels.

a. Identify and leverage diverse job sites to post opportunities so that underrepresented groups are made aware of opportunities they can apply to.

b. As we implement new technology to digitize our recruitment process (Applicant Tracking System), we will ensure that DEI requirements are built into the process so that we can conduct blind evaluations without regard for gender, name or place of origin.

c. We will leverage technology to collect appropriate data that can help us evaluated among other things the effectiveness of diverse talent acquisition strategies.

2.3 Diverse and inclusive Hiring Panels. Ensure hiring panels are diverse and trained to prevent unconscious bias.

a. Where possible, the hiring panel will include one female member and to the extent racialized persons.

b. Members of panels will be trained on unconscious bias and making decisions based on facts and merit and not "gut feelings".

2.2 Inclusive Language and Images. Ensure language and images used in job postings and job descriptions is inclusive.

a. We will build inclusive language and images in our job postings, and job descriptions to ensure we attract diverse candidates.

b. Update Recruitment Policy to ensure language reflects Town's vision of:

"Our workforce is talented, diverse, and committed to fostering a safe, fair, and inclusive workplace and community".

c. Update our job posting DEI language to include:

"*The Town of Aurora is an equal opportunity employer that is committed to an inclusive, barrier-free recruitment and selection processes and work environments. We are committed to recognizing and celebrating the diversity of opinion, talent and expertise that make each person unique. We thank all applicants and advise that only those selected for an interview will be contacted.".*

2.3 Promote DEI in company culture. Increase opportunities for employees to be engaged in achieving DEI goals.

a. We will leverage the employee engagement action planning corporate committee to gain their input in the development and implementation of the DEI Strategic Action Plan. Creating an inclusive culture will require the participation of staff.

3. Employee Retention

We will make every effort to create and maintain an inclusive culture where individuals feel encouraged to stay and grow.

3.1 Involve All Staff. All staff will be provided opportunities to participate in providing their input, decision making and sharing ideas.

a. Bi-annual Employee Engagement will be a regular vehicle for staff to provide input.

b. Pulse surveys will be deployed regularly to get views of staff on different issues affecting them and ensure that their voice is shared.

c. CAO and executive leaders will hold regular Town Hall meetings to share updates with staff and provide opportunities for staff to ask questions and input.

d. Opportunities will be identified to make the workplace more welcoming for diverse employees. e.g. designate space as a quiet room or spiritual room.

3.3 Open Communication Lines. We will create structures that encourage and support conflict resolution.

a. We will support our staff and leaders with skills that enable them to prevent and resolve conflicts.

b. We will leverage technology to build structures that allow employees to collaborate online and express their views but also to build strong professional relationships with their peers.

3.2 Continue building a culture of collaboration and trust. All employees in the organization need to increase their ability to work as a team as a team and be committed to recognizing and celebrating the diversity of culture, opinion, talent and expertise that make each person unique.

a. We will provide regular diversity training to increase awareness and skills in this area.

b. We will provide leadership development training to increase collaboration and trust within our people leaders.

c. We will review, update and implement our respect in the workplace policies and procedures and provide regular training opportunities for all staff.

d. We will review our floating holiday policy and revise so that it can be used to accommodate religious/cultural beliefs

e. Build a more robust information on our Corporate Intranet on DEI for staff.

4. DEI Training and Development

We will invest in DEI training programs that help every employee to show up each day without fear of being their true selves. This will foster higher degrees of engagement, productivity, and innovation that contribute to increased employee satisfaction. This in turn will translate to a better service

4.1 Training Plan. Promote workshops and learning sessions designed to increase cultural competencies and skills in promoting a diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace.

a. Provide mandatory DEI training for all people leaders

b. Provide mandatory DEI training for all staff

c. Provide education for management and staff on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

d. We will include DEI training as part of our onboarding process for new employees

4.1 Inclusive Policies. We will review, update and implement policies to ensure they are equitable and inclusive

a. Respectful Workplace Policy and Procedures

b. Recruitment policy and procedures

c. Flexible Work Arrangements and Remote Work Policy and Procedures

d. Workplace Accommodation Policy and Procedures

4.2 Train leaders on mentorhip programs. We will train leaders on how to mentor and coach

a. We will improve the employee onboarding and retention employee experience by providing access to mentoring.

b. We will leverage mentorship relationships to build trust and respect.

c. Mentorship will be a way to connect senior leaders to other members of the organization, receive reverse mentoring and share and transfer organizational knowledge.

5. Marketing Advertising and Communications

We will implement a process to review all Town initiatives through a DEI lens.

5.1 We will review and enhance the Town's brand identity

- **a.** We will communicate the Town's story through a DEI lens.
- **b.** We will review our written communications to ensure we are using appropriate, inclusive, non-offensive language.
- **c.** We will review print material to ensure that images our honest and representative of our municipality and our community and that they showcase our cultural diversity.
- **d.** We will align diversity and inclusion messages with the Town's brand that include:
    - **i.** a welcoming and supportive culture
    - **ii.** diverse workforce - unique perspectives
    - **iii.** work that is meaningful and fulfilling
    - **iv.** Ability to tangibly help the lives of residents
    - **v.** Opportunity for professional growth for everyone.

5.2 We will develop a DEI framework that all Town initiatives can be viewed through prior to being implemented.

Referencing the City of Ottawa's guide to **Advancing Equity and Inclusion in Municipal Government** we will train our leaders and staff on how to apply the DEI ens in the development of programs and initiatives to ensure our programs and initiatives are inclusive of everyone in the community.

https://documents.ottawa.ca/sites/documents/files/documents/adv_equity_en.pdf

6. Strategic DEI-Focused Partnerships

We will continue to build strategic partnerships across our community to further enhance cross-sectoral capacity to create community wide and systemic impact.

6.1 We will expand alliances with external agencies and service providers to improve talent sourcing and recruitment from diverse groups and people with disabilities.

a. We will partner with local colleges and universities to create opportunities to attract diverse talent. (e.g. co-ops, internships etc.)

6.2 We will create an inventory of all our existing strategic partnerships and identify any additional opportunities to expand.

a. We will review opportunities to engage our partners to participate in the decision making process.

b. We will survey our partners to solicit their feedback and get a better understanding of what their challenges are from DEI perspective.

7. Data Collection

We will develop a dashboard that measures progress on DEI activities and outcomes and share the results

5.1 Using data to inform our actions on creating a truly diverse workplace culture. We will focus our efforts on making sure our employees' experiences are not negatively affected because of their identities.

a. We will continue to conduct regular employee engagement surveys and ensure the DEI data we ask our employees are meaningful and beyond basic demographics.

b. Using data from our employee engagement surveys we will we will review and update our corporate policies to ensure they are reviewed from a DEI lens.

c. We will continue the implementation of our talent management system to digitize HR processes and we will leverage the data analytics features to inform our future decisions on policy direction.

d. We will regularly survey staff above and beyond employee engagement surveys to get their input on critical issues affecting them and the organization.

e. We will continue our work on the "Measure what matters" program to ensure we have meaningul measurements and data to inform our progress on a number of critical success factors.

8. Accountability

To be successful in our DEI journey we will develop an accountability framework that ensure our vision is realized.

5.1 We will measure and report on our progress annually.

- **a.** We will continue our work with the employee engagement action planning committees and ensure DEI related initiatives are carefully planned and executed with input from these key stakeholders.
- **b.** We will provide regular updates to our Executive Leadership Team on the progress we are making and challenges we face.
- **c.** DEI will be embedded in the Town's Corporate Strategic Plan as a key priority.
- **d.** We will develop and implement a communication strategy to ensure everyone in the organization knows and understands the Town's DEI views.

APPENDIX – KEY CONCEPTS AND TERMS

Authentic Self	Who an individual is as a person, demonstrating different experiences, perspectives, cultures, history, etc., without being forced to conform to the majority culture in the workplace. The work culture must value a wide range of talents, skills, and experiences to create a sense of belonging for everyone without causing harm to others.
Cultural Competency	The ability to understand, accept, and interact with individuals of different backgrounds and cultures.
Disability	A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.
Diversity	Diversity encompasses the range of similarities and differences each individual brings to the workplace, including but not limited to, national origin, language, race, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, age, religion and belief, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, veteran status, family structure, and diversity of thought, all of which is shaped by culture, background, experiences, and other elements.
Equity	Consistent, systematic, fair, just, and impartial treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all individuals, including individuals who historically have been denied such treatment, while striving to identify and eliminate barriers that might prevent any employee's full and equitable participation in the workplace.
Inclusion	Inclusion is a set of behaviors (e.g., welcoming new employees, paying attention and extending an invitation, seeking and respecting other perspectives, etc.) that promote equal access to opportunities and resources for individuals who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized.

Individual/Person with a Disability	A person with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities (such as walking, talking, seeing, hearing, or learning), has a record of such impairment, or is regarded as having an impairment unless the impairment is both transitory and minor.
Reasonable Accommodation	Any change in the work environment (or in the way things are usually done) to help a person with a disability apply for a job, perform the essential duties of a job, or enjoy the benefits and privileges of employment.
Self-Identification of Disability	The voluntary completion and submission of information from the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM's) Standard Form 256 (SF 256) identifying that a person has a disability, either by hard copy of the SF 256 to the servicing Human Resources Branch personnel in the Division of Administration, or electronically through the MyEPP system using the appropriate code from the SF 256.
Talent Acquisition	Long-term human resources planning and finding appropriate candidates for positions that require specific skillsets to fulfill a business need.
Disabilities	Disabilities is an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. An impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations.
Undeserved Populations	Populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as a geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civil life.
Unseen Diversity Characteristic	Non-visible personal characteristics such as background, culture, and personality, as well as protected classes such as disability, sexual orientation, and religion and belief.