
For Information

REPORT TITLE: **Update on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at the Region of Peel**

FROM: Gary Kent, Chief Financial Officer and Commissioner of Corporate Services

OBJECTIVE

To provide the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee with an update on activities and initiatives related to advancing the Region of Peel's diversity, equity and inclusion efforts.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The Region of Peel is on a journey to becoming a more diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace and community.
 - The Region has developed a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Framework to outline outcomes, strategies and partners to enable the Region to become a more diverse and inclusive workplace and community.
 - The Region has continued to lead and collaborate on initiatives and projects to advance diversity, equity and inclusion for both the community and its workforce.
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DISCUSSION

1. Background

The Region of Peel is on a journey to becoming a more diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace and community where everyone has access to opportunity and feels a sense of belonging regardless of differences. To move closer to this outcome, both internal and external efforts must be made.

2. Region of Peel Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Framework

The Region of Peel Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Framework (See Appendix I) has been developed to provide an outline of the intended outcomes, strategies and partners that align to the Region's priority of becoming a diverse and inclusive workplace and community.

The framework has been divided into two areas of focus – the community and workforce. Activities and initiatives have started for both the community and workforce areas including:

- Workforce Census and Courageous Conversations (Workforce)
- Various events and observances to increase awareness and understanding of diversity, equity and inclusion related topics (Community and Workforce)

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- Approval of Phase One of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) recommendations described below to increase DEI and accountability in the organization (Workforce)
- Partnering with stakeholders to plan, identify and address systemic barriers (Community and Workforce)

3. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Efforts

The Region has developed and implemented a number of strategies and tactics to address barriers that may impede achieving equity for all. These efforts have continued to progress over the year and include:

a) Workforce Census and Courageous Conversations

In October 2020, the Region of Peel procured an external vendor (WorkTango) to administer its first workforce census (WFC) to:

- Collect baseline data about the demographic breakdown of its workforce, and
- Understand how diversity shapes the employee experience.

The Region also introduced the Courageous Conversations (CC) series to employees to provide a safe place to share and learn about lived experiences from a variety of diversity dimensions (See Appendix II).

b) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Recommendations

Data from the WFC and CC has informed the development of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion recommendations to address areas of concern for employees and improve DEI in the workplace. These recommendations focus on the workforce but will inherently impact the community through increased diversity of thought and inclusive service delivery. On April 20, 2021, these recommendations were presented to and endorsed by the Executive Leadership Team. Recommendations will be implemented in a phased in approach starting in 2021 throughout 2025.

The following themes are foundational to the DEI recommendations:

- Organizational Culture
- Psychological Health and Well-Being
- Accountability

DEI recommendations have also been divided into five key focus areas:

1. Inclusive and Respectful Workplace
2. Career Advancement and Promotions Processes
3. Employee Education
4. Recruitment
5. Employee Engagement

c) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Events & Observances

Throughout the year, the Region acknowledges various events and observances to build awareness and knowledge about diversity, equity and inclusion related issues. To date, these activities have been primarily workforce focused. Moving forward, workforce and community facing events will continue to be planned to promote:

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- Community engagement
- Opportunities for learning
- Acceptance of differences amongst community members

i) Black History Month Event

On February 24, 2021, the Region hosted a virtual event in honour of Black History Month. This event was open to both employees and community partners and attended by over 460 participants. Its focus was to increase awareness and knowledge of the issues faced by Black men, how systemic barriers affect the Black community, and what can be done to address these issues as individuals and organizations.

ii) Pride

On February 11, 2021, Regional Council approved resolution number 2021-104 stating, *“that the Region of Peel’s recognition of Pride Month be moved from July to June to be in alignment with the greater Toronto Area.”*

As a demonstration of unity and partnership, the Region and local municipalities (the Cities of Brampton and Mississauga and the Town of Caledon) will host a collaborative virtual event to celebrate and learn about the LGBTQ2S+ community in June 2021. Municipal events will also occur throughout the month of June.

d) Mass Vaccination Program

The Region continues its efforts to achieve equity for all residents and employees, including in its COVID-19 pandemic planning and response. The Region of Peel’s Mass Vaccination Program continues to strategize and implement actions to reach all members of the community, with the most vulnerable populations given priority.

The Peel COVID-19 Mass Vaccination Community Planning Table informs and guides the development and execution of Peel’s COVID-19 Mass Vaccination Plan, utilizing a systems lens. Population Planning Tables were established to focus on defining and understanding the unique needs and concerns of individual population groups, while identifying barriers and supports to encourage vaccine uptake.

The Community Equity and Engagement Advisory Table (CEEAA) was established to provide advice, direction and guidance to Peel’s population Planning Tables on applying the provincial ethical frameworks and equity considerations. The CEEAA has informed approaches to population engagement and access to clinics that are expected to maximize vaccine uptake within the diverse population in Peel. Some examples include:

- Providing input on addressing barriers including transportation supports and extended hours at clinics;
- Advising on prioritization criteria for mobile clinic options and identifying targeted approaches to support vulnerable populations;
- Supporting a pop-up vaccination clinic for the Black, African, and Caribbean community in a positive vaccine environment; and,
- Advising on clinics for the Muslim community in response to barriers that have been brought forward to influence the delivery of services in a culturally sensitive way.

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e) Anti-Black Racism and Systemic Discrimination Collective

The Anti-Black Racism and Systemic Discrimination (ABR & SD) Collective started in 2020 in response to systemic discrimination and anti-Black racism being experienced in Peel. The mandate of the collective is to provide a safe and open forum for discussion and advocacy that will lead to dismantling individual, structural and systemic discrimination and racism at different levels. Community of practice approaches can offer opportunities to bring stakeholders together to collaborate on complex issues and bring diversity in thought and areas of focus. Meetings are supported by Regional staff and chaired by various community partners across Peel.

To date, six tables have been established through the collective:

1. ABR & SD Collective (Established July 2020)
2. ABR & SD Policing Sub-Committee (Established August 2020)
3. ABR & SD Healthcare Sub-Committee (Established September 2020)
4. ABR & SD Community of Practice Sub-Committee (Established January 2021)
5. Hate Crimes Coalition Sub-Committee (Established January 2021)
6. ABR & SD Education Sub-Committee (Established February 2021)

f) Anti-Racism Position Statement

The Region of Peel has developed an Anti-Racism position statement that was communicated internally and externally to make known that as a Regional government and community leader, the Region stands against racism toward any marginalized group in the community.

CONCLUSION

As the Region moves along its journey to becoming a more diverse and inclusive workplace and community, continuous efforts must be made both internally and externally. The Region will lead and collaborate with internal and external partners to plan and implement strategies and actions that will identify and remove barriers that will lead to equity for all members of the community.

APPENDICES

Appendix I – Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Framework

Appendix II – Courageous Conversations Sessions – Diversity Dimensions

For further information regarding this report, please contact Juliet Jackson, Director – Culture & Inclusion, Ext. #6741, juliet.jackson@peelregion.ca.

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Reviewed and/or approved in workflow by:

Department Commissioner, Division Director and Legal Services.