



Report

Subject:	Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Committee Annual Report
Department:	Corporate Services
Division:	Clerks
Report #:	CPS-2024-095
Meeting Date:	2024-12-16

Recommendations

That report CPS-2024-095 Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Annual Report be received;

That the EDI Strategy be approved;

That staff continue with implementation of the strategy;

That Staff offer transition opportunities for existing EDI Committee members that ensures members can remain meaningfully involved in advancing the goals of the EDI Strategy through various channels;

That after a meeting is held to facilitate transition, the EDI Committee be dissolved; and

That Council thank the Committee members for their contributions in fulfilling the workplan mandate of the EDI committee.

Overview

- **Historical Commitment to EDI:**
 - The Town of Orangeville has consistently fostered inclusivity, pride, and community connections through various EDI initiatives, even before the establishment of a formal EDI Committee.
- **Key Accomplishments:**
 - The EDI Committee has successfully completed their workplan, including:
 - Creation of a Community Supports & Well-Being webpage.
 - Development of an EDI Strategy, which redirected consulting dollars into impactful community investments.
- **Next Phase – Action & Implementation:**
 - With the workplan complete, the focus now shifts to action and implementation.
- **Transition & Growth:**
 - Plans are underway to transition the current EDI Committee to avenues where they can continue to advance various EDI initiatives, if they so choose.
- **Acknowledgement & Gratitude:**

- The Town is appreciative of the Committees volunteerism and work on the EDI file and looks forward to continuing to collaborate with them in other meaningful ways moving forward.

Background

The Town of Orangeville actively fosters inclusivity, pride, and community connections through a variety of EDI initiatives, reinforcing a welcoming community for all. Below are a few examples:

- **Medicine Wheel Garden at Bravery Park:** This sacred space is rooted in Indigenous teachings, featuring interpretive elements that invite reflection and a connection to nature.
- **Public Art:** Through collaborations with local organizations like Dufferin Community and Family Services (DCAFS), projects such as the Crystal Queer utility box and the mural display – featuring art created by participants of the GLOW Youth Group, a support group for LGBTQ2S+ youth – aim to promote understanding and celebrate diverse gender and sexual identities within the community.
- **Celebrate Your Awesome:** This annual festival honors diversity and LGBTQ2S+ pride, creating a vibrant, inclusive atmosphere for all to enjoy.
- **Theatre Orangeville:** The theater actively engages in EDI themed storytelling, with productions like *The Darktown Strutters' Ball* highlighting the significant contributions of Black artists and the lasting impact of their work on the music industry.
- **Love Orangeville:** As a visible symbol of community pride, the "Love Orangeville" initiative invites residents and visitors alike to engage with the Town's welcoming spirit.
- **Orangeville Public Library:** Through its strategic plan, which emphasizes inclusivity and lifelong learning, the library positions itself as a champion of cultural expression and a vital partner in promoting community dialogue and social engagement.
- **Proclamations:** The Town's established community-led proclamation process honors and recognizes key dates of significance.

Additionally, the Town established an EDI Committee, comprising one Council member, one staff lead, and eight community members. Each Town committee develops a workplan, and the EDI Committee Workplan outlined key initiatives focused on strengthening community engagement, promoting wellness, and developing an EDI strategy.

This report provides an update on the EDI Committee Workplan achievements and outlines proposed next steps for continued implementation.

Analysis/Current Situation

EDI Committee Workplan Initiatives:

Strengthening Community Engagement & Fostering Community Wellness:

Two (2) initiatives from the EDI Committee Workplan were geared towards strengthening community engagement and fostering community wellness. These initiatives aim to build allyship

among community organizations with an EDI focus, create a centralized database, and expand access to mental health support.

Committee members began by compiling a comprehensive list of EDI organizations within the Town and County. Recognizing the challenges of maintaining this list, staff reached out to Dufferin County to explore collaboration opportunities. The County informed us about the "My Dufferin Service Directory" and connected the Committee with the Dufferin County Equity Collaborative (DC Moves), a platform where residents and agencies can access local programs and services. The County cross referenced their list with what the community prepared to ensure a comprehensive database.

As a result, staff created a "Community Supports and Well-Being" page on the Town of Orangeville's website, featuring direct links to the My Dufferin Service Directory, the DC Moves organization list, and the new Dufferin/Caledon community helpline (see Appendix A).

These efforts completed the task of creating a centralized, up-to-date database for all of Dufferin County and integrates mental health support through the community helpline. Additionally, these initiatives enhanced the Town of Orangeville's website by establishing a "Community Supports and Well-Being" landing page, a resource that did not exist prior to this initiative. Together, these efforts strengthen community engagement and foster greater community wellness.

Developing an EDI Strategy:

History:

- 2022:
 - The EDI Committee conducted a community survey. However, the survey did not yield pertinent results as 72% of respondents were female, 76% identified as "white," and 87% did not identify as LGBTQ2S+.
- 2023:
 - In Q4 2023, Council approved \$80K for an external EDI strategy as part of the EDI Committee Workplan.
- 2024:
 - Staff began benchmarking against best practices for strategy development which confirmed the critical need for meticulous data collection, deep community engagement, dedication, transparency, and continued investment.
 - Town staff have provided periodic updates to the EDI Committee regarding the progress made and sought their input.
- Municipal Context:
 - The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), under their Social and Economic Property Review, supports that the existing property tax system is a regressive tax system that does not align with funding of systemic social issues.
 - Therefore, funding for EDI and other social impact programs should be sourced from the upper tier governments.

Ultimately, without valuable data from the 2022 survey, limited capacity, and uncertainty around the appropriateness of continued municipal investment year over year (as per AMO), it was concluded that we may experience limited success and that the funding required may be more significant than originally anticipated.

Present Date:

Staff took on the challenge of exploring whether the \$80,000 earmarked for a consultant-driven strategy could be more effectively used to support community initiatives, potentially achieving equal or greater impact.

At present date, a new strategy approach has been developed that builds a framework to advance EDI, re-directs consultant funding into community investments and involves strategic community engagement (See Appendix B). Key focus areas include:

Key Focus Areas	\$
Partnering With Agencies and Relevant Stakeholders to Implement Best Practices	\$10,000
Communications Enhancements	\$30,000
Community Conversations	\$30,000
Potential Landscape Investments	\$10,000
TOTAL	\$80,000
<i>Town of Orangeville EDI Committee 80K Allocation 2024-2026</i>	

Partnering with Agencies and Relevant Stakeholders to Implement Best Practices:

A wealth of documentation is available that highlights the impactful work accomplished by EDI professionals, offering valuable insights and best practices that extend beyond any single initiative or project. This focus area aims to leverage these resources to conduct comprehensive research and municipal benchmarking. The goal is to inform the development of inclusive policies, identify potential data collection tools, and explore innovative approaches that support the advancement of EDI across various aspects of municipal operations.

Communication Enhancements:

This focus area seeks to integrate an EDI perspective into all Town initiatives and explore focussed training opportunities for staff. Investing in communications ensures broad community reach and impact.

Community Conversations:

We are developing plans to host and co-host community forums and events, enhance existing library initiatives, and pursue partnerships with ongoing efforts led by Dufferin County.

The Library and EDI Strategy share a strong commitment to inclusivity, making collaboration a natural fit. A proposed plan for 2025 programming has already been developed, emphasizing opportunities for shared learning and growth.

This focus area includes exploring speaker series, expert panel discussions, and other events designed to engage both Orangeville and the broader County community.

Potential Landscape Investments:

Landscape investments, defined as physical additions to the environment that honor EDI principles, can take various forms, such as plaques, benches, and wrap-around decals etc. To

support these efforts, the EDI Strategy has allocated funds for exploring meaningful landscape investments in collaboration with our community partners. These initiatives seek to enhance public spaces while promoting inclusivity and diversity within the community. By engaging with local stakeholders, we can create impactful changes that reflect our commitment to EDI values.

To date, local community groups have endorsed initiatives such as the installation of a community recognition bench and an Indigenous plaque. However, ongoing community engagement is vital to ensure these investments are meaningful and resonate with the broader community. As discussions advance, the specifics of future landscape investments will be community-led, with details such as size, location, and messaging evolving through a collaborative process. Ultimately, our approach remains rooted in the principle of “*nothing for them without them*,” ensuring that proposed ideas involve the input and participation of community groups.

Next Steps:

Staff are implementing the 2024–2026 EDI Strategy in collaboration with agencies, relevant stakeholders, and community partners. Maintaining a continuous learning mindset and flexibility will be essential as we focus on raising awareness and building capacity.

Given that the EDI Committee Workplan is fulfilled and that the EDI strategy, if approved, is complete, the purpose of the EDI Committee is concluded. The focus shifts to further action and implementation which is best achieved through various channels; therefore, staff are proposing transition opportunities for willing committee members.

Future of the EDI Committee:

Staff will host a final meeting with the EDI Committee in Q1 2025 to present a transition plan. This plan will outline various options for current EDI Committee members to consider as they decide how they might like to continue contributing to EDI initiatives, should they wish to do so. Following this meeting, the EDI Committee will be dissolved. The options may include:

Economic Development, Culture & Events Committee: Current EDI Committee members who have an interest in supporting local cultural initiatives may find opportunities through the Economic Development and Culture Committee, such as volunteering at community events and promoting public art opportunities.

Library Collaboration: Engaging with the library, which is actively seeking more diverse voices to inform its programs and services.

Ongoing Stakeholder Groups: Involvement in stakeholder groups that will continue to provide input as we progress toward full implementation of the EDI Strategy.

Partnership Opportunities: Exploring potential collaborations with Dufferin County and surrounding municipalities to further strengthen EDI initiatives.

Taskforce and County-Wide Initiatives: As highlighted in the AMO Social and Economic Prosperity Review, funding for EDI initiatives is most effectively managed at the upper-tier level of government. This presents potential opportunities for assembling a dedicated taskforce or supporting broader county-wide efforts in the future.

This transition plan will ensure that EDI Committee members can remain meaningfully involved in advancing the goals of the EDI Strategy through various channels.

Corporate Implications

This report will not generate direct implications. If future actions related to this report will have a corporate impact, a report will be presented to Council for approval, if required.

Conclusion

The 2024 EDI Committee workplan has been successfully completed, marking significant progress in community engagement, wellness initiatives, and the development of a comprehensive, community-focused EDI strategy. Early implementation of this strategy is already underway, with key achievements including the 2025 programming partnership with the Library and collaborative consultations with community groups on landscape investments.

This approach not only builds on the Town of Orangeville's strong foundation of EDI, it elevates and aligns related initiatives to maximize their community impact.

The completion of the EDI Committee workplan highlights the readiness to transition into full implementation mode.

To facilitate this transition, staff will host a final meeting with the EDI Committee in Q1 2025. During this session, a transition plan will be presented, outlining various opportunities for current committee members to continue contributing to EDI initiatives should they choose to remain involved.

Strategic Alignment

Strategic Plan

Strategic Goal: Community Vitality

Objective: Vibrancy – Build a more inclusive community and ensure citizen involvement.

Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan

Theme: Social Well-Being

Strategy: Provide accessible social and community program options that support health, wellness, and learning.

Notice Provisions:

Not applicable.

Respectfully submitted,

David Smith
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Attachment(s):

1. Community Supports & Well-Being Landing Page
2. Executive Summary: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy
3. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy