

Clause 10 in Report No. 1 of Committee of the Whole was adopted, without amendment, by the Council of The Regional Municipality of York at its meeting held on January 26, 2017.

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York Region Draft Diversity and Inclusion Charter

Committee of the Whole recommends adoption of the following recommendation contained in the report dated December 9, 2016 from the Commissioner of Community and Health Services:

1. The Regional Clerk circulate this report, for information, to local municipalities, the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee, the York Regional Police Services Board, Community Partnership Council, local Chambers of Commerce and Board of Trade and the Municipal Diversity and Inclusion Group.

Report dated December 9, 2016 from the Commissioner of Community and Health Services now follows:

1. Recommendation

It is recommended that:

1. The Regional Clerk circulate this report, for information, to local municipalities, the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee, the York Regional Police Services Board, Community Partnership Council, local Chambers of Commerce and Board of Trade and the Municipal Diversity and Inclusion Group.

2. Purpose

This report provides an update on the York Region Draft Diversity and Inclusion Charter initiative.

3. Background

York Region has one of the most diverse populations in Ontario

York Region continues to be one of the most affluent regions in Ontario, with a demographic composition that is quickly changing. As of 2014, 1.15 million people called York Region home, with that number expected to grow to 1.79 million by 2041, including people from all cultures, races, ethnicity, languages, religions, abilities, ages and sexual orientations.

As York Region's population continues to grow, so will its diversity. York Region is well equipped to meet the needs of a growing and diverse population, while continuing to demonstrate ongoing commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Regional Council has demonstrated a commitment to making our diverse communities more welcoming and inclusive

The 2015 to 2019 Strategic Plan's vision promotes an inclusive community that is welcoming of the full range of the diversity of all people. Diversity is the mix of unique dimensions, qualities, and characteristics that each individual possesses. An individual's ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, background and experiences shape their perspectives. Inclusion is getting the mix to work well together, to ensure everyone feels valued, respected and supported.

Endorsement of a Diversity and Inclusion Charter offers a model for building on the strengths of earlier initiatives by expressing a common vision for, and commitment to, promoting an inclusive community that is welcoming and inclusive of all people. A York Region Diversity and Inclusion Charter that is endorsed by local organizations would encourage participating organizations to become increasingly inclusive for employees and customers alike.

Creating a purposely inclusive organization benefits both the organization and the community

Creating an intentionally inclusive organization offers many benefits including high employee engagement, greater opportunity to access and retain talent, innovative thinking, greater customer satisfaction as well as the potential for the organization to lift business performance.

Creating an inclusive organization also benefits the community it serves. With an inclusive organization, the diverse population can enjoy programs and services that are responsive to their needs. An inclusive organization can also attract from the full talent available in the community. By extension, if these employees bring the full spectrum of diversity to their jobs, organizations can rely on internal resources to best respond to community needs.

Embracing diversity and inclusion values is a best practice

Organizations and agencies across all sectors are embracing diversity and inclusion values and strategies as a best practice to enhance business performance, social inclusion and respond positively to demographic shifts. Some jurisdictions, including the Region of Peel, City of Toronto and Town of Ajax, have adopted the diversity and inclusion charter model to help member organizations work together towards building inclusive communities. The values are also expressed through agencies such as the United Way of Toronto and York Region whose work is grounded in the belief that our greatest strength is the ability to bring people together, from all walks of life, to build a better region, welcoming, celebrating and valuing the contributions of all.

The Community Partnership Council identified the Charter model as an effective way to build York Region's capacity to be a welcoming community

Plans to develop a York Region charter emerged from the work of the Community Partnership Council in 2012. Under the leadership of City of Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti and Stephen Lam, Catholic Community Services of York Region, the Council developed the York Region Immigration Settlement Strategy to build York Region's capacity to be a welcoming community with a focus on multi-cultural diversity. The community partners of the Council's Municipal Multicultural Reference Group identified the Charter model as an effective way to help achieve this goal and started work to develop one.

The first round of community consultations focused on York Region as a community that receives newcomers

Development of the Draft Diversity and Inclusion Charter began with stakeholder consultations. In 2015, the Community Partnership Council led the first series of Let's Talk Inclusion community and staff dialogues with a focus on cultural and religious diversity. This round of dialogues involved 550 in-person and 12,000 online stakeholders. Key feedback received from the community indicated that diversity is broader than multi-cultural diversity and that the Charter should embrace all dimensions of diversity. The Charter mandate was broadened, at that time, to reflect this.

In the second round of consultations the conversation broadened to include other dimensions of diversity

Based on the findings from the first Let's Talk Inclusion dialogues, a second round of dialogues took place in May and June 2016 to include this broader mandate. This series engaged stakeholders to discuss other dimensions of diversity in the Human Rights Code such as age, gender, race, ethnicity, physical

and intellectual ability, religion, sexual orientation, educational background and expertise. Over 200 people participated in these sessions. Feedback from both rounds of dialogues was used to inform the draft Charter.

Member organizations of the Municipal Diversity and Inclusion Group will be encouraged to endorse a common Charter

The York Region Municipal Diversity and Inclusion Group was formed in 2016 to continue the development of the Charter going forward. Co-chaired by York Region and York Regional Police, this group includes local municipalities, hospitals, school boards, non-profit agencies, conservation authorities and the United Way of Toronto and York Region (see Attachment 1). Members agree that the development and endorsement of a common York Region Diversity and Inclusion Charter would help promote an inclusive community that is welcoming of the full range of the diversity of all people.

4. Analysis and Implications

The York Region Draft Diversity and Inclusion Charter embraces all dimensions of diversity

The York Region Draft Diversity and Inclusion Charter embraces all dimensions of diversity including age, gender, race, ethnicity, ability, religion, sexual orientation and educational background (see Attachment 2). It is based on the [Eurocities Integrating Cities Charter](#) which is a widely used framework. In all cases the Eurocities Charter focuses on the newcomer population. York Region's Draft Diversity and Inclusion Charter, however, progressively stretches beyond newcomers and includes all dimensions of diversity, such as age, gender, race, ethnicity, ability, religion, sexual orientation and educational background.

The Draft Charter is also responsive to the community. It has been developed in partnership with the Municipal Diversity and Inclusion Group member organizations to ensure that what is created is comprehensive and reflective of the community at large. Member organizations, including York Region, will be asked to endorse the Charter when it is finalized.

Commitment to inclusion is affirmed through four key areas of organizational responsibility

Member organizations that endorse the final Charter will affirm their commitment to inclusion and removal of barriers under the four key areas of organizational responsibility that are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Key Areas of Organizational Responsibility

Key Areas of Organizational Responsibility	Organizations Will Strive To
As a Policy-Maker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply principles of equality* for all residents • Promote equal access and non-discrimination across all policies • Strive to engage diverse communities in the policy-making process and encourage participation with the aim of finding a balance that best meets the needs of residents
As an Employer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively promote understanding and respect for diversity and inclusion with our employees • Promote the fair and equitable treatment of employees by their managers and colleagues • Attract a diverse and talented workforce that reflects, understands and meets the needs of a changing community
As a Service Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide services that are accessible, inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs of the community
As a Purchaser of Goods and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage equal opportunity in procurement

* Principles of equality reflect the consensus among human rights and equality experts that all people are equal and should be treated equally under the law.

A robust engagement strategy will ensure the four key areas of responsibility form a successful framework for inclusion

An important next step will be to consult further with the community and member organizations on the specific areas of organizational responsibility included in the Draft Charter. This third round of Diversity Dialogues will be conducted in spring 2017 and will use a variety of creative engagement tactics. It may include consultative techniques such as design charrettes, workshops, roundtables and online strategies designed to reach different groups and perspectives, in different ways, particularly those who are harder to reach and engage with.

The goal of this consultative round is to make sure that the Draft Charter's four key areas of organizational responsibility incorporate previous findings and successfully form a framework that member organizations can use to address barriers to inclusion in their own organizations and, collectively, in the community. This round of Dialogues will push the conversation from identifying barriers to developing creative, long-term solutions.

The final Charter will return to Council and member organizations of the Municipal Diversity and Inclusivity Group for endorsement

Following the consultations with member organizations, stakeholders and the community at large, the Charter will be refined and brought back to Council in 2017 for final review and endorsement. Following York Region's endorsement of the Charter, the Charter will be reviewed for endorsement by each member organization. Organizations will then work together to bring the vision of the Charter to life collectively, in the community, and, individually, in our organizations.

By embracing all dimensions of diversity, the final Charter will promote an inclusive community that is welcoming of the full diversity of everyone

The Charter allows member organizations to express a common vision for, and commitment to, promoting an inclusive community that is welcoming of the full diversity of everyone. Developing a Charter also supports the Region's commitment to creating more welcoming and inclusive communities as outlined in multiple strategic plans including the Corporate Strategic Plan, Vision 2051 and Regional Official Plan, and commitment to meet the accessibility needs of all people under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

5. Financial Considerations

The development of the Draft Charter is being completed within the Regional staff complement and approved business plans and budgets.

6. Local Municipal Impact

Striving to promote welcoming and inclusive communities represents common ground for York Region and the municipalities, organizations and agencies of the Municipal Diversity and Inclusion Group. This collaborative partnership is intended to benefit all those who live, work and play in York Region.

In partnership with the Municipal Diversity and Inclusion Group, the Region will continue to engage with the community to ensure that the final Diversity and Inclusion Charter reflects the diversity and needs of all people across all municipalities in York Region. As members of the Municipal Diversity and Inclusion Group, local municipalities will also be asked to endorse the Charter, thereby collectively expressing an ongoing commitment to diversity and inclusion across all local jurisdictions.

7. Conclusion

York Region is taking a leadership role in the development of the Diversity and Inclusion Charter in collaboration with the Municipal Diversity and Inclusion Group. Together, member organizations and the community recognize that a Diversity and Inclusion Charter offers an effective model for implementing positive change for our increasingly diverse populations across all municipalities.

Greater community impacts can be achieved together. A York Region-made Diversity and Inclusion Charter will provide the collaborative framework for York Region and the municipalities, organizations and agencies of the Municipal Diversity and Inclusion Group to express a common vision for, and commitment to, promoting an inclusive community that is welcoming of the full range of the diversity of everyone.

For more information on this report, please contact Lisa Gonsalves, Director, Strategies and Partnerships, at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 72090.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

December 9, 2016

Attachments (2)

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Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request