



Committee of the Whole Report For the Meeting of October 17, 2019

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** October 10, 2019
From: Mandi Sandhu, Head of Service Innovation and Improvement
Subject: Corporate Equity – Next Steps Workshop

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Direct staff to report back in early 2020 with a summary of Council input, as well a plan to further the equity lens discussions with equity seeking groups and the community as a whole in early 2020.
2. Direct staff to bring forward financial costs associated with development and implementation of an equity lens as part of the 2020 Financial Plan.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with background information on equity and community wellness approaches in place in other jurisdictions across North America, key equity lens definitions and considerations, and seek direction on a desired approach and outcomes for the City of Victoria through workshop format.

BACKGROUND

The 2019-2022 Strategic Plan includes a *Declaration of Principles and Values Statement* for “Welcoming diversity and fostering a spirit of inclusion and equity in everything we do”. In June 2019, Council passed a Motion foundational to this value statement as follows:

That Victoria City Council direct staff to develop a plan to revisit the objectives, scope and schedule of activities for the Crystal Pool project that aligns with the new Strategic Plan, including application of the evaluative tools described in section i, ii, iii, iv below, for Council consideration:

- i. Ensure no net loss of green space in the neighbouring area.*
- ii. Apply an equity lens to siting, design, amenity selection, engagement, procurement, and evaluation, to inform decisions about and investment in community*
- iii. Apply an affordability lens to assess total cost of ownership, siting, amenity selection, operating costs, costs to taxpayers and users*
- iv. Invite potential partners and neighbourhood representatives to collaborate to align and help achieve these equity, accessibility and affordability objectives*

- v. *Embed distributional, procedural, structural and inter-generational equity into the City's corporate policies guiding hiring, staff training and professional development, procurement and civic engagement*
- vi. *Report back to Council on potential locations in the North Park and Hillside / Quadra neighbourhoods.*

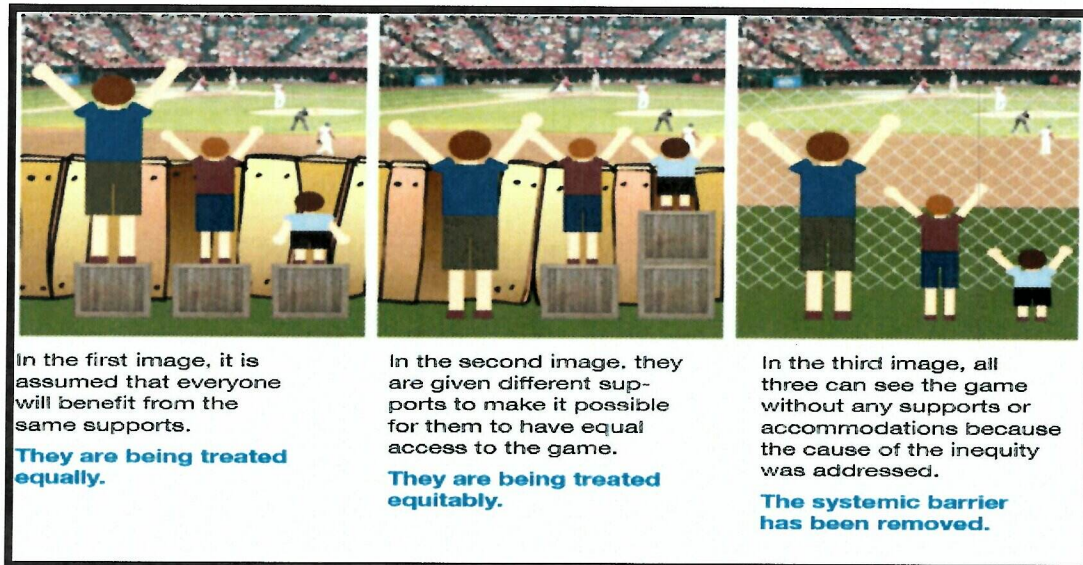
Motion Arising:

That Council direct the City Manager to imbed these 4 principles ii, iii, iv, v for the city's emerging equity policies.

The 2019-2022 Strategic Plan contains a number of objectives and initiatives [actions] that are targeted at specific equity seeking groups, including, but not limited to: children, youth, seniors, Indigenous peoples, transgender, non-binary and Two-Spirit people, people with disabilities and people who have mental health conditions. Work is currently underway to engage these populations through focused advisory committees, task forces and other working groups, as well as the broader public engagement to develop strategies, promote greater inclusion and pro-actively improve service design and delivery to address barriers. The focus of these strategies under development are largely focused on "inclusion" of specific equity seeking populations rather than an "intersectional" approach.

An intersectional research and policy lens recognizes that people have multiple and diverse identity factors that intersect to shape their perspectives, ideologies and experiences. An intersectional approach involves working to address inequality and barriers to inclusion without isolating one factor of an individual's identity from another and recognizing that inclusion impacts people differently due in part to how their many identity factors intersect to influence their experience.

Foundational to a discussion of adopting an equity lens, is an understanding of the differences between (1) equality, (2) equity and (3) social justice. Equality is focused on inputs and equity is focused on outputs. As depicted in the figure below, in the first image, everyone is given the same inputs/resources – this is equality. In the second image, inputs are adjusted so that everyone experiences the same output, which in this case is to see the game – this is equity. In the third image, the systemic barrier has been removed – this is social justice.



There is a strong correlation between the concepts of equity and social justice to the World Health Organization (WHO) Social Determinants of Health, which is under consideration for adoption in 2020 as articulated in the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan under the objective of *Health, Well-Being and a Welcoming City*. The social determinants of health are the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age. According to the WHO, these circumstances are shaped by the distribution of money, power and resources at global, national and local levels. Also noted by the WHO, is the social determinants of health are mostly responsible for health inequities - the unfair and avoidable differences in health status between countries [communities]. The application of forms of an equity lens for the City of Victoria could consider the key concepts put forth by the WHO, particularly those where local government can influence, collaborate or control based on Council direction.

The City's Official Community Plan (OCP), adopted in 2012, is premised on sustainability with an emphasis on equity values, particularly longer-term 'inter-generational' equity. In some cases, the OCP is focused on 'choice' and equality of access to housing, transportation, amenities and other quality of life factors.

Equity values have also been a key focus of local area planning, specifically related to:

- Fostering better housing choice and affordability in all neighbourhoods for a range of income levels, lifestyles and ages;
- Supporting greater transportation options for all ages and abilities; and
- Supporting good jobs close to home

Local area planning has been carried out using the City's Engagement Framework. Lessons learned in recent years include:

- Public participation in local area planning processes (particularly community-led engagement initiatives) have not been representative of neighbourhood and City-wide equity seeking populations
- Addressing equity requires change - people tend to organize 'against' more than 'for'
- Equity seeking populations may not have the same resources and capacity to participate in engagement processes
- Application of city-wide OCP values across all neighbourhoods may be better achieved through city-wide processes (as opposed to neighbourhood by neighbourhood).

Based on these lessons learned, an equity framework could better support local area planning through the framing of issues/opportunities, having more diverse and representative engagement processes and better evaluation and assessment of policy/implementation outcomes.

Through a review of select jurisdictions, samples of the different approaches in terms of overall approach and priorities below and is further flushed out in the workshop presentation material in Appendix A. In addition to the brief synopsis of how these sample Canadian cities have organized their adoption of an equity lens, policy or framework, there are also examples from other West Coast jurisdictions on how this has manifested itself in data-driven decisions based on community values in King County and Tacoma Washington.

ISSUES & ANALYSIS

The following section of this report focuses on a portion of the Motion approved by Council specifically related to "Embed distributional, procedural, structural and inter-generational equity into the City's corporate policies guiding hiring, staff training and professional development, procurement and civic engagement"

Civic Engagement

The City of Victoria's Engagement Framework was adopted in 2017. It was developed with community input to provide a consistent, transparent approach to public participation in City decision making. The framework is guided by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) principles for effective civic engagement. One of these principles is **Inclusiveness** and the City's engagement framework includes the commitment to makes best efforts to reach, inform and engage all people who are impacted by the decisions being considered.

Imbedded in the City's engagement planning are strategies to define and target populations not traditionally heard to ensure their voices are part of the conversation about civic issues and decisions that directly affect them. Each engagement process includes a range of tools and techniques to reach diverse publics and strives to eliminate barriers to participation. While the City offers a multitude of engagement opportunities, enjoys high levels of public participation and benefits from a very engaged community, feedback received does not always represent an accurate reflection of the make up of the community. The opinions of some groups remain under-represented despite best efforts.

The City's engagement department continues to explore ways to better understand barriers preventing more equitable participation by certain groups and to develop metrics to evaluate and measure equitable participation. This is an emerging area in the field of public engagement. A review of best practices in other municipalities is currently underway and the City's 2020 Engagement Summit is being planned to include specific workshops on this topic with the goal of updating the City's Engagement Framework to include the latest learning, including direct input from equity seeking populations as identified by Council as part of its Equity Lens. It is expected that this will lead to the development of an engagement equity toolkit to supplement the Engagement Framework which will include specific strategies and tactics to foster more equitable participation by certain under-presented groups, as well as ways to measure and report on the representative make up of feedback received to ensure it reflects, to the greatest extent possible, the values and views of our community as a whole.

Staff Training and Professional Development

The City of Victoria supports ongoing staff training and development in three broad categories: foundational learning for all employees; business enabling learning tailored to specific roles and responsibilities; and leadership development for current and emerging leaders. Consistent with Council's 2019 – 2022 Strategic Plan objectives, training to support equity and inclusion is both planned and underway in 2019 and 2020 in a number of areas including reconciliation, accessibility awareness, and transgender, non-binary and Two-Spirit inclusion.

The establishment of an equity definition and framework will guide the development and evolution of the City's core, foundational learning to support implementation of the framework or lens across City operations.

Hiring

As an employer, the City of Victoria is required to comply with employment related legislation including B.C.'s *Employment Standards Act* and *Human Rights Code*, and with the four collective agreements governing terms and conditions of employment for unionized employees. This legal framework ensures that the City's hiring and recruitment practices are focused on hiring candidates with the knowledge, skills and abilities to perform the work; consider seniority as required by collective agreement provisions; and are free from discrimination based on age, race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, family status, disability, sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity or expression.

The City does not currently have information regarding the demographic profile of our workforce, but will be proceeding with an employee engagement survey that will capture this information in the fourth quarter of 2019. Once the City has an understanding of the demographic profile of our current workforce, we would be in a position to set targets and consider actions for increased diversity as appropriate. For example, the City could pursue targeted recruitment and outreach to under-represented equity groups and train hiring managers in inclusive hiring and on-boarding practices.

Procurement

The City of Victoria is in the process of advancing social procurement to better leverage tax dollars to achieve positive social outcomes aligned with community values and strategic objectives. The City is one of several member municipalities involved in the *Coastal Communities Social Procurement Initiative* (CCSPI). The purpose of the initiative is to change how local governments purchase goods and services, so that when money is spent on improving communities through the normal course of operations and special projects, there is also a consideration of local benefits that can be derived through procurement practices to increase economic development, local employment, increased affordability and greater access to services.

As part of the work that is underway, Council will be engaged with CCSPI later this year. Following that discussion and input from Council, City staff will work with CCSPI to assess alignment with the evolving adoption of an equity lens to advance the specific direction from Council.

OPTIONS & IMPACTS

One of the pragmatic considerations is the level of effort and resources that can currently, and in the future, be allocated to further advancing this initiative given organizational capacity. As indicated in the Committee of the Whole report provided to Council on October 17, 2019 regarding resources required to support service improvement and performance measurement functions in the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan, some further work on equity can be accommodated within these resources – however depending on the scope, complexity and pace at which Council directs, additional resources may be required in future years.

In addition to the four immediate streams of work around engagement, hiring, training and procurement outlined in this report, staff have been working with external subject matter experts that have knowledge and experience with other municipalities that are in the process of addressing or adopting an equity lens. Learnings from other areas indicates that in many cases, there is a specific “problem” to be solved, that acts as a catalyst for adopting some form of an equity assessment or lens.

In order to better inform next steps, staff are seeking a dialogue with Council to better provide insight on Council values, priorities and considerations for staff to potentially address in furthering the operationalization of equity into planning, programs, services and decision making.

Accessibility Impact Statement

Accessibility is one of several equity seeking groups that will be included in the overall development of an equity policy framework. As noted above, this is an inclusionary approach rather than equity based.

2015 – 2018 Strategic Plan

This report specifically addresses the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan *Declaration of Principles and Values Statement* for “Welcoming diversity and fostering a spirit of inclusion and equity in everything we do”.

Impacts to Financial Plan

The impacts to the 2020 Financial Plan are included in a separate report to the Committee of the Whole regarding *Service Delivery Improvement and Performance Measurement Resources*, that would advance this piece of work, along with other Strategic Plan actions identified in that report as presented to Committee of the Whole on October 17, 2019. Initial staff training costs for adopting an equity lens in 2020 can be accommodated within the City's corporate training budget as an expansion of diversity and inclusion, as well as accessibility and reconciliation training currently underway.

Official Community Plan Consistency Statement

Social equity is explicitly addressed in the City of Victoria's Official Community Plan (OCP) under 'Community Well-Being' to encourage a fair distribution of community services, social services, and facilities across the city, to support all parts of the population. The OCP also has equity principles, goals and objectives embedded within a number of other areas such as Land Management and Development, Transportation and Mobility, Economy, Parks and Recreation, Arts and Culture as well as Housing and Homelessness.

CONCLUSIONS

Staff will continue to advance Council direction on applying an equity lens to corporate policies related to engagement, hiring, training and procurement equity. Based on direction from Council staff will summarize input and report back to Council in early 2020.

Respectfully submitted,

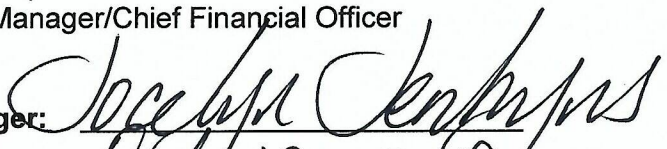


Mandi Sandhu
Head, Service Innovation & Improvement



Susanne Thompson
Deputy City Manager/Chief Financial Officer

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:


Date: Oct 10, 2019

List of Attachments

1. Workshop Presentation