



Committee of the Whole Report For the Meeting of January 16, 2020

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** January 10, 2019
From: Mandi Sandhu, Head of Service Innovation and Improvement
Subject: Community Equity Lens – Scope Options and Next Steps

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Direct staff to use the Council feedback from the equity workshop on equity values, guiding principles for framework development, equity considerations, and implementation considerations as a foundation for developing an equity lens along with further community input for the City of Victoria (Appendix A).
2. Approve Option #2 - Develop the equity framework within resources requested through the 2020 draft Financial Plan and supplemented with \$75,000 one-time funding to retain external expertise to address short-term capacity gaps.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In June 2019, Council directed staff 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*", as well as lead a workshop with Council on equity values.

In October 2019, Council provided staff with feedback on values related adopting an equity lens, as well as guiding principles for development and implementation of an equity framework for the City of Victoria. Core values articulated by Council included taking a social justice perspective to remove barriers, intersectionality (reflect multiple lived experiences), quality of life (health, happiness and satisfaction), and building a resilient and prosperous community that is inclusive and accessible for all. In addition, taking an intersectional approach will require consideration of a number of equity factors including:

- Ability - persons with disabilities
- Age - children, youth and seniors
- Citizenship Status - immigrants and refugees
- Education - level achieved
- Ethnic Origin and Race - includes Indigenous people and visible minorities
- Gender - male, female, transgender, non-binary, or gender-nonconforming
- Housing Security - tenure and precarity
- Income - absolute and relative level, living wage, wealth

- Religion - faith, belief systems, customs
- Sexual Orientation - lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and two-spirit

In addition to the feedback from Council, staff have investigated options and requirements to undertake new work related to the design, implementation and evaluation of adopting an equity lens and framework. Through the 2020 financial planning process, staff have requested three positions to support service improvement and performance measurement to support implementation of the as outlined in the Strategic Plan. These positions are integral to the development, implementation and evaluation of an equity framework, including training and working with staff across the organization. Given these are new positions that will take time to recruit, staff have also identified an additional one-time request of \$75,000 to retain short term external consulting support to move this initiative forward while the staffing capacity gap is addressed.

In the short term, staff have identified an opportunity for application of an equity lens to the 2021 budget process for new or enhanced programs and services (including user fee changes); efficiencies (changes that produce savings and maintain or improve service levels) and service level reductions.

This report also provides information on the initial direction from Council related to work that is progressing to advance equity considerations in hiring, staff training and professional development, procurement and civic engagement.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the outcomes of the October 17, 2019 Council workshop on adopting a community equity lens and seek direction on options for scope and pace to further this work in 2020, including financial implications.

BACKGROUND

On March 14, 2019, Council adopted the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan. The Plan includes a Declaration of Principles and Values Statement for “*Welcoming diversity and fostering a spirit of inclusion and equity in everything we do*”. At that time, staff did not receive direction to undertake specific actions related to advancing specific equity considerations in policy, programs and decision-making processes.

In June 2019, Council directed staff 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*” and to “*direct the City Manager to imbed these 4 principles ii, iii, iv, v for the city's emerging equity policies*”. Exploring application of equity concepts was also not included as part of the original staff work plan for 2019. Staff re-aligned existing work priorities in August of 2019 to focus on equity and shifted a number of work plan items to 2020.

As outlined in a staff report to the Committee of the Whole on October 17, 2019 regarding service delivery improvement and measurement resources contained in the 2020 Financial Plan as requested by Council, furthering basic work on formally adopting an equity approach in 2020 could be supported by these resources (3.0 FTE), if approved by Council.

On October 17, 2019, Council also participated in a workshop, led by staff and external consultants, to review equity definitions, concepts, approaches, and case studies, as well as provide feedback to staff on values and priorities around equity. Based on this workshop, Council approved the following motion on October 27, 2019:

1. Direct staff to report back in early 2020 with a summary of Council input, as well as 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.
3. Direct that the report from Councillor Dubow along with the other feedback from Council be referred to staff to inform the report back as noted in #1.

Recommendations from the memo from C. Dubow are contained in Attachment B and all concepts are implicitly addressed throughout this report.

ISSUES & ANALYSIS

The following section of this report provided a high-level summary of the feedback from the Council Workshop on equity, alignment of an equity within the Strategic Plan, as well as follow-up from previous Council direction received in June 2019.

Definition

The workshop in October 2019 was a valuable first step to introduce baseline equity concepts and approaches, as well as gain an understanding of the collective and individual views of members of Council related to equity priorities as summarized in Attachment A. Based on the discussion with Council and a review of practices in other local governments, the following 'working' definition of equity, which is founded in a social justice perspective, is proposed to be used to inform the development of an Equity Framework for the City of Victoria:

Equity is treating everyone fairly by acknowledging their unique situation and addressing systemic barriers. The aim of equity is to ensure that everyone has access to equal benefits and outcomes.

Two areas of Council feedback from the October workshop of note are related to terminology and organizational design. On terminology, "class" and "socio-economic status" have not been included in the equity considerations in the summary table in Attachment A for simplicity as these are generally a combination of multiple factors or variables such as experience, education level and income, but exclude other factors. To avoid overlapping concepts in the equity considerations, experiences of multiple conditions will be addressed through an intersectional approach which will look beyond class and status.

The second area of note during the Council workshop and also not summarized in Attachment A is related to organizational and reporting structure for staff involved with development, implementation and monitoring/reporting of an equity framework, as well as the potential 'clustering' of related positions, such as the recently approved position to support implementation of Accessibility priorities. Staff have investigated the various models such as Halifax, Lethbridge, Toronto and Vancouver as cited by individual Council members during the workshop, among others. Once resources are known through 2020 budget decision making process, the City Manager will make decisions on organizational structure, direct and functional reporting lines and position titles with a view to establishing how these positions can effectively achieve objectives related to equity, diversity and inclusion to meet Council objectives within City operations.

Alignment with Other Strategic Plan Initiatives

Through the analysis of the feedback provided by Council, staff have noted a number of areas where the development and implementation of an equity lens may impact other initiatives or recommended by staff to be considered through the development of an equity lens:

Equity Considerations Related to the Strategic Plan

The current Strategic Plan does not provide specific direction for staff to develop an equity lens or framework, but instead identifies a number of potential equity-seeking groups as areas of focus for 2019-2022. These include, but are not limited to, children, youth, seniors, renters, immigrants and refugees, and people with disabilities. The feedback from Council during the equity workshop reflected more broad considerations as outlined in Attachment A, and, as assessed by staff, is more reflective of the broad scope of considerations that may be included in an equity framework given learnings from other jurisdictions.

Strategic Plan projects and initiatives that are that are currently underway such as the development of an Accessibility Framework, Reconciliation Dialogues, Seniors' Strategy and the Youth Strategy will continue during the development of an equity framework in 2020, with a view to ensuring alignment among numerous streams of work.

Planned Capital Projects

There are a handful of action items related to major capital projects in the current Strategic Plan related to a new facility or upgraded amenities where general location has been pre-determined (eg. new central library, Quadra Village Community Centre). Staff are proceeding with implementing the Strategic Plan and under the assumption that these decisions regarding locations will not be revisited or delayed with the introduction of an equity lens, as was directed for the Crystal Pool and Wellness Centre Replacement Project, and noted in the equity implementation considerations from Council as to not have development of an equity policy and framework delay other planned work in Attachment A.

Neighbourhood Boundaries

The Strategic Plan has an action item to "resolve anomalies in neighbourhood boundaries" in 2020, which will be initiated through a Council workshop. This action is not expected to impact work related to the equity framework across the City which will look at distributional equity rather than neighbourhood boundaries, with a focus on the proximity of assets, programs and services, consistent with the approach taken in the Official Community Plan. Local area planning will continue to focus on areas of the city that are place-based (villages and transportation corridors that all people experience), rather than limited to neighbourhood boundaries.

Governance Review

Through the Council equity workshop, there was a common interest expressed in taking an intersectional approach to development of an equity lens, which is reflected in many of the case study examples as emerging practice. At the same time, the City currently has four Advisory Committees or Working Groups focused on Renters, Accessibility and Active Transportation, as well as plans that are either underway or will shortly be underway to establish a number of task forces, including, but not limited to community wellness, seniors, LGBTQi2S, welcoming task force (newcomers and people getting a new start in our community), among many others.

An area of caution noted by staff is that as these focused groups become established, the governance of applying an intersectional equity lens on programs and services may become unnecessarily complex and counter-productive to an overall community equity lens and objectives. With the upcoming Governance Review that is to start in 2021 staff are recommending that the

scope of new task forces be focused on specific actions in the short term (through 2021), and that a larger lens on the roles and responsibilities of Advisory Committees be addressed as part of this governance review, if desired by Council.

Beyond the current Advisory Committee structures, there may also be opportunities to formulate new mechanisms that the City may want to explore for specific policy decisions such as a peer review of staff equity impact statements related to budget changes, or new programs and initiatives that would benefit from additional assessment beyond a single factor or strategy being implemented that is targeted to one of many equity-seeking groups.

Council Reporting

Currently the report template for Committee of the Whole includes an Accessibility Impact Statement, as well as a more recently proposed 'Climate Lens Impact Statement' from staff in the fall of 2019. The current approach to specifically identify impacts to individual equity factors on a one-off basis may become problematic and could better be aligned with a broad intersectional approach to equity considerations. Options on an expansion of assessment of equity impacts to include other factors such as gender, age, income etc. through regular Council reporting will be further investigated by staff. This would include the trade-offs as part of decision making options.

Initiated Actions for Previous Direction

The following section of this report provides further analysis of the original direction received from Council in June 2019 to advance equity considerations in four areas of corporate policies guiding (1) hiring, (2) staff training and professional development, (3) procurement and (4) civic engagement. Based on this direction, the City Manager will issue a corporate policy as to how these items will be addressed as directed by Council to "*direct the City Manager to imbed these 4 principles...for the city's emerging equity policies*" in early 2020, with a view to a Corporate [Council] Policy once an Equity Framework has been adopted by the City.

1. Hiring

Employee Engagement Survey

The Employee Engagement Survey that will be launched in Q1 of 2020 through BC Stats will capture a snapshot of employee demographic information. Participation in the survey overall, as well as answering specific demographic questions by employees, is voluntary. The baseline data on the current profile of the City's workforce could be used to better understand how the current workforce reflects the community and further discussions on internal and external strategies. These will be developed later in 2020 once the baseline information and employee perceptions have been assessed.

Other strategies that could be employed that may impact hiring and are under consideration operationally (examples of procedural equity) include:

- Targeted recruitment and outreach to under-represented groups
- Training for managers and supervisors on inclusive hiring and onboarding
- Human resources Inclusion Lens checklist to identify and eliminate possible barriers in recruitment, hiring, promotion and retention of diverse staff
- Diversity and Inclusion training as "core" required training under the City's Corporate Learning Program
- Increase leadership knowledge of equity and diversity
- Establish a senior leadership committee responsible for oversight and implementation of diversity and inclusion strategies
- Measure and report on diversity demographics of workforce at regular intervals

2. Staff Training and Professional Development

Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) Training

Fundamental to introducing an equity lens is to ensure that staff at all levels of the organization undergo sensitivity training to understand the objectives of an equity approach. Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) is an analytical process used to assess how diverse groups of women, men and non-binary people may experience policies, programs and initiatives. The “plus” in GBA+ acknowledges that GBA+ goes beyond biological (sex) and socio-cultural (gender) differences. The tool acknowledges that people all have multiple identity factors that intersect to make us who we are; GBA+ also considers many other identity factors, such as race, ethnicity, religion, age, and mental or physical disability; it is an intersectional analytical process for examining how various intersecting identity factors impact the effectiveness of government initiatives.

This no cost interactive web-based certification training through the federal government is a common first step in training staff in a number of municipalities as broad sensitivity training to understand how equity plays a role in the design and implementation of government policies, plans and programs that can impact different individuals with different experiences. Starting in late Q1, an initial cohort of staff will be identified to complete the training, with additional cohorts to be added through the year.

In addition to GBA+, training and professional development related to Indigenous Cultural Safety Training is continuing through 2020.

Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion

The City of Victoria recently become an Employer Partner with the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI) which provides a number of benefits that will support City staff on our diversity journey. Benefits include a monthly newsletter that provides information about CCDI events and research; an e-library with over 1,000 documents containing Canadian-specific and international diversity and inclusion research, reports, toolkits and news; participation in educational webinars four times per month for all employees; and in-person events, including best-practice forums and Community of Practice events in 18 cities across Canada twice per year. Additionally, City staff are actively participating in a network with a number of major Canadian municipalities that participate in quarterly information sharing teleconferences related to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

3. Social Procurement

Work towards adopting and imbedding social procurement in the City through the Coastal Communities Social Procurement Initiative (CCSPI) is continuing. In November 2019, a workshop was held for City staff to highlight how day-to-day purchases from regular operations can support local businesses with business practices aligned with the City's goals for social procurement, sustainable waste management and climate leadership. This supports the City's Social Procurement pilot project to encourage staff to incorporate social procurement into day-to-day purchasing decisions. An update report on the CCSPI initiative will be brought to Council in February and will also seek direction on changes to the Purchasing Policy to add social procurement considerations.

4. Community Engagement

The current Strategic Plan includes direction to hold an annual Neighbourhoods Summit to consider best practices in placemaking, planning and engagement. An Engagement Summit has also been held annually since 2017 to continue to advance the City's work to address civic issues through an inclusive approach that harnesses the intelligence, energy and goodwill of the community. Given the high level of interest from some community groups and Council on adoption of an equity lens, a combined 2020 Neighbourhood and Engagement Summit is planned to take place in Q1 2020. Initial planning for the summit includes workshops and presentations on Victoria's equity make up, guest speaker(s) from other communities breaking new ground on equity in engagement and a community dialogue on how the City's Engagement Framework can be strengthened to build on inclusion, diversity and strategies to allow all residents to engage more fully on matters that affect their own lives and their community.

IMPACTS

Advancing work related to hiring, training, procurement and engagement [Summit] is proceeding in 2020. Pending budget decisions related to positions that have been proposed to support the development, implementation and monitoring of an equity framework, among other priority corporate service improvement and performance measurement initiatives, there is a spectrum of options available regarding the scope and pace at which new work can be undertaken to address equity. If these resources are not approved, approximately 0.2 FTE is currently allocated to this initiative through the delay of planned work to coordinate the advancement of the equity initiative in 2020.

The following section of this report outlines an initial anticipated scope for the design, development and implementation of an Equity Lens for the City of Victoria in 2020.

1. *Equity, Inclusion and Diversity Framework*

This scope of work includes common definitions, purpose, vision and values, goals, activities, roles and responsibilities, implementation plan, evaluation in the short, medium and long terms. Also included in this work is a staff guide over and above GBA+ Training on how to assess programs and services they deliver as well as assess proposed new or expanded services to include equity considerations.

2. *Equity, Inclusion and Diversity application to 2021 Financial Plan Process (Pilot on equity responsive budgeting)*

The 2021 financial planning process will begin in Q2 2020. Staff have identified the budget process as an opportunity to introduce "Equity Responsive Budgeting" which is based on the City of Toronto's recent approach to focus on equity impact analysis of changes in the operating budget to inform decision making. This impact analysis would be applied to programs and initiatives where there are:

- New or enhanced programs and services (including user fee changes)
- Efficiencies (changes that produce savings and maintain or improve service levels)
- Service level reductions

The focus of the impact analysis is anticipated to be outward (citizen-facing) focused and includes new policy or program areas directed by Council through the Strategic Plan. It is anticipated that internal-facing services (such as supplementary requests for administrative staff to maintain service levels) would be excluded. For the City of Victoria, staff are recommending that the threshold to undertake an assessment of the budget proposal be for initiatives with

budget requests over \$200,000. The outcome of this analysis would be provided to Council and the public as part of the Draft 2021 Financial Plan. Staff are considering the option of assembling a one-time community based “intersectional committee” to validate the initial staff equity assessment that would represent a diverse range of equity considerations.

3. *Equity, Inclusion and Diversity application 2022 Program Budget Process (Pilot with a limited scope in 2022)*

Staff have looked at other practices in terms of applying an equity lens to the on-going budget process development processes. Once staff in pre-identified program areas have common training and tools to understand and assess equity considerations the following program areas have been identified where an application of equity lens could be applied to program planning starting in 2021 with a pilot in 2-3 program areas for the 2022 Financial Plan.

As directed by Council through the October 2019 Equity Workshop to focus application of the equity considerations, below is an initial listing of potential areas where an equity lens could be applied. Considerations in developing this initial listing is that many program areas are based on safety, risk and condition assessment such as underground infrastructure and are therefore not included.

<p><u>Operating</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engagement - Public Art Installations - Placemaking and Public Realm improvements - My Great Neighbourhood Grant Program - Recreation Programs - Tennis Court and Sport Field Bookings - Youth Services and LIT Program - Human Resources 	<p><u>Capital</u></p> <p><i>Transportation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bus Shelter Installations - <p><i>Parks</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New Parks - Park Improvements and Maintenance - Sport Court and Playground Improvements - Urban Forest Master Plan 	<p><i>Street Infrastructure</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seasonal Animation - Countdown Signals and Audible Pedestrian Signal Installation - Surface Infrastructure Program <p><i>Facilities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community Centre and Public Washroom Improvements
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OPTIONS

The following options are proposed to Council as part of the 2020 Financial Plan deliberations. These options have slight variations in scope, pace and cost for the following short-term actions in 2020 and further described below:

Option Description	Deliverables	Risks	Additional Cost
Option 1: Develop Equity Framework with Staff Resources Requested in Financial Plan	This option is consistent with the original staff report on service improvement and measurement resources that were requested as part of the 2020 draft Financial Plan, whereby the three staff resources identified would have a portion of their	The main risk of this approach is around timelines required to hire into new positions which require the development of job descriptions, job evaluation to determine salary assignment, a 30 day review period by CUPE, advertising,	None

Option Description	Deliverables	Risks	Additional Cost
	annual workplans dedicated to supporting advancement of equity, diversity and inclusion across City departments.	recruitment and on-boarding, which is expected to take at least 4-6 months.	
Option 2: Develop Equity Framework with Resources Requested, Supplemented with Additional One-Time External Expertise to Address Short Term Gaps to Expedite Work (RECOMMENDED)	Given the anticipated time that will be required to retain in-house staff to undertake work related the City's emerging equity agenda, the allocation of one-time funding to retain additional external expertise to develop the equity framework would result in the draft Framework to be developed sooner than Option 1 (September versus December).	This option assumes that external consulting firms are responsive to a Request for Proposals and available to undertake work in an expedited timeframe. It also will require staff time to develop the RFP, evaluate proposals, and on-board the contractors.	This option supplements Option 1 with allocation of \$75,000 (one-time) for 2020.
Option 3: Develop Equity Framework with Resources Requested, Supplemented with Additional External Expertise to Address Short Term Gaps, as well as one new additional full-time position fully dedicated to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.	This option further expands on option two and adds an additional position that would be dedicated to the development, implementation and monitoring/evaluation of the equity program.	The impact of an additional position dedicated to this initiative may not result in a significant difference in deliverables in 2020 given the time required to hire staff, but rather strengthen internal capacity in future years by having in-house expertise.	This option would require both the \$75,000 one-time identified in option #2, as well as \$107,900 on-going for an additional Diversity and Inclusion Specialist (over and above the three staff resources already requested).

Accessibility Impact Statement

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

2019 – 2022 Strategic Plan

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”. The current 2019-2022 Strategic Plan does not identify development of an equity lens or framework as an action item. An amendment to the Strategic Plan would be appropriate given the current and anticipated future work on this initiative.

Impacts to Financial Plan

Depending on the option chosen by Council, there are different staffing and expenditure considerations as outlined in the options above for the 2020 Financial Plan. Impacts to the 2021 Budget will be brought forward by staff in the fall of 2020 pending Council direction.

Official Community Plan Consistency Statement

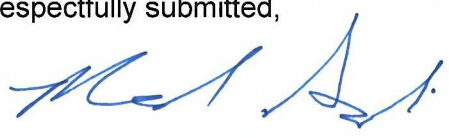
Social equity is explicitly addressed in the City of Victoria’s Official Community Plan (OCP) under ‘Community Well-Being’ to encourage a fair distribution of community services, social services, and facilities across the city, to support all parts of the population. The OCP also has equity principles,

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

Based on Council direction, staff will begin to retain the necessary internal and external resources and overall workplan to further develop a community equity lens for the City of Victoria.

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: Jan 10, 2020

List of Attachments

- A. Summary of Council Feedback
- B. Previous Council Direction