



## Committee of the Whole Report

### For the Meeting of March 12, 2020

---

**To:** Committee of the Whole **Date:** March 6, 2020  
**From:** Mandi Sandhu, Head of Corporate Initiatives  
**Subject:** Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

---

### RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive this report for information.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Through the 2020 budget deliberations that concluded at the end of January 2020, Council approved five new full-time equivalents (FTE) positions related to equity, diversity and inclusion. During the deliberations, Council acknowledged that the clustering of some of these positions would be beneficial to ensure an intersectional approach to equity and the application of an equity lens on decision making to consider the multiple factors that may impact an individual's experience.

Clustering positions related to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) as a citywide function is common in other local governments. A centralized EDI function enables synergies and coordination between City services and programs that may shift in focus over time, and assists to mitigate perceptions that the needs of particular equity seeking groups are being prioritized over others. As such, this report focuses on the establishment of an Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion with three staff functions (1) Policy and Strategy; (2) Capacity Building and (3) External Community Liaison. Additionally, one function related to social planning will be in the Community Planning Division and one function focused on recreation accessibility and inclusion will be in the Recreation Division.

Staff have begun the development of job descriptions, all of which will require job evaluations and CUPE review prior to advertising. This is expected to take four to six months. In the interim, a Request for Proposals is under development to start to advance the development of equity framework.

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to outline the functions of positions approved through the 2020 Financial Plan to support the design and implementation of equity related policies, plans, programs and services for the City of Victoria.

### BACKGROUND

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 to 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 to better understand lived experience requires consideration of a number of equity factors including ability, age, citizenship status, education, ethnic origin/race (includes Indigenous people and visible minorities), gender, income, religion and sexual orientation.

On January 16, 2020, staff brought forward a report to Council identifying estimated resources required to action the development of an equity lens and an equity framework. Through the 2020 budget deliberations that concluded on January 24, 2020, Council approved five new full-time equivalents (FTE) positions related to equity, diversity and inclusion, with specific focuses on accessibility, transgender inclusion, recreation programming, social planning and an equity specialist. However, at that time, staff also indicated that the focus of the positions as approved by Council were potentially too narrow given the broad spectrum of equity, diversity and inclusion considerations, as well as previous direction on taking an intersectional approach to consider the multiple factors that may impact an individual's experience. Based on this discussion, Council requested that staff report back on the functions of the new positions prior to initiating recruitment as follows:

*That Council authorize the following FTEs for 2020 and future years, as well as an one-time expenditure of \$75,000 for contracted services, and direct staff to report back by the end of Q1 in Open and Closed Meetings on options for completing and implementing the Equity Framework taking an intersectional approach, including the direction that initial priority of the Equity and Inclusion Coordinator is the implementation of the Trans Inclusion work, using the following new staff resources and / or existing resources, including draft job descriptions:*

- *Equity and Inclusion Coordinator - 1 FTE – \$107,900 (ongoing)*
- *Accessibility and Inclusion Recreation Role - 1 FTE – \$52,000 (ongoing)*
- *Accessibility Coordinator – 1 FTE – \$107,900 (ongoing)*
- *Social Planner – 1 FTE - \$125,111 (ongoing)*
- *Contracted Services - \$75,000 (one-time)*
- *That Council add another FTE to focus on Equity and Inclusion. \$108,000*

## **ISSUES & ANALYSIS**

The original 2020 budget requests from staff were based on previous Council direction related to specific reports on initiatives included in the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan, including the draft Accessibility Framework, the Transgender, Non-Binary, Two-Spirit (TNB2S+) Inclusion Plan, adoption of a service improvement function, and adoption of an equity framework. However, as noted by Council these positions as originally proposed are narrow in focus, and do not reflect the evolving feedback from Council as reflected in the Equity Workshop in October 2019.

Clustering positions related to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) as a centralized function is common in other local governments. An Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion enables synergies and coordination between initiatives or actions that may shift in focus over time, reflects the impact EDI initiatives have across City services and programs, and assists to mitigate perceptions that the needs of particular equity seeking groups are being prioritized over others. The mandate for the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is proposed as follows:

- Champion EDI as a fundamental philosophy and goal for the City of Victoria
- Coordinate an on-going internal Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Leadership Steering Committee and Staff Working Group (related to staffing/employment, workplace behaviour and respect, training and capacity building plans for all new and existing staff)
- Lead implementation coordination of the approved TNB2S+ Inclusion Plan and the Accessibility Framework
- Support Intersectional Advisory Committee(s) to provide advice and recommendations on new and/or improved policies, programs and services
- Work with supervisors and employees to advance training and understanding of equity, diversity and inclusion concepts at the individual and divisional levels based on program needs
- Ensure alignment of strategies, plans in support of EDI priorities and community needs
- Maintain community information and geo-spatial maps to inform assessments and decisions
- Advance work with community agencies, not-for-profit groups, and other levels of government to develop partnerships to further EDI priorities
- Guide departments in undertaking equity impact assessments for new or changed policies, programs and services where an equity lens is applicable to support Council decision-making
- Update the City's Equity Framework as required
- Report annually on City related EDI work

Critical to the role of the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion is to pro-actively work with departments on undertaking more comprehensive assessments of the trade-offs required to address equity considerations to support Council decision making. Currently, all reports, except those related to development applications which have a specific legislative scope, include the impact statements regarding the:

- Strategic Plan;
- Financial Plan;
- Accessibility and Inclusion; and
- Official Community Plan.

A recent staff report has suggested that a 'Climate Lens Impact Statement' be required for all Council reports requiring Council decisions. Staff are now recommending that a more holistic and comprehensive assessment be included in future Council reports, including climate impacts, to identify where equity considerations will require assessment of trade-offs between competing objectives. The intent of this approach is to better inform decisions made by Council in terms of the equity benefits to be achieved, as well as those that may not be realized given different options.

Instrumental to the role of the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion is to support Council decision making in terms of pre-determined trade-offs or balancing of interests. These trade-offs may include prioritization of Strategic Plan action items over one or another (such as social objectives over economic development), acknowledgement of additional cost to address equity considerations for accommodation or expanded scope, increased scope beyond linear focused reports on one lived experience contained in approved strategies over those that are under development (e.g. Accessibility Framework versus Seniors Strategy).

The application of an equity lens will impact all departments within the City – while the five equity-related functions are proposed to be embedded in three different departments, there is an expectation that these positions will be working toward common goals and outcomes for the corporation and community.

### **NEW POSITION FOCUS AREAS**

The proposed key duties and responsibilities of each new position is outlined below and has been developed based on an analysis of internal program and external community needs to advance the development and application of an equity lens and framework, as well as further anticipated actions to support equity, diversity and inclusion.

#### **1. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion - Policy & Strategy Function**

- Lead the citywide coordination of equity related activities, assessments and service reviews to ensure application of an equity lens
- Staff point of contact for new Intersectional Advisory Committee (pending Governance Review in 2021)
- Coordinate annual reporting on all EDI related strategies and plans (Equity Framework, Accessibility Framework, Trans Inclusion Plan, Welcoming Strategy, etc.)
- Monitor equity policy and program advancements in other municipalities, and establish a network of colleagues in other local government to share best practices and learnings
- Liaise and work with other levels of government (CRD, provincial and federal governments) as well as not-for profit organizations such as the CCDI
- Update the Equity Framework as required

#### **2. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion – Capacity Building Function**

- Develop and deliver training to staff, including a focus on a common understanding of equity-related concepts and principles across City departments and at different levels of the organization
- Explore and promote innovative methods for learning and staff development
- Support internal research, data gathering and mapping of current and anticipated future community profile
- Support policy development, audit function related to Council reports and equity impact statements and assessments

#### **3. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion – External Community Liaison Function\***

- Work with TNB2S+ communities to advance objectives of the approved plan
- Work with community partners to advance actions within the Accessibility Framework
- Establish partnerships to advance equity, diversity related initiatives with community groups
- Work with partners to leverage funding to support community groups in advancing EDI priorities
- Coordinate responses to external applications for duty to accommodate and other issues as a one window approach.

*\* This function is separate from the liaison role of the Neighbourhoods Team with Neighbourhood Community Associations.*

#### **4. Social Planning Function**

Social planning is about improving the social well-being of a community. Unlike other forms of urban planning that focus on the physical or environmental characteristics of a city, social

planning focuses on the people. Many municipalities in BC include social planning functions that are responsible for undertaking development of social policies, strategies, research and analysis, with the objective of achieving healthy and equitable communities. A social planning function at the City of Victoria could undertake the following:

- Provide social planning advice, expertise and guidance, conduct research, analysis and engagement, and develop policy to support current and emerging initiatives and actions, which may include:
  - o 2019-2026 Housing Strategy Actions
    - Family Housing Policy – Child and Youth Friendly City social policy
    - Barrier-free Housing and Universal Design
    - Intergenerational Housing
    - Faith-based Housing
    - Indigenous Housing Working Group
    - Co-op, Co-housing and Land Trusts
    - Inclusive Housing
  - o Seniors Strategy implementation
  - o Childcare Strategy implementation
  - o Homelessness initiatives including support to the Housing Action Response Team and the Pandora Task Force
  - o Island Health Integrated Health Services Research project
  - o TNB2S+ Inclusion Plan
  - o Community Well-being Task Force
- Support the application of an equity lens in all housing strategy work and local area planning
- Work within the Community Planning Division and closely with the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion on an on-going basis
- Respond to and manage emerging social issues in municipal jurisdiction

## **5. Recreation Accessibility and Inclusion Function**

- This function was previously provided by *Recreation Integration Victoria* and was supported by the City through a contribution to that organization. This organization is no longer providing this function, and as such, the new staff resource approved for the Recreation division will fill this gap.
- Responsible for long-term program planning, coordination with stakeholders, execution of all accessibility and inclusion services and practices, as well as reporting on progress.
- Work within the Recreation Division and work closely with the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion on an on-going basis.

Outside of the staff resources outlined above, \$75,000 one-time funding was also approved in the 2020 Financial Plan. The bulk of these resources are to be used to retain external consulting expertise to bridge the resource gap to advance the development of an equity framework while recruitment of staff takes place, as well to further advance community profile mapping, staff training and application of equity considerations for the 2021 Financial Plan. A request for proposals is being advertised with award being anticipated in April 2020.

### *Accessibility Impact Statement*

This report addresses how staff resources will be allocated to support implementation of the Accessibility Framework upon its finalization, as well as other related inclusion functions. It is expected that all three new positions that will comprise of the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion will support the implementation of the framework along with departments and community partners.

### *2019 – 2022 Strategic Plan*

This report directly responds to the recently added new action item for 2020 to “Develop an Equity Framework” under the Strategic Objective of #1 Good Governance and Civic Engagement.

### *Impacts to Financial Plan*

Funding for the positions described in this report is included as on-going operational funding in the 2020 Financial Plan.

### *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**

Work is underway to retain external resources to focus on the development of the City's framework as the evaluation of job descriptions and recruitment of qualified candidates for the four new positions created in early 2020 is expected to take four to six months.

Respectfully submitted,



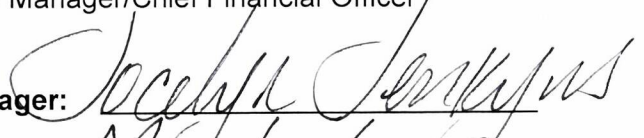
Mandi Sandhu  
Head of Corporate Initiatives



Susanne Thompson  
Deputy City Manager/Chief Financial Officer

**Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:**

**Date:**

  
March 6, 2020