



Meeting Date: March 6, 2024

Prepared By: Tiffany Farrell, Director of Corporate Services

Report No: CPS-13-2024

Subject: Diversity Equity and Inclusion 2023 Report

Recommendation:

THAT Report CPS-13-2024, re: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion 2023 be received for information.

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to bring forward the 2023 update on actions completed with respect to the Municipality's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy.

Background:

Equality and inclusion are fundamental human rights for every individual, as prescribed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Throughout the Municipality of Middlesex Centre, we support diversity, equity and inclusion in all of its forms, and reject discrimination based on age, disability, economic circumstance, marital and family status, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and gender expression, race, religion, and sexual orientation, among others.

Inclusion, equity and diversity are shared responsibilities. Achieving diversity requires a commitment to human dignity, equity, and inclusion that must find full expression in our organizational culture, values, norms and behaviours.

Middlesex Centre developed its first Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy and supporting strategy in 2022. In 2023, the Municipality updated the policy. As we continue through this journey will we continue to learn, grow and improve along the way. The goal is to have diversity, equity and inclusion embedded into everything we do.

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy adheres to the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Canadian Human Rights Act, the Employment Equity Act and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. The policy was implemented according to the following principles:

- 1) All employees, customers and volunteers of the Municipality of Middlesex Centre will be treated with dignity and respect.
- 2) The Municipality of Middlesex Centre will identify, prevent and remove barriers to services, programs and opportunities.
- 3) Discrimination is prohibited in the workplace, in the provision of goods, services, and facilities to the public, and in the administration of contracts as defined by human rights legislation.
- 4) Municipality of Middlesex Centre facilities will strive to be safe, welcoming and inclusive for diverse staff and members of the community.
- 5) Municipality of Middlesex Centre will create an inclusive organizational culture where diverse employees feel valued for their knowledge and skills.
- 6) Municipality of Middlesex Centre will make all reasonable efforts to accommodate employees in the workplace as stipulated under the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, the Employment Standards Act, and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.
- 7) Municipality of Middlesex Centre will strive to create an environment where personal accountability and self-awareness are expected, and harassment and discrimination are not tolerated.
- 8) Principles of equity and inclusion will be embedded in the Municipality of Middlesex Centre's education, training and professional development for staff, local board volunteers, and Council.
- 9) Public feedback processes will identify, prevent and remove barriers to participation to ensure that diverse communities and individuals have opportunities to be meaningfully engaged.
- 10) The Municipality of Middlesex Centre will report on progress annually.

Specifically, each year the Director of Corporate Services will prepare a brief report to Council outlining:

- training provided to staff under this policy,
- high-level accomplishments towards initiatives in support of this policy,
- any concerns raised under this policy, and
- any new legislation, programs or initiatives related to diversity, equity and inclusion of which Council should be aware.

Analysis:

The following outlines the strategic initiatives that Middlesex Centre completed in 2023 towards achieving the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy goals.

Strategic Area: Inclusive Culture

Aims:

- Ensure all Members of Council, local volunteer boards, and staff are aware of their responsibilities to protect human rights and remove discrimination and racism.
- Promote respect, understanding and appreciation of diversity and inclusion.
- Communicate about the values of community inclusion.

Initiatives	Responsibility	Measure(s) of Success
Provide training to staff on the importance of growing a diverse and inclusive community through online training module.	Human Resources	All staff and Council completed training courses through the municipality's learning management software, specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrating Respect at Work Training• Human Rights in Canada Training• Gender and Sexual Diversity Training
As they come up for review or as new programs are added, review all municipal policies, programs, services, staffing and other actions with an equity and inclusion lens.	Senior Management Team Human Resources	This was completed in 2023, as all human resources policies were reviewed and updated.

Strategic Area: Communication

Aim:

- Ensure open and accessible communication among employees and between the municipality, residents and other stakeholders.

Initiatives	Responsibility	Measure(s) of Success
Use simplified English, symbology, and action-oriented visuals in official municipal communications and meeting materials.	Communications Administrative Services	Updated and new materials are reviewed against this lens, with an understanding that some items (public meeting notices, for instance) may have legislative or technical limitations to being in simplified English.

Initiatives	Responsibility	Measure(s) of Success
Ensure all municipal website information is accessible, easy-to-navigate, and up to date.	Communications	Website content and navigation is reviewed regularly for easy-of-use and readability. Middlesex Centre documents added to the site meet AODA accessibility requirements.
Ensure diversity and inclusiveness is reflected in municipal publications (both written and visual elements).	Communications	Where images of people are used in a campaign, multiple images are used to reflect diversity in the target audience.
Continue to learn from and share with other municipalities.	Senior Management Team Human Resources Communications	Diversity, equity and inclusion is a discussion point at a Senior Management Team meeting at least once a quarter.

Strategic Area: Accessibility

Aims:

- Ensure that all residents are treated respectfully and have access to all facilities and services in the municipality.
- Recognize and identify special needs of all residents, including but not limited to, the areas of planning and development, housing, recreation, public works and utilities.
- Identify incidents of racism, discrimination and exclusion in the community and take action to address these incidents.

Initiatives	Responsibility	Measure(s) of Success
Continue to encourage housing development that enables people with different physical, social, economic and cultural characteristics be able to obtain housing in the Municipality of that meets their needs.	Council Senior Management Team	Discussions in Council meetings, specifically the Official Plan (OP) and Zoning Bylaw discussions in 2023. Through the Municipality's OP review, policies have been updated to enable accessory residential units to allow residents the option to age-in-place, for example granny flats. Additionally, staff are engaging with the development community about creating a variety of housing to encourage all people to live in the community.

Initiatives	Responsibility	Measure(s) of Success
<p>Continue to build parks, sports centres and recreational areas to barrier free design and use universal design.</p>	<p>Community Services</p>	<p>Accessibility criteria are incorporated into new designs as required under AODA (or higher). Specific projects in 2023 included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rick Hansen accreditation of the Wellness Centre • Senior Active Living Centre in Ilderton • Awarded grant funds to open a new Youth Centre in Komoka (expected 2024) • Westbrook Park playground features new accessible play structure • Poplar Hill accessible washroom • Dedicated accessible parking spaces at the Denfield Park parking lot, and new asphalt accessible trail leading from parking lot to playground • Dedicated accessible parking spaces at Weldon Park to support playground and washroom • Dedicated accessible parking space at Heritage Park to support new universal washroom • New accessible entrance doors at the Ilderton Community Centre • New automatic accessible door installed on Delaware Community Centre to support the Middlesex Centre Archives
<p>Continue to work with the County of Middlesex to review and develop accessibility plans for municipal facilities, services and procedures to address existing barriers and gaps, including providing input on the development of Multi-Year Accessibility Plans.</p>	<p>Municipal Clerk</p>	<p>Attendance at County meetings and completion of assigned tasks.</p>
<p>Provide annual reporting in accordance with AODA legislation, to demonstrate ongoing accessibility related achievements. Provide annual report on these strategies to Council.</p>	<p>Municipal Clerk Director of Corporate Services</p>	<p>Completion of annual reports by March of the following year.</p>

Strategic Area: Hiring and Employee Retention

Aims:

- Continue to employ on the basis of job requirements and in keeping with Human Rights legislation, selecting people to roles based on their qualifications, skills and experience.
- Ensure municipal recruitment, deployment, reward and development practices, and approach to working arrangements, are designed to attract and retain diverse talent and to accommodate individual needs at different career development and life stages.

Initiatives	Responsibility	Measure(s) of Success
Continue to develop policies that support staff through different life stages (for example, allow for flexible hours, work from home were possible to support employees with family members requiring support).	Senior Management Team Human Resources	Council approved updated and new human resources policies in Q4 2023. New policies included: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Volunteer Policy• Human Rights Policy• Protected Leaves Policy• Compensation Administration Policy Council approved an updated Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy on November 1, 2023.
Actively encourage the use of inclusive language among staff.	Managers All Staff	Managers presented and discussed this topic at one staff meeting in 2023.
To undertake a review of the compensation program to ensure that it is internally equitable and pay equity compliant.	CAO Director of Corporate Services Human Resources	Middlesex Centre hired Pesce & Associates Human Resource Consultants to complete this review in 2023. The final project was approved by Council on July 5, 2023.

Strategic Area: Leadership in the Community

Aim:

- Provide support for cultural projects, programs, events and organizations so that the cultural diversity and heritage is represented in a fair, inclusive and equitable manner.

Initiatives	Responsibility	Measure(s) of Success
Encourage and be welcoming to groups celebrating cultural events and inclusivity.	Council Senior Management Team Community Services	Support of Mayor and Council at events when invited (and as appropriate). Groups directed to existing funding supports (e.g., Council Grants, etc.) to offset event costs.
Explore opportunities to add elements of diversity and inclusivity at municipal buildings and properties (e.g., flags of various cultural groups, rainbow crosswalks, etc.).	Senior Management Team	Middlesex Centre trained more than 75% of front-facing staff on dementia and supporting those living with dementia and their caregivers in preparation for being recognized as Dementia Friendly Community Supporter in 2024.

Concerns and Legislative Changes

There were no concerns raised by staff in 2023. There was no changing legislation impacting municipal policy.

Activities in 2024

Staff will continue with accomplishing strategic initiatives related to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and will continue to update the strategy document in 2024.

Staff will be exploring the following initiatives in 2024 for implementation in 2024:

- Review employee benefits with a diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) lens:
 - Conduct a staff survey.
 - Work with Selectpath to review benefits that relate to DEI to other employers.
- Have Middlesex Centre become Rainbow Registered by completing the accreditation program.

Staff will be exploring the following initiatives in 2024 for implementation in 2025:

- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Working Group.
- Joining the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities.

Strategic Plan:

This matter aligns with following strategic priorities:

- Priority 5 – Responsive Municipal Government.

The process of reporting on this policy and the actions within responds to:

- Responsive Government - Objective 5.1 – Enhance Customer Service
- Responsive Government - Objective 5.2 – Foster a culture of mutual trust and respect within Council and between Council and staff
 - By reinforcing a common purpose among Council members and promoting teamwork between Council and staff.
 - By encouraging training and professional development for Council members and staff.
- Responsive Government - Objective 5.3 – Foster a culture of innovation, continuous improvement, and cost-effective service delivery.
 - By sharing information and gathering input, continuing our timely and effective communication to the public.
 - By reviewing and enhancing our processes
- Responsive Government - Objective 5.5 – Work with other levels of government, health organizations, and community groups to address complex societal problems.

Attachments:

N/A