



**Meeting Date:** March 12, 2025

**Prepared By:** Tiffany Farrell, Director of Corporate Services

**Report No:** CPS-13-2025

**Subject:** Diversity Equity and Inclusion 2024 Report

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**Recommendation:**

THAT Report CPS-13-2025, re: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion 2024 be received for information only.

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this report is to bring forward the 2024 update on actions completed with respect to the Municipality's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy.

**Background:**

Throughout the Municipality of Middlesex Centre, we support diversity, equity and inclusion in all 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 we will 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 2024 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	<p>In 2024, all new team members completed training courses through the municipality's learning management software, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Workplace Diversity and Including Training</li><li>• Gender and Sexual Diversity Training</li></ul> <p><i>All existing staff would have completed the training in 2023.</i></p> <p>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.</p>
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 2024, as all information technology policies and some 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.
Ensure all municipal website information is accessible, easy-to-navigate, and up to date.	Communications	Website content and navigation are reviewed regularly for ease-of-use and readability. Middlesex Centre documents added to the site meet AODA accessibility requirements.
Ensuring 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 year.

## 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	Through the Municipality's Official Plan Review, policies have been updated to enable accessory residential units (for example, granny flats) to allow residents the option to age-in-place.  Additionally, staff are engaging with the development community about creating a variety of housing to provide opportunities for all people to live in the community.
Continue to build parks, sports centres and recreational areas to barrier free design and use universal design.	Community Services	Accessibility criteria are incorporated into new designs as required under AODA (or higher). Specific projects in 2024 included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior Active Living Centre in Komoka</li> <li>• Youth Centre in Komoka</li> <li>• Ilderton Arena upgrades (accessibility component)</li> </ul>
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.	Manager of Legislative Services/Municipal Clerk	Attendance at County meetings and completion of assigned tasks.
Provide annual reporting in accordance with AODA legislation, to demonstrate ongoing accessibility related achievements.  Provide annual report on these strategies to Council.	Manager of Legislative Services/Municipal Clerk  Director of Corporate Services	Completion of annual reports by March of the following year.

Initiatives	Responsibility	Measure(s) of Success
Continue to remove barriers for residents to access recreational programming in the Municipality.	Community Services	The <a href="#">Affordable Access to Recreation Program</a> assists residents whose financial situations limit them from participating in recreation programs offered by the Municipality of Middlesex Centre. The program provides successful applicants with a recreation program credit of \$300, which is valid for one year. Residents may apply for and receive the credit once per year.

## Strategic Area: Hiring and Employee Retention

### Aims:

- Continue to employ based on 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, allowing for flexible hours, work from home were possible to support employees with family members requiring support).	Senior Management Team Human Resources	No new policies were implemented in 2024.  Council approved updated and new human resources policies in 2023. New policies included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Volunteer Policy</li><li>• Human Rights Policy</li><li>• Protected Leaves Policy</li><li>• Compensation Administration Policy</li><li>• Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy</li></ul>
Actively encourage the use of inclusive language among staff.	Managers All Staff	Managers presented and discussed this topic at one staff meeting in 2024.
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.
To undertake a review of the employee benefits program to ensure that it is internally equitable and reviewed with a DEI lens.	Director of Corporate Services Human Resources	Middlesex Centre worked with SelectPath to complete this review in 2024. The final project was approved by Council on June 5, 2024.

## 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	At the renovated municipal office, staff have added a universal washroom, two gender neutral washrooms, accessible door operators and an accessible ramp to new council horseshoe.

## Concerns and Legislative Changes

There were no concerns raised by staff in 2024. There was no changing legislation impacting municipal policy.

## Activities in 2025

Staff will continue with accomplishing strategic initiatives related to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and will continue to update the strategy document in 2025.

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

- Staff are looking at new cultural sensitivity training opportunities.
- Staff are looking into introducing new technology (chat bot) that will augment our customer service options for those that wish to use it.

Staff will be exploring the following initiatives in 2025 for implementation in 2026:

- Have Middlesex Centre become Rainbow Registered by completing the accreditation program.
- Establishing a 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