

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion plan focused on reflecting Aurora community

Aurora's Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Master Plan, one which focuses on the workplace at Town Hall, is up for consideration this week and, if approved, will ensure municipal decision-making reflects and respects the diversity and the community we serve.

That is the message being delivered by Doug Nadorozny, CEO for the Town of Aurora.

His goal, he says in the draft plan, is to build and maintain a workforce that is talented, diverse and committed to fostering a safe, fair and inclusive workplace and municipal administration.

The vision is to support diversity in the programs and services we offer our citizens and build a culture that enhances, values and capitalizes on the diversity in our workforce.

We reached one conclusion: we must and can do more, said Mr. Nadorozny. This Strategic Action Plan is a key step in that process. It is organized around eight strategic goals: commitment from the top, DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) recruitment, employee retention, training and development, marketing and communications, strategic DEI-focused partnerships, data collection and accountability.

Our high-level goals are augmented by actionable steps that provide a clear map forward for the municipality. Internally, the plan further integrates diversity, equity and inclusion into our hiring, training and career development programs. It calls on leaders at all levels of the organization to develop operational plans reflective of their current DEI performance and business realities and will hold them accountable for advancing their plans and achieving results.

One priority in the plan is to recruit, hire and develop a workforce which reflects Aurora as a community. This, the report states, will be carried out by optimizing experiences throughout an employee's career.

If the plan is ratified by ensuring equal opportunity practices are consistent and strive to close representation gaps on all levels.

As we implement new technology to digitize our recruitment process, we will ensure that DEI requirements are built into the process so that we can conduct blind evaluations without regard for gender, name or place of origin.

Hiring panels will also be planned to ensure members are diverse and trained to prevent unconscious bias.

Where possible, the hiring panel will include one female member and to the extent racialized persons, reads the plan. Members of panels will be trained on unconscious bias and making decisions based on facts and merit and not gut feelings.

For potential new positions that might come on the job market, efforts will be made to ensure the language and images used in such posts are inclusive, while employees will be engaged to achieve the goals of the plan.

We will invest in DEI training programs that help every employee to show up each day without fear of being their true selves, the plan promises. This will foster higher degrees of engagement, productivity and innovation that contribute to increased employee satisfaction. This, in turn, will translate to a better service.

Such training will include providing education for management and staff on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights and anti-racism.

Should Council endorse the recommendations in the plan at this week's General Committee meeting and ratify their decision this

coming Tuesday, staff will present the draft plan further to the Town's Anti-Black Racism and Anti-Racism Task force for their review and input.

By Brock Weir Editor Local Journalism Initiative Reporter