

June 5, 2006

To: Policy and Finance Committee

From: Councillor Joe Mihevc  
Chair, Roundtable on Access, Equity and Human Rights

Subject: Utilization of an equity lens and an equity impact statement

Purpose:

To present the results of the project undertaken by the Roundtable on Access Equity and Human Rights to develop an “equity lens” and an “equity impact statement “ as tools for the implementation of access and equity best practices across the City of Toronto

Recommendations:

The Roundtable on Access Equity and Human Rights recommends that:

- (1) City Council endorse the utilization of an “equity lens” as outlined in Appendix One and the inclusion of an equity impact statement in reports to Council; and
- (2) the City Manager be requested to utilize these tools for a six month trial basis and report back to Council on the results; and
- (3) the appropriate City Officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

**Context:**

In March 2004, Toronto City Council established a Roundtable on Access, Equity and Human Rights to advise the Mayor and City Council on the elimination of the barriers faced by human rights protected groups and to ensure that the contributions, interests and needs of all sectors of Toronto’s diverse population are reflected in the City’s mission, operations and service delivery. (Policy and Finance Report 2, Clause 5)

At its November/December 2004 meeting, Toronto City Council approved the membership and the workplan of the Roundtable. The membership of the Roundtable is multi-sectoral and includes representation from Toronto's diverse communities. The workplan approved by Council identified a number of specific projects as well as requesting advice on strategies and actions required to achieve the City's access, equity and human rights objectives as stated and approved by Council including those in the Report of the Task Force on Community Access and Equity (1999) and the Plan of Action for the Elimination of Racism and Discrimination (2003). (Policy and Finance Committee Report 9 Clause 57)

This report addresses the Council's request for reports on two projects in the workplan.

- “(a) a report to the Mayor and Council regarding a tool/guidelines for integrating a gender based, anti-racist, and anti-poverty analysis of the City's budget, policies, services and programs. The report will recommend specific guidelines and timetables for the application of this tool to the budget, policies and guidelines to City departments, agencies, boards and commissions. A working group of the Roundtable will develop and test the analytical tool against a representative sample of budget submissions, policies, services and programs, to assess its utility, prior to recommending the tool to Council;
- (b) a report to the Mayor and Council regarding a strengthened corporate assessment and monitoring structure which would ensure that departments, agencies, boards and commissions are held accountable for access, equity and human rights goals, actions and results and facilitate objective assessment of the City's progress.”

This report also incorporates recommendation #74 from the Task Force on Community Access and Equity which recommended the introduction of an equity impact statement in reports to Council. (Policy and Finance Report 11, Clause 1, December 1999.)

At its January-February 2006, meeting Toronto City Council approved the status report from the Roundtable on the implementation of its workplan. (Policy and Finance Report 1, Clause 22).

### **Development of the Equity Lens**

At its organizational meeting in February 2005, the Roundtable established a working group from among its members to focus on the development of an “equity lens” as a tool to be used by Council and the Toronto Public Service to identify and remove barriers and reinforce best practices in the planning, development and evaluation of policies, services and programs.

A draft equity lens was considered by the Roundtable in November, 2005 and staff of the City's InterDivisional Staff Team on Access Equity and Human Rights (IDST) were asked to field test its use and to report back to the Roundtable.

The equity lens was developed as a series of questions which could be used to carry out the following functions: Diagnosis, Measurement, Evaluation, and Identifying and Celebrating

Accomplishments. Appendix One presents the proposed equity lens and Appendix Two provides the draft equity lens used during the testing process.

### **Role of the InterDivisional Staff Team on Access Equity and Human Rights (IDST)**

The InterDivisional Staff Team (IDST) on Access and Equity is made up of representatives appointed by Division Heads to coordinate the planning and reporting of access and equity action plans and its work is facilitated by staff of Diversity Management and Community Engagement in the City Manager's Office as recommended by the Auditor General's report "that the Diversity Management and Community Engagement Unit lead and facilitate a corporate access and equity planning process that involves departmental representatives, the new Roundtable on Access, Equity and Human Rights, and other advisory committees on access and equity related matters". (Audit Committee, Report No. 3, Clause 1, May 2004)

### **Field Test of the Equity Lens**

Five City Divisions field tested the equity lens in specific programs. Details of the programs selected for testing are outlined in Appendix Three.

1. Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

*Study on customer complaints to the Professional Standards Unit*

2. Human Resources (HR)

*Summer student recruitment excluding Recreation, Culture and Tourism positions*

3. Municipal Licensing and Standards (MLS),

*Accessible taxicab owner/driver courses*

4. Parks, Forestry and Recreation (PFR)

*Community consultations*

5. Public Health (PH).

*Local health committees*

### **Results of the equity lens field test**

The results of testing were provided to the February and April 2006 meetings of the IDST. The experience in the testing period identified the need for the test to use of clear language and a need for staff orientation. Appendix Four provides details on the test results and will assist with developing the approach to implementation.

### **Action taken by the Roundtable on the results of the equity lens field test**

Test results on the equity lens were reported to the April 2006 meeting of the Roundtable on Access, Equity and Human Rights.

The Roundtable requested the Chair to report the results to Council with the recommendation that the equity lens be used by the Toronto Public Service. The Roundtable also requested that the equity lens be applied to Council reports an equity impact statement.

### Summary

The proposed equity lens has been developed through an extensive process which involved a task group established by the Roundtable and the Roundtable. The lens has been reviewed at meetings of the city staff serving on IDST and has been shared with staff working on the Meeting Management Initiative. The lens has been tested in a sample of programs and refined for further use.

Testing of the equity lens has shown that it can be an effective tool for ensuring on-going integration of access and equity best practices in the City of Toronto. The introduction of an equity impact statement based on the application of the equity lens provides a mechanism for including equity considerations in the decision-making process of City Council.

Application of the equity lens continues to place the City of Toronto in a leadership position on access, equity and human rights issues as it works to provide services to the changing composition of the diverse communities who live and work in the City of Toronto.

Councillor Joe Mihevc  
Chair, Roundtable on Access, Equity and Human Rights

### **Attachments:**

Appendix One: Equity Lens  
Appendix Two: Draft Equity Lens used during the testing process  
Appendix Three: Programs which were tested  
Appendix Four: Summary of test results

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## **APPENDIX 1 - Equity lens**

### **Recommended for use by the Roundtable on Access, Equity and Human Rights April, 2006.**

#### What is an equity lens

Equity means equitable outcomes for all. It requires the removal of systemic barriers and accommodation of differences whereby individuals and groups can benefit equally. Different treatment, rather than treating everyone the same, is necessary to obtain equal results. For example, providing language translation, sign language interpretation, real time captioning and attendant care at public meetings enables residents from different language groups and residents with different abilities to participate in the City's decision-making process.

The equity lens was developed as a tool to be used by Council and the Toronto Public Service to identify and remove barriers and reinforce best practices in the planning, development and evaluation of policies, services and programs. The tool has four functions: Diagnosis, Measurement, Evaluation, and Identifying and Celebrating accomplishments.

Diagnosis – For a new policy or program, the equity lens helps to detect the impact on diverse individuals and groups, and identify barriers and appropriate accommodation to address barrier elimination.

Measurement – For an existing policy and program, it helps to measure whether it eliminates barriers and benefits equitably diverse individuals and groups.

Evaluation – It identifies strengths and areas for improvement and helps to find equitable solutions.

Identifying and celebrating accomplishments – It identifies “best practices” and “milestones” that can be replicated to build upon original successes.

The “equity lens” utilizes these questions:

1. How did you identify the barriers faced by diverse groups and assess the impact of the policy/program on them? What diverse groups are impacted by the identified barriers?

(Examples of identifying barriers and assessing impact – consultation, research, collection of data on gender, race and other characteristics, outreach, field work, etc.)

2. How did you reduce or remove the barriers? What changes have you made to the policy/program so that the diverse groups will benefit from the policy/program? What human and budgetary resources have been identified or allocated?

(Examples of barrier reduction and proactive strategies – language translation, accessible location, diversity training, hiring and retention of diverse staff, designated accessibility

planner, integrating community input into policy/program, special program, advocacy, etc.)

3. How do you measure the results of the policy/program to see if it works to benefit diverse groups?

(Examples – statistics on the distribution of resources, analysis of disaggregate data, improvement in specific areas, satisfaction with policy/program results, etc.)

## **APPENDIX TWO – Draft Equity lens used during the testing process (November 2005)**

### ***Council reference***

Council established a Roundtable on Access, Equity and Human Rights November/December, 2004. The workplan set by Council for the Roundtable included the development of “a tool/guidelines for integrating a gender based, anti-racist and anti-poverty analysis”. (Policy and Finance Report 9, Clause 57, November 30, December 1 & 2, 2004).

### ***City of Toronto - Vision Statement on Access, Equity and Diversity***

The proposed “tool” or “equity lens” is based on the vision statement approved by Council as part of Council’s Plan of Action for the elimination of racism and discrimination, 2003 and Council’s Action Plan on Access, Equity and Human Rights, 1999.

*“Diverse communities and groups make up the population of Toronto. The City of Toronto values the contributions made by all its people and believes that the diversity among its people has strengthened Toronto.*

*The City recognizes the dignity and worth of all people by equitably treating communities and employees, fairly providing services, by consulting with communities and making sure everyone can participate in decision-making.*

*The City recognizes the unique status and cultural diversity of the Aboriginal communities and their right to self-determination.*

*The City recognizes the barriers of discrimination and disadvantage faced by human rights protected groups.*

*To address this, the City will create an environment of equality in the government and in the community for all people regardless of their race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, disability, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, same sex partnership, age, marital status, family status, immigrant status, receipt of public assistance, political affiliation, religious affiliation, level of literacy, language and/or socio-economic status.*

*The City of Toronto will implement positive changes in its workforce and communities to achieve access and equality of outcomes for all residents and to create a harmonious environment free from discrimination, harassment and hate.”*

### ***What is an equity lens***

An equity lens is a tool for analysis, planning, decision-making and evaluation.

- **Diagnosis** – It can be used to analyze the impact of the design and implementation of policies or programs on diverse individuals and groups and to identify appropriate accommodation to address barrier elimination.
- **Measurement** – It can be used to measure whether policies and programs distribute resources and benefits equitably among diverse individuals and groups.

- **Monitoring and evaluation** – It can identify strengths and areas for improvement and helps to build equitable solutions. This includes the establishment and maintenance of all service planning and human resource data bases.
- **Identifying and celebrating accomplishments** - An effective monitoring and evaluation system will identify “best practices” and “milestones” that can be replicated to build upon original successes.

### ***Application of an equity lens***

The equity lens is intended to address the barriers faced by human rights protected groups referenced in the City’s non-discrimination policy and referenced in the Vision Statement on Access, Equity and Diversity (outlined above) and Human Rights Policy.

The equity lens can be used to address barriers faced by a specific group, specific issues or groups which experience multiple barriers or have intersections among identities. For instance, the Employment Equity Policy’s designated groups are Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, racial minorities and women. Individuals and groups also have intersecting identities, such as women who may also be Aboriginal or have immigrant and/or racialized backgrounds.

Questions to ask in applying the equity lens are:

1. What issues/concerns are being addressed by the policy or program? What impact would the proposed policy/program have on diverse groups? (Please refer to human rights protected groups referenced in the Vision Statement on Access, Equity and Diversity outlined above)
2. How are data and/or consultations with these diverse groups used in the design and/or implementation of the policy or program?
3. What policy or program implementation guidelines, including special measures and programs, are in place to ensure that outcomes benefit the identified groups?
4. What indicators will be or have been developed to show that outcomes benefit identified groups?

### ***Integrating an equity lens***

It is proposed that strategies and tools be developed and implemented to integrate the equity analysis in City business and practices. Examples are:

- The inclusion of an “equity impact statement” in reports to Standing Committees and Council
- The provision of resource materials on the equity lens to City employees
- Establishment of discussion groups and learning circles on the equity lens and related issues for City employees.

### **APPENDIX THREE – Description of projects/programs participating in the field testing.**

#### ***EMS – Study on customer complaints to the Professional Standards Unit***

The Professional Standards Unit (PSU) in EMS provides access for customers and allied agency's inquiries regarding the delivery of ambulance service. The Unit responds to customer complaints in a timely manner ensuring a thorough review of all cases and overseeing the resolution process to the satisfaction of the customer, wherever possible. The purpose of the study is to analyze the inclusion of diversity considerations in the PSU complaints process.

#### ***HR - Summer student recruitment excluding Recreation, Culture and Tourism positions***

Summer employment is offered to students to meet the City's work demands during peak seasonal periods and to complement the students' academic training, develop their employability skills, help fund their education and provide insights into future career options with municipal government. HR provides advice through its Hiring Summer Student Guidelines for an effective process for filling summer student positions in the City divisions, other than Recreation, Culture and Tourism. HR also provides assistance in the summer student hiring process. The equity lens testing is intended to examine the access to summer employment for diverse groups.

#### ***MLS – Accessible taxicab owner/driver courses***

To ensure that drivers of accessible taxicab vehicles are providing service that meets the needs of people with disabilities, MLS provides specialized training to taxicab drivers wanting to drive accessible taxicab vehicles. The accessible taxicab owner/driver courses are 5-day courses. Those who complete and successfully pass the program can own and/or operate an accessible taxicab vehicle used for transporting passengers with disabilities. The purpose of the equity lens testing is to identify how the program addresses the needs and skill set required to provide service to people with disabilities.

#### ***PFR – Community consultations***

Community consultation is a component of the work of the PFR Access and Diversity Unit. The information collected and analyzed from community consultation forms the basis of PFR strategic directions, policy development, programming and training. The Access and Diversity Unit also works with community leadership and community advisory councils that provide further input in the community consultation process. Terms of reference have been drafted to deal with these procedures and the development of community advisory councils. The equity lens testing is intended to examine how the outcomes of consultations are used in program planning to benefit diverse communities.

#### ***PH - Local health committees***

Local health committees have the mandate to provide input and advice to the Board of Health on its programs, policies and priorities in order to be responsive to local and emerging needs. They have a minimum of eight and maximum of 13 members, and represent a diversity of perspectives, interests and expertise related to health issues. The purpose of the equity lens testing is to look at the effectiveness of the local health committees through its membership composition, accommodation and the results of a formal evaluation.

## **APPENDIX FOUR Summary of test results**

The results of testing the lens are outlined below.

### **1. Usefulness of the equity lens**

Establishing a standard, corporate-wide equity tool is useful for integrating equity in the policies and practices of the City of Toronto. The equity lens questions should provide a stronger emphasis on identifying barriers and barrier removal and could be modified so that it can be used for new, developing and existing policies and programs.

### **2. Clarity of definitions**

Key terms such as equity, outcomes, benefits and accommodation need to be clearly defined and presented in clear language so that it can be applied across the Toronto Public Service as well as available for use by external organizations.

### **3. Orientation and staff education**

Staff orientation on how to use the equity lens is an essential component of its effectiveness as a tool. Additional resource materials, discussion groups and learning circles may be required. Inclusion of training on the equity lens could be integrated into existing and future training programs within the Toronto Public Service on diversity management and report writing.

### **4. Assistance with decision making**

Application of the equity lens will provide an assessment mechanism leading to the inclusion of an equity impact statement in the reports to Council and Committees. This is one means of integrating consideration of equity issues in the decision making process of the City.

### **5. Integrating equity principles**

Utilization of the equity lens provides a mechanism by which City divisions can address equity principles in planning, development and evaluation of policies, procedures, services and programs.