

TORONTO STAFF REPORT

March 21, 2002

To: Policy and Finance Committee

From: Chief Administrative Officer

Subject: Status Report - Implementation of the Recommendations of the Report of the Task Force on Community Access and Equity

Purpose:

To advise Council on the status of implementation of the Council approved Action Plan and Recommendations of the Report of the Task Force on Community Access and Equity

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) this status report be forwarded to the City's Community Advisory Committees on Access, Equity and Human Rights – Aboriginal Affairs; Disability Issues, Lesbian Gay Bi-sexual Transgender Issues, Race and Ethnic Relations, and Status of Women and to the Working Groups on Access, Equity and Human Rights requesting that their comments be provided to the September meeting of the Policy and Finance Committee; and
- (2) this status report be used as a reference during the community consultation process seeking input for the development of the City of Toronto's Plan of Action for the elimination of racism and all forms of discrimination; and
- (3) the appropriate City Officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Background:

In March 1998, the new City Council established a Task Force on Community Access and Equity. The terms of reference requested the Task Force to identify the necessary “policies, structural functions, program priorities and evaluation processes” by which the City can strengthen civil society; increase community involvement and civic participation and continue the City's leadership role in working towards eliminating the barriers faced by women, people of colour, Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, lesbians, gays, bisexual and transgender/transsexual persons, immigrants, refugees, religious and faith communities.

The Task Force on Community Access and Equity was chaired by Councillor Joe Mihevc with two community co-chairs, Gloria Fallick and Sylvia Maracle. Four other Members of Council, Councillors Elizabeth Brown, Peter Lipreti, Pam McConnell and Sherene Shaw and thirteen community members participated as members.

The Task Force developed an Action Plan, which was based on extensive community input and was built on the legacy of commitment and leadership of the former municipalities. In June 1999, City Council considered an Interim Report from the Task Force and a report from the Chief Administrative Officer regarding resources for the on-going implementation of Council's access, equity and human rights programs. In December 1999, City Council approved the Final Report of the Task Force. The Access, Equity and Human Rights Action Plan approved by Council consists of 97 recommendations.

The Action Plan supports the vision statement outlined by the Task Force in its Final Report and reinforces the commitments made by Council towards respecting the diversity among the City's residents and the recognition that this diversity strengthens the City.

Vision Statement- Report of the Task Force on Community Access and Equity, 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 diversity among its people has strengthened Toronto.

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

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

The City recognises 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, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, marital status, receipt of public assistance, political affiliation, disability, level of literacy, language and or socio-economic status.

The City 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.”

The Action Plan and Recommendations approved by Council included a requirement for the Chief Administrative Officer to provide a status report to Council on the implementation of the recommendations. This status report has been compiled by an interdepartmental staff working group based on information provided by each City Department. In addition to designating staff to participate in the working group, the Commissioners were consulted on the preparation of this status report.

Comments:

Context:

The implementation of the Task Force recommendations has taken place during a time of great social and political change: the reorganization of the amalgamated City, service restructuring and harmonization, and transfer of responsibilities from the provincial and federal governments. The City of Toronto has responded to these challenges with a range of public policy and program initiatives. The City has also continued its leadership role on access, equity and human rights.

In addition to approving the Action Plan of the Task Force on Community Access and Equity which addressed the multiple roles of the City in governance, employment, service delivery, and advocacy, Council has also approved a number of specific policies, many of which were specifically identified by the Task Force. These include policies on the elimination of hate activity, human rights and harassment, employment equity, and multilingual communications.

Council has also adopted a Policy Framework on Immigration and Settlement, and has authorised a consultative process for the development of a Plan of Action for the elimination of racism and all forms of discrimination in response to the findings of the Ornstein Study on ethno-racial inequality and to the UN World Conference on Racism and Related Intolerances. This status report on the recommendations of the Task Force on Community Access and Equity will be a useful point of reference for the development of the proposed Plan of Action.

Council has continued to take an active role in linking and partnering with community organizations, institutions and other orders of government in support of access, equity and human rights. Council has also responded to various legislative proposals such as the federal bills on immigration and refugee protection and the Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

As well, City Council has appointed a Diversity Advocate, Councillor Sherene Shaw, who has met with all of the Advisory Committees to seek their input into the development of the City's Plan of Action for the elimination of racism and discrimination and to help set priorities for

future access and equity implementation. To date, the common priorities established through this process are: poverty reduction, housing, public transit and transportation, youth leadership and the elimination of youth violence, employment, policing, education, communications and public awareness.

Aside from the specific programs and policies pertaining to access and equity, City Council has adopted a Strategic Plan to guide its actions with respect to advocacy, community participation, equity, effectiveness, leadership, partnerships and sustainability. The Task Force's Action Plan and the proposed Plan of Action for the elimination of racism and all forms of discrimination support Council's strategic directions.

Highlights of implementation:

The Task Force developed an Action Plan based on principles which address the various roles of the City. It was anticipated that the Action Plan would be implemented over a three-year term and that status reports would be provided by Departments through the Chief Administrative Officer.

Appendix One of this report provides details on the status of implementation of each recommendation as well as specific actions and activities undertaken by Departments. Feedback by Departments on implementation has indicated that some recommendations require long-term planning to achieve full implementation, while others have already been implemented or are being integrated into regular programs and business planning.

Implementation has been initiated on practically all of the recommendations. Of the 97 recommendations, 64 percent have been implemented or are integrated into the ongoing activities of Departments, and implementation has been initiated on another 20 percent of the recommendations.

The remaining 16 percent of the recommendations are to be implemented. These are recommendations 2, 8, 16, 27, 28, 36 (b), 40, 43, 47, 73, 74, 76, 81, 85, and 96. Steps will be taken to implement the recommendations which have not yet been implemented. Some of these recommendations require specific reports and further study, and others are time specific, such as the audit report required in each term of Council, which is not due until 2003. There are those recommendations which refer specific matters to be addressed in policies such as the Official Plan, which is still being prepared. Other recommendations are based upon there being a specific request or an identified need, such as recommendation 2 which permits the establishment of new working groups on access and equity issues if needed.

The balance of this status report summarises the implementation of the Action Plan based on the roles of the City identified by the Task Force to strengthen civil society/civic participation, to provide civic leadership and advocacy and to carry out the City's responsibilities as an employer and for municipal service delivery, purchasing, grants programs and economic development.

1. Strengthening civil society/civic participation

(Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 34, 41, 44, 45, 68, 76)

Mechanisms for community participation

A cornerstone for strengthening civil society has been the provision of mechanisms for community input and participation. City-wide community advisory committees on aboriginal affairs, disability issues, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues, race and ethnic relations and status of women have been operating and providing advice to Council. Departments/divisions have established community advisory committees on a variety of programs and issues. These advisory structures have opened up opportunities for communities to provide input into the municipal decision-making process.

Council has also approved a policy for citizen appointments to agencies, boards and commissions and special purpose bodies.

Communication strategies

The City has developed communications strategies to reach diverse communities. Departments/divisions have used community media, targeted mailing, multilingual approaches, alternate communication formats and contacts with community organizations to inform diverse communities and increase their civic participation.

A number of community media have press passes to City Hall. All media outlets are provided an in-box for receiving City news releases, meeting agenda and other information upon request.

Resource support

To build community capacity, the City has provided resource support, such as meeting space in City facilities, information sessions and research information to community organizations. “Increasing the availability of community space by making city-owned space available for public use on reasonable terms” is one of the strategic directions articulated in the Social Development Strategy. A report is being prepared on the use of City facilities. The City’s Permit Allocation Policy is under review to ensure that members of Toronto’s diverse communities have equitable access to all parks, recreation and culture facilities.

Participation of Aboriginal peoples

The City has several initiatives underway to support the cultural, social and economic participation of Aboriginal peoples. Council has adopted the principle of “Aboriginal self-determination” in recognition that Aboriginal peoples have a unique historical and constitutional relationship with the rest of Canada, and the acknowledgement of this unique status must be brought to any relationship the City forges with the Aboriginal community. The Community

Advisory Committee on Aboriginal Affairs is discussing the development of an urban Aboriginal agenda.

2. Civic leadership and advocacy

(Recommendations #8, 15, 17, 18, 31, 32, 33, 54, 74, 75, 76, 79, 81, 82, 83, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97)

Corporate leadership

To position access and equity as a strategic resource to Council, departments and the communities, Council established a corporate access and equity support function in the Strategic and Corporate Policy/Healthy City Office of the Chief Administrator's Office. It is responsible for specialized advice to the Chief Administrative Officer, Council and departments and monitors legislative proposals that impact on human rights protected groups. It coordinates support to community advisory committees, administers the access and equity grants program, implements awareness and public education programs on access and equity and provides community liaison and partnership initiatives. Responsibility for Employment Equity and Human Rights functions were located in the Human Resources Division of the Corporate Services Department.

Departmental leadership

Departments/divisions have built on the past accomplishments of the former municipalities and have had various access, equity and human rights initiatives underway since amalgamation. Toronto Public Health, for instance, has in place an access and equity policy framework, which was adopted by the Board of Health in January 2002 and a comprehensive access and equity action plan. Parks and Recreation has established an Access and Equity Staff Working Committee with approved terms of reference to work towards furthering access and equity goals and objectives throughout the Division.

Increasing awareness and influencing public opinion

The City has implemented various initiatives to send a clear message to the public that the City recognizes and values diversity. Proclamations and awareness programs, many of which are in partnership with communities and public institutions, recognize significant human rights and diversity dates, such as Black History Month, International Women's Day, International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, First Nations Day, Pride Week and Human Rights Day. Cultural programs and local history projects educate the public about the contributions of diverse communities.

The City also presents awards for volunteer efforts to increase disability access, foster positive race relations and the achievement of women's equality.

The City's share of advertising mediums such as the bus-shelters has been used for various awareness campaigns.

Advocacy and intergovernmental initiatives

The City monitors and articulates its position on federal and provincial policies and programs.

The City is involved in on-going discussions with the federal and provincial orders of government in the area of immigration and settlement policy, programs and funding. In response to changes in the Immigration Act, Council asked the federal government to include the City at the table in the discussion of immigration policies and programs, provide funding and programs to ensure successful settlement of immigrants/refugees and reimburse the City for costs of public health, social assistance and hostel related to newcomers.

It continues to lobby the federal and provincial governments for additional childcare funding to increase subsidized childcare spaces in the city. In housing, while the City has adopted policies to promote the production of new affordable rental housing and protect the existing stock, it has asked the provincial and federal governments to reduce or remove various taxes and amend regulations that may inhibit private developers from building rental housing. The City has been persistent in its campaigns to ensure the provision of affordable housing, including implementing policies that address the condominium conversion and demolition of rental housing.

Council called for a strong, effective and mandatory Ontarians with Disabilities Act that applies to all sectors: public, private and non-profit, and which addresses physical, service and attitudinal barriers in communications, transportation, housing and the workplace.

The City is an advocate for the equal treatment of same-sex spouses. It leads by example and has provided parallel pension benefits for same-sex spousal families.

Partnership initiatives to respond to high needs communities

The City is developing a strategy to promote a safer Toronto for youth called "Finding a Place for Our Youth". The strategy will work towards a coordinated approach for the prevention of youth violence in response to the outbreak of youth violence in Toronto's neighbourhoods last summer. The Five-Point Plan in the strategy includes skill development, counselling and support programs, recreation, community awareness and education, enforcement and intergovernmental advocacy. The City will build broad-based partnerships with community agencies, school boards, the private sector and the federal government in implementing this initiative.

The City is examining effective ways to facilitate the labour market entry of skilled immigrants. It will take a coordinated approach involving various departments and partnership with community agencies, private foundations and educational institutions. The strategies being considered include mentoring, work placement and linking with foreign credential assessment services and relevant programs on the Internet.

3. City as employer

(Recommendations #9, 14, 21, 48, 49, 50, 51,52, 53, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 80)

The City has put the required organizational structures, such as the Human Rights Office, in place. It has developed appropriate workplace policies and guidelines, such as employment equity, human rights, harassment and hate. The communication and training regarding these policies has been provided to employees to ensure the on-going implementation of employment equity and human rights principles. Employment equity and human rights principles have been integrated into human resources practices. Examples of this integration include ensuring that job requirements are bonafide, accomodating applicants in the selection process and making the necessary arrangements to accommodate employees once they are hired.

In addition, an employment equity survey was conducted in Fire Services. The plan to survey the rest of the organization by the end of 2002 has commenced. Once these survey data are available, employee equity plans and programs, such as mentoring, can be developed to address identified areas of under-representation and concentration.

4. Municipal service delivery

(Recommendations #9, 14, 15, 16, 19, 22, 30, 31, 32, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 77, 78, 84)

Training and cultural sensitivity initiatives

To help staff develop the skills to deliver services effectively to people from diverse backgrounds, all departments have planned and implemented various training programs and cultural sensitivity initiatives, ranging from human rights, non-discrimination, handling racial incidents to use of updated accessibility guidelines for building accessibility assessments.

Multilingual Services Policy

Council has adopted a Multilingual Services Policy to affirm the City's commitment that information is available to all its residents. All departments have offered some form of multilingual service with staff with second language skills, multilingual Language Line Services, purchased services, community organizations and volunteers.

Service equity

The City has continued to provide recreation programs to ensure that groups with specific needs can access and benefit from City services, for example, swimming schedules and programs which respect religious observances, leadership programs for disadvantaged youth. The City is also conducting community consultation for a review of the Permit Allocation Policy to ensure that members of Toronto's diverse communities have equitable access to parks, recreation and culture facilities.

Policy and planning

Policy and planning processes that are underway will address diversity issues related to Aboriginal people, ethno-racial communities and people with disabilities. For example, the Social Development Strategy was developed in consultation with Toronto's diverse communities and reflects their recommendations. The public art policies in the Official Plan and the Culture Plan will also address the City's diverse heritage. Proposed archaeological policies will assist in protecting Aboriginal heritage sites. In the review to create a single comprehensive zoning bylaw, barriers related to the current bylaw provisions faced by Aboriginal people and other communities practising cultural and spiritual traditions will be examined. Public Health will be developing a comprehensive system to promote equitable service access based on diversity competency and relevancy to Aboriginal and other city cultures.

Alternate formats and accommodation

The City has also used alternate communication formats and accommodation measures to remove barriers to the delivery of goods and services and access to facilities for people with disabilities. For instance, information about the 2000 municipal election was made available in Braille, audiotape and large print. Touch-tone registration service is available to physically and mentally challenged people for arts programs at Cedar Ridge Creative Centre. Accessibility audits of most City-owned buildings will be completed in 2002. Accessibility Guidelines will be developed and they will include streetscaping amenities and specialized traffic signals. TTC has developed timelines for accessibility of conventional TTC services and improving Wheel Trans plans. The number of accessible taxicabs has been increased. Replacement signs in taxi cabs will have embossed large print and Braille, informing the customer of the cab number and a complaint phone line.

Community input and participation

As noted earlier, city-wide and departmental/divisional community advisory committees provide input to the City in the planning, delivery and evaluation of municipal services.

5. Municipal purchasing, grants programs and economic development

(Recommendations #12, 14, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73)

Inclusive policy

The Toronto Economic Development Strategy specifically recognizes the cultural, linguistic and socio-economic diversity as one of the City's key competitive strengths. The Strategy won the International Economic Development Council Award for Excellence and Leadership in 2000 for its broad scope and inclusiveness.

Community-specific programs

The small business forum 2001 sponsored by Enterprise Toronto included sessions dedicated to small businesses owned by Aboriginal people, women, youth and newcomers. In 2002, Enterprise Toronto will organize discussions on economic development initiatives that may be of interest to Aboriginal people.

As a follow up to the Urban Aboriginal Economic Forum, Enterprise Toronto has participated in and coordinated a number of events that support Aboriginal entrepreneurship, such as hosting a small business forum for Aboriginal people. The outreach and forum for Aboriginal people will be continued in 2002.

Inter-governmental collaboration

The Economic Development, Culture and Tourism Department and the Community and Neighbourhood Services Department are members of the Inter-governmental Committee for Economic and Labour Force Development (ICE). ICE is hosting an Aboriginal Forum in March 2002. Members of the Aboriginal community in conjunction with ICE will determine the agenda and participation.

Review of purchasing practices

Municipal purchasing can be used as an economic development strategy. Enterprise Toronto and Purchasing and Materials Management Division (PMMD) are reviewing purchasing practices. They will make recommendations to improve the participation of small businesses in the City's purchasing process.

Multilingual communication strategies

PMMD advertises to bidders to get onto the bidders list in seventeen local and ethno-specific papers and various directories. It uses multilingual information pamphlets, a video in eight languages and presentations to communities providing instruction on how to do business with the City.

Data collection and reporting

The City is compiling data to prepare a report to Council on the proportion of expenditure the City has spent with businesses owned by Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, racial minorities and women.

Grants

The City's twenty-nine grants programs support the provision of various cultural and human services and preventative programs as well as community capacity building. Eligibility for all programs has been harmonized across the City. Demand for funds consistently exceeds funding in

most program areas. All recipients of City grants are required to follow anti-racism, access and equity guidelines to ensure their services are accessible and equitable across the City. The access and equity grants program maintains anti-racism and anti-hate as the funding priorities given limited resources available to support expansion of the program to cover all human rights protected groups.

Next step - strengthening planning and reporting mechanisms

The City will take steps to implement those recommendations in the Action Plan of the Task Force that relate to planning and reporting mechanisms for achieving access, equity and human rights goals. CAO staff in the Diversity Management and Community Engagement Unit will be preparing guidelines for developing departmental access action plans. Access action planning is therefore not an “add-on”, but is part and parcel of the service planning and delivery which departments provide and can be linked to planning, budgeting and performance review.

The Task Force’s Action Plan requires the preparation of an audit report during each term of Council to address the performance of the City in achieving access, equity and human rights goals. The first report is due in 2003.

As well, Toronto City Council has approved a consultation process for the development of its Plan of Action for the elimination of racism and all forms of discrimination. In addition to receiving input for the Plan of Action, the consultation process will provide an opportunity for community input on this status report and on the progress which the City has made towards implementing its access, equity and human rights Action Plan.

Conclusions:

City departments have made significant progress towards the achievement of the vision outlined by the Task Force on Access and Equity through the implementation of the Action Plan. Departments have implemented or have initiated implementation of most of the recommendations, including integrating programs directly into departmental services. As noted in the foregoing, of the 97 recommendations, 64 percent have been implemented or are integrated into the ongoing activities of departments, and implementation has been initiated on another 20 percent of the recommendations. The remaining 16 percent of the recommendations are to be implemented.

Implementation of the Action Plan has contributed significantly towards building a community which respects and values the diversity of the City’s population. The implementation process has also helped to build partnerships with community and external partners. The Community Advisory Committees on access, equity and human rights and departmental community advisory committees, for instance, have provided input to the implementation of the City’s access and equity initiatives.

The work to date has laid the groundwork for access, equity and human rights in the City. This status report will be a useful reference for the development of the City's Plan of Action for the elimination of racism and all forms of discrimination

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Attachments:

Appendix 1 - Status Report on the Implementation of Recommendations Adopted by City Council, Final Report of the Task force on Community Access and Equity