




DIVERSITY & INCLUSION strategy

update July 2020

The City of Abbotsford
recognizes the value of
a diverse and inclusive
workforce.



To create a workplace that fosters a culture of diversity and inclusion, and to attract, retain, and develop a talented diverse workforce which broadly reflects the community and citizens we serve. Our goal is to create a City which leverages diverse talents and ways of thinking to create innovative programs and services that meet the diverse needs of our residents.

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Introduction

The City of Abbotsford recognizes the value of a diverse and inclusive workforce in attracting and retaining top talent at the City and in best serving and anticipating the needs of our diverse and growing community. As an organization we are committed to maintaining a positive, open and respectful working environment where everyone matters and differences are viewed as strengths. By fostering an environment of dignity and respect for all of our employees we will continue to build a workforce that reflects the diversity and strength of our community.

The 2020 update to the City of Abbotsford's Diversity and Inclusion Strategy will ensure the City remains in a leadership role in demonstrating the values of diversity and inclusion in the workplace and in supporting an involved, safe and engaged workforce committed to customer service excellence. The updated Strategy will serve as a platform for the City in planning proactively for the ongoing changes in the economic and talent market and assist in positioning the City as an employer of choice.





City of Abbotsford Diversity & Inclusion Strategy

Definition of Diversity as adopted by the City of Abbotsford:

The City of Abbotsford commits to respecting the fundamental rights, personal worth and human dignity of all members of our community and commits to acknowledging, understanding, accepting, valuing and celebrating differences among people with respect to race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or age of that person or because that person has been convicted of a criminal or summary conviction offence that is unrelated to the employment or to the intended employment of that person. This commitment helps everyone at the City of Abbotsford to celebrate differences as strengths and embrace the way in which we are interdependent.

Guiding Legislation – Canada and British Columbia

- Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- British Columbia Human Rights Code
- Workers Compensation Act of British Columbia

City of Abbotsford Guiding Policies and Practices

- City of Abbotsford Values – 2019-2022 Strategic Plan
- Abbotsford City Council Diversity Policy (A001-08)
- City of Abbotsford Diversity and Inclusion Staff Policy (S10-02)
- City of Abbotsford Respectful Workplace Policy
- City of Abbotsford Code of Ethics

City of Abbotsford Guiding Programs and Training

- Respectful Workplace Training
- Ethical Conduct Training
- Sensitivity Training



Background Research and Engagement for Strategy Update

Beginning in early 2020, staff undertook a series of engagement activities and background research for updating the City's Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and corresponding Action Plan including:

1. In February 2020 the Human Resources department engaged employees on what actions we could take to celebrate diversity in our organization. Staff attended City Hall, Public Works, James Treatment Plant, Matsqui Recreation Centre and Abbotsford Recreation Centre to solicit feedback from employees in each facility.
2. Further engagement was undertaken in May/June 2020 through World Diversity Day (May 21, 2020) celebrations and the creation of a video of staff thanking the community for their support during COVID-19 restrictions; and the activities undertaken within the organization leading up to Canadian Multicultural Day June 27, 2020.

3. Working group sessions were held in June/July 2020 with various employee representatives from across the organization.
4. Information and direction from the following internal and external Reference Documents was also reviewed and considered in developing an internal Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan
 - City Council's Diversity Policy
 - City Council's 2019-2022 Strategy Plan
 - Customer Culture Strategy
 - Employee Engagement Strategy
 - Best Practice research guidelines for developing Diverse and Inclusive Workplaces

Diversity and Inclusion Updated Action Plan

From the feedback received through the engagement activities and best practice research, 4 Action Themes and Opportunities were developed to support the City's ongoing Diversity and Inclusion efforts over the next 2 years to December 31, 2022.



THEME 1: Recognizing and Celebrating Diversity in the Workplace

Promoting, recognizing and celebrating inclusiveness and diversity within the workplace is one of the best ways for any organization to foster an open-minded, global corporate culture. Research supports that a diverse workforce is better equipped to meet the needs of a diverse community by reflecting a variety of perspectives. Recognizing and celebrating diversity within an organization provides an opportunity for everyone to feel that their values, beliefs and experiences are fully appreciated by those they work with.

Actions to support celebrating diversity in the workplace:

- Re-establish Diversity Working Group
- Sponsor regular events/programs that celebrate and recognize the diversity of our workplace for our employees
- Implement additional barrier-free/universal-design access opportunities where possible (i.e. washrooms, accessible entryways)
- Consider how we reflect our cultural makeup in our décor



THEME 2: Improved Internal Communications

Ensuring employees are informed of workplace diversity and inclusion activities and information provides all employees with sense of belonging within the organization and an avenue for their voice to be recognized. Clear communication and follow-through is critical in ensuring that employees are informed, educated, and feel able to support each other in adopting inclusive attitudes in every aspect of their working lives.

Actions to support improved internal communications:

- Improve internal communications regarding cultural celebrations of all types
- Create a shared cultural calendar that everyone can add information into
- Include diversity strategy in HR onboarding and hiring processes
- Continue with CityLine recognition of workplace diversity opportunities
- Apply for a workplace diversity recognition award



THEME 3: Ongoing Training and Collaboration

In today's global work environment, more than ever, we are likely to interact professionally with people from different cultural background to our own. No matter what role you have in an organization, whether it's as a team member, a manager, or a customer, developing a better understanding of different cultures and perspectives can help to improve communication and avoid misunderstandings for everyone in the workplace.

Actions to support ongoing training and collaboration:

- Include diversity based educational opportunities as part of regular corporate training
- Institute regular Respectful Workplace Training opportunities
- Sensitivity Training
- Ethical Conduct Training



THEME 4: Leadership Commitment and Engagement

Leadership plays a key role in promoting inclusion and diversity within an organization and in creating an environment where all opinions are valued and every individual can reach their full potential. Research supports that organizations where leadership is seen to model best practice in diversity and inclusion have a higher and more robust customer engagement and satisfaction.

Actions to support leadership commitment and engagement:

- Ensure a lens of Diversity is included with all leadership initiatives and policies
- Ensure our organizational Diversity and Inclusion metrics and measurements are regularly included in communications with staff
- Continue with implementing Customer Culture Strategy action items, specifically those related to Equipping Our People and technology improvements
- Continue with Employee Engagement Strategy – including annual surveys and action items; considering alternate working opportunities for employees to support family status and other needs; ensuring health and wellness opportunities are available for employees

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CELEBRATING
25
YEARS
OF COMMUNITY