

Town of Stratford
**DIVERSITY & INCLUSION
PLAN UPDATE**

UPDATED: JUNE, 2018



Introduction

The Town of Stratford is committed to creating a community environment where culture is diverse and thriving and all individuals are welcome. The Town joined the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination (CCMARD) in July 2007. In joining CCMARD, Stratford committed to developing an action plan to eliminate racism and discrimination and to setting priorities, actions and timelines to allocate resources to carry out the plan.

In 2009, Stratford formed an ad hoc committee to develop a Diversity and Inclusion Plan. A Diversity and Inclusion sub-committee was then formed to oversee the promotion and execution of this plan. The Town recognizes the importance of keeping this plan up-to-date and contracted MRSB Consulting Services Inc. to facilitate a review and update of the Diversity and Inclusion Plan in June of 2018.

The Town identified the need to gather feedback from the Diversity and Inclusion sub-committee, residents, staff and council, and stakeholder groups. A brainstorming session was held with members of the Diversity and Inclusion sub-committee to receive feedback on what has been done to-date and to create an approach for soliciting feedback from key groups.

Stratford engaged MRSB to design three separate survey tools which were distributed to stakeholder groups, staff, council, and residents. MRSB and the Town of Stratford reached out directly to staff and council and stakeholder groups to invite them to participate in the process. MRSB created and executed a social media strategy encouraging residents to complete the resident survey.

Two separate focus groups were held at the Town, one for key stakeholders and residents, and another for new residents. A meeting was held with the PEI Newcomers Association to help identify opportunities to address barriers to community integration.

The Town of Stratford strives to provide a welcoming and inclusive community for all residents and the update of the Town's Diversity and Inclusion plan is a reflection of this goal. During consultations and feedback collection, many residents and stakeholder groups indicated that Stratford is a leader in diversity and inclusion on Prince Edward Island. Feedback gathered from residents and stakeholders led to the creation of several strategies and actions which are contained in this plan under the strategic areas of Inclusive Culture, Communication, Accessibility, and Leadership.

Inclusive Culture focuses on the Town's continued commitment to the principles of diversity and inclusion while also staying aware of changes in the field. Inclusive Culture is

about creating a climate in which respect, equity, and positive recognition of differences are cultivated.

The strategic area of Communication focuses on two key areas – effectively communicating with residents and continuing to demonstrate Stratford’s diversity and inclusion efforts.

During feedback collection, many residents pointed to different aspects of the strategic area of Accessibility and its importance to them. Stratford’s continued focus on creating policy and infrastructure that is inclusive to all is important to residents and a key focus for the Town moving forward. Residents also feel the Town could create a more accessible environment by improving transit, transportation, and addressing other existing accessibility barriers and gaps in service.

The strategic area of Leadership encompasses Stratford’s continued to ensure programing and events promote diversity and inclusion. The Town is committed to supporting cultural projects, programs, events, and organizations, so that the cultural diversity and the heritage of the community can be preserved and diffused in a fair and representative way.

All feedback gathered through discussions with key stakeholders, online surveys, and focus groups has been compiled and analyzed to develop this updated Diversity and Inclusion Plan.

INCLUSIVE CULTURE

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communicate with and educate residents about the values of community inclusion. 2. Make residents aware of their responsibilities to protect human rights and remove discrimination and racism. 3. Promote respect, understanding and appreciation of diversity and inclusion. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Educate residents on the importance of growing a diverse and inclusive community. 2. Educate residents on how to be welcoming to newcomers and groups at risk of exclusion (e.g. 'just say hello campaign'). 3. Partner with organizations to offer diversity and inclusion training to Town staff and Council. 4. Create a directory of resources on discrimination, racism, and diversity and inclusion for use by Town staff, Council, and residents. 5. Be aware of inclusivity campaigns and strategies happening elsewhere and identify opportunities for the town to pursue (e.g. 'No Big Deal' trans pronoun program). 6. Partner with organizations to encourage increased awareness of diversity and inclusion within the schools. 7. Continue to hold welcome sessions for new residents and ensure new residents are aware of the welcome sessions. 8. Continue to reach out and invite residents to sit on Town committees and promote and encourage gender balance and diversity in all committees. 9. Review Town forms with a lens of diversity and inclusion to ensure questions are appropriate and necessary (e.g. gender questions). 10. Continue to proactively reach out to community and social groups to seek feedback on needs and identify ways to work together to address those needs.

COMMUNICATION

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure open communication between the Town, residents, and key stakeholder groups. 2. Demonstrate ALL are welcome in Stratford. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use simplified English, symbology, and action-oriented visuals in official Town communications and meeting materials. 2. Ensure all Town information is accessible, easy to navigate, and up to date. 3. Continue to enhance and promote the Town's diversity and inclusion efforts. 4. Improve supports to non-English speaking residents and individuals with sensory impairments (e.g. hearing assistive devices, call-in translation services). 5. Strengthen content and ensure timely delivery of welcome packages. 6. Continue to proactively engage strategic partners in town events (e.g. PEIANC). 7. Showcase Stratford's diversity and inclusiveness in town publications. 8. Continue to learn from and share with other municipalities 9. Explore opportunities to add elements of diversity and inclusivity to future town infrastructure (e.g. accessible crosswalks, flags of various cultural groups).

ACCESSIBILITY

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure that all residents are treated respectfully and have access to all facilities and services in the town. 2. Recognize and identify special needs of all residents, including but not limited to, the areas of planning and development, housing, public transit, recreation, public works and utilities. 3. Identify incidents of racism, discrimination and exclusion in the community and take action to address these incidents. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct an inclusivity review of town transit infrastructure and services and identify defined actions (e.g. bus schedule, sidewalk access, community bus, walking groups) <i>Note: limited mobility was the most frequently mentioned barrier during feedback collection.</i> 2. Invite residents to become involved in the community. 3. Be aware of diverse needs during town events (e.g. simplified English, time of day, child care, inclusion of 'empty nesters'). 4. Continue to promote a housing policy that enables people with different physical, social, economic and cultural characteristics be able to obtain housing in the Town of Stratford that meets their needs. 5. Continue to build parks, sports centres and recreational areas to barrier free design and use universal design. 6. Work together with strategic partners to support individuals who experience discrimination, racism and exclusion. 7. Assess the Town's services and programs to ensure offerings are diverse and inclusive. 8. Review and update the Town's hiring practices to reflect a diverse and inclusive culture. 9. Conduct an accessibility review of the Town's facilities, services and procedures to address existing barriers and gaps.

LEADERSHIP

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to be a leader in diversity and inclusion by ensuring programming and events promote diversity and inclusion while also pursuing 'big ideas.' 2. To provide support for cultural projects, programs, events and organizations so that the cultural diversity and the heritage of the community can be preserved and diffused in a fair and representative way. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Incorporate elements of diversity and/or inclusion into all town events and continually improve the quality of events. 2. Invite established newcomers to become Cultural Ambassadors. 3. Explore practices to add diversity to Town Council. 4. Hold open meetings of the Diversity and Inclusion sub-committee. 5. Encourage community groups to engage newcomers and groups at risk of inclusion (e.g. Rotary, Lions Club). 6. Explore the creation of an 'Inclusive Business Certification' for Stratford businesses modeled after the Green Business Certification program. 7. Encourage and be welcoming to groups celebrating cultural events and inclusivity. 8. Encourage individuals and groups to share culture through classes and events (e.g. cooking classes). 9. Promote participation and socialization through programming (e.g. sports, crafts, walking groups).