

Section I – Items for Board of Directors Action

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Directors
Friday, May 20, 2022 Meeting

FROM: John MacKenzie, Chief Executive Officer

RE: **PEOPLE FIRST DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION STRATEGIC PLAYBOOK**

KEY ISSUE

Endorsement of Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's People First Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Playbook.

RECOMMENDATION

WHEREAS at Meeting #5/20 held on June 26, 2020, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's (TRCA) Board of Directors affirmed its commitment to proactive diversity and inclusion practices;

AND WHEREAS TRCA's 2013 Strategic Plan, *Building The Living City* identifies engagement of the diverse cultural communities within our watersheds as core goals of TRCA;

AND WHEREAS TRCA's Core Value of Respect identifies that as an organization we strive to be *equitable, fair, and respectful while recognizing individual contributions and diversity*;

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT the enclosed People First Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Playbook be endorsed;

THAT TRCA staff take all steps necessary to implement the People First Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Playbook;

AND FURTHER THAT staff report to TRCA's Board of Directors annually on progress related to TRCA's People First Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Playbook.

BACKGROUND

TRCA's jurisdiction is home to close to five million people living within nine watersheds spanning six upper tier and 15 lower tier municipalities. Approximately 50% of the population of TRCA's watersheds identify as a member of a visible minority group, which is more than three times the national average and more than double the Ontario average. Within the communities that TRCA serves, systemic racism, sexism and other forms of unequal treatment and discrimination continue to be prevalent and common, contributing to compounding inequities amongst significant segments of the local population.

Through community-based programs and public-facing services, TRCA engages and interacts with close to 2.5 million residents annually, including through visitation of conservation parks and trails, programming at education centres and attractions, formal training, community events, consultations and other outreach and engagement activities designed to give voice to local residents' environmental needs and interests. Recognizing this important community-based

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function, and acknowledging that TRCA has a role to play in dismantling systemic discrimination, at Board of Directors Meeting #5/20, held on June 26, 2020, Resolution #RES.#A113/20 was approved as follows:

...WHEREAS, racism, sexism and other forms of unequal treatment are pervasive and systemic issues;

AND WHEREAS at Meeting #4/18 held on May 25, 2018, TRCA's Board of Directors endorsed the Inclusion Charter of York Region as part of TRCA's commitment to diversity and inclusion, and as a framework for ensuring programs, services, facilities, and workplaces are inclusive of all people;

AND WHEREAS TRCA provides a range of programs and services that aim to support improved equity and inclusion through employment, training, and engagement for all residents of TRCA's watersheds, including sustainable neighbourhood action programs, community learning programs, inclusive onboarding resources for employers, bridge training, newcomer youth employment supports and multi-cultural outreach activities;

AND WHEREAS, TRCA is committed to addressing diversity, inclusion and discrimination through the updates and implementation of its Diversity Strategy, Code of Conduct, Workplace Violence, Harassment and Discrimination Prevention corporate policies;

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT TRCA's Board of Directors and Senior Leadership Team affirm their commitment to proactive diversity and inclusion practices;

AND FURTHER THAT TRCA staff consult with partner municipalities on their existing programs and policies, and report back on the status of relevant TRCA policies and on any other measures that TRCA can take with its partners to substantiate this commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Stemming from the above resolutions, TRCA convened a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Working Group comprised of staff from the various TRCA Divisions, with a Senior Leadership Team Champion and TRCA's CHRO as Chair of the Working Group. Working together with contributions from across the organization, the DEI Working Group undertook a current state assessment, developed a governance model, and determined specific priorities, course of work and actions related to addressing systemic discrimination, bias, and inequity at TRCA. The result of this work is the People First Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Playbook.

RATIONALE

The People First Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Playbook takes important steps to address system barriers and historic models of discrimination or bias within TRCA and in the communities where programs and services are provided in local communities. Of particular significance within the People First Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Playbook is both the Purpose Statement and the Strategic Pillars. The Purpose Statement serves to create alignment across the organization on intent and expectations, creating a common purpose and shared destination to guide the work of TRCA, while the Strategic Pillars inform and underpin the targeted, specific and measurable actions that TRCA will undertake to address systemic discrimination, bias, and inequity.

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TRCA's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Purpose Statement is as follows:

TRCA values and respects the contributions that diverse perspectives, experiences, voices, and ideas bring.

TRCA is committed to ensuring that our employees have continual opportunities to:

- Realize their full potential as individuals, while being respectful of the individuality of others.*
- Support and foster an inclusive working environment.*
- Deliver equitable, accessible, and inclusive programs and services that reflect the diversity of our jurisdiction.*

Building on the Purpose Statement, the Strategic Pillars were established to bring meaningful change to TRCA's organizational DNA by integrating the principles and practices of DEI into every facet of TRCA's operations. The five Strategic Pillars are:

- Strengthen DEI Competency: Initiatives focus on improving organizational ability to understand, appreciate, and interact with persons from different backgrounds and belief systems to empower employees to respect one another and work effectively together.
- Incorporate Inclusion into TRCA's Employee Life Cycle Initiatives, focus on embedding inclusion and equity into all phases of TRCA's employment lifecycle.
- Integrate DEI into TRCA's Strategic Plan, Program Development and Delivery Initiatives, focus on ensuring that TRCA's strategy, programs and plans are reflective and representative of the diverse communities we serve.
- Enable DEI Measurement Initiatives focus on utilizing DEI metrics and data to support effective strategic organizational priorities and decision making.
- Building Inclusive Leadership Capacity Initiatives, focus on enabling leadership to build a culture that is supportive and embraces inclusion.

Each Strategic Pillar, while providing the overarching direction of activities, also consists of specific and measurable initiatives with tangible intended outcomes to advance DEI within TRCA. These actions were developed by the DEI Working Group in consultation with the broader organization and approved by the Senior Leadership Team. Each initiative or action has an associated timeline, and the DEI Working Group has begun undertaking early work on advancing 2022 actions and initiatives contained within the People First Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Playbook.

In addition to the above, each DEI initiative within the People First Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Playbook will have an associated scorecard that tracks and measures progress, along with providing a summary for reporting purposes. Central to the process of developing the People First Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Playbook was a commitment to transparency and these scorecards will continue to support openness of performance and progress on these important undertakings.

Relationship to Building the Living City, the TRCA 2013-2022 Strategic Plan

This report supports the following strategies set forth in the TRCA 2013-2022 Strategic Plan:

Strategy 6 – Tell the story of the Toronto region

Strategy 11 – Invest in our staff

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FINANCIAL DETAILS

Funding in support of DEI activities and initiatives related to the People First Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Playbook is contained within the Human Resources and Division-specific budget envelopes.

DETAILS OF WORK TO BE DONE

Work is underway on developing specific action plans related to the initiatives contained within the People First Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Playbook with the DEI Working Group leading the development of these specific activities and staff from across the organization engaged on an as needed basis. Several training modules are either underway or in development.

The People First Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Playbook will be integrated into the 2023 TRCA Strategic Plan, with work currently underway.

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Date: April 6, 2022

Attachments: 1

Attachment 1: People First Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Playbook