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## Reconciliation, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion 2021 Annual Report

### ISSUE

This report highlights work completed in 2021 related to Reconciliation, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (REDI) initiatives and also provides an overview of initiatives planned for 2022. Of note, while the leadership on work within the REDI space is predominantly undertaken by three different Divisions: Community Services; Human Resources (HR); and Strategy and Transformation, it is work that requires the support and actions of the entire organization, a One-City approach.

Further to this, we acknowledge there is a Council Priority area for REDI, and many of the key outcomes and actions within the priority area are impacted by the work outlined in this report. REDI initiatives focused internally to the organization are embedded within the pillar of Transformational Change for the organization, so this report reflects on work not only within the organization but in our connection to the community and addressing the broader goals of REDI within the community.

### BACKGROUND

Initiatives in the REDI space have been undertaken by the City of Saskatoon (City) over many years and many initiatives are occurring in collaboration with community-based organizations, and the community as a whole, all with a focus on achieving REDI objectives. Here is a timeline of key events over the past two years that provides context on how the City has reached the point we are at today:

May 2020	George Floyd Murder sparks an international Black Lives Matter movement and inspires a global reckoning with racism.
Summer 2020	City officials and administration reach out to members of the Black community to discuss issues of anti-black racism and systemic barriers.
August 2020	City Council puts forward three motions to identify and address systemic barriers in the areas of employment, public engagement, board and committee representation. ( <a href="#">Motion 1</a> , <a href="#">Motion 2</a> , and <a href="#">Motion 3</a> )
May 2021	The remains of 215 children are discovered at the former Kamloops Indian residential school.
May 2021	City Council endorses a “One City” strategic approach to addressing systemic barriers. ( <a href="#">link to Governance and Priorities resolution and report</a> )
June 2021	REDI Stewardship committee and Cross functional group are formed to champion and develop a coordinated roadmap and action plan.
June 2021	A systemic barriers project team is established to specifically address the three motions.

September 2021	The City recognizes the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (NDTR) as a Statutory holiday. ( <a href="#">link to City Council resolution and report</a> )
October 2021	The Governance and Priorities Committee received a report outlining the REDI Business Plan and Budget Options highlighting several capital and operating budget requests for 2022 and 2023. ( <a href="#">link to Governance and Priorities resolution and report</a> )
December 2021	The City Council approves the 2022-2023 Business Plan and Budget. ( <a href="#">link to City Council resolution and report</a> )
January 2022	The City Council approves the City of Saskatoon 2022-2025 Strategic plan that identifies Reconciliation, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion as a Council Priority area. ( <a href="#">link to City Council resolution and report</a> )

### **CURRENT STATUS**

In 2021 the Administration established an internal REDI Stewardship Committee (Committee) to activate, champion and align the City's activities and resources to best support the work in the REDI space. A cross functional REDI Team and a Systemic Barriers Project team was also established to bring together internal expertise, people with lived and living experience and leadership to begin developing strategies and plans to engage management, employees, and the community in driving these areas of focus forward in a coordinated approach. In addition, a REDI lead position has been created and recruitment will occur in the third quarter of 2022. A REDI roadmap and action plan is in the final stages of development and will be brought forward to City Council in a future report.

The REDI 2021 annual report is intended to be delivered in conjunction with the Indigenous Initiatives Annual report and the 2021 Recreation and Community Development Annual Report to provide a comprehensive glance into the work that is happening across the organization.

### **DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS**

The sections below highlight the many initiatives carried out within the REDI space in 2021 and Appendix 1 provides a high-level look ahead to the work planned for 2022.

#### Addressing Systemic Barriers

Within the work of the Systemic Barriers initiative, the Administration has begun developing:

- A framework for addressing systemic barriers for the recruitment and retention of diverse employees; the inclusion and participation of underrepresented residents in public engagement and on boards and committees.
- An inclusive decision-making process that creates space for the authentic voice and representation of rights holders, who have historically been excluded from decision-making processes.

In addition to these over-arching principles and processes, there has been some progress made in addressing systemic barriers in each functional area, although it may take time to see a significant change in key measurable outcomes such as the organizations equity performance metrics.

As an equity partner with the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, the City has adopted workforce targets for the four equity groups: Indigenous, Visible Minority, Persons with a Disability, and Women in underrepresented occupations. To achieve the set SHRC targets, we have commenced work on the renewed short- and long-term Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) action plan focused on attracting and retaining a diverse workforce and to track our progress towards achieving the expected results. Although the focus is to achieve all SHRC targets, a focused effort is being placed on the representation of Indigenous people as the City works towards fulfilling the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) call to Action #92.2.

The table below shows the organization’s equity performance compared against SHRC Target.

Equity Groups	SHRC Target	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Progress
Women	47%	37%	36.5%	35.7%	31.8%	32%	↓↓↓↑
Indigenous Persons	14%	7.1%	7.2%	7.3%	7.1%	7.7%	↑↑↓↑
Persons with Disability	22.2%	3.7%	3.8%	3.5%	2.8%	2.9%	↑↓↑↑
Visible Minority	16.8%	11.0%	11.7%	11.9%	11.7%	12.5%	↑↑↓↑

Although our organization’s equity performance compared against SHRC Target still requires improvement, there has been an upward trend from the previous year.

Recruitment and Retention

Working with both Indigenous Initiatives and the Systemic barriers project team, the HR team has received feedback from rights holders, those with lived experiences and members of the community which has informed the renewed focus of the DEI strategy and action plan to focus on:

- Effectively attracting and retaining an Indigenous and diverse workforce;
- Removing systemic barriers and challenges that prevent us from achieving a representative workforce; and
- Adopting leading inclusive recruitment practices and outline plans for continuous improvement at the City.

In addition, four strategic intents were identified to guide the future work ensuring that actions are focused on tangible, sustainable progress.

1. Debiasing the selection process by adopting inclusive recruitment practices.
2. Implement an accountability framework to influence culture change for people leaders and union representatives that reflects the importance of hiring and retaining a representative diverse workforce.
3. Establishing partnerships with the educational institutions, community organizations, rights holders, and essential stakeholders to help feed the talent pipeline and inform the City's workforce practices.
4. Engaging with those with lived experience at the beginning of the design of the strategies to inform and guide our internal practices. This includes a focus on removing system barriers and pre-employment challenges that prevent us from retaining a representative workforce.

### *Inclusive Public Engagement*

Building on the solid foundation of a City Council approved Policy on Public Engagement, the Communications and Public Engagement (CPE) department has been working to build out the framework and staffing resources to support the full intent of the policy and strive for more inclusive engagement. In addition, CPE team and the Systemic Barriers project team have spent time exploring ways to identify and address systemic barriers to public engagement and developing strategies to remove/address barriers, to better enable more inclusive public engagement.

One of the inputs to this exploratory work was based on community feedback received by City Council in May 2021 based on the "One City Approach" report. The concerns raised highlighted that there was no clear reference to racism or how those with lived experience will guide the work. In response, the project team was tasked with forming both an internal and external advisory group. In Fall 2021, the project team-initiated discussions with a small group of individuals from the Black community that had expressed concerns in the summer of 2020. As a result of the discussions, three recommendations were provided:

1. Importance of consulting separately with different groups, and that their guidance was specific for working with the Black community.
2. The need for additional conversations with members of the Black community, and to recognize the diversity of that community.
3. Importance of the work being led by someone who is part of the Black community.

In December 2021, a pilot project for pre-engagement with the Black community was developed with Administration contracting the People Bridge Advocacy (PBA) to lead the engagement as they have established networks, expertise, as well as the trust of the community to carry out the engagement. The project plan and process were developed in later 2021 and implementation and future reporting will occur in 2022.

### Representation on Boards and Committees

In 2021 the City Clerk's office has implemented many systemic changes made to remove/address barriers to encourage more diverse representation on Boards and Committees of City Council. Those key changes are:

- Closed captioning for City Council and Council Committee meetings.
- Hard of hearing devices in Council Chambers.
- Deaf interpreter provided for Saskatoon Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- Remote attendance options for all meetings.
- Transportation vouchers for advisory committees of City Council.
- Targeted recruitment efforts for more diverse representation on Boards and committees.
- Researching best practices around encouraging more diverse representation on Boards and committees.

### Anti-Racism

The Organizational Strategy Execution (OSE) department continues to provide technical and administrative supports to the Anti-racism Network and continues to organize and host the "Living in Harmony" Awards event that is typically held on March 21, International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

In addition, there has been a key focus on the transformative work of the systemic barriers project by providing a decolonizing lens to the City's reconciliation efforts. This approach incorporates anti-racism practices by including Elders and representatives of racialized groups in the planning and delivery of the engagement activities and relies on a collective impact model to move towards transformative community change. Moving forward, the work will include internal engagement across the organization to assess where various Departments and Divisions are, identify challenges, and to collaboratively develop an internal anti-racist/oppressive strategy to support reconciliation.

### Reconciliation

The Indigenous Initiatives department works collaboratively across the many City departments to support both internal and community-based reconciliation efforts and to build and maintain relationships with the indigenous community and indigenous governments. More detail is provided in the Indigenous Initiatives-2021 Annual Report but here are a few highlights:

- Collaborating and investing in many Reconciliation education and awareness initiatives (i.e. Rock your Roots Walk for Reconciliation, the annual Wicahitowin Indigenous Engagement conference).
- Supporting reconciliation efforts by collaborating on projects such as the Traditional Land use and Knowledge assessment project, Indigenous Procurement Protocol implementation, Legacy Review and John A. MacDonald renaming.
- Working with the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Two Spirit (MMIWG2S) Advisory group on implementing the recommendations from the IWG2S\*Coming Home Report.

### Community Safety and Wellbeing

As a programmer, funder, convenor and facilitator the Recreation and Community Development Department takes a people-centred approach to improving the well-being of individuals in community so they can reach their full potential. More information is provided in the 2021 Annual Report, however, here are some primary areas of focus:

- Removing physical and social barriers at City Leisure Centres.
- Administering the City's Leisure Access Card program for lower-income residents.
- Supporting community associations to offer no-cost and low-cost community programs at the neighbourhood level.
- Indigenous recreation and leadership initiatives including being a partner in White Buffalo Youth Lodge.
- Co-producing the annual Wícihitowin Indigenous Engagement Conference;
- Implementing the Immigration Action Plan and hosting Immigration Saskatoon Partnership (IPS).
- Developing age-friendly initiatives to enhance the quality of life as people age; and
- Participating in social planning tables that address community safety and well-being, including:
  - Saskatoon Poverty Reduction Partnership;
  - Safe Community Action Alliance;
  - Saskatoon Tribal Council – Sawēyihotān;
  - Saskatoon Homelessness Action Plan;
  - Saskatoon Indigenous Community Action Partnership; and
  - Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership.

Throughout 2021 many Divisions and Departments have made good progress on initiatives focused on addressing Reconciliation, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. A solid foundation has also been established for a more coordinated One City approach to initiatives in the REDI space going forward.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications. All initiatives identified are being carried out within approved budgeted resources.

### **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

There are no policy, legal, environmental, privacy or CPTED implications or considerations.

### **NEXT STEPS**

The various Departments across the organization will continue to focus efforts on the strategic initiatives and identified outcomes within the REDI priorities.

### **APPENDIX**

1. Looking Ahead to 2022 – initiatives and activities planned for 2022

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