

Region of Waterloo

Chief Administrative Officer

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

To: Community and Health Services Committee

Meeting Date: December 6, 2022

Report Title: Reconciliation, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (REDI) update

1. Recommendation

For Information.

2. Purpose / Issue:

To provide an update and overview of actions and initiatives taken at the Region of Waterloo to advance Truth and Reconciliation and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

3. Strategic Plan:

This work supports all focus areas of the strategic plan. In particular, it supports the Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Communities focus areas 4.1, 4.3, and 4.5 of the strategic plan

4. Report Highlights:

- The Region of Waterloo is committed to advancing Truth and Reconciliation (TR) and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). Although Reconciliation is distinct and unique from EDI, many shared goals, principles, and values shape the work of both including:
 - Systemic change - Advancing conversations, actions and policy towards Truth and Reconciliation as well as EDI by bringing about change within the organization and facilitating community-wide systems level change.
 - Relationship building and community engagement – building meaningful relationships with community partners, leaders, and organizations based on trust, mutual respect and collaboration.
- To advance this work, the Region created the Office of Reconciliation and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (REDI) within the CAO's office. The team includes two inaugural roles, a Director, Truth & Reconciliation and a Director of EDI. Both directors work directly with equity advisors and staff across the Region on shared goals as well as partners in the area municipalities and other organizations in the

community (see [CAO-21-06](#) and [CAO 21 07](#) for an update on 2021 activities).

- Two key overarching plans guide the team's work. The Community Safety & Wellbeing Plan (CSWB) framework is a council approved community-led vision for a safe and well community (see [CAO-22-01](#)). The Reconciliation Action Partnership (RAP) has shared goals and action to work towards Truth and Reconciliation grounded in 12 municipal specific Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action (TRC).
- The team is also advancing the council-approved implementation plan addressing the Anti-Racism Advisory Working Group Recommendations (see [CAO-21-08](#)); council directed Equity and Reconciliation Investment fund see([COR-FSD-20-41](#)), as well as the council directed Upstream Fund ([CAO-EDI-22-02](#)).

Key actions this year under these areas include:

- Developing and implementing a 3-step community based model for the Upstream Fund to support self-determined communities, a key priority of the Community Safety Wellbeing Plan (CAO-EDI-22-008)
- Delivering on the Reconciliation Action Partnership (RAP) work plan, including an Indigenous Space Needs Assessment to better understand the space needs of Indigenous-led organizations and residents across the Region.
- Improving the social and economic health and wellbeing of residents through Equity and Reconciliation Investments including the new Community Capacity Building investment (see CAO-EDI-22-007)
- Working with staff across departments towards implementing the ARAWG recommendations.

5. Background:

Following Anti-Racism town-halls hosted by the Regional Chair in the summer of 2020, an Anti-Racism Advisory Working Group (ARAWG) was created for a two-year term to provide advice and recommendations to Regional council on addressing the systemic impacts of racism.

Council also created a new equity investment fund of \$5 million in 2021 and \$10 million thereafter to improve the social and economic health and wellbeing of First Nation, Inuit and Métis, African Caribbean and Black, racialized, and other marginalized communities who continue to face systemic barriers.

The Community Safety Wellbeing Plan (CSWP) acts as a framework for change focused on systemic change to ensure a safe and well community. At the heart of the plan is Truth and Reconciliation, Anti-Hate, Anti-Oppression, Anti-Racism and EDI and the social determinants of health. Building accountable systems (e.g. housing, health, education etc.); supporting self-determined communities and enabling community-based circles of support that nurture relationships and grass roots change are key areas

of focus. The Upstream funding model is one example of the framework being actioned. Staff will continue to use this framework to grow, create and explore alongside community (see [CAO-EDI-22-05](#) for the most recent update on CSWP).

The Region works collaboratively with area municipalities on the Reconciliation Action Partnership (RAP) focused on 12 municipal TRC encompassing languages, culture, justice, commemorations and more. This collaboration includes the cities of Cambridge, Kitchener, Waterloo and the townships of North Dumfries, Wellesley, Wilmot, and Woolwich) area municipalities. The Reconciliation Action Partnership has shared goals and action to work towards Truth and Reconciliation including the following subcommittees: Learning and development, Honorariums, Place keeping and land opportunities, Communications and Events, Heritage and Cultural Landscapes, Governance and Accountability. Work continues to explore ways to further collaborate on EDI initiatives.

6. Area Municipality Communication and Public/Stakeholder Engagement:

Area Municipality Communication:

Area municipal engagement and communications have been ongoing throughout the work and priorities of the Reconciliation, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion team. The Reconciliation Action Partnership is a great example of a joint municipal strategy to accomplish shared goals. As the work of the REDI team progresses, staff will continue to explore ways to collaborate with area municipalities on shared priorities.

Public/Stakeholder Engagement:

The Region has made progress in partnership to advance Truth Reconciliation and EDI with completely new ways of engaging those with lived experience, and community-led collaborative work across systems and sectors to build meaningful and trusting relationships and facilitate systemic change. This approach has been rooted in a common set of principles to engage with community in an authentic, trauma informed ways. Staff will continue to develop the Region's community engagement strategy building on community wisdom, previous experiences, lessons learned, and best practices. This will include a cross-departmental approach to sharing experiences of emerging models of engagement and methods to better coordinate engagement activities.

7. Financial Implications:

The REDI team is comprised of six staff with a 2022 operating budget of \$1.3M funded 100% from the Equity and Reconciliation Investment Initiative.

8. Conclusion / Next Steps:

The REDI team will continue to advance Region of Waterloo commitments to TR, Anti Racism and EDI working alongside community, area municipalities, and stakeholders.

Staff will continue to bring updates to Council.

9. Attachments:

Appendix A - Office of Reconciliation and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Presentation

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