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Date June 6, 2023 **Report No.** 2023-21

To Chair and Members
Committee of the Whole – Operations

From Aaron Wallace, Acting General Manager
Community Services and Social Development

1.0 Type of Report

Consent Item ☐
Item for Consideration ☒

2.0 Topic Inclusive Community Plan 2023 – 2026 [Financial Impact: None]

3.0 Recommendation

- A. THAT Report 2023-21 titled 'Inclusive Community Plan 2023 – 2026 BE RECEIVED.
- B. THAT Appendix A: Inclusive Community Plan 2023 – 2026 BE ADOPTED

4.0 Executive Summary

In May 2022, Brantford City Council approved a staff recommendation, endorsed by the Brantford Immigration Partnership (BIP), to join the UNESCO¹ Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities (CIC).

¹ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

As a member of the CIC, the City of Brantford committed to working with community partners to develop an *Inclusive Community Plan* to celebrate, promote and support cultural values and diversity.

The Inclusive Community Plan was developed in partnership with the Wilfrid Laurier University School of Social Work, and represents the input and feedback from a wide range of community stakeholders and subject matter experts.

As seen in Appendix A, this plan has been co-endorsed by 34 community organizations, all with a common goal of supporting a welcoming and vibrant community.

It is acknowledged by all stakeholders that developing an Inclusive Community Plan is not a one-time process, but rather a commitment to listening, learning and cooperation over the long term.

The Inclusive Community Plan includes three Guiding Principles:

1. Learn from Each Other
2. Stand Up for Each Other
3. Celebrate Each Other

Within these Guiding Principles, the plan includes ongoing and prospective *Partnership and Project Opportunities*, representing both current local initiatives, and best practices from other communities that can be replicated in Brantford.

Over the coming months, the BIP, in collaboration with community stakeholders, will create an implementation plan that includes additional engagement opportunities, project plans, and evaluation metrics.

Progress on the Inclusive Community Plan 2023-2026 will be reported to Council as part of the *Brantford Immigration Partnership Annual Report*.

5.0 Purpose and Overview

This report recommends adoption of the Inclusive Community Plan.

6.0 Background

In May 2022, Brantford City Council approved the following resolutions:

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- A. THAT Report 2022-198 titled Brantford Immigration Partnership Annual Update BE RECEIVED;
 - B. THAT City Council RESOLVES to join the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities and endorses the commitments championed by this network;
 - C. THAT the Mayor of The City of Brantford BE AUTHORIZED to sign the Declaration to join the Coalition as attached as Appendix B; and
 - D. THAT staff BE DIRECTED to follow communication protocols including informing the Canadian Commission of UNESCO of the City's resolution to join the Coalition and publicly announcing the City's Coalition membership to local partners and residents.

6.1 UNESCO Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities

In May 2022, Brantford City Council approved a staff recommendation, endorsed by the Brantford Immigration Partnership, to join the UNESCO Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities (CIC).

As a member of the CIC, the City of Brantford committed to working with community partners to develop an Inclusive Community Plan to celebrate, promote and support cultural values and diversity.

Membership to this coalition provides a variety of tools and best practices that were used in the development of this plan.

6.2 Focus and Scope

The concept of 'Inclusion' is broad, and applies to a wide variety of personal, social and cultural experience. The Inclusive Community Plan is part of an ongoing process of listening, learning, and celebrating, while acknowledging that acts of racism, discrimination and prejudice are painful to individuals and damaging to communities. The Inclusive Community Plan is part of an ongoing dialogue about the value of diversity, and the power of collective action against hate and discrimination.

This plan positions the municipality, as the host organization for the Brantford Immigration Partnership, to lead and support community-based projects that focus on diversity and inclusion.

Within that focus, the Inclusive Community Plan is intended to complement and support the existing work of individuals, organizations and governments in these ongoing efforts.

6.3 Role of the Brantford Immigration Partnership

The Brantford Immigration Partnership, which is comprised of community leaders across all sectors (education, employment, health care, settlement, faith, culture, non-profits, etc.), has taken a leadership role in the development of the Inclusive Community Plan.

This plan aligns with the BIP's mandate to create a welcoming and inclusive City, where all residents are able to participate in the economic, social, civic, and cultural growth of our community.

The BIP will have a leadership role in the implementation and monitoring of the plan, with updates to Council provided as part of BIP Annual Reports.

6.4 Role of the WLU School of Social Work

In response to the City's commitment to the CIC, staff collaborated with the Wilfrid Laurier School of Social Work to develop a consultation process for the Inclusive Community Plan. As noted below, this consultation process included a wide range of research and engagement activities, including literature reviews, environmental scans, focus groups, workshops, surveys and key informant interviews.

7.0 Corporate Policy Context

The Inclusive Community Plan is complementary to a number of key municipal strategies and initiatives, each of which supports a welcoming and vibrant City including *Brantford Accessibility Plan*, *Healthy Aging Plan*, and *Building the Community from the Kids Up*, to name only a few.

The Inclusive City Plan also supports the City of Brantford Strategic Priorities 2023-2026, specifically within these focus areas:

2. Focus on productive and collaborative relationships

6 a) Effectively and consistently engage with the community

8.0 Input from Other Sources

Brantford Immigration Partnership

Wilfrid Laurier University School of Social Work

Community Stakeholders (see *Research and Consultation Plan* below for additional details)

9.0 Analysis

9.1 Research and Consultation Plan

Given the scope and complexity of an inclusion-based plan, faculty and students from Wilfrid Laurier University School of Social Work designed a research and consultation plan to allow for a wide range of participation options.

The intent of these consultations was to understand how to best acknowledge, learn about, and celebrate the wide range of diversity within the community.

9.1.1 Review of Comparable Municipal and Community Plans

In collaboration with the WLU School of Social Work, staff reviewed the goals, objectives and outcomes of comparable plans from the following communities, organizations and governments to ensure the Guiding Principles and Priorities of the Inclusive Community Plan aligned with established best practices:

Markham, Halifax, Cambridge, Oshawa, Hamilton, Vancouver, Guelph, Windsor, Toronto, Ottawa, Town of Caledon, Barrie, New York City, District of Muskoka, Calgary, London, Thunder Bay, Mississauga, Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board, Government of Canada, Province of Ontario, Conestoga College, Grand Erie District School Board, Lakehead University, Laurentian University, Ontario Trillium Foundation, Sick Kids Research Institute, University of Guelph, University of Alberta, Wilfrid Laurier University, York University, Child and Family Services of Grand Erie, and the Ontario AIDS Network,

9.1.2 Community Focus Groups and Survey

- The Bridge
- Wilfrid Laurier University's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee
- Why Not Youth Centre
- YMCA Settlement Services
- Grand River Council on Aging

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- Brantford Regional Indigenous Support Centre
Let's Talk Brantford Community Survey

9.1.3 Key Informant Interviews (Staff / Volunteer Representative)

- Best Start Network
- Brant County Health Unit
- Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board
- Brantford Native Housing
- Brantford Pride
- Brantford Regional Indigenous Support Centre (BRISC)
- Children and Family Services Grand Erie (CFSGE)
- EarlyON Child and Family Centres
- Grand Erie District School Board (GEDSB)
- Grand River Community Health Centre (GRCHC)
- Muslim Council of Brantford-Brant (MCBB)
- Nova Vita
- The Bridge
- United Against Hate
- Willowbridge Community Services
- Workshop
WLU Laurier University – Brantford

9.2 Key Priorities and Insights

The research, focus group and interviews revealed a number of important themes, priorities and project examples. This feedback has been categorized within three Guiding Principles:

1. Learn from Each Other
2. Stand Up for Each Other
3. Celebrate Each Other

As seen in *Appendix B: Inclusive Community Plan*, these Guiding Principles are accompanied by 13 Priorities, and illustrated through examples of Partnership and Project Opportunities.

Many of the Partnership and Project Opportunities are currently underway, including the Young Minds Book Club, Newcomer GPS, ‘Your City, and Your Language’ Campaign, with others being suggested by community partners or arising from the research, and will be considered for implementation over the term of the plan.

9.3 Next Steps and Preliminary Metrics

The creation of the Inclusive Community Plan represents an important milestone in an ongoing process of ensuring a welcoming and vibrant community.

Although the development of this plan included significant research and community engagement, it is acknowledged that many other voices, partners and perspectives will inform and support these priorities. This is symbolized by the first identified Priority, “Keep Listening,” as a commitment to continued community dialogue over the term of the plan.

Moving forward, staff will work closely with the Brantford Immigration Partnership and other stakeholders to develop an implementation plan, inclusive of current initiatives, and the development of new projects brought forward by the community during the research and consultation process (See *Appendix B: Inclusive Community Plan: Partnership and Project Opportunities*).

The following is a list of sample preliminary metrics, with further baselines, evaluation and measurement tools to be developed over the first year of implementation.

- Increase # of partners and organizations supporting the ICP
- Increase # of events to celebrating diversity and inclusion
- Increase # of community initiatives that promote diversity and inclusion
- Increase # of community resources, tools and training
- Increase # of participants in allyship, ambassador

10.0 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

11.0 Climate and Environmental Implications

There are no direct climate and environmental impacts associated with this report.

12.0 Conclusion

This report recommends Brantford City Council's adoption of the Inclusive Community Plan. The Plan consists of three Guiding Principles, 13 Priorities and a number of current and prospective projects to support the plan.

Following the adoption of the plan, staff will work with the Brantford Immigration Partnership and other community partners to establish an implementation plan.

Progress on the Plan will be reported to Council as part of the Brantford Immigration Partnership Annual Reports.



Prepared By:

Aaron Wallace, Acting General Manager
Community Services and Social Development

Attachments

Appendix A: Community Endorsement

Appendix B: Inclusive Community Plan

In adopting this report, is a by-law or agreement required? If so, it should be referenced in the recommendation section.

By-law required ☐ yes ☒ no

Agreement(s) or other documents to be signed by Mayor and/or City Clerk ☐ yes ☒ no

Is the necessary by-law or agreement being sent concurrently to Council? ☐ yes ☒ no