



East Gwillimbury

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Framework

*A roadmap for building an
inclusive community that
celebrates diversity*

December 2021.

East Gwillimbury - Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Framework

Contents

- Introduction** 2
- Purpose**..... 2
- Background** 2
 - Municipal Diversity and Inclusion Group 2
 - Inclusion Charter 2
 - Neighbourhood Network..... 2
 - York Region DEI Community of Practice..... 3
- EG’s approach** 3
 - East Gwillimbury Strategic Plan..... 3
 - Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee of Council 4
- Work already underway..... 4
- Proposed East Gwillimbury EDI Framework..... 5
 - Engage..... 6
 - Educate 6
 - Express 6
 - Resourcing..... 6

East Gwillimbury - Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Framework

Introduction

East Gwillimbury is a growing community that is poised for even more growth. By 2026, the Town is expected to be home to a population of 47,700, a 35% increase over the current population of 35,456.

That growth is comprised of a diverse population, and it is the Town's responsibility to ensure its planning, programs and services are aligned with the evolving community.

Along with the growth in population, the Town is experiencing some growth in the number of employees and continues to fill existing positions as they become vacant through retirements or resignations.

An EDI Framework is needed to guide the municipality in its internal and external interactions, policy development, training, planning and other activities to build an inclusive community that celebrates diversity. For a municipality, it is also important to frame inclusion from the perspective of community and economic participation.

Purpose

The purpose of this framework is to establish a roadmap for creating an inclusive community that celebrates diversity.

Background

As one of the nine York Region municipalities, it's important to describe EG's EDI work in the context of broader Regional efforts.

Municipal Diversity and Inclusion Group

In 2016, York Region, local municipalities including East Gwillimbury, school boards, hospitals, York Regional Police, conservation authorities and others formed the Municipal Diversity and Inclusion Group (MDIG) with a commitment to welcoming and inclusive communities. York Region and YRP Co-Chair 20-member committee.

Inclusion Charter

One of its earlier initiatives was the development of the [York Region Inclusion Charter](#) which East Gwillimbury signed on April 10, 2019. The Charter highlights the Town's commitment to welcoming and embracing inclusive communities.

Neighbourhood Network

In addition to participating in MDIG activities, East Gwillimbury is part of the Engaged, Inclusive Communities project. The project is a collaborative approach among Aurora, East Gwillimbury, and Newmarket with Neighbourhood Network, a community-based organization funded by Magna, as the lead community partner.



NeighbourhoodNetwork
Building Better Communities Together

The project takes an integrated approach to examining shared challenges and opportunities and researching specific needs of the communities involved.

In its June 15, 2021 [presentation to EG Council](#), Neighbourhood Network representatives spoke about the need for inclusive engagement, to make data informed decisions about program and policy development, and for municipalities to foster a sense of community belonging. The presentation included current demographic data as well as themes identified through meetings with staff and community organizations. The themes are:

East Gwillimbury - Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Framework

Meet people where they are; Engage with Intention; Communicate the Commitment; Make the informal, formal; Access; Engage meaningfully. The presentation also covered areas of opportunity.

The next phase of the project will focus on learning and engaging around the key themes and opportunities.

This is expected to take place early in 2022.

York Region DEI Community of Practice

East Gwillimbury staff participates in a York Region DEI Community of Practice, an informal group of staff from Markham, Vaughan, Newmarket, Aurora, and East Gwillimbury that meets on a monthly basis to share information and best practices.

EG's approach





East Gwillimbury Strategic Plan

In addition to aligning the Town's work with York Region initiatives and other municipal partnerships, it is important to link EDI efforts with the Town's Strategic Plan.

The purpose of the strategic Plan is to be a safe, connected community, focused on livability, and high quality, affordable services. And the vision is to be a balanced community, evolving to meet the changing needs of our residents. Each of the four strategic priorities identify at least one strategic action that requires an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion lens.



As articulated through the four strategic priorities, EDI work is linked to the strategic actions for several of these priorities:

Strategic Priority		Strategic Actions related to EDI
Responsible Growth and Environmental Protection		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that communities are built in a respectful manner, with resident and business quality of life protected
Quality Programs and Services		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support and promote the arts, culture and heritage of East Gwillimbury • Provide programs and services that are inclusive, affordable, and accessible to all residents
Build Complete Communities		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revitalization and rejuvenation of key downtown areas to provide a sense of place for the community
Culture of Municipal Excellence		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to create an inclusive community that celebrates diversity • Build an engaged and strategically aligned staff team to deliver high quality programs

East Gwillimbury - Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Framework

Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee of Council

In 2019, East Gwillimbury Council established the Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee of Council. The Committee objectives are:

- Provide advice, comments, and recommendations on issues affecting diversity in the community to foster awareness, reduce barriers, promote inclusion, and engage residents. Additionally, the committee will facilitate opportunities to educate and celebrate the different aspects of diverse cultures and traditions through outreach activities.
- Work with staff and the Region of York on implementing the Town's Inclusion Charter.
- Liaise with other groups and committees throughout the Town to promote events and inclusivity within the community.

The Committee is comprised of resident representatives, one Member of Council, and one staff liaison. This forum provides for an ideal opportunity to ensure that the Framework developed meets community needs.

[Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee – Terms of Reference](#)

Work already underway

In addition to establishing the Diversity and Inclusion Committee of Council, and adopting the York Region Inclusion Charter, it is important to recognize the various activities, events, and initiatives that the Town has undertaken which reflect its efforts towards improved diversity and inclusion. Some of these initiatives were outlined in an [April 2019 Report to Council](#). Other initiatives subsequently took place.

Diversity and Inclusion Employee Information/training sessions

- Diversity and Inclusion training for the Extended Management Team and Council Members:
 - EAP provider, Shepell, facilitated several sessions to introduce the topic and provide information regarding Diversity and Inclusion in the workplace.
- As part of EG's Extended Management Harvard ManageMentor training program, training was provided to the Extended Management Team in April 2019.
- N6 Leadership Symposium – Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion
 -

Community Flagpole and Flag Raising Protocol

- In 2021, the Town of East Gwillimbury installed a Community Flagpole in the south courtyard at the Civic Centre. Subsequently, a flag raising protocol was developed along with an [online form](#) for community organizations to submit a request to fly a flag.

Land Acknowledgement

- At its July 27, 2021 meeting, Council passed a resolution to offer a land acknowledgement at the beginning of all formal Town organized events and at the beginning of other Town events/meetings. The Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation endorsed and approved the land acknowledgement statement.

The Town of East Gwillimbury recognises and acknowledges the lands originally used and occupied by the First Peoples of the Williams Treaties First Nations and other Indigenous Peoples, and on behalf of the Mayor and Council, we would like to thank them for sharing this land.

We would also like to acknowledge the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation as EG's closest First Nation community and recognize the unique relationship the Chippewas have with the lands and waters of this territory. They are the water protectors and environmental stewards of these lands, and we join them in these responsibilities.

East Gwillimbury - Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Framework

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

- September 30, 2021, marked the first time the federal government acknowledged the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation as a federal holiday. The date has historically been recognized as Orange Shirt Day. Together with input from the Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee of Council, staff established a working group to develop plans to share information about the date with staff and the community. The activities included:
 - Staff Virtual Town Hall
 - Online training for all staff and Members of Council
 - An education booth at the Farmers' Market along with an activity where visitors could reflect on their learning and leave a message on wooden hearts
 - Flag raising ceremony



Pride

- With the new community flagpole, 2021 marked the first year the Pride flag was raised. In addition, a social media campaign was developed to recognize Pride and to encourage residents to share messages of belonging.



Public Art

- Several examples of public art have been developed in cooperation with Indigenous Communities. For example, a Canoe structure was commissioned in 2021 and will be erected at the Nokiidaa Trailhead in 2022.

Library Services

- EG Public Library continues to provide information, programming and services through a diversity and inclusion lens. For example, a booklist, display and other information was provided in support of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation in 2021.

Proposed East Gwillimbury EDI Framework

The East Gwillimbury Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Framework builds on the work that the Town has already accomplished. Specifically, an Engage, Educate and Express approach is recommended as a roadmap for creating an inclusive community that celebrates diversity. This is both an internal and external Framework.

The initial focus will be on further establishing a foundation in 2022 and implementing some initiatives that are relatively low in terms of cost and effort. It is also important to note that while Corporate Services is responsible for developing the Framework, accountability for various components rests within the respective departments. Corporate Services will track the initiatives, provide support and develop an annual report to Council on the status of the initiatives.

This is an incremental approach with a heavier emphasis on the “Engage” component in the earlier years. It is critical to build relationships and adopt a “nothing about me, without me” mindset – both internally and externally. Over time, and with input from the community and staff, there will be an opportunity increase the Educate and Express components of this Framework.

East Gwillimbury - Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Framework

Engage

This element involves identifying community groups and staff in the development of initiatives, activities, events and policies. It is about creating opportunities for people to be in the room together. Examples of activities include:

- develop an Employee Resource Group
- collaborate with other municipalities, Neighbourhood Network, and the Municipal Diversity and Inclusion Group (MDIG)
- engage in conversations with the Chippewas of Georgina to identify specific actions to address the TRC Report
- build relationships with community organizations
- seek input from communities to address racism

Educate

The intent of the educate component is to increase awareness among staff and the community of various ethnocultural and community groups in EG. Examples of activities include:

- develop and promote education and training for staff, Council, Committees of Council
- improve resources and information on the EG website
- explore opportunities to expand EDI programs and services for the East Gwillimbury Public Library

Express

Through the express pillar, the Town will build policy, programs, services and events that reflect EG's diverse community. Examples of activities include:

- develop internal and external policies such as recruitment, public art, and translation policies
- improve access to services with the support of translation tools (online and in person)
- plan public events that incorporate EDI
- seek input from the Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee of Council on EDI initiatives
- ensure public engagement actively seeks diverse perspectives from community groups and Indigenous Communities.

Resourcing

This Framework will evolve. Activities completed will also likely result in additional initiatives. For example, results of the employee survey may surface additional activities, needs, support that are needed to improve inclusion and diversity. Funding for such initiatives may be included in future year budgets or incorporated into existing operational budget envelopes.