



City of Kingston
Information Report to Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee
Report Number MAAC-24-016

To: Chair and Members of the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee

From: Jennifer Campbell, Commissioner, Community Services

Resource Staff: Ruth Noordegraaf, Director, Community Development & Wellbeing and IIDEA

Date of Meeting: November 7, 2024

Subject: Community Development & Well Being and IIDEA Department Update

Council Strategic Plan Alignment:

Theme: 4. Foster a Caring and Inclusive Community

Goal: 4.1 Enhance community safety and well-being.

Executive Summary:

The Community Development & Wellbeing and IIDEA (Indigenization, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility) department is a new department in the Community Services Group, formally established in April 2024. This new department was endorsed by City Council in the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan.

Key strategies that staff are working on for the remainder of 2024 and 2025 are: the development of an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, the establishment of a dedicated Indigenous Initiatives portfolio, the creation of a Food Framework, the update of the Age Friendly Plan, the review and update of the Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan, the creation of a Youth Plan and the further growth of a Neighbourhood Activation strategy.

This report is providing the committee with a brief overview of these projects and initiatives, and where applicable, how staff is intending to consult the committee on these projects and initiatives.

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Recommendation:

This report is for information only.

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Authorizing Signatures:

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY COMMISSIONER

**Jennifer Campbell,
Commissioner, Community
Services**

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

**Lanie Hurdle, Chief
Administrative Officer**

Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:

Paige Agnew, Commissioner, Growth & Development Services	Not required
Neil Carbone, Commissioner, Corporate Services	Not required
David Fell, President & CEO, Utilities Kingston	Not required
Peter Huigenbos, Commissioner, Major Projects & Strategic Initiatives	Not required
Brad Joyce, Commissioner, Infrastructure, Transportation & Emergency Services	Not required
Desirée Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer	Not required

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Options/Discussion:

Background

The Community Development & Wellbeing and IIDEA (Indigenization, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility) department is a new department in the Community Services Group, formally established in April 2024.

Analysis

The department work can be conceived of across three focus areas and uses an IIDEA lens to intentionally consider the systems and processes that shape policies, practices and lived experiences internally as well as throughout the community. Principles that guide the department through an IIDEA lens include:

- Truth and Reconciliation
- Allyship and Social Cohesion
- Ongoing Dialogue
- Diverse Engagement
- Transparency and Accountability
- Sense of Belonging
- Inclusive and Equitable Services
- Community Partnerships
- Enhanced Representation

The three focus areas are Community Development & Wellbeing (CDWB), Indigenous Initiatives, and Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI). In the sections that follow these areas and the work underway in each will be further described

Community Development & Wellbeing (CDWB)

The focus of the CDWB portfolio is to develop, implement and facilitate strategies for social development in Kingston, with the intent to support individuals, families, neighbourhoods, and the community to be connected and more resilient.

The following strategies and initiatives are in progress for the remainder of 2024 and 2025:

Review and Update of the Community Safety & Wellbeing Plan (CSWB)

The creation of the CSWB became a requirement in 2018 under the *Police Services Act* (sections 248 to 256, now the *Community Safety and Policing Act*). The act states 'Every municipality shall prepare and, by resolution, adopt a community safety and well-being plan.' [Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019, S.O. 2019, c. 1, Sched. 1 \(ontario.ca\)](#). The requirement is to review and update these plans every four years.

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Between 2019 and 2021 the City, in collaboration with community partners and engagement with residents, came together to build the [Community Safety and Well-being Plan](#) for the City of Kingston. The plan focused on supporting safe and healthy communities to address root causes of complex social issues. The current CSWB was approved by Kingston City Council in 2021.

The vision of the plan is to build a resilient community that can respond and adapt to change in ways that foster cooperation, build capacity, increase connectedness and ensure essential needs are met.

In preparation for the 2025 review and update of the CSWB, staff are now doing a community audit of the work done between 2021 and 2024 and are creating a workplan and advisory committee for the 2025 review and update process. Staff will invite members of MAAC to participate in the CSWB plan review and update in 2025 through the project team request process.

Creation of a Food Framework

Food impacts everyone in the community and touches various areas such as food security, economic development and climate adaptation.

The City is actively involved in different areas of the food ecosystem, including addressing food insecurity, skills development opportunities, food sovereignty, community garden expansion, increase of food production opportunities in rural and urban areas, climate impacts of food production and food waste.

The City is supporting key initiatives including:

- The Community Food Redistribution Warehouse, facilitating the efficient collection and distribution of large donations of food to agencies.
- The update of the community garden policy.
- Support of public and farmers markets.
- Skills development opportunities through increased community kitchen access and food skills development at the Harbour Kitchen program at Portsmouth Olympic Harbour supporting newcomer, racialized and indigenous women, and women with disabilities, and the Bloom's skills program at Centre 70 supporting young adults with exceptionalities.
- Support to Lionhearts Fresh Food mobile market providing fresh produce at a low cost at up to eight locations in the community.
- Food events, such as Food production training series, open farm days (in collaboration with South Frontenac).

Staff are working on the creation of a "Food Framework" with the goal to better coordinate and organize the food ecosystem in the community. The framework will tie in all the areas of the

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system and will include data around food needs, food supply and program impact measurements.

Staff are completing an environmental scan and are mapping out a draft food framework. As a next step, staff will complete engagement with community partners and will invite members of MAAC to share their feedback on the draft framework in early winter of 2025 through the MAAC project team request process.

Community Development - Neighbourhood Activation Funding (CDNAF)

The goal of the CDNAF is to strengthen community ties, promote inclusivity, and support underserved and equity-seeking groups. The CDNAF was created as a pilot in 2023 to provide small micro-grants and fee offsets for municipally owned properties or resources, helping informal community groups that operate for the betterment of the community (i.e. neighbourhood associations, service groups, special interest clubs and arts/culture groups). Over the last six months the program helped facilitate three pop-up movies in parks, five block parties, and seven community and cultural initiatives, all aimed at fostering a greater sense of belonging and connection among residents. Staff worked closely with organizers to implement initiatives that address specific community needs such as youth engagement and social connectivity. The feedback from participants has been overwhelmingly positive, with many expressing that they feel more interconnected and less isolated. These initiatives have played a vital role in bringing people together and strengthening their sense of community. In late October 2024, the CDNAF program was launched more broadly to ensure everyone is aware of this opportunity in the community. Staff will also bring the first full impact report to the Arts, Recreation & Community Policies committee in Q1 of 2025.

Closely aligned with the CDNAF is the ethno cultural community spaces pilot that staff are developing as directed by Council through a motion that was approved by Council on May 21, 2024. This motion directs staff to develop a two-year pilot program that enables emerging ethno-cultural groups to access meeting rooms in City recreational facilities. Staff are currently developing this pilot by researching best practices in other communities, reviewing the City's fee waiver policy, other funding opportunities, and by identifying underutilized spaces within the City's inventory to make recommendations for equitable resource utilization. Staff expect to roll out this pilot in early 2025.

The CDNAF and the ethno cultural community spaces pilot are two of the tools to activate neighbourhoods and staff are working on additional programs for 2025.

Municipal Fee Assistance Program (MFAP)

An interdepartmental staff team worked on the review and relaunch of the MFAP. The program is designed for people with lower to moderate incomes who might find it difficult to pay the fees associated with some City programs or services. Through a single application process, MFAP recipients can access discounted transit passes, City recreation and fitness programs/

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memberships, Grand OnStage shows and musical performances, PumpHouse Museum tickets, extended health care benefits and responsible pet ownership (such as spay and neuter services). Program registration is confidential, allowing recipients to access these services the same as any other user.

The City uses the Statistics Canada after-tax Low-Income Measure (LIM) plus 15 percent to determine eligibility. Residents of Kingston who are active recipients of Ontario Works (OW) or the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) will automatically qualify.

The MFAP relaunch comes after City staff were asked to review the program to identify and remove any barriers to low-income individuals during the application process. The review was endorsed by City Council and completed in February 2024 ([Report Number 24-095](#)) as part of a goal outlined in Kingston's [Strategic Plan](#) to enhance community well-being.

Another outcome of the review is a new one-year partnership with Lionhearts to include the [Fresh Food Market Pop-ups](#) in the program. During the pilot program which starts this fall, all MFAP recipients qualify for discounts at any of the eight market locations by presenting their MFAP card and a piece of identification.

Update the Age Friendly Plan

In the 2023-2026 [Strategic Plan](#), a priority is to update the Age Friendly Plan in 2025. The population of Kingston is aging and as this demographic shift continues, an older population will access many of the services and programs that the City manages; it will also have a direct effect on the labour market and economic development opportunities. Additionally, as the population ages, the demands on the healthcare system will become even greater. Kingston is not alone in undergoing this demographic shift; Canada and countries around the world are adapting to the needs of an aging population.

"Age-Friendly Communities" are one strategy that cities can adopt to support their citizens. In 2012, Kingston became part of the World Health Organization's (WHO) Global Network for Age Friendly Cities and Communities. Kingston also became a recognized municipality of the Ontario Age-Friendly Communities Outreach Program (OAF COP). Over the years, recommendations were made and acted upon to make Kingston an Age-Friendly Community (AFC). Through a combination of factors, including some staff changes and the pandemic, the work was temporarily paused.

In 2023, a community-led working group was formed and looked at ways to update the plan, this work is now being referenced in support of City Council's direction to update the Age Friendly Plan. In addition, staff have re-engaged with the Centre for Studies in Aging & Health (CSAH) at Providence Care. The CSAH works in collaboration with both internal and external partners to build knowledge, awareness and system capacity to promote successful aging; prevent or delay frailty and its harmful consequences; and improve care by supporting transformation in organizations that provide health services.

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Staff are also closely aligning the update of the Age Friendly work with the work that the Community Foundation for Kingston & Area (CFKA) is undertaking on Older Adults and Belonging. The CFKA Older Adults and Belonging funding stream is a collaborative initiative to unite community organizations and agencies serving older adults in the KFL&A region who share the intent of reducing social isolation and fostering connection and belonging for older adults in the community. Through the fund the foundation is dedicated to fostering connections, finding productive synergies, developing systemic awareness of key local issues affecting the connection and belonging of older adults, and improving cross-sector communication. The intent is to create sustainable connections and community-based solutions to prevent, mitigate and reduce the impacts of social isolation on older adults in KFL&A that will have a long-term impact. Staff are participating in the Older Adults and Belonging steering committee.

In 2025, staff will work through the following four steps in updating the Age Friendly Community plan. These steps are in alignment with the Ontario Age friendly plan guidelines.

Step 1 - Define local principles

Step 2 - Complete a needs assessment (last completed in 2014)

Step 3 - Develop an action plan

Step 4 – Create an evaluation plan and Monitor progress

Staff will invite members of MAAC to participate in the AFC update in 2025 through the project team request process.

Creation of a Youth Plan

In Council's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan, a priority is to create a Youth Plan in 2025. Just over 10 years ago in 2011, Council directed staff to work on a Youth Friendly Plan and as a result the 'Youth to Kingston' (Y2K) project was initiated, and a plan was created. Many organizations were involved in the creation of Y2K, and the Youth Commission of Canada led the process. Between 2013 and 2019 actions and initiatives of the Y2K plan were implemented across the community.

In 2019, the [Adverse Childhood Experiences & Resilience Coalition \(ARC\) of Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox & Addington](#) was formed. ARC is comprised of agencies and individuals in the KFL&A region, with a vision of a resilient community that prevents and reduces the effects of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). Coalition members have knowledge and awareness of ACEs, stigma, resilience, and the importance of community and supportive relationships. They champion ACEs, resilience-informed practices, and use evidence of ACEs and toxic stress and resilience to inform decision-making and action within their sphere of influence.

City staff are participating at the ARC table and are in the initial stages of identifying how a youth strategy can be successfully established in the community, engaging youth in the process, and in close partnership with the existing agencies serving youth.

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Indigenous Initiatives

The Community Development & Wellbeing and IIDEA Department when established was set up to include a dedicated Indigenous Initiatives portfolio and is presently recruiting for a Manager, Indigenous Initiatives, who will lead this work.

This dedicated role will build on the important work already underway within the City and the broader community and will provide leadership, direction, and support to the implementation of a range of City priorities, including the City of Kingston's commitment to Truth and Reconciliation and the continuation of work begun under the Engage for Change Project (2016-2022). This is also work that is specifically called for within Council's Strategic Priorities including the development and implementation of an Urban Indigenous Engagement Strategy, a Nation-to-City consultation framework, the development of a localized urban indigenous land trust model, and supporting the creation of dedicated spaces within select City parks for Indigenous led sacred and ceremonial fires.

The role will also manage, lead and support Indigenous consultation within the work of the municipality, including projects related to land-use development.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

The EDI office was established in 2020 and supports the delivery of the City's Indigenization, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IIDEA) portfolio, in close partnership with other key City departments and community partners.

The EDI office is working on the creation of a comprehensive EDI Strategy and Framework which will shape future workplans across the IIDEA work of the City. The City has engaged the services of MNP Consulting to assist in crafting this work.

The development of the strategy and framework directly supports Council's Strategic Priority 4.5.2: 'to Advance Indigenization, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IIDEA) within our community'. To oversee this process and ensure comprehensive representation, IIDEA champions from across the organization participate in the IIDEA steering committee, and engagement with this committee, City leadership, community tables and City Council is an integral part of the process. Staff will invite members of the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee (MAAC) to share their feedback with MNP Consulting in late fall/early winter of 2024/2025 through the project team request process.

Staff will continue to inform and engage MAAC on the progress of the CDWB-IIDEA projects and initiatives.

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Indigenization, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility (IIDEA) Considerations

The work of the CDWB-IIDEA department directly aims at reducing and eliminating obstacles that affect excluded individuals or groups.

Existing Policy/By-Law:

None

Notice Provisions:

None

Financial Considerations:

None

Contacts:

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Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:

None

Exhibits Attached:

None