



Welcoming and Inclusive Communities Strategy

June 2019

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1 Background

Through spring 2019, the Town of Vegreville and the Vegreville Centennial Library chose to explore how the town can be as receptive as possible to new residents, to existing families and to groups that assist in the town and region.

Out of this consultation came the confirmation of the desire for Vegreville to be known as a welcoming and inclusive community. The desire was expressed in a series of ways that can be acted upon by the town, and indirectly by other groups involved in the life of the community.

The pages that follow provide direction for the town to work on becoming even more welcoming and inclusive.

2 Tie to Town Strategic Plan

Vegreville Town Council approved a strategic plan in 2018. Part of that plan is focused on the town being a 'welcoming and inclusive community.' This is reflected in the town's vision of:

People our core, innovation our strength, community our intention

The focus also appears in a pair of the values that council identified, most notably *Inclusivity* and *Vibrancy*.

Within the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan, council identified a goal "to celebrate cultural diversity in Vegreville." Putting this goal into action, two strategies were created:

- *Consult with cultural groups to get an understanding of their needs and desires; and*
- *Promote opportunities to become a more culturally inclusive community.*

To that end, town administration engaged with individuals and groups to identify how to meet council's vision and goal. Two members of council, Councillor Jerrold Lemko and Councillor Ann Waters were appointed to work on this venture.

This becomes the starting point for the town's administration to explore how to be inclusive and how to celebrate diversity.

3 Goals

Through a focused listening and consultation exercise, a large amount of information was gathered from individuals representing town council and administration, as well as over 20 community organizations, business groups, and faith groups. From that, a series of three goals has been distilled. Each goal indicates desired change over time. The goals work within council's strategic plan's scope of 2018-2021.

Each of the three goals below has a series of strategies – actions that can be taken to support the completion of that goal. Each strategy also contains an indication of who is the accountable person within the town structure, and when the strategy is expected to be completed.

3.1 Communicating with Vegreville

Goal:

- To provide useful and current town-related information to newcomers and long-time residents.

Strategies:

| Strategy | Accountable | By When |
|--|------------------------------|----------------|
| <i>Ensure that the town's online presence through its website and social media is current and provides timely information.</i> | Director, Community Services | 2020 Q1 |
| <i>Upgrade the Vegreville town online mobile application to include current events and a listing of services provided by the town and partner organizations.</i> | Director, Community Services | 2021 Q4 |
| <i>Continue with the Municipal Scoop insert into town utility bills</i> | Director, Community Services | 2021 Q4 |

3.2 Welcoming People and Families

Goal:

- To assist new residents as they navigate Vegreville’s programs and services as they become familiar with the town.

Strategies:

| Strategy | Accountable | By When |
|--|------------------------------|----------------|
| <i>Reinvigorate Vegreville’s Ambassador program</i> | Director, Community Services | 2020 Q2 |
| <i>Work with Welcome Wagon program to ensure that new residents are greeted and provided with accurate and appropriate information about the town, its businesses and community organizations.</i> | Director, Community Services | 2020 Q4 |

3.3 Points of Contact

Goal:

- To ensure that residents and newcomers are provided with relevant information whenever they encounter town staff and facilities.

Strategies:

| Strategy | Accountable | By When |
|---|------------------------------|----------------|
| <i>All town facilities and front-line staff are provided with information about town programs and services that they can pass out to those who need or want it.</i> | Director, Community Services | 2019 Q4 |
| <i>Work with realtors to provide them with useful information for newcomers.</i> | Director, Community Services | 2020 Q2 |
| <i>Work with faith groups to provide them with useful information for newcomers, congregants, refugees, and others as appropriate.</i> | Director, Community Services | 2020 Q4 |

4 Other Potential Goals

The three goals above are achievable within the horizon of the strategic plan and given the town's capacity. The work of identifying what is important to the town in its diversity and inclusivity efforts included other areas of focus as well.

The areas of interest below could be developed into goals should council so desire:

- Accessibility
- Awareness of Programs and Services
- Communication
- Community Climate
- Diversity
- Facilities
- Health Care and Education
- Local Business and Community Groups
- New Residents
- People Requiring Support
- Proximity and Population
- Public Transportation

Each of these areas of interest was explored during the consultation phase and more information is available on the results of each of these topics.

5 Next Steps

The three goals in this plan cascade from town council's 2018-2021 Strategic Plan. Work and eventual reporting on these goals and strategies will feed into the determination of whether the town is successful in achieving the vision it has set for itself.

Each of these goals can be reported in the interim as progress is made, as barriers are encountered, or as the environment shifts and changes need to be made. This is not a static document, but rather one that will need to adapt as circumstances change, capacity is stretched, and council's focus adapts.

