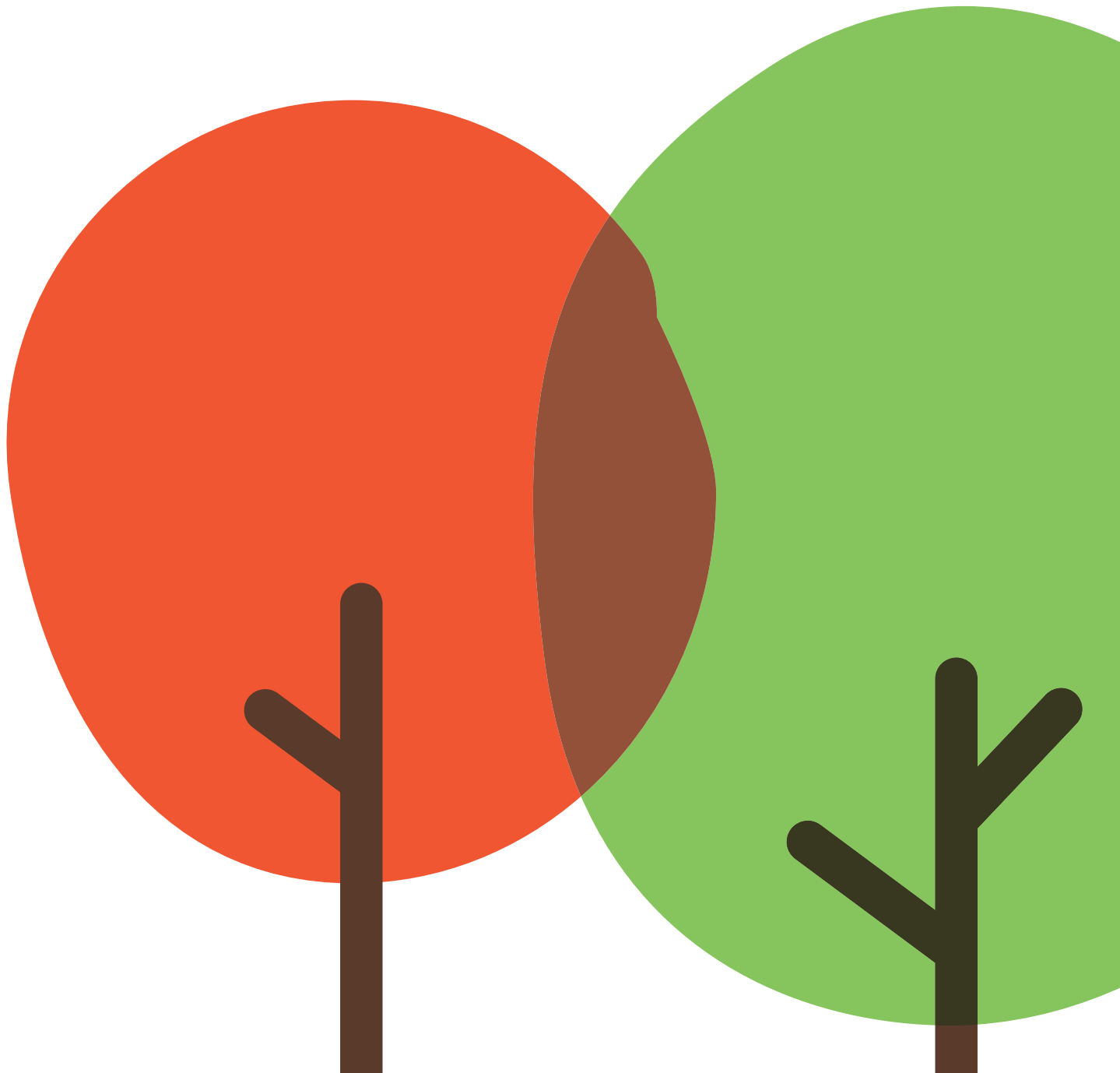**MUNICIPALITY** *of the*
COUNTY *of* **KINGS**

TOWARD EQUITY AND DIVERSITY

A Strategy for Belonging in the Municipality of the County of Kings

Adopted by Municipal Council on December 7, 2021

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OUR COMMITMENT

The Municipality of the County of Kings rejects racism and prejudice in every form and stands firm in our commitment to our community. We are committed to Truth, Reconciliation and decolonizing our organization, community, processes, and policies.

Racism and discrimination violate human rights and threaten the safety and wellbeing of our communities. There are constant reminders that racism and prejudice are persistent, embedded and systemic in our community and in our own society. We hold a collective responsibility to acknowledge and confront it.

Acknowledging that we need to follow the leadership of our community, we will take a stewardship role in supporting those doing the work, including community leaders, advocates, youth or elders, and community-based organizations. We denounce the historic and systemic nature of the continuing racism and discrimination against people due to culture, ability, age, socio-economic status, and gender or sexuality.

We know that the responsibility for striving toward justice belongs to all of us, including those of us who have historically been over-represented and racially privileged. Creating safe space for the voices of Black, Indigenous, people of colour, racialized, and other equity seeking communities is critical, now more than ever. The Municipality remains committed to being open and providing impartial government while continuing to work towards deep-rooted and long-lasting change in the communities we serve.

We commit to being anti-racist, advocating for de-colonization, and supporting equity, inclusion, diversity, justice and belonging. We will hold each other accountable and provide transparency for our community to also hold us accountable. We commit to being fair and being good allies and collaborators. We commit to the actions in the plan and to collaborating with the community to constantly renew the actions and evaluate progress.

This commitment has been adopted by the organization, including Council who have all become signatories to this plan.

We commit to the words above, in Our Commitment, to uphold the principles of the plan, and prioritize taking action.

Mayor, Peter Muttart

and Municipal Council:

District 1	District 4	District 7
June Granger	Martha Armstrong	Emily Lutz
		(Deputy Mayor)
District 2	District 5	
Lexie Misner	Tim Harding	District 8
		Jim Winsor
District 3	District 6	
Dick Killam	Joel Hirtle	District 9
		Peter Allen

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It is important to acknowledge that the Municipality of the County of Kings is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq Peoples. These territories are covered by the "Treaties of Peace and Friendship" which Mi'kmaq Peoples first signed with the British Crown in 1726. We are all treaty people, and these treaties are still applicable today. The treaties did not deal with surrender of lands and resources but in fact recognized Mi'kmaq title and established the rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between nations. The Municipality is home to Annapolis Valley First Nation, and Glooscap First Nation, as well as a diverse urban and rural Indigenous population.

GIBSON WOODS

ANNAPOLIS VALLEY FIRST NATION

PINE WOODS

WOLFVILLE

KENTVILLE

BERWICK

GLOOSCAP FIRST NATION

PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP TREATIES
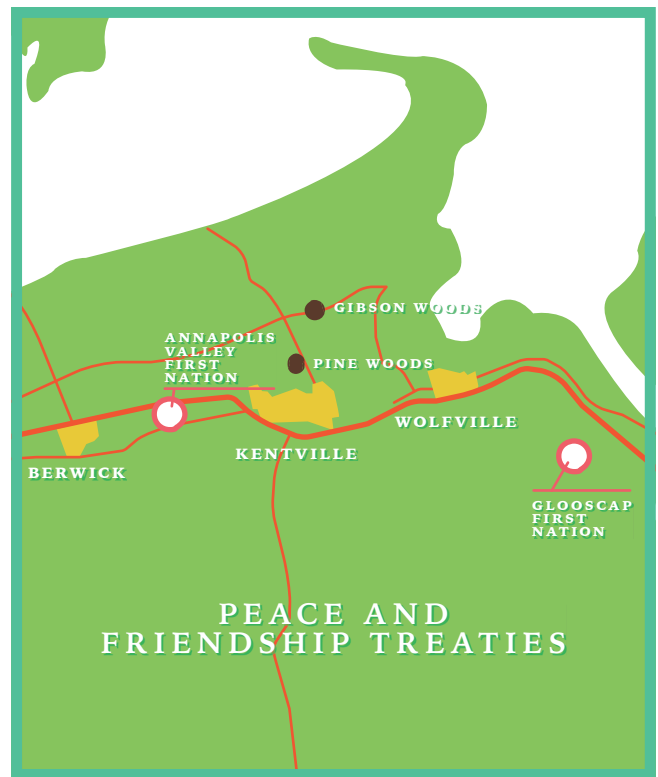
Acknowledgement of Historical Black/African Nova Scotian Communities: Also depicted on the map above are the communities of Pine Woods and Gibson Woods. These communities are being included on the map as historical Black or African Nova Scotian communities. We specifically honour these historical communities across Nova Scotia, who have been here for well over 400 years.
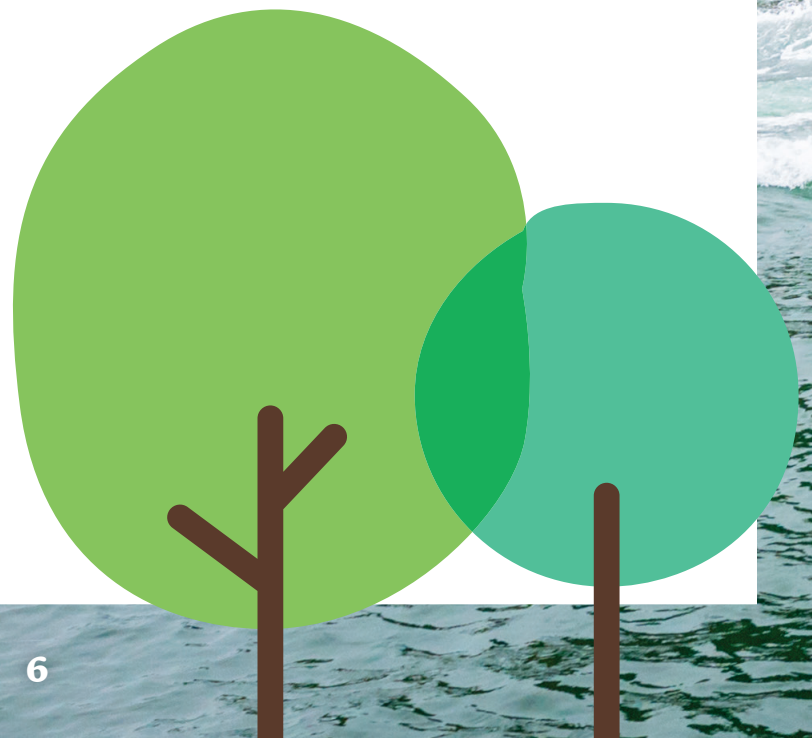
GLOSSARY

It is important to promote understanding through language and clarify the terms that are contained in the plan, or in documents supporting the plan. Many of these terms are part of a rapidly evolving discourse and their meaning could change over time, but the concepts and terms contained within form a foundation for the project.

Aboriginal People: This is the overall term used in Canada's 1982 Constitution Act to refer to First Nations, Inuit and Métis people. The word recognizes the fact that Aboriginal peoples are the original people of Canada (Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, 2014). Increasingly, this term is being used to only refer to Indigenous Peoples in a legal context and not making casual references.

Accessibility: Accessibility involves removing the barriers faced by individuals with a variety of disabilities (which can include, but is not limited to: physical, sensory, cognitive, learning, mental health) and the various barriers (including attitudinal and systemic) that impede an individual's ability to participate in social, cultural, political, and economic life. Disabilities can be temporary or permanent. As we age our abilities change and therefore an accessible society is one designed to include everybody; both people with disabilities and people who self-identify as non-disabled (City for All Women Initiative, 2015).

African Canadians: People of African descent in Canada, who are citizens or permanent residents (Used as an umbrella term for all peoples of African descent in Canada).

African Nova Scotians: Honouring specifically the historically African Nova Scotian communities across the province, who have been here for well over 400 years. *Distinct from African Canadians or other people of African Descent who now reside in Nova Scotia. Many of these communities self-identify as Indigenous African Nova Scotian.

African Diaspora: The global connection of people and communities of African Descent – whether native to African or peoples from Africa – ex: people in the Americas, Europe, etc.

Ally: A person who supports an individual or group to be treated equitably and fairly. This often grows out of the self-awareness of inequities or privileges we have experienced. Action is taken individually or collectively to create conditions that enable everyone to have equal access to resources and benefit (City for All Women Initiative, 2015).

Antisemitism: Latent or overt hostility or hatred directed towards or discrimination against individual Jewish people or the Jewish people for reasons connected to their religion, ethnicity, and their cultural, historical, intellectual and religious heritage (Province of Ontario, 2017).

Belonging: A sense of belonging is the feeling of being connected and accepted by one's family and community. It is a critical component of human and community development and lends itself to feeling like one can participate and relate to their group or community.

Colonialism (Colonization): A practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another. Settler colonialism—such as in the case of Canada—is the unique process where the colonizing population does not leave the territory, assets ongoing sovereignty to the land, actively seeks to assimilate the Indigenous populations and extinguish their cultures, traditions and ties to the land (Government of Canada, 2019). In Canada, this means that Western European-derived ways of being, believing, knowing, and doing are implicitly or explicitly presented as the standard or norm, and other ways of being, knowing, and doing are implicitly or explicitly presented as "other," alternative, or less worthy.

Cultural Humility: A practice of self-reflection to understand personal and systemic biases and to develop and maintain respectful processes and relationships based on mutual trust. Cultural humility involves humbly acknowledging oneself as a learner when it comes to understanding another's experience (Canadian Institute of Planners, 2019).

Cultural Competency: A comprehensive collection of behaviour, attitudes, practices, and policies that creates an inclusive environment for people of diverse backgrounds. Culturally competent organizations have the awareness, knowledge base and learned skills to effectively and sensitively work with and provide services to people of diverse backgrounds (Portland Metropolitan Region, 2016).

Cultural Safety: An outcome based on respectful engagement that recognizes and strives to address power differentials that can be present in planning systems, e.g., between decision-makers or experts and marginalized people. It means all people feel respected and safe when they participate in planning processes (Canadian Institute of Planners, 2019).

Decolonization: (see antonym above Colonialism, Colonization) In Canada, decolonization is usually discussed in terms of the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. It is related to Indigenous resurgence (Indigenous people reclaiming and restoring their culture, land, language, relationships, health, etc., both independent of and with the support of non-Indigenous people). Decolonization is also associated with other relationships between groups of people within Canada and in other countries and contexts around the world, and for some, is linked to broader principles of inclusion and equity. Decolonization is a process, not a product, and it involves undoing or removing colonial elements of society.

Diversity: Vancouver's A Healthy City for All (2014) describes 'diversity' as a term that is often confused for 'race' or 'culture,' when in fact it should be used to consider the number of interlocking ways that people are disadvantaged and mistreated, and thus how people from various and marginalized groups or communities feel comfortable, safe and able to access their community spaces and institutions (City of Vancouver, 2014).

Equity: Fairness, impartiality, even-handedness. A distinct process of recognizing differences within groups of individuals and using this understanding to achieve substantive equality in all aspects of a person's life (Government of Canada, 2019).

Inclusion: Acknowledging and valuing people's differences so as to enrich social planning, decision-making, and quality of life for everyone. In an inclusive municipality, we each have a sense of belonging, acceptance, and are recognized as valued and contributing members of society. Real inclusion takes place when those already included in the "mainstream" learn from those who are excluded and initiate change (City for All Women Initiative, 2015).

Institutional Racism: Policies, practices and procedures that work better for white people than for people of colour, often unintentionally or inadvertently (National League of Cities, 2017).

Intersectionality: The intersection, or crossover, of our many identities affects how each of us experiences the Municipality. These intersections occur within a context of connected systems and structures of power (e.g., laws, policies, state governments, other political and economic unions, religious institutions, media) (City for All Women Initiative, 2015).

Islamophobia: Includes racism, stereotypes, prejudice, fear or acts of hostility directed towards individual Muslims or followers of Islam in general. In additional to individual acts of intolerance and racial profiling, Islamophobia can lead to viewing and treating Muslims as a greater security threat on an institutional, systemic and societal level (Province of Ontario, 2017).

LGBTQ+ or 2SLGBTQQIAA: Acronyms used to encompass most or all members of sexually- and gender-diverse communities. LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, +) or 2SLGBTQQIAA (Two Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, Ally) are typically used interchangeably. Members of these communities experience overt and systemic discrimination.

Mi'kmaq: Mi'kmaq (Mi'kmaw, Micmac or L'nu, "the people" in Mi'kmaq) are Indigenous peoples are among the original inhabitants of the Atlantic region in Canada, and the original peoples within the Municipality of the County of Kings. This traditional territory is known as Mi'kma'ki and is made up of seven districts. Mi'kmaq people have occupied their traditional territory, since time immemorial.

Marginalization: Refers to a long-term, structural process of systemic discrimination that creates a class of disadvantaged minorities. These groups become permanently confined to the margins of society; their status is continually reproduced because of the various dimensions of exclusion particularly in the labour market, but also from full and meaningful participation in society (Province of Ontario, 2017).

Peace and Friendship Treaties: On the East Coast, Peace and Friendship Treaties were signed with the Mi'kmaq, Maliseet and Passamaquoddy prior to 1779. Treaties are solemn agreements that set out long-standing promises, mutual obligations and benefits for both parties. The British Crown first began entering into treaties to end hostilities and encourage cooperation between the British and First Nations. As the British and French competed for control of North America, treaties were also strategic alliances which could make the difference between success and failure for European powers. (Government of Canada, 2021.

Privilege: The experience of freedoms, rights, benefits, advantages, access and/or opportunities afforded to members of a dominant group in a society or in a given context (City for All Women Initiative, 2015).

Race: A social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly colour), ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification, and the social, economic and political needs of a society at a given period of time. Racial categories subsume ethnic groups (Portland Metropolitan Region, 2017).

Racialization: A process of delineation of group boundaries and of allocation of persons within those boundaries by primary reference to (supposedly) inherent and/or biological (usually phenotypical) characteristics (Province of Ontario, 2017).

Racial Equity: "Closing the gaps" so that race does not predict one's success, while also improving outcomes for all (National League of Cities, 2017).

Reparations: Governments have a duty to acknowledge and address widespread or systematic human rights violations, in cases where the government caused the violations or did not seriously try to prevent them. Reparations initiatives seek to address the harms caused by these violations. They can take the form of compensating for the losses suffered, which helps overcome some of the consequences of abuse. They can also be future oriented—providing rehabilitation and a better life to victims—and help to change the underlying causes of abuse. Reparations publicly affirm that victims are rights-holders entitled to redress.
(https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary)

Social Participation: Involvement in meaningful activities that increase one's sense of belonging and well-being (Government of Canada, 2019).

Structural, Institutional or Systemic Racism: When institutions or systems create or maintain racial inequity, often as a result of hidden institutional biases in policies, practices and procedures that privilege some groups and disadvantage others (Province of Ontario, 2017).

Systemic Barriers: Obstacles that exclude groups or communities of people from full participation in, and the benefits of, social, economic, and political life. They may be hidden or unintentional but are built into the way society works. Existing policies, practices and procedures, as well as assumptions and stereotypes, reinforce them (City for All Women Initiative, 2015).

Truth and Reconciliation: The concept of reconciliation is about speaking the truths of the past, and acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted on Indigenous Communities in Canada, including Residential Schools. It is about atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviours that continue to marginalize Indigenous people. Reconciliation is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country. (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015).

Two-eyed Seeing (Etuaptmumk): is a guiding principle developed by Mi'kmaq Elder Albert Marshall that recognizes that better outcomes are more likely if we bring two or more perspectives into collaboration. Accordingly, Etuaptmumk can also be understood as a gift of multiple perspectives, an insight and framework that could help us do better in many areas of our shared lives, including our relationship with the earth.

INTRODUCTION

The Municipality of the County of Kings is a vibrant and dynamic region in the Province of Nova Scotia. Developed over the span of four centuries in Mi'kma'ki, the traditional, ancestral and unceded lands and waters of the Mi'kmaq people. As well, this region is home to multiple Historic African Nova Scotian communities, whose heritage and contributions have shaped the current landscape. Our region is now home to a diverse population with unique stories and cultures enriching the Municipality of the County of Kings.

A predominantly rural region, residents face complex barriers to equitable participation in the community. With a history of systemic and structural racism, experiences of rural poverty, and discrimination and stigma facing various members of the community, the well being, resilience and future of the Municipality depends on a collective commitment to action. Some of the potential marginalized experiences and barriers that residents face within the region are illustrated through the diagram below.

Indigenous
(i.e. First Nations, Inuit & Metis)

Religious minorities

Black & African Nova Scotian

People of colour
(i.e. Black & Brown folks)

Language barriers

Immigrants, Newcomers & Citizenship
(i.e. Temporary Foreign Workers, undocumented immigrants

Access to services
(healthcare, education, Access Nova Scotia)

RACIALIZATION

Body size
(i.e. larger bodies are stigmatized)

Internet access

RURAL VS URBAN

Neuro diversity
(i.e. autism spectrum disorder, ADHD, etc)

Access to diverse job market

ABILITY

MARGINALIZED EXPERIENCES

Congenital or acquired physical challenges

Access to transportation

Physical & mental health

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

Access to higher education

SEXUALITY & GENDER IDENTITY

2Spirit, Trans, Genderqueer, Nin-binary, Agender, Intersex (i.e. Folks who do not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth)

Access to healthy food

Homeless or unstable housing

Being a woman

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Pansexual, Queer, Asexual

PROJECT BACKGROUND

In 2008, the Municipality of the County of Kings adopted a declaration to join the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities against Racism (CCMARD), the Canadian branch of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) initiative. This action was followed by the Town of Kentville, which joined CCMARD in 2010. Together, Kings and Kentville committed to achieving the 10 anti-racism and anti-discriminatory UNESCO Commitments.

In July of 2012, the Race Relations and Anti-Discrimination Committee (RRADC) of the Municipality of the County of Kings contracted Horizons Community Development Associates Inc. to develop the Action Plan for ending racism and discrimination. The final version of the Action Plan was approved by Council in October 2012.

After eight years of progress made and milestones celebrated in the Municipality alongside the community's changing needs and a rapidly evolving societal discourse, Council and the Diversity Committee sought an update to the original Action Plan. In August of 2020, Lightship Strategies Inc., Indigevisor Advisory and Consulting and Infinitus Academy Inc. were contracted to take on this work. The team has worked to conduct analyses of best practices throughout Canada and of a comprehensive policy review, as well as complete engagement throughout the Municipality. Engagement has determined what has come out of the past Action Plan and what the community's priorities and needs are going forward.

PROJECT APPROACH

Over the past year, the project team worked closely with municipal staff, the Diversity Committee, and community collaborators through a community-led approach to identifying actions. We had some tough conversations, and it was in the discomfort, vulnerability, and passion for justice that these conversations were possible.

A community-led approach to development of the goals, targets, and tangible actions was completed through a strategic interviewing process, which allowed the team to identify areas for improvement of the municipality, as well as areas where community can support the municipality in implementation. We believe it is in these alignments where actions can be most impactful.

This final document is a strategic policy framework that will direct the creation of municipal policies and guide Council and administrative decisions related to funding, programming, policy, ongoing project work, and priorities in nearly every department of the organization. While one of the key pillars of the plan is internal to the municipality's operations, all of the other actions are outward facing. They are about providing platform and support for community to guide the municipality authentically into action. Nearly every action includes partnership, and actions will be evaluated with community conversations.

The vision is for this to be a framework for collaboration. It is a short-term strategy that should be completed within 3-5 years. Through ongoing community engagement, new actions and targets should be added on a regular basis.
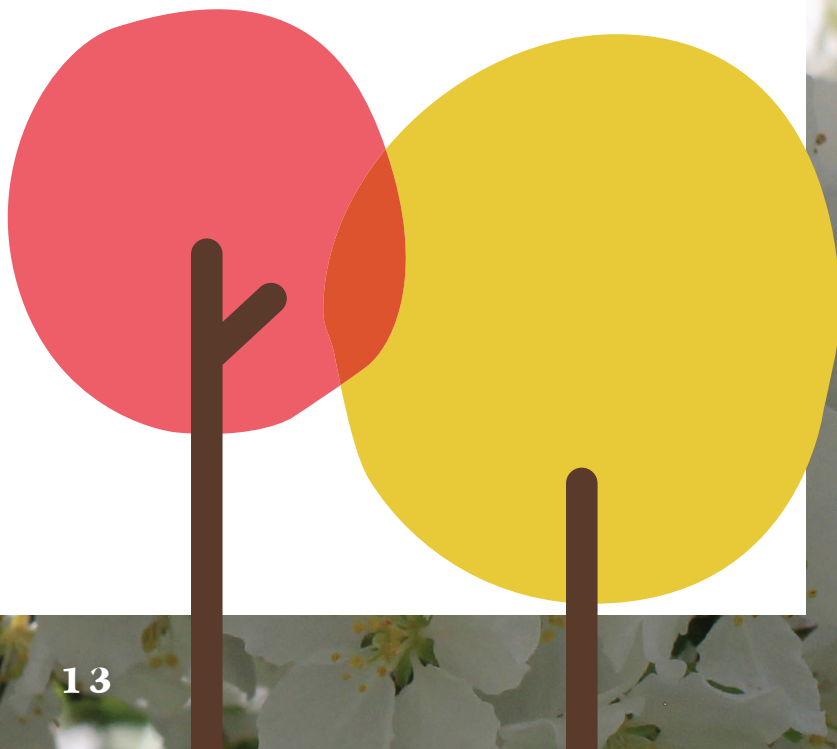
OUR LENSES

Embedded in equity and inclusion work is the consideration for intersectionality. "Intersectionality" is used to explain the intersection of oppressive pow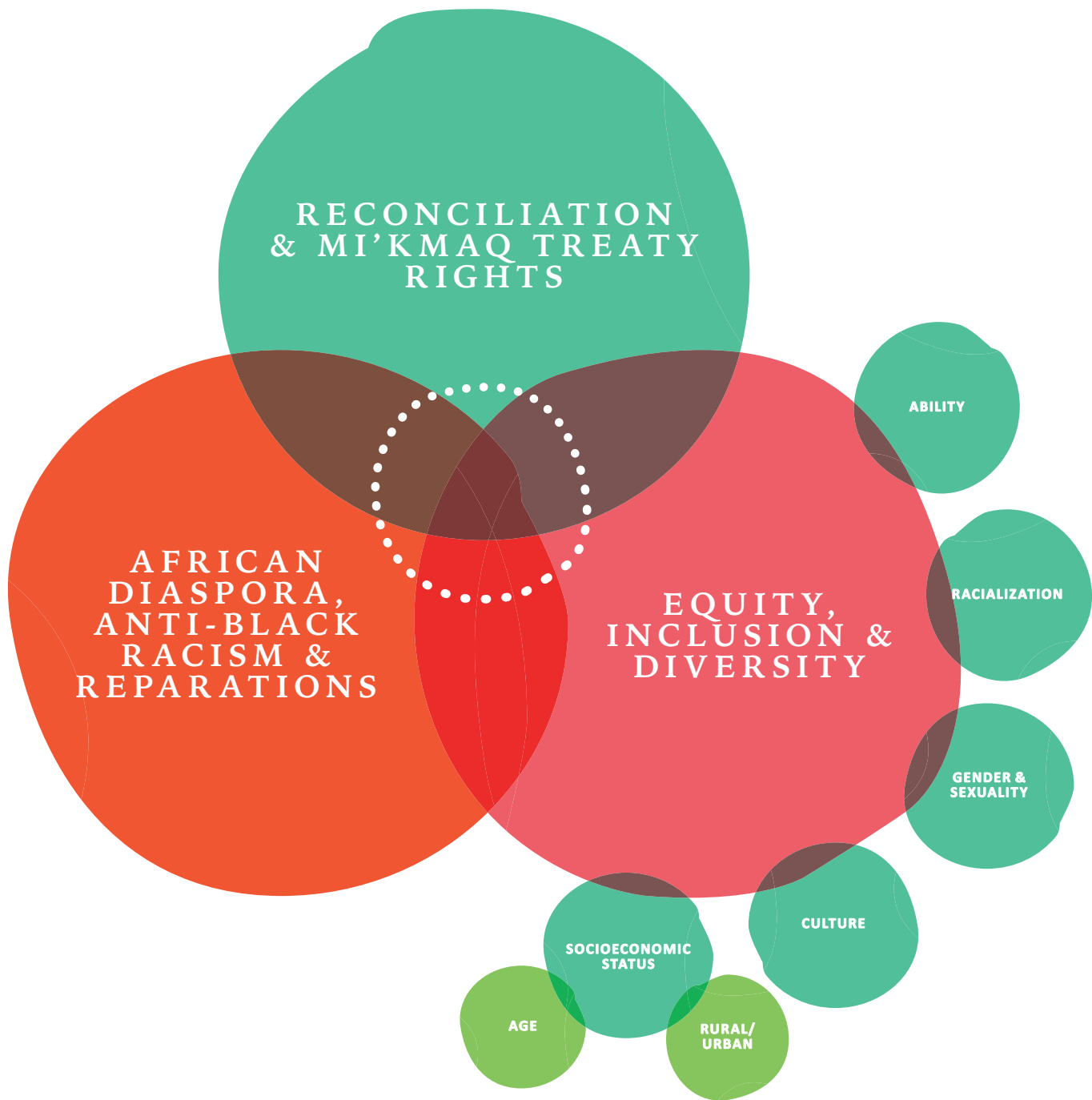er for people who belong to multiple marginalized groups. It helps us to understand how systems of power and oppression operate together. A set of 'lenses' were developed to enable our team to analyze existing and potential policies and actions through multiple perspectives. These lenses include:

Reconciliation and Mi'kmaq Treaty Rights Lens: This lens is fundamental to recognizing that Nova Scotia is on the unceded, ancestral territory of Mi'kma'ki. Using an Indigenous rights lens means we will prioritize actions or policies that enable Mi'kmaq people to access services safely and in a way that directly meets their needs. It is about supporting self-determination and decolonization. Complimenting Indigenous Rights with a Reconciliation lens ensures that we use the Truth & Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) 94 Calls to Action, and in particular the several Calls to Action that directly pertain to municipal governance as guidance for specific action items.

African Diaspora, Anti-Black Racism Lens and Reparations Lens: Is an acknowledgement of the need for reparations while recognizing; (1) That the African continent is the birthplace of humanity, with the oldest civilizations and that democracy, cooperative economics, art , entertainment, modern education and medicine, are rooted in African Wisdom and were built off the backs of African-Descended people; and (2) The centuries long displacement, disenfranchisement - lack of access, opportunity and celebration of heritage and contribution, and systemic implications impacting the current realities of persons of African Descent, specifically African Nova Scotians who have ancestral roots in the province for 400+ years.

Equity, Inclusion and Diversity Lens: We actively include all voices and identities and act to empower and support those who are typically excluded. We consider how systemic barriers and internal biases, such as racism, misogyny, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, ageism, and various forms of stigma are embedded in Western planning and policy processes, and thus many people and voices are not reflected in the policies that shapes our residents' experience. This lens includes specific focus on socio-economic barriers including age and geography, ability and access for persons with disabilities, racialization and barriers faced by people of colour, gender and sexuality, as well as culture which encompasses the diverse traditions, food, clothing, language, and living heritage that enrich the Municipality.

RECONCILIATION & MI'KMAQ TREATY RIGHTS

AFRICAN DIASPORA, ANTI-BLACK RACISM & REPARATIONS

EQUITY, INCLUSION & DIVERSITY

ABILITY

RACIALIZATION

GENDER & SEXUALITY

CULTURE

SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

AGE

RURAL/ URBAN

The lens map above shows the intersections of the three lenses utilized within this work. When we look through these lenses, actions with the maximum impact will be found at the intersection or overlap between the lenses.

ENGAGEMENT & RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Engagement Approach

This plan seeks to build actions in alignment with other levels of government, supporting organizations, and by seeking partnerships with neighbouring Nations, community leaders, and service providers that support equity-seeking groups within the municipality. The engagement approach has been founded in the development of partnerships with community and in a manner that protects the safety of those with lived experience of victimization and marginalization. Deeper engagement at the community level needs to be targeted towards specific action and implementation, and can occur as an outcome of the plan.

In addition to community outreach, engagement was completed with Council of the Municipality of the County of Kings as well as the Diversity Committee. The Diversity Committee in particular has provided guidance throughout the planning process over several meetings and engagement sessions. The engagement results, below, include feedback from collaborating organizations, Diversity Committee and Council.

We recognize engagement is an ongoing process, rooted in relationship building. Engagement doesn't stop once the plan is drafted, but rather the planning process sets the stage for ongoing conversation and collaboration.

Collaborators and Organizations

These organizations form a starting point and the municipality is open to hearing from other organizations or programs who would like to support the work. If you are interested in participating in the work on an ongoing basis or have ideas, please contact us here.

During the planning process, the team met with approximately 30 organizations and individuals across a variety of sectors that are community leaders in this work. This included organizations targeted to serve all people in the region including youth, seniors, persons with disabilities, women, immigrants and newcomers, Mi'kmaq and the urban Indigenous community, Black and Historic African Nova Scotian Communities, and 2SLGBTQ+ communities. It also included organizations with specific mandates that will support the work by encouraging change, including transit, economic development, tourism, cultural stewardship, education, and community services within the municipality.

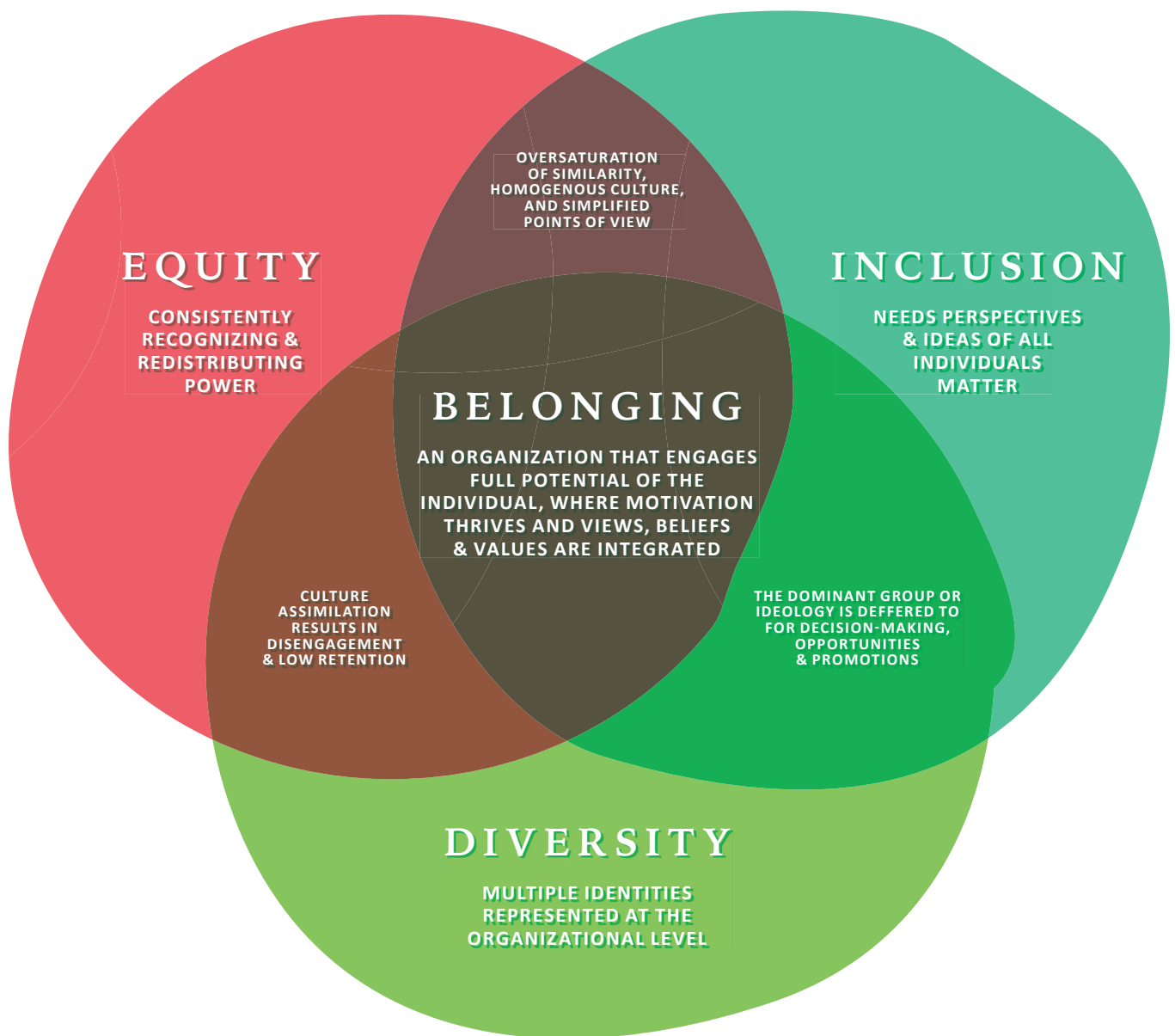**What We Heard: How are we taking direction from engagement?**

Feedback on the overall direction of the plan, foundational concepts, and how to manage the project are summarized in the sections below.

Much of the input that was heard throughout the engagement process was specific actions that have been put directly into action through the plan commitments. All of the actions in the plan were identified by participants in the planning process and input has been infused into the policy statements, vision, and organization of the plan.

Some higher-level feedback on plan management, development, and the role of the municipality is summarized below:

- The Municipality of the County of Kings needs to lead in a serving way, informed by community.

- The project must be founded in recognition of our communities who historically inhabited Nova Scotia. Mi'kmaw communities as well as African Nova Scotian Communities require Reconcilation and Reparations.

- The plan should be founded in a holistic understanding of equity and belonging.

- The plan needs to focus on specific opportunities that are actionable and tangible commitments for the community. We need to be able to define the actions clearly.

- The action plan, commitments and message must be simple, straight forward, and accessible language.

- The plan must be founded in accountability and commitment. There needs to be real levers through policy and programs, and leaders need to be committed to the outcomes.

- The emphasis should be on sustainable and decentralized action throughout the whole municipal organization.

- The process needs to be transparent and collaborative. Community members should know about the progress through ongoing communication and evaluation of the plan. Community needs to be able to hold the municipality accountable.

- The actions need to be adjustable based on community feedback. Some of the ideas may or may not work, so we need to be able to see what is working and what isn't and adjust to create a living plan.

- We can't be a full community if we don't hear all voices. We need to commit to ongoing engagement with all interested people and organizations. This plan is the beginning of a conversation.

- Some of the priority areas for action are internal policies and work environment, economic development, public accountability, opportunities for youth, equitable land use, Reconciliation, and Reparations.

- To be authentic, the actions must be 'written' or identified by the defined groups, because it relates to their truth and their life-experience.

- This plan should be founded in justice, including changing existing prejudices to acceptance and creating public accountability for acts of racism and discrimination. The language needs to be elevated.

- Community will need to see follow-through. We will need to have some sort of measurement to bring this plan back to Council each year to see how we are doing.

- The plan needs to stay at the front of mind—it can't disappear onto the side of one person's desk. There needs to be collective responsibility and action.

EQUITY
CONSISTENTLY RECOGNIZING & REDISTRIBUTING POWER

INCLUSION
NEEDS PERSPECTIVES & IDEAS OF ALL INDIVIDUALS MATTER

DIVERSITY
MULTIPLE IDENTITIES REPRESENTED AT THE ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL

BELONGING
AN ORGANIZATION THAT ENGAGES FULL POTENTIAL OF THE INDIVIDUAL, WHERE MOTIVATION THRIVES AND VIEWS, BELIEFS & VALUES ARE INTEGRATED

OVERSATURATION OF SIMILARITY, HOMOGENOUS CULTURE, AND SIMPLIFIED POINTS OF VIEW

CULTURE ASSIMILATION RESULTS IN DISENGAGEMENT & LOW RETENTION

THE DOMINANT GROUP OR IDEOLOGY IS DEFFERED TO FOR DECISION-MAKING, OPPORTUNITIES & PROMOTIONS

VISION STATEMENT

The Municipality will be an organization that reflects the diversity of our community, demonstrates authentic leadership and community-led work, and where there is equal and equitable opportunity for all through employment, access to services, inclusive policy, and investment. We envision an organization that will make an impact through tangible, prevention-oriented leadership.

The Municipality will act as a partner that upholds fundamental rights and freedoms to move beyond inclusion to justice. As a partner, the municipality provides a platform for hearing and reflecting all voices while supporting and investing in collaboration on anti-racism and anti-discrimination initiatives.
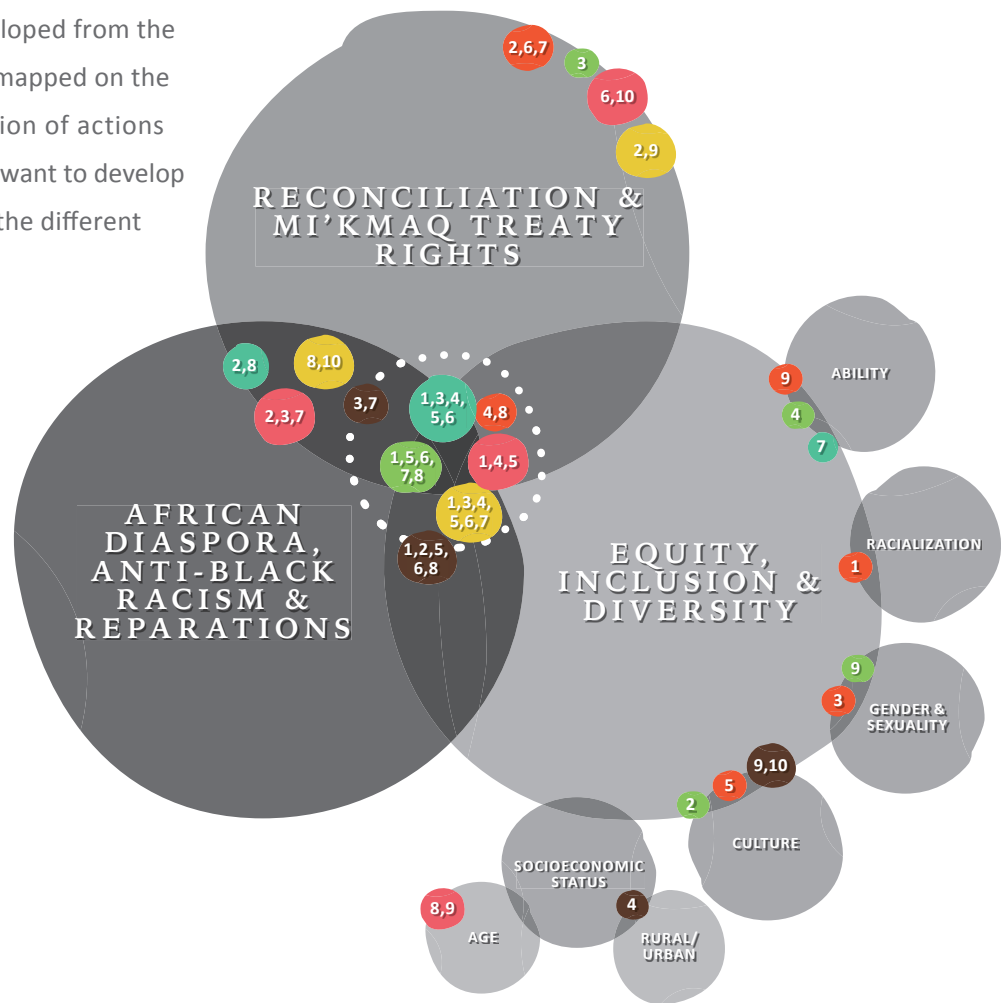
The Municipality is a place that is a community of communities—where everyone belongs. We strive to create a safe and attractive community that people want to visit, move to, and that reflects all of our communities and recognizes cultures.

ACTION DEVELOPMENT

This will be a set of actions that direct the Municipality of the County of Kings in future action, policy change, investment, or collaboration. Each commitment will include guidance towards implementation such as identifying partners and collaborators, resources required, and responsibilities. Each action is organized, within a set of six pillars:

- 🟡 Demonstrating Leadership & Enhancing Representation
- 🟢 Economic Empowerment
- 🔴 Truth, Awareness, and Advocacy
- 🟢 Cultural Celebration & Reflection of Diversity
- 🔴 Creating Safe Spaces, Land, & Built Environment
- 🟤 Access and Equitable Service Delivery

The commitments were developed from the engagement results and are mapped on the lenses to show the distribution of actions within the project lenses. We want to develop a set of actions that address the different communities in the region.

RECONCILIATION & MI'KMAQ TREATY RIGHTS

AFRICAN DIASPORA, ANTI-BLACK RACISM & REPARATIONS

EQUITY, INCLUSION & DIVERSITY

ABILITY

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DEMONSTRATING LEADERSHIP & ENHANCING REPRESENTATION
(INTERNAL ACTION)

This pillar is about how the municipality enhances its own capacity to be better equipped to achieve the goals of the plan. This focuses on internal policy development, hiring, and training practices as well as committees and creating and holding space for equitable representation at the municipal table.

	ACTION OR PROJECT
1	Commit to high-level pillars and policy direction of this plan within all land use, economic development and human resource policies. Review of this plan within all planning activities and reviews as critical background document. Utilize the lenses developed in the project for all municipal decision-making and policy development. Consider using the framework of the plan as part of the template for the 'request for decision' to council.
2	The plan includes a communication strategy and an orientation package for new councillors, staff, and the public about the plan and resulting action.
3	Recruit and appoint Indigenous members to Diversity Committee.
4	Explore opportunities to make Diversity staff position part of an Inter-Municipal Service Agreement to increase capacity and focus of that position.
5	Development of a Human Resource and Employment Strategy that prioritizes internal action around equitable and representative hiring, culturally appropriate retention initiatives such as mentorship, dedicated positions for BIPOC, creating a welcoming workplace, adequate training, and partnership opportunities with local employment support programs. Also consider representation within summer student hiring initiatives. Part of this initiative should include celebrating and highlighting successes of individual staff.
6	Complete a review of all committees (diversity, planning advisory, etc.) to address creating diversity such as having Youth, Members of Historic African Nova Scotian Communities, Indigenous and gender diverse representation to promote equitable decision making.
7	Training and cultural literacy should start with mayor, councillors and senior staff. Designating 20% of PD budget to equity, inclusion training, develop orientation training and consider service awards for those doing the work at a staff level.
8	Develop a mentorship program and capacity development for Indigenous and ANS youth at the high school and university levels in all aspects of municipal operations, including planning and infrastructure interns.
9	Create staff exchanges with local band councils and to dedicate support on a project-by-project basis for collaboration on funding and infrastructure development.
10	Through collaboration or an inter-municipal service agreement, develop dedicated Indigenous and African Nova Scotian. Liaison positions within staff to help navigate and communicate with Communities, lead initiatives and develop internal capacity through training and support for Municipal staff.

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

This pillar is about creating opportunities for equitable economic development utilizing the municipality's spending power, and by fostering an inclusive entrepreneurship environment within the County or lessening financial barriers to economic participation.

	ACTION OR PROJECT
1	Development of a social entrepreneurship hub or innovation incubator for diverse business owners.
2	Collaborate with Mi'kmaq communities and African Nova Scotian communities to commit planning, community development, and infrastructure staff support to develop an affordable housing project within the Municipality by developing funding proposal, land donations, and staff support. The Municipality will have a support role, as housing is Provincial jurisdiction.
3	With the procurement policy being reviewed, there are opportunities to look at our spending power. We will set a baseline aside of procurement dollars to diverse business owners, establish evaluation criteria and definitions according to industry standards. We will review this baseline in 3 years, and monitor spending annually.
4	Add equity, diversity and inclusion component to tender or RFP process through development of evaluation criteria. This may include items such as corporate ownership, employee representation, and capacity building and training initiatives.
5	Develop a directory of diverse business owners and opportunities in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce.
6	Support registration for diverse business owners within third-party organizations as diverse-owned vendors through providing grants for fees for one year.
7	Explore opportunities for Kings Transit to provide free passes to persons with disabilities or those participating in employment support programs.
8	Promote Indigenous and African Nova Scotian businesses through wayfinding and tourism promotion materials.

TRUTH, AWARENESS, & ADVOCACY

This pillar is about how the municipality facilitates a broader public conversation, communicates with partners and participates in truth-telling and advocacy towards Reconciliation and Reparations.

	ACTION OR PROJECT
1	Provide and promote publicly available allyship education resources, training, and awareness that includes treaty education. Consider developing webinar series or discussion platform.
2	Review naming of Municipal assets such as street signs, water bodies, and other places to authentically reflect the history of the County. For new developments prioritize expressing Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotian names and words on new municipal developments (i.e. Streets, Parks or facilities) in the county. Include interpretation and translation of naming as appropriate to educate the public.
3	Advocate and support re-naming, replacing, or providing additional interpretation around assets and places managed by other levels of government or privately, that reflect racist and oppressive history (i.e. Removal of offensive, violent and toxic namesakes such as Cornwallis).
4	Utilize this action plan as a platform for broader community discussions and deeper engagement at the individual and public level through meetings and education sessions.
5	Develop a Communication Strategy for creating accountability, which includes adding a page to the municipal website; developing a platform for sharing/communicating or joining the conversation; and celebrating success through mailing lists and social media updates.
6	Develop Friendship Accord and regular times for conversation with the Towns, County of Kings, Glooscap and Annapolis Valley First Nations to find ongoing opportunities for collaboration.
7	Deepen communication pathways and strategy with ANS and Mi'kmaq communities through designated 'district' style meetings and more regular two-way communication and promotion of events, employment opportunities, and news through existing channels.
8	Support early education about the history of the region through simple interpretation located at playground sites throughout the County.
9	Support early childhood education about diverse cultures and histories by supporting the Family Resource Centre, Libraries, and NSCC Child Development Centre, or other organizations in developing tools and resources provided to registered daycares in the County.
10	Commit to a consultation Terms of Reference with Mi'kmaq communities that includes considerations for Traditional Knowledge and Elder honoraria to support two-eyed seeing (Etuaptmumk in Mi'kmaq) and traditional ways of knowing within municipal work, such as flood risk mapping.
11	Develop and propose a Policy including meaningful mechanisms by which the Municipality can make actionable land and territorial acknowledgements addressing we are in Mi'kma'ki.

CULTURAL CELEBRATION & REFLECTION OF DIVERSITY

Culture is always changing. This pillar is about creating a platform for sharing culture, promoting the diversity of the region, and supporting communities to tell their stories—through interpretation, events, food, and artistic expressions.

	ACTION OR PROJECT
1	Always gather around food for diversity meetings, engagement sessions, or events and utilize diverse food suppliers.
2	Consider providing grants or waiving fees to new food businesses such as food trucks to promote a multi-cultural food landscape within the Municipality. Consider dedicating space for a food truck program in new areas that do not have food services.
3	Create an elder-in-residence program for use in municipal programs, opening ceremonies, and to participate and provide guidance to municipal operations. During this development, review town crier program.
4	Promote universal access to culture through an accessible event framework that includes guidelines on described events and interpreters.
5	Develop a public art program in partnership with the Towns to express stories and places in the municipality. Prioritize Mi'kmaw, African Nova Scotian, and diverse artists in the selection criteria.
6	Acquire representative photography of the region by diverse photographers for illustrating this plan, as well as other corporate communications.
7	Co-create a municipal Interpretation and Commemoration Framework or plan that includes: • Direction on signage type, design, and placement; • Considerations for language and translation (ie. Bilingual or Tri-lingual), and representation; • Interpretation of monuments, statues, or sites that has public and consistent coverage and recognition of the people, cultures and contributions • Review existing interpretation at public parks and sites and balance colonial stories with underrepresented stories. • Committing to tangible recognition and celebration of Mi'kmaq, Historic African Nova Scotian, and African Canadian Heritage • Engagement and community validation of information presented in interpretation.
8	Work with tourism partners to recognize and celebrate diverse communities and various cultural heritage locations and sites in promotions and tourism maps.
9	Consider visual support for communities such as placing pride flags and rainbow decals on municipal vehicles and education or awareness campaign tailored to that action.

CREATING SAFE SPACES, LAND, AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The municipality is a steward of land and community facilities. This pillar is about how spaces and lands are used and managed to enhance equity, representation, and protect cultural resources.

	ACTION OR PROJECT
1	Explore opportunities to create a walking 'buddy' system for Active Transportation routes in the county.
2	Develop a park, mural or garden in a high traffic area as a memorial to MMIW.
3	Develop funding criteria for municipal contributions to facilities or projects that include requirements for gender inclusive washroom facilities.
4	Improve access to Community Spaces through a comprehensive review of facilities and booking system, including a review of equitable fee structure, and by reducing economic barriers through free parking or transit for events.
5	Opportunity to manage a vacant agricultural lands database and pair newcomers with lands to pursue farming opportunities.
6	Review vacant land assets and transfer to Mi'kmaq communities as an act of Reconciliation.
7	Develop a Reconciliation Garden that includes medicinal plants and interpretation.
8	Work to create a cultural resource assessment framework for new developments in the Municipality to outline requirements for community engagement and archaeology in areas of significance.
9	Support the development of a fully accessible playground within the Municipality. Co-design with community to determine a desired location and appropriate equipment.

ACCESS AND
EQUITABLE SERVICE DELIVERY

As a service provider for residents, this pillar is about removing barriers, promoting access to underserved communities or demographics, and how the county can support those delivering services that target underserved communities.

	ACTION OR PROJECT
1	Explore opportunities to develop a 'system navigator' position at the Municipality, which will help those with barriers to access and navigate services, and support with any required interactions with the County (i.e. Paying tax bill).
2	Collaborate with police service and enforcement providers to create more equitable and safe communities.
3	Consider culturally-relevant and targeted recreation projects or programs, co-developed with the communities they are intended to serve. In particular, consider cost-sharing of activities and resources for off-reserve Indigenous and African Nova Scotian Youth.
4	Explore options and implement pilots for more accessible and regular transit in rural parts of county and examine geographical distribution of services when making decisions. Prioritize developing routes to Canning at commuter times.
5	Explore opportunities for Kings Transit to engage more closely with the communities it serves, including ongoing engagement opportunities.
6	Adjust grant policy to include diversity criteria in the evaluation of applications. Consider ownership, leadership, employees, geography, and training investments when establishing criteria.
7	Review scholarship program and evaluation criteria to ensure they are accessible to all communities and consider designating some of the scholarships to reach African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaq Youth.
8	Consider providing additional support to grant applicants by providing a contact person to give advice and provide support on applications or debrief those who applied to improve their applications. Consider adjusting the grant program to reduce administrative burden for small grants.
9	Explore development of a list of locally available translation services and develop a standing offer for services.
10	Work with real estate community and educational institutions to develop and distribute welcome packages to newcomers and new residents of the county that provide information on services and programs available.

IMPLEMENTATION, COLLABORATION & EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

The following are guiding principles and recommendations for implementation and evaluation framework. This section is about being practical about what we can achieve and how we can hold each other accountable while remaining responsive to changing community needs, ideas, and opportunities.

What will implementation look like?
We have heard from community that implementation is the most critical component of this work. There is no point of this exercise, if the actions and ideas of community don't get put into action. Implementing this plan requires resources, taking responsibility, and collaboration. A framework for implementation and approach to these three elements is presented below.

Responsibility & Taking Ownership: This plan cannot simply be dedicated to Diversity Staff or isolated to one business unit within the municipality. It is the intention that this plan will be carried by the whole municipal organization, which includes leadership and support from Council, Senior Staff, and community partners. Each business unit will report on the actions in the plan that pertain to them.

Schedule: This plan is a short-term endeavor. Each of the actions should be substantially completed within 3-5 years. Some actions will be longer-term changes. We see every action beginning some progress within the first year of the plan being adopted by council. That means that for 'big' actions (those with a high level of effort) partnerships will be established, actions will be further scoped, RFP's will be issued, and other steps to begin that process will be undertaken.

Resources: The actions in the plan have been scoped with resourcing in mind. Senior staff at the municipality as well as Council have reviewed and commit to investing the resources—human, financial, administrative, and spatial resources.

Community Collaboration: Each action is to be co-created with the communities that they are targeted towards. This collaboration will help the municipality to maintain momentum and adjust the course to be authentic and tailored to the community needs. This might mean adapting actions that don't have as great of an impact as desired, or that might not feel relevant over time, through the evaluation process.

HOW WILL WE MEASURE PROGRESS?

This will set the parameters for reviewing the plan and using it as a living document that will constantly be changed and updated. The plan will be evaluated for its quality, performance and

Qualitative Evaluation: T his method of evaluation is about checking in with community to see what is working and what isn't. This will be done through conversation, including an annual workshop and an open survey, with Stakeholders, and Rightsholders to discuss the actions in the plan, add actions or adjust course. A conversational approach will allow for storytelling and other means of communication that will provide authentic insight into the sense of belonging that different communities experience. It will create opportunities to build new actions, find opportunities for collaboration, and focus on this work in a meaningful way. Aside from this, the Municipality should provide ongoing engagement opportunities that are accessible to all residents through surveys, suggestions, or opportunities to get involved in the work.

Quantitative Evaluation: S ome of the actions in the plan are targeted to tangible measurement. For example, we can count dollars invested, training budgets, staff positions, and land areas. Quantitative evaluation of some actions provides concrete evidence of change that can be tracked, audited, and transparently communicated to community. Actions that will be measured quantitatively will also be evaluated with community through conversation.

WORKSHOP AGENDA

The workshop will be a half-day online or in-person event hosted by the Municipality. The format can be developed in further detail. The event should include a meal, shared by participants.

- Land Acknowledgement

- Introductions

- Actions & Progress Update which will include an update on each action. This could be a report, and highlights could be discussed.

Discussion Questions:

- What is working? What isn't? Why?

- Are there new ideas or actions the Municipality can support or take on?

- How can we enhance awareness and communication?

The results of the annual workshop should be summarized in a 'What we heard' report and circulated to Council, the contact list as well as posted to the website.

HOW WILL WE BE TRANSPARENT AND COMMUNICATE PROGRESS?

Public Accountability for the actions in the plan is a critical component for making the project a success. The municipality agrees to maintain a tab on their website that shows the status of the actions in this plan that will be publicly available.

Communication will include:

- Development of communications infrastructure, including a mailing list for interested people and opportunities for new residents and organizations to get involved in the work to support the municipality.

- Publicly available updates on plan progress at a minimum of every 6 months that will also be shared through the mailing list. This will include an update on meetings or community workshops held, resources required, internal initiatives or events, community partner initiatives or events, and progress on each action in the plan until all have been completed.

- Ongoing addition of new actions or deepening of existing actions (target 5-10 per year) as an outcome of the community evaluation workshops. These proposed actions will be circulated for feedback and to identify potential community collaborators prior to adoption.
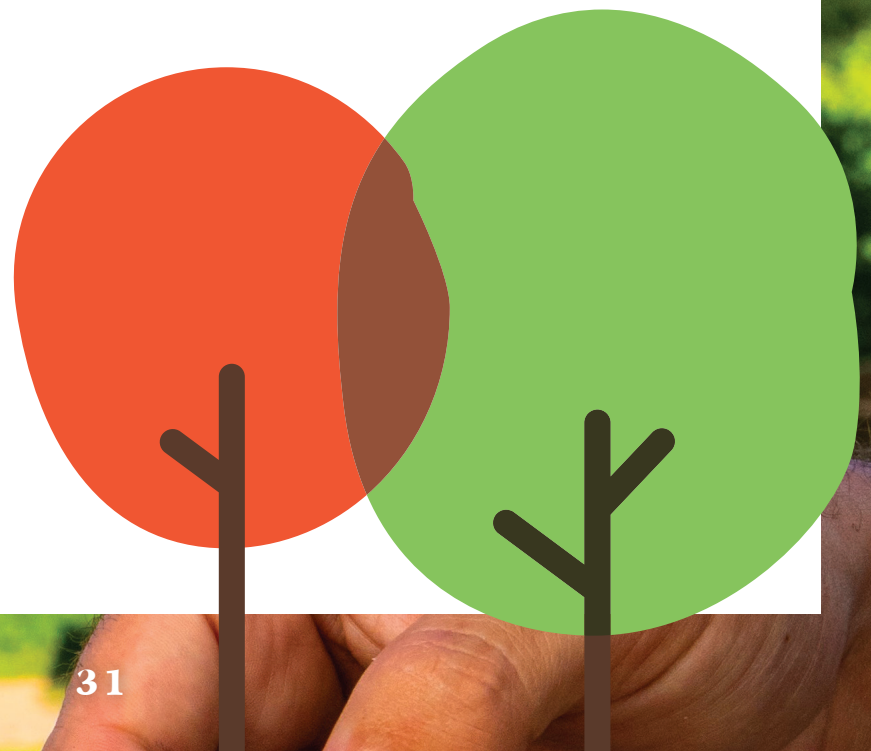
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