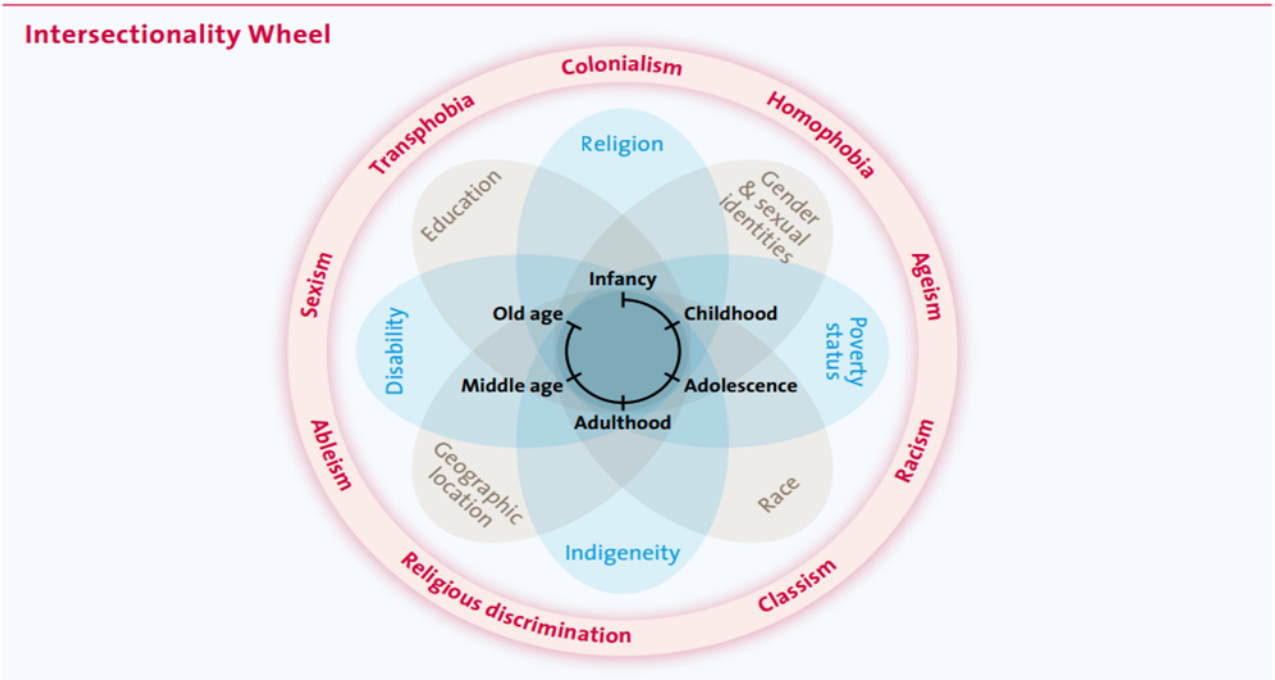
A Process for Everyone

A Process for Everyone is a set of inclusive engagement Principles developed to inform the engagement process for the Official Community Plan (OCP) and Transportation Action Plan (TAP) Joint Review. The City of Vernon is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming community, and reflecting this commitment in how we engage and communicate on our OCP and TAP. This Framework expresses how we will plan and adapt our process to create distinct engagement opportunities for diverse groups based on their needs and preferences. This approach is responsive to the potential barriers individuals and groups may face, illustrated on the Intersectionality Wheel (Figure 1 below):

Figure 1: Intersectionality Wheel



How We Will Practice Inclusion in Our Engagement Process

The following six principles will guide the City in considering inclusion and equity in our communications, engagement, and education plans for the OCP/TAP Joint Review:

1. We will acknowledge our shared history.

The City recognizes the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, the Province of BC's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, and the Federal Government's United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act. We will engage with openness to learn about the history of what is now the City of Vernon. We will also listen with openness to the experience of other individuals and groups who may have been historically marginalized within the community.

2. We will listen and learn.

We recognize that learning about priority populations facing inequities and barriers in the City is an ongoing process. In designing engagement, we will ask how we can be most welcoming and inclusive. During engagement, we will ask equity-focused questions to better understand barriers and what is working well to address them; collecting data that is disaggregated according to common barriers; and, monitoring whether social well-being is trending better or worse over time. It may mean learning with humility if the City has not been inclusive to priority populations in the past. Most importantly, it involves cultivating relationships over time with priority populations and listening to their lived experiences, challenges and aspirations.

3. We will invite diverse perspectives and foster a welcoming experience.

The City regularly offers engagement opportunities—through in-person Open Houses and events and through online portals such as EngageVernon.ca. These are open to everyone and designed to be as inclusive and accessible as possible. Nonetheless, the OCP/TAP team recognizes that this is an approach that relies on the public to come to us, and that there are groups in our community that may not feel comfortable to interact in these modes. Others may not have felt seen, heard or valued in the past and do not see a call to participate in general processes. In light of this, we will intentionally make plans to reach out to all members and groups in our community and help them participate in various parts of the OCP/TAP planning process. We will adjust our way of doing things to address the needs of different people. This way, everyone can obtain assistance to be part of the OCP/TAP engagement process.

4. We will provide the resources needed to support participation.

In designing engagement, we will ask priority populations what is needed for them to be able to contribute. We will budget for our engagement process by allocating resources to support participation, whether in the form of direct payment to individuals and groups or funding support to service providers who can assist with conducting context-responsive engagement initiatives.

5. We will build relationships that go beyond the current planning process.

We recognize that the OCP/TAP Joint Review prompts us to renew and seek out new relationships with community groups and organizations. This provides us an opportunity to connect or reconnect, but our goal is to build relationships of trust, continuity and reciprocity that will help with community planning and development going forward. When we engage diverse groups and individuals, we commit to doing our work respectfully. One way of expressing this idea is: “nothing about us without us”. This means that we consider concerns and aspirations with care, and ask for permission to share information to City decision makers and the public. We are willing to talk openly about both opportunities and constraints as we develop our Implementation Strategy and express how new policies, plans and infrastructure addresses equity concerns. We recognize that some aspirations will take time to accomplish. Some may require the involvement and leadership of other government agencies or new resources.

6. We will look for ways to create shared benefits.

We prioritize our relationships with diverse groups and seek to develop partnerships that can offer more value to our community. In doing so, the City benefits and each group benefits from moving forward together. We look for ideas and opportunities that allow us to make progress. We ask for feedback and we reflect on our work on a regular basis. We are active in exploring the root causes of what is contributing to inequality. We will consider the question: how do we gauge and report on our progress towards equity? In all our relationships, we maintain our commitment to a more equitable and inclusive future for all.