

IDEA Committee Recommendations

January 2023



TOWN OF MEDWAY

Committee Members

Select Board issued Committee Charge on December 7, 2020 (updated April 2021), specifying nine (9) members to be appointed as follows:

- One (1) member from the Select Board
- One (1) member recommended by the School Committee
- One (1) member recommended by the Council on Aging
- One (1) member who is a resident of Medway and an employee of the Medway Police Department
- One (1) Medway Business Owner or Civic Organization Member from an under-represented population
- Four (4) residents of the town, one of whom shall be selected from and represent Medway's BIPOC population

Daniel Kerls	Chair, Resident
John Foresto	Vice-Chair, Select Board Representative
Lt. William Kingsbury	Police Department Representative
Vacant	Council on Aging Representative
Susan Dietrich	School Committee Representative
Andrea Crow Henry	Civic Leader
Khalid Abdi	Member
Marques Crosby	Member
Brian Sharkey	Member

Our Mission Statement

The mission of the Medway Inclusion, Diversity & Equity Advisory (IDEA) Committee is to provide feedback and recommendations to the Select Board geared toward policy development designed to continue and, where appropriate, enhance the promotion and fostering of Medway as a community that is inclusive and welcoming to all peoples of all backgrounds, beliefs, and cultures.

This mission statement shall in no way be construed to suggest that Medway does not excel in these efforts, but rather seeks to fully explore our standards, our practices, and our collective efforts today and to build upon them for an even better tomorrow.

Committee Milestones

- *April-July 2021* – Committee Appointments/Formation/Planning
- *October 2021* – Defined common language and terms
- *November 2021* – Published projected timeline
- *December 2021* – Launched Community Feedback Form
- *December 2021-April 2022* – Conducted focus groups with organizations specified in committee charge
- *May 25, 2022* – Held Community Forum #1 to share findings
- *May 25, 2022 (open through August 2022)* – Launched Community Survey
- *November 9, 2022* – Held Community Forum #2 to share findings
- *December 2022* – Draft final report and recommendations
- *January 2023* – Presentation to Select Board

Our Definitions

Diversity

Diversity is the presence of differences within our community

Equity

Equity is the opportunity for equal outcomes for all

Inclusion

Inclusion is fostering a community where everyone belongs

Defining Diversity

What Does Diversity Mean?

Diversity is a broad term that includes, but is not limited to, differences in:

- Mental Health
- Age
- Physical Ability
- Learning Ability
- Race/Ethnicity
- Accessibility Needs
 - Language
 - Transportation
 - Public Service Needs
- Gender/Identity
- Religion
- Socio-Economic Status
- Thought/Ideology/Politics

Key Takeaway: *Diversity is about far more than race.*

Summary of Key Findings

- Medway has become increasingly diverse in the last 20 years, but there remains a general lack of awareness about how the town has changed.
- The Town, Schools, and Police have started providing resources to support changing needs of residents, and more needs to be done.
- Specific areas of concern fall under the categories of:
 - **Housing**
 - **Accessibility:** *Language/Translation Services – Transportation – Public Services*
 - **Information Sharing:** *Communication – Education of Residents – “Social Capital” Gap*
- DEI related opinions are both broad in scope (i.e., they encompass many different aspects depending upon who you ask) and many people have strong opinions about DEI related issues.
- Some form of discrimination has been seen or experienced by approximately 2/3 of survey respondents (out of 245 responses), and bullying by both adults and children was also highlighted as a problem in Medway.
- Survey respondents agreed that Medway is a good place to live/work, but is lacking diversity and conversations about diversity / race are not seen as respectful and productive.
- There is a need for resources to help those in the majority consider the needs of those in the minority.

IDEA Committee Recommendations

Problem #1: Medway does not currently have a resource for residents with concerns regarding inclusion, diversity, equity, and access.

Recommendations:

- Make the IDEA Committee a permanent, advisory town committee comprised of seven (7) members, including one (1) member each from the Select Board, School Committee, and Council on Aging, and four (4) members at large appointed by the Select Board.
 - Recommend re-appointing three (3) active members of existing IDEA Committee to one-year terms, and four (4) members to staggered terms to ensure continuity of Committee work and successful launch.
- Repeat the IDEA survey every 2 years, possibly in conjunction with annual town census mailing, to measure progress.
- Maintain the IDEA Community Feedback form as a responsibility of the IDEA Committee for reviewing and sharing results with relevant Town entities.

Rationale:

Master Plan Goal 18d. Review and strategically implement the recommendations of the Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity Advisory Committee, which is tasked with providing feedback and recommendations to the Select Board /Town Manager's Office geared toward policy development that will promote and foster a community that is inclusive and welcoming to people of all backgrounds, beliefs, and cultures.

IDEA Committee Recommendations

Problem #2: Medway residents do not understand how the Town works and how to become involved.

Recommendation:

- Update the town of Medway website to add a Welcome to Medway section prominently on the home page, which could include:
 - Town mission statement
 - Structure of town government (Select Board, Town Meeting)
 - Links to boards and committees and how to become involved
 - Links to State Representatives
 - Link to Town Resource Guide (see Problem #3)
 - Other helpful links as needed

Rationale:

Master Plan Goal 18: Nurture and build a sense of belonging for all residents of Medway as a welcoming and inclusive community where people with diverse backgrounds and cultural identities feel safe, respected, and integrated, have opportunities to share their traditions, and are encouraged to participate in town government.

- a. Continue to invest in modernizing the town's Information technology (IT) infrastructure and technology to maximize community access to Town information.***

IDEA Committee Recommendations

Problem #3: Residents are unaware of the many resources available to them.

Recommendation:

- Create a centralized resource page/guide on the town website listing resources available to residents and how to access them.
- Include ability to search based on what type of help or service is needed
 - “I need help with...”
 - Rent
 - Utilities
 - Food
 - Mental Health Services
 - Transportation
 - List key town government functions as well (trash/recycling schedules, voting information, etc.)

Rationale:

Master Plan Goal 18c. Consider creating Welcome to Medway materials online and in a town building that could help new residents by providing resources about the community.

IDEA Committee Recommendations

Problem #4: The population of Medway is becoming more diverse, and the town does not currently have resources in place for addressing the needs of all residents.

Recommendations:

- Investigate and implement resources for language/translation services, including but not limited to:
 - Multilingual signage at Town Hall
 - Availability of forms in multiple languages
 - Functionality for users to translate town website into other languages
- Conduct event planning in town through an inclusion, diversity, and equity lens – IDEA Committee could create resource materials to assist with this (i.e. will the event be accessible for individuals with mobility, vision, hearing challenges, etc.).
- Complete an audit of what DEI training currently exists for all town departments and employees (i.e., Town offices, Schools, Police/Fire, etc.) and review for opportunities to improve.

Rationale:

Master Plan Goal 19d. Provide resources for language translation, hard of hearing, and blind individuals to access town information and meetings.

Questions?

