



# INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, AND EQUITY ACTION PLAN

Town of Brighton, NY

[www.brightonidea.org](http://www.brightonidea.org)

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## TOWN BOARD MEMBERS

William W. Moehle, Town Supervisor

Christine E. Corrado, Town Board Member

Jason S. DiPonzo, Town Board Member

Christopher K. Werner, Town Board Member

Robin R. Wilt, Town Board Member and Liaison to the IDEA Board

## PLAN PREPARED BY:

The IDEA Plan was prepared with information collected from Brighton Town residents, and compiled by the IDEA Advisory Board and consultant, Gwen, Inc. The IDEA Plan is also commonly referred to as the Diversity Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Plan and may be used interchangeably.





# Message from the Town Supervisor

“

The Town of Brighton is a special community that I am proud to call my home. The core community values of diversity, equity, inclusion, sustainability, and education are central to so much of the work we do in Town government, and I believe that it is our focus on those values that sets Brighton apart as an exceptional place to call home.



We have been deliberate in the work we do to advance these values in Brighton. We adopted our Envision Brighton 2028 Comprehensive Plan three years ago as a roadmap to guide our land use decision making in a way that will make Brighton a more sustainable community. That Plan was developed with extensive community involvement, and we will continue to implement the recommendations in the Envision Brighton Plan. Now, this Town of Brighton Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity Action Plan will be our roadmap to make intentional decisions to enable Town government and Town residents to celebrate diversity and inclusion in Brighton, and send a clear message that we welcome the diversity that is the hallmark of our community. This Action Plan also was developed with significant input from the community, including a diverse Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity Advisory Board: the IDEA Board. Implementing its recommendations will be a priority going forward.





The Town Board appointed the members of Brighton's IDEA Board in 2018, and the members reflect the broad range of race, faith, abilities and background of the Brighton community. The IDEA Board is currently led by Co-Chairs Sarah Johnstone and Dr. Rashid Muhammad, and they have worked with expert consultants from Gwen Inc., to develop this Plan. They are also in the process of reviewing and revising Town policies to ensure that they incorporate best practices as they relate to equity and inclusion, and to ensure that Town employees receive equity and inclusion training.

I am grateful to the members of the IDEA Board for their work in developing this Plan. I encourage the entire Brighton community, including local businesses and other institutions, as well as our residents, to embrace this Plan and these recommendations, and work together to ensure that Brighton remains a leader and a role model for other communities and continues to attract a diverse population of people who choose to live in a community that values them and values the strength that diversity brings to our hometown.

Town Supervisor  
Brighton, NY

# Members of the IDEA Board

**Mark Kokanovich, *Board Chair***

**Sarah Johnstone**

**Mike Boucher**

**Amy Hsi, *Board Recorder***

**Helen Jones**

**Cindy Sobieraj**

**Victoria Love**

**Amanda Andrea**

**Prashant Prabhat**

**Miriam Moore, *Town of Brighton Chief Diversity Officer***

**Robin Wilt, *Town of Brighton Council member and Liaison to the IDEA Board***





# Message from IDEA Board Chair

Like many communities across our nation, the Town of Brighton is enhancing its efforts to support a more culturally diverse, equitable, and inclusive community. To further emphasize these efforts, the Town established an Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity Advisory (IDEA) Board comprised of Brighton residents. The Board is charged with developing a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion recommendation plan that will be used by Town of Brighton town leaders to guide their decision-making in all aspects of the Town's work.

To develop the IDEA Board, Supervisor Moehle put out a call for community volunteers who were interested in serving on a new citizen advisory board. Following an interview process, all 18 people who expressed interest joined the IDEA Board and convened the first meeting in August of 2019. To solicit community-wide engagement in the process, the Board hosted three community conversations in 2020 that focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion matters in the Town. These sessions were open to the public and welcomed all ideas for consideration in the plan. During the conversations, many residents said that they moved to Brighton specifically because of our community's cultural diversity. These residents also wanted to better understand the Town's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts and know how they could help. Also, many residents shared personal experiences of discrimination in Brighton. Other residents pointed out that there is not equal access to all resources. For our community to continue thriving, there must be an intentional focus on and commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion by the Town of Brighton's government and leaders.

We hope that you will join us on this journey as we work to create a more culturally diverse, equitable, and inclusive community. All perspectives are welcome, and while we may not agree on every issue, that's ok. Indeed, diverse viewpoints are the essence of a welcoming and just community. During a time of sharp divisions, this is our chance to come together, lift each other up, and be a community that is welcoming to all people.



## Community Description

The Town of Brighton is proud of its diversity. It is one major reason that people seek out opportunities to live and raise families in Brighton. Recently released 2020 Census data shows that Brighton is becoming more diverse in many respects. The Census data highlights how important it is that Brighton is the first town in upstate New York to develop an Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Advisory Plan. It is also vitally important we work to prioritize and implement the Plan's goals and strategies, so all Brighton residents will recognize they are valued and their Town government values a Brighton that is open, inclusive and welcoming to all.





Brighton is an inner ring suburb of Rochester, and because it has very little land available for new development, it is not surprising that Brighton's population has grown very slowly over the last ten years. However, the racial and ethnic diversity of Brighton increased significantly during that time, particularly its Black and Latino/Hispanic population. Brighton has a large combined Black, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, Native American/Alaskan/Hawaiian population.

In addition, Brighton is home to by far the largest Jewish population in Monroe County. Based on information from the Jewish Federation of Greater Rochester, about 50% of the Jewish population in Monroe County lives in Brighton, and there are several synagogues and Jewish schools located in town. Brighton is also home to a growing Muslim population as well as the largest mosque in Monroe County. Plus, Brighton is home to significant Buddhist and Hindu populations. Brighton's interfaith tradition is strong among these and many Christian and other faith communities.





Brighton is also highly educated, with approximately two thirds of our population aged 25+ holding a Bachelor's degree or higher. Home prices in Brighton are higher than most suburbs of Rochester and have risen rapidly during the past few years, like other Rochester suburbs, but approximately 45% of Brighton's population does not live in owner-occupied housing. This leads to a wide diversity in the socio-economic status of residents of Brighton, with nearly 10% of Brighton residents living in poverty.

These statistics and so many more, show the diversity of Brighton and the importance of planning to address the needs of all our residents. This Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity Action Plan (IDEA Plan) will be a road map to guide the Town of Brighton's various activities. The plan can be used as a reference by local not for profit organizations, neighborhood and other community groups, and residents for their respective endeavors. Together, we reject division and hate, and come together to celebrate our diversity and our vision as a community.





# The Development of the IDEA Plan

A Brief History of the Brighton IDEA Board

## 2019

In August of 2019, the Brighton Town Board appointed a diverse group of community members to accomplish a goal set forth by the Town Board: to create a plan to guide the town's decision-making on matters of diversity, equity and inclusion.

The new advisory Board was named the IDEA Board, an acronym for Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity Advisory Board. Felicia Garcia-Hartstein was named as its first chair. Some of the Board members who came together knew each other and were experienced in civic activities. Others, motivated by a desire to create a more equitable environment for their children, were new to town government.

The IDEA Board established a monthly meeting schedule in collaboration with Gwen, Inc., an Auburn, NY based firm that specializes in diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) strategy development.

Over the next 7 months the members of the IDEA Board learned about the kind of changes that would be necessary for a plan to be implemented by a municipality. They began to generate ideas for what issues the plan could address and grouped the ideas into 6 key areas.



# 2020

The IDEA Board next planned for a community engagement process to invite more residents into the conversation about what kinds of actions could help make Brighton a better place for all residents. The intention was to use a large group conversation process called World Café that would foster open communication as well as ideas.

The plans for a series of in-person sessions were cancelled in March of 2020 due to the impact of COVID. The World Café sessions were ultimately held virtually with participation from nearly 100 Brighton residents, using the IDEA Board's preliminary ideas as a way to spark more ideas and conversation. Additionally, IDEA Board members connected individually with as many residents as possible to gather perspectives and ideas.

# 2021

With substantial input, the process of creating the final draft plan could begin. The IDEA Board expresses their thanks to everyone who took time to add to the ideas, to offer constructive feedback, and who supported the process of creating this work.

# Organization of the Plan

The plan is organized into six Key Areas that each have three elements: the focus, goals, and strategies.

## 6 Key Areas

each of which has three elements:



**FOCUS:** A general statement describing the focus of the key area.



**GOALS:** Statement(s) describing the desired results for each key area



**STRATEGIES:** Suggestions for actions that the Town could take to achieve the goals



# KEY AREAS



## 1 **Communication, Education and Celebration**

The Town of Brighton will aid in the delivery of experiences that promote the diverse populations within the town, creating opportunities for a well-celebrated and educated community.

## 2 **Engagement and Partnerships, Inclusion and Representation**

The Town of Brighton will work to forge relationships and partnerships with key community stakeholders, placing an emphasis on the visibility and voices of the various communities within the town.

## 3 **Policies and Practices**

The Town of Brighton's policies and practices will reflect the needs, resources, and services of the town's diverse communities.

## 4 **Economics**

The Town of Brighton will promote the idea of town residents having their basic needs met. It is also in the Town's interest to support the local economy.

## 5 **Public Safety**

The Town of Brighton's public safety agencies will be sensitive to the town's diversity and work in partnership with stakeholders to ensure Brighton is a safe place for all residents.

## 6 **Infrastructure, Housing and Transportation**

The Town of Brighton will be a welcoming community for all.





KEY AREA #1

# Communication, Education and Celebration

The Town of Brighton will aid in the delivery of experiences that promote the diverse populations within the town, creating opportunities for a well-celebrated and educated community.

## GOAL

The Town will support multiple ways for the community to **connect** and **communicate**.



## STRATEGIES

- ◆ Ensure that Town communications are accessible
- ◆ Appoint a Town Chief Diversity Officer
- ◆ Maintain a channel between the public and Town Hall, allowing experiences and thoughts to be shared with key Town decision-makers
- ◆ Create an internal system mandating the review of mass communications to incorporate DEI in all Town communications



# Communication, Education and Celebration

The Town of Brighton will aid in the delivery of experiences that promote the diverse populations within the town, creating opportunities for a well-celebrated and educated community.

## GOAL

The Town will promote **cross-cultural, educational, and celebratory** experiences.



## STRATEGIES

- Support trainings, workshops, and dialogues that are educational, informative and meaningful to illuminate and celebrate the differences within the Town of Brighton
- Present mandatory trainings around biases and sensitivities within Town Hall
- Establish opportunities for cross-cultural educational experiences with local K-12 schools, colleges and universities
- Convene a celebrations committee to aid the Town in highlighting the Town's social diversity



## KEY AREA #2

# Engagement and Partnerships, Inclusion and Representation

The Town of Brighton will work to forge relationships and partnerships with key community stakeholders, placing an emphasis on the visibility and voices of the various communities within the town.

## GOAL

The Town will work to attract and retain a **diverse workforce** and will commit to sourcing and showcasing **goods and services** that reflect the diversity within the town.



## STRATEGIES

- ◆ Seek applicants from diverse communities
- ◆ Broaden the scope of prospective recruitment by partnering with organizations



# Engagement and Partnerships, Inclusion and Representation

The Town of Brighton will work to forge relationships and partnerships with key community stakeholders, placing an emphasis on the visibility and voices of the various communities within the town.

- ◆ Maintain a working relationship with workforce organizations and other institutions that will allow access to historically marginalized populations
- ◆ Create a presence and high level of visibility at county-wide job fairs, further branding the town of Brighton as a viable and welcoming place of employment for all
- ◆ Stay abreast of funding opportunities from both local and national streams of unrestricted funds that support DEI work
- ◆ Secure grant funding to aid in the growth of a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Team and work being performed for the Town of Brighton



# Policies and Practices

The Town of Brighton's policies and practices will reflect the needs, resources and services of the town's diverse communities.

## GOAL

The Town will ensure that diversity, equity, and inclusion are **core values** made central to the phases of planning, implementation, and evaluation of policies and practices.



## STRATEGIES

- ◆ Conduct a SWOT analysis in an effort to assess the Town government's internal strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as they relate to DEI





# Policies and Practices

The Town of Brighton's policies and practices will reflect the needs, resources and services of the town's diverse communities.

- ◆ Implement processes that will support the intent of recruiting, hiring and retaining diverse job candidates
- ◆ Hiring processes will be reviewed and recommendations made within the confines of the civil service selection process
- ◆ Develop metrics to show the progress made in each area of focus
- ◆ Establish an internal process for the incorporation of inclusive and culturally sensitive language in Town documents
- ◆ Ensure Town staff and elected officials continue to participate in mandatory workshops on topics of diversity, equity and inclusion
- ◆ Report progress annually using qualitative and quantitative data



# Policies and Practices

The Town of Brighton's policies and practices will reflect the needs, resources and services of the town's diverse communities.

- ◆ All Town departments will submit plans to centralize/ incorporate DEI into their department plans, creating an interdepartmental plan between the Chief Diversity Officer and respective Department Heads
- ◆ Review Equal Employment Opportunity, anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies and complaint procedure forms





# Economics

The Town of Brighton will promote the idea of town residents having their basic needs met. It is also in the Town's interest to support the local economy.

## GOAL

The Town will support programs that aid in the **economic well-being** of town residents and businesses within the town of Brighton.



## STRATEGIES

- ◆ Increase the usage of New York State and/or Monroe County's registered minority- or women-owned enterprises (MWBE)
- ◆ Support micro-entrepreneurship programs, incubator spaces and workforce development programs
- ◆ Explore access to job trainings, apprenticeships and internships through educational institutions and other community resources



# Public Safety

The Town of Brighton's public safety agencies will be sensitive to the town's diversity and work in partnership with stakeholders to ensure that Brighton is a safe place for all residents.

## GOAL

The Town's public safety agencies will demonstrate **cultural competency** and **professionalism**, with an overall approach that is fair and safe for all.



## STRATEGIES

- ◆ Maintain inclusive hiring practices
- ◆ Continue training and certification on DEI and mental health crises intervention
- ◆ Collect and report demographics and intervention types for calls, service stops and detentions in which Brighton police are involved
- ◆ Maintain internal forms of communication between the Police Chief, Town Supervisor and Chief Diversity Officer



# Infrastructure, Housing, and Transportation

The Town of Brighton will be welcoming for all.

## GOAL

The Town will pursue efforts that support the accessibility of **affordable housing**, buildings, infrastructure and Town parks.



## STRATEGIES

- ◆ Use incentive zoning to increase development capacity by providing public benefits
- ◆ Explore ways to increase density and affordable housing within the town





# Infrastructure, Housing, and Transportation

The Town of Brighton will be welcoming for all.

- ◆ Create opportunities for redevelopment of main corridors to ensure land use is inclusive
- ◆ Endorse *Envision Brighton's* recommendations for enhancing community by carefully managing the built environment, protecting the natural resources of Brighton, and creating more safe, well-designed public gathering places
- ◆ Assess the town's infrastructure to identify specific features that may impede accessibility, safety and community. When undertaking development or modifications, incorporate improvements that improve accessibility for all
- ◆ Ensure safe public accessibility of all public buildings, property and streets, regardless of ability or disability, at a minimum, to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards
- ◆ Incorporate gender-neutral restrooms in Town Hall



# Infrastructure, Housing, and Transportation

The Town of Brighton will be welcoming for all.

## GOAL

The Town will support the **accessibility** of public transportation.



## STRATEGIES

- ◆ Evaluate the accessibility of public transportation within the town, specifically focusing on individuals who may identify themselves using one or more of the following categories: aging, disabled, economically challenged, English as a second language
- ◆ Work to enhance Brighton's public transportation