

Clause No. 14 in Report No. 5 of Committee of the Whole was adopted, without amendment, by the Council of The Regional Municipality of York at its meeting held on November 21, 2013.

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YORK REGION IMMIGRATION SETTLEMENT STRATEGY: MID-TERM REPORT SEPTEMBER 2011 TO JUNE 2013

Committee of the Whole recommends adoption of the following recommendation contained in the report dated October 25, 2013 from the Commissioner of Community and Health Services:

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. The Regional Clerk forward a copy of this report to the Human Services Planning Board and Community Partnership Council to inform their work on “Making Ends Meet” and Immigration Settlement initiatives.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a mid-term update on the implementation of the York Region Immigration Settlement Strategy (the Strategy).

3. BACKGROUND

The implementation of the Strategy is a collective effort with stakeholders in York Region

The Strategy was developed in collaboration with the Community Partnership Council (CPC), a multi-sectoral stakeholder planning table, to support the integration of newcomers in York Region. The CPC is co-chaired by Mayor Scarpitti, City of Markham and Stephen Lam, Director of Immigrant Services and Community Programs, Catholic Community Services of York Region. The CPC identified five community results to define successful integration in York Region:

- 1) York Region is a community that is welcoming and inclusive
- 2) Newcomers are economically integrated
- 3) Newcomers are socially integrated
- 4) Newcomers are culturally integrated
- 5) Newcomers are civically and politically integrated

Council approved the Strategy in 2011 and a subsequent Action Plan in 2012. The Action Plan was comprised of approximately 125 actions from CPC members including 54 actions from the Region. These actions are to be implemented between 2012 and 2015.

The scope of the actions is broad and addresses key areas of newcomer integration, including employment, education, health, housing and civic engagement. CPC members have collaborated with each other and/or with other community stakeholders to implement these actions.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The Community Partnership Council actions are yielding positive results

At mid-term of the implementation, 34 per cent of the total actions are complete and 62 per cent are in progress. Below are examples of some of the actions taken under the five community results.

1) York Region is a community that is welcoming and inclusive

Under this result, York Region is a community that welcomes newcomers and facilitates their participation in all aspects of community life, the economy and society. Some of these actions include:

- The Town of Newmarket played an instrumental role in facilitating a presentation on the Strategy to the Chief Administrative Officers of the six northern municipalities (Town of Georgina, Town of Aurora, Town of East Gwillimbury, Township of King, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville and Town of Newmarket). Following the presentation, the Strategy was endorsed by the Councils of all six northern municipalities.
- The City of Markham has adopted a new Board and Committee Appointment policy that prioritizes fair and open recruitment of diverse candidates to the City boards and committees. The policy has led to an increase in diversity on boards.
- York Region Housing York Inc. (Housing York) has identified the provision of culturally appropriate services to tenants as part of its Strategic Plan 2012-2016. Housing York will enhance the cultural competencies of its staff training plan and

its operating practices. Housing York is the owner of 2,201 housing units that serve over 4,000 residents in approximately 34 locations.

- York Region Social Services Branch is training some of their staff on cultural competency through a web-based module offered through the Hospital for Sick Children. Approximately 90 per cent of staff have completed 60 per cent of the training and have each dedicated 13.5 hours. The training will be completed by the end of 2013.
- York Region revised its Community Investment Fund to directly align with the Strategy. This means that projects that may be considered for funding include a newcomer focus.

2) Newcomers are economically integrated

Under this result, newcomers are able to succeed in the labour market by finding employment that matches their skills and education and earn a liveable household income. Some of these actions include:

- The Workforce Planning Board has developed train-the-trainer modules for Employment Ontario offices in York Region to help newcomers who are 45 and over find a job. In total, 13 Employment Offices have been trained on how to administer the module.
- Job Skills, through Employment Pathways for Newcomers Program, provided workshops to 23 newcomer entrepreneurs who would like to start a business in York Region. Over 86 per cent of the clients who went through phase 1 of the workshops indicated they would like to move to the next phase of the workshops.
- York Region Social Services Branch partnered with the Rehabilitation Network of Canada to offer employment supports to 17 internationally educated professionals who are on Ontario Works. As a result, six clients found employment. Staff are also piloting a corporate volunteer placement initiative to help 10 internationally educated professionals enhance their networks and find employment.
- York Region Corporate Services Department placed 10 internationally trained immigrants in engineering-related internship positions within the Environmental Services Department. All interns successfully completed their placements and gained the necessary work experience that would help them obtain a license in their field. Five of the interns were also hired full-time by the Region.
- York Region Emergency Medical Services Branch is piloting a program to help foreign-trained health professionals gain the needed volunteer hours to become certified as a primary care paramedic. Currently, there is one foreign-trained

physician in the program who has accumulated 450 volunteer hours. If the pilot is successful, the Department would like to open up the program to more foreign-trained physicians.

3) Newcomers are socially integrated

Under this result, newcomers feel connected, valued and included in their community. Some of these actions include:

- Social Enterprise Canada is moving towards an on-demand translation service through telephone and video sessions rather than on-site pre-booked meetings. Use of on-demand sessions has increased from four sessions per month in 2011 to 22 sessions per month in just the first three months of 2013.
- The York Region District School Board has liaised with community organizations and schools to help over 4,000 newcomer students participate, engage and feel included in their school environment through school clubs, workshops and activities. In addition, a mental health lead was hired to provide support to newcomer students.
- York Region Public Health Branch has trained over 200 staff on health equity framework/social determinants of health to help them understand how public health initiatives may impact newcomers and how to remove barriers to accessing health services. As a result, staff indicated increased awareness and willingness to take action to address health equity for priority populations, including newcomers.
- York Region Transportation and Community Planning Department provided orientation sessions on the YRT/Viva services to staff at libraries and settlement agencies. The sessions help staff educate their newcomer clients on taking transit in York Region. Over 60 front line service providers have received an orientation.

4) Newcomers are culturally integrated

Under this result, newcomers are comfortable in sharing, learning and interacting with multiple cultures in the community. Some of these actions include:

- The City of Vaughan provided a public space to allow diverse cultural communities to learn and interact with each other through presentations, exhibits, and cultural programming. Over 500 people attended cultural celebrations and 100 attended workshops.
- The City of Markham in partnership with the Welcome Centres is developing a Newcomer Recreation Awareness Strategy to promote physical literacy among the newcomer population and to increase their participation in recreational activities.

- The Town of Richmond Hill, as part of the implementation of its Cultural Plan, has established a Cultural Leadership Council comprised of 22 diverse community members to improve connections with cultural communities. The Council meets three times a year to inform the implementation of the Cultural Plan and to share information with diverse communities in Richmond Hill.
- The Markham Museum and City of Markham have developed a program to engage newcomer youth from diverse backgrounds in volunteer and leadership roles with the Museum. Approximately 250 youth are in the program. Two of the youth volunteers received the Ontario Volunteer Service Award from the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration.

5) Newcomers are civically and politically integrated

Under this result, newcomers are able to exercise their rights and responsibilities appropriately and are empowered to take leadership roles in the community. Some of these actions include:

- The Centre for Immigrant and Community Services Ontario hosted 42 information sessions to educate 700 newcomers on the government, police and justice system. These sessions included a tour of the local Civic Centre and introduction of York Region Police services. Approximately 80 per cent of the participants noted that the sessions enhanced their knowledge of police and government services.
- COSTI Immigrant Services informs newcomers of their rights and responsibilities by inviting guest speakers (e.g. York Regional Police) to their Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) classes. Approximately 85 per cent of the newcomer participants reported an increased level of knowledge of their rights and responsibilities.
- York Regional Police and the Catholic Community Services of York Region train newcomer communities on how to volunteer on Committees of Council and Volunteer Boards in York Region. Approximately 210 newcomers are trained and have been provided opportunities to participate in student and parent councils, as well as boards and committees of organizations.
- The United Way of York Region engaged 50 people from diverse communities in their Leadership and Impact Series to build capacity for civic leadership. Over 88 per cent of the participants found the series critical to their leadership development.

In addition to the individual actions, the CPC identified ten actions to be implemented collectively by 2015. *Attachment I* provides an update on the progress of these collective actions. To date, 40 organizations in York Region have endorsed the Strategy and in doing

so are committed to supporting newcomer integration as well as using a newcomer lens in their service delivery.

The Municipal Multicultural Reference Group presents an opportunity for York Region to build regional capacity to embrace diversity and promote inclusivity

According to the 2011 National Household Survey, 45 per cent of the total population of York Region are immigrants; 43 per cent of the population identified themselves as a member of a visible minority group. By 2031, York Region immigrant population is projected to be approximately 55 per cent of the total population (York Region Long Range Planning Branch).

Recognizing the growth and diversity in York Region, the CPC established the Municipal Multicultural Reference Group (MMRG) as a collective action under the Strategy. The MMRG is a working group of the CPC that provides a forum for local municipalities and other mainstream institutions (e.g. York Regional Police, United Way of York Region and York Region hospitals and school boards) to engage in collaborative strategic planning and develop York Region-wide diversity and inclusivity initiatives.

As an initial step, the MMRG inventoried best practices being used by member organizations to promote diversity. Many of the local municipalities have embarked on corporate diversity and equity initiatives to build a welcoming and inclusive community. For example, the City of Markham has a Diversity Action Plan, the City of Vaughan a Diversity Strategy, the Town of Richmond Hill has a Cultural Plan, and the Town of Newmarket and Georgina each have a Diversity/Inclusivity Advisory Committee.

One of the key initiatives of the MMRG is the development of an organizational self-assessment tool in partnership with York University. The tool's purpose is to help organizations measure how effective they are in serving diverse communities. The adoption and use of this tool can help organizations identify and address gaps when serving diverse communities and reinforce the development of organizational policies, services and programs that are inclusive and equitable. The application of this tool across the organization can be a first step to developing a corporate diversity and inclusivity policy.

Some of the other initiatives the MMRG is beginning to work on include facilitating diversity dialogues among leaders in communities across the Region that may lead to the development of a York Region-wide diversity and inclusivity charter. These initiatives help embrace diversity and promote inclusivity in York Region. The Region, as the Co-Chair of the MMRG, is facilitating the implementation of these initiatives. The success of the MMRG initiatives will be dependent on support from the broader community and Regional Council.

York Region is recognized for its work on collaborative planning and coordination in the implementation of the Strategy

York Region work on the Strategy has been gaining the attention of its peers. The CPC recently received the 2013 Local Municipal Champions award by the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association. The award recognized the CPC for its leadership and innovative approach to newcomer integration in York Region. The work of the CPC has also been recognized internationally. In April 2013, senior government officials from China came to York Region to learn about the CPC, its structure, partnerships, and collaborative process in implementing the Strategy. In September 2013, Citizenship and Immigration Canada invited the Region to present on the York Region Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) model at community forums in Saskatchewan.

The Region was also awarded the 2012 Toronto Star Award for Excellence in Workplace Integration from the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council. The award recognizes the innovative foreign credential process guide developed by Human Resources to help recruiters and managers hire internationally trained candidates.

In recognition of leadership efforts at the local level on immigration, the Region was invited to sit on the Municipal Immigration Committee, a tri-partite committee where the federal, provincial and municipal governments share information and discuss strategic policy development. Through participation on this Committee, the Region continues to stress the important role that municipalities play in informing federal and provincial policy directions with our understanding of the local needs of the newcomer population and the labour market in the region.

Next Steps

The CPC will be moving forward on the following key milestones:

- Action Plan implementation (2014-2015):
 - Continue engaging internal and external stakeholders
 - Planning for the next Internationally Educated Professionals conference
 - Implementing the MMRG diversity/inclusivity actions
- Renewal of CPC terms and membership (Spring 2015)
- Gather data and update indicators to monitor progress (Fall 2015)
- Final report and next steps for refreshing the Strategy (Winter 2015)

Link to key Council-approved plans

The Strategy is consistent with York Region strategic direction and priorities included in *Vision 2051* and the *2011 to 2015 Strategic Plan*, specifically “Improve Social and Health Supports” and “Increase the Economic Vitality of the Region.”

The Strategy also contributes to the goals of the *Investing in our Communities: A Multi-Year Plan for the Community and Health Services Department* and helps to foster social inclusion and economic opportunities by addressing the needs of a growing and diverse community.

It is also strongly aligned with the Human Services planning Board of York Region Making Ends Meet initiative.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Region is continuing to explore other sources of funding to continue the implementation of the Immigration Settlement Strategy

Since 2011, a total of about \$1.5 million has been leveraged under the Strategy to support newcomer integration in York Region, as shown in Table 1. Funding from Citizenship and Immigration Canada to administer the Local Immigration Partnership initiative was \$273,583 in 2013 to 2014. It is anticipated that this level of funding will continue in the next fiscal year. Negotiations will be finalized in March 2014.

**Table 1
Total Funding Allocated under the Immigration Settlement Strategy
(2011 to 2013)**

Funding Source	Total
Citizenship and Immigration Canada	\$1,105,328
Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration	167,379
Ontario Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities	59,957
Central Local Health Integration Network	196,383
Corporate Sponsorships	15,965
Total	\$1,545,012

The federal government views their role with the LIP as that of an incubator. In the long-term, LIPs are expected to be self-sustainable. New funding opportunities will need to be leveraged in order to continue to support the implementation of the Strategy. Achieving the results under the Strategy is a long-term commitment and may require additional resources from the Region through the annual budget process.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

All nine local municipalities have endorsed the Immigration Settlement Strategy and are actively engaged through the Municipal Multi-Cultural Reference Group and the Building Connection with Libraries Collective Action.

Local municipalities play a critical role in the full spectrum of newcomer integration. Municipalities are at the forefront in helping newcomers feel welcome in their new community, ensuring access to social and economic supports, and engaging them in the political and civic processes so that they can become fully engaged in Canadian society.

7. CONCLUSION

York Region is increasingly a destination of choice for newcomers. As more newcomers make the Region their home, the actions under the Immigration Settlement Strategy help to support their successful integration and enable the community to prosper. Identifying and engaging broader community partners will remain a key building block in implementing the Strategy, as success depends on strong partnerships and collaborative effort. The Strategy provides a framework for stakeholders to work together in building a strong, healthy and resilient community that fosters inclusion.

For more information on this report, please contact Lisa Gonsalves, Director, Strategies and Partnerships at ext. 2090.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachment referred to in this clause is attached to this report.)

**Immigration Settlement Strategy: Mid-Term Performance Measures
(September 2011 to June 2013)**

Area	How Much Did We Do?	How Well Did We Do It?
Implementation of the Action Plan	Individual Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CPC members identified 125 actions to contribute to the Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 34 per cent of the actions are complete 62 per cent of the actions are in progress These actions fall under all five of the community results in the Strategy
	Collective Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 collective actions have been identified to contribute to the Community Results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 per cent of the actions are complete 70 per cent of the actions are in progress 20 per cent will be initiated in the latter half-term of the Strategy implementation
	Building Community Capacity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build Connections Between Libraries Enhancing Services available at the Immigrant Youth Centre Building Connections with Diverse Communities in York Region Engage Funders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded settlement programming to all nine libraries in York Region so that all libraries systems have supports/resources for newcomers Approximately, 100 library staff in the northern York Region were trained to help build library capacity to serve the diverse needs of community Successfully built partnerships with approximately six mainstream youth service providers to deliver services at the Immigrant Youth Centre. Developed a resource kit with contact information on ethno-cultural groups, media and places of worships, so that appropriate information-sharing and outreach to the diverse communities in York Region can be facilitated Completed research on traditional and non-traditional funders to identify opportunities to leverage resources to support newcomer integration in York Region
	Supporting positive attitudes towards diversity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a Municipal Multicultural Reference Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established the first region-wide Municipal Multicultural Reference Group where all nine local municipalities, hospitals, school boards and the United Way of York Region are actively engaged in moving forward on the diversity and inclusivity agenda in York Region
	Enhancing labour market outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hosted The Regional Municipality of York 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> York Region first Internationally Educated Professionals conference, entitled The

	<p>first Internationally Educated Professionals (IEP) Conference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance Mentorship Partnership Program • Engage Employers 	<p>Gateway, had 485 newcomers and employers in attendance. Over 80 per cent of the participants noted that the workshops were informative, provided helpful tools and increased their level of awareness of available supports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The program has been expanded to City of Markham, Town of Newmarket, York Region District School Board and York Regional Police • Developed operating guidelines for a three year project that will identify the needs of small and medium enterprises in York Region, including the engagement and hiring of immigrants
<p>Community Engagement in the Immigration Settlement Strategy</p>	<p>Outreach and Partnerships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted about 30 presentations, information sessions and booths at community events and conferences to create awareness of the Immigration Settlement Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately 40 organizations in York Region have endorsed the Strategy and recognized the importance of supporting the successful integration of newcomers in York Region • All Working Groups of the CPC include partnerships between settlement and mainstream organizations allowing for opportunities to share knowledge and network
	<p>Publications and Reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produced eight publications on demographics, settlement and integration needs of newcomers in York Region • Promotional items developed to conduct outreach to promote supports available to newcomers in York Region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributed about 5,000 publications and promotional items to community organizations, newcomers and long-term residents, to create awareness of newcomer integration challenges and resources available to support integration in York Region
	<p>York Region Immigration Portal (YRIP):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attracted approximately 22,200 visitors to the site during 2011 to 2013 from countries including Canada, South Korea, US, India, UK, Jamaica, Israel, Russia and China 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced virtual hub with more resources for newcomers and the organizations that support them and increased traffic to the Portal • Approximately 68 per cent of the visitors to the site are new and 32 per cent are returning visitors