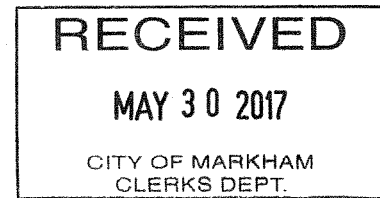


May 26, 2017

Ms. Kimberley Kitteringham
City Clerk
City of Markham
101 Town Centre Boulevard
Markham, ON L3R 9W3



Dear Ms. Kitteringham:

**Re: 2017-2021 York Region Newcomer Strategy
Celebrating Diversity. Strengthening Community.**


Regional Council, at its meeting held on May 25, 2017, adopted the following recommendations of Committee of the Whole regarding "2017-2021 York Region Newcomer Strategy - Celebrating Diversity. Strengthening Community.":

1. Council endorse the 2017–2021 York Region Newcomer Strategy as set out in Attachment 1 to this report.
2. This report and attachment be circulated by the Regional Clerk to the local municipalities, local Members of Parliament, local Members of Provincial Parliament, the Community Partnership Council, the Human Services Planning Board and the Municipal Diversity and Inclusion Group.
3. Regional Chair Emmerson and Mayor Scarpitti, in his capacity as Co-Chair of the Community Partnership Council, send letters to the Minister requesting more funding for this program in order to continue to good work being done by York Region.

A copy of Clause 14 of Committee of the Whole Report No. 8 is enclosed for your information.

Please contact Lisa Gonsalves, Director, Strategies and Partnerships at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 72090 if you have any questions with respect to this matter.

Sincerely,



Christopher Raynor
Regional Clerk

/C. Clark
Attachments

Clause 14 in Report No. 8 of Committee of the Whole was adopted, without amendment, by the Council of The Regional Municipality of York at its meeting held on May 25, 2017.

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**2017-2021 York Region Newcomer Strategy
Celebrating Diversity. Strengthening Community.**

Committee of the Whole recommends:

1. Receipt of the presentation by Lisa Gonsalves, Director, Strategies and Partnerships Branch, Community and Health Services.
2. Adoption of the following recommendations, as amended, contained in the report dated April 21, 2017 from the Commissioner of Community and Health Services:
 1. Council endorse the 2017–2021 York Region Newcomer Strategy as set out in Attachment 1 to this report.
 2. This report and attachment be circulated by the Regional Clerk to the local municipalities, local Members of Parliament, local Members of Provincial Parliament, the Community Partnership Council, the Human Services Planning Board and the Municipal Diversity and Inclusion Group.
 3. *Regional Chair Emmerson and Mayor Scarpitti, in his capacity as Co-Chair of the Community Partnership Council, send letters to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship requesting more funding for the Local Immigration Partnerships program and the Welcome Centre Immigration Services system in order to continue the good work being done in York Region.*

Report dated April 21, 2017 from the Commissioner of Community and Health Services now follows:

1. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. Council endorse the 2017–2021 York Region Newcomer Strategy as set out in Attachment 1 to this report.
2. This report and attachment be circulated by the Regional Clerk to the local municipalities, local Members of Parliament, local Members of Provincial

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Parliament, the Community Partnership Council, the Human Services Planning Board and the Municipal Diversity and Inclusion Group.

2. Purpose

This report provides information about the 2017–2021 York Region Newcomer Strategy (Attachment 1) and highlights actions the York Region Community Partnership Council will take to support the economic and social integration of newcomers to York Region.

3. Background and Previous Council Direction

York Region's Local Immigration Partnership and its Community Partnership Council have contributed to creating a welcoming community for all newcomers

With a population of almost 1.2 million, York Region has been a destination of choice to almost 560,000 immigrants. It is estimated that by 2031, 55 per cent of York Region's population will be immigrants and 62 per cent will be members of a visible minority group.

Given this significant immigrant population, in 2009 York Region was selected by the federal government to lead the Local Immigration Partnership initiative to establish multi-sectoral partnerships and develop a local settlement strategy to create a welcoming and inclusive community.

In 2010, Council appointed the Community Partnership Council to develop the York Region Immigrant Settlement Strategy which was endorsed by Council in 2011. The Local Immigration Partnership Initiative: York Region Immigration Settlement Strategy outlined ten collective actions for implementation and more than 115 individual actions for its members to work on. All actions focused on helping newcomers integrate either economically, socially, culturally or civically. By the end of the Community Partnership Council's first term, all actions had been achieved as noted in the Immigration Settlement Strategy Update in April 2016.

Specific mention of York Region's implementation of "an Immigration Settlement Strategy to enhance the integration and success of new Canadians" was made in the Globe and Mail article on Canada's Best Diversity Employers on March 28, 2017.

It was this strategy that led to York Region's creation of the Municipal Diversity and Inclusion Group with a mandate to develop a Diversity and Inclusion Charter.

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The York Region Draft Diversity and Inclusion Charter was considered by Council in January 2017. Council directed the report be circulated, for information, to the local municipalities, York Region Police Services Board, Community Partnership Council, local Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade and the Municipal Diversity and Inclusion Group.

The Community Partnership Council has created an updated Newcomer Strategy

As a result of York Region's appointment by the federal government to lead the Local Immigration Partnership, the Community Partnership Council was formed in 2010. As mandated by the federal government, the Community Partnership Council is responsible to work collaboratively with the Region to develop and support the implementation of a local strategy and action plan to address the needs of newcomers in York Region.

A new term of the Community Partnership Council began in April 2016. Membership includes representatives from settlement services, language and skills training, economic development, education and health services, (including mental health), police services, local municipalities, the Region and the provincial and federal governments. The Community Partnership Council is co-chaired by Mayor Frank Scarpitti, City of Markham and Nella Iasci, Executive Director of Job Skills.

The Community Partnership Council has worked over the past year to update the strategy by reviewing the community results and indicators of the original strategy. The 2017–2021 York Region Newcomer Strategy is the result of this work. It ensures alignment with new federal and provincial expectations builds on the results, actions and indicators of the previous strategy and focusses on the economic and social integration of newcomers to York Region.

4. Analysis and Implications

Immigration is a priority of the federal government, the provinces and many municipalities across Canada

Because of world events, political change to the federal government and the recent Syrian Refugee Resettlement Initiative, immigration is receiving an increased profile within the media and all levels of government. Although immigration is a federal responsibility, it is at the municipal level where its effects, challenges and benefits are experienced.

In February of 2017, Laura Albanese, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, met with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and select municipal

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representatives to discuss how to improve immigrant social and economic integration. Mayor Frank Scarpitti, City of Markham, and staff from York Region participated in this meeting.

The meeting outlined the following items for consideration by the Minister:

- Reinstatement of the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement which could include a formal role for municipalities to provide input on immigration settlement planning
- Strengthen Local Immigration Partnerships to coordinate local services and work to achieve better outcomes for newcomers

Immigration provides an opportunity to address anticipated labour shortages

Municipalities will attempt to increase diversity within their populations to make more global connections, increase local prosperity and fill expected labour shortages. It is in the interest of municipal governments to develop welcoming communities to ensure newcomers integrate within their communities.

Recent research by the federal government estimates labour market shortages are projected from 2015–2024 across Canada in both highly skilled and management occupations (Government of Canada Occupational Projection System 2015 Imbalance Scenario Projection Estimates). This is significant as more than 50 per cent of newcomers to York Region arrive with a bachelor's degree or higher level of education. The York Region Economic Development Action Plan indicates that elevating the Region's profile is required to ensure it remains as a significant economic entity in the Ontario, Canadian and global context. Successful integration of these well-educated and skilled newcomers will assist in achieving this plan. If competition continues to increase amongst provinces and municipalities to attract and retain newcomers, York Region will need to continue to position itself as a destination of choice for immigrants to Canada.

The Local Immigration Partnership and its Community Partnership Council remain a strong mechanism to respond to newcomer needs in York Region

The Community Partnership Council receives strong leadership through its co-chairs and on-going partnerships with external institutions and agencies, including the Welcome Centres. Its collaboration with other York Region strategies and initiatives (the Human Services Planning Board, the Municipal Diversity and Inclusion Group, and Public Health) will help promote social determinants of health and successful integration of newcomers.

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The 2017–2021 York Region Newcomer Strategy will assist in strengthening linkages between employers and newcomers and create a more inclusive community for newcomers to settle and succeed

The 2017–2021 Newcomer Strategy focuses on community results that align with two key federal and provincial expectations – economic and social integration.

Figure 1 highlights the specific actions that will be implemented over the next five years to support newcomer integration in York Region. They are organized under the following five themes:

- Strengthen newcomer employability
- Promote inclusive workspaces
- Address information needs
- Increase local service planning
- Strengthen social cohesion

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Figure 1
Economic and Social Integration Collective Actions 2017–2021

Economic Integration	
Strengthen Newcomer Employability	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host 3rd Internationally Educated Professionals conference 	<p>The next Internationally Educated Professionals Conference is planned for the fall of 2017. Its objectives are to provide participants with a better understanding of York Region's employment landscape with workshops to improve skills in finding employment and understanding of the Canadian employment culture. There will also be a focus on employers helping them to understand the benefits of diversity and inclusion.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a business case to Enhance Newcomer Employability 	<p>Some newcomers still struggle to find employment despite good education and skills. The Community Partnership Council will develop a case management model to address this gap within the employment system. Newcomers within the program will be able to gain specific employment skills, such as language programs or preparing for the Canadian workplace. This approach will also provide coaching and follow-up once the individual is employed.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for additional bridging programs, language training and accreditation opportunities 	<p>When the business case for the model is complete, working with our partners, we will identify sources of funding for implementation and advocate for additional resources to support training.</p>
Promote Inclusive Workplaces	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a communications campaign to promote and disseminate Diversity and Inclusion Tools for employers 	<p>A key feature of the 2017 Internationally Educated Professionals Conference will be focus on employers to help them understand the benefits of diversity and inclusion and the tools that are available to assist them. Tools and resources will be distributed to employers beyond the conference.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the implementation of the Diversity and Inclusion Charter 	<p>The Community Partnership Council will commit to actions developed under the Charter.</p>

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Social Integration	
Address Information Needs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update yorkwelcome.ca 	<p>Newcomers do not always have the information required during their settlement journey as service systems can be challenging to navigate. To address this, the yorkwelcome.ca portal will be refreshed to better meet the needs of newcomers and service providers.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop resource of services to be available to newcomers 	<p>Working with community partners, a one-stop resource will be developed for newcomer services.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map community assets including formal and informal services 	<p>York Region and other stakeholders are currently mapping community assets, which include service providers, community associations, public institutions such as schools, faith groups, libraries, etc. Coordinating efforts could lead to a comprehensive resource map and easier access to services.</p>
Increase local service planning	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for Welcome Centre community hub model 	<p>Welcome Centres are unique hubs for services for newcomer settlement, language and employment. Advocating for Welcome Centres to expand and sustain services offered within their locations will assist newcomers to access a greater range of services.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop local capacity to respond to newcomers needs 	<p>York Region's local municipalities have knowledge and experience in planning and programming for newcomers, as do Welcome Centres and other local service providers. Creating an opportunity with these partners to support local planning will assist with community engagement and capacity building.</p> <p>York Region is a partner with York University on a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council project grant to better understand and complement the newcomer settlement process.</p> <p>Data will be updated using 2016 Census information and other sources to better understand the profile of immigrants arriving in York Region.</p>

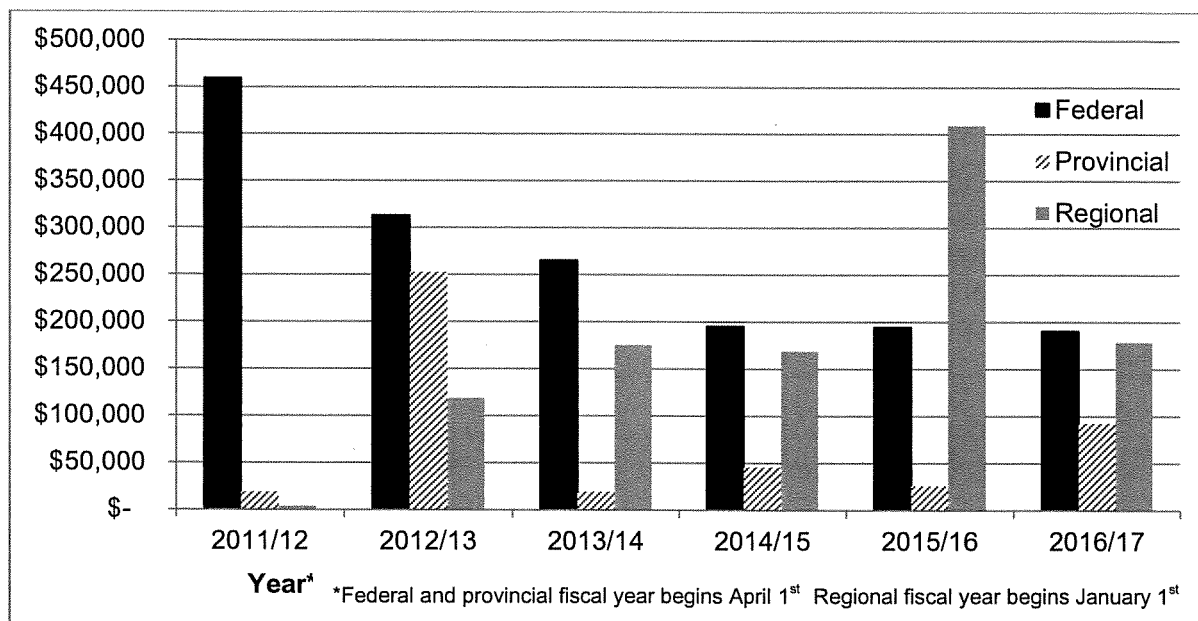
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Strengthen social cohesion	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify and support local opportunities to strengthen social cohesion within communities	<p>The goal of social cohesion is to positively engage all residents within a community. This is accomplished by promoting welcoming and inclusive communities to all residents.</p> <p>The Community Partnership Council will continue to work on their original mandate to build social inclusion by securing funds to support community groups in developing or promoting projects that help build welcoming and inclusive communities.</p> <p>Municipalities already support social inclusion by hosting and supporting festivals and cultural events. Working with municipalities, we will develop a project to further promote welcoming and inclusive communities.</p>

5. Financial Considerations

The 2017 annual budget allocated for the Local Immigration Partnership is \$563,764. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada will provide \$190,787 for fiscal 2017/2018 with the York Region providing \$372,977. Initially, in 2011/2012, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada funded the Local Immigration Partnership for \$459,178. As shown in Figure 2, federal funding has decreased every year. Despite this, the Region considers the program to be a worthy investment.

Figure 2
Funding Allocated to Local Immigration Partnership and
Newcomer Strategies 2011–2017



All amounts are actuals with the exception of the federal funding for 2016/2017 which is the budgeted amount for that year.

Federal and provincial funding primarily support the Local Immigration Partnership program and actions such as Internationally Educated Professionals conferences, the Immigration Portal maintenance, and the International Student mobile application development and launch.

The Region will leverage opportunities from the federal and provincial governments as in the past to support the actions within the 2017-2021 York Region Newcomer Strategy. Funding to support any new initiatives will be within the Community and Health Services budget and subject to annual budget approvals.

6. Local Municipal Impact

Local municipalities' knowledge and expertise about immigrant and cultural issues are expected to play a key role to help support and implement the revised strategy. The local municipalities will be engaged to understand how best to

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implement and support the Diversity and Inclusion Charter and in the identification of actions designed to create welcoming and inclusive communities.

7. Conclusion

The past and recent accomplishments of the Immigrant Settlement Strategy result from the effective collaborations by members of the Community Partnership Council, other York Region supported groups and within the community.

Over the past year, the Community Partnership Council and the Region leveraged expertise and knowledge to refresh and refocus the strategy. This work resulted in rededicated energy and newly planned activities to improve economic and social integration for all newcomers. The on-going goal of York Region remains the same: creating an inclusive and welcoming community where all residents can thrive.

For more information on this report, please contact Lisa Gonsalves, Director, Strategies and Partnerships at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 72090.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

April 21, 2017

Attachment (1)

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Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request