



City of
Peterborough

To: Members of the Committee of the Whole

From: Ken Doherty, Director Community Services

Meeting Date: May 30, 2016

**Subject: Report CSD16-018
Welcoming Communities Application**

Purpose

A report to seek Council endorsement for the Peterborough Immigration Partnership's application to the Welcoming Communities Initiative.

Recommendation

That Council approve the recommendation outlined in Report CSD16-018 dated May 30, 2016 of the Director of Community Services, as follows:

That the Peterborough Immigration Partnership's application to Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) for recognition as a Welcoming Community be endorsed.

Budget and Financial Implications

There are no financial or budgetary implications in approving this recommendation as there is no direct funding for the City of Peterborough from Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada or the Province as an outcome of applying to the Community Partnership Settlement Plan. However, IRCC funding could be made available to the New Canadians Centre (NCC) as they will participate in the plan's implementation and will experience an increase in refugee client volumes.

Background

Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has launched a new Welcoming Communities Initiative (WCI). This is a three-part approach to support the expansion of the current network of communities across Canada that can provide the supports and services necessary to resettle Syrian Government Assisted Refugees (GAR) and other newcomers in the future. This initiative is comprised of:

1. an open intake process for new Resettlement Assistance Program centres, which was open from January 13, 2016 to March 11, 2016;
2. an opportunity for communities to develop Community Partnership Settlement Plans that articulate their ability to resettle and retain refugees; and
3. information to communities on other ways they can be involved in supporting refugees, focusing on private sponsorship.

Part 1 was an open intake process for new Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) centres. It was open from January 13, 2016 to March 11, 2016. The New Canadians Centre applied to become a RAP centre and was successful. Along with Brooks, Alberta, and Leamington, Ontario, Peterborough demonstrated they have the services in place to become new RAP centers.

In Part 2 of the initiative, communities must demonstrate that they have the necessary settlement supports and services in place to resettle Syrian GARs and newcomers in their community. This is done through the Community Partnership Settlement Plan. The Plan serves as a way for a community to assess its readiness to help in both attracting and retaining newcomers in the long-term.

The application must provide a summary of the community's support and service capacity in the following key areas:

- the availability of a broad set of settlement services;
- the availability of services such as permanent housing, employment, transit, etc. to meet the needs of Syrian GARs; and
- established partnerships with the local RAP agency, settlement service providers, the Local Immigration Partnership (LIP), and/or equivalent planning and coordination bodies.

It must also explain how the community will address any gaps they have identified through their self-assessment, and demonstrate the resources and capacity to implement the plan are available.

The lead applicant can be the municipality, or another organization such as the Local Immigration Partnership Council, or Chamber of Commerce. If the municipality is not the lead applicant, municipal support and endorsement is required.

As the Local Immigration Partnership Council, the Peterborough Immigration Partnership (PIP) is taking the lead in applying to this program. PIP, then known as the Peterborough Partnership Council on Immigrant Integration (PPCII), was established in 2008 to provide a coordinated response to immigrant integration. It is financially supported by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and the Ministry of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade. The New Canadians Centre provides administrative support for Peterborough Immigration Partnership.

In 2016 PIP continues to be a community based organization with over 60 local organizations and agencies, and 140 community individuals working towards making the City and County of Peterborough a more welcoming place for newcomers. In the fall of 2015, building upon over eight years of work and the first 2010-2015 PPCII Integration Strategy, PIP launched its 2016-2021 Community Immigrant Integration Plan.

The Community Immigrant Integration Plan was developed following a comprehensive review of the work done under the 2010-2015 strategy document, conducting research on local demographic trends, implementing a survey of partnership members and the community, and conducting focus groups with decision-makers, employers and international students. The new Plan articulates the goals the Peterborough community needs to better integrate newcomers into all aspects of community life. The Plan's launch in the fall of 2016 positioned PIP to pull its members together to respond to the refugee crisis in the Middle East.

The Syrian Refugee crisis has inspired municipalities and community organizations across the country to offer support. Locally the New Canadians Center, PIP and key community stakeholders established the Refugee Resettlement Task Force (RRTF) in November 2015 and its work is ongoing. The RRTF works at a strategic level, to ensure community collaboration behind the provision of refugee support services to successfully integrate and retain the refugees coming to the area.

In January 2016 the NCC applied to IRCC under Part One of the Welcoming Communities Initiative to become a new Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) centre. The application involved completing a comprehensive capacity audit providing information on housing, education, health, transit and other support services. The audit was to demonstrate that Peterborough has the services required to support the refugee families. In February Peterborough, having demonstrated that it has the settlement, partnership and support services in place, was approved to become a RAP centre for a one year period.

The Peterborough application for Community Partnership Settlement Plan builds on the work and initiatives that the Refugee Resettlement Task Force, the New Canadians

Center, and the City have already undertaken. It focuses on the procedures and processes that all the participating organizations have put, or will put, in place.

In February IRCC contacted Staff to ask if the City supported the NCC's application to become a RAP center, and to inquire if the City would be applying to the Welcoming Communities Initiative. IRRC acknowledged that Peterborough has already demonstrated that the required supports to assist refugees and immigrants settling in Peterborough are in place. IRCC also confirmed this with Hajni Hos, the New Canadian Centre's Executive Director. Peterborough would not have been designated as a RAP agency if the groundwork was not already in place.

Staff is bringing this report to Council seeking Council endorsement for the application. The City's Arts, Culture & Heritage Advisory Committee has already reviewed the application and recommended that Council endorse it.

Summary

WCI is a three-part approach focusing on creating a culture of inclusion; attracting and retaining newcomers; improving labour market outcomes for newcomers; and enhancing Peterborough's settlement capacity. The Peterborough Immigration Partnership already works with key community organizations, agencies and stakeholders to promote social inclusion and the economic success of immigrants and refugees. By endorsing the Welcoming Communities Initiative - Community Partnership Settlement Plan, Council will be demonstrating their ongoing support for the integration of new immigrants and refugees into the social and economic life of the community.

Submitted by,

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