



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Toronto Newcomer Strategy, 2014 - 2016 Implementation

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| Date: | April 2, 2014 |
| To: | Community Development and Recreation Committee |
| From: | Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration |
| Wards: | All Wards |
| Reference Number: | AFS # 18288 |

SUMMARY

Toronto City Council approved the mission, vision and guiding principles of the Toronto Newcomer Strategy, and set policy direction concerning a number of other immigration related issues in 2013. The release of the Strategy has brought the successful integration of newcomers into focus. Its vision is that "all newcomers reach their full potential to thrive and contribute to their local neighbourhood, community and city, ensuring Toronto's continued success and prosperity."

This report provides information and progress updates on a number of City Council decisions, including those related to the implementation of the Toronto Newcomer Strategy, Social Development Open Dialogue Sessions, Integrating Cities Charter, municipal franchise, welfare of immigrant children and access to City services for newcomers.

The report highlights major achievements to date, relevant trends and issues, and outlines recommendations for new activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration recommends that:

1. City Council adopt the Integrating Cities Charter (Attachment 2) and direct that Toronto become a signatory of the Charter
2. City Council declare the day of the signing ceremony as Newcomer Day in Toronto
3. City Council approve the implementation of the new activities outlined in this report, including an anti-rumour campaign in Toronto and annual Newcomer Fair
4. City Council direct the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to continue monitoring the implementation of the Toronto Newcomer Strategy and providing annual progress reports to the Community Development and Recreation Committee

Financial Impact

The Toronto Newcomer Office is fully funded by a federal grant with a term of April through March. As Social Development, Finance and Administration (SDFA) has recently received notice of the extension of the federal funding through 2016, the program will be reporting the availability of an additional \$285 thousand for 2014 programming and funding through an in-year adjustment in the 1st quarter operating variance report.

Once this adjustment has been approved by Council, the 2014 Operating Budget for SDFA will include the full-year programming and funding, adjusting the 2014 Approved Operating Budget for SDFA to include \$386 thousand gross and \$0 net to deliver the Toronto Newcomer Strategy.

DECISION HISTORY

In January 2013, the Community Development and Recreation Committee requested the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to review and report back on the following:

- have permanent residents in Toronto be given the right to vote in municipal elections
- establish a structure to facilitate the community, staff and Members of Council to be engaged in advocacy opportunities related to immigration issues, and
- adapt the EuroCities Charter on Integrating Cities for the city of Toronto

The full direction is available at:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.CD18.4>

In February 2013, City Council approved the mission, vision and guiding principles contained in the Toronto Newcomer Strategy, and requested the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to report to the Community Development and Recreation Committee on its implementation. The full direction is available at:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.CD18.7>

In May 2013, City Council authorized the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to extend future contracts with Citizenship and Immigration Canada to support the Toronto Newcomer Initiative for future years. The Toronto Newcomer Initiative has been renamed to Toronto Newcomer Office (TNO) since then, to better reflect its role, scope of work and the City's ongoing commitment to newcomers. The full direction is available at:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.EX31.19>

In June 2013, City Council made a decision to request the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to amend the necessary legislation to allow permanent residents to vote in municipal elections. The full text of the decision is available at:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.GM22.15>

In July 2013, City Council adopted the recommendations from the report Welfare of Immigrant Children and directed the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration and the General Manager, Children's Services to report back on the progress to the Community Development and Recreation Committee. The full text of Council direction is available at:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.CD22.6>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Each year tens of thousands of people from around the world choose Toronto as their new home. According to the 2011 National Household Survey, 49% of its population in 2011 were immigrants. One third of them are newcomers, having arrived in Canada in the last 10 years.

In recent years, there has been a sharp decline in the number of permanent residents choosing to settle in Toronto. 105,900 permanent residents came to Toronto in 2001 while only 44,635 in 2011, representing a drop of close to 60 per cent over the ten year period. At the same time, suburban areas and other regions of Canada have been experiencing a substantial growth in newcomer population.

The competition for highly skilled immigrants has grown internationally as well. Many cities in North America and around the world have developed strategies to attract newcomers and help them integrate faster and better. Chicago's Office of New Americans, New York's City Commissioner of Immigrant Affairs, the Mayor's Office of New Bostonians are some examples from the United States. In Europe, more than 30 cities have

come together and signed a charter that commits them to migrant integration and creation of equal opportunities.

While Toronto has a higher proportion of immigrants than any of these cities, many of those that decide to choose Toronto as their home are faced with significant barriers. Toronto's newcomers often struggle to find adequate employment, affordable housing and may have difficulty accessing City and other services.

The successful economic and social inclusion of newcomers to Toronto has a considerable impact on the prosperity of our city. Toronto has a long history of welcoming newcomers and helping them settle and integrate. Last year, City Council reaffirmed this commitment through several key decisions, some of potentially historical significance.

Two years ago, Toronto's Local Immigration Partnerships and the Toronto Newcomer Office (TNO) conducted extensive research and consultations with a range of stakeholders to identify priority areas for improved newcomer integration and to inform the development of the Toronto Newcomer Strategy.

The Strategy has three distinct components: Newcomer Leadership Table, cooperation with Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs) and four strategic pillars. The work of the Toronto Newcomer Office, a three-member team fully funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, has been structured around these components. The Office is responsible for ensuring the implementation of the Toronto Newcomer Strategy by providing management support to the Newcomer Leadership Table, informing and advising the development and implementation of Strategic Pillar activities, and by working closely with other Local Immigration Partnerships.

COMMENTS

The Newcomer Leadership Table was established in November 2012. It represents a unique opportunity for direct dialogue on immigration issues between the representatives of the three orders of government, community agencies, school boards, health and other sectors. In addition, the Table has provided direct input and advice on many of the implementation activities of the Toronto Newcomer Office outlined below.

The strategic pillars represent broad areas that have been identified as critical for successful newcomer integration. The major pillar activities implemented since the adoption of the Strategy are outlined below, as well as the implementation plans for the next two years. All of the activities align with the Strategic Pillars, including those undertaken based on City Council direction.

Strategic Pillar: Improving Access to Municipal Supports

Through consultations with LIPs, newcomers and other stakeholders it has been identified that newcomers face multiple barriers in accessing City services, such as lack of information about City services, inadequate customer service and unintended barriers in service design.

2013-2014 Implementation

- After the release of the Strategy, an Inter-divisional Working Group was formed to advise and support Toronto Newcomer Office in the work related to this Pillar. The focus of the Working Group has been on developing tools to improve newcomer access to City services. This included a direct service assessment tool for front-line supervisors and the development of a brochure for newcomers about City services. The service assessment tool has been successfully pilot tested by five Divisions. The brochure has been finalized and is in the process of being translated to French and to top five languages spoken by newcomers in Toronto.
- On January 16th, 2014 the Executive Director, SDFa hosted an Open Dialogue on Newcomer Access to City Services, in partnership with OCASI - Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants. There were more than 100 participants, including residents, staff from community based and other agencies, Citizenship and Immigration Canada and from the City of Toronto. Participants emphasized that while the City is doing a lot of good work, newcomers continue to experience barriers. A full report from the Open Dialogue is attached as Attachment 3, outlining key discussion points and next steps for City staff.
- As a recommendation out of the Newcomer Leadership Table, opportunities for Toronto's involvement with EURO CITIES have been explored. At the request of the EURO CITIES, City representatives presented the Toronto Newcomer Strategy at the Integrating Cities conference in Tampere, Finland. The Conference brought together senior policy makers from major cities in Europe, representatives from EU institutions, service providers, migrant communities and the private sector. The Conference offered an opportunity for dialogue on best practices in migrant integration and helped inform the City of Toronto of international best practices.
- Other major activities in this period include two information sessions on City services for settlement workers and a session on City funding programs for settlement agencies. Each of the sessions involved a significant number of participants and has received a very positive and encouraging feedback.

2014-2016 Implementation Plan

Toronto Newcomer Office, as part of Social Development, Finance and Administration will continue to work with internal and external stakeholders to improve newcomer access to City services. This pillar will be the primary focus of the TNO for the next period. Implementation activities include:

1. Adoption of the Integrating Cities Charter by Council:

The Integrating Cities Charter was launched in 2010 and as of November 2013 it has been signed by 32 cities across Europe. The Charter outlines commitments to migrant integration of cities in their role as policy makers, providers of services, employers and buyers of goods and services. There are no financial requirements to become a signatory, and there are numerous benefits. While the settlement experience has historically been very different between the Toronto and European context, the Eurocities Integrating Cities Charter is of interest for a number of reasons, including:

- The charter provides a clear statement of commitment to migrants and newcomers.
- Integrating Cities is developing more detailed performance measures from a municipal perspective and Toronto will benefit from more direct involvement in the indicator development.
- Being part of a recognized network of cities will facilitate collaboration on the development and implementation of new policies at the municipal level.
- Toronto would have an opportunity to engage in the "implementing" program to both learn and share best practices.
- European Cities have been dealing with large numbers of "temporary" residents (a growing phenomenon in Toronto) and have developed initiatives such as the anti rumour campaign to help mitigate the impacts of exclusion.

Toronto, as the first non-European city to sign the Charter would become a foundation for a potential future transatlantic dialogue between EUROCITIES members and Canadian and US cities on the issue of migrant integration.

To become a signatory, Toronto Council must formally adopt the Integrating Cities Charter. Once this decision is formally made, the municipality informs EUROCITIES who in turn confirms the affiliation process. Signing ceremony can be organized at local level or can be done as part of an annual Integrating Cities Conference. The Mayor, or equivalent representative of the Council, must sign the Integrating Cities Charter text. This text is attached as Attachment 2 (note that the word "European" will be removed from the heading, should City Council decide to proceed). As the final step, a scanned copy of the signed Charter needs to be provided to EUROCITIES and the city is then included in the public list of signatories.

2. Annual Newcomer Day and Newcomer Fairs

In Toronto's calendar, currently there is no formal recognition of newcomers. Should the Council adopt the Integrating Cities Charter, it is proposed that the day of the signing ceremony is declared a Newcomer Day in Toronto and that it is marked every year going forward through Newcomer Fairs.

The annual Newcomer Fairs will be organized by Toronto Newcomer Office in collaboration with other City Divisions and Toronto's Local Immigration Partnerships. The Fairs would involve booths and displays that would showcase City services as well as settlement services provided by community partners. They will take place in locations such as Nathan Philips Square, Dundas Square, City Hall or Metro Hall. The

Newcomer Fairs will represent an opportunity for newcomers to find out more about City and other services, and for settlement providers to communicate directly with City staff from across Divisions in one location.

3. Direct service assessment tool for front-line supervisors:

The tool will be made available to all City Divisions and linked with the City's Equity, Diversity and Human Rights Framework.

4. City of Toronto Immigration Portal:

The portal has been funded by the provincial government and was last updated in 2011. The next round of updates will happen in 2014-2015.

5. Pilot-testing of having settlement services available in community centres:

TNO will facilitate collaboration between settlement agencies and Toronto's Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division to pilot-test having settlement workers on site in select community centres.

Strategic Pillar: Supporting Civic Engagement and Community Capacity

Through consultations with LIPs, newcomers and other stakeholders, it has been identified that the capacity of community organizations needs to be strengthened in order to better respond to newcomer needs. Also, newcomer civic engagement needs to be encouraged and fostered in order for newcomers to become an active part of community. In this context, stigma, discrimination and social isolation were identified as barriers to a greater newcomer participation.

2013-2014 Implementation

In June 2013, City Council made a request to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to "amend the necessary legislation to allow permanent residents the right to vote in municipal elections."

The Executive Director, S DFA hosted two Open Dialogues related to this strategic pillar, in partnership with OCASI. The Open Dialogue on Permanent Resident Voting in Municipal Elections was held on January 16th, 2014, with close to 80 participants. They included residents, staff from community based and other agencies, Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the City of Toronto. The purpose of the Open Dialogue was to present a range of perspectives on the issue and open a conversation on next steps and how to facilitate this change. Some of the key discussion points include that voting rights are a form of social inclusion and that everyone has a role to play in securing municipal franchise.

The Open Dialogue on Pathways to Citizenship was held on March 27, 2014, with over 50 participants and it was also streamed live. The event touched on proposed changes to the

Canadian Citizenship Act in Bill C-24: Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act, announced in February, 2014 by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada. The bill outlines a number of significant changes, including increases in permanent residency requirements, in application fees (already in effect), and in who is required to meet language requirements and pass a knowledge test to be granted Canadian citizenship. There are also proposed changes to representation and fraud, the processing of applications, ineligibility criteria and the role of the Minister.

The purpose of the Open Dialogue was to increase awareness of the pathway to citizenship process, proposed changes and to discuss the potential impacts. The key messages that emerged are that citizenship is a symbol of inclusion, belonging and equality, and that the challenge for some groups to becoming Canadian citizens may increase with the implementation of measures in Bill C-24. It was also identified that there is a need to raise community awareness about the benefits of citizenship and about the potential changes to eligibility requirements.

A full report from the Open Dialogues is attached as Attachment 3, outlining key discussion points and next steps for City staff.

2014-2016 Implementation Plan

6. Education related to the proposed changes to the Canadian Citizenship Act:

Staff will engage with members of the Newcomer Leadership Table to better understand and assess the impact of the proposed changes to the Canadian Citizenship Act on Torontonians, settlement service providers, City services and other stakeholders.

7. Anti-rumours campaign:

To improve social cohesion and coexistence of migrants and the local population, the City of Barcelona launched a campaign in 2010 to contest negative and unfounded rumours and stereotypes about migrants. The campaign has focused on twelve specific rumours, such as immigrants having limited skills or immigrants overusing the health services and social benefits. It includes a variety of activities: campaigning through a network of community agencies with trained "Anti-rumour Agents", hosting public debates with leading local figures, Anti-rumour comics, a manual to combat stereotypes, street performances, videos, website and circulation of promotional materials. This public service campaign has been organized under the leadership of Barcelona City Council and has been widely recognized for its simple, but effective way to build a more cohesive society. Based on discussion at the January 16th Open Dialogue, stigma and stereotypes are some of the barriers to greater newcomer participation and better integration. An adapted anti-rumours campaign is proposed for the next period.

Strategic Pillar: Promoting and Supporting Good Health

The report *The Global City: Newcomer Health in Toronto* (2012) identified health as a settlement issue. Most newcomers arrive in Toronto in good health, but experience a health decline over time due to the stress associated with migration, settlement and adaptation. High rates of unemployment, discrimination, social isolation, housing insecurity and barriers to health and other services also contribute to their declining health over time.

2013-2014 Implementation

Since the adoption of the Strategy, Toronto Public Health (TPH), Children's Services and Toronto Newcomer Office, continue to work together with other City Divisions and external partners to address these and other challenges. Achievements include:

- Hosting the conference, *New Country/New Life: Promising Strategies to Promote Newcomer Mental Health*, that was held on February 28th, 2014. It brought together a broad cross-section of approximately 250 management and front-line staff in the health, settlement, and other sectors that serve newcomers. It followed on the recommendations from the 2012 Newcomer Health forum that identified newcomer mental health as a major and ongoing concern. The conference explored systemic challenges that newcomers to Canada experience, including discrimination, stigma, unemployment and social isolation, which exacerbate the already challenging settlement process. It further presented effective practices that build on the strength and resilience of newcomers and highlighted approaches to support newcomers in their journey of making Toronto home.
- Toronto Newcomer Strategy Health Pillar Steering Committee has recently been established under the leadership of TPH, to provide ongoing health equity leadership to the Strategy, enhance system service collaboration, facilitate new partnerships and to inform and advise organizations with program development within the health and settlement sectors.
- The Immigrant Children Working Group continued to meet to identify ways to improve service coordination and address lack of data related to children that arrive to Canada unaccompanied and seek refugee status, or children that arrive here to be reunited with a parent and/or a step parent. In addition to TPH, Children's Services and TNO, members include the Children's Aid Society of Toronto, Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto, Peel Children's Aid Society, Toronto District School Board, Toronto Catholic District School Board, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Canada Border Services Agency, and the Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth. The focus of the meetings has been on developing definitions and mapping pathways to children falling through the cracks through case studies.

2014-2016 Implementation Plan

To promote and support newcomer health, Toronto Public Health, Children's Services and Toronto Newcomer Office will continue to work together and with other internal and external partners to conduct the following activities:

8. Annual newcomer health forum:

The next newcomer health forum will be held in late 2014. The scope and focus will be identified by the Newcomer Health Pillar Steering Committee. Annual forums have proved to be a successful advocacy mechanism that brings together practitioners, researchers and policy makers, facilitates their dialogue, builds sector capacity and identifies ways to move forward.

9. Knowledge Exchange:

The Newcomer Health Pillar Steering Committee will be developing a comprehensive knowledge exchange strategy to promote newcomer health using existing networks and knowledge brokers.

10. Continued work related to immigrant children:

The Immigrant Children Working Group will expand membership to include 211 Toronto and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. The Group will continue to meet and work towards reaching its mandate.

Strategic Pillar: Advancing Labour Market Outcomes

A soon to be released research report by Mowat Centre confirms that "unemployment rates are higher and incomes are lower for immigrants as compared with Canadian-born individuals in the GTA – and these trends are getting worse." In Toronto, it is taking longer for newcomers than anyone else, to find adequate full-time, permanent employment. Their incomes are lower and they sometimes work in two or three part-time jobs. At the same time, there are skill shortages in some professions and some employers are having difficulty in filling the positions. The long-term human impact and the direct cost to the economy is staggering. In 2010, the Toronto Board of Trade estimated that when there is a failure to integrate immigrants into the economy, the cost to the broader Toronto Region is \$1.5 to \$2.25 billion annually in lost economic activity.

The City's work to improve labour market outcomes for newcomers revolves around three key strategies – *Collaborating for Competitiveness*, *Strong Neighbourhoods 2020*, and *Working as One: A Workforce Development Strategy for Toronto (WDS)* – that collectively work to sustain and advance economic growth, ensure all communities share in the opportunities that are created, and better connect jobseekers and employers. All three strategies work in a complementary and integrated manner to advance the City's objectives and provide improved services to businesses and residents directly and in partnership with others.

In February 2014 the Economic Development Committee adopted a report titled Workforce Development Strategy - 2013 Progress. This report provides an update on City actions to advance the WDS in 2013, highlighting the work that the City is doing to implement the strategy in conjunction with City partners. It describes key accomplishments and showcases prominent examples of the work being done. Finally, informed by the City's new Strategic Actions and reflecting the lessons emerging from implementing the strategy to date, the report identifies the City's priorities for workforce development in 2014.

Vulnerable populations, including newcomers, are at the heart of the City's work with jobseekers. The City regularly connects newcomers to a range of employment opportunities through its workforce development initiatives. The City also partners with employers, community-based settlement organizations, and community-based employment organizations to improve labour market outcomes for newcomers.

2013-2014 Implementation

In the period since the adoption of the Toronto Newcomer Strategy, the Toronto Newcomer Office has been active on several committees and workgroups that focus on labour market issues. This includes the Intergovernmental Committee for Economic and Labour Force Development in Toronto (the ICE Committee), the City's Senior City Employment Services Steering Committee (SCSSC) and Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council's (TRIEC's) Intergovernmental Relations (IGR) Committee. As a member of the ICE Committee's planning team, TNO was closely involved in the commissioning and development of a report by the Mowat Centre, *Redesigning Collaboration: Opportunities for Innovation in Toronto's Labour Market*. The report will be launched in late April, and its findings will be utilized to inform future activities under the Labour Market pillar. In addition, TNO organized or participated in several events that focused on improving labour market outcomes for newcomers.

2014-2016 Implementation Plan

To advance newcomer labour market outcomes and build on the existing strategies, Toronto Employment and Social Services (TESS), Economic Development & Culture and Toronto Newcomer Office will continue working together, as well as with other internal and external partners. Planned activities include:

11. Opportunities to offer settlement services in City employment centres:

Together TNO and Toronto's Employment and Social Services will explore opportunities for settlement workers to offer services on site in select employment centres.

12. Promotion of business start-up programs to newcomers:

TNO will work with Economic Development and Culture and TESS, to facilitate the promotion of the Toronto's entrepreneurship programs to the settlement sector and to newcomers interested in starting a business.

Conclusion

The successful integration of newcomers is an opportunity to enrich the city economically, socially and culturally. Municipalities are the 'first responders' and places where newcomers settle and integrate. The City of Toronto continues to be committed to the successful integration of immigrants and is working to create more welcoming communities and better opportunities for newcomers so that more of them chose Toronto as their final destination.

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SIGNATURE

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Social Development, Finance and Administration

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: 2014-2016 Implementation Plan
Attachment 2: Eurocities Charter on Integrating Cities
Attachment 3: Report on Social Development Open Dialogues

Attachment 1:

2014-2016 Implementation Plan

Strategic Pillar: Improving Access to Municipal Supports

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- The charter provides a clear statement of commitment to migrants and newcomers.
- Integrating Cities is developing more detailed performance measures from a municipal perspective and Toronto will benefit from more direct involvement in the indicator development.
- Being part of a recognized network of cities will facilitate collaboration on the development and implementation of new policies at the municipal level.
- Toronto would have an opportunity to engage in the "implementing" program to both learn and share best practices.
- European Cities have been dealing with large numbers of "temporary" residents (a growing phenomenon in Toronto) and have developed initiatives such as the anti rumour campaign to help mitigate the impacts of exclusion.

Toronto, as the first non-European city to sign the Charter would become a foundation for a potential future transatlantic dialogue between EUROCITIES members and Canadian and US cities on the issue of migrant integration.

To become a signatory, Toronto Council must formally adopt the Integrating Cities Charter. Once this decision is formally made, the municipality informs EUROCITIES who in turn confirms the affiliation process. Signing ceremony can be organized at local level or can be done as part of an annual Integrating Cities Conference. The Mayor, or equivalent representative of the Council, must sign the Integrating Cities Charter text. This text is attached as Attachment 2 (note that the word "European" will be removed from the heading, should City Council decide to proceed). As the final step, a scanned copy of the signed Charter needs to be provided to EUROCITIES and the city is then included in the public list of signatories.

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The tool will be made available to all City Divisions and linked with the City's Equity, Diversity and Human Rights Framework.

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Strategic Pillar: Supporting Civic Engagement and Community Capacity

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Strategic Pillar: Promoting and Supporting Good Health

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The next newcomer health forum will be held in late 2014. The scope and focus will be identified by the Newcomer Health Pillar Steering Committee. Annual forums have proved to be a successful advocacy mechanism that brings together practitioners, researchers and policy makers, facilitates their dialogue, builds sector capacity and identifies ways to move forward.

9. Knowledge Exchange:

The Newcomer Health Pillar Steering Committee will be developing a comprehensive knowledge exchange strategy to promote newcomer health using existing networks and knowledge brokers.

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The Immigrant Children Working Group will expand membership to include 211 Toronto and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. The Group will continue to meet and work towards reaching its mandate.

Strategic Pillar: Advancing Labour Market Outcomes

To advance newcomer labour market outcomes and build on the existing strategies, Toronto Employment and Social Services (TESS), Economic Development & Culture and Toronto Newcomer Office will continue working together, as well as with other internal and external partners. Planned activities include:

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EUROCITIES Charter on Integrating Cities

Our commitment to integrating migrants and migrant communities in European cities

As policy-makers we will:

Actively communicate our commitment to equal opportunities for everyone living in the city;
Ensure equal access and non-discrimination across all our policies;
Facilitate engagement from migrant communities in our policy-making processes and remove barriers to participation.

As service providers we will:

Support equal access for migrants to services to which they are entitled, particularly access to language learning, housing, employment, health, social care and education;
Ensure that migrants' needs are understood and met by service providers.

As employers we will:

Take steps where required to reflect our city's diversity in the composition of our workforce across all staffing levels;
Ensure that all staff, including staff with a migrant background, experience fair and equal treatment by their managers and colleagues;
Ensure that staff understand and respect diversity and equality issues.

As buyers of goods and services we will:

Apply principles of equality and diversity in procurement and tendering;
Promote principles of equality and diversity amongst our contractors;
Promote the development of a diverse supplier-base.

date ____/____/____

city of _____

Mayor _____



Attachment 3: Report on Social Development Open Dialogues



Social Development Open Dialogues, organized and hosted by the Social Development, Finance & Administration (SDFA) Division have been designed to start a conversation about a variety of social issues affecting our communities, and engage a broad range of community members including City Council, City staff, and community agencies.

Two Open Dialogues were held on January 16th, 2014, in partnership with OCASI – Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, and funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada. An additional Open Dialogue was held on March 27th, 2014. The following are reports from each of the sessions, summarizing key themes and discussion points.

Open Dialogue: Permanent Resident Voting in Municipal Elections

Thursday, January 16th, 2014

9:00 am – 12:30 pm

The 519 Community Centre

Supporting Civic Engagement and Community Capacity is one of the four pillars of the Toronto Newcomer Strategy, endorsed by Toronto City Council in February 2013. In June 2013, City Council made a request to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to "amend the necessary legislation to allow permanent residents the right to vote in municipal elections".

The purpose of the Open Dialogue was to present a range of perspectives on the issue and open a conversation on next steps and how to best facilitate this change. More than 70 people participated. Participants included residents, staff from a broad range of community and other agencies, staff from Citizenship and Immigration Canada and from the City of Toronto.

The Open Dialogue started with a welcome from Chris Brillinger, Executive Director, SDFA. This was followed by a panel discussion and facilitated discussion, moderated by Debbie Douglas, Executive Director, OCASI, highlighting perspectives of Nathalie Des Rosiers, Dean, Common Law, Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa; Nawal Al-Busaidi, Manager, Thorncliffe Neighborhood Office and Councillor Joe Mihevc, Ward 21, St. Paul's.

KEY MESSAGES

The following key messages emerged from the Open Dialogue session:

1. Voting rights are a form of social inclusion
2. There are a number of ways the Ontario government could respond to Council's request

3. There is a need for a focussed approach to ensure permanent residents can vote in municipal elections by 2018
4. Everyone has a role to play in securing municipal franchise

DETAILED THEMES

The following summary combines panellist views and audience comments.

Voting rights are a form of social inclusion

Voting rights play an important role in creating a more inclusive and participatory society. Many newcomers come to Canada to have "a right to choose in their lives" and granting permanent residents the right to vote would enable them to directly express that value. Citizenship and voting rights are currently inter-related, and members of the public may have fears that granting voting rights to permanent residents would diminish the symbolic value of citizenship. There is no evidence to suggest this as an outcome in other countries that have granted voting rights to non-citizens. Canadian citizens need to be challenged to see voting rights as being tied to social, political and economic inclusion, in order to build vibrant, inclusive communities. The approach needs to shift from what makes people deserving to have a vote, to what justifies not giving them the right to vote. The current approach to voting as a reward connected to citizenship, needs to shift towards voting being a tool for engagement and participation.

There are a number of ways the Ontario government could respond

Municipal elections in Ontario are governed under the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended. The Ontario government can respond in three ways to the City Council's request from June 2013, related to permanent resident voting in municipal elections:

1. The province could create a new requirement for every municipality in Ontario to add permanent residents to the voting registry;
2. The province could give permissive rights to all municipalities in Ontario to decide whether or not to add permanent residents to the voting registry; or
3. The province could give the City of Toronto alone the permission to add permanent residents to the voting registry through the Toronto Act. No other municipality would be able to follow suit without applying and being given permission by the provincial government.

Following Council's request in June, the City has received a response from the Minister of the Municipal Affairs and Housing that there is insufficient time to consider the requests for the 2014 election, but that they will be considered prior to the 2018 election.

There is a need for a focussed approach to ensure permanent residents can vote in municipal elections by 2018

The request made by Council to grant permanent residents the right to vote in municipal elections did not extend to include international students or undocumented residents, and did not extend to include provincial or federal elections. An overhaul of the voting system on the municipal level is a considerably

complex and sizeable task, and having clear and limited parameters around expansion will help to achieve it. Because the federal government oversees national defence and international relations, there could be a valid argument to contain federal voting rights to citizenship. There is no such argument as far as restricting voting rights to citizens in provincial and municipal elections.

Everyone has a role to play in securing municipal franchise

The support for extending municipal franchise to permanent residents from the general public has been divided. Opinion polls show that more than 50% of the population does not support the idea. In order to change this, the approach needs to shift from what makes people deserving to have a vote, to what justifies not giving them the right to vote. The current approach to voting as a reward connected to citizenship, needs to shift towards voting being a tool for engagement and participation.

As granting municipal voting rights to permanent residents in Toronto is a provincial decision, it is important that people across the city engage with their MPPs and share their views.

In addition, work needs to be done at the community level. Engagement and education within communities is the key to building support, with a focus on educating the public about why people don't choose or don't have a pathway to citizenship. This can be done by community organizations engaging with their clients, or by residents talking to their friends and neighbours about the issue. Live streaming conversations like this could help get the word out too.

Conversations should not be limited to Toronto. Other municipalities across the province need to get engaged. The City of Toronto is not a member of the Association of Municipalities Ontario, but is a member of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and Big City Mayors' Caucus. This is a venue to establish a united approach to the issue.

CLOSING REMARKS

Panellists wrapped up discussion with the following closing remarks:

- Municipal franchise would not diminish citizenship, but will enhance opportunities for participation
- We all need to work on awareness raising
- Technologies are key to spreading the word

NEXT STEPS FOR CITY STAFF

Chris Brillinger highlighted three key steps for City staff in moving forward:

1. A report will be going to Council in April, with a recommendation that the City implements an anti-rumour campaign about newcomers.
2. There are practical issues related to developing a voter list that includes permanent residents, which need to be explored.
3. The Newcomer Leadership Table will continue to look at and work on supporting civic engagement of newcomers.

Open Dialogue: Newcomer Access to City Services

Thursday, January 16th, 2014

1:30 pm - 4:00 pm

The 519 Community Centre

Improving Newcomer Access to City Services is one of the four pillars of the Toronto Newcomer Strategy, endorsed by Toronto City Council in 2013. The Strategy was developed through extensive consultation and research, which identified that newcomers experience multiple barriers in accessing City services.

The purpose of the Open Dialogue was to present a range of perspectives on the issue and to open a conversation to identify what's working, what needs to change and what are the best ways to address barriers to access. More than 100 people participated. Participants included residents, staff from a broad range of community and other agencies, staff from Citizenship and Immigration Canada and from the City of Toronto.

Chris Brillinger, Executive Director of the City of Toronto's Social Development, Finance & Administration Division opened the Open Dialogue. Debbie Douglas, Executive Director, OCASI moderated a panel presentations that featured panelists Elaine Baxter-Trahair, General Manager, Children's Services, City of Toronto, Councillor Janet Davis, Ward 31, Beaches - East York, Sultana Jahangir, community member, Cheryl MacDonald, Manager with the City's Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division, and Angela Robertson, Executive Director, Central Toronto Community Health Centres. After presentations, there was a round of facilitated questions and answers.

KEY MESSAGES

The following key messages emerged from the Open Dialogue session:

1. The City is doing a lot of good work in providing services to newcomers
2. Newcomers continue to experience a range of barriers to accessing City services
3. Many newcomers don't know what City services are available to them and how to access them
4. Settlement agencies could play a role in reducing barriers to City services for newcomers

DETAILED THEMES

The following summary combines panellist views and audience comments.

The City is doing a lot of good work in providing services to newcomers

There are a number of key actions that the City has taken to increase newcomer access to City services in Toronto. A few divisions have identified equitable access as a priority and included newcomers as a target group in the development of their service plans. This will guide the funding and management of their services over the coming five years. This is a promising step in reducing barriers that newcomers experience in accessing City services. In addition, the Board of Health's work related

to advocating for the rescinding of cuts to refugee claimant health coverage and the City's commitment to the undocumented has sent a supportive message to newcomer communities across Toronto. The City has produced key research reports which have added credibility to community work around disparity issues, and has also been a key partner and funder to organizations that work with newcomers across Toronto.

Newcomers continue to experience a range of barriers to accessing City services

Numerous barriers to City services remain for newcomers in Toronto. Customer service is an area for improvement, as newcomers can feel disrespected and discriminated against by front-line City workers. The way City services are provided needs to be flexible and responsive to newcomer realities, including working multiple jobs, having limited access to transit and having cultural and spiritual barriers to City services. The City needs to continue to build relationships with labour rights groups and cultural institutions, and increase cross-sector collaboration with the Province and Federal Government and with funder organizations to increase newcomer access to information, services, supports and opportunities in Toronto.

Many newcomers don't know what City services are available to them and how to access them

Newcomers are often overwhelmed with going through the settlement experience and often don't know what City services are available to them and how to access them. The City needs to develop multiple strategies to address this gap in communication and to ensure all newcomers are aware of programs and services available. One promising practice spear-headed by Toronto Public Library is to house settlement workers in libraries. This has encouraged newcomers to connect to City services while accessing important settlement information. The same approach was used by the Toronto Newcomer Initiative in 2010-11 to run a pilot project with settlement workers in four different City Division facilities. Toronto Newcomer Office is currently working with Parks, Forestry & Recreation to pilot settlement workers in four community recreation centres.

Settlement agencies could play a role in reducing barriers to City services for newcomers

Settlement agencies could play a role in increasing the accessibility of City services. Language and self-confidence are the two biggest barriers that newcomer experience. Settlement agencies can help connect communities with services offered by the City. The City recognizes the potential in building stronger relationships with the settlement sector. Divisions such as Children's Services have identified the settlement sector as a key strategic partner in increasing newcomer access to child and family services across the city. Other divisions, including Parks, Forestry & Recreation currently partner with settlement agencies across the city to deliver skills building workshops to newcomer groups. The programs have been highly successful and indicate the strength of developing settlement agency partnerships.

NEXT STEPS FOR CITY STAFF

Chris Brillinger highlighted opportunities related to improving newcomer access to City services:

1. Every City division is required to develop an annual customer service plan. This can be used as a platform for improving newcomer experiences at the City.

2. A new performance management process has been developed. It is based on the City's new Strategic Actions, one of which is improving newcomer access to City services.
3. The Newcomer Leadership Table will continue to work on identifying ways to improve the settlement experiences of newcomers.

Open Dialogue: Pathways to Citizenship

Thursday, March 27th, 2014
9:30am-12:00pm
Council Chambers, City Hall

Supporting Civic Engagement and Community Capacity is one of the four pillars of the Toronto Newcomer Strategy, endorsed by Toronto City Council in February 2013. Citizenship plays a significant role in facilitating civic engagement and community capacity building.

In February, 2014, Canada's Citizenship and Immigration Minister Chris Alexander announced a set of proposed changes to the Canadian Citizenship Act in Bill C-24: Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act. The bill outlines a number of significant changes, including increases in residency requirements, in application fees, and in who is required to meet language requirements and pass a knowledge test to be granted Canadian citizenship. There are also proposed changes to representation and fraud, the processing of applications, ineligibility criteria and the role of the Minister.

The purpose of the Open Dialogue was to present a range of perspectives on the issue and increase collective knowledge about citizenship, the proposed changes and their implications. Over 50 people participated. Participants included staff from City of Toronto divisions, from a broad range of community and other agencies from across the city, as well as residents.

The Open Dialogue started with a welcome from Chris Brillinger, Executive Director, SDFA. This was followed by a panel discussion and facilitated discussion, moderated by Debbie Douglas, Executive Director, OCASI, highlighting perspectives of Councillor Ana Bailao, Ward 18, Davenport; Gillian Smith, Executive Director and CEO, Institute for Canadian Citizenship; Cathryn Sawicky, Partner, Fogler Rubinoff LLP; and Avvy Yao-Yao Go, Clinic Director, Metro Toronto Chinese, Southeast Asian Legal Clinic.

KEY MESSAGES

The following key messages emerged from the Open Dialogue session:

1. Citizenship is a symbol of inclusion, belonging and equality
2. Many immigrants face barriers to becoming Canadian citizens and these barriers will likely increase with the introduction of Bill C-24

3. Community awareness about the benefits of citizenship and changes to eligibility outlined in Bill C-24 needs to increase
4. Everyone has a role to play in shaping the final version of Bill C-24

DETAILED THEMES

The following summary combines panellist views and audience comments.

Citizenship is a symbol of inclusion, equality and belonging

Canadian citizenship is a powerful symbol of inclusion and a powerful mechanism to share and steward power across our cities, provinces and country. Canada currently stands alone on a global level with regards to citizenship, with 80-85% of our permanent residents attaining Canadian citizenship. The pathway to citizenship requires applicants to prove their understanding and commitment to the rights, privileges, duties and responsibilities associated with Canadian citizenship. The Canadian-born population never has to prove this. Expectations of new Canadian should not exceed those of the Canadian-born population: all residents in Canada should be engaged in ongoing discussion.

Many immigrants face multiple barriers to securing Canadian citizenship

Many immigrants who have chosen Canada as home face multiple barriers to securing Canadian citizenship, and proposed changes to eligibility requirements in Bill C-24 may increase these barriers. Immigrants to Canada with low-level English, with low income or with a history of minor offences may experience increased barriers or ineligibility to apply for citizenship. The already implemented raise of citizenship application fees from \$200 to \$400, the proposed increase in language testing to residents aged 14 to 64 from the current 18 to 54 year old residents, and the proposed inadmissibility of time spent in Canada as a temporary foreign worker, international student or live-in caregiver may negatively impact immigrants who work hard, pay taxes and contribute to their communities across Canada.

Community awareness about the benefits of citizenship needs to increase

The settlement process is arduous and long, and citizenship is often not a priority for immigrants navigating multiple needs including finding housing, securing employment, gaining access to language classes and healthcare services, and building connections in their new communities. Often immigrants are unaware of the difference between permanent residency and citizenship and of the benefits to holding a Canadian passport, and often immigrants who are eligible to apply for citizenship do not have the time or support to navigate through the process. There needs to be more education and support around applying for citizenship.

Everyone has a role to play in shaping the final version of Bill C-24

Bill C-24 has not come into effect as of yet. Everyone has a role to play in shaping the final version of the bill. It is important that people across the country engage with their MPs to share their views about Bill C-24, and ideas and suggestions for refining and improving the bill. It is important that Canadian citizens who already have voting rights engage with their MPs and hold them to account. Legal clinics and community organizations could organize a coalition to challenge aspects of the bill.

In addition, work needs to be done at the community level. Engagement and education within communities is the key to increasing awareness and understanding, with a focus on educating the public about the benefits of citizenship, and about the changes associated with Bill C-24. The City and City Councillors have a role to play in education and awareness. Ethnic media would be a good channel through which to increase immigrant community awareness of the bill and its implications.

CLOSING REMARKS

Panellists wrapped up discussion with the following closing remarks:

- Our country holds a mixture of Canadian-born and Canadian-by-choice citizens: both should be treated equally
- Canadian-born citizens must be interested and involved in shaping Bill C-24
- Immigrants make economic, social and cultural contributions to our country: these should all be acknowledged and reflected in policy regarding citizenship
- This conversation should extend beyond Bill C-24 and focus on inclusion and belonging

NEXT STEPS FOR CITY STAFF

Chris Brillinger highlighted a key next step for City staff in moving forward: A report will be going to Community Development Recreation Committee on April 17th, and will outline plans for the implementation of the Toronto Newcomer Strategy. The report will reference the Open Dialogue on Pathways to Citizenship and issues from this session will be raised to determine next steps.