

TO: City Clerk, Executive Committee
FROM: General Manager, Community Services Department
DATE: March 23, 2007
SUBJECT: Immigration
FILE NO: RR 115-2 and LS 220-48

RECOMMENDATION: that this report be submitted to City Council recommending:

1. that the Administration be directed to pursue the next steps as identified in the body of this report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report from the consultants has been provided in two documents, the first is the executive summary of the report (see Attachment 1) and the second is the full report entitled “Building Saskatoon to Become a Global City: A Framework for an Immigration Action Plan” (a copy is available through the City Clerk’s office).

The following is a brief overview of each section of the report.

Section One: Introduction

The attached report is intended to serve two purposes. First, it provides the City of Saskatoon with a framework within which to consider what it can do, directly and indirectly, to attract, integrate, and retain immigrants. Second, it provides various other governmental and non-governmental stakeholders in Saskatoon with a framework for developing and implementing sector-based and agency-based strategies and action plans.

An important theme emerged during the consultations. There is a widespread consensus that the City of Saskatoon must develop and implement any policies and programs targeted for attracting, integrating, and retaining immigrants in a way that is parallel and in agreement with the existing and future policies and programs designed to benefit the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal population with long and strong roots in the city. In other words, it is important that any action plan include strategies related to both immigration and migration to our city.

The report was produced following extensive consultations with many foreign-born newcomers and a wide array of representatives from government and non-government organizations, including:

- Organizations and individuals providing immigrant support;
- Intercultural relations organizations;
- Existing immigrant communities;
- Representatives of Aboriginal communities;
- Representatives of community associations;
- The business community including the Chamber of Commerce;
- The Saskatoon Regional Economic Development Authority;
- Public sector employers;
- Health service providers;

- Regulators of trades and professions;
- Institutions for primary, secondary, and post-secondary education;
- Representatives of the appropriate federal, provincial, and municipal departments and agencies;
- City Council members; and
- Representatives of organized labour.

All consultations were conducted through a process that encouraged frank discussion and the expression of personal opinion.

Section Two: Vision

The participants outlined six key elements of a vision which they believed should influence the development and implementation of an action plan. These elements are seen as the basis for Saskatoon becoming a “global city”. The vision is for Saskatoon to be:

- An economically dynamic and sustainable community;
- A cosmopolitan global community both in its thinking and its activities;
- A welcoming community for all newcomers;
- A culturally diverse community;
- An inclusive and socially just community; and
- A socially harmonious community.

Section Three: Immigration Flows and Foreign-Born Population

This section provides an overview of both the immigration flows to Saskatoon and the profile of the city’s population. The following key points were noted:

1. Saskatchewan currently receives less than one percent of Canada’s annual flow of immigrants, and two out of every five immigrants coming to Saskatchewan choose to live in Saskatoon. As a result of the low number of immigrants moving to the province and the city, the proportion of foreign-born residents living in Saskatoon is low relative to other major cities. This can be a challenge in attracting and retaining immigrants to the city.
2. Of the immigrants who come to Saskatoon, approximately one-quarter do not stay. This retention rate is significantly below the national average.
3. The sources of Saskatoon’s immigrants have changed recently from European/US immigrants to immigrants from China, Afghanistan, Sudan, India, and Iraq resulting in a greater proportion of visible minority groups.
4. Over half of Canada’s foreign-born population has lived in Canada for at least 20 years. This can cause concerns for immigrants who are seeking to live in communities that contain significant populations with similar cultural backgrounds and immigration experiences.

5. Immigrants coming to Saskatoon are highly educated, but many are not currently employed within their areas of training, expertise, and experience.
6. The number of temporary foreign-born workers and students living in Saskatoon has been increasing. They can be a significant source of new immigrants.

Section Four: Factors for Attracting, Integration and Retention

This section identifies those key factors which are generally recognized as influencing newcomer's decision to move and stay in any community. These factors include:

1. Opportunities within the community, particularly employment and entrepreneurial opportunities. Other areas include housing, education, cultural, recreational opportunities; family proximity, and ethno-cultural community contact opportunities.
2. Services within the community including reception and settlement services such as: ease of access to information at transportation terminals, assistance in securing accommodations, food and other consumers' products upon arrival. Accessibility to affordable services such as: language, employment training, and assessment of educational credentials.
3. Social conditions of the community which contribute to newcomers feeling welcomed, appreciated, supported, and safe.
4. Design of the community or the built environment including ease of mobility within the city, social and recreation spaces, and liveable neighbourhoods.
5. Natural environment including climate and natural spaces.
6. Geographic location and proximity to other communities.

The City of Saskatoon and community have no control over the latter two factors.

Section Five: Needs Analysis

This section provides an overview of the needs of the different segments of the immigration system including the needs of the City of Saskatoon for newcomers, the needs of newcomers to the city, the needs of community agencies, and the needs of governmental agencies:

1. City of Saskatoon - the need for continued population growth, notable labour shortages, and increasing challenges caused by a global economy all support the need to develop "clusters" of entrepreneurs, workers, and artists who provide important links to other parts of the world and the country.
2. Newcomers - includes pre-arrival needs for information, arrival or reception needs for information on housing, food, appropriate clothing, and other special services. Post arrival

needs for housing, employment, health services, community integration, socio-cultural integration, and civic participation. These needs can vary depending on whether the newcomers are economic immigrants, families or refugees.

3. Community Service Agencies – includes the need for more linkages and coordination with each other and other governmental agencies, more information regarding projected and actual flows of immigrants, and resource needs (e.g. financial, human, space).
4. Governmental Agencies – includes the need for more authority and autonomy in dealing with immigration and integration matters in the Saskatoon city region and the need to locate supports within the City of Saskatoon.

Section Six: Issues and Options

This section provides a detailed overview of the issues and options identified by the participants in the consultation for consideration by governmental and non-governmental agencies. The 70 issues and options pertain to enhancing capacity within the immigration sector through the efforts of governmental and non-governmental agencies, individually and collectively in the following five areas:

- 1) Improving planning and coordination capacity of both governmental and non-governmental agencies providing immigration services;
- 2) Improving recruitment capacity (the ability to attract newcomers to the city both from other countries and other provinces);
- 3) Improving reception capacity (the ability to provide for the immediate needs of newcomers and provide a welcoming environment);
- 4) Improving economic integration capacity (the ability to provide meaningful employment or entrepreneurial opportunities for newcomers that leads to financial independence); and
- 5) Improving community integration capacity (the ability to provide opportunities for newcomers to participate in the local social and civic networks).

These options are intended to provide a menu or framework for the development of strategic plans and the prioritization of these strategies.

Section Seven: Recommendations

The recommendations provided by the consultants articulate their suggestions for the first steps towards building the capacities identified in the issues and options section and are intended to focus on what the City of Saskatoon can do either on its own or in consultation and collaboration with other levels of governments and sectors. The seven recommendations are as follows:

- 1) Establish a Mayor's Task Force on immigration to provide leadership and coordination in relation to immigration matters;
- 2) Develop and implement a detailed action plan based on the framework provided in the report, in particular, looking at the issues and options presented through the consultations;

- 3) Develop and implement sectorial-based and agency-based strategies through various sectors and agencies in the community interests or roles in immigration;
- 4) Harmonize the immigration action plan and other strategies including overall community and economic development, expanding employment and services for First Nations and Métis residents, and expanding employment and services for youth;
- 5) Develop and implement a population and development strategy for the Saskatoon city region consisting of two major components – one devoted to population growth and the other related to community and economic development;
- 6) Develop and implement an awareness and involvement campaign designed to explain how immigration can contribute to the community's future prosperity, and how the community can contribute to increasing the attraction, integration, and retention of immigrants; and
- 7) Create an intergovernmental committee on immigration for which the principal role is communication, coordination, and collaboration among various orders of government.

BACKGROUND

During its November 29, 2004 meeting, City Council approved, in principle, the following recommendations of the Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Committee:

- “a) that the City of Saskatoon develop a strategy and action plan to:
 - i) accommodate more immigrants in Saskatoon;
 - ii) effectively address the difficulties facing newcomers to improve retention of immigrants;
 - iii) effectively address the challenges facing the community; and,
 - iv) take full advantage of the many opportunities and benefits that increased immigration can offer;
- b) that a qualified person be engaged to consult with the various stakeholders and resource persons to produce a more detailed set of objectives, a proposed strategy, and a community based action plan for consideration by City Council.”

On September 26, 2005, Mr. Ken Pontikes and Mr. Joseph Garcea were contracted to conduct a series of consultations with the community and prepare an issues and options paper which will form the basis of an action plan.

Representatives from the Immigration Branch, Saskatchewan Education and Advanced Learning, and Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) served with representatives from the City of Saskatoon as a steering committee to facilitate this process of developing an Immigration Strategy for the City of Saskatoon. Both the provincial and federal levels of government contributed \$15,000 each to fund this process.

JUSTIFICATION

The issue of the attraction and retention of newcomers to municipalities has become an increasing

priority for local and regional communities over the past number of years. This is a result of the growing recognition among municipal officials of the importance of immigration from a population growth and economic perspective. A number of municipalities including Edmonton, Winnipeg, Calgary, Toronto, and Halifax have developed strategic initiatives in the area of recruitment and retention of newcomers to their cities. These strategies indicate a move for municipalities towards a more active role in the various aspects of the immigration and integration processes. The Government of Saskatchewan has also placed an increased priority on the area of immigration – allocating increased resources to the portfolio. Federally, the government has also placed a priority in this area and has introduced additional funding programs to support new initiatives. As we move forward in addressing the challenges in attracting and retaining newcomers, it will be important to involve all levels of government and the community-based organizations working in the sector to ensure a coordinated and effective approach to this issue. Your administration is recommending the following next steps to move this strategy forward:

1. Continue the collaborative approach around the issue of recruitment and retention of newcomers to the City of Saskatoon.

This approach, in place of a Mayor’s Task Force, acknowledges the role of all levels of government and reinforces a commitment to a coordinated effort on this issue. To quote from the Big City Mayors Committee Advocacy Workgroup on Immigration:

“While this is a vital role that municipalities play, it is not a role that municipalities are generally mandated to play, and it is not one that should be financed from the property tax base of municipal governments.”

The Administration proposes that the City of Saskatoon continue to collaborate with the Federal and Provincial Governments to develop a Saskatoon-specific response to the issues, opportunities, and potential solutions described within the framework document prepared by Mr. Pontikes and Mr. Garcea.

2. Expand the scope of the response plan to include strategies related to both immigration and migration to our city.

The consultations identified the need for newcomers to our City to support continued population growth, address notable labour shortages, and face the variety of increasing challenges caused by a global economy. These situations all support the need to develop “clusters” of entrepreneurs, workers, and artists who provide important links to other parts of the world and the country.

Newcomers to our city will fill these needs whether they come from another part of the world, from other cities in Canada, from First Nations, or from rural areas. All newcomers, regardless of their origin, will require information, supports, and a welcoming environment. However, as identified in the framework document, support needs can differ not only across segments of newcomers, but also within those segments.

3. Develop a governance model for the development of the detailed response and sustainability plan.

The “Framework for an Immigration Action Plan” document prepared by the consultants will be the foundation for development of this plan.

The Administration is suggesting a steering committee composed of representatives from: the Federal, Provincial and Municipal Governments. Provincial Government official(s) should represent interests in health, education, housing, as well as immigration. The mandate of the steering committee will be to deal with policy, jurisdiction, and sustainable supports for the plan; as well as overall strategies in services areas such as housing and settlement services (i.e. arrival needs, language supports).

During the consultations, there was widespread consensus that any action plan developed will need to harmonize with the needs of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal population with long and strong roots in the city, the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal population migrating to the city from rural areas of the province, and the attraction or migration of expatriates and others from outside the province. Each of these target groups may well require distinct strategies to address their unique situations and needs.

In order to ensure the needs of all of these target groups are being addressed, a number of key stakeholders will be involved in the process including representation from the business sector; the settlement sector (both providers and client groups); Aboriginal Governments, University (foreign students/work permits), and the voluntary sector. These stakeholders will assist the steering committee in identifying the broad components of the plan and in the development of the detailed action plan based on the framework document prepared by Mr. Garcea and Mr. Pontikes. The Administration is further proposing the development of working groups within each of these target areas as required. Membership on these working groups will vary based on the need/issue being addressed. These working groups will be responsible for refining specific plans and overseeing the implementation of these plans.

This approach makes it possible to engage the expertise of other governments, non-governmental organizations, and the community at large depending on the needs identified and expertise required.

4. Summarize current initiatives within Saskatoon and Region that serve newcomers.

A critical first step is to identify the existing efforts and services within our community that serve our newcomers and to leverage those existing service providers to the greatest extent possible.

The Administration supports the suggestions made by the consultants to build stronger linkages and coordination between the existing service providers. The Administration would be pleased to participate in any efforts to integrate existing services for newcomers in Saskatoon, as well as an integrated information service information network, such as the 211

Information System currently being advocated and lead by the United Way of Saskatoon. To be effective, initiatives such as these will require a supplemental communications strategy to make newcomers aware of the services available to them.

5. Development of a public communications campaign.

This campaign will be aimed at increasing the awareness and understanding of immigration and the positive contribution of immigrants and newcomers to our community. This campaign will be harmonized with the existing work of the Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Office in the area of anti-racism education and awareness.

OPTIONS

The fundamental options are to continue with the status quo or to pursue a more integrated and formal approach to attracting and retaining newcomers to our city. The attached report and your administration are recommending the later.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Any potential policy implications will be identified and brought forward by the Administration as the action plan unfolds.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Development of the proposed action plan and administration of the suggested collaborative approach and related governance model will require the support of dedicated staff. Acquiring these resources, for both the initial development of the response plan and for the sustained implementation of the plan, will be included within the discussions and recommendations surrounding these initiatives.

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

- 1) Presentation of final Framework Report to Executive Committee, Public Agenda – early April;
- 2) Presentation of the report to City Council, mid-April 2007;
- 3) Update to the Saskatoon settlement agencies and the Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Committee on the report, mid-April to mid-May; and
- 4) Ongoing communications and updates to City Council and the community.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public Notice pursuant to Section 3 of Policy No. C01-021 (Public Notice Policy) is not required.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Building Saskatoon to Become a Global City: A Framework for an Immigration Action Plan – Executive Summary.

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Approved by: “Paul Gauthier”
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Dated: “March 26, 2007”

Approved by: “Phil Richards”
Phil Richards, City Manager
Dated: “March 26, 2007”

c: His Worship the Mayor

Immigration/cm