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INCLUSIVITY ACTION PLAN

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report, November 5, 2004, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services:

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. This report be received for information.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Human Services Planning Coalition's (HSPC) initiative to develop an *Inclusivity Action Plan* to help make York Region an ethno-culturally inclusive community.

3. BACKGROUND

York Region has received between forty to sixty thousand immigrants in each five year period for the past forty years, including 43,405 in the 1996-2001 census periods. In 2001, the proportion of immigrants in York Region was 39.1%, a higher proportion than the 905 regional averages of 34.3%. Within the GTA, the City of Toronto followed by Peel Region had the highest proportion of immigrants at 49.4% and 43.1% respectively.

According to Statistics Canada, the term "immigrants" refers to people who are, or have been, landed immigrants in Canada. A landed immigrant is a person who has been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities. Some immigrants have resided in Canada for a number of years, while others have arrived recently.

This rapid growth in immigration brings assets in terms of skilled professionals, cultural diversity and economic prosperity. However it also challenges human service providers in responding to the needs of immigrants and in making York Region inclusive for all ethno-cultural groups.

The HSPC recognized the importance of addressing the consequences of increasing rates of immigration. In its 2003-2004 work plan, the HSPC identified the issue as a priority, defining it as a question of inclusivity (i.e. generating the feeling and the reality of belonging).

In January, 2004 the HSPC approved the establishment of a planning committee with representation from the Simcoe-York District Health Council, the United Way of York

Region, Catholic Community Services of York Region, YRDSB, York Neighbourhood Services, CHATS, York Region Police Services, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, York Region Health Services Department, and the Human Services Planning Branch. The planning committee reviewed previous reports and recommendations and proposed three themes for an action plan:

- 1) improving communication
- 2) creating ethno-cultural awareness
- 3) promoting ethno-cultural representation

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

4.1 Progress to Date

A process of developing the *Inclusivity Action Plan* has involved many steps, including:

- Review of information gathered by York Region human service providers, government and the community over the past 20 years.
- A summary of the recommendations for becoming more inclusive that have been outlined in reports generated over the past four years.
- The development of a consultation document with three themes and related recommendations designed as a tool to facilitate discussion and to gather input from human service providers, ethno-cultural communities, residents and all other stakeholders.
- A call for community feedback about what recommendations should be priorities and suggestions for how to implement those priorities
 - Distribution and mailing of 1,500 consultation tools to human service providers, stakeholders and the general public for input.
 - Newspaper ads placed in all the York Region Newspaper Group papers informing the general public of the consultation.
 - Two months of feedback via focus groups, mail back, internet and e-mail and telephone responses.
- The development of a workbook and draft *Inclusivity Action Plan*. Includes an accountability model that proposes the establishment of six working groups who report to an Inclusivity Action Group, an action group of the HSPC.
- Distribution of a workbook and draft Action Plan to service providers and the general public.

Human service providers and other interested stakeholders, key leaders, faith leaders and ethno-cultural groups in York Region will be invited to participate in an **Inclusivity Summit** on **January 20, 2005** to discuss and endorse a made-in-York Region Action Plan.

The workbook and draft *Inclusivity Action Plan* will be mailed to participants and other stakeholders prior to the January 20 summit. A copy is attached to this report.

A final Action Plan will be prepared & brought to the HSPC for approval in March 2005.

4.2 Relationship to Vision 2026

Vision 2026 addresses immigrant issues and inclusivity in a number of goal statements. Most significantly, in the goal of creating 'quality communities for a diverse population' the action areas associated with celebrating our diversity will be met by these initiatives.

They will also help to ensure an 'enhanced environment, heritage and culture' by building pride in our heritage.

In creating a 'vibrant economy', the action area of attracting and supporting business will be advanced by a strong, internationally trained labour force.

Meeting the needs of immigrants and newcomers to York Region will help achieve the goal of 'responding to the needs of our residents'.

In the goal of 'managed and balanced growth', human service needs of all residents will be addressed in proactive ways.

And lastly, in the goal of 'engaged communities and a responsive region', the action area of being a Region that involves its citizens will be enhanced by these initiatives.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications. The costs of the *Inclusivity Action Plan* are limited to staff time, printing and mailing expenses. These costs were approved in the 2004 budget. In addition, the HSPC has contributed \$5,000 from revenues generated in the *It's All Here* employment project towards the development of the *Inclusivity Action Plan*.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Local municipalities are important partners in the provision of human services in York Region. Programs and services provided by the Human Services Planning Branch continually and consistently include representation of the interests of area municipalities. The three southern municipalities have the largest numbers of newcomers, although the demographic shift is happening in all municipalities.

Table 1
Immigrants in York Region in 2001

Aurora	18.1%
East Gwillimbury	13.8%
Georgina	11.4%
King	21.4%
Markham	52.9%
Newmarket	18.7%
Richmond Hill	48.3%
Vaughan	41.9%
Whitchurch-Stouffville	16.7%
York Region Total	39.1%

Partnership with local area municipalities is an important and necessary foundation for all initiatives.

7. CONCLUSION

Human services are those programs and services that support a safe healthy community and maintain and promote its quality of life.

The changing demographics of York Region are an important consideration in its growth management strategy. The importance of a skilled labour force and the inclusion of immigrants in both the workforce, and as fully participating citizens, are critical to the growth of York Region as a strong, caring safe community.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

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