

## Immigration and Settlement Strategy-Vernon, B.C.

### Local Immigration Partnerships Council Meeting Minutes: March 25 2015

#### In Attendance:

Dan Rogers *Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce*, Cheryl Bannoya *Club Filipino Okanagan Shuswap*, Jane Lister *Okanagan College*, Kevin Poole, *Economic Development & Tourism City of Vernon*, Heather Press *Tolko Industries Ltd.*, Karine Posznanski *VDISS*, Annette Sharkey *SPCNO*, Wayne Robert *Urban Matters*, Ted Treller *Urban Matters*, Lorelei Fiset *Pinnacle Communications & Media Inc.*, Brigitt Johnson *Consultant*

**Regrets:** Jan Schulz *Family Resource Centre*, Carol Wutzke *VDISS*, Pam Myers *Nexus BC*, Lynn Belsher *Nexus BC*, Lisa Krushen *NOYFSS*, Alison Krick *Silver Star Ski Resort Ltd*, Marlene Higgins *Kal Tire*, Marcel Korver *Community Futures*, Tannis Nelson *RDNO*, Juliette Cunningham *City of Vernon*, Lara Konkin *DVA*, Tara Thompson *Vernon Branch Okanagan Regional Library*, Julie Steffler *Interior Health*, Dauna Grant *Vernon Public Art Gallery*,

1. **Introductions:** Participants introduced themselves and the organization they represent.
2. **Community Mapping:** Wayne Robert of Urban Matters reviewed progression through the main steps of the Immigration Strategy project to date. Community mapping fits into the 3<sup>rd</sup> step, researching the context for the strategy. It is “the process by which a community inventories its assets.” The Community Mapping document circulated with the agenda represents a snapshot view of Vernon at a single point in time. The 17 Characteristics of a Welcoming Community are used as reference points, and information is included about the players (agencies, etc) and the characteristics. This information was gathered through research and the workshops that LIPC members participated in in December. Implementation ideas suggested at those workshops have been “parked” to refer to in the future.

Some of the outcomes and conclusions of the community mapping exercise are:

- There are a tremendous number of players contributing to the 17 characteristics
- Most agencies are indirectly serving immigrants
- In some areas, purpose and efforts may not be 100% aligned
- The document helps create a shared awareness and understanding of community assets
- It should facilitate community involvement in research and action
- It helps identify areas where services and capacity can potentially be increased
- The document can help articulate and communicate the existing level of services to external agencies.

Some of the implications/next steps for the Immigration Strategy are:

- To arrive at a consensus around the community mapping data and its interpretation
- To gather input and perspectives from immigrants about their views of Vernon relative to the 17 characteristics
- To establish some benchmarks
- To determine which characteristics are changeable

3. **Public Opinion Survey/ Research:** Lorelei Fiset of Pinnacle Communications & Media Inc. reviewed the highlights from the public opinion telephone survey of 300 Vernon residents completed in January, which are provided on the attached summary page. Recommendations for the components of a public education campaign are being drafted.

Key messages are focused on:

1. Creating awareness of the need for immigration
2. Creating awareness of the benefits of cultural diversity and immigration
3. Creating awareness for support of immigrants

Some goals for the public education campaign emerging from the survey, the input from LIPC members at Lorelei's workshop, best practices, and other research are:

- To Increase public awareness about the benefits of immigration
- To Increase public knowledge about immigrants and their needs
- To Increase awareness of and referrals to social immigration agencies
- To Increase public awareness and understanding about the value of a welcoming community for immigrant newcomers

Lorelei emphasized that creating awareness and understanding, and changing public opinion and actions, takes significant time and resources. She reviewed some of the tools that can be used as part of the campaign: videos, PSAs on Shaw, website quizzes, articles, branded campaign materials and clothing, job fairs, billboards, radio and newspaper, etc. The proposed public education campaign would run for two-three years during the implementation phase of the project, beginning in April 2016 after the Immigration Strategy is completed. A repeat of the survey tool at the conclusion of the campaign would be used to evaluate changes over the period.

4. **Investment Research & Labor:** Urban Matters have conducted an analysis regarding the labor and investment opportunities and challenges in the City of Vernon, combining both primary and secondary research sources. Over 30 interviews of key centers of influence in Vernon were completed. The objective of the report (which has been distributed with the minutes) is to: "analyze local labor market trends to identify entrepreneurial and business investment opportunities and challenges." Wayne has offered that time for a discussion of the report results would be valuable. Next steps will be a survey of small and medium businesses within Vernon, and interviews and focus groups with recent immigrants.
5. **Filipino Fiesta:** Cheryl Bannoya mentioned a major cultural event being organized by Club Filipino Okanagan-Shuswap for July 4 at the Vernon Recreation Centre. It is a chance to experience the culture, music and food of the Philippines first hand. Tickets will be available shortly and must be purchased in advance. Adults are \$25; children 6-13 \$10; children under 6 are free.
6. **Multicultural Meet Up, A Taste of ...:** Vernon Branch of Okanagan Regional Library and Local Immigration Partnerships/ Welcoming Communities will be hosting a series of events, each featuring a different country. Speakers will present on their experiences travelling to that country, an immigrant from that country will share their perspective. It is hoped that a chef from a local restaurant will round out the presenters with some highlights about the local cuisine. The intent is to support interest in multiculturalism, create opportunities for connection between immigrants and the general community, and give everyone a "taste" of a specific country and its culture. Sponsors are being sought to provide for the purchase of appetizers. Events at the library are free to the public.

Speakers and countries are still being finalized, but the first event is scheduled for April 25 from 3:00-5:00 and will feature the Ukraine. Subsequent dates are: May 23 (the Philippines), June 27, Sept 26, Oct 24, Nov 28.

7. **Next Meeting:**                   **June 24 2015 10-12 am**  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Board Room  
Community Futures  
3105 33<sup>rd</sup> Street

