

February 13, 2019

To: Members
Executive Committee

Re: Access Without Fear - Undertaking Update

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the MN17-10 Access Without Fear motion be removed from the list of outstanding items for City Council.
2. That this report be received and filed.

CONCLUSION

In response to City Council's consideration and direction regarding MN17-10 Access Without Fear and the undertaking from the July 31, 2017 City Council meeting, the Administration fulfilled the required actions and due diligence associated. As such, it is recommended that this item be removed from the outstanding list of Council items.

BACKGROUND

At the July 31, 2017 Council meeting, the following Access Without Fear motion was considered and approved:

The Sanctuary Cities/Access Without Fear motion and all delegations' comments be referred to those orders of government responsible for immigration and refugee settlement services for follow-up and response; namely, the federal minister of immigration, the provincial minister of immigration, including the Honourable Ralph Goodale, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA) and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM).

That this referral be accomplished through a letter, which contains a copy of the taping of the July 31, 2017 City Council meeting, from the Mayor, on behalf of City Council. Subsequently, a report be provided to Executive Committee in Q3 of 2018 of any response that is received.

In addition, the following undertaking was accepted by the Administration from City Council:

That the Administration pursue ways to educate the public, especially newcomers to the city, about access to City services without fear, that includes social media messages, program descriptions, connections with community groups, and any other creative ideas and actions that staff may see as a way to help alleviate fear.

DISCUSSION

Welcoming and responding to the needs of newcomers in the city has, and continues to be important to City Council, as demonstrated in the Vision:

“Our vision is to be Canada's most vibrant, inclusive, attractive, sustainable community, where people live in harmony and thrive in opportunity.”

In addition, one of the primary principles of our Strategic Plan “One City – One Team” not only reflects the importance of teamwork amongst employees within the City as an organization, but also extends to and reflects relationships external to the organization, that being the value and contributions of all residents, collectively supporting the betterment of the city as a whole.

In response to the motion, on August 28, 2017, Mayor Fougere sent a letter to the federal and provincial ministers responsible for immigration (attached as Appendix A). A response to this letter was received on February 7, 2018 from the Honourable Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship (attached as Appendix B).

In response to the undertaking, a number of actions have been taken in the areas of communication, programming and employment opportunities. These are outlined below.

Our Communication

Welcoming newcomers to Regina is a priority and the following messages are featured on Regina.ca:

- The City of Regina welcomes people from around the world. Our diversity defines us.
- Language is an important part of becoming comfortable in a community. Languages transmit cultures, values and traditional knowledge and plays an important role in promoting sustainable futures.
- We look forward to you calling Regina ‘home’ and participating in many cultural and recreational services that we are proud to offer our residents.
- The City of Regina never asks anyone for their immigration status to access any of the services we provide.

The City is launching a new website in Spring 2019 and this information will continue to be featured in the Welcome to Regina section. The new Regina.ca will be mobile friendly and have the Google Translate widget so that residents can use it for their translation needs. Google Translator is a free service that instantly translates words, phrases and web pages between English and over 100 other languages.

The City is continuing to identify appropriate occasions to welcome and include newcomers to Regina who have settled from other countries using the above messages. This includes focusing on significant and/or relevant ‘Days’, such as World Refugee Day, International Migrants Day and International Languages Day.

Our Community Programming

The City's Social Inclusion and Cultural Development units have strong relationships with newcomer and immigrant organizations including the Regina Region Local Immigration Partnership (RRLIP) and Regina Open Door Society. The Administration engages with these organizations to proactively develop and implement strategies to increase inclusivity within our recreation, leisure, cultural and sport programs and services. Part of this work includes leading a Diversity Programming Committee which is focused on developing inclusive programming for our diverse community, including newcomer children, youth, families. This work has resulted in a number of programs implementing cultural components, activities, and addressing language barriers for newcomers. An example of a program that resulted from this work is the girls only "My Time Program" that operates in the Coronation Park Community. This program initially started in the Huda School, with 100 per cent of girls attending being newcomers to Canada.

In addition, the City of Regina's Community Investment Grant Program provides funding to community-based organizations that work with newcomer populations/communities, for example, the Regina Open Door Society and Regina Immigrant Women.

Our Workforce and Workplace

In 2018, the Administration adopted a Diversity and Inclusion Plan which outlines three goals to focus on between 2018 and 2022. The three goals are:

- Representation: Our workforce reflects the diversity of our community
- Inclusion: Our workplace is an inclusive environment
- Education: Employees are educated and value the important of diversity and inclusion

This work is being led by our Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee which is focusing on how we can increase diversity and inclusion within our work place, including hiring of newcomer populations, and educating the corporation on challenges/barriers that newcomers can face in the workplace. It is essential that our workforce is representative of the community and by continuing to build an organization that welcomes all and services everyone in our community enables us to continue to deliver high-quality, reliable services.

RECOMMENDATION IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report. However, if further actions are to be initiated, the costs would be considered and analyzed.

Environmental Implications

None with respect to this report.

Policy and/or Strategic Implications

The City of Regina is proud of its role as a diverse, inclusive and welcoming community for all citizens, including refugees and immigrants. All residents of our community have the right to equal access to public services of all types, including emergency services, recreational programming and police protection.

As immigration and refugee settlement services fall within the responsibility of the federal and provincial governments, it is important that their role in supporting refugees and immigrants complements and enhances any City contributions in this regard.

Other Implications

None with respect to this report.

Accessibility Implications

None with respect to this report.

COMMUNICATIONS

The City of Regina's Communications department, as the primary outward facing vehicle for public messaging interaction, has taken the lead on the communications activities described in this report.

DELEGATED AUTHORITY

The recommendations contained in this report do not require City Council approval.

Respectfully submitted,



Chris Holden
City Manager

Respectfully submitted,



Sheila Harmatiuk
Senior Advisor, Government & Indigenous
Relations