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| <b>To:</b>                     | Warden Hicks and Members of Grey County Council  |
| <b>Committee Date:</b>         | April 8, 2021  |
| <b>Subject / Report No:</b>    | EDTC-CW-10-21  |
| <b>Title:</b>                  | Local Immigration Partnership Strategy   |
| <b>Prepared by:</b>            | Savanna Myers, Director of Economic Development,<br>Tourism & Culture<br>Melissa Avedesian, Local Immigration Partnership<br>Coordinator |
| <b>Reviewed by:</b>            | Kim Wingrove, Chief Administrative Officer   |
| <b>Lower Tier(s) Affected:</b> | All  |
| <b>Status:</b>                 |  |

## Recommendation

1. **That Report EDTC-CW-10-21 regarding the Local Immigration Partnership Strategy be received; and**
2. **That the Settlement Strategy be endorsed and the action plan be developed through the Partnership Council and brought back to Council annually for information.**

## Executive Summary

The Grey Bruce Local Immigration Partnership launched in July 2020 following federal approval of the five year program. Year one deliverables (April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021) included establishing an inclusive Partnership Council, developing a brand, adopting a five year Settlement Strategy and collating research and findings into a guiding Action Plan for the Partnership Council to consider annually.

## Background and Discussion

Access to a stable, sufficient and appropriately skilled labour force is critical to the economic health of Grey and Bruce Counties. Recognizing this, in April 2019 County economic development staff from both Grey and Bruce joined forces to submit an application for the establishment of a Grey Bruce Local Immigration Partnership. The goal of this economic development partnership is to address labour stress issues

reported by businesses in all sectors regionally. In addition, this work supports and fosters multiple partnerships to deliver attraction and retention programming in the region.

In February 2020, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) approved the Grey Bruce Local Immigration Partnership (GBLIP) for five years to support the development of community-based partnerships and planning to support the unique needs of newcomers.

Successful newcomer attraction and integration requires a thoughtful approach to the individual and their families. Attraction begins with identifying and facilitating opportunity, moves to retention and ends when individuals feel a part of a community. This is true for any new community member but has particular obstacles to address when attracting and retaining people from other Countries. It is with this in mind, that the establishment of the Grey Bruce Local Immigration Partnership is built.

Recognizing that successful settlement needs to happen at scale, LIPs connect various stakeholders, from employers and school boards, to health centres and networks, boards of trades, levels of government, professional associations, ethno-cultural and faith-based organizations and community and social services sectors to improve coordination of services that facilitate immigrant settlement and integration. This is accomplished through a systems approach, supported by community-based knowledge sharing and local strategic planning, with the ultimate goal of positive cumulative impact.

Direct support to individuals and families is another important aspect of a successful strategy. YMCA Grey Bruce Settlement Services, works one-on-one with newcomers and immigrants offering direct support. IRCC is also funding this complimentary initiative over the same five year period, which, when combined with the LIP, provides comprehensive settlement services across the region for all stakeholders.

Since its launch in July 2020, the GBLIP has:

- Established an inclusive partnership council comprising of over 50 members from 42 organizations who meet regularly to develop a coordinated, comprehensive, and strategic approach to immigration and integration that fits the needs of the community it represents;
- Developed and launched a brand and key messaging toolkit; and
- Developed a draft Settlement Strategy presented in this report, along with an accompanying Action Planning: Research and Findings document to guide the Partnership Council with an a la carte menu of objectives, actions and metrics to select from each year as the journey progresses and environments change.

## Settlement Strategy

Through RFP-EDTC-07-20, Louise Pitre Coaching & Consulting was retained to develop the Settlement Strategy and accompanying Action Planning: Research and Findings document. The six-month process included a comprehensive document review of relevant local data and intel, reports and studies, along with a review of past and present initiatives; two engagement sessions with the Partnership Council, seven key stakeholder interviews, eight focus groups involving 62 participants along with input from Welcoming Communities Grey Bruce.

The groundwork for supporting the settlement and inclusion journey of newcomers in Grey Bruce has been laid through 15 years of leadership and commitment from key community members, many of whom are members of the newly founded Welcoming Communities Grey Bruce. This volunteer based not-for-profit organization has, in the past five years advanced several successful short-term projects initiating experimentation with rural settlement strategies. The approach taken to develop the Grey Bruce Local Immigration Partnership Council Settlement Strategy builds off this solid foundation.

Through the research and stakeholder engagement process, seven community priorities emerged:

1. **Coordination:** The need for an overarching coordinating body to ensure newcomers are seamlessly connected to the services they need when they need it, as well as, also connecting community partners to the information they need to support newcomers, and finally connecting employers to the supports they need to both attract and retain employees.
2. **Collaboration:** The need for organizations to work together to achieve transformative change; recognizing that organizations can reach greater outcomes together than apart.
3. **Intersectoral inclusive leadership capacity:** The need for building the capacity of leaders across all sectors and the Grey Bruce region to cultivate inclusive and equitable workplace and community cultures.
4. **Social connections and capital:** The need to support not only the economic integration of newcomers but also, their social integration by fostering social capital and creating opportunities for social connections.
5. **Employment opportunities and economic integration:** The need for employment that is meaningful, recognizes credentials, supports workplace integration and inclusion, and addresses discrimination, racism and micro-aggressions in the workplace.
6. **Access to affordable and suitable housing:** The need for adequate and affordable housing has surpassed the need for transportation services. The lack

of housing is one of the most serious challenges facing the attraction of newcomers to Grey Bruce.

7. **Attitudes toward newcomers:** The need to address the attitudes toward newcomers, attitudes rooted in racism and fear of the other.

From here, the priorities and actionable objectives are framed through four pillars:

- Build Capacity
- Strengthen Community
- Cultivate Prosperity
- Foster Inclusion

## **Implementation and Execution**

The *Partnership Council Settlement Strategy 2025* is about building capacity, strengthening community, cultivating prosperity, and fostering inclusion to prepare Grey Bruce to attract and retain newcomers in the region. Leveraging previous work, the *Partnership Council Settlement Strategy 2025* is a beginning. It lays the building blocks needed for a strong, connected, and engaged Local Immigration Partnership Council anchored in and guided by the voices and needs of newcomers. Members of the Partnership Council are collectively responsible for the identification, selection and implementation of activities prioritized through the annual action plan in order to achieve positive cumulative impact.

The Partnership Council aspires to be a welcoming community, where diversity is normalized and immigration is embedded in our DNA. These successes and more, are achieved through local collaboration. This strategy sets the stage for walking together – government, newcomers, settlement services, service providers, employers, community. Year over year, through the Partnership Council, GBLIP will endeavour to co-create a prosperous and welcoming Grey Bruce, where everybody belongs, moving beyond settlement to inclusion.

## **Legal and Legislated Requirements**

There are no legal or legislated requirements with this report.

## **Financial and Resource Implications**

There are no financial or resource implications with this report. The Grey Bruce Local Immigration Partnership is fully funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).

## Relevant Consultation

- Internal – Economic Development
- External – Bruce County Economic Development, GB LIP Partnership Council, Community Stakeholders, Service Providers, Employers, Newcomers

## Appendices and Attachments

[Settlement Strategy 2025](#)

[Brand Toolkit](#)