



Committee Report

To: Warden Janice Jackson
Members of the Planning and Development Committee

From: Mark Paoli
Director of Planning and Development

Date: April 15, 2021

Re: Grey Bruce Local Immigration Partnership Settlement Strategy 2025

Staff Recommendation:

That the Grey Bruce Local Immigration Partnership Settlement Strategy 2025 report be received; and,

That the action plan developed through the Grey-Bruce Local Immigration Partnership be reported to County Council annually for information.

Background:

Access to a stable, sufficient, and appropriately skilled labour force is critical to the economic health of Grey and Bruce Counties. Recognizing this, and with Committee's endorsement in April 2019, Economic Development staff from both Grey and Bruce Counties joined forces to apply for the establishment of a Grey Bruce Local Immigration Partnership. As such, Grey County took the lead to apply for funding to support the operation of the LIP for 5 years, including the staff to support the work and support the partnership council in advancing the overall program goals and objectives.

The goal of this 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, starting April 2020, 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 the Grey Bruce Local Immigration Partnership is built on.

Recognizing that successful settlement needs to happen at scale, LIPs connect various stakeholders, to improve coordination of services that facilitate immigrant settlement and integration such as the following:

- employers
- school boards
- health centres
- boards of trades
- levels of government
- professional associations
- ethno-cultural
- faith-based organizations
- community and social services sectors.

This is accomplished through a systems approach, supported by community-based knowledge sharing and local strategic planning, with the goal of a positive combined impact.

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

The GBLIP accomplished the following since its inception:

- Established the Grey Bruce Local Immigration Partnership Council comprising of over 50 members from 42 organizations across Grey-Bruce. Through this board-based community representative group, the GBLIP Partnership Council takes a leadership role in building a welcoming community by leading the Settlement Strategy and developing specific actions to move the priority areas forward;
- Developed and launched a brand and key messaging toolkit (attachment); and,
- Developed a GBLIP Settlement Strategy attached to the report (attachment) presented in this report to guide the Partnership Council in the development and delivery of a number of objectives, actions, and metrics to work on each year adapting as situations change.

Settlement Strategy Summary:

Louise Pitre Coaching & Consulting was retained through Grey County's RFP-EDTC-07-20 to develop the Grey Bruce Local Immigration Partnership Settlement Strategy. The six-month process included a comprehensive document review of relevant local data and intel, reports and studies, and a review of past and present initiatives. It also included two engagement sessions with the Grey-Bruce Local Immigration Partnership Council, seven key stakeholder one on one interviews, eight focus groups involving sixty-two participants and input from the board members of Welcoming Communities Grey Bruce.

The groundwork for supporting the settlement in Grey Bruce has been laid through 15 years of leadership and commitment from key community members. Many of the key community members are members of the newly founded Welcoming Communities Grey Bruce. In the past five years, this volunteer based not-for-profit organization has advanced several successful short-term projects for rural settlement strategies. The Grey Bruce Local Immigration Partnership Council Settlement Strategy builds off this solid foundation.

Through this process, seven community priorities emerged, framed in four overarching pillars - Build Capacity, Strengthen Community, Cultivate Prosperity, and Foster Inclusion.

1. Coordination
2. Collaboration
3. Intersectoral inclusive leadership capacity
4. Social connections and capital
5. Employment opportunities and economic integration
6. Access to affordable and suitable housing
7. Attitudes toward newcomers.

Implementation:

The *Grey Bruce Local Immigration Partnership Settlement Strategy 2025* is a beginning. This strategy sets the stage for key stakeholders - government, newcomers, settlement services, service providers, employers, and community - to work together toward a common goal. That collective goal is to ensure that when we attract newcomers to communities across Grey and Bruce, they feel welcomed. In the end, this ensures successful retention, a critical piece to this overall goal.

The strategy is also a framing document to ensure a strong, connected, and engaged Local Immigration Partnership Council that is anchored by the needs of newcomers. Now that the strategy is complete, the next step is for the Partnership Council to create a comprehensive, detailed list of actions, supported by GBLIP staff and the two county economic development staff, that includes specific activities that can be measurable to ensure success. These activities will be comprised into an “Action Plan” that will be presented to the respective Grey and Bruce County Councils. Annually, staff will a GBLIP year in review outlining the next year’s actions to both Grey and Bruce County Councils.

Conclusion:

Over the next four years, led by the Grey-Bruce Local Immigration Partnership Council, the GBLIP will endeavour to create a prosperous and welcoming Grey Bruce, where everybody belongs - moving beyond settlement to inclusion. As a result, the region will be able to strengthen its position to attract newcomers and address labour force challenges felt across sectors by local businesses. The Grey-Bruce Local Immigration Strategy 2025 and its corresponding actions will help build a stronger regional economy into the future.

Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Considerations:

There are no financial, staffing, legal or IT considerations associated with this report.

Interdepartmental Consultation:

None

Link to Strategic Goals and Elements:

Goal #3 Find creative new ways to engage our public.

Goal #7 Stimulate and reward innovation and economic development.

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Departmental Approval:

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