
MEMORANDUM

August 07, 2014

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Penny Ballem, City Manager
Sadhu Johnston, Deputy City Manager
Janice MacKenzie, City Clerk
Kevin Quinlan, Director, Policy and Communication, Mayor's Office
Lynda Graves, Manager, Administration Services, City Manager's Office
Mike Magee, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Rena Kendall-Craden, Director, Communications
Brenda Prosen, General Manager of Community Services
MaryClare Zak, Managing Director, Social Policy and Projects
Baldwin Wong, Social Planner, MWGI Liaison

FROM: Mayor's Working Group on Immigration

SUBJECT: Summary report from Mayor's Working Group on Immigration (MWGI) 2012-2014

This Memo provides Mayor and Council with an overview of the activities of the Mayor's Working Group on Immigration (MWGI) from 2012 to 2014.

SUMMARY

A first meeting of the MWGI was convened in April 2012 by MWGI Co-Chair Councillor Geoff Meggs, to identify key themes and directions on immigration issues. Due to significant change in the settlement sector and transition of funding back to the Federal government from the Province during 2012, the group did not meet again till 2013. However, member organizations continued to support the work of the Vancouver Dialogues Project and the City's Newcomers Mentorship Program.

In 2013, MWGI members participated in the development of the *Welcoming Communities* initiative and helped launch five initiatives at the Welcoming Communities Summit. The event attracted the attendance of 250 delegates.

In 2013, the City was approved by the federal government to undertake the Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) initiative. LIP will play a strategic role in creating community partnerships, research and better service co-ordination. The MWGI will provide strategic oversight to the initiative over the next two years.

More recently, the MWGI responded to growing public interest in the idea of 'sanctuary city' and hosted a community workshop on the topic in May 2014. The workshop was attended by over thirty community members and service organizations. Information gathered from the workshop will be helpful for the City in considering next steps.

The MWGI recommends the following:

- A. That the City continues to advocate for the need of establishing Newcomer's Mentorship Program to other cities;
- B. That the MWGI will provide strategic oversight and act as governance group to the Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) initiative;
- C. That the MWGI will follow up on discussion of Sanctuary City and explore the feasibility of Vancouver establishing policies of "access without fear".

BACKGROUND

The Mayor's Working Group on Immigration (MWGI) was first established by Mayor Larry Campbell in 2005 in response to the changing demographics of the city. At that time, Census data showed that immigrants in Vancouver accounted for close to 50% of the total population.

In 2006, Mayor Sam Sullivan re-established the group, and the main activity of the group was convening a Metro Vancouver Immigrants Employment Summit in 2008. The summit helped launch the Immigrant Employment Council of B.C.

In 2009-2011, Mayor Robertson re-established the MWGI. During their term, the MWGI supported the launch of the Vancouver Dialogues Project, recommended the establishment of the City's Newcomer's Mentorship Program, and hosted a social media campaign to create awareness of the issues facing some Temporary Foreign Workers.

Mayor Robertson reappointed the current MWGI with Councillor Geoff Meggs and Professor Dan Hiebert as Co-Chairs. MWGI are based on sectoral representation and expertise in different areas of immigration. A membership list is appended to this report. (**Appendix A**). Social Policy staff serve as secretariat to the group.

The MWGI has three key mandates:

- 1) Recommend key policy and program directions regarding immigration issues at a local level;
- 2) Advise on issues arising from Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), Big Cities Mayors Caucus table and others;
- 3) Provide opportunity for City of Vancouver and community partners to have input in the development of immigration programs and policies, including undertaking research.

MWGI has also adopted six Priority areas (in 2005) in addressing immigration related issues:

- 1) Developing a Vision and Value Statement (**Appendix B**)
- 2) Policy and Program Development
- 3) Employment, Economics and Education
- 4) Access to Services
- 5) Support to refugees
- 6) Integration, Engagement and Anti-Racism

DISCUSSION

The MWGI met a number of times between 2012 and 2014. Highlights of the discussion are in **Appendix C**.

MWGI Key Activities

The MWGI supported and participated in the following activities/programs:

1. City of Vancouver Newcomer Mentorship Program

The MWGI hosted the Metro Vancouver Immigrant Employment Summit in 2008 and recommended that the City establish a Mentorship Program for new Canadians. In 2011, the City launched the first pilot, and based on its success, the City launched its 2nd and 3rd mentorship cohorts in the fall of 2012 and 2013.

The Mentorship program has continued as a joint partnership between the City, the Immigrant Employment Council of B.C., and several immigrant serving agencies (SUCCESS, ISSofBC, MOSAIC), and has added new partners including the Back in Motion Rehab Inc., Training Group at Douglas College, and Skills Connect for Immigrants Program at Training Innovation. Senior staff at the City of Vancouver have also reached out to other municipalities to share the benefits of the program and encourage other civic governments to become involved.

In the current (3rd) Mentorship Program, the number of city staff increased from nineteen to thirty five, including four General Managers and many senior staff of the City. The City mentors came from Finance, Engineering, Information Technology, City Manager's Office, Human Resources, Parks and Recreation, and Community Services. They were matched with mentees recruited from partner agencies. Mentoring included a minimum of 24 hours of interactions over the course of four months.

Dr. Penny Ballem, who is the sponsor of the program, spoke about the significance of the initiative to the city: "Vancouver's economic performance and prosperity is highly dependent on immigration and, more specifically, our success in attracting and integrating talented individuals into our labour market. Mentorship is simple, powerful and efficient. It builds connections, relationships and understanding."

Having successfully completed the third mentorship program, the City is now preparing to offer another round of mentorship opportunity to city staff and newcomers to the city.

MWGI Co-chair Councillor Geoff Meggs has advocated the need for such a program to other cities and will continue to do so in the coming year.

2. Welcoming Communities Summit and Newcomer's Guides

In January 2013, the City embarked on the *Welcoming Communities* initiative. With input from 28 partner organizations including the MWGI, five Working Groups were established. Each working group was tasked with a specific initiative designed to support the Welcoming Communities Project's overarching goal of making Vancouver a more welcoming place for newcomers.

There were five specific initiatives undertaken by the Working Groups:

- A. The **Community Action Circle** Initiative was established to explore how to better advocate for systemic changes to improve newcomers' access to resources and support services, and to establish stronger relations between long-time residents and newcomer residents. While each circle used different strategies and tools for stimulating grassroots engagement, common themes emerged regarding what creates a welcoming community.

Sponsoring organizations for the seven Community Action Circles are: Collingwood Neighbourhood House; Frog Hollow Neighbourhood House; Kitsilano Neighbourhood House; Little Mountain Neighbourhood House; Mt Pleasant Neighbourhood House; Progressive Intercultural Community Services; YMCA of Greater Vancouver

- B. The **Planning and Collaboration** initiative, led by MOSAIC and Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House, worked to establish a blueprint for "models of collaboration" for groups focused on newcomers issues to more effectively work together. This initiative took on research, expert input and community consultation to establish a model that would work well for interested groups.

The initiative has released its final report which provides details on their findings, and what they've learned from other Canadian municipalities, and from non-traditional stakeholders. The report concludes with recommendations for how the City of Vancouver and stakeholders can move forward in creating partnerships that are inclusive and collaborative. The report will be reviewed and discussed by MWGI.

- C. Led by MOSAIC, the **Diversity@Work** initiative worked with nine local businesses and three Business Improvement Associations (BIAs) to contribute to welcoming and inclusive workplaces in three neighborhoods on the East side of Vancouver. The project offers diversity training, tools and resources to the businesses. Business owners and staff were interviewed in a video and described what the project meant to them.

This Project was delivered by MOSAIC along with other community partners: Progressive Intercultural Community Services, City of Vancouver, SUCCESS, Women's Enterprise Centre, Vancouver Community College, Immigrant Employment Council of BC, and the Business Improvement Associations of Victoria Drive, Hastings North and Collingwood.

- D. **First Peoples: A Guide for Newcomers - a digital e-guide:** the project grew out of the Vancouver Dialogues Project. Newcomers are often at a disadvantage when it comes to learning about First Peoples because of language barriers, problems with

access to information, or sufficient time to learn. Led by Social Policy, Vancouver Community College and ELSA Net (now called LISTN), with support from the Vancouver Public Library, the *First Peoples Guide* addresses this deficit. This digital e-guide will become a key resource for newcomers to learn about the rich culture, diverse history and experiences of Canada's First Peoples. The guide is available on the City website (www.vancouver.ca/newcomers)

Accompanying the *First Peoples Guide*, LISTN has compiled extensive materials for ESL teachers and students who wish to learn or teach topics including Aboriginal art, Aboriginal history, traditional Aboriginal education, Indian residential schools and Aboriginal identity. These materials will be available online and will allow newcomers to improve their English while learning more about the First Peoples of B.C.

- E. Co-ordinated by Social Policy, and supported by various agencies, *Growing Roots: A Newcomer's Guide to Vancouver* was developed in response to the diverse needs of newcomers arriving in Vancouver: as an invitation for participation and civic engagement; and as a useful resource for accessing services and welcoming spaces.

Building on existing guides and available information, the guide features unique and personal stories shared by newcomers and long-time residents, and highlights resources on a wide range of topics, from getting around the city to obtaining information about needed services, to finding volunteer opportunities.

The guide is made of up three chapters (People, Neighbourhoods & Getting Involved, Services & Resources) with videos throughout. The chapters are organized into 31 sections containing interviews, overview summaries, links & resources and media. The guide is available on the City of Vancouver website (www.vancouver.ca/newcomers) and is part of the Vancouver Public Library e-collection.

The Welcoming Communities Summit, held on March 4th, 2014, was the culmination and celebration of the initiatives and 250 delegates attended the event. The event had three primary objectives:

- 1) to showcase the five key initiatives undertaken by the City and project partners;
- 2) to engage delegates to share and discuss ideas for supporting immigrants' integration;
- 3) to look to the future and consider next steps.

Highlights of the summit included: 1) opening remarks by the Mayor; 2) welcome from the Coast Salish First Nations; 3) working groups' presentations and launch of the *Growing Roots Newcomer's Guide* and *First Peoples Guide*; 4) keynote dialogue titled "Creating the Newcomer Experience - the Way Forward" which featured MWGI Co-Chairs Councillor Geoff Meggs and Dan Hiebert. Representatives from the Vancouver Foundation and AMSSA, which is a member of the MWGI, also participated on the dialogue panel.

Professor Dan Hiebert opened the dialogue exploring the experiences of cities with significant newcomer populations. Dialogue panelists addressed four topics which have been identified as key themes for the upcoming Local Immigration Partnership initiative: "Governments and Public Institutions Addressing Needs", "Intercultural and Civic Engagement", "Newcomer Access to Services and Programs", and "Welcoming Workplaces".

After the dialogue, summit delegates were also asked to reflect on the dialogue and to help identify key issues in each of the area for future consideration. Based on feedback from delegates, the summit was a huge success.

3. Local Immigration Partnership (LIP)

In the summer of 2013, the federal government announced the repatriation of settlement funding from the province back to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). The renewed settlement program in B.C. includes a funding stream for 'Local Immigration Partnership' ("LIP") initiatives that build coalitions of partners and sectors to strengthen immigrant settlement & integration. With support from MWGI and local community partners, the City put forward a proposal which was accepted by CIC.

MWGI has agreed to act as LIP's Leadership Council and provide strategic oversight and advice to the initiative over the next two years. To date, thirty organizations have agreed to participate as project partners.

Proposed activities for LIP will include research, stakeholder engagement, project implementation, and a citywide symposium in 2016 to highlight results. Building on the Welcoming Communities initiative, LIP will develop strategies and collaborative work in four focus areas:

- 1) **Enhancing Newcomers Access to Services and Programs**
- 2) **Strengthening Intercultural and Civic Engagement**
- 3) **Creating Welcoming and Inclusive Workplaces**
- 4) **Governments and Public Institutions Addressing Needs**

4. Sanctuary City Workshop

On May 9th, 2014, MWGI convened a workshop that brought together a range of organizations and stakeholders to begin exploring the extent to which the City of Vancouver may become a 'Sanctuary City' - a city which has clear policies designed to enhance service access for people who are living in the community with pending or no immigration status. City of Toronto, for example, has established an "Access Without Fear" policy.

The workshop was convened in response to growing community interest in the concept of a "sanctuary city," which has been adopted as a policy by many American cities (<http://www.ojjpac.org/sanctuary.asp>) and two municipalities (Toronto and Hamilton) in Canada. At least one Vancouver organization, Sanctuary Health, has been exploring this issue for some time.

The objectives of the workshop were to:

- Ensure participants had an accurate and up-to-date understanding of the issues involved through a sharing of experiences and perspectives;
- Clarify and assess the nature and extent of vulnerability problems facing refugee claimants and undocumented migrants;
- Explore and develop potential options to address these problems
- Identify potential implementation issues, challenges and options for next steps.

A full report on the workshop discussion is appended to this report (**Appendix C**). As this was an exploratory meeting, not all the relevant groups were able to attend the meeting. It is expected that in future discussions, more stakeholder groups will be invited to share their perspectives.

The two and half hour workshop generated a significant amount of information, including: individual perspectives from workshop participants, identifying categories of individuals who are vulnerable on the basis of their immigration status, areas of services needed by those individuals that are difficult to access, reasons for people not accessing services, support provided by community and faith groups, potential actions and approaches, and suggestions for next steps.

As remarked by MWGI Co-Chair Professor Dan Hiebert at the end of the meeting:

“The Mayor’s Working on Immigration understands that the question of whether to declare Vancouver as a ‘sanctuary city’ is complex, since many of the expectations embedded in the concept of sanctuary cannot be enacted or regulated at the City level (e.g. the actions of the Canada Border Services Agency that take place in the City of Vancouver; Translink Police). One reason to convene the meeting, therefore, was to ensure that key stakeholders discuss the idea of a sanctuary initiative from an informed perspective.”

Councillor Meggs also noted that, moving forward, the issue of municipal jurisdiction would need to be communicated clearly to all stakeholders in order to not create false expectation. He affirmed that a report on the Sanctuary City discussion compiled by MWGI will be included in a report to Mayor and Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the various discussions and initiatives highlighted above, the following are proposed for consideration:

- A. That the City continues to advocate for the need of establishing Newcomer’s Mentorship Program to other cities;
- B. That the MWGI will provide strategic oversight and act as governance group to the Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) initiative;
- C. That the MWGI will follow up on discussion of Sanctuary City and explore the feasibility of Vancouver establishing policies of “access without fear”.

Appendix A

Mayor's Working Group on Immigration (MWGI) - Membership

MWGI Co-Chair: *Councillor Geoff Meggs*
 Professor Dan Hiebert

Community & Immigrant Services:

Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of B.C. (AMSSA) - Lynn Moran, Executive Director

Immigrant Services Society of B.C. - Patricia Woroch, CEO

MOSAIC - Eyob Naizghi, Executive Director

Progressive Intercultural Community Services Society PICS - Charan Gill, CEO; alternate: Barry Goodwin

SUCCESS - Queenie Choo, CEO

Business/Employer:

Immigrant Employment Council of BC - Daisy Quon, Program Director

Academic/Research/Foundation:

UBC - Professor Dan Hiebert (co-chair)

Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada - Yuen Pau Woo, President; alternate: Kenny Zhang

Legal

Canadian Bar Association - Meike Lalonde, Immigration Section Chair; alternate: Ryan Rosenberg

Refugee Issues:

Storefront Orientation Services SOS - Kerstin Walker, Executive Director

Vancouver School Board Settlement Program - Cecilia Tagle

City's Multicultural Advisory Committee (MAC)

Professor Miu Chung Yan, Co-Chair

Member At Large:

Zool Suleman, immigration lawyer, past Chair, MWGI

Mayor's Office Liaison

Lara Honrado, Director, Community Relations

Staff Liaison & Secretariat

Baldwin Wong, Social Policy

Appendix B

Preamble:

While immigration has traditionally been under federal and provincial jurisdiction, most immigrants in Canada live in cities. It is therefore increasingly important that cities play an integral role in advocating for the inclusion of newcomers in Canadian society.

This goal of inclusion is understood to be consistent with our existing commitment to honour and value the role of First Nations as the initial occupants of Canada, and the bilingual nature of Canada, respecting the significance of English and French as official languages.

Vision and Value Statement Concerning Immigrants and Refugees:

Vancouver is a city where immigrants and refugees have the best opportunities to become an integral part of the social, economic and cultural fabric of civic life.

Further:

The City of Vancouver is proud of its cultural diversity and values the distinctive characteristics of its residents, including newcomers to Canada;

The City of Vancouver is committed to fostering an open, welcoming and safe environment to people of all cultural backgrounds;

The City of Vancouver acknowledges that newcomers contribute to the social, cultural and economic vitality of Canadian society, locally and nationally, and that newcomers contribute to our relationships with other countries and cultures. Accordingly, Vancouver seeks ways to maximize newcomers' contributions to civic life, socially, culturally and economically.

The City of Vancouver will ensure that newcomers have equitable access to all the services provided by the City.

The City of Vancouver will help to ensure that newcomers have access to appropriate and timely settlement and integration services, by working in partnership with other orders of government and non-governmental organizations.

The City of Vancouver acknowledges its role with respect to a large number of visitors to Canada, including tourists, international students, and temporary migrants.

Appendix C

The MWGI held four meetings between 2012 and 2014. Highlights of the discussions are as follows:

MWGI 1st Meeting - Roundtable on Immigration (2012)

- There are 3 city priorities: affordable housing; transit; and job creation. They all pertain to the interests of newcomers.
- Advocacy on bigger issues would be more effective if cities come together
- Support economic development issues including those which affect international students and temporary foreign workers
- Need to tap into resources of business/investor class of immigrants whose expertise and skills are not well used
- Identify concerns around policing and detention (for people with no or pending status)
- Need to have dialogue with youth; their awareness of Vancouver as 'multicultural city' is different from other groups

MWGI 2nd meeting (2013)

- Federal immigration funding criteria will be different from provincial program criteria and will not support certain 'vulnerable' groups (refugee claimants; recently naturalized immigrants etc.)
- Immigration policy will be labour-market driven and employer-based; hence prospective immigrants will have different settlement needs
- Incoming immigrants will be required to have official language proficiency; this will change the type of services needed
- Understand changes and impacts of federal immigration policies and funding repatriation
- Need to continue to engage with the Province on immigration issues
- Lack of research capacity (especially since the closing of BC Metropolis)
- Need to engage with UBCM and other cities on immigration issues
- Better linkage on issues with Vancouver School Board
- Advocacy of mentorship program to other cities

MWGI 3rd meeting (2014)

- Presentation on "Canadian Immigration - High Net Worth Impact" by member of Canadian Bar Association
- B.C. attracted 14% of total new immigrants to Canada but has 40% of all High Net Worth (HNW) immigrants settling in B.C.
- Federal has closed immigration investor program so fewer HNW immigrants are expected; not sure about impact on local housing market
- Need dialogue with senior CIC officials to understand policy direction and city's role
- VSB is experiencing different enrollments in different parts of city - overall enrollments decrease, but VSB will open new schools in one area (Point Grey) due to demand

- Information shared about international cities' best practices in the area of immigration - e.g. Barcelona, Rotterdam, Copenhagen, Toronto, Boston, San Francisco, New York, Seattle
- Vancouver, when compared, has not formalized its approach
- How can we best leverage existing resources to address gaps/needs?

MWGI 4th meeting (2014)

- Welcoming summit a success - diverse participants and engagement with First Nations; can this be an annual event?
- Discussion on LIP and the role of MWGI - agreed LIP is a good resource and agreed for MWGI to provide oversight and act as LIP governance body
- LIP has some research capacity - can it be used as clearing house for research data/information?
- City can express concerns about LIP's restrictions on the type of eligible activities within the program
- Future MWGI should include more stakeholders/sectors, e.g. businesses, BIAs, employers, funders, neighbourhood houses
- What's the Sanctuary City (SC) movement? What's under City's jurisdiction?
- More research needed on what happened in other Canadian cities, i.e. Toronto and Hamilton. (Staff subsequently compiled information about the two cities on their Sanctuary City policies and approaches)
- MWGI agreed to convene a workshop on Sanctuary City and to include key groups such as VPD, VSB and VCH

Appendix D

Report on 'Sanctuary City' Workshop

May 9th, 2014

Compiled by: Kevin Evans (Workshop Facilitator)

For The Mayor's Working Group on Immigration

Report on 'Sanctuary City' Workshop

On May 9th, 2014, the Mayor's Working Group on Immigration (MWGI) convened a workshop that brought together a range of organizations and stakeholders to begin exploring the extent to which the City of Vancouver may become a 'Sanctuary City' - a welcoming and inclusive place for people who are living in the community with pending or no immigration status.

The meeting was convened in response to growing community interest in the concept of a "sanctuary city," which has been adopted as a policy by many American cities (<http://www.ojipac.org/sanctuary.asp>) and two municipalities in Canada. At least one Vancouver organization, Sanctuary Health, has been exploring this issue for some time.

The objectives of the workshop were to:

- Ensure participants had an accurate and up-to-date understanding of the issues involved through a sharing of experiences and perspectives;
- Clarify and assess the nature and extent of vulnerability problems facing refugee claimants and undocumented migrants;
- Explore and develop potential options to address these problems
- Identify potential implementation issues, challenges and options for next steps.

A list of participants is appended to this report. MWGI Co-Chair Councilor Geoff Meggs acknowledged in his opening remarks that, as this was an exploratory meeting, not all the relevant groups were necessarily at the table. He said one of the desired meeting outcomes was a list of who else needed to be at the table for future discussions.

The purpose of this document is to capture the substance and key themes of the discussion which will, in turn, inform a report from the MWGI to Mayor and Council.

Introduction

Councilor Meggs welcomed participants and noted the complexity of the issue – including overlapping jurisdictional authority. He said the discussion would help identify key issues, potential next steps, and who else needs to be consulted going forward. The discussion will inform recommendations from the Working Group to the Mayor which may serve as the basis for a future MWGI to continue action on the issue under the incoming Council following the municipal election in the fall.

Sanctuary City Movement and video

Representatives of the organization Sanctuary Health set the stage by providing a brief history of the Sanctuary City movement – which has been adopted by over 100 cities in the U.S., plus Hamilton and Toronto in Canada, to provide for the health and safety of individuals and families with pending or no immigration status – and by introducing a video intended to help

participants understand the challenges of the conditions under which undocumented individuals in the city are living.

One of the two women interviewed in the video explained how she arrived in Canada under the Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) program with an understanding that her sponsoring employer would attend to her health and security needs. However, after she became pregnant in Canada, the employer withdrew that support and ended her employment. With the changed circumstances of her immigration status, she was unable to secure publicly-funded medical care during her pregnancy. She eventually gave birth to a healthy child with the assistance of a midwife.

A second woman in the video said, “Human rights are expendable in this situation. There is no help to be had, and if you look for help it only makes things worse.”

Roundtable Discussion

Discussion then followed, with the following experiences/perspectives shared among participants:

- Access to basic services should not be solely determined by immigration status
- Definition of Sanctuary City - a city which is accessible, inclusive and safe for everyone
- Stories of non-status people living in unsafe housing, couch-surfing for sex, afraid to call police, and being victims of sexual violence
- VPD shared story of a woman facing domestic violence but afraid to report due to immigration status
- VPD noted there is under reporting of violence in the LGBTQ community for a variety of reasons
- Non-status individuals are afraid of transit police; if detained, they may spend up to two weeks in detention
- There is a need for shelter but non status people have no IDs and most shelters require IDs
- Pine Clinic offers many services, but is now closing
- Vulnerability of undocumented construction workers
- Reduced access to citizenship is a big issue
- Issue of cessation (from Permanent Resident status to non-status) is concerning to Canadian Council for Refugees
- VPD raised the issue of cross-municipal boundaries, and the use of discretion where reporting can be managed to protect rights
- Recent suicide of migrant in detention (picked up by Transit police); many are now scared of Transit police and their powers
- Spousal sponsorship may create precarious situations for some: spouses are threatened with loss of status (and therefore deportation) and subject to risks of abuse

- Temporary Foreign Workers have no access to services when contracts are broken by employers
- Children born in Canada to non-status residents are without health services
- Some churches are responding to the needs and providing support to non-status migrants
- Only one or two shelters are not asking for IDs
- Non status residents are afraid to access food banks as they fear being reported
- Settlement agencies funded by CIC can only provide services to specific groups, including permanent residents and government assisted refugees
- Grandparents sponsorship are being replaced with extended visitor visas

Vulnerable individuals

Participants worked to define the categories of individuals who are vulnerable on the basis of their immigration status:

- Undocumented migrant workers;
- Refugee claimants (applications pending);
- Refugee claimants (applications rejected);
- Temporary foreign workers whose employment circumstances have changed and/or whose visas have lapsed;
- Children of undocumented/refugee claimants born in Canada;
- Live-in caregivers;
- Sponsored seniors;
- Agricultural workers;
- Unaccompanied minors;
- Students with expired visas;
- Sponsored spouses

Participants acknowledged the challenges in quantifying the number of people living in these circumstances due to the fact that they are undocumented with many living “underground.” A representative of Sanctuary Health provided an estimate of 3,000 undocumented Latin American migrants in the Lower Mainland.

Areas of services needed but not accessible

The group then shared perspectives on areas where refugee claimants, vulnerable and undocumented persons had challenges accessing support services or information without immigration identification:

- Emergency shelter
- Supported housing
- Health care (e.g. physical and mental health; medication for chronic conditions; pre-natal and maternal)
- Food security – e.g. food banks
- Transportation – public transit

- Residential Tenancy Branch (landlord/tenant issues)
- Municipal police – reporting crimes or threats
- WorkSafe BC
- Employment Standards
- Local community centers
- Schools
- Not for profit sector – e.g. settlement agencies
- Library services
- Ministry of Children and Families
- Employment Insurance
- Legal Aid
- Court system

Reasons for not using services

Participants said individuals without immigration status do not access the above services for a combination of possible reasons:

- Fear of deportation
- Lack of awareness of which services ask for proof of residence or immigration status
- Fear of service providers reporting to Canadian Border Service Agency (CBSA)
- Lack of awareness of existing services
- Cost

Areas of vulnerability

Participants also described areas of vulnerability for members of this community, including:

- Domestic violence and threat of deportation- abusing spouses threaten to terminate sponsorship leading to deportation
- Employment conditions – workplace health and safety, wages, working hours, etc.
- Physical safety and security – reluctance to involve police due to fear of deportation and distrust of law enforcement agencies due to experiences in country of origin

Some sources of supports and resources

Other than the service groups represented at the meeting, some other supports and resources were noted:¹

- Churches
- Kinbrace Society recently published a resource guide for Refugee Claimants
- Recent announcement by the Province of B.C. to provide funding to some settlement agencies for support services to TFW's and refugees claimants in Metro Vancouver. This funding expires March 31st 2015.

Potential actions and approaches

¹ It was noted that CIC-funded agencies are challenged to provide support to this community due to the nature of funding mandates and clients eligibility

A “popcorn brainstorm” session produced the following suggested actions to help alleviate the pressures and challenges under which undocumented individuals and their families are currently living:

- Adoption of a “don’t-ask-don’t-tell” policy for City of Vancouver services
- Establish a city-wide policy to not report undocumented individuals to CBSA or CIC – e.g. Los Angeles
- Identify existing services for those without documentation
- Create an inventory of city services where ID is required and assess whether it is necessary
- Identify who has a legal duty to report undocumented people
- Provide transparent information around reporting protocols and data links between service providers and CBSA and CIC
- Ensure any policy changes are supported by resources – e.g. multilingual and accessible services; training for front-line staff
- Provide access to nurse-practitioners not supported by MSP
- Establish a City ID for undocumented people – e.g. New York; also driver’s license?
- “Place- based approach” where local community support can be made available and the area is a CBSA-free zone
- Provide facilitated banking services
- Establish an official complaint process
- Designate “sanctuary organizations”, e.g. Safe Harbour agencies

Suggested next steps:

- Identify what is within the city’s scope of jurisdiction
- Develop an inventory of what’s currently accessible and what’s not
- City Council make a statement of intent linked to the “Healthy City” initiative
- City champion the “Sanctuary” concept with other municipal jurisdictions and levels of government
- Continue dialogue with affected community
- Support development of the community’s voice
- Assess applicability of change-management “lessons learned” from the harm reduction campaign
- Liaise with Sanctuary Cities in Canada and the U.S. – e.g. Toronto, Hamilton, Seattle
- Facilitate opportunities for service and support organizations to do a self-audit of their accessibility

Concluding remarks

At the end of the meeting, MWGI co-chair Dan Hiebert made the following remarks:

“The Mayor’s Working on Immigration understands that the question of whether to declare Vancouver as a ‘sanctuary city’ is complex, since many of the expectations embedded in the concept of sanctuary cannot be enacted or regulated at the City level (e.g. the actions of the Canada Border Services Agency that take place in the City of Vancouver; Translink Police). One reason to convene the meeting, therefore, was to ensure that key stakeholders discuss the idea of a sanctuary initiative from an informed perspective.”

Councilor Meggs thanked all participants for their contribution. Moving forward, the issue of municipal jurisdiction would need to be communicated clearly to all stakeholders in order to not create false expectation. A report from MWGI will be presented to Mayor and Council for their consideration for next steps.

Workshop Participants:

Tasha Nijja	Sanctuary Health
Elanna Nolan	UBC
Zool Suleman	Suleman & Co., Lawyers
Meena Dawar	Vancouver Coastal Health
Mario Ayala	Inland Refugee Society of BC
Jacky Essombe	Multicultural Advisory Committee
James Ash	Greater Vancouver Foodbank Society
Carmen Cheung	BC Civil Liberties Association
Andrew Kuipers	Kinbrace Community Society
Dan Hiebert	UBC Geography
Jennifer Reddy	Vancouver School Board
Cecilia Tagle	Vancouver School Board - SWIS
Alejandra Lopez Bravo	Sanctuary Health
Kate Hodgson	CoV, Park Board, Ray Cam
Mary Clare Zak	CoV, Social Policy
Alex Kang	AMSSA
Kerstin Walter	Storefront Orientation Services
Dylan Mazur	Vancouver Ass'n of Survivors of Torture
Rosa Sevy	Iona Pacific Inter-Religious Centre
Diana Guenther	CoV, Social Policy
Shelagh Flaherty	Vancouver Public Library
Sherman Chan	Canadian Council for Refugees
Eyob G. Naizghi	MOSAIC
Victor Porter	Ministry of Justice
Mario Giardini	Vancouver Police Department
Chris Friesen	Immigrant Services Society of BC
Mui Chung Yan	Multicultural Advisory Committee
Byron Cruz	Sanctuary Health
Sharalyn Jordan	Rainbow Refugees/LEGIT
Kevin Evans	Consultant for CoV
Baldwin Wong	CoV, Social Policy
Councilor Geoff Meggs	CoV, Councillor