



**Council Member Motion**  
**For the Committee of the Whole Meeting of July 14 2022**

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**To:** Committee of the Whole **Date:** June 24 2022  
**From:** Mayor Helps and Councillor Dubow  
**Subject:** Welcoming City Advisory Committee Recommendations to Council

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**BACKGROUND**

In October 2021, Council endorsed the Welcoming City Strategy and Welcoming City Action plan and appointed a Welcoming City Implementation Advisory Committee. Working with staff in the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Office, the Advisory Committee has developed an implementation Plan for the Year 1 and Year 2 Actions. Please see attached. The implementation plan is meant to be a living document and future year actions will be added when this plan is reviewed in July 2023.

Staff reported back to the Committee on the actions that are currently underway and those that would require additional resources. In preparation for the 2023 budget, the Advisory Committee has prioritized actions that they feel will have the biggest impact in some of the key areas of focus including economic inclusion and specific actions to welcome newcomers including:

- a.) Hosting a job fair for newcomers and immigrants to help fill City job vacancies
- b.) Hosting a workshop for newcomer-owned businesses to learn about the City's social procurement process, prequalification, and procurement opportunities
- c.) Adding a section to the Connect Victoria App, available in multiple languages, that is for newcomers, with information about resources, events, etc
- d.) Working with the Welcoming City Advisory Committee to develop a program to reach accepted refugees destined for Victoria including a Welcome to Victoria package in their own language, connections with local employers, etc, as they are waiting to come to Canada
- e.) Ongoing support for an annual welcoming event for newcomers including hosting a pre-event or post-event activity and dialogue to introduce newcomer artists and performers to local community leaders and other community members, broaden their connection to the community, and strengthen cross-discipline relationships and knowledge-sharing.

In addition, there is a Year One action: "The city to host or support an annual Welcoming Event for newcomers to promote and celebrate the social, economic and cultural benefits and contributions newcomers bring to the city and welcome those who came within the previous year." Such an event will be held on October 22<sup>nd</sup> 2022. The Committee requests that the City partner with Here Magazine, the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Belfry Theatre to support this event and allocate \$7500 from the City's 2022 contingency budget to do so.

The event's primary funder, the Department of Canadian Heritage, is unable to fund refreshment costs. In order to remove financial barriers to attendance, there is no charge for admission to this event, thus there is no way to recover the food costs. Food is an integral part of cultural-sharing and community-building and it is also an economic development opportunity as the food will be provided by local newcomer, immigrant, and Indigenous caterers.

There is also a request for the City to host a pre-event or post-event activity and dialogue to introduce newcomer artists and performers to local community leaders and other community members, broaden their connection to the community, and strengthen cross-discipline relationships and knowledge-sharing. The timing of the event – after the municipal election and before the new Council is sworn in – makes it difficult for the City to undertake this role this year, but the committee recommends that the City and members of the Welcoming City Advisory Committee consider taking this on in future years, subject to budget deliberations.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Welcoming City Advisory Committee has worked hard to prepare this submission for the 2023 budget and to make recommendations to Council to help advance Council's Welcoming City Action Plan. We realize it will take a number of years to implement the Action Plan and have prioritized items that will help to make the city more welcoming and inclusive of newcomers including a focus on economic inclusion. We note that in a tight labour market and with a high number of vacancies at the City, actions #3a and #3d in particular are also advantageous for the city administration.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Council:

1. Receive the 2022-2023 Welcoming City Implementation Plan for information
2. Allocate \$7500 from the 2022 Contingency budget to support Action 3.2, "Host or support an annual welcoming event for newcomers."
3. Request that staff report back as part of the 2023 budget process on the following Implementation Plan items:
  - a.) Hosting a job fair for newcomers and immigrants to help fill City job vacancies
  - b.) Hosting a workshop for newcomer-owned businesses to learn about the City's social procurement process, prequalification, and procurement opportunities
  - c.) Adding a section to the Connect Victoria App, available in multiple languages, that is for newcomers, with information about resources, events, etc
  - d.) Working with the Welcoming City Advisory Committee to develop a program to reach accepted refugees destined for Victoria including a Welcome to Victoria package in their own language, connections with local employers, etc, as they are waiting to come to Canada.
  - e.) Ongoing support for an annual welcoming event for newcomers including hosting a pre-event or post-event activity and dialogue to introduce newcomer artists and performers to local community leaders and other community members, broaden their connection to the community, and strengthen cross-discipline relationships and knowledge-sharing.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Helps".

Mayor Helps

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dubow".

Councillor Dubow