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“Cochrane, Timmins and Kirkland Lake have roared back to life, Fort McMurray style.”

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Introduction

Bay Consulting of North Bay was engaged by the Timmins Local Immigration Partnership (TLIP), through the Timmins Economic Development Corporation (TEDC), to conduct stakeholder focus groups in Timmins in October 2010 to obtain community feedback on attitudes toward increased immigration efforts, identify service gaps that require attention and attempt to solve them.

As TLIP worked through its first year of planning it decided to solicit community feedback and suggestions that could help shape an immigration strategy for the city. This project is the latest in a series of planning initiatives by TLIP that, together, will provide a solid framework for moving forward with an immigration strategy. This document provides a roadmap for TLIP as it makes the transition from planning to implementation. It will also serve as a resource for funders and anyone interested in immigrant attraction and retention efforts in Timmins.

TLIP has actively pursued the participation of the francophone community in Timmins and those agencies/committees in the north servicing francophone immigrants to participate in this initiative. Participation from the francophone community in Timmins is essential to developing and implementing an immigration strategy which provides a welcoming atmosphere and inclusiveness of both official languages. The TLIP strategy should be developed with the intention of addressing the needs and uniqueness of a community in which there is both a large Anglo and Franco phone community.

Four focus groups were conducted at Cedar Meadows Resort October 19, 20 and 21, 2010, with 34 participants. Participants were immigrants, employers, educators, health care organizations, faith groups, and service providers.

Each group went through a SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) for approximately two hours and when that was completed all participants completed a multiple choice questionnaire. The results of these exercises are described in this report, with the raw data available at the end. It is important to point out that the data represents perceptions and in some cases may not be factual. Bay Consulting, the TEDC and the Timmins Local Immigration Partnership thank all the participants for their thoughtful input and enthusiastic participation. Their names are listed in the appendices.

Each group was provided with a similar introduction by the facilitator, Don Curry, to set the scene for the discussions ahead. Mr. Curry referred to an article he had published in the October issue of *Northern Ontario Business* that made the case for Northern Ontario communities spending time and resources on immigrant attraction, settlement and retention.

To point out the effect of the huge baby-boomer generation about to retire, he referred to Trevor Wilson, a human equity expert and author of *The War for Talent*, who points out that one-third of the Canadian workforce is eligible for retirement between 2006 and 2012. Three-quarters of the top



managers are eligible for retirement by 2012 and half of the senior managers under them are also eligible to retire.

He also referred to David Foot, University of Toronto demographer and author of *Boom, Bust and Echo*, who wrote in 1996 that the day is coming when schools will be closing and senior citizens' housing will be constructed. That day is upon us.

Mr. Curry pointed out that the replacement rate for the population is 2.1 children per couple and the current rate in Canada is 1.8. He said the two populations that are increasing are immigrants and aboriginals and they will be the source of future growth and jobs. Aging baby boomers, a low birth rate and continued youth out-migration from Northern Ontario are all factors that support increased attention being paid to immigrant attraction, settlement and retention.

This report contains the results of the three days of focus groups and attempts to put them in a context for the Timmins Local Immigration Partnership to work with as it plans future initiatives.



Progress to November 2010

Much was accomplished in 2010 and earlier to move Timmins to the point where it is ready and able to attract, retain and settle higher numbers of immigrants.

1. Funding was received from Citizenship and Immigration Canada for a Local Immigration Project (LIP) and John Okonmah was hired as the LIP Coordinator. An Advisory Committee was formed for the project and it serves, along with the staff of the Timmins Economic Development Corporation, as the catalyst for immigration initiatives.
2. The Timmins Immigration Portal was launched (www.immigrationtimmins.ca) as a major source of information for newcomers before and after they arrive in Timmins and it continues to attract Internet traffic. Funding was received from the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration through the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement.
3. A Timmins New Immigrants Community Profile was completed in August 2010.
4. Timmins became a partner in the Professions North initiative by Laurentian University in Sudbury, designed to help newcomers earn any extra credits they may require for Canadian professional designations and get job-ready faster.
5. Timmins Economic Development Corporation is an active member of Settlement North, a group of settlement agencies and municipal representatives active in newcomer settlement in Kenora, Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Timmins, Sudbury and North Bay.
6. TEDC is also active with economic development departments of the other four major Northern Ontario cities in developing joint attraction initiatives.
7. A pan Northern Ontario marketing initiative for new immigrants is in development (partnership with Sault Ste. Marie, Timmins, North Bay and Sudbury.)
8. Connections have been made with Contact Interculturel Francophone de Sudbury and Collège Boréal to include an emphasis on attracting French-speaking immigrants.
9. With the LIPs across Ontario now working proactively with the Welcoming Community Initiative (WCI) (www.welcomingcommunities.ca) opportunities exist to solicit research and assistance from WCI. Discussions have been held with WCI to obtain research assistance for Timmins.
10. Train the trainer workshops for diversity trainers are being held.
11. Are You Ready workshops for the community have been held to help pave the way for increased numbers of newcomers.
12. The LIP Advisory Council members have taken part in anti-oppression training with support from the Thunder Bay Multicultural Association.
13. May 19 was declared Diversity Day in Timmins in 2010 for the first time.
14. Timmins is actively involved with the Municipal Immigration Information Ontario project.
15. The Timmins LIP participates in the Association of Municipalities of Ontario Municipal Immigration Committee.
16. Training partnerships exist with other settlement service providers in the community eg. Settlement training in Sault Ste. Marie with Northern College Employment Services invited.



With all this work in progress or completed, it was time to solicit stakeholder feedback and move forward with an immigrant attraction, retention and integration strategy.



Local Immigration Partnership Advisory Council Report Revisions

On December 7, 2010, the Timmins Local Immigration Partnership Advisory Council met to review the findings / recommendations of Bay Consulting found in this report. At this time, the committee identified areas, specifically in the recommendations, that should be amended to better reflect the interest and participation of both the Anglo and Franco phone communities. The committee also suggested revisions to ensure that the proposed settlement services agency is led by the local community and that recommendations are relevant for all ethnic backgrounds.

After careful review and discussion the committee requested the following revisions be made to this report:

- To reflect in the final report the required collaboration and strategic planning for both the Anglo and Franco phone communities in Timmins. (Pg #2,)
- Reword Recommendation #1 to ensure there is an emphasis on the need for the Settlement Service Agency to be community led. (Pg. #16)
- Expand Recommendation #2 so that the strategy report addresses the key language classes ESL and FSL and build on how to make both available to new immigrants. Also, explore opportunities for implementation of ESL / FSL through either school boards or colleges in Timmins. (Pg. #17)
- “Ensure that existing francophone networks are involved and equal partners in immigrant attraction, retention and integration efforts” originally ranked as Recommendation #11 was moved higher in the priority sequence to Recommendation #4. (Pg. #18)
- Reword Recommendation #5 to address the need for an Anglo and Franco phone communication strategy on immigration, attraction and integration to social service agencies in Timmins. (Pg. #19)
- Amend Recommendation #9 to address the development of a questionnaire feedback evaluation process for new immigrants in both Anglo and Franco phone communities. (Pg. #20)
- Amend Recommendation #10 to be more general and should refer to assisting different ethnic groups to establish places of worship. (Pg. #21)
- Clarify Recommendation #14 by defining youth as those individuals between the ages of 15-35 and to include post secondary schools in programs to make the educational institutions more inclusive and welcoming. (Pg. #22)



Focus Group Results

The four focus groups were consistent in identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as they relate to immigrant attraction, retention and integration.

Asked what the strengths of Timmins were, responses referred to its closeness to lakes and wilderness, short commuting times, being a safe community, the presence of good-paying jobs, good health care, a strong transit system, good schools in English and French, a French and an English college and a French university, bilingual workforce, significant population but with a small town feel, low cost of buying a home, diverse retail outlets, the airport, low cost of living, well-networked francophone community, and more.

The low cost of home ownership is a significant advantage for Timmins. Focus group participants debated whether the going rate for a three-bedroom home is \$160,000 or more than \$200,000, but that range makes it more attractive than in southern Ontario.

The questionnaire showed 100 per cent agreement that Timmins is a safe community and this should be emphasized in future marketing to newcomers. Safety is a prime concern for newcomers from high-crime countries and is more of a deciding factor for them than it may be for native Canadians.

The other attributes mentioned above are all important and can be presented to a marketing firm as ideas for future attraction campaigns.

In regard to weaknesses, the winter weather came up in all four groups, but with the proviso that Timmins gets a lot of sunshine in the winter months. The cost of a plane ticket to Toronto was a universal complaint, as was the fact there is no train service. The low vacancy rate for rental housing was identified by each group as both a weakness and an opportunity.

Settlement agency and ESL to be expedited

The lack of a settlement agency and social networking opportunities for newcomers were cited as major barriers, as was the lack of English as a Second Language classes. Distance from other centres was described as a weakness, along with a lack of medical specialists, high cost of fuel and lack of a multicultural hub, a void a settlement agency could fill.

Getting a settlement agency operating in Timmins and providing ESL classes have to be major short-term priorities. The other Northern Ontario cities have them so Timmins has to address these two issues to be competitive. An application for funding for the North Bay & District Multicultural Centre to open an office in Timmins with two local bilingual staff members is now under review by Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

With national settlement funding being slashed by \$53 million April 1, 2011, that means Ontario will face at least a \$30 million cut because it attracts 60 per cent of the immigrants. Quebec, Manitoba and



B.C. all have provincial control over immigration, so the cut will likely be for the remaining provinces. However, the modernization of settlement programs now under way by CIC could eliminate duplication of services in southern Ontario and free up more funds for the North, which currently receives only two per cent of the Ontario total. It is important for all Northern Ontario municipalities to be vocal about attracting a larger share of Ontario's settlement funding.

The proposal under consideration is cost-effective, with only two staff members and rental space. Training, administrative support and leadership will be provided by staff in North Bay. The Thunder Bay Multicultural Association has a similar administrative arrangement with Kenora and it has been working well for years.

The five-person board of directors of the North Bay & District Multicultural Centre will add a member from Timmins. The Timmins office will have its own identity and newcomers will adopt it as their own. The connection to North Bay will be for funding, financial and project reporting to funders, staff training and professional development but the connection will be invisible to those in Timmins.

One newcomer participant said she could fill an ESL class with newcomers she knows who need English classes. If a settlement agency is launched in 2011 it could take the lead in encouraging a school board or other entity to launch ESL classes, or secure the funding to do it itself.

Opportunities abound, beginning with the establishment of a settlement agency with a Host volunteer program and the creation of English as a Second Language classes. Those are the two most important initiatives that will create instant improvements in immigrant attraction, retention and integration. A settlement agency would become a hub for immigrants, a place to network socially and professionally, and provide much-needed settlement services.

A Host program (the program name may be changed) pairs a newcomer with a local resident who acts as a friend and mentor for a six-month period to facilitate social integration. The volunteer is a person to practise English or French with and he or she may introduce the newcomer to other people.

In addition, the Host program organizes group activities, such as English or French Conversation Circles where everyone can practise their new language. Bowling, skating, hiking, sliding, ice fishing and snowshoeing are all examples of group activities that highlight the Canadian way of life, develop friendships and help keep newcomers in Timmins.

Participants described a significant Muslim population in Timmins, with a weakness in attracting more being the lack of a mosque. A settlement agency/multicultural centre in Timmins could act as a catalyst with the Muslim community, encouraging and assisting them with securing a property to serve as a mosque. Since the focus groups were held it became known that there is interest now among the Muslim community in starting a mosque.



Marketing works

Marketing can address communication issues concerning the attributes of Timmins and geographic awareness issues. This past fall the Highway 11 Corridor decided to address low numbers on the fall colours tourist train from North Bay to Temagami by advertising in the Chinese media in Toronto. A very short advertising campaign attracted 800 Chinese residents of the GTA and more cars had to be added to the train.

The fact that there is a significant community from the Philippines in Timmins, estimated by one member of that group as approximately 120 people, was seen as an opportunity to build on. Other communities capitalize on that advantage. Thunder Bay and Regina for example have significant refugee populations from Burma (Myanmar) and keep building on them.

Existing strong francophone networks were seen as an opportunity. Marketing should include a focus on francophone immigrants, but it was agreed a settlement agency should be bilingual, and serve all newcomers. There is no funding available to fund separate settlement agencies based on language and it goes against the grain of being inclusive with all services.

Rather than spend limited marketing resources in foreign countries, participants agreed it would be more cost effective to market to under-employed or unemployed skilled tradespeople and professionals in the GTA, Ottawa and Montreal.

Participants felt there is a lack of activities for the teen-aged and 20s population, coupled with poor communication to find out what is available. The lack of knowledge of southern Ontario people about Northern Ontario was seen as a weakness that could make it hard to recruit newcomers from the Greater Toronto Area.

Existing immigration partnerships with the other four major cities in Northern Ontario were viewed as an opportunity to pool funds for more effective marketing. Creating a webpage marketing Northern Ontario with links to the immigration portals of the five major cities was viewed as an opportunity and this project is under way.

A suggestion was put forward to use immigrants now in Timmins as role models when marketing to newcomers. That is a good suggestion and more immigrant profiles such as the ones on www.immigrationtimmins.ca would be helpful.

One participant said there are many good websites in the public, nonprofit and private sectors promoting Timmins and they should be linked. They should also be promoted to search engines, with appropriate key search words.



200 vacancies coming at local mining company

A representative from one of the larger local mining operations said in the employers' focus group that one-third of its workforce is retiring in the next 10 years. With a staff of 600, that's 200 jobs. Other companies may not have the statistics available, but it is safe to say that they have a similar situation. The leading edge baby boomers were born in 1946, so they are now 64 and will be soon retiring in great numbers.

Jobs in the mining industry are well paid and should attract newcomers.

Manitoba has the answer

The Provincial Nominee Program (PNP), particularly as it is used in Manitoba, was seen as an opportunity for employers to find the skilled immigrants they need quicker than they can now. The present Ontario PNP brings in only about 1,000 people a year. However, the province-wide Welcoming Communities Initiative is investigating bringing the Manitoba model to Ontario and Timmins is invested in the discussions.

In Manitoba the PNP accounts for almost all immigration. Different communities target people with different skills and if would-be immigrants already in the queue to come to Canada match those skills they can jump the line and move directly to a job in Thompson, Manitoba, for example. It could save them a two or three-year wait to come to Canada.

Once newcomers have Permanent Resident status they are free to move anywhere they like in Canada, which makes creating a welcoming community for newcomers very important.

Skilled trades in demand now

Continued youth out-migration, including sons and daughters of newcomers, is seen as a threat to the economic future of Timmins. Participants said teachers should be providing guidance and information to young people about careers that are readily available in Timmins. Many noted that the skilled trades are in demand and pay very well, but teachers encourage high school students to go to university.

Immigration competition from other cities was seen as a threat but can be turned into an opportunity if the five major Northern Ontario cities work together on their marketing strategy, as they are now doing. The fact that Timmins is further north than North Bay, Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie may be seen as negative, but there are more job opportunities in Timmins than in the other cities, which is positive. If the mining town of Thompson Manitoba can successfully attract newcomers it should be easy for Timmins.

An aging population creating more demands on health services was seen as a threat, but it is one shared by all Northern Ontario cities. The leading-edge baby boomers are mostly healthy, so the demand on health services by more seniors is a number of years away yet.



Some felt that as more immigrants arrive a community backlash could result, with the feeling that newcomers are taking jobs that local residents could fill. Employers quashed that myth quickly, pointing out that mining engineers and geologists are being hired internationally now because none are available locally. Drillers have to be trained because there are none seeking work. A call centre needs 150 people now that it can't find. A fast food franchise is paying a higher wage than in other communities but sometimes has to close its 24/7 operation due to lack of staff. Greenhouse workers can't be found for the forestry sector and there is a demand for heavy equipment operators.

Other factors

Racism was seen as a threat and the need for community education was highlighted by each focus group. One member of the newcomer group spoke of a recent incident where a newcomer from Pakistan had his tires slashed and a racially motivated threatening note was left on his windshield. If incidents such as this are not reported to the police as hate crimes there would be no knowledge in the community that this is occurring.

A racism study in 2005 (www.debwewin.ca) surveyed and interviewed people in Timmins, North Bay and Sault Ste. Marie and found examples of racism in each city, mainly directed toward the aboriginal population. National surveys indicate about 15 per cent of Canadians have racist tendencies while a higher percentage would not be overtly racist, but subtly discriminatory.

Five years ago the visible minority populations in each city were fairly small but have grown since and will continue to grow. Anti-racism education will always be a work in progress but it is necessary and important work. School boards should be ensuring it has a strong place in the curriculum and the out-of-school population can be reached with special events celebrating diversity, workplace diversity training and marketing.

Anti-racism education for the community at large was seen as an opportunity. Some participants felt there could be a community backlash if there is a perception that immigrants are taking the best jobs and that needs to be addressed with factual information.

The low vacancy rate for rental housing and lack of significant choice in purchasing a home were seen as problems, but also opportunities for developers. No apartment buildings have been constructed for many years and there is a market for new homes.

One group believed employers would expand their operations if they were confident that people are available to fill the new positions.

As more newcomers arrive focus group participants saw an opportunity for new ethnic restaurants and more international food in grocery stores. One participant pointed out that Continuing Education courses can be mounted quickly if someone has an idea for a course and sufficient enrolment is obtained. An international cooking course was one suggestion.



Under the subject of threats, the focus groups recognized that Timmins is resource-based and if prices fall dramatically there will be repercussions in employment and the attractiveness of the city to newcomers. Some noted that while Timmins is very attractive now because of the job opportunities, it could become less attractive as other cities in Ontario recover from the economic downturn.

Lack of funding for immigrant support services was seen as a major threat, as all agreed it is a necessary service to not only attract newcomers, but retain them. The wage earner in the family may develop social connections through work, but the spouse also has to become socially integrated in the community and learn English or French. If that doesn't happen the spouse will become isolated, possibly depressed and will urge the wage earner to leave the city.



Questionnaire Results

One hundred per cent of the focus group participants believe immigrants should be valued for the diversity they bring to society and 97 per cent (all but one) agreed immigrants are important to the future economic viability of Timmins. That is a firm foundation for an immigrant attraction, retention and integration strategy.

It appears that there will be community support for this initiative and a ready supply of knowledgeable people to counteract any misconceptions that may arise.

Questions 3 through 18 pertain directly to the Welcoming Communities Initiative (www.welcomingcommunities.ca) definition of the attributes that define a welcoming community for newcomers. The questions were designed to identify attitudes, with no quantifiable indicators. The Welcoming Communities Initiative is attempting to create quantifiable indicators, but its tool will not be available until the end of 2011.

Ninety-four per cent believe there are employment opportunities for newcomers and that is a major competitive advantage.

Service industry wages in Timmins are much higher with some companies than they are in southern Ontario. Does it make sense for someone with management aspirations in the service industry to be working at a fast food franchise in Brampton at minimum wage in a city with high housing costs, or in Timmins at a higher wage where the cost of living is lower? The same goes for call centre staff, with 150 openings in Timmins right now.

The mining and forestry sectors also have positions they can't fill locally and the pay rate should be attractive to newcomers with the right skills.

Results on the question of housing were split, with 53 per cent saying there is affordable and suitable housing in Timmins and 47 per cent saying the opposite. Those saying there is no affordable and suitable housing available were likely referring to the low vacancy rate for rental accommodation. Everyone agreed the cost of purchasing a home in Timmins is very attractive.

Two-thirds of the participants believe attitudes in Timmins are generally favourable toward immigrants, cultural diversity and the presence of newcomers. One-third believes there are some issues and this will have to be addressed by school curriculum, community events, staff diversity training and marketing.

Social marketing campaigns change behaviour, as demonstrated by drinking and driving, anti-smoking, seatbelts and other successful campaigns.

Seventy-six per cent of participants said Timmins does not have immigrant serving agencies that can successfully meet the needs of newcomers. What is surprising is that 24 per cent thought the agencies existed, when there is no settlement services agency or free ESL classes in the city.



Fifty-eight per cent disagreed with the statement that there is a strong network of agencies and individuals in Timmins working toward creating a welcoming community for newcomers. Those who agreed were likely looking at the LIP advisory committee as providing that network. It is early days yet for that group and it will expand in future, providing that network. Creating a welcoming community will have to be a priority for the LIP as it transitions from planning to implementation.

Only 39 per cent agree that municipal services in Timmins are sensitive to the presence and needs of newcomers. The only ones who would know for sure are the newcomers themselves, and only 25 per cent of them agreed with that statement. Whether it is perception or reality, attention has to be paid to this issue.

Sixty-two per cent agreed there are ample education opportunities available for newcomers. In discussions they pointed to the excellent schools operated by the four school boards, an English college, French college and French university. What is lacking, all agreed, is an English university.

Sixty-five per cent said Timmins has accessible and suitable health care for newcomers. Those who disagreed in discussions pointed to the shortage of family doctors, a situation faced by many Ontario municipalities. There was universal agreement that the hospital provided excellent care and the presence of MRI and CT Scan machines was a source of pride.

The availability and accessibility of public transit is a plus, as 94 per cent of respondents believe the city has a strong transit system.

Seventy-four per cent of respondents feel there is a sufficient number of diverse religious organizations in Timmins, with those who disagreed pointing out the lack of a mosque for Muslims, a temple for Sikhs, etc.

Sixty-five per cent did not agree with the statement that the city has adequate social engagement opportunities for newcomers. This demonstrates the need for a Host program operated by a settlement agency.

Fifty-eight per cent of respondents, and 100 per cent of the newcomers disagreed with the statement that newcomers have ample opportunity to participate politically. That question is open to interpretation, as some may feel they have the right to vote if they are Canadian citizens while others thinking the question referred more to running for political office.

Sixty-two per cent believe newcomers have positive experiences with the police and the justice system, with 75 per cent of newcomers agreeing, which is a positive endorsement.

A very significant result is that 100 per cent of respondents agree that Timmins is a safe city in which to raise a family. This should be emphasized in marketing campaigns because it is not only long-time residents saying it, but newcomers as well. This is an overwhelming affirmation that people feel safe in Timmins.



Seventy-six per cent believe there are ample opportunities for newcomers to use public space and recreational facilities, with 75 per cent of the newcomers agreeing with that statement. It does not appear to be an issue.

Finally, 88 per cent of participants agree media coverage of newcomers in Timmins is generally favourable, with 50 per cent of the newcomers agreeing. Settlement agency staff and LIP volunteers can be vigilant by responding immediately to any unfair portrayals encountered in the media.



Strategy Recommendations

The following recommendations are largely based on the focus group discussions and questionnaire results, but may also be shaped by personal experience with LIPs, the Welcoming Community Initiative, immigrant settlement agencies and the prior knowledge and experience of the author with national and regional anti-racism initiatives.

Recommendation 1—Pursue the establishment of a settlement agency in Timmins

As mentioned earlier, the North Bay & District Multicultural Centre, working in partnership with the Timmins Economic Development Corporation, submitted an application to Citizenship and Immigration Canada to open an office in Timmins. Feedback on whether or not it will proceed should be received before the end of December, 2010. If the decision is favourable funding is expected to be available April 1, 2011 for a two-year period. Funding would be ongoing after that, dependent on performance.

In order to reduce costs and be successful in receiving the required funding, the Timmins settlement office would operate as a satellite office of North Bay until such time that TLIP and Timmins representatives are better positioned to sustain and oversee day to day operations of such an agency. The North Bay Multicultural Association has for many years operated successfully and has the necessary knowledge to provide Timmins the proper guidance when setting up such an agency. It is important to note that Timmins will maintain a seat on the North Bay Multicultural Association Board of Directors which will ensure that the settlement agency is community led.

Based on Citizenship and Immigration Canada's statements that it wants to fill gaps and eliminate duplication, there is reason to be optimistic. As recently as October 29, 2010, Mary Barr, Director, Intergovernmental Affairs, Ontario Region for CIC, said at the Local Immigration Partnerships and Welcoming Communities Initiative conference in Ottawa that "Immigrants deserve settlement services no matter where they choose to reside." As the person responsible for both the LIPs and WCI initiatives in Ontario, she said CIC "is committed to support the LIPs," and a settlement service agency for Timmins would be a LIP outcome worthy of continued CIC support.

November 2, 2010, at the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants Executive Directors Forum in Alliston Ms. Barr said all current LIPs in Ontario will be funded through March 31, 2012. She had previously stated publicly that she expects them to be around for a long time and she has received proposals for nine new ones.

Also at the OCASI Executive Directors Forum November 2, 2010, Wally Boxhill, Director, Integration and Resettlement Program Delivery, National Headquarters of CIC, said there is an emphasis on serving under-served areas "and one should not be surprised if some agreements come to an end and will not be renewed." This was seen by Executive Directors as an indication some existing settlement agencies will lose their funding effective March 31, 2011. If that is the case it could free up funding for new centres.



CIC covers 100 per cent of the costs associated with a settlement agency, including staff, rent, promotion, travel, professional development, etc. Other funding sources could be obtained to provide services not covered by CIC. The North Bay & District Multicultural Centre, for example, currently has funding from CIC, FedNor, the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation, City of North Bay, the federal New Horizons for Seniors program, the provincial Violence Against Women program, Laurentian University, RBC, and a fundraising program involving bingos and an annual golf tournament.

A highly visible central location close to transit service will be required. Training and supervision of two staff members will be provided by the staff in North Bay. North Bay staff will be responsible for payroll and bookkeeping and other administrative functions. This model is cost effective and should be appealing to CIC.

However, there will be fewer funds available for Ontario settlement agencies than there was in 2010, so it is not certain that a new location will be funded. It is important for LIP volunteers and TEDC staff to continue to make the funding case at every opportunity they have to interact with CIC staff based in Sudbury.

A negative response from CIC, or even a compromise position to hire one person only, will be appealed. Housing a staff member at the TEDC offices is not an option. First, there is no room, and second, an arm's length relationship from municipal government is required. Newcomers to Timmins need and deserve a first-rate service.

A settlement agency would quickly become a magnet for newcomers. Previously invisible newcomers would use the services and begin to network with others in the community as they learn that it is a friendly, welcoming place that provides free services paid for by the Government of Canada and access to personal, and in time, professional, networks.

The creation of a Host program, along with traditional settlement services, is a must. The Host program matches volunteers with a newcomer for social networking and also organizes group activities to provide a sense of community and attachment.

Time line—November 2010 through May 2011

Recommendation 2—Pursue the creation of free ESL / FSL classes

The first challenge is to demonstrate the need by compiling names of people who would take advantage of such a service, and the second challenge is to find funding. The Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration has a presence in Timmins and is an opportune place to begin the process.

As brought forward during the newcomers focus group session, ESL / FSL classes need to be offered free of charge and have a continuous intake. A school board or local college willing to launch ESL / FSL classes should be identified. Failing that, the settlement agency could take it on itself. A teacher, rented space and some furniture are all that is required to get started.



Settlement agency staff could do the required legwork and the North Bay office could write and submit a proposal on behalf of the Timmins office.

Time line—April through September 2011

Recommendation 3—Develop a council and committee structure for the Timmins Local Immigration Partnership

Most LIPs in Ontario have a council and committee structure based on themes and projected outcomes. Examples of committees are: settlement services, employment, education, health, creating a welcoming community, and anti-racism. Each committee should have a chair and that person could serve on an executive committee. Committees set their own strategic goals, which are endorsed by the executive committee and the membership at large.

As of this writing 10 of the 34 LIPs across Ontario have completed and submitted their strategic plans to CIC. Submitted plans can be examined at www.welcomingcommunities.ca for ideas for a governing council and committee structure that will work for Timmins.

The LIP and WCI conference in Ottawa in October discussed the future of LIPs, under the framework “from planning to implementation,” and it was evident that some LIPs are implementing as they go along and some are completing the planning year first, and then moving to implementation. Timmins can decide for itself if it wishes to implement simultaneously with planning.

The LIPs were seen at the conference as becoming a permanent fixture, and that perception was encouraged by the senior CIC funders present. Senior government panel members commented that everyone is claiming parenthood of the LIPs and that’s a good thing, because both the federal and Ontario governments see them as successful.

One senior CIC representative from Ottawa said the LIPs “are a neat model and everyone is fascinated by them.” Deborah Tunis, Director General, Integration Branch, National Headquarters, said “there are special moments in history when you get to implement things and that’s what the LIPs are doing.”

Time line—November 2010-January 2011

Recommendation 4—Ensure that existing francophone networks are involved and equal partners in immigrant attraction, retention and integration efforts

Many francophones participated in the focus group sessions and expressed interest in the attraction of francophone immigrants. It is important that settlement services be available in both official languages and it is equally important to ensure that existing francophone networks are accessed to provide leadership in attracting, retaining and integrating francophone newcomers.

Time line—December 2010 and ongoing



Recommendation 5—Develop and implement a communication strategy to inform both Anglo and Franco phone social service agencies in Timmins about current immigrant attraction, retention and integration efforts

The strategy could be developed and implemented by the new settlement agency. It will be important to keep other service providers aware of initiatives driven by the settlement agency and the TLIP. Service providers will have to know where to go for assistance when they have clients requiring interpreter service, assistance with translating documents, etc. Those services can be provided by the settlement agency and must be marketed widely soon after it begins operation.

Once Timmins has a research partnership with the Welcoming Communities Initiative in place it can have a settlement services baseline mapping study completed. This will provide current information about all services (Anglo and Franco phone) that an immigrant would access, and show any gaps that may exist. This will be beneficial not only for newcomers, but social service agencies as well.

If TLIP decides to establish a Settlement Committee, that committee could also provide leadership.

Time line—April through September 2011

Recommendation 6—Develop a community network, coordinated by the Timmins Local Immigration Partnership, to work with employers, the future settlement agency and other interested parties to support employers in the creation and communication of employment opportunities for newcomers.

The focus group session with employers clearly showed there are employment opportunities right now, and many more will be coming in the years ahead. A comment was made that a lot of these opportunities are hidden. Communicating with newcomers can be difficult if they are not reading the local newspaper, so strategies have to be developed to use the Internet. Young people traditionally are not avid newspaper readers either, and the Internet is their main source of information.

Employers, TLIP and the future settlement agency should work together to develop and implement a strategy to reach job seekers. The existing immigration portal could be one avenue, along with linking employers' sites to the portal. Developing a Facebook presence for TLIP is another avenue to reach newcomers and direct them to the websites where jobs are advertised.

Existing “social capital” should be used strategically. This term is being used in the Welcoming Communities Initiative and refers to social and personal networks already in place. Over the years employers, government representatives and service agencies develop networks, so it is likely that strong ones already exist in Timmins.

If an employment committee of TLIP is created this task could be part of that committee's responsibilities. Rather than an employment committee, TLIP may want to examine existing models for immigrant employers' councils in Toronto, Waterloo, London and North Bay.



Time line—April 2011 and ongoing

Recommendation 7—Develop an anti-racism strategy and action plan for Timmins

The first step is to acknowledge that racism exists, and there was majority acceptance of that fact in the focus group discussions. There are many possible elements to an anti-racism strategy. Steps could be taken to ensure that every school board, public institution and major employer has a race relations, diversity, or anti-discrimination policy in place. The policies should include anti-racism and diversity training for staff.

RBC can be used as an example for employers and perhaps RBC and the other banks could take on community leadership roles. The national banks are leaders in diversity initiatives.

Another element of the strategy could be to promote community engagement through a diversity awards program, anti-racism poster contest, articles in the newspaper, community champions, public service announcements, etc.

Time line—January 2011 and ongoing

Recommendation 8—Encourage city council to make construction of rental housing a priority

The lack of rental accommodation in the city was highlighted by every focus group. It is a serious issue not only for the attraction of immigrants, but everyone else. Having people interested in taking a job but declining the opportunity because they can't find a place to live is not a situation the city wants to find itself in.

The mayor and council are aware of this and should consider this as a priority for their new four-year term. Mechanisms can be put in place to make it attractive for developers to build apartment buildings and townhouses to accommodate new residents not yet ready for home ownership. This recommendation is beyond the scope of TLIP but members can provide verbal support to those tasked by the city to work on this initiative.

Time line--January 2011

Recommendation 9—Use the questionnaire completed by the focus group participants, or a similar version of it, to periodically obtain feedback from Anglo and Franco phone newcomers on how welcoming the city of Timmins is.

Once a settlement office is operational it will be much easier to initiate and maintain contact with newcomers. A survey of 50 newcomers conducted in 2011 would provide baseline information on how welcoming the city is perceived by newcomers. Follow-up surveys will provide TLIP with strong indicators on how its interventions are making a difference.



Once the Welcoming Communities Initiative survey tool is developed it should be used in the community as well. It should provide measurable, rather than attitudinal responses.

All survey tools should be made available in English and French in order to be able to obtain feedback from both the Anglo and Franco phone newcomers.

Time line--October 2011 and ongoing

Recommendation 10—Work with the different ethnic communities to establish acceptable places of worship

For example, the existing Muslim population in Timmins appears to be larger than many thought. One member of that community recently (October 2010) made it known that the community is seeking space for communal prayer and gatherings. The city can work with them to address zoning issues that could arise if they want to use an existing building for a mosque. Muslims are a growing population in Canada and a city with a mosque will attract more than a city without one. North Bay was losing Muslim professionals to Sudbury before the Muslim community created its own mosque.

Once a settlement agency is created staff must ensure that all ethnic communities become actively engaged in the community and have the appropriate places of worship.

Time line—November 2010 and ongoing

Recommendation 11—Develop closer ties with ethnic communities

For example, a focus group participant from the Philippines estimated there are 120 people from his country in Timmins. Others suggested that estimate may be conservative. Regardless, it is a significant and partially hidden population. Many women from the Philippines come to Canada as live-in caregivers and are largely out of sight. Once they obtain their Permanent Resident status they are free to work anywhere in Canada. It should become a priority to keep them in Timmins.

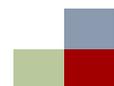
Many live-in caregivers have professional qualifications and, once they have good English or French language skills, can move into positions in finance, social service, business or other occupations.

Time line—May 2011

Recommendation 12—Develop a low cost newcomer attraction strategy based in Canada

It is cost-prohibitive for one city to develop an effective overseas marketing campaign to attract newcomers. Money would be wasted in advertising to the wrong people in the wrong places due to lack of knowledge of local markets.

A more practical strategy is to market to newcomers who are already in Canada but are not employed in their area of expertise or are not employed at all. Most newcomers gravitate to the cities of Toronto,



Montreal and Vancouver in the often mistaken belief that that is where the jobs are. Thousands are disappointed to learn they cannot get a job in their fields and they end up being under-employed.

There are marketing firms that specialize in reaching diverse populations and one should be engaged, when the city is ready, to develop a marketing campaign. The caveat is 'when the city is ready.' It is not advisable to begin an attraction campaign until a settlement agency is in place. It will become the first point of contact for newcomers and will play the strongest role in the community in ensuring newcomers get settled and networked and feel they are part of the community. Without this service a revolving door could be created, of newcomers coming, but not staying.

Ontario remains the province of choice for immigrants, even though numbers dropped slightly over the past five years, likely due to the strong economy in western Canada and job losses in Ontario. Five of the top 10 immigrant-receiving cities in Canada are in Ontario—Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton, Kitchener and London.

Results from the focus groups and questionnaires should be shared with a marketing firm to develop strong messaging. Any marketing firm engaged by TEDC, TLIP or the City of Timmins should be made aware of the following:

- 100 per cent of focus group participants believe Timmins is a safe place to raise a family
- 100 per cent say immigrants should be valued for the diversity they bring to society
- 97 per cent say attraction of skilled newcomers is important to the city's economic viability
- 94 per cent believe Timmins has good employment opportunities right now
- 94 per cent say public transit is accessible
- 88 per cent say media coverage of newcomers is favourable
- The city has an airport and state-of-the-art hospital
- The cost of buying a home is very low compared to southern Ontario
- There are many lakes, rivers and forests close to the city
- The commuting time to work is very short

Time line—July 2011

Recommendation 13—Encourage and assist all four school boards, Northern College, Collège Boréal and Université de Hearst to make their schools welcoming places for newcomer youth (ages 15 -35)

Ongoing participation by all four school boards, Northern College, Collège Boréal and Université de Hearst is necessary to ensure newcomer youth are made to feel welcome when they enrol in a new school. Students enrolling in older grades or post secondary institutions who can't speak English or French are going to present difficult challenges for teachers.

Best practices should be shared among the school boards, the colleges and the university, whether they are buddy systems, diversity mentors, language classes after school, sharing of a language lab, etc. An



education committee or settlement committee of TLIP could provide leadership and ongoing communication among the school boards, the colleges and the university.

Time line—January 2011 and ongoing

Recommendation 14—Ensure municipal staff members receive diversity training

Whether it is perception or reality, only 39 per cent of questionnaire respondents felt municipal services in Timmins are sensitive to the presence and needs of newcomers. Only 25 per cent of immigrants believed municipal services are sensitive to their presence and needs.

City staff members encounter newcomers in numerous ways and should be on the list for receiving diversity training when that occurs. This is similar to Recommendation 6.

Time line--January 2011 and ongoing

Recommendation 15--Strengthen relationships with the immigrant-serving sector in Northern Ontario

Good relationships already exist, as TEDC and TLIP staff members have attended various meetings of settlement agencies, economic development officers and other municipal representatives involved in immigrant attraction and retention initiatives. Timmins has been represented at two LIP and WCI provincial meetings.

It has been the experience of other settlement agencies in Northern Ontario that they have much more in common with each other than they do with settlement agencies in Toronto. All are members of the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI), which is a good organization and very helpful, but Toronto-centric.

Discussions were held at the October LIP and WCI meeting in Ottawa to work with WCI to organize a conference in Northern Ontario that would involve all five major cities and possibly guests from northern Quebec, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. Issues facing the northern parts of each province are more relevant than those facing Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal. Subsequent discussions point to a conference in North Bay in February or March, 2011. One outcome would be the identification and procurement of immigration research resources for Timmins.

Northern Ontario settlement agencies have a loosely-knit organization called Settlement North and the executive directors meet annually in early November at the OCASI Executive Directors Forum and once or twice at other times in the year. Timmins has had representation at these meetings and once a settlement agency is launched someone from that agency should attend these meetings.

Time line—April 2011 and ongoing



Recommendation 16—The LIP should contribute to and influence local policy and public discourse on immigration issues

There is an anti-immigration mood gathering steam in Canada, likely inflamed by Tamil refugees arriving in B.C. by boat, anti-Muslim sentiments spurred on by every news story of a new terrorism plot, and by U.S. television that condones racist language and discourse. Everyone involved with immigration issues has to be aware of this threat. All three major federal political parties support immigration and the current Minister, Jason Kenney, said at the October LIP-WCI conference that “we need to maintain public support for our generous immigration policy.”

He pointed out that there are 45 million people who want to come to Canada, making Canada the number two world destination for immigrants, behind the U.S. He said one of the attractions of Canada is the fact that skilled immigrants who find employment in their fields now earn \$80,000 or more within three years of arrival.

He also spoke about the progress being made with professional licensing bodies, of which there are more than 400 in Canada, with the development of a pan-Canadian framework for foreign credential recognition. There has been initial agreement on nine professional categories, which will be ready by the end of 2011, when applicants can get an answer within a year, instead of the several years it may take now.

The message needs to get out, not only in Timmins but across Canada, that immigration is good for the economy. We have to increase our population if we want social services and infrastructure improvements that our taxes pay for to continue. As mentioned earlier, retiring baby boomers, an insufficient birth rate and youth out-migration make immigration not only desirable, but necessary.

LIP members can use their existing networks to spread the positive news about immigration. Members can take on the roles of public educators. Positive portrayals of newcomers can be promoted in the local media. City council members can be encouraged to promote the need for immigration. The LIP could make an annual presentation to city council to provide an update on progress and garner positive publicity from the media covering the meeting.

Time line—April 2011 and ongoing

Recommendation 17—LIP members should examine the CIRRO report (Community Immigration Retention and Rural Ontario) for strategies that would work in Timmins

The CIRRO project, led by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) examined best practices in immigration initiatives in three small Ontario communities—North Bay, Brockville and Chatham-Kent. Each community had a public service intern for a six-month period to document what the community was doing. The North Bay intern was located at the settlement agency, the North Bay & District Multicultural Centre.



The report is now in draft form and should be made public before the end of 2010. No doubt there will be strategies used in the three communities that will work in Timmins as well. The LIP should assign someone to analyze the report and make recommendations to the LIP to discuss and implement any practice or project deemed strategic for Timmins.

Time line—January, February 2011

Recommendation 18—Make maximum use of the Timmins Immigration Portal

The city has an asset in its immigration portal and the LIP, TEDC and the new settlement agency should continue to maximize the use of this tool. They must be vigilant in assuring it is updated regularly with new information and features that will assist newcomers to come to Timmins and get settled in the community when they arrive. Since 2006 the Province of Ontario, through funds made available through the Canada Ontario Immigration Agreement (COIA) has made \$2 million a year available to municipalities to create and market immigration portals. There are now 21 portals serving 128 communities.

TEDC and the LIP can use FedNor or NOHFC interns to keep the portal current and add new features. A review of the other 20 portals in the province would be helpful to find applications that would complement the Timmins portal.

The Internet is the number one source of information for newcomers, who will use it to make decisions on where in Canada they will settle. Once here, they should also be using the portal to access community information.

Time line—December 2010 and ongoing



Internet Resources

Attracting and Retaining Immigrants: A Tool Box of Ideas for Smaller Centres

http://atwork.settlement.org/sys/atwork_offsite_frame.asp?id=1004483&link=http://integration-net.ca/english/ini/wci-idca/tbo/index.htm

Canada immigration and settlement www.loonlounge.com

Citizenship and Immigration Canada www.cic.gc.ca

Community Immigration Retention and Rural Ontario www.reddi.gov.on.ca

Host program www.hostontario.org

Immigrant Employers` Councils www.alliescanada.ca

Maytree Foundation <http://maytree.com>

North Bay & District Multicultural Centre www.nbdmc.ca

North Bay Immigration Portal www.northbayimmigration.ca

Northwestern Ontario Immigration Portal www.immigrationnorthwesternontario.ca

Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants www.ocasi.org

Ontario immigration www.ontarioimmigration.ca

Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration www.citizenship.gov.on.ca

Racism in Northern Ontario www.debwewin.ca

Sault Ste. Marie Immigration Portal www.discoverthesault.ca

Settlement Assistance Welcome to Ontario www.settlement.org.

Sudbury Immigration Portal www.immigrationsudbury.ca

Timmins immigration portal www.immigrationtimmins.ca

Timmins municipal website <http://portal.timmins.ca>

Welcome B.C. www.welcomebc.ca

Welcoming Communities Initiative www.welcomingcommunities.ca



Flipchart notes from Focus Group 1 (October 19, 2010)—Newcomers to Timmins

SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) pertaining to the need for Timmins to attract, integrate and retain newcomers.

Participants (4) Venezuela, Philippines, Trinidad & Tobago, India

Strengths

- Rural
- Small town feel
- Peaceful
- Easy to get around
- People are friendly and willing to help, accommodating
- No big city problems
- Safe
- More job opportunities than in larger cities
- But...job market is hidden
- Cheaper
- One recently purchased an older three-bedroom home for \$135,000
- \$1300 a month to rent four-bedroom house; another one renting house for \$850
- Group believes you can purchase a good home for \$135K to \$150K
- Fully-equipped regional hospital and it's looking for staff
- 120 people here from the Philippines; start as live-in caregivers, get their Permanent Resident Status and then can work where they want
- They estimate 10 families here from India; 6 to 8 from Chile; one from Venezuela; one from Ecuador; two or three from Nicaragua; one from Peru; one from Trinidad & Tobago; quite a few from China
- Shopping—a regional hub
- Airport
- Can take the bus to the train station in Matheson to get on the Northlander train to Toronto
- A number of telecommunications companies here
- Recreation opportunities
- Jobs—professional, government, service, mining, tourism, farming, telecommunications, health services, education
- Newcomers` guide from Chamber of Commerce
- Government ministries are immigrant friendly
- Five active large mining operations—gold, copper, zinc, nickel plus centre for diamonds



Weaknesses

- Social networking, lack of immigrant community
- Place to help with work permit approval, temporary foreign workers, Permanent Resident status
- No English classes (available at Collège Boréal for a price)
- Other cities have free computer classes for newcomers
- No ethnic food
- Education system is provincial—not standard across Canada
- Children stay after school to learn English and that is working, but no provisions for them in class
- Weather
- Airfare cost to Toronto
- Rental housing is scarce

Opportunities

- English classes, free ESL or LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada) offered in other centres by school boards, settlement agencies
- Demand for classes is there—through word of mouth can get enough for a class
- Start a settlement agency—newcomers need a place to go
- Create an immigrant information network through the settlement agency
- Host Program through settlement agency—newcomers can form their own families
- Settlement agency has to be visible, central and on a bus route
- LIP can spearhead community education on the value of immigrants to society
- Educate employers on the value of immigrants and the skills they bring
- Look at creating an Immigrant Employers' Council
- Create incentives to hire immigrants
- Create mentoring opportunities, internships
- Need more low rental housing
- Men's shelter is always full—22 beds. Can stay indefinitely but a lot of turnover
- Provide letters of comfort to landlords in lieu of first and last month's rent deposit
- Matachewan gold property under construction now—gold production in 2012. Most workers will live there or in Kirkland Lake but some could live here
- Lots of exploration under way now
- No mosque yet; that will attract Muslims

Threats

- Low metal prices
- Workplace challenges—racism not pervasive. When encountered it is subtle, not overt
- Need education to create a welcoming community



- Recent tire slashing incident racially motivated--re: man from Pakistan

Focus Group 2 (October 19, 2010)—Employers

Participants (8) GoldCorp, Xstrata, Detour Gold, Rio Tinto, Millson, RBC, City of Timmins

Strengths

- Quality of life, short commutes, low cost of housing
- \$150 to \$160K for 10-year-old three-bedroom home; others said \$250K for good, modern home
- Friendly
- Outdoors
- Lots of activities for children with no wait times and at low cost
- Four school boards with modern facilities
- Good school bus service
- Post-secondary education opportunities
- Timmins District Hospital
- Good employment opportunities with high incomes
- Safe—low crime rate
- Less racism than in larger centres

Weaknesses

- Weather
- Insects
- Distance from everything
- No mosque for Muslims
- Family doctors--25% of residents don't have a family doctor
- Lack of medical specialists—you have to go out of town for treatment
- Lack of competition regarding air travel—They can keep the prices high
- No large manufacturing here because it is not a port and doesn't have rail connection
- Gas and heating prices are higher
- No cultural hub—multicultural association has one event a year
- Lack of interpreters
- Safe, but female employees do not stay downtown after 6 p.m.

Opportunities

- Create a settlement agency
- Employers can use RBC diversity programs as a guide



- Immigrant Employers` Council? Possibly. Employers are operating in silos now. Municipal government has to talk to the private sector more.
- Promotion and marketing
- Lots of good websites both municipal and private—make sure they are linked and are listed high on search engines
- Philippine community already here is an asset. Help it grow
- Provide more education on cultural differences and similarities
- Employment! Mining industry can't keep up and forestry sector starting to hire again. Mining can't get mining engineers, geologists, drillers, skilled trades; forestry can't get greenhouse workers, heavy equipment operators; service industry can't get call centre employees and front line staff.
- Call centre has 150 openings. Need Grade 12 and fluency in English or French with computer skills.
- One-third of GoldCorp workforce is retiring in the next 10 years. That is 200 jobs.
- Can't get greenhouse workers. Work 10 months a year.
- Use role models to market Timmins to immigrants

Threats

- If gold prices fall
- Mining and forestry are cyclical
- Out-migration, not only of Canadian youth but immigrant youth as well
- Immigrant children often get highly educated and leave
- Government red tape
- Housing is an issue right now

Focus Group 3 (October 20, 2010)—Educators, etc.

(Participants (13) Conseil scolaire catholique de district des Grandes Rivières, TDH, Northern College, DSSAB, Ecole Publique Renaissance, Community Living, Timmins Public Library, Red Cross, Porcupine Health Unit, Collège Boréal

Strengths

- Fresh air
- Great bus lines
- Low cost of living
- \$160,000 for a three-bedroom home
- Beautiful library
- Outdoors
- Hospitable



- Well networked francophone community
- Rapid access to health care—MRI, CTScan
- Good retail
- Post-secondary opportunities, two colleges and university
- Relatively safe
- Multifaith
- Six-minute commute to work
- Strong business community—jobs
- Good place to raise a family
- Four school boards with good facilities
- Tranquil lakes (you're upset if you don't have the lake to yourself)
- Timmins serves regional population of 117,000

Weaknesses

- Snow, winter, 40-below temperatures
- No full-time English university
- Family doctor shortage
- Lack of rental accommodation
- Distance from other cities
- Exorbitant airfares
- No train service
- Nowhere to go for a Saturday drive—other communities are too far away
- Fuel prices
- No large immigrant community
- No interpreters
- No English as a Second Language classes
- No immigration assistance
- Immigrants need jobs to come here
- Resource-dependent
- Not easy to move from another country straight to Timmins
- Lack of activities for youth
- Hard to get young people to return after they have left Timmins
- Racism—lack of awareness of other cultures
- Shortage of hotel rooms
- Southern Ontario does not know Northern Ontario
- Telecommunications companies, building supplies, etc. have monopolies—lack of competition



Opportunities

- Francophone networks , Sudbury francophone immigration organization, College Boreal has numerous campuses in Ontario
- ESL-ALS at College Boreal; 15-week Continuing Education course costs \$240
- Timmins Literacy Council has ESL for a fee
- Opportunity for a school board or other organization to secure Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration funding to offer free ESL during the day
- Northern College has a China connection
- Engage champions from immigrant community
- Recruit immigrants from GTA, Ottawa, Montreal
- Francophone marketing program to Ottawa, Montreal being launched by Northern Ontario partnership group of cities
- Immigration partnerships with other four major cities in the North
- Educate employers
- Efforts under way to speed up credential recognition process
- Educate service organizations in Timmins regarding immigration process, services
- Provincial Nominee Program (especially if Manitoba model used in Ontario)

Threats

- Immigration competition from other cities
- Funding
- Gold and resource prices
- Resource-dependent city
- Timmins, with its strong economy, will become less attractive as economies in other cities improve

Focus Group 4 (October 21, 2010)—Faith groups, social services, etc.

Participants (9) Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, Northern College, United Way, Learning Centre, Bayshore Home Health, Mt. Joy United Church, Christ Lutheran Church, South Cochrane Addiction Services

Strengths

- Friendly
- Clean
- Great education
- Great hospital
- Affordable leisure activities with wide variety and accessibility



- Short commuting times
- Lots of water access
- Wildlife
- Affordable housing—3 bedroom home \$150 to \$200K
- Nature trails
- Cottage cheaper than further south; about \$250K
- Quick access at walk-in clinics
- Six-month wait to get primary care practitioner—could be a nurse practitioner; have six of them
- New east-end health clinic
- New one-stop employment centre—co-location of existing services; bilingual
- Good college; French university
- Cultural activities
- Timmins Multicultural Association has annual open house at arena
- Multicultural groups already here—can work with them
- Religious representation
- Close to 50 Muslims in Timmins—see some Muslim women wearing hijab waiting for their children at school bus stops. They are a hidden population.
- Northern College meeting needs of Muslim students by finding them a prayer space
- Children’s activities—need money though
- Symphony
- Retail shopping
- National companies have a staff member responsible for diversity initiatives
- Airport

Weaknesses

- Airfare and travel prices
- Lack of activities for the 13-30 set
- Communication—hard to find out what is available locally—immigration portal can become the main source of community information for everyone
- Welcome to Timmins Night is good, but not comprehensive enough
- Weather—however winters are sunny
- Shorter days in winter can lead to depression for some
- Miners go to work in the dark, work underground and go home in the dark. Don’t see the sun for five days
- Lack of free English as a Second Language classes; Mining companies offer on fee for service; Learning Centre offers on demand—has two students now. School board should pick it up. Learning Centre even sent them the proposal and they failed to act to get provincial Ministry of



Citizenship and Immigration funding for free ESL. The public school board had a list of 25 people wanting ESL classes and failed to act. Could shop it elsewhere.

- Better opportunities to learn French
- Rental housing—low vacancy rate and high cost
- Not a wide variety of homes for sale
- Long waiting list for seniors' housing
- As immigrants come in and take good jobs local residents could create a backlash
- Cliques—even newcomers from other cities or provinces have trouble breaking into the soccer parent crowd for example
- Some aboriginal people prejudiced against newcomers
- Prejudice caused by not knowing people from other countries as people; when you don't know them you believe the stereotypes
- Even have stereotypes between Ontario and Quebec, French and English
- Extra work for employers to hire newcomers
- Have to educate employers
- Accreditation delays, even with the skilled trades
- Relatively small immigrant community
- Lack of exposure to immigrants

Opportunities

- ESL
- Anti-racism education; need to educate community about inclusion, racism
- Regular meet and greets with newcomers
- Doctor recruitment and orientation process in place now
- Teachers need to promote local jobs and trades
- Create a Host Program for newcomers
- Need all kinds of housing; apartment buildings—None built in years
- Hold outdoor events for newcomers
- Welcome to Timmins program—Provide orientation, talk about local customs, values, norms
- Employers would expand if they knew the workforce was available—They need a comfort level
- Hospitality training—Northern College offers it on demand and offers short-term courses
- International food courses—promote them through Northern College's Continuing Education program
- Can do a lot through Continuing Education—Anyone with a course idea can present it and if the enrolment is there the college will run it
- Contact North—but you have to be motivated to take courses online
- Grocery stores can stock more international food—Independent Grocers doing it now
- New ethnic restaurants



- Need more hotels
- Network with nearby communities—Kapuskasung, Hearst, etc.
- Promote the size of Timmins; people are surprised it has so many people
- TV ads for Espanola are quite good
- University has new French-English translation program this year. People can work from Timmins and have worldwide contacts on the Internet.

Threats

- Mines and forestry collapse
- Lack of funding for immigrant settlement services
- If lost support from mayor and council—present council and mayor are pro-immigration; mayor is supportive and active
- Possible lack of support from community; possible backlash against immigration
- Transportation services—airfare expensive, buses expensive and no train service from Timmins
- Continued youth out-migration
- Aging population creates more demand on health care



Questionnaire Results

(Composite Total of 34 Focus Group Participants)

1. Attracting skilled immigrants is important to the future economic viability of Timmins.

Agree strongly 27/34 79.4%; Agree 6/34 17.6%; Disagree 1/34 2.9%

97% agree

2. Immigrants should be valued for the diversity they bring to society.

Agree strongly 24/33 72.7%; Agree 9/33 27.3%

100% agree

3. There are employment opportunities for immigrants in Timmins and area.

Agree strongly 16/33 48.5%; Agree 15/33 45.5%; Disagree 2/33 6%

94% agree; 6% disagree

4. There is affordable and suitable housing in Timmins and area.

Agree strongly 3/34 8.8%; Agree 15/34 44.1%; Disagree 13/34 38.2%; Disagree strongly 3/34 8.8%

53% agree; 47% disagree

5. Generally, attitudes toward immigrants, cultural diversity and the presence of newcomers in the community are positive.

Agree 23/34 67.6%; Disagree 11/34 32.4%

6. Timmins has newcomer serving agencies that can successfully meet the needs of newcomers.

Agree strongly 1/34 2.9%; Agree 7/34 20.6%; Disagree 18/34 52.9%; Disagree strongly 8/34 23.5%

Agree 24% agree; 76% disagree

7. There is a strong network in Timmins of agencies and individuals working toward creating a welcoming community for newcomers.

Agree strongly 5/33 15.2%; Agree 9/33 27.3%; Disagree 13/33 39.4%; Disagree strongly 6/33 18.2%

Agree 42%; Disagree 58%

8. Municipal services are sensitive to the presence and needs of newcomers.



Agree strongly 3/33 9%; Agree 10/33 30.3%; Disagree 17/33 51.5%; Disagree strongly 3/33 9%
Agree 39%; Disagree 61%

9. There are ample educational opportunities for newcomers in Timmins.

Agree strongly 5/34 14.7%; Agree 16/34 47.1%; Disagree 10/34 29.4%; Disagree strongly 3/34 8.8%
Agree 62%; Disagree 38%

10. Timmins has accessible and suitable health care for newcomers.

Agree strongly 2/34 5.9%; Agree 20/34 58.8%; Disagree 11/34 32.4%; Disagree strongly 1/34 2.9%
Agree 65%; Disagree 35%

11. Timmins has available and accessible public transit.

Agree strongly 9/34 26.5%; Agree 23/34 67.6%; Disagree 2/34 5.9%
Agree 94%; Disagree 6%

12. There are a sufficient number of diverse religious organizations in Timmins.

Agree strongly 8/34 23.5%; Agree 17/34 50%; Disagree 7/34 20.6%; Disagree strongly 2/34 5.9%
Agree 74%; Disagree 26%

13. Newcomers to Timmins have adequate social engagement opportunities.

Agree strongly 1/34 2.9%; Agree 11/34 32.4%; Disagree 17/34 50%; Disagree strongly 5/34 14.7%
Agree 35%; Disagree 65%

14. Newcomers to Timmins have ample opportunity to participate politically.

Agree strongly 3/31 9.7%; Agree 10/31 32.3%; Disagree 17/31 54.8%; Disagree strongly 1/31 3.2%
Agree 42%; Disagree 58%

15. Newcomers to Timmins have positive relationships with the police and the justice system.

Agree strongly 2/31 6.5%; Agree 17/31 54.8%; Disagree 10/31 32.3%; Disagree strongly 2/31 6.5%
Agree 62%; Disagree 38%

16. Timmins is a safe community in which to raise a family.



Agree strongly 9/34 26.5%; Agree 25/34 73.5%

Agree 100%

17. There are ample opportunities for newcomers to use public space and recreational facilities.

Agree strongly 6/33 18.2%; Agree 19/34 57.6%; Disagree 8/33 24.2%

Agree 76%; Disagree 24%

18. Media coverage of newcomers in Timmins is generally favourable.

Agree strongly 2/32 6.3%; Agree 26/32 81.3%; Disagree 3/32 9.4%; Disagree strongly 1/32 3.1%

Agree 88%; Disagree 12%



Questionnaire Results

Educators, library, health unit, Red Cross, transit, DSSAB (13)

1. Attracting skilled immigrants is important to the future economic viability of Timmins.

Agree strongly 8/13 61.5%; Agree 4/13 30.8%; Disagree 1/13 7.7%

2. Immigrants should be valued for the diversity they bring to society.

Agree strongly 7/12 58.3%; Agree 5/12 41.7%; 1 no response

3. There are employment opportunities for immigrants in Timmins and area.

Agree strongly 5/12 41.7%; Agree 7/12 58.3%; 1 no response

4. There is affordable and suitable housing in Timmins and area.

Disagree strongly 2/13 15.4%; Disagree 7/13 53.8%; Agree 4/13 30.8%

5. Generally, attitudes toward immigrants, cultural diversity and the presence of newcomers in the community are positive.

Agree 9/13 69.2%; Disagree 4/13 30.8%

6. Timmins has newcomer serving agencies that can successfully meet the needs of newcomers.

Disagree strongly 2/13 15.4%; Disagree 6/13 46.2%; Agree 4/13 30.8%; Agree strongly 1/13 7.7%

7. There is a strong network in Timmins of agencies and individuals working toward creating a welcoming community for newcomers.

Disagree strongly 2/12 16.6%; Disagree 4/12 33.3%; Agree 4/12 33.3%; Agree strongly 2/12 16.6%
1 no response

8. Municipal services are sensitive to the presence and needs of newcomers.

Agree strongly 2/12 16.6%; Agree 5/12 41.7%; Disagree 3/12 25%; Disagree strongly 2/12 16.6%

1 no response

9. There are ample educational opportunities for newcomers in Timmins.

Agree 6/13 46.2%; Agree strongly 3/13 23%; Disagree 4/13 30.8%



10. Timmins has accessible and suitable health care for newcomers.

Agree 8/13 61.4%; Disagree 5/13 38.5%

11. Timmins has available and accessible public transit.

Agree strongly 5/13 38.5%; Agree 7/13 53.8%; Disagree 1/13 7.7%

12. There are a sufficient number of diverse religious organizations in Timmins.

Agree strongly 3/13 23%; Agree 9/13 69.2%; Disagree 1/3 7.7%

13. Newcomers to Timmins have adequate social engagement opportunities.

Agree 6/13 46.2%; Agree strongly 1/13 7.7%; Disagree 5/13 38.5%; Disagree strongly 1/13 7.7%

14. Newcomers to Timmins have ample opportunity to participate politically.

Agree strongly 3/12 25%; Agree 5/12 41.7%; Disagree 4/12 33.3% 1 no response

15. Newcomers to Timmins have positive relationships with the police and the justice system.

Agree strongly 2/12 16.7%; Agree 8/12 66.7%; Disagree 2/12 16.7%; 1 no response

16. Timmins is a safe community in which to raise a family.

Strongly agree 4/13 30.8%; Agree 9/13 69.2%

17. There are ample opportunities for newcomers to use public space and recreation facilities.

Agree strongly 4/13 30.8%; Agree 7/13 53.8%; Disagree 2/13 15.4%

18. Media coverage of newcomers in Timmins is generally favourable.

Strongly agree 1/13 7.7%; Agree 12/13 92.3%

Additional written comments

Seniors' homes. People are living at the hospital, third floor, awaiting a room at a long-term care facility. A long-term care facility is being built as we speak. The cost for rent and private long term care is \$2,000 per month. Waiting lists for people with developmental disabilities are extremely high.

As a focus group for immigration I feel it would be very important to share and prepare meetings, focus groups and questionnaires in both official languages. I feel it is a great selling point for immigration and we should lead by example. Merci. Thank you.



(In French) It is important to take advantage of the strong francophone community. It is also important to involve francophone leaders to attract francophone immigrants to Timmins.



Questionnaire Results

Employers (8)

1. Attracting skilled immigrants is important to the future economic viability of Timmins.

Agree strongly 7/8 87.5%; Agree 1/8 12.5%

2. Immigrants should be valued for the diversity they bring to society.

Agree strongly 6/8 75%; Agree 2/8 25%

3. There are employment opportunities for immigrants in Timmins and area.

Agree strongly 6/8 75%; Agree 2/8 25%

4. There is affordable and suitable housing in Timmins and area.

Agree strongly 3/8 37.5%; Agree 5/8 62.5%

5. Generally, attitudes toward immigrants, cultural diversity and the presence of newcomers in the community are positive.

Agree 8/8 100%

6. Timmins has newcomer serving agencies that can successfully meet the needs of newcomers.

Disagree strongly 2/8 25%; Disagree 6/8 75%

7. There is a strong network in Timmins of agencies and individuals working toward creating a welcoming community for newcomers.

Disagree strongly 2/8 25%; Disagree 5/8 62.5%; Agree 1/8 12.5%

8. Municipal services are sensitive to the presence and needs of newcomers.

Disagree 7/8 87.5%; Agree 1/8 12.5%

9. There are ample educational opportunities for newcomers in Timmins.

Agree 6/8 75% ; Agree strongly 1/8 12.5%; Disagree 1/8 12.5%

10. Timmins has accessible and suitable health care for newcomers.

Agree 1/8 12.5%; Strongly agree 1/8 12.5%; Disagree 5/8 62.5%; Disagree strongly 1/8 12.5%

11. Timmins has available and accessible public transit.



Agree strongly 2/8 25%; Agree 6/8 75%

12. There are a sufficient number of diverse religious organizations in Timmins.

Disagree strongly 2/8 25%; Disagree 2/8 25%; Agree 3/8 37.5%; Agree strongly 1/8 12.5%

13. Newcomers to Timmins have adequate social engagement opportunities.

Disagree strongly 2/8 25%; Disagree 4/8 50%; Agree 2/8 25%

14. Newcomers to Timmins have ample opportunity to participate politically.

Disagree strongly 1/8 12.5%; Disagree 3/8 37.5%; Agree 4/8 50%

15. Newcomers to Timmins have positive relationships with the police and justice system.

Disagree 4/8 50%; Agree 4/8 50%

16. Timmins is a safe community in which to raise a family.

Agree 8/8 100%

17. There are ample opportunities for newcomers to use public space and recreation facilities.

Agree strongly 1/8 12.5%; Agree 5/8 62.5%; Disagree 2/8 25%

18. Media coverage of newcomers in Timmins is generally favourable.

Agree strongly 1/8 12.5%; Agree 7/8 87.5%

Additional written comments

Timmins tends to think and behave too much in English or French. Education of children and the general public must include an appreciation of differences to avoid stereotyping.

We need a support system for newcomers and their families. Support for spouse regarding employment, language, etc.

We need to cater more to immigrants and their needs.



Questionnaire Results

Immigrants (4)

1. Attracting skilled immigrants is important to the future economic viability of Timmins.

Agree strongly 4/4 100%

2. Immigrants should be valued for the diversity they bring to society.

Agree strongly 3/4 75%; Agree 1/4 25%

3. There are employment opportunities for immigrants in Timmins and area.

Agree 3/4 75%; Disagree 1/4 25%

4. There is affordable and suitable housing in Timmins and area.

Disagree strongly 2/4 50%; Disagree ¼ 25%; Agree 1/4 25%

5. Generally, attitudes toward immigrants, cultural diversity and the presence of newcomers in the community are positive.

Disagree 2/4 50%; Agree 2/4 50%

6. Timmins has newcomer serving agencies that can successfully meet the needs of newcomers.

Disagree strongly 1/4 25%; Disagree 1/4 25%; Agree 2/4 50%

7. There is a strong network in Timmins of agencies and individuals working toward creating a welcoming community for newcomers.

Disagree strongly 1/4 25%; Disagree 1/4 25%; Agree 2/4 50%

8. Municipal services are sensitive to the presence and needs of newcomers.

Disagree 3/4 75%; Agree 1/4 25%

9. There are ample educational opportunities for newcomers in Timmins.

Disagree 3/4 75%; Agree 1/4 25%

10. Timmins has accessible and suitable health care for newcomers.

Agree 3/4 75%; Agree strongly 1/4 25%

11. Timmins has available and accessible public transit.



Agree 3/4 75%; Agree strongly 1/4 25%

12. There are a sufficient number of diverse religious organizations in Timmins.

Disagree 3/4 75%; Agree 1/4 25%

13. Newcomers to Timmins have adequate social engagement opportunities.

Disagree strongly 1/4 25%; Disagree 1/4 25%; Agree 2/4 50%

14. Newcomers to Timmins have ample opportunity to participate politically.

Disagree 4/4 100%

15. Newcomers to Timmins have positive relationships with the police and the justice system.

Agree 3/4 75%; Disagree 1/4 25%

16. Timmins is a safe community in which to raise a family.

Agree 3/4 75%; Agree strongly 1/4 25%

17. There are ample opportunities for newcomers to use public space and recreational facilities.

Agree 3/4 75%; Agree strongly 1/4 25%

18. Media coverage of newcomers in Timmins is generally favourable.

Agree 2/4 50%; Disagree strongly 1/4 25%; Disagree 1/4 25%

Additional written comments: None



Questionnaire Results

Churches, College, United Way, Learning Centre, Bayshore Home Health, Addiction Services (9)

1. Attracting skilled immigrants is important to the future economic viability of Timmins.

Agree strongly 8/9 88.9%; Agree 1/9 11.1%

2. Immigrants should be valued for the diversity they bring to society.

Agree strongly 8/9 88.9%; Agree 1/9 11.1%

3. There are employment opportunities for immigrants in Timmins and area.

Agree strongly 5/9 55.6%; Agree 3/9 33.3%; Disagree 1/9 11.1%

4. There is affordable and suitable housing in Timmins and area.

Disagree strongly 4/9 44.4%; Disagree 2/9 22.2%; Agree 3/9 33.3%

5. Generally, attitudes toward immigrants , cultural diversity and the presence of newcomers in the community are positive.

Disagree 5/9 55.6%; Agree 4/9 44.4%

6. Timmins has newcomer serving agencies that can successfully meet the needs of newcomers.

Disagree strongly 3/9 33.3%; Disagree 5/9 55.6%; Agree 1/9 11.1%

7. There is a strong network in Timmins of agencies and individuals working toward creating a welcoming community for newcomers.

Agree strongly 3/9 33.3%; Agree 2/9 22.2%; Disagree 3/9 33.3%; Disagree strongly 1/9 11.1%

8. Municipal services are sensitive to the presence and needs of newcomers.

Disagree 4/9 44.4%; Disagree strongly 1/9 11.1%; Agree 3/9 33.3%; Agree strongly 1/9 11.1%

9. There are ample educational opportunities for newcomers in Timmins.

Disagree strongly 3/9 33.3%; Disagree 2/9 22.2%; Agree 3/9 33.3%; Agree strongly 1/9 11.1%

10. Timmins has accessible and suitable health care for newcomers.

Agree 8/9 88.9%; Disagree 1/9 11.1%

11. Timmins has available and accessible public transit.



Agree 7/9 77.8%; Agree strongly 1/9 11.1%; Disagree 1/9 11.1%

12. There are a sufficient number of diverse religious organizations in Timmins.

Agree strongly 4/9 44.4%; Agree 4/9 44.4%; Disagree 1/9 11.1%

13. Newcomers to Timmins have adequate social engagement opportunities.

Disagree 7/9 77.8%; Disagree strongly 1/9 11.1%; Agree 1/9 11.1%

14. Newcomers to Timmins have ample opportunity to participate politically.

Disagree 6/7 85.8%; Agree 1/7 14.2%; Two with no response.

15. Newcomers to Timmins have positive relationships with the police and the justice system.

Disagree 3/7 42.9%; Disagree strongly 2/7 28.6%; Agree 2/7 28.6%; Two with no response.

16. Timmins is a safe community in which to raise a family.

Agree 5/9 55.6%; Agree strongly 4/9 44.4%

17. There are opportunities for newcomers to use public space and recreation facilities.

Agree 4/8 50%; Disagree 4/8 50% One no response.

18. Media coverage of newcomers in Timmins is generally favourable.

Agree 5/7 71.4%; Disagree 2/7 28.6%; Two with no response.

Additional written comments

Agree that the settlement agency is very needed in Timmins, and the Host Program that goes along with it. There is also high demand for a free ESL course. The Welcome to Timmins night is service-focused because it is hosted by the Chamber of Commerce. If the recreational part is needed perhaps it should be the municipality's recreation department who partners with the different sports agencies in the community to make another event about recreational activities. It would be helpful to know who the contacts are to assist businesses with the hiring process for immigrants.

Need ESL.

Wonderful opportunity. Hope to see a settlement agency coming to Timmins soon. As a service provider it would be nice for us to be able to provide such a resource to the individuals that we see. Need more newcomer serving agencies. Slowly getting there regarding a network working toward creating a welcoming community for newcomers. Municipal services are sensitive with the present government. Health care slowly getting better—it is better than Toronto or other large centres.



Many issues are the same for local (Canadian) residents. Most of the issues mentioned are not pertaining to immigrants only. Marketing and awareness is a very huge issue to eliminate stereotypes and prejudice.

There is definitely a lack of understanding of other cultures and cultural differences. It is evident in some people's comments. Thank you for the opportunity to participate.



Focus Group Participants

Group 1 October 19, 2010—Immigrants to Canada

Rodel Caberto
Sujoy Das
Jennifer Ferrari
Andrew Persad

Group 2 October 19, 2010—Employers

Steve Adams, City of Timmins
Luc Brousseau, Xstrata Copper
Mike Francoeur, Rio Tinto Minerals
Monique Koski, Millson Forestry
Michelle Laforge, City of Timmins
Cheryl Monahan, Porcupine Gold Mines
Pierre Noel, Xstrata Copper
Domenic Rizzuto, Goldcorp
Nyaree Sunnasy, RBC

Group 3, October 20, 2010—Educators and Service Providers

Denis Bélanger, Collège Boréal
Remi Boileau, Collège Boréal
Jason Denis, Canadian Red Cross
Cathy Ellis, Timmins Economic Development Corp. (Observer)
Judy Heinzen, Timmins Public Library
Dave Landers, Cochrane District Social Services Administration Board
Richard Loiselle, Conseil scolaire catholique District des Grand Rivières
Jodi Maenck, Community Living
Richard Pitt, Timmins Transit
Mike Resetar, Timmins & District Hospital
Kimberley Salonen, Conseil scolaire catholique District des Grand Rivières
Glenn Sheculski, Northeastern Catholic School Board
Steve Trinier, Cochrane District Social Services Administration Board
Catherine Verreault, Timmins Transit

Group 4, October 21, 2010—Service providers, clergy, college, provincial government

Angela Desormeau, South Cochrane Addiction Services
Coral Ethier, Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration
Nancy Hopcraft, Mount Joy United Church
Marie Iserhoff, Literacy Network of Northeastern Ontario
Anne Jensen, Porcupine Health Unit



Carole Jones, Les Foyer des Aines Francophones
Alison Kozlow, Timmins Learning Centre
Joel Kuhl, Christ Lutheran Church
Cathy Poupore, Bayshore Home Health
Johanne Recoskie, Northern College

