

CHAPTER 3

PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL STRUCTURE

INTRODUCTION

As noted in Chapter 1, the following proposed Structure and its elements came out of a series of Task Group meetings as well as direct consultation with the WRIEN Steering Committee.

On March 24, 2010, a Community Forum was held where over 200 people participated in reviewing the proposed Partnership Structure (as well as the Settlement Strategy and Action Plan). Small group discussions and an exercise in which each individual participant indicated his/her support for the structure allowed participants to comment on all aspects of the structure found below.

COMMUNITY FORUM RESPONSE

Generally, Community Forum participants not only supported the structure and its various components, they also committed to participating at one level or another. There were, however, some concerns expressed, with a number of participants recognizing that more detail would have to be worked out by the new Council, especially related to roles, accountability and funding.

In addition, with almost all elements, where there was support there were also questions or expressions of concern. Examples are given below:

- while the majority of comments to having the Region as Host were positive (Region has broad community perspective; Region would give some stability and credibility to the Partnership Council; Region works well with the community, etc.), there were also some concerns expressed, including: would the decision-making processes of a government institution, including things like having to have all funding approved by Regional Council, hinder the Council from moving forward quickly into action; would the Region be willing to give in to the will of the Council even where they may wish to undertake something that would be counter to Region's policies.
- while many felt it is good to have an Executive Director, just as many said that more staff would be needed to implement the large agenda of the Council and to support the volunteers at all levels; concerns were expressed about who that position would be accountable to; and it would be crucial that the position be filled by the "right" person.
- many felt that the number of Council members was about right but many more felt it would have to be larger to accommodate all sectors; a number of participants felt the immigrant/refugee contingent should be larger than one-third; and others emphasised that the Council would need to have decision-makers from other

organizations on the Council, that the Region and funders should be represented and there should be representation from all Regional communities.

- again, many agreed with WRIEN being part of the Council and leading the employment related pillar (able to build on its good work and its strengths); however, others had concerns that WRIEN would need to commit to serving the non-professional immigrant, has not in the past taken into account refugee needs, would reflect the “status quo”, would dominate the Partnership Council because it already is funded.

While the comments from the discussion groups appeared to suggest that either the proposed Partnership Council Structure was simple, straightforward and workable or that it was too large, could become bureaucratic and would depend too heavily on having the “right” people in all positions, the evidence from the individual exercise suggested strong support for the proposal with the majority of “stickers” tending toward the “Very Much” end of the continuum of moving the community forward. In addition, the majority of participants expressed interest in participating at some level with the new Partnership Council.

In addition, there were some suggestions made that the Partnership Council may deem to be important, some of which could be added to the Terms of Reference:

- it is vital to support and coach those immigrant/refugee participants in Working Groups and Council who are not familiar with this type of structure;
- ongoing review and evaluation are crucial to success;
- the Council needs to be prepared to lobby provincial and federal governments for change, not just focus locally;
- a workplan/business plan needs to be developed to negotiate with funders;
- periodically hold separate forums for different sectors;
- comprehensive service provision initiatives need to involve funders of those services as well as deliverers;
- mandate of Council should include: “and strengthening awareness and capacity of Waterloo Region to integrate increasing numbers of immigrants and refugees” in order to emphasize a two-way approach and responsibility of the whole community to make change;
- relationship building within the council is crucial – need to create a common culture with a common purpose;
- council meetings should be open to the public.

Finally, in the Evaluations completed by participants at the Community Forum, 87% supported the suggested name, “Waterloo Region Immigration Partnership” although some did not like the resulting acronym WRIP.

PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL STRUCTURE – TERMS OF REFERENCE

Mandate

The mandate of the LIPC is to help facilitate successful settlement and integration of immigrants and refugees to Waterloo Region.

Values and Principles

Flexible and responsive, inclusive, consensus, consultation, collaboration, purpose driven, best practices, respect, non judgmental, transparency, preparation, community driven, results focused, action oriented.

Host

- Ask the Regional Municipality of Waterloo to host for up to 5 years (with an option of an independent organization in the future).
- Region hosting would be contingent on funding resources being available.
- Pre-determined dollars need to be committed prior to moving forward.
- Host roles: Office space, staff supervision, back office support, administrative logistics.

Council Roles:

- Set strategic priorities (based on phase one LIP process) and monitor action-plan implementation
- Seek input from community-at-large and educate community about immigrant issues
- Seek out and strategically allocate resources
- Provide advice or direction on key initiatives (in collaboration with work groups)
- Hire and oversee Executive Director (need to clarify with role of host)
- Mobilize and distribute resources and investments for Council special projects
- Identify and conduct region-wide advocacy
- Strike ad hoc task groups as needed
- Pursue government relationships including advocacy together with other LIPs (need to clarify restraints of host)
- Share information back to community

Council Composition:

- Approximately 15 members initially determined by interim LIPC (in consultation with host), thereafter Council seeks its own replacements from community nominations. Criteria: diverse community sectors, region-wide representation, at least 1/3 immigrants (connected to respective community).
- Elect chair and vice-chair by membership for a fixed 2 year term.

Executive Director

Roles:

- Support Council and work groups in implementing action-plan
- Ensure communication and information flow across Council/work groups
- Liaise with core funder(s) and seek project funding
- Contract outside consultants as needed (e.g., evaluation)
- Hire and supervise administrative and project staff

Work Groups (services, employment, inclusive community)¹

Roles:

- Carry out activities related to Council strategic priorities within their domain
- Implement special projects of Council in keeping with Council strategic priorities
- Present periodic progress reports to Council
- Strengthen cross-sector partnerships and inter-work group collaboration
- Identify and conduct region-wide advocacy
- Seek input from community-at-large and educate community about immigrant issues
- Provide input to Council regarding priorities and issues

Composition:

- Members designated by Council for a 2 year renewable terms (same criteria as Council) based on community nominations of people committed to work group priorities. Strive for at least 1/3 immigrants (connected to respective community).
- Chairs appointed by and sit on Council.

Funders

- Multiple funders for core operations and special projects.
- Pooled community funds for new emerging initiatives.
- Pre-determined dollars need to be committed prior to moving forward.

Community:

- Nominations for Council members
- Active involvement in work groups (nominated to and appointed by Council)
- Receive information about and provide input to Council strategic directions

Evaluation/Research:

- Measure effectiveness of outcomes and processes.

¹ Please note that on the following structure diagram the bullets under the three Work Groups are those strategic directions (abbreviated and in some cases combined) from the charts in Chapter 2 of this report that apply to each Work Group. Under “Settling” are the Strategic Directions from the “Enhancement of Settlement Services” and the “Comprehensive Service Provision” charts. Under “Working” are the Strategic Directions from the “Employment” chart. Under “Belonging” are the Strategic Directions from the “Public Awareness and Inclusion” and “Immigrant Leadership and Civic Participation” charts.

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