



## City of North Bay Report to Council

Report No: CSBU-2024-027

Date: June 5, 2024

Originator: Erin Richmond, Manager, Economic Development

Business Unit:

Department:

Community Services

Economic Development

Subject: Request for Rural Community Immigration Pilot Support

Closed Session: yes  no

---

### Recommendation

1. That Council provide a resolution in support of the North Bay & District Chamber of Commerce's applications to Immigration and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and FedNor to host a Rural Community Immigration Pilot (RCIP).
2. That Council acknowledge, should the Chamber be awarded a pilot, this support includes a commitment of up to \$62,500 spread over the course of the 5-years with a pre-commitment to the 2025 Budget.

---

### Background

In 2019 Immigration and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) put out a call for interested communities to apply to host the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP) project. Economic Development staff explored delivery model options and partnered with the North Bay & District Chamber of Commerce to prepare and submit applications to IRCC and FedNor to host and fund the program.

In June 2019, IRCC announced that North Bay was among the 11 communities from across Canada selected to host the pilot program. The program was developed in 2019/2020, with support of our local workforce and settlement community partners, and was officially launched in August 2020 with the Chamber serving as the program lead for North Bay and area.

Economic Development staff have remained involved in the program participating on the Evaluation Review Committee, helping to promote the program to employers and newcomers, partnering to undertake specific pilot project deliverables and by providing financial support of the program. Over

the course of the RNIP project, Economic Development has invested \$63,100 into the program, through approved annual operating budgets/initiatives, to help the Chamber leverage a total program valued at \$836,500. Since inception, the program has received 4,113 applications, processed 638 community recommendations supporting individuals and their families, representing 844 newcomers to our community.

As of May 2024, 294 of those individuals who received a recommendation have received their permanent residency status, with the remaining in the queue for processing by IRCC. The pilot program has resulted in participation from 288 employers who have successfully been able to fill 638 positions filling all of the spaces allotted to North Bay under the program in the past couple years. As part of the program, these 288 employers have completed the Diversity At Work Nipissing training program provided by Yes Employment Services.

Originally scheduled to sunset in September 2023, the pilot was extended by both IRCC and FedNor until August 2024. North Bay project partners, along with Northern Ontario counterparts, have been lobbying for some time for IRCC to make RNIP a permanent program in the north. On March 6, 2024, IRCC announced that a new pilot project, the Rural Community Immigration Pilot (RCIP) would replace RNIP and that both participating and non-participating RNIP communities would be invited to apply to host one of the 15 national RCIPs outside of Quebec.

IRCC launched details of the community application process on May 21, 2024. Economic Development staff have been working with the North Bay District Chamber of Commerce to explore and develop a submission to host a new 5-year pilot. Interested communities must submit a complete pilot program plan, and confirmation of funding by July 2, 2024 in order to be considered.

A new RCIP pilot would build on the successes and lessons learned to date from RNIP. Program enhancements, including realignment of geographic boundaries and priority occupations are being considered. The Chamber of Commerce is estimating the cost of delivering a new 5-year pilot program at approximately \$1,250,000 and is requesting a City of North Bay's financial contribution towards the new RCIP be approximately \$62,500 spread out over the term of the 5-year pilot.

Should North Bay be selected as one of the nation's 15 RCIP communities, and awarded related program funding from FedNor, the City's contribution would equate to approximately \$12,500 per year and represents 50% of the required 10% total project contribution made by the applicant. The remaining 50% of the required applicant contribution will be attributed to the Chamber and other partner communities.

---

## **Financial/Legal Implications**

Should the North Bay and District Chamber of Commerce’s applications to Immigration and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and FedNor to operate a Rural Community Immigration Pilot be approved, there will be a financial contribution required from the City of North Bay. Depending on timing of an approval, the Economic Development Department may have to realign priorities to provide up to \$12,500 in 2024. The City’s contribution for subsequent years will be presented to Council by a pre-approved service level change in the 2025 Budget.

Council’s support of North Bay and District Chamber of Commerce’s application represents a pre-commitment to the 2025 Budget in the amount of \$12,500.

---

### **Corporate Strategic Plan**

- ☒ Natural North and Near
- ☒ Affordable Balanced Growth
- ☒ Responsible and Responsive Government
- ☒ Economic Prosperity
- ☒ Spirited Safe Community

### **Specific Objectives**

- Foster the creation of a community with a positive environment that instills pride and confidence and supports a resilient diversified and inclusive economy.
- Continually improve on policies and practices that celebrate diversity and create a welcoming environment that supports development, growth, and community engagement.
- Maximize funding opportunities with other governments.
- Promote and support public and private sector investment.
- Cultivate the growth and expansion of existing businesses in North Bay and in surrounding communities.
- Work with key community stakeholders in defining long term work force needs and the development, attraction and retention of talent.
- Be engaged in immigration activities as a tactic to increase the size and diversity of the labour force.
- Celebrate and encourage multi-culturalism, recognizing its role in economic development.
- Encourage openness and diversity in the community for all residents.

---

### **Options Analysis**

Option 1:

That City Council provide a resolution in support of the North Bay & District Chamber of Commerce’s applications to Immigration and Citizenship Canada

(IRCC) and FedNor to host a Rural Community Immigration Pilot (RCIP). This Option includes a commitment of up to \$62,500 spread over the course of the 5-years should the Chamber be awarded a pilot. As a program partner, through the Economic Development Department, the City will continue to play an active role in the pilot.

This is the recommended option.

Option 2:

That City Council does not provide a resolution in support. This Option would prevent the North Bay & District Chamber of Commerce from proceeding with viable applications for IRCC and FedNor prior to the July 2, 2024 deadline and North Bay would not be considered for a Rural Community Immigration Pilot.

This is not the recommended option.

---

### **Recommended Option**

1. That Council provide a resolution in support of the North Bay & District Chamber of Commerce's applications to Immigration and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and FedNor to host a Rural Community Immigration Pilot (RCIP).
2. That Council acknowledge, should the Chamber be awarded a pilot, this support includes a commitment of up to \$62,500 spread over the course of the 5-years with a pre commitment to the 2025 Budget.

---

Respectfully submitted,

Name: Erin Richmond, Ec.D., CEcD  
Title: Manager, Economic Development

### **I concur with this report and recommendation**

Name: Ian Kilgour, MCIP, RPP  
Title: Director, Community Services

Name: Margaret Karpenko, CPA, CMA  
Title: Chief Financial Officer /Treasurer

Name: John Severino, P.Eng., MBA  
Title: Chief Administrative Officer

Personnel designated for continuance:  
Name: Erin Richmond, Ec.D., CEcD  
Title: Manager, Economic Development