



What We Heard: Settlement and Inclusion of All Migrants

**Report on the Community Validation Sessions
for the
Draft Updated C529 Policy - Immigration and
Settlement**

**Kate Gunn and Lucenia Ortiz
March 2024**



Introduction

The City of Edmonton's C529 Policy - Immigration and Settlement policy was born in 2007 from an extensive community engagement process with over 200 members from ethnocultural communities. The City was in the midst of a booming Alberta with waves of new migrants arriving everyday and it needed a policy commitment to ensure that these newcomers are welcomed properly with respect and dignity.

After 15 years of a rapidly changing urban environment, two City Council motions initiated the work of updating the C529 policy. These motions were:

June 20, 2021: "review and refresh City Policy C529 Immigration and Settlement (2007), to ensure alignment with concepts identified in the year one State of Immigration and Settlement report."

May 21, 2023: That Administration provide an updated policy on immigration and settlement in alignment with relevant intersecting policies and engagement with newcomer communities to a future Committee meeting

These Council motions set the stage for extensive research on immigration and settlement from a municipality perspective and broad-based community engagement process in 2021 and 2022 with migrants and key stakeholders.

In 2023, following the May 21 Council motion, an updated C529 Policy was drafted to be presented once again to stakeholders to validate whether the intent and content of the updated policy reflected the ideas, sentiments and hopes of migrants and key stakeholders at the engagement.

This report documents the themes emerging from conversations in those community validation sessions and recommendations from participants to further enhance and strengthen the Draft Updated C529 Policy.

The Community Validation Sessions (January - February 2024)

The purpose of the community validation process is to engage those impacted by the draft updated policy, key stakeholders in the immigration and settlement sector and newcomers. As those outside of this sector. The aim is to review the draft C529 Policy, provide feedback on the key areas of the draft policy and present suggestions for improvements and changes to the draft policy

Participants in the Community Validation Process

A total of 87 participants were engaged in four validation sessions described as follows:

1. Newcomers and migrants with lived experience (12) - the participants represented all



the immigration categories as they entered Canada: skilled workers, refugees, family class, TFWs, undocumented migrants and international students with intersecting identities such as gender, age, LGBTQ+, abilities.

2. Stakeholders - the members of the SIS Committee (10) and Edmonton Local Immigration Partnership Collaborative (ELIP) composed of 51 representatives from 30 immigrant-serving organizations and ethnocultural organizations from the City
3. Thought Leaders - a total of 14 participants from a cross section of community leaders, academics, researchers, policy makers, practitioners, civic committee members. This will include the arts, business, NFP and social sector, disability community and City of Edmonton Civic Agency community leads.

Key Questions in the Community Validation Process

Participants in the community validation process will be asked the following key questions:

- What do the participants like most in the Draft Updated C529 Policy
The intent of this question is to find out whether the draft policy addresses the core challenges and issues experienced by migrants in the city, and how it will benefit migrants and other stakeholders impacted by the policy.
- What is missing?
The intent of this question is to reveal areas that were not included in the policy and important to migrant interests and whether there are any potential harm to different groups of migrants
- What needs to be improved and strengthened?
This questions opens the opportunity for participants to identify areas in the draft policy that can enhanced, improved and strengthened and other recommendations they wish to suggest

Emerging Themes from the Community Validation Sessions

Overall, the participants indicated that the policy was well-thought and well-written in terms of understanding of the barriers and challenges that migrants faced from being a newcomer to one that has lived in the city for many years and identifying the critical elements of inclusion from the migrants experience.

The policy offers a sense of direction, and that the intent is to have strong City leadership, ongoing dialogue and participation of migrant communities with regular updates.

Key Strengths of the Updated C529 Policy

1. **People-focused policy**



Participants appreciated and commended the change in the policy title from “Immigration and Settlement” to “**Settlement and Inclusion of Newcomers and Migrants**” to emphasize that the policy is directed at the people most impacted by it and that the goal of the policy is inclusion.

Governments like the City need to think from the migrants perspective when they make policy and decisions, and this makes more humane policy.

I like the policy title, the human element that naming migrants and newcomers brings to the policy.

I like the mentioning of Sharing Power as I see it as an opportunity to involve community members in generating solutions.

There is a lot to like in this policy. It's wonderful to see the alignment with all 3 SIS Reports, seeing the direct community involvement in the policy and I like the shift in the name and the centering of inclusion.

I like the commitment to shared governance, working with folks on implementation.

2. Guiding principles capture what matters most to all migrants of all status

According to the participants, all the guiding principles speak to the values that many migrants wish public policies would have such as belonging, anti-racism and equity.

In particular, **accountability** stood as the most critical as it has something to do with three things:

- Commitment to the interests and well being of migrants of all status ensuring their voices are heard and prioritize
- Trust building between the city and migrant communities means accountability has a lot to do with ensuring implementation of the policy and monitoring outcomes. For so long, participants feel that city policies particularly those that deal with migrants such as the current C529 and the C606 (Access without Fear) once approved are left without any implementation follow-up because the policy did not include any accountability mechanism and leaving them with little trust and confidence that actions can actually happen with an approved policy.
- Accountability as a principle enables, supports and provides directions for the City to appoint an entity to initiate and steward the implementation of actions.
- Certain groups experience discrimination at the City and accountability is therefore important and welcomed in this policy.



I like that Accountability is included as that has been missing for a long time, We have had a lot of reports made that are now collecting dust somewhere.

3. **The principle of equity framing** which refers to the importance of disaggregated data also provides a distinctive element in the policy and is referenced as a key to good decision-making. This principle also makes the Accountability principle stronger as disaggregated data will support documentation of equity-based outcomes.

4. **Policy Directions**

Most of the participants appreciated all the policy directions but there were a few that they noted will make the greatest impact on the lives of all migrants.

Inclusive Economy

Both ELIP participants and those with lived experience felt that Inclusive Economy is one of the most important focal areas for the Updated C529 policy. It is where the City of Edmonton can best demonstrate its dual role in advancing an inclusive economy as an employer as well as a model to other employers in the municipality. It will help the city to be intentional in creating opportunities for newcomer migrants from employment to supporting entrepreneurship among migrants - all elements of building an inclusive economy.

For those with lived experience, this policy direction is very meaningful as it finally recognizes that migrants, especially recent arrivals struggling to build their careers in the city, faced many barriers to participate in the local economy with specific reference to the devaluation of foreign credentials. This policy direction will make it possible for the City to create job training opportunities, supporting local businesses to hire newcomers and offering City employment opportunities and training. The City can partner with other employers in Edmonton to make a welcoming and inclusive economy a reality. The City can lead and model this.

Inclusive Economy is a key policy direction and I hope we can have the opportunity as community members to be part of the implementation planning and help on projects.

Newcomers and migrants are the bread and butter of our Edmonton economy, they are a gift and an asset.

The City needs as a large employer to be transparent and grounded in data about hiring, tendering, service practices - to be an model inclusive employer.



Lastly, this policy direction needs to be more assertive and positive of the central role migrants play in the Edmonton economy and success beyond barriers and problems. A shift in narrative about a city that acknowledges the immense wealth of migrants to make Edmonton as a city that attracts diverse talents and skills.

Neighbourhood Inclusion

Neighbourhood Inclusion is an important policy direction because it is where migrants make their entry to the community. It needs to start when they arrive at the airport, where migrants can be proactively welcomed and connected to information and services they need. Without this welcome at the very start, newcomers find it very lonely and they struggle to find their way, find jobs and connect. The City can ramp up its efforts in this welcome approach and this policy can support that. It can look to Quebec City which has a strong welcome to newcomer presence at their international airport.

Participants hope that this policy direction supports encouraging community league halls to be inclusive neighborhood hubs for migrants to connect with relevant services and with the community. Newcomers who are still settling in and transitioning to their new home bring talents that can be valuable to the community.

A comprehensive, community-based supporting system is needed for migrants from the day of their arrival.

Migrants come with their laptop these days, not their baskets. The City is not using these talents they have well. They have time in the first 6 months to a year to be engaged, to learn about Edmonton and to contribute their skills to their communities if supported.

Participants noted that the current municipal power structure does not provide equitable access to local power and decision making by community and cultural organizations who play a critical role in support of inclusion of newcomers.

There is a strong network of culturally organized groups. How do we strengthen them to keep welcoming folks and creating a sense of home here? How can we ...form another stream or arm of the City Council ,a lever for change?

Areas to be Strengthened and Improved

1. Policy Title

There is a need to clarify the terms, “newcomers” and “migrants” in the policy title to avoid confusion to use the term consistently throughout the policy. The issues



expressed by the participants on these two terms include the difference between newcomers and migrants - how are they described in clear and consistent terms.

The term migrants should be defined according to the following:

- Birth of origin - born outside of Canada
- Place of origin - primary migrants or those coming from a country outside of Canada or secondary migrants or those coming from another province in Canada
- Ancestry - descendants of parents born outside of Canada
- Length of residence - newly arrived and those who were in Canada 10 years or more
- Intersectional identities - age, gender, sexual orientation, abilities, race, ethnicity, status

According to participants, the clarity in defining who is impacted by the policy has implications to its breadth and specificity (“Is a one-policy-fit- all a good approach?”). For example, the policy could be strengthened by emphasizing the tangible, critical support needed for newcomers and recently arrived migrants, support that is so vital in that stage of the early years of arrival.

Some specific groups that are impacted could get “lost” in a more synthesized general terminology such as migrants. Can consistency be enhanced, using a consistent term - without losing the identities of the many different groups of migrants and their distinct needs?

We know that the reality is that our systems need responsiveness not just to those who are recently new to Canada, but those who have been here for more than a couple of years and even those who might not be new to Canada by are new to Edmonton

In relation to this discussion on defining migrants, it was also suggested to check the Definitions page to ensure definitions are aligned with Access without Fear and that distinctions are clear.

2. Statement of Intent

Participants suggested the following edits to strengthen the statement of intent:

- A stronger, more aspirational statement of intent (“To thrive and flourish” - recommended) addressing economic stability and equity of opportunity as equally important to social inclusion and belonging.



- To be stronger, add the phrase “Regardless of immigration status” to the policy statement in the draft policy.
- Add “political decision making” to the statement as well, to be stronger.

3. Guiding Principles

The Equity based guiding principles provide an impetus for the City to play a key role in shifting mainstream mindsets about migrants, to reframe how they are seen as powerful, contributing city builders. Participants focused on two guiding principles that need be more stronger and powerful in creating actions:

Accountability

- Accountability is synonymous with transparency in particular in the implementation phase of the policy. Participants feel that this principle in policy is not strong enough to enable and enact the operationalization of the policy. It comes from a high level of frustration both from the ELIP participants and those with lived experience. They need to have a firm level of assurance that outcomes will be identified, monitored, evaluated and reported back to the community.
- Accountability should be closely linked with Disaggregated Data and to extend the responsibility of SHARING DATA for transparency and accountability to the public, accountability.
- Accountability should include how this policy will report back to those we are helping (migrant communities) and how we ensure that they are involved. Questions such as these need to be answered: Who will enforce the policy? Can the reference to accountability suggest regular reporting publicly on progress to outcomes?

The City in face needs to model in policy and in action a positive approach to racialized groups.

Intentionality

A stronger emphasis in intersectionality that clearly identifies intersectional identities and the challenges they present and how this principle addresses the different dynamics of different migrant groups.

This principle of Intentionality also encompasses accountability of the City to work across all City departments and initiatives.

Intersectionality is really important.



Civic Participation and Citizenship

This guiding principle should reflect the importance of connecting to language and culture to support civic participation and citizenship and engagement. A clearer definition of these terms will be valuable for greater understanding of the policy itself.

Citizenship needs to be clearly defined within the context of this policy beyond the legal definition of citizens in Canada.

Acknowledgment of Cultural Wealth

Given input from thought leaders, how can we clarify or reframe this principle about multidimensional assets migrants offer? The Community Cultural Wealth term leads to misunderstanding about what it means. May need to change the title or be very clear that it is NOT about just Cultural Wealth but about econ contribution, expertise, skills and relationships, also culture, that migrants bring.

Consider a 7th principle Accessibility, that encompasses not just physical access, but service and engagement accessibility or be sure to weave Accessibility clearly into one of the other 6 principles better.

Maybe there is space to integrate the concept of accessibility ...not just physical accessibility but also language accessibility.. acknowledge the barriers in accessibility in this space

4. Policy Directions

Among the six policy directions, there are three policy directions that participants suggested to be more explicit in guiding actions for implementation.

Service Access and Equity

This policy direction is so vital to all migrants of all identities and contexts because it constitutes the first level of contact between the City of Edmonton and the newly arrived migrants. The participants identified the following areas to make this policy direction achieve a high level of municipal commitment yet specific enough to address distinct barriers with stronger actions:

- Recognizing the cultural capital that newcomers bring upon arrival that could lead to opportunities to engage newcomers in their initial settlement is crucial towards the integration journey

Right now this early year of initial settlement for newcomers is a lost opportunity. We are lost from the start, but given information in a way we understand, provided with



education and connection to services we need to thrive, we can also offer our gifts- our cultural capital- by volunteering in this early settlement period, instead of staying home alone. We bring talents that are not known and experience in business and professions that can be put into use during this initial settlement period.

- Education and information about City services and programs is vital. This needs to be emphasized in this policy direction so that it can trigger intentional funding and adequate resources to community partners.
- This policy direction should include all the intersectional identities that are disadvantaged in accessing service such as race, ethnicity, culture and immigration status. For example, this policy direction could be more specific such as calling for a review of the C606 Access to Municipal Services without Fear for undocumented migrants.

Undocumented migrants cannot access services easily without documentation from the City.

Regardless of legal status, is the City willing to support all, especially the most marginalized?

The City needs to review Access to Municipal Services without Fear C606 (2018) which has never been implemented. City staff should know about it.

- This policy direction is intricately linked to two policy directions which are markers for the Accountability principle: Data for Action and Leadership. We need data to show that outcomes are achieved through equity-framed data and that the City has assumed leadership in making the City accountable for these outcomes.
- Strengthen the City commitment to support the key role of settlement sector partners and the post secondary institutions in building inclusion.

Civic Engagement and Communications

ELIP participants viewed that this direction is a key area for change by the City. According to them, the City needs to do better in reaching out to the community in engaging, building two way, communication using creative linguistically and culturally responsive platforms and processes.

The revised policy directions should address the following:



- Define the central role of populations impacted by this policy and to clearly state that while the City creates the supports for engagement, they are not the major player in a civic engagement undertaking
- Include tackling the growing racism and resistance to migrants in the community
- Clearer definition of civic engagement and how would does it look like using an innovative equity approach
- More direction around communications between the City and migrants
- Incorporate alignment and complementarity of the City's Indigenous Framework with the Updated C529 Policy

Insights for the City of Edmonton

Participants provided valuable insights in addition to their specific comments on the different sections of the Updated C529 Policy to ensure that the policy fulfills its commitments towards its implementations. These insights can be grouped into the following themes:

- **Implementation and moving forward**

Participants recognize the significant impact an Updated C529 policy will play in expressing the City Council's commitment to advancing migrant inclusion and bringing focus and resources to a corporate wide effort in this regard. They are, however, concerned about its implementation, and ensuring migrants and newcomers communities continue to be meaningfully involved in the next steps to action. Some of these concerns that need to be addressed as part of the policy making process are the following:

- Ensuring implementation happens
- Calling for a timeframe for reporting back
 - I suggest adding a time frame for City updates to the community to report on progress every year.*
- Inviting migrants to be part of next steps
 - Invite people, including migrants, to be part of the next steps, the action planning and follow through. These are people who are gifted and want to contribute and help.*
- Building City staff capacity and understanding to implement the policy
- Sustainability of actions or changes that had been implemented and whether they will be continued if they were effective in achieving outcomes

The City City's Corporate Policy Framework (p 10) clearly outlines that once a policy is approved implementation begins. It also requires that "Employees, residents or both need to be made aware of the policy and begin to respond to it or put its intentions into



action.” Further, it outlines that a robust implementation plan presents “what will change and how, and also considers how change will be supported , not just resourced.”

A first action for implementation would be an opportunity for the City to create newcomer welcome spaces and centres in the community to engage with, educate, connect and draw out the gifts of newcomers- especially in the critical first year of arrival in Edmonton. From their arrival at the airport, to connecting in neighbourhood hubs of connection, this is a community development approach that speaks to prevention and building inclusion and belonging from the start.

The principles and policy directions of the Updated C529 will support the City in its City Plan vision, its 15 minute city and development of connected districts.

Community league buildings, and local libraries and rec centres, need to be open to provide space where newcomers can come to connect, to learn and to provide their gifts and skills.

- **Advocacy and collaboration**

Many of the actions needed to implement the policy directions in the Updated C529 policy requires working with other orders of government as well as with multisectoral organizations. It is important to Identify the conditions (in the local municipal/provincial context) needed for successfully implementing the policy. As well, Information about the limitations of the City in terms of its mandate, role and parameters of Administration in the policy vis a vis other levels of government policy and processes and how this impacts its advocacy/leadership role on certain issues relevant to immigration and settlement

- **Measuring and Ensuring Impact**

A specific strategy/action plan with steps/procedures to achieve the goal of the policy shifting beyond traditional accountability measures with ongoing outcomes-based evaluation and outlined accountability measures for implementation as well as inaction.

- **Sustained engagement with migrant communities throughout implementation**

Participants hope that once the policy is approved and implemented that there will be a continuing engagement with migrant communities. Some examples provided include the following:

- Provide education and promotion using channels newcomers access and in languages they speak and at places they gather. Public transit is an accessible place for information that most newcomers use.



- Educate City staff about the policy Updated C529 and C606 and how they can implement them in their daily work to support newcomers and migrants, in all City departments.
 - Host a gathering of migrants and newcomers every year, maybe twice a year, to report on progress.
 - There needs to be a Council report on progress about Updated C529 and its action plan each year to ensure a dialogue continues, progress is reported on and newcomers continue to be involved in this work on inclusion. Education one the Updated C529, awareness and reporting on progress regularly - these are key expectations of the community going forward.
- **On language and terminology for the Updated C529 Policy document**

Participants also provided useful suggestions to how to make the Updated C529 Policy a compelling document that merits attention and action. These suggestions include:

 - Use of strengths-based language when presenting barriers and challenges experienced by migrants
 - Check for Gender-inclusive language to reflect intersectionality - clearer definitions between various legal statuses, definitions of racialized minorities, ethnicity, people with disabilities, 2SLGBTQ+ communities
 - Language specific to the rising number of asylum seekers - seeking protection, they become undocumented refugees - no authorization to remain in Canada
 - Consider ways to clarify or reframe some key terms that may be misunderstood or jargon:
 - Community Cultural Capital
 - Citizenship
 - Consistent term for Migrants and Newcomers
 - **Essential document attachment to the Policy**

Participants are aware that a policy document has language and page limitations that restrict the inclusion of key policy elements and context relevant to the policy. Participants agreed that an attachment to the Policy could provide critical context, details around barriers and the roles of different orders of government. It might also make clear alignment with relevant equity based City strategies and policies. Indigenous frameworks and reconciliation commitments would be of key importance and how C529 will ensure alignment and illustrate how frameworks for newcomers and Indigenous communities can be complementary. could restrict the discussion of important information relevant to the policy.

Explicitly name some kind of reference to standing Indigenous policies, to ensure that future actions are also in line with that ...to illustrate how these kinds of frameworks don't have to work in opportunity but are complementary. "



Included in this attachment are the relevant policy, strategies and plan that have implications to the Updated C529 policy. Foremost of which is a discussion of Indigenous Policies, frameworks and commitment and how it ensures future actions can be aligned with as well and it could be a guide on how frameworks for newcomers and Indigenous can be complementary.

Final Comments

What we heard from all participants centred on three important points: Hope despite distrust for action to come, Use of an equity lens and Engagement of those impacted

What we heard from all the participants revealed hopeful expectations in the midst of concerns, frustration and growing distrust with the municipal government. The participants shared their valuable insights and offered constructive suggestions for a stronger and powerful Updated C529 policy such that implementation becomes a compelling next step subsequent to the approval of the policy.

What we heard also reiterated the importance that the Updated C529 Policy, the subsequent strategy and implementation plan be explicitly and resolutely anchored on a meaningful equity lens, aligned with the City's Indigenous Framework and Anti-Racism Plan. These are pillars of true inclusion that must be embedded in all that the City does to serve and protect all its residents.

Finally, the Updated C529 Policy will only be a living document when the people impacted are meaningfully engaged and involved in it - from its inception, development, implementation and evaluation.



ATTACHMENTS

Summary Notes from the Community Validation Sessions

SIS (State of Immigration and Settlement) Committee

January 31, 2024

Participants - 10

What did you like the most? What is missing? What could be improved or strengthened?

- Newcomers and migrants - But this policy is also for community members who have been here for longer.
- The new name makes sense.
- Like that accountability is included as that has been missing for a long time. We have had a lot of reports made that are now collecting dust somewhere.
- Enhance settlement support to newcomers, and sponsors, as well as the role of the settlement agencies
- Translate some of these documents
- Missing: Areas of navigation to settlement resources in English and other languages
- Like the mentioning of sharing power as I see it as an opportunity to involve community members in generating solutions
- Suggest straightforward and clear (over abstract) language to not lose focus
- Talking about partnerships between City and Settlement workers - The settlement sector is today working separately from the City and the City taking this work for granted. We need something new and practical such as partnerships (between the City and settlement sector) to make change. We need commitment from the City - these would lead to sufficient resources being set aside for this and only then can we ask for accountability.
- Leadership and Advocacy is one space where something can be added to enhance the partnership part
- We need a strategy to respond to space issues for cultural and religious gatherings and celebrations. This could be touched on in the policy to be looked at further in the future.
- Like that actions by the City and things that need to be prioritized are highlighted
- Inclusion and Participation distinction. Are people passive voices or meaningfully included? How are partnerships built with civic society?



- Service Equity and Inclusive Economy: Highlight specific groups but I am missing groups that are disadvantaged because of ethnicity or race. Pinpoint when it comes to the City and hiring practices. Spell out the CoE as an employer and that they need to change hiring practices and set a positive example. We also need more data on this.
- Angle of the policy - Newcomers and migrants as two overlapping groups. Do we need “migrant” in the name or would it exclude groups removing this from the name?
- How the City does tendering could be added under diversifying the economy as this has historically excluded newcomers.
- City could create a small-business startup fund or in partnership with other financiers. This would make a lot of business sense for the City as well.



Key Themes:

Strengthen Reference to Settlement Sector and City Role in Settlement

- Wanted to see a strong commitment to settlement work in particular from the City in this policy..the title refers to Settlement. But that is the only mention of it.
- The Policy could highlight the role of settlement agencies, even at least mention them as they play a key role.

Clarify language around collaboration, co creation and partnership

- Seemed to say that using the term Partnership might be stronger and clearer, more accessible to readers
- Can we strengthen the co-creation language and message in the draft? Maybe use the term partnership ? Make it clear and strong, that the City and communities need to work **together**, in active meaningful ways for change.
- Seems that several participants are calling for stronger focus on partnering to co create with community, to advance inclusion , address discrimination
- Participants want to be assured the City sees and will include communities as partners in this work.

Strengthen the language around the City role, jurisdiction

- A number of comments around the City role needed to be articulated more clearly
- What is the City mandate and role, its limitations and where it can make a difference?
- Can we strengthen the policy draft to note the City as the largest Employer and how it needs to model inclusive and transparent hiring practices, tendering etc?

The Use of Citizenship in the Principles

- The use of the word Citizenship in one of the guiding principles– concerns about what the focus of citizenship was intended, as some migrants are not citizens? Is this a concern to address?

Note:

- Some of the elements we removed due to the template focus are those things participants are very concerned about.
- Even though they may be reassured to know these concerns have been “captured” in other documents (Backgrounder, What We Heard), not seeing them in the Draft Policy is concerning

Key areas that have been removed from the draft that are important emerging areas include:

- Key Next Steps in Implementation
- The City Role and Mandate
- City Stewardship locus - we refer to a whole of city approach, but do not specify a corporate centre of responsibility
- Alignment to key City Policies and Initiatives- removed but it provided a sense of context that this policy aligned with strategic City directions, including Reconciliation, City Plan and more.



City Accountability as a guiding principle was welcomed, but could be even stronger (SIS)

- Some flagged the importance not of just exploring Disaggregated Data, but of SHARING DATA and Transparency to the public, accountability.
- Certain groups experience discrimination at the City and accountability is therefore important and welcomed in this policy.
- Address: How we will report back to those we are helping and how do we ensure they are the main actors (migrant communities)?? Who will enforce the policy?
- The City in fact needs to model in policy and in action a positive approach to racialized groups. Can this be strengthened in the draft??
- Can the reference to accountability suggest regular reporting publicly on progress to outcomes?



ELIP (Edmonton Local Immigration Partnership) Community Collaborative Table February 1, 2024

Participants - 51 representatives from 30 organizations

City Commitment in this Policy is welcome

- Participants were pleased to see the City commitment in this draft Policy to addressing the challenges facing migrants in Edmonton and to see the challenges facing newcomers explicitly referred to (but could be clearer).
- Participants were pleased to see Data, including Disaggregated data, referenced in the policy principles and directions as key to good decision making. Some flagged the importance not of just exploring Disaggregated Data, but of SHARING DATA and Transparency to the public, accountability.

Proposed Name of the Policy Supported

- Participants supported the new name Settlement and Inclusion- although the ongoing terminology concern may apply - do we need to use migrants and newcomers?

Good Statement of Intent but need to add THRIVE and FLOURISH

- Likes the Policy Statement of Intent, but need to add “thrive and flourish” (not just survive) to the statement, addressing economic stability and equity of opportunity as equally important to social inclusion and belonging.
- Good to have the equity focus but this statement can be strongly aspirational, articulating where the policy is leading, the outcomes.

Inclusive Economy is seen as an important key area of focus

- Participants stressed the important role of the City to build and support an inclusive economy, with opportunities for newcomers and migrants, to take a long view of building businesses locally for the future
- Clarify the DUAL FOCUS the City has to a) support an inclusive economy broadly and b) the Role of the City as an Employer and supporting other Edmonton employers

Civic Engagement and Communications direction is key area for change by the City

- The City needs to do these areas better, reach out to Community ie EFLC and ELIP to engage, to build two way, not one way, communication using creative and culturally responsive platforms
- The City needs to address racism and resistance to migrants in the community that is growing
- This descriptor is weak...what is civic engagement, more direction around communication and what is an innovative equity approach??? Tighten this up to clarify in a tangible way.
- Not clear on the use of citizenship here. It's complicated and complex. Is this policy leading the City to change rules around voting for permanent residents, with this use of the term? If not, perhaps it is not the right word here.



Service Equity and Access direction is vital and could be strengthened

- Could highlight specific groups ie those disadvantaged because of ethnicity or race.
- This links to Data and to Accountability and Leadership, as the City needs as a large employer to be transparent and grounded in data about hiring , tendering, service practices - to be an model inclusive employer

Key Themes:

Intersectionality and the question of inconsistent Terminology used in the draft Policy

- the Policy needs to address different dynamics of different migrant groups
- the issue of whether specific groups get “lost” in a more synthesized , general terminology ie migrants.
- Is a one-policy-fit- all a good approach? Will it be effective?
- Comments that the current draft Policy has 23 references to migrants and newcomers, newcomers, migrant newcomers, and waffles between them. Confusion from the use of racialized migrants, newcomers etc, in the principles and directions in the draft.
- Can consistency be enhanced, using a consistent term - without losing the identities of the many different groups of migrants and their distinct needs?
- Can a consistent term be chosen ie migrants that includes those who are 2nd generation here , ie longer term in Edmonton, who might be excluded by the term newcomers?
- Is Intersectionality -and its challenges- clearly present and strong enough in the draft?
- ALSO: Check the Definitions page to ensure definitions are aligned with Access without Fear and that distinctions are clear.

Need for more specifics on systems barriers and examples

- Comments that the Policy does not provide specific examples of systems barriers that exist and impact the lives of newcomer
- Comments that participants like the strength based language, but would like more detail on specific barriers migrants encounter, more specificity

There is no reference now in this Policy to City Indigenous Policies and frameworks

- Might be strong to explicitly reference somewhere in the Draft Policy Standing Indigenous Policies, to ensure future actions are aligned with that
- Note how Indigenous commitments can be used as a foundation and how frameworks for newcomers and Indigenous can be complementary.

It's all in the Implementation (SIS and ELIP)

- It is all about Implementation, implementation will be the proof of the policy in the end.
- Concern about implementation not being in the Policy in any tangible steps or plan, and worry about lack of teeth and what may not happen. It lacks an action plan, steps to achieving the result.
- What happens if there is no action??? Who is responsible?



- The Policy doesn't address implementation in a tangible or meaningful way. How do we know the policy will be implemented and embraced?
- The need to move to action, to OPERATIONALIZE is a key concern for participants.
- Musing about HOW the implementation and next steps will happen...will there be a Community or City committee or task force?
- How can this Policy ensure community will be a principal actor, involved actively in implementation with the City?
- Can some reference to next steps, specific outcomes, that need to be identified, monitored and evaluated be briefly introduced in this template?
- Accountability to work across ALL City departments and City initiatives is missing- intention to not silo this in one department or Branch but to embed in all the City does and supports.



**Lived Experience Validation Session
February 10, 2024
Commonwealth Community Recreation Center**

Participants: 12 community animators and community members with lived experience (skilled workers, refugees, undocumented migrants and LGBTQ+)

Notes from Discussion

The discussion was holistic and both Questions 1 and 2 were addressed as part of the conversation about input on C529, its strengths and potential gaps.

Question #1

What did you like the most in the draft policy? Do you see yourself as a migrant or newcomer reflected in this policy?

Question #2 What's missing? What would strengthen this policy?

- The following notes are clustered under key areas of feedback, emphasis and suggestions for strengthening shared by participants.
- *Statements in Italics* are quotes from participants relevant to the points being raised.

Overall

- I liked the possibility the policy offers, a sense of direction, and that the intent is to have strong City leadership, ongoing dialogue and participation of migrant communities with regular updates.

I like the principles and the policy directions in the draft policy.

Policy Name or Title

- Support for the new title that identifies newcomers and migrants specifically.
- Governments like the City need to think from the migrants perspective when they make policy and decisions, and this makes more humane policy.
- While the title is good, spanning both migrants and newcomers, the policy could be strengthened by emphasizing the tangible, critical support needed for newcomers and recently arrived migrants , support that is so vital in that stage of the early years of arrival.

I like the policy title, the human element that naming migrants and newcomers brings to the policy.

Statement of Intent

Two specific changes were recommended to this Statement of Intent:



- To be stronger, add the phrase “Regardless of immigration status” to the policy statement in the draft policy.
- Add “political decision making” to the statement as well, to be stronger.

Guiding Principles

- I like the six principles.
- Accountability is important.
- Without a time frame for reporting back, the policy has nothing to ensure the policy will be acted upon.

I suggest adding a time frame for City updates to the community to report on progress every year.

Policy Directions

Inclusive Economy

- I liked the two policy directions of **Inclusive Economy** and **Neighbourhood Inclusion**. There is a barrier in the labour force, especially for women, that doesn’t seem that women can run and own businesses and the City can advance inclusion in this way by addressing these barriers and making opportunities for all to participate in the economy.
- We are professionals at home like doctors but cannot practise in Canada upon arrival. Lack of Canadian experience is a big barrier. We need to study, and that costs money and takes time, and often we have to take a low paying survival job just to pay bills. This period in the curve of settling in Edmonton is one where newcomers can be connected to contribute their assets , to volunteer and to learn and connect.
- The City can implement and coordinate and encourage job training opportunities , supporting local businesses to hire and offering City employment opportunities and training. The City can partner with other employers in Edmonton to make a welcoming and inclusive economy a reality. The City can lead and model this.

Inclusive Economy is a key policy direction and I hope we can have the opportunity as community members to be part of the implementation planning and help on projects.

Newcomers and migrants are the bread and butter of our Edmonton economy, they are a gift and an asset.

It is very difficult to come to Canada and you are often frustrated when you get here as you may expect it to be perfect – but then reality kicks in.

Neighbourhood Inclusion

- **Neighbourhood Inclusion** is an important policy direction because it is where migrants make their entry to the community. It needs to start when they arrive at the airport, where migrants can be proactively welcomed and connected to information and services they need. Without this welcome at the very start, newcomers find it very



lonely and they struggle to find their way, find jobs and connect . The City can ramp up its efforts in this welcome approach and this policy can support that. It can look to Quebec City which has a strong welcome to newcomer presence at their international airport.

- Upon arrival and in their first year or two, newcomers need a clear one stop shop, a place to go to connect- community welcome spaces and centres.
- Not all newcomers can go to Catholic Social Services. Group 5's are lost and alone with no one to help and guide them, to encourage them to use and contribute their existing skills and assets and expertise while they await training and find employment. Group 5's have to wait a year, or 6 months, to try and even get into language training.
- This gap - of time as migrants arrive and wait to get a job and learn the language poses a huge opportunity for the City to step in with resources, to mobilize its staff and its facilities to provide that kind of neighbourhood local hub of connection. This can be done efficiently without additional resources, but with the Intention that this Policy brings to the City efforts.
- The City should have a space for multi language services located in neighbourhoods, accessible and welcoming to newcomers in particular and addressing their needs. Can there be spaces and offices in various neighbourhoods like this?

A comprehensive, community-based supporting system is needed for migrants from the day of their arrival.

Migrants come with their laptop these days, not their baskets. The City is not using these talents they have well. They have time in the first 6 months to a year to be engaged, to learn about Edmonton and to contribute their skills to their communities if supported.

Service Access and Equity

- A review of C606 Access to Municipal Services without Fear is needed, in order to ensure the intent of C529 incorporates tangible actions to support undocumented migrants who encounter systemic barriers to inclusion at the City and more broadly in the community.
- City staff don't know about C606 and that they are not to ask for ID, so City Staff need to be informed by the City so they learn this important role and approach.
- New arrivals, newcomers , to Edmonton do not know how to connect, where to get resources, a job, training or support. It is a lonely time.
- Right now this early year of initial settlement for newcomers is a lost opportunity. Currently migrant newcomers are lost from the start, but given information in a way they understand, provided with education and connection to services they need to thrive, they can also offer their gifts- their cultural capital- by volunteering in this early settlement period, instead of staying home alone. They have talents that are not known and experience in business and professions from their homes that can be put into use during this initial settlement period.



- The City needs to ramp up its efforts to reach, inform, educate and involve newcomers from day one. It can do this itself at its facilities and by providing intentional funding and adequate resources to community partners to provide this connection.

Undocumented migrants cannot access services easily without documentation from the City.

The City needs to review Access to Municipal Services without Fear C606 (2018) which has never been implemented. City staff should know about it.

Final Comments: What do you hope will happen once the policy is approved?

- Hopes that the City will promote this policy once approved, both to the public using public transit that over 95% of newcomers use. Provide education and promotion using channels newcomers access and in languages they speak , at places they gather.
- The City also needs to educate City staff about the policy C529 and C606 and how they can implement them in their daily work to support newcomers and migrants, in all City departments.
- Host a gathering of migrants and newcomers every year, maybe twice a year, to report on progress. There needs to be a Council report on progress about C529 and its action plan each year but in addition the City needs to host a gathering of newcomers as well to ensure a dialogue continues, progress is reported on and newcomers continue to be involved in this work on inclusion. Education of C529, awareness and reporting on progress regularly - these are key expectations of the community going forward.
- Flagging the opportunity for the City to create newcomer welcome spaces and centres in the community to engage with, educate, connect and draw out the gifts of newcomers- especially in the critical first year of arrival in Edmonton. From their arrival at the airport, to connecting in neighbourhood hubs of connection, this is a community development approach that speaks to prevention and building inclusion and belonging from the start.
- The principles and policy directions of C529 will support the City in its City Plan vision, its 15 minute city and development of connected districts.

Invite people, including migrants, to be part of the next steps, the action planning and follow through. These are people who are gifted and want to contribute and help.

Community league buildings, and local libraries and rec centres, need to be open to providing space where newcomers can come to connect, to learn and to provide their gifts and skills.



Thought Leaders

February 12, 2024

Participants - 14 individuals from various sectors - business, arts, communications, academe, disability, youth and women

What did you like most about the draft policy? (will it help the populations you are connected to?)

- Name of the Policy is an improvement - Migrants and Newcomers
- Mention of Guiding Principles and various populations that the policy is intended to support; not meant to include Indigenous populations coming to our city?; is there a way to say what populations are excluded?; this is not clear currently;
- Neighbourhood inclusion, economic opportunities, if we start from the neighbourhood level we can address the challenges; aligns with City districts plan in connecting at the neighbourhood level
- a lot to like in this policy; wonderful to see the direct alignment with all 3 reports; seeing the direct community involvement in the policy; like shift in the name; like centering of inclusion; are newcomers and migrants the right terms? Not everyone self identifies as migrants/newcomers; perhaps exploring other terminology to make sure that everyone is included; can see how the policy can lead to action is exciting;
- language is so limiting; could spend 1000 years looking at the right language; when I saw the terms I put my own interpretation on the language; need to look at intention; need to look at people coming from other cultural contexts; need to reflect the cultural and linguistic lens on all of this
- like commitment to shared governance; working with folks on implementation; questions on implementation; what are the timelines for implementation?;
- What does Council support look like currently?
- intersectionality is really important
- agree with previous statements; like alignment with other policies; wording in guiding principles - talk about cultural wealth; lived experience of newcomers might encompass people that don't primarily identify with a cultural group (ie LGBTQ community); lots of conflict in the world, group meetings online are
- The new policy name is better and more focused and centering on being people-focused
- The guiding principles and the various populations that the policy is meant to serve
- Neighbourhood Inclusion considers and helps mitigate other challenges, such as mental health



- Integration with the SIS report as it is so closely related; Policy directions are reflective of the recommendations that have come from the SIS reports
- Principles are laid out well and the shared governance aspects
- Alignment with the other policies

What's missing? (will there be negative impacts?)

- migrants bring more than cultural wealth; they bring economic wealth; need a general term that encompasses other wealth - political, social, cultural and economic - strength based approach;
- good point to show the diversity of wealth;
- the policy is very broad and any additions might be more specific than what is needed/wanted;
- leveraging the community league structure is a dream that never materialized; arguably there is a strong network of culturally organized network; people can form stronger attachments to these organizations - how do we strengthen them so that they can keep welcoming folks and creating a sense of home here; how can we rethink how those cultural orgs plug into city council and form another stream /arm of city council; lever for change;
- maybe there is space to integrate accessibility in the policy; not just physical accessibility but also language accessibility/translation; it would acknowledge barriers in accessibility in this space;
- Neighbourhood inclusion - need reflection of structural barriers; community leagues have behaviour that is not very inclusive but still have a voice (power) to influence; how does the policy affect current city power structure; cultural groups don't currently have access to council like the Community Leagues;
- a wholistic policy then a stronger reference to accessibility would be very important and impactful
- reads like newcomers will be facing a lot of barriers; framing of the policy could reflect that the success of our future growth will come from the potential/opportunities/success/power/generation of the communities;
- important to shift the mainstream narrative that dominates;
- Does this policy consider settlement or movement from rural to urban or even Indigenous peoples moving from reserves to Edmonton
 - Perhaps we can be clearer as to who
- Are we using the proper terms? Migrant and Newcomers
 - Do individuals connect with these
- Definitions and words can be a struggle and we can get caught up in that
- Accessibility aspect?
- Post-secondary context
 - Connection within this policy



What could be improved or strengthened?

- Post secondary context (International Students) - is there a role that the City of Edmonton can play with folks that make a significant academic contribution to the City ; Data - need meaningful data that captures meaningful data around minority within minority groups; captures context
- What policy links have been made and needs to be shared with community?; a lot of links with other City Policies - need a supporting document to integrate with other areas of the City
- not just about welcoming but about attracting talent to build our city; University of Alberta and a couple of key industries connect us to the world; not just cultural wealth - we want to prosper; the future of urbanisation is talent attraction;
- Calgary has a celebratory culture and Edmonton needs to change the tone to frame in terms of proactive/positive/success/assertive (aggressive) orientation that communicates that Edmonton is a city that everyone wants to live in
- Shifting the mainstream narrative
- Inclusive economy
 - The wealth of the city is dependent on a high-functioning newcomer model
 - Could this directive be more strength-based where we look at newcomers as a source of wealth and not a burden
- Cultural wealth is very focused on culture
 - Some people may not identify with a culture and may be missing marginalized groups
 - Newcomers bring more than just cultural wealth this could limit the value newcomers bring
 - The strength-based principle should highlight this
- Neighbourhood inclusion and civic engagement have intersectionality and could be further explored
 - Community leagues could be a channel and need to be more inclusive. These can serve as another way for voices to be heard by council
- Data aspect
 - How do we get meaningful data?
- Linking to other policies
- We need to compete for talent and be proactive and assertive to be attractive
 - Future of urbanization is talent recruitment and retention