

REPORT

Climate Action, Planning and Development

To: Mayor Cote and Members of Council **Date:** March 28, 2022

From: Jackie Teed, Acting Director, Climate Action, Planning and Development **File:** 05.1035.10

Item #: 2022-222

Subject: Ukrainian Crisis – Government and Community Response

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council receive this report for information.

PURPOSE

This report provides an update on actions currently underway by the federal and provincial governments and Holy Eucharist Cathedral, New Westminster Parish and possible future actions by the City, the Welcoming and Inclusive New Westminster Local Immigration Partnership Council, Holy Eucharist Cathedral, and others to support the Ukrainian community during this time of crisis.

EXISTING POLICY/PRACTICE

Existing policy is summarized within Attachment 1.

BACKGROUND

Over the past several weeks, governments, faith-based organizations, non-profit agencies, businesses, and community members have been mobilizing to support the Ukrainian community during this time of crisis. This includes aiding humanitarian efforts in Ukraine and planning for the arrival of displaced persons.

Federal Response

On March 17, 2022 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) announced a new pathway to accelerate temporary residence of displaced Ukrainians seeking safe haven in Canada. With the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET), Ukrainians and their immediate family members of any nationality may stay in Canada as temporary residents for up to three years and can apply for a three year work permit at the same time as their visa. Many of the regular requirements associated with seeking residency have been waived, including: individuals who do not have a valid passport can still apply and students can register for and start attending school as soon as they arrive. Those already in Canada can also apply to extend their visitor, study or work permits for three years and all application fees will be waived. IRCC is also working on a special family reunification sponsorship pathway for permanent residence and is working with the Ukrainian Canadian Congress to develop the details of this program in the coming weeks.

The federal government has established the Job Bank's [Jobs for Ukraine](#), which calls on employers who wish to support Ukrainians with offers of employment to register these offers and the government will help connect them to those seeking work. Measures have also been implemented for unvaccinated or partially vaccinated Ukrainian nationals, allowing entry to those who hold a temporary resident visa or permit, as well as a fee waiver program for certain travel and immigration documents.

The Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) has an administrative deferral of removals (ADR) in place for Ukraine. An ADR is a temporary measure that can delay a removal order that would normally require a person to leave Canada immediately. The removal of these individuals resumes once the situation in their country or region stabilizes. However, individuals who are not allowed in Canada for security reasons or on grounds of criminality, international or human rights violations, or organized crime can still be removed despite the ADR.

A matching fund for Canadians who donate to the Ukraine has been setup through the Canadian Red Cross, [Ukraine Humanitarian Crisis Appeal](#).

More information on these and other actions can be found on the [Canada's response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine website](#).

Provincial Response

The provincial government contributed \$1,000,000 to the Canadian Red Cross to support the people of Ukraine and announced that they are setting up a 1-800 number to take calls to help manage the many phone calls directed towards Ukrainian organizations. The Premier has met with Ukrainian community leaders and with some refugee and settlement agencies to discuss plans for housing, physical and mental health, child care, and other supports. Some possible housing solutions cited by the Premier include ski resorts, university campuses, churches and people's homes.

CITY OF NEW WESTMINSTER RESPONSE

City Operations

The City's Purchasing department has reviewed our current supply chain and has confirmed that a) we do not purchase directly from any Russian Federation company and b) we do not purchase any product manufactured in the Russia Federation. The Purchasing Department will continue to monitor the situation and will work with other Divisions within the City to ensure no product is purchased.

Since March 8, 2022 the City has flown a Ukrainian flag in the Friendship Gardens, adjacent to City Hall.

Welcoming and Inclusive New Westminster Local Immigration Partnership Council

At the March 11, 2022 meeting of the Welcoming and Inclusive New Westminster Local Immigration Partnership Council (WINS LIP), Councillor Das raised the question of how the City and WINS LIP could support the Ukrainian community during this time of crisis. A meeting between the City, WINS LIP and Holy Eucharist Cathedral was suggested.

On March 17, 2022 staff convened a meeting with WINS LIP members and Father Mykhailo Ozorovych of Holy Eucharist Cathedral to share information about actions underway and to explore opportunities for collaboration and coordination of response efforts. In attendance were Holy Eucharist Cathedral, City staff, and representatives from the following WINS LIP member organizations:

- Fraser Health
- Fraserworks Co-op
- MOSAIC
- Ministry of Children and Family Development
- Pacific Immigrant Resources Society
- Welcome Centre

Holy Eucharist Cathedral is acting as an informal hub for crisis response in New Westminster and beyond, collaborating with Ukrainian organizations across the province, all of which are volunteer run with limited resources, and in some cases expertise, to respond to the current crisis. Their work includes providing information to families with relatives in the Ukraine, developing a database of offers of support from across the province, and managing a donation program: [Help Us Help Ukraine](#). To date, over 200 households and individuals from across the province have contacted Holy Eucharist Cathedral to offer housing, donations, employment, etc. There is a need for additional resources and support and Holy Eucharist Cathedral welcomes collaboration with the City and WINS LIP.

The WINS LIP, which is chaired by the City and includes all settlement organizations, is closely monitoring the situation and participating in discussions with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and the provincial government on coordinating response efforts in New Westminster.

Key needs identified at the March 17, 2022 meeting include temporary housing, clothing and household items, employment and financial assistance, food security programming, mental health support, language services, and child care. The importance of coordinating efforts in New Westminster, including understanding who is arriving and what are their needs, was highlighted as being paramount.

NEXT STEPS

At the March 17, 2022 meeting the following actions were proposed:

- Establish a working group that meets monthly to share information and coordinate response efforts. The working group would include City staff, Holy Eucharist Cathedral, WINS LIP members, and other interested individuals and organizations. Staff from Community Planning would chair and coordinate the meetings, and assist with logistics as needed.
- The City to provide communications support to the working group, including raising awareness about the crisis, providing information about resources, listing reputable sites to make a donation, becoming a host family, and more.
- The City to explore potential access to City facilities for providing services and support (e.g., childcare, food security programming, language services, etc.)
- The City to contact the School District about participating on the working group.
- The Welcome Centre playing a central coordinating and navigation role, in collaboration with the Public Library.

The Community Planning section work plan would have to be adjusted to prioritize this new work. Meetings of the Community Poverty Reduction Strategy and implementation of the strategy would be paused until fall 2022. Community planning staff would commence work on the new strategy sometime in 2023. Additional work plan adjustments could be made to allow for more support to be provided from other Planning Division staff, if required. Communications support for working group activities and actions would be accommodated by Corporate Communications Division staff within existing work plans.

Staff anticipates that the learnings from the working group could be applied, at some time in the future, by City and community partners in mobilizing crisis response to support displaced individuals from other regions experiencing conflict.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

To date, this work has been carried out by Climate Action, Planning and Development staff and Library staff. Other Departments will be engaged about potential availability of facilities and other supports.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications at this time.

OPTIONS

The following options are presented to Council for consideration:

1. That Council receive this report for information.
2. That Council provide staff with other direction.

Staff recommends option 1.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Existing Policy/Practice

APPROVALS

This report was prepared by:
Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner

This report was reviewed by:
John Stark, Supervisor of Community Planning

This report was approved by:
Jackie Teed, Acting Director, Climate Action, Planning and Development
Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer