



## STAFF REPORT

**Title:** Alberta Advantage Immigration Program - Community Designation for the Rural Renewal Stream

**Meeting Date:** May 24, 2022

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### **Executive Summary:**

It has been suggested by members of the business community that the City of Cold Lake consider applying for designation under the Rural Renewal Stream of the Province's Alberta Advantage Immigration Program (formerly the Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program).

The Rural Renewal Stream is a pilot project that, to date, no community has been designated under. In order to achieve designation, the Province states that a community must: Have a population under 100,000; have at least one (1) employer in the community with full-time, non-seasonal work available; the community must have the capacity to assist the individual with their settlement.

Once designation is achieved, a candidate's application must be accompanied by a formal endorsement of the community's elected officials, their application must be signed and submitted by an economic development organization whose primary function is economic development, and they must be formally endorsed by a "settlement providing" organization.

Designated communities are responsible for identifying and working with eligible community employers, collaborating with a settlement organization, developing any additional criteria to recruit foreign nationals, responding to foreign national inquiries while actively recruiting, collaborating with employers to select and endorse foreign nationals and developing and implementing a plan to welcome and settle foreign nationals.

Once designated, this program would require a significant effort to sustain and would require capacity within the community and within the City of Cold Lake's administration. A discussion is warranted surrounding whether the community responsibilities could be fulfilled, whether any additional resources would be required to implement the program, and the timelines involved in standing up the needed supports and capacity.

Because this issue is much larger than a simple show by letter of support, administration is recommending that this item be discussed at greater length during Corporate Priorities and community associations such as the Cold Lake Regional



Chamber of Commerce. This should also give administration the time needed to speak with the Provincial Staff who are administering the program to gather more information about the commitment and capacity required.

**Background:**

The Alberta Advantage Immigration Program has three streams available through which workers can access the program. There are additional streams for entrepreneurs and farmers.

The three streams for workers are:

**Alberta Opportunity Stream:** This allows temporary foreign workers currently in Canada to working full time to take a full-time job offer from an employer in Alberta. The offer must be for an eligible position and must be supported by a Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA).

**Alberta Express Entry Stream:** This allows Alberta to nominate a limited number of qualified candidates from the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's Express Entry System. It is geared towards candidates with special skills that support the government's economic objectives, individuals with strong ties to Alberta, and international graduates from Canadian post-secondary institutions.

**Rural Renewal Stream:** This stream allows rural communities to achieve a designation that then allows a community to recruit and retain foreign nationals to live, work and settle in their community.

No direct funding comes from the government for this program, but grants were available to assist communities in building the capacity required for the program's implementation. The deadlines for these grants passed in 2021.

It is highly recommended that Council familiarize itself with the program which can be found at the following link:

<https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-advantage-immigration-program.aspx>

**Alternatives:**

- Council may pass a motion directing administration to seek designation under the Rural Renewal Stream of the Province's Alberta Advantage Immigration Program.
- Council may decline to seek designation under the Rural Renewal Stream of the Province's Alberta Advantage Immigration Program at this time.



- Council may pass a motion directing administration or a committee of council to further research the program and the resources needed for its successful implementation.
- Council may pass a motion referring this item to Corporate Priorities Committee of Council for further discussion.

**Recommended Action:**

- Administration recommends that Council pass a motion referring this item to Corporate Priorities Committee of Council for further discussion.

**Budget Implications (Yes or No):**

No

**Submitted by:**

Kevin Nagoya, Chief Administrative Officer