



# City of Richmond

## Report to Committee

**To:** General Purposes Committee  
**From:** Kim Somerville  
 Director, Community Social Development  
**Re:** **Cities #WithRefugees Campaign**

**Date:** February 19, 2020  
**File:** 07-3300-01/2020-Vol 01

### Staff Recommendation

That City Council demonstrate its commitment to promoting inclusion and supporting refugees by signing the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Cities #WithRefugees pledge, as outlined in the staff report titled "Cities #WithRefugees Campaign" dated February 19, 2020 from the Director, Community Social Development.

Kim Somerville  
 Director, Community Social Development  
 (604-247-4671)

Att. 1

<b>REPORT CONCURRENCE</b>	
<b>CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER</b>	
<b>SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW</b>	<b>INITIALS:</b>
<b>APPROVED BY CAO</b>	

## Staff Report

### Origin

On World Refugee Day 2018, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) launched the Cities #WithRefugees campaign that invited cities from all over the world who are working to promote inclusion, support refugees and bring communities together, to sign a statement of solidarity for refugees (Attachment 1). This global initiative seeks to amplify the efforts of cities who are creating inclusive communities where everyone can live in safety and contribute to and participate in their local community. Over 200 cities have endorsed the statement, including 15 Canadian cities such as Vancouver, Surrey, Port Moody, Toronto, and Victoria.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2018-2022 Strategy #3 – One Community Together:

*Vibrant and diverse arts and cultural activities and opportunities for community engagement and connection.*

This report supports the Social Development Strategy 2013 – 2022 Strategic Direction #5 – Build on Richmond's Cultural Diversity:

*19.1 Encouraging collaborative approaches to ensure that Richmond remains a welcoming and integrated community, while respecting the desires of immigrant groups to maintain their own cultures.*

This report supports the Cultural Harmony Plan 2019–2029 Strategic Direction #4 – Communication and Community Engagement:

*4.5 Develop and implement an awareness campaign about the benefits of an inclusive community and recognize the contributions long-time residents and recent immigrants have made to Richmond's vibrant community.*

### Findings of Fact

The Cities #WithRefugees statement of solidarity describes the important role cities play in creating inclusive communities for refugees who are forced to flee their countries to escape violence and persecution. With nearly two out of three refugees settling in an urban area, cities are at the forefront of the refugee crisis. Welcoming refugees creates opportunities for economic, civic, and social growth as communities benefit from the diversity of experiences and ideas refugees bring. As cities continue to improve their infrastructure, services, and administrative systems to incorporate large inflows of new residents, cities must create spaces where everyone can feel safe, become self-reliant and participate in all aspects of their community. The statement concludes with a call to join UNHCR and 200 other countries to stand #WithRefugees. No additional activities by the City are required to be a part of this campaign.

## Analysis

### Refugee population in Richmond

Richmond continues to welcome refugees in the community each year through both private sponsorship and government-assisted sponsorship. According to the 2016 Census, there were 3,465 residents under the refugee category who arrived in Richmond between 1980 and 2016 (the period when this data was collected by Statistics Canada). The table below shows the leading countries of birth for refugees to Richmond.

### **Leading Countries of Birth for Refugees Living in Richmond (1980-2016)**

Country of Birth	Number of Refugees	Country of Birth	Number of Refugees
China	685	Poland	150
Vietnam	455	Somalia	125
Iran	300	Syria	115
Iraq	260	El Salvador	115
Afghanistan	150	Sri Lanka	55

*Source: Statistics Canada, 2016*

### Collaboration and Partnerships

The City actively participates in Richmond's Community Collaboration Table, also known as Richmond's Local Immigration Partnership (LIP), to enhance collaboration, coordination and strategic planning at the community level in order to foster welcoming and inclusive communities and improve settlement and integration outcomes for immigrants and refugees. The City is also a member of the Inter-Government Committee on Settlement which is composed of federal, provincial and local staff representatives to discuss emerging issues related to immigrant and refugee settlement and integration. This ensures that proper supports are in place for newcomers and the service system is working collaboratively to identify and address any needs as they arise.

### Alignment with the Council-adopted Cultural Harmony Plan 2019–2029

City Council adopted the Cultural Harmony Plan 2019–2029 on November 25, 2019. The purpose of this ten-year plan is to identify innovative and collaborative approaches to strengthen intercultural connections among Richmond residents, provide City programs and services that address the needs of the city's diverse population, and remove barriers to participation for Richmond residents. One of the priority actions in this plan is to develop and implement an awareness campaign about the benefits of an inclusive community and recognize the contributions of long-time residents and recent immigrants to Richmond's vibrant community. By signing the Cities #WithRefugees pledge, the City is demonstrating its commitment to raising

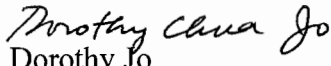
awareness of the plight of refugees around the world and the value they bring to cities such as Richmond.

**Financial Impact**

None.

**Conclusion**

The UNHCR Cities #WithRefugees Campaign seeks to raise awareness of the 71 million refugees around the world and the benefits they bring to their local communities. The City's participation in this campaign is an acknowledgement of our values and is in line with the work the City is already undertaking, particularly the adoption of the Cultural Harmony Plan 2019–2029. The plan demonstrates the City's commitment in building a welcoming and inclusive community for all Richmond residents. The City can further demonstrate this commitment by joining in a statement of solidarity with refugees, alongside 200 other cities in the world.

  
Dorothy Jo  
Inclusion Coordinator  
(604-276-4391)

Att. 1: UNHCR Cities #WithRefugees Statement

Please consider supporting #WithRefugees Campaign by joining the Cities #WithRefugees initiative. The Cities #WithRefugees initiative seeks to amplify the efforts of cities who are creating inclusive communities where everyone can live in safety, become self-reliant, and contribute to and participate in their local community.

UNHCR through its #WithRefugees Campaign will showcase the solidarity that so many cities around the world have demonstrated towards refugees. The Cities #WithRefugees statement of solidarity was released on World Refugee Day 2018 on June 20<sup>th</sup> with 60 cities signing the statement. ***Cities can continue to sign onto the document to send a strong message of global grass roots solidarity for families forced to flee [here](#).***



### Cities #WithRefugees Statement

We, mayors and local authorities from around the world, stand #WithRefugees. The role of towns, cities and counties in creating inclusive communities and promoting hope has never been as important.

Today, over 25 million people worldwide are living outside their countries to escape violence and persecution. Refugees leave nearly everything behind to seek safety: their homes, their jobs, and sometimes even their families. Despite the unimaginable sacrifices refugees make to find safety, many keep their hopes and dreams for the future. Refugees' will to survive and their drive to help their families and communities prosper are not easily extinguished by adversity.

When refugees arrive to a new country, nearly two out of three settle in an urban area. As cities, we are undeniably at the forefront of refugee crises, and our communities benefit from their tenacity and courage. Welcoming refugees creates opportunities for economic, civic and social growth. The diversity of experiences and ideas refugees bring spurs creativity and innovation. For example, both Albert Einstein and Sergey Brin were refugees. Their contributions did not just change our communities; they changed the course of human history.

As cities, we are constantly working to improve our infrastructure, services, and administrative systems in order to meet governance challenges, such as incorporating large inflows of new residents. This work is critical to our shared future. As leaders, we have a responsibility to receive and include new residents with care in order for our cities to become stronger and more resilient to change. Ultimately, those among us who rise to this call for leadership will reap the benefits of societies that are the most productive, the most modern, and the most filled with promise.

As local authorities, we shoulder the enormous responsibility of providing access to housing, health care, education, skills training, and employment opportunities for newcomers and long-term residents alike. Solutions to refugee crises start at the local level and require that everyone plays a part: every city, every neighbourhood, and every individual can contribute. As leaders, we must create spaces where everyone can live in safety, become self-reliant, and contribute to and participate in their local community.

The vital work that cities do can be a model for others, forging a path forward as national governments create and adopt a Global Compact on Refugees to strengthen international crisis response. Our work as mayors and city authorities is primarily local, but when we are united in purpose with each other and our refugee residents, the impact of our solidarity will be global.

Join us and stand #WithRefugees. Together we can make a world of difference.

Aix-les-Bains, France  
Albury City, Australia  
Altena, Germany  
Amsterdam, Netherlands  
Ann Arbor, MI, USA  
Athens, Greece  
Bankstown, Australia  
Barcelona, Spain  
Berbera, Somaliland/Somalia  
Berlin, Germany  
Bosaso-district, Somalia  
Bradford, UK  
Braga, Portugal  
Brighton, UK  
Bristol, UK  
Brussels, Belgium  
Byron, Australia  
Cardinia, Australia  
Casino, Australia  
Chicago, IL, USA  
Chula Vista, CA, USA  
Dallas, TX, USA  
Darebin, Australia  
Dire Dawa, Ethiopia  
Evanston, IL, USA  
Galway, Ireland  
Greater Dandenong, Australia  
Hargeisa, Somaliland  
Hobart, Australia  
Jackson, WY, USA  
Kalumbila town Council, Zambia  
Kampala, Uganda  
Kortrijk, Belgium  
Lane Cove, Australia  
Leicester, UK  
Livadia, Greece  
Ljubljana, Slovenia  
London, England  
Los Angeles, CA, USA  
Madison, WI, USA  
Madrid, Spain  
Manchester, UK  
Melbourne, Australia  
Mexico City, Mexico  
Milan, Italy  
Mogadishu, Somalia  
Montevideo, Uruguay  
Montgomery County, MD, USA  
Namur, Belgium  
New York, NY, USA  
Nicosia, Cyprus  
Paterson, NJ, USA  
Philadelphia, PA, USA  
Providence, RI, USA  
Queanbeyan, Australia  
Randwick, Australia  
Rochester, NY, USA  
Ryde, Australia  
Saltillo, Mexico  
São Paulo, Brazil  
Saskatoon, Canada  
Sheffield, UK  
South Orange, NJ, USA  
St. Louis, MO, USA  
St. Paul, MN, USA  
Sydney, Australia  
Torino, Italy  
Toronto, Canada  
Union City, CA, USA  
València, Spain  
Vancouver, Canada  
Victoria, Canada  
Vienna, Austria  
Warsaw, Poland  
Whittlesea, Australia