The Winnipeg Private Refugee Sponsorship Assurance Program
File G-8 (Vol. 6)

16. In June of 2002 Council approved the Homegrown Economic Development Strategy (HEDS), which identified "closing the skills gap and enhancing immigration" as one of its three priority policy foundations and issues and stressed that the City must "play a leadership role in supporting enhanced immigration sponsorship programs".

The Executive Policy Committee has been advised that the Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council (MIIC) has requested the City of Winnipeg to consider acting as a guarantor in support of "family linked" (individuals with relatives or friends in Manitoba) refugee sponsorship.

Numerous individuals, including a provincial government representative and a respected refugee advocate, have characterized the need for family linked sponsorships as "huge". It is predicted that Manitoba will begin to lose population at an accelerating rate, with associated difficulties. Winnipeg, with two-thirds of the provincial population, will share proportionately in this slide and predicament. At this point the City of Winnipeg plays no role in an issue that is fundamental to its future.

On July 17, 2002, the Executive Policy Committee passed the following motions:

- That the Mayor, supported by the Executive Policy Committee Secretariat, enter into negotiations with relevant parties to carry out a pilot project in support of increasing immigration to Winnipeg by supporting family linked refugee sponsorship.

- That the Mayor, supported by the Executive Policy Committee Secretariat, enter into negotiations with the Governments of Manitoba and Canada in support of developing a broad tri-level agreement towards building innovative immigration partnerships in favour of growing Winnipeg's population.

- That the Mayor submit any draft agreements to Executive Policy Committee and City Council for approval.

- Concurred in a recommendation that "the City … enter into negotiations" as outlined above and that "a negotiated pilot project be brought back to the Executive Policy Committee and Council for approval."

The Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council (MIIC) presented a relatively simple and potentially low-risk, but effective, high profile opportunity for the City of Winnipeg. The proposal suggests partnerships between refugee sponsoring groups and the City of Winnipeg be formed "to substantially increase the number of refugee family members settling in Winnipeg". These groups would "work with local community and family members to priorize

refugees with appropriate skills, language abilities and family supports. Sponsoring groups, constituent groups and Winnipeg family members would take responsibility for providing for the needs of the family members when they arrive and helping them to settle successfully."

The City of Winnipeg's role would be to provide funds to ensure that there would be no dependency on the Government of Canada for the first year of the sponsorships, and to provide for settlement costs where resources are not available.

The basic proposal is that the City of Winnipeg approve a grant of $250,000.00 for the fund. The nature or intent of the fund is to guarantee, or "underwrite", the sponsorship of refugees by sponsor groups. It can therefore be expected that the majority of the funds will roll over from year to year. A minimum of draw down may be required to cover settlement costs, in the unlikely event of breakdowns in sponsorships.

Executive Policy Committee Secretariat staff have met and entered into negotiations with representatives of relevant parties, including:

- Manitoba Labour and Immigration
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC)
- Manitoba Refugee Sponsors (MRS)
- Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council
- Winnipeg Foundation

The parties' negotiations have resulted in a Draft Agreement identified on Appendix "B".

A tri-level agreement has not yet been concluded, however, negotiations continue in this regard. In reference to the Program, Federal Minister Coderre, in his August 15, 2002, letter to the Mayor suggests the Program "represents an innovative partnership… and has the potential to contribute to Winnipeg's growth and by accepting refugees who do not have family in Winnipeg but are interested in making Winnipeg their home, you will be… expanding the base for future immigrant and refugee sponsorships." The latter point is in reference to the Program and Draft Agreement including, at CIC's request, "community-linked" (that is, not just "family-linked") sponsorships. This allows for identification by CIC missions abroad of potential sponsored persons – so-called "unnamed" refugees that CIC has requested be included in the Program.

In her August 14, 2002, letter to the Mayor, Provincial Minister Barrett suggests the program is "an important tool to support the humanitarian immigration stream that has been so successful due to local leadership and dedication."

Report of the Executive Policy Committee dated September 18, 2002

An Advisory Board should be established, comprising representatives from the City of Winnipeg, Province of Manitoba, Government of Canada, and MRS. The Board would be responsible for oversight and/or implementation of the intent of the Program. It could serve a number of longer-term purposes, including laying the foundation for further business and government collaboration.

Attached as Attachment "A" is a Financial Impact Statement dated September 17, 2002, which outlines the costs involved with the Program.

The Executive Policy Committee recommends:

I. That the City of Winnipeg approve The Winnipeg Private Refugee Sponsorship Assurance Program according to the principles outlined in the Draft Agreement identified on Attachment "B".

II. That an additional appropriation be approved for the 2002 Adopted Tax Supported Budget to provide a grant to the Manitoba Refugee Sponsors (MRS) or its agent for the purpose of establishing an assurance fund of $250,000.00 and $7,500.00 related to administrative support.

III. That ongoing funding of $30,000.00 for 2003 and beyond, for a maximum total of five years, related to administrative support, be referred to the administration for recommendation and review during deliberation on the 2003 Current Estimates process.

IV. That an Advisory Board be established to monitor the operation of the Agreement and the Program for measuring success, and to provide oversight to this sponsorship guarantor project.

V. That the Mayor be authorized to appoint the City's representative to the Advisory Board.

VI. That the project be reviewed after twelve (12) months of activity.

VII. That the Executive Policy Committee Secretariat work with the Proper Officers of the City to do all things necessary to implement the foregoing.

Attachment "A" referred to in Clause 16 of the Report of the Executive Policy Committee dated September 18, 2002-09-18

Financial Impact Statement:

Project Name: The Winnipeg Private Refugee Sponsorship Assurance Program

Date: September 17, 2002 First Year of Program **2002**

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Capital					
Capital Expenditures Required					
Less: Existing Budgeted Costs					
Additional Capital Budget Required	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Funding Sources:					
Debt - Internal					
Debt - External					
Grants (Enter Description Here)					
Reserves, Equity, Surplus					
Other - Enter Description Here					
Total Funding	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Total Additional Capital Budget Required	$ -				
Total Additional Debt Required	$ -				
Current Expenditures/Revenues					
Direct Costs	$ 257,500				
Less: Incremental Revenue/Recovery					
Net Cost/(Benefit)	$ 257,500	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Less: Existing Budget Amounts					
Net Budget Adjustment Required	$ 257,500	$ 30,000	$ 30,000	$ 30,000	$ 30,000

Michael Ruta
Corporate Controller

Attachment "B" referred to in Clause 16 of the Report of the Executive Policy Committee dated September 18, 2002

Draft Agreement

to Establish

The Winnipeg Private Refugee Sponsorship Assurance Program

Between:

The City of Winnipeg ("the City")
Manitoba Refugee Sponsors ("MRS") Group

Guiding Principles:

1. The City desires to support private family-linked or community-linked refugee sponsorships as one effective mechanism for increasing the city's population, and for responding to the concerns of many of its citizens from refugee backgrounds with family still abroad and at risk;
2. MRS is an association of the faith-based and community groups involved in the private sponsorship of refugees in Winnipeg, and desires that more refugees be sponsored;
3. The parties wish to collaborate with each other and with the Government of Canada and the Province of Manitoba in increasing Winnipeg's population while meeting the humanitarian need for refugee resettlement;
4. The parties wish to establish a Program to supports private family-linked or community-linked refugee sponsorship, which shall be known as The Winnipeg Private Refugee Sponsorship Assurance Program, as one effective mechanism for increasing the city's population and for responding to the concerns of many of its citizens from refugee backgrounds with family still abroad and at risk;
5. The Government of Canada endorses such initiatives as an expression of its existing policy in support of the private sponsorship of refugees and as an instrument for the greater regional distribution of immigrants; and
6. The Province of Manitoba supports the enhancement of its population by such means, as one facet of its commitment to the sustaining and growth of its population base, and develops programs and services to support immigrants and refugees in Winnipeg.

Roles and Responsibilities:

- The City agrees:

1. To provide to MRS or its agent a grant in the amount of Two Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars ($250,000) to be used as an assurance fund to ensure that financial support is available to Constituent Groups who undertake family-linked or community-linked refugee sponsorships in the event of difficulties with the

2. sponsorship that may require support, as more fully described and in accordance with this agreement;
3. To establish an Advisory Board to monitor the Program and to make recommendations in respect thereof and with regard to complementary programs and initiatives; and,
4. To provide MRS or its agent up to Thirty Thousand Dollars ($30,000) for the administrative support of its work in carrying out the procedures of this agreement in the first year of the project, and for up to four years thereafter, subject to the City's annual budgetary approvals.

- MRS agrees:

1. To participate in the further development and execution of the Program, including the development of criteria for qualifying family-linked or community-linked refugee sponsorships that will receive the assurance of the funds; and
2. To designate an administrator/agent on behalf of MRS for the purposes of the Program to act as administrator of the Program to provide for the proper functioning of this agreement, including reviewing applications and ensuring that settlement arrangements as described are met and monitored as per Citizenship and Immigration Canada's resettlement and monitoring plan, and providing an annual accounting of its performance.

- The parties agree:

1. To appoint representatives to act as a working group to further develop processes and terms of reference for the efficient execution of the Program;
2. To identify a representative to an Advisory Board. The Advisory Board will also include one representative to be identified by Manitoba Labour and Immigration and by Citizenship and Immigration Canada and by representatives of organizations that the parties may from time to time invite; and
3. That the Advisory Board shall meet at least twice each calendar year during the operation of this agreement, and more often as required.

Definitions:

- "Sponsorship Agreement Holder" means an organization with an agreement with the Government of Canada, permitting the organization to sponsor refugees.
- "Constituent Group" means an organization with authority, delegated from a Sponsorship Agreement Holder, to sponsor refugees.
- "Family-linked or community-linked refugee sponsorship" means a refugee sponsorship to provide the primary support for the sponsored person or persons during their initial year in Winnipeg initiated by a resident of Winnipeg or a community organization in Winnipeg, where the initiator commits to the Sponsorship Agreement Holder filing the sponsorship application with the Government of Canada.
- "Sponsored person" means a convention refugee identified by residents or community organizations in Winnipeg or by CIC missions abroad.

- “Difficulties with the sponsorship that may require support” means situations where family, the constituent groups and the Sponsorship Agreement Holder do not have the sufficient wherewithal to provide support to the sponsored person(s) during any part of the sponsorship period.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF THE PARTIES HERETO HAVE EXECUTED THIS AGREEMENT AS OF [DATE].

The City of Winnipeg

Per_____ Per _____
Mayor City Clerk

Manitoba Refugee Sponsors

Per_____
Chair