

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – MAY 29, 2006

OUTREACH TO IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES: MUNICIPAL ELECTION NOTICES

Recommendation

Councillor Tony Carella recommends that the Clerk be directed to develop a plan for the issuing of municipal election notices in no less than three and no more than five languages other than English and French.

Economic Impact

Nil. Any expenses relating to this initiative would be detailed in the requested plan, for consideration by Council at some future date.

Purpose

To encourage greater participation in the upcoming municipal election by citizens who are relatively recent immigrants and are fluent neither in English nor in French.

Background - Analysis and Options

Recent deputants and other concerned citizens have noted the general decline in voter turnout, particularly low in the case of municipal elections. In light of this situation, it is a reasonable assumption that given the increasingly diverse, multicultural nature of Vaughan's population, it is incumbent upon the City to ensure that basic information relating to the upcoming municipal election---as provided in a variety of election notices---reaches the broadest possible range of the electorate. As many of these individuals are not yet fluent in either of Canada's official languages, providing notices in their mother tongue is essential.

This is the strategy recently adopted by the Town of Newmarket, which passed (on May 9, 2006) a by-law to provide 2006 municipal election notices in Chinese, German, Punjabi, Spanish, and Vietnamese, as part of the Town's "New Faces in New Places" component of its *Vote 2006* campaign.

In passing the by-law, the Town noted that attaining Canadian citizenship is typically a five-year process that starts with arrival to Canada and ends with the citizenship ceremony. According to some linguistic experts, complete fluency in English can take up to seven years, thereby leaving a two-year gap between citizenship and complete fluency, which gap the Town's new by-law is meant to address.

In the case of Vaughan, and as reported in the Region of York's *Community Snapshots: Recent Immigrants Living in York Region*, the number of recent immigrants increased by 127% between 1991 and 2001---the second largest percentage increase amongst municipalities in York Region that have a sizeable immigrant population. The top **places of birth** for recent immigrants are the Russian Federation (16%), Ukraine (9%), and India (7%). With respect to the **ethnic origin** of recent immigrants, Russian is first at 23%, Chinese second at 19%, and East Indian third at 17%. The most common **visible minority** groups among recent immigrants are South Asians (32%), Chinese (21%), and Filipino (10%).

Fully 56% of recent immigrants are Canadian citizens, and thus eligible to vote in municipal elections.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources have been allocated and approved.

Conclusion

In an effort to increase voter turnout at the next municipal election, it is appropriate that the City of Vaughan develop a plan for reaching out to potential voters among recent immigrants to Canada, who have become citizens---and are therefore entitled to vote, but who still lack sufficient fluency in English to participate fully in the election process.

Attachments

Region of York's *COMMUNITY SNAPSHOTS: Recent Immigrants Living in York Region*, pp. 78-83

Report prepared by:

Councillor Tony Carella

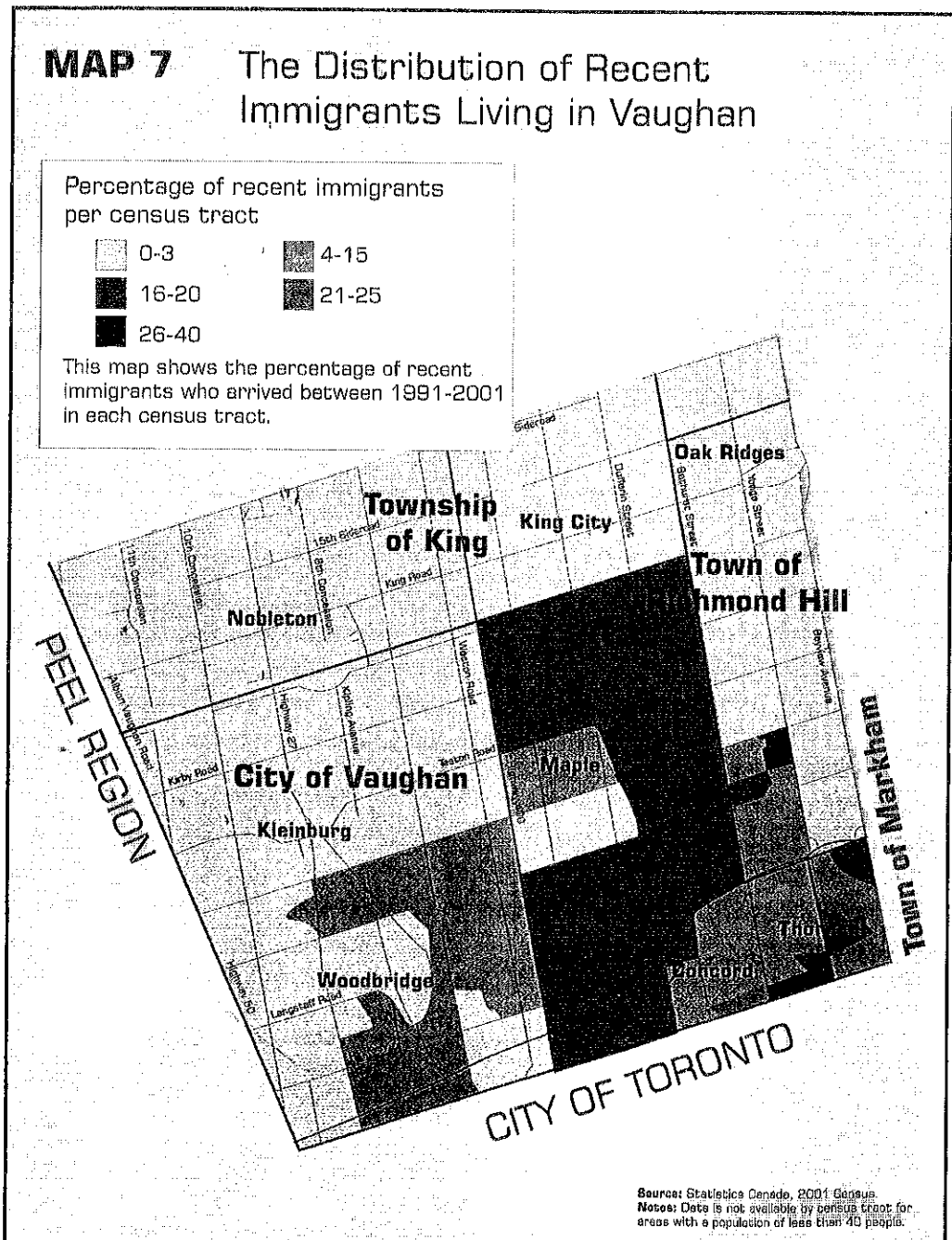
Respectfully submitted,

Tony Carella
Councillor- Ward 2

City of Vaughan

Demographics

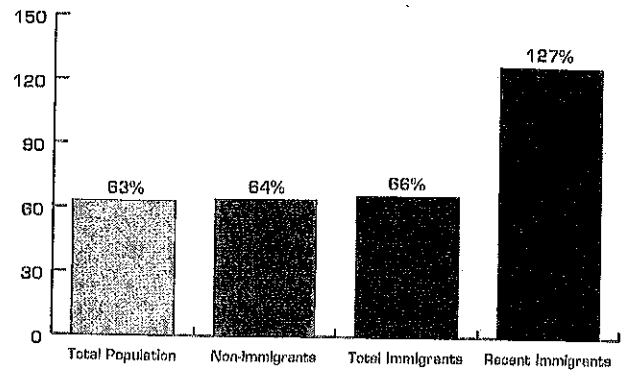
- The City of Vaughan accounts for 18% of York Region's recent immigrant population.
- In Vaughan, the immigrant population increased by 16,885 between 1991 and 2001. This is the third highest increase of all municipalities with a sizeable immigrant population. The spatial distribution of recent immigrants in Vaughan is shown on Map 7.



APPENDIX 1

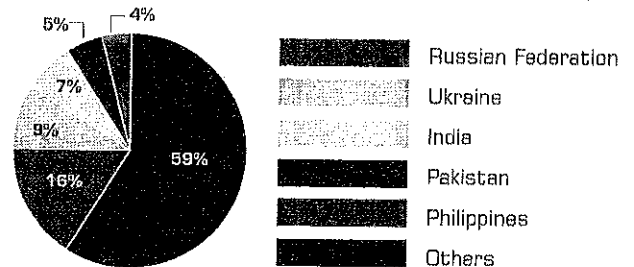
- The number of recent immigrants has increased by 127% between 1991 and 2001, as shown in Chart 42. This represents the second largest percentage increase amongst municipalities in York Region that have a sizeable immigrant population.
- The top places of birth for recent immigrants are Russian Federation (16%), Ukraine (9%) and India (7%) as shown in Chart 43.
- In Vaughan, Russian is the top *ethnic origin* of recent immigrants (1991-2001) at 23%, followed by Chinese (19%) and East Indian (17%).
- The *age at immigration* for recent immigrants is similar to the age distribution for recent immigrants in York Region as a whole.
- *Marital status* profile is similar to York Region profile.
- 56% of recent immigrants are Canadian citizens.
- The most common *visible minority group* amongst recent immigrants is *South Asian* (32%), Chinese (21%) and Filipino (10%), as shown in Chart 44.

CHART 43: Percentage Change in Population Between 1991 and 2001 by Immigrant Status, Vaughan, 2001



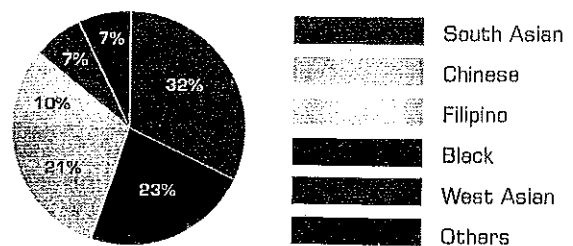
Source: Statistics Canada, Custom Tabulations, Census 2001

CHART 44: Top Five Places of Birth for Recent Immigrants, Vaughan, 2001



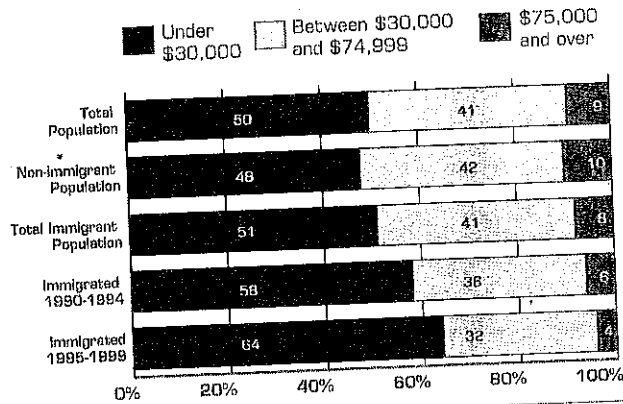
Source: Statistics Canada, Custom Tabulations, Census 2001

CHART 45: Top Five Visible Minority Groups for Recent Immigrants (1991-2001), Vaughan, 2001



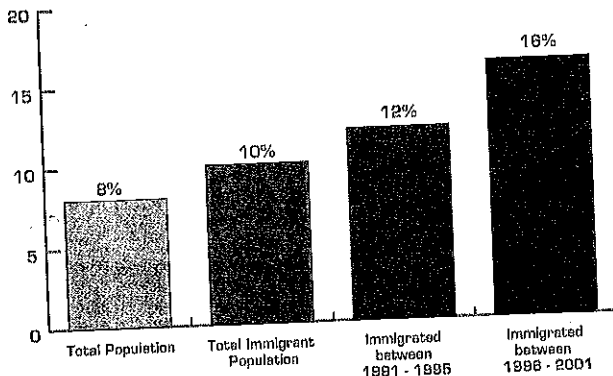
Source: Statistics Canada, Custom Tabulations, Census 2001

CHART 46: Income Groups for Population Aged 15 Years and Over by Immigrant Status, Vaughan, 2001



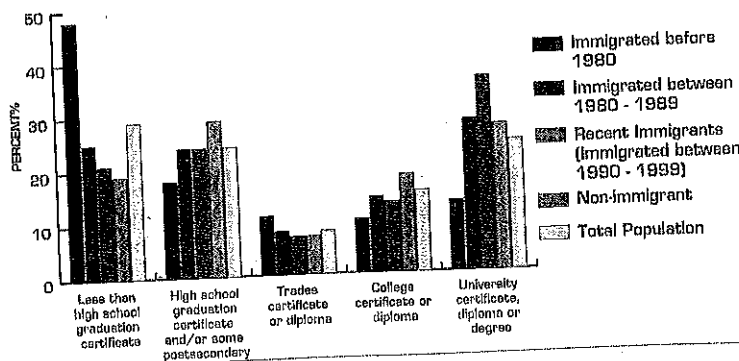
Source: Statistics Canada, Custom Tabulations, Census 2001

CHART 47: Percent of Population (15 years of age and over) Under LICO by Immigrant Status, Vaughan, 2001



Source: Statistics Canada, Custom Tabulations, Census 2001

CHART 48: Highest Level of Schooling for Population Aged 15 Years and Over by Period of Immigration, Vaughan, 2001



Source: Statistics Canada, Custom Tabulations, Census 2001

Income

- Recent immigrants (1995-1999) living in Vaughan have a larger percentage (64%) of their population in the under \$30,000 income level than the *non-immigrant population* (48%), as shown in Chart 45.
- In Vaughan, 16% of recent immigrants are low income compared to 8% of total population, as shown in Chart 46. This is the lowest low income rate amongst municipalities in York Region with a sizeable immigrant population.

Education

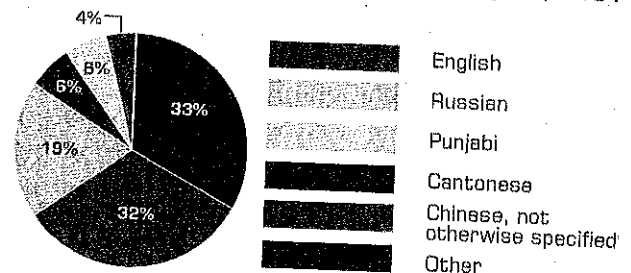
- In Vaughan, the percentage of recent immigrants (1990-1999) aged 15 to 24 not attending school is 26%, compared to 30% for the total population.
- In Vaughan, 36% of recent immigrants (1990-1999) have a university certificate, diploma or degree, compared to 27% of *non-immigrants*, as shown in Chart 47. This is reflective of the overall trend for York Region where recent immigrants generally have higher levels of university education than the *non-immigrant population*.
- The major fields of study amongst recent immigrants (1991-2001) with post secondary qualifications are commerce, management and business administration (19%), engineering (16%), and technology and trades (13%).

APPENDIX 1

Language

- In Vaughan, 8% of the recent immigrant population (1991-2001) have no *knowledge* of either *official language*. This is the third highest percentage amongst York Region municipalities.
- The most common languages spoken at home are English (32%), Russian (19%), Punjabi (6%), Cantonese (6%) and Chinese (4%), as shown in Chart 48.
- English is the main language used at work by 79% of recent immigrants (1991-2001).

CHART 49: Top Five Home Languages (single response) for Recent Immigrants (1991-2001), Vaughan, 2001



Source: Statistics Canada, Custom Tabulations, Census 2001

Religion

- In Vaughan, the most common religious affiliations of recent immigrants are Roman Catholic (21%), Jewish (21%) and "No Religion" (15%). This is different than the breakdown for recent immigrants in York Region in general which is most commonly "No Religion", followed by Roman Catholic and Muslim. This is slightly different than the religious affiliation profile for the total population of York Region, with a higher proportion of Jewish and lower proportions of Roman Catholic and "No Religion".

Mobility

- A greater percentage of recent immigrants (1991-2001) are *movers* (34%) than the total population (16%). This is the highest rate of mobility for recent immigrants amongst the area municipalities in York Region.

APPENDIX 2

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS - AREA MUNICIPAL SNAPSHOTS

Distribution

The majority of recent immigrants (98%) live in the five more urban municipalities in York Region (Aurora, Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill and Vaughan). Of the five municipalities, Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan host the majority of recent immigrants. Although the data does not explain why this pattern exists, it is most likely a reflection of proximity to services, public transit accessibility, range of housing choice, proximity to employment, and proximity to Toronto.

Place of Birth

In terms of place of birth, the Russian Federation is the most common place of birth for recent immigrants in Aurora and Vaughan. Hong Kong is the most common place of birth for recent immigrants in Markham and Richmond Hill. For recent immigrants in Newmarket, the United States and China are the most common places of birth.

Some places of birth of recent immigrants which do not represent sizeable proportions for all five urban municipalities but are sizeable in at least one of the municipalities include:

- A sizeable proportion of recent immigrants born in Mexico living in Aurora
- Sizeable proportions of recent immigrants born in Iran living in Markham
- Sizeable proportions of recent immigrants born in Germany living in Newmarket
- A sizeable proportion of recent immigrants born in Ukraine living in Richmond Hill
- Sizeable proportions of recent immigrants born in Pakistan and Philippines living in Vaughan.

Age

In all five municipalities, most recent immigrants (67% to 69%) were over 20 years of age at the time of immigration. In other words, the majority of recent immigrants are of prime working age, child bearing age and legal voting age.

Knowledge of Official Languages

Knowledge of official languages varies amongst the five more urban municipalities in York Region. The municipality with the lowest proportion of recent immigrants having no knowledge of either French or English is Aurora (2%). Markham has the highest percentage (13%) of recent immigrants with no *knowledge of either official language*.

APPENDIX 2

Visible Minorities

Chinese and *South Asian* or *West Asian* are the most common *visible minorities* in the five more urban municipalities in York Region.

Income

Across the five more urban municipalities, there are consistently higher percentages of recent immigrants that fall within the low income category, compared to the total population of the municipality. Generally, recent immigrants are two to three times as likely to be within the low income category compared to the total population.