

For Immediate Release

Come North – Population Growth, Let's Do It Together

January 14, 2021 – Stronger, together is the familiar message in the newly released Come North 10-point Action Plan. This report details what was discussed at two conferences in February 2020 and lays out an action plan for making Northern Ontario a welcoming place for newcomers.

"The action plan released today must be implemented immediately." Said Ryan Reynard, Executive Director of Lake of the Woods Business Incentive Corp., a host of the Come North conferences.

James Franks, Economic Development Officer for the City of Temiskaming Shores, the other conference host, added that "For some organizations this means continuing to move forward, even in the face of COVID, with existing efforts to attack racism, further reconciliation, and attract newcomers to our regions. For others, it means critical changes in direction and the investment of new resources."

Key points in the plan include:

- **Northern communities must become welcoming communities** – for everyone. Newcomers and current residents alike.
- Northern Ontario needs a coordinated marketing plan that allows large and small communities to leverage shared resources. Common themes, common messages, common resources, and a collective effort to promote Northern Ontario and all the communities present here. **Growing the north is not a zero-sum game.**
- Greater linkages need to be maintained between those combatting racism, those promoting immigration, and those seeking to further reconciliation. **Newcomers must be part of the reconciliation process from their first arrival in our regions.**
- The existing immigration portals need to be brought up to date, be better resourced, and be more directly accountable to the community. They also need to shift focus to **population growth and include more information on tools to fight racism and promote reconciliation.**

You can read the Action Plan along with the full conference report and conference proceedings here: <https://www.northernpolicy.ca/come-north-reports>

Media Interviews: Ryan Reynard from Lake of the Woods, James Franks from City of Temiskaming Shores, Stacey Parks from Northwestern Local Immigration Partnership and NPI President and CEO Charles Cirtwill are available for comment. To arrange an interview, please contact:

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About the Come North Project:

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Come North began with two planning conferences held in February 2020 in Thunder Bay and Temiskaming Shores. The conferences aimed to discuss population growth strategies for Northern Ontario, while examining the challenges and expectations of domestic migrants and international newcomers. The conferences were designed around information sharing, planning and coordination. Attendees left the conferences with a better understanding of what resources are available to attract, support, and retain population in rural and remote communities throughout Northern Ontario.

Lake of the Woods Business Incentive Corp. and the City of Temiskaming Shores hosted the two conferences.

Northern Policy Institute and the Northwest Local Immigration Partnership provided organizational support.