



REQUEST FOR DECISION

SUBJECT:	Pausing the Rural Renewal Stream Program		
SUBMISSION TO:	REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING	REVIEWED AND APPROVED FOR SUBMISSION	
MEETING DATE:	March 25, 2025	CAO:	MANAGER: LG
DEPARTMENT:	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	DIR: MAV	PRESENTER: LG
STRATEGIC PLAN:	Economy	LEG: SS	

RELEVANT LEGISLATION:

Provincial (cite) – N/A

Council Bylaw/Policy (cite) – N/A

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

MOTION: That Council direct Administration to pause participation in the Rural Renewal Stream Program for an indefinite period of time.

BACKGROUND/PROPOSAL:

The Rural Renewal Stream (RRS) is a provincial immigration program aimed at addressing workforce shortages in rural communities. While its main goal is to fill these gaps, it also aims to accelerate the process for newcomers to obtain residency in Canada. Once granted, permanent residents are free to live and work anywhere in the country. However, applicants must reside and work in Alberta while their permanent residency application is being processed, which must be submitted within six months of receiving an RRS nomination.

On March 20, 2023, Greenview, in partnership with the Town of Valleyview, obtained designation under the Provincial Rural Renewal Stream program and remains in effect until March 29, 2026. Administration is proposing indefinitely pausing the Rural Renewal Stream in Greenview due to significant administrative burdens, slow processing times, and decreased program allocations following Federal and Provincial immigration policy changes that have lowered immigration allocation spaces throughout Alberta. The program demands extensive staff time for due diligence, diverting resources from other municipal priorities. Alberta Advantage Immigration Program processing delays create uncertainty, and the 50.96% reduction in overall allocations for 2025—combined with 47,663 Expressions of Interest (as of the latest update from AAIP on February 20, 2025) in the selection pool—makes the probability of selection slim. Since January 1, 2024, Greenview has conducted only three Alberta Advantage Immigration Program checks, further underscoring the program's limited impact. Additionally, the County of Grande Prairie and the City of Grande Prairie have already paused their programs, demonstrating a regional shift in approach. Given these factors, Greenview should align with neighbouring municipalities and reassess its participation in the Rural Renewal Stream to ensure a more strategic allocation of resources and economic development efforts. This pause will allow for reassessment and realignment of provincial resources needed for the success of the program in rural communities.

BENEFITS OF THE RECOMMENDED ACTION:

1. The benefit of Council accepting the recommended motion is re-allocating staff resources into business development and outreach.
2. The benefit of Council accepting the recommended motion is to adequately support newcomers who have already been issued endorsement letters.

DISADVANTAGES OF THE RECOMMENDED ACTION:

1. The disadvantage of the recommended action will be the loss of a program for Greenview and Town of Valleyview businesses to attract employees.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative #1: Council has the alternative not to pause the program and continue to administer until March 29, 2026, when the term is due. Administration does not recommend this based on the over saturation of the program and the timelines for processing applications.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATION:

There are no financial implications to the recommended motion.

STAFFING IMPLICATION:

Staff resources can be positively re-allocated into business development and outreach.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT LEVEL:

Greenview has adopted the IAP2 Framework for public consultation.

INCREASING LEVEL OF PUBLIC IMPACT

Inform

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL

Inform - To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.

PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC

Inform - We will keep you informed.

FOLLOW UP ACTIONS:

Administration will continue to closely monitor Alberta Advantage Immigration Program for provincial announcements related to the Rural Renewal Stream and provide updates to Council as necessary. If the program is paused, Administration will be required to notify our business community, the Town of Valleyview and Alberta Advantage Immigration of the decision.

ATTACHMENT(S): N/A