

Thursday, March 26, 2009

For Immediate Release

York Regional Council approves plan to commence work on a multi-year Community and Health Services plan

Council invests an immediate \$1 million to help residents in need

NEWMARKET – York Regional Council today approved investing \$1 million to assist vulnerable residents immediately and commence development of a multi-year Community and Health Services plan.

“We are spending \$1 million immediately to address the pressing needs of our most vulnerable residents,” said York Region Chairman and CEO Bill Fisch. “We will also develop a five-year plan that will outline how the Region will respond to changing community needs and economic conditions.”

The immediate expenditures include five new programs and one program enhancement that will:

- Improve supports to the working poor
- Improve supports to clients with multiple barriers
- Respond to residents’ immediate needs

“The recession has brought individuals and families into crisis situations and they need our help,” said Town of Richmond Hill Regional Councillor Brenda Hogg, Chair of the Region’s Community Services and Housing Committee. “These programs will help stabilize vulnerable residents, support parents and children who face hardship and, most importantly, prevent homelessness.”

The original focus of the multi-year plan was to address crucial community needs and identify service gaps in social and health services provided through the Region. But due to the economic downturn, Council has taken action now to help vulnerable residents manage through the current economic uncertainty.

“The multi-year plan will help us meet our long term goals,” said Town of Markham Deputy Mayor Jack Heath, Chair of the Region’s Health and EMS Committee. “It will give us a clearer picture of the impacts on our programs and services and enable us to respond more effectively to our residents’ needs.”

This expenditure to help vulnerable residents is funded through a 0.2 per cent tax levy increase in the 2009 Operating Budget that was reserved for social services and housing. Beginning in 2010, \$1.3 million will be allocated to similar early investments annually.

“Regional Council looks forward to working with all levels of government to find sustainable solutions that will benefit our residents and our economy during changing economic conditions,” added Chairman Fisch.

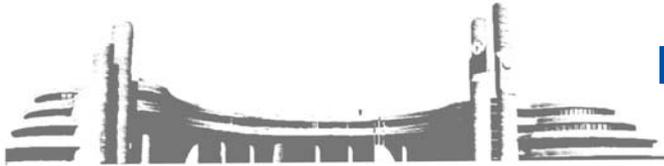
Expected to be in place for 2010, the multi-year plan will focus on the provincially-mandated and Council-approved programs and services that the Community and Health Services department provides. It will highlight and assess key human services issues and challenges in York Region, develop strategic directions and best practices for the Community and Health Services department to respond to the issues identified and contribute to achieving the Region’s long-term goals.

For more information on The Regional Municipality of York, please visit www.york.ca

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Attachment: *Backgrounder: Early investments to provide immediate relief*



Thursday, March 26, 2009

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Early investments to provide immediate relief

\$1 million expenditure to help residents in need

NEWMARKET – York Regional Council today approved the development of a multi-year Community and Health Services plan and the allocation of \$1 million to enable the Region to take immediate and preventative action to help vulnerable residents manage through the economic uncertainty.

York Region will create five new programs and enhance one program as follows:

Improve supports for the working poor		
Emergency Financial Assistance to Avoid Loss of Housing	Provides temporary assistance to households living in market-rent units who are at risk of losing housing due to income loss.	\$200,000
Homelessness Prevention Program (Program enhancement)	Provides temporary assistance to renters in private rental units or homeowners to enable them to stay in their homes after losing their jobs and while searching for new ones.	\$250,000

Improve supports to Community and Health Services clients with multiple barriers		
Clothing Allowance for Domiciliary Hostel Residents	Provides a one-time general clothing allowance to domiciliary hostel residents to ensure that they receive adequate clothing. There are about 360 residents per month in domiciliary hostels.	\$108,000
Household Support Services for Special Priority Applicants and Households	Provides up to three months of transitional housing support services to special priority applicants (e.g., people who are suffering from or at risk of domestic violence).	\$87,500

Respond to residents' needs		
Backpack Program	Helps support families receiving Ontario Works (OW) to provide their children with essential school supplies at the start of the school year. This program will help 2,500 school-aged children across the Region.	\$125,000
Winter Coat Program	Helps support families receiving Ontario Works (OW) to provide their children with a winter coat. This program will help 3,200 children in York Region each year.	\$240,000

In 2009, approximately \$1 million will be expended to address these initiatives and \$1.3 million annually beginning in 2010.

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