

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT FUNDING STRATEGY
INITIATIVES UPDATE
AND REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF RECOMMENDED 2004 PROJECTS**

(Regional Council at its meeting on December 11, 2003 adopted the foregoing Report with the following amendment:

That the reference to “\$2.5 million granted by the Town of Richmond Hill” in Attachment 1, Page 1, Item 8 regarding Pathways for Children, Youth and Families of York Region (Markham office), be deleted.)

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The initiatives update for the Community Development and Investment Funding Strategy (CDIF) be received for information by Council.
2. Regional Council approve the community services projects recommended for 2004 Purchase of Service contracts by the CDIF evaluation team.
3. The Commissioner of Community Services and Housing be authorized to report on these commitments to provincial funding sources as required before year-end, and be authorized to execute these contracts, subject to the review of the Regional Solicitor.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to update Committee and Council on activities undertaken in 2003 to implement the Community Development and Investment Funding (CDIF) Strategy, and the status of the CDIF Strategy to date.

This report also requests approval from Council of the projects recommended through the Request for Proposal to Provide Priority Community Services to Vulnerable Residents of York Region. These funds are part of the Community Funding Strategy that will be implemented in 2004. The bulk of these funds are from provincial sources, and some funds must be committed to program activities by December 31, 2003, or risk their withdrawal by the Province.

3. BACKGROUND

The Community Services and Housing Department manages a number of Municipal, Provincial and Federal funding initiatives that provide services for residents of York Region. These funds include the National Child Benefit, the Ontario Works Performance

Bonus, the Municipal Purchase of Service fund and Homelessness Initiatives funds. Prior to the CDIF Strategy, each funding initiative was managed independently, with different processes and timelines.

On April 18, 2002, Council approved the CDIF Strategy to be effective for the 2003 Business Planning cycle. The Strategy established a framework within which the Community Services and Housing Department plans, manages, and funds the purchase of community-based services, and within which accountability criteria and practices are established.

The approved CDIF Strategy establishes the framework for a fair, equitable and transparent process to distribute and manage these programs and funds in the community. Under the CDIF, there are two “funding envelopes.” One envelope is for Department-Identified Initiatives, and the other is for Community Initiatives. The Community Initiatives envelope is implemented through an invitation for project proposals from the community, through a RFP process.

The first annual RFP was released on September 25, 2003, and closed November 13, 2003. The CDIF evaluation team, comprised of York Regional staff and other York Region funders from the Federal, Provincial and non-profit sector is recommending 17 proposals (outlined in Attachment 1) to receive Community Initiatives funding in 2004. This funding will go to agencies that provide a variety of community services across the Region. However, some of these funds must be committed to program activities by December 31, 2003, or the Region risks their withdrawal.

Under Purchasing By-law A00304-2002-031, section 5, the Commissioner of Community Services and Housing has authority to approve contracts up to an amount of \$100,000. The CAO has authority to approve amounts up to \$250,000, and Council approval is required for amounts over \$250,000.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

4.1 Summary CDIF Implementation

In 2003, the following initiatives were undertaken to implement the newly approved CDIF Strategy in York Region, to ensure that it operates as an effective, efficient and accountable program.

4.1.1 Key Processes Were Mapped

After Council approved the Strategy, all work required for implementation was mapped out. This was an important step to ensure institutionalization of the processes required to implement the Strategy in a fair, equitable, transparent and accountable manner.

4.1.2 Purchase of Service Contracts Were Standardized

Prior to the inception of the CDIF Strategy, each fund was managed in different divisions with different types of contracts. With the funds now managed centrally, Community Services and Housing staff worked closely with the Department's solicitor to standardize Purchase of Service contracts for 2003 initiatives onward. The Department now has in place a standard contract template that is used for all contracts developed under the CDIF umbrella.

4.1.3 Contract Management Database Was Established

Prior to the CDIF Strategy, funds were managed in a decentralized manner, which made it difficult to track fund allocation and contract status in a coordinated way.

As part of the accountability framework for the CDIF, a centralized database was developed by Department staff, to provide up-to-date reporting of fund allocations and the status of all contracts with community Agencies. This information is reviewed and updated quarterly.

As many of the funding initiatives are time-limited, it is crucial that they be monitored consistently and accurately. The database provides a central collection point for information and can be reviewed regularly to ensure that all projects are progressing as anticipated. If there are project variances for any reason, this centralized reporting system identifies them quickly and enables funds to be effectively reallocated to meet the Strategy's goals.

4.1.4 York Region Funders' Alliance Was Reinstated

To improve collaboration and to better identify sources of funding that may be available for community agencies, Community Services and Housing staff initiated the reformation of the York Region Funders Alliance. This group had existed in the past, however due to staff turnover in various member organizations; the group had ceased to meet regularly.

The goals of this group are to:

- Increase community access to sources of funding
- Involve more funders in the York Region Funders' Alliance
- Improve community and agency infrastructure and capacity building
- Explore new models of sustainability
- Share information on priority setting, strategic planning and evaluation.

Members of the York Region Funders' Alliance include representatives from:

- Community Services and Housing Department, York Region
- United Way of York Region
- Ontario Trillium Foundation
- Human Resources Development Canada
- Department of Canadian Heritage
- Ontario Ministries of Citizenship, Culture, Tourism and Recreation

The Alliance meets quarterly and is formalizing its activities for 2004.

4.2 2003 Annual Report

An interim process was put in place to allocate funds to 2003 Community projects in a fair and transparent manner, while the CDIF RFP Strategy and processes were being fully developed. During this transition year, projects approved in previous years were re-funded for 2003, with agencies being notified that for 2004 they would be required to apply for funding through the CDIF RFP process.

Results of the 2003 projects, including the types of projects funded, the numbers of clients served and the project outcomes, successes and lessons learned will be reported in the Community Funding Annual Report to Committee and Council in early 2004, as required by Council.

4.3 CDIF Implementation for 2004

The CDIF Strategy is being fully implemented for 2004. Using the criteria set out by Council in 2002, Community Initiatives were invited through a RFP process this falls in accordance with the Region's Purchasing By-law. Services that would be purchased for Community Initiatives were in the \$800,000 to \$1.1 million range, subject to funding limitations and restrictions. Funding has now been confirmed at a total of \$1,058,170.

4.3.1 Funding Limits and Restrictions

The majority of the funding available under the Strategy comes from outside York Region, and with pre-determined conditions attached. These conditions are from the funding source for Provincial funds, or by way of Council direction if the funds are Regional allocations. Attachment 2 outlines the funding initiatives, including amounts and criteria.

Using the guidelines established by the funding sources, Council directives, input from the Department Management Group as well as information from a gap analysis, the following priority funding areas were identified:

- Employment and Financial Supports
- Family and Children Services
- Homelessness
- Sustainability and Capacity Building

4.3.2 Request for Proposal Process

Once the available funding was determined and the funding priorities were confirmed, an RFP was developed working With staff from Supplies and Services Branch as well as the Community Services and Housing Department Solicitor, to invite community agencies to submit their proposals to enter into purchase of service agreements with the Region.

An extensive marketing plan was undertaken to ensure that the process was open to as many agencies as possible. The RFP was released on September 25, 2003; it closed November 13, 2003.

Agencies were informed of the release through:

- information on the Region's website
- RFP announcements emailed out to YorkLink agencies
- Newspaper advertisements
- A public service announcement/press release

A total of 70 RFP packages were picked up by interested community agencies. At closing, 42 proposals from 37 agencies were submitted in response to the RFP.

4.3.3 Proposal Evaluation and Selection

To make the final determination of community initiative services that would be purchased for 2004, an evaluation team met at the end of November. The evaluation team was comprised of the Directors of the Community Services and Housing Department and representatives from three external York Region funding bodies: Human Resources Development Canada, the Trillium Foundation, and the United Way. The Supplies and Services Department facilitated the evaluation meetings.

The evaluation team scored each proposal based on the criteria established by council including:

- Agency effectiveness
- Agency financial management
- Agency capacity
- Project benefits in identified priority areas
- Project methodology and activities
- Project costs and budget
- Project/program sustainability

In addition, the evaluation team sought to identify strong projects in each of the four priority areas (Employment and Financial Supports, Family and Children Services, Homelessness, and Sustainability and Capacity Building); avoid project and service duplication; and provide services throughout the Region.

Seventeen projects are recommended under the CDIF Strategy's Community Initiatives for 2004. Attachment 1 lists the community services that the evaluation team is recommending. Council's endorsement is requested for these projects. All funding from purchase of service contracts that result from the RFP process will be disbursed in 2004. However, the bulk of these funds are from provincial sources, and some of these funds must be committed to program activities by December 31, 2003, or the Region risks their withdrawal.

After approval, Purchase of Service contracts will be entered into with the successful agencies to enable them to have the opportunity to meet their obligations. The agencies will be appropriately monitored and evaluated throughout the 2004 year.

4.3.4 2004 Community Funding Annual Report

As required by Council, an annual report to Committee and Council will be submitted early in 2005, outlining the outcome of these projects.

4.5 Relationship to Vision 2026

The CDIF Strategy has been designed and implemented to support the Vision 2026 goal of responding to the needs of our residents. The Strategy also addresses the Vision 2026 goal of quality communities for a diverse population.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

A total of \$1,058,170 is allocated to project funding under this RFP. The CDIF Strategy is managed within the current budget allocations set aside for each fund contained within the Strategy. Some of the funds have time limitations attached to them. For example, the Ontario Works Performance Funds require that funds be committed to program activities within two years of their receipt, which is December 31, 2003, or the Region risks their withdrawal.

The Strategy provides sound accountability practices to disburse funds within the Community through a transparent, equitable process. The Strategy and process is managed within the current approved staffing levels for the Department. The benefits to the community of bringing these much needed service dollars into York Region are far-reaching and long-term.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

All area municipalities will benefit from the initiatives generated by these service dollars. The strategic investment process and the model that has been put in place will enhance these benefits.

7. CONCLUSION

The Council-approved CDIF Strategy is being fully implemented for the 2004-funding year. The CDIF Strategy allows the Region to plan, manage and fund the purchase of community-based services in York Region, in a way that ensures both the process and the results are accountable, fair, and equitable.

Council endorsement is requested for the recommended proposals for funding under the CDIF Strategy in order to commit the funds to program activities, as required for some funding sources by year-end, and in order for successful community agencies to begin

fulfilling their purchase of service obligations to the residents of York Region in January 2004.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(A copy of the attachments referred to in the foregoing is included with this report and is also on file in the Office of the Regional Clerk.)