

**Community and Health Services Department
Multi-Year Plan
2010-2015**

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Executive Summary

Introduction

This is the first Multi-Year Plan for the combined departments of Community Services and Housing, and Health Services – now Community and Health Services (C&HS) – since their merger in 2007. This plan will help C&HS identify and manage emerging and/or pressing human services issues faced by the residents of York Region who use our programs and services.

The plan is also timely given the recent provincial commitment to upload a major part of municipal social assistance costs – including GTA Pooling, Ontario Disability Support Program, and Ontario Works benefit costs. As a result, the Region will have a new opportunity to “re-invest” Regional funds. This plan will help prioritize where new investments are needed most.

From a departmental perspective, the purpose of the Multi-Year Plan is to develop overarching strategic directions as a framework for future C&HS initiatives or enhancements over the next five years, which will typically proceed through the annual budget and business planning cycles.

The plan will:

- Highlight and assess key issues or challenges.
- Develop goals and actions on how to respond to issues identified in areas where C&HS can influence consistent with Regional strategies and the department’s mandates.

Human Services Issues

During the consultation process stakeholders identified many areas where C&HS excels. The following section, however, highlights key human service issues which C&HS will need to address or continue to address through its programs and services over the next five years. These issues were identified through consultation and research findings including demographic trends.

- **C&HS faces multiple service pressures from growth and changing demographics.** These pressures will affect all program areas. The department will need to balance growth-related demand for services with more targeted initiatives which respond to York Region’s changing social fabric.
- **The pace and face of growth will vary across communities.** York Region’s large geographic area and growing population can lead to mismatches between resident needs and service delivery locations. C&HS will need to focus on social and economic trends in rural, suburban and urban areas in order to understand the varying service delivery needs.
- **Recent immigrants to Canada are attracted to York Region’s vibrant economy and communities.** However, challenges such as income levels, housing costs, lack of Canadian work experience, knowledge of English as a second language, and family stress associated with new cultural expectations or lack of opportunities to use education and training can be

barriers to integration. It will be important to meet or exceed the service levels from other regions so as not to lose the contributions of immigrants to other communities.

- **Older residents will require a changing mix of services and greater housing options.** Collaborative planning will be important to support active and healthy living, and mitigate where possible the increasing need for future institutional care.
- **The lack of affordable housing will put increased pressures on all segments of the community.** Affordable private rental housing is particularly limited across the Region for lower income households. Recent federal and provincial housing investments are increasing the supply of units. However, there is no related funding to make units truly affordable to residents at the lowest end of the income distribution. Residents with more complex needs or multiple barriers also need support to find and keep housing. The lack of emergency shelter space for homeless women and youth in southern communities are key service gaps.
- **More residents are living on lower incomes.** With the recent economic instability and gaps in some provincial and federal supports, low income residents are at greater risk of financial hardship and can face struggles in meeting their basic needs. This places increased pressures on C&HS financial and employment assistance, subsidized housing and child care, and community services that address poverty. The relative affluence of York Region can hide poverty and homelessness, and masks barriers to full participation in the community for individuals and families (e.g. transportation costs, access to recreation).
- **Residents have more complex needs.** Some require additional supports to access and navigate the human services delivery network – including service coordination, intensive case management and social work supports, and outreach – to improve outcomes and quality of life.
- **Residents are expecting better access to information and services.** Both the federal and provincial governments have increased and promoted “one-stop shopping” options for government programs and services. York Region’s residents expect similar convenience from their regional and local governments. Progress has been made to date – but opportunities exist to further improve the location of services and to build on existing capacity in multi-service hubs. On-line applications and centralized “one-stop” information and referrals would help residents identify the services that are most relevant to their needs.
- **Long-term social and economic policy is increasingly focussed on the success of children and youth – enhancing capacity to meet changing needs will be critical to families.** This will include identifying community need in critical areas (e.g. affordable child care, early intervention services, family strengthening programs) while managing the impact of provincial implementation of the Early Learning Program.
- **Public Health, EMS and Long-Term Care are facing pressures due to growth and regulatory requirements** – particularly with current funding levels.

- **C&HS will need to transition into new or expanded roles to meet upcoming provincial policy direction.** There is now greater focus on outcomes-based planning, funding and service delivery within the department's mandate. These will create both opportunities and challenges to meet the human service needs of residents.

Guiding Principles

The following principles guided the development of the Multi-Year Plan and provide a lens to how the department will address key human service issues. In meeting its mandate, C&HS will:

- **Support the determinants of health.** The health of individuals and communities is influenced by the interaction of social, economic, and health factors. C&HS plays a key role, along with other levels of government and community agencies, in providing services which support better health outcomes for residents.
- **Focus on prevention.** Addressing the root causes of social and health issues can reduce pressures on long-term and more costly emergency or institutional supports. C&HS will improve access to preventative social and health services that promote healthy sustainable communities, and help individuals and families at risk to reach their full potential.
- **Address services through a life course perspective.** Residents have different needs at different stages of life. C&HS will focus on supporting residents through major life transitions.
- **Keep pace with growth and diversity.** Investing in human services can sustain the quality of life and economic well-being of residents. The relative need for specific services across the Region will shift over time as a result of demographics, social and economic factors, government fiscal and policy changes, and health threats or disease outbreaks.
- **Provide services in a holistic and people-centred way.** Coordinated, seamless and tailored services are required to meet the needs of residents on their terms and in their communities.
- **Strengthen community partnerships.** Collaboration leads to better human services for residents. C&HS will foster stronger networks with local communities and other levels of government.
- **Propose high quality, fiscally responsible and sustainable solutions.** Resources should be directed to new or enhanced initiatives where there is strong policy rationale for action or clear evidence and research to support investment.
- **Align strategies with federal and provincial policies and Regional priorities.** As part of a broader human services system, C&HS must be guided by both federal and provincial policy while working to support Regional strategies.
- **Build on its broader function as service system manager for provincially-mandated programs and services.** C&HS has a critical leadership role in planning and managing a

network of human services, convening community partners to support local strategies, and acting as a “catalyst” for broader advocacy on York Region-specific needs.

Goals and Actions

The Multi-Year Plan includes **Current Actions** already planned or underway and **Proposed Actions** that C&HS can undertake with Regional Council approval. The **Proposed Actions**, which focus on new or enhanced programs and services, are set out below.

Goal 1 - Contribute to Regional economic vitality by helping low income residents with access to basic needs, and with finding and keeping jobs.

With Council approval, staff could implement the following proposed new or enhanced actions:

- enhance community development and investment initiatives to keep pace with service needs.
- expand low income dental program for children and youth.
- explore options to address public transportation costs for low income residents.
- enhance partnerships with Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, and Employment Ontario to support job training and employment opportunities.
- continue to assess and respond to the Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy.
- following implementation of the provincial Early Learning Program, review and enhance levels of child care subsidy to support transitions to employment.

Goal 2 - Support healthy communities through a broad range of housing choices and supports to meet the diverse needs of residents.

With Council approval, staff could implement the following proposed new or enhanced actions:

- in response to the provincial Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy, lead the development of a York Region Housing Strategy encompassing the whole continuum of housing – from homelessness to home ownership.
- update the York Region Housing Needs Study.
- fulfil Regional commitments, and maximize federal and provincial funding for affordable housing.
- enhance investments in services and programs which provide housing stability to those at risk of homelessness or facing financial crisis.
- review programs which support individuals in crisis.

Goal 3 – Optimize the health of the community for all ages and stages through health protection, prevention and promotion initiatives.

With Council approval, staff could implement the following proposed new or enhanced actions:

- pursue local enhancements related to the 2008 Ontario Public Health Standards to better serve the residents of York Region.
- enhance Public Health responsiveness to future pandemic threats by implementing recommendations arising from the local H1N1 review.
- develop a comprehensive Regional strategy to address the needs of seniors in the community.
- explore strategies and options to address mental health services and supports for clients/tenants following the release of the Provincial Long-Term Mental Health and Addictions Strategy.
- pursue opportunities to address growth and optimal use of paramedic resources by expanding scope of community paramedic care.

Goal 4 - Strengthen our neighbourhoods now and in the future by supporting children, families and youth to fulfill their potential.

With Council approval, staff could implement the following proposed new or enhanced actions:

- enhance family strengthening programs to increase access to parenting supports and recreation for low income families.
- implement the Early Learning Program in collaboration with community partners.
- respond to broader system-wide changes arising from the Pascal Report recommendations, particularly enhanced service manager roles, and Best Start Child and Family Centres.

Goal 5 – Foster social inclusion and economic opportunities by addressing the needs of a growing and diverse community.

With Council approval, staff could implement the following proposed new or enhanced actions:

- develop service delivery options to help improve access to services for diverse communities and recent immigrants – for example, implementing initiatives identified in York Region’s Immigration Strategy developed in collaboration with the Community Partnership Council.
- develop a pilot strategy to support service navigation and coordination for residents with complex needs
- review existing community funding programs to address changing needs within the community and investigate the creation of a fund for human service collaborations.

Goal 6 - Deliver a more integrated human service system that supports effective community planning and quality services.

With Council approval, staff could implement the following proposed new or enhanced actions:

- develop department-wide strategies to improve access to information and services.
- enhance data and research to support community planning.
- integrate responses to poverty throughout C&HS planning and service delivery initiatives as appropriate.

Implementation

The C&HS Multi-Year Plan reflects the key needs identified by community agencies, clients, local municipalities and C&HS staff. Because of the changing nature of human services, the Multi-Year Plan will be reviewed annually by C&HS Senior Management to assess progress, refresh key issues or actions, and identify priorities and opportunities to implement specific initiatives. An update will be provided to Regional Council outlining the key findings of this annual review process.

Regional Council approval of the MYP will show commitment in principle to the goals and actions identified in the plan. Funding to support initiatives arising from the Multi-Year Plan will be requested on a case-by-case basis typically through the annual budget and business plan. Departmental capacity to implement Multi-Year Plan initiatives will align with future budgetary processes. Many new or enhanced programs and services will require additional resources to manage and deliver results.

A formal review of the Multi-Year Plan, including updated research and consultative feedback, will take place every five years to ensure our residents' needs are understood, and the strategic framework and priorities continue to be relevant. Regional Council approval will be required for any work relating to an updated Multi-Year Plan.

Conclusion

The C&HS Multi-Year Plan will guide the department's understanding of, and response to, emerging and pressing human services needs in York Region. Staff believe it is a realistic plan for the next five years which proposes new or enhanced program and service initiatives which will help residents across York Region – including the most vulnerable in our communities.

This is particularly relevant given the province's on-going upload of social assistance costs. The Region now has new opportunities to reinvest funds to address York Region-specific needs. The Multi-Year Plan provides a critical tool to identify service gaps and growth-related pressures on C&HS programs, and prioritize strategic spending as funding opportunities become available through uploading.

This first iteration of the Multi-Year Plan is also a starting point in responding to new provincial policy directions related to housing, early learning, and other service areas identified through the *Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review*. These may increase C&HS' service manager responsibilities. If this happens, C&HS will need to build capacity as the role of service system manager evolves and expands.

The Multi-Year Plan comes into effect once approved by Regional Council.

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Community and Health Services Department Multi-Year Plan

Introduction

Purpose

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The plan is also timely given the recent provincial commitment to upload a major part of municipal social assistance costs – including GTA Pooling, Ontario Disability Support Program, and Ontario Works benefit costs. As a result, the Region will have a new opportunity to “re-invest” Regional funds. This plan will help prioritize where new investments are needed most.

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The plan will:

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Scope

The Multi-Year Plan is focused on those programs and services where C&HS has a provincial mandate, delegated federal responsibility, or direction from Regional Council to plan, manage, and deliver.

This Multi-Year Plan has a five year planning horizon, during which time it will be annually refreshed and updated. The plan will be reviewed in 2015. The plan is also expected to be an iterative document – subsequent versions will build upon this first planning exercise.

This flexible approach is based on the recognition that there are barriers and constraints for C&HS and longer-term planning beyond a five-year window is not possible at this time. These constraints include:

- Changing economic conditions and their impact on residents
- Changing federal and provincial policy and funding priorities which govern and direct C&HS’ mandate and activities
- Capacity issues in other human service areas
- Fiscal constraints at all levels of government
- Competing pressures on Regional Government.

C&HS planning requires flexibility in order to meet changing conditions and maintain strategic focus on longer term objectives. This flexibility includes seeking opportunities to collaborate and partner with other human services sectors where needed. Residents do not experience their lives in “program” silos. They are better supported when human services work together.

History

Why the Multi-Year Plan was Developed:

In 2007, the Regional Municipality of York merged the Community Services and Housing, and Health Services Departments to improve the coordination of resources, programs and services, and to better serve the community. Regional Council’s direction to the recently merged C&HS to develop a Multi-Year Plan reflects a desire for a department-wide framework for strategic program development, service initiatives and investments.

This approach is similar to the planning framework for hard infrastructure such as transportation or water, but flexible enough to allow C&HS to respond to the unpredictable policy environment within which human services operates. It will also provide an opportunity for C&HS to explore options for more integrated approaches to service access and delivery.

The release of the Provincial Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review (PMFSDR) in 2008 also contributed to the need for the Multi-Year Plan. Through the PMFSDR, the province has committed to uploading municipal social assistance costs; allowing York Region an opportunity to “re-invest” these funds to meet specific community needs. The Multi-Year Plan will provide a framework to guide Regional Council’s decisions on human service “re-investments”.

As part of PMFSDR implementation, work is also underway between the province, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), and the City of Toronto to develop a more outcomes-based approach to the planning and delivery of programs and services in areas where the province and municipalities share responsibilities.

How the Multi-Year Plan was Developed:

The Multi-Year Plan is based on the knowledge and experience of C&HS staff, clients, and community and local municipal partners – supplemented by a review of key human service documents and reports, and demographic trends.

Consultations included:

- C&HS Staff Survey: C&HS staff (full-time, part-time and casual) were invited to comment on the issues and challenges facing their clients and the effects of those issues on C&HS programs and services.
- Consultations: 13 cross-branch staff focus groups, one municipal partner forum, two client focus groups and three public forums with community partners and agencies took place. This provided a forum to discuss human services trends, issues and possible solutions.

- Key Informant Interviews: senior C&HS management were consulted to get their direction on key issues and priorities.

This approach provided a sound understanding of the human services issues facing York Region residents – where services are needed, how best to deliver them and where possible gaps exist. Once the research was concluded, the analysis identified core key issues and led to the actions proposed in this Multi-Year Plan.

In total, almost 900 individuals provided input; a summary of the consultative feedback is provided in Appendix 1.

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Planning Context

Community and Health Services Department Overview

C&HS provides a range of health, housing, and social services - either directly or through agreements with community agencies. These services touch the lives of residents everyday and at every stage of life. The department supports some of York Region's most vulnerable people, as well as the broader health and well-being of all residents.

C&HS operates under provincial and federal legislation and regulations – these set out the policy directions and objectives which guide programs and services and define roles and responsibilities. A significant portion of the department's funding comes from federal and provincial subsidies. However, C&HS also funds and manages Regional discretionary programs which address community-specific needs.

C&HS is part of a broader range of human services providers in York Region and only provides a small part of the total human services funding directed to York Region residents.

In some service sectors, the department is one of many service providers funded from other levels of government to provide direct services to residents – such as in long-term care, community support services for seniors, and some family and children's services.

In other cases, C&HS acts as service system manager for provincially-mandated and cost-shared programs – where the department takes the lead in planning, managing, and evaluating a network of human services to meet the needs of residents and communities. These include:

- Ontario Works
- child care subsidies
- social and affordable housing, and
- homelessness prevention.

C&HS also provides public health programs legislated under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* and operates York Region's emergency medical services (EMS). It is also the community lead for a number of federal planning and funding initiatives.

In all these roles, the C&HS goal is to provide programs and services which respond to the needs of York Region's residents and communities. Activities range from assessing needs or service gaps, engaging community partners and advocating for York Region specific needs, to developing service plans and local strategies.

Community and Health Services is the largest department in the Region with approximately 1,500 employees working out of various locations, including service and operational centres, EMS stations, and Housing York Inc. (HYI) housing sites.

Key Services

C&HS consists of six branches which provide direct service delivery, program management and critical support functions. Appendix 2 provides an organizational chart of the department and outlines the branch functions.

The following are highlights of major service areas:

Affordable housing:

- Administers approximately 6,000 social housing units through 43 independent non-profit and cooperative housing providers, including 1,977 social housing units through Housing York Inc.
- Manages region-wide wait list for subsidized housing and rent supplement programs.
- Acts as developer and funder of affordable housing programs (e.g. Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program).
- Manages and funds homelessness prevention programs – including housing stabilization supports.
- Manages funding and program relationships with emergency shelter operators and domiciliary hostel operators including the monitoring and enforcement of the Lodging House By-law for 700 beds.

Long-term care and seniors' services:

- Operates two long-term care facilities (Newmarket Health Centre with 132 beds and Maple Health Centre with 100 beds), supportive housing services and a variety of day and outreach programs for seniors and adults with disabilities.

Services for adults, families and children in need:

- Provides employment and financial assistance to eligible residents under the *Ontario Works Act*.
- Manages child care fee assistance to eligible families in need, child development programs to children with special developmental needs, family strengthening programs, and wage subsidy to eligible staff of child care service providers.
- Manages community investment funding.
- Manages implementation of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* for the Regional Corporation.
- Manages and coordinates the provision of emergency social and health services to residents in the event of disasters and health emergencies

Public health services:

- Delivers a broad range of services and programs designed to prevent disease, protect the health and safety of York Region residents and promote healthy lifestyles and public policy as outlined in the 2008 Ontario Public Health Standards.
- Key programs relate to food and water safety, infectious diseases prevention and control, chronic diseases and injury prevention, and early childhood development.

Emergency medical services:

- Provides emergency pre-hospital care and non-emergency medical response to patients, including patient assessment, life saving treatment and monitoring, and safe and timely transport to the appropriate facility for continuing medical care.

Information and referrals:

- Operates Health Connection and Contact Centre – telephone based information, support and access to C&HS programs.
- Manages and coordinates the updating and production of the printed and online YorkLink Directory.

Linkages to Regional Corporate Plans

A variety of strategic plans from the Regional Municipality of York - particularly Vision 2026, York Region's Sustainability Strategy, and the Regional Official Plan - guide the department's activities. These set out the long-term goals the Region strives to achieve for residents related to their human service needs.

This Multi-Year Plan is a mid-level plan. It places the Regional goals in a shorter time-frame and identifies goals that C&HS can influence and/or work towards. The Multi-Year Plan will inform the development of annual budgets and business plans for all C&HS branches – particularly where new or enhanced programs are needed to improve services to residents.

The department's overall operations are guided by the Regional business plans and budget. Investing in any or all of the actions identified later in the Multi-Year Plan will be dependent on a number of factors impacting our operations, including the Region's financial circumstances, provincial and/or federal policy directions and/or funding.

Figure 1: C&HS Multi-Year Plan Planning Context

Plan Cycles	Process	Contents
Longer-term, Medium-term updates	Regional Official and Corporate Plans Vision 2026 Sustainability Strategy	Goals, strategic actions and indicators
	↓	
Medium-term, Annual reviews	Community & Health Services Multi-Year Plan	Challenges, strategic goals and actions
	↓	
Annually	Budget & Business Plan	Financial and human resource requirements
	↓	
Varies by program	Operational Service Plans	Service challenges, initiatives and requirements

Other Factors affecting C&HS

The following figure illustrates the planning environment in which C&HS will operate over the life of this plan and identifies a number of factors which will affect C&HS' planning capacity. This Multi-Year Plan provides a first step in identifying and addressing these factors. Moving forward will require developing appropriate sub-strategies – particularly to align with new or enhanced provincial policy directions.

Figure 2: Factors Influencing Planning Environment for Multi-Year Plan



Key Demographics in York Region

York Region will face a number of human service challenges in the next five years. Demographic data from York Region's Community and Health Services Department, Planning and Development Services Department, and the 2001 and 2006 Censuses were examined. The following demographic profile of York Region was identified:

Major Demographic Trends

Rapid Population Growth
Aging Population
Increasing Diversity
Increasing Low Income Population
More Non-Traditional Families
Growing Need for Affordable Housing

Population Growth

Between 2001 and 2006, York Region was the fastest growing Census Division in Ontario with a population increase of 22 per cent. This rapid growth is expected to continue; the Region's population is projected to grow to over 1.5 million people by the year 2031.

Seniors

Based on the population forecast model in Figure 3, the greatest increase in growth will be for residents 65 years and over. The following table shows York Region's growth across all age groups.

Figure 3: York Region Population Forecast by Age, 2006 to 2031

Age	2006	2031	Growth	% Change
0-14	185,687	244,323	58,636	31.6%
15-24	132,008	161,563	29,555	22.4%
25-64	518,201	789,849	271,648	52.4%
65+	95,978	311,745	215,766	224.8%
Total	931,874	1,507,480	575,606	61.8%
55+	193,831	495,757	301,926	155.8%
75+	40,463	137,209	96,746	239.1%

Children

According to Census data, the growth in the number of children between the ages of 0 and 14 between 2001 and 2006 was much higher (14 per cent) than the growth experienced in the rest of Ontario (-1 per cent) in this age group.

Diversity

Ethno-cultural and racial diversity is becoming a defining characteristic of York Region residents. Based on Census data and current projections:

Visible Minorities

Between 2001 and 2006, the number of visible minorities in York Region increased by 53 per cent. As of 2006, there were 329,955 individuals who identified themselves as part of a visible minority living in York Region - this translates to 37 per cent of the total population. For purposes of comparison, this is the fourth largest proportion in Canada after Peel Region (50 per cent), Toronto (47 per cent) and Vancouver (42 per cent). The largest visible minority groups were Chinese (44 per cent), South Asian (24 per cent) and Arab/West Asian (9 per cent). Projections indicate that by 2031, approximately 62% of the total population in York Region will identify themselves as a visible minority¹.

Immigrants

Immigrants accounted for 60 per cent of York Region's growth between 2001 and 2006. The proportion of residents who are immigrants increased from 39 per cent of the population in 2001 to 43 per cent in 2006. It is anticipated that this trend will continue, and that by 2031, the proportion of residents in York Region who are immigrants will increase to approximately 55%.

Income

While York Region is an affluent community with the fifth highest median family income in Canada and the second highest in Ontario (2006 Census), a growing number of residents live in low income households². This number grew from 72,565 residents in 2001 to 112,165 residents in 2006 and represents a 55% increase since 2000. In 2006, almost 13 per cent of York Region residents were living in a low income household.

¹ Projections for visible minorities and immigrant population based on York Region Planning and Development Services Department in-house population forecast model to 2031, using average annual growth rates during 1996 – 2006.

² Low income households are defined as households with a combined family income that is at or below the low income before tax cut off.

Figure 4: Number of Residents Living in Low Income Households, York Region Municipalities, 2006

Municipality	Total Population	Low Income Population (LICO-BT)³	Low Income Rate (LICO-BT)
Aurora	46,870	3,830	8.2%
East Gwillimbury	20,620	905	4.4%
Georgina	41,870	5,145	12.3%
King	19,350	1,055	5.5%
Markham	260,420	41,895	16.1%
Newmarket	73,265	7,165	9.8%
Richmond Hill	161,555	25,555	15.8%
Vaughan	237,830	25,275	10.6%
Whitchurch-Stouffville	24,060	1,350	5.6%
York Region	885,840	112,165	12.7%

Low income residents in York Region represent all social, family and age groups. Based on 2006 Census data, some York Region residents are at higher risk of living in low income households including:

- Single person households (34 per cent)
- Single parent families (31 per cent)
- Recent immigrants (30 per cent)
- People who are not working (21 per cent)
- People working only part-time and part-year (15 per cent)
- Members of visible minorities (17 per cent)
- People without high school diploma or certificate (16 per cent).

Children

Based on 2006 Census data, almost 15 per cent or 32,500 of York Region's children under the age of 18 lived in a low income household. This is the third highest proportion of children living in low income households in Ontario after Toronto (32 per cent) and Peel Region (19 per cent). Between 2001 and 2006 the number of persons under 18 living in a low income household increased 62 per cent.

Household and Family Composition

Although two-parent families with children continue to make up the largest number of households in York Region, there was increasing diversity in households and family composition between 2001 and 2006.

³ Low income before tax cut offs (LICO-BT) are defined using Census before tax income data. These reflect the income levels at which families or persons not in economic families spend 20% more than the average of their before tax income on food, shelter and clothing. Based on 2006 Census, the low income cut off for a family of four living in a community with a population between 100,000 and 499,999, such as Markham, Richmond Hill, or Vaughan is about \$33,251. For an individual living by themselves it is \$17,895.

Based on 2006 Census data, two parent households with children at home were the largest household type in York Region - but also experienced the slowest rate of growth between 2001 and 2006 at 18 per cent. The other household types that grew at a faster rate are:

- Households without children (23 per cent)
- Single person households (33 per cent)
- Other household types – multiple families, single-parent families (33 per cent).

Housing

Based on 2006 Census data, 88 per cent of the total dwellings in York Region were owned – up slightly from 86 per cent in 2001. This was the highest proportion of owned dwellings in the GTA.

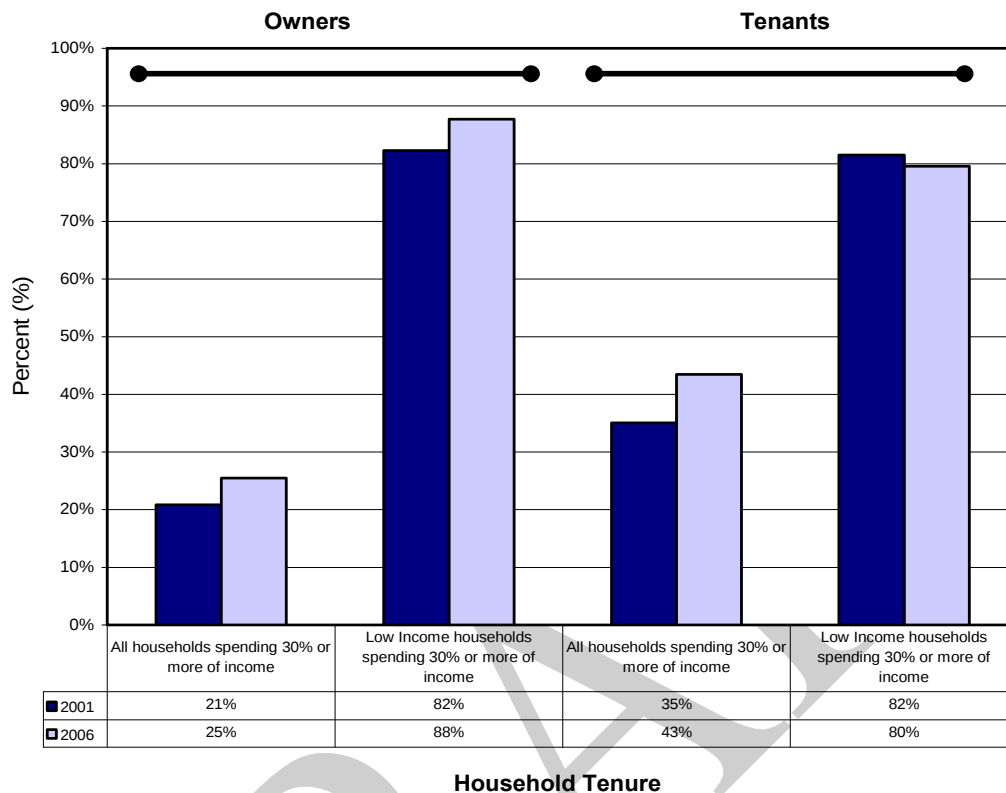
In 2006, 12% of total dwellings in York Region were rented, down slightly from 14% in 2001. This was the lowest proportion in the GTA. At \$957, York Region was the third highest median monthly payment in the GTA for a rental dwelling in 2006, after Peel (\$974) and Halton (\$970).

Housing Affordability

As shown in Figure 5, housing affordability continues to be an issue in York Region. The affordability threshold⁴ is defined as spending 30% or more of household income on housing costs. Spending more than this can make it difficult to pay for necessities such as food, clothing, education and transportation – particularly for lower income households.

⁴ Affordability threshold as defined by Statistics Canada and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

Figure 5: Percentage of Households⁵ and Low Income Households Spending 30% or More of Household Income on Shelter Costs, 2001 – 2006, York Region



⁵ Calculated for economic family households. Economic families refers to a group of two or more persons who live in the same dwelling and are related to each other by blood, marriage, common-law or adoption. Low income households have a combined family income that is at or below the LICO-BT.

Human Services Issues

Responding to Issues

As part of our on-going service planning and program development, C&HS already does much to ensure our services are responsive to changing needs of residents. Given the recent economic uncertainty, addressing poverty is particularly critical. The department provides a range of provincially-mandated and Council approved programs that work to mitigate the worst effects of poverty, develop pathways out of poverty, support households from falling into long-term poverty and promote social inclusion. Specific initiatives that meet the spectrum of needs for people facing economic hardship include:

- Development of ten key policy directions to support regional participation in the development of Ontario's Poverty Reductions Strategy.
- Participation on the Association of Municipalities of Ontario Social Policy Task Force/Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy Sub Committee
- Data verification and validation of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Quality of Life report
- Monitor and track indicators and data related to poverty and low income population
- Establishment of a Human Services Planning Board which is a collaboration of human service organizations/agencies/networks and community leaders. Its main purpose is to enhance human services within York Region by pursuing projects that will support and strengthen the broader human services sector.
- Provision of income and employment support under Ontario Works Act.
- Provision of operational support and funding administration for emergency shelters in the community
- Provision of additional client intervention and assistance
- Provision of family strengthening programs
- Provision of permanent and supportive housing to special needs adults in Domiciliary Hostels
- Provision of child care fee assistance to low income families
- Provide low income families with access to early intervention services
- Provide affordable housing through rent-geared-to-income programs
- Support local homelessness initiatives
- Administer a Community Development Investment Fund to community service providers to address the needs of lower income residents.
- Provides infectious disease control through the street outreach van and a needle exchange programs
- Provide dental and nutrition services
- Health promotion targeting at risk populations
- Provide subsidized services to seniors through facility programs, day programs and supportive housing programs.
- Provides crisis intervention and assistance to seniors.

Issues to be Addressed

This section highlights key human service issues which C&HS will need to address through its programs and services over the next five years. The following issues were identified through the Multi-Year Plan consultation and research findings including demographic trends:

- **C&HS faces multiple service pressures from growth and changing demographics.** These pressures will affect all program areas. The department will need to balance growth-related demand for services with more targeted initiatives which respond to York Region's changing social fabric.
- **The pace and face of growth will vary across communities.** York Region's large geographic area and growing population can lead to mismatches between resident needs and service delivery locations. C&HS will need to focus on social and economic trends in rural, suburban and urban areas in order to understand the varying service delivery needs.
- **Recent immigrants to Canada are attracted to York Region's vibrant economy and communities.** However, challenges such as income levels, housing costs, lack of Canadian work experience, knowledge of English as a second language, and family stress associated with new cultural expectations or lack of opportunities to use education and training can be barriers to integration. It will be important to meet or exceed the service levels from other regions so as not to lose the contributions of immigrants to other communities.
- **Older residents will require a changing mix of services and greater housing options.** Collaborative planning will be important to support active and healthy living and mitigate where possible the increasing need for future institutional care.
- **The lack of affordable housing will put increased pressures on all segments of the community.** Affordable private rental housing is particularly limited across the Region for lower income households. Recent federal and provincial housing investments are increasing the supply of units. However, there is no related funding to make units truly affordable to residents at the lowest end of the income distribution. Residents with more complex needs or multiple barriers also need support to find and keep housing. The lack of emergency shelter space for homeless women and youth in southern communities are key service gaps.
- **More residents are living on lower incomes.** With the recent economic instability and gaps in provincial and federal supports, low income residents are at greater risk of financial hardship and can face struggles in meeting their basic needs. This places increased pressures on C&HS financial and employment assistance, subsidized housing and child care, and community services that address poverty. The relative affluence of York Region can hide poverty and homelessness, and can mask barriers to full participation in the community for individuals and families (e.g. transportation costs, access to recreation).
- **Residents have more complex needs.** Some require additional supports to access and navigate the human services delivery network – including service coordination, intensive case management and social work supports, and outreach – to improve outcomes and quality of life.

- **Residents are expecting better access to information and services.** Both the federal and provincial governments have increased and promoted “one-stop shopping” options for government programs and services. York Region’s residents expect similar convenience from their regional and local governments. Progress has been made to date – but opportunities exist to further improve the location of services and to build on existing capacity in multi-service hubs. On-line applications and centralized “one-stop” information and referrals would help residents identify the services that are most relevant to their needs.
- **Long-term social and economic policy is increasingly focussed on the success of children and youth – enhancing capacity to meet their needs will be critical to families.** This will include identifying community need in critical areas (e.g. affordable child care, early intervention services, family strengthening programs) while managing the impact of provincial implementation of the Early Learning Program.
- **Public Health, EMS and Long-Term Care are facing pressures related to regulatory requirements and growth** – particularly with current funding levels.
- **C&HS will need to transition into new or expanded roles to meet upcoming provincial policy direction.** There is now greater focus on outcomes-based planning, funding and service delivery within the department’s mandate. These will create both opportunities and challenges to meet the human service needs of residents.

While C&HS has done and continues to do much to address human service issues, with growth and change there are more opportunities and challenges. The MYP outlines proposed actions that could address the existing and emerging human services issues facing our residents.

**Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review:
Vision of Strategic Human Services**

The PMFSDR working table on service delivery proposed the following vision of strategic human services in Ontario:

- Integrated human services planning and service management at the municipal level will provide seamless access to a network of quality, place-based human services in Ontario.
- Integrated and client-focused human services that are accessible, responsive and adaptable to the specific circumstances of people and communities will result in more positive outcomes for all Ontarians.
- Comprehensive human services will reduce the breadth and depth of poverty, promote social inclusion, support child development, increase and sustain labour force attachment, and improve the overall health and well-being of the population.
- Measurable results for people, funders, deliverers, and tax payers will be achieved through an outcome based accountability framework and funding that supports flexibility, innovation, collaboration, community engagement, transparency and value for money.
- Strategic investment in Ontario's social infrastructure will benefit all Ontarians by enhancing economic competitiveness, and social and cultural sustainability of Ontario.

Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review: Service Delivery Accountability Table – Working Paper. PMFSDR, May 2008

Guiding Principles

The following principles guided the development of the Multi-Year Plan and provide a lens to how the department will address key human service issues. In meeting its mandate, C&HS will:

- **Support the determinants of health.** The health of individuals and communities is influenced by the interaction of social, economic and health factors. C&HS plays a key role, along with other levels of government and community agencies, in providing services which support better health outcomes for residents.

Determinants of Health

The determinants of health include:

- income and social status
- social support networks
- education and literacy
- employment and working conditions
- social and physical environments
- personal health practices and coping skills
- healthy child development
- biology and genetic endowment
- health services
- gender, culture and language.

Ontario Public Health Standard, 2008

- **Focus on prevention.** Addressing the root causes of social and health issues can reduce pressures on long-term and more costly emergency or institutional supports. C&HS will improve access to preventative social and health services that promote healthy sustainable communities, and help individuals and families at risk to reach their full potential.
- **Address services through a life course perspective.** Residents have different needs at different stages of life. C&HS will focus on supporting residents through major life transitions.
- **Keep pace with growth and diversity.** Investing in human services can sustain the quality of life and economic well-being of residents. The relative need for specific services across the Region will shift over time as a result of demographics, social and economic factors, government fiscal and policy changes, and health threats or disease outbreaks.
- **Provide services in a holistic and people-centred way.** Coordinated, seamless and tailored services are required to meet the needs of residents on their terms and in their communities.

- **Strengthen community partnerships.** Collaboration leads to better human services for residents. C&HS will foster stronger networks with local communities and other levels of government.
- **Propose high quality, fiscally responsible and sustainable solutions.** Resources should be directed to new or enhanced initiatives where there is strong policy rationale for action or clear evidence and research to support investment.
- **Align strategies with federal and provincial policies and Regional priorities.** As part of a broader human services system, C&HS must be guided by both federal and provincial policy while working to support Regional strategies.
- **Build on its broader function as service system manager for provincially-mandated programs and services.** C&HS has a critical leadership role in planning and managing a network of human services, convening community partners to support local strategies, and acting as a “catalyst” for broader advocacy on York Region specific needs.

Goals and Actions

The following section sets out the overall goals and actions for this iteration of the Multi-Year Plan. The goals reflect the needs identified in consultations, and the broader Regional strategic directions related to human services from Vision 2026, the Sustainability Strategy and the Regional Official Plan. The actions are the program and service initiatives C&HS is already committed to doing or proposing as new or enhanced through the Multi-Year Plan.

Goal 1 - Contribute to Regional economic vitality by helping low income residents with access to basic needs, and with finding and keeping jobs.

Overview

The basic needs of all people can be defined as food, shelter, clothing, transportation and health services, as well as the ability to find and keep a job. Various federal and provincial programs provide income support and help with finding and keeping employment for lower income residents. C&HS plays a role through delivery of provincial cost-shared and Regional programs.

Recent and pending changes at the federal and provincial levels are intended to improve and modernize the delivery of income support and employment programs. However, community needs may change more rapidly than the federal and provincial changes can be implemented. In addition, the effects of recent economic instability continue to be felt by lower income residents. Consequently, they will still face challenges – including gaps in the current system of supports - to meet their basic needs.

As part of the broad social safety net for York Region residents, C&HS will continue to help residents who are in crisis or face economic hardship. C&HS will also work to support long-term self-sufficiency for adults with multiple barriers to employment through provincial and Regional programs.

C&HS will also work with other levels of government to improve Ontario's income support system – and continue working with community-based service providers and provincial agencies to improve the circumstances of lower income residents of York Region.

Multi-Year Plan Action Areas

Council approved actions already planned or underway:

- implement Ontario's Enhanced Employment Services for Vulnerable Persons which will help Ontario Works participants who have multiple barriers to employment.
- implement a new Ontario Works Employment Service Delivery Model to meet changing client needs and address emerging labour market trends.
- develop specialized employability assessments and life skills programs, job-specific training, and supports for people who have multiple barriers to employment.

- continue school Backpack and Winter Coat program for children and families in receipt of Ontario Works.
- continue to provide access to dental services for low income residents through:
 - o the expanded Children in Need of Treatment program – which provides emergency dental care to low income children and youth 0-17.
 - o Ontario Works dental services for adults and children – including preventative services for adults under Ontario Works discretionary benefits.

With Council approval, staff could implement the following proposed new or enhanced actions:

- enhance community development and investment initiatives to keep pace with service needs.
- expand low income dental program for children and youth.
- explore options to address public transportation costs for low income residents.
- enhance partnerships with Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and Employment Ontario with a focus on helping under-represented groups (e.g. recent immigrants, Ontario Works participants, and older workers) participate more fully in the labour market.
- continue to assess and respond to the Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy.
- following implementation of the provincial Early Learning Program, review and enhance levels of child care subsidy to support transitions to employment.

Goal 2 - Support healthy communities through a broad range of housing choices and supports to meet the diverse needs of residents.

Overview

The lack of affordable housing cannot be overcome by a single level of government. A variety of federal, provincial and Regional solutions are required to meet the housing needs of low income residents. Community and Health Services plays a critical role through funding and administering provincially-mandated social housing programs, acting as developer and funder of new affordable housing facilities through federal and provincial capital programs, and managing federal and provincial homelessness prevention programs.

Housing is an area where a flexible and supportive approach to policy and funding solutions is critical. Consolidating the funding from federal and provincial housing programs into one envelope would give C&HS the tools to meet local housing needs. While the province has committed to developing a long-term affordable housing strategy, additional long-term federal and provincial funding is needed to:

- Develop new affordable housing units as well as repair and retro-fit existing social housing.
- Provide adequate rent supplements or housing benefits to address high housing costs for lower income households – including funding for Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) units as part of federal-provincial affordable housing programs.
- Support housing services which prevent homelessness and promote housing stability.

C&HS will continue to increase housing options for lower income residents, as well as support residents who are homeless or at risk to find and keep housing through a range of housing services.

Multi-Year Plan Action Areas

Council approved actions already planned or underway:

- continue to increase affordable housing options for low and moderate income households in York Region through:
 - Development and construction of 566 affordable housing units through Housing York Inc. and community agencies
 - Developing strategies to use *Investing in Ontario Act* funding to increase affordable housing supply.
 - Implementing Regional Rent Supplement Program.
- sustain the current supply of social housing through the Non-Profit Building Repair program so buildings are energy efficient and in good repair.
- develop a strategic plan to guide HYI operations.
- train and support housing providers to meet new legislative and regulatory requirements of the Ontario Building Code (OBC), *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA), and Ontario Human Rights Commission Policy on Rental Housing.
- continue implementing Regional program to provide transitional supports to people who are fleeing domestic violence and moving into RGI housing; provide on-going support programs in social housing properties where these individuals and their families are living.

With Council approval, staff could implement the following proposed new or enhanced actions:

- in response to the provincial Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy, lead the development of a York Region Housing Strategy encompassing the whole continuum of housing – from homelessness to home ownership.
- update York Region Housing Needs Study.
- fulfil Regional commitments, and maximize federal and provincial funding for affordable housing.
- enhance investments in services and programs which provide housing stability to those at risk of homelessness or facing financial crisis.
- review programs which support individuals in crisis (e.g. emergency shelters, domiciliary hostels).

Goal 3 - Optimize the health of the community for all ages and stages through health protection, prevention and promotion initiatives.

Overview

The World Health Organization defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being; not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Access to a range of health and social services is a key determinant of health. Within the broader health care system, C&HS plays a critical role in supporting the overall health of residents as well as the more vulnerable through:

- Public health programs which support the health of individuals and communities through disease prevention, health protection, and comprehensive health promotion activities. Public health programs also reduce pressures on the health care system through a “prevention” lens by supporting residents in living healthy and active lives.
- Long-term care options and community supports as resident’s age, with a focus on the health, safety, independence, and social well-being of the frail, cognitively challenged and elderly. Community and Health Services is one of a number of York Region service providers funded through the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to deliver these services.
- Emergency Medical Services which respond to community need for emergency and non-emergency paramedic care and transport.

Community and Health Services will continue to expand programs and services to keep pace with demand resulting from growth across York Region and the needs of an aging population. The department will continue to work with other health care service providers to reduce system pressures through prevention and better access to community-based care.

Multi-Year Plan Action Areas

Council approved actions already planned or underway:

- respond effectively and efficiently to the Ontario Public Health Standards (2008) and changes to the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* by ensuring adequate staffing, and technological and financial resources are available.
- develop an EMS resource allocation plan to address projected call volumes.
- introduce a new local response time plan in compliance with new provincial requirements.
- conduct a review of Adult Day Centre operations and programs.
- develop a strategic plan for Regional Long-Term Care and Seniors programs.

With Council approval, staff could implement the following proposed new or enhanced actions:

- pursue local enhancements related to the 2008 Ontario Public Health Standards to better serve the residents of York Region in areas such as food-borne illness, food inspection disclosure systems, and public health impacts of the built environment, syndromic surveillance and better models for the management of Tuberculosis.

- enhance Public Health responsiveness to future pandemic threats by implementing recommendations arising from the local H1N1 review.
- develop a comprehensive Regional strategy to address the needs of seniors in the community.
- explore strategies and options to address mental health services and supports for clients/tenants following the release of the Provincial Long-Term Mental Health and Addictions Strategy.
- pursue opportunities to address growth and optimal use of paramedic resources by expanding scope of community paramedic care.

Goal 4 - Strengthen our neighbourhoods now and in the future by supporting children, families and youth to fulfill their potential.

Overview

Resilient communities foster strong families and engage youth, particularly those facing barriers to success. C&HS does not have a formal mandate to serve youth. However, the department does provide a coordinated range of services for children and families. These services promote healthy child development and early learning, support parents in their role as care-givers and provide younger youth and children with positive opportunities for leadership and social inclusion.

Supporting the success of children and youth requires a multi-service approach. However, the current policy and funding environment for such an approach is going through a period of change. Through the Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy, the province has developed a five-year plan to reduce child poverty by helping children and youth reach their full potential and helping families to break the cycle of poverty.

The provincial strategy has a strong focus on education and early learning. This includes implementation of a new Early Learning Program for four and five year-olds. An enhanced role for municipal service managers (such as C&HS) is possible in two areas: developing and managing a network of Best Start Child and Family Centres as integrated service “hubs” for parents and children prenatal to 3; and in providing broader Early Years Services for children 0-12.

C&HS has identified these possibilities as a key strategic focus during the next year. In its role as a municipal service manager, C&HS will adjust programs as needed in response to changes in provincial funding levels or policy direction, while continuing to support the overall health and well-being of children, including those with special needs. These services include child care fee assistance, early intervention services, family strengthening programs, and child and family health programs.

C&HS will also work with the province, school boards, and the early learning community to support successful implementation of the Early Learning Program and any related changes to overall service system management.

Multi-Year Plan Action Areas

Council approved actions already planned or underway:

- monitor and report on the Early Learning Program's effect on the stability of York Region's child care system. This reporting will focus on identifying overall system pressures, implications for child care fee assistance waitlists, and impacts on child care operators.
- work closely with other municipal service managers through provincial associations to promote a stable child care system as the Early Learning Program evolves.
- develop clinical and intervention pathways through Early Intervention Services for targeted groups of children (e.g., children with Down Syndrome).
- improve access to community recreation programs for children and youth with special needs.

With Council approval, staff could implement the following proposed new or enhanced actions:

- enhance family strengthening programs to increase access to parenting supports and recreation for low income families.
- implement the Early Learning Program in collaboration with community partners.
- respond to broader system-wide changes arising from the Pascal Report recommendations, particularly enhanced service manager roles and Best Start Child and Family Centres.

Goal 5 – Foster social inclusion and economic opportunities by addressing the needs of a growing and diverse community.

Overview

York Region's rapid growth and changing social fabric continues to strengthen the community and the economy. These changes are also creating multiple-service pressures which affect the types of services needed and the ways in which those services are delivered. It is important that all residents have access to supports which sustain their full participation in York Region's community and economy. Accomplishing this will require innovation and collaboration.

Meeting growth-related demand for services will also require a broader provincial approach to fund the needed social infrastructure – the system of social services, networks and facilities that support people and healthy communities. Provincial investments need to keep pace with the human service needs of residents, including growth funding to support cost-shared programs through C&HS.

With these broader funding issues in mind, C&HS will continue to foster social inclusion for all residents using current programs. The department will focus on strategies and service delivery options to better respond to York Region's ethno-racial diversity, new immigrants and adults with more complex needs.

Fostering Social Inclusion

An inclusive society creates both the feeling and the reality of belonging and helps each of us reach our full potential. The feeling of belonging comes through caring, cooperation, and trust. The reality of belonging comes through equity, fairness, social and economic justices. We make belonging real by ensuring that it is accepted and practiced by society.

Count me in! Ontario Prevention Clearinghouse, 2006.

Multi-Year Plan Action Areas

Council approved actions already planned or underway:

- develop a “made-in-York Region” Immigration Settlement Strategy under the Local Immigration Partnership Initiative. It will be funded by the federal government and will provide better access and co-ordination of immigrant integration services, improve labour outcomes for recent immigrants living in York Region and strengthen regional awareness and capacity to successfully integrate immigrants.
- translate sections of York Region’s Immigration Portal into appropriate languages to meet the needs of new and prospective immigrants. A marketing campaign to raise awareness of the portal’s new features is also planned.
- develop translation standards for communicating C&HS information in ethno-cultural media.
- continue the Quality of Life Program for domiciliary hostel residents. This program is fully funded by the Region to support recreation, social and community activities.
- develop a partnership with the Central Community Care Access Centre to better support the needs of domiciliary hostel residents and help their transition to long-term care as needed.

With Council approval, staff could implement the following proposed new or enhanced actions:

- develop service delivery options to help improve access to services for diverse communities and recent immigrants – for example, implementing initiatives identified in York Region’s Immigration Strategy developed in collaboration with the Community Partnership Council.
- develop a pilot strategy to support service navigation and coordination for residents with complex needs.
- review existing community funding to address changing needs within the community and investigate the creation of a fund for human service collaborations.

Goal 6 - Deliver a more integrated human service system that supports effective community planning and quality services.

Overview

Residents can face a number of challenges in accessing the services they need. Services may be unavailable or oversubscribed. Residents may be unaware of the services that do exist and even if they are aware, may not be able to find or use them. These issues are not unique to C&HS but present a particular challenge given the scope of programs and services delivered by the department and some of the special needs of residents. Better access to information and services was a consistent message from the Multi-Year Plan consultations.

C&HS operates within a culture of continuous improvement which values planning and delivering services that meet people's needs, as well as understanding the communities and neighbourhoods where they live.

The province and municipalities across Ontario are developing new approaches to human services planning, particularly toward outcomes-based models of accountability and service planning/delivery. As part of this process, C&HS will inform residents about our services and how they can be accessed in ways that are helpful and relevant to their needs. The department will also keep services responsive to the changing needs of residents; and work with government and community partners to improve the quality and quantity of human services for York Region residents.

Multi-Year Plan Action Areas

Council approved actions already planned or underway:

- continue to develop data products to support research, policy, service delivery and community advocacy.
- upgrade software and analytical data tools to better understand client needs and support service delivery across a range of program areas.
- obtain feedback from Ontario Works participants to improve program and services, including introducing a customer satisfaction survey.
- establish an HYI tenant services/marketing office in the south end of the Region.
- develop community capacity building and advocacy to build the case for timely and adequate funding of human services from senior levels of government. This will include developing strategic partnerships with external groups as well as working groups within the Region.

With Council approval, staff could implement the following proposed new or enhanced actions:

- develop department-wide strategies to improve access to information and services such as e-Service options.
- enhance data and research to support community planning.

- integrate responses to poverty throughout C&HS planning and service delivery initiatives as appropriate.

Related Issues and Actions under Multi-Year Plan

During the course of the Multi-Year Plan consultations, a number of issues were raised where C&HS has little control or direct influence. Examples include concerns over access to - affordable counselling, health care including primary care, specialists and some mental health and addictions services, and specialized supports for children with special needs such as autism. These issues reflect the interdependence of human services – residents often require multiple services to improve their outcomes from multiple levels of government.

Municipal service managers have consistently called for a more integrated and seamless approach to human services planning and delivery – including working with other levels of government, community agencies, and funding partners to foster collaboration. In York Region, this has included coordinating services and information, assessing community needs, and developing advocacy tools or positions to communicate York Region-specific issues and to influence policy decisions.

Through the Multi-Year Plan, C&HS will share information with internal and external partners relating to issues beyond our mandate and scope, and continue to work with those partners to identify and address broader service gaps or needs which affect residents.

Implementation

The C&HS Multi-Year Plan reflects the key needs identified by community agencies, local municipalities and C&HS staff. Because of the changing nature of human services, the Multi-Year Plan will be reviewed annually by C&HS Senior Management to assess progress, refresh key issues or actions, and identify priorities and opportunities to implement specific initiatives. An update will be provided to Regional Council outlining the key findings of this annual review process.

Regional Council approval of the MYP will show commitment in principle to the goals and actions identified in the plan. Funding to support initiatives arising from the Multi-Year Plan will be requested on a case-by-case basis through the annual budget and business plan. Departmental capacity to implement Multi-Year Plan initiatives will be aligned with future budgetary processes. Many new or enhanced programs and services will require additional resources to manage and deliver results.

A formal review of the Multi-Year Plan, including updated research and consultative feedback, will take place every five years to ensure our residents' needs are understood, and the strategic framework and priorities continue to be relevant. Regional Council approval will be required for any work relating to an updated Multi-Year Plan.

Early Multi-Year Plan Investments (2009)

In March 2009, Regional Council approved \$1.3 million in annual funding to support “early investment initiatives” to respond to pressing community needs while the C&HS Multi-Year Plan was being developed. These “early investment initiatives” included:

- Addressing housing stability for low income workers facing financial crisis by supporting homelessness and eviction prevention programs.
- Providing housing supports to help people fleeing domestic violence establish and maintain successful tenancies.
- Improving access to basic needs for under-resourced families and individuals with complex needs.

Conclusion

The C&HS Multi-Year Plan will guide the department's understanding of, and response to, emerging and pressing human services needs in York Region. It is based on information from many sources including "front-line" staff. And it is a realistic plan for the next five years which proposes new or enhanced program and service initiatives which will help residents across York Region – including the most vulnerable in our communities.

This is particularly relevant given the province's on-going upload of social assistance costs. The Region now has new opportunities to reinvest funds to address York Region-specific needs. The Multi-Year Plan provides a critical tool to identify service gaps and growth-related pressures on C&HS programs and prioritize strategic spending as funding opportunities become available through uploading.

This first iteration of the Multi-Year Plan is also a starting point in responding to new provincial policy directions related to housing, early learning, and other service areas identified through the Provincial Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review. These may increase C&HS's service manager responsibilities. If this happens, C&HS will need to build capacity as the role of service system manager evolves and expands.

The Multi-Year Plan comes into effect once approved by Regional Council.

Appendix One – Consultation Summary Report

Purpose

The *Multi-Year Plan* will guide the department's services, programs and investments over the next five years (2010 – 2015) to ensure that they are responsive to the emerging and/or pressing human service issues facing our residents.

Approach

The research phase of the *Multi-Year Plan*'s development was managed by three internal staff groups including a project team, a task group, and a steering committee. The goal of these groups was to learn more about our residents and their changing needs, and develop a responsive plan. The research framework included extensive consultations with key C&HS stakeholders: staff, clients, local community agencies and local municipalities.

April – October 2009

An extensive literature review and analysis was completed: key documents related to C&HS programs and services, existing program-related service plans, human service plans from other jurisdictions, and related provincial initiatives.

June 2009

An analysis of C&HS programs and services was conducted through a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) workshop with the project team and task group.

June – July 2009

C&HS conducted a six-week survey: all C&HS staff were invited to comment on the needs of C&HS clients, where programs and services are needed, how to best deliver services, and any existing service gaps.

October 2009 – January 2010

The project team visited workplaces and communities across York Region to meet with C&HS staff, clients, community agencies and local municipalities in focus group sessions to discuss human services trends, issues and possible solutions.

January – February 2010

Senior C&HS management were interviewed to validate the issues identified through the consultations and identify areas where C&HS could respond.

Overall, almost 900 C&HS staff and stakeholders participated in the consultations and contributed significantly to the development of the *Multi-Year Plan*.

Research Results

The consultations confirmed the key human service challenges staff had identified in earlier research, and suggested the directions and actions that C&HS can take to guide programs and services over the next five years as funding opportunities become available.

The research also identified successes in specific services and programs offered by C&HS, and provided feedback on the positive way C&HS staff are viewed by residents and community agencies. This section will highlight the issues and gaps identified through the research.

A recurring series of themes emerged during the consultations:

1. Rapid Growth and Changing Demographics

Aging Population

- The population is rapidly growing.
- The greatest increase in growth is forecast for residents 65 years of age and older.
- Collaborative planning is needed to support active and healthy living, and mitigate where possible the need for future institutional care.
- As older residents retire, there could be labour shortages.
- As residents age there may be increased need for subsidized services such as dental, assistive devices and housing.

Increasing Diversity and Immigration

- There is increasing ethno-cultural and racial diversity and an increased demand for culturally-sensitive and multi-lingual service delivery.
- Improved integration of recent immigrants is needed, particularly to mitigate lack of Canadian labour market experience or credentials, and language barriers.

Low Income Population Growth

- The number of low income residents is increasing; however low income, poverty and homelessness are often hidden.
- The economic downturn has resulted in greater demands for financial assistance, employment supports and services, subsidized housing, child care subsidies, and Regionally-funded community services that address poverty and basic needs.
- Unemployed residents face many challenges re-entering the labour market if they do not have the skills and education required in today's economy.
- Some residents are not able to fully participate in their communities because of social isolation, persistent low income, transportation limitations (availability and cost), the high cost of living and/or unstable employment.

Increasing Complex Needs

- Residents with complex needs (e.g. multiple health issues) require more intensive services. This trend is across all age groups – frail elderly, adults with disabilities or employment barriers, and children with special needs.
- There is a growing number of residents who face more than one significant barrier to becoming self sufficient. This trend includes those with language barriers, limited education, poor mental or physical health, addictions, or limited social networks – coordinated and targeted supports can help improve outcomes.

- Adults with complex needs are increasingly moving to Regional Long-Term Care facilities and require a different mix of supports than older residents who have traditionally made up the client base.

2. Revitalized Methods of Providing Services

- C&HS can improve how it communicates about programs and services: what programs and services are available and how to access them. This includes how we provide information and the need for cultural/language sensitivity, as well as location of services, the need for hubs and online applications.
- Additional supports are required for some residents to identify services that are most relevant to their needs.
- Resident needs are not always well matched with service delivery locations. This is a result of the size and the growing and changing population of the Region.

3. Housing Affordability

- There is a limited supply of affordable rental housing options and rent-geared-to-income units. More affordable and safe housing in mixed income communities is also required.
- Housing costs in relation to income are too high for many individuals and families.
- The growing number of residents who have complex needs in finding and maintaining stable housing need more services.
- There are gaps and capacity issues in the emergency shelter system.

4. Demand for Services for Children and Youth

- Families need more programs offering support including child care subsidies, early intervention services, child health programs and parenting supports, access to recreation, before and after school care, and school lunch programs.
- There is a need to engage youth to reduce the potential for violence and social isolation.
- There is increased attention on the importance of child development in the early years but there are concerns surrounding the impact of the provincial Early Learning Program and sustained child care funding.

5. Health Care Challenges

- Public Health, EMS and Long-Term Care are facing pressures regarding new regulatory requirements along with growth-related service demand – particularly with current funding levels.
- As in other regions, the demand for emergency medical services is influenced by capacity in other areas of the health system, particularly hospital emergency rooms, provincial dispatch, access to primary care and the availability of support services.
- Population growth increases the potential for large scale emergencies and pandemics.

6. Need for Coordinated Funding and Policy

- Federal and provincial decisions about funding and policy affect our planning and delivery of services.
- Many of the issues that have been identified are largely beyond the control of C&HS but affect our residents and service delivery, including:
 - hospital overcrowding
 - lack of affordable counselling
 - lack of affordable dental services for adults and seniors with lower incomes
 - access to mental health services, addiction services, and specialized services for children with special needs

- access to doctors.
- Funding is not keeping pace with the growing demand for a range of services. As a result, there are wait lists for services, and insufficient resources for case management, research and analysis to support service planning and policy development.
- Community agencies require multi-year, sustainable funding to create long-term infrastructure and support collaborative planning
- There is a need for more community level data and knowledge sharing.
- The changing legislative and policy environment will cause C&HS roles to shift and evolve. These will create both opportunities and challenges to address human service needs of residents.

Conclusion

Through our consultation process C&HS heard from a broad cross-section of stakeholders, and we thank them for their time, support and for the valuable feedback provided. The perspective and needs of all stakeholders - C&HS staff, clients, community agencies and local municipalities have been considered in the drafting of the *Multi-Year Plan*.

Appendix Two: Community and Health Services Department Branch Program Areas

