



MEMORANDUM

TO: Community and Health Services Committee Members

FROM: Adelina Urbanski, Commissioner of Community and Health Services Department

DATE: May 12, 2010

RE: **Motion and Communication (Dignity for All Campaign)**

In April 2010, The Regional Community and Health Services Committee submitted a motion (Clause No. 1 of Report No. 3 of the Community Services and Housing Committee) to endorse a resolution from the City of Calgary regarding the *Dignity for All Campaign (Council Attachment I)*. As part of this motion, it was requested that The Regional Municipality of York send notification of this endorsement and resolution to the City of Calgary, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario for their information and distribution.

Background

In 2009, a national campaign was launched by Canada Without Poverty, and Citizens for Public Justice. This campaign, called *Dignity for All*, is a multi-year, multi-partner, non-partisan campaign that calls for action by the federal government to make Canada poverty-free and more socially secure and cohesive by 2020. This campaign calls for sustained action by the federal government to combat poverty in Canada through:

- A federal plan for poverty elimination that complements provincial and territorial plans
- A federal anti-poverty Act that ensures enduring federal commitment and accountability for results
- Sufficient federal investment in social security for all Canadians.

The City of Calgary has circulated a resolution endorsing the *Dignity for All Campaign* for consideration at the Annual General Meeting of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities advocating for a federal anti-poverty Act. The City of Calgary has requested that The Regional Municipality of York support the resolution that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities endorse the *Dignity for All Campaign*. The City of Calgary also calls on the federal government to develop a federal anti-poverty Act that ensures enduring federal commitment and accountability for results, with sufficient federal investment in social security for all Canadians,

and that the federal government actively consult with municipalities in the development of the announced poverty elimination plan and any forthcoming anti-poverty Act.

Status of Poverty Reduction in York Region

It is recognized that the overall health and well-being of individuals and communities is influenced by the interaction of social, economic and health factors (determinants of health). The Community and Health Services Department plays a key role in providing services which support better health outcomes for residents including its poverty initiatives. 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 longer-term poverty, and promote social inclusion.

Specific Department initiatives and programs focused on addressing the spectrum of needs for people living in poverty 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.
- Development of a Community and Health Services Departmental Multi-Year Plan that will incorporate poverty reduction initiatives
- 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
- Provides low income families with access to early intervention services
- Provides affordable housing through rent geared to income programs
- Support and funding of local homelessness prevention initiatives
- Administer a Community Development Investment Fund to community service providers to address the needs of vulnerable residents
- Infectious Disease control through the Street Outreach van and Needle exchange programs

- Dental and nutrition services
- Health promotion targeting at risk populations
- Subsidized services to seniors through facility programs, day program and supportive housing programs.
- Crisis intervention and assistance to seniors.

York Region is on the front-lines in addressing poverty through the programs and services it provides to low income and vulnerable residents, and in its ongoing efforts to identify and respond to emerging needs and issues. The municipal role in reducing poverty will be made stronger with improvements to the underlying federal and provincial social infrastructure including:

- Improved income security
- Increased supports to children, youth and families
- Expanded access to affordable child care
- Greater federal and provincial commitment to affordable housing and homelessness initiatives
- Integrated labour market development
- Enhanced service system integration
- Broadened opportunities to education and skills training
- Increased access to transportation
- Higher levels of food security
- Improved services for newcomers, seniors, aboriginals, women, single mothers, and those affected by addictions and mental health

The federal government's commitment to addressing and reducing poverty is a critical and necessary step. Now, more than ever, poverty must remain at the forefront of the government's agenda to keep the social infrastructure and the need for sustained funding relevant. There is no integrated approach among levels of government to address poverty. The federal government needs to work with municipalities to make Canada poverty-free.

The Regional Municipality of York Poverty Reduction Plan

Several communities across Canada have developed local poverty reduction plans. In the context of The Regional Municipality of York, the Human Services Planning Board of York Region will be asked to incorporate the issue of poverty into its work plan and linkages to other Departmental initiatives will also be sought. (see *Council Attachment 2*).

Recommendation

That The Regional Municipality of York endorse the resolution set out in *Council Attachment 3* regarding Poverty and the *Dignity for All Campaign*, to show its continued commitment to poverty reduction.

For more information on this communication, please contact Cordelia Abankwa-Harris, Managing Director, Strategic Service Integration and Policy Branch, at Extension 2150.

Adelina Urbanski
Commissioner of Community and Health Services

AU/CA/cr/kn

Attachments: 1 – City of Calgary Resolution
 2 – Diagram of Poverty-Related Initiatives at York Region
 3 – Resolution of The Regional Municipality of York

**City of Calgary Resolution to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities –
Dignity for All**

Whereas in 1989, the Parliament of Canada unanimously endorsed a motion to end child poverty by the year 2000; and

Whereas Canada continues to have a high rate of poverty, by one standard measure, with 4.7 million people living in low-income households across Canada in 2006; of whom almost 1 million were children; and

Whereas poverty is largely concentrated in urban areas, with two-thirds of Canada's poor (over 3 million people) living in Canada's largest urban areas in 2006; and

Whereas the current economic recession has resulted in significantly deteriorating economic conditions for many Canadian families; and

Whereas the impacts of poverty significantly impact urban municipalities including costs of social assistance, affordable housing, homelessness, policing, fee subsidies and other social supports; and

Whereas the United Nations Human Rights Council called on the Government of Canada in 2009 to develop a national strategy to end poverty; and

Whereas organizations, led by Canada without Poverty, and Citizens for Public Justice, have launched the pan-Canadian Dignity for All Campaign that calls for vigorous and sustained action by the federal government to combat the structural causes of poverty in Canada through:

A federal plan for poverty elimination that complements provincial and territorial plans.

A federal anti-poverty Act that ensures enduring federal commitment and accountability for results.

Sufficient federal investment in social security for all Canadians.

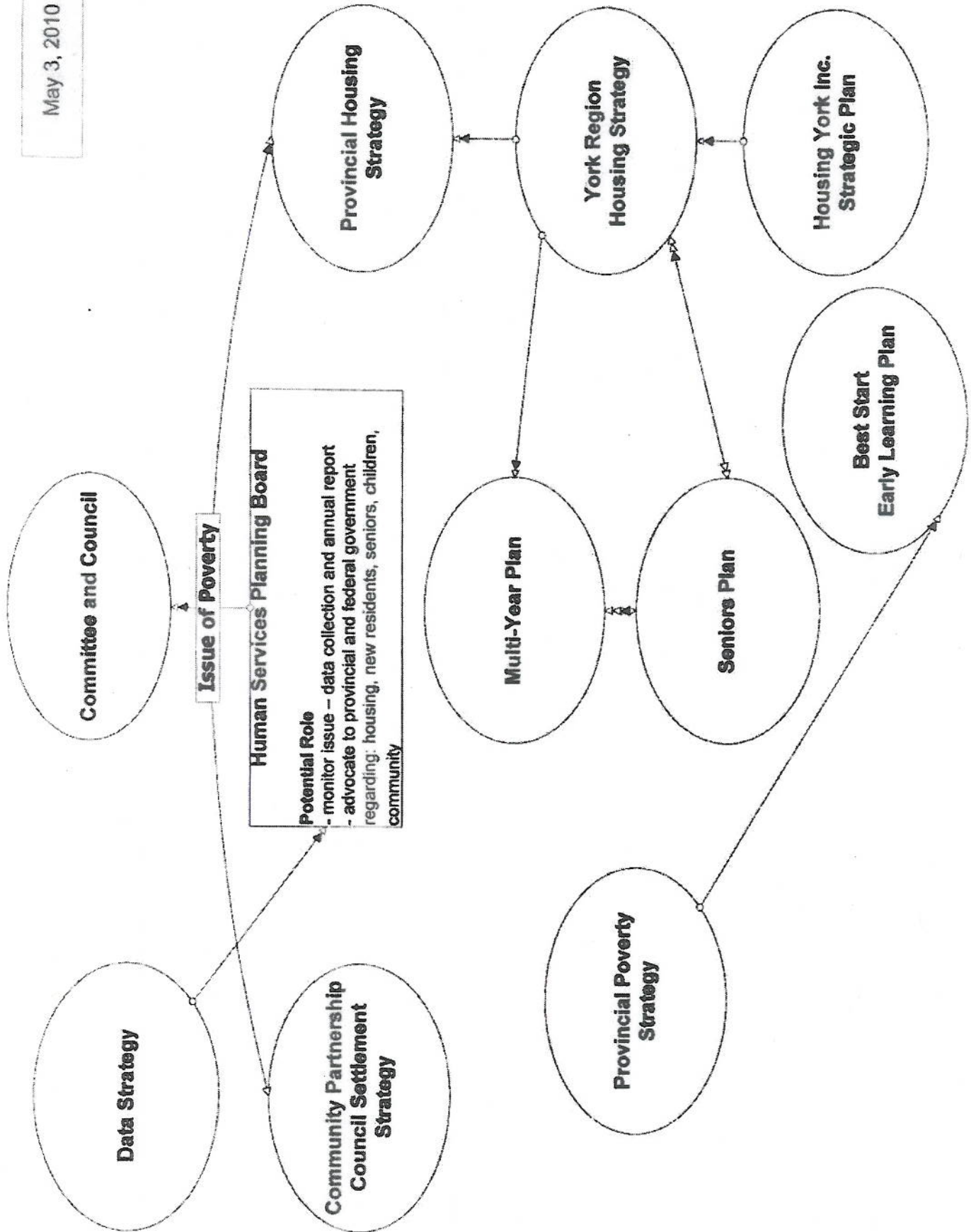
Whereas on 2009 November 24 the House of Commons passed the following motion: "That, with November 24th, 2009 marking the 20th anniversary of the 1989 unanimous resolution of this House to eliminate poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000, and not having achieved that goal, be it resolved that the Government of Canada, taking into consideration the Committee's work in this regard, and respecting provincial and territorial jurisdiction, develop an immediate plan to eliminate poverty in Canada for all."

BE IT RESOLVED that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities endorses the "Dignity for All Campaign" and calls on the Government of Canada to develop a federal antipoverty Act that ensures enduring federal commitment and accountability for results, with sufficient federal investment in social security for all Canadians; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities call on the federal government to actively consult with municipalities in the development of the announced poverty elimination plan and any forthcoming anti-poverty Act.

City of Calgary, Alberta

May 3, 2010



**RESOLUTION OF THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK REGARDING
POVERTY REDUCTION AND DIGNITY FOR ALL CAMPAIGN**

WHEREAS poverty is a growing issue in York Region with one in eight residents facing or at risk of facing economic hardship due to low-income.¹

WHEREAS the Region is seeing a rapid increase in its vulnerable population; lone parents, recent immigrants, people with disabilities and children residing in low income households.²

WHEREAS housing affordability continues to be an issue for York Region with an increased demand for rent-geared to income units³ and limited affordable rental housing options⁴.

WHEREAS, due to recent economic instability and gaps in provincial and federal supports, there has been increased pressure on Regional financial and employment assistance, subsidized housing and child care and community services that address poverty.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Council of the Regional Municipality of York endorse the Dignity for All Campaign resolution set out in *Council Attachment 1* of this report, as proposed by the City of Calgary.
2. The Human Services Planning Board of York Region consider assigning priority to the issue of poverty in York Region in the development of its workplan and assume the role of monitoring and annually reporting to Council on the issue of poverty but also enlisting the data and support of the regional sectoral planning groups (e.g. Community Partnership Council, Community Social Data Strategy)
3. Regional Municipality of York Region staff be directed to weave the issue of poverty in future planning projects, and incorporate strategies aimed at mitigating the effects of poverty in future strategic planning initiatives (e.g. Community and Health Services Multi-Year Plan, York Region Affordable Housing Strategy, York Region Seniors Plan)
4. The Regional Municipality of York send notification of this endorsement and resolution to the City of Calgary, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, for distribution to municipalities across Ontario.

¹ Based on 2006 Census data and before tax low income cut off rates.

² Based on 2001 and 2006 Census data.

³ Regional Municipality of York, Community and Health Services Committee, *Service Indicators for Social Assistance and Housing*, March 10, 2010

⁴ Based on 2006 Census data.