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RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT THE STRONG COMMUNITIES COALITION: A COALITION OF HUMAN SERVICES IN DURHAM, HALTON, PEEL AND YORK

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report November 28, 2006, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Council endorse the Human Services Planning Coalition's (HSPC) Resolution supporting the recommendations of the Strong Communities Coalition (SCC) as set out in Council Attachment 1.
2. Staff of the Planning and Development Services department report back to Council on the government relations activities of the Strong Communities Coalition as well as implications for the Region.
3. This report be circulated by the Regional Clerk to local municipalities, the Human Services Planning Coalition and United Way of York Region.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to request Council endorse the HSPC's Resolution supporting the recommendations of the SCC and to update Council on SCC's progress to engage the provincial government.

3. BACKGROUND

A report providing an overview of the SCC was presented to the Planning and Economic Development Committee on June 14, 2006 and Council on June 26, 2006. The Planning and Development Services department was asked to report back to Council on SCC's activities to engage the provincial government as well as the implications to the Region.

The SCC was established on June 20, 2005 arising from the need to speak out about improving local access to health and social services for the three million residents of Durham, Halton, Peel and York and the need for fair population-based funding to address the growing funding gap for these vital services. Its mandate is to advocate for equitable and sustainable funding policies and formulae for health and social services in the GTA/905 communities. It is led by the 905/GTA HealthCare Alliance (a group of 10

hospitals in the 905 area) and the United Way Agencies of York, Peel, Halton, Ajax/Pickering and Oshawa/Clarington.

On October 24, 2006 the SCC released its report, *Growing Pains*, based on the findings of a recent audit by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) assessing the gap in health and social services funding between the GTA/905 and the rest of Ontario. The HSPC also issued a press release on the same day assessing the size of the gap for human services funding in York Region.

Since the release of its reports, the SCC has engaged the provincial and municipal governments through briefings with Ministers, MPPs, Regional Chairs, Mayors and Councillors across the GTA/905 to secure stakeholder support, advocate for the report's recommendations and carry the key messages to the Ontario Government. The SCC is currently developing a communications strategy to continue this advocacy in 2007.

The HSPC has distributed the SCC's reports to local politicians (regional/local councillors and mayors), MPPs, MPs and all nine local municipalities.

At the November 22, 2006 HSPC meeting, a Resolution was passed supporting the SCC's recommendations and a request was made by the HSPC to seek Council's endorsement of the Resolution. (See Council Report Attachment 1) A similar Resolution was passed by Brampton Council on August 2, 2006.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

4.1 Relationship to York Region's Growth Management Plan

To adequately plan for the continued rapid population and employment growth over the next 25 years, and to conduct a comprehensive review of the Region's Growth Management systems, York Region has embarked on a comprehensive public information and engagement process to collect feedback on the Region's Sustainable Development Initiative. The results of this consultation process will help in moving York Region forward to a more sustainable Region, including the incorporation of a sustainable development theme into the ongoing and future Growth Management workplan. The work of the SCC will contribute to and fit well with the Region's Growth Management initiative. In particular, the SCC's recommendations are consistent with those of the HSPC and will help ensure that human services in York Region keep pace with its growth.

4.2 Key Findings of the PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) Audit Report

The PwC audit reviewed social services in the areas of adult services, developmental services, child care and children's services, including children welfare and health care services. The reviews were also conducted within the realms of hospital services and services provided by Community Care Access Centres (CCAC), such as home care.

The audit concluded that a sizable gap exists between per capita health and social services annual operating funding in the GTA/905 area compared to the rest of Ontario, and that the annual operating funding gap grew over the 2002/03 – 2006/07 period. Specifically, the report noted that the annual funding gap for provincially-funded social services in the GTA/905 over the last several years has grown to \$551.5 million, while the health care gap is \$899.3 million. CCAC services have also experienced a funding gap of \$94.4 million.

4.2.1 Human Services Funding in York Region

As part of its mandate, the HSPC, established in 2001, has been tracking the gap in human services funding in York Region. With the release of the SCC's report, the HSPC has updated its assessment of the size of the gap for human services funding in York Region.

The total size of the funding gap for social services in York Region in 2003/04 (the most updated provincial data available) was about \$173 million. Similarly, the funding gap for health services has grown to almost \$453 million in 2006/07.

4.2.2 The HSPC Resolution of Support for the SCC

At its November 22, 2006 the HSPC passed a resolution supporting the SCC's recommendations that the Government of Ontario:

1. Immediately provide **growth funding** for health and social services in the GTA/905 regions of Durham, Halton, Peel and York;
2. Revise the way it allocates funding for health and social services across Ontario so that it is distributed on the basis of population size, growth and characteristics– that is, fundamentally *population-based*;
3. **Develop a health and social services strategy for Ontario's high-growth regions** to complement *Places to Grow*, and that this strategy be developed in consultation with the GTA/905 stakeholders, including members of the Strong Communities Coalition.

The HSPC also passed a motion to bring forward the Resolution for Council's endorsement.

4.3 The SCC's Communications Strategy

Pre- Release Briefings to Secure Stakeholder Support

Prior to the release of the *Growing Pains Report* and the PwC Report, United Way of York Region met with the Regional Chairman, the Policy & Priorities Action Group of the HSPC, York Region MPs, MPPs, hospital CEOs, the Local Health Integration

Network Chairs/CEOs, and the local school boards to raise awareness of the SCC and to seek stakeholder support. In addition, the Greater Toronto Area and Hamilton Mayors and Chairs were briefed at their October 13, 2006 meeting in Newmarket. Other 905/GTA United Ways also undertook similar government relations activities.

To ensure that provincial officials were aware of the reports, and that messaging resonates with decision-makers and all parties are aware of the issues, SCC members briefed relevant Ministers, their staff and ministry staff as well as members of the official opposition prior to the release. For example, the following Provincial government officials were briefed:

- Deputy Ministers and/or Assistant Deputy Ministers from the Ministries of Health and Long-Term Care, Citizenship & Immigration, Community & Social Services, Children's & Youth Services (August 22, 2006)
- Rosario Marchese, MPP (August 14, 2006)
- Minister David Caplan, (September 13, 2006)
- Minister Michael Colle – (October 2, 2006)
- Premier's office and Minister of Finance Office – (October 12, 2006)
- Elizabeth Witmer, MPP – (October 18, 2006)

Release of *Growing Pains Report* and PwC Report – October 24, 2006

SCC hosted a media conference at Queen's Park with United Ways' spokesperson, Shelley White, CEO of Peel United Way, Dr. Colin Saldanha, a physician and a community volunteer with the United Way and Board of Trade and Tariq Asmi, Executive Director of the GTA/905 Health Coalition. The CEOs of the United Ways were also in attendance. Excellent media coverage was garnered from this event. The HSPC also issued a press release on the same day assessing the size of the gap for human services funding in York Region and communicating the messages of the SCC.

Building Community Awareness of the Report - Post Release

To ensure understanding by key stakeholders of the report's findings, United Ways have presented the report's findings to their member agencies at regular forums and other community meetings. Some United Ways are also planning to, or have already, presented the *Growing Pains Report* to their Regional Council, Municipal Councils, municipal Boards of Trade, ethnic business associations, community groups and other applicable groups.

Simon Cheng, Program Director of the Human Services Planning, represented the HSPC at a Pre-budget Consultation with Finance Minister Greg Sorbara on November 24, 2006. The discussion provided a good opportunity to reinforce the SCC's messages and the HSPC's request for the repatriation of pooling dollars.

Communications Strategy Pre-provincial election (2007)

The SCC is currently developing a pre-election strategy aimed at delivering key messaging prior to the 2007 Provincial election. Some of the activities that are being considered include the United Ways hosting town hall meetings and round table discussions with stakeholders.

4.4 Relationship to Vision 2026

The release of the *Growing Pains Report* and the PwC audit report builds a strong case for the under-funding of human services and sends a unified message to the Province requesting population-based funding for health and social services for the GTA/905. It works to secure new funding models to “respond to the needs of our residents”.

In the goal of “managed and balanced growth”, the Region will be “anticipating and responding to the human service needs of a growing and changing population”. The SCC’s recommendations support this goal by taking a proactive role in addressing the rapid population growth and advocating for population-based funding for social services and health care in the GTA/905.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As United Ways continue to take the lead in implementing the SCC’s communications strategy, the associated costs will be shared by the leading United Ways. This report has no immediate financial impacts for the Region.

If Council adopts the resolution and forwards it to the Government of Ontario, the funding gap of about \$173 million in social services (2003/04) and \$453 million in health services (2006/07) may be addressed.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The SCC is considering briefing all Mayors and Councillors of local municipalities about the *Growing Pains Report*. In addition, United Ways will continue to present the report’s findings to Municipal Councils, Boards of Trade, business associations and community groups to seek their support.

7. CONCLUSION

The *Growing Pains Report* and the PwC audit report have further confirmed the HSPC’s findings of historic under-funding for health and social services in York and other 905 areas. SCC’s recommendations to the Province are in alignment with the funding approach proposed by the HSPC.

Council's support of the SCC's recommendations may positively influence funding policy as it pertains to human services in the GTA/905 including York Region. Addressing the under-funding of human services is an important part of the Region's sustainability and growth management plan.

Regional staff will continue to participate in the discussions of the SCC and provide information and data support to this Coalition.

For further information about this report, please contact Dina Riccardi, Senior Planner, Human Services Planning Branch at (905) 830-4444 ext. 1557.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachment referred to in this clause is attached to this report.)