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FEDERAL HOMELESSNESS PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE UPDATE

The Community and Health Services Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report dated September 3, 2009, from the Commissioner of Community and Health Services.

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. This report be received for information.

2. PURPOSE

This report provides an update on the activities of the Homelessness Partnership Initiative.

3. BACKGROUND

The federal government, through Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC), has been providing homelessness funding to the Region since 2001. In 2007 a new initiative, the Homelessness Partnering Strategy, commenced. Through this strategy, \$2.12 million has been provided in two phases. The Homelessness Partnership Initiative Phase 1 (HPI-1) from April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2009 and Phase 2 (HPI-2), from April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2011. Phase 1 was extended, in time only, to March 31, 2010.

In order to receive federal funding, the Region worked with HRSDC and a Community Planning Group to complete a *Community Plan to Address Homelessness*, a document that outlines community goals and priorities. The *Community Plan* was completed in 2001 and updated in 2008. The federal government also required that a Community Advisory Board, comprised of community funding agencies and York Region staff, be established to evaluate and recommend projects for funding.

The Region was confirmed by HRSDC as the “Community Entity” to act as the delivery agent on behalf of the federal government. In November 2007, Regional Council approved that the Region continue in its role of “Community Entity” through the adoption of Clause No. 6 of Report No. 9 of the Community Services and Housing Committee, and in February 2009, the Community Advisory Board voted to retain York Region in this role.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Homelessness Partnership Initiative Phase 1 (HPI-1) from 2007-2010

The Homelessness Partnership Initiative began as a two year initiative from April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2009 and was approved by Regional Council on March 27, 2008 through the adoption of Clause No. 8 of Report No. 2 of the Community Services and Housing Committee. Eight projects were started during this time frame to provide services to vulnerable residents in York Region who were homeless or at-risk of homelessness (*see Attachment 1*).

The federal government extended the HPI-1 funding period from April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010 to allow communities to complete projects and allocate unspent funds. This was an extension, in time only, and no additional funds were provided. There were four HPI-1 projects that required additional time to complete project deliverables.

Eviction prevention: highlights of a HPI-1 pilot project

In March 2008, the Community Legal Clinic of York Region was approved for HPI-1 funding to pilot a one-year eviction prevention project. Through this project a para-legal specializing in landlord/tenant law and cross-trained in mental health issues, provided eviction prevention services to targeted clients and provided training for front-line community and health staff to educate them on the eviction process and eviction prevention.

Residents with mental health problems are at a much greater risk of eviction. Upon eviction they often have difficulty finding new housing, often resulting in homelessness. Homelessness or threat of homelessness often exacerbates the resident's mental health problems and isolation.

Clients struggling with mental health issues are dealing with multiple, complex problems that require intense one on one intervention. During the one year pilot, the Eviction Prevention Worker was able to provide assistance to 59 households, some of the most complex cases in the Region, and assisted 108 residents. Eviction was prevented or delayed in 45 of the cases and 14 were assisted to find new housing. A three month follow-up confirmed that 34 of the households that were assisted remained housed.

This program has been very successful and has been funded for an additional two years through HPI-2.

Phase 2 Homelessness Partnership Initiative funding priorities

The federal government provided an additional \$1,060,748 in homelessness funds to the Region, the Community Entity, for 2009-2011. It was required that the funds be allocated to three areas: capital projects, service projects, and a maximum of 15%, \$159,112 to administration/evaluation.

In February and March 2009, the Community Planning Group met to select community priorities and to recommend the funding allocation for capital and service projects. The priorities were selected from the community priorities that had been identified in *The York Region Community Plan to Address Homelessness, 2nd Update 2008*. HRSDC did not require a new Community Plan at this time, allowing the Region to act quickly on the allocation of the new funding. The following six priorities were selected:

1. There is a crisis in the affordable housing supply in York Region, including supportive housing.
2. Supports and services for homeless individuals and families, and those who are at risk of becoming homeless, are limited and don't meet the needs of York Region residents.
3. Individuals who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless have difficulty accessing health services.
4. The services available to some homeless and at risk populations, as may be defined by their age, ethnicity, ability, and/or gender, in particular youth and women, are not sufficient to meet their needs.
5. Risk of homelessness is increased with mental health or substance abuse problems and the availability of services is not sufficient to meet the needs of this population group.
6. There is a need for improved knowledge and increased utilization of knowledge, as well as public education and advocacy on homelessness in York Region.

The selected priorities and recommended funding allocations were outlined in the HPI-2 Purchase of Service Request that was released to the public on April 2, 2009 and closed on April 30, 2009.

HPI-2 funded initiatives 2009-2011

A Community Advisory Board consisting of community funders and regional staff met on May 15, 2009 to select projects. Of the 14 proposals received, seven were chosen to best serve the needs of residents that are homeless or at risk of homelessness in York Region (*see Attachment 2*).

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The total HPI-2 funding of \$1,089,047 (including \$28,299 carried over from HPI-1) will be spent from April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2011 and is a 100% federally funded program with no regional tax levy impact.

Following the Community Planning Group recommendations, the Community Advisory Board recommended the following funding allocation for HPI-2 funds:

Table 1
HPI-2 Funding Allocation

Project Type	Amount
Capital	\$ 122,693
Service	693,731
*Subtotal:	\$ 816,424
Administration	159,112
Unallocated Capital	113,511
Total	\$1,089,047

**See Attachment 2 for description and cost of each project.*

The remaining funds of \$113,511 will be allocated based on program guidelines during the course of the funding period by the Commissioner as authorized by Regional Council on March 26, 2009 with the adoption of Clause No. 4 of Report No. 2 of the Community Services and Housing Committee.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

All York Region communities benefit from HPI funding as it strengthens quality of life and provides vital services to our most vulnerable residents. The following are some examples of the results of HPI-1 funded projects:

- Construction was started on two transitional housing units that will provide seven beds for twenty years.
- The new van was used during the time of the project to transport a total of 835 homeless youth to appointments for employment resources, health and addiction services, life skills programs, food banks, and cultural, recreational and volunteer activities.
- A total of 383 residents were assisted with transportation.

See Attachment 1 for a complete list of results.

7. CONCLUSION

York Region's continued participation in federal homelessness initiatives is consistent with its role as Service Manager and continues the commitment to working with other levels of government and the community to work towards homelessness prevention and mitigation.

The supports and services that are offered through these homelessness prevention initiatives continue to provide preventive supports to the most vulnerable residents of York Region. The services offered reduce the long term costs associated with absolute homelessness, and improve the quality of life for York Region residents.

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

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The two attachments referred to in this clause are attached to this report).

Homelessness Partnership Initiative Projects Phase 1

No.	Agency and Project Name	Services Delivered	Funding (\$)	Results
1	Blue Door Shelters – Leeder Place Expansion	This project will provide furnishings and equipment for the new 60 bed Leeder Place Family Shelter that is expected to serve 340 residents annually.	\$164,400	Furnishings provided for the new shelter
2	Community Legal Clinic of York Region – Preventing Homelessness Through Targetted Eviction Prevention	Eviction prevention for those who are least able to fend for themselves (brain injury, mental or psychological health problems or diminished mental capacity). Training to front-line staff.	62,000	59 cases, 108 people served. 45 evictions prevented. 14 people rehoused
3	East Markham Non-Profit Homes	To provide funding for 2 units (7 beds) of transitional housing for homeless youth in a multi-unit non-profit building.	384,387	Construction started on 2 transitional units (7 beds), will provide housing for 20 years
4	Inn From The Cold Inc – Multi-service Centre Renovations	Renovate the building at 510 Penrose in Newmarket to create a multi-service centre where the temporary emergency shelter, Inn From the Cold, and several agencies serving homeless or at risk clients can be located.	100,000	Phase 1 completed: 5 agency Multi-Service Centre opened
5	Salvation Army Sutton Youth Shelter – Sutton Youth Shelter Outreach & Program Transportation Van	Purchase one van to transport shelter youth to appointments for employment resources, health and addiction services, life skills programs, food banks, and cultural, recreational and volunteer activities. The Sutton Youth Shelter opened in March 2006 with 16 emergency and 10 transitional beds for youth between ages 16 and 24.	60,000	835 youth transported to appointments
6	York Region Alliance to End Homelessness/Tides Canada Initiatives Society – A Coordinated Response to Homelessness: Transportation	Develop long-term sustainable approaches to transportation for homeless and at risk residents of York Region, and provide a coordinated community approach that would increase access to services and supports in York Region for 500 vulnerable York Region residents.	65,000	383 residents assisted with transportation needs. 1 report produced

No.	Agency and Project Name	Services Delivered	Funding (\$)	Results
7	York Region Alliance to End Homelessness/Tides Canada Initiatives Society – Knowledge, Skills & Practices for Change: Capacity Building Through Learning	Build the capacity of individuals and organizations in the homelessness servicing sectors by holding networking/training events, sharing effective practices and developing partnerships.	50,400	6 events held. 1 support network launched
8	York Region Alliance to End Homelessness/Tides Canada Initiatives Society – Knowledge, Skills & Practices for Change: Street Health in York Region	Hold a community health forum to share data and stories about the health issues facing clients who are homeless and at risk of homelessness, discuss service gaps, and begin to brainstorm short and long term solutions.	7,150	1 event held. 1 pilot study completed
	Total - 8 Projects		\$893,337	

Homelessness Partnership Initiative Projects Phase 2

No	Agency and Project Name	Services to be Delivered	Approved Funding (\$)	Service Location
1	Blue Door Shelters – Capital Improvements for the York Region Youth Shelter	This project will provide minor capital improvements to the Newmarket Youth Shelter. The Shelter serves approximately 200 homeless and at risk youth annually.	\$ 46,038	Newmarket, but open to all York Region youth
2	Blue Door Shelters – Service Delivery Improvements in Emergency Homeless Shelters	Building staff competencies through training which will improve service delivery to shelter clients, and assist in the recruitment and retention of qualified staff. The agency serves over 1,000 clients annually.	91,543	East Gwillimbury & Newmarket, but serving all York Region
3	Community Legal Clinic of York Region – Preventing Homelessness Through Targetted Eviction Prevention	Eviction prevention for those who are least able to fend for themselves (brain injury, mental or psychological health problems or diminished mental capacity). Training to front-line staff.	308,939	Richmond Hill, serving all York Region
4	Inn From The Cold Inc – Multi-service Centre Renovations	Final phase capital renovations to the Multi-Service Centre at 510 Penrose Street.	76,655	Newmarket, serving all York Region men and women
5	Women's Centre of York Region – Enterprising Careers	Provide an employment readiness program with components of assessment, support, guidance, coaching and community connection for women at risk of homelessness.	94,814	Newmarket, but open to all York Region women
6	York Region Alliance to End Homelessness/Tides Canada Initiatives Society – Next Steps in the coordinated Community Response to Homelessness	This project will develop core competencies for housing, outreach and transitional workers and hold 7 training and networking events. It will increase transportation supports and access for homeless and at-risk people by distributing funds to agencies and identifying new sustainable transportation options.	126,495	Newmarket, serving all York Region

No .	Agency and Project Name	Services to be Delivered	Approved Funding (\$)	Service Location
7	York Region Alliance to End Homelessness/Tides Canada Initiatives Society	Gain a better understanding of the particular health service needs of those accessing emergency and transitional shelters by coordinating a collaborative response to the health care needs of shelter residents, and by improving shelter resident's access to health care. Evaluate the impact of building greater partnerships between health care providers and direct service agencies.	71,940	Newmarket, serving all York Region
	Total – 7 Projects		\$816,424	