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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT FUNDING STRATEGY INITIATIVES UPDATE AND REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF RECOMMENDED 2006 PROJECTS

The Community Services and Housing Committee recommends adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, November 3, 2005, from the Commissioner of Community Services and Housing:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Regional Council approve the community service projects (*see Attachment 1*) recommended for 2006 Purchase of Service contracts by the Community Development Investment Funding (CDIF) Evaluation Committee.
2. The Region enter into Purchase of Service contracts with successful proponents as recommended by the Evaluation Committee, after due diligence verifications are completed, and the Commissioner of Community Services and Housing be authorized to sign these contracts on the Region's behalf, subject to review by Legal Services.
3. The Commissioner of Community Services and Housing be authorized to allocate any new or related Community Development and Investment Funds that may become available during the course of 2006 within the framework of provincial guidelines, the Community Funding Strategy, and Vision 2026.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to update Committee and Council on the Community Development and Investment Funding (CDIF) Strategy implementation and activities in 2005.

This report also requests approval of the projects recommended through Purchase of Service Request (POS) agreements to provide priority community services to vulnerable residents of York Region. These funds are part of the Department's Community Funding Strategy for 2006.

Finally, as in the past, this report seeks approval to receive and allocate new CDIF funding that may become available during the course of 2006 in accordance with provincial guidelines and the Regional Council approved CDIF Strategy. These funds tend to be either one-time 100% provincial dollars to be used in community service initiatives or within current budget allocations set aside for CDIF. Normally, provincial

funding of this nature is required to be returned to the Province, if not spent, by the end of the calendar year.

3. BACKGROUND

The Community Services and Housing Department manages a number of municipal, provincial and federal funding initiatives that provide services for residents of York Region. These funds include the National Child Benefit, the Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program and the Municipal Purchase of Service Fund. In previous years the strategy also included funding from the Ontario Works Performance Bonus; however, this initiative has ended, reducing the amount and flexibility of funding available through CDIF in 2006. Prior to the CDIF Strategy, each funding initiative was managed independently, with different processes and timelines.

On April 18, 2002, Council approved the CDIF Strategy which established a framework within which the Community Services and Housing Department plans, manages, and funds the purchase of community-based services, and within which accountability criteria and practices are established.

The approved CDIF Strategy established the framework for a fair, equitable and transparent process to distribute and manage these programs and funds in the community. Under the CDIF, there are two “funding envelopes”. One envelope is for Department-Identified Initiatives, and the other is for Community Initiatives. The Community Initiatives envelope is implemented through an annual Purchase of Service Request (POS) process which invites project proposals from the community.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

4.1 CDIF Strategy Enhancements

In 2005, a number of initiatives were undertaken to continue improving implementation of the CDIF Strategy in York Region.

A successful partnership between Supplies and Services, Legal Services and the Community Services and Housing Department, as well as the new provisions in Schedule ‘A’ of the Region’s revised Purchasing By-law, made it possible to develop and implement a process that was more appropriate for purchasing services from community agencies. The new process was designed to be more user-friendly for community agencies and also to reduce the paper work required for submitting proposals. However, it will continue to be administered by Supplies and Services Branch and will retain the essential features of the purchasing process that ensures transparency, fairness and accountability.

In addition, as was the case last year:

- The documentation fee was waived to allow small agencies to more easily participate.
- An information session was held, jointly hosted by the Community Services and Housing Department and Supplies and Services Branch. Its goal was to assist community agencies to understand the CDIF eligibility criteria, the priority areas for funding, and the application process and submission requirements. The meeting also allowed agencies to ask questions about the POS process. All answers provided at the Information Session were shared with all proponents – whether they attended or not - to ensure a level playing field.

The implementation and effectiveness of the CDIF Strategy will be reviewed each year to promote continuous improvement of this initiative.

4.2 2005 CDIF Implementation

The 2005 Community projects approved by Regional Council on November 18, 2004 for community services for residents of York Region are currently underway. A report on the delivery of these services, including the projects funded, the numbers of clients served and the project outcomes and successes will be reported to Council early in 2006.

4.3 CDIF Implementation for 2006

Using the criteria set out by Regional Council in 2002, this fall, Community proposals for projects to be delivered in 2006 were invited through a Purchase of Service Request process in accordance with the CDIF Strategy. Available funding for this year's community initiative was estimated to be in the \$800,000 to \$1.0 million range, subject to funding limitations and restrictions. Funding has now been confirmed at a total of just over \$1.1 million.

4.3.1 Funding Limits and Restrictions

The majority of the funding available under the Strategy comes from other funding sources and with pre-determined criteria and conditions attached. These conditions are set by each funding source, be it federal or provincial. Regional allocations also have attendant funding criteria established by Regional Council.

The priority funding areas identified for community initiatives are:

- Employment Supports.
- Family and Children Services.
- Homelessness.

Sustainability and Capacity Building.

These priority areas are based on guidelines established by the funding sources, Regional Council directives, input from the Community Services and Housing Department's Management Group as well as information from a review of homelessness and homelessness services in York Region.

4.3.2 The Purchase of Service Request Process

The POS Request invited community agencies to submit their proposals to enter into purchase of service agreements with The Regional Municipality of York for the delivery of priority community services in 2006. The POS Request was released on August 18, 2005, and closed September 29, 2005.

A marketing plan was executed which allowed as many agencies as possible to be made aware of the POS Request.

Also, as mentioned previously, an Information Meeting was held to provide agencies with explanations of the documentation and to answer their questions.

The community was informed of the release through:

- Information on the Region's website.
- POS announcements emailed out to YorkLink agencies.
- Newspaper advertisements.
- Public Service Announcements.
- A press release from the Region's Corporate Communications Branch.

At closing, 63 proposals with requests that totalled approximately \$5.4 million were submitted in response to the POS Request.

4.3.3 Proposal Evaluation and Selection

As in past years, all eligible proposals were evaluated by the Community Services and Housing Directors and external funders from other levels of government and the not-for-profit sector. This process was facilitated by the Supplies and Services Branch.

The Evaluation Committee scored each proposal based on the criteria established by Council including:

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

Also, the Evaluation Committee sought to:

1. Identify strong projects which focused on the clients the Department is mandated to serve in each of the four priority areas (Employment Supports, Family and Children Services, Homelessness and Sustainability and Capacity Building).
2. Avoid project and service duplication.
3. Provide services to residents throughout York Region.

The CDIF Evaluation Committee is unanimously recommending 17 projects (outlined in *Attachment 1*) to receive Community Initiatives funding subject to due diligence verifications and negotiations with eligible agencies. Upon receiving Regional Council approval, the Community Services and Housing Department will enter into negotiations with the successful agencies to develop Purchase of Service contracts for the delivery of approved services. During the negotiation process Regional staff will verify each agency's representations contained in its proposals and also ensure that approved amounts and all agreed services and funding conditions reflect the decisions of the Selection Committee.

CDIF funding will be flowed to approved projects which will be implemented between January 1, 2006 and December 31, 2006. As always, funding will go to a range of agencies to provide a variety of community services across the Region. All agencies will be appropriately monitored and evaluated by Regional staff throughout the implementation of their Purchase of Service agreements.

4.3.4 Community Funding Activity Report

As required by Council, a report to Regional Council will be submitted early in 2007, outlining the outcome of the projects that will be implemented between January and December 2006.

4.4 Relationship to Vision 2026

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

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Under this CDIF POS Request the total of \$1.1 million allocated to project funding is managed within the current budget allocations set aside for each fund contained within the Strategy. The majority of this funding is derived from federal and provincial sources for the Community Services and Housing Department to manage as part of its service system management function (*Attachment 2*).

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

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

These community initiative projects significantly contribute to the overall positive impact of the CDIF Strategy. Last year over 30,000 York Region residents from all municipalities directly benefited.

As in past years, the initiatives generated by these service dollars are expected to bring measurable benefits to York Region as a whole, through services delivered to residents in all area municipalities.

7. CONCLUSION

The Council-approved CDIF Strategy allows the Region to plan, manage and fund the purchase of community-based services in York Region, in a way that ensures that both the process and the results are accountable, fair, and equitable. This is the third year of implementing what has proven to be a very successful community investment strategy focused on leveraging community agency capacity.

It is clear that using this funding to strategically purchase badly needed community services from those who are best equipped to deliver them, and monitoring the use of these dollars, is a very cost-efficient and effective way of supporting the needs of residents.

Regional Council endorsement is requested for the recommended proposals for funding under the CDIF Strategy to commit the funds to program activities by year-end. This will allow the recommended community agencies to begin providing services to the residents of York Region in January 2006.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

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