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SUCCESSFUL APPLICATION TO THE COMMUNITIES IN ACTION FUND

The Community Services and Housing Committee recommends adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report, February 28, 2006, from the Commissioner of Community Services, Housing and Health Services:

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. This report be received for information.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to advise that an application submitted to the Communities in Action Fund, administered by the Ministry of Health Promotion, has been accepted.

As a result, York Region will receive \$90,420 in project funding, toward a total project budget of \$150,700 over two years that will enable the Social Housing, Recreation and Sport Project to proceed. York Region's share of this project, \$60,280, will be funded from the NCB Reserve with no tax levy impact.

The Social Housing, Recreation and Sport Project, funded through the Communities in Action Fund, will give children of low income families, in underserved social housing communities in York Region, the opportunity to participate in sport and recreation programming.

3. BACKGROUND

The intent of the Communities in Action Fund is to:

- Provide new opportunities for children and youth (0 – 18 years of age) especially those of low income families to participate in sport and recreation activities.
- Support the Province's ACTIVE 2010, a sport and recreation strategy designed to increase physical activity in Ontario.

3.1 Research Findings

Numerous studies have demonstrated that children and youth who are involved in regular sport and recreational activities have increased self-confidence, higher self esteem, an improved self-image and positive peer and social interactions which contribute to strengthening children and strengthening families and communities. (*Source: The Benefits Catalogue, 1997*).

3.2 Reason for Application

The Community Services and Housing Department, led by the Family and Children's Services Division, made application to the Communities in Action Fund in order to use alternate sources of revenue to facilitate a number of regionally based initiatives, which support the research findings on the benefits of sport and recreation programming. The Social Housing, Recreation and Sport Fund will build on the history of effective working relationships which the Community Services and Housing Department has with local municipal recreation departments and community agencies

3.3 The Application Process

The Family and Children's Services Division completed the application in the fall of 2005 and confirmed to the Ministry of Health Promotion that support for this initiative, in principle, was secured with the prospective housing communities.

Regional staff were informed by the Ministry of Health Promotion that funding had been approved due to the quality of the application, the regional scope of the initiative, the experience York Region has as a funding and program administrator and the unique approach this project will take to increase access to sport and recreation for low income children and youth.

Project funding commences in 2006 and ends December 31, 2007. A post-project report, which is required by the Ministry, will also be provided to Regional Council.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

4.1 Identification of Housing Sites

To identify the participating housing sites, Community Services and Housing staff conducted site visits and needs assessment meetings at Housing York Inc., non-profit and co-operative family housing communities across the Region.

The identified housing sites in the application are:

- Charles Darrow Co-operative (Town of Aurora)
- Machell's Corners Co-operative (Town of Aurora)
- Heritage East Housing York Inc. and Alison Court Non-Profit (Town of Newmarket)
- John Fitzpatrick Steelworkers Co-operative (Town of Richmond Hill)
- Richmond Hill Co-operative (Town of Richmond Hill)

These sites were identified because they possess indoor and outdoor space conducive to active and passive programming as well as community capacity to participate and support the project goals.

4.2 Outcomes Analysis

The Social Housing Sport and Recreation project will accomplish the following key objectives:

- Provide eligible children and youth residing in the identified housing communities with on-site summer sport clinics, after-school programs and family wellness resources.
- Establish a community project steering committee to guide project deliverables.
- Purchase service with a community agency to hire two full-time and the required part-time and support resources to deliver the Program.
- Encourage employment and volunteer opportunities within the human service sector in York Region.
- Consider a sustainability plan to secure alternate sources of revenue in order to continue the project beyond the funded period.
- Establish an alliance of social service and recreation organizations to work collaboratively.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

A requirement of the Communities in Action Fund is a minimum 40% contribution toward the project budget. The total Communities in Action initiative for York Region will cost up to \$150,700 over two years with \$90,420 funded by the Province and \$60,280 funded from the NCB Reserve Fund. York Region's NCB funding has been approved by Council in the 2006 Budget as part of the Community Development and Investment Fund (CDIF) strategy. There is no impact on the tax levy of this initiative.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The implementation of this project will increase service to targeted populations using an alternate source of revenue.

7. CONCLUSION

The Communities in Action Fund is an alternate source of revenue that will enable children of low income families, residing in underserved social housing communities in York Region, the opportunity to participate in sport and recreation programming.

Research supports the benefits participation has in the lives and physical health of all children, youth and families, especially those living in poverty.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.