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FEDERAL HOMELESSNESS FUNDING UPDATE HOMELESSNESS PARTNERING STRATEGY

The Community Services and Housing Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report dated February 26, 2009, from the Commissioner of Community and Health Services.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The Commissioner of Community and Health Services be authorized to conduct a Request for Proposal from community service agencies to solicit proposals for projects to be funded through the Homelessness Partnership Initiative and other initiatives under the Homelessness Partnering Strategy for the full duration of the federal program, including extensions and new funding.
2. The Commissioner of Community and Health Services be authorized to execute purchase of service agreements under the Homelessness Partnership Initiative and other initiatives under the Homelessness Partnering Strategy and any ancillary documentation to give effect thereto, subject to the prior review of Legal Services.
3. The Commissioner of Community and Health Services be authorized to allocate the balance of the Homelessness Partnership Initiative funds and other initiative funds for projects which fall within the Homelessness Partnering Strategy federal guidelines and *The York Region Community Plan to Address Homelessness*.
4. The 2009 Budget be amended to include an increase of \$1.06 million in gross expenditures for the Homelessness Partnership Initiative, offset by 100% federal subsidy of \$1.06 million with no increase to the net tax levy.

2. PURPOSE

This report requests authority to administer the Homelessness Partnership Initiative funds and any other homelessness funds made available through the federal government's Homelessness Partnering Strategy.

3. BACKGROUND

Federal homelessness funding has been available to York Region since 2001

In late 1999 the federal government, through Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC), established the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI), a response to community requests for support in dealing with the growing homelessness problem in Canada. In 2001, in order to satisfy federal requirements for the SCPI program, the Region worked with HRSDC and a Community Planning Group to complete a *Community Plan*, a document that outlines community goals and priorities. In 2002, York Region was confirmed by HRSDC as the “Community Entity” to act as the delivery agent on behalf of the federal government. York Region received an allocation of \$3.2 million through SCPI funding between March 2001 and December 2007.

In December 2006, a new federal initiative, the Homelessness Partnering Strategy, was announced. York Region was allocated funding of \$1.06 million over a two year period from April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2009 through the Homelessness Partnership Initiative. A *Community Plan* update was completed in 2008. This is a federal requirement for Homelessness Partnership Initiative funding which 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. The *Plan* was developed by the Community Planning Group that includes service providers from across the Region. Please see *Council Attachment 1* for the Executive Summary of this Plan.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Extension of the Homelessness Partnership Initiative 2007-2009 to 2010

The federal government has extended the current Homelessness Partnership Initiative funding period to March 31, 2010. This administrative year allows time, without additional funding, for community projects to be completed.

New Homelessness Partnership Initiative funding

Starting in 2009 the federal government is also providing York Region new two year Homelessness Partnership Initiative funding of \$1.06 million. It will be available from April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2011. In order to provide seamless funding, the federal government waived the requirement to provide a *Community Plan* update and a program assessment. Funded activities must still meet the goals and priorities established in the *Community Plan* and the funds will be available through an amendment to the current Homelessness Partnering Strategy Contribution Agreement. This new two year funding is part of a federal government commitment to a five year Homelessness Partnering Strategy.

York Region to continue as “Community Entity”

A “Community Entity” is an organization that enters into an agreement with HRSDC to access and contract funds out to community service providers to carry out activities that benefit the Region’s homeless and at-risk population. Regional Council approved that York Region continue in its role of “Community Entity” in November 2007 with the adoption of Clause No. 6 of Report No. 9 of the Community Services and Housing Committee. On February 3, 2009, the York Region Community Advisory Board, a board comprised of community funding agencies, voted to retain York Region as the Community Entity.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The York Region community has been allocated a total of \$1,060,748 over the period April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2011 under the Homelessness Partnership Initiative. This amount has been included as a 100% federally funded program with no tax levy impact in the 2009 Operating Budget for the Community and Health Services Department. The funding streams will remain consistent with the 2007 to 2009 Homelessness Partnership Initiative allocations as set out in the *Community Plan*, subject to change upon federal agreement and noted below:

1. \$300,000 (approximate) for service projects.
2. \$600,000 (approximate) for capital projects to improve housing supply.
3. \$160,000 regional administration costs.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

All York Region communities benefit from this Homelessness Partnership Initiative funding by strengthening quality of life and providing vital services to the most vulnerable residents.

7. CONCLUSION

The 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.

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