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COUNCIL ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2007 – 2010

The Community and Health Services Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report dated March 25, 2010, from the Commissioner of Community and Health Services.

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that this report be received for information.

2. PURPOSE

This report highlights some of the major accomplishments, events and successes of Regional Council during the 2007 – 2010 term through the Community and Health Services Committee, and the former Community Services and Housing Committee and Health and Emergency Medical Services Committee.

3. BACKGROUND

The Community and Health Services Committee oversees regional health, social and housing services

The Community and Health Services Committee provides policy direction and effective management of the Region's roles and responsibilities for health, social well-being and housing needs, supports policies to ensure accessible and equitable services and programs throughout the Region, and develops plans to meet future human service needs of York Region's growing population.

The Community and Health Services Committee is responsible for overseeing the work of the six branches within the Community and Health Services Department (the Department): Business Operations and Quality Assurance, Emergency Medical Services, Housing and Long Term Care, Public Health, Social Services, and Strategic Service Integration and Policy.

More specifically, the Community and Health Services Committee typically reviews and makes recommendations to Regional Council on a range of human services including Ontario Works, child care subsidies, early intervention services for special needs children, social and affordable housing and homelessness prevention, which largely operate under provincial and federal legislation. The Committee also oversees the provision of public health programs legislated by the Ontario Ministry of Health and

Long-Term Care under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* as well as York Region's Emergency Medical Services (EMS). In addition, the Committee reviews and oversees the Department's role as the community lead for a number of federal planning and funding initiatives such as the Homelessness Partnership Initiative and the Local Immigration Partnership. While a significant portion of the Department's funding is from federal and provincial subsidy, the Community and Health Services Committee and Regional Council also approve and direct 100% regionally funded discretionary programs which address community-specific needs.

Next only to York Regional Police, the Community and Health Services Committee oversees the largest Department in The Regional Municipality of York with approximately 1,500 employees working out of locations throughout York Region including service and operational centres, EMS stations and Housing York Inc. housing sites. From a practical perspective, the Committee oversees the Department's administration of a broad range of human services including, for example, 6,000 social housing units through 43 independent non-profit and cooperative housing providers as well as Housing York Inc., child care fee assistance to more than 4,000 children per month, and the annual inspection of over 12,000 local food premises.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

York Regional Council Achievements for the 2007 – 2010 Term

Regional staff have coordinated input from the Department regarding York Regional Council Achievements for the 2007 – 2010 Term through the Community and Health Services Committee. This report will focus on those accomplishments, events and successes led by the Community and Health Services Committee, and the former Community Services and Housing Committee and Health and Emergency Medical Services Committee (predecessor/former Committees).

Major accomplishments of the Community and Health Services Committee (and former Committees) between 2007 and 2010, which are organized under key theme areas, include:

Housing and Community Services

- Approved a comprehensive Asset Management Strategy that provides interest-free loans to Social Housing Providers to conduct capital repairs to maintain existing social housing stock.
- Provided \$2.7 million to assist four community agencies to develop 270 affordable housing units by providing one-time funds, up to \$10,000 per unit, and leveraging approximately \$20 million in available federal-provincial funding under the Affordable Housing Program.

- Opened Tom Taylor Place – Housing York Inc.’s newest 50 unit apartment building in the Town of Newmarket that includes residents who are deaf or hard of hearing. This is the first Housing York Inc. development designed and built to LEED Silver Certification standard.
- Opened Leeder Place Family Shelter, a new emergency shelter for homeless families in the Town of East Gwillimbury. The shelter has 15 units (60 beds) and has been designed and built to LEED Certification standard.
- Approved the Eviction Prevention Assistance Program that assists market rent tenants residing in social housing by providing up to 24 months of assistance if they are facing eviction due to loss of employment or decrease in earnings.
- Established a regionally funded Rent Supplement Program to enable new developments under the Affordable Housing Program to house applicants (up to 150 households) from the Region’s Social Housing Wait List.
- Established a framework to allow the Region to begin programming and administration, in order to utilize its funding allocation under the Economic Stimulus – Social Housing Renovation and Repair Program.
- Conducted a review of the Emergency Shelter system in York Region and approved additional regional funding to support the sustainability of the system.
- Through enhanced funding of \$250,000 from Regional Council to the Homelessness Prevention Program, the program was formally expanded to the southern part of the Region to assist more individuals and families. In 2009, 208 households representing 522 residents were assisted.
- Commenced construction of over 250 additional affordable housing units in the City of Vaughan, Township of King and Town of Richmond Hill, which are expected to be completed in 2011.

Social Services

- Implemented Early Investment Initiatives to respond to immediate needs of vulnerable residents during the recent economic downturn (e.g. backpack and clothing allowance) for children of families on Ontario Works.
- Implemented the Ontario Works Enhanced Employment Services initiative to assist vulnerable social assistance recipients experiencing multiple barriers in finding a job.
- Implemented the Ontario Child Benefit including the restructuring of the Social Assistance allowance rates, for families on Ontario Works with dependent children under 18 years of age.

- Implemented income testing for families applying for child care fee subsidies.
- Enhanced family strengthening programs to include special needs children and youth.
- Completed 2009 Early Development Instrument analysis. Currently producing data and information to support community planning, and child care and school readiness programming.
- Currently working closely with the Province, school boards and the early learning and special needs community to provide support related to the school boards' introduction of the first phase of the new learning program for four and five year olds due to take place in the fall of 2010.

Protecting and Promoting Health and Independence

- Partnered with York Regional Police to launch the Emergency Medical Services Special Response Unit which offers specialized medical care for high-risk emergency calls, including multiple casualties, hazardous materials or dangerous police operations.
- Launched the electronic Patient Care Record System to meet the growing demand for reliable and complete patient record data required to consistently improve both clinical and operational performance quality.
- Implemented the specialized cardiac care program for patients experiencing heart attacks in partnership with Southlake Regional Health Centre.
- Commenced implementation of the revised Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care *Ontario Public Health Standards*, which came into force December 1, 2008 and January 1, 2009.
- Approved the Balanced Scorecard framework for York Region Public Health, which provides a snapshot of the key activities of the Public Health Branch, some baseline indicators for performance measurement, and a better basis for decision-making as well as facilitates greater transparency and accountability for public health in York Region.
- Initiated priority Public Health response measures to address the pandemic H1N1 influenza activity in York Region in the fall of 2009, including the temporary establishment of five immunization clinics and three influenza assessment centres.
- Increased paramedic staff with 44 new staff members, added three ambulances and opened two paramedic response stations to better meet increasing demand.

- Added 96 Automated External Defibrillators to the Heart Alive Program.
- Created 34 new Convalescent Care Program beds at the regionally administered long term care facilities.
- Opened a new Alternative Community Living Program at Water Street Non-Profit Homes in the Town of Markham.
- Continued to finalize and implement disease protocols that accompany the Ontario Public Health Standards on infectious diseases, sexual health, Tuberculosis and other infections.

Community Development and Accessibility Planning

- Appointed lead of York Region's Local Immigration Partnership by Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Under this initiative, York Region established the Community Partnership Council comprised of 19 community stakeholders, to collaboratively develop a "made-in-York Region" Immigration Settlement Strategy.
- Established the Human Services Planning Board of York Region, a multi-sector collaborative of key human service organizations. Its primary purpose is to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of human services within York Region by pursuing various initiatives that build capacity within the broader human services sector.
- The Community Development and Investment Fund (CDIF) has been successful in creating a network of community-based supports to respond to the Region's growing and changing population, with a particular focus on family and children's services, homelessness services and employment supports. Regional Council doubled the CDIF funding to \$5 million. In 2009, 89 projects were funded and more than 70,000 vulnerable residents were served. Within the four year period, over \$16.1 million was allocated to approximately 230 projects.
- In 2009, nine community agencies received more than \$345,000 in funding through the New Agency Development Fund to support the organizational development and capacity building activities of new and emerging community agencies.
- Community and Health Services Committee approved three Accessibility Plans under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* containing 265 initiatives to make York Region's programs, services and facilities more accessible to people with disabilities. Measures were also implemented to ensure accessible customer service at the Region and compliance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.
- The Social Housing Innovation Fund (\$500,000) that provides Social Housing Providers funding to conduct accessibility upgrades and repairs and/or purchase playground equipment was delivered.

- The 2009 York Region Thanksgiving Food Drive was enhanced by partnering with local food banks and school boards to collect over 50,000 pounds of food.

Strategic Policy Development

- Initiated development of a Multi-Year Plan as a strategic framework to guide the Department's programs, services and investments from 2010 to 2015, and more effectively respond to community changes and the needs of York Region residents.
- Contributed to the development of the Provincial Poverty Reduction Strategy and the Provincial Affordable Housing Strategy based on the needs of York Region residents.
- Produced five Fact Sheets that profile demographic changes in York Region relating to housing, employment and income, languages, immigration and mobility, and ethnic origin and visible minorities, to better understand York Region's changing social make-up and community needs, and improve program and service planning and development.

Supporting Safe and Secure Communities

- Provided emergency social services in response to the Vaughan tornado. Over 120 families registered and received information and referral services as well as other community supports such as food, clothing, counselling, and emergency financial assistance.

Relationship to Vision 2026

The recommendations of the Community and Health Services Committee that are subsequently endorsed by Council are consistent with the stated goals of York Region's Vision 2026 Plan and the Sustainability Strategy.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report. The costs of implementing the programs and initiatives cited in this report have been managed by Council in its administration of annual budgets and longer-term financial planning.

In 2009, the Department's approved gross operating budget was \$363 million and the net operating budget was \$128 million. In 2009, the approved capital budgets for EMS, Housing and Long-Term Care totalled \$13.8 million.

Priorities of Council are reflected in the annual budget and associated funding allocations. With responsible, prudent fiscal policies, sustainable funding strategies and

proactive financial planning processes, York Region strives to ensure that programs and services are delivered to the community in an effective manner at reasonable cost. York Region's financial policies and practices ensure that ongoing operating requirements as well as growth and development needs are financed in a fiscally responsible manner to meet current and future needs.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Regional staff have, and will continue to, work closely with local municipal staff to ensure the effective and efficient support of policies that are consistent with the strategic goals of the local municipalities. Many of the accomplishments in the 2007 – 2010 term are facilitated by the spirit of collaboration between all of the municipalities in York Region.

7. CONCLUSION

The 2007 – 2010 Community and Health Services Committee and Regional Council have taken decisive steps to address the health, social well-being and housing needs of York Region residents. Significant progress has been made in complying with new provincial health standards and responding to recent public health threats such as H1N1, increasing social and affordable housing supply and housing supports, increasing financial and employment supports for vulnerable residents, expanding community-based supports for family and children's services and homelessness services, beginning the development of a "made-in-York Region" Immigration Settlement Strategy and planning as a Department to better address residents' changing needs through the Multi-Year Plan.

Continued progress in these areas will ensure that York Region is able to maintain a good quality of life for all of its residents.

For more information on this report, please contact Adelina Urbanski, Commissioner of Community and Health Services, at Ext. 2023.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.