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UPDATE ON MULTI-YEAR PLAN FOR COMMUNITY AND HEALTH SERVICES PROGRAMS

The Community and Health Services Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report dated October 30, 2009 from the Commissioner of Community and Health Services.

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that this report be received for information.

2. PURPOSE

This report responds to a request from the Community Services and Housing Committee on March 11, 2009 to provide an update on the development of the Multi-Year Plan for Community and Health Services (C&HS) programs.

A status report on the implementation of six early investment initiatives, which were approved by Regional Council on March 26, 2009 through the adoption of Clause No. 2 of Report No. 2 of the Community and Health Services Committee as part of Phase 1 in the development of the Multi-Year Plan, is being provided through a separate communication to Regional Council.

3. BACKGROUND

Regional Council approved the development of a Community and Health Services Multi-Year Plan

In March 2009 the proposal to develop a C&HS Multi-Year Plan was endorsed by Regional Council. The development of a Multi-Year Plan responded to Council's direction to create a longer range strategic plan for the mandated and Council approved programs and services of the C&HS Department. The proposal highlighted the approach that will be taken over 2009/2010 to develop and implement the Multi-Year Plan. This report provides an update on the progress of the Multi-Year Plan.

The Region has a well developed framework for long-term and strategic planning through Vision 2026, the Sustainability Strategy, and the Regional Official Plan – all of which recognize the value of human services and human services planning in supporting the quality of life of residents.

To support the realization of these longer-term goals, it is important to establish shorter-term objectives and strategies that are responsive to changing community needs and policy priorities. Good human services planning requires an adaptive and flexible approach so long-term demographic trends, such as aging, can be balanced with unforeseen economic events, changes in the socio-economic composition of populations, and new policy directions from other levels of government. As a result, it was agreed that the Multi-Year Plan will provide strategic directions and guide our investments and program development over a five-year term.

The five-year timeframe will allow for the plan to be forward moving, formally reviewed every five years, and the flexibility to adjust to our programs and services as needed to deal with the very dynamic policy, economic and social environment in which human services operate.

The Multi-Year Plan will focus on C&HS provincially mandated and regionally approved programs, and the plan will:

- Identify and assess key issues, challenges and needs
- Develop strategic directions on how to respond to these issues, challenges and needs
- Identify specific C&HS actions to implement these strategic directions
- Identify associated funding costs and revenue sources

The development of a Multi-Year Plan is very timely

The rapidly changing demographics of the region and the current economic climate both speak to the need for a new look at how our services and programs respond to the needs of our residents.

As well, opportunities such as the uploading of social service costs by the Province may allow for the reinvestment of regional funds to improve C&HS service outcomes. The Multi-Year Plan must be flexible enough to balance immediate and evolving needs against long-term targeted and preventative investments.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The development of the Multi-Year Plan is being led by the Strategic Service Integration and Policy Branch, with strategic input and guidance from an internal Task Group and Steering Committee

The Multi-Year Plan project is being managed by the Strategic Service Integration and Policy Branch with oversight by an internal Task Group and Steering Committee.

The internal Task Group consists of management staff from Emergency Medical Services, Public Health, Social Services, Housing and Long-Term Care, Strategic Service

Integration and Policy, and Business Operations and Quality Assurance. The Task Group's role is to guide and oversee the development of the Multi-Year Plan and they have been meeting regularly since April 2009.

The internal Steering Committee's role is to provide strategic direction on the development and implementation of the Multi-Year Plan. The Steering Committee consists of all senior branch managers in the C&HS Department and the Commissioner.

As part of the development of the Multi-Year Plan, strategic input from other York Region Departments (e.g., Planning, Finance and Transportation) will be sought through the Strategic Policy Committee review process. This will ensure Region-wide awareness of the plan, the efficiency of the plan proposals, and avoid the potential for duplication and overlap of services.

The work plan for the Multi-Year Plan consists of 4 phases that began in March 2009 and will end in the spring of 2010

We have established a compressed workplan for the development of the Multi-Year Plan. Table 1 below highlights the four phases of this workplan.

Table 1
C&HS Multi-Year Plan Milestones

Project Deadlines	Date
Phase 1 – Approach and Scope	
Initial Report to Council	March 26, 2009
Phase 2 – Research and Consultations	Fall 2009/Winter 2010
Literature Review	
C&HS Staff Survey and Focus Groups	
Client and Community Agency Focus Groups	
Senior Management Input	
Phase 3 – Plan Development	Winter/Spring 2010
Final Report to Council	Spring 2010
Phase 4 – Multi-Year Plan Implementation	2010 - 2015

Phase 1 included developing the approach, specific deliverables and timelines for the Multi-Year Plan

In March 2009, the proposal to develop a C&HS Multi-Year Plan was endorsed by Regional Council. As part of the initial report to Council in March 2009, six early investment initiatives were approved to respond to immediate community needs. Due to the recent economic uncertainty, a major focus was supporting housing stability for low income workers facing financial crisis as a result of job loss or a significant change in

employment. Other priorities included helping people fleeing domestic violence to establish and maintain successful tenancies in social housing communities, as well as improving access to basic needs for under-resourced families and individuals with multiple barriers or complex needs. These initiatives were funded through the 0.2% tax levy approved by Regional Council on February 19, 2009 through the adoption of Clause No. 1 of Report No. 2 of the Finance and Administration Committee for social services and social housing, and most of these funds have been allocated through the approved early investment programs.

Phase 2 includes an extensive literature review, department-wide staff survey, staff, client and community agency focus groups, and senior management input

The current phase of the Multi-Year Plan recognizes the importance of research and consultative feedback as significant efforts have been made to learn more about C&HS programs, services and best practices in our program areas, and gather input from key C&HS stakeholders. The research and consultation phase includes an extensive literature review, survey of all C&HS staff for their input and ideas, and consultation sessions with 13 staff focus groups, 2 client focus groups and 3 public forums with community partners and agencies. The final consultation will be key informant interviews with senior management at York Region at the end of the Phase 2 work. The purpose of the research and consultations is to identify issues, principles, themes and actions that will form the Multi-Year Plan strategic directions.

A literature review has commenced and will be completed by December 2009. This task involves reviewing key documents related to C&HS programs and services, existing program-related service plans and related provincial initiatives (e.g. Provincial Municipal Fiscal Service Delivery Review, poverty reduction, strategic plans of other municipalities such as Peel, Halton and Ottawa, Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategies, and other strategic documents within York Region etc.).

A survey of all C&HS staff has been completed. The purpose of the survey was to engage all staff and understand through their first-hand knowledge what York Region residents need, where services are needed, how to best deliver services and what service gaps may exist. The staff survey allowed more than 33% of C&HS staff an opportunity to comment on the issues and challenges impacting their clients and C&HS programs and services.

As well, an analysis of the Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) of existing C&HS programs and services was completed by the internal Task Group. The purpose of the SWOT was to outline the internal Task Group members' views regarding the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing our programs and services.

The preliminary results from the literature review, SWOT analysis and staff survey are being used as background information to guide the consultation sessions that are planned to occur between September 2009 and December 2009.

The Multi-Year Plan workplan includes extensive consultation because in order to develop a successful and responsive strategic document, we need to know more about our residents and their changing needs, and we need to hear about the experience of staff in the delivery of C&HS services, and their suggestions for improvement. These extensive consultations will provide us with these details, and will contribute to making our programs and services more responsive and better coordinated and improve outcomes for vulnerable residents.

Phase 3 will involve drafting the Multi-Year Plan including strategic directions and actions, and an implementation strategy. The Multi-Year Plan report will be presented to Regional Council for review and approval in the Spring 2010 as part of this phase.

The Multi-Year Plan will focus specifically on provincially mandated and Council approved programs and services provided by the C&HS Department. The plan will also:

- Acknowledge the external factors that impact our services
- Focus on the needs of York Region residents.
- Align with other York Region strategic plans.
- Include strategic directions and actions, and an implementation strategy.

The draft Multi-Year Plan will be presented to Regional Council in the spring of 2010 for review and approval.

Phase 4 will focus on implementation and monitoring of the Multi-Year Plan

The Multi-Year Plan will be a living document and it will be more formally refreshed every five years. Each five year plan is expected to build upon the former multi-year plan. As the final phase of the project, the focus will be on implementation of the Multi-Year Plan and monitoring progress.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

While there are no financial implications associated with this report, future phases will likely have financial impacts.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

With the recently merged C&HS Department, we are now well-positioned to strategically review how our services address the human service needs of York Region residents. While C&HS programs and services impact all York Region residents, the Multi-Year Plan will better identify, plan, and target programs and services, recognizing that community needs and issues vary across the local municipalities.

7. CONCLUSION

The Multi-Year Plan will enable the C&HS Department to be more proactive in its response to changing community needs, economic conditions and policy directives, while supporting progress towards York Region's long-term and strategic goals. The development of the Plan is progressing as planned with the next key milestone being the presentation of a draft of the Multi-Year Plan to Regional Council in the spring 2010.

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

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.