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UPDATE ON INCLUSIVITY ACTION PLAN

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report, March 15, 2006, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services:

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Regional Chair and Regional Clerk be authorized to sign the necessary agreement(s) with federal and provincial funders for the implementation of the *Inclusivity Action Plan* (IAP).

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Human Service Planning Coalition's (HSPC) *Inclusivity Action Plan* initiative.

3. BACKGROUND

Launched in May 2005, the *Inclusivity Action Plan* (IAP) is a region -wide, community based approach to inclusivity sponsored by the Human Services Planning Coalition.

A Steering Committee chaired by Regional Councillor Frank Scarpitti guides and directs the work of 47 organizations and 88 participants in six working groups.

IAP Steering Committee members

Chair	Frank Scarpitti	Regional Councillor
Welcome Resource Centre	Patricia Robertson	Executive Director, York Neighbourhood Services
English Language Development	Robert Cazzola	Director, Education & Info Services, COSTI
Public Awareness	Jennifer Churchill	Director, Community Development Branch, Health Services
	Rajesh Khetarpal	Community Development Branch, Health Services

Learning Opportunities for Children	Christine DeHaas	Character Community & YCDSB
	Veronica St. Pierre	Principal, YRDSB
Volunteer & Leadership Development	Alison Peck	Executive Director, York Region Abuse Program
	Janice Chu	Community Resources Manager, UWYR
Organizational Development	Simon Cheng	Director of Community Resources, UWYR
	Ricky Veerappan	York Regional Police, Diversity and Cultural Resources Unit
HSPC Community Members	Faduma Awow Mohamed Ranjit Kumar	Executive Director, Labour Community Services Community Representative of HSPC
HSPC	Stephen Lam	Director, Immigrant Services & Community Programs, CCSYR
Member		Director, Economic Development Branch
Member	Cordelia Abankwa-Harris	Director, Policy & Program Support Services, CS&H

The *Inclusivity Action Plan* is a community plan to invest in York Region's capacity to welcome and integrate immigrants and thereby to create social capital for a vibrant economy, a highly skilled workforce and an enviable quality of life. Overall, the IAP initiative will develop York Region as a place where immigrants can contribute their rich experiences, skills and abilities which in turn will benefit the social and economic prosperity of York Region.

The *Inclusivity Action Plan* will help York Region be more ethno-culturally inclusive. The six working group initiatives focus on three key themes, identified at the *Inclusivity Summit* held in January 2005, of improving communication, creating awareness and promoting representation.

Community linkages and collaboration are the essence of the *Inclusivity Action Plan*. To be successful it is essential to continue to build relationships and foster new linkages. The ability to initiate change in public and organizational attitudes will be measured through the influence or impact of our communication efforts.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

4.1 Inclusivity Action Plan

4.1.1 Recent Activities

An overall *IAP Action Plan* was developed identifying 21 distinct initiatives from the six working groups. A process to implement the 21 initiatives was created based on three phases of activity spanning an 18-month period. The six working groups will use the three six month phases to fully implement their initiatives. The three phases of implementation are:

- Phase I Build capacity and establish networks
- Phase II Create communication tools, and
- Phase III Develop organizational resources

In order to secure funds to begin implementing the IAP initiatives and relieve the in-kind contributions of the working group members, the Steering Committee has prepared and submitted an Application for Funding to Service Canada under the Job Creation Program.

The Committee has requested \$457,363 to establish a project office, a project team and implement the first phase of the IAP action plan. By using the phased implementation process, the Steering Committee has been able to identify the appropriate skill sets required to assist in implementing the initiatives in the first phase.

A successful Application for Funding will permit the hiring of an Administrative Team (3 staff) for a one- year term and hire a Direct Delivery Team (3 staff who are eligible for the Job Creation Program) for a six- month term to implement Phase I of the Action Plan. The project team would consist of the following staff:

Administrative Team (1 year term)

- Project Manager (1)
- Business Service Coordinator (1)
- Administrative Coordinator (1)

Direct Delivery Team (Job Creation Program- six month term)

- Program Analyst (2)
- Communication Officer (1)

Should the committee succeed in obtaining funding, this report recommends the Regional Chair and Regional Clerk be authorized to sign the necessary agreement to continue the *Inclusivity Action Plan* implementation. Regional legal staff will be involved in the preparation and review of the Agreement. The Region has had positive experience implementing this administrative model successfully in the past.

4.1.1.1 Next Steps

The IAP will continue to pursue further funding from Federal and Provincial sources to implement subsequent phases of the action plan.

Recently, IAP project staff and the HSPC government relations consultant met with the Office of the Honourable Mike Colle, Ministry of Citizenship & Immigration. The Minister's Office expressed a keen interest in IAP as a best practice model, which may be beneficial in other areas of the province.

The Ministry expressed interest in continuing to work with the Region on this project and an invitation has gone out to the Assistant Deputy Minister to attend a meeting of the IAP Steering Committee in the spring.

To ensure the community and other stakeholders are engaged in the IAP process and as a follow up to the *Inclusivity Summit*, the IAP will host an *Open House Celebration* on the morning of June 8th at the Varley Gallery in Unionville to communicate, showcase and celebrate the work done over the last year.

4.2 Relationship to Vision 2026

Vision 2026 addresses immigrant issues and inclusivity in a number of goal statements. The initiatives of the IAP focus on both labour market integration and building a connection, a feeling of belonging, between immigrants and the York Region community.

York Region will become a community where immigrants can contribute their rich experiences, skills and abilities to both the social and economic prosperity of York Region, thereby advancing the goal of creating 'quality communities for a diverse population' as well as creating a "vibrant economy".

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are indications that the *Inclusivity Action Plan* Application for Funding submitted to Service Canada will be given thorough consideration. The requested funds are sufficient to establish the project team and implement phase one of the initiatives. There will be no added costs to York Region.

As the IAP will continue to seek funds from other federal and provincial sources to implement initiatives, it is recommended that the Regional Chair and Regional Clerk be authorized to sign this and any future agreement(s) with federal and provincial funders for the implementation of the *Inclusivity Action Plan (IAP)* subject to review by Legal Services.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Partnership with local area municipalities is an important and necessary foundation for the *Inclusivity Action Plan*. Becoming a more ethno-culturally inclusive community will take the efforts of many and provide significant value to residents of all local area municipalities.

7. CONCLUSION

Human services are those programs and services that support a safe, healthy community and maintain and promote its quality of life. The Human Services Planning Coalition provides the forum for all human service providers to collaborate on actions that will increase funding and service delivery effectiveness and efficiency.

The *Inclusivity Action Plan* is important to both immigrants living in York Region and to the health and safety of the York Region community. By working towards a more ethno-culturally inclusive community, immigrants will be able to live, learn, work and play in a way that fulfills and generates the feeling of being connected and most importantly the reality of belonging. Building a sense of well-being will result in positive immigrant contributions to York Region's social and economic prosperity and an enviable quality of life.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.