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2003 COMMUNITY FUNDING ACTIVITY REPORT

The Community Services and Housing Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, April 1, 2004, from the Commissioner of Community Services and Housing:

1. RECOMMENDATION

1. It is recommended that this report be received for information by Committee and Council.

2. PURPOSE

The Commissioner of Community Services and Housing is required to report to Council annually on the status of the past year's community funding projects.

This report outlines the activities and outcomes of York Region's 2003 Community Investments.

3. BACKGROUND

On April 18, 2002, Council approved the Community Development Investment Funding Strategy (CDIF) to be effective for the 2003 Business Planning cycle. The Strategy established a framework within which the Community Services and Housing Department, as part of its service management mandate, plans, manages and funds community development projects, including the purchase of community-based services. Under the CDIF there are two "funding envelopes." One envelope is for Department-identified Initiatives, and the other is for Community Initiatives.

The CDIF is comprised of Provincial, Federal and Municipal funding and its mandate is to strategically invest and leverage the funds to provide community services for residents of York Region (see *Attachment 1*). These funds include the National Child Benefit, the Ontario Works Performance Bonus, the Municipal Purchase of Service fund and Homelessness Initiatives funds.

While the CDIF Strategy was being fully implemented, an interim process was put in place to allocate funds to 2003 community projects. During the 2003 transitional year, community projects approved in previous years were re-funded. Agencies were notified that for 2004 they would be required to apply for funding through an RFP process. The RFP process was carried out in the fall of 2003, and Council approved the recommended projects for 2004, on December 11, 2003.

This document is a report back on projects that were operated between January and December 2003.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

4.1 CDIF Projects for 2003

In 2003, funds totalling \$3,029,926 were available in four areas: employment and financial supports; family, children and youth; homelessness initiatives; and emergency funding. Details are highlighted in Table 1 below:

Table 1

Funding Area	Amount
Employment and Financial Supports	\$403,716
Family, Children and Youth	\$1,303,715
Homelessness Initiatives	\$1,247,495
Emergency Funds Holdback	\$75,000
Total	\$3,029,926

Under the approved Strategy, funding was to be available to address emergency service situations. For this reason, an emergency funds holdback was established.

A total of 31 Community Services and Housing projects were delivered in 2003. Funded projects delivered a wide range of community services in York Region, including:

- Child and family supports, such as child care and special needs funding, child nutrition and funding for recreation programs for low-income children.
- Outreach services to the homeless, homelessness prevention and emergency supports for those facing homelessness.
- Emergency, peer mentoring and counselling services to at-risk youth.
- Developing employment skills through volunteer opportunities for Ontario Works recipients.

Attachment 2 details the projects, services delivered, agencies and locations.

4.2 Monitoring and Evaluation of Projects

Purchase of services contracts required community agencies to provide the Region with regular reports on project activities and project expenditures.

In addition, during 2003 many projects received site visits from regional staff as part of the monitoring process. This was also an opportunity for the Region to provide guidance and advice.

In late fall, nine projects were selected for formal site evaluations based on the following criteria. Projects:

- that were new or innovative
- that were particularly complex
- with agencies that received Regional funding for the first time
- where in-year monitoring indicated that an evaluation was warranted, or
- where a funding source required an evaluation.

The objective of each evaluation was to do a site verification of compliance of each selected agency with the terms of its purchase of service agreement. The achievement of project goals and objectives were assessed as well as what challenges arose in the delivery of the project and how the agencies responded to those challenges.

Department staff met with the community project managers to review all aspects of these projects and conducted an on-site verification of active governance and acceptable financial management through a review of the agency's records and financial statements.

The projects that were selected for evaluation in 2003 are outlined in *Attachment 3*. The evaluations were positive. The Department found that funded agencies that were selected for on-site evaluations practised good governance through active volunteer boards that met regularly and oversaw the delivery of the agencies' programs and services to the community. As well, there was a high degree of financial accountability in the funded agencies.

Most projects were on track to meet or exceed projected deliverables. The few instances where projects did not meet expected outputs were the result of unexpected circumstances, for example agency relocation. Each project was monitored regularly to ensure that performance standards were met prior to the Region's scheduled payments being released. Many agencies, as a standard practice, attempted to assess client satisfaction and the client benefits derived from use of the service.

4.3 Service Integration

Service integration results in better service to clients, as they can access appropriately bundled services from the Region. Service integration is a program-wide CDIF goal, and it was promoted in a number of different projects in 2003.

For example, the Crosslinks outreach van provided a range of services including basic needs, counselling, emotional support, and access to information for homeless people throughout the Region. The van was funded jointly by the Community Services and Housing and Health Services Departments. In another project, Community Services and Housing and Health Services also worked together to provide new parents with a comprehensive information package containing relevant literacy, health and community service information. As well, the Region collaborated with nine Municipal Parks and Recreation Departments to implement summer recreational programs for children of Ontario Works participants.

4.4 Partnerships

Partnerships result in more effective and efficient services to clients, and are therefore another key goal of the CDIF Strategy. In 2003, partnerships were developed and fostered in a number of CDIF projects.

For example two agencies, Family Day Care Services and York Region Food for Learning, partnered to facilitate the funding of school nutrition programs for students. The project also benefited from in-kind contributions from Health Services, including staff expertise and the use of office space. The Food for Learning programs required the active participation of school principals, who supervised the program and handled financial and administrative responsibilities.

Other CDIF projects enlisted support of the schools, as well. For example the Pathways for Children, Youth and Families Home Base project received referrals of ‘at risk’ children from neighbouring schools. The York Region Abuse Program (YRAP) received support and referrals from school counsellors.

In the area of homelessness prevention and intervention, the Canadian Mental Health Association administered funding for the York Region Alliance to End Homelessness to provide training programs for workers in homelessness agencies. The York Region Alliance to End Homelessness is comprised of representatives from 58 community agencies that work to eradicate homelessness. The Alliance’s Education sub-committee co-ordinates the workshops through which all Alliance members have access to training.

There was also ongoing informal collaboration between agencies. For example, Wrap Around York offered regular counselling and anger management services to clients of Home Base Drop-in Centre, which is run by Pathways for Children, Youth and Families. The Family Life Centres responded to requests from the Children’s Aid Society to provide counselling services to victims or witnesses of domestic violence.

4.5 Community Input and Volunteerism

Community input on project administration and monitoring was promoted through both committee participation and direct volunteer service.

The After School Programs for Children and Youth at Social Housing Sites benefited from the input of the Community Program Advisory Committee. Community volunteers also directly supported program activities. Use of community volunteers was an integral part of the Youth Assisting Youth program, which used almost 70 peer volunteer mentors in its work with bullies and victims of bullying. At the Habitat for Humanity ReStore, volunteers assisted in operating the store, including high school students who were fulfilling their community service hours. YRAP coordinated and benefited from over 16,000 hours of volunteer service in fundraising and service delivery in 2003. Delivery of school nutrition programs under Food for Learning project was also done through the volunteer input of parents.

4. 6 Relationship to Vision 2026

The CDIF Strategy is being designed and implemented to support the Vision 2026 goal of responding to the needs of our residents. The Strategy also addresses the Vision 2026 goal of quality communities for a diverse population.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The CDIF Strategy is managed within the current budget allocations set aside for each fund contained within the Strategy. In 2003, CDIF Strategy funds, which came primarily from Federal and Provincial sources, totalled \$3,029,926.

The Strategy provides sound accountability practices to disburse funds. The Strategy and process is managed within the current approved staffing levels for the Department. The benefits to the community of bringing these much-needed service dollars into York Region are far-reaching.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

All municipalities benefited from the initiatives generated by these service dollars. The strategic investment process and the model that has been put in place for 2004 will enhance these benefits.

7. CONCLUSION

The Council-approved CDIF Strategy allows the Region to plan, manage and fund the purchase of community-based services in York Region, in a way that ensures both the process and the results are accountable, fair, and equitable. The 2003 year marked the successful launch of the CDIF Strategy, with many project successes.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(A copy of the attachment referred to in the foregoing has been forwarded to each Member of Council with the April 14, 2004 Community Services and Housing Committee agenda and a copy thereof is on file in the Office of the Regional Clerk.)