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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT FUNDING STRATEGY 2004 UPDATE

The Community Services and Housing Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, May 25, 2004, from the Commissioner of Community Services and Housing:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The Community Services and Housing Department be authorized to receive and allocate any new or reallocated Community Development and Investment Funds within the framework of Provincial guidelines, the Community Funding Strategy, and Vision 2026.
2. The Region be authorized to enter into Purchase of Service agreements to provide services to vulnerable residents of York Region, subject to the requirements contained in this report and the Commissioner of Community Services and Housing be authorized to sign the agreements on the Region's behalf, subject to prior review by the Regional Solicitor.

2. PURPOSE

This report seeks approval from Committee and Council to receive and allocate new Community Development and Investment Fund (CDIF) activities in accordance with Provincial guidelines and the Council approved CDIF Strategy. These funds are either one-time 100% Provincial dollars to be used in community service initiatives or within current budget allocations set aside for CDIF. Any Provincial funding is required to be returned to the Province, if not spent, by December 31, 2004.

3. BACKGROUND

On April 18, 2002, Council approved the CDIF Strategy. 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 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. These funds include the National Child Benefit, the Ontario Works

Performance Bonus, the Municipal Purchase of Service Fund and various homelessness programs.

In 2003, the Community Services and Housing Department, using the CDIF Strategy, selected projects for 2004 Department Initiatives. In some cases, agreements were reached for Community Agencies to provide the services, while in other cases Department staff carried out the projects using CDIF resources.

In addition to the selection of Department Initiatives, a Request for Proposal (RFP) process was carried out in the fall of 2003. The recommended projects for 2004 were approved by Council on December 11, 2003.

Since the RFP, Community Services and Housing Department staff have been in negotiations with the Province regarding 2004 funding. As part of these discussions, it has come to our attention that there may be additional Provincial funding for the CDIF strategy that may become available throughout the year.

In addition, previously committed CDIF funding sometimes becomes available through the contract negotiation and monitoring processes if it is determined that agencies are unable to deliver on their entire agreements. This provides an opportunity to purchase needed services from other community agencies to benefit the Region's residents. The challenge is that often such funding becomes available late in the year, and all Provincial funding is time-sensitive, and must be spent by December 31, 2004 or it is required to be returned to the Province.

This report recommends an abbreviated process to Council to purchase community services using additional CDIF funding that may become available, through new Provincial allocations or project reallocations, throughout the year. It is important to be able to act quickly as funds become available to allow agencies to access funding and use it to provide services to vulnerable residents before the funding timeline ends.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

4.1 Criteria for Project Selection

The Department will purchase services using any new or reallocated funds within the framework of provincial guidelines, the Community Funding Strategy, and Vision 2026. New projects will be reviewed and approved based on the criteria from the funder and with regard to service indicator shortfalls.

Proposals may be selected from those received through the RFP process. There were numerous quality proposals however; there were not sufficient resources to fund all of them. In addition, proposals may be Department-led community initiatives, to meet new service needs identified during the year. All proposals selected will contain anticipated measurable outcomes and indicators of success. The Commissioner of Community

Services and Housing will report back on the outcomes of any new projects entered into, as well as previously approved projects as part of the annual reporting process.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

New funding that becomes available for reallocation will be 100% funded by the Province. The Province requires that Provincial funds be spent by December 31, 2004 or be withdrawn. Any new funding will be in addition to the funding initiatives totalling \$2,300,076 that was reported to Council on December 11, 2003.

The Department will receive and distribute any new or reallocated funds within the framework of Provincial guidelines, the Community Funding Strategy, and Vision 2026. The CDIF 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 benefit from the initiatives generated under CDIF.

7. CONCLUSION

York Region requires more community services than the Region can provide within the funds available. It is therefore imperative to have the ability to quickly take advantage of any additional funds that may become available from the Province to better meet the needs of our residents.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.