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2011 PROGRESS REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF 'INVESTING IN OUR COMMUNITIES: A MULTI-YEAR PLAN FOR THE COMMUNITY AND HEALTH SERVICES DEPARTMENT'

The Community and Health Services Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report dated October 28, 2011, from the Commissioner of Community and Health Services.

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council receive this report for information.

2. PURPOSE

This report provides a progress report of the first year of *'Investing in our Communities: A Multi-Year Plan for the Community and Health Services Department'* since Regional Council approval of the plan in September 2010 in Report No 6 of the Community and Health Services Committee.

3. BACKGROUND

Community and Health Services first Multi-Year Plan approved by York Regional Council in September 2010

Investing in our Communities: A Multi-Year Plan for the Community and Health Services Department (MYP) was developed at the request of Regional Council to guide investment and set priorities for human service needs in York Region from 2010 - 2015.

As part of the consultation process for the MYP, almost 900 stakeholders including Regional Council, staff, residents who use our services, service providers and local municipalities provided valuable feedback. As such, the plan is grounded in the knowledge and experience of many who are keenly aware of the human services challenges that face our residents.

The MYP highlights key human service issues and challenges facing York Region and identifies strategic directions, broad goals and actions that, taken together, will allow the Community and Health Services Department (C&HS) to develop coordinated and consistent responses to these issues.

The MYP also helps inform where new investments are needed most and provides a framework for prioritizing those initiatives.

Six Multi-Year Plan goals establish key areas for responding to identified human service needs

The MYP is designed to help position C&HS to better manage the changes resulting from the Region's growing, aging and diversifying population including cultural, ethno-racial and socio-economic changes. It provides a strategic focus for the longer-term objectives of the department and aligns with new provincial policy directions.

These general objectives are focused through six MYP goals which address broad areas where the efforts of the Community and Health Services Department are directed. The six goals of the MYP are:

1. Contribute to Regional economic vitality by helping low income residents with access to basic needs, and with finding and keeping jobs.

'Basic needs' refers to the provision of food, shelter, clothing, transportation, health services and employment. As part of the broad social safety net for York Region residents, the Community and Health Services department will continue to help residents who are in crisis or face economic hardships.

2. Support healthy communities through a broad range of housing choices and supports to meet the diverse needs of residents.

The lack of affordable housing is an issue of concern to many, as it adversely impacts the lives of an increasing number of residents in York Region. The Community and Health Services department will continue to increase housing options for lower income residents, as well as support residents who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

3. Optimize the health of the community for all ages and stages through health protection, prevention and promotion initiatives.

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Access to a range of health services is an important determinant of health. The Community and Health Services department will be responsive to the growing demand for these services.

4. Strengthen our neighbourhoods now and in the future by supporting children, families and youth to fulfill their potential.

Resilient communities foster strong families and engage youth, particularly those facing barriers to success. Community and Health Services will adjust programs as needed to continue to support the health and well-being of children.

5. Foster social inclusion and economic opportunities by addressing the needs of a growing and diverse community.

It is important that all residents have access to supports which sustain their full participation in York Region's community and economy. The department will focus on strategies and service delivery options to better respond to York Region's ethno-racial diversity, new immigrants and adults with more complex needs.

6. Deliver a more integrated human service system that supports effective community planning and quality services.

Given the scope of programs and services delivered by the department and some of the special needs of residents, improving access to information and services is a key requirement. The Department will continue to work with stakeholders to improve the quality and quantity of human services for York Region residents.

Each MYP goal contains specific action areas, some of which were underway as the MYP was developed. Other actions were newly identified to enhance the work of the department and bring C&HS closer to meeting the MYP goals. Any new action area or initiative that needs additional resources would be subject to the regular business planning and budget process. In all, the MYP included a total of 54 action areas – 29 already in progress and an additional 25 new action areas that would be further developed over the five year term of the MYP.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Multi-Year Plan implementation has successfully addressed actions in all six goal areas

The following provides examples of the actions that have contributed to each of the MYP goals during its first year of implementation.

1. Contribute to Regional economic vitality by helping low income residents with access to basic needs, and with finding and keeping jobs.

- Successfully introduced vocational testing, life skills programming and job related skills training to prepare multi-barriered clients for participation in the workforce. 487 participants received training and employments supports from January 2010 to September 2011.
- Child Care Fee Subsidy was expanded to support low income families who require child care to enable them to remain in, or to develop the skills to participate in, education or employment activities. When this initiative is fully implemented an estimated 80 additional low income families will be supported.

- Launched in October 2010, the renamed Healthy Smiles Ontario program is designed to promote oral health and provide access to regular dental care for children under 18 who are not covered by insurance and demonstrate income under \$20,000. Over 280 children received treatment between October 2010 and August 2011.
- Additional funding to assist the Region's emergency shelters was approved for 2011 including additional staff resources to increase outreach and manage what is intended to be a streamlined approach to contracts and increased accountability. A review of the emergency shelter system is also underway to determine what a made-in-York Region shelter model would look like and what services and supports could be included.
- A pilot transit fare subsidy program was developed to help eligible Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program clients address the cost of transportation and secure and keep jobs. The pilot program estimated to cost \$1.3 million, was approved by Regional Council in October 2011.
- Developed a partnership with the Central Community Care Access Centre to better support the needs of emergency shelter residents and help their transition to long term care as needed. A protocol is now in place to these clients as urgent.

2. Support healthy communities through a broad range of housing choices and supports to meet the diverse needs of residents.

- Development is underway on three new Housing York buildings (total 263 units) and seven new non-profit housing communities (total 303 units). As of September 2011, 153 of these units were completed and occupied. Regional rent supplement funding has been made available to 74 of these units.
- In 2011, the Non-Profit Building Repair programs will provide \$2.5 million through subsidy advances and secured loans to enable six housing providers, who together serve more than 500 households, to complete essential building repairs.
- Expansion of the Homelessness Prevention Program criteria to enable residents to access the program more than once in a lifetime was approved on June 23, 2011 when Council received Report No 6 of the June 2011 Community and Health Services Committee. By the end of August 2011, 125 households (292 individuals) received assistance through the Homelessness Prevention Program to remain in their current housing. Three households so far have benefitted from the expanded criteria.
- Enhance Social Housing Innovation Fund to enable housing providers to implement retrofits. In all, 13 housing providers who together serve 1,153 households will receive funding to enable them to replace playgrounds and/or implement energy or accessibility upgrades.

3. Optimize the health of the community for all ages and stages through health protection, prevention and promotion initiatives.

- Developed and implemented the Health-Oriented Development Checklist for Healthy Communities in York Region based on research of best practices. The checklist is now used by the Public Health Branch Building Healthy Communities Work Group in providing input on policies and land use planning proposals.
- Work is underway to develop a 10-year master plan for York Region Emergency Medical Services outlining capital and resource needs to achieve and maintain targeted response times.
- Work is underway by York Region Emergency Medical Services to develop an expanded paramedic program to serve a growing and aging population in new ways and reduce non-acute patient transports to hospital. The expanded scope may include providing broader treatments at home and providing referrals to community resources.
- A review of the Adult Day Centre operations and programs is underway to streamline intake processes and improve efficiencies through shared resources and programming. In 2011, close to 90 residents benefitted from these programs.
- A web based Food Inspection Disclosure system was funded as part of the Region's public health enhancements. The website will allow York Region residents quick access to food inspection reports on more than 11,000 food establishments and so reduce exposure to unhealthy eating environments. This will result in increased protection from disease.

4. Strengthen our neighbourhoods now and in the future by supporting children, families and youth to fulfill their potential.

- In order to enhance staff efficiency and consistency of client service to a large population of children (those born premature) and a unique population (those with Down syndrome), Early Intervention Services developed separate service system processes called pathways. 250 families with children born prematurely and 25 with children having Down syndrome were served by these approaches.
- Provided subsidy and increased access to recreation programs for 102 children to help families with child care needs in July and August 2011.

5. Foster social inclusion and economic opportunities by addressing the needs of a growing and diverse community.

- Developed a made-in-York Region Immigration Settlement Strategy including five result areas by consulting with 2,000 stakeholders to understand the needs of our diverse community. The Immigration Settlement Strategy was approved by Regional Council in September 2011, through the adoption of Report No. 7 of the Community and Health Services Committee.
- Corporate coordination of the implementation of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* and *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* resulting in improved access for people with disabilities to York Region's programs, services and facilities.
- A review of the Region's community funding programs is underway to examine how these programs can more directly support the broader strategic direction of the department and Region.
- As part of the Region's 2011 budget, \$619,000 was added to the Community Development and Investment Fund Strategy to invest in community programs and services for low income residents in the Region.

6. Deliver a more integrated human service system that supports effective community planning and quality services.

- The Human Services Planning Board of York Region includes key human service organizations/agencies/networks and community leaders working together to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the human services sector. The Board has identified Making Ends Meet in York Region as their first priority area of focus.
- A customer satisfaction survey was distributed to Ontario Works clients to gather feedback and identified areas for potential service enhancements. An action plan will be developed for implementation in 2011/12.
- Department wide strategies to improve access to information and services are being developed by fostering new partnerships with stakeholders such as the Region's five Welcome Centres, enhancing the department's web pages and exploring ongoing print and media opportunities.

The initiatives under this goal were further complemented by the approval of the Regional Official Plan that includes an array of healthy community policies. This work was recently awarded an Excellence in Planning Award by the Ontario Professional Planners Institute as well as Healthy Communities Award bestowed jointly with the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario.

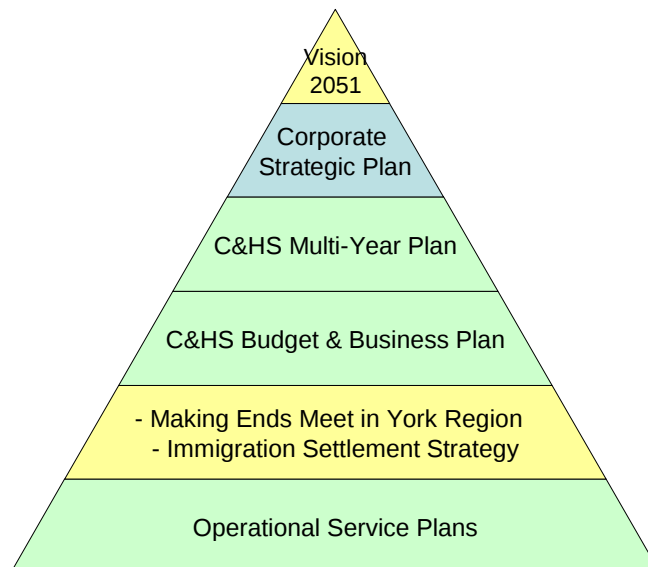
Next Steps

Given the changing human services environment, the MYP has been designed to allow for annual review and refresh to ensure that the actions and initiatives identified for implementation are still relevant and timely. Much of the refresh process will be reflected in the annual business plans, where new initiatives are introduced. A report on the MYP's second year of implementation will be presented to Regional Council in early 2013.

Link to key Council-approved plans

As a departmental strategic plan, the MYP is a mid-level plan that aligns the department's priorities and services with the Region's overall directions as contained in Vision 2026, the Regional Official Plan and the 2011 to 2015 Strategic Plan. Figure 1 below illustrates how the MYP fits in relation to the Region's broader corporate plans, and shows the overarching role of the MYP in relation to other plans and initiatives underway in the department.

Figure 1 – The Multi-Year Plan aligns with broad regional strategies



Four MYP goals are directly incorporated into the Corporate Strategic Plan priority to “Improve Social and Health Supports” and related indicators of success, ensuring a consistent approach to both planning and implementation.

A key element of the MYP's implementation is the use of the Region's regular business planning and budget process to identify immediate implementation priorities. This

enables the department to balance the development of new actions included in MYP with the need to address other more immediate pressures impacting on C&HS operations including meeting mandated and legislative requirements. In March 2011, through the business plan and budget process, approximately \$4.4 million was approved for 21 initiatives in all goal areas.

Two other critical community initiatives led by C&HS are also aligned directly with the goals of MYP in their development. Making Ends Meet, a community wide initiative of the Human Services Planning Board of York Region focuses on the needs of low and moderate income residents in the Region and will contribute to achieving several of the goals outlined in the MYP. Similarly, the recently released York Region Immigration Settlement Strategy, an initiative of the Community Partnership Council under the Local Immigration Partnership, incorporated the MYP goals into its development and many of the results areas identified in the Immigration Settlement Strategy support the achievement of the MYP goals.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Funding of priority Multi-Year Plan actions will continue to be approved through the budget cycle

Decisions to fund and implement specific enhancement initiatives arising from the MYP Goals and Actions will be made annually through the budget and business plan process or in separate reports to Council.

For 2011, almost \$4.4 million was allocated in the budget to 21 approved MYP enhancement initiatives. Of this total investment, funding of \$573,000 was received from federal or provincial sources; there was a one time cost of \$595,000 funded by the Social Assistance Reserve, leaving a net York Region investment of \$3.2 million.

The 2012 investment requests for MYP enhancement initiatives will be made through the 2012 business plan and budget.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

In addressing the human service priority needs of York Region, the MYP also contributes to these needs in local communities. Implementation of many MYP initiatives build on current partnerships with local municipalities and residents of every local municipality stand to benefit from the service planning and enhancements funded and delivered through the MYP.

7. CONCLUSION

The implementation of MYP initiatives in 2011 provided continuity of key services as well as programs to enhance service delivery to a growing and increasingly diverse population. Going forward, the MYP will be used as a framework that informs the way in which the department implements mandatory programs and identifies priorities for additional programs. The MYP will continue to be used to enhance cross branch and cross program integrated planning so that synergies can be achieved.

For more information on this report, please contact Lisa Gonsalves, Acting Managing Director of Strategic Service Integration and Policy Branch at Ext. 2090.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.