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FEDERAL HOMELESSNESS FUNDING UPDATE HOMELESSNESS PARTNERING STRATEGY

The Community Services and Housing Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, October 29, 2007, from the Commissioner of Community and Health Services:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The Region continue in its role of “Community Entity” under the new federal housing program to administer community funds on behalf of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.
2. The Commissioner be authorized to make application for and enter into such legal agreements as may be necessary to access federal funding, subject to review by Legal Services.
3. The Commissioner be authorized to conduct, as appropriate, a Request for Proposal from community service agencies to solicit proposals for projects to be funded through the Homelessness Partnering Initiative.

2. PURPOSE

This report requests authority to apply for funding under the Homelessness Partnering Initiative and any subsequent funding under the Homelessness Partnering Strategy.

3. BACKGROUND

In late 1999, the federal government responded to requests for support in dealing with the growing problem of homelessness in Canada by establishing the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative, a program funded through Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC). York Region was allocated \$1.6 million under the program over a three-year period.

3.1 Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative—Phase 1

In 2001, York Region worked with HRSDC and service providers in the community to complete *York Region’s Community Plan to Address Homelessness*. In 2002, York Region was confirmed by HRSDC as the “Community Entity” to act as the delivery agent on behalf of the federal government.

3.2 Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative—Phase 2

In 2003, the Government of Canada announced the extension of the program Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative 2 and a further \$1.6 million allocation to the Region for a three-year period.

3.3 Homelessness Partnering Strategy announced

On December 19, 2006 a new federal program entitled the Homelessness Partnering Strategy was announced. Included in the Strategy was a two year funding initiative to be called the Homelessness Partnering Initiative. A report regarding the new program was adopted by Council on April 19, 2007 through the adoption of Clause No. 3 of Report No. 4 of the Community Services and Housing Committee.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Although the Homelessness Partnering Strategy was still under development, a few details were announced in December.

4.1 Principles under the Homelessness Partnering Strategy

Some stated principles of the broader Homelessness Partnering Strategy include:

- Increased emphasis on partnerships especially with provincial governments and preliminary discussions are underway.
- “Horizontal federal partnerships”—HRSDC is interested in seeing other federal departments involved e.g. Corrections or those with surplus lands.
- Funding priorities are capital investments in shelter, transitional and supportive housing, and supports to those facilities that help get the homeless off the street.

4.2 Over \$1 million available to York Region

The Homelessness Partnering Initiative is positioned by the Federal Government as an interim initiative while work is done to engage other federal departments, provincial homelessness funders, and other potential stakeholders in developing a long term national Homelessness Partnering Strategy.

York Region could expect to be a priority area with funding at approximately the same annual rate as the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (i.e., \$530,000 per year). The term of the Homelessness Partnering Initiative is April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2009.

4.3 York Region to continue as Community Entity

As with the previous Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative programs, the Region is expected to act as the funding manager on behalf of the federal government. To carry out this role the Region executes an agreement with HRSDC to access funding. In turn, the Region will contract out to community service providers to carry out activities to

benefit the Region's homeless and those at risk of homelessness. Funded activities must meet the goals and priorities established in the updated Community Plan.

4.4 York Region's Community Plan to Address Homelessness is being updated

Since April, additional details have been provided by HRSDC about the Homelessness Partnering Initiative. There is a requirement to complete a new *York Region's Community Plan to Address Homelessness*.

Because this has been found to be a valuable planning tool, the Region and a broad range of community representatives had already begun work on a community plan update when the new federal initiative was announced at the end of 2006.

York Region's Community Plan to Address Homelessness is scheduled to be completed by year end and will be submitted to Council for adoption early in 2008.

4.5 Region to host a public forum on homelessness in 2008

It is proposed that the Region host a half-day forum on homelessness issues in York Region early in 2008 jointly with our community partners. This forum would serve as a venue to launch the updated Community Plan and offer an opportunity to discuss options for addressing the goals outlined in the document.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The York Region community has been conditionally allocated a total of \$1,060,748 for the period April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2009 under the Homelessness Partnering Initiative. The proposed 2008 business plan and budget for the Housing Services Branch includes program expenditures offset by 100% funding, with no tax levy impact for this initiative. *The Community Plan* will recommend funds be set aside to offset the Region's costs to administer the program.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Participation in the Homelessness Partnering Initiative program will benefit all York Region communities by strengthening quality of life and providing vital services to the most vulnerable residents.

7. CONCLUSION

The Region's continued participation in federal homelessness initiatives is consistent with its role as Service Manager and continues the commitment to working with other

levels of government and the community to work towards homelessness prevention and mitigation.

For more information on this report contact Sylvia Patterson, Director, Housing Services Branch in the Community and Housing Services Department.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.