

REGION OF OTTAWA-CARLETON  
RÉGION D'OTTAWA-CARLETON

REPORT  
RAPPORT

Our File/N/Réf.  
 Your File/V/Réf.

DATE 11 July 2000

TO/DEST. Co-ordinator, Community Services Committee

FROM/EXP. Acting Director, Social Housing  
 Medical Officer of Health  
 Acting Social Services Commissioner

SUBJECT/OBJET **COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN - UPDATE 2000**

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**DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**That the Community Services Committee recommend Council:**

- 1. Approve the *Community Plan Action to Prevent and End Homelessness - Update 2000*.**
- 2. Forward the *Community Action Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness - Update 2000* to the Federal Minister of Homelessness and indicate the Plan will be used as the basis for allocating federal funds under the Supports to Community Partnership Initiative.**
- 3. Approve the transfer of the \$1.15 million 1999 Social Housing surplus to the Social Housing Reserve Fund for use in the implementation of the recommendations of the Community Action Plan Update.**

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to:

1. Present the *Community Action Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness - Update 2000* for Council's approval;
2. Inform Council of the principal terms and conditions associated with the \$17 million of federal funding awarded to RMOC under the Supports to Community Partnership Initiative, including the requirement for "matching" contributions; and

3. Identify the sources of matching funds for the above program for the year 2000, including the 1999 Social Housing budget surplus and the proceeds from the sale of Echo Drive among others.

## BACKGROUND

The *Community Action Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness - Update 2000* builds on the original Action Plan approved by Council in 1999. The *Update 2000*, (distributed separately), validates the initial set of 22 recommendations and describes additional actions to be taken in the next three years. In keeping with the original Plan, the *Update 2000* continues to stress the need for actions which balance intervention and prevention measures. Actions focus on improvements to both support service and housing supply. However, without question, the single most pressing need in our community is for more affordable housing. This is as true in 2000 as it was in 1999.

Development of the *Update 2000* occurred through a consultative process, beginning with a survey of housing and service providers, as well as clients, and culminating in a 2-day forum on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of June. More than 100 participants from 70 community-based and government organisations came together to seek solutions and identify existing gaps in service provision to homeless people. Issues emerged around the unique needs of various homeless populations, such as families, newcomers, aboriginal people, and persons with multiple health disorders etc. Ensuring appropriate services are available to suit needy groups is key to understanding and solving the problems of homelessness. Above all, forum participants identified affordable housing as the most urgent priority.

## PROGRESS TO DATE

Staff presented a progress report to Council in April this year, describing the actions taken to date on each of the 22 recommendations contained in the Action Plan, including a description of all projects funded through the Homelessness Initiatives Fund, and Hostel Re-Direction funding. In total, more than .37 projects benefited from 1999 funding and most are now underway, providing new services, such as the Salvation Army's rent bank, enhanced supports, such as additional street outreach workers, and new housing.

Expected outcomes have been defined for each project and staff will continue to monitor progress. To date, we can report that the average length of stay at shelters is decreasing, although shelter usage remains high primarily due to overall population growth. The full impact of all projects has not been realised yet - this is particularly true for the housing projects which are still under construction.

## FEDERAL FUNDING

Funding for homelessness initiatives will be significantly enhanced this year and for the following two years as a result of a new federal program called Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI). Ottawa-Carleton will receive a total of \$17 million for three years, averaging about \$5.7 million annually. The program is targeted to persons who are absolutely homeless with a focus on developing a continuum of supports. Funds for permanent housing are expressly prohibited; funds for transitional housing may be considered.

In order to access the money earmarked for our Region, the community must demonstrate, among other things:

- matching funds are available, including provincial, private sector, and/or municipal dollars, or in-kind contributions;
- a community plan to end homelessness has been prepared through a collaborative process.

Staff have met with federal officials and are preparing to assume the role of funding administrator on behalf of Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC). Up to 15% of the annual \$5.7 million may be used to cover the costs of administration. Funding allocations will be made in accordance with a process similar to the one used last year, with a Request for Proposals issued in early Fall followed by an Allocations Committee review.

Matching funds have been identified and staff are confident they meet the conditions set out by the federal government. They include in 2000:

Province of Ontario Homelessness Initiatives Fund	\$733,000
Province of Ontario Mental Health and Homelessness	1,400,000
Province of Ontario - funding to Community Health Centres for homelessness	900,000
Province of Ontario/RMOC Hostel Re-direction funding*	977,000
RMOC Social Housing Surplus 1998	1,000,000
Community Foundation	800,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$5,810,000</b>

\*The funding is cost-shared 80% provincial/20% RMOC

It is anticipated that similar contributions will be available in subsequent years, and it will be critical to maintain the municipal contribution for 2001 - hence the request to transfer the 1999 social housing surplus of \$1.15 million to the Social Housing Reserve Fund.

Federal officials have confirmed that monies identified as “matching dollars” can in fact be used towards the creation of housing and are not bound by the same limitations as the federal funds. It is proposed that the 1999 Social Housing Surplus be earmarked for housing projects in much the same way that the 1998 surplus was. The use of last year’s \$1 million surplus leveraged more than \$9 million in capital for new housing and accounted for 150 additional housing units in nine locations.

### REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

In light of the overwhelming response to last October’s Request for Proposals for initiatives to end homelessness, staff expect that the community will generate a number of creative and practical proposals to utilise federal, provincial and other funding. Like last year, we plan to issue an RFP in early Fall and convene an allocations committee to review the proposals in November. In order to meet federal requirements to have funds committed within the fiscal year, the schedule is very tight.

The RFP 2000 will follow the format established last year, and will highlight some of the new actions needed and service system gaps identified at the 1999 and 2000 Homelessness Forums and described in the *Update 2000*.

### PUBLIC CONSULTATION

This report has been circulated to everyone who participated in the second day of the Community Forum, including members of the Steering Committee of the Alliance to End Homelessness, senior federal government officials, and staff in other regional departments.

### 1999 SURPLUS - SOCIAL HOUSING

Recent year-end figures made available from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing indicate the 1999 Social Housing Surplus is \$1.15 million. It is therefore requested that the 1999 Social Housing surplus be transferred to the Social Housing Reserve Fund, to be made available as part of our matching contribution to the federal SCPI dollars. Furthermore, these regional dollars will ensure dedicated funds exist for the creation of more affordable housing.

## CONCLUSION

This report confirms the community's objectives for preventing and ending homelessness by building on the initial *Action Plan* approved by Council in July 1999. While much has been accomplished since last year, more work and money is clearly needed. Opportunities to significantly improve the range of support services and transitional housing are available through enhanced federal funding. Opportunities to create permanent affordable housing are more limited but can be leveraged with regional dollars made available through the social housing budget surplus.

*Approved by*  
*Marni Cappe*  
*R.A. Cushman*  
*Garry Armstrong*

## FINANCE DEPARTMENT COMMENT

Subsequent to the determination of the 1999 Operating Surplus the Province's final billing for 1999 Local Services Costs - Social Housing was received. The final billing was 1.15 million lower than the estimate previously provided by the Province.

If this information was known prior to the determination of the 1999 Operating Surplus, the reported surplus within the Region Wide Fund would have been 1.15 million higher. In accordance with Council policy, it would be appropriate to transfer this surplus to the Social Housing reserve funds.