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DATE 21 September 2000

TO/DEST. Co-ordinator
Corporate Services and Economic Development Committee

FROM/EXP. A/Social Services Commissioner

SUBJECT/OBJET **GLOUCESTER CENTRE FOR COMMUNITY RESOURCES
CAPITAL FUNDING REQUEST**

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION

That the Corporate Services and Economic Development Committee recommend Council approve a maximum expenditure of \$300,000 to provide a one-time capital grant to assist the Gloucester Centre for Community Resources to renovate and expand their current location.

BACKGROUND

The delivery of social and health services through a network of neighbourhood based Community Resource/Health Centres is unique to the Region of Ottawa-Carleton. The Network of Community Resource Centres has grown since 1972 to its existing 13 Centres. Since 1990, the Region has provided core funding (including funds for space) to the Centres. Over the years, the Region has provided capital grants to various Community Resource Centres, for example, the Somerset West Community Health Centre, Carlington Community and Health Services, Overbrook-Forbes Community Resource Centre. In March 2000, the Corporate Services and Economic Development Committee and Council approved a capital grant and an interest free loan to "Under One Roof", a project to co-locate services, for the acquisition of property.

DISCUSSION

The Centre

Since 1979, the Gloucester Centre for Community Resources (GCCR) has been providing a range of community services and programs to the residents of Gloucester. In the past year, the Centre offered assistance to 7,500 community members and their families; staff responded to over 20,000 telephone

inquiries and provided services to 800 abused women. In addition, 175 volunteers contributed 16,000 hours delivering over 6,000 meals and making 2,700 telephone assurance checks to seniors.

The Gloucester Centre for Community Resources offers a range of specialized services to the community such as: Mental Health, Women and Violence, Resource and Referral, Meals on Wheels, Transportation for Seniors, Grocery Bus, Telephone Assurance, Craft Groups, Youth Programs, Community Development, Healthy Babies/Healthy Children, Speech and Language Services, Home Management Services, driver refresher courses, Legal Aid Clinics and individual and crisis intervention counselling services.

Present Facility

The Centre's main office is located in the Beacon Hill Shopping Centre at 2339 Ogilvie Road. The Centre currently operates from two locations. The main location at the Beacon Hill Shopping Centre and the Gloucester South office co-located with the Gloucester Museum at 4550 Bank Street. The Centre has the mandate to serve all of Gloucester. The satellite office in Gloucester South was set up to serve people in the south end of the city who would otherwise have a long trip to the main centre. It is rented at a beneficial rate from the City of Gloucester. The lease for the Gloucester South location will expire on December 31, 2000. The Centre is currently exploring options to ensure continuity of services to the residents of South Gloucester.

GCCR currently rents 4,950 square feet of space in the Beacon Hill Shopping Centre. A total of 26 full and part time staff plus student placements and volunteers occupy the office space and meeting room facilities. The current division of space is inefficient. The office space is utilized at capacity. An additional meeting room is required immediately and there is a need to have more accessible and adaptable meeting space. Heating, ventilation, air conditioning and lighting are inadequate in the present location. Specific design layout of space and equipment is required for the provision of these services.

In addition, several issues have been identified with the current space. The Centre lacks visibility and accessibility. The only access to the reception is through a loading area and up a set of stairs (21 steps) to the second floor. The access is difficult for seniors and parents with strollers and the offices are inaccessible to people in wheelchairs. Safety has been raised as an issue at this current location, particularly for the women attending the Women and Violence programs.

Site Selection

In 1998, the Centre reviewed its current space needs as its lease at the Beacon Hill Shopping Centre was to terminate in 1999. Several options were explored but relocation was deferred due to lack of "fit up" money. A one year lease agreement was negotiated with the current lease agreement expiring on October 31, 2000. In consideration of the upcoming termination of the lease, the Centre retained a consultant to conduct a spatial study as well a real estate scan.

The spatial study indicated 6,725 usable square feet is needed for the functions currently performed at the present location in the Beacon Hill Shopping Centre. The Centre is currently paying \$76,600 rent and cleaning fees for the 4,950 square feet they now rent (\$18.93 per square foot gross). This rent is

below market rent in the community for office space, which ranges between \$16.50 and \$25.00 per square foot. The condition of the current space is Class C. Functionally, they use about 4,700 square feet as the space is awkwardly split between the second floor suite of offices and the basement rooms; 1,100 square feet of which is storage, not all of which is needed. The Centre instead needs more space for its offices, meeting and interview rooms.

The factors taken into consideration during the real estate scan were: zoning, cost, condition, accessibility, flexibility in converting space, transit and parking, market conditions, availability of public space, suitable lighting and subdivision of space.

The consultant and the Centre's relocation committee considered 19 spaces of which five were selected for site visits. The board considered three properties in detail, 1105 Cadboro, 1661 Montreal Road and the main level of the Beacon Hill Shopping Centre. All were available for lease and Cadboro was available for sale. The Cadboro site was originally selected as the preferred location however a purchase agreement could not be reached between the Centre and the vendor.

Expansion to the present location at Beacon Hill Shopping Centre is a desirable solution and addresses the following issues.

Gloucester is presently utilizing 4,676 square feet of usable space. An initial evaluation of its present shortages and future requirements indicated the need for 6,725 usable square feet which amounts to 7,095 rentable square feet. That figure also included 500 usable square feet of shortage.

The Centre has been offered the space directly below its present location on the ground level of the mall. The space, a former retail shop, fronts on two internal walkways, has good visibility and is accessible, being at ground level. The owner is willing to install an elevator, at the Centre's cost, in order to make the two spaces contiguous and to make the current second floor wheelchair accessible. The gross rentable square feet for the combined space is 6,198 square feet, which is slightly less than the initial study indicated. However the current landlord has provided 900 square feet of storage to the Centre for no charge for the past several years. It can be reasonably be assumed that the landlord can be asked to provide a reduced amount of 500 square feet, free of charge. The 6,198 square feet can be fully used for the Centre's programs and administration. The attached spatial tables show how the Centre can be accommodated.

Its present space provides accommodation to 16 Centre employees and 10 seconded staff for a total of 26 full and part time staff and their equipment, as well as regular volunteers, student placements and project workers. If the Centre expands within the mall, there will be space for up to 36 workers and their equipment. The Centre will be accessible throughout and in a highly visible location within the mall. Functionally the Centre would divide its activities between the two floors. Reception, intake, the speech therapist, a group room, an interview room, "noisy" uses and others that would benefit from increased accessibility and visibility would be located on the mall level. "Quiet" uses such as the counsellors, people using the telephone as a major part of their job, administration, and people using the Centre as a administrative office would remain upstairs. The current space would have to be reconfigured to allow for a elevator lobby and a wider corridor (1.5 metres) to allow for accessibility. The kitchen will remain on the second level.

As the Centre would be staying in place, existing community linkages would not be disrupted and the general public would feel as if they were coming to the same place. Construction can be phased as to not interfere with the delivery of programs, with construction first proceeding at mall level and a doubling up period while the upstairs is finished.

The proposed location is one that is already familiar to existing clients and community members. The addition of space on the ground floor of the mall will increase the visibility of the Centre and the safety of Centre users and staff. Services would become accessible given that retrofitting for an elevator is possible and will be undertaken by the Centre. The additional location will provide ample space for the Centre to meet its service needs in a more accommodating, client friendly environment in a cost-effective manner as part of the existing layout of the second floor will be reused.

Funding Requirement

The total capital cost of this project is \$325,146. Gloucester CRC will contribute \$25,146. The Centre has requested the Region to provide a capital grant of \$300,000..

The Centre is currently in negotiation with the landlord to finalize new rental agreements. Due to the expansion of space and proposed renovations, the cost will likely be \$2 to \$3 per square foot less than current market rates.

CONSULTATION

Client feedback on the lack of accessibility of the Centre was included in the decision-making process and in the discussion on space in the Gloucester Centre for Community Resources' proposal.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

No funds were identified in the 2000 budget for this purpose.

CONCLUSION

Current space no longer meets the Centre's minimum requirements and the current lease expires October 31, 2000. The option of expanding and renovating space at the Beacon Hill Shopping Centre will increase access to the services and programs; the street level visibility of the Centre; and safety for all those who use the Centre.

Approved by

Garry Armstrong

A/Commissioner, Social Services

FINANCE DEPARTMENT COMMENT

The source for funding one time capital grant requests, which are outside the normal budget process, is usually the Region Wide Capital Reserve Fund. The uncommitted balance in this Reserve Fund is generally sufficient to fund capital grant requests of this nature. However, as a result of Council's approval of the New Ambulance System Design report (August 9, 2000), all remaining uncommitted funds have been committed to fund the projected land ambulance capital requirements. Approximately \$6.0 million of the \$8.7 million in capital requirements will be funded from this Reserve Fund. The remaining \$2.7 million will be funded from departmental savings within the Region Wide Fund operating budget.

Should Committee and Council wish to approve this capital grant request, it is likely that additional savings will be possible within the 2000 operating budget to fund this request.

In accordance with Ottawa Transition Board Guideline 5.2.g, approval of the Board will be required.

*Approved by
Tom Fedec on behalf of
Lloyd Russell
A/Finance Commissioner*

LC/lw