



# INFORMATION REPORT

<b>TO:</b> Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee	<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b> CITY WIDE
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b> April 10, 2012	
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b> Development of Youth Strategy (CS12016) (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List Item)	
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b> Joe-Anne Priel General Manager Community Services Department	<b>PREPARED BY:</b> Jane Soldera (905) 564-2424 Ext. 2399
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

**Council Direction:**

On December 14, 2011 Council referred Communication Item 5.8 (a resolution from the City of Kingston respecting the development of a Youth Strategy) to the General Manager of Community Services for a report to the Emergency and Community Services Committee.

**Information:**

The City of Kingston passed a motion at its November 15, 2011 Council meeting to support the development of “a youth strategy that promotes diversity and tolerance and that provides inclusive programs and services for all young people.” Further, Council also directed that a copy of the motion be sent to Ontario municipalities with a population of over 100,000 “urging them to develop similar youth based strategies to ensure that all young people are given the chance to fulfil their potential”. Kingston’s Council took this action following the death of the teenage son of City of Ottawa Councillor Alan Hubley. This tragedy has resulted in individuals and communities across Ontario highlighting the need to address youth issues such as bullying, tolerance and diversity.

These are complex issues that require new community based responses and solutions. In Hamilton we have developed an innovative way of working together on such complex issues, specifically through the development of community collaboratives such as the Hamilton Roundtable on Poverty Reduction and the Best Start Network.

Provincially, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services initiated research and broad consultation activities in 2010 to inform a forthcoming youth report and provincial youth policy framework. The framework will be an evidence-based resource to be used by communities across Ontario to better understand the developmental needs of youth and the kinds of opportunities they need to ensure their success as they transition into adulthood. United Way agencies across the province partnered with the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to facilitate engagement of youth in the consultation phase of this work.

Based on the provincial Youth initiative, United Way of Burlington & Greater Hamilton in 2010, commissioned research by the Social Planning & Research Council in order to better understand the challenges facing Youth in Hamilton. *The Seeking Better Outcomes for Youth in Hamilton Report* highlighted 8 critical Youth issues in Hamilton, e.g. poverty. Consequently, United Way convened a group of stakeholders who are dedicated to building a Hamilton Youth Collaborative. While the collaborative is still in the early stages of its development, a core group of individuals and agencies are committed to building a youth strategy for all of Hamilton's youth. The Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) participates in the collaborative. The United Way reports that MCYS is encouraged by progress made to date.

Staff from the Community Services Department, Public Health Services Department, and the City Manager's Office - Neighbourhood Development Strategies, are currently participating in the core group to support the development of the collaborative, ensure linkages to City of Hamilton initiatives, programs and services and to encourage linkages to other community collaboratives such as the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, and the Best Start Network.

In addition to these community-wide planning efforts it should be noted that a number of other local initiatives are already underway that focus on supporting young people. The Street Youth Planning Collaborative is addressing issues faced by street-involved and homeless youth. The Youth Serving Agencies' Network is a strategic collaboration of community agencies which promotes the healthy development of children through advocacy, sharing of information and resources, and the provision of accessible programs and services. At a more "grass roots" level, a group in Waterdown has formed the Healthy Communities – Healthy Youth initiative, which is coordinating a community effort to build assets and resiliency in their youth. These are but a few examples of the commitment of the community to helping young people reach their full potential and offer a strong foundation for broader community-wide planning.