



CITY OF HAMILTON
COMMUNITY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
Neighbourhood and Community Initiatives Division

TO:	Mayor and Members General Issues Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	March 19, 2014
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Neighbourhood Home Improvement Project (CES14015) (Wards 1-5, 8)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	Wards 1-5, 8
PREPARED BY:	Paul Johnson (905) 546-2424 ext. 5598 Suzanne Brown (905) 546-2424 ext. 4711 Irene Heffernan (905) 546-2424 ext. 4929
SUBMITTED BY:	Vicki Woodcox Acting General Manager Community and Emergency Services Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That the City of Hamilton partner with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU), Threshold School of Building and the Hamilton Community Foundation (HCF), to implement the Neighbourhood Home Improvement Project;
- (b) That \$35,000 of the Neighbourhood Action Strategy Fund be provided to the Threshold School of Building to assist in the delivery of this initiative in 2014; and,
- (c) That the Acting General Manager of Community and Emergency Services be authorized and directed to execute an agreement for the period April 1, 2014 to December 31, 2014 between the City of Hamilton and the Threshold School of Building to implement the above project, in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The success of the 2013 Neighbourhood Home Improvement Project pilot has led the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, Threshold School of Building and the Hamilton Community Foundation to fund the job creation and home renovation project within neighbourhoods supported by the City of Hamilton's Neighbourhood Action Strategy again in 2014. This partnership is a unique opportunity for 21 unemployed job seekers to build valuable job skills, gain work experience and increase their chances of obtaining long-term employment. Under the direction of Threshold School of Building, trainees gain practical experience through exterior repairs to owner-occupied homes in the neighbourhoods for a 26-week period. The Threshold School of Building is a

registered charity that was incorporated in 2001. They are dedicated to practical and sustainable community development by teaching basic building skills and organizing active participation in affordable housing and community projects in the Hamilton area.

This project addresses actions identified in several of the Council endorsed Neighbourhood Action Plans. Most notably, the job training component of this project addresses residents' desire for improved job skills and development and subsequently increased job opportunities. The exterior construction component of the project will improve the quality of housing in neighbourhoods, which has an impact on the health and well-being of the individuals living in these homes and also addresses the desire for beautification of the neighbourhoods.

Eligible trainees include those who have established a claim for Employment Insurance (EI) benefits or those who have had their EI benefit period end within the last three years, including maternity or parental benefits paid within the past five years. The intake process for trainees is coordinated by Threshold with input from City staff (Employment and Income Support Division of Community Services Department) that is able to identify potential participants from the Ontario Works caseload. Eligible trainees will be residents of the City of Hamilton. Along with valuable learning experiences and job skills that trainees gain, they also receive a stipend of approximately \$330/week.

An application and review process for renovation projects was developed by the City, Hamilton Community Foundation and Threshold, in consultation with neighbourhood planning teams, for the 2013 pilot and will be reviewed for the 2104 project. Applicants for the renovation projects must meet an income threshold and own their homes in one of the 11 identified priority neighbourhoods.

In continuing this project, the City of Hamilton will contribute \$35,000 to offset the administrative cost associated with this project. This investment will leverage over \$440,000 in funding from MTCU and \$35,000 in additional funding from the Hamilton Community Foundation. Threshold School of Building will serve as Administrator of the program; providing safety training, on-site work experience and employability skills and assume responsibility for the safety and any liability of the participants.

This unique project, a real manifestation of the vision and hard work of residents in the development of their neighbourhood action plans, was an enormous success last year with 74 residents receiving much needed home repairs, 20 people trained in construction skills and 1 person trained in administrative work. Of these, 17 gained employment and 1 person registered for post-secondary education.

Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial:

That \$35,000 dollars from the Neighbourhood Strategy Fund be utilized to support the Neighbourhood Home Improvement Project. This investment will leverage investments in excess of \$440,000 and job training experience from the Threshold School of Building.

Staffing:

Staff of the Neighbourhood Action Strategy will partner with MTCU, HCF and the Threshold School of Building to support this work. Ontario Works Employment staff will be supporting the trainees with employment supports throughout the project and post program, if required.

Legal:

A funding agreement satisfactory to the General Manager of Community and Emergency Services, the City Solicitor and Risk Management Division, Corporate Services will be signed prior to the release of any funds.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (Chronology of events)

Table 1 highlights the chronology of events from the establishment of the Neighbourhood Development Strategy Office to today.

Table 1 – Neighbourhood Development Strategy Timeline

Date	Report	City Milestone
Sept. 2010	Staff Report CM09021a/CS10091	Creation of the Neighbourhood Initiative with a focus on improving neighbourhoods and better integrating actions between the City and community at a neighbourhood level.
May 2011	Staff Report CM11007	Approval of the components of the Neighbourhood Development Strategy.
July 2011	Info Update	Identified the neighbourhood selection criteria and initial neighbourhoods. Neighbourhoods selected for 2011/12 included Keith (Ward 3), Stinson (Ward 2) and the Stadium “precinct” (Ward 3). Neighbourhoods selected for 2012/13 initiation included Beasley (Ward 2), McQuesten (Ward 4) and Rolston (Ward 8). In addition, through the partnership with the Hamilton Community Foundation (HCF), 5 additional neighbourhoods to be supported through this initiative (for a total of 11).
Feb. 2012	Info Report CM11007(b)	Details provided in regards to progress made to date, overall Neighbourhood Development Strategy deliverables, governance structure, research and evaluation plan and costs.

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June 2012	Info Update	Year one progress update highlighting quick-wins and next steps.
Sept. 2012	Staff Report CM12013	Endorsement of the Neighbourhood Action Plans for Keith, Stinson, Beasley and McQuesten.
Jan. 2013	Staff Report CM12013(a)	Presentation of the Neighbourhood Action Plans for Riverdale and Davis Creek (formerly known as Quigley Road).
Feb. 2013	Staff Report CM13001	Report requesting funding in support of Ontario Job Creation Program Hamilton Home Renovation Partnership
March 2013	Staff Report CM12013(b)	Endorsement of the Neighbourhood Action Plan for South Sherman.
April 2013	Staff Report CM13001(b)	Approval of Neighbourhood Development Strategy Initiative – Community Networker (CN) pilot project. (Ward 4).
June 2013	Staff Report CM12013(c)	Endorsement of Neighbourhood Action Plan for Jamesville
Oct 2013	Staff Report CM11007(c)	Neighbourhood Action Strategy Annual Update
Feb 2014	Staff Report CM12013(d)	Presentation of the Neighbourhood Action Plan for Crown Point and Gibson Landsdale (GALA)
March 2014	Staff Report CES14015	Recommendation report requesting funding in support of Neighbourhood Home Improvement Project (formerly the Ontario Job Creation Program Hamilton Home Renovation Partnership)

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

None.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Staff worked with the Employment and Income Support Division within the Community and Emergency Services Department to outline the role of employment services in this project.

Staff from the City Manager's Office and Corporate Services assisted in the development of a funding agreement.

The community developers connected with the Neighbourhood Action Strategy have been engaged to link this work to the Neighbourhood Action Plans endorsed by Council.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONAL FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Neighbourhood Home Improvement Project is consistent with goals and objectives within the Neighbourhood Action Plans, which highlight the need for job creation, beautification initiatives, skills training and development, community interaction, and partnerships.

This partnership offers significant value to the City for the relatively small amount of funding provided. Work experience for trainees will include:

- safety certification (Fall Protection, WHMIS, CPR, Emergency First Aid)
- job orientation
- tool orientation
- on-site instruction and supervision
- on-going participant evaluations
- completion event
- post-program support

This unique project, a real manifestation of the vision and hard work of residents in the development of their neighbourhood action plans, was an enormous success in 2013, with 74 residents receiving much needed home repairs, 20 people trained in construction skills and 1 person trained in administrative work. Of these, 17 gained employment and 1 person registered for post-secondary education.

From an employability perspective, the Neighbourhood Home Improvement Project gave trainees much more than just on-the-job training; it provided opportunities for people to network in their community and to develop teamwork, problem solving, communication and planning skills. The project fostered a passion for the trainees' work that was expressed through the gratitude shown by the residents who received renovations. These new skill sets are all key contributors to employability.

There is clear evidence that improving the quality of housing has a positive impact on the health and well-being of the individuals living in the housing, as well as a positive benefit to the neighbourhood. By providing renovations to home owners who would otherwise be unable to afford them, this program allows residents to maintain their pride in ownership. Home ownership is associated with civic engagement and stability within neighbourhoods.

This innovative partnership program responds to the economic and skills training needs, identified both by residents and statistical data, of residents that live in the neighbourhoods in the Neighbourhood Action Strategy. It also addresses the needs of low and modest income home owners, but providing no cost home renovations that keep their homes safe and well maintained, enabling them to live in healthy, beautiful

environments. Beautiful well maintained homes are also important for neighbourhoods as they build neighbourhood pride and decrease the perception that neighbourhoods are unsafe and uncared for. Household disrepair is also linked to significant health implications. Leaky structures, busted plumbing, broken windows and pest infestation elevate risk of accidents, respiratory illness and all-cause mortalityⁱ. Residents in such buildings are more likely to suffer from slips and falls, lead poisoning, bug bites, asthma and tuberculosis, as well as experience dramatic events such as fire, flooding and building collapseⁱⁱ.

Value, dignity, and pride are essential components of a vibrant neighbourhood and are intangible benefits from this partnership.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

None.

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2012 – 2015 STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Priority #1

A Prosperous & Healthy Community

WE enhance our image, economy and well-being by demonstrating that Hamilton is a great place to live, work, play and learn.

Strategic Objective

1.5 – Support the development and implementation of neighbourhood and City wide strategies that will improve the health and well-being of residents.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

None.

ⁱ Burdette,A.,Hill, T.,& Hale,L. (2011). Household Disrepair and the Mental Health of Low-income Urban Women. *Journal of Urban Health*. 88(1), pp 142-153.

ⁱⁱ Rosenstreich, D., Eggleston,P., Kattan,M., Baker,D.,Slavin, R., Gergen,P., et al. (1997). The Role of Cockroach Allergy and Exposure to Cockroach Allergen in Causing Morbidity among Inner-City Children with Asthma. *New England Journal of Medicine* 336(19), pp 1356-63