



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

TO:	Mayor and Members General Issues Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	June 18, 2014
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Neighbourhood Action Strategy City-Wide Initiatives (CES14026) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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SUBMITTED BY:	Joe-Anne Priel, General Manager Community and Emergency Services Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That staff explore the development of a city-wide Neighbourhood Engagement Matching Grants program and report back to the General Issues Committee in the first quarter of 2015 on the results and next steps
- (b) That the General Manager of Community and Emergency Services Department enter into a partnership agreement with the Social Planning and Research Council for community development support in the Rolston neighbourhood, and to support neighbourhood planning across Hamilton from September 2014 to December 31, 2015, in the amount of \$96,000 to be funded from the Neighbourhood Action Strategy Fund (Project #2051255204), in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor; and,
- (c) That the General Manager of Community and Emergency Services Department enter into a partnership agreement with the Hamilton Community Foundation to support the expansion of the Neighbourhood Leadership Institute (NLI) across the City of Hamilton for the next three years (September 2014 – December 2016) in the amount of \$20,000 per year to a total of \$60,000 to be funded from the Neighbourhood Action Strategy Fund (Project #2051255204), in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Neighbourhood Action Strategy (NAS), a partnership initiative of the City of Hamilton and the Hamilton Community Foundation, was established in 2010 to work with residents and local leaders to make neighbourhoods better and healthier places for all residents. In October of 2010, Hamilton City Council approved the earmarking of \$2 million to support the Neighbourhood Action Strategy with an additional \$1 million per year commitment by the Hamilton Community Foundation.

Since its inception in 2010, the Neighbourhood Action Strategy has engaged with 11 identified neighbourhoods to develop individual neighbourhood action plans. Ten of the 11 neighbourhoods have completed plans, with the first step in the planning process underway in the 11th neighbourhood. Early successes have built momentum with the creation and endorsement of ten neighbourhood action plans and many quick wins; from new community gardens and children's summer camps through to multi-stakeholder projects like the Neighbourhood Home Improvement Project. The first annual NAS report, as well as the Building Momentum event held in January 2014, increased the interest of residents and organizations across the city in the approach and processes used in the Neighbourhood Action Strategy.

During the October 2013 presentation to General Issues Committee by Jim Diers, former Director of Neighbourhoods for the City of Seattle, there was discussion on the benefits of expanding the Neighbourhood Action Strategy, so that the momentum would not be constrained to only a few of the many great neighbourhoods across this city. To that end, the Neighbourhood Action Strategy Office (NASO) recommends a three pronged approach to meet this articulated outcome:

1. Exploration of a Neighbourhood Engagement Matching Grants Program and the implementation of a pilot program in 2015;
2. Enhancement of community development work through the funding of an additional community developer that will complete neighbourhood planning in the Rolston neighbourhood and support neighbourhood planning in other areas across the city to December 31, 2015; and,
3. Expansion of the Neighbourhood Leadership Institute (in partnership with the Hamilton Community Foundation) to include leaders from neighbourhoods across the City of Hamilton.

Funding for these city-wide initiatives will be allocated through the Neighbourhood Action Strategy Fund. The Neighbourhood Engagement Matching Grants Program would be managed by staff of the Neighbourhood and Community Initiatives Division of the Community and Emergency Services Department. Partnership agreements for the community development work and the Neighbourhood Leadership Institute will be

developed with the Social Planning and Research Council and the Hamilton Community Foundation respectively.

Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 8

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: Resources would be allocated from the Neighbourhood Action Strategy Fund (Project # 2051255204) in the amount of \$156,000. As of May 2014, \$381,000 has been earmarked from the \$2M fund.

Staffing: There are no staffing implications associated with Report CES14026

Legal: Funding agreements with both the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton and the Hamilton Community Foundation will be developed and executed prior to the release of any funding.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Neighbourhood Action Strategy, a partnership initiative of the City of Hamilton and the Hamilton Community Foundation, was established in 2010 to work with residents and local leaders to make neighbourhoods better and healthier places for all residents.

In October of 2010, Hamilton City Council approved the earmarking of \$2 million to support the Neighbourhood Action Strategy with an additional \$1 million per year commitment by Hamilton Community Foundation in community development support and neighbourhood granting.

Employing an asset based community development approach; the Neighbourhood Action Strategy utilizes the greatest resource in any neighbourhood, its residents, to intentionally focus dialogue around the positive things in the community. The strategy blends the foundations of asset-based community development with the land use planning process to develop resident-led, asset-based Neighbourhood Action Plans that build on the social capital and address the health inequities in 11 Hamilton neighbourhoods. The development and implementation of the neighbourhood plans depends upon the relationships between residents, the community developer, city staff, and other neighbourhood stakeholders.

The Neighbourhood Action Strategy also provides the framework for the “horizontal integration” of neighbourhood work that not only ensures the effective and efficient delivery of service at a neighbourhood level, but also assists the City in creating a stronger working relationship with residents and key stakeholders in neighbourhoods.

Since its inception, the Neighbourhood Action Strategy has engaged with 11 identified neighbourhoods to develop unique neighbourhood action plans. Currently, there are

421 distinct actions from 10 of the 11 completed neighbourhood action plans, with the pre-planning process underway in the 11th neighbourhood. Upon completion of each neighbourhood action plan, residents have presented their plans to the General Issues Committee to unanimous endorsement. With each subsequent plan building on the early successes and momentum of the preceding, excitement for this community capacity building approach has grown within the community. At the annual report presentation in October 2013, Jim Diers, the former Director of Neighbourhoods from the City of Seattle, spoke to the General Issues Committee about his 25 year experience working with neighbourhoods in that city and how impressed he was with the early successes in Hamilton. The resulting discussion at this meeting provided the impetus for the recommendations contained in this report.

A diverse set of resources are required to support the Neighbourhood Action Strategy, including five community developers, two managers, community planning facilitation, secondments of staff time to project management and support from across City of Hamilton departments for implementation of neighbourhood actions. While the excitement and the success are undeniable, the momentum should not be constrained to only a few neighbourhoods in this city.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

There are no policy implications associated with report CES14026.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Hamilton Community Foundation (HCF) was consulted and is in favour of the recommendations in Report CES14026. The HCF currently funds four community development workers and a portion of a manager's salary, as well as the Neighbourhood Leadership Institute and welcomes the additional resources to expand this valued service.

Children's and Home Management Services Division Director, Community and Emergency Services Department was consulted and is in favour of the recommendations in the report CES14026.

The Performance, Planning and Evaluation Program Manager, Community and Emergency Services Department, lead the Neighbourhood Action Evaluation. All preliminary data shows value to continuing and expanding the Neighbourhood Action Strategy.

The Manager of Finance, Administration and Revenue Generation was consulted and provided advice regarding the financial recommendations. There are no issues with the financial components of the report CES14026.

Procurement, Financial Services was consulted and there are no issues with the recommendations in the report CES 14026.

The Director of the Neighbourhood Leadership Institute has agreed to lead the expansion of the NLI, should funding be approved. The evaluation of the NLI shows that it is highly valued by resident participants.

The Social Planning and Research Council were consulted and are in favour of the recommendations. They will partner with the NAS to expand the complement of community development workers and oversee the Neighbourhood Action Resource Centre.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONAL FOR RECOMMENDATION

During the annual update of the Neighbourhood Action Strategy in October 2013, it was suggested that the early successes of the City's neighbourhood initiative should lead to an expansion of this work across the City of Hamilton. To that end, this report recommends that the City begin to expand the Neighbourhood Action Strategy city-wide through the following activities:

1. Exploration of a Neighbourhood Engagement Matching Grants Program and the implementation of a pilot program in 2015;
2. Enhancement of community development work through the funding of an additional community developer that will complete neighbourhood planning in the Rolston neighbourhood and support neighbourhood planning in other areas across the city from September 2014 to December 31, 2015; and,
3. Expand the Neighbourhood Leadership Institute (NLI) to include resident participants from outside the 11 identified neighbourhoods. The NLI has been an evolving initiative of the Hamilton Community Foundation for the past two years. Targeted to resident leaders within the NAS identified neighbourhoods, the NLI developed from a grassroots foundation to a space participants receive leadership training while growing a locally developed project idea.

Neighbourhood Engagement Matching Grants Program

Staff would like to explore the possibility of developing a Hamilton Neighbourhood Engagement Matching Grants program, in consultation with key stakeholders and in consideration of other City of Hamilton granting programs. By working with local residents and their collective assets within neighbourhoods, this program would match neighbourhood investments with a financial contribution from the City of Hamilton. An example of a neighbourhood project might be the creation of a public art "garden" in an unused or derelict space in a community. By working with resident artists and neighbours, the grant money would be used to purchase materials, supplies and professional design, while the actual physical labour required to plan and build the art

garden would come from volunteer hours. Art pieces could also be sponsored by local businesses and BIA's.

Ideally, the cash investment from the municipality would require a match of investment for the neighbourhood on a 1:1 ratio, with neighbourhood contributions including volunteer time, in-kind donations, sponsorships, donated services, etc. However, it would be expected that neighbourhoods would work to engage as many of their residents as possible.

The exploration and development of the Neighbourhood Matching Fund would occur in 2014, with a report back to General Issues Committee in the first quarter of 2015 with a pilot project anticipated to launch in 2015. Potential objectives of the Neighbourhood Matching Grant program might be:

- Provide neighborhood groups with city financial resources for community-driven projects that enhance and strengthen the quality of life within City of Hamilton neighborhoods;
- Leverage community assets that exist in City of Hamilton neighbourhoods to obtain 100% match of city funds;
- Build a stronger sense of community by engaging a broad range of diverse people living in City of Hamilton neighbourhoods to work with their neighbours on proposed projects; and,
- Promote collaboration between the City and the community.

In the course of researching similar programs, staff reached out to Jim Diers who had visited Hamilton in October, 2013. The City of Seattle created the Neighborhood Matching Fund (NMF) program in 1988 to “provide neighborhood groups with City resources for community-driven projects that enhance and strengthen their own neighborhoods. All projects are initiated, planned and implemented by community members in partnership with the City. Every award is matched by neighborhoods’ or communities’ resources of volunteer labour, donated materials, donated professional services or cash. This community match is at the heart of the NMF Program.”

As part of the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods, NMF promotes collaboration between the City and the community. Community building is core to project success: the process of bringing people together and building relationships is as important as project results. Since 1988, the Fund has awarded more than \$49 million to more than 4,000 projects throughout Seattle, generated an additional \$72 million of community match, and engaged more than 86,000 volunteers who have donated over 574,000 hours (retrieved from <http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/nmf/>, April 11, 2014).

Enhance Community Development

Currently, there are five community developers (CD) that provide support to 11 identified neighbourhoods. CD staff are hired and managed by the Social Planning and Research Council. However, the goal was always to have one CD support two neighbourhoods. To date a CD and public health nurse have assisted the Rolston neighbourhood with the pre-planning phase. In order to complete the full planning process in Rolston there is a need to increase the CD team by 0.5 FTE. Since it would be advantageous to hire a full-time position, an opportunity exists for this new CD staff position to provide support to planning efforts in other neighbourhoods across the city and link neighbourhood groups to a series of resources available through the Neighbourhood Action Strategy Office.

In order to support neighbourhood engagement and planning across the City of Hamilton, the NASO has created the Neighbourhood Action Resource Centre, which consists of the Neighbourhood Action Planning Toolkit, a Photovoice Toolkit, a series of community workshops and the development of unique neighbourhood profiles.

The Neighbourhood Action Planning Toolkit was created by the NASO to assist resident and neighbourhood groups with the tools they need to lead a planning process in their own neighbourhood. It is available in hard copy from the NASO or on-line on the City of Hamilton website.

<http://www.hamilton.ca/ProjectsInitiatives/NeighbourhoodDevelopment/>.

The Photovoice Kit, developed in partnership with Public Health Services, can be used by any neighbourhood group or association in the City of Hamilton that would like to gather information about their neighbourhood. It includes all the essential components needed to lead a group through the process. Photovoice is a method of gathering information that is fun and creative, using maps and pictures. It works very well with children and with residents whose first language is not English. In the Neighbourhood Action Strategy, we have used it to engage new people in the planning process and gather information about neighbourhoods from children.

As well, the NASO will develop a 'hands-on' Neighbourhood Workshop Series for neighbourhood groups on community engagement techniques like website and newsletter development, advertising, engaging diverse communities and creating a planning team or neighbourhood association.

Lastly, the Performance, Planning and Evaluation Program of Community and Emergency Services Department will create Neighbourhood Profiles for those groups wishing to understand more about the unique demographics of their neighbourhood. This information is the first step in establishing a neighbourhood action planning team and creating a neighbourhood action plan. The Profiles will be developed without additional staffing resources, to a maximum of 12 per year.

It is recommended that the new CD staff position act as the point of contact for neighbourhoods across the city that are interested in neighbourhood planning and require the support of additional resources.

Currently, the funding for community development work from the Hamilton Community Foundation is in place until December 31, 2015. It is recommended that the enhanced community development work match that timeframe and be reviewed at the same time as the funding from the Hamilton Community Foundation is up for renewal.

Expand Participation in the Neighbourhood Leadership Institute

The Neighbourhood Leadership Institute (NLI) has been an evolving initiative of the Hamilton Community Foundation for the past two years. Targeted to resident leaders within the NAS identified neighbourhoods, the NLI developed from a grassroots foundation to a space where people put their ideas into action. Participants receive leadership training while growing a locally developed project idea. They develop skills in areas such as project management, conflict resolution, communication, grant writing, public speaking, working with others, self-advocacy and leading teams.

The city is the classroom for NLI, as students engage in hands-on activities in neighbourhoods, learning from each other and from their wider community.

The NLI works with a number of Hamilton organizations, agencies and educational institutions. Mohawk College has certified the course which means graduates can receive a college-level credit for their work. Through the Hamilton Community Foundation, some projects may be eligible for a small grant to support implementation in neighbourhoods.

Hamilton's Neighbourhood Leadership Institute creates space for engaged, transformative leadership skills and values to be shared and applied. Research shows that strong local networks build resilient neighbourhoods and cities. Resident leadership is a core tenant of the NAS because it will lead to the long-term sustainability of neighbourhood engagement and initiatives.

Currently, residents from the identified neighbourhoods under the Neighbourhood Action Strategy participate in the NLI. Through enhanced funding this learning opportunity would be extended to residents from other neighbourhoods across the city.

In these three ways, the Neighbourhood Action Strategy will better support neighbourhood engagement and re-vitalization city-wide. The Neighbourhood Action Strategy has a proven track record of engaging residents in the creation of neighbourhood action plans. To date, 10 plans with a total of 421 actions have been created and implementation on many actions is underway. There is a comprehensive evaluation framework in place, with partners from McMaster University, the University of Toronto, Structure Consulting and the Social Planning and Research Council, that is now funded through external granting streams after an initial investment by the City of

Hamilton and the Hamilton Community Foundation. A preliminary report of findings is expected in the fall of 2014.

The success of the Strategy can also be measured in the partners who have come to the table to assist in implementing actions, from key stakeholder institutions like Mohawk College, McMaster University and Hamilton Health Sciences, to private partners like the RBC and Scotiabank, to the many community organizations across the city. The Building Momentum event, in support of the NAS, was a sold out event in January that netted a further \$19,000 for community engagement activities in the 11 neighbourhoods.

To date, the Neighbourhood Action Strategy has earmarked \$381,000 in investments, and has leverage \$2.6 million additionally in investments from partners across the City of Hamilton, another strong piece of evidence that the neighbourhood work is creating positive change in neighbourhoods.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

If the Neighbourhood Action Strategy is not expanded to provide activities city-wide there is still a need to enhance community development to support planning in all 11 identified neighbourhoods. This would require a partnership with the Social Planning and Research Council to fund only the 0.5 FTE of community development staff required to address the gap in community development worker support to Rolston neighbourhood.

Financial Implications:

This alternative would reduce the financial investment through the Neighbourhood Action Strategy Fund to approximately \$48,000.

Staffing Implications:

There are no staffing implications associated with this alternative.

Legal Implications:

A funding agreement with the Social Planning and Research Council will be developed and executed prior to the release of any funding.

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