INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	August 16, 2017
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Community Hubs Update (CES17035) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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Council Direction:

Not applicable

Information:

Background and Overview of Community Hubs

In March 2015, the provincial government announced its commitment to developing community hubs in an effort to bring services together in one place and to make better use of public spaces to serve citizens. The Premier announced the appointment of Karen Petrie, as the Special Advisor on Community Hubs to lead the Premier's Community Hubs Framework Advisory Group. The mandate of the Advisory Group was to review provincial policies, research best practices, and develop a framework for adapting existing public properties to become community hubs.

In August 2015, the Advisory Group released *Community Hubs in Ontario: A Strategic Framework and Action Plan* (attached as Appendix A to Report CES1703). This document, which was based on extensive stakeholder consultations across the province, defined a community hub, identified barriers that stand in the way of implementing community hubs, and set out an action plan with 27 recommendations to address those barriers.

Based on the provincial definition, a community hub is a central access point for a range of needed health and social services, along with cultural, recreational, and green spaces to nourish community life. It can be a school, neighbourhood centre, early learning centre, library, senior's centre, community health centre, government building, place of worship, or other public space. A community hub can be virtual or located in a physical building. It can be located in a high-density urban neighbourhood or an

isolated rural community. Each hub is unique based on the community needs, services, and resources of the neighbourhood it serves. The goals for community hubs are:

- Coordinated planning: a coordinated system of planning that encourages partnerships and build on what works.

- Client-focused service delivery: a system that provides integral service to people in their communities.

- Community infrastructure/public properties: a system that maximizes the use of public properties for community benefit.

Community hubs provide the opportunity to strengthen school-community partnerships, better respond to the local needs of residents, provide more efficient and sustainable services, increase access to services, and improve outcomes and the social determinants of health for individuals and families.

In addition to bringing together a variety of services and resources, locally a community hub has also been defined as bringing together a variety of community partners and agencies.

The City of Hamilton's Approach to Planning and Implementing Hubs

The development of the City's hub strategy and the coordination of the implementation of community hubs will be led by staff from Children's & Home Management Services (CHMS) Division, Community & Emergency Services Department; however its success is dependent on leveraging financial and human resources across City departments. A cross-departmental City advisory group and key departmental contacts will be established to assist in the development and implementation of community hubs. The success of the community hub strategy will also be dependent on leveraging the resources and expertise of a wide variety of community partners.

The planning and development process for community hubs is not a 'one-size fits all' or a linear process, as it recognizes that the planning process for each community hub should reflect the unique needs of the neighbourhood it serves. It is also a unique process as each community hub will need to leverage different financial resources and physical assets, as well as provide a unique array of resources and services based on local needs. There is an important role for City Council, City staff, and community partners to play in the development of community hubs, however the roles and lead responsibilities may vary based on the factors described above. This is particularly relevant given that the Province has not provided ongoing capital or operating dollars to support the implementation of community hubs. Community and City partners will need to ensure alignment with other federal, provincial and local initiatives, and leverage these resources in order to successfully implement hubs in Hamilton.

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As a community, Hamilton is well-positioned to develop a local community hubs strategy given our history of taking a neighbourhood-based approach to community planning. There are several examples of local initiatives and co-located services and programs that will provide the foundation for the creation of a Hamilton community hubs strategy. These include work under the Best Start Initiative, the Neighbourhood Action Strategy, and the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan. Although the development of community hubs is not a new approach for the City of Hamilton, successful examples include the new Greensville School/library project, Winona Community Centre and Turner Park. The recent provincial direction provides us with an opportunity to better align various initiatives, reduce barriers to the creation of hubs, and better leverage resources across our community.

Currently, there are a number of community hub opportunities have been identified and are at various stages of development. Some examples of these include:

- Biindigin Community Hub (St. Helen's School)
- Sir John A. MacDonald School
- Eastmount School
- Ancaster Arts Centre (Ancaster Memorial School)
- Hill Park Secondary School
- Prince Philip School
- Domenic Agostino Riverdale Community Centre
- Vanier Towers

Each of these potential local community hub initiatives will vary in terms of the services they offer, the potential partners involved, and the development process that will be undertaken. Further information will be provided to Council as local community hub initiatives are identified and implemented.

Next Steps

CHMS staff are in the process of developing a local community hubs strategy, which will be presented to Emergency & Community Services Committee in Q1 of 2018. City staff will also continue to work with Hamilton's Anchor Institutions and other community partners to identify potential community hub opportunities, including how financial resources and physical assets can be maximized, and how local community hub initiatives can be aligned with federal and provincial priorities and funding opportunities. As local community hub opportunities are identified and implemented, updates will be brought forward to Council through various committees depending on the lead partners involved in each project.

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Appendices and Schedules Attached

Appendix A to Report CES17035: Community Hubs in Ontario: A Strategic Framework
and Action Plan