



CITY OF HAMILTON
EMERGENCY & COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
Neighbourhood & Community Initiatives Division

TO:	Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	November 6, 2017
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Neighbourhood Action Strategy Annual Update 2017 (CES15052(b)) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Al Fletcher 905-546-2424 Ext. 4711
SUBMITTED BY:	Vicki Woodcox Acting General Manager Community and Emergency Services Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That the Neighbourhood Action Strategy Annual Report, attached as Appendix A to Report CES15052(b), be received;
- (b) That staff enter into a funding agreement with Hamilton Community Foundation for Community Development staff from January 1 to December 31, 2018, and funded as follows
 - (i) \$81,250 funded from the Neighbourhood Action Strategy Capital fund (# 20551255204); and,
 - (ii) \$65,000 funded from the Best Start Reserve (#112218);
- (c) That the existing partnership agreement with the Hamilton Community Foundation for the provision of the Neighbourhood Leadership Institute be extended to December 31, 2018, in the amount of \$20,000 funded from the Neighbourhood Action Strategy Capital fund (#2051255204); and,
- (d) That the Neighbourhood Engagement Matching Grant Pilot Program extension to December 31, 2018 with additional funding in the amount of \$10,000 from the Neighbourhood Action Strategy Capital fund (#2051255204), be approved.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides the annual update of Hamilton's Neighbourhood Action Strategy (NAS), including the accomplishments and challenges that residents, community agencies, institutions and City staff have worked together to achieve and resolve. The evaluation summaries provided by our partners at McMaster University and the University of Toronto provide evidence that the NAS is indeed making positive changes

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in neighbourhoods, although there are some areas that continue to require attention as well as some unintended consequences of success for 2018.

The NAS Annual Report (attached as Appendix A to Report CES15052(b)), provides an overview of the accomplishments of 2017, through the stories from the individual neighbourhoods, evaluators and through the work of City staff. Led by the Hamilton Community Foundation and through the work of resident researchers, over 200 residents and community partners were interviewed to obtain their thoughts on what has worked, what hasn't worked and where they see NAS moving forward in the future. This (re)Imagine work is being implemented in two phases; Phase 1 is the development of a Conceptual Framework and Phase 2 will co-create an operational plan for the delivery of NAS. Phase 2 is to be completed in Q2 2018 at which time staff will report back to Council on the results.

Staff are seeking approval for funding for 2018 from the NAS capital account and the Best Start Reserve for transitional community development support, the Neighbourhood Leadership Institute and the Neighbourhood Engagement Matching Grants Program.

Community Development

The Social Planning and Research Council has been delivering community development services for NAS from 2014-2017. (re)Imagine Phase 1 determined that a new approach is required to deliver flexible and responsive community development services and the work of creating that structure has begun. However, a transition plan will be required in 2018 to continue to support neighbourhoods until this new model of community development (Phase 2) can be implemented. The Community Developer's contracts will be held by Hamilton Community Foundation with joint support, funding and oversight through the NAS partnership for this transition year. Staff are recommending funding be provided through the NAS Capital Fund and the Best Start Reserve.

Neighbourhood Leadership Institute (NLI)

For the past several years, the NLI has provided a space to work with interested residents on building capacity and leadership through education and the development of a project idea. The NLI is open to both interested residents across Hamilton, including those residing in NAS neighbourhoods. Since its inception, the NLI has graduated 90 residents and has developed projects such as Beautiful Alleys, which is resident-led and City supported with the goal of beautifying neighbourhood alleyways. NAS jointly funds the Neighbourhood Leadership Institute (NLI) with Hamilton Community Foundation and recommends this program continue to be funded.

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Neighbourhood Engagement Matching Grant Program

Council approved a \$25,000 pilot program in 2015 to fund small grants for community engagement to neighbourhood associations, informal resident groups and individual residents. After a slow start in the first year, awareness and interest has increased and it is expected that by the end of 2017 the allocated funding will be expended. This city wide program provides funding opportunities outside of the NAS neighbourhoods for community engagement activities and is therefore recommended for funding to continue the program.

Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: The amount required to extend the funding of the Community Development staff, the Neighbourhood Leadership Institute and the Neighbourhood Matching Grant Program work until December 31, 2018 is:

- \$111,250 funded from the Neighbourhood Action Strategy Capital fund (# 20551255204); and,
- \$65,000 funded from the Best Start Reserve (#112218).

With approval of this report, there would be approximately \$65,000 remaining within the NAS Capital Fund.

Staffing: There are no staffing implications related to Report CES15052(b)

Legal: Staff will work with Legal Services to prepare the necessary funding agreement extensions with Hamilton Community Foundation.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Since 2011, NAS has been a partnership between Hamilton Community Foundation, Best Start Initiative and City of Hamilton to provide community development within the City of Hamilton. Council approved a \$2 million Neighbourhood Action Strategy capital fund to support the development and work of the NAS. Together the partnership has funded front line community developers, supported programs, capital improvements, resources for staffing, youth camps, neighbourhood small grants, community leadership development and festivals, events and gatherings that broaden citizen engagement within the 11 NAS neighbourhoods. This \$2 million investment has leveraged an additional \$7 million in donations, in-kind services, grants through different levels of government and collaborative activities with community partners.

Community development is a core element in NAS; indeed it is the foundation upon which the whole Strategy is built. As community developers connect with residents to lead engage community members to renew their Neighbourhood Action Plans, and to

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create positive change in their neighbourhoods, the assets and issues that residents focus their attention on have begun to change. Many Planning Teams have revised and updated their actions to include significant social issues such as employment, poverty and affordable housing. Neighbourhoods also continue to have the focus of creating beautiful safe and positive neighbourhood spaces, developing communication pathways like local newspapers/newsletters to connect neighbourhoods, art in public places, and organizing events with a focus on inclusion.

Evaluation has always been a key component of NAS. As a developmental, locally created initiative, it was imperative to evaluate both the processes and the impacts of the work. The Hamilton Neighbourhoods Study (HNS), led by Dr. Jim Dunn from McMaster University (CRUNCH), and the Neighbourhood Action Evaluation team (NAE), led by Dr. Sarah Wakefield from the University of Toronto have both been evaluating components of NAS. The HNS team surveyed residents in six of the 11 neighbourhoods twice over two year increments as well as surveying a control neighbourhood not included in the NAS program. The NAE team observed all Planning Teams/Hubs meetings over the year and assisted neighbourhoods in tracking the implementation of their neighbourhood action plans. The NAE provides a third party evaluation of the residents' actions to observe and reflect on the accomplishments and challenges.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

None

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Finance, Administration and Revenue Generation Division were consulted and have no concerns with the recommendations.

Hamilton Community Foundation was consulted and has no concerns with the recommendations.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

(re)Imagine Phase 1: Conceptual Framework

In 2017, the NAS Partnership, led by Hamilton Community Foundation, embarked on an in-depth review of the NAS program, called “(re)Imagining the Neighbourhood Action Strategy” ((re)Imagine). Through the work of resident researchers, over 200 residents and community partners were interviewed to obtain their thoughts on what has worked, what hasn't and where they see NAS moving to in the future. The (re)Imagine consists of two phases of work; Phase 1 is the Conceptual Framework and Phase 2 will deliver the operational plan for NAS.

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The Phase 1 report outlines the Big Ideas, Guiding Principles and Core Programme Elements that make up the Conceptual Framework and are summarized below.

Big Ideas

- Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD)
- Social determinants of health (SDOH)
- Anti-oppressive practice (AOP)

Guiding Principles

1. NAS Welcomes Everyone
2. NAS Work is Collaborative
3. NAS Responds to Changing Situations and Community Priorities
4. NAS Acknowledges that things are Complex
5. NAS is Inventive, and will Try New Things

Existing Essential Programme Elements

1. Community hubs
2. Planning teams
3. Small grants
4. Ongoing learning and training
5. Neighbourhood action plans
6. Neighbourhood projects and events
7. Community developers
8. NAS initiatives beyond the planning teams
9. Evaluation and reflection
10. Flexible and adaptive structures

Using the above framework to scope further discussions, the (re)Imagine Team is now engaged in targeted consultation to develop an operational plan. Over the next few months, the team will explore potential opportunities to deliver NAS and together with the Steering Committee will bring forward recommendations related to the structure of community development, scope, expectations, roles and responsibilities, support, resources and funding needs. A report will then be submitted to both City Council and Hamilton Community Foundation Board, seeking approval for the recommendations.

In order to have adequate time to complete the Phase 2 work, a transition plan is being proposed which will have a staffing and resource cost of approximately \$320,000 shared by the Hamilton Community Foundation, Best Start Reserve and the NAS Capital Fund. The city portion of the costs would equal \$146,250.

Neighbourhood Action Strategy Evaluation

Since the beginning, evaluation of the NAS process, outcomes and impacts has been important to understand if the program is making a difference in neighbourhoods.

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Hamilton Neighbourhoods Study (HNS)

The HNS team survey focused on 6 of the 11 neighbourhoods surveying residents over two year increments as well as surveying a control neighbourhood not associated with the NAS program. The HNS started with a seed grant from the NAS fund for the 2014 surveys, and continued through a provincial research grant for the 2016 surveys two years later, HNS was able to provide neighbourhood level data of changes over the two year period.

HNS states that “Overall, 39% of residents, compared to only 23% in the benchmark group, agreed that over the past two years (since the implementation of the NAS), I think my neighbourhood has gotten better to live in as a whole.”

Some of the improvements HNS has found to date have related to areas of neighbourhood satisfaction and pride, social cohesion, social capital, and City-neighbourhood relations. However, some residents have also noted some of the unintended consequences of increasing neighbourhood well-being arising from the work of NAS, including displacement and housing affordability issues.

Neighbourhood Action Evaluation (NAE)

NAE has completed the fourth year of their process evaluation of the NAS. Included within this years' evaluation is the completion of 105 interviews with residents, service providers and city staff, and 11 focus groups with NAS planning teams. The following provides a listing of the major themes from their evaluation:

- Residents are celebrating
- Community Developers (CD) are invaluable
- Inclusive neighbourhood planning remains a challenge
- Concerns about displacement are growing
- Planning teams need consistent, accessible meeting space
- Decision-making matters

Neighbourhood Leadership Institute (NLI)

For the past several years, the NLI has provided an educational program to work with interested residents on building capacity and leadership through education and the development of a project idea. 2017 marked the fourth iteration of the NLI which is jointly funded by Hamilton Community Foundation and NAS Capital Fund (Reports CES14026 and CES17004). Including the 2017 session, the NLI alumni family has grown to more than 90 alumni who continuously exercise their skills as leaders in the community, a third of which are from outside NAS neighbourhoods.

In August 2017, the NLI conducted an evaluation specifically focused on alumni. Some key findings from the evaluation concluded that overall, the participants found the NLI to

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be a positive experience/program where they built confidence in themselves as leaders in the community and/or as individuals. As well, participants reaffirmed their commitment to neighbourhood/community work and felt that it was extremely valuable to be able to learn from the diverse range of experiences that came together at the NLI. Participants also acquired or expanded on skills to deal with controversy within groups and learned conflict resolution techniques.

NLI has seen positive changes and outcomes from residents throughout the city as a whole, not just in NAS neighbourhoods.

Neighbourhood Engagement Matching Grant Program (NEMGP)

In April 2015, Council approved the \$25,000 Neighbourhood Engagement Matching Grant Pilot Program (NEMGP) for one year beginning June 2015 (Report CES14026 (a)) from the Neighbourhood Action Strategy fund. The NEMGP provides funds up to \$1,000 maximum per project/activity to support neighbourhood and place-based grassroots initiatives across the City in the areas of 'building community', 'building capacity' and 'changing spaces'. In June 2016, as the initial investment had not been depleted, Council approved Report CES14026(b) to extend the pilot program through December 2017. To date, NEMGP has:

- Received 31 requests for funding
 - 15 applications from Neighbourhood Associations
 - 11 applications from informal groups
 - 5 applications from non-profit organizations
- Approved 31 applications totalling \$19,993.81 with
 - 19 applications approved for "Building Community"
 - 6 applications approved for "Building Capacity"
 - 6 applications approved for "Changing Spaces" funding streams
- Grants leveraged an additional \$69,385 from other non-city revenue sources
- 4,667 residents participated in funded projects/activities, including a children's festival at Meadowlands Fellowship Christian Reform Church, Ainslie Wood Neighbourhood Clean Up, Easter Egg Hunt in Winona, Rosedale BBQ and Community Event, East Mountain (Inch/Eastmount) promotional cards, Gardening Workshop in Corktown and Flamborough Community Event at Cedar Cove.

To date, \$5,006.19 remains within the allocated funding envelope.

Based on anticipated application submissions through the fall, the funds allocated to NEMGP will be expended by year end. As small grants were determined to be a core programme element of the NAS, it is being recommended that this program continue.

Tracking of Neighbourhood Action Plans – City Involved Actions

Through the development of the Neighbourhood Action Plans, the residents determined 452 actions that they felt would improve their communities. Approximately 81% of the actions would have City involvement once a neighbourhood champion brought an action forward to implement. Of the City-related actions, the Annual Report shows that 51% of the actions have been completed, 19% are currently active and the remaining 30% are non-active.

This does not include the Rolston Neighbourhood 29 actions as their plan was endorsed more recently and not subject to the same tracking.

Future of NAS and Timing

Both residents and staff have seen positive changes within the NAS neighbourhoods over the past six years. These changes have not come without obstacles, complexity and at times difficult situations. Further, as the City sees significant change so do each of the NAS neighbourhoods with the influx of Newcomers as well as movement throughout Ontario. As the City changes, so do the priorities and actions within the NAS neighbourhoods whereby what may have been an improvement to former residents may not hold the same value as it does with the new residents. To that end, the NAS community engagement is even more relevant today.

It is the intent of staff to work with HCF through Phase 2 of (re)Imagine to conclude what community development model best suits the needs of the residents. Through the development of this model staff will be able to report on governance, funding and staffing resources necessary to implement the model. It is proposed staff will report back to Council by the end of Q2 2018.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

None

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2016 – 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

Community Engagement & Participation

Hamilton has an open, transparent and accessible approach to City government that engages with and empowers all citizens to be involved in their community.

Healthy and Safe Communities

Hamilton is a safe and supportive city where people are active, healthy, and have a high quality of life.

Clean and Green

Hamilton is environmentally sustainable with a healthy balance of natural and urban spaces.

Culture and Diversity

Hamilton is a thriving, vibrant place for arts, culture, and heritage where diversity and inclusivity are embraced and celebrated.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix A to Report CES152052(b) – Neighbourhood Action Strategy 2017
Annual Report