

Consolidated Clause in Community Services Committee Report 6, which was considered by City Council on September 25, 26 and 27, 2006.

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**Approval of Best Start Funds for
Regent Park Child Care Centre**

City Council on September 25, 26 and 27, 2006, adopted this Clause without amendment.

The Community Services Committee recommends that City Council adopt the staff recommendations in the Recommendations Section of the report (August 23, 2006) from the General Manager, Children's Services.

Purpose:

This report seeks approval to spend funds from Best Start in accordance with the City's Child Care Service Plan.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

Best Start is a provincially funded program with no city contribution. The Best Start Service and Transition Infrastructure Plans, approved by Council in October 2005, outlined the allocation of Best Start funding for child care expansion projects including construction/ renovation funding and start-up funding of up to \$2,200.00 for each new child care space created under the Best Start Plan.

Sufficient funds are available in the 2006 Operating Budget for the Best Start program to begin developing the Regent Park Child Care Project. Completion of the project is expected in 2007 and funds will be included in the 2007 Operating Budget Submission. The child care facility is to be licensed for 62 children in a Toronto Housing Corporation (TCHC) building owned property with an estimated construction cost of \$1.86 million. The project was approved as a Phase 2 project in the City's Best Start Service and Transition Infrastructure Plan.

The Chief Financial Officer and Deputy City Manager has reviewed this report and concurs with the information provided.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) funds of \$1.86 million for the construction costs be approved for the Regent Park Child Care Centre, a Phase 2 project in the Best Start Service and Transition and Infrastructure Plan;
- (2) the General Manager of Children's Services be delegated authority to execute an agreement on behalf of the City with the Toronto Community Housing Corporation for these purposes and such agreement be on terms and conditions satisfactory to the General Manager and in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor; and
- (3) the appropriate City officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Background:

The City's Best Start Service and Infrastructure Transition Plans approved by Council at its meeting of October 26, 27, 28 and 31, 2005, outlined the allocation of Best Start funding to meet the City's targeted expansion of child care. The plan is divided into two phases and includes funding for construction and start up costs of new child care programs. Phase 1 projects are nearly all complete, and Phase 2 projects were scheduled to commence after March 31, 2006. As a result of the cancellation of the federal/provincial agreements for Early Learning and Child Care only a handful of Phase 2 projects are recommended to go ahead.

Redevelopment of the Regent Park community is already underway. Regent Park is a community with 2,330 children 0-9 years and 1,185 of them or 81 per cent live with income under Low Income Cut Off (LICO) compared to the Toronto average of 30 per cent of all children. Council adopted a Regent Park Community Facilities Strategy at its meeting of September 28, 29 and 30, 2005, which identified the need for up to seven additional child care programs to serve this community.

Comments:

Phase 1 Best Start projects are currently underway and despite the cancellation of the federal/provincial agreement, the Children's Services Division has determined that there is sufficient funding from the first year of Best Start to complete the Phase 1 projects underway and a small number of the highest priority projects in Phase 2 including Bergamot, Regent Park and a new Aboriginal child care centre.

The development and provision of a child care facility in the TCHC building in Regent Park at the corner of Parliament and Oak Streets has advanced such that construction is expected to begin in late Spring 2007 and TCHC needs to confirm the child care portion of the funding to begin the project. The proposed child care facility for 62 children will be constructed in a TCHC operated building and will serve both the tenants of this building and nearby community.

Conclusions:

This report seeks approval of capital funds for the Regent Park Child Care Centre and requests authority to enter into an agreement with the Toronto Community Housing Corporation for the construction of a licensed child care centre for 62 children.

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City Council – September 25, 26 and 27, 2006

Councillor Moscoe declared an interest in this Clause, in that his daughter is a part-time childcare worker employed by the City of Toronto.