Feasibility Study for Early Childhood Education and Development and Care Pilot Project

(City Council on February 29, March 1 and 2, 2000, adopted this Clause, without amendment.)

The Policy and Finance Committee recommends the adoption of the Recommendation of the Community Services Committee embodied in the following communication (February 10, 2000) from the City Clerk:

Recommendation:

The Community Services Committee on February 10, 2000, recommended to the Policy and Finance Committee the adoption of the attached report (January 25, 2000) from the Commissioner of Community and Neighbourhood Services, subject to deleting Recommendations Nos. (2) and (3) and inserting in lieu thereof the following new Recommendations Nos. (2) and (3):

“(2) funding of the City’s $20,000.00 contribution be found from the funds set aside in the Social Services Reserve Fund for “seamless day pilot programs”, as directed by City Council in its adoption of the 1999 Operating Budget on April 26, 27 and 28, 1999; and

(3) this report be forwarded to the Policy and Finance Committee for consideration;”.

Background:

The Community Services Committee had before it a report (January 25, 2000) from the Commissioner of Community and Neighbourhood Services respecting the feasibility study for pilot projects in Early Childhood Education, Development and Care; and recommending that:

(1) Council approve that the Community and Neighbourhood Services Department enter into a partnership with the Toronto District School Board, the Toronto Catholic District School Board and the Atkinson Charitable Foundation in order to implement a feasibility study for a pilot project in Early Childhood Education, Development and Care and, in particular, to receive and manage contributions from the partners;

(2) funding of the City’s $20,000.00 contribution be considered as part of the $150,000.00 request for the Children and Youth Action Committee in the Approved Task Forces budget in the Non-Program Expenditures budget through the 2000 budget process;

(3) this report be forwarded to the Policy and Finance Committee for consideration, and the Budget Advisory Committee secretary for budget process pending file in accordance with the Financial Control Protocols adopted by Council;
(4) the Commissioner of Community and Neighbourhood Services report to Council in the spring of 2000 on the results of the feasibility study including the possible financial implications of proceeding with the pilot project; and

(5) the appropriate City officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

The Committee also had before it a communication (February 9, 2000) from Ms. Anne Dubas, President, Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 79, urging the Community Services Committee to ensure that CUPE members providing these important child care and educational services be part of the development and implementation process of an integrated early childhood program.

(Report dated January 25, 2000, addressed to the Community Services Committee from the Commissioner of Community and Neighbourhood Services)

Purpose:
To report on the feasibility study for pilot projects in Early Childhood Education, Development and Care and seek Council's approval for the City to enter into a funding partnership for the study.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

The adoption of the recommendations in this report will allow the City of Toronto to accept funds from partners to carry out a feasibility study for a pilot project in Early Childhood Education, Development and Care (ECEDC).

Through the contributions of the various partners, a total of $53,500.00 will be available for the feasibility study. It is proposed that the City’s contribution of $20,000.00 be funded from the $150,000.00 budgeted for the Children and Youth Action Committee, which will be considered in the 2000 budget process as part of the Approved Task Forces budget in the Non-Program Expenditures budget.

The Department will report back to Council in the spring of 2000 with the results of the feasibility study, including any possible financial implications to the City of proceeding with the pilot project.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer reviewed this report and concurs with the financial impact statement.
Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

(1) Council approve that the Community and Neighbourhood Services Department enter into a partnership with the Toronto District School Board, the Toronto Catholic District School Board and the Atkinson Charitable Foundation in order to implement a feasibility study for a pilot project in Early Childhood Education, Development and Care and in particular, to receive and manage contributions from the partners;

(2) funding of the City’s $20,000.00 contribution be considered as part of the $150,000.00 request for the Children and Youth Action Committee in the Approved Task Forces budget in the Non-Program Expenditures budget through the 2000 budget process;

(3) this report be forwarded to the Policy and Finance Committee for consideration, and the Budget Advisory Committee secretary for the budget process pending file in accordance with the Financial Control Protocols adopted by Council;

(4) the Commissioner of Community and Neighbourhood Services report to Council in the spring of 2000 on the results of the feasibility study including the possible financial implications of proceeding with the pilot project; and

(5) the appropriate City officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Background:

On April 26, 1999, Council directed that “the Commissioner of Community and Neighbourhood Services report on possible funding partnerships and an implementation plan for feasibility studies to develop pilot projects to integrate all key children’s services (such as child care and kindergarten) into a seamless program for children ages 0-5 years old; and that funding for such projects be found from the $3.0M set aside in the Social Assistance Stabilization Reserve for children’s needs.” This report provides an update on the Department’s progress in securing a funding partnership and implementing a feasibility study.

Comments:

The Atkinson Charitable Foundation, the Toronto District School Board, and the Toronto Catholic District School Board have each agreed to participate in a feasibility study. The purpose of the study is to outline the necessary conditions for successful implementation of an Early Childhood Education, Development and Care pilot project and will identify the types of pilot models that meet those conditions. The partners have contributed a total of $53,500.00, with the City’s share being $20,000.00. The breakdown of the other partners contributions is: $20,000.00 from the Toronto District School Board; $8,500.00 from the Atkinson Charitable Foundation; and $5,000.00 from the Toronto Catholic District School Board. The City’s contribution will be funded from the Children and Youth Action Committee budget, which is being requested through the 2000 budget process.
In addition to the funding contribution, each partner has agreed to participate on a steering committee. The Community and Neighbourhood Services Department is also providing policy and project management support to the feasibility study. As such, the Department requires the authority from Council to enter into a partnership with the Atkinson Foundation and the Boards, and to receive the partner’s financial contributions toward the study.

The ECEDC pilot project feasibility study will begin at the end of February 2000 and finish by May 2000.

Conclusions:

In April 1999, Council directed that a partnership be created to implement a feasibility study for an ECEDC pilot project. The partnership is now in place and there is some urgency to complete the feasibility study so that all partners can make plans for possible future activities regarding the pilot project. The four partners are contributing a total of $53,500.00 to the study. Council approval will enable staff to proceed.

Contact:

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(A copy of the communication dated February 9, 2000, from Ms. Anne Dubas, President, Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 79, referred to in the foregoing communication from the City Clerk was forwarded to all Members of Council with the February 17, 2000, agenda of the Policy and Finance Committee and a copy thereof is also on file in the office of the City Clerk).