

2008 Funding for Regent Park Neighbourhood Initiative

Date:	May 15, 2008
To:	Community Development and Recreation Committee
From:	Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration Division
Wards:	28
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

This report provides information on the progress of Regent Park Neighbourhood Initiative (RPNI) during the second year of the three-year funding commitment. RPNI continues to play a significant role representing the residents in the context of the redevelopment of social housing in Regent Park. The report recommends the allocation of \$68,000.00 from the Community Services funding envelope within the 2008 Approved Budget for the Community Partnership and Investment Program, to support the activities of Regent Park Neighbourhood Initiative for the final year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration Division recommends that:

- (1) the Community Development and Recreation Committee recommend funding of \$68,000.00 be provided to Regent Park Neighbourhood Initiative from the Community Services Partnership funding envelope within the 2008 Approved Budget for the Community Partnership and Investment Program, for the period of July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009;
- (2) in order to receive the 2008 funds, Regent Park Neighbourhood Initiative must provide an updated budget and supporting program documentation for year 3 of the project, satisfactory to the Director, Community Resources; and

- (3) the appropriate City Officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact beyond what has been approved in the 2008 Approved Operating Budget.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and concurs with the financial impact statement.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of May 23, 24 and 25, 2006, City Council adopted Clause 7, Report No. 3 of the Community Development and Recreation Committee titled “Funding for Regent Park Neighbourhood Initiative” from the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration. That report recommended funding of \$68,000 for RPNI to support local involvement in planning in Regent Park in the context of redevelopment. This funding allocation was provided for a 3 year period to be reviewed on an annual basis until 2008 in order to facilitate RPNI capacity and sustainability.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2006/agendas/council/cc060523/cms3rpt/cl007.pdf>

At its meeting of June 19 and 20, 2007, City Council adopted Clause 6.13, Report No. 6 of the Community Development and Recreation Committee titled “2007 CSP Funding for Regent Park Neighbourhood Initiative” from the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration. That report recommended \$68,000 for the second year of funding for the 3-year Regent Park Neighbourhood Initiative.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/cd/bgrd/backgroundfile-3940.pdf>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The Regent Park Neighbourhood Initiative was formed in 2002 to provide leadership in building and sustaining a healthy and vibrant community in the Regent Park area. The organization works in partnership with service providers, government and local businesses to identify and address issues brought forward by the community. RPNI’s role in the community includes being a broker for the residents with various stakeholders in the redevelopment of Regent Park.

The City of Toronto recognizes the unique role of RPNI in the community and provides funding to facilitate the organization to build capacity and sustainability based on a three-year plan covering the period from July 2006 through June 2009.

COMMENTS

The RPNI received the second year funding from the Community Services funding envelope of City of Toronto for the period starting from July 1, 2007 to support their

activities. During the second year of the project, the organization has participated actively in the Social Development Plan (SDP) process. The SDP provides a framework for building a cohesive and inclusive community in Regent Park over the course of redevelopment and into the long term. Staff from Toronto Community Housing (THC) and the City's Social Development, Finance and Administration Division and Toronto Social Services have worked in partnership with a core committee of community leaders that include RPNI to guide the engagement process and the creation of the plan. The City of Toronto and the Toronto Community Housing have approved the SDP. It has also been adopted by the RPNI board and thirteen of the local agency boards. The SDP has also outlined a clear role for RPNI and confirmed their roles of Community Planning, Community Leadership Development and Community Engagement.

In the past year, the RPNI has worked closely with the Social Development, Finance and Administration Division to convene the SDP Stakeholders Table quarterly to monitor the progress of the SDP and provide a forum for identifying cross-sectoral opportunities, sharing information, harmonizing respective plans and working together on the broader analysis of the social development needs of Regent Park. During the process, the RPNI has actively engaged the residents and community agencies and other stakeholders to guide the work of community-building in Regent Park and promote social inclusion. RPNI has convened a number of the key processes in the plan, and in 2007 began to convene the Community Services Planning Table, the Adult Education table, and the Grassroots Leaders Table.

A number of the issue specific tables have reportedly made significant progress. The University of Toronto and the Centre For Community Learning and Development are partnering to develop a Learning Hub which is the primary project of the Adult Education Table. The Economic Development Advisory Committee has developed an outline for a business incubator project and has begun discussions about a micro-credit project. The TCH and community partners that include social services agencies and employers have worked together to place Career and Employment specialists in the RPNI office. Employment is a key factor in improving the quality of life for residents in Regent Park and is a key component of the SDP.

In terms of the capacity building activities, the organization is in the process of applying for Charitable Status. The RPNI has developed a fundraising strategy and will begin to implement fundraising strategy for foundations, corporate and individuals in the coming year. The support from the government, community partners and the residents positions RPNI to approach other funders that include the United Way and other foundations such as Toronto Community Foundation, Laidlaw Foundation and the Trillium Foundation to explore other sources of funding to continue their work in the Regent Park community. The organization has strengthened its infrastructure and will finalize its internal financial systems and adopt draft financial policies. The organization will explore options to work with other trustees and gain organizational independence in the long run.

In the coming year, the organization will continue to build the organization capacity, outreach into the community and solidify their role as the community planning body for Regent Park.

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SIGNATURE

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