

Development of the Community Partnership Strategy

Date:	October 30, 2008
To:	Community Development and Recreation Committee
From:	Executive Director, Social Development, Finance & Administration
Wards:	
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

This report outlines the process that will be used to develop the Community Partnership Strategy. This Strategy was requested by Council at its June 2008 meeting, and has four goals:

1. Provide municipal leadership to ensure the city maintains a strong, vibrant and responsive community-based sector;
2. Define the key roles the City should play in supporting this sector;
3. Identify neighbourhoods that would benefit from increased investment in the community-based supports that improve outcomes for their residents; and
4. Provide a strategic framework for decision-making about the level and rate of increases in municipal funding to the community-based sector.

The goals of Community Partnership Strategy will be achieved with two inter-related activities:

1. Establish benchmarks for the key community-based supports within the municipal jurisdiction that are required for neighbourhood wellbeing; and
2. Establish a framework for priority and target setting that allows Council to make strategic decisions about the order and rate at which it will increase its investments in the key community-based supports that are below benchmark levels.

The Strategy will be developed in 2009 for implementation in 2010, and its initial focus will be the Community Services Partnership Program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Community Services Partnership Program priorities for new and increased funding in 2009 and 2010 be expanded to include:
 - a. Core administration funding that supports the ability of community organizations to engage residents and build partnerships;
 - b. Program funding that supports the participation of vulnerable residents in engagement opportunities;
 - c. Community development programs that allow vulnerable residents and neighbourhoods to identify needs, assets and opportunities, and to act on them; and
 - d. Funding to strengthen the human resource base in organizations, particularly in terms of their ability to engage with residents, businesses, governments, and other partners;

and that the enhanced funding of \$600,000.00 requested in 2009 for the Community Services Partnership Program included in the 2009 Community Partnership & Investment Programs' Operating Budget submission, if approved by Council, be allocated to these expanded priorities.

2. Staff report back to Council on the 2010 target for increased investment in the Community Services Partnership Program in September 2009.
3. This report be forwarded to the Budget Committee for consideration during the 2009 Operating Budget process.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

This report's recommendations will have no financial impact beyond what has already been approved in the 2008 Operating Budget.

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

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on June 23-24, 2008, Council directed staff to develop a community services partnership strategy that identifies service needs and proposes an implementation

plan for a three-year rolling budget planning process for the Community Services Partnership program.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2008/cd/reports/2008-06-09-cd16-cr.pdf>

At its meeting on September 18, 2008, the Community Development and Recreation Committee requested the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration consult with community partners on the human resources challenges facing community agencies during the preparation the community services strategy.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2008/cd/minutes/2008-09-12-cd18-mn.pdf>

The Community Partnership Strategy will be developed in the context of the City's place-based work. Council formalised the City's place-based work with the adoption of 13 priority neighbourhood areas at its meeting on October 26, 27, 28 and 31, 2005.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2005/agendas/council/cc051026/pof9rpt/cl006.pdf>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Place-Based Approaches to Neighbourhood Wellbeing

During the past and current term of Council, the City has placed increasing emphasis on identifying vulnerable neighbourhoods and targeting resources to improve outcomes for their residents. This focus was initiated in 2004 with the Community Safety Plan and furthered by Council in October 2005 with the adoption of 13 priority neighbourhood areas.

The City's 13 priority neighbourhood areas were identified as being at greater risk of negative outcomes, experiencing increased levels of gun violence and criminal gang involvement, and with poor access to the services and facilities required to address their social challenges. In response, the City has worked to develop collaborative, effective and sustainable approaches to delivering services at the local level with Neighbourhood Action Teams and Neighbourhood Action Partnerships. It has also developed intergovernmental partnerships to enhance investments in the social infrastructure of targeted neighbourhoods.

By the end of July 2006, more than \$64 million in new City, Provincial, Federal and United Way Toronto funding had been invested in priority neighbourhood areas. This increased funding produced more than 319,000 participation opportunities in the areas of youth employment, education and skill development; youth engagement; community and family supports; and youth justice.

As a part of the ongoing refinement of City's place-based work, a more holistic analysis of neighbourhood wellbeing will be developed that includes areas such as community engagement, housing, environment, transportation, health, safety, arts and culture, and economic opportunities and security. This enhancement of the City's neighbourhood wellbeing framework will be an interdivisional effort that will build on existing monitoring, evaluation and analysis processes, and will be done in collaboration with

external organizations with an interest in neighbourhood wellbeing, such as United Way Toronto and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. Council will consider this enhanced neighbourhood wellbeing framework in late 2009.

Community Partnership and Investment Program

Much of the Community Partnership and Investment Program (CPIP) has been aligned with the City's place-based work. Since the adoption of the 13 priority neighbourhood areas, key CPIP programs, including the Community Services Partnership Program, the Community Safety Investment Program, the Service Development Investment Program, the Identify 'N' Impact Fund, and Local Arts Service Organizations, have given priority consideration to funding requests that build the community-based infrastructure in these neighbourhood areas and enhance opportunities for youth.

Learnings from the City's place-based work and enhancements to the City's neighbourhood wellbeing framework present new opportunities to strengthen the contribution made by CPIP programs to these and other neighbourhoods. One of the primary ways that CPIP programs will enhance their contribution to neighbourhood wellbeing will be through the development of the Community Partnership Strategy.

This report describes the process that will be used to develop the Community Partnership Strategy (CPS). The CPS development process described here has been prepared with input from Neighbourhood Action Teams and Partnerships, community service organizations, and funders of key neighbourhood services. In particular, many of the directions that will be pursued during the development of the CPS have been drawn from a forum for community organizations that was held in early October 2008 and attended by more than 200 representatives from across Toronto and service areas.

COMMENTS

Community Partnership Strategy

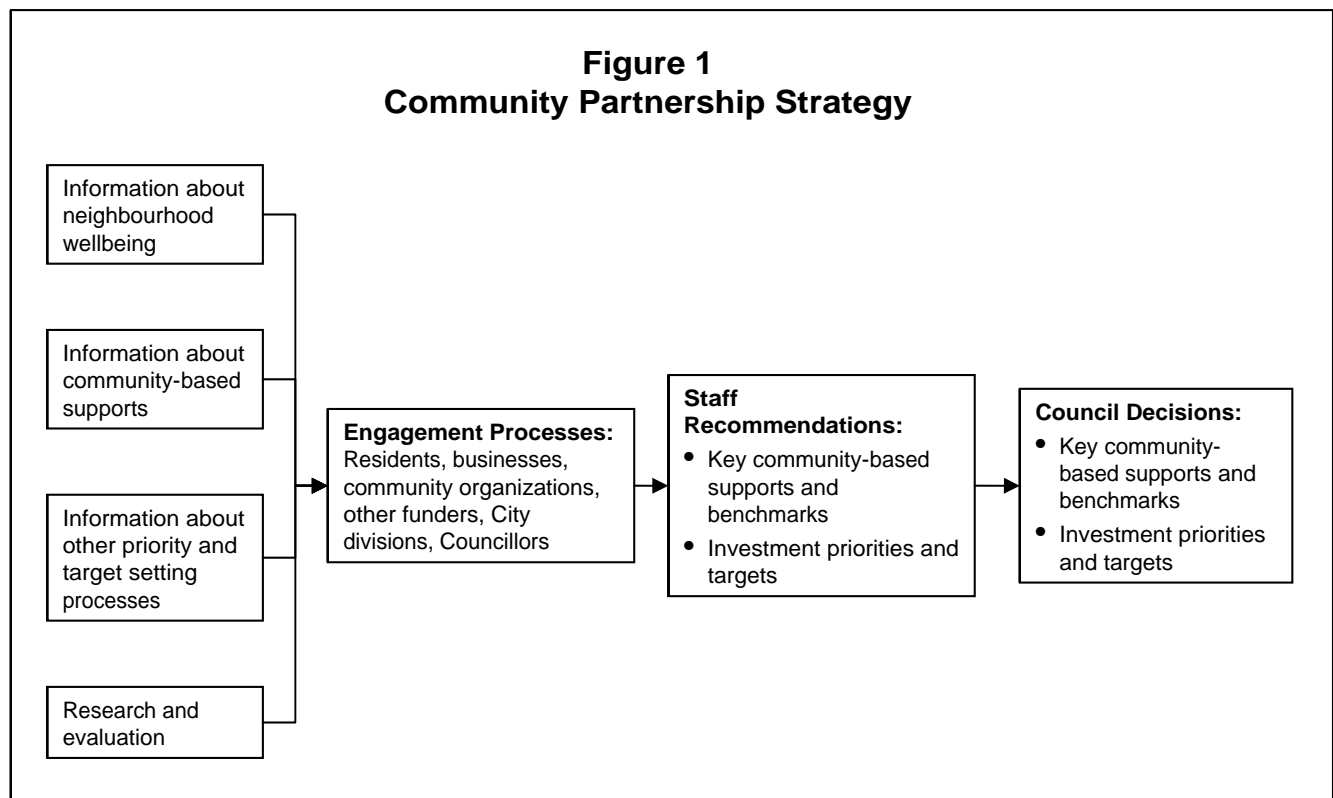
During the course of 2009, the City will engage residents, community-based organizations, the private sector, funders and Councillors to develop a Community Partnership Strategy that will determine the appropriate mix and level of community-based supports required to support their wellbeing. The Community Partnership Strategy will have four goals:

1. Provide municipal leadership to ensure the city maintains a strong, vibrant and responsive community-based sector;
2. Define the key roles the City should play in supporting this sector;
3. Identify neighbourhoods that would benefit from increased investment in the community-based supports that improve outcomes for their residents; and
4. Provide a strategic framework for decision-making about the level and rate of increases in municipal funding to the community-based sector.

The goals of CPS will be achieved with two inter-related activities:

1. Establish benchmarks for the key community-based supports within the municipal jurisdiction that are required for neighbourhood wellbeing; and
2. Establish a framework for priority and target setting that allows Council to make strategic decisions about the order and rate at which it will increase its investments in the key community-based supports that are below benchmark levels.

Once developed, benchmarks, priorities and investment targets will be refined based on evaluations of the impact of the CPS, the City's neighbourhood wellbeing framework, new research, and through engagement processes with residents, businesses, community organizations, funders and Councillors. The overall Strategy is illustrated in Figure 1.



The development phase of the CPS will establish the benchmarks to be used in its initial implementation. Development will focus on the Community Services Partnership Program (CSPP), the largest CPIP partnership program, and the Strategy's initial priority and target setting framework will reflect the increased municipal investments required to bring CSPP-supported programs and services to benchmark levels. Staff will report to Council in April 2010 on the proposed Strategy, and will begin its implementation immediately following Council approval to impact the 2011 funding year.

Benchmarking Community-Based Supports

The City identified priority neighbourhood areas in part because they did not meet the most basic benchmark for service adequacy: a significant percentage of the vulnerable populations in these neighbourhood areas were further than walking distance from the services that could contribute to improved neighbourhoods outcomes. However, the City has not identified desirable benchmarks for community-based supports that can be used to determine when services are at an appropriate level.

Benchmarks for community-based services will provide the foundation on which the CPS is developed, and will be used to establish the priority and target setting framework that will guide Council's increased investment levels in CPIP programs. By using the benchmarking, priority and target setting approaches established successively in the Culture Plan, the Creative City, and the Agenda for Prosperity to guide decision-making, Council has grown the CPIP Arts and Culture envelope from \$12.2 million in 1999 to \$18.0 million in 2008, an increase of \$5.8 million or 48.1%. In the absence of similar strategies for other program areas, the remaining CPIP funding envelopes have not kept pace with inflation. This has left Toronto lagging behind other Canadian municipalities in per capita investments in critical community supports. For example, in 2008 Toronto invested \$4.20 per capita in its Community Services Partnership Program, while Vancouver and Montreal invested \$5.97 and \$6.61 per capita respectively in comparable community-based services.

During the development phase of the CPS, an initial set of key community-based supports required by all neighbourhoods for their wellbeing and corresponding benchmarks will be identified using research, benchmarking approaches for related services, and the practices of other jurisdictions. The benchmarks will be established within a framework which recognizes that an appropriate level of a particular support for neighbourhood wellbeing, such as recreation, may be achieved with City and community-based programming in one neighbourhood, and with private sector programming in another neighbourhood.

Some of the supports identified during the development phase might be very specific to local needs, such as mentoring programs, while others may reflect the neighbourhood infrastructure required to support broader service delivery, such as community hubs, community space and community development activities. Depending on the nature of the key supports identified, benchmarks may reflect the accessibility of services in areas such as distance from residents, waiting list lengths, affordability, and cultural appropriateness. They may also address the overall wellbeing of the community-based infrastructure in terms of partnerships, the diversity of service options, the health of human resource pools, and levels of funder collaboration.

The benchmark development process will consider both supports that must be present at the neighbourhood level, and supports that can be provided at a larger geographic scale. It will consider supports that must be present in all neighbourhoods, and those required depending on neighbourhood demographics.

Staff will be working closely with a range of partners during the identification of key community-based supports and corresponding benchmarks. The United Way Toronto, the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the Toronto Community Foundation have all expressed an interest in working with the City on approaches to measuring neighbourhood wellbeing. Community organizations and Neighbourhood Action Teams and Partnerships will play a particularly important role in the identification of key community-based supports, as will residents and Councillors. In addition, City divisions, Agencies, Boards and Commissions and funders of neighbourhood services will contribute to development of benchmarks based on their own research, analysis and practices.

Priority and Target Setting Framework

During 2009, a framework will be developed to set investment priorities and targets for community-based supports under the CPS. This framework will allow Council to make strategic decisions about the neighbourhoods it invests in, the order in which it increases investments in key community-based supports that are below benchmark levels, and the rate at which these increased investments are made.

The priority and target setting framework will allow Council to make strategic decisions based on a number of factors. These factors will include demographic information, such as the number of low income families and individuals in neighbourhoods. The factors will also be drawn from the City's neighbourhood wellbeing framework, and may include information about the availability of fresh, affordable food, sense of belonging, access to green space, and neighbourhood walkability. Research and evaluation from academia, other jurisdictions, and from CPIP funded programs and services will also play an important role in the framework.

The framework will necessarily consider the priorities of non-municipal funders of community-based services, including United Way Toronto, Service Canada, and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. These funders, along with community service organizations and Neighbourhood Action Teams and Partnerships will be engaged in the development of the priority and target setting framework.

Because Toronto has a mixed service delivery system which relies on partnerships among the City, community organizations, and for-profit service providers, coordination with other City service planning and priority setting processes will be particularly important in establishing an effective priority and target setting framework. As a result, the CPS development phase will pay particular attention to the ways in which the CPS should be informed by and will inform the strategies of other municipal program areas, and will explore the use of "lenses" which allow the system of supports for vulnerable populations, such as children and youth, seniors, and racialized communities, to be analysed across a range of service providers.

Engagement Processes

Engagement processes that provide a means for residents, businesses, institutions, and community organizations to participate in the identification of benchmarks, investment priorities and targets will be a central part of the CPS. These processes will advance Council's civic engagement priority, and will help to ensure the CPS results in a plan for community-based investment that is both effective and responsive.

During the CPS development phase, a number of different engagement avenues will be explored. The range of engagement avenues identified for the first CPS implementation will be varied, and allow participants to choose the level and length of their involvement with the Strategy. Specific engagement processes that allow vulnerable community members and groups, including the homeless, racialized groups, low-income residents, and youth, will also be identified.

The CPS will build on existing engagement processes, including Neighbourhood Action Partnerships in priority neighbourhood areas, resident engagement under United Way Toronto's Action for Neighbourhood Change, and the community development work of CPIP-funded organizations. Other models of community engagement in priority and target setting used by the City, its ABCs, and in other jurisdictions, will also be explored.

Although engagement processes are a central component of the CPS, it is important to note that the decision making authority for key community supports, benchmarks, investment priorities and targets remains with Council. This will be particularly important in the setting of priorities to ensure that the needs of the city's most marginalised residents are included in its considerations.

During the CPS development phase, staff will work closely with community service organizations, Neighbourhood Action Teams and Partnerships, City operating divisions and ABCs, and non-municipal funders of neighbourhood supports to identify the resources required to build on existing engagement process, and the new engagement opportunities required. The Laidlaw Foundation has also identified an opportunity for a collaborative effort to identify the community infrastructure required to support engagement.

Resources to Support Development

The Community Partnership Strategy will only be successful if all neighbourhoods and residents have the supports required to participate in the ongoing development and refinement of benchmarks, priorities and targets. For this reason, the 2009 and 2010 Community Services Partnership Program will need to strengthen the community-based infrastructure that supports the engagement of vulnerable residents and neighbourhoods in this process.

To strengthen the community-based engagement infrastructure, the Community Services Partnership Program will establish four additional priorities for 2009 and 2010. These priorities will be used to assess requests for new and increased CSPP funding:

1. Core administration funding that supports the ability of community organizations to engage residents and build partnerships;
2. Program funding that supports the participation of vulnerable residents in engagement opportunities;
3. Community development programs that allow vulnerable residents and neighbourhoods to identify needs, assets and opportunities, and to act on them; and
4. Funding to strengthen the human resource base in organizations, particularly in terms of their ability to engage with residents, businesses, governments, and other partners.

The 2009 proposed operating budget includes a request for \$218,530.00 in increased funding to provide cost-of-living increases for all CSPP-funded organizations, and \$600,000.00 in additional funding for new and increased requests that address the CSPP priorities. This report recommends that if Council approves this \$600,000.00 increase to the CSPP for 2009, that it be directed to address these expanded CSPP priorities.

The report “CPIP 2008 Community Services Funding Allocations and Program Update” is also before Committee at its November meeting. The report describes the introduction of a multi-year budgeting process for the Community Services Partnership Program. The multi-year budgeting process is supported by changes in the allocations cycle that allow staff to assess all requests for new and increased CSPP funding in advance of the corresponding operating budget process. Staff will then report to Council on the level of increased CSPP funding required to support the new and increased requests that advance the CSPP’s priorities. Based on this information, Council will direct staff on the appropriate level of increased CSPP investment to be included in the operating budget approval process that begins in the fall for the following calendar year. Implementation of this revised allocations timeline will begin in 2009 to impact the 2010 operating budget process.

This report recommends that this new multi-year budgeting process be used to establish the first investment target for the Community Services Partnership Program under the Community Partnership Strategy. Staff will report to Council in September 2009, and will recommend that the target for increased investment in the CSPP for 2010 be set at the total of all recommended new and increased allocations that fit the program’s enhanced priorities. Staff will subsequently report to Council in April 2010 on the priorities and investment targets for the CSPP 2011 allocations cycle as a part of the report on the proposed Community Partnership Strategy.

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