



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Ministry of Health Promotion Funding Agreement to expand and enhance After-School Recreation Care Programs

Date:	September 18, 2009
To:	Community Development and Recreation Committee
From:	Brenda Patterson, General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation
Ward:	Wards 1, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 15, 31, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 40, 42, 43
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

This report seeks approval from City Council to enter into an agreement with the Province of Ontario to accept a grant from The Ministry of Health Promotion, Child and Youth After-School Strategy in the amount of approximately \$699,372.00 for the After-School Recreation Care (ARC) program. The grant will be directed toward the 2009/2010 ARC session to expand existing services, increase enrolment, lower registration fees and subsidize operating costs.

This cost sharing opportunity is consistent with the vision that government, stakeholders and families work together to plan, develop, fund, regulate and deliver services that enhance outcomes for Toronto's children.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division recommends that:

1. City Council approve the acceptance of a grant of approximately \$699,372.00 from "Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Ontario, as Represented by The Minister of Health Promotion;"
2. City Council delegate authority to the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation to negotiate and execute an Agreement with "Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Ontario, as Represented by The Minister of Health Promotion" in

relation to the funding, such agreement to be satisfactory in form and content to the General Manager and the City Solicitor;

3. City Council grant authority to the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation to receive future Provincial Grants on an annual basis for the After-School Recreation and Care (ARC) program, and to enter into appropriate agreements with “Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Ontario, as Represented by The Minister of Health Promotion” in relation to such funding, satisfactory in form and content to the General Manager and the City Solicitor;
4. that the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation adjust the ARC Program 2009 operating budget by reallocating \$279,748.00 from Registration Fees to Provincial Grants and include the remaining funds in the 2010 operating budget with a net zero in both years; and
5. that the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation report back to Community Development and Recreation Committee in the spring of 2010 on the future funding options and viability of the After- School Recreation and Care Program.

Implementation Points

Upon adoption by Council, the September 2009-June 2010 ARC program fees will be decreased to \$2.00 per day/per child (from the current \$6.00 per day fee) to provide increased accessibility for families in all Priority Neighbourhoods.

Healthy program curriculum will be implemented and will meet the required Ministry of Health Promotion, Child and Youth After-School Strategy funding agreement criteria as follows: 30% physical activity, 20% healthy eating and nutrition education, 20% wellness and personal health (with an emphasis on ‘resiliency’) and 30% social activities, homework, individual and co-operative activities and games.

Current registration capacity of up to 630 children will be increased to 860 children.

A new ARC program for children 6-10 years and a Community Leadership After-School Program (CLASP), for youth 11-14 years, will be opened in October 2009, in the Malvern community. These programs will serve 60 children and youth. The CLASP program provides a unique opportunity for junior youth to develop positive life skills, build self-esteem, learn about healthy relationships, and build trust and understanding between multi-generational and multi-cultural groups.

Financial Impact

There is no net impact in the Parks, Forestry and Recreation program’s 2009/2010 operating budget since the funds from the Ministry of Health Promotion of \$699,372.00,

will be offset by an equal reduction in program's user fees by way of reduced fees from the parents. \$563,952.00 of the Ministry's funding would be directed to the reduction of parents' fees from \$6.00 per day to \$2.00 per day and the remaining \$135,420.00 would be applied to support the operating costs.

The Ministry of Health Promotion will be releasing the funds to the City of Toronto in monthly payments over a ten-month period, beginning in September 2009 and ending in June 2010. From the total funds committed, programs estimates to receive \$279,748.00 in 2009 and balance of \$419,623.00 in 2010. The 2009 ARC operating budget will be adjusted by \$279,748.00 to reflect the funding to be received by December 31, 2009. Accordingly, in subsequent years, the ARC operating budget will be adjusted to reflect the funding amount received from the Ministry of Health Promotion. The funds will allow for the reduction of fees to increase accessibility.

In 2005 Council approved funding of \$3.7 million dollars from Social Services Stabilization Reserve Fund to flow through Children's Services Program for the development and implementation of the ARC programs from 2006-2008. From this initial allocation, Parks, Forestry and Recreation has spent a total of \$1.7 million over three years (\$361,200.00, \$556,900.00 and \$837,600.00 respectively, in 2006, 2007 and 2008). In addition, Children's Services has budgeted \$1.3 million dollars from the Social Services Stabilization Reserve Fund for ARC in 2009 to expense through Parks, Forestry and Recreation. Although there is financial provision for this program through 2010, once the funding from the Social Services Stabilization Reserve Fund is exhausted, the funding basis for the ARC program will have to be reviewed.

The Ministry of Health Promotion requires both monthly and annual reports to include status on staffing, budget, program content, challenges and successes, hours of operation, children and youth served, stakeholder involvement and program evaluations. The reporting process will be the responsibility of the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Community Recreation Branch Manager overseeing the ARC Initiative.

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

DECISION HISTORY

In November 2005, City Council directed staff to develop a model after-school recreation and care program to address childcare and recreation needs for children 6-12 years of age in vulnerable communities, and provide increased opportunity for youth employment. Funding of 3.7 million dollars was allocated from the Social Services Stabilization Reserve Fund for this purpose.

A Staff Report providing information and financial data on the development of the After-School and Recreation care programs was prepared and submitted to Council on June 20, 2006. The report provided details on the progress of the initiative and identified the

intended structure. The program model has met all expectations but the program fees continue to be a barrier for families.

City Council Dec. Doc., Policy & Finance Cmte., Report 9, Clause 32a - (November 24, 2005)

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2005/agendas/council/cc051124/cofa.pdf>

Economic Development & Parks Cmte., Report 5, Clause 15(h) – (June 20, 2006)

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2006/agendas/committees/edp/edp060706/edpdd.pdf>

City Council Dec. Doc., Policy & Finance Cmte., Report 6, Clause 31 (July 25, 2006)

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2006/agendas/council/cc060725/cofa.pdf>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Quality childcare and recreation programs are effective and efficient interventions to improve the outcomes for children and their families, particularly in communities with high levels of child poverty and poor access to services.

In 2005 Council approved funding of \$3.7 million dollars from Social Services Stabilization Reserve Fund to flow through Children's Services Program for the development and implementation of the ARC programs from 2006-2008. From this initial allocation, Parks, Forestry and Recreation has spent a total of \$1.7 million over three years (\$361,200.00, \$556,900.00 and \$837,600.00 respectively, in 2006, 2007 and 2008.) In addition, Children's Services has budgeted \$1.3 million dollars from the Social Services Stabilization Reserve Fund for ARC in 2009 to expense through Parks, Forestry and Recreation.

The ARC programs are currently in their third year of operation and it is clear that the funding model is not sustainable. The current cost of an ARC program space is \$14.00 per day. Registration fees per child are \$6.00 per day and the remaining \$8.00 per day is drawn from the Social Services Stabilization Reserve Fund. Families, community partners, and staff report that fees pose a significant barrier to accessing service. Many families are eligible for childcare subsidy and recreation subsidies under the Welcome Policy; however, lengthy waiting lists for fee subsidy make these programs difficult to access.

There are currently 550 children registered in 27 ARC program locations in the City's thirteen Priority Neighbourhoods. Funding received from The Ministry of Health Promotion would allow registration fees to be reduced from the current \$6.00 per day to \$2.00 per day. This reduction in fees will increase access for families unable to afford the current fees. It is expected that registration would increase to 800 children. A new ARC and CLASP program in the Malvern Community will provide service to an additional 60 children and youth. The program content will be enhanced to include a greater focus on physical activity, healthy living and well being, including a focus on mental health and resiliency.

COMMENTS

Both the ARC and CLASP models reinforce the City's focus on integrated service delivery and support Council's priorities of strengthening neighbourhoods and improving public service. The ARC model is consistent with the Child Care Service Plan and the proposed Middle Childhood strategy that reinforces the need for comprehensive, integrated and inclusive services for children.

The recreation and care needs of school age children have been highlighted in the City's Child Care Service Plan and the Best Generation Yet initiative. This funding opportunity supports the development of an expanded quality model of recreation and care service to meet the needs of school age children in Toronto. It is proposed that the use of grant funding from the Ministry of Health Promotion, Child and Youth After-School Strategy be considered to cost share existing operating costs and expand services for children and youth in the Priority Neighbourhoods.

CONTACT

Malcolm Bromley, Director, Community Recreation, Tel: 416-392-7252, Fax: 416-395-0105, Email: MBROMLEY@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Brenda Patterson
General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation