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STAFF REPORT SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

Toronto Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) on Education and Sustainable Development – Scan of RCE Activities in North America and Worldwide

Date:	January 20, 2010				
То:	Parks and Environment Committee				
From:	Lawson Oates, Director Toronto Environment Office				
Wards:	All				
Reference Number:	P:\2010\Cluster B\TEO\PE10001				

SUMMARY

The International Decade of Education for Sustainable Development was created by the United Nations ("U.N.") General Assembly for the years 2005-2014. An international network of Regional Centres of Expertise ("RCE") on Education for Sustainable Development was established by the United Nations University, as part of the U.N. initiative. Toronto applied to be recognized as an RCE, which was granted by the United Nations University in 2005.

Subsequently, City staff invited various local organizations with an interest in education and sustainable development to consider becoming members of the Toronto RCE. A memorandum of understanding was developed by staff and interested local organizations, which City Council endorsed in July 2007, including the City's involvement for a two-year period.

The Toronto RCE pursued its agenda from mid-2007 through to May 2009, when the members identified that the value of maintaining the Toronto RCE as a stand alone formal organization was limited and voted to suspend all further activities. The members concluded that the Toronto RCE had met its goals and objectives and that existing relationships had been strengthened and would continue to evolve and develop without the need of a formal organization.

At its meeting of October 15, 2009, the Parks and Environment Committee was presented with a staff report advising that the members of the Toronto RCE had decided to suspend the activities of this group. The Committee deferred the report and requested that staff provide more information about the activities of other designated Regional Centres of Expertise. This report responds to that request.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications as a result of this report.

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

DECISION HISTORY

At the October 15, 2009 meeting of the Parks and Environment Committee, staff provided an update on the activities of the RCE (via a staff report dated September 29, 2009) and advised that on May 20, 2009, the RCE members decided not to renew their participation in the Toronto RCE. The Parks and Environment Committee deferred considering the recommendations in the staff report and requested that staff report back on:

- a. the location of other Regional Centres of Expertise (RCE) located in North America and worldwide;
- b. identify how many other members have actually withdrawn their memberships from the UN RCE; and
- c. provide a report tabling the achievements of other RCEs in other countries.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

In the spring of 2004, the U.N. General Assembly passed a resolution marking 2005-2014 as the International Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. The United Nations University supported this with the promotion of education designed to support sustainable development. The vehicle to achieve this was local bodies that would form networks and help develop and expand education concerning sustainable development. The local bodies would be known as Regional Centres of Expertise ("RCE") on Education for Sustainable Development.

In 2005, the Mayor wrote to the United Nations University seeking recognition of Toronto as an RCE, which was subsequently forthcoming the same year.

Former Deputy City Manager Fareed Amin hosted in 2006 a one-day forum for interested stakeholders, such as representatives of the Toronto District School Board, local universities, Environment Canada, Toronto Zoo, and the Toronto & Region Conservation Authority. Subsequently, a memorandum of understanding was developed by the stakeholders and endorsed by City Council in 2007.

A progress report was submitted by staff to the Parks & Environment Committee in September 2008, which identified some important steps that had been achieved by the Toronto RCE, including building a database of all formal and informal sustainable development activities in the Toronto region and networking through presentation of case studies, such as the Toronto District School Board's Ecoschools initiative.

COMMENTS

As of December 2009 there were 66 officially recognized RCEs across the world. Of those 66, seven are located in North America (four in Canada, two in the United States and one in Mexico). Through web based research, it was found that about one-half of the RCEs appear to be active, in that they have a dedicated web-site or have received some profile on the international United Nations University (UNU) host RCE web-site. (Please see Appendix A for more detail).

Detailed analysis of the six RCEs in Canada and the United States was done through telephone and email conversations with key contacts. The three RCEs in Canada besides Toronto -- Greater Sudbury, Montreal and Saskatchewan -- were all found to be active. Of the two RCEs in the United States, only one, Grand Rapids, was found to be active and the other, Greater North Central Texas, was found to be currently undergoing a re-organization.

Common factors in the RCEs in Canada and the United States that are active, are:

- Integration of their RCE designation into existing initiatives on sustainable development;
- Stable and secure funding;
- An identified gap in education in sustainable development; and
- Active engagement of a number of stakeholders in wanting to address that gap.

Members Who Have Withdrawn Their Memberships

As available staff resources inhibit a formal survey of every RCE in the world, a scan of information on the internet was undertaken. While it is difficult to ascertain whether membership has been withdrawn from other RCEs, no web-based statements have indicated membership withdrawls.

Regardless of a RCE's membership status, RCE activity should also be considered as an indicator of impact and/or value within communities. By using indicators such as whether or not an RCE has posted a dedicated website (or engaged in other relevant activities such as announcement of a program or request for information sharing) or if an RCE was mentioned in the UN-RCE newsletter called "The RCE Bulletin", RCE activity can be gauged.

After surveying internet resources, it was found that only 50% of the 66 RCE's produced a onepage profile highlighting specific information about the geographic scope, goals, and objectives of their program. Further, using the indicators noted above regarding external internet communication, only 18% of RCE's were deemed active through web postings thus demonstrating an interest in outreach and sharing information with others, a key activity in Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). The most active RCEs according to the above criteria (in order) are: Rhine-Meuse (Netherlands), Greater Sudbury (Canada), Okayama (Japan), Penang (Malaysia), Graz-Styria (Austria), Saskatchewan (Canada), East Midlands (UK), Greater Sendai (Japan), Barcelona (Spain), Severin (UK), Ireland, and Kitakyushu (Japan).

Summary of RCE Achievements

A summary of the achievements of six (6) RCEs geographically based in North America is included in Appendix B of this report. Staff had either telephone conversations with the following RCE's or an active email exchange that included exchanges of Annual Reports or other organization materials.

As is detailed in the Appendix, each RCE has developed their own approach in advancing the interests of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as defined by the UN. All RCE approaches began with similar processes of identifying the programs and projects already being undertaken within communities and using this network of organizations to further develop a vision and needs identification for education programs in the future. Using their insight on how to best enable education for sustainable development in their local areas, RCEs in general have built partnerships directly related to their unique cultures and goals, as is outlined below.

a. Greater Sudbury RCE -- Status: Active

The Sudbury RCE has defined their own pillars of sustainability (the traditional three pillars being "environment, social and economy") by expanding the purview of the environment and social pillars to include personal physical health, civic engagement and social capital building in addition to community economic well-being and reduction of unemployment. This work is based on the Healthy Community Charter work that has been led by the Municipality.

The Greater Sudbury RCE participates in the larger RCE network by submitting articles to the quarterly RCE bulletin and has also submitted a chapter to be included in the book currently being developed by the United Nations University.

b. Saskatchewan RCE -- Status: Very Active

Politically, there is wide support for this RCE in the Province of Saskatchewan, which is evidenced by the recognition of the RCE by the Lieutenant Governor, the Premier, Ministers of Environment and Labour and community mayors and councillors. This RCE has numerous programs and leverages funds from provincial ministries and student employment programs to conduct research and surveys. They have also have a very active technology based network of working groups to share information on issues pertaining to rural community livelihoods and sustainability.

c. Montreal RCE – Status: Active

Montreal's RCE was established in 2008 and is still in the development stage. However, like Sudbury, it has modelled much of its work on the City of Montreal's First Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development, which has the following goals:

- To improve the air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
- To ensure quality of life of residential areas;
- To practise responsible resource management; and
- To adopt good practices for sustainable development in companies, institutions and businesses.

d. Grand Rapids RCE – Status: Very Active

The Grand Rapids RCE is engaged in sustainability in high school curriculum. The focus has been to incorporate environmental values in education. Their flagship project is a collaboration among teachers, staff, administrators, community members and a Foundation to bring to realization the teaching of 'economicology' (a study combining principles of ecology, economics, environment, education as well as the values of empathy and ethics). By the end of 2014, the Grand Rapids RCE hopes to have a fully infused education program incorporating economicology.

e. North Texas RCE – Status: Not Active

The North Texas RCE is in the process of reorganization in order to focus on sustainable development curriculum in public schools. This RCE has not received any funding from governments or corporations. Representatives from this RCE have participated in International RCE Conferences in Regina, Saskatchewan and Madrid, Spain, but at the RCE members' own individual expense. Due to its reorganization, no information was available regarding RCE activities at present.

CONCLUSION

Aside from the North Texas RCE, all other RCE's contacted in North America were deemed to be 'Active' or 'Very Active'. Factors common to the RCEs in Canada and the United States that are active include:

- integration of their RCE designation into existing initiatives on sustainable development;
- stable and secure funding;
- an identified gap in education in sustainable development; and
- active engagement of a number of stakeholders in wanting to address that gap.

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ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A: RCE's Around the World

Appendix B: Detailed Summary of Activities of the Active RCEs Located in Canada and the United States

Appendix A: RCE's Around the World

The United Nations University (UNU) has acknowledged 66 Regional Centres of Expertise (RCE) worldwide with a total of seven RCEs located in North America including four located in Canada – Saskatchewan, the Greater Sudbury Region, Toronto and Montreal.

<u>In Africa</u>

Cairo, Egypt Ghana Greater Mbarara, Uganda Greater Nairobi, Kenya Kakamega, Western Kenya Kano, Nigeria KwaZulu Natal, South Africa Lagos, Nigeria Makana and Rural Eastern Cape, South Africa Maputo, Mozambique Swaziland Zomba, Malawi

In Asia-Pacific

Anji, China Bangalore, India Beijing, China Bogor, Indonesia Cebu, Philippines Cha-am, Thailand Chubu, Japan Delhi, India East Kalimantan, Indonesia Greater Sendai, Japan Guwahati, India Hyogo-Kobe, Japan Ilocos, Philippines Incheon, Korea Kitakyushu, Japan Kodagu, India Kyrgyzstan Lucknow, India Northern Mindanao, Philippines Okayama, Japan Pacific Island Countries Penang, Malaysia Pune, India Tongyeong, Korea Trang, Thailand Yogyakarta, Indonesia Yokohama, Japan

In Europe and the Middle East

Barcelona, Spain Creias-Oeste, Portugal East Midlands, UK Graz-Styria, Austria Hamburg, Germany Ireland Jordan Munich, Germany North East, UK Nuremberg, Germany Porto Metropolitan Area, Portugal Rhine-Meuse Region Samara, Russia Skane, Sweden Southern North Sea, Belgium/Netherlands/France Severn, UK Yorkshire and Humberside, UK

In South America and the Caribbean

Bogota, Colombia Curitiba-Parana, Brazil Guatemala

In North and Central America

Grand Rapids, USA Greater North Central Texas, USA Greater Sudbury, Canada Montreal, Canada Saskatchewan, Canada Toronto, Canada Western Jalisco, Mexico

Community	Year Recognized by UN	Partnership Members and Geographic Scope	Funding	Objectives	Achievements to Date
Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA	2007	 <u>Members:</u> City of Grand Rapids Grand Rapids Public Schools Grand Rapids Community College Grand Valley State University West Michigan Sustainable Businesses forum West Michigan Strategic Alliance Aquinas College Geographic Scope: West Michigan region in the Great Lakes Watershed	Yearly funding for RCE-specific support eg. meetings and project development has been under \$50,000/year. Initial RCE related project support has been on average \$150,000 per year with expectations to ramp up as new flagship projects are being developed	 Make sustainable development a visible reality to all citizens through making ESD become second nature. Short-term objectives (2007): Establish a guiding framework for visioning a sustainable Grand Rapids Building community awareness and sharing best practices regarding the importance of ESD Creating a sustainable education handbook and curriculum response to state standards Developing and measuring meaningful community sustainability indicators in collaboration with other agencies and organizations, and Establishing a viable working relationship with the US Partnership for the Decade of Education for 	Research and development activities are taking place under the following key themes: a. Reorienting Education Towards Sustainable Development: supporting sustainability initiatives on campuses by networking with organizations who support and promote efforts to re-orient education toward sustainable development through consensus-building, healthy competition, research and networking student groups. b. Increasing Access to Quality Based Education: work with Grand Rapids Public Schools on mentoring high school dropouts and introduce students to working life with area businesses in order to eradicate poverty and depression by positive involvement of young people in the community. c. Delivering Training Programs: developing a green purchasing consortium to identify products designed and built around sustainable principles eg. compostable food service items, re-manufactured office furniture, etc. Also working with health services community to establish Children's Environmental Health Initiative (CEHI) which is a collaboration of public health, education, government, and business whose mission is to provide educational materials and information

Appendix B: Detailed Summary of the Activities of the Active RCEs Located in Canada and the United States

Community	Year Recognized by UN	Partnership Members and Geographic Scope	Funding	Objectives	Achievements to Date
	0	and Geographic Scope	runding	Sustainable Development Long term objectives for the period of 2008-2014 include: • Measurable improvements in the community's economy, social capital and environment • Increased public	 about environmental health hazards in the home and community. d. Leading Advocacy and Awareness Raising Efforts: raising efforts in faith-based communities regarding the energy and resources used by places of worship. Flagship project has been the introduction of an Economicology program at the high school level.
				 understanding of and engagement in the work of the RCE More diverse representation in the community at all levels Effective and proven systems and strategies for delivering ESD content through community 	
				 sustainability planning activities in all stakeholder sectors Institutionalized ESD programs in all education sectors and at all levels from K-12 to higher education, to life-long learning and Databases and resources for sharing sustainability best 	

Community	Year Recognized by UN	Partnership Members and Geographic Scope	Funding	Objectives	Achievements to Date
				practices in the private and public sectors	
Greater Sudbury, Ontario, Canada	2007	 <u>Members:</u> Sudbury District Health Unit for Active Living/Healthy Lifestyle EarthCare for the Natural Environment Social Planning Council for Civic Engagement/Social Capital Greater Sudbury Development Corporation for Economic Growth Geographic Scope: Sudbury and the townships of Capreol, Nickel Centre, Valley East, Rayside Balfour, Onaping Falls and Walden	Received \$217,720 from Council in 2005.	Greater Sudbury has pledged to advance the objectives of the Healthy Community Charter by establishing local relationships with educational institutions and interested organizations to raise public awareness and understanding of sustainable development. This RCE has a direct reporting relationship to the Greater Sudbury Council through the Healthy Community Cabinet which reports directly to the Mayor and Council.	 Focus is on Four Pillars of Sustainable Development: a. Active Living/ Healthy Lifestyle Pillar Integrated trails to improve active transportation linkages and educate the community about the location and benefits of usage across the Greater Sudbury area; promote the ability to access any community by off road neighbourhood connections. b. Natural Environment Pillar Food sustainability: Make it easier for the citizens of Greater Sudbury to make sustainable food choices. Rather than purchasing produce from out of the province or country, it would be beneficial to support our local and provincial suppliers. The goal of the working group is to encourage Sudburians to purchase 5% of their produce grown locally and 20% provincially. c. Civic Engagement/Social Capital Pillar Develop a greenhouse in association with the Greater Sudbury Farmers Market to facilitate a link between family poverty and assisting marginalized individuals in their growth and skill development. d. Economic Growth Pillar

Community	Year Recognized by UN	Partnership Members and Geographic Scope	Funding	Objectives	Achievements to Date
					Establish a partnership with Business Retention and Expansion program to connect community stakeholders on the topics of unemployment, labour force issues as well as out-migration issues. The Greater Sudbury RCE/Healthy Community Cabinet is currently developing memoranda of understanding as well as terms of reference so that working groups may be formed and are able to move forward with their defined projects.
Montreal, Canada	2008	 <u>Members:</u> City of Montréal I.C.I Environnement: a network of 16 universities and constituent universities active in the fields of science, technology and environmental engineering and sustainable development. Biosphère, Environment Canada Commission scolaire de Montréal (CSDM) Collège de Rosemont <u>Geographic Scope:</u> Partners across the 	No funding information available at the time of printing of this document.	 Through education with specific regard to sustainable development, the RCE's mission is to promote changes to Quebecers' lifestyles and their consumption behaviour with the goal of adopting "green" behaviour. Long-term goals: ✓ Promote educational actions designed to change behaviour and attitudes in a sustainable way ✓ Create synergies by identifying common research axes in education regarding sustainable development ✓ Develop expertise in 	 Based on Montreal's First Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development which included over 120 partners. The RCE contributes to implementing actions identified in Montreal's First Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development (MFSPSD), designed based on the following four main orientations: To improve the air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, To ensure quality of life of residential areas, To practise responsible resource management, To adopt good practices for sustainable development in companies, institutions and businesses. The secretariat of the RCE has been engaged in the completion of three major projects : the inventory of the projects initiated by members; the ecoleadership program and the organization

Community	Year Recognized by UN	Partnership Members and Geographic Scope	Funding	Objectives	Achievements to Date
		province of Quebec through the network of 16 universities represented in every region of Quebec		 "how to influence and act on life habits" ✓ Make Montréal and Québec communities conscious of the importance of individual acts within the perspective of sustainable development ✓ Ensure the transfer of knowledge and abilities and apply the results of research 	of the 4th Internationl Conference of the RCE in Montreal.
Saskatchewan, Canada	2007	 <u>Members:</u> Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology University of Regina and its federated colleges University of Saskatchewan Carlton Trail Regional College First Nations University Luther College Craik Sustainable Living Project Regina Eco-Living Inc. 	Government of Saskatchewan Green Initiatives Fund (now Go Green Fund): \$70, 300 in October 2007 Saskatchewan Ministry of Education and Saskatchewan Outdoor and Environmental Education Association: \$5000 Sponsors (SaskTel, SaskEnergy,	Goal is transformative education that promotes sustainable lifestyles and livelihoods which echo their main themes: sustaining rural communities and educational approaches for regional ESD. Saskatchewan RCE's main tasks are : (1) Literacy and access to quality basic education for all within the region. (2) Identification of key issues of sustainability and sustainability projects in the region. (3) Open networks for	 Over the past year the RCE has had three regional events for all RCE members: a. The "RCE Conference of the Americas 2008" titled "Knowledge and Innovation for Sustainability: Assessing and Adopting Beneficial Practices" on May 25-27, 2008, at the University of Regina. b. RCE SK ESD Recognition Event held in Craik, Saskatchewan, on November 20, 2008. c. "Spring Into Action" in Saskatoon on June 8 and 9, 2009, featuring Dr. Chuck Hopkins, holder of the UNESCO Chair at York University. This meeting placed emphasis on advancing ESD in the provincial curriculum and on First Nations involvement and perspectives on these issues.

Community	Year Recognized by UN	Partnership Members and Geographic Scope	Funding	Objectives	Achievements to Date
		 Royal Saskatchewan Museum RoadMap 2020 City of Regina City of Saskatoon Town of Craik L.A.M.B. Environmental Education and Consulting SaskTel Geographic Scope: Regina, Saskatoon, the town and rural municipality of Craik as well as other rural and First Nations communities	Cooperators Insurance): \$2100 A great deal of in- kind contributions from the college and university partners. University researchers will apply for funds for their projects under RCE banner and provincial government summer student programs provide both learning and staff complement.	 knowledge sharing. (4) Public awareness about sustainability in the region. (5) Ongoing opportunities for collaborative work on ESD projects. (6) Integration of sustainability into formal education curricula. (7) Formal linkages promoting ESD between organizations. 8) Identification of current research in ESD and coordination of new ESD research projects. (9) Development and incorporation of science and technology for ESD. (10) Acknowledgment and celebration of success. (11) Ongoing advocacy for ESD outcomes. (12) Ongoing documentation of RCE activities. (13) Ongoing measurement and evaluation of RCE initiatives. 	In addition to these events, there are Theme Area Working Groups (TAWGs): Climate Change Farming and Local Food Production, Consumption, and Waste Minimization Health and Healthy Lifestyles Reconnecting to Natural Prairie Ecosystem Supporting and Bridging Cultures for Sustainable Living and Community Building Sustainable Infrastructure Including Water and Energy Building Sustainable Communities (newly launched in November, 2008) along with the RCE Facilitation Group (RFG), RCE Technology Group (RTG), and RCE Student Researchers. In terms of networking, a total of 24 in-person meetings with a total of 200 attendees were held since January of 2008. The RCE Saskatchewan website also allows for virtual networking by working group. Saskatchewan RCE's two main flagship programs: a. YouthBuild Saskatchewan – youth at risk receive informal education on how to build affordable, energy efficient housing in Regina, Saskaton and rural areas to produce skilled entry-level workers; targets an estimated 30,000 Saskatchewan youth (ages 16-24)

Community	Year Recognized by UN	Partnership Members and Geographic Scope	Funding	Objectives	Achievements to Date
				The Terrente DCE mostides a	b. Engineering Education for Sustainability Initiative – establish urban and rural centres focused on research and training geared towards renewable energy and building technology appropriate to prairie climates. In addition, wind turbines will be used for education, research, and demonstrations
Toronto, Canada (Educational Alliance for a Sustainable Toronto)	2007	 <u>Members:</u> York University University of Toronto Seneca College TDSB Citizens' Environment Watch TRCA Education Alliance for a Sustainable Ontario (provincial) Environment Canada (federal) Geographic Scope: City of Toronto specifically but GTA more broadly		The Toronto RCE provides a forum for sharing information and for forging partnerships in the delivery of programmes in sustainable development, among educational institutions, governments, and community representatives. The goals are to: • enhance public awareness and understanding of sustainability; • improve the quality of public education and curriculum development; • encourage more sustainable behaviour and consumption patterns among Torontonians; and • support the development of specialised professional learning programs in	 a. September 2006 – Networking Forum, Downsview Park with 180 participants and 30 displays b. ESD Inventory – provide baseline data for gap analysis with a view to identifying appropriate directions for future investments in ESD research and program development c. Research proposal – using information from the ESD Inventory in combination with the City of Toronto's Climate Change, Clean Air and Sustainable Energy Action Plan, identified gaps in ESD training, online opportunities re training and lack of content of ESD delivery agents (eg. Educational institutions, ENGOs etc) in poverty alleviation and peace studies d. Best Practices Case Studies – identify 10-12 case studies

Community	Year Recognized by UN	Partnership Members and Geographic Scope	Funding	Objectives	Achievements to Date
				the area of sustainable development (<u>City of</u> <u>Toronto, 2006</u>). Long-term objectives are to identify the sources of information surrounding sustainability issues, programmes and policies in Toronto, and seek to infuse them into the ongoing initiatives of educators, trainers and media representatives. In general, the aim is to "integrate local sustainability challenges into the information/education flow of formal, informal and non-formal education in the Toronto region" (<u>City of</u> <u>Toronto, 2006</u>).	