TORONTO

STAFF REPORT
INFORMATION ONLY

Supplementary Report: Leveraging the Federal Government's Public Security Priorities to Help Make Toronto Community Housing Corporation Properties Safer

Date:	October 25, 2012
To:	City Council
From:	City Manager
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

City Council, at its meeting on July 11, 12 and 13, 2012, deferred consideration of Member Motion 25.25 entitled *Leveraging the Federal Government's public security priorities to help make Toronto Community Housing Corporation properties safer – by Councillor Vincent Crisanti, seconded by Councillor Frances Nunziata* and requested the City Manager to report directly to Council on this matter.

This report provides additional details on the Federal Government's Communities at Risk: Security Infrastructure Program and updates Council on the efforts of Toronto Community Housing (TCH) to improve safety and security for residents within their communities.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications resulting from the receipt 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 its meeting on July 11, 12 and 13, 2012, City Council deferred consideration of MM25.25 *Leveraging the Federal Government's public security priorities to help make Toronto Community Housing Corporation properties safer – by Councillor Vincent Crisanti, seconded by Councillor Frances Nunziata*, until the next regular City Council meeting scheduled for October 30 and 31, 2012 and City Council request the City Manager to report directly to Council on this matter.
http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewPublishedReport.do?function=getCouncilDecisionDocumentReport&meetingId=5665

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The Federal Government, on December 15, 2011, announced the launch of the next phase of the Communities at Risk: Security Infrastructure Program (SIP). SIP is designed to help communities at risk of hate-motivated crime improve their security infrastructure.

Approved projects may receive up to 50% of total projects costs to a maximum of $100,000 per project. Example of eligible projects include: security assessments, alarm systems, fences, gates closed circuit television (CCTV) systems, lighting, motion detection, and can include minor construction fees related to the project.

Funding from SIP is only available to not-for-profit organizations and under the current rules, public institutions, Crown Corporations, for profit organizations and individuals are not eligible. This makes public housing properties such as TCH ineligible for these funds. SIP further restricts the use of program contributions in combination with any other federal, provincial, territorial, regional or municipal government assistance.

COMMENTS

Safety has consistently been identified as a priority for tenants, staff and external partners of TCH. The Community Safety Strategy introduces a focused approach to creating safer communities by promoting initiatives which enhance the skills, abilities and resiliency of staff and tenants, fosters partnerships with key community stakeholders and use existing resources strategically to build community safety and health.

On March 26, 2012, the TCH Tenant and Community Services Committee received the report entitled 2012 Community Safety Strategy Work Plan. The Work Plan establishes priorities to achieve the following key outcomes:

- Community standards and enhanced tenancy management related to anti-social activity will be commonly recognized as an effective tool for promoting safety in communities; staff and tenants are more comfortable reporting criminal and anti-social behaviour

- Tenants advocate for themselves and draw on resources of the police and social service agencies in order to address negative influences and strengthen their voice in the community; local groups formed to strategize around safety issues

- Community agencies and external partners develop stronger linkages and collaboration at the local level to address the community's safety priorities; more partnerships with local police divisions, community agencies, and other community partners

- Resources are better aligned at the local level to address the specific safety priorities of each community and tenants and staff report feeling safer in Toronto Community Housing communities

- Safety will be one of two key focus areas for Participatory Budgeting in 2012, allowing tenants to identify solutions to safety priorities in their communities. 2011 initiatives in 2012 included pruning of shrubs and trees to increase visibility as well as building access control enhancements.

On June 22, 2012, the TCH Board of Directors received the report entitled CCTV Usage and Procedures at TCH. The report provides information related to the current stock of CCTV equipment, how the equipment is used throughout the portfolio, and how images are used to assist Toronto Police Service.

TCH employs CCTV technology as an environmental crime reduction tool that provides a surveillance function. In addition to providing a deterrent for potential criminals and capturing evidence of criminal offences, CCTV cameras also enhance public perception that an area is safe. If an area is perceived as safe, there is a tendency for the community to reclaim the area, which increases natural surveillance and eyes on the street.

TCH has noted a marked interest related to CCTV amongst tenants, as evidenced in the increased requests for additional cameras through tenant priority funding. Currently, there are approximately 3,000 CCTV cameras installed across the portfolio and the cost, in terms of acquisition and maintenance, are noted to be increasing.

Given the current state of good repair challenges at TCH and the priority of available funds for targeted repairs to mechanical systems, building envelope and structural elements, the availability of funds from the Federal Government through the SIP or a similar type fund for which public housing properties would be eligible would be a welcome investment. Targeted cost shared security infrastructure funding from the Federal Government would advance the achievement of the objectives of the TCH Community Safety Plan priorities and improve the safety and security of TCH residents and their communities.

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SIGNATURE

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