



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Oakwood Vaughan Strategy

Date:	September 30, 2015
To:	Community Development and Recreation Committee
From:	Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration
Wards:	Ward 15 Eglinton-Lawrence
Reference Number:	AFS # 21331

SUMMARY

At its meeting of August 25-28, 2014, City Council approved the staff report: *Update on the Relocation of Cornerstone Place Shelter* and directed City staff to undertake a set of actions in collaboration with neighbourhood stakeholders to develop an Oakwood Vaughan Strategy.

This report outlines the Oakwood Vaughan Strategy and identifies actions that can be accomplished within existing City resources and actions that require additional resources in order to implement the Strategy.

With the assistance of a third party facilitator, City staff have convened the Oakwood Vaughan Community Working Group (OVCWG) to collaborate on development of the Oakwood Vaughan Strategy. The working group includes local residents, businesses, the ward Councillor, community agency staff, and City staff.

In addition, an interdivisional Project Management Team (PMT), with representation from a number of City Divisions, Agencies and Boards including Social Development, Finance and Administration, Shelter Support and Housing Administration, Economic Development and Culture, Toronto Public Library, Toronto Public Health, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, City Planning and Toronto Police Service, has been established to facilitate internal supports for the development and implementation of the Oakwood Vaughan Strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council endorse the Oakwood Vaughan Strategy and Actions as outlined in Attachment 1, subject to the 2016 and future years' budget processes; and
2. City Council refer the Oakwood Vaughan Strategy and Actions to the Budget Committee for consideration with other City priorities for 2016.

Financial Impact

There are no 2015 financial implications arising from this report. The financial implications arising from the strategy and actions, if approved by Council, will commence in 2016.

The implementation of the Oakwood Vaughan Action Plan (refer to Attachment 1) requires one time funding in 2016 or 2017 and will require ongoing base funding from 2017 to ensure program sustainability, with the funding requirements noted below:

One time project funding in 2016:

Division	One Time Project Resource 2016 only
City Planning	\$100,000
TOTAL	\$100,000

One time project funding in 2017:

Division	One Time Project Resource 2017 only
Toronto Public Library	\$50,000
Economic Development and Culture	\$20,000
TOTAL	\$70,000

On-going base funding from 2017 and future years:

Division	Annualized Resource Request 2017 and future years
Parks Forestry and Recreation	\$295,000
Economic Development and Culture	\$122,000 (1 FTE)
Toronto Public Library	\$15,000
TOTAL	\$ 432,000

Toronto Public Library has requested \$100,000 through the TPL 2016 Operating Budget Submission for the Youth Hub initiative, which supports the Oakwood Vaughan Strategy and aligns with the Poverty Reduction Strategy.

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

EQUITY IMPACT

By focusing on economic development, social services and land-use planning to address issues of high unemployment, petty crime, and lack of economic development, the Oakwood Vaughan Strategy aims to revitalize the neighbourhood by improving social and economic opportunity and overall community wellbeing. Progress towards this objective will contribute to the City's Poverty Reduction Strategy.

DECISION HISTORY

On May 5, 2015, City Council approved the Oakwood Vaughan Strategy Update report. This report provided an update on work undertaken to date, including the development on an interdivisional working group. The report also provided a framework for the development of the strategy.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.CD3.11>

On August 25, 26, 27 and 28 2014, City Council approved the permanent relocation of Cornerstone Place Shelter to 616 Vaughan Road. City Council requested the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, to convene a community working group including local residents, agency staff, and City staff to work with the community agency and the City on the shelter's transition to the proposed location and to refine the shelter service model. City Council also requested the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance & Administration to work with other relevant City divisions and agencies to develop recommendations for an Oakwood Vaughan Strategy.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2014.CD31.7>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

In August 2014, City Council approved the relocation of Cornerstone Place Shelter to 616 Vaughan Road and directed staff to convene a multi-stakeholder community working group facilitated by a third party to work with the shelter and the City to refine the shelter service model and support an effective transition into the community. City Council also directed staff to work in collaboration with neighbourhood stakeholders to develop an Oakwood Vaughan Strategy to improve economic development, social services and land-use planning for the neighbourhood to address issues of high unemployment, petty crime, and lack of economic development. Since the approval of the shelter, City staff, community agencies and residents have been collaborating on the development of the Oakwood Vaughan Strategy.

COMMENTS

Development of Collaborative Structures and Community Engagement

In December 2014, Shelter Support and Housing Administration (SSHA) and Social Development, Finance and Administration (SDFA) formed an interdivisional Project Management Team (PMT) to ensure the development of a coordinated Oakwood Vaughan Strategy to maximize existing resources and identify collaborative opportunities for local success. The PMT works closely with the ward Councillor and Oakwood Vaughan Community Working Group (OVCWG) to identify priorities for the area.

In December 2014, SSHA hired a third party facilitator to establish and facilitate a community working group including local residents, agency staff, shelter clients and City staff to work with Cornerstone Place Shelter and the City on the shelter's transition to the new location, refinement of the shelter service model, and development of the Oakwood Vaughan Strategy. The OVCWG was formed in January 2015 and has met regularly, providing input to City staff on the transition of the shelter and the development of the Oakwood Vaughan Strategy.

On March 4, 2015 the Shelter opened and a resident group, hosted two successful community open houses to acquaint local residents with the shelter. These events improved relations between the shelter and local residents and businesses. The Shelter continues to share information with the OVCWG regarding its operations, including hours of operation, safety and security measures and programs, and activities available to shelter residents. Residents of the Oakwood Vaughan neighbourhood continue to show their support for the shelter by volunteering to offer art programs with an emphasis on art therapy, community pride, and inclusion.

On June 27, 2015 the PMT in partnership with the OVCWG hosted a community meeting and conducted an online survey to inform residents about the Oakwood Vaughan Strategy and gather feedback on key social service and economic priorities. The resident input was used to inform the Oakwood Vaughan Strategy.

Most recently an Oakwood Vaughan Interagency Network was established consisting of city staff, local agency staff and residents. The purpose of the group is to serve as a catalyst for community coordination and collaborative programming. The Network will focus primarily on community safety, but it will also provide a forum for: resource and information sharing; community engagement and awareness; and targeted community outreach.

Oakwood Vaughan Strategy

The Oakwood Vaughan Strategy is based on four complementary key areas that were vetted through stakeholder engagement. Each key area encompasses a number of initiatives (refer to Attachment 1) and the PMT will ensure the work of each key area intersects and builds on the others as appropriate.

1. Community Safety

A "Safe Growth" plan for the neighbourhood is being developed by a partnership table that includes Toronto Police Service (TPS), SDFA's Community Crisis Response Program, community agencies and local residents. The purpose of the partnership is to improve community safety and the perception of safety in the physical environment and on a personal basis.

A community safety survey was distributed to local agencies and other stakeholders in the Oakwood Vaughan community to help identify community safety challenges and to gather feedback on ways to enhance safety in the neighbourhood. Through the survey, drug and alcohol use and mental health issues were identified as the main community safety concerns. The safety plan will identify actions to address the community priority safety concerns and establish safety protocols to respond to community emergencies.

Most recently, TPS 13 Division received funding through the provincial Proceeds of Crime Program for the Street Outreach Pilot Project. This project will direct resources to the police and partner agencies (John Howard Society – Toronto and City of Toronto "The Works" Program) to support street involved individuals with mental health and addiction challenges in the surrounding neighbourhood. The project will run from early October 2015 to March 2016.

2. Economic Development

One of the more successful models for local economic revitalization is a Business Improvement Area (BIA). However, a significant impediment for creating and maintaining a successful BIA in distressed commercial areas, is the lack of organizational and funding capacity of the local business community to ensure on-going success. Building the capacity of the Oakwood Village BIA is the cornerstone of the economic plan in the Oakwood Vaughan Strategy.

A staff report on providing support to distressed commercial areas in Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIAs) will be at Economic Development Committee for consideration in the fourth quarter of 2015. The program is intended to build local capacity and partnerships within these areas to establish high functioning BIAs, with stable funding and organizational capacity. This dedicated, on-going support will allow BIAs to implement sustainable economic revitalization strategies. Although the pilot for this program is targeted to Neighbourhood Improvement Areas, a similar approach can be utilized to reinvigorate the Oakwood Vaughn BIA.

The Oakwood Vaughn Strategy proposes a dedicated Economic Partnership Advisor to work with the Oakwood Village BIA and local stakeholders to develop a comprehensive and long-term economic revitalization plan, and funding strategy. The Economic Partnership Advisor would also work with the BIA on board recruitment and retention, board training, and business and community engagement. Support to the Economic Partnership Advisor could also be provided by a placement from Toronto Employment and Social Services' Job Incentive Program.

Seed funding is also proposed to assist with the implementation of a specific economic development initiative in the area to provide an example of the success that can be achieved through small but effective interventions. Ideas being considered are implementation of a pop-up shop program to clean-up and animate vacant storefronts, promotion of the commercial façade improvement program, development of a local community festival within the BIA, or a business recruitment strategy.

3. Community Engagement

Community engagement is central to the development and implementation of the Oakwood Vaughan Strategy. In addition to engaging the OVCWG, staff have begun to engage the community on an on-going basis to identify issues and develop locally-based solutions. Communication strategies include community meetings, special events, flyers and web based communications. Toronto Public Library, Parks, Forestry and Recreation and Toronto Public Health also participate in local planning network tables.

On June 18, SDFA hosted a meeting with local agencies in the Oakwood Vaughan community. The purpose of the meeting was to inform local partners on the development of the Oakwood Vaughan Strategy; develop an understanding of the breadth of programs and services offered locally; identify gaps in programs and services, and identify service priorities. This feedback is reflected in the strategy actions.

4. Planning and Development

The Strategy partners will undertake a review of current built form and policy frameworks in the community to identify any opportunities to accommodate development and new investment within a mixed-use context.

The Strategy is reflective of community priorities to enhance local assets, safety and community cohesion. This integrated approach to social and economic planning will result in a cohesive and comprehensive approach to neighbourhood revitalization that responds to community needs.

The Strategy reflects a variety of City-led initiatives that are intended to improve the social and physical fabric of the Oakwood Vaughan community in a manner that is realistic and achievable. It represents the beginning of a cohesive effort to proactively plan for the future, and be better aligned to respond to opportunities as they present themselves. The Strategy includes 24 actions across four complementary focus areas.

Moving Forward

Some of the actions identified in the Oakwood Vaughan Strategy have been implemented. Some are underway, and others have yet to begin. The Oakwood Vaughan PMT will continue to implement the Strategy and connect with local stakeholders for feedback and guidance. It is anticipated this integrated approach to social and physical planning will result in more cohesive initiatives that better meet community needs.

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Attachments:

Attachment 1: Oakwood Vaughan Strategy Actions