

For Information

DATE: May 5, 2011

REPORT TITLE: **NEIGHBOURHOOD CAPACITY SUPPORT STRATEGY: OVERVIEW**FROM: Janet Menard, Commissioner of Human Services
Janette Smith, Commissioner of Health Services**OBJECTIVE**

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the Neighbourhood Capacity Support Strategy (NCSS) and provide highlights of collaborative accomplishments achieved to-date, within identified priority neighbourhoods.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The goal of the Neighbourhood Capacity Support Strategy (NCSS) is to create healthy and safe environments by collaborating with high priority communities, to ensure the provision of accessible, integrated and holistic services.
- This approach recognizes that at times in their lives, individuals and families can become vulnerable.
- The NCSS supports include nine identified high-need neighbourhoods located within Brampton and Mississauga. This has increased from five sites in 2009.
- While the resident-approved priorities of each neighbourhood vary, the identified activities in all sites include: a focus on access to affordable food and clothing; access and support to address health issues; support to maintain housing (including eviction prevention); access to employment and training services; tutoring for children and youth; and social activities. As well, all programs and activities are based on consideration of the demographic characteristics of the neighbourhoods.
- To support a neighbourhood within Caledon, discussions are currently underway with respect to a potential site.
- In the future, the strategy will include the addition of seniors and intergenerational programming, an enhanced recognition of volunteer community leaders and the development of an evaluation framework.

DISCUSSION**1. Background****a) History**

In November 2007, Regional Council acknowledged that, in addition to a number of existing community initiatives designed to address community capacity building, there

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was an urgent need for targeted support to meet increasing requests for intervention within specific neighbourhoods in Peel.

Research that initially recommended the formation of the NCSS pointed to a number of serious concerns, such as low levels of civic engagement, increasing poverty levels (especially among newcomers and visible minorities), rising abuse, domestic violence and homelessness, as well as youth issues often associated with youth violence and gang related behaviour. While broader Region-wide strategies were and are certainly beneficial (e.g. Fair Share Task Force, Peel Children and Youth Initiative, Best Start, and the Peel Newcomer Strategy Group), there was still a need for a neighbourhood level approach that included very practical and action-oriented ways to address local needs. Not only do residents need to see and experience the positive work that is being conducted to benefit them, they must also have an active role in the solutions.

To address documented service gaps, the Commissioners of Human Services, Health Services and the Medical Officer of Health partnered to support the creation of NCSS.

Initially the NCSS began with five identified neighbourhoods and over the first two years of the initiative, this grew to nine areas in Brampton and Mississauga. In 2009, staff identified for Council additional neighbourhoods that would benefit from NCSS involvement. These neighbourhoods were established based on concerns raised by community members, agencies, and in some cases, by municipal staff and/or Councillors.

Further, Council has endorsed community capacity building through Peel's Strategic Plan 2011-2014 and Term of Council Priorities. As well Council has supported new terms of reference and name for the Grants Ad-Hoc Committee.

b) Description

i) Neighbourhood Capacity Support Strategy

The NCSS builds on the mandate of Human Services and supports Objective 4 – to “strengthen individual family and neighbourhood capacity”.

It is complementary to the Community Investment Fund (CIF), which serves to address Peel needs at both macro and micro levels, with a view to ensuring that Peel communities, neighbourhoods and families are resilient, and recommends priorities that are aligned to the community work. As noted in the report of the Commissioner of Human Services, dated February 8, 2010, titled “Community Investment Fund”, more than 60 single and multi-year applications from the Peel non-profit sector community agencies were approved to receive funding.

ii) Goals

The goal of the NCSS is to create healthy and safe environments by engaging residents in solutions that address challenges that they have identified.

Solutions include:

- Community led activities
- Financial support
- Partnerships with other agencies

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For each identified neighbourhood, the strategy involves the following steps: gathering information about the specific communities including community consultations, defining the issues, obtaining neighbourhood approval, developing measurable indicators, organizing project plans, budget and staffing, and communication and implementing the plans.

iv) Current Sites**Brampton Sites**

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Knightsbridge/Kingscross | (Ward 8) |
| 2. Brampton North West | (Ward 6) |
| 3. Queen St /Kennedy Rd | (Ward 1 and 3) |
| 4. McHardy Court /Fair Oaks | (Ward 4) |
| 5. Brampton East | (Ward 10) |

Mississauga Sites

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------|
| 6. Acorn Place | (Ward 4) |
| 7. Sheridan/Roche Court | (Ward 2) |
| 8. Colonial Terrace/Collegeway | (Ward 8) |
| 9. Malton | (Ward 5) |

v) Major Activities

Activities occur through Region of Peel staff, funding to charitable or not-for-profit organizations, purchase of service agreement and redeployment of existing services through community partners. A second report on this agenda "Neighbourhood Capacity Support Strategy: Joint Neighbourhood Development Funding Between United Way and Region of Peel", outlines the process used to fund resident-led activities.

Below are examples of some of the major ongoing activities and one-time events, most of which are voluntarily led by residents:

- Children and youth focused programming (Breakfast programs, Youth Drop-In, Junior Youth Empowerment, science workshops for girls)
- Family focused programming (Family Fun Program, Parenting Programs, Healthy Starts, Family Literacy, Arts and Crafts for children and parents, as well as Indian dance workshops)
- Adult focused programming (tax clinics, employment services)
- Community events (Brampton East Spring Fair and Sheridan Neighbourhood barbeque were attended by more than 1000 residents)
- Committees focused on specific initiatives (Malton Community Building Project Steering Committee)
- Two community groups have been developed and are being formalized including the McHardy Court – Community Collaborators and another at Colonial Drive that has not yet been named. The existence of these groups presents opportunities for us to move into a more sustainable resident-led community development model.

More information is outlined in the attached Appendix I.

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Staff from Human Services plays a lead role in a number of neighbourhoods. At the Sheridan site, staff co-facilitates the project with the City of Mississauga. In Malton, staff has played a lead role in the development of the Malton Crisis Response Committee, which is a direct response to the shooting death of a youth in the area in July 2010. As well, the Region of Peel and United Way of Peel have contracted with a number of community agencies to provide specialist programming in some of these sites. Staff from Peel Living has also played a key role in the NCSS through programming at Peel Living sites.

Health Services has played a key role in the NCSS and have brought many important initiatives into the neighbourhoods. These initiatives include: Peel Youth Violence Prevention, Healthy Smiles dental program and the Community Food Advisor nutrition program. Moreover, Health Services staff was instrumental in bringing in an inspiring youth motivational speaker to the Knightsbridge site. Staff also facilitated a session at Knightsbridge to develop the group's terms of reference and an outline of key accomplishments. Additionally, for the past three years, Health Services staff has played a lead role in the Brampton North West Neighbourhood, where they have worked closely with principals of two school boards, the City of Brampton and community resident groups.

As well, Health Services has partnered with the City of Brampton to initiate the Brampton East Community Partners where ongoing involvement is under review.

2. Findings

The initiative has focused on low-income families, children and youth as key beneficiaries. All programs and activities are based on consideration of the demographic characteristics of the neighbourhoods and recognize that individuals and families will be vulnerable at times throughout their lives.

To support families, the program engages a broader scope of support and includes participation from local businesses, faith groups, schools, community centres and community agencies.

While the resident-approved priorities of each neighbourhood vary, in general, the identified activities in all sites include a focus on access to affordable food and clothing, access and support to address health issues, support to maintain housing (including eviction prevention), access to employment and training services, tutoring for children and youth, social and recreational activities.

Feedback received from residents is very positive and participation in the programs is steadily increasing. It is significant to note that a number of programs are led by the residents themselves.

Below are some key lessons learned since inception of the NCSS regarding engaging communities and community capacity building:

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- The process takes time and patience
- A respectful approach recognizes a community's history
- Existing local abilities must be acknowledged
- Sensitivity and attention must be shown to local dynamics and conventions
- Community readiness must be taken into consideration
- By connecting people to resources, community capacity building enables individuals, families and neighbourhoods to develop their ability to overcome challenges

3. Results Observed

Over the past year and a half, a number of positive results have been observed from various sites. A few observations are highlighted below:

- Increased resident engagement. Residents are empowered and are taking the lead for some on-going programming (e.g. Knightsbridge Junior Youth Club, Kingsbridge Breakfast program, Colonial Step Dance Club, Art for Kids)
- Increased community engagement and resource awareness
- More people are accessing employment opportunities (e.g. nine youth employed as part of Summer Youth Challenge program)
- Increased youth participation including engagement of hard to reach youth (e.g. Sheridan Young Men's Group, Knightsbridge Senior Youth Club, Youth Programming at Colonial Terrace)
- Increased awareness of bullying, substance abuse, conflict resolution (e.g. numerous workshops organized including a Police Academy)
- Improved children and youth academic achievements (e.g. Safe City Mississauga, Boys and Girls Club and Baha'i community offer homework clubs)
- Increased volunteer opportunities for adults and youth (e.g. there are currently more than 104 active volunteers)
- Agency networking has increased the collaboration between various community agencies that lead to neighbourhood specific programming opportunities (e.g. Baha'i community, Region's Learn Play Care (LPC) division, Knightstable, Employment services)
- More residents are being employed locally through increased networking opportunities (e.g. local youths employed for summer camps, breakfast programs, city recreation programs)

These positive outcomes are supported in the following reports, submitted to or by NCSS team, and are available upon request:

- Erin Mills Youth Centre
- Punjabi Community Health Services Malton Youth Centre Initiative Report
- Rapport Youth and Family Services – Knightsbridge and Colonial Drive Neighbourhood Youth Outreach Report
- Boys and Girls Club Update Report
- Safe City Mississauga Report
- Brampton Safe City Report
- Community Partnership monthly narrative report folder

4. Next Steps

As a still relatively new initiative, it is important for the NCSS to continue to outreach and make linkages with relevant services and programs. As programs in the community

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change, it is critical that ongoing networking is conducted and new partnerships are explored. This will include investigating potential involvement of service clubs.

Discussions will continue with residents and groups in Caledon to provide proactive intervention in a high needs neighbourhood (i.e. Stationview). A strong foundation has been laid by Boys and Girls Club during the summer of 2010 when a broader community engagement to determine interest and needs took place.

a) Enhanced Volunteer Recognition

It is important to acknowledge the many residents who share their passion for their community by volunteering their services in these neighbourhoods. This is a major accomplishment to celebrate and as such efforts to recognize volunteers will be enhanced.

f) Evaluation

To date, leads for NCSS sites have conducted ongoing localized monitoring of progress and have made changes where required. More recently Human Services has initiated the development of a measurement strategy to evaluate long-term impacts of NCSS on the identified neighbourhoods and the broader community. The intention is to return to Council with a comprehensive measurement and evaluation framework to improve the targeting of services and the measuring of the Strategy's impacts.

Community agencies are contracted in partnership with the United Way to support resident-led services like youth engagement, summer programming, community safety, tutoring for children and youth, etc.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Total funding for community investment is approximately \$5 million for 2011, of which \$3.8 million is related to Community Grants; \$150,000 is related to resident led projects; and the balance is for Lifesavers, Community Partnerships, and other volunteer Mississauga, Brampton, and Caledon community investment initiatives.

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CONCLUSION

Neighbourhood Capacity Support Strategy (NCSS) continues to promote community involvement to increase resident engagement and community well-being. Community transformations are being experienced.

As a result, with three years experience in the initially identified high-needs neighbourhoods, the NCSS has proven to be an effective catalyst for positive change. The proposed evaluation framework will ensure continued effectiveness and support fact based outcomes and change.

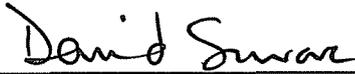


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APPENDIX I

Neighbourhood Capacity Support Strategy Sites

Mississauga		
Neighbourhood	Ward	Location
Acorn Place	4	Eglinton and Hurontario
Sheridan	2	Roche Court, Fowler Drive, N. Sheridan Way
Colonial Terrace	8	Colonial Terrace, Collegeway & Ridgeway
Malton	5	Malton
Key Issues		
<p>In general in all NCSS sites, there are gaps in services for certain youth groups especially the 12-24 age groups. Access to community support and information was previously lacking in terms of information about job skills, training, employment opportunities, health and nutrition, dental programs and parenting support. In Acorn Place, various agencies are struggling to keep up with the demand of the community, while various ongoing funding sources are being cut. In Colonial and Malton, the communities needed to address youth shootings and drug and gang violence. Cultural and racial segregation has been an issue in the Sheridan community. Mental health is an issue in some areas. As well, several agencies that support the communities have experienced recent funding cutbacks.</p>		
Examples of Programs/ Events		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numerous new youth programs, many of which are focused on age groups where there were gaps in service (e.g. tutoring, life skills, Baha'i youth programs, dance classes, parent and child drop in centre, etc.) • Health Services Healthy Smiles Dental Program • Colonial BBQ • McHardy/Fair Oaks Community Carnival 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sheridan held a science workshop for young girls • Free tax clinics, on-site employment service worker • Community kitchen, breakfast clubs, dinner club • Community gardening day • Parenting classes, parent & child drop-in centre • Winter festival in Colonial, Knightsbridge • Colonial Open House (at the Community Hub) 	
Examples of Significant Accomplishments		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sheridan residents organized a major event; a Children's Eid Party with over 300 participants • At Acorn, Peel Youth Village engages youth through various youth employment initiatives • Colonial and Sheridan are holding regular meetings to build networks and collaborations that will fill gaps in service and use community assets. • Colonial NCSS funding secured a youth worker for the 14-24 year old age group. He has been able to connect youth to job and recreation programs and has reported youth returning to school, lower suspension rates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Malton Youth Center Steering Committee was established through collaboration with community agencies and organizations to develop a local youth centre. NCSS funded the hiring of youth workers for the South Asian and Black communities • Partnership on the Malton Food for Health Project. NCSS sits on the hiring committee and the advisory committee, providing a venue through Peel Living and providing funding for Food Handling Certification to host 20 opportunities for residents. 	
Results Observed		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased gaps in services and programs • Increased resident engagement • Increased engagement of hard to reach youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness of bullying, drugs, internet safety, conflict resolution • Increased youth academic achievements • Lower high school suspension rates 	

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Neighbourhood Capacity Support Strategy Sites

Brampton		
Neighbourhood	Ward	Location
Knightsbridge	8	Central Park Drive adjacent to Bramalea City Centre
Brampton North West	6	Mayfield (north), Hurontario (east) Williams Parkway (south) Winston Churchill (west)
Queen St / Kennedy	1&3	Queen and Kennedy
McHardy Court	4	Fair Oaks & McMurchy
Brampton East	10	
Key Issues		
<p>In general, issues facing the neighbourhoods include the need for productive activities for youth, support for youth in school, and adult access to education, employment and parenting programs. In addition, there is a need for access to health information and services. Many families require financial assistance and cultural diversity needs to be celebrated and supported.</p>		
Examples of Programs/ Events		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McHardy Community Carnival, Knightsbridge classical Indian dance workshop • Breakfast clubs, Knight's Table bread drop-off for seniors and families • Homework clubs and Computer Access Program 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult education information session • Free tax clinics • Best Start Health Coalition's pre and post natal education and care
Examples of Significant Accomplishments		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brampton East Community Partners Spring Fair with 500 participants and 20 community agency displays • Brampton North West organized two leadership conferences exclusively for students in grades five and six, and helped send hundreds of students to "We Day," the annual leadership conference of Free the Children's Me to We program. • Transforming Neighbourhoods' Junior Youth Empowerment and Parenting Programs 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McHardy NCSS and Boys and Girls Club is supporting the group as they formalizing and begin to gather community specific information before engaging departmental/agency/municipal partners • Brampton East and Queen/Kennedy are newer sites that are in earlier stages of development. In each area they are identifying community needs. • Knightsbridge hosts three ongoing resident-led programs including arts and crafts for children and parents, women's jewelry making and Knightsbridge Peeps program (for youth 7-15)
Results Observed		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents are empowered • Residents are taking the lead for some programming • Increased youth participation 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased community engagement and resource awareness • More people are accessing employment opportunities • Decreasing gaps in services in the community