



CITY OF RICHMOND

REPORT TO COMMITTEE

TO: Planning Committee
FROM: Terry Crowe, Manager,
Policy Planning Department
DATE: November 10, 2000
FILE: 4057-11
RE: Regional and Local Homelessness Planning Initiatives

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That Council authorize staff to undertake a consultative process with community organizations to determine the feasibility of making a submission for funding under Phase 2 of the Federal Government's "Supporting Community Partnerships Initiatives" (SCPI) program for the purpose of undertaking a community based, homelessness needs assessment and planning strategy for Richmond.

Terry Crowe, Manager,
Policy Planning Department

Att.

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CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER

STAFF REPORT

ORIGIN

This report:

1. provides an update on the City's response to date related to the regional homelessness planning process, and;
2. informs Council, in anticipation of upcoming public announcements, about the status of funding allocations to community organizations in Greater Vancouver under Phase 1 of the Federal Government's "Supporting Community Partnerships Initiatives" (SCPI) program. This program is aimed at addressing urgent local homelessness issues.
3. also requests Council approval for City staff to undertake a consultative process with community organizations to determine the feasibility of making a submission to seek funding under Phase 2 of the Federal SCPI program to undertake a community based, homelessness needs assessment and planning strategy for Richmond.

DISCUSSION

Federal Government's "Supporting Communities Partnerships Initiatives Program (SCPI)

A Federal Government program, "Supporting Communities Partnerships Initiatives" (SCPI) is available to local organizations and is aimed at developing and implementing community based solutions to address urgent local homelessness issues.

Phase One:

Phase 1 of this program was targeted to current "urgent" homelessness priorities such as minimal barrier emergency shelters, supportive/second stage housing, prevention services and programs.

City staff sought to ensure that as many local Richmond organizations as possible were aware of the program and circulated copies of the Phase 1 Request for Expressions of Interest to a number of community organizations in the City: While staff were originally hopeful that local organizations would seek funding under the program, there were no proposal applications submitted from Richmond based organizations.

A public announcement of recommended project proposals is anticipated over the next few weeks.

Phase Two:

A second phase of the SCPI program which will provide more emphasis on supporting longer term, comprehensive homelessness needs assessments is expected in January 2001.

In anticipation of this phase, staff have taken steps to seek community agency interest in developing a long range, community based homelessness needs assessment and related strategy for Richmond. A number of agencies have expressed interest in working with the City on this project.

Regional Homelessness Planning Initiative

A draft Regional Homelessness Plan is currently being prepared under the direction and guidance of a Steering Committee comprised of federal, provincial and local government representatives from across Greater Vancouver as well as non-profit, community agencies involved in shelter provision and affordable housing. The Regional Draft Plan is intended to provide a context for homelessness within a broader framework for the planning, co-ordination and development of affordable housing, services and facilities across the Region.

City staff and the Mayor attended early meetings of the Steering Committee. Subsequently, a City staff member, (Marg Picard) was appointed as the City's representative. Staff have participated in a number of Steering Committee meetings that have been convened over the past few months ensuring that Richmond's needs and interests are recognized.

The first draft of the Regional Plan has been prepared and has been reviewed by City staff. The plan identifies issues related to current capacity and service delivery systems and sets out broad policy directions and actions for consideration by governments and the private and non profit sector to prevent and alleviate homelessness in Greater Vancouver.

Richmond Situation

At the present time staff have determined that there is not a clear picture of the need or extent of the homelessness problem in Richmond, and no local plan or co-ordinated approach to dealing with this issue.

Currently, Richmond has only one shelter, Richmond House operated by the Salvation Army with 7 beds for men only. It is currently operating at or near capacity. Referrals are made to Lookout Emergency Shelter in Vancouver if no space is available.

The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) in Richmond has also identified a need for emergency housing for mental health clients.

The issue of homelessness has also been raised by a number of agency staff in conjunction with other issues such as alcohol and drug misuse, poverty and affordable housing.

Staff are planning on convening a meeting in early 2001, of the City's community stakeholders:

- to provide an opportunity to share information and perspectives on the regional homelessness planning initiative, and
- to explore further the idea of developing a Richmond community based, homelessness needs assessment and planning strategy under Phase 2 of the SCPI program for a needs assessment.

The City's role would be one of a facilitator of the process, enabling a better understanding of the local homelessness issue, local priorities and a plan of action.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

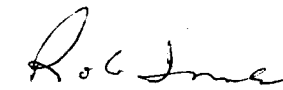
- The federal government's SCPI program provides an opportunity for community based organizations, in partnership with the City of Richmond, to seek funds to undertake a homelessness needs assessment and planning strategy for Richmond.

- Financial implications would largely consist of staff time to facilitate a process with local community organizations to develop a proposal for submission to the program.

CONCLUSION

- Over the past few months, the City, through staff representation on a Regional Homelessness Steering Committee has been actively involved in the development of regional homelessness plan;
- An opportunity to develop a locally based, homelessness needs assessment and planning strategy for Richmond, in collaboration with community organizations, exists under the upcoming Phase 2 of the Federal program;
- Staff seek confirmation from Council to consult with community organizations to explore the development of a proposal and submission to seek funding under Phase 2 of the Federal SCPI program to undertake a community based, needs assessment and planning strategy for Richmond meets Council approval.


Margaret Picard
Social and Community Planner


Rob Innes
Community Planner

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