

**STAFF REPORT TO
THE PLANNING, TRANSPORTATION AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE
MEETING OF JULY 25, 2012**

SUBJECT **Capital Regional District Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness
2012/2013 Service Agreement**

ISSUE

To receive update information on the 2012/13 Service Agreement between the Capital Regional District (CRD) and the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness (GVCEH).

BACKGROUND

Since it was established in May 2008, the GVCEH has received operational funding from the CRD and other organizations for management and administrative support functions provided through the GVCEH Secretariat. The Secretariat has an annual core administrative operating budget of approximately \$400,000. Funders include: CRD Community Health (\$150,000 in 2008 and 2009, and \$225,000 annually since 2010); City of Victoria (\$100,000 annual commitment through 2013); VIHA (irregular annual contributions ranging from \$75,000 to \$150,000); and the United Way (\$100,000 commitment for 2012/13 and for 2013/14).

The CRD also has provided considerable capital funding for new supportive housing projects for the homeless or at risk, and has five directors on the GVCEH Leadership Council and two senior staff actively involved in several committees.

The first two years of GVCEH operation (2008 and 2009) can be described as the 'start-up' phase, emphasizing community education and awareness, community partnership-building, initial research, data collection and planning to identify the scope of homelessness in the Region, and identifying strategies and solutions. The GVCEH is now in the implementation phase, specifically the development of new supportive and affordable housing options, along with ongoing emphasis on research and community awareness.

Despite the addition since 2009 of 180 supportive housing units and 84 shelter beds, preliminary 2011/2012 data on homelessness in the Region indicates that the use of emergency shelters has remained constant or increased, and often exceeds 100% capacity. A full 2012 report (Report Card) on the state of homelessness in the Region will be release at the GVCEH annual general meeting in September.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND ISSUES

The focus of the 2012/13 CRD-GVCEH service agreement is to: i) provide greater clarity around the core functions of the GVCEH that support and complement the housing and homelessness functions already provided by the CRD; and, ii) place increased emphasis on measurable performance outcomes and deliverables. The services set out in the Agreement are shown in Attachment 1.

Some of the highlights of services contained in the Agreement include the following:

- coordinating the development of a funding strategy for the Housing Procurement Plan;
- preparing a research plan that identifies priority areas for investigation, with an emphasis on evidence-based research and service gap analysis;
- developing and implementing a communications strategy that places homelessness front and center in regional, provincial and federal decision-makers minds; and,
- potential collaboration with the United Way Funding Map project to identify gaps in services and opportunities for improved service coordination.

It has also been suggested that a change in the GVCEH governance structure and business planning process may be warranted to increase effectiveness in achieving its objectives. Many GVCEH partners feel that the current governance and organizational structure needs to increase its focus on identifying and prioritizing strategies that will lead to the development of additional housing units and other supportive and affordable housing solutions. This will lead to increased partnership building and promote broader based advocacy for funding to support the implementation specific initiatives.

In a recent GVCEH-initiated survey of community partners and stakeholders, the need to change governance structures was identified by a majority of respondents. This included streamlining the committee structure of the organization, and redefining the role and reducing the size of the Leadership Council. More recently, questions have also been raised by CRD Board members around the effectiveness of the Region's form of representation on the Leadership Council.

CONCLUSIONS

In its fifth year of operation, the GVCEH is at a significant crossroads as evidenced by the recent community evaluation survey/report and the communities limited success towards achieving the goal of ending homelessness by 2018. The CRD is the major funder of ongoing GVCEH core operations and specific projects to address homelessness, and has a mandate and significant responsibility for addressing homelessness in the context of a socially sustainable Region. The CRD Board may wish to request a review of the governance and management structure of the GVCEH and its own representation structure, as well as consider the effectiveness of the Region's long term funding obligations to the Coalition's core operations.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Planning, Transportation and Protective Services Committee receive the report on the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness Service Contract Deliverables for 2012/13 for information and direct staff to meet with the CRD Coalition representatives to discuss potential governance and service expectations as part of the 2012/13 budget business planning process.

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Concurrence

Attachment 1

CRD-SOCIETY 2012/13 Service Contract - Deliverables

Housing Options Planning

The SOCIETY will coordinate with the CRD and other Coalition partners initiatives a range of housing and related solutions and specific initiatives to address homelessness.

• **Objectives**

- A. Coordinate the Homelessness Partnership Strategy (HPS) initiative with the CRD (as the Community Entity) in accordance with the priorities of the Coalition Community Plan.
- B. Coordinate with the local housing providers to identify priority projects for the Coalition to pursue.
- C. Coordinate Funding strategies to access capital and operating funding to begin acting on the Housing Procurement Action Plan.
- D. Facilitate the funding and announcement of at least one of the housing pipeline projects identified by March 2013.

• **Deliverables**

1. That the Coalition develops and implements a process to make HPS funding recommendations to the CRD Board.
2. That the Coalition develop and publish a list of priority 'Pipeline' projects that partners could undertake immediately subject to available funding.
3. That the Coalition coordinates the development of a funding strategy for the Housing Procurement Action Plan, with a short term goal of funding partnerships for Pipeline projects and a longer term goal of notional funding support for future initiatives and strategies identified in the Action Plan.
4. That the Coalition facilitates the announcement of at least one of the housing pipeline projects as identified.

Ongoing Research

Oversee the development and update of qualitative and quantitative data on the nature and scope of homelessness in the Region.

- **Objectives**

- A. Coordinate with the CRD the preparation of the Report on Housing and Supports to inform planning and provide local data on homelessness.
- B. Through the Report on Housing and Supports identify knowledge gaps necessary to end and prevent homelessness and strategies to fill identified gaps in knowledge.
- C. In coordination with the CRD, be informed by existing and ongoing research relevant to preventing and ending homelessness, and partner on specific projects consistent with Coalition research priorities, mission, vision and values.
- D. Promote knowledge translation and exchange of homelessness interventions and solutions among Coalition stakeholders, partners, public and researchers.

- **Deliverables**

1. That the Coalition produces and publishes the Report on Housing and Supports.
2. That the Coalition prepares a research plan that identifies priority areas for investigation with regard to homelessness in the CRD, with an emphasis on evidence-based research and service gap analysis.
3. That the Coalition host at least five 'Research Cafés' to share results of quantitative and qualitative research on homelessness

Community Awareness

Develop and implement a Communications strategy that will place homelessness front and centre in regional, provincial and federal decision-makers minds. The communications plan should include such things as the development of a strategy and rollout, including best practices, a media plan and campaign for putting a face on homelessness. The communication plan will be developed in concert with the staffing capacity, resources of the Coalition and partners.

- **Objectives**

- A. To create public awareness of how to end homelessness and support for funding to do so and to “put a face to homelessness” by increasing public understanding of homelessness and those who live with it.
- B. To support efforts to increase local, regional and provincial awareness of the Coalition and recognize the Coalition as a preferred source of expertise on the issue of homelessness by:
 - (i) strengthening proactive media relations to maximize communication opportunities and increase awareness;
 - (ii) proactively managing emerging issues to ensure the Coalition reputation is strengthened and maintained; and
 - (iii) developing open relationships with partners where information is shared and there is an understanding of common goals achieved.

- **Deliverables**

1. Implement a series of at least six small campaigns that raise the profile of homelessness in the Greater Victoria region.
2. Implement a communications plan that coordinates Coalition content and activity in social media, website, publications, and media relations.

Service Relevance and Integration

The SOCIETY is well positioned to collaborate with partners on specific projects and also help coordinate the efforts of agencies involved in services to the homeless or at risk to ensure effective use of limited resources.

- **Objectives**

- A. To monitor the implementation of the Centralised Access to Supportive Housing (CASH) initiative and refine as required.
- B. Collaborate on initiatives to address the 'hardest to house'.
- C. To investigate the potential for collaboration between the Coalition and the United Way Funding Map project to identify gaps in services and funding; and to identify opportunities for improved service coordination.
- D. To engage the experiential community in finding solutions to homelessness to ensure to the long term success of the SOCIETY's mission.

- **Deliverables**

1. Initiate the CASH program and, in conjunction with VIHA and BC Housing, initiate an independent process to measure the effectiveness of the program.
2. Participate in the VIHA Working Group on their Hard to Reach Service Delivery Model.
3. Create a report that identifies the potential for collaboration between the United Way, the Office of Community Based Research, the Coalition, and other partners such as the CRD.
4. Through the process of Social Inclusion:
 - (i) Produce a Peer Resource Manual for those experiencing homelessness, and
 - (ii) Develop an advisory body to the Coalition of those who have experienced homelessness.

General Administration

In support of Board and Committee activities, conduct administrative functions required to support the SOCIETY's overall day-to-day operations, annual business planning, and longer-term strategic planning.

- **Objectives**

- A. To complete the projects identified elsewhere in this business plan on time and on budget.
- B. To hold the 2012 Annual General Meeting (AGM) and prepare the 2011-12 Annual Report in accordance with the constitution and by-laws of the organisation.
- C. To review and update the Coalition Community Plan, and have it approved by the Leadership Council prior to the end of March 2013.
- D. To review and update the Coalition Business Plan and have it approved by the Leadership Council prior to the end of March 2013.
- E. To review and update the Coalition's budget and have it approved by the Leadership Council prior to the end of March 2013.
- F. To provide administrative support as required to the Leadership Council and the Committees of the Coalition.

- **Deliverables**

1. Hold the Annual General Meeting and create the Annual Report in accordance with the Societies Act.
2. Produce the 2013-2014 Coalition Business Plan and budget, and revise the Coalition Community Plan, prior to the end of March 2013.