Date: February 12th, 2019

Report No. CPREC-IC-2019-080

To: Chair and Members
    Committee of the Whole – Operations and Administration

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1.0 Type of Report

Consent Item []
Item For Consideration [ X ]

2.0 Topic


3.0 Recommendation

That report CPREC-IC-2019-080 updating Council on the Neighbourhood Hubs program BE RECEIVED.

4.0 Purpose and Overview

To provide an update to Council on the Neighbourhood Hubs including program milestones and achievements from 2018.
5.0 Background

In 2008 Brantford City Council approved a Community Development Model for the City that placed an emphasis on Neighbourhood Association networks and overall social and economic development at the neighbourhood level. Neighbourhood Associations have played a significant role in providing recreational activities for families in the City of Brantford since the early 1940’s. Neighbourhood Associations provide an opportunity for resident involvement and advocacy, making a difference throughout the City. Each winter, hundreds of volunteers are responsible for flooding and maintaining 27 natural neighbourhood ice rinks throughout the City. In 2012, this approach was further intensified through the launch of the Neighbourhood Hubs Program within two priority neighbourhoods, Eagle Place and East Ward, with the goal of addressing persistent challenges related to employment, educational attainment and community safety.

In December 2015, Council approved the expansion of the ‘Hubs’ program to the Holmedale Neighbourhood funded through surplus 2015 program funds (PHSSS2015-130, 2015 Neighbourhood Hubs Initiative Progress Update and Recommendations).

In December 2017, Council approved the expansion of the ‘Hubs’ program to the Downtown Central neighbourhood, funded within the approved Neighbourhood Hubs budget (PHSSS2017-126).

Academic and community research has consistently demonstrated that the most effective; long-term interventions for reducing social and economic risk, and ultimately transforming communities, are approaches that bring community partners together to connect marginalized families, particularly those with children and youth, to educational, mentorship and wellness opportunities. The development and implementation of the Neighbourhood Hubs Program has positioned Brantford as a Provincial leader in this new approach, and connects many of the corporate strategic initiatives related to educational attainment, health, wellness and community safety.

6.0 Corporate Policy Context

6.1 Economic Vitality & Innovation

Brantford will be known as a leading centre for learning and innovation – supported by a comprehensive education system.
1.3 Graduate Brantford

6.2 **High Quality of Life & Caring for all Citizens**

Brantford will be recognized as a safe and healthy community – one that promotes and enables the well-being of its citizens, and supports access of all citizens to a full range of health and community services.

Neighbourhood Hubs are an important vehicle by which elements of the 2014 2018 Community Strategic Plan can be accomplished:

- 2.2 Develop a Safe Brantford strategy
- 2.3 Develop a Healthy Brantford strategy
- 2.4 Develop and implement strategies to support the Healthy Kids Community Challenge
- 2.8 Develop and coordinate partnerships
- 2.9 Continue to implement the neighbourhood hubs

6.3 **City of Brantford Parks and Recreation Master Plan**

**Goal 3:** To promote and provide access to recreation for health, wellness and active living

Objectives:

To foster community connections, through the promotion of opportunities for participation and volunteerism in recreation.

**Goal 6:** To continue to improve the parks and recreation service delivery system through integrated and coordinated planning and partnerships

Objectives:

To enhance communication and collaboration between municipal, public, private, school and community stakeholders to ensure the development of equitable and efficient planning, policy and facility use mechanisms and protocols;
To continue the commitment to the Community Development Model and approach to program development and service delivery addressing issues of poverty and social inequality and leveraging interdepartmental opportunities to optimize the delivery of services.

7.0 **Input From Other Sources**

Eagle Place Community Association
East Ward Echo Place Neighbourhood Association
Holmedale Neighbourhood Association
Downtown Central Neighbourhood Association
Neighbourhood Alliance of Brantford
Junior Achievement Waterloo
Laurier Brantford

8.0 **Analysis**

8.1 **Creating Access to Services**

Targeted approaches within neighbourhoods are an effective method to reach families that may be experiencing complex, interwoven challenges related to lower-than-average income, lower educational attainment levels and greater family instability. Social support programs can help to break inter-generational cycles by buffering toxic social conditions that prevent emotional and psychological development.

This assistance with finding pathways to programs and services can lead to permanent employment or educational opportunities, aid long-term stability in low-income families, and help minimize unhealthy coping mechanisms, such as gambling and drug use. Social programs can also help to build on the unique strengths and needs of a family and create a holistic approach to family well-being that leads to stability and unity in the long run.
8.2 Community Leadership Creates Program Growth

Leadership from community residents is essential for ensuring that activities and programming is reflective of community need and sustainable over the long term. One of the key drivers of the ‘Hubs philosophy’ has been the understanding that traditional approaches to needs assessment and service design have not sufficiently addressed inequities in service uptake. Neighbourhood Hub staff provide the environment where community residents can lead change and bring greater prosperity to their respective neighbourhoods. This framework has provided a process for supporting resident groups to plan projects that address an identified community need.

This resident engagement is the primary catalyst for increased participation in the Hub neighbourhoods in 2018 with 12230 participants in programs and services offered. Two-hundred and forty-five ‘resident-led’ projects were implemented during the year which provided a diverse menu of offerings to the community which address, one or more of the program pillars for success. This resident contribution, aligned with support from community partners, resulted in over 2900 volunteer hours invested in 2018, representing a tremendous 52% increase over 2017.

8.3 Provincial Recognition

In 2017, the ‘Major B.’ Hub was the recipient of the 2017 Ontario Municipal Social Services Association Local Champions Award in recognition of the City’s “excellence in human services integration and service system management.” This recognition was based on “Major B.’s” status as one of the Province’s only school-based hubs and the sustained effort to ensure residents, neighbourhood associations and community partners are actively involved in program development.

In June 2018, the City of Brantford again received The Ontario Municipal Social Services Association Local Champion award in recognition of our partnership with Wilfrid Laurier University’s Brantford campus, acknowledging our collaborative work to develop programs and initiatives that support the social and economic wellbeing of citizens in our community. Collaborative initiatives recognized in the award include the Community Changemakers Certificate program in which Laurier faculty work directly with residents to create neighbourhood projects that support social inclusion, health and community safety.
8.4 Collaborative Partnerships and Neighbourhood Action Plans

Hub Neighbourhood Associations are recognizing that residents are communicating similar needs and issues. In response to this, opportunities to collaborate on project initiatives such as the Community Safety Forum, allow for NA’s to share resources that will assist the volunteers, create sustainability and realize cost savings.

Partnerships between community agencies, has continued to impact the growth and success of the Neighbourhood Hub program. The ability to respond to community needs through active partnerships allow residents to access services with reduced barriers. The newest Hub location at Central Public School will allow the Downtown Central Neighbourhood Association to expand their programs and services to neighbourhood residents as well as explore other areas of program opportunities not previously afforded to them.

9.0 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications with respect to this report. The on-going operating costs are included in the 2019 proposed budget and continued support from many community partners continue to make this valuable program possible.

10.0 Conclusion

The conditions within a particular neighbourhood can either support or impede individual and family functioning in all areas of life, including social, economic and health factors. Progressive municipalities across Canada have focused on delivering services in specific neighbourhoods and supporting community leaders in developing customized local plans that engage residents, service participants and community partners.

In 2018, The Neighbourhood Hub Program engaged thousands of residents in a wide variety of education, wellness and social programming which created outcomes and milestones that support a number of Key Strategic Actions including community safety, educational attainment and improved health outcomes. The Neighbourhood Hub Program provides a mechanism to connect committed volunteers who are passionate about their neighbourhoods, to projects and initiatives that spark change.
The ongoing success of Brantford’s Neighbourhood Hub Program is a result of the combined efforts of staff from Community Programs, Parks and Recreation and Health and Human Services, working together to improve access to services and the quality of life for residents living in emerging neighbourhoods.

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Jo Cupoli-Atanas, General Manager Health and Human Services

Attachments (if applicable)

Newspaper Links to Stories Related to Neighbourhood Hubs

Copy to:

NA

In adopting this report, is a by-law or agreement required? If so, it should be referenced in the recommendation section.

By-law required [ ] yes  [X] no

Agreement(s) or other documents to be signed by Mayor and/or City Clerk [ ] yes  [X] no

Is the necessary by-law or agreement being sent concurrently to Council? [ ] yes  [X] no

Appendix A: Newspaper Articles Related to Neighbourhood Hubs

Program participants aspire to make change:
https://www.brantfordexpositor.ca/news/local-news/program-participants-aspire-to-make-change
Laurier launches teen edition of Neighbourhood Changemaker: