



Corporate Report

NO: R167

COUNCIL DATE: June 27, 2005

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: Mayor & Council DATE: June 23, 2005
FROM: General Manager, Planning FILE: 5080-01
and Development
SUBJECT: Action for Neighbourhood Change Project

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council receive this report as information.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to provide information to Council on the Action for Neighbourhood Change project, which is taking place in five cities across Canada, including the City of Surrey and to advise Council of the neighbourhood that was selected within Surrey.

BACKGROUND

At the Council-In-Committee meeting of May 2, 2005, Council received a delegation by Susan Papadionissiou, Manager, Community Services, United Way of the Lower Mainland and Linda Western, Project Manager, Agency and Community Services of United Way of the Lower Mainland. The delegation advised Council of the Federal government program called "Action for Neighbourhood Change" ("ANC") that will be taking place in Surrey over the next year.

The ANC is a federal neighbourhood revitalization project that is being piloted in five neighbourhoods, one in each of five cities across the country. The purpose of the ANC is to improve living conditions of families and individuals at the neighbourhood level through a neighbourhood visioning and strategic planning process. Surrey was selected as one of the cities under the program, along with Regina, Thunder Bay, Toronto and Halifax.

The United Way of Canada was selected to coordinate this national initiative and is working at the local level through its affiliate (i.e. United Way of the Lower Mainland), and its partners, the Caledon Institute of Social Policy, the Tamarack: Institute of Community Engagement and the National Film Board.

Locally, the United Way is bringing together over 40 organizations, including representatives from the federal and provincial governments, the City of Surrey, the School District, the RCMP, the business sector and community organizations, to guide and support the initiative. The role of this group is to:

- Assist with the selection of a pilot neighbourhood in Surrey;
- Act in an advisory capacity to the work at the neighbourhood level; and
- Assist in implementing the goals and strategies developed by the neighbourhood.

The delegation advised Council that current federal funding commitment to this project extends only to March 31, 2006. However, the United Way is committed to supporting the work of the neighbourhood beyond that timeframe should that be required.

At the request of the United Way, City staff from both the Planning and Development Department and the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department have attended a number of meetings and provided information, data and maps to assist with the analysis in the neighbourhood selection process.

The purpose of this report is to provide details on the project, including the role of the various players, the expected outcome of the project, the project framework and the role of the City.

DISCUSSION

The ANC is a \$4 million federal government project intended to initiate local neighbourhood revitalization activities in one neighbourhood in each of five cities across the country. Surrey was one of five cities identified to be part of this initiative, along with Halifax, Toronto, Thunder Bay and Regina.

The project is being guided and funded by five different federal programs in three departments. Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Health Canada, and Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness provide funding and guidance to the project. A full description of the project is provided in two articles that are attached to this report as Appendices "A" and "B". The article in Appendix "A" is entitled "About the Action for Neighbourhood Change (ANC) Project and the article in Appendix "B" is entitled "Action for Neighbourhood Change, Community Stories, Caledon Institute for Social Policy".

The following sections provide a brief overview of each of the various players involved in the process and their role in this initiative.

The Federal Partners

The goal of the federal partners is to strengthen the understanding of how neighbourhoods can organize themselves to effect change, what processes they use to achieve change at the neighbourhood level, what decisions they make along the way and the priority issues they select to address. The ANC was developed and is being funded by the following five federal government partners:

- National Crime Prevention Strategy, Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada;
- National Literacy Secretariat, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC);
- National Secretariat on Homelessness (HRSDC);
- Office of Learning Technologies (HRSDC); and
- Canada's Drug Strategy, Health Canada.

The ANC incorporates two distinct, but simultaneous activities:

- (a) A community development/revitalization process designed to enable residents to work collaboratively, with support from the broader community (residents, non profit agencies and private and public sector organizations), to develop a strategic plan to address social issues in, and improve the liveability of their neighbourhoods; and
- (b) A national research component to learn about new processes, practices and strategies in bringing neighbourhoods together, to get a better understanding of the social conditions and interrelated factors that contribute to poverty and stress within communities and to assess the impact and effectiveness of federal social policies in meeting the needs of residents and neighbourhoods.

The situations in each of the pilot communities will be unique, but it is anticipated that the lessons from each of the communities will be transferable to other similar processes in the future. The ANC projects will work to discover how to best align or realign financial and program support to have the greatest impact on neighbourhood revitalization.

Depending on the outcome of this pilot project, the federal government may expand the program to include other communities.

The Coordinator - United Way of Canada and its Partners

Earlier this year the federal government selected the United Way of Canada to implement the program through its local affiliates and with its partners, the Caledonia Institute for Social Policy, the Tamarack Institute for Community Engagement and the National Film Board, which will be documenting the process.

- The Caledonia Institute – intends to conduct public policy research and policy dialogue to help build relationships between government and community partners;
- Tamarack Institute – will facilitate the communication between the five local United Way organizations working with the pilot communities; and
- The National Film Board – will document each of the local stories and processes as a means of recording and tracking the process, but also as a means to share information about the processes being undertaken between the five participating neighbourhoods.

The United Way will be involved in the following processes:

- Selection of the Neighbourhood;
- Assisting with the process of Neighbourhood Visioning; and
- Assisting with the development of the Neighbourhood Action/Strategic Plan.

The United Way will facilitate the process, engage the community and ensure, through the community advisory committee, that the neighbourhood process is well supported and strengthened.

Community Advisory Committee

The United Way will work with the community and local non-profit groups to establish a community advisory committee for the selected neighbourhood. The role of the community advisory committee is to build the necessary connections between the neighbourhood and the broader community. As noted by the delegation, the United Way of the Lower Mainland has already started the process by bringing together representatives from Surrey "community

services" organizations, local, federal and provincial governments, the School District and the RCMP. Representatives from the Planning and Development Department and Parks, Recreation and Culture have been involved in meetings and in providing information.

Bridgeview - The Pilot Neighbourhood

The primary focus of the ANC will be on assisting a neighbourhood that is experiencing stress, related to social and economic factors and is interested in participating in a neighbourhood visioning and strategic planning process. The community advisory committee has been working to consider several eligible communities that meet the general criteria set out by the federal funders. Careful consideration is being given to the broad criteria list that considers both challenges and assets of the potential participating neighbourhoods.

Given the short time frame for the project, one of the key aspects is selecting a community that is willing and ready to participate. Based on the above considerations, the neighbourhood of Bridgeview has been selected as the neighbourhood for the pilot in the City of Surrey. The Bridgeview residents, through their representatives, have expressed a strong interest in participating in the project. The project will be formally launched in Bridgeview in the next month.

The goals at the neighbourhood level include:

- To assist the neighbourhood to develop leadership skills and social networks (capacity building);
- To enable sustainability of the project in the neighbourhood beyond the federal program;
- To enable the neighbourhood to come together and identify their own needs and vision;
- To build on what is already existing and successful in the neighbourhood;
- To take on a small, but doable project or set of issues that is achievable over the term of the project;
- To document the knowledge gained about the processes used; and
- To encourage new and unique strategies to create safe and healthy neighbourhoods.

Ideally, the problems to be addressed by the neighbourhood will be those that focus on the policy areas of the government partners such as economic and social factors, education considerations and crime prevention and, thereby, enable the government partners to both support the process and evaluate their policies to better match local realities.

The Role of the City and the Social Well-Being Plan

The City is currently working at the citywide level in developing a Plan for the Social Well-Being for Surrey Residents. Some of the issue being addressed in the Plan may also arise through the ANC project. The involvement and interest of the federal government in the issues of one neighbourhood in Surrey may provide opportunities for broader applications or discussion on issues that affect the well being of Surrey residents in other areas. At this time, it is difficult to assess how the ANC project will fit with the recommendations identified through the preparation of the Social Well-Being Plan, but it is expected that the two processes will be complementary.

SUMMARY

This report provides additional background information and a status report on the ANC program, a federal initiative being coordinated by the United Way of Canada and its partners. The project is being piloted in one neighbourhood in each of five cities across Canada. In Surrey, a broad range of community organizations and government agencies have been involved in a process of selecting a neighbourhood to participate in this initiative. The neighbourhood of Bridgeview has been selected. The United Way of the Lower Mainland, which is coordinating the process in Surrey, will engage the selected neighbourhood in a visioning process, and in developing an action plan around key issues important to the neighbourhood. The neighbourhood process will be supported by both Surrey community organizations and national organizations to develop an action plan by which the neighbourhood can continue to enhance its liveability during and beyond the involvement of the federal program.

City staff will continue to participate and liaise with the United Way on this project and provide updates to Council on this initiative.

Murray Dinwoodie
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Planning and Development

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Attachments

Appendix "A" - About the Action for Neighbourhood Change (ANC) Project

Appendix "B" - Action for Neighbourhood Change, Community Stories, Caledon Institute for Social Policy

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Appendix "A"





Appendix "B"







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