



City of
Peterborough

To: Members of the Committee of the Whole

From: Ken Doherty, Director Community Services

Meeting Date: June 20, 2016

**Subject: Report CSD16-021
Peterborough as Green/Sustainable Community & Economy**

Purpose

A report to seek Council support for Evergreen's proposed focus for its Mid-sized City pilot project in Peterborough.

Recommendations

That Council approve the recommendations outlined in Report CSD16-021 dated June 20, 2016 of the Director of Community Services, as follows:

- a) That the presentation by Jo Flatt from Evergreen on the Mid-sized City Program in Peterborough be received;
- b) That the focus for the balance of the pilot project to "strategically position Peterborough as a green/sustainable community and economy" be endorsed.

Budget and Financial Implications

There are no financial or budgetary implications in approving this recommendation.

Background

Last spring John Good, from the Community Foundation of Greater Peterborough, met with City CAO, Allan Seabrooke, to provide an overview of the Foundation's activities. He introduced the CAO to the work of Evergreen, a national charity with a focus on making cities more livable, working on a Mid-sized City pilot project in Hamilton. Both agreed that Peterborough should join the project if possible. The CAO assigned the Director of Community Services as the City Liaison.

Mid-sized Cities in Ontario

The City of Peterborough falls within the population range of 50,000 – 500,000 for a medium-sized city in Canada. The twenty five medium sized cities in Ontario represent 44.3% of the population. Despite this, they are often overlooked in terms of the role that they play; and are overshadowed by the larger urban centres. Although it is a single-tier municipality and not formally part of the County government, Peterborough is also considered to be a “centre” city or regional hub that provides a broad range of services well beyond its borders and even those of the County. Unfortunately, there is no municipal governance or funding model to recognize these roles.

Exploring Specific Mid-sized City Opportunities

With funding from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Evergreen initiated a pilot project to explore the unique needs of four Ontario mid-sized cities—Hamilton, London, Sudbury, and Peterborough. The project seeks to understand their respective needs and opportunities and to develop strategies to increase prosperity by building on their local assets. In a parallel process, Evergreen and our partners in Hamilton have decided to focus on unlocking underused physical assets for community benefit. London partners have decided to focus on strategies for community engagement to support implementation of the Official Plan. Sudbury partners are interested in exploring how to leverage anchor institutions for new types of economic and social development.

Local Steering Committee

Last year, a local steering committee was established with John Good from the Community Foundation, Sandra Dueck from the Peterborough Chamber of Commerce, Ken Doherty from the City, and Jo Flatt from Evergreen. Earlier this year, Rhonda Keenan from Peterborough Economic Development also joined the committee.

Progress to date

As a context for discussion for the four pilot mid-sized cities, Evergreen prepared a background discussion paper entitled **Making Mid-sized the Right Size: Re-envisioning Success in Ontario's Mid-sized Cities** (Appendix A). Topics included: Making the Case for Mid-sized Cities; Economic Outlook; Growth Management, Density and Complete Communities; Social Development and Housing Affordability; Municipal

Finances; and Building on Local Assets to Create Great Spaces. Examples of best practices from the four pilot cities were included throughout.

On March 2nd and April 13th, 2016, Peterborough hosted two separate meetings with key community leaders from the public, private, and social sectors to better understand local assets and to identify potential actions that could increase local prosperity. The findings of these two meetings can be summarized as follows:

1. Peterborough is brimming with environmental, social, physical, economic, and cultural assets that contribute to a strong and prosperous city, but it is not leveraging these assets to their greatest potential.
2. There is a perception that Peterborough, both as a city and community, lacks a united vision and strategic focus that sets a clear direction for the future.
3. There is a sense of duplicated conversations and efforts in Peterborough and more needs to be done to align and coordinate the existing initiatives to prevent redundancies and ensure effective outcomes.
4. Mid-sized cities require greater flexibility on key provincially mandated regulatory issues. As cities, they need to be recognized for their unique traits and needs, with room to experiment and try new approaches.

In a third meeting, held on April 27th, the two groups converged to determine which opportunity provided the greatest potential to increase local prosperity. Through a facilitated process, the participants agreed that there should be a specific regional focus to **strategically position Peterborough as a green/ sustainable community and economy**. This direction builds on the success of Sustainable Peterborough; matches the ambitions of the new research park at Trent; and –most importantly-- embraces all of the four pillars in the City's proposed Strategic Framework.

In a parallel process, Hamilton has decided to focus on unlocking underused physical assets for community benefit. London is expanding on developing community engagement strategies to implement their Official Plan. Sudbury is exploring leveraging anchor institutions for new types of economic and social development.

Next Steps

It is hoped that Council will endorse this direction so that over the course of the next year, the Committee can work with the broader community to develop an action plan to better understand and to realize this potential.

Next steps include:

1. Identify and map green/ sustainable assets in Peterborough.
2. Research what it means to be a green/ sustainable economy, and prepare case studies on cities that have undertaken such strategies.
3. Engage the County of Peterborough and update them on process and outcomes.

Later in the process, participants in the overall pilot project will be invited to attend a Forum to share experiences across the four participating mid-sized cities. The outcomes of the individual projects, the background research, and the forum will be shared with the province.

For more specific details on the process, outcomes of the three Peterborough meetings, and a list of key stakeholders who participated, please refer to Appendix B.

Summary

The City of Peterborough's involvement in Evergreen's Mid-sized City pilot project could not have come at a more opportune time. The proposal to focus on Peterborough as a green/ sustainable community and economy poses no risk as a pilot project but could provide a key focus for both community and economic development for the City and region going forward.

Submitted by,

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Attachments:

Appendix A - The Mid-Sized City Program in Peterborough: Collective Opportunity to Improve Prosperity & Making Mid-sized the Right size: Re-envisioning Success in Ontario's Mid-Sized Cities