



City of  
**Peterborough**

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**To:** Members of the Joint Services Steering Committee

**From:** Ken Doherty, Director of Community Services

**Meeting Date:** February 9, 2017

**Subject:** Report CSSSJSSC17-001  
Basic Income Guarantee Update

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## **Purpose**

A report to update on the potential Basic Income Guarantee (BIG) pilot as described in the discussion paper "Finding a Better Way: A Basic Income Pilot Project for Ontario" by The Hon. Hugh Segal and local community response.

## **Recommendation**

That the Joint Services Steering Committee endorse the recommendation outlined in Report CSSSJSSC17-001 dated February 9, 2017 of the Director of Community Services, as follows:

That Report CSSSJSSC17-001, an update on the Basic Income Guarantee Pilot be received for information.

## **Budget and Financial Implications**

There are no budget implications as a result of this report.

## Background

This report provides an update on the BIG pilot as identified in Report C16-001 and Report C16-007; and further described by Hugh Segal in “Finding a Better Way”. Appendix A provides the Executive Summary for “Finding a Better Way”.

The City’s position has been that BIG, as an option for poverty reduction, merits a discussion to adequately assess a policy approach. The role of the municipality could be to advocate with the provincial and federal government to further explore the options within their jurisdictions. As the provincial government continues to explore the option for a BIG pilot, this report summarizes the reaction locally and across the province.

### “Finding a Better Way: A Basic Income Pilot Project for Ontario”

In the 2016 Provincial Budget, a commitment was made to a Basic Income Pilot. The Hon. Hugh Segal was tasked with writing a discussion paper to outline the possible steps forward for a Basic Income Pilot for Ontario.

“Finding a Better Way” was released on November 3, 2016. In this paper, Hon. Hugh Segal outlines a possible organization of the Basic Income Pilot and key evidence that it should generate. Evidence that should be gathered includes:

- health outcomes
- life and career choices made over the duration of the pilot
- education outcomes
- work behaviour, job search and employment status
- community level impacts
- direct administrative costs or savings for replacing, for pilot recipients, Ontario Disability Support Program or Ontario Works with a Basic Income
- changes in food security status
- perceptions of citizenship and inclusion for participants
- impact on mobility and housing arrangements
- Impact for Basic Income participants in terms of relationship with other federal and provincial benefits such as Employment Insurance or child benefits.<sup>1</sup>

The Hon. Hugh Segal stated that the pilot should test replacing Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program income but not test replacing all social assistance benefits with one income. He also stated that the pilot should commence Phase 1 before March 31, 2017.

The immediate “next step” was for the province to seek input from the public. This input was organized in the form of 10 public consultations across Ontario as well as other digital methods to gather information. There was no provincial consultation located in

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<sup>1</sup> Segal, H. **Finding a Better Way: A Basic Income Pilot Project for Ontario**. 4, 2016. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/finding-better-way-basic-income-pilot-project-ontario>

Peterborough, though residents of Peterborough have travelled to nearby consultations. The deadline was January 31, 2017 and will therefore not be available for this report. These consultations asked for feedback from the public as to:

- who should be eligible
- which communities to include in the study
- how the benefit is designed
- how we deliver the pilot
- how to evaluate the pilot

The Social Services Division has encouraged their staff to complete the online survey individually from the perspective of their roles in delivering social assistance and their interactions with clients.

### **Response from Basic Income Peterborough Network**

Social Services staff met with representatives from the Basic Income Peterborough Network (BIPN) on November 22, 2016 to discuss and gain their perspective of the report. The BIPN has developed a number of strategies to provide input to the provincial consultation including:

- Meeting with Jeff Leal to discuss the consultations.
- They have registered members for the consultations in Cobourg, Oshawa and Scarborough and are encouraging people to complete the online survey.
- The BIPN had continued to solicit resolution endorsements and have secured more since the publication of “Finding a Better Way” (see Appendix B)
- The BIPN are also participating in creating “vignettes” about the impacts a BIG could have in the form of videos which are available online through the Nourish Project.
- The BIPN held at least 2 or 3 “pop- up” conversations in January and a community consultation dinner on January 26<sup>th</sup>. The results of the local consultation will be submitted to the province.

The BIPN has also developed a set of principles that they hope the pilot will follow. The principles are:

- No one involved in the BIG pilot project, nor anyone participating in the program, once it is developed, should be any worse off than they are now. This means that other services and supports must be continued (e.g. Dental benefits, housing supports, child care subsidies, ODSP supports etc...) and that the amount of income which is provided takes into account the real cost of living and is enough to adequately live on.
- Basic Income should be available for anyone and everyone, who has an income below a set level. This means that there should be no debt level requirements, no proof of job search, etc....

- BIG does not take away the need for increases in minimum wage, pay equity, or other ways working can make sure a person's life get better. A Basic Income is meant to help people, not act as a subsidy for those wishing to pay people less than human effort is worth.
- BIG must be provided to Indigenous Communities in a way that respects their autonomy, and allows them to say how it is delivered in their communities.
- BIG must recognize all basic needs in Canada. These include: food, physical and mental health, housing, clothing, transportation, and internet/communication services.

These principles have been echoed by many of the provincial consultation participants. The province has been posting summaries of each consultation shortly after the event. As of mid-January, there have been approximately 26,000 online submissions to the provincial consultation and 90% are in favour of a BIG pilot. There are some general themes that have appeared which include the idea that the pilot should be available for low income Ontarians not just those in receipt of social assistance and that the pilot should not replace services and existing benefits such as dental and housing supports.

### **Other reactions to BIG across the province**

Discussions are ongoing with municipal associations such as Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA) and the Association of Municipalities Ontario (AMO) related to the general municipal reactions to the proposed BIG pilot. Submissions to the consultation are anticipated by the deadline.

In October 2016, Peterborough Public Health released their "Limited Incomes: A Recipe for Food Insecurity" annual report. They state that individuals need to learn more about the concept of a BIG "as a policy that will provide an income sufficient for life's basic needs, guaranteed by the government to all". Additional reports supporting a BIG pilot are expected provincial Public Health Associations in time for the consultation deadlines. It is expected that these reports will provide additional information related to the anticipated health outcomes of BIG.

In November 2016, the University of Waterloo published its 2016 Canadian Index of Wellbeing and they propose a policy recommendations that include a universal basic income for all Canadians as part of the social assistance system as outlined in Appendix C.

There is a number of other websites and articles that reference BIG. For additional information related to BIG and the pilot, there is a list of resources Appendix D.

## Summary

As the Province wraps up their consultation based on Hugh Segal's report "Finding a Better Way" there has been a significant response from institutions, agencies and the general public. Peterborough did not have a provincial consultation but the community was well represented through the coordinating efforts of the BIPN, who supported many opportunities for local residents to provide input. The province has committed to introduce a plan for the pilot by April 2017.

Submitted by,

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### Attachments:

- Appendix A - "Finding a Better Way: A Basic Income Pilot Project for Ontario" by the Hon. Hugh Segal – Executive Summary
- Appendix B - BIPN resolution endorsements
- Appendix C – Canadian Index of Well Being, pages 68 & 69.
- Appendix D – Additional BIG Resources