COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
Housing Services Division & Recreation Division

TO: Chair and Members
   Emergency & Community Services Committee

WARD(S) AFFECTED: CITY WIDE

COMMITTEE DATE: April 15, 2013

SUBJECT/REPORT NO:
YWCA Transitional Living Program and YWCA Senior Centre Operating Agreement
(CS13024) (City Wide)

SUBMITTED BY:
Joe-Anne Priel
General Manager
Community Services Department

PREPARED BY:
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SIGNATURE:

RECOMMENDATION

(a) That the General Manager of the Community Service Department be authorized and directed to provide $250,000 in one-time funding to the YWCA Transitional Living Program from the approved Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative budget; and,

(b) That the General Manager of the Community Services Department be authorized and directed to provide one-time funding in the amount of $55,000 to the YWCA for the operation of two seniors centres in Hamilton, from City of Hamilton's unallocated Capital Reserve # 108020.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the March 25, 2013 Emergency and Community Services Committee meeting, staff were directed to report back on the feasibility of providing one-time funding of up to $250,000 to the YWCA Transitional Living Program.

As well, on March 21, 2013, the Chief Executive Officer of the YWCA requested one-time funding in the amount of $55,000 to their 2013 operating grant to complete necessary repairs at the Ottawa Street location. The letter requesting funding for the Seniors Centre is attached as Appendix A to Report CS13024.

This report provides background information for Emergency and Community Services Committee regarding both funding requests.

YWCA Transitional Living Program

YWCA Hamilton provides a Transitional Living Program at 75 MacNab Street South that provides safe and affordable housing for 65 at risk women who struggle with the impacts of poverty, homelessness and violence. The YWCA has requested one-time funding in the amount of $250,000 to provide additional staffing supports to better meet the needs of the residents. Currently, there is one staff person on site at any given time. There are limitations and risks in operating a program with a staff ratio of 1:65 residents. The additional funding will mitigate the risk by increasing the staff ratio to 2:65 residents.

The YWCA Transitional Living Program is an important housing option within the women’s housing system. Transitional housing has proven to be an effective interim step prior to independent living for women who have experienced homelessness. Transitional housing is usually time limited, communal in nature and with built in staff supports. Mary’s Place, which is Hamilton’s only emergency shelter for single women, is consistently full. Many of the women at Mary’s Place move to the YWCA Transitional Living Program rather than directly to independent living. With support from the YWCA staff, the residents are better able to set goals and successfully move to independence. Transitional housing options such as the YWCA Transitional Living Program are instrumental in shortening the length of stay for women at Mary’s Place and freeing up the beds for other women in need of emergency shelter.

The YWCA has reported that the Transitional Living Program is operating at a deficit and the program is at risk of closure without the additional funding. The YWCA Transitional Living Program receives funding through the federal Homelessness Prevention Strategy (HPS and supports a project entitled Supporting Our Sisters (SOS). This project is a comprehensive service system response for women experiencing homelessness. A mobile, trauma informed case management team supports women
from emergency shelters to housing that will meet their needs. Through the SOS project, the YWCA is being funded for $113,409 for the two-year period of April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2014 for staffing costs. Recently, the City approved an additional $30,000 in HPS funding to further supplement staffing costs at the YWCA.

As well, in 2012, the YWCA Transitional Housing Program received $19,335 from the City's Community Partnership Program (Social and Community Services Stream). The purpose of the funds is to provide subsidies for some of the low income women who cannot afford to pay the full amount of their rent.

The YWCA Hamilton has submitted a comprehensive service plan to support their request for additional funding. If the recommendation for funding is approved, the City will enter into a Service Agreement with the YWCA.

With the introduction of the new Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) restrictions and requirements have been removed that in the past limited the City’s ability to fund transitional housing. The YWCA Transitional Living Program will be considered for future funding under CHPI in 2014. Given the limited amount of funding under CHPI, the YWCA has committed to actively seeking alternate funding from other sources.

**YWCA Seniors Centres**

The YWCA has provided senior citizen programming since 1975 with annual financial support from the City of Hamilton. The City currently provides a grant to the YWCA for the operation of senior centres at 75 MacNab Street South and 52 Ottawa Street North.

The one time funding increase in the amount of $ 55,000 to the YWCA’s operating grant will be utilized to complete necessary repairs at the Ottawa Street location. The indoor pool is in need of repairs to the filtration system and a leak within the pool tank has caused damage to the change rooms. The YWCA has advised that they are unable to continue with the senior and community aquatic programming unless the repairs to the pool are completed.

*Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable*

**FINANCIAL / STAFFING / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Financial:

If approved, the one-time funding request of $250,000 for the YWCA Transitional Housing Program will be funded from the approved CHPI budget. A positive variance
has been identified in the CHPI budget due a lower than anticipated demand for the new Housing Stability Benefit for the first quarter of 2013.

The one time funding increase of $55,000 for the operation of the two senior centres will be funded by the City of Hamilton’s unallocated Capital Reserve # 108020.

Staffing:
There are no staffing implications to Report CS13024

Legal:
There are no legal implications to Report CS13024

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

YWCA Transitional Living Program

During the past year, approximately 150 women have lived in the YWCA Transitional Living Program. Women can self-refer or are referred by community agencies such as emergency shelters. Residents may live in the program for up to one year. Many of the women are facing mental health issues, addictions, abuse, and homelessness. With support from staff, women develop a care plan which identifies goals that help them to secure income and independent housing.

The program is located at 75 McNab St. South. Residents are provided with individual rooms but share a bathroom. There is a common sitting area, television, telephone and kitchenette on each floor. Women participating in the program are responsible for their own meals and can store food on site. In addition to housing, the Transitional Living Program provides crisis intervention, counselling, case management, and group activities. Residents have access to the multi-faceted programs provided at the YWCA Hamilton including health and wellness programs, recreation, seniors centre, and employment skill development programs. The residents may access the pool and fitness programs.

In 2011, the Women’s Housing Planning Collaborative (WHPC) was established. The collaborative consists of community stakeholders and City staff working together to address the needs of at risk and homeless women in Hamilton. The WHPC develops, coordinates, advocates, and facilitates a gender specific and comprehensive system of services to meet the needs of at risk and homeless women. The WHPC developed the Supporting Our Sisters (SOS) project and submitted an application for HPS funding during the last Call for Applications. The YWCA is both a member of the WHPC and a partner in the SOS project.
The service plan submitted by the YWCA identifies that the $250,000 in one-time funding will be allocated to staffing ($199,822), the administration of the program ($25,000) and employee benefits ($25,178).

YWCASeniorsCentres

The YWCA has provided senior citizen programming since 1975 with annual financial support from the City of Hamilton. The YWCA currently operates senior centres at 75 MacNab Street and 52 Ottawa Street North in Hamilton. The programs that are offered at these two sites are available to seniors from across the City. The YWCA seniors’ program has three funding sources:

1. the sale of senior centre memberships at a price established by the City;
2. individual program fees, approved annually by the City; and,
3. an annual operating grant from the City.

The current annual operating grant from both locations is $357,320. This is comprised of a $271,920 grant from the City and $85,400 Elderly Persons Centre grant which is provided by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS/LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

There are no policy implications for Report CS13024.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

The Corporate Services Department, Finance and Administration Section was consulted regarding funding options for this request.

The WHPC was established to address the pressures in the women’s homelessness system. The WHPC considers the YWCA Transitional Living Program an important part of helping women move from homelessness to more sustainable housing. This program helps to alleviate pressures within the women’s emergency shelter system.

ANALYSIS / RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

YWCA Transitional Living Program, in collaboration with the SOS project helped move 43 women into more permanent forms of housing since January 2012. This represents 86% of women discharged from the YWCA Transitional Living program.
Providing one-time funding for this program will support women living in YWCA Transitional Living Program to move into more permanent forms of housing and alleviate pressures within the women’s emergency shelter system.

The YWCA have indicated that the increase in funding will go directly to repair the indoor pool filtration system and interior change rooms at the Ottawa Street location. This additional funding will ensure that there is not an impact to the aquatic programming of this facility.

**ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION**

None

**ALIGNMENT TO THE 2012 – 2015 STRATEGIC PLAN:**

**Strategic Priority #1**  
A Prosperous & Healthy Community  

*WE enhance our image, economy and well-being by demonstrating that Hamilton is a great place to live, work, play and learn.*

**Strategic Objective**

1.5 Support the development and implementation of neighbourhood and City wide strategies that will improve the health and well-being of residents.

**APPENDICES / SCHEDULES**

March 21st, 2013

Jack Brown
Chris Herstek
City of Hamilton
Recreation Division, Community Services
28 James Street North, 3rd Floor
Hamilton, ON L8R 2K1

Dear Jack and Chris,

I am writing to request a onetime increase to our funding for our operating grant for 2013. We have had some unforeseen circumstances resulting from challenges with our pool that will require repairs of $55,000. The scope of work includes replacing a pool filter and repairs to change rooms due to a leak from the pool. This is seriously impacting all of our programming at our Ottawa Street location and we would appreciate your consideration of this request. Please let me know if you require any further information and we look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Denise Doyle
CEO
YWCA Hamilton
Phone: 905-522-9922 ext. 101
Email: ddoyle@ywcahamilton.org