TO: Mayor and Members of Council Committee of the Whole
WARD(S) AFFECTED: CITY WIDE

COMMITTEE DATE: August 10, 2010

SUBJECT/REPORT NO: GTA West Research Study on Health Benefits of Social Housing (CS10074) (City Wide)

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

PREPARED BY: Robert McKnight 905 546-2424 ext. 3728
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SIGNATURE:

RECOMMENDATION

That the General Manager of the Community Services Department, or designate, be authorized to execute Form 1, Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act ss. 1 to 8, attached as Appendix A to Report CS10074, to participate with McMaster University, in the GTA West Research Study on the Health Benefits of Social Housing.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Housing and Homelessness Division, Community Services Department, is participating as one of four municipal social housing Service Managers in a research study to measure the change in health of households before and after placement in social housing. The other participating municipalities are the City of Toronto, the Region of Peel and the Region of Halton. The research project is managed by Dr. James Dunn, who is an Associate Professor, Department of Health, Aging and Society at McMaster University. Dr. Dunn is the Chair of Applied Public Health at McMaster University and a research scientist at St. Michael’s Hospital in Toronto.

Applicants on the Access to Housing co-ordinated waiting list for social housing in Hamilton will be recruited to participate in a survey of their health status at intervals.
before and after being housed. Applicants provide their consent to the City to share their personal information as part of the application process. The results of the research will inform policy development and service planning regarding social housing as well as potential advocacy efforts. This is an important step towards improved evidence-based decision making for this sector. It is anticipated that the research findings will provide invaluable information about affordable housing, neighbourhoods and health issues and will provide important planning information for government at all levels and community agencies.

The research has been designed to comply with all consent and privacy requirements including Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA), and has been approved by the Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation who is funding the study. The research design has also been reviewed and approved by the McMaster University Research Ethics Board.

The MFIPPA permits the City to disclose personal information to others under certain circumstances and the Social Housing Reform Act (SHRA) permits the City to enter into agreements with certain educational institutions for the purpose of providing personal information to be used for research purposes. Execution of the Form 1, Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act ss. 1 to 8 Agreement (attached as Appendix A to Report CS10074), between the City and McMaster University, details these conditions.

Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 4

FINANCIAL / STAFFING / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: All costs associated with the research study will be borne by the research sponsor through the research funding.

Staffing: There are no staffing implications.

Legal: The SHRA permits the City, in its capacity as Service Manager, to enter into an agreement with a body, which is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act or MFIPPA to disclose personal information for the purposes of, among other things, conducting research. Applicants were advised at the time of collecting personal information that such information may be used for this purpose. Legal Services has reviewed the agreement to ensure it satisfies the requirements of the SHRA.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND
In 2008, Dr. James Dunn, who is a noted researcher in the area of health impacts of housing, received funding through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to undertake a research study called the GTA West Social Housing and Health Study. Since September 2009, the GTA West Social Housing and Health Study was managed by the Survey Research Unit of St. Michael's Hospital's Centre for Research on Inner City Health in Toronto, under the direction of Dr. Dunn. More recently, McMaster University joined the project in order to provide better co-ordination of the project across the four study sites.

Dr. Dunn’s broader research program focuses on questions regarding the social determinants of health and the influence of economic and social policies and programs on inequalities in health and child development with a focus on urban housing and neighbourhoods. He is co-lead on an international study of the relationship between income distribution and population health in North American metropolitan areas. In addition, he is working on several projects related to the role of housing and neighbourhoods in the production of social inequalities in health.

The implementation phase of the research is scheduled to begin in the summer of 2010. As this project measures the health of households; both pre and post placement in social housing, the final results of the research will not be available until the end of 2011 or early 2012.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The research design for the GTA West Social Housing and Health Study has been vetted through the Research Ethics Board at McMaster University and St. Michael’s Hospital to ensure a high ethical standard for consent and privacy considerations for households participating in the research, as well as compliance with statutory requirements under MFIPPA and SHRA.

**RELEVANT CONSULTATION**

City Manager’s Office, Legal Services Division, Commercial/Policy/Development Section

Corporate Services, Office of the City Clerk, Records and Freedom of Information Section

**ANALYSIS / RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION**

Execution of the Agreement between the City and McMaster University will enable the City to participate in the research study while adhering to MFIPPA and SHRA requirements. The results of measuring the health benefits of social housing in
Hamilton, and in comparison to other municipalities will have significant implications for policy development locally and for advocacy efforts concerning social housing.

**ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION**

Council may choose to not participate in the study. By not participating, the City of Hamilton will not have the benefit of the research findings specific to Hamilton for local planning purposes.

**CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN**


*Intergovernmental Relationships*
- Influence federal and provincial policy development to benefit Hamilton

*Social Development*
- Everyone has a home they can afford that is well maintained and safe
- Residents in need have access to adequate support services

*Healthy Community*
- Adequate access to food, water, shelter and income, safety, work, recreation and support for all (Human Services)

**APPENDICES / SCHEDULES**

Appendix “A” to Report CS10074: Form 1, *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* – ss. 1 to 8
Appendix A to Report CS10074
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Form 1
Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

This agreement is made between McMaster University, referred to below as “McMaster” and the City of Hamilton, referred to below as the “City”.

The Social Housing Reform Act, 2000, S.O. 2000, c.27 (“SHRA”) permits a service manager to enter into agreements with a body that is an institution under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.F.31 or under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990 c. M.56 as amended (“MFIPPA”) to disclose personal information subject to the terms and conditions set out herein.

Dr. James Dunn (the principal investigator) of McMaster has requested access to the following records that contain personal information and are in the custody or under control of the City:

Names and telephone numbers of individuals who are on the wait list for social housing with the City. This personal information will be used for the purpose of contacting individuals to invite them to participate in a research study on housing and health being conducted by McMaster under voluntary, informed consent (the “Study Purpose”).

The City is prepared to furnish the requested personal information to McMaster in accordance with the requirements of MFIPPA and the terms of this Agreement. The City will ensure that it has the authority to provide access to the requested personal information for the Study Purpose.

In receiving the requested records McMaster understands and promises to abide by the following terms and conditions:

1. McMaster will not use the information in the records for any purpose other than the Study Purpose under the supervision of the principal investigator unless McMaster has the City’s written authorization to do so.
2. McMaster will give access to the personal information in a form in which the individual to whom it relates can be identified only to persons who have a need to know for the purposes of undertaking the study and who have executed a Research’s Undertaking in the form attached hereto as Appendix A. McMaster will provide a copy of each executed Research’s Undertaking to the City.
3. McMaster will keep the information in a physically secure location to which access is given only to the persons mentioned above.
4. McMaster will destroy all individual identifiers in the information by Dec. 31, 2013.
5. McMaster will not contact any individual to whom the personal information relates directly or indirectly, without prior written authority of the City. Such authority is hereby granted, for contacting individuals for the Study Purpose.
6. McMaster will ensure that no personal information will be used or disclosed in a form in which the individual to whom it relates can be identified without the written authority of the City.

7. McMaster will notify the City in writing immediately upon becoming aware that any of the conditions set out in this agreement have been breached.

8. If a privacy breach occurs as a result of McMaster’s actions, McMaster will immediately notify the City of any unauthorized access to the personal information supplied under this agreement, and will provide a report to the City detailing an investigation of how the unauthorized action occurred, the extent of the unauthorized access, McMaster efforts to contain the loss, and any mitigation efforts to prevent a similar occurrence. McMaster also agrees, at its own cost, to notify the Office of the Information Privacy Commissioner of Ontario of the breach as well as all affected individuals and provide notice of the privacy breach, the nature of the information accessed and potential steps the affected individuals should take to mitigate any harm caused by the privacy breach.

Signed at ___________________ this ________ day of ___________________, 20____.

McMaster University      City of Hamilton

Kathy Charters
Executive Director, Research Services
McMaster University
1280 Main Street West, Hamilton, ON
L8S 4M4
Telephone: 905-525-9140 ext. 23735

I have the authority to bind McMaster University
Appendix A

RESEARCHER’S UNDERTAKING

I, the undersigned, acknowledge that McMaster University (“McMaster”) may make certain information, specifically the names and telephone numbers (collectively “Personal Information”) of applicants on the wait list for social housing in the City of Hamilton, (the "City") available to me in connection with my work on a research study entitled “GTA West Social Housing and Health Study” (the “Research Study”) conducted under the direction of Dr. James Dunn.

In consideration of Personal Information being or to be made available to me and other valuable consideration, I agree that I:

1. have requested access to the Personal Information described above, and unless I receive the City’s prior written authorization to do otherwise, shall use it only for the purposes of:
   a. conducting research that will assess the impact of being re-housed into social housing on mental health and health behaviours of adults aged 18 to 64 and on behaviour problems of children aged 3 to 10; and
   b. assessing changes in housing quality, neighbourhood quality, work and work readiness, social supports and perceptions of crime and safety;

2. shall abide by the provisions of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56, and any other applicable laws, as amended, and not disclose the Personal Information to any person other than the City, McMaster, and/or other persons, on a need to know basis, who have signed a Researcher's Undertaking similar to this document;

3. shall keep the Personal Information in a physically secure location which is accessible only to me and to the persons mentioned in paragraph 2;

4. shall destroy all individual identifiers in the Personal Information by ________________;

5. shall not use or disclose Personal Information in a form in which the individual to whom it relates can be identified without the prior written authorization of the City; AND

6. shall immediately notify McMaster in writing upon becoming aware that any of the conditions set out above have been breached including any unauthorized access to the Personal Information supplied to me in connection with my work on the Research Study, and shall provide all reasonable assistance to the City and McMaster to rectify that breach.

Version June 3, 2010

GTA West- Social Housing and Health Study
Signed at________________________this____day of________________, 20____.

SIGNED, SEALED AND DELIVERED  
In the presence of  

Witness:_________________________  
Signature__________________________

Print Name:______________________  
Print Name:________________________