

Region of Waterloo
Chief Administrative Officer
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

To: Community and Health Services Committee
Meeting Date: December 6, 2022
Report Title: Reconciliation and Equity Investment 2022 Update

1. Recommendation

For information.

2. Purpose / Issue:

To provide an update regarding the Region's Reconciliation and Equity Investments (REI) fund originally approved as part of the 2021 Region Plan and Budget.

3. Strategic Plan:

Advancing equity, diversity and inclusion supports the Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Communities and Responsive and Engaging Public services focus areas of the strategic plan, specifically including objectives: 4.3.1, 4.3.2, 4.3.3, 4.3.4, 4.5.3, 5.1.3.

4. Report Highlights:

- Regional staff continue to work in innovative ways to facilitate system change through the REI fund. See Appendix A for investment updates.
- In addition to continuing progress with existing initiatives, REI are making significant strides towards sustainability, building trust and increasing capacity with community groups.
- The Immigration Partnership's Fund for Immigrant Economic Wellbeing, received \$1 million of the Region's REI fund. The fund successfully launched a community led funding campaign and has selected community-based initiatives that will positively impact the employment, entrepreneurship and economic wellbeing of immigrants. See appendix B for more information.
- The Community Capacity Building fund, using \$2 million in REI funds, will bolster communities that have been historically excluded from funding. In alignment with the council-approved Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan a priority has been placed on funding that enables self determination. These funds encourage capacity building in organizations that are led by and serve

Indigenous, Black, racialized and marginalized populations in the Region who continue to face systemic barriers.

5. Background:

The diversity of Reconciliation and Equity investments reflects the Region's commitment to making transformational systemic change across the organization to create better outcomes for all residents. The impact of this work extends beyond new ways of working, directly to those in our community. For some stories of impact, see Appendix C.

6. Area Municipality Communication and Public/Stakeholder Engagement:

Area Municipality Communication

- Staff will develop a community update to highlight the impact and stories from those most impacted by these investments. This communication will be shared with the community and council in the new year.
- Communications related to the most recent funding decisions through the Community Capacity Building and Economic Wellbeing funds have been distributed to community.

Public/Stakeholder Engagement:

- Upstream and Community Capacity Building funds are closely aligned to ensure community engagement in the implementation of the funding processes.
- Community engagement sessions were hosted to gather community input and increase awareness of the funding opportunities.
- As was developed in the Region of Waterloo Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan, the community's voice and an emphasis on transparency were prioritized through the application and review process. Staff will continue to be guided by these principles through the next stages.

7. Financial Implications:

Funding for initiatives to advance equity, diversity and inclusion is supported through the Region's equity investment: \$5M in 2021 and \$10M in 2022 and future years. The property tax levy supports this investment: \$5M in 2021 increasing to \$10M in 2022 with the \$5M increase in 2022 being phase-in over two years utilizing a one-time contribution from the Tax Stabilization Reserve (\$2.5M) in 2022.

Including a carryover of unspent funds from 2021, the Region has \$14.8M of available equity funding during 2022. It is projected that close to \$6M will be distributed during 2022 and in addition, there are approximately \$2.5M in future capital commitments.

8. Conclusion / Next Steps:

Staff will continue to manage and support the ongoing projects associated with

these investments. Council and community will be provided regular updates and staff will continue to engage across departments and with community to build relationships and work towards equity outcomes.

9. Attachments:

Appendix A – Reconciliation and Equity Investments Updates

Appendix B – Immigrant Economic Wellbeing Fund Overview

Appendix C – Reconciliation and Equity Investments Impact Stories

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