

Our File/N/Réf.
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DATE 29 February 2000

TO/DEST. Co-ordinator
Corporate Services and Economic Development Committee

FROM/EXP. Commissioner, Social Services Department

SUBJECT/OBJET **OVERBROOK-FORBES COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTRE
RENOVATIONS FUNDING REQUEST**

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION

That the Corporate Services and Economic Development Committee recommend Council approve a one-time grant from the Region Wide Capital Reserve Fund in the amount of \$270,000 towards renovation costs associated with the move of Overbrook-Forbes Community Resource Centre.

BACKGROUND

The delivery of social and health services through a network of neighbourhood based Community Resource/Health Centres is unique to the Region of Ottawa-Carleton. Since 1972, the Region has provided core assistance to the Centres.

DISCUSSION

The Centre

The Overbrook-Forbes Community Resource Centre has been providing support to low income individuals and families for the past 18 years. Its catchment area covers north-east Ottawa (Overbrook, Forbes, Manor Park). 40% of its population aged 15+ does not participate in the labour force, it has an 11.5% unemployment rate and 50% of households earn less than \$20,000 per year. Over 90% of the clients served by the Centre are on social assistance and the remainder are the working poor. The Health Department has identified this area as one of the highest

concentration of at-risk seniors. The Centre has witnessed a 50% increase in requests for services since 1995 and has responded to these by increasing some of its resources either through project grants, partnership agreements with other social service agencies, fundraising efforts and increasing its volunteer pool by 300%.

Present Facility

The Centre is currently located on Lola Street, near Coventry Road, next to a concentrated area of low-income housing but at one extremity of its catchment area. The Centre presently rents 5,136 square feet of space, they require more appropriate space and an increase in square footage to continue to offer their services. The Centre responds to many needs through the provision of counselling, crisis and support services, community development, employment programs, programs for seniors and family health education. Other service providers are interested in offering services or increasing their hours of services at the Centre including the Public Health Department, however the Centre cannot accommodate them due to lack of space. The Centre is pursuing opportunities to offer technical assistance to its clients, such as access to computers, as well as programs specifically targeting young children and their parents but the current space cannot accommodate the program requirements. For the first time in years, the Centre has not been able to accommodate students on placement or project staff because of lack of space. Appendix A outlines the services presently provided at the Centre and the services planned for 2000 and 2001.

Site Selection

The Centre's current lease is up for renewal on August 31, 2000. The landlord has provided the Centre with an offer to renew their net lease at \$8.95 per square foot, which represents an additional estimated operating cost of \$12,400 per annum. The Centre is reluctant to accept this offer, because of both the financial and service impacts.

The Centre commissioned a review of the real estate market last spring. The factors taken into consideration were: zoning, cost, condition, accessibility, flexibility in converting the space, transit and parking, market conditions and subdivision of space. Wheelchair accessibility was also a key criteria. Most of the buildings in the Centre's area with moderate rents lack adequate wheelchair access above the first floor, and therefore only first storey space was seriously considered. Many clients walk or ride the bus to the Centre; therefore, frequent bus service with a stop nearby was also a key requirement.

The review determined that other private options were not affordable (an average of \$25 a square foot for similar set up). However, an interesting opportunity has unfolded with St. Charbel's Church purchasing a school at 235 Donald Street. This congregation has invited charities and non-profit groups to lease space at a modest cost in order to create a multi-service site "The Al Hardini Centre" for people in the community. They have offered space that is appropriate to the Centre's needs both in space and location and at a very affordable cost (\$8.00 per square foot for regular space and \$4.00 per square foot for warehousing space including GST). Their offer translates into almost doubling the Centre's current square footage while maintaining the Centre's current rental costs.

Since the building was formerly used as a large secondary school, it has certain amenities that are of use to the Centre, for example access to a gym and to a cafeteria. The Centre's services will complement the existing agencies at this site such as:

Ottawa Valley Autistic Homes Day Program (OVAH)
 Snowsuit Fund
 St. John Ambulance Training Centre
 Children at Risk -- Communication Development Program & Nursery School
 Centre Réveil
 Association pour l'intégration sociale d'Ottawa-Carleton
 Eagle Centre
 Roberts Smart Centre.

Future Space Options as Result of Amalgamation

In light of the municipal amalgamation, the Property Services Division of the Planning and Development Approvals Department did a review of all existing Regional and Municipal building assets in the catchment area of the Overbrooke-Forbes Community Resource Centre. It has been determined that there is no building asset even close to 9,000 square feet with the exception of the City of Ottawa No. 6 Fire Station situated on Beechwood Avenue. It is apparent that the amalgamation process will not result in a space option for future occupancy for this Community Resource Centre.

Funding Requirement

Overbrook-Forbes Community Resource Centre has applied to the Region of Ottawa-Carleton for \$270,000 to assist with the rehabilitation and renovations of the school on Donald Street. The total capital cost for fitting up and furnishing the space is estimated at \$334,000.

The renovations required include a central air conditioning system and retrofitting the space to accommodate the appropriate number of offices. Many of the larger rooms and the warehousing area need minimal work.

Renovating is not a first for the Centre but requesting financial assistance from government for it is. In the recent past the Centre has been successful in renovating their current space solely with in-kind donations of goods and services worth \$40,000. So far, the Centre has identified a number of avenues for soliciting financial and in-kind (goods and/or services) donations to cover costs related to the move and renovations for the new location. They have also raised \$30,000 and are launching a fundraising campaign to solicit more support from local service clubs, businesses and individuals in the community. They have been successful in acquiring a once a week timeslot at a local bingo hall since January 2, 2000. In-kind donations have also been received from a number of consultants they have worked with, through reduced fee schedules and other services for the renovation. They also count on their current volunteer pool, many of which use the Centre's services, to help with the relocation.

In order to ensure that any public funds committed to this project would be protected, a legal agreement would require conditions with respect to the length of tenancy.

CONSULTATION

There was no public consultation for this report.

CONCLUSION

In light of this catchment area's concentrated high-risk population and the lack of local resources to serve them, it is crucial that the Centre ensures an adequate infrastructure to offer services. Current space no longer meets minimum requirements and the current lease expires August 31, 2000. The present landlord is proposing an annual rent increase of \$12,400 per year. The option of moving to the Al Hardini Centre would provide the Centre with an additional 3,890 square feet of space at current rental costs. The church will not be able to hold this particular space open for very long since it is store front and the proposed rent is attractive at less than market cost.

*Approved by
Dick Stewart*

Attach. (1)

FINANCE DEPARTMENT COMMENT

The awarding of a capital grant for \$270,000 was not included in the 2000 Budget as adopted by Council on December 22, 1999. Should the Committee wish to recommend that Council approve this capital grant, uncommitted funds are available in the Region Wide Capital Reserve Fund. The uncommitted balance in this Fund as of December 31, 1999, is approximately \$2.8 million, subject to Council's consideration of the financial assistance package of \$720,000 as recommended in the staff report entitled "Under One Roof". The Reserve Fund balance does not reflect the 1999 year end operating results of the Region Wide Operating Fund.

TRANSITION BOARD APPROVAL

The capital grant request of \$270,000 was not included in the 2000 budget as adopted by Council on December 22, 1999. Accordingly, under the Financial Guidelines as adopted by the Ottawa Transition Board, this request will be subject to Board approval.

*Approved by
J.C. LeBelle
Finance Commissioner*

OVERBROOK-FORBES COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTRE

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

LOCATION - 235 DONALD STREET
(AL ARDINI CENTRE)

Office Space & Circulation 6,526 ft²

Food Bank & Youth Drop-in 2,500 ft²

TOTAL AREA 9,026

GROSS RENT PER YEAR \$62,208

GROSS RENT PER FT² \$6.89

TOTAL CAPITAL COST \$334,000

CONTRIBUTIONS \$64,000

REGIONAL GRANT \$270,000

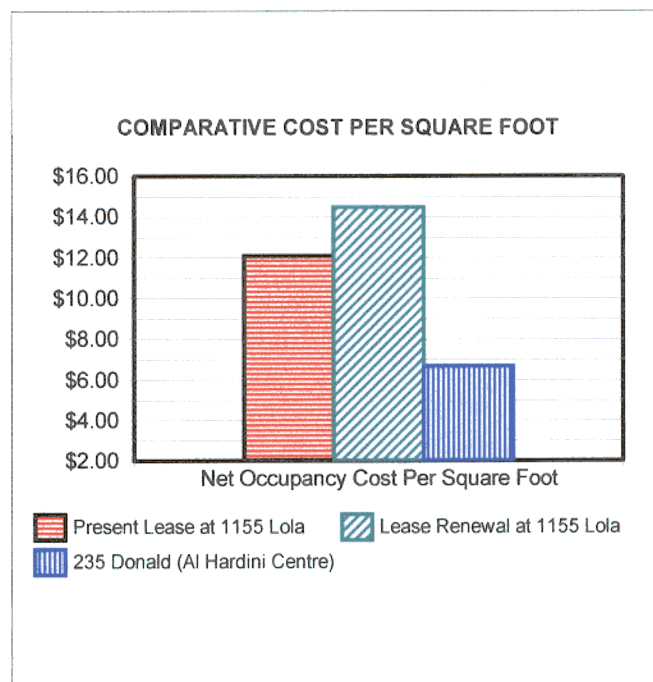
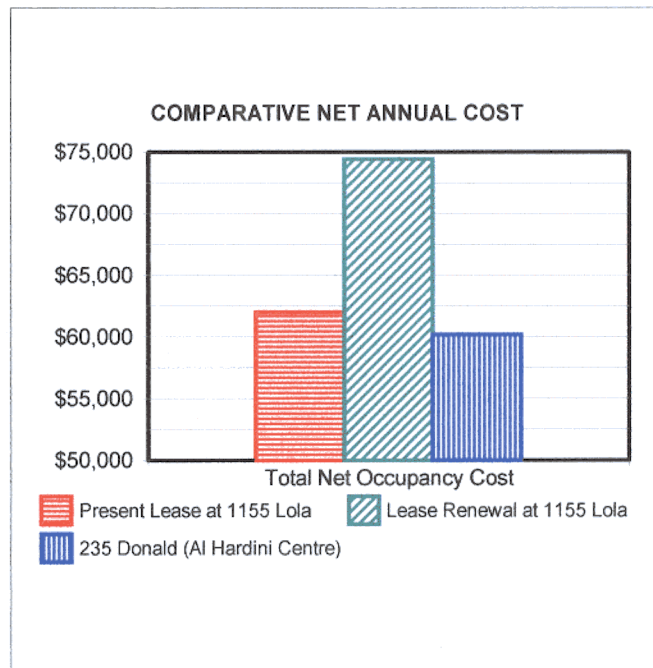
BENEFITS

Annual Cost Savings Of \$14,242
19%

Savings Over 5 Years \$71,208

Space Increased by 3,889 ft²
76%

Additional Workstations 18



COST SAVINGS AND INCREASED SERVICE CAPABILITY