

Report to/Rapport au :

Planning Committee
Comité de l'urbanisme

and Council / et au Conseil

February 19, 2013
19 février 2013

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CITY WIDE / À L'ÉCHELLE DE LA VILLE

Ref N°: ACS2013-COS-CSS-0003

**SUBJECT: INVESTMENT IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR ONTARIO (IAH)
ONTARIO RENOVATES PROGRAM – OTTAWA**

**OBJET : PROGRAMME D'INVESTISSEMENT DANS LE LOGEMENT
ABORDABLE DE L'ONTARIO (PILAO)
PROGRAMME RÉNOVATIONS ONTARIO – OTTAWA**

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Planning Committee recommend Council approve:

1. That the local priorities for the Ontario Renovates Component of the Investment in Affordable Housing for Ontario (IAH) Program be low income seniors and persons with disabilities and that the program provide, in accordance with the IAH program guidelines, the following:
 - a) Grants up to \$3,500 where a person has a disability and forgivable loans up to \$15,000 for eligible households requiring repairs or accessibility related modifications;
 - b) Forgivable loans up to \$15,000 for eligible low income senior households requiring repairs;
 - c) Forgivable loans up to \$15,000 per dwelling unit to qualified landlords for accessibility related modifications.
2. That the Administrator of Housing Services be delegated the authority to provide exemptions to recommendation number 1) above, in order to resolve situations where the current conditions of a home threaten the

health and safety of an eligible household or their ability to continue to live in their home, provided that such exemptions meet the requirements of the IAH Service Manager Administration Agreement of the IAH Program and the IAH Program Guidelines.

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

Que le Comité de l'urbanisme recommande au Conseil d'approuver :

1. que les personnes âgées à faible revenu et les personnes handicapées soient considérées comme des priorités locales pour le volet Rénovations Ontario du Programme d'investissement dans le logement abordable de l'Ontario (PILAO) et que le programme consente ce qui suit, conformément aux directives du PILAO :
 - a) des subventions allant jusqu'à 3 500 dollars quand une personne est handicapée et des prêts-subventions allant jusqu'à 15 000 dollars pour les ménages admissibles nécessitant des réparations ou des modifications pour accroître l'accessibilité;
 - b) des prêts-subventions allant jusqu'à 15 000 dollars pour les personnes âgées à faible revenu admissibles dont la résidence nécessite des réparations;
 - c) des prêts-subventions allant jusqu'à 15 000 dollars par logement aux propriétaires d'immeubles locatifs admissibles pour des modifications visant à accroître l'accessibilité;
2. que l'on confère les pouvoirs nécessaires à l'administrateur des services de logement afin qu'il puisse fournir des exemptions à la recommandation 1) ci-dessus afin de résoudre des situations où les conditions actuelles de la résidence menacent la santé et la sécurité des habitants d'un ménage admissible ou leur capacité à continuer de vivre dans leur maison, pourvu que ces exemptions respectent les exigences de l'accord d'administration des gestionnaires de services du PILAO et les directives du PILAO.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report establishes local priorities under the Ontario Renovates Program component of the Investment in Affordable Housing for Ontario (IAH) Program that advances the City's Strategic priorities for seniors and persons with disabilities. The recommendation for the Ontario Renovates Program in Ottawa is to establish as a local priority modifications and repairs for low income seniors and households where one or more persons live with a disability. The program will also be available to landlords who apply to modify their existing units and buildings to make them more accessible. The Ontario Renovates Program in Ottawa is planned to commence on April 2nd, 2013 and operate

for 2 years, with an allocation of \$1.2M each year until all provincial and federal funding is committed or the expiry of the IAH program in March 2015.

With the approval of this report, staff would promote the Ontario Renovates Program, provide information sessions and start accepting applications on or before April 2, 2013.

City funds are not required to deliver the Ontario Renovates Program in Ottawa.

BACKGROUND

The Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) previously administered by Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation (CMHC) since 1974 and the Home Adaptations for Seniors Independence Program by Service Canada were phased out by the federal government on March 31st, 2012. Service Managers were given the option to use affordable housing funding to deliver these programs under the new Ontario Renovates Component of the Investment in Affordable Housing for Ontario (IAH) Program. In January 2012, Council approved \$1.2M for 2013 and 2014 respectively, in federal and provincial funding from the (IAH) program, for a total of \$2.4M and directed staff to develop guidelines (local priorities) for the administration of the program.

A review of the Ontario Renovates Component Guidelines and consultation with other Ontario Service Managers and agencies regarding existing and planned programs was conducted. Staff are recommending that the funding be used to facilitate repairs and modifications for low income seniors and persons with disabilities so they may remain housed independently in their communities. This approach builds on strategies and priorities in the City's Strategic Plan, the Older Adult Plan, the Poverty Reduction Plan and helps advance accessibility modifications in the built environment under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). Council's allocation of \$2.4M toward the program will allow the delivery of grants and forgivable loans from April 1st 2013 through to March 31st 2015, or until funds are expended, whichever occurs first.

DISCUSSION

Local Priorities

Given the expected demand for this funding program, the Ontario Renovates Program in Ottawa will be focused on seniors and persons with disabilities. To maximize the number of households assisted under these two priorities, grants and forgivable loans will be provided up to \$3,500 and \$15,000, respectively, taking into consideration past program average per unit allocations previously granted by CMHC and similar grant programs in other municipalities. Therefore the Ontario Renovates Program in Ottawa will be structured into the following three components:

- 1) Grants and forgivable loans, as described in the IAH Ontario Renovates Component Guidelines, up to \$3,500 and \$15,000, respectively, for households where a member of the household lives with a disability and requires repairs,

adaptations or home modifications essential to safety and the ability of the person with the disability to continue to live independently.

- 2) Forgivable loans, as described in the IAH Ontario Renovates Component Guidelines, up to \$15,000 for low income senior households who own their own home and require repairs, adaptations or home modifications essential to their safety and their ability to continue live independently.
- 3) Forgivable loans, as described in the IAH Ontario Renovates Component Guidelines, up to \$15,000 for accessibility modifications, to qualifying rental accommodations (including apartment buildings and rooming houses), to modify a building or unit to better accommodate seniors or persons with disabilities. Qualifying rental accommodations are rental buildings with low to moderate income tenants paying a maximum monthly rent that does not exceed the City's Average Monthly Rent as determined by CMHC in the fall annual market rental survey. For example, the rent for a one bedroom apartment under the program must be \$899 per month or less, for up to 15 years (subject to increases in the CMHC market rental survey).

Using the criteria above, the Ontario Renovates Program in Ottawa is estimated to assist approximately 200 senior and/or disabled individuals and households with limited financial means to undertake necessary modifications and health and safety repairs.

Eligible Repairs

Eligible repairs for qualified seniors under the program may include repairs and rehabilitation required to make a house safe while improving energy efficiency. Examples of permitted repairs include, but are not limited to:

- heating systems, chimneys
- doors and windows
- foundations, roofs, walls, floors and ceilings
- electrical systems, plumbing
- septic systems, well water, and well drilling

Examples of modifications to increase accessibility related to housing and reasonably related to the occupant's disability include, but are not limited to:

- ramps and handrails
- chair and bath lifts
- height adjustments to countertops
- cues for doorbells/fire alarms

Maximum Income Limits

The maximum eligible income set by the Province for a household in Ottawa to qualify for this program is established at \$82,600 for the City of Ottawa. Staff is recommending that the maximum income limits for the program reflect current city affordability policies,

such as those established in the Official Plan at the 30th income percentile (\$50,039), typical seniors income based on Old Age Security (OAS), Canada Pension Plan (CPP), (approximately \$38,000 for a couple) and also taking into consideration minimum and liveable wages, household size and cost of living as established by Statistics Canada Low Income Cut Off's (LICO). Using only one of the afore mentioned income indicators may result in the maximum income limits being too high, too broad (e.g the City's 30th income percentile) or perhaps too low (i.e., LICO), restricting access to many households in need of the funding. As such, staff are recommending that the income levels in Table 1 be used as a guideline to determine eligibility under the program.

The recommended income levels take into consideration the typical income of a low to modest income senior household, households on minimum wage, as well as family size. An asset limit up to \$50,000 will also be established, and will apply to cash in hand or liquid assets easily converted into cash in a short period of time. Other criteria in the program will be in accordance with the IAH Program Guidelines such as the maximum qualifying house price limit being based on the average Resale Price as determined by MLS® and verified by CMHC.

Household Size	Maximum Gross Annual Income
One Person	\$31,500
Two Person	\$39,200
Three Person	\$48,200
Four Person	\$58,400
Five Person	\$66,200
Six Person	\$74,700
Seven or more Persons	\$82,600

Administration

The overall administration of the program will be carried out in accordance with Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) IAH Program Guidelines which require MMAH approval of funding for each applicant and monitoring of the program through the Provincial Affordable Housing Information System (AIMS). Under the IAH Guidelines, accessibility-related grants up to \$3,500 do not require repayment. The period for forgiveness for home owners for home repair projects is 10 years and for landlords is 15 years. Eligible households and landlords will be permitted one loan or grant for the duration of the program.

Recognizing the need for flexibility, it is recommended that the Administrator of Housing Services be delegated authority to approve funding for repairs above \$15,000 in the case of extenuating circumstances. Such exemptions may include allowing a forgivable loan to exceed the \$15,000 limit in circumstances where (i) the current conditions of a home threaten the health and safety of a household or their ability to continue to live in their home considering its condition (ii) the need for additional loan funds are justified and supported by staff; and (iii) the additional loan funds are allowed under the IAH Program Guidelines.

No additional City funds are required to deliver the Ontario Renovates Program in Ottawa. The provincial and federal governments have not committed further funding beyond the expiry of the IAH Program in March 2015, as such the program will be closed once allocated funds are expended or the program expires, whichever occurs first.

Information about the program, process and applications will be available through the City's website, at Community Social Support Centres, and by calling (613) 580-2424 ext 12300 (a phone extension dedicated to the program). Staff will promote the program and provide information sessions to organizations that represent and / or support seniors or people with disabilities prior to distribution and accepting applications for funding on or before April 2, 2013.

RURAL IMPLICATIONS

Residents meeting the criteria for Ontario Renovates in rural areas of the City will be eligible for Ontario Renovates funding.

CONSULTATION

Housing Services Branch will begin conducting information sessions with community groups, support agencies and organizations that represent and/or provide services to persons with disabilities and/or seniors.

COMMENTS BY THE WARD COUNCILLOR(S)

Not applicable.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal impediments to the implementation of the report recommendations.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk management implications associated with this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no additional financial implications as a result of the report recommendations. Council previously approved the IAH program which included 100% Provincial/Federal funding for the Ontario Renovates program, as well as up to 5% of the IAH program funding for administration costs for additional staffing over the length of the program.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

The Ontario Renovates Program in Ottawa provides funding for accessibility related modifications to residential buildings that are home to low income seniors and persons with disabilities. The program will fund accessibility related modifications that affect the built environment and provide for homes that are accessible and barrier free.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

There are no technology implications associated with this report.

TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES

The recommendations in this report advance the Strategic Priorities in the 2011-2014 Strategic Plan Priority for Healthy and Caring Communities. This strategic priority is to help all residents enjoy a high quality of life and contribute to community well-being through healthy, safe, secure, accessible and inclusive places.

Strategic Objective: HC1 in the Plan – Achieve equity and inclusion for an aging and diverse population and highlights the need to accommodate a diverse and aging population by effectively planning and implementing changes to major infrastructure development and service delivery.

The focus on seniors and persons with disabilities will help older adults age in place and will also assist landlords in their compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)

DISPOSITION

Staff will start promoting the Ontario Renovates Program and begin providing information sessions prior to distributing and accepting applications for funding on or before April 2nd, 2013.