

**To:** Warden and Members of County Council

**From:** Director of Human Services

## **Renovation and Upgrades to 75 Graham Street, Woodstock**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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1. That County Council authorize the allocation of up to \$500,000 from the Child Care and Early Years Mitigation funding and \$350,000 from Facilities Reserve to facilitate the renovation and required updates to the County owned building located at 75 Graham Street, Woodstock for the purpose of delivering EarlyON Child and Family Centre programs and services;
2. And further, that County Council authorize staff to release a tender to select a contractor to complete the necessary renovations and upgrades at 75 Graham Street, Woodstock.

### **REPORT HIGHLIGHTS**

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- The purpose of this report is to obtain Council's approval to expend up to \$500,000 from the child care and early years mitigation funding and \$350,000 from Facilities Reserve to support the renovations and required updates to the County owned building located at 75 Graham Street, Woodstock
- The proposed renovation includes basic functionality and accessibility items, as well as maintenance/renewal items that have been deferred in recent years with the building being vacant
- The proposed renovation will facilitate the delivery of in-person EarlyON Child and Family Centre programs and services as a main site in Woodstock, as well as the central hub for outreach programs across the county
- Construction is expected to commence in the fall of 2021, with occupancy anticipated by the beginning of 2022

### **Implementation Points**

Upon Council's approval, staff will issue a construction tender to allow proponents to submit bids to carry out the necessary renovations and upgrades at 75 Graham Street, Woodstock.

### **Financial Impact**

The County holds a historic allocation of \$965,000 mitigation funding from the Ministry of Education for Child Care and Early Years initiatives. These funds are required to be allocated







to a child care and early years project and have been approved by the Ministry of Education. Staff are seeking Council's approval to allocate \$500,000 from the Child Care Mitigation Funds.

Staff are also seeking Council's approval to allocate \$350,000 from the Facilities Reserves to address basic building functionality and accessibility items such as HVAC system, exterior doors, basic finishes and accessible washrooms and entrance for this project. As part of the 2021 approved budget, the 2021 projected year-end balance of the Facilities Reserve was \$2.4 million. The ten year Capital Reserve Plan projects the Facilities Reserve balance to be approximately \$860,000 in 2023, prior to increasing to \$2.4 by 2025. Therefore, there are sufficient funds in the Facilities Reserve to address the \$350,000 required to update this facility for the proposed use.

## **Communications**

This report deals with funding allocation from the Provincial government, as well as funding from Facilities Reserves to complete renovations and necessary upgrades on an existing County owned property. In light of this, details of this report have been shared with the Ministry of Education and County staff (Corporate Services, Public Works).

## **Strategic Plan (2020-2022)**

					
<b>WORKS WELL TOGETHER</b>	<b>WELL CONNECTED</b>	<b>SHAPES THE FUTURE</b>	<b>INFORMS &amp; ENGAGES</b>	<b>PERFORMS &amp; DELIVERS</b>	<b>POSITIVE IMPACT</b>
1.ii.		3.ii.	4.ii.	5.ii.	6.i.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Background**

On December 9, 2020, County Council considered recommendations in Report No. HS 2020-11, entitled "Early On Program – Location of Main Centre", and approved \$58,700 from the Child Care Mitigation Funds to procure architectural design work to update the County-owned vacant facility located at 75 Graham Street as the main centre for EarlyON programming.

As the service system manager for EarlyON Child and Family Centre programs, Oxford County is required to establish mandatory centres that are community-based in order to meet the needs of families in the community. Mandatory centres are physical program sites where children, parents and caregivers can participate in child and family programs in-person.

The county-owned property at 75 Graham provides a central location in Woodstock that is easily accessed through various transportation means. Its close proximity to other services for families makes it an ideal location to provide programs to families, as well as to intensify partnerships within the community.

## **Comments**

The proposed renovations will allow for year-round, centre-based core services for EarlyON programs in Woodstock, as well as providing community partners to meet with families who are accessing those programs. The building will house EarlyON staff, including outreach staff who will be travelling across the county to provide consistent programs in rural communities at shared spaces and outdoor environments. In addition to establishing the main EarlyON centre at 75 Graham Street, staff are working to leverage existing opportunities in each of Tillsonburg and Ingersoll to serve those communities as well.

The county-owned building at 75 Graham Street, Woodstock has been vacant for approximately 5 years. The building requires necessary updates and renovations for occupancy, irrespective of intended use. These include, but are not limited to basic functionality and accessibility items, as well as maintenance/renewal items identified in a past Building Condition Assessment, which have been deferred in recent years with the building being vacant. These are items that would have been completed and paid for by the Reserve had the space been occupied. If EarlyON no longer requires the use of the building at 75 Graham Street, Woodstock, then this investment will allow for future building functions.

The Ministry of Education has provided its support for this project, strongly suggesting that the children's services unconditional mitigation funding be used to support the EarlyON renovations. Staff have completed a conceptual design process that would realize effective use of the space, increased value of a county asset, and an opportunity to serve families across Oxford County.

Staff are requesting approval to allocate up to \$500,000 from the child care mitigation funds and up to \$350,000 from Facilities Reserves to support the renovation and necessary updates to 75 Graham Street, Woodstock.

EarlyON Child and Family Centres must continuously look for opportunities to facilitate stronger relationships within the community, and assist parents and caregivers in accessing services and supports that respond to their unique needs. The proposed project will provide space to offer in-person EarlyON programs in Woodstock and support the delivery of in-person programs across Oxford County. It will also strengthen the existing partnership with the Oxford Circles program, as well as additional supports through the Human Services department. Additionally, it provides an opportunity for community partners to meet with families on-site to provide support for health and wellness consultations, post-partum support, child development sessions, and more.

## **Community Profile**

Overall, from 2011 to 2016, the child population in Oxford County has increased (see the graph below). In 2016, 9,113 children aged 0 to 6 years lived in Oxford County. This is an increase of 5.0% from 2011. The 0 to 6 population comprises 8.2% of the overall population.

Municipalities that experienced higher than average growth in the number of children aged 0 to 6 years from 2011 to 2016 include: East-Zorra Tavistock, Norwich, and Woodstock.

See the table below for further details:

Municipality	# Children 0-6 (2011)	# Children 0-6 (2016)	% Change (2011 to 2016)
Oxford County	8,678	9,113	5.0%
Woodstock	2,965	3,257	<b>9.8%</b>
Ingersoll	1,035	1,041	0.6%
Tillsonburg	1,042	1,042	0.0%
Blandford-Blenheim	571	572	0.2%
East Zorra-Tavistock	483	534	<b>10.6%</b>
Norwich	1,155	1,233	<b>6.8%</b>
Southwest Oxford	740	740	0.0%
Zorra	678	694	2.4%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census Profile

### Past Program Participation Data

The table below highlights service delivery data in 2019, the last full year that in-person programs were offered in Oxford County by the previous service provider:

Municipality	# Children Visits*	# Parents/Caregivers Visits*	Total Visits
Oxford County	15,999	10,547	26,546
Woodstock	6,746	4,636	11,382
Ingersoll	2,700	1,703	4,403
Tillsonburg	3,133	2,151	5,284
Blandford-Blenheim	1,048	657	1,705
East Zorra-Tavistock	516	298	814
Norwich	607	397	1,004
South-West Oxford	279	106	385
Zorra	847	513	1,360

\*Visits (cumulative) - individual is counted each time they've attended in a given time period.

## **Conclusions**

There is a demonstrated need for an EarlyON programming presence across Oxford County and funds are available to support the renovations and necessary upgrades to 75 Graham Street, Woodstock for the purpose of delivering EarlyON Child and Family Centre programs and services.

The proposed project, which will revitalize a county-owned building, will have a positive impact on the community by offering a dedicated space to provide EarlyON programs and services in Woodstock and form the basis of extending service delivery throughout the County.

## SIGNATURES

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### Report Author:

Original signed by

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### Departmental Approval:

Original signed by

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