

To:	Warden Hicks and Members of Grey County Council
Committee Date:	December 20, 2018
Subject / Report No:	SSR-CW-02-19
Title:	EarlyON Community Based Capital Project – Sydenham
Prepared by:	Barbara Arbuckle
Reviewed by:	Barb Fedy
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	City of Owen Sound
Status:	Recommendation adopted by the Committee of the Whole as presented as per Resolution <i>CW04-19</i> ; Endorsed by Council on January 10, 2019 as per Resolution <i>CC09-19</i> .

Recommendation

1. That **SSR-CW-02-19 regarding the EarlyON Community Based Capital Project (CBCP) proposed within Grey County’s Sydenham building be received; and**
2. That **Council authorizes staff to procure the design and renovation of the former Sydenham school building to provide EarlyON and childcare services; and**
3. That **staff, in accordance with Section 3.3 b) of the Purchasing Procedure, bring back a report to a future meeting seeking Council approval to award the project.**

Executive Summary

There is a growing need for child care services and education and support for caregivers in Grey County. Addressing the situation is challenging due to a shortage of registered early childhood educators (RECEs) to staff available licensed childcare spaces. An investment in the development of a unique childcare and EarlyON centre at the Regional Skills Training, Trades and Innovation Centre (RSTTIC) adjacent to Georgian College’s Owen Sound campus is proposed to enhance the ECE program experience, as well as provide flexible on-site childcare services.

Background and Discussion

Grey County Children’s Services is the designated Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) for planning and managing licensed child care services throughout the County. Grey County Children’s Services is also responsible for the local management of all EarlyON

Centres. EarlyON Centres are intended to support all children ages 0-6, parents and caregivers in learning, growing and connecting together.

Within the County of Grey, parents have challenges when accessing either child care and/or EarlyON services. Economic conditions require some parents to undertake longer commutes in harsher conditions, irregular work hours (including split and rotating shift-work), limited child care and EarlyON options. There is an expanding childcare waitlist.

Across Ontario there is also a critical shortage of registered ECEs. For Grey County, recent statistics indicate an ECE shortage of approximately 30% (73 individuals) to fully staff all licensed spaces to Ministry legislated child to educator ratios. To begin addressing this shortage locally, a strategy would be to support the ECE program at Georgian College's Owen Sound Campus in attracting students and increasing graduate numbers. Georgian has capacity for 45 students each year. In 2018, 15 graduated and 26 students have registered their intent to graduate in May 2019.

Grey County has a diverse and changing population with unmet needs across age groups. Dedicated space at Sydenham is proposed to be renovated to serve as an EarlyON center offering inclusive supports and programming to meet the needs of our growing population.

There have been expressions of interest from local service providers to form a partnership at the RSTTIC. Early in 2019, Grey County will consult with providers to determine the best programming fit for the project.

Community Based Capital Projects (CBCP) – Sydenham

Funding in the amount of \$257,500 was approved by MEDU earlier in 2018 in support of a project to accommodate the EarlyON centre at the former Sydenham school, conditional on the County purchasing the building. That purchase was completed in October 2018. The County is required by the Ministry to submit an attestation form by March 1, 2019 which confirms that the County has tendered the renovation project. The latest date that the CBCP EarlyON Centre is required to open at Sydenham is December 31, 2020.

It should be noted that East Ridge which is a school within close proximity provides both EarlyON and child care services. The intent is not to replicate services but rather complement existing services with niche services for certain segments of the Grey County population.

Legal and Legislated Requirements

The Ministry of Education (MEDU) provides funding to Grey County Social Services under the legislative authority of the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014.

EarlyON and childcare centres are operated under a transfer payment agreement with the province and as set out in the Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centres (2018): Business Practices and Funding Guidelines for Service System Managers.

The County is required by the Ministry to submit an attestation form by March 1, 2019 which confirms that the County has tendered the renovation project.

Financial and Resource Implications

The CBCP – Sydenham EarlyON funds approved by MEDU are:

CBCP EarlyON Funds	\$ 257,500
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The CBCP capital program will not include any increases to the Grey County levy and will not have any additional impacts beyond what was approved in the 2018 Children’s Services budget.

County staff resources will be required for activities such as project accounting, project management, and administration in order to coordinate capital funding from the province.

Potential Risk

Grey County has not received the initial 66% of funds for this project that were due when the purchase of the Sydenham property closed. Staff are working with MEDU to confirm the flow of funding. Until this is received, no significant commitments will be entered into or expenditures incurred.

The Ministry deadline to tender the Sydenham EarlyON project is before March 1, 2019. If the County does not meet these conditions as contained in the Community Based Capital Program, then certain portions of the funding may be clawed back or forfeited.

Relevant Consultation

Internal

- Grey County Finance Department
- Grey County Economic Development
- Grey County Business Enterprise Centre
- Grey County Planning Department
- Grey County Solicitor
- Grey County Clerk’s Office

External

- Georgian College
- Bluewater District School Board (BWDSB)
- City of Owen Sound
- Licensed Child Care Providers in Grey County
- EarlyON Service Providers in Grey County