TORONTO

STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED

Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020 Implementation

Date:	June 12, 2013
To:	Community Development and Recreation
From:	Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	AFS #16105

SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the implementation to date of the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020 (TSNS 2020), which was adopted by Council in March 2012. A final report on the roll out of the Strategy will be considered by the Community Development and Recreation Committee at its December 3, 2013 meeting, and full implementation of the Strategy will begin in 2014.

Much of the work required to implement TSNS 2020 has taken place as a part of *Urban HEART @Toronto,* a research project of the City, the Centre for Research on Inner City Health, United Way Toronto and other community partners. The project is now nearing completion, and its results will be used to establish measures in five policy areas that TSNS 2020 will set targets against: Physical Environment and Infrastructure, Social and Human Development, Economic Opportunity, Governance, and Health.

Urban HEART @Toronto measures will be used to identify a series of *Neighbourhood Improvement Areas* (NIAs) for focused City attention. Consultations with residents, Councillors, community and government funders, the private sector, the community sector, and City Divisions, Agencies and Corporations, will be held in September and focus on four key issues:

1. How should the *Urban HEART @Toronto* indicators be used to set criteria and select *Neighbourhood Improvement Areas*?
2. What targets should the City set for its performance against these indicators?
3. What additional criteria should be considered to select *Neighbourhood Improvement Areas*?

4. What information should the City track and report to understand whether its efforts are making a difference in *Neighbourhood Improvement Areas* and other neighbourhoods?

A maximum of twelve NIAs and regular reporting on the wellbeing of neighbourhoods against the measures developed by *Urban HEART @Toronto* can be supported within existing resources. The report describes the estimated resources required to support additional NIAs and evaluate the Strategy's impact. The Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration will report to the September 18, 2013 meeting of the Community Development and Recreation Committee on options and priorities to ensure the Strategy's broader implementation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration, recommends:

1. City Council receive this report for information.

Financial Impact

This report will have no financial impact beyond what has already been approved in the 2013 Operating Budget.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on June 29, 2011, the Community Development and Recreation Committee, in response to a communication from Councillor Vincent Crisanti titled Priority Neighbourhood Designation, directed the Executive Director of Social Development, Finance and Administration to provide a report updating the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy.
http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2011.CD5.9

At its meeting of March 5, 6, and 7, 2012, Council adopted the report titled *Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020*.
http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.CD10.3

At its meeting of January 15-16, 2013, Council approved the report titled *2013 Capital and Operating Budget*. As a part of this report, Council approved recommendation 234, and requested that "Executive Director of Social Development, Finance and Administration to develop a financing plan to support the Strong Neighbourhoods

Strategy and report through the Community Development and Recreation Committee to the Budget Committee for consideration in the 2014 budget process."
http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.EX27.1

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy was first adopted by Council in 2005, premised on the understanding that an historic under-investment in the social infrastructure of some Toronto neighbourhoods had resulted in a variety of challenges, particularly in the area of community safety, and particularly for racialized youth.

Under the 2005 Strategy, the City engaged a wide range of partners in the work of building the social infrastructure of neighbourhoods targeted for investment. Working with the City, the federal and provincial governments, United Way Toronto and other community funders, the community service sector, the private sector, and residents of Toronto helped to launch more than 1,200 initiatives and reach more than 50,000 youth and 38,000 other residents. Their efforts have left a legacy of much needed community facilities and strong partnerships that continues to benefit neighbourhood residents.

After almost seven years of successful implementation, Council directed the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration Division to report back on an update to the Strategy. Council's direction particularly focused on the need to better strengthen all neighbourhoods and monitor their wellbeing. The proposed updates to the Strategy were approved by Council in March 2012 when it adopted the report titled *Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020*.

This report provides Committee with an overview of the work that has been done to date to implement TSNS 2020, and describes the remaining steps required to ensure its full implementation in 2014. A final report on the Strategy's roll out will be provided to the Community Development and Recreation Committee at its December 3, 2013 meeting.

COMMENTS

Monitoring Neighbourhood Wellbeing

One of the most important changes approved by Council as a part of Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods 2020 was a significant broadening of its goals, objectives and focus population.

Under the 2005 Strategy, the City primarily focused its efforts on youth, with the objective of developing the employment and engagement opportunities they needed to advance the Strategy's goal of community safety. Under the updated Strategy, the City will now work to build an equitable set of social, economic, and cultural opportunities for all residents, with the goal of advancing equitable outcomes across all neighbourhoods.

The specific outcomes that TSNS 2020 will monitor are being developed as a part of a joint initiative called *Urban HEART @Toronto* with the Centre for Research on Inner

City Health (CRICH), United Way Toronto, the Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network and other community partners. The research portion of the initiative is expected to conclude by July, and will recommend the best available measures of equity at the neighbourhood level.

Urban HEART is the acronym for the *Urban Health Equity Assessment and Response Tool*. Launched by the World Health Organization in 2010, the tool is intended to help city leaders and their communities resolve health and social inequities. Under this model, organizations from diverse sectors work together, but stay focused on their unique role and mandate. The equity measures of Urban HEART provide a focal point that is used to help coordinate and improve their collective efforts to produce real, meaningful, and lasting change.

Urban HEART is based on the "social determinants of health," a research-based model that recognizes that the health of individuals is primarily determined by their living conditions, and not by their individual lifestyle choices or by their use of medical services. The social determinants of health can be categorized in many different ways, and in the Canadian context include income and income distribution, education, employment, job security and working conditions, early childhood development, food security, housing, social exclusion, the social safety net, health services, Aboriginal status, gender, race and disability.[1]

Originally designed for urbanizing nations, *Urban HEART* is now being adapted to produce a snapshot that shows how Toronto's neighbourhoods are doing in five different policy areas based on the social determinants of health:

- Governance
- Social & Human Development
- Economic Opportunity
- Health, and
- Physical Environment and Infrastructure

The snapshot of neighbourhood health produced by *Urban HEART* is designed to be a simple one, and it typically includes only two or three carefully chosen indicators of equity for each of the five policy areas. This simple snapshot quickly reveals broad patterns of inequity at the neighbourhood level, and allows a wide variety of partners to identify both policy areas (such as Economic Opportunity) and neighbourhoods requiring more detailed analysis and collective action.

The *Urban HEART @Toronto* project conducted three rounds of consultations with more than 80 researchers, policy makers and program planners with expertise in neighbourhood-level equity measures from the academic, public, private and community sectors to identify the indicators that will be a part of this snapshot. Using a process

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[1] Mikkonen, J., & Raphael, D. (2010). Social Determinants of Health: The Canadian Facts. Toronto: York University School of Health Policy and Management.

designed to build consensus, these experts identified the best available measures of equity across the five *Urban HEART* policy areas that met seven criteria for relevance:

1. Clear: the indicator is understandable and easy to interpret;
2. Feasible: the required data is actually collected routinely and is obtainable at an affordable cost;
3. Locally Actionable: program or policy changes at the local or regional level could improve results on this indicator;
4. Responsive: the indicator will reflect changes in a timely manner;
5. Comparable: the indicator can be compared across time and place and in relation to benchmarks or targets;
6. Analytically-sound: the indicator is well-grounded in theory and in fact and is broadly supported as an indicator to measure health or social well-being;
7. Salient for Toronto: the indicator points to health or social concerns that are significant and consequential in the Toronto context.

A draft set of indicators has now been produced, and the project's research team of statisticians and epidemiologists is currently determining whether this data is available in a timely manner for all 140 neighbourhoods in Toronto and establishing appropriate benchmarks. Once the draft indicators and benchmarks have been prepared by the research team, they will be recommended to the project's Steering Committee for approval. The draft indicators are provided in Table 1, and a final decision on the indicators and benchmarks is expected from the Steering Committee by July.

When the final indicators and benchmarks have been confirmed by *Urban HEART @Toronto*, Social Development, Finance and Administration (SDFA) will work with City Divisions, Agencies, Corporations and external partners involved with TSNS 2020 to design a *Neighbourhood Monitor* and report regularly to Council on the wellbeing of all neighbourhoods. Wellbeing Toronto, the City's online, interactive neighbourhood mapping tool, will provide a foundation for the *Monitor,* and the first release of the *Monitor* will be provided to the Community Development and Recreation Committee at its December 2013 meeting as a part of the final report on the roll out of TSNS 2020.

The finalized *Urban HEART @Toronto* indicators and benchmarks will also be used as a basis for assessing the impact that TSNS 2020 has on neighbourhoods, and will allow the City to set performance targets for its work. An evaluation framework is currently under development, and will be designed with the wide range of partners in the City's place-based work who also contribute to the Strategy's goals. The Strategy's evaluation framework will be provided to the Community Development and Recreation Committee at its December 3, 2013 meeting.

Table 1	
Urban HEART @Toronto – Draft Measures of Neighbourhood Equity	
Domain	**Measure**
Governance	Voter Participation: Percentage of eligible voters who voted in the most recent municipal election
	Volunteering: Percentage of residents over 15 who volunteer on regular basis
Social And Human Development	Youth Graduation: High school graduation rate of 17 year olds
	Marginalization: a composite of residential instability, material deprivation, dependency, and ethnic concentration
Economic Opportunity	Poverty: Percentage of households in the neighbourhood living below the Statistics Canada Low Income Measure
	Unemployment: Percentage of adults currently unemployed
Population Health	Mental Health: Proportion of residents who report excellent, very good or good mental health
	Health Adjusted Life Expectancy/Or Premature Mortality: Estimated number of healthy years an individual is expected to live
	Avoidable Hospitalizations: Hospitalization for chronic health conditions (diabetes, congestive heart failure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or asthma)
Physical Environment and Infrastructure	Community Resources: distance to libraries, recreation centres, and places of worship
	Walkability: whether the infrastructure supports walking and whether there are destinations to walk to

Identifying Neighbourhood Improvement Areas

Under the 2005 Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy, *Priority Neighbourhoods for Investment* were identified for focused City action and broader investment. The thirteen identified neighbourhood areas were determined using three criteria:

- Whether the neighbourhood lacked community facilities and programs;
- Whether there were more residents who would benefit from community facilities and programs than there were in other neighbourhoods; and
- Whether the neighbourhood was experiencing more gun and gang violence than other neighbourhoods.

Because of TSNS 2020's expanded goals, a broader range of equity-focused criteria will be required to identify the *Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIAs)* that will be

targeted for City action under the updated Strategy. These criteria will be based on benchmarks and targets developed by *Urban HEART @Toronto* and through consultations with a wide range of stakeholders.

Although the indicators and benchmarks developed by *Urban HEART @Toronto* provide a strong base of evidence to inform the selection of NIAs, they are not the same as selection criteria. A "criterion" is a standard that decisions and judgements can be based on, and there are many possible ways to set a criterion based on indicators and benchmarks.   For example, *Urban HEART @Toronto* draft indicators include "unemployment" and "youth graduation" as proposed measures of equity at the neighbourhood level. Using these indicators, Council could decide to:

a. Identify all neighbourhoods with an unemployment rate 40% above the benchmark as NIAs; or
b. Identify all neighbourhoods with an unemployment rate 20% above the benchmark and a youth graduation rate 20% beneath the benchmark as NIAs; or
c. Identify all neighbourhoods with a youth graduation rate 40% beneath the benchmark as NIAs.

Each of these criteria may lead to a different set of NIAs, a different set of performance targets, and to a different set of resulting actions on the part of the City and other partners.

Stakeholder consultations to establish the criteria to select NIAs will take place in September, and planning is now underway. The consultations will target residents, Councillors, community and government funders, the private sector, the community sector, and City Divisions, Agencies and Corporations, and will ask these stakeholders to consider four key issues:

1. How should the *Urban HEART @Toronto* indicators and benchmarks be used to set criteria and select NIAs?
2. What targets should the City set for its performance against these indicators?
3. What additional criteria should be considered to select NIAs?
4. What information should the City track and report to understand whether its efforts are making a difference in NIAs and other neighbourhoods?

The resulting criteria will be recommended to the Community Development and Recreation Committee at its December 3, 2013 meeting, and will be accompanied by the corresponding set of *Neighbourhood Improvement Areas*.

Strengthening in All Neighbourhoods

The Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy's goal of advancing equity across all neighbourhoods cannot be met with a focus on Neighbourhood Improvement Areas

alone. To ensure that all neighbourhoods are positively affected by the Strategy, a *Neighbourhood Lens* is being developed.

In general, a "lens" is a tool that brings objects into sharper focus. In the context of the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020, the *Neighbourhood Lens* will take shape as a series of questions and case studies that bring important characteristics of neighbourhoods into focus. This focus on neighbourhood characteristics is intended to help policy makers, program planners and decision makers work more effectively by revealing the ways in which their work impacts the wellbeing of neighbourhoods.

The proposed format for the *Neighbourhood Lens* is partly modelled on the City of Ottawa's *Equity and Inclusion Lens*, which provides questions that municipal staff can consider about the diversity of Ottawa residents when undertaking communications, policy development, community engagement and consultation, evaluation, research, program and project planning, leading and supervising, recruiting and interviewing, and training.

The Ottawa lens also includes eleven diversity snapshots that profile different equity seeking communities, highlighting these communities' contributions, the barriers they face, and their vision of an inclusive city. One of these diversity snapshots profiles the City's rural residents, and suggests characteristics such as distance from the city centre and limited access to transit that may also be important to consider when planning for the wellbeing of Toronto's neighbourhoods.

The City has significant investments in all of its neighbourhoods, offering programs, services and facilities that contribute to the quality of life for all residents, including:

- Over 130 recreation centres with programs for all ages, and hundreds of parks;
- Over 50 directly operated child care centres, and support for many more;
- The 98 branches of the Toronto Public Library;
- Support for local businesses that want to grow and residents who want to build their career;
- Cultural events, community arts, and museums; and
- Nutrition programs, dental care, and emergency medical services to keep residents healthy.

By bringing the characteristics and needs of diverse neighbourhoods into focus, the *Neighbourhood Lens* is intended to ensure these City investments are as effective as possible in advancing equity across all neighbourhoods.

The *Neighbourhood Lens* is currently under development and will be ready for testing in the fall. During the testing phase, the *Lens* will be used to help the City Divisions, Agencies and Corporations that have been active in the City's place-based work examine the ways in which their policies, programs and priorities impact all neighbourhoods. Once this testing is complete, the final *Neighbourhood Lens* will be included in the report

to the Community Development and Recreation Committee's December 3 meeting on the full implementation of TSNS 2020.

Financing the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020

During the 2013 Budget process, Council requested that the Executive Director of Social Development, Finance and Administration "develop a financing plan to support the Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy and report through the Community Development and Recreation Committee to the Budget Committee for consideration in the 2014 budget process."

The 2005 Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy was extremely successful in using the resources that the City dedicated to the Strategy's implementation to leverage investments in targeted neighbourhoods from other governments, community funders and the private sector. For example, each dollar in the $13.0M Partnership Opportunities Legacy Fund (POL), a dedicated capital fund in place from 2006 – 2009, leveraged an additional $1.90 from external funders. As a result of POL fund initiatives, almost $38M was invested in 26 community infrastructure projects that included playgrounds, community and youth program spaces, community multi-service hubs, parks, and multiple sports facilities.

The Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020 represents a significant expansion of the City's ambitions for its neighbourhoods, and it will require an equally ambitious financing plan to focus the resources of the provincial and federal governments, community funders and the private sector on identified *Neighbourhood Improvement Areas*. However, like the 2005 Strategy, this financing plan must be built on a strong City commitment to resourcing the Strategy's implementation.

Because implementation planning is not yet complete, the core City commitment required to implement the Strategy has not yet been fully determined. However, the work to date has established the following estimated minimum resourcing requirements. These commitments are not available within the 2013 Approved Operating Budget:

- One full-time equivalent Project Manager to coordinate the Strategy's implementation across an expanded range of City Divisions, Agencies, Corporations, and engage a range of external funders, including United Way Toronto, community funders, the provincial and federal governments and the private sector to meet performance targets; and
- One full-time equivalent Planning Analyst to support the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the Strategy against its performance targets across a range of partners.

In addition, for each designated *Neighbourhood Improvement Area*, the estimated minimum core City commitment is:

- One full-time equivalent Community Development Officer to coordinate the engagement of residents, community service providers and City staff at the neighbourhood level and support neighbourhood-level planning;
- Dedicated operating funds of $10,000.00 per year for each NIA to support resident engagement and seed resident-led initiatives; and
- Dedicated capital funds of $1.0M per four-year period per NIA to leverage capital investments from external partners.

Within the existing resources, the Division will be able to recommend a total of twelve designated NIAs to Council in December, each with an operating fund of $1,000 per year to support resident engagement, and no capital support. The Division will also be able to report regularly to Council on the indicators and benchmarks recommended by the *Urban HEART @Toronto* project, but will not be able to collect and analyze the data required to support an evaluation of the Strategy.

A more detailed analysis of the Strategy's resourcing requirements is now underway, and the Executive Director, SDFA will report to the September 18, 2013 meeting of the Community Development and Recreation Committee on options and priorities for ensuring the Strategy's broader implementation.

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