



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Toronto Social Development Dashboard

Date:	March 9, 2015
To:	Community Development & Recreation Committee
From:	Acting Executive Director, Social Development, Finance & Administration
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	AFS # 20359

SUMMARY

This report presents the 2015 Q1 edition of the Toronto Social Development Dashboard (SDD). The Dashboard provides a graphical summary of the most relevant and recent socio-economic indicators available to help inform Community Development and Recreation Committee's decision-making on a range of social development issues.

The SDD reports available indicators that reflect the most current characteristics on social wellbeing. The SDD provides high-level, citywide metrics, which complement current place-based social data reporting systems such as the City's Wellbeing Toronto (www.toronto.ca/wellbeing), and other dashboards like the Toronto Economic Dashboard being used at Economic Development Committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. The Community Development and Recreation Committee receive this report for information.

Financial Impact

The adoption of the recommendations contained in this report has no financial impact.

Equity Impact

The Social Development Dashboard (SDD) reports on a variety of socio-economic indicators to help inform decision-making by the Community Development and Recreation Committee. It is important for decision-makers to recognize that different populations may experience the trends reported in the SDD in differing ways and to different degrees. The impact of socio-economic trends on individuals and communities from various equity-seeking groups in Toronto is an important consideration in the ongoing development of the SDD. As staff develop and refine the Social Development Dashboard, they will examine indicators to assess the potential for reporting disaggregated data where appropriate. Staff will continue to collect, maintain and disseminate data for equity seeking groups through other existing reporting tools such as Wellbeing Toronto, Census Background Reports, and the Neighbourhood profiles.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of August 14, 2014, the Community Development and Recreation Committee directed the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to: continue to develop the Toronto Social Development Dashboard as an evolving evidence-based support tool, reporting on a quarterly basis to help inform Committee's decision-making process on social development issues. The Committee requested additional indicators in the Social Development Dashboard, including income inequality and social inclusion. See: <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2014.CD31.13>

At its meeting of September 18, 2013, the Community Development and Recreation Committee, while considering item [CD23.10: Service Level Review](#), during the discussion requested the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to review and report on human services metrics and develop a "Social Development Dashboard."

ISSUE BACKGROUND

In order to inform evidence-based decision-making, members of the Community Development and Recreation Committee expressed interest in a dashboard tool which could provide access to key social indicators on a regular basis. The Toronto Social Development Dashboard (SDD) was developed to respond to this need. It is an "at a glance" look at key indicators in the human services sector. The SDD provides an overall picture of the human services context in Toronto.

The 2015 Q1 edition of the SDD features 19 indicators across six categories: Labour Force Participation, Immigration, Socioeconomic Vulnerability, Social Assistance, Housing, and Child Care. The Dashboard, found in Appendix 1, in most cases, compares data in each of

the 19 indicators for the most recent quarter (in this case, 2014 Q4) against the same quarter in the previous year. For a few indicators, only annual data is available for year over year analysis.

Social Development, Finance & Administration, with the assistance of the Affordable Housing Office, Children's Services, Economic Development and Culture, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, Toronto Employment and Social Services, and the Daily Bread Food Bank, assembled the data in this edition of the SDD. The data is also drawn from Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Numerous other divisions and agencies have and continue to be consulted on the development of indicators for future, more advanced versions of the dashboard. New indicators will be added as relevant, required and available.

COMMENTS

Indicators in Context

The SDD is intended to provide periodic snapshots of social wellbeing in the city of Toronto. The purpose of the tool is to provide a barometer of social conditions. The tool reports on both macro- and micro-level data for broad social condition monitoring only, and as such is not a tool for performance measurement.

While the dashboard is a tool to support evidence-based decision-making, it is important to note that not every indicator represents a service area that is under the City's jurisdiction. Some indicators are included to help understand the broad context of social wellbeing of Toronto residents. For example, in the category of housing, the Core Housing Need indicator is included to contextualize the housing indicators which follow it.

Based on current Dashboard indicators, the following are highlights of current trends in Toronto's social wellbeing across the six categories:

Current Trends in Social Wellbeing

Macro-Level Trends

Labour Force Participation, Immigration, and Socioeconomic Vulnerability indicators speak to macro-level trends in how Toronto residents are faring in the broader labour market, the level of stability among Toronto's immigrants, and the overall level of socioeconomic vulnerability in the city.

Labour Force Participation

- The seasonally adjusted employment rate for Toronto residents peaked in June 2013 at 61.9%, its highest level in over 20 years. Since that time it has fallen back, and it now stands at the same level it was in Q3 2012 at 58.3%.
- Starting in the Fall of 2012, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for Toronto residents fell sharply for a year, reaching 8.2% in Q3 2013. It subsequently returned to where it was two years ago, and then dipped again in late 2014 to 8.7%. Since

these changes are not corroborated by other data, it appears that it may have been a statistical anomaly.

- Like the employment rate, the seasonally adjusted labour force participation rate for Toronto residents peaked in June 2013 at 67.6 %, its highest level in over 20 years. Over the past 18 months the participation rate has declined. In Q4 2014, the participation rate fell to 63.8%.
- Overall, since the 2013 peak in labour force participation, the rate has been declining.

Immigration

- The number of permanent resident landings in Q4 2014 is 10,334, an increase of 773 from the previous year. This increase is a slight reversal of an overall trend that has seen a significant decline in permanent resident landings in Toronto for more than ten years while suburban areas and other regions of Canada have seen substantial growth in permanent resident landings.
- Between Q3 2013 and Q4 2014, there has been a decrease in the number of temporary resident entries in Toronto from 13,663 to 12,082. This decline is a slight reversal of an overall trend since 2005 that has seen a significant increase in temporary resident entries in Toronto.
- Overall, temporary entries still outnumber permanent entries in Q4 2014.

Socioeconomic Vulnerability

- After peaking at 23.3% in 2009, the prevalence of persons living in low-income based on the after-tax Low-Income Measure, returned to pre-recession levels in 2011 with a rate of 22.2%. 2012 saw another increase as the rate rose 0.4% over the previous year.
- The last two quarters of 2014 saw a decline in food bank use from 187,700 visits in Q2 2014 to 175,900 visits in Q4 2014. However, while visits have gone down in 2014, food bank use in Q4 2014 remains higher than corresponding counts from 2013 by 1,500 visits.
- Overall, a significant portion of Toronto residents still depend on food banks regularly.

Service Access and Support Trends

Social Assistance, Child Care and Housing indicators point to micro-level trends about service access and supports. They indicate social assistance use as a response to the economic circumstances of Toronto residents, and how Toronto residents are faring in terms of access to housing and childcare.

Social Assistance

- The percentage of the population receiving social assistance decreased by 1.0% over the second half of 2013, from 10.1% in Q3 2013 to 9.1% in Q1 2014. The trend then levelled off, staying steady at 9.1% for the first three quarters of 2014.
- The total social assistance caseload, including both families and singles, was 91,879 in Q3 2014, down from 97,818 for Q3 in the previous year. The total social assistance caseload has been declining since mid 2013 due to fewer applications for social assistance and continued exits in the post recession recovery.

- The percentage of the social assistance caseload with earnings increased as of October 2013 due to a change in Provincial policy that allows residents on assistance to retain more of their employment earnings without penalty. As a result, 9.9% of residents on assistance had earnings in Q2 2014 compared with 8.6 % the previous year.
- Overall, while there are some positive trends in Toronto residents' reliance on social assistance, some vulnerable groups continue to show trends of decline. Despite a continued decrease in caseloads for both families and individuals in 2014, single parents on social assistance have been increasing their length of stay on the caseload as good and appropriate employment opportunities for them lessen.

Housing

- Toronto grows by about 30,000 people annually. In 2011, 34% of Toronto households were in core housing need where the media rent for adequate, affordable and suitable local housing exceeds 30% or more of household income. This was a significant increase from 2006, when 24% were in core housing need.
- In 2014, 260 new affordable rentals and 98 new affordable home ownerships were completed, compared to 260 and 54 respectively in 2013, and 1,139 and 242 respectively in 2012. The number of new affordable homes completed annually varies with available federal, provincial, and/or municipal investments and incentives. Federal and provincial funding has declined since 2012 when additional economic stimulus funding expired. At the current pace, by 2020 the City will be unable to meet affordable housing targets set out in *Housing Opportunities Toronto (2010-2020) Plan*.
- The number of lower-income tenant and homeowner households assisted through the provision of funding to complete essential health, safety and accessibility repairs and modifications decreased in 2014 to 348 from 682 households in 2013 and 2,107 households in 2012. The number of households assisted varies with available federal and provincial investments administered by the City. 2012 was a transition year to a new program and the volume is expected to increase again in 2015 by some 2,000 units as a result of a multi-unit request for proposal completed in 2014.
- The Toronto Rent Bank program provides an interest-free loan and supports to households who are at risk of eviction due to rental arrears. Rent Bank loans have been declining over the last two years, from 285 in Q4 2012, to 216 in Q4 2013, to 175 in Q4 2014.
- The City administers both rent-g geared-to-income (RGI) rent supplements and fixed rate housing allowances. At the end of 2014, there are 90,990 households on the waiting list for RGI housing, up slightly from 2013 at 87,486. However, the numbers of households assisted with a subsidy dropped slightly from 73,301 in Q2 2014 to 72,404 in Q4 2014.
- Emergency shelter provision continues to increase. The average number of individuals provided emergency shelter per night in Q4 2014 increased by 150 to 4,117 compared to the previous year. The trend of increased emergency shelter use over the past few years may be due to a lag in need following the recession; some individuals have had more options to exhaust before needing to turn to emergency shelter services. This is discussed further in the shelter occupancy report also being

considered at the March 25, 2015 Community Development and Recreation Committee meeting.

- Overall, there are decreases in the availability of affordable housing, RGI, rent bank loans, and supports for households to complete essential repairs and maintenance.

Child Care

- The stock of licensed child care spaces has been rising steadily in recent years, with slight fluctuations. Since Full-Day Kindergarten was introduced in 2010, new spaces have been created to meet the before and after school needs of children in Full-Day Kindergarten. At the same time, provincial policy has resulted in increases in spaces for infants and toddlers.
- Additional provincial funding has allowed the City of Toronto to increase the number of child care fee subsidies for families. In 2014, there were 24,932 available child care fee subsidies, an increase of 668 subsidies from the previous year.
- The number of children on the wait list for a child care fee subsidy has been decreasing since 2012 as a result of improved access to fee subsidies. However, the wait list grew slightly from the first to the last quarter of 2014. Despite this increase of 640, the wait list is still significantly smaller at the end of 2014 than the same time the previous year (down from 18,826 in Q4 2013 to 16,802 in Q4 2014, a decrease of 2,024 children).
- Overall, there are some positive trends in the availability of child care spaces, child care subsidies and wait lists as a result of changes in policy and investment.

Disaggregated Data and Equity-seeking Groups

The indicators used in the six categories of the SDD are based on averages and may mask underlying trends in sub population groups, or smaller geographic areas. As staff develop and refine the Social Development Dashboard, they will examine indicators to assess the potential for reporting further disaggregated data where appropriate to better guide service and policy responses to be more effective in addressing the needs of equity-seeking groups.

Continuing Development of the Social Development Dashboard

Staff continue to work to identify potential new or revised indicators, build data sharing partnerships between City Divisions and to other levels of government, and investigate to best identify their appropriate use in the SDD. Following on Committee's direction, staff are developing, for example, an indicator of Wage Inequality using data from the Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey as a useful way to report in a significant aspect of income inequality on a quarterly basis. Staff also continue to investigate an indicator of social cohesion suitable for use in a quarterly dashboard, and are pursuing access to appropriate incarceration data from the Province and consumer debt load and financial asset debt load data from Environics Analytics to support analysis of overall socioeconomic vulnerability in Toronto.

Staff are also developing the SDD with the goal of complementing other City data tools, such as Wellbeing Toronto and other dashboards, including the Toronto Economic Dashboard and the Management Information Dashboard.

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ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 1: City of Toronto Social Development Dashboard (2015 Q1)