



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Toronto Social Development Dashboard, September 2015

Date:	September 2, 2015
To:	Community Development & Recreation Committee
From:	Executive Director, Social Development, Finance & Administration
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	AFS # 20869

SUMMARY

This report presents the September 2015 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 and Council's decision-making on a range of social development issues. This version of the dashboard provides updated quarterly data for the second quarter (the months of April, May & June) of 2015.

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

1. City Council 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 and City Council. 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 evolution 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 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.

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

The Toronto Social Development Dashboard (SDD) 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. It is intended to provide periodic snapshots of social wellbeing in the city of Toronto. The tool reports indicators for broad social condition monitoring only, and as such is not a tool for performance measurement.

The September 2015 edition of the SDD features 21 indicators across six categories: Labour Force Participation, Immigration, Socioeconomic Vulnerability, Social Assistance, Housing, and Child Care. The Dashboard, found in Appendix 1, compares data in 15 of the 21 indicators for the most recent quarter available against the same quarter in the previous year. For five indicators, the data is available only annually, and for one indicator, only every five years.

Social Development, Finance & Administration, with the assistance of the Affordable Housing Office, Children's Services, City Planning, 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 versions of the dashboard.

COMMENTS

Current Trends in Social Wellbeing

The overall trends in social wellbeing identified in the September 2015 edition of the Social Development Dashboard remain broadly consistent with the results identified in the previous 2 editions of the SDD.

The most recent edition of the SDD shows increases in the employment rate and participation rate, and a decrease in the unemployment rate. However, these positive trends are not shared equally among all Torontonians. Some positive trends in Toronto residents' social vulnerability seen in previous editions of the dashboard, such as lower use of Food Banks and the Rent Bank, were reversed in the second quarter of 2015, with higher Food Bank use and more Rent Bank loans being granted. It is important, though, to note that these indicators can follow a seasonal pattern which results in higher numbers in the spring. This may be part of the reason for the observed increase.

Other indicators which had been suggesting increased vulnerability, such as the larger number of children on the wait list for a child care fee subsidy, have showed modest improvement over the second quarter of 2015.

Changes in Historic Data for Existing Indicators

A number of indicators have had revisions to the way their data is collected, and/or will experience changes in previously reported values:

- Seasonal adjustments to Labour Force Survey data result in slight variations to historical data. Raw values from each edition of the SDD will not match precisely to previous editions. The data reported in previous versions of the SDD are not comparable to the data in current and future editions of the dashboard.
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada has redesigned its Temporary Resident facts and figures, on which the Temporary Resident Entries indicator is based. This was done to address changes in the Temporary Foreign Worker Program and to improve overall reporting. For this reason, the data reported in versions of the SDD prior to June 2015 are not comparable to the data in current and future editions of the dashboard.
- Challenges with the provincial Social Assistance Management System software have delayed inclusion of more recent social assistance data. Updating of this data is on hold until these issues are resolved.

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. Staff have been working to identify opportunities to include disaggregated data in the SDD to provide indicators of the relative well-being and needs of equity-seeking groups. These efforts have proved challenging. Very few data sources that are reliably available in the frequency demanded by a quarterly dashboard are also available in disaggregated form.

In the fall, staff will renew efforts to identify appropriate disaggregated indicators for inclusion in the SDD. Staff will consult with community partners and City divisions, agencies, and corporations to identify administrative and other data sources which could better support the City's need for disaggregated indicators. Staff will report back on these efforts with the first edition of the SDD in 2016.

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, indicator data for Income Inequality that will use annual Statistics Canada Taxfiler data to report on income inequality on a regular basis. This indicator will require custom reports from Statistics Canada, which are being acquired with existing resources through the Community Data Program. This data is anticipated to be available in 2016.

Staff will continue to develop 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.

As directed by Council, staff have begun the process of creating a page on the City's Open Data website so that the data from the dashboard can be made publicly available. Staff have added a web page to the City's website for the Social Development Dashboard. This page will host previous editions of the Dashboard, and will link to the SDD's Open Data site. It will be accessible from the toronto.ca/demographics page.

The next release of the SDD will be at the November 25th, 2015 CDRC.

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ATTACHMENTS

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