



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

TO Prosperity: Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy

Date:	October 9, 2015
To:	Executive Committee
From:	City Manager, Deputy City Manager Cluster A, Deputy City Manager Cluster B, Deputy City Manager & Chief Financial Officer
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	AFS # 20492

SUMMARY

Although Toronto is a prosperous and successful city, a growing number of its residents are living in poverty. According to Statistics Canada, close to 1 in 5 adults and more than 1 in 4 children live on an after-tax income below the Low Income Measure. This is considerably higher than the national average. At its meeting on April 1, 2014, City Council requested that the City Manager develop a City of Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy. After a broad community engagement process, City staff brought an interim strategy to Council on July 7, 2015. City Council approved *TO Prosperity: Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy* in principle and directed staff to finalize the strategy.

Based on further input from residents, partners, City staff and Councillors, this report presents *TO Prosperity: Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy*. Through 17 recommendations and 71 actions, *TO Prosperity* lays out a 20-year plan to advance equity, opportunity and prosperity for all Toronto residents. Through this strategy, the City of Toronto has the opportunity to be a leader in addressing the issues of poverty, creating meaningful solutions, and driving systemic change.

This report proposes an Implementation and Accountability Structure to oversee and coordinate the strategy's implementation, beginning with the first of five action plans, the TO Prosperity 2015 -2018 Term Action Plan. The report discusses how the Collective Impact model, an evidence-based approach increasingly used to address complex issues, shaped the development of the strategy and implementation plan. Next, it describes the five bodies that will comprise the Implementation and Accountability Structure: a multi-sector Accountability Table, a Lived Experience Advisory Group, a Senior Management Steering Committee, a Private Sector Roundtable, and a Monitoring and Evaluation Working Group. Finally, the report describes a City staff unit that will provide program management of the day-to-day activities related to the

planning, implementation, evaluation, and reporting of poverty reduction actions and initiatives. This unit will lead implementation work in three critical areas: Community Engagement, Intergovernmental Partnerships, and Strategic Alignments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Manager, Deputy City Manager Cluster A, Deputy City Manager Cluster B, Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer recommend that:

1. City Council adopt the vision, objectives, recommendations, and actions contained in the *TO Prosperity: Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy* as outlined in Attachment A, including the 2015 – 2018 Term Action Plan.
2. City Council request the Deputy City Manager, Cluster A, the Deputy City Manager, Cluster B, and the Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer to develop annual work plans for 2017 and 2018 based on the TO Prosperity 2015 - 2018 Term Action Plan.
3. City Council adopt the TO Prosperity 2016 Annual Work Plan for implementation as outlined in Appendix C and forward the recommended initiatives with financial impacts to the City Manager for consideration as part of the 2016 Budget process.
4. City Council direct the Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer, in consultation with the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance & Administration, to include consideration of the funding needs of *TO Prosperity: Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy* in the Long Term Fiscal Plan.
5. City Council approve the establishment of the TO Prosperity Accountability Table responsible for overseeing effective engagement, implementation, and measurement of the Strategy, with membership drawn from community, residents, business, labour and academia, and key funding institutions, comprised of the following work groups:
 - a. Lived Experience Advisory Group comprised of Toronto residents with lived experience of poverty to contribute their expertise to the effective development, measurement and monitoring of poverty reduction initiatives;
 - b. Senior Staff Steering Committee on Poverty Reduction, chaired by the Deputy City Manager Cluster A, with membership drawn from City divisions, agencies, boards, and commissions that impact poverty in Toronto;
 - c. Private Sector Roundtable comprised of Toronto business leaders to contribute strategic opportunities and investments to advance the economic, employment and development goals of the strategy;
 - d. Measurement and Monitoring Working Group comprised of measurement and evaluation experts to develop and execute the strategy's monitoring plan.
6. City Council request the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration, in consultation with the General Manager, Toronto Employment and Social

Services, Executive Director, Corporate Finance, and Executive Director, Financial Planning to develop a cost-benefit analysis and framework for poverty-related spending as part of the *TO Prosperity* implementation.

7. City Council direct the Deputy City Manager Cluster A in consultation with the Accountability Table, to monitor the implementation of *TO Prosperity* and provide annual progress reports to the Executive Committee.
8. City Council forward *TO Prosperity: Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy* as outlined in Attachment A to the City-School Boards Advisory Committee, and the Board of Health, Toronto Library Board, Toronto Transit Commission Board, Toronto Police Board, and Toronto Community Housing Corporation Board for their consideration.
9. City Council forward *TO Prosperity: Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy* as outlined in Attachment A to the five Local Health Integration Networks (LHIN) for Toronto and the Strategic Advisory Council of the Toronto Central LHIN for their consideration.
10. City Council forward *TO Prosperity: Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy* to the Premier of Ontario; President of the Treasury Board and Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy; the Minister of Children and Youth Services; the Minister of Community and Social Services; the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure; the Minister of Education; the Minister of Finance; the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care; the Minister of Labour; the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; the Minister of Training, Colleges, and Universities; and, the Minister of Transportation for consideration on program and funding alignments.
11. City Council forward *TO Prosperity: Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy* to the Prime Minister of Canada; the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada; the Minister of Employment and Social Development Canada; the Minister of Finance; the Minister of Industry; the Minister of State (Social Development); and, the Minister of Health for consideration on program and funding alignments.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

TO Prosperity is a 20-year strategy divided into five terms, beginning with the 2015 – 2018 Action Plan. There will be four subsequent term action plans coinciding with Council terms. Each Action Plan is comprised of four annual work plans and a corresponding progress report. The 2015 – 2018 Term Action Plan includes initiatives started in 2015, a 2016 Annual Work Plan, and actions requiring work plans for 2017 and 2018. Annual work plans will include a mix of initiatives that can be completed within existing resources and others requiring new investments.

New investments required for 2016 Work Plan initiatives will be considered in the 2016 budget process. Annual work plans will be developed for the 2017 and 2018 actions in the Term Action Plan. Any associated financial impacts will be reported to Toronto City Council in 2016 and 2017, and considered in the 2017 and 2018 budget processes.

2015 City Investment

In 2015, City Council invested \$25.9M across 28 poverty reduction initiatives across the issue areas of the Strategy: housing, service access, food access, transportation and jobs. The City's year one investment emphasized:

- making transit free for children 12 and under: positive impact for approximately 87,595 low-income children in Toronto;
- adding capacity to the shelter system: additional capacity to the system of 198 new beds, 4,405 bed nights, 2 women's 24-hour drop-ins, and expanded warming centres;
- expanding student nutrition: 8,205 more children and youth now have access to nutritious food through 27 more programs; and,
- increasing child care subsidies and after-school care: an additional 184 subsidies for children and families, and 530 more children receiving after-school recreation care.

Within existing resources, City staff worked with a range of partners to also advance initiatives in the areas of:

- quality jobs;
- social procurement;
- youth employment; and,
- intergovernmental advocacy on several provincial policies affecting the lives of low-income Torontonians.

A full list of progress made on the 41 2015 initiatives can be found in Attachment C, 2015 Progress Report.

The City's year one investment of \$25.9M is now annualized to \$26.1M and part of on-going base funding to continue these programs and services in 2016 and beyond.

2016 City Investment

In addition to the \$26.1M base operating funding in 2016, the proposed 2016 Annual Work Plan includes 75 City initiatives, many through partnerships, that will advance *TO Prosperity* recommendations and actions.

Within existing resources, City staff will pursue 28 policy and regulatory change initiatives that seed longer-term impacts, including:

- a community benefits framework;
- social procurement strategy;
- options for fare-g geared-to-income transit;
- community investment strategy for new/revised grant program; and
- job quality assessment tool and living wage standard.

In 2016, the City is committing approximately \$39M funding (from sources other than the property tax) to prioritize investments in:

- new affordable rental housing;
- affordable home ownership;
- renovations and repair for rooming housing and lower-income homes.

In the 2016 budget process, additional investments will be considered in the following key areas to support the achievement of poverty reduction recommendations:

- student nutrition expansion;
- youth employment, e.g. expansion of Partnership to Advance Youth Employment (PAYE);
- quality opportunities and jobs, e.g. expansion of Jobs Incentive Program
- service enhancements for seniors, e.g. expansion of Homemakers and Nurses Services (HMNS) Program

2015-2024 Capital Plan

In addition to operating funds, the City's 10 year capital plan includes significant investment to address issues of poverty.

In 2016:

- \$3.0M will be invested to support energy retrofits in older apartment buildings through the Hi-RIS program;
- \$2.4M for needed service infrastructure in Neighbourhood Improvement Areas will be invested;
- \$5.0M for the redevelopment of 389 Church Street;
- Continued redevelopment work on George Street Revitalization; and,
- Additional capital investments to support the expansion of child care spaces and revitalization of existing shelters and increased shelter capacity will be considered in the budget process.

Long Term Funding for Poverty Reduction

The loss of the Provincial Pooling Compensation Grant, most of which the City used to support social housing, as well as the ongoing federal withdrawal of funding for social housing, adds significant pressure to the property tax funded portion of the annual budget. Replacing this significant withdrawal of funding from the provincial and federal governments is critical in order to maintain current levels of social housing, one of the essential elements of poverty reduction.

Recommendation 17 of the Poverty Reduction Strategy calls for dedicated funding for poverty reduction initiatives over the life of the strategy, including exploring new revenue tools, to invest in poverty reduction. Inclusion of *TO Prosperity: Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy* in the Long-Term Fiscal Plan will address the long term, sustainable funding of the strategy.

EQUITY IMPACT

Deep-rooted economic and social transformations, coupled with important policy shifts, have led to the racialization, feminization, and geographic concentration of poverty in Toronto. Members of racialized groups and female lone-parent families are almost twice as likely to be poor as other Torontonians. Half of the city's neighbourhoods are becoming increasingly poor, while a small part of the city is becoming increasingly wealthy. Recent immigrants, people with disabilities and Aboriginal people are also overrepresented among the city's poor. Moving out of poverty becomes extremely difficult when individuals belong to any two, or more, of these groups.

TO Prosperity sets out a number of actions to begin to address and prevent these disparities. For these actions to be effective, people with lived experience of poverty must be at the heart of the Strategy. In the public engagement process to develop the Strategy, people with lived experience told staff *what* to focus on. Moving forward, people with lived experience will be engaged in developing ideas on *how* to implement the actions contained in this report.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on April 1, 2014, City Council requested that the City Manager develop a City of Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy based on broad public and City consultation. City Council directed that the Strategy be primarily focused on actions and ideas for City Divisions, Agencies and Boards to implement, as well as areas where inter-governmental advocacy is required, and where leadership from the community sector and other partners is needed.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2014.CD27.9>

At its meeting on February 4, 2015, when adopting the 2015 Operating Budget, City Council approved \$25.9M in new and enhanced services as an early commitment to poverty reduction efforts. <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.BU4.4>

At its meeting on July 7, 2015, City Council approved *TO Prosperity: Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy* in principle and directed staff to finalize the strategy and report back to Council in November 2015. <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.EX7.2>

Starting with the Budget Committee on August 28, 2015 and ending with the TTC Board on September 28, 2015, *TO Prosperity: Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy* was considered by 8 separate Standing Committees and 3 Boards. The Interim Strategy was endorsed by 6 committees and the 3 Boards, and motions were directed to staff for consideration in finalizing the Strategy (Attachment E).

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Toronto is a prosperous and successful city, but a growing number of Toronto residents are unable to make ends meet and achieve a stable life. Almost 1 in 5 adults (332,360 adults aged 18 to 64) and more than 1 in 4 children (42,830 children younger than 6 years of age) live on an after-tax income below Statistics Canada's Low Income Measure.¹ The incidence of low-income in Toronto (19%) is significantly greater than in Canada (14.9%), Ontario (13.9%), and the rest of the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (11.5%).

¹ City of Toronto (2013), *2011 National Household Survey: Income and Shelter Costs*.

The report, *TO Prosperity: Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy*, submitted to Council on July 7, 2015 describes three key aspects of poverty in Toronto:

- (1) The cost of living in the city has risen steadily over the past decade. Over the past six years, the cost of child care rose by 30%, public transit became 36% more expensive, and rents increased by 13%. In 2014, for the sixth consecutive year, GTA food banks had over one million visits, with an increase of nearly 40% in Toronto's inner suburbs since 2008.²
- (2) Toronto's labour market is increasingly polarized between high and low quality jobs, while social and income supports are becoming more difficult to access. In 1984, only 11% of Toronto's jobs were part-time while in 2014, the number had more than doubled to 23%.³ Changes made to the number of hours needed to qualify for Employment Insurance (EI) have restricted access to it: only 20% of unemployed Toronto workers qualify. At the same time, Ontario Works (OW) rates have lost more than half of their value since the mid-1990s, when they were cut by 21%.⁴
- (3) There are much higher levels of poverty and much greater risks of poverty among specific population groups and neighbourhoods. It is well documented that poverty is increasingly concentrated geographically, notably in the city's mature outer suburbs and in older high rise towers in these areas⁵. Poverty is also concentrated in specific communities. Recent immigrants (46%), Aboriginal people (37%), female lone parents (37%), members of racialized groups (33%), and people with disabilities (30%), have higher rates of poverty than the general Toronto population.⁶ While existing data sources are not yet disaggregated to include other communities such as the transgender community and consumer survivors, qualitative evidence points to significant challenges with poverty as well.

In response, *TO Prosperity: Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy* sets out the following three objectives for addressing poverty in Toronto: addressing immediate needs; creating paths to prosperity; and driving systemic change.

The Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy

Between October 2014 and September 2015, staff in Social Development, Finance and Administration and Toronto Employment and Social Services worked with a community advisory committee, resident animators with lived experience of poverty, United Way Toronto & York Region, and a variety of community groups to engage over 1,950 residents from across the city. This engagement took place through:

² Daily Bread Food Bank (2014), *Who's Hungry?*

³ City of Toronto (2014), Profile Toronto: Toronto Employment Survey 2014.

⁴ Granofsy, T., Corak, M., Johal, S. and Zon, N. (2015), *Renewing Canada's Social Architecture*. Mowat Centre; Davis, M., Hjartarson, J. and Medow, J. (2011), *Making it Work: The Final Recommendations of the Mowat Centre EI Task Force*. Mowat.

⁵ Hulchanski, D (2010), *The Three Cities Within Toronto: Income Polarization Among Toronto's Neighbourhoods, 1970-2005*; United Way Toronto (2011), *Poverty by Postal Code 2: Vertical Poverty (Declining income, housing quality and community life in Toronto's inner suburban high-rise apartments)*.

⁶ Social Planning Toronto and the Alliance for a Poverty Free Toronto (2013), *Toward a Poverty Elimination Strategy for the City of Toronto*.

- 11 citywide public meetings;
- 117 community-led conversations;
- a full-day multi-sector dialogue;
- four roundtable discussions with sector experts; and,
- two online questionnaires for residents.

In September 2015, as per Council direction, the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy was considered at 11 Standing Committees, Budget Committee and the Boards of the Toronto Public Library, Toronto Public Health, and the Toronto Transit Commission. An additional 117 residents shared their thoughts and experiences through this process. The Boards and Committees endorsed the Strategy, and in some cases recommended additional actions and initiatives for staff consideration in finalizing *TO Prosperity* (Appendix E).

The result of this extensive engagement and consultation is *TO Prosperity: Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy*, a 20-year strategy with 17 recommendations and 71 actions across six issue areas (see Table 1).

Table 1: Summary of Recommendations & Actions

Issue	Objective	# of Recommendations	# of Actions
Housing Stability	Address immediate needs	2	8
	Create pathways to prosperity	1	6
Service Access	Address immediate needs	1	8
	Create pathways to prosperity	1	4
Transit Equity	Address immediate needs	1	4
	Create pathways to prosperity	1	4
Food Access	Address immediate needs	1	3
	Create pathways to prosperity	1	6
Quality Jobs & Livable Incomes	Address immediate needs	2	7
	Create pathways to prosperity	1	4
Systemic Change	Drive systemic change	5	17
Total		17	71

The strategy runs from 2015, when Council made its initial investment in poverty reduction initiatives, until 2035. It is divided into five terms, beginning with the 2015 – 2018 Action Plan (Attachment B). There will be four subsequent action plans coinciding with Council terms. Each Action Plan is comprised of four annual work plans and a corresponding progress reports. The 2015 – 2018 Term Action Plan includes initiatives started in 2015, a 2016 Annual Work Plan, and actions requiring work plans for 2017 and 2018. The 2016 Work Plan (Attachment C) contains a range of initiatives that City divisions, agencies and commissions have taken leadership to advance and implement. Concrete deliverables are stated for each initiative, as well as financial implications.

COMMENTS

Building a Foundation: Collective Impact for City-wide Change

Successfully addressing poverty, a multifaceted social and economic issue with various causes, requires galvanizing the knowledge, resources, and energy of many stakeholders. Collective Impact is an evidence-based approach increasingly used by local, national, and international bodies to address complex issues like poverty. Based on the premise that no single organization alone can adequately address such complex social issues, this approach for cross-sectoral collaboration establishes that all partners committed to working together must:

- develop a common agenda;
- agree on shared measurements;
- work on mutually reinforcing activities; and,
- continuously communicate with each other.⁷

Research has shown that the success of this approach depends on the support of a backbone unit, whose work is to ensure that activities are deliberate, sustained, and integrated where necessary.⁸ This overall co-ordination and management function is vital to the implementation of a multi-year strategy involving many different sectors and partners.

The City of Toronto has been a pioneer in the adoption of a Collective Impact approach for implementing complex City initiatives such as Tower Renewal, the Toronto Youth Equity Strategy, and the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020. Working closely with community, business, labour, and government partners, a streamlined backbone unit is driving implementation and monitoring of each of these initiatives. By replacing traditional, siloed streams of service delivery, the result has been a more integrated, comprehensive and effective cross-program approach to implementation.

The Collective Impact approach has also shaped the development of *TO Prosperity*. Reflecting the importance of building a common agenda, extensive efforts were made to engage residents with lived experience of poverty, community and funding partners, businesses, labour, and City of Toronto divisions, agencies, boards, and commissions. The objectives, recommendations, and actions detailed in *TO Prosperity* are the result of this broad engagement process. City staff worked with the Wellesley Institute and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Advisory Group, and consulted with the Province of Ontario's Poverty Reduction Office to draft a monitoring and evaluation plan which will be further developed in collaboration with a broader range of stakeholders.

In adopting the Collective Impact model for the implementation of *TO Prosperity*, the City recognizes both its obligation to respond to poverty and the need to partner with a variety of stakeholders to do so. The City will create a multi-sector Implementation and Accountability Structure to ensure that the City's efforts are responsive to community needs and effectively contribute to reducing poverty in Toronto. Coordination among sectors will be critical to achieve the bold aims set out in this Strategy.

The Implementation and Accountability Structure will further work to ensure that Toronto's Poverty Reduction Strategy maintains a common agenda, guided by shared measurements, where activities are mutually reinforcing, and partners have a shared sense of commitment, motivation

⁷ John Kania and Mark Kramer (2011). "Collective Impact." *Stanford Social Innovation Review*.

⁸ Fay Hanleybrown, John Kania, and Mark Kramer (2012). "Channeling Change: Making Collective Impact Work." *Stanford Social Innovation Review*.

and success. In some cases, initiatives identified in the 2016 work plan are delivered in concert with a broad section of community and private sector partners. Through the five bodies described below, a near term aim of the backbone unit will be to identify City initiatives that are co-led with external partners, identify work led by external partners alone that helps advance the goals of the Strategy, and seek out new partners who are best positioned to realize aspects of the Strategy.

The Implementation and Accountability Structure will be composed of the following five bodies:

1. An **Accountability Table** with membership drawn from the community sector, residents, business, labour and academia, and key funding institutions to oversee the effective engagement, implementation, and measurement of the Strategy. The Accountability Table will ensure that there is ongoing connection and coordination through representatives from each of the bodies described below.

2. A **Lived Experience Advisory Group** comprised of Toronto residents with lived experience of poverty to contribute their expertise to the effective development, measuring, and monitoring of poverty reduction initiatives.

TO Prosperity prioritizes issues and solutions identified by residents with lived experience of poverty. Moving forward, the Lived Experience Advisory Group will be responsible for ensuring that the design, execution, and measurement of poverty reduction initiatives consider lived expertise in addition to technical expertise. The Advisory Group will be consulted frequently and will be invited to send delegates to poverty-related meetings and discussions across the City of Toronto.

3. A **Senior Staff Steering Committee** chaired by the Deputy City Manager Cluster A, with membership drawn from City divisions, agencies, boards, and commissions whose work impacts poverty in Toronto.

Senior staff from 30 City divisions, agencies, and commissions guided an extensive internal engagement process over ten months, leading to the creation of an actionable strategy. Moving forward, this Steering Committee will be responsible for overseeing the drafting of new annual work plans, monitoring the implementation of related initiatives, developing annual progress reports, and strategizing responses to system barriers to advance the strategy.

4. A **Private Sector Roundtable** comprised of Toronto business leaders, United Way Toronto & York Region, and the Toronto Region Board of Trade to contribute strategic advice and identify opportunities that meet the economic and employment goals of the strategy.

The City of Toronto collaborates with the private sector through a large number of priority initiatives. The creation of a Private Sector Roundtable provides an opportunity to strengthen and expand this work with the explicit purpose of addressing poverty in Toronto. The Roundtable will provide an important forum for business leaders to reorient ongoing partnerships and initiatives towards poverty reduction goals and to identify new opportunities for private sector leadership in this area. Given that the strategy explicitly recognizes the crucial role of good jobs and inclusive economic growth and development as underpinning effective poverty reduction, meaningful private sector involvement and champions will be essential to achieving the outcomes sought through *TO Prosperity*.

4. A **Monitoring and Evaluation Working Group** comprised of measurement and evaluation experts to monitor the key indicators and measure whether and to what degree the strategy's recommendations and actions contribute to reducing poverty in Toronto.

Measuring progress and evaluating success are key challenges facing municipal poverty reduction strategies given their focus on complex inter-related problems which propose a range of integrated solutions. Issues include data availability and reliability, the limitations of existing social and economic data sets which are often geared to measuring national and provincial trends, costs and resources required to undertake and sustain collection and analysis of data over time, and the selection of appropriate indicators.

The Monitoring and Evaluation Working Group will be responsible for monitoring outputs of individual initiatives, for determining the degree to which they contribute to the broader action outcomes, and whether these outcomes have the desired impact on recommendation-level indicators. As a starting point, City staff, working with The Wellesley Institute, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Advisory Group, and the Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy Office, developed the preliminary recommendation-level indicators contained in the strategy.

These indicators represents a good beginning. However, a key starting point to effectively measure success is ensuring that actions geared to addressing poverty are as concrete and focused as possible. This is the logic underpinning *TO Prosperity*, which identifies specific priorities that are the focus of annual work plans and which contribute to achieving broader, longer term objectives

A near term priority for the Working Group will be to assist City staff in identifying indicators for 2016 work plan initiatives and to refine the preliminary recommendation-level indicators presented in this report. The Working Group will also undertake the development of a broad City of Toronto-focused poverty indicator.

Managing Implementation: The Backbone Unit

Lessons from other jurisdictions implementing complex strategies involving multiple internal and external partners, such as *TO Prosperity*, indicate that a dedicated backbone unit is required to successfully drive and coordinate implementation. A backbone unit housed within the City of Toronto will support day-to-day activities related to the planning, implementation, evaluation, and reporting of the activities set out in the various action plans and work plans. Much of this work will be carried out by supporting and coordinating the above-described bodies. This Toronto Poverty Reduction Unit will also serve as a focal point for harnessing existing staff expertise and resources across the City of Toronto to support poverty reduction priorities.

In addition to these comprehensive functions, this unit will lead work in three critical areas:

Community Engagement: The Poverty Reduction Unit will lead a variety of community engagement processes to ensure that *TO Prosperity* remains a living document that reflects the experiences and priorities of all residents. Complementary to the work of the Implementation and Accountability Structure, these engagement processes will help to inform the implementation and future refinements of Toronto's first poverty reduction strategy.

Intergovernmental Alignment: By aligning its efforts with that of other governments, the City will more effectively advance evidence-based actions to reduce poverty. In the development of *TO Prosperity*, the City initiated promising discussions with the Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy Office. The Toronto Poverty Reduction Unit will continue these conversations and work to engage the appropriate federal departments.

Strategic Alignments: In recent years, Toronto City Council has approved a range of strategies that address the inequities that residents face. A number of strategies are place-based and focus on strengthening neighbourhoods and built-form infrastructure; some are population-based and focus on service improvement for improvement population outcomes; and others are systems-based aimed at city-wide change. To reduce poverty in Toronto, *TO Prosperity* brings these pieces together, maximizing the benefits resulting from each approach. Moving forward, by working with City Staff and other partners, the Toronto Poverty Reduction Unit will support ongoing alignment and co-ordination of the implementation and evaluation of various City policies and programs to ensure a consistent focus on poverty reduction.

The initial task of the proposed Toronto Poverty Reduction Unit will be to facilitate the design of the Implementation and Accountability Structure through a transparent and participatory process. The Unit will also prioritize driving the implementation of the 2016 work plan, and working with the Senior Staff Steering Committee to put in place a consistent approach to managing and monitoring the achievement of 2016 deliverables.

Conclusion

TO Prosperity: Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy is the product of intensive focus, significant work, and extensive input from residents, communities, City partners, Toronto City Council and City staff. The Strategy provides a foundation for the City of Toronto's ongoing efforts and new investments aimed at reducing poverty and advancing prosperity for all Torontonians.

The Strategy recognizes that poverty for some is transitional. However, it also recognizes that some Toronto residents face more deeply entrenched structural challenges. Consequently, the Strategy highlights the necessity of addressing immediate needs, but also of developing new and better pathways out of poverty for residents. The Strategy also focuses on systemic changes that are required to embed poverty reduction within the City's decision making, budgeting and priority setting processes.

Implementing and sustaining a longer term Strategy that supports cumulative changes aimed at reducing poverty will require both a strong and purposive accountability framework, as well as focused and dedicated staff resources in the form of the proposed backbone unit.

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: *TO Prosperity: Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy*

Attachment B: TO Prosperity 2015-2018 Term Action Plan

Attachment C: 2016 TO Prosperity Work Plan

Attachment D: 2015 TO Prosperity Progress Report

Attachment E: September 2015 Standing Committees & Boards: Approved Motions