



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Toronto Social Development Dashboard, March 2016

Date:	February 22, 2016
To:	Community Development & Recreation Committee
From:	Executive Director, Social Development, Finance & Administration
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	AFS #22232

SUMMARY

This report presents the March 2016 edition of the Toronto Social Development Dashboard (SDD). The Dashboard provides a graphical summary of the most relevant and recently updated socio-economic indicators available to help inform Community Development and Recreation Committee and Council'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 and Toronto's Dashboard.

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>

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 March 2016 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 period available against the same period 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 Manager's Office, 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, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship 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 March 2016 edition of the Social Development Dashboard remain broadly consistent with the results identified in previous editions of the dashboard.

The most recent edition of the SDD shows an increase in the unemployment rate, which staff in the Economic Development and Culture division have identified is explained by an increase in the number of people looking for work. This trend of an increasing participation rate only appeared in December 2015 and so is not readily apparent in the quarterly data of this SDD but can be seen in the December 2015 edition of the monthly Economic Indicators report. This difference between the monthly and quarterly picture underscores the importance of consistent reporting methods for the City's numerous indicator products.

The recently released 2015 Toronto Employment Survey conducted by the City Planning division shows a continued increase in the proportion of jobs which offer part-time hours (less than 30 hours per week), with percentage rising to 24.2%, 1.0% higher than in 2014. This trend suggests a continued shift towards increased employment precarity in Toronto.

Immigration indicators are current as of Q3 of 2015, and while there is an increase from Q2 in permanent resident admissions destined for Toronto, this is due primarily to an increase in the number of skilled workers. An increase in refugee admissions reflecting Syrian refugee resettlement in Toronto was only beginning to be seen in Q3. This total is anticipated to have been much larger in Q4 of 2015.

In the first half of 2015, the positive trends in Toronto residents' social vulnerability that were seen in previous editions of the dashboard, such as lower use of Food Banks and the Rent Bank, had reversed. However, this trend has improved with fewer Rent Bank loans in the fourth quarter and fewer Food Bank visits in the third quarter. Improved access to fee subsidies has also led to a notable decrease in the size of the waitlist for a child care fee subsidy.

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:

- Challenges with the provincial Social Assistance Management System software continue to delay inclusion of more recent social assistance data. Updating of this data remains on hold until these issues are resolved.
- Seasonal adjustments to Labour Force Survey data result in slight variations to historical data. 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.

- Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship 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 prior versions of the SDD are not comparable to the data in current and future editions of the dashboard.

Continuing Development of the Social Development Dashboard

The current focus of development work on the SDD is harmonization with other dashboards produced by the City. Staff in SDFA are working with colleagues in the City Manager's Office and Web Revitalization, along with other SDD contributing divisions, to harmonize data collection and management of indicators. Once a harmonization strategy is in place, efforts to develop and refine the selection of indicators available in the SDD will continue.

CONTACT

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ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 1: City of Toronto Social Development Dashboard (March 2016)