REPORT FOR ACTION

Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy: 2019-2022 Action Plan

Date: October 30, 2019
To: Executive Committee
From: Deputy City Manager, Community and Social Services
Wards: All

SUMMARY

TO Prosperity: Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy was approved by City Council on November 3, 2015, setting an ambitious 20-year plan (2015-2035) to mitigate the effects of poverty and reduce its incidence among Toronto residents, using various tools and resources available to the City as a local government. In addition to adopting the 20-year Poverty Reduction Strategy, City Council also approved the 2015-2018 Term Action Plan, and directed staff to bring forward an updated Term Action Plan every four years, coinciding with each term of Council over the 20-year life cycle of the Strategy.

The 2019-2022 Term Action Plan recommended in this report includes a series of actions and activities aligned with the Strategy's original 17 recommendations and 6 thematic areas that focus on housing stability, service access, transportation equity, food access, quality jobs and livable incomes, and systemic change.

The Term Action Plan recommended in this report is an evolution of the first term Action Plan, with a greater emphasis on impact and outcomes, continuous engagement, transparency and accountability, and leveraging non-traditional partners.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Deputy City Manager, Community and Social Services recommends that:

1. City Council adopt the actions contained in the 2019-2022 Poverty Reduction Strategy Term Action Plan as outlined in Attachment A as the City of Toronto's strategic poverty reduction priorities for this term of Council.

2. City Council direct the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to report back to the Executive Committee in 2021 on progress made towards implementing activities contained in the work plan as outlined in Attachment B.

3. City Council direct the City's Agencies and Corporations to share data, as permitted within various legislative authorities, to support the monitoring and evaluation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy shared outcomes.

4. City Council direct the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration, in partnership with the Indigenous Affairs Office to work with the Indigenous communities of Toronto to develop an Indigenous-led Toronto Poverty Reduction Action Plan and identify resource requirements that will be submitted to the 2021 budget process.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The Poverty Reduction Strategy is not a program itself, with its own budget, rather it is a corporate-wide strategy that provides overall direction on the City's strategic poverty reduction priorities.

In some cases, activities identified in the Strategy are reflected in discrete programs and services delivered by specific Divisions and Agencies. The resources required for implementation are either contained within the existing base budgets of the relevant divisions or programs, or are subject to new and/or enhanced requests through the budget process.

In other cases, activities identify transformations in how the City operates and create a clear mandate to develop networks and partnerships that will enable future work. In these cases, resources required and utilized to accomplish these activities are diffused and embedded across a number of different program areas.

Many programs and services that the City provides to low-income residents are funded in part or in whole by other orders of government. These funding relationships are always subject to change.

Between 2015 and 2019, City Council approved approximately $181M (net) in new and enhanced programs and services as part of the City's investments for the first Poverty Reduction Strategy Term Action Plan (2015-2018). These investments were made to stabilize and strengthen programs and services supporting low-income Torontonians, and to create a foundation for further systemic change.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy initiatives and activities that will support the recommended Term Action Plan are identified in Attachment B and categorized as follows:

1. List A (Within Existing Resources / Base Funded) contains 33 activities that have prior council approval, are base-funded and can be completed using existing resources.

2. List B (Planned but Subject to Budget Approval) contains 25 activities that are planned, but will require new and/or enhanced resources to be implemented. Divisions and Agencies will be submitting businesses cases to the 2020 and future budget processes for consideration with other City priorities and evaluated with all new and

enhanced requests with identification of a sustainable funding source required. Specific investments will be proposed upon approval of the Term Action Plan as part of the 2020 Budget process.

3. List C (In Development) contains 31 activities that are being proposed for further evaluation and development and require no current financial commitment. As resource requirements are identified for these initiatives, staff will report to Council through future budget processes as required.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has been provided the financial impacts associated with this plan for review as part of the 2020 budget process.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on November 3, 2015, City Council unanimously adopted "TO Prosperity: Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy," the City of Toronto's 20-year strategic plan to address poverty. 17 recommendations were adopted to address housing stability, service access, transit equity, food access, quality jobs and livable incomes and systemic change.
(http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.EX9.5)

At its meeting on December 13, 2016, City Council approved the Fair Pass Discount Program for Low-Income Torontonians. Transit equity is one of the five pillars of Toronto's Poverty Reduction Strategy. The Fair Pass Discount Program provides a discount on the adult Toronto Transit Commission fare for those who are experiencing poverty and is currently being implemented with a phased approach.
(https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2016/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-98467.pdf)

At its meeting on March 7, 2019, City Council requested the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to provide updates on a number of initiatives, including the provision of youth programing, library open hours, and the Fair Pass Discount Program in the development of the Poverty Reduction Strategy 2019-2022 Term Action Plan. These updates are provided in Attachment F.
(http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.EX2.5)

At its meeting on January 16, 2019, Economic and Community Development Committee directed the Deputy City Manager, Community and Social Services to undertake a review of all City of Toronto youth services and programming and to report back in the second quarter of 2020.
(http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.EC1.6)

At its meeting on May 14, 2019, City Council requested the Province of Ontario to reverse the $177.65 million dollars in unilateral, retroactive cuts to the City of Toronto's 2019 Budget that were announced as part of the 2019 Ontario Budget.
(http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.MM7.13)

At its meeting on September 15, 2019, Economic and Community Development Committee received a report from the Acting Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration responding to Committee directions on opportunities to

engage non-profit organizations to provide youth mentoring programs for children ages 7-11 living in Scarborough's Neighbourhood Improvement Areas. (https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2019/ec/bgrd/backgroundfile-136644.pdf)

At its meeting on October 2, 2019, City Council directed the Chief People Officer, People and Equity to develop a City of Toronto Gender Equity Strategy by the end of 2021 and to establish a Gender Equity Unity with People and Equity in 2020. (http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.EX8.7)

COMMENTS

Background

The Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy was approved by City Council at its meeting held on November 3 and 4, 2015.

By approving the Strategy an ambitious 20-year vision for Toronto was established:

> *By 2035, Toronto is a city with opportunities for all: a leader in the collective pursuit of justice, fairness and equity. We want to be renowned as a city where everyone has access to good jobs, adequate income, stable housing, affordable transportation, nutritious food, and supportive services.*

To pursue this vision, City Council adopted 17 Poverty Reduction Strategy recommendations addressing housing stability, service access, transportation equity, food access, quality jobs and livable incomes, and systemic change.

Council also directed that a new Term Action Plan be developed every four years, coinciding with each term of Council over the 20-year span of the Strategy.

This provides an opportunity to engage with residents and refine the specific actions and activities Toronto will focus on as its strategic priorities to advance the objectives of the 17 recommendations, while accounting for changed circumstances, demographics, data, technology, and assessments of program effectiveness.

The Term Action Plan recommended in this report includes an updated series of actions and activities aligned with the original 17 recommendations, and places a greater emphasis on impact and outcomes, continuous engagement, transparency and accountability, and leveraging non-traditional partners.

Poverty in Toronto

Growing economic and social inequality is a significant threat to the long-term success of the City.

According to 2016 Canadian Census data, 1 in 5 adults and 1 in 4 children continue to live in poverty in Toronto, as measured by the Low-Income Measure. Additionally, while those living in poverty are distributed throughout the city, certain neighbourhoods

continue to experience a higher than average concentration of poverty. These neighbourhoods tend to be highly racialized and in the inner suburban areas of Toronto.

According to the Government of Canada's new official poverty line, the Market Basket Measure, the City of Toronto has a rate of poverty that is almost 1.5 times higher than the Greater Toronto Census Metropolitan Area, 1.7 times higher than the provincial rate, and 1.8 times the national rate, based on 2017 Canadian Income Survey data.

Poverty also continues to be disproportionately experienced by certain populations, including those who are socially isolated, singles, vulnerable seniors, Indigenous communities and equity-seeking groups such as Black Torontonians, racialized youth, and residents living with a disability.

Progress made through the 2015-2018 Term Action Plan

Since the creation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy, significant progress has been made to address poverty in Toronto. The objectives of the 2015-2018 Term Action Plan were to stabilize and strengthen programs and services supporting low-income Torontonians in order to mitigate the impacts of poverty and to create a strong foundation for further systemic change to reduce the incidence of poverty in Toronto, using levers available to the City as a local government.

Examples of key initiatives and accomplishments from the 2015-2018 Term Action Plan include:

Housing Stability:
- Stabilized funding for Toronto Community Housing and developed the Tenants First implementation plan to transform the delivery of social housing in Toronto
- Established building maintenance standards through the RentSafeTO program to improve the quality of multi-residential buildings

Service Access:
- Developed new centres located in Neighbourhood Improvement Areas where recreation programs are free
- Expanded access to child care through the addition of new child care spaces and subsidies
- Created spaces for youth through the development of enhanced youth spaces and hubs in community recreation centres and libraries

Transportation Equity:
- Increased transit affordability by implementing Phase 1 of the Fair Pass program providing discounted Toronto Transit Commission fares to adults receiving social assistance

Food Access:
- Improved access to nutritious food for children by expanding funding and adding new participating schools to student nutrition programs
- Improved access to nutritious food through the Mobile Good Food Market

Quality Jobs and Livable Incomes
- Embedded inclusive economic development practices by adopting and implementing a social procurement program
- Established the Woodbine Community Benefits Agreement and adopted a Community Benefits Framework for Toronto

Systemic Change
- Embedded lived experience into City service planning and decision-making processes through the creation of the Lived Experience Advisory Group

Overall, $181 million (net) of new and enhanced Poverty Reduction Strategy investments were included in the City's annual operating budgets between 2015 and 2019. These strategic investments were designed to achieve the Strategy's objectives to address immediate needs, create pathways to prosperity, and drive systemic change.

Provincial and Federal Context

Province of Ontario

As the first point of contact with residents, City services are directly confronted with the realities of poverty. However, the work of poverty reduction is an inter-governmental endeavour. While core services that low-income Torontonians rely upon are delivered by the City, they are primarily funded and regulated by other orders of government, primarily the Government of Ontario. Given this legal and funding relationship between the Province and the City, the ability to respond to the growing needs of low-income residents is directly affected by sudden changes in the landscape. As a result of such changes, the work of realizing the objectives of the Poverty Reduction Strategy can be affected.

The new Provincial government elected in June 2018 commissioned a third-party "line by line" review of government expenditures, emphasizing the need for improved efficiency and more robust public expenditure management frameworks and renewed funding models that incent productivity and performance. This has led to review of a number of programs, policies, and services as well as the overturning of previously announced initiatives such as the Basic Income pilot.

The 2019 Ontario Budget tabled on April 11, 2019 announced a range of funding and program changes that would have resulted in $177.65 million in unilateral, retroactive cuts to the City of Toronto's 2019 Budget, including changes to provincial/municipal cost-sharing formulas for child care and public health going forward (details outlined in the City Manager's report tabled with City Council's decision and adopted on May 14, 2019, MM7.13 Impact of 2019 Provincial Budget on the City of Toronto). Following an advocacy campaign by the City of Toronto, the Large Urban Mayor's Caucus of Ontario and other stakeholders, the Province agreed to reverse the proposed cuts for 2019 and work with local governments on how to achieve future savings.

However, a new cost sharing formula with Toronto Public Health and Children's Services is planned for 2020 onwards, which will likely see the City share in a greater proportion of costs for these areas. While the City will work to mitigate the impacts of

these changes to low-income residents, the ability to create or expand key poverty reduction programs, such as initiatives to improve food access or increase child care subsidies, will be directly impacted.

The 2019 Ontario Budget also announced the province's commitment to reform the social assistance system and indicated that the changes would result in estimated annual savings of over $1 billion per year for the Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services which funds social assistance.

Other Provincial funding changes, such as changes to rent controls as part of the Province's Housing Supply Action Plan, as well as funding cuts as outlined in MM7.13 Impact of 2019 Provincial Budget on the City of Toronto, will impact services to residents in poverty. As example, with the exception of asylum claim forms, Legal Aid Ontario has stopped all funding for new legal services for immigration and refugee clients. As many of these populations experience poverty in Toronto, the residual effects will affect City services.

Overall, while details are not yet known, anticipated regulatory and funding changes from the Province are likely to have significant consequences for Toronto's ability to deliver services and respond to the effects of poverty on its residents. If the municipal share of overall funding for provincially mandated core services increases, the City of Toronto will face challenges in funding and delivering on strategic initiatives to improve the quality of life for low-income Torontonians and enable them to fully participate in the social and economic fabric of Toronto. These ongoing and changing pressures will have a direct and tangible impact on the City to deliver on the actions and activities of the Term Action Plan. As a result of continuing changes, the implementation of the Strategy will need to be agile and responsive.

Government of Canada

Federally, the Government of Canada announced a Poverty Reduction Strategy in August 2018 that established, for the first time, an official national poverty line based on the Market Basket Measure. This includes creating a dashboard of indicators federally to better measure progress towards the target goal of halving poverty by 2030 from its 2015 level. The federal strategy also built on and referenced existing initiatives such as:

- a 2017 announcement of a National Housing Strategy focused on reducing chronic homelessness by 50% over the next ten years
- the Canada Child Benefit, which assists with the costs of raising children and is proportionate to the annual income of a household
- a $7 billion investment over 10 years to the Guaranteed Income Supplement top-up for single seniors
- a targeted focus on addressing Indigenous housing as well as Indigenous early learning and child care
- a new Canada Workers Benefit, which is a refundable tax credit that is intended to supplement the earnings of low income workers and provides work incentives for low-income Canadians.

Further, the 2019 federal budget included investments in youth employment supports, student loan reform, the development of a National School Food Program, as well as investments in municipal infrastructure.

It is anticipated that the incoming federal government will maintain such initiatives. Additionally, commitments were made during the election campaign to increase benefits such as the Child Disability Benefit and the Canada Child Benefit.

As the announcements and changes from the provincial and federal governments are evolving and ongoing, it is difficult to ascertain the full scope and scale of impact. Staff will continue to work with other orders of government to advance the objectives of the Poverty Reduction Strategy though there remains significant potential that this will be impacted by changes to federal and provincial policies. Given the changing nature of these areas of support, the actions and activities in the Term Action Plan are designed to be nimble in the face of new contexts.

The Municipal Role in Poverty Reduction

Although provincial and federal governments have a significant role to play in poverty reduction, the direct impacts of poverty are often borne by the City through the services and supports offered. As such, mitigating the impacts of and reducing poverty is core business for municipal governments and an area in which the City can have impact. For some City divisions, such as those offering human services, this is part of their explicit mandate. For other Divisions and Agencies that have not historically been involved in human service delivery, there is a growing recognition that they too can play a role in poverty reduction.

The Term Action Plan is placing a more deliberate focus on utilizing the controls of a municipal government to drive systemic change. Whereas the City is very dependent on support and funding from other orders of government, there are a number of formal and informal relationships that can be leveraged, such as working closely with the For Public Benefit Sector (i.e. the community-based Not-for-Profit sector) to deliver locally relevant and responsive programs and supports. The City also plays an important role in convening non-traditional partners to develop new ways of operating and can utilize these levers to better offer supports and pathways for low-income residents.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy has identified six different types of roles that the City might play with respect to delivering on strategic poverty reduction initiatives:

- **Service Provision**: new or enhanced services for residents that have a direct impact on mitigating the effects of, or reducing the number of people in poverty.
- **Policy and Regulation**: revisions to or development of policies and regulations that shift practices or creates an enabling environment to improve outcomes for residents living in poverty, including engaging in advocacy to other orders of government for policy or regulatory changes.
- **Funding**: grants and other supports (e.g. assets, in-kind, deferred revenue) that incubate new ideas or sustain supportive programs, services and initiatives that improve the outcomes of residents living in poverty.

- **Leadership**: establishment or implementation of best practices, including change management and government modernization initiatives, that improve services for and outcomes of residents living in poverty.
- **Stewardship**: facilitating, convening, and establishing partnerships that drive systemic change or transformation that benefit residents living in poverty.
- **Purchasing and Investment**: leveraging existing operating spending, or capital infrastructure investment to improve social and economic outcomes of communities.

The Term Action Plan contains actions and activities that each utilize one or more of these municipal tools. With a holistic plan to mitigate the effects of poverty on residents, the City is taking a systems approach in order to have positive impact.

Enhancing Strategic Partnerships

To truly address poverty, the City must engage in strategic partnerships with other sectors to advance poverty reduction initiatives across Toronto. The City has a long standing relationship with community-based organizations in the For Public Benefit sector, with civic leadership and funding partners such as the United Way, with academic and health care institutions, and with other system partners such as the Local Health Integration Networks.

The Term Action Plan acknowledges that truly addressing poverty requires the City to strengthen these relationships. This includes collaborative initiatives, such as AnchorTO (a network of public sector institutions), which is advancing the practice of social procurement, local hiring and community benefits among multiple major public institutions in Toronto. It also includes working more effectively with the For Public Benefit sector to build organizational capacity to enable all partners to better leverage existing assets and resources to provide innovative new supports for residents.

Development Process for the 2019-2022 Term Action Plan

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Office has been engaging with residents (including those with lived experience of poverty), academic partners, community stakeholders, service providers and City staff from across the corporation since the Spring of 2018 to create the Term Action Plan.

These include the #TacklePovertyTO Speaker Series, facilitated and self-directed community conversations across Toronto neighbourhoods, online submissions, workshops with the Poverty Reduction Strategy's Lived Experience Advisory Group, and two rounds of internal "Drill Down" sessions with City Divisions and Agencies.

Overall, hundreds of residents and staff provided input on how to update the Poverty Reduction Strategy, and the Term Action Plan reflects what we heard during this process. Feedback included placing a greater emphasis on identifying and filling service gaps, focusing on assisting residents as they face life transitions, and easing the process of navigating services that are offered in Toronto.

It was also identified that there is a need to implement a process of continuous engagement to ensure that residents are fully included and invested in the Poverty Reduction Strategy and to meet the collective impact objectives of the Strategy. In partnership with the Yonge Street Mission, recommendations were developed to accomplish continuous engagement, and are reflected in many of the actions and activities in the proposed Term Action Plan.

The Term Action Plan also embeds equity and inclusion more explicitly in its design by:

- Initiating the development of a gender-based analysis to understand the impact of the proposed actions on women, girls and other intersectional identities
- Committing to the development of an urban Indigenous-led poverty reduction action plan, advancing the City of Toronto's commitments to reconciliation

Recommended 2019-2022 Poverty Reduction Strategy Term Action Plan

Across the six (6) issue themes and 17 recommendations, the Term Action Plan prioritizes 31 actions that address immediate needs, create pathways to prosperity, and drive systemic change. This plan also explicitly acknowledges the leadership of and alignment with other strategies that advance the City's poverty reduction goals including, but not limited to, the HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan (which will be presented to Committee and Council for its consideration in December 2019), the Toronto Seniors Strategy, Tenants First, the Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism, and the Resilience Strategy.

The complete recommended Term Action Plan is appended to this report as Attachment A. Highlights include, but are not limited to:

Housing Stability:

The Term Action Plan aims to provide low-income residents and community partners with the capacity to engage with the City of Toronto in support of the objectives of the City's ten-year housing plan. Specific actions and activities to address housing stability will be included in the HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan which will be considered by City Council before the end of 2019.

The HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan will provide a blueprint for action across the full housing spectrum - from homelessness to rental and ownership housing to long-term care for seniors. The plan also updates and builds upon the City's first housing plan, Housing Opportunities Toronto Action Plan 2010-2020.

The HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan will set an aggressive housing agenda focused on supporting people and is aligned with other City policies such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy, Toronto's Resilience Strategy and the Seniors Strategy. It will set targets to be achieved over the next 10 years with estimates of the financial investments necessary to achieve success. It will also provide for increased accountability and oversight over a range of government resources necessary for improving housing outcomes for residents.

A number of actions and activities within the Poverty Reduction Strategy Term Action Plan will complement and contribute to the City's ongoing housing efforts, such as implementation of the Community Benefits Framework, developing community capacity and inclusive economic development models, facilitating continuous engagement with Toronto residents, and prioritizing the monitoring and evaluation of outcomes.

Service Access:

The Term Action Plan strives to ensure that low-income residents can more easily discover and access consistent, predictable human services that deliver the outcomes they are intended to achieve by:

- Leveraging existing public assets, services, and new partnerships to make supports more accessible for low-income residents
- Evaluating program delivery models to maximize positive client and service user outcomes
- Pushing forward seamless service delivery and breaking down silos that create barriers for residents
- Supporting the City's review of youth services and continuing to implement the Child Care Growth and Capital Strategies

Transportation Equity:

The Term Action Plan supports low-income residents in being able to afford and access a public transit system that connects residents to jobs, services and civic life by:

- Continuing the implementation of the Fair Pass Transit Discount Program
- Exploring and incubating ways to improve connectivity for low-income residents across Toronto

Food Access:

The Term Action Plan aims to improve access for low-income children to nutritious foods, and ensures low-income residents can participate in healthy, equitable and sustainable food systems by:

- Investing in programs and services that address food insecurity, and promoting healthy equitable, and sustainable food systems

Quality Jobs and Livable Incomes:

The Term Action Plan aims to strengthen connections to financial empowerment and income supports, as well as pathways to quality jobs through:

- Embedding financial empowerment into City programs and services
- Monitoring and responding appropriately to proposed social assistance program changes

- Advancing inclusive economic development initiatives, including community benefits, social procurement and other anchor institution strategies

Systemic Change:

All City of Toronto divisions and agencies can exercise levers and operate in innovative ways which promote economic inclusion, resident empowerment, and collective impact for residents experiencing poverty. The Term Action Plan seeks to drive systemic change by:

- Developing a policy framework to guide when the City should deliver programs and services on a universal or targeted basis, including a consideration of appropriate levels of subsidies and fees
- Implementing a continuous engagement model
- Recruiting a new cohort of the Lived Experience Advisory Group
- Establishing a robust monitoring and evaluation regime
- Partnering with Indigenous communities to empower an urban Indigenous-led poverty reduction action plan

Key Strategic Initiatives for 2019-2022

The recommended Term Action Plan contains many vital programs and services that will be delivered by Divisions and Agencies. In addition to these, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Office will be leading the development of several key strategic initiatives outlined below.

Transit Fare Equity Program for Low-income Residents

Affordable transportation contributes to the overall health and well-being of individuals and communities by improving access to services, goods and opportunities.

As a flagship initiative of Toronto's Poverty Reduction Strategy, the Transit Fare Equity Program increases equitable access to transit by leveraging PRESTO technology to provide a Toronto Transit Commission fare discount to low income residents. A discount of 33% is provided on the price of an adult single ride and a 21% discount is provided on the price of an adult monthly pass.

Phase 1 of the Fair Pass Discount Program was successfully launched in April 2018, focussing on residents in receipt of either Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program benefits. Led by Toronto Employment and Social Services, over 68,000 Fair Pass cards have been issued since inception of the program.

An independent consultant conducted an evaluation of Fair Pass Phase 1 between April 2018 and April 2019. This evaluation is appended as Attachment C to this report. The evaluation's key findings include:

- *Fair Pass Usage and Registration*: Almost half of Fair Pass cardholders reported using their discount within the first month and over 60% registered their card.

- *Increased Transit Usage*: 90% of Fair Pass users report taking transit as much as they like compared with only 55% prior to discount; 92% of Fair Pass users take transit 2-3 times per week, with 50% using it multiple times a day.

- *Improved Access*: Pre/Post survey results shows that Fair Pass users are better able to attend work (72% post vs. 36% pre discount); visit family/friends (72% post vs. 34% pre discount), and attend medical appointments (84% post vs. 50% pre discount).

- *Reduced Social Isolation*: over 60% of Fair Pass users reported that the discount had positively impacted their life and for many, having the discount decreased their social isolation and generated new activity.

- *Program is Accessible/Convenient*: 92% of Fair Pass users reported feeling confident/comfortable using the discount, 89% said the process to apply was easy.

Phase 2 was launched in September 2019. Led by Toronto Children's Services, the program is now extended to child care subsidy recipients whose household income is below the Low-Income Measure plus 15% threshold. An estimated 16,000 additional households are now eligible for the discount. Since eligibility was extended to this cohort, more than 2,750 residents have applied for the Fair Pass Discount Program. This number is expected to increase as additional clients are notified that they are eligible.

An evaluation of Phase 2 is currently underway that will mirror the evaluation of Phase 1. Baseline data is currently being collected from Phase 2 applicants through a voluntary online survey. After a period of several months, staff will survey these Fair Pass users again to understand how their transit usage patterns have changed.

Plans are also underway to prepare for the potential approval and implementation of Phase 3 which would extend eligibility to all other Toronto residents with an income below the Low-Income Measure plus 15% threshold.

Based on the learnings from Phase 1, Phase 2 and approaches used in other jurisdictions (such as the City of Calgary's Fair Entry program), the Poverty Reduction Strategy Office, in partnership with the Human Services Integration project team, will convene a Project Management team to design, plan and implement Phase 3 of the Fair Pass Discount Program, subject to the identification of sustainable funding sources.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Office envisions the Fair Pass Discount Program as helping to inform and support seamless systems integration and other government modernization initiatives for low-income residents.

Roll-out of Phase 3 is anticipated to occur in 2021.

Develop an urban Indigenous-led Toronto Poverty Reduction Action Plan

The City of Toronto proposes to work with urban Indigenous leaders in 2020 to develop and fund the implementation of a community-specific poverty reduction action plan.

In this time of Truth and Reconciliation; coordination and communication between and across sectors is essential to ensure we are maximizing outcomes that are linked to broader priorities and goals as it concerns the urban Indigenous landscape in Toronto. It also ensures that Indigenous communities and leaders play a lead role in self-determining outcomes that impact on day to day life in Toronto.

Our Health Counts (2016) indicates that 90% of Indigenous children live below the Low-Income Cut-Off. Similar reports place 84% of Indigenous individuals and families as living in extreme poverty.

Data from the 2016 City of Toronto Streets Need Assessment indicates that Indigenous people make up 16% of this city's homeless population despite representing only 2.6% of the overall population

As currently structured, the Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy does not contain specific actions targeted to Indigenous people, despite evidence that this population is significantly over-represented across all poverty related statistics.

This initiative will be guided by the commitments and statements of accountability made to the urban Indigenous peoples of Toronto as stated in the Meeting in the Middle Engagement Strategy & Action Plan, developed in partnership between the community and the Shelter, Support and Housing Administration Division.

The development of an urban Indigenous-led Poverty Reduction Action Plan will be a step in the right direction in ensuring that the needs and perspectives of the Urban Indigenous community are identified, prioritized, and funded, in order to best address the unique circumstances faced by this population.

In support of the principles of self-determination and self-governance, the City of Toronto along with a coalition of agencies and leaders from the urban Indigenous communities of Toronto, coordinated through the Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council, and governed by a signed Letter of Understanding, will develop a business case for the 2021 budget process for the provision of ongoing financial support to:

1. Identify program areas (City and/or community-delivered) to leverage for action
2. Develop a community engagement framework
3. Identify funding constraints and opportunities
4. Raise awareness, including engaging in advocacy to other orders of government
5. Develop a governance structure for ongoing implementation and reporting
6. Disburse the grant funding to community-based organizations
7. Develop an appropriate method of monitoring progress and outcomes

Inclusive Economic Development

Inclusive Economic Development is defined as a systems approach to economic development that creates an inclusive, sustainable economy that is meaningfully connected to the wellbeing of individuals and families.

The Term Action Plan contains a number of initiatives that build on existing work the City is undertaking and proposes new directions to drive Inclusive Economic Development.

Key ongoing initiatives include:

- The Social Procurement Program that achieves strategic social, economic and workforce development goals through the City of Toronto's purchasing of goods and services.
- A Community Benefits Framework that aims to maximize the social and economic impacts of community benefits when the City of Toronto buys, builds, or provides financial incentives for construction or remediation.

The Action Plan will pursue promising opportunities to:

- Encourage investment in community-owned/controlled assets
- Support the establishment of social enterprises and community cooperatives
- Continue to prioritize local hiring and workforce development

Over the course of the Term Action Plan, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Office will pursue opportunities to prioritize economic opportunities for equity seeking communities that are particularly distant from the labour market. In particular, there is a need to target economic inclusion activities to those living with a disability, Black Torontonians and Indigenous communities. Collaboration with the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee, and the Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism will be undertaken to achieve these objectives, along with the proposed development of an urban Indigenous-led Poverty Reduction Action Plan.

Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (Attachment D) lays out a plan for how to gather actionable information regarding the activities, processes, and shared short- and long-term outcomes. The Framework intends to incorporate and build upon the City of Toronto's shift towards Results Based Accountability. The Monitoring and Evaluation Framework will help identify the role the Poverty Reduction Strategy plays in community-wide impact by focusing on specific clients who receive support and services.

This report seeks City Council direction to the City's Agencies and Corporations to share data, as permitted within various legislative authorities, to support the monitoring and evaluation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy shared outcomes.

The Term Action Plan will also identify resources that will be required to allow for the sharing and analysis of relevant administrative and research data that will enable enhanced monitoring, evaluation and reporting on key individual and population-level outcomes that the Term Action Plan intends to achieve.

Process for Poverty Reduction Strategy Outcome Development

The Term Action Plan identifies some preliminary outcomes to measure progress. These are presented in Attachment B. A final list of Poverty Reduction Shared Outcomes will be developed through a collaborative process, in consultation with all relevant divisions, key community partners and stakeholders. Interdivisional working groups will be established to validate these shared outcomes and performance measures as well as to assess and report out on progress.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data collected as a part of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Monitoring and Evaluation Framework will be disaggregated whenever possible in order to better understand the factors that impact City of Toronto resident's wellbeing and lead to inequities. Disaggregated data allows for the identification of inequities to better inform planning, policy, program and service delivery.

Gender-Based Analysis

The Poverty Reduction Strategy is an equity strategy. It recognizes the importance of ensuring that all Torontonians, regardless of their gender or other identity factors such as race or family composition, have equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from prosperity.

To develop the Term Action Plan, an equity lens was used to take into consideration the variation in experiences and barriers that different groups face related to poverty. Some of these groups include women, persons with disabilities, newcomers to Canada, single parents, unattached individuals, Indigenous peoples, trans-gendered and non-binary individuals, and individuals from Black and other racialized communities.

Further to this, in 2018 the Poverty Reduction Strategy Office was directed by City Council to conduct a gender based analysis of the Term Action Plan. To achieve this, gender considerations were embedded into the development process of the plan. The office also established a working group to assist in conducting a gender- based analysis of the actions being considered and to determine a strategy to embed gender-based analysis into the ongoing implementation, monitoring and impact evaluation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy.

City Council's recent direction to establish a Gender Equity Office, and develop a Gender Equity Strategy provides an exciting opportunity to develop tools and strategies for addressing intersectional gender equity and analysis.

Lived Experience Advisory Group

In 2016, Social Development, Finance and Administration launched a process to establish the City's inaugural Poverty Reduction Strategy Lived Experience Advisory Group. The design of Toronto's Lived Experience Advisory Group was informed by hundreds of Toronto residents who provided input on what a lived experience advisory group should look like, including composition and terms of membership, frequency and location of meetings, communications, audience and tactics, and supports required. The City applied an equity-based application and selection process to the group, with consideration given to ensure representation from equity-seeking groups. Members were nominated through an open call for applications that clearly laid out the type and duration of commitment requested, including training, orientation, monthly meetings, and community engagements.

In January 2017, 20 applicants were selected to form the Lived Experience Advisory Group. Members include people with diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, sexual, and gender identities. Members include racialized people, new immigrants, people with disabilities, Indigenous people, and people with experiences of the justice system. These individuals represent the vast diversity of perspectives and identities that make up the City of Toronto. Members hold intricate knowledge and diverse personal lived experience with the realities, conditions and impacts of living with poverty. The Lived Experience Advisory Group's coming together represents the culmination of years of input from community members who demanded better access routes for people with lived/living experience to participate in City processes.

Members are engaged as part of a three-year term to inform the effective development, implementation, and monitoring of the strategy. The group's mandate focuses on advocacy, education and awareness, and monitoring and evaluation. Since the launch in 2017, the group has met monthly and has participated in a wide variety of City policy, program, and service-development processes. The group also act as a conduit between City staff and communities, and organize and participate in presentations and conversations with City divisions, the private sector, community agencies, and residents. As illustrated in Attachment E, members contribute insights into a range of programs and issues, including Ontario Works, unemployment, systemic discrimination and the impacts of violence.

The first cohort of the Lived Experience Advisory Group has been largely successful. The model, experience and lessons learned have informed best practices that have influenced the design of other internal and external advisory groups within the City of Toronto and has attracted interest from other municipal and regional jurisdictions across Canada.

In the fall of 2019, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Office, with the involvement of existing members, will invite residents from across the City of Toronto to join the second cohort of the Lived Experience Advisory Group.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: 2019-2022 Poverty Reduction Strategy Term Action Plan
Attachment B: 2019-2022 Poverty Reduction Strategy Work Plan
Attachment C: Transit Fare Equity Program: Phase 1 Evaluation Report
Attachment D: Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy Monitoring and Evaluation Framework
Attachment E: Summary of Lived Experience Advisory Group Participation in Poverty Reduction Strategy Activities
Attachment F: Response to City Council's March 7, 2019 Requests