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2020 OPERATING BUDGET BRIEFING NOTE

Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy

Issue/Background:

- In 2015, City Council approved the Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), a comprehensive 20-year strategy to mitigate the effects of poverty and reduce its incidence among Toronto residents. The PRS focuses action on Housing Stability, Service Access and Coordination, Transportation Equity, Food Access, Quality Jobs & Livable Incomes, and Systemic Change to advance equity, opportunity and prosperity for all Toronto residents.
- The PRS has 17 recommendations linked to a set of actions to be carried out over consecutive four-year terms of council. The first 2015-2018 Action Plan has been completed.
- In November 2019, City Council approved the 2019-2022 Term Action Plan which consists of 31 Actions and 89 Activities to be carried out over the course of the term, some of which require new investments.
(<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.EX10.1>)
- At its meeting held on January 17, 2020, Budget Committee requested that City staff provide a briefing note on the total investments made through the Poverty Reduction Strategy over the last 5 years (Motion 1i). This briefing note responds to that request.
(<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.BU14.2>)

Key Points:

- Between 2015 and 2019, City Council directed an increased investment of approximately \$266.5M (gross) and \$181M (net) in the operating budget for new and enhanced PRS-related initiatives. This does not include additional capital investments, and programs that are funded through existing or other revenue sources (e.g. funded by other orders of government such as the National Housing Strategy). A summary of these investments can be found in Attachment 1.
- Progression on the major objectives of the 2015-2018 Action Plan has been made. The Action Plan contained over 300 discrete work plan items, the majority of which have been implemented.
- The objectives of the 2015-2018 Action Plan were to stabilize and strengthen programs and services supporting low-income Torontonians, and create a foundation for further systemic change. Key accomplishments include:

- *Housing Stability*
 - Stabilized funding for Toronto Community Housing and developed the Tenant's First implementation plan to transform the delivery of social housing in Toronto
 - Created building maintenance standards through the RentSafeTO program to improve the quality of 3,500 multi-residential buildings across Toronto

- *Service Access and Coordination*
 - Established 17 additional Community Recreation Centres where programs are free, located in Neighbourhood Improvement Areas, including the development of 1 new centre (York Recreation Centre)
 - Expanded access to child care through the addition of 15,306 new child care spaces and 5,584 subsidies
 - Created safe, inclusive spaces for youth through the development of 11 new enhanced youth spaces in community centres and 13 new youth hubs in libraries

- *Transportation Equity*
 - Increased transit affordability by implementing the first two phases of the Fair Pass program providing discounted TTC fares to adults receiving social assistance and those who receive child care subsidies living with a low-income, with more than 53,000 cards actively in use
 - Introduced Kids Ride Free on the TTC, benefiting approximately 266,000 children 12 and under annually

- *Food Access*
 - Provided access to nutritious food for 211,000 children by expanding student nutrition programs, with increases of 36% in students served, 17% in programs offered, and 27% in participating schools since 2014
 - 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 best in class social procurement program
 - Established the Woodbine Community Benefits Agreement that is on track to meet its social and employment targets, and developed a Community Benefits Framework for Toronto to regularize the practice

- *Systemic Change*
 - Introduced Equity Responsive Budgeting in 2016 to provide analysis of how changes in the Operating Budget impact equity-seeking groups in order to inform budget deliberations
 - Embedded lived experience into City planning and decision-making processes through the creation of the Lived Experience Advisory Group

- The 2020 Staff Recommended Operating Budget includes additional funding of \$15.3M (gross) and \$4.7M (net) (see Table 1).
 - The focus of these new investments are to sustain the progress made over the previous four years of the strategy, as well as to begin implementation of the 2019-2022 Term Action Plan. This includes:
 - Supporting the implementation of the HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan
 - Investing in the Community Recreation Growth Plan
 - Adding additional Youth Hubs (Toronto Public Library) and Enhanced Youth Spaces (Parks, Forestry and Recreation)
 - Implementing the 100% Provincially Funded Low-Income Seniors Dental Care Program
 - Expanding Sunday hours at Toronto Public Libraries
 - Continued delivery of Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Fair Pass transit discount program, and designing an implementation plan for Phase 3, which will expand eligibility to all adult low-income Toronto residents, with a planned roll-out beginning in 2021
 - Advancing inclusive economic development initiatives through the Community Benefits Framework
 - Creation of an Intersectional Gender Equity Strategy and Unit
 - Development of an Urban Indigenous-led Toronto Poverty Reduction Action Plan
 - In addition, there are 33 Activities in the 2019-2022 Action Plan that have prior Council approval, are base-funded and can be completed using existing resources.
 - The 2020 Staff Recommended Operating Budget include approved Activities in the 2020 PRS work plan that require new and enhanced resources for implementation this year.
 - Additional Activities that are under development or are anticipated to start in future years will be submitted through the 2021 Budget Process and beyond.
 - Since Council approved the Poverty Reduction Strategy in 2015, reporting through the budget process on investments has been inconsistent. For example, in some years, capital investments have been included, and in others, not, making it challenging to compare investments by year.
 - Staff will be reporting to Council in mid-2020 on the total investments (operating and capital) made by the City to support low-income Torontonians over the past 10 years. The baseline identified in this report will be used to track PRS investments in a more consistent manner over the life-span of the Strategy.
 - Finally, in addition to regular updates through future budget processes, staff will deliver a mid-term report through the Executive Committee in 2021 on progress made towards implementing activities, and achieving outcomes, contained in the work plan.
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Table 1. New and Enhanced Staff Recommended Priorities Included for Poverty Reduction in the 2020 Staff Recommended Operating Budget

Service	In \$ Thousands	
	Gross	Net
City Manager's Office		
Creating an Intersectional Gender Equity Strategy & Unit	218.2	218.2
Housing Secretariat		
Consultant Review and Research for Housing TO 2020-2030	450.0	
Parks, Forestry & Recreation		
"Swim to Survive" Recreation Program – Phase 5	159.6	159.6
Recreation Growth Plan & Waitlist Mngmt – Phase 3	1,085.1	824.4
Enhanced Youth Spaces – Add 10 New Spaces Over 3 Years	929.6	929.6
Senior Services and Long-Term Care		
Emotion Centered Approach to Care - Pilot	500.0	500.0
Shelter, Support & Housing Administration		
Add 8 Street Outreach Workers as mandated by inquests' report	805.5	805.5
Administering New Affordable Housing Sites	291.5	
Social Development, Finance & Administration		
Community Benefits Framework	83.6	83.6
Transit Fare Equity Program – Phase 3 (Project Management)	500.0	500.0
Urban Indigenous-Led Poverty Reduction Action Plan	472.0	
Toronto Public Health		
100% Provincially Funded Low-Income Seniors Dental Care	9,075.6	(22.5)
Creating Health Plus (CH+)	55.0	55.0
Toronto Public Library		
2020 Sunday Service Enhancement	208.0	208.0
Two Additional Youth Hub Locations	461.0	461.0
Total 2020 Investments in Poverty Reduction	15,294.7	4,722.4

Note: An additional \$0.230M gross and net was approved by the TTC Board for Wheel Trans to support Poverty Reduction

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