A
Social
Development
Strategy
for the
City of Toronto

2001

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December 2001

By adopting this Social Development Strategy, Toronto City Council has made a commitment to improving the health and well-being of the people of our city. It's a commitment which includes providing vital social programs and services, and strengthening communities.

The Social Development Strategy outlines some of the challenges Toronto faces in improving residents' quality of life. It describes the shared values that bind us together as a city and the principles that underlie our approach to social development. It also lays out a set of specific strategic directions to guide Toronto's course.

This strategy is the product of a great deal of discussion and reflection. I would like to thank the city staff and my Council and community colleagues on the Social Development Strategy Steering Committee who participated in the development of this document. And most important of all, I extend our thanks to the many people who have enriched the strategy through their insightful contributions during the public consultation process.

Irene Jones

Councillor Irene Jones
Chair
Social Development Strategy
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Table of Contents

Introduction

As we enter the 21st century, Toronto remains one of the world's best places to live. Canada's largest metropolis is one of the wealthiest cities in the world, well-placed to adapt to the changes sweeping cities everywhere. The future offers Toronto, as part of one of the fastest growing city-regions in North America, tremendous opportunity to be a dynamic centre of innovation and prosperity. But the future also holds many challenges, as growing social polarization and inequalities threaten to erode the progress we have made.

The Social Development Strategy (SDS) is part of Toronto's plan for the future. As the social component of the city's Strategic Plan, the Social Development Strategy describes some of the challenges Toronto faces, enunciates the shared values that bind us together as a city, and describes the principles that should underlie our approach to social development. It also lays out a set of specific strategic directions to guide Toronto's course.

The Context

The buoyant economy of the late 1990s has produced wealth for many Torontonians, but the benefits of the boom have not been shared equitably. Income disparities in Toronto are growing. Alarming numbers of Toronto families and individuals are poor or are at risk of falling into poverty and homelessness. Single-parent families—who are most at risk and who are usually headed by women—are on the increase, their numbers rising faster than they have in 25 years. Nearly 40 per cent of Toronto's children are living below Statistics Canada's low-income cut-off point.

Growing numbers of people are homeless or at risk of being homeless. In 1999, nearly 30,000 men, women and children lived in emergency shelters at some point during the year. One hundred thousand people are waiting for subsidized housing. An average of over 100,000 people use food banks every month. Tied to the growing polarization in incomes is a diminution of opportunity for those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged. The income gap severely and disproportionately affects ethno-racial groups. The gulf between Toronto's haves and have-nots is widening, threatening the quality of life for all residents of the city.

The growing social and economic polarization is caused in part by changes in the labour market brought about by fundamental shifts in the global economy. Changing family structures also play a role. But equally significant in creating the growing social and economic gaps is the retreat of the federal and provincial governments from key areas of social programming. In recent years, reduction of fiscal deficits has become the guiding priority for senior levels of government, while programs that address social deficits have been allowed to erode. Tax reduction, rather than income redistribution, is the priority. Funding for income support programs, such as employment insurance, social assistance and social housing has been dramatically reduced. Tenant, employment and environmental protections have been weakened, and support for education and community services has been cut.

As part of the refocusing of their priorities, senior levels of government have downloaded new responsibilities—along with substantially increased costs—to municipalities. The City of Toronto has assumed stewardship for a range of services, but has not been given the fiscal capacity to properly carry out its new responsibilities. At a time when Toronto faces increased needs, more is expected from both the city and community sectors, but there are fewer resources to cope with rising expectations. The city has little flexibility beyond raising property taxes, imposing user fees, or cutting services.

The Challenge of Change

Toronto *can* adapt to change; we have done so before. A hundred years ago, when the city was in the midst of its industrial transformation, Toronto's slums were home to legions of urban poor. Many children did not survive infancy. A sense of security and opportunity grew as Toronto met the challenges of the day. As the decades passed, governments and the community working together invested in a social infrastructure—a complex system of resources, programs, facilities and social networks—to provide Torontonians with an improved quality of life. The social infrastructure is now as diverse as the needs it was developed to address. It consists of bricks-and-mortar facilities such as hospitals, social housing, schools, libraries, nursing homes and recreation, arts and cultural centres, as well as services such as child care, public health, social assistance and children's aid.

Underpinning the development of the social infrastructure has been the city's social cohesion: residents' sense of inclusion, based on a respect for their differences, and their understanding of the things they have in common that bring them together. Toronto has defined itself by including newcomers, children, young people, Aboriginal people, senior citizens and persons with disabilities. Strong communities support social inclusion, using public resources to meet the needs of those who face hardships, discrimination and other barriers to participation. A cohesive community benefits everyone, because people who feel part of a larger community have an investment in the public good.

The new City of Toronto—created in 1998—has assumed stewardship for vital parts of our social infrastructure. Working side by side with school boards, community organizations and senior levels of government, the city has the opportunity to reaffirm its longstanding commitment to the public good, both as a service provider and funder and as an advocate for social justice. Social development offers us the opportunity to maintain both our stewardship and our commitments.

Principles of Social Development

According to the 1995 United Nations' World Summit for Social Development, "the ultimate goal of social development is to improve and enhance the quality of life of all people." The World Summit adopted the Copenhagen Declaration and Program of Action, which was signed by Canada and more than 100 other nations. The declaration lays out a set of goals, two of which are central to Toronto's Social Development Strategy:

- [to] promote democracy, human dignity, social justice, and solidarity...
- [to] promote the equitable distribution of income and greater access to resources through equity and equality of opportunity for all.

The City of Toronto's Strategic Plan states that social development "encompasses principles of social equity, social well-being and citizen engagement, and is an important determinant of healthy communities and quality of life."

Toronto's Social Development Strategy recognizes that well-being is a social achievement, and not exclusively an individual one. The aim of the SDS is to democratize prosperity and opportunity, so that all those who live in Toronto can lead healthy lives in a safe, socially cohesive urban environment. It values diversity and reaffirms the goals of achieving access and equality of outcome for all residents as expressed in the city's access and equity action plan. Movement towards these goals must be guided by five principles:

Equity – the fair distribution of resources, free from discrimination on the basis of age, disability, gender, socioeconomic background, race, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation

Equality – equal, effective and comprehensive rights for all

Access – fair and equitable access to all services, so that no one falls below minimum standards that include adequate income, sufficient nutritious food, adequate and affordable housing, and sufficient clothing

Participation – the opportunity to participate fully in the life of the city and the decision making that will determine our collective future

Cohesion – the fostering of social trust, mutual care, and respect for diversity as the foundation for supportive communities.

Strategic Directions

To build a healthy, inclusive and sustainable community in which residents have access to good jobs and to the services they need, we must strike a balance between social development and economic growth. While markets may promote efficiency, it is up to people—their communities and governments—to promote equity. Our strategy sees wealth as a means to an end: ensuring that all Torontonians enjoy healthy, worthwhile lives. This quality of life significantly contributes to Toronto's economic position by helping the city attract investment and retain a skilled workforce.

Toronto has the opportunity to articulate a shared vision of a liveable, prosperous, attractive and creative city in which public effort combines with individual initiative to enhance the quality of life of all residents. This vision should guide the city in leading an effective and constantly evolving human services system—a system that must be based on cooperative partnerships and sustained by the commitment and financial support of all levels of government.

Social development is based on an integrated understanding of the challenges facing Toronto at the beginning of this new century. Although there are no simple or isolated solutions to the challenges

we face, progress towards Toronto's social development goals will be realized by the city pursuing the proposed set of 11 strategic directions which are laid out in this document. The directions are grouped under three general headings:

Strengthen Communities

- Actively support the building of community capacity
- Encourage participation in communities and government
- Increase access to community space

Invest in a Comprehensive Social Infrastructure

- Identify areas for strategic investment in social development
- Increase the effectiveness and co-ordination of planning activities
- Extend social monitoring and reporting
- Evaluate program success
- Seek more fair and flexible sources for city revenue

Expand Civic Leadership and Partnership

- Work towards a joint strategy for social development in the Greater Toronto Area
- Work with other municipalities to develop a national urban agenda
- Strengthen the city's role as advocate.

Section 2 contains a discussion of the strategic directions. Section 3 contains a full summary of the directions.

Section 1: The Context for Change

Every nation that permits people to remain under the fetters of preventable disease, and permits social conditions to exist that make it impossible for them to be properly fed, clothed and housed... and that endorses a wage that does not afford sufficient revenue for the home, a revenue that will make possible the development of a sound mind and body is trampling a primary principle of democracy under its feet.

> – Dr. Charles Hastings
> Toronto's Medical Officer
> of Health, 1910–29

A City Transformed

During its history, Toronto has been remarkably successful in struggling with the issues of urban life. So successful, in fact, that it emerged as an urban model for other North American cities—a place where people have been able to build a secure and satisfying quality of life, a place where prosperity became democratized.

We have now entered the 21st century. Looking back over the past 100 years shows how far we have come. At the beginning of the last century, housing was at times wretched, sanitary conditions were primitive and disease threatened everyone.

The city's problems were particularly devastating for children, many of whom died at an early age. Municipal charity in the form of food or coal did exist, but could be withheld on the advice of middle class volunteers who visited poor homes to assess the worthiness of destitute families.

The past 100 years have brought vast improvements in the overall health and well-being of Torontonians. Public health, child care, public housing, social assistance and care for the elderly have all improved our quality of life. Over the course of the century the municipalities that now comprise the City of Toronto, working together with senior levels of government and locally with community agencies, have built an effective social infrastructure designed to meet the needs of a diverse and rapidly growing population.

The savage inequalities of the Victorian era were whittled away as government responded to public pressure for services. But as a new century begins, we must continue to adapt if Toronto is to avoid the worst effects of social polarization and provide its people with the services they need.

Services for People

The city now delivers—by itself and in partnership with others—a vast array of programs and services that affect the quality of life for 2.5 million Torontonians. At a cost of over $6.1 billion a year, the city provides traditional services such as waste collection and disposal, roads and transit; protective services like police, fire and ambulance; and the human services such as public health, parks and recreation, arts and culture, emergency hostels and child care. It is particularly these human services that enable the continuing social development of the city.

Over the years, a complex and sophisticated human service delivery system has evolved in Toronto, involving both the city and the community-based sector. In some program areas such as the payment of social assistance, the city is the sole delivery agent, operating out of a network of local offices throughout the city. In other areas such as child care there is a mix of service providers. In addition to directly operating its own child care centres, the city contracts with hundreds of centres, both commercial and non-profit, as well as with several home child care agencies to provide subsidized child care. Through programs such as the Community Services Grants Program, the city provides grants to community-based organizations for a broad range of services such as elderly persons' centres, youth leadership programs and services for ethno-racial communities.

The scope of the city's human services role is huge. It directly operates 58 licensed child care centres; 10 long-term care facilities; 98 public library branches; 44 cultural facilities including theatres, galleries, museums and arts centres;

140 community centres; and five emergency hostels. Through the new Toronto Community Housing Corporation the city is also responsible for 60,000 social housing units.

But it is in the complex web of city-community partnerships that the real strength of the human services system lies. Working with community service agencies, ethno-racial groups, cultural organizations and many others, the city has been able to reach out to all parts of Toronto to identify needs and develop flexible and innovative ways of meeting them.

New Ground Rules

The past decade has been a time when governments at all levels, in many parts of the world, have focused on eliminating deficits and reducing debt. As deficit-cutting came to dominate government agendas, social spending became a victim of fiscal restraint.

In Canada, the federal government has succeeded in reducing program spending (as a percentage of GDP) to the levels of the late 1940s, when the social safety net was just starting to be developed and Canada had minimal public pensions and no Medicare. Ottawa has shifted a significant portion of the cost of health care and social services to the provinces and forced cities like Toronto to bear the cost of immigration and settlement and other services. The government of Ontario has concerned itself with lowering its own tax rates. It has financed the tax reduction in part by shifting to municipalities increased costs for social housing, libraries, public transit, welfare and employment services, child care, emergency hostels and ambulances.

Between 1997 and 1999, in a series of sudden and dramatic moves, the provincial government significantly altered Toronto's municipal landscape. The government ordered the amalgamation of six area municipalities and the regional government, Metro, into a new "megacity." It also radically realigned longstanding provincial-municipal cost-sharing arrangements. One of the effects of the realignment was to remove part of the cost of education from the property tax base. The provincial government also intended to rationalize roles

and responsibilities for the funding and management of community services—a goal that had been under study for many years. Some significant changes resulted from the new ground rules.

The city is now fully responsible for funding social housing. Provincial-municipal cost-sharing for social assistance benefits remained 80:20 but the city now also shares the cost of the provincial Ontario Disability Support Program. The child care funding envelope was broadened so that the funding of family resource programs and programs for special needs children is now cost-shared.

The funding realignment and downloading have profound implications now and for the future. Toronto's (non-Catholic) public schools used to be funded entirely by local property taxes. In 1997, the province removed part of the cost of education funding from the municipal tax base and stripped the power of local school boards to levy taxes. It also introduced a new province-wide funding formula. While the new system has the potential to increase funding equity in other parts of the province, the Toronto public school system, which has a unique set of costs, has suffered a major funding cut which it has no means of recouping from local sources.

The trade-off for removing education costs from the property tax base has put Toronto at a significant disadvantage. The city must now fund transportation infrastructure (transit and roads) and income redistributive programs (social assistance and social housing) from local property taxes. The trade-off has been far from revenue-neutral and will be even less so if economic conditions continue to deteriorate. Downloading has increased city costs by over $250 million and will result in much higher costs should the current economic downturn drive up welfare caseloads and reduce transit revenues. The added burden on local taxpayers could be enormous.

As well as changing cost-sharing arrangements—and shifting a significant burden of new costs onto the city—the provincial government also passed many new responsibilities to municipalities. The City of Toronto continues to manage the social assistance program—Ontario Works—and the subsidized child care system, but in addition

has picked up management of social housing, and a broader range of children's services.

While the city now manages most aspects of program operation, the province retains the policy and regulatory authority to set the ground rules. And the experience to date is that the provincial government is exercising that authority in a way that increasingly limits municipal flexibility for managing and providing the service. In Ontario Works, for example, the province set rigid targets for participation along with financial penalties for municipalities that do not comply. As a result, the City of Toronto has very limited flexibility in administering this cornerstone of provincial social policy.

The process of amalgamating the seven municipalities into one big city has posed many administrative and political challenges. In areas like parks and recreation and public health, separate bureaucracies had to be integrated into single departments and their policies and services rationalized. In some instances the rationalization has not been easy. For example, the former municipalities had varying policies on charging user fees for parks and recreation programs, and some difficult political decisions have been required to develop a new user fee policy for the whole city.

The flexibility of the new Council in meeting all the challenges posed by increasing need, downloading and amalgamation was constrained by its decision to freeze municipal property taxes during the first three years of the new city's existence. Although some savings will be realized from amalgamation, Toronto faces many fiscal challenges in the years to come. In facing those challenges, the city lacks the capacity of senior governments to raise revenues other than through property taxes or user fees. The cumulative effect of the recent changes is that the city is faced with growing needs but has fewer resources and less flexibility with which to deal with them.

The city's partners in the community-based sector are facing a similar squeeze. Community agencies play a key role in the delivery of human services in Toronto. Because of their understanding of local needs and their flexibility of operation, community agencies can provide high quality services in an effective and accountable way. But like the city, their ability to deal with these needs is being increasingly constrained by diminishing resources and more rigid, targeted mandates and funding criteria. The community-based sector lacks the means to ensure its own future viability. The city must vigorously advocate with senior levels of government in support of the integral role of community agencies. Senior governments must be persuaded to use the policy and fiscal levers at their disposal to address broader systemic issues—such as housing, income, employment access—that are beyond the capacity of local communities to solve with the tools available to them.

The City in the Region and the Nation

The fortunes of the city and the rest of the GTA are inextricably linked. Although Toronto is growing, the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) outside Toronto is expanding three times as fast. More people now live in the suburban regions than in the city. As population growth continues, there are serious implications for the natural environment: loss of farmland, wildlife habitat and watersheds. The shift in population balance also affects the geography of regional social development. Toronto will still shoulder responsibility for a higher proportion of the city-region's disadvantaged people. It will continue to have a disproportionate share of the region's social needs. The rest of the GTA, however, will increasingly face the challenges with which Toronto is now dealing. A social development strategy can be instrumental in managing growth and change in the region.

According to a study prepared for the Greater Toronto Services Board, the GTA has the seventh highest incidence of low-income families (18.2 per cent) among 24 Canadian metropolitan areas. Although the outlying areas are growing rapidly and enjoyed a strong economic recovery by the mid-nineties, the number of households living in poverty still increased by 94 per cent between 1990 and 1995. In the same period the number of poor families in Toronto grew by 56 per cent. Just as poverty in Toronto clearly affects the

"old" suburbs as well as the city centre, the "new" suburbs of the GTA are not immune to the problems that affect cities the world over. Nor are they immune to the negative impacts of provincial downloading which will increasingly constrain their ability to meet social needs.

Because of the central importance of the city-region in the national and provincial economies, it is vital that the GTA municipalities and federal and provincial governments devise common strategies for the development of the region as part of a new and more workable approach to governance. The province has taken preliminary steps in this regard by introducing tax pooling, which has the effect of sharing the costs of social assistance and social housing throughout the GTA. In the long run, however, a more co-ordinated and comprehensive urban policy framework will be needed to ensure the future health and vitality of the region.

It is also important that major cities be recognized as a distinct order of government and that they develop direct relationships with the federal government. To achieve this, cities must begin to form alliances and make common cause on the problems they face. Progress in this direction has already begun through the work of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, which has forged much closer ties between Ottawa and the cities. Big city mayors have also formed an alliance to argue for direct federal assistance to cities. If the challenges to Toronto's social infrastructure are to be met, this progress must continue.

Our Strengths

Notwithstanding the complex set of challenges facing Toronto, amalgamation and other restructuring have provided the new city with the opportunity to build on its many strengths. Cities have a crucial asset: the capacity to pinpoint local problems and to assist in identifying solutions. Senior levels of government tend to be remote from the everyday reality of local needs of people and their communities. They have difficulty understanding the nature of local resources and limitations. City governments—particularly those whose sensitive antennae keep them in close touch with communities—are well-placed to develop the most appropriate strategies, policies and plans. Local authorities, together with an active citizenry, can respond effectively and directly to the needs of individual Torontonians and their organizations.

The approach to governance and social development evolved somewhat differently in each of the municipalities which merged to form the new City of Toronto. Some took a more active role in expanding the scope of public health and community-based human services and in supporting community development, but all used a variety of strategies including new service models, discretionary grants, planning policies and monitoring tools to meet emerging social needs.

The disparate histories and cultures of the former municipalities are now being reconciled in the new city government and a much more complex understanding of governance and social development is emerging. Further change is underway as the new city assumes increasing responsibility for managing service systems—systems which depend on many different configurations of government and community participation—as well as delivering services directly. The corporation is being challenged to demonstrate accountability for the decisions it makes in funding and managing services, and there is a growing recognition of the need for more co-ordination between sectors in the planning and delivery of services. In the future there will be a premium on co-operation, innovation and accountability.

The Challenges Ahead

The role of Toronto's city government has changed dramatically. The city is being challenged to lead in areas that once may not have been considered the interest or responsibility of municipal government. Traditional city functions have been supplemented by new ones.

As we shape the new city we must ensure that Toronto develops in directions that are socially sustainable, but we must be prepared to do this

with resources that are severely constrained. The crux of the problem:

- The federal and provincial governments have retreated from their traditional funding responsibilities for social programs—particularly those focusing on income redistribution and housing.

- Funding and management responsibilities for these income redistributive social programs have been shifted to municipalities, which must at the same time continue to manage and pay for their traditional social obligations such as public health and parks and recreation.

- Senior levels of government have access to the resource base and the legislative and regulatory tools which can effectively respond to changing needs and economic circumstances.

- The city has not been given the fiscal and policy tools necessary to meet its new social development responsibilities.

- Even in good economic times, the city is being stretched to meet its obligations; in the event of a prolonged downturn, the city will not be able to respond to the increased demand for social assistance and shelter accommodation.

- The impacts of a diminishing social infrastructure are increasingly evident in our city: increased poverty and homelessness. If there is no renewal of intergovernmental partnerships and if the city is not given the tools it needs, the inevitable result will be an erosion of the quality of life for all residents.

The Social Development Strategy builds on the policy development work of several task forces and subcommittees established since amalgamation, including the Mayor's Homelessness Action Task Force, the Task Force on Community Safety, the Seniors' Task Force, and the Children and Youth Action Committee. The SDS is one among a number of strategic planning initiatives that the city will use to help shape the social and physical environment of the new city. Along with the Strategic Plan, the Environmental Plan, the Culture Plan, and the Economic Development Strategy, the SDS will serve as a roadmap to the future. We may not follow it exactly, but our destination is clearly in sight. Section 2 discusses the strategic directions which will help chart the road ahead.

Section 2: A Strategy for Social Development

Toronto now faces challenges that will determine its future. To meet these challenges we must build on our city's strengths. But it is clear we must do so in a way that positions Toronto's residents to flourish in a new millennium. Fortunately, the social vision and civic values that have underpinned Toronto's approach to social development provide an enduring basis for moving forward; for putting social development into action. By drawing on these values, the Social Development Strategy identifies how city government, in concert with communities and residents, can get to where we want to be: a Toronto that balances social equity, prosperity and social inclusion.

Toronto's strengths are clear: A diverse population. Resilient communities. A dynamic economy offering abundant opportunity. Safe, attractive neighbourhoods where people from all ethno-racial backgrounds live side by side. A strong social infrastructure created through the mutual efforts of government and community. Public engagement and civic participation as fundamental values. Openness to learning from each other's forms of cultural expression. Plentiful opportunities to rebuild the city to accommodate more homes and jobs. A willingness to invest in a better future.

At the same time, there are clear signs the city's social well-being is increasingly at risk. Exclusion, polarization and diminished potential belong to a future none of us want. Central to the Social Development Strategy is the conviction that the city must show leadership by making positive and proactive choices.

Social Development in Action

Toronto's Social Development Strategy is animated by a social vision that foresees improving the quality of life in Toronto by fostering caring communities, by ensuring access to services and opportunities, and by shaping a healthy and safe urban environment through investment in social infrastructure. The SDS addresses the needs of all citizens and proposes a vision for social life in the city—how people interact with their communities, with city government, with each other. Social development is about how all of us live in and contribute to a city with a unique character—a place where the social landscape and built form are equally important. And where the strong urban fabric and sense of community is a product of the thousands of everyday activities and interactions that bring people into contact with each other.

While the SDS goes well beyond being a social service and policy blueprint, the services that the city funds, manages and delivers represent a key ongoing commitment to social development. Our parks, libraries, and cultural and recreation centres are part of a social infrastructure used by all Torontonians. And the city has long provided critical services and supports to our most vulnerable residents.

Reflecting the city's civic vision, the Social Development Strategy speaks to Toronto's role as an urban government concerned with social equity, prosperity and social inclusion. It focuses on the city as a broker, planner, advocate, facilitator, initiator, catalyst, funder, builder, manager and provider. And it asserts an ongoing commitment to the city's social infrastructure through strategies that aim to mobilize all available resources, from the dedication and ingenuity of individuals to the collective strength of communities to the powers, responsibilities and financial clout of senior governments.

To realize the city's potential, the Social Development Strategy sets out strategic directions in three inter-related areas: Strengthen Communities, Invest in a Comprehensive Social Infrastructure, and Expand Civic Leadership and Partnership.

Strengthen Communities

The social cohesion of Toronto's communities underlies much of the city's historic success. The inclusive and supportive nature of our communities forms Toronto's legacy as a liveable city.

The Community Social Planning Council of Toronto made this point in *Preserving Our Civic Legacy* (see Appendix D), its report on the first phase of the public consultation on the Social Development Strategy:

> During the past four decades, the world has come to recognize Toronto's civic capacity to create an urban community of social diversity living in relative harmony. The unique social fabric of Toronto, contributing to a high quality of urban life, is one of the city's great civic and economic assets... Preserving the social cohesion of Toronto means sustaining the civic capacity to strengthen communities and to eliminate social vulnerabilities across the new city.

As part of the SDS public consultation, key community stakeholders were canvassed about the specific attributes of successful, supportive communities. Their responses, as encapsulated in *Preserving Our Civic Legacy*, suggest that supportive communities:
- are places of belonging and pride
- are inclusive environments
- provide opportunities for community and civic engagement
- have capacities for care.

Strengthening communities and ensuring that they are supportive is fundamental to the continuing social development of Toronto. The characteristics described by consultation participants suggest several strategic directions related to how this can be done.

Community Capacity Building

Sustaining Toronto as a highly liveable city requires collective citizen action through neighbourhood associations, issue-oriented groups and grassroots coalitions. Nurturing the development of such groups is part of building "community capacity" which the 1995 Copenhagen Declaration of the United Nations summit on social development defined as strengthening "the capacities and opportunities of all people, especially those who are disadvantaged and vulnerable, to enhance their own economic and social development, to establish and maintain organizations representing their interests and to be involved in the planning and implementation of government policies and programs by which they will be directly affected."

The better organized the community, the more likely that local issues can be resolved locally in a manner that meets local needs and concerns. The city encourages the formation of community groups and networks, employing community development staff to assist citizens in organizing themselves and providing support to ensure stable community infrastructure. Working in partnership with the City of Toronto, these organizations and agencies deliver services and programs, advocate on behalf of residents, and help to build social cohesiveness within communities.

Over the years a sophisticated service delivery model has developed within Toronto. It is an "alternative" model that has moved away from a constrictive reliance on centralized service delivery. It relies on partnerships between the city, community organizations, and for-profit service providers. Depending on the sector, the city may act as a service manager and funder, through grants or purchase service agreements with community organizations, or as a direct service provider. Toronto's human services system, because of its mixed and flexible nature, can provide accessible services effectively and economically.

The community-based sector which is so central to the service delivery system requires secure and stable funding to continue its work. Disinvestment in social infrastructure by senior levels of government is undermining our ability to respond to community needs at a time when those needs are growing. This threat to the system not only erodes the capacity to provide service to some of the most vulnerable in our city, but it also undermines one of the most effective means for communities to pull together toward the common goal of improving the well-being of all community members.

This is not to suggest, however, that communities should be expected to shoulder the responsibilities of meeting the social needs of residents on their own. The city must continue to foster partnerships within the sector, and work in tandem

with the service sector to continue ensuring an appropriate mix of service delivery to most effectively and efficiently meet the needs of residents. The further development of partnerships and linkages between community agencies should also be encouraged.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

■ **Actively support the building of community capacity**

The city must:
- renew its commitment to a mixed system of human services in which both the city and community-based agencies share the responsibility for delivering programs and services;
- provide stable funding to support the functioning of a flexible and responsive community infrastructure;
- maintain an effective balance between its dual roles as a manager of service systems and as a direct provider of service;
- help build strategic partnerships, alliances and networks among community-based organizations and institutions to provide effective services and advocacy; and
- provide staff resources to support community capacity building.

Participation and Decision-Making

Governments work best for all residents when people know and understand what issues are being considered and how decisions are being made. How citizens can effectively participate must be equally clear.

Social development is underpinned by democratic governance—the institutions, processes and traditions that shape how city governments work, how decisions are taken and how residents have their say. This does not simply mean voting every three years or getting involved in formal decision-making at City Hall. It also means having the opportunity for regular participation at the community level in all aspects of civic life. A democratic city is one that encourages and enables people to develop public values by taking advantage of public forums—attending meetings on issues of local concern, sitting on advisory committees, making deputations to Council, lobbying, making their views known. The amalgamation of seven municipalities into the new City of Toronto offered the citizens and their government an opportunity to reaffirm their traditional commitment to citizen participation. Council has adopted a policy, *Framework for Citizen Participation in the City of Toronto*, that recognizes citizen participation as an "integral element of the city's governance structure." To further encourage participation, the city should undertake a program of information and education that builds a "civic consciousness" about how the city works and how residents can become involved in its functioning.

Advisory committees represent one direct way in which residents can contribute their ideas and energy to the city. They must be inclusive and representative of Toronto's linguistic, racial and ethnic communities, people with disabilities and people with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. The mandate, authority and selection of advisory bodies must be clearly stipulated and circulated widely in all communities in a way that is easily accessible. Participants in formal advisory bodies must have access to resources and support sufficient to make their work effective.

To facilitate public input and participation, the city must find creative and effective ways to communicate with all residents. Participants in the public consultation on the draft SDS emphasized repeatedly that information on city services and policy proposals should be available in an appropriate range of languages and formats. This is important in informing newcomer groups about what the city does. The use of various formats such as websites, posters and electronic media will help ensure that the city's message is reaching youth and others who may not be attuned to or able to access print media. Similarly, the city must ensure that people with disabilities have access to its services and decision-making processes.

Local governance in a city as large as Toronto must strike a balance between the needs of neighbourhoods and particular communities and the needs of the city as a whole. Both are important. Neither should routinely take precedence

over the other, and achieving the right balance often involves difficult compromises. Achieving this balance becomes even more important because of the size of the new city wards. With only 44 councillors to represent a city of 2.5 million, the need for inclusive and responsive governance mechanisms at the ward level becomes acute. Residents must feel that they are able to express their concerns to their councillors and that councillors are responsible for the decisions they make.

Good governance must also recognize the "louder voices" phenomenon. Some groups have better access to decision-makers than others. It is not sufficient to simply be committed to participation without taking this fact of political life into account. Wealth, lobbying skills, facility with the English language, familiarity with all the informal ways of getting things done or influencing how things get done—these are unevenly distributed in any community. The result is sometimes an inequitable distribution of resources or the disadvantaging of certain groups. Toronto must make every effort to level the playing field. All residents must also have the assurance that city consultations are not merely *pro forma* exercises, that their input is valued and that their views will be considered when decisions are made.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

■ Encourage participation in communities and government

The city must:
- actively foster the participation of all sectors of the community in the decision-making process;
- help shape a "civic consciousness" among residents by providing information and education about how the city works and how they can become actively involved;
- use creative and flexible outreach and communication techniques to reach all parts of the community;
- ensure community access to publicly-owned facilities for meeting, recreational, cultural, and educational purposes;

- encourage political responsiveness and accountability at the neighbourhood level; and
- seek and respect community input on issues of public concern.

Community Use of Space

The continuing availability of facilities in which to hold meetings and to stage cultural, recreational and educational activities is key to civic vitality. The community-based sector also requires access to affordable space in which to operate programs. It became very clear during the first phase of public consultations on the draft Social Development Strategy that reduced access to community space has become a major concern. The supply of affordable space has been diminished, largely as a result of changes to the provincial education funding formula. Schools, which were once prime locations for community meetings and activities, must now charge fees which many groups have been unable to afford. Access to this vital community asset must restored.

Similarly local community recreation and cultural centres, museums, libraries and other civic buildings are important community resources which must be accessible for public use. As well as being available for occasional use by the public, city-owned space should be made available on reasonable terms to the community-based sector to operate ongoing programs.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

■ Increase access to community space

The city must commit itself to increasing the availability of community space by:
- making city-owned space available for public use on reasonable terms; and
- advocating that the provincial government acknowledge that schools are a community asset and recognize in its education funding formula the costs associated with the community use of schools.

Invest in a Comprehensive Social Infrastructure

Social infrastructure must be understood to include the whole system of government and community resources, programs, facilities and social networks that contribute to people's health, safety and well-being. The city must take a leading role in developing a deliberate strategy of planning and investment to preserve and enhance the social infrastructure.

Toronto has a long, much-admired history of actively shaping urban form and providing a high quality of life for its citizens. This has been due to a combination of private initiative and active public involvement in regulating the built environment and fostering social development. The city has been successful in the past because of the involvement of all three levels of government.

The retreat by senior levels of government from their traditional roles and responsibilities coupled with radical reductions in spending has dramatically curtailed re-investment in social infrastructure like child care centres, social housing, and education. As a consequence, Toronto's quality of life and social cohesion are in jeopardy.

Everyone has a stake in Toronto's continued success. The city is a vital engine of the Canadian and Ontario economies and its continued competitiveness is key to national productivity. But that competitiveness must be based on broad vision of what constitutes successful communities. An approach to competitiveness that ignores health, education, social well-being, and the quality of jobs available is ultimately self-defeating, nothing more than a race to the bottom in which short-term profits may be gained but longer-term viability is lost. A healthy, well-educated, socially cohesive population will make Toronto an attractive place to invest. In an era in which capital is mobile, it is vital to ensure that people want to keep living and working here. Being a place that skilled people are reluctant to leave is a significant competitive advantage.

Strategic Investment

Many U.S. cities have recently used substantial federal assistance to make major re-investments in their eroded physical infrastructure. We must do the same, keeping in mind that re-investments in physical infrastructure must be matched by similar commitments to social infrastructure.

In determining social investment priorities, the city must take a long-term view. Over the next 30 years, the city will grow by more than half a million people—most of them new Canadians. While this growth will generate new revenues and create opportunities, the social infrastructure, which is already under considerable stress, will have to accommodate the increased demand for service that new residents will make.

Decisions about investment must be based on the principles of social development—ensuring equity, equality, access, participation and cohesion—and be aimed at raising the city's level of health and well-being. Failure to invest now in children's programs, housing, public health and other services will have serious implications for the future. If we allow standards of health and well-being to deteriorate, we will eventually have to pay for more expensive services such as policing, corrections, shelters and health care. A well-planned program of investment in social infrastructure will help prepare the city for the challenges of the new century.

The city's task forces and policy work groups have already laid much of the groundwork for identifying investment priorities. Established early in the term of the first Council of the amalgamated city, they have taken a broad look at the major policy and service issues facing the new city. They have pointed out the shifts in social balance which put our future at risk and the systemic difficulties in dealing with those risks.

The report of the Mayor's Homelessness Action Task Force (which was followed by the *Report Card on Homelessness*), and the *Toronto Report Card on Children* highlighted the growth in poverty in Toronto, the impacts on our most vulnerable citizens, and the strains that are being placed on city and community-based services as they attempt to meet increasing needs. The *Youth Profile* charted

the changing demographic make-up of Toronto's youth and described their sense of exclusion from the mainstream of city life. The Community Safety Task Force, the Mayor's Task Force on Young Offenders and the Action Plan on Youth Violence in Schools reported on growing concerns about safety and security and the need to take a balanced, inter-sectoral approach to violence prevention. The Task Force on Community Access and Equity made broad recommendations on how the city could better serve its diverse communities.

Other reports produced in collaboration with the city also highlighted issues that must be addressed. For example, "Ethno-Racial Inequality in the City of Toronto," prepared by Professor Michael Ornstein, identifies ethno-racial groups experiencing significant disadvantage in education, employment and income. Deliberate investment in social infrastructure is required to meet the varied challenges the city faces.

Through the work of its task forces and other political initiatives, City Council has identified, at least in general terms, a set of social priorities. It is the responsibility of city service managers to translate the priorities into a coherent set of systems and programs. They must do this in an environment of constrained resources and heightened expectations about accountability to both taxpayers and senior levels of government. It is important, however, that accountability in human services delivery be understood to go beyond crude measurements of cost per unit of service. Achieving positive outcomes such as the improvement of public health and well-being are equally important. Accountability in a human services context must encompass notions of quality and effectiveness as well as efficiency.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

- **Identify areas for strategic investment in social development**

  In consultation with the community, the city must determine the key areas for investment that will significantly improve the health and well-being of individuals and communities. Investment decisions must be guided by both community need and the principle of equitable access to services and facilities throughout the city.

Planning Co-ordination

As Toronto grows, the city must work with its communities to ensure that social programs and facilities are available where they are required and in a form that meets the needs of its diverse population.

Good planning must precede growth and development. New residential construction should be planned in a way that ensures the expansion of social infrastructure as well as adequate access to community space. This may include the city using planning and regulatory tools to ensure that new publicly and privately-funded development makes space available to the community for programs and activities.

System planners must increasingly take a holistic view of the services they provide and look for ways to co-ordinate programs and activities and to share existing facilities. We must move beyond the existing "silos" that compartmentalize the work of the various sectors providing human services.

We must also build on the many existing service partnerships that involve the city, the school boards and community organizations. The use of Toronto 's schools provides a model of how sectors can work together. Schools are not only centres for learning but also have become the homes to child care centres, family resource services and nutrition programs. They often share facilities with recreation centres and host countless community activities. New initiatives are underway to develop models for a "seamless" school day in which families' educational and child care needs would both be met.

The many potential relationships between service providers—no matter whether they are city, school board or community-based—must be encouraged to grow and flourish. Community organizations must be increasingly involved in planning the social development of local areas and should be encouraged to develop appropriate indicators of community capacity and well-being.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

- **Increase the effectiveness and co-ordination of planning activities**

- The city must use all available planning and regulatory tools to encourage the expansion of social infrastructure.
- All sectors that provide human services must work together more closely in planning service systems to better meet local and city-wide needs. The various sectors must also do more to co-ordinate and integrate the planning and delivery of their services and to share facilities.
- Community-based agencies and planning organizations must be funded to undertake community planning initiatives, and to develop indicators of community capacity and well-being.

Social Monitoring

There should be an expanded use of social reporting tools such as report cards, which gather information on community well-being, using a consistent set of indicators and set targets for improvement in various program areas. These reports can measure the city's progress in improving health and well-being and can guide politicians and policy-makers as they make decisions about spending and resource allocation. They can also guide the system planning decisions of operating departments. The city has already reported on the situation of children and on its progress in reducing homelessness. Such report cards are valuable planning tools and should be developed in other areas.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

■ **Extend social monitoring and reporting**

Community and Neighbourhood Services must continue to play a lead role in the development and updating of social monitoring and reporting tools such as report cards. Report cards should contain comprehensive sets of indicators which are linked to specific targets for improvement. These tools will help to identify areas in need of strategic investment and to guide departmental system planning.

Key monitoring indicators include:
- indicators assessing the health and well-being

of individuals and communities with a particular focus on vulnerable populations; and
- indicators measuring the progress of social development which are clear and direct enough for broad community understanding and usefulness.

Evaluating Progress

Monitoring tools such as report cards should be used to inform policy and budget decisions and to guide system and service planning. They must also be used to identify desired outcomes—targets for improvement in social health and well-being. The effectiveness of programs and services must be assessed on the basis of these expected outcomes.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

■ **Evaluate program success**

As part of its commitment to a flexible and responsive human services system, the city must:
- continue to develop and refine evaluation techniques which regularly measure the effectiveness and cost efficiency of programs in achieving defined outcomes; and
- use the findings of evaluation to continuously improve service planning and delivery.

Funding of Services

Innovation must also be brought to the search for more diverse and equitable sources of revenue to support city services. The current reliance on property taxes and user fees disadvantages many renters, low-income families and those on fixed incomes. More targeted and income-sensitive forms of taxation should be examined as well as some form of tax relief to lower-income homeowners.

Property taxes and user fees do not give the city the fiscal capacity it needs to adequately fund its social and physical infrastructure. Many of the city's fiscal difficulties would be eased if it had access to other forms of revenue-generation such as a share of provincial income tax or consumption taxes.

If there is no change to the current system of revenue generation, then municipal-provincial cost-sharing arrangements must be modified to ease the City of Toronto's burden in paying for income redistributive programs.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

- **Seek more fair and flexible sources for city revenue**

  The city must seek the authority to implement new revenue-generating and sharing mechanisms that are both fair and appropriate to its stewardship responsibilities.

Expand Civic Leadership and Partnership

Regional Urban Strategy

The search for ways to expand the city's fiscal capacity to meet social needs must involve the entire urban region. Toronto's post-war success has been based in part on the principle of broadening responsibility for services and extending the use of pooled tax revenues beyond physical infrastructure like roads and sewers. The city's social infrastructure—education, social services, community development—was seen as equally important by provincial governments that recognized the need for integrated planning in the city-region.

Resources and service mandates have gradually shifted from smaller municipalities to larger metropolitan governments so that costs could be distributed over a larger population and tax base. Sharing the burden between assessment-rich areas and those with fewer resources helped Toronto to avoid the poverty, crime and social dislocation that have plagued many American city-regions whose core cities and old inner suburbs were abandoned by the middle class.

Toronto is at the heart of an integrated regional economy whose outer edges have benefited from much of the job creation of the past two periods of economic expansion. Just as the prosperity of the outlying regions is essential to the GTA as a whole, downtown Toronto's strength is a regional

asset. It is clearly in the best interests of the outlying communities to have a socially, economically and culturally strong urban core. Sharing the benefits of economic prosperity and quality of life across the whole GTA requires sharing responsibilities, including costs.

The pooling of the costs of social assistance and social housing among the GTA municipalities has been important. It recognizes that there is a concentration of both need and services in the City of Toronto and that there is a collective responsibility to meet that need and to pay for those services. Ultimately, though, a new co-ordinated regional strategy will be required.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

- **Work towards a joint strategy for social development in the Greater Toronto Area**

  Toronto must work together with other municipalities in the GTA to find a co-ordinated approach to social development and the delivery of human services.

National Urban Agenda

The scope for potential urban alliances extends beyond the immediate region. The city has been making common cause with other cities and regions through the activities of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and through the coalition of big city mayors which has been calling on the federal government to play a more active role in supporting urban physical and social infrastructure. This work should continue with the objective of increasing focus on the needs of cities and developing a national urban agenda.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

- **Work with other municipalities to develop a national urban agenda**

  The city must continue to work in partnership with other municipalities in the GTA, Ontario and the rest of Canada as well as with municipal organizations to:
  - redefine the powers of cities and their relationship with other orders of government; and

- persuade the federal government to develop a national agenda on urban issues and to play a more active role in supporting urban social and physical infrastructure.

Advocacy

It is very difficult for the city, by itself, to prevent the fraying of Toronto's social fabric. The city lacks the full complement of fiscal and regulatory powers to influence the patterns of income distribution that are so crucial to maintaining social cohesion and preventing the exclusion of disadvantaged citizens. Senior levels of government have eroded measures that had been gradually established to regulate the market and provide services the market does not distribute equitably. These governments have decided that market relations are the principal way to determine our collective future, abandoning or curtailing commitments to social housing and the democratization of prosperity. The city, restricted to relying on the property tax base and user fees as revenue sources and forced to operate within a provincial legislative framework, does not have the ability to take up the slack.

In July 2000, Toronto City Council requested that the Province of Ontario enact a city charter for Toronto to help redefine the relationship between the city and senior levels of government. Charter status would give the City of Toronto more local autonomy, provide it with long-term financial sustainability by broadening its revenue base, and enable it to communicate directly with the federal government on matters of mutual interest.

Until the city's status is formally changed, Toronto must continue to make strong representation to senior levels of government in all forums that are available to it. It must take the lead in reminding other governments of their responsibilities for social infrastructure and social equity. As it did when it played such a major role in putting homelessness on the national agenda, the city must continue to point to the fault lines in our community. In its advocacy, the city must encourage citizens to speak on their own behalf and consistently involve the voices of affected individuals and communities. Together they must identify what the city needs from senior levels of government, consistently promoting policies designed to promote social cohesion.

The city must make the case to senior levels of government that to meet the needs of its population, it must have adequate funding support for the programs it delivers particularly in such areas as social and affordable housing, child care and immigration and settlement services. The city also requires new forms of revenue generation that are both sustainable and equitable.

The city must also advocate constructive, achievable solutions as Toronto continues to take the lead in areas where it does have control. Although solving the shortfall in social and affordable housing is beyond the city's capacity, initiatives such as the Let's Build program show that it can play a key role in facilitating the development of affordable rental housing through new construction.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

■ **Strengthen the city's role as advocate**

Working with all sectors of the population, the city must advocate with senior levels of government to provide adequate authority and resources to manage and fund community and social services. The city's advocacy must be based on the premises that:
- the provincial government must commit to funding support for vital parts of the social infrastructure such as social and affordable housing; and
- the federal government must re-assert a national leadership role in important areas of social responsibility such as housing, child care and immigration and settlement services.

The Road Ahead

At a time when social polarization and inequality are growing, Toronto's reputation as a successful city depends on our ability to provide our citizens with the services and support they need to contribute productively to the

economy and community life in general. Our social development strategy is by necessity concerned with service delivery. We must house, feed, educate and care for a population that is becoming larger, older, more diverse, more polarized and more vulnerable. The strategy recommends investment in our social infrastructure to ensure the continuing viability of the programs and facilities Toronto residents need. But the SDS also recognizes that the city's responsibilities of stewardship extend well beyond the planning, management and delivery of service. A balanced approach to social development also requires a civic commitment to building community capacity, encouraging civic participation, building partnerships and playing a strong advocacy role to make sure that it has the resources it needs.

Committing to this multi-faceted approach to social development will enable Toronto to maintain its distinctive tradition as a vibrant, caring and safe place to live and work.

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Section 3: Summary of Strategic Directions

Toronto has the opportunity to articulate a shared vision of a liveable, prosperous, attractive city in which public effort combines with individual initiative to enhance the quality of life of all residents. This vision should guide the city in leading an effective and constantly evolving human services system—a system that must be based on co-operative partnerships and sustained by the commitment and financial support of all levels of government.

Social development is based on an integrated understanding of the challenges facing Toronto at the beginning of this new century. Although there are no simple or isolated solutions to the challenges we face, Toronto's social development goals will be realized by the city taking action in the following strategic areas:

Strengthen Communities

■ **Actively support the building of community capacity**

The city must:
- renew its commitment to a mixed system of human services in which both the city and community-based agencies share the responsibility for delivering programs and services;
- provide stable funding to support the functioning of a flexible and responsive community infrastructure;
- maintain an effective balance between its dual roles as a manager of service systems and as a direct provider of service;
- help build strategic partnerships, alliances and networks among community-based organizations and institutions to provide effective services and advocacy; and
- provide staff resources to support community capacity building.

■ **Encourage participation in communities and government**

The city must:
- actively foster the participation of all sectors of the community in the decision-making process;

- help shape a "civic consciousness" among residents by providing information and education about how the city works and how they can become actively involved;
- use creative and flexible outreach and communication techniques to reach all parts of the community;
- ensure community access to publicly-owned facilities for meeting, recreational, cultural, and educational purposes;
- encourage political responsiveness and accountability at the neighbourhood level; and
- seek and respect community input on issues of public concern.

■ **Increase access to community space**

The city must commit itself to increasing the availability of community space by:
- making city-owned space available for public use on reasonable terms; and
- advocating that the provincial government acknowledge that schools are a community asset and recognize in its education funding formula the costs associated with the community use of schools.

Invest in a Comprehensive Social Infrastructure

■ **Identify areas for strategic investment in social development**

In consultation with the community, the city must determine the key areas for investment that will significantly improve the health and well-being of individuals and communities. Investment decisions must be guided by both community need and the principle of equitable access to services and facilities throughout the city.

■ **Increase the effectiveness and co-ordination of planning activities**

- The city must use all available planning and regulatory tools to encourage the expansion of social infrastructure.

- All sectors that provide human services must work together more closely in planning service systems to better meet local and city-wide needs. The various sectors must also do more to co-ordinate and integrate the planning and delivery of their services and to share facilities.
- Community-based agencies and planning organizations must be funded to undertake community planning initiatives and to develop indicators of community capacity and well-being.

■ **Extend social monitoring and reporting**

Community and Neighbourhood Services must continue to play a lead role in the development and updating of social monitoring and reporting tools such as report cards. Report cards should contain comprehensive sets of indicators which are linked to specific targets for improvement. These tools will help to identify areas in need of strategic investment and to guide departmental system planning.

Key monitoring indicators include:
- indicators assessing the health and well-being of individuals and communities with a particular focus on vulnerable populations; and
- indicators measuring the progress of social development which are clear and direct enough for broad community understanding and usefulness.

■ **Evaluate program success**

As part of its commitment to a flexible and responsive human services system, the city must:
- continue to develop and refine evaluation techniques which regularly measure the effectiveness and cost efficiency of programs in achieving defined outcomes; and
- use the findings of evaluation to continuously improve service planning and delivery.

■ **Seek more fair and flexible sources for city revenue**

The city must seek the authority to implement new revenue-generating and sharing mechanisms that are both fair and appropriate to its stewardship responsibilities.

Expand Civic Leadership and Partnership

■ **Work towards a joint strategy for social development in the Greater Toronto Area**

Toronto must work together with other municipalities in the GTA to find a co-ordinated approach to social development and the delivery of human services.

■ **Work with other municipalities to develop a national urban agenda**

The city must continue to work in partnership with other municipalities in the GTA, Ontario, and the rest of Canada as well as with municipal organizations to:
- redefine the powers of cities and their relationship with other orders of government; and
- persuade the federal government to develop a national agenda on urban issues and to play a more active role in supporting urban social and physical infrastructure.

■ **Strengthen the city's role as advocate**

Working with all sectors of the population, the city must advocate with senior levels of government to provide adequate authority and resources to manage and fund community and social services. The city's advocacy must be based on the premises that:
- the provincial government must commit to funding support for vital parts of the social infrastructure such as social and affordable housing; and
- the federal government must re-assert a national leadership role in important areas of social responsibility such as housing, child care and immigration and settlement services.

Appendix A: Demographic Trends

Toronto's social character is changing. More of the city's people are reaching retirement age, while newcomers are arriving in large numbers from the rest of the world. While we have enjoyed a period of economic growth over the past few years, not everyone has benefited. The number of people in vulnerable groups has increased. Homelessness is at high levels. More children are living in poor families and income inequality has grown. Young people face special challenges in establishing independent lives.

Over the past decade, Toronto has been transformed socially, economically and politically. These changes have created new opportunities as well as new challenges. These fact sheets outline some key social and demographic trends in the city. They are intended to help frame discussion of the City of Toronto's social development goals and future directions. Data for the fact sheets come from these sources:

- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation: Toronto Region Market Reports
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada: Facts and Figures
- Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Culture: Immigrant Landings Database
- Statistics Canada: Census
- Statistics Canada: Labour Force Survey
- Statistics Canada: Tax File Data
- Toronto Community and Neighbourhood Services Department: Census 1996, Summary Reports 1 to 3
- Toronto Community and Neighbourhood Services Department, Seniors' Task Force: Socio-demographic Profile and Seniors' Services, 1998
- Toronto Community and Neighbourhood Services Department: Toronto Report Card on Children, 1999
- Toronto Community and Neighbourhood Services Department: Toronto Report Card on Homelessness, 2000
- Toronto Community and Neighbourhood Services Department: Toronto Youth Profile, 1999
- Toronto Urban Development Services: Annual Employment Survey
- Toronto Urban Development Services: Population and Employment Projections.

For more information, contact:
Toronto Community and Neighbourhood Services
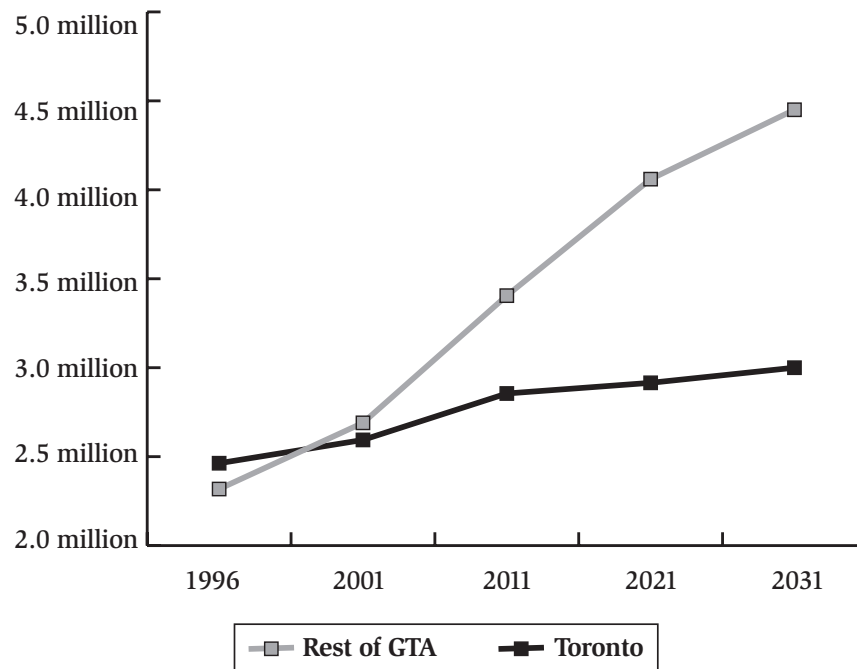Social Development and Administration Division
Phone: 416-392-5617
E-mail: hlow@city.toronto.on.ca
      or
      ameisner@city.toronto.on.ca
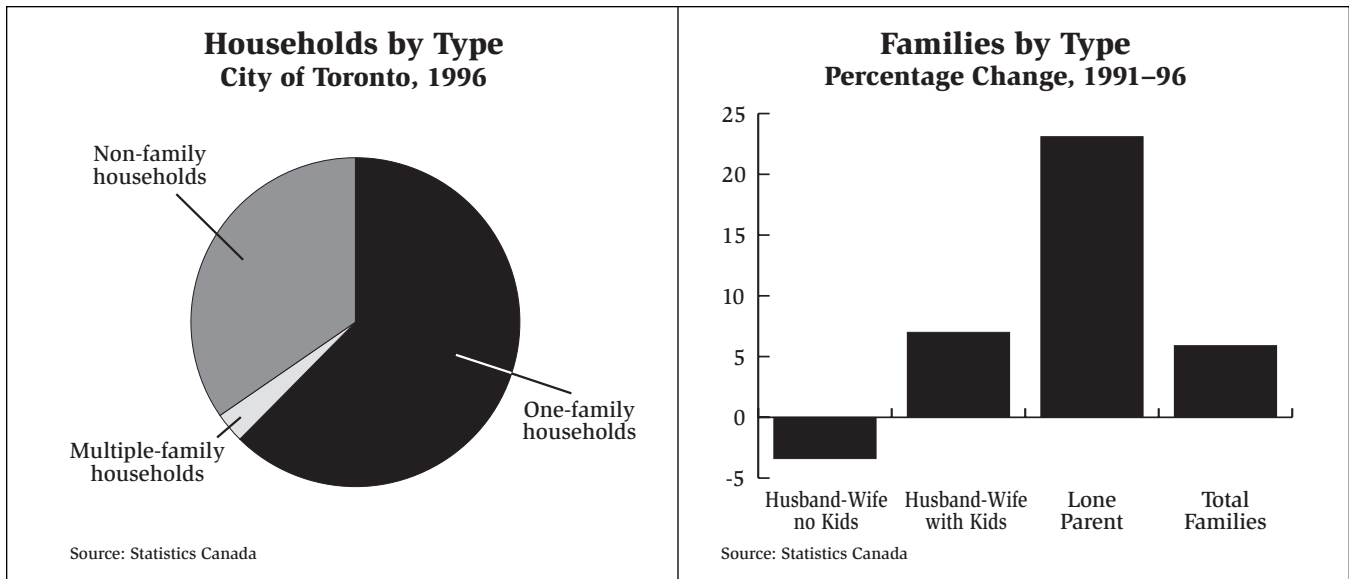
The City and the Greater Toronto Area

Projected Population Growth, 1996–2031
City of Toronto and Rest of GTA

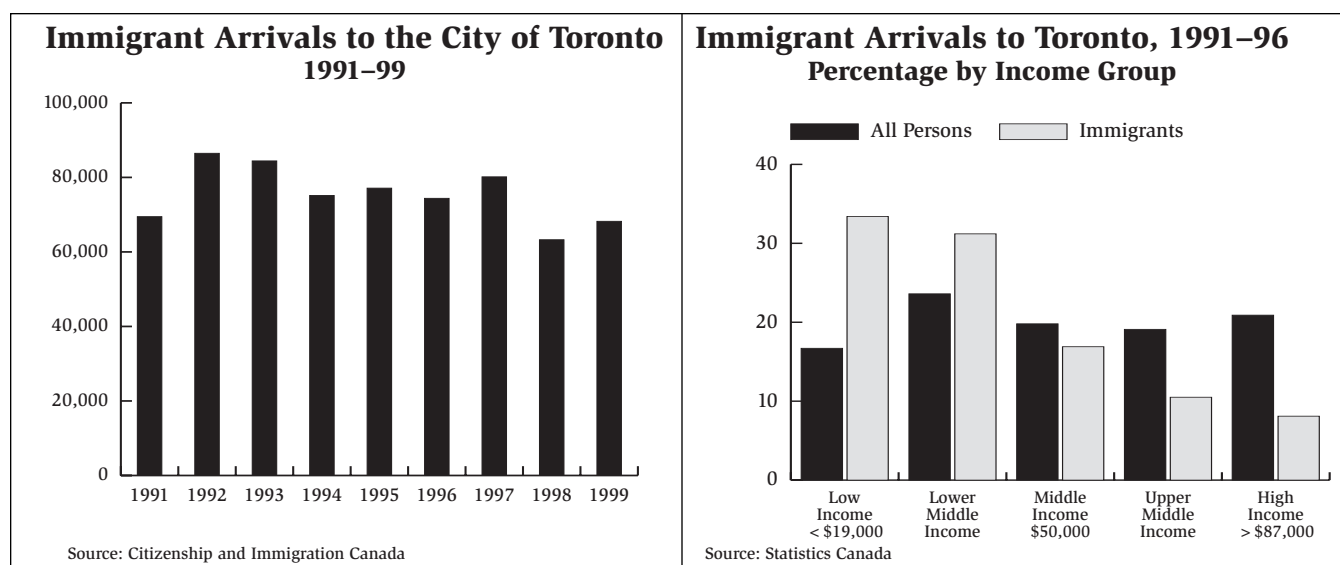Source: City of Toronto Urban Development Services

- Toronto is Canada's largest city and the fifth largest city in North America.
- The city is at the heart of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), which ranks behind only Dallas, Texas, as the fastest growing region in North America.
- In 2001, the GTA had an estimated population of 5.3 million, half of whom lived in the City of Toronto. Since 1980, the GTA outside of Toronto experienced extraordinarily rapid growth that is expected to continue well into the 21st century.
- By 2011, the population of the GTA and the city is expected to increase by 19% and 10% respectively. This represents an additional 250,000 city residents. Much of this population growth will result from international migration, further enhancing Toronto's ethno-cultural diversity.
- Like most core cities, the demographic profile of Toronto's population contrasts with that of the larger region that surrounds it. Toronto has both a smaller proportion of children and a larger proportion of seniors than the rest of the GTA. It also includes a significantly higher proportion of vulnerable groups. Toronto has:
  - 69% of GTA low-income families
  - 66% of GTA poor children
  - 69% of GTA seniors living alone
  - 62% of GTA lone-parent families
  - 80% of GTA recent immigrants
  - 75% of GTA households receiving social assistance
  - 78% of GTA youth living on their own
  - 75% of GTA tenant households.

Households, Families and Children

Households by Type
City of Toronto, 1996

- Non-family households
- Multiple-family households
- One-family households

Source: Statistics Canada

Families by Type
Percentage Change, 1991–96

(Bar chart categories: Husband-Wife no Kids, Husband-Wife with Kids, Lone Parent, Total Families; y-axis from -5 to 25)
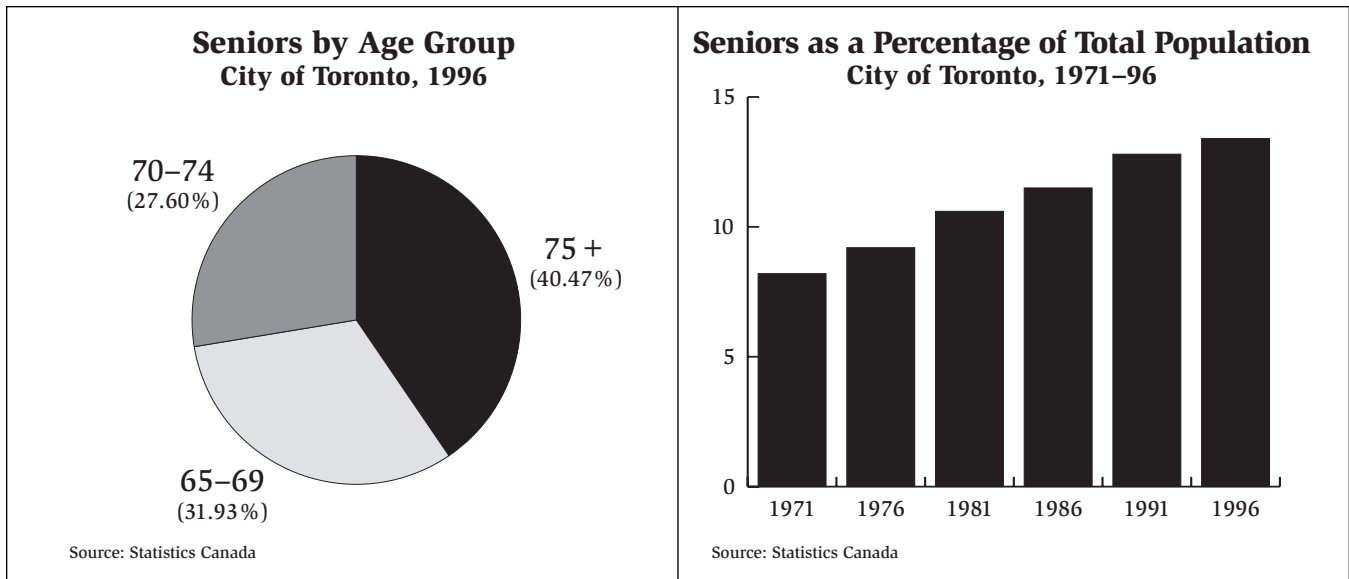
Source: Statistics Canada

- Toronto includes a mix of both family and non-family households. In 1996, it had 903,500 households. Sixty-two per cent of households included single families, 3% included multiple families, and the remaining 35% were made up of one or more single individuals. Over the past decade, average household size has continued to decline.

- From 1991–96, the city added 39,000 new households, a rise of 4.5%. Over this period, Toronto experienced growth in the number of families with children, reflecting both a natural increase and the influx of immigrants.

- While two-parent families comprise 80% of all families in the city, from 1991–96 lone-parent families accounted for more than one half of the growth of families with children. In 1996, there were 117,340 lone-parent families in Toronto, an increase of 23% over the previous five years.

- Lone-parent families have significantly lower income levels than two-parent families. In this regard, median income for lone-parent families in 1998 was $24,400, approximately one half that of two-parent families. Twenty-two per cent of all children aged 12 and under live in lone-parent families.

- From 1991–96, the number of children under 6 increased by 15%, while children aged 6 to 14 grew by 13%. At the same time, the number of unmarried children over age 25 living at home rose by 24%, reflecting, in part, economic barriers to forming independent households that were due to the recession.

- The city continues to maintain a balance of owner and tenant households. In 1996, 53% of city households lived in rental units, an increase of 34,000 since 1991.

- The trend towards "nontraditional" families is reflected in the sharp growth in the number of separated and divorced individuals in the city, which, from 1991–96, increased by 21% and 20% respectively. The number of married individuals remained unchanged, while the number of widowed individuals rose by 3%.

Immigration and Diversity

Immigrant Arrivals to the City of Toronto 1991–99

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada

Immigrant Arrivals to Toronto, 1991–96
Percentage by Income Group

■ All Persons □ Immigrants

Low Income < $19,000 | Lower Middle Income | Middle Income $50,000 | Upper Middle Income | High Income > $87,000
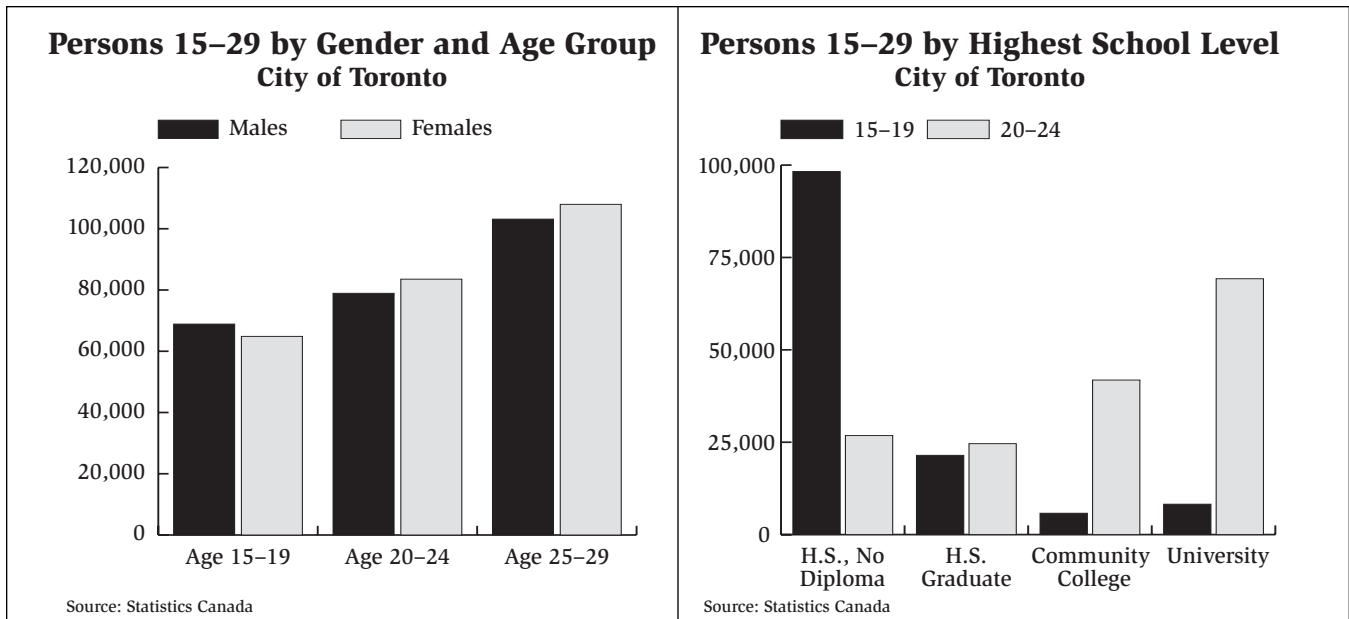
Source: Statistics Canada

- Toronto is one of the world's most ethno-culturally diverse cities, and it continues to be a primary destination for immigrants. Toronto receives almost four out of 10 new arrivals to Canada annually. In 1996, 47% of the population was foreign-born and nearly 40% were members of a visible minority.

- Before 1980, 60% of immigrants to Toronto originated in Europe. Since then, Asia has become the predominant continent of origin, accounting for one-half of new arrivals. In recent years, the People's Republic of China has been the top source of new arrivals, followed by India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the Philippines.

- Immigrants are responsible for much of Toronto's population growth in the past decade. From 1990–97, the city had a net increase of 447,565 persons due to international migration, while experiencing a net loss of 361,685 persons to the rest of the Greater Toronto Area, the rest of Ontario and other provinces.

- The majority of new arrivals to Toronto over the past decade are skilled-worker and family-class immigrants. Toronto is also the preferred destination for refugees. In 1999, two-thirds of all refugees to Canada settled in the city.

- Almost four out of 10 recent arrivals have little or no English language ability.

- Settling in Toronto poses many challenges for new arrivals. In recent focus groups conducted by the city, representatives of agencies serving immigrants pointed to employment, language, afford-able housing and access to information and settlement services as important needs for new arrivals.

- The majority of recent immigrants to Toronto live in two-parent families with children, are tenants, have attended university or other post-secondary training, and have lower household income than the population as a whole. Forty-five per cent of immigrants who arrived from 1991–96 reported household incomes of less than $19,000, as compared to 23% of all Toronto households.

- It takes immigrants approximately 12 years to reach a level of average annual income comparable to the rest of the population.

Toronto's Aging Population

Seniors by Age Group
City of Toronto, 1996

70–74
(27.60%)

75 +
(40.47%)

65–69
(31.93%)

Source: Statistics Canada

Seniors as a Percentage of Total Population
City of Toronto, 1971–96

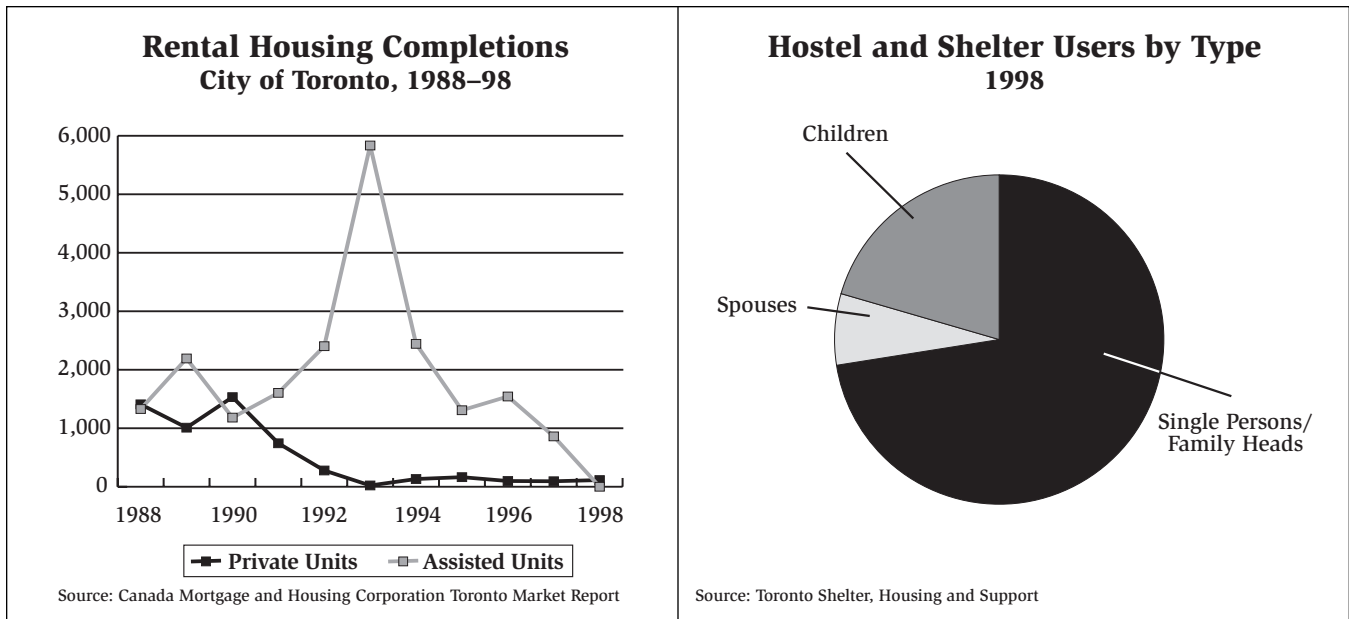| Year	
1971	
1976	
1981	
1986	
1991	
1996	

Source: Statistics Canada

- Toronto's population is aging. In 1996, 319,800 people aged 65 and over lived in the city, comprising 13% of the total population. Seniors are the fastest growing age group, rising by 87% since 1971. By 2031, it is expected that more than one-quarter of city residents will be seniors.

- People are living longer. Over the last 25 years, the number of Toronto residents aged 75 and over increased by 102%. As seniors age, many choose to live in the city, attracted by the availability of housing, health and other services. In 1996, two-thirds of all persons aged 85 and over in the GTA lived in Toronto.

- Almost one-quarter of Toronto seniors live alone. The number of seniors living alone increased by 8% in the first half of the 1990s. According to Ontario government projections, the proportion of seniors living alone is expected to increase further in the future.

- Seniors are a very diverse group, with income levels at both ends of the scale. Seniors living in families tend to be much better off than those living alone. The 1998 median annual incomes for two-parent and lone-parent families headed by a senior were $62,400 and $44,700 respectively. For seniors not living in families, the median was $16,900.

- The number of seniors of Asian origin is increasing, while the number of seniors from Europe has declined steadily since 1961.

- A high proportion of seniors has no knowledge of either of Canada's official languages. In the Toronto metropolitan area, 15% of all seniors knew neither English nor French in 1996, compared to 5% for the area's population as a whole.

Youth

Persons 15–29 by Gender and Age Group
City of Toronto

Source: Statistics Canada

Persons 15–29 by Highest School Level
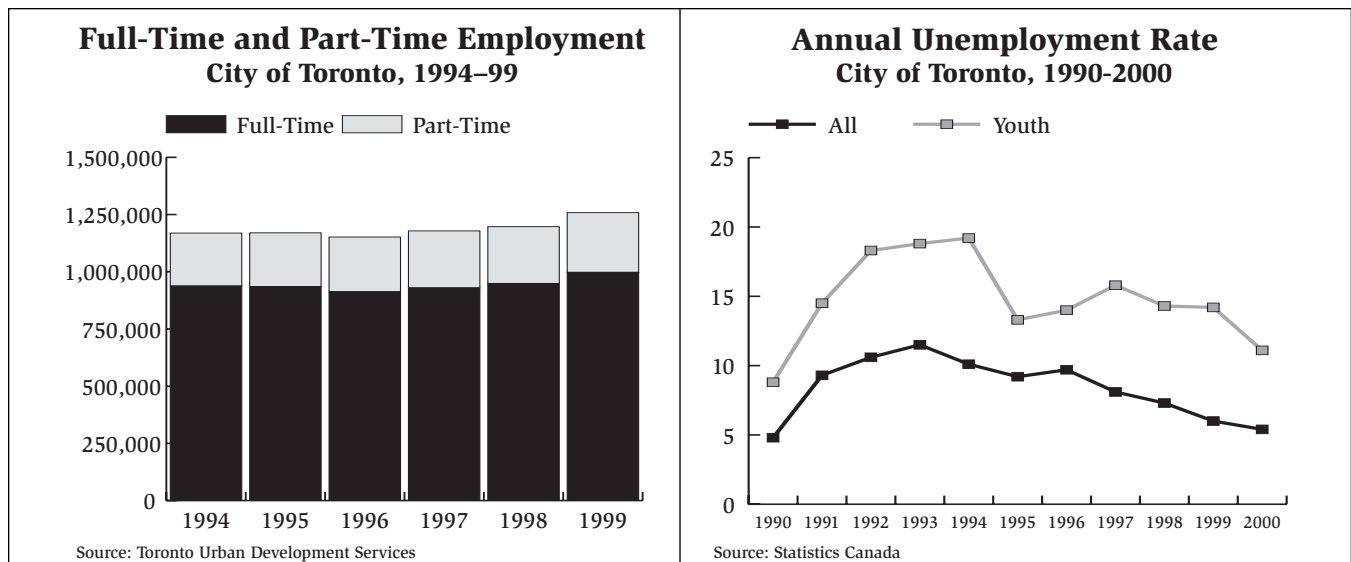**City of Toronto**

Source: Statistics Canada

- Toronto's youth are a diverse group. They face special social and economic challenges. In 1996, there were 296,205 persons aged 15 to 24 living in the city. Youth made up 12% of the total population. After declining during the 1990s, the youth population is expected to grow by almost 20% over the next decade.

- Toronto youth reflect the ethno-cultural character of the city. Thirty-seven per cent of youth are foreign born. More than one-half of foreign-born youth originate in Asia, with the largest segment coming from China. Of the remaining foreign-born youth, 18% are from Europe, 11% from the Caribbean, 11% from Latin America, and 7% from Africa.

- Eighty-five per cent of youth live in family households. Of youth not in families, 20% live alone, 46% live with relatives, and 33% live with unrelated individuals. The city is home to three out of four youth in the GTA who live alone.

- Nearly 15,000 families were headed by a person under 24 in 1999. Almost one half were lone-parent families led by women and 25% of these had two or more children.

- Adequate income is a perennial issue for youth, especially those with family responsibilities. In 1999, the median income for two-parent families headed by a youth was $22,700. At the same time, the median for youth-led lone-parent families and for single individuals was $12,700 and $8,500, respectively.

- Better education and technological skills are necessary for success in today's labour market. In a 1999 survey conducted by the city to gauge youth priorities, "jobs and employment" and "affordable post-secondary education" were the top-ranking concerns, rated as important by more than 80% of participating youth.

- After experiencing unprecedented high levels of joblessness throughout the last decade, the unemployment rate for youth has declined as the economy improved. In June 2001, the unemployment rate was 17.2% for those aged 15–19 and 9.4% for those aged 20–24. The overall youth unemployment rate is nearly twice that of older workers and represents 24,400 individuals seeking work.

Housing and Homelessness

Rental Housing Completions
City of Toronto, 1988–98

Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation Toronto Market Report

Hostel and Shelter Users by Type
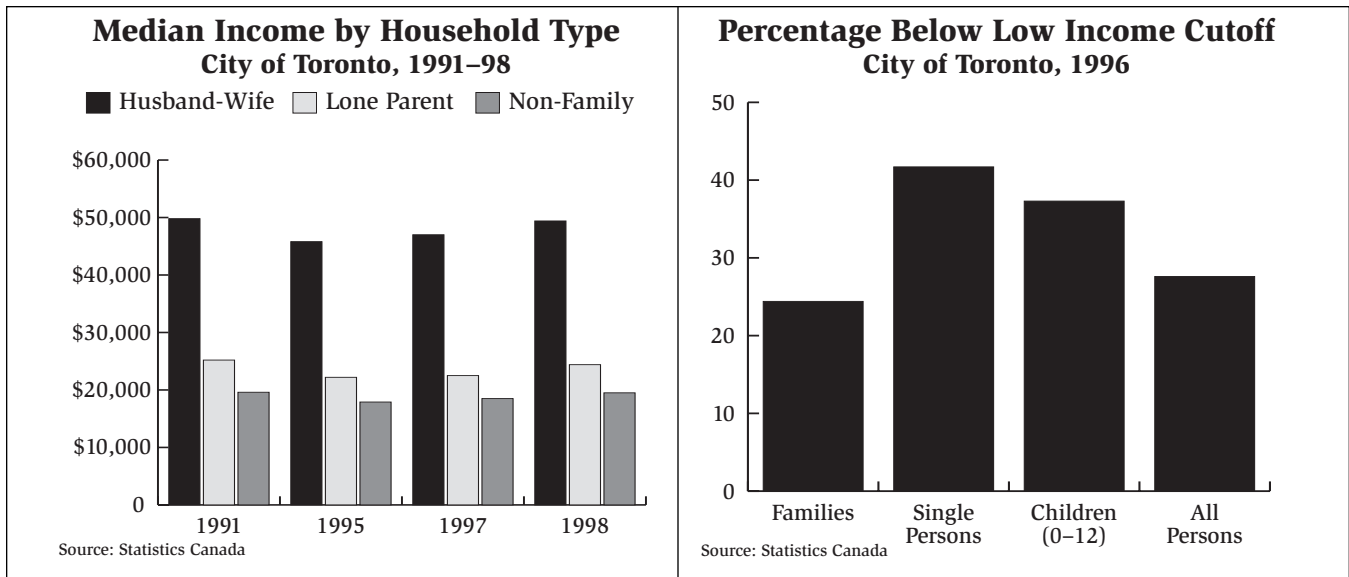#### 1998

Source: Toronto Shelter, Housing and Support

- Toronto continues to experience low residential vacancy rates, particularly for affordable units. According to Canada Mortgage and Housing's rental market survey, only six out of every 1,000 private-market units in the city were available for rental in October 2000. The low vacancy rate that has characterized the city's housing market since 1995 is expected to persist, given the lack of new rental housing construction.

- The cost of rental accommodation is rising faster than tenants' incomes. From 1995–2000, average wages increased by 9% while average rent rose by 29%. In October 2000, the average rent for a private unit in the city was more than $900. This increase reflects both the tight vacancy situation and the impact of the Ontario government's relaxation of rent controls in 1997.

- Families are spending an increasing proportion of their income on housing, and more families are facing affordability problems. The average family in Toronto spends 17% of its income on housing. In 1996, one out of six households with children spent more than one-half of their income on housing, an increase of nearly 50% since 1991, when the rate was 11%.

- Homelessness is getting worse. A growing number of people cannot find stable housing and are forced to rely on emergency shelters. Between 1988 and 1998, the total number of admissions to Toronto shelters increased by 75%.

- While single persons remain the predominant users of emergency shelters, the fastest growing group of shelter users is two-parent families. From 1988–98, the number of children staying in shelters rose from 2,700 to 6,000, a 120% increase. This reflects a rise in both the number and the size of homeless families.

- The shortage of affordable rental housing is a major contributor to homelessness. Since the cancellation of federal and provincial non-profit housing programs in 1995, no assisted and little low-cost private housing has been built in the city. Moreover, the demand for subsidized housing keeps growing. There are now more than 50,000 households on waiting lists for assisted housing.

Jobs and Employment

Full-Time and Part-Time Employment
City of Toronto, 1994–99

Full-Time ■ Part-Time ▨

[Stacked bar chart showing Full-Time and Part-Time employment from 1994 to 1999. Y-axis from 0 to 1,500,000. Total employment roughly 1,175,000 in 1994, similar through 1996, rising to about 1,250,000 in 1999. Full-time portion around 925,000–1,000,000.]

Source: Toronto Urban Development Services

Annual Unemployment Rate
City of Toronto, 1990-2000

All ■— Youth ▨—

[Line chart showing unemployment rates from 1990 to 2000. Y-axis from 0 to 25. Youth rate peaks near 19 in 1994 and declines to about 11 by 2000. All rate peaks near 11.5 in 1993 and declines to about 5.5 by 2000.]

Source: Statistics Canada

- Toronto's diverse and dynamic economy includes major concentrations of the following sectors: business and financial services, retail and wholesale trade, media and communications, education, medical and health sciences, and large government institutions.

- Between 1990 and 1996, business in the city experienced a severe downturn due to the recession, leading to many closures and significant downsizing of local firms. During this period, the number of business establishments and the rates of full-time employment fell by 9% and 18% respectively. The largest impacts were in the office and manufacturing sectors, which together lost more than 150,000 jobs.

- Since 1996, the economy has shown strong signs of recovery, as both full-time and part-time employment have grown in each successive year. According to the City of Toronto's annual employment survey, from 1996–99, the number of both full-time and part-time jobs in the city increased by 9%. Despite this growth, the number of jobs has yet to reach the peak levels of the late 1980s.

- In 1999, the city was home to 73,500 businesses employing 1.26 million people. The overwhelming majority of firms are small. The combined retail and service sectors comprised 46% of all establishments, 18% of full-time jobs, and 40% of part-time jobs. The office sector, however, continues to predominate, employing almost one-half of all workers in the city.

- After reaching historically high levels in the mid-1990s, unemployment has continued to decline as the economy has improved. According to the Labour Force Survey, 103,300 residents were unemployed in June 2001, for an overall rate of 7.3%. Despite recent improvements, labour force participation is still below the 70% level attained prior to the recession. Sixty-six percent of city residents aged 15 and over were in the labour force.

- Labour market success is strongly correlated with educational attainment. In June 2001, the unemployment rate was 5.6% for community college graduates, 7.5% for university graduates and 10% for those without high school diplomas. At all educational levels, youth generally experience higher rates of unemployment than older workers.

Income and Poverty

Median Income by Household Type
City of Toronto, 1991–98

■ Husband-Wife ☐ Lone Parent ■ Non-Family

Source: Statistics Canada

Percentage Below Low Income Cutoff
City of Toronto, 1996

Source: Statistics Canada

- After falling sharply during the first half of the 1990s, household income has improved since 1995, as evidenced by rising median-income levels. It is expected that this trend will continue as long as the economy produces more and better-paying full-time employment.

- Since 1995, median income has increased on annual basis. Median income was $51,300 for two-parent families, $24,600 for lone-parent families and $20,300 for single persons in 1999. Despite growth in recent years, median income is still below pre-recession levels in 1991 when inflation is taken into account.

- Many families and individuals continue to live on low incomes. In 1999, for example, 41% of lone-parent families, 48% of single individuals and 15% of two-parent families lived on annual income of less than $20,000.

- In a national study by the Canadian Council on Social Development, Toronto had the eighth highest rate of poverty in Canada in 1996. Twenty-four per cent of city families and 42% of non-family persons in the city had incomes below Statistic Canada's low-income cutoff (LICO). At the same time, 38% of children were living in low-income families. From 1991–96, the number of low-income families increased by 53,800. In 1996, the LICO was $17,132 for a single person, $32,238 for a family of four, and $39,835 for a family of six.

- In January, 2001, families with children made up 48% of all social assistance cases. These families comprised 21,000 pre-school children, 28,000 persons aged 5–12 and 12,000 persons aged 13–17.

- Poverty in the city has resulted in increasing reliance on emergency housing and food services. The Daily Bread Food Bank, for example, reported that in the last quarter of 2000 more than 140,000 people in the GTA used food bank programs. Three out of four food bank users lived in the city. Families using food banks included approximately 65,000 children.

Appendix B: Chronology of the Social Development Strategy

March 1998 Toronto City Council approves a report outlining the purpose and key components of a Social Development Strategy (SDS).

October 1998 City Council approves a report describing the objectives, elements, and timelines, for the Social Development Strategy and explaining its relationship to the city's Strategic Plan.

January 1999 An interdepartmental staff reference group is formed to advise on the drafting of the Social Development Strategy.

August 2000 City Council adopts the overview of the draft Social Development Strategy, containing goals, principles and proposed strategic directions and a consultation strategy, including contracting with the Community Social Planning Council of Toronto to assist in Phase I of the Community Consultation on Social Development.

September 2000 The Social Development Strategy Steering Committee is established to guide the consultation process. Chaired by Councillor Irene Jones, the steering committee is composed of city councillors, community representatives and staff from the Community and Neighbourhood Services Department.

November 2000–March 2001 Phase I of the Community Consultation on Social Development is conducted. Community Social Planning Council staff facilitate 13 local area focus groups and 9 sectoral focus groups to gather input from community stakeholders on the strategic directions proposed in the Social Development Strategy. (See Appendix C)

February 2001 The Community Consultation on Social Development co-sponsors a series of consultation sessions with youth.

May 2001 The report on Phase I of the consultation "Preserving Our Civic Legacy," prepared by the Community Social Planning Council of Toronto is released by the SDS Steering Committee. (See Appendix D)

June 2001 City Council receives the report on Phase I of the Community Consultation on Social Development and approves Phase II which is to involve public meetings and presentation of material to city advisory committees and task forces.

July 2001 City Council approves the draft Social Development Strategy which incorporates the findings of Phase I of the community consultation.

September–October 2001 Staff make presentations and distribute SDS material to Council advisory committees and task forces.

October 2001 Public meetings are held in each of the six community council areas to gather feedback on the strategic directions proposed in the Social Development Strategy. (See Appendix C)

December 2001 The final version of the Social Development Strategy is approved by Toronto City Council.

Appendix C: Community Consultation on Social Development

Local Area Focus Groups

York/West Toronto
(Wards 11, 12 &17)
Davenport-Perth Neighbourhood Centre
November 7, 2000

East York/East Toronto
(Wards 26, 29, 30, 31 & 32)
WoodGreen Youth Employment Centre
November 14, 2000

West Scarborough
(Wards 35, 36 & 37)
Birchmount Bluffs Neighbourhood Centre
November 15, 2000

Northwest – Rexdale
(Wards 1, 2 & 4)
St. Paul the Apostle Anglican Church
November 16, 2000

West Toronto-Parkdale-High Park
(Wards 13, 14 & 18)
St. Christopher House
November 20, 2000

West North York-Jane-Finch-Bathurst
(Wards 7, 8, 9& 10)
Driftwood Community Centre
November 21, 2000

East Scarborough
(Wards 38, 43 & 44)
East Scarborough Boys' & Girls' Club
November 22, 2000

Uptown Central Toronto
(Wards 15, 16, 21 & 22)
North Toronto Memorial Community Centre
November 22, 2000

South Etobicoke-Lakeshore-Central
(Wards 3, 5 & 6)
LAMP, Community Room
November 28, 2000

North Scarborough
(Wards 39, 40, 41 & 42)
Scarborough Civic Centre
November 30, 2000

East North York
(Wards 23, 24, 25, 33 & 34)
Oriole Community Centre
December 4, 2000

Downtown Central Toronto West
(Wards 19 & 20)
St. Stephen's Community House
December 6, 2000

Downtown Central Toronto East
(Wards 27 & 28)
Central Neighbourhood House
December 7, 2000

Sectoral Focus Groups

City Staff Reference Group
Metro Hall
December 1, 2000

Urban Aboriginal Leaders
Native Child & Family Services of Toronto
December 4, 2000

Social Justice and Advocacy Groups
Ralph Thornton Community Centre
December 6, 2000

**Making Services Work for
People—Children's Services Network Chairs**
Ministry of Community and Social Services
December 12, 2000

Multi-Service and Community Health Centres
WoodGreen Community Centre
December 13, 2000

City-wide Mandated Voluntary Service Agencies
Toronto Association of Community Living
December 15, 2000

Ethno-racial/Ethno-cultural Groups
Metro Hall
January 10, 2001

Business Sector
Toronto Board of Trade
January 16, 2001

Funding Sector
United Way of Greater Toronto
January 25, 2001

Presentations

Best Practices Group
Metro Hall
April 28, 2000

Sustainability Roundtable
Metro Hall
February 27, 2001

Senior Staff Meeting
Toronto District School Board
March 1, 2001

Advisory Committee on Race and Ethnic Relations
City Hall
May 14, 2001

Seniors' Assembly
City Hall
September 20, 2001

Advisory Committee on Disability Issues
City Hall
September 25, 2001

Advisory Committee on Aboriginal Affairs
City Hall
October 11, 2001

Additional Outreach

Children and Youth Action Committee

Community Safety Task Force

Toronto Youth Consultation
February 6 – 22, 2001

Public Consultation Meetings

Scarborough Civic Centre
October 15, 2001

Etobicoke Civic Centre
October 17, 2001

Toronto City Hall
October 17 & 22, 2001

North York Civic Centre
October 18, 2001

York Civic Centre
October 22, 2001

Appendix D: *Preserving Our Civic Legacy* – Summary Report

Τhis report summarizes *Preserving Our Civic Legacy*: A Report by the Community Social Planning Council of Toronto to the City of Toronto on Phase I of the Community Consultation on Social Development.

Part I – Stakeholder Perspectives on a Social Development Strategy

In August 2000, Toronto City Council authorized a community consultation on a Social Development Strategy for the City of Toronto. The Department of Community and Neighbourhood Services contracted with the Community Social Planning Council of Toronto (CSPC-T) to conduct the first phase of that consultation, which was an outreach to selected local and sectoral stakeholders for input on strategic directions to improve the quality of life of Toronto residents. Working with city social development staff and a network of community partners in the social development field, the CSPC-T designed and conducted a series of 22 focus groups on the city's Social Development Strategy from November 2000 through January 2001.

Altogether 269 key informants were consulted, made up of 161 community participants in 13 local area focus groups held in local communities in all parts of the city, and 108 leaders from nine sectoral focus groups offering major city-wide perspectives on the social development of the city.

The Spread of Social Vulnerability

The focus group process explored states of social vulnerability with local area stakeholders. Social vulnerabilities are those external conditions or resource deficiencies in the environment that increase risk factors for certain populations in the community.

- **Families, newcomers and youth were cited most frequently as vulnerable populations in communities across Toronto.**
- **Growing deficiencies in social support, a serious decline in basic living standards, and limited access to education and training were identified as major sources of vulnerability.** Participants were generally apprehensive that the social infrastructures in local communities to address growing vulnerabilities were becoming progressively weaker through the cumulative impacts of public funding cutbacks and the lack of commitment by senior governments to strengthen basic levels of economic security.
- **Major social vulnerabilities are not concentrated in pockets of the city but spread to communities in all parts of Toronto.** Areas with the highest identified concentrations of social vulnerability span the full breadth of the new city and are

located in East Scarborough, North Scarborough, North Etobicoke, Downtown Toronto and the old City of York.

● **City-wide focus group participants from all sectors were alarmed by the growing polarization and inequality evident in Toronto during the past five years, and by the diminishing capacity of the city and communities to address social conditions.** Cutbacks in government spending contributed to growing social divisions in the city. Also identified as a cause was senior government withdrawal from social responsibilities, leaving the city without an adequate mandate and revenue base for providing essential social supports.

Strengthening Supportive Communities

Local area focus group participants described socially supportive communities as:

● **places of belonging and pride where residents have a strong sense of identification with a specific locality within the larger city;**

● **inclusive environments where diversity is valued and discrimination and racism are not tolerated;**

● **active and lively places facilitating a culture of involvement and participation; and**

● **communities with the commitment and capacity to care for and support their more vulnerable and marginalized members.**

Important resources required to create supportive communities are:

● **a network of stable and secure community-based agencies;**

● **a wide range of community-focused public services (e.g., child care);**

● **community access to and use of public facilities (e.g., community and recreation centres, libraries, schools); and**

● **strong local networks (e.g., faith-based groups, local business, voluntary associations, partnerships and community networks).**

Promoting Civic Engagement

Participants suggested the following approaches to encourage civic engagement and citizen participation in communities and their local government as an important dimension of strengthening communities.

● **use creative, innovative and flexible outreach with clear information and remove linguistic and cultural barriers particular to certain parts of the population (e.g., newcomers, youth);**

● **ensure local political accountability since the corporate city has become more distant from the local resident/citizen;**

● **facilitate the shaping of a "civic consciousness" among residents by providing information and education about how the city works and how they can become actively involved; and**

● **take responsive action based on community input rather than ignoring the results of public consultations.**

Information Needs and Social Development Indicators

Local area focus group participants suggested that the city needed to have the following kinds of information about local communities:

- service needs and existing resources;
- demographic information and population trends in local communities;
- information on the social impact of economic conditions and policies on local communities; and
- qualitative information on the "human stories" of individuals and families in communities.

Local communities need the city to provide clear, accessible and usable information about communities, including communication in multiple language formats. "Mapping," community "report cards" and community "indicators" were identified as useful tools for community planning.

Sectoral focus group participants commented as follows on key indicators that could be used to monitor and assess the state of the city's social development:

- **Employment indicators are critical, especially with respect to certain groups such as visible minorities, Aboriginal people and disabled people.**
- **Stronger indicators on the social cohesion and "civility" of the community and city are needed.**
- **Indicators to measure the social development of the city must be clear and direct enough for broad community understanding and usefulness.**

Regional Social Development Trends and Issues

Sectoral focus group participants identified three major regional issues or trends with implications for the social development of Toronto.

- **An over-reliance on city services for regional social needs.** Toronto's established and developed service base attracts people with social needs from the outlying region into the city, placing tremendous additional stress on the already over-burdened city's service resources.
- **Attitudinal barriers and biases interfering with the shaping of a shared regional identity or consciousness.** Some participants suggested that there was an ideological or attitudinal "divide" between the "416" and "905" areas, clearly inhibiting the development of a strong sense of regional identification.
- **Growing recognition of the need for a planning capacity to pursue social and economic integration at the regional level.** New governance and planning structures with some form of effective mandates for co-ordination are necessary to break down existing rivalries and to promote economic development and social cohesion within the GTA.

Effective action on the above issues will require:

- **the political will and leadership to break down the divisive biases and barriers within the region;**
- **public awareness and identification with a shared vision for the region; and**
- **forming true partnerships with other sectors in regional education and planning initiatives (e.g., school boards, community sector).**

Expectations of Government Roles and Responsibilities for Social Development

Generally, focus group participants affirmed the main components of the city's social development mandate. Several sectoral focus groups offered particular feedback.

- **The business sector focus group noted that the service delivery role part of the city's mandate seemed limited to maintenance rather than developmental activity.**

- **Aboriginal and ethno-racial focus group participants expressed concern that there was little specific acknowledgment of the city's responsibilities to historically excluded and marginalized communities.**

- **The non-profit community agency sectors emphasized the importance of establishing more secure and stable working relationships with the city in order to help fulfill the social development mandate.**

- **All sectors supported a strong advocacy role for the city, especially with respect to representing its social needs to senior levels of government.**

Local focus group participants:

- **agreed on the city's advocacy role on social needs vis-à-vis senior governments;**

- **felt the city has a major role to play in doing community research, social impact studies, and needs assessments for planning and development; and**

- **expected the city to provide resources to the community sector for service supports and community development.**

The expectations of participants in both local and sectoral focus groups were similar with respect to the roles of the provincial and federal governments in meeting the social needs of the city.

- **There was strong agreement that the provincial government must re-commit to funding support for the city in social housing and social assistance.** Sectoral participants felt that the provincial government could play a more helpful role in economic development and, more specifically, in facilitating regional planning and co-ordination among cities in major urban regions such as the Greater Toronto Area.

- **Almost all groups felt that the federal government should re-assert itself into a national leadership role in many important areas of social responsibility.** Repeatedly, participants identified the expectations for federal leadership to include: laying out a national vision, setting national standards, and emphasizing universality in its policies and programs.

- **A number of both local area and sectoral focus groups felt that there should be a national urban strategy.** The federal government should have a more direct working relationship or partnership with cities on social development issues.

Confidence in Social Governance

In terms of relative confidence in the three levels of government on the social needs of communities, local area focus group participants:

- **overwhelmingly accorded the city the top ranking in terms of both understanding and effectiveness with regard to the social needs of the community; and**

- **ranked the federal government second, while the provincial government was clearly third on these two indicators of confidence in governance on social issues.**

Both local and sectoral focus groups had identified the resource constraints under which the city was operating in fulfilling its social development mandate. There was clear recognition of the financial burden resulting from downloading by senior levels of government. When offered a range of resource options to rank order for funding the city's new social responsibilities, the stakeholder participants:

- ranked direct federal government funding to the city as the highest overall preference (28.7% of all three rankings selected) as well as the preferred first and second choices (35.2%);

- ranked provincial funding (26.1%) just barely ahead of new city revenue sources (24.1%);

- chose new city revenue sources (e.g., income tax, sales tax, gas taxes) as a *first preference* slightly more frequently than provincial funding; and

- chose corporate contributions to city programs (7.3%) and using existing local revenue sources like the property tax (10.3%) as the *least preferred options* for funding the city's new social responsibilities.

In discussion of these results, both local area and sectoral focus group participants arrived at the same strongly held conclusions.

- **The City of Toronto is clearly affirmed as the level of governance in which stakeholders have the greatest social confidence.** In a sense, the city is viewed as the first public voice of its residents. This is all the more evident in the profound loss of confidence by stakeholders in the Government of Ontario to protect the social well-being of Toronto.

- **Given the scale of social vulnerabilities identified across Toronto, and the loss of civic confidence in the province, participants are calling upon the federal government to assume an active responsibility for the social development of the city.** Focus group participants contended that the social well-being of cities is vital to national continuity, and this requires direct involvement by the federal government. The presence of the federal government on urban issues would offer hope to stakeholders that there was a senior level of government with constitutional authority that cared about the social future of Toronto.

Part II – A Social Development Mandate for Toronto

The recognition that the quality of social life in Toronto requires active leadership from local government and strong fiscal commitments from senior governments reflects a process of civic evolution. Major milestones in the evolution of public responsibility for the social development of Toronto include the following initiatives:

- The *Needs and Resources Study* (1963) highlighted the urgency for planning and coordination across service sectors, recognized the limitations of the voluntary sector's service capacity, and called, even in 1963, for senior government financing of essential social programs to meet the needs of a rapidly growing urban population.

- The proposed *Metropolitan Official Plan* in 1976 was the first public acknowledgement within Toronto that local government had a basic responsibility for social development.

- *Metro's Suburbs in Transition* (1979 and 1980) challenged the prevailing political culture that viewed cities and suburbs as different social formations and stimulated the creation of a metropolitan focus on social issues.

- *The Social Development Strategy for Metropolitan Toronto* completed in 1991 recognized that the social well-being of Metro rested upon a civic partnership of local government services working with strong communities and neighbourhoods capable of engaging and supporting their members.

- The amalgamation of Toronto in 1998 unified responsibility to promote the social well-being of all residents within frameworks that support the requirements of the more vulnerable.

The latest draft Social Development Strategy for Toronto builds on the above civic foundations. Overwhelmingly, community and sectoral stakeholders expressed greater confidence in the city than any other level of government to take the leadership needed on the social development front.

The Civic Responsibilities of Stewardship

The new city's role in social development has grown through necessity and expectation into one of stewardship, a civic responsibility to actively promote the quality of social life throughout Toronto for present and future generations. There are three main dimensions to the civic responsibilities of stewardship:

- First, the new city has the direct responsibility to provide a wide range of social and community services responsive to distinctive local requirements.

- Secondly, strengthening the civic partnership with communities assumes increasing significance.

- Thirdly, the quality of social life in Toronto is highly dependent upon the extent to which the federal government and the province meet their public responsibilities.

In order to perform the preceding third civic responsibility of stewardship, it is certain that the city will have to assume a strong advocacy role in relation to senior governments. When senior governments disengage from their public responsibilities, and allow conditions of social despair and urban decline to become entrenched, then the civic responsibilities of stewardship include intelligent and sustained advocacy by the new city on behalf of its people and communities and in civic alliance with them. This advocacy includes proposing and negotiating new arrangements with senior governments that will enable the city to perform its stewardship role capably.

Activating Strategic Directions through Partnerships and Alliances

On its own, the city has limited authority and fiscal resources to effect a comprehensive social development strategy. It does, however, possess several important strengths.

- **First, the new city has acquired major public responsibilities for social provision as a result of amalgamation and downloading.** More integrated, or at least better co-ordinated, planning mechanisms are needed between the city's social development function and the community sector. Developing a community focus to city services also means reconsidering barriers such as user fees to the community use of space, facilities and programs. Also, building strong community systems of social support with local partners is a social development challenge that the city has the capacity to pursue.

- **A second strength is the basic social confidence in the role of local government that prevails in Toronto.** This key strength gives the city the capacity to build strong civic partnerships to promote the strategic directions of a social development strategy. In both policy and practice, the city must first recognize that community-based agencies, whether supporting local neighbourhoods or specific population groups (e.g., ethnic or racial identification, Aboriginal origins, disability, age, sexual orientation, etc.), are essential resources for the social development of the city. Their role goes beyond service delivery to that of promoting civic engagement, leadership development, and community responsibility. The city has the fiscal capacity to assure community-based agencies of the stable core funding that they require in order to serve effectively as social development partners

Finally, a social development strategy must recognize that civic alliances with other municipalities are necessary to end senior government abandonment of cities. Working with municipalities in the GTA on joint social development priorities is the strongest way of communicating with the current provincial government, or its successor. Similarly, the city has a strong stake in joining with other large cities across Canada in strengthening the political fibre of the federal government to once more pursue a national urban agenda.

Conclusion

In this consultation, community and sectoral stakeholders affirmed the strategic directions proposed in the *Draft Social Development Strategy* as presented to City Council last year. While validating the proposed strategic directions for wider public comment and input, participants identified more clearly their expectations of the city in the performance of its social development mandate. They also conveyed an acute appreciation for the constraints under which the city is functioning and recognition that the long-term social sustainability of the city depends on more supportive public policy frameworks and resources that are now controlled by senior governments.

Participants, however, strongly affirmed the city as the first public voice on social development. In that regard, there is room to build community, public and political support to secure the full mandate and means needed to build further on the foundation that exists.

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