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COMMUNITY SOCIAL DATA STRATEGY UPDATE AND RELEASE OF “WHAT IF YORK REGION WERE A VILLAGE OF JUST 100 PEOPLE?” BROCHURE

The Community Services and Housing Committee recommends that:

- 1. The presentation by Cordelia Abankwa-Harris, Director of Policy and Program Support Services and Lisa Gonsalves, Manager, Program and Policy Development regarding Census 2006 Update: Labour, Ethnic Origin, Income and Housing be received**
- 2. The recommendation contained in the following report, August 29, 2008, from the Commissioner of Community and Health Services be adopted.**

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. The Regional Clerk circulate this report to the York Region Consortium and Community Reference Group members, the area municipalities, and the York Region Funders' Alliance members.

2. PURPOSE

This report provides Committee and Council with an update on the work being undertaken by The Regional Municipality of York in partnership with the York Region Consortium, including the release of the brochure entitled, “What If York Region Were a Village of Just 100 People?” (Census 2006), as outlined in *Attachment 1* of this report. The report also provides observations on York Region's socio-economic characteristics based on Statistics Canada's 2006 Census general release data.

3. BACKGROUND

York Region participates in a national data strategy

York Region is one of 14 communities across Canada that has formed a consortium to participate in the Canadian Council on Social Development's Community Social Data Strategy. The Community Social Data Strategy provides a gateway for municipalities and community-based organizations to access data from Statistics Canada to identify and better understand the social and economic trends within their individual communities.

Understanding current trends and using data to predict future trends helps ensure that resources are effectively deployed and planned for.

York Region's Consortium is comprised of representatives from:

- The Regional Municipality of York (lead Consortium member)
- United Way of York Region
- York Catholic District School Board
- York Region District School Board
- York Regional Police

The Consortium has also partnered with the broader community to form the Community Reference Group. The Community Reference Group consists of:

- The Consortium members
- Aurora Chamber of Commerce
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters York Region
- Catholic Community Services of York Region
- Human Services Planning Coalition
- Town of Markham Planning and Urban Design Development
- Vaughan Chamber of Commerce
- York South Simcoe Training and Adjustment Board

The Community Social Data Strategy helps us understand York Region's demographic and socio-economic trends and characteristics

Co-chaired by Mayor Tony Van Bynen, Town of Newmarket, and Daniele Zanotti, CEO, United Way of York Region, the Consortium and the Community Reference Group collaborate to determine the types of data that will be most useful to a broad spectrum of organizations and the general public, most responsive to York Region's changing demographics, and promote a better understanding of York Region's social and economic make-up.

To date the 2001 Census data has been most readily available. Some of the Consortium's major projects include: "*Community Snapshots: Recent Immigrants Living in York Region*" and "*What if York Region were a Village of Just 100 People?*" (Census 2001). In November 2007, the Consortium also produced its first set of "*Just the Facts about Your Community*" fact sheets which used 2001 and 2006 data to provide profiles of youth, seniors, families and the low income population. These fact sheets have been widely distributed to local municipalities, community organizations, federal and provincial government offices, the business community and to the general public for information and for use in decision making and planning.

Overall, the feedback from the community on these products has been very positive. The fact sheets, in particular, have proven to be quite popular and are an effective and concise way of raising awareness of socio-economic trends in York Region.

Data negotiations with Statistics Canada are complete

Over the past year, the Region, as the lead of York Region's Consortium, along with the other thirteen Consortiums across Canada have been working with the Canadian Council on Social Development and Statistics Canada to compile the 2006 Community Social Data Strategy data package. The 2006 data package will include customized cross tabulated census information, as well as access to the following additional features:

- More levels of geography.
- An online data catalogue.
- An online GIS mapping tool.
- Data from all other Consortiums across Canada.

The data sharing agreements and contracts have now been finalized by the Canadian Council on Social Development, and signed by Statistics Canada and the York Region Consortium members. The 2006 custom data will be released in phases throughout the remainder of 2008 and continued through the fall 2009.

Further consultations with the York Region Consortium and the Community Reference Group will take place to determine the upcoming analysis, future research projects and products that will be pursued by the York Region Consortium using the 2006 custom data.

2006 Census general release data provides a preliminary indication of York Region trends

Between March 2007 and May 2008, Statistics Canada released data from the 2006 Census to the public in phases. Previously, both the Planning and Development Services Department and the Community and Health Services Department have reported to Committee and Council on the Statistics Canada 2006 Census releases regarding:

- Population and dwelling counts (released March, 2007)
- Age and sex (released July, 2007)
- Marital status, families and households, housing and shelter costs (released September, 2007)
- Language, mobility and migration, immigration and citizenship (released December, 2007)
- Aboriginal peoples (released January, 2008)

Since then, Statistics Canada has released data related to:

- Labour, place of work, education and language at work (March, 2008)
- Ethnic origin and visible minorities (April, 2008)
- Income and earnings, housing and shelter costs (May, 2008)

This data, although not as robust as the custom data that the Region will be getting through the Community Social Data Strategy, provides indications of initial York Region socio-economic and demographic trends.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Now that all the 2006 Census general release data is available, beginning in September 2008 the Community and Health Services Department will create fact sheets beginning with an update of “*What if York Region Were a Village of Just 100 People?*” brochure (see *Attachment 1*). This will help set the context for future fact sheets to be released by the Community and Health Services Department on behalf of the Consortium throughout the fall 2008. The schedule of release dates and topics is as follows:

- Immigration and Mobility – to be released in October, 2008
- Language – to be released in October, 2008
- Ethnic Origin and Visible Minorities – to be released in October, 2008
- Employment and Income – to be released in November, 2008
- Housing and Shelter Costs – to be released in November, 2008

The fact sheets will be widely circulated by email and will be posted on the Social Data Strategy website pages that can be found on York Region’s web site. They will also be made available in the three most commonly spoken non-official languages in the Region (i.e. Chinese, Russian and Farsi) and can be made available in other languages on an as-needed basis.

4.1 What have we learned from the 2006 Census about our community?

The following provides a brief summary of the key highlights of York Region’s community from the 2006 Census general release data.

York Region has a growing and diverse population

- York Region is the fastest growing Census Division in Ontario and the third fastest in Canada. York Region’s population grew 22.4% from 729,254 in 2001 to 892,712 in 2006.
- York Region had the highest growth rate for all age groups in Ontario including children between 0 and 14 years, where most Census Divisions are experiencing a decline in this age group.
- The traditional family structure is still dominant in York Region, with 82.7% of census families being married couples compared to 73.9% in Ontario. Of the married couples in York Region, 67.2% have children – this is the largest proportion for all Census Divisions in Canada.

- York Region has also experienced a 37.2% increase in the number of lone parent families (with the majority being led by females). Lone parent families are at greater risk of poverty than two-parent families.
- York Region had the lowest proportion of rental housing in the GTA. Renters have decreased from 13.7% in 2001 to 11.7% in 2006. Newmarket has the highest proportion of rental dwellings at 17.5% in 2006.
- There are now 380,525 immigrants that make York Region their home. In 2001, 40.0% of York Region's total population were immigrants. By 2006, the immigrant population represented 43.0% of York Region's total population.
- In York Region there are approximately 35,000 residents that have no knowledge of English or French. This has increased 49.8% since 2001.
- The number of aboriginal people in York Region has increased from 2,560 in 2001 to 3,595 in 2006. This represents a 40% increase.

York Region residents are well educated

- York Region had the third highest proportion of adults aged 25-64 years with a university degree (33.2%) of all Census Divisions in Canada.
- Richmond Hill had the highest proportion (42.0%) of adults aged 25-64 years with a university degree of all Census Subdivisions in Ontario. Markham (36.8%), Aurora (35.8%) and Vaughan (30.8%) were sixth, seventh and ninth in Ontario.
- In York Region, Business; management and administration (24.9%) was the most popular field of study for post-secondary graduates (15 years and over).
- Almost 30.0% of postsecondary graduates in York Region (15 years and over) earned their certification, diploma or degree outside of Canada, compared to 21.5% for Ontario.

York Region's labour force is growing

- In York Region, the labour force grew 22.0% between 2001 and 2006 – this was the highest growth rate of all Census Divisions in Ontario.
- York Region has the third largest labour force (500,060) of all Census Divisions in Ontario, next to Toronto and Peel. The majority (78.0%) of residents are working full-time.

Where are York Region residents working?

- In 2006, 49.7% of York Region's employed labour force worked within the Region and 39.5% worked outside York Region. Another 10.1% have no fixed workplace address.

What are the top industries and occupations in which York Region residents work?

- In 2006, the top industries in which York Region residents were employed were Business Services (21.0%), Manufacturing Industries (13.0%) and Retail Trade (12.0%).
- The two most common types of occupations for York Region's residents were Business, Finance and Administration and Sales and Services – each representing 22.0% of York Region's employed labour force.

Unemployment rates increased between 2001 and 2006

- Between 2001 and 2006, the unemployment rate fell in every province and territory, except Ontario and the Northwest Territories. In Ontario, the unemployment rate increased from 6.1% in 2001 to 6.4% in 2006.
- York Region's unemployment rate increased from 4.5% in 2001 to 5.4% in 2006. The unemployment rate also increased in all nine local municipalities in York Region.

Median economic family income still strong in York Region

- At \$89,099, York Region had the fifth highest median economic family income in Canada but has dropped \$2,433 or 2.7% since 2001. This is the third largest percentage decrease in the province after Peel and Toronto. In fact, only six Census Divisions in Ontario had a decrease between 2001 and 2006 (Peel, Toronto, York, Essex, Dufferin and Chatham-Kent). An economic family is two or more persons who live in the same house and are related to each other by blood, marriage, common-law, or adoption.
- King, Aurora and Whitchurch-Stouffville are within the top 25 municipalities' for the highest incomes in Canada – ranking 14th, 17th and 22nd.

Low income rates have increased

- Statistics Canada defines the Low Income Cut-off Before Tax as the income levels at which families or persons not in economic families spend 20% more than average of their before tax income on food, shelter and clothing. In 2006, the low income cut-off for a family of four living in a community with a population between 100,000 and 499,999 is about \$33,251 (before taxes).
- In 2006, 13% or 112,501 of York Region residents lived in low income households. Of this group, 32,477 are children under 18 years old or 28.8%.
- The number of low income residents increased by 55.0% since 2001. For children under 18 the increase was 61.7%.

- In 2006, 82.4% of the low income residents lived in Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan.

Housing costs are high

- In 2006, the median monthly payment for a rental dwelling was \$957 versus \$1,463 for an owned dwelling. This includes the amount spent on mortgage/rent, utilities, and municipal services.
- York Region had the second highest median monthly payments for owned dwellings in the GTA after Peel.
- York Region had the third highest median monthly payment for rented dwellings after Peel and Halton.

Visible minorities are increasing in York Region

- The number of visible minorities in York Region has increased by 113,825 or 52.7% since 2001. In 2006, there were 329,955 visible minorities living in York Region representing 37.2% of the total population.
- York Region had the third largest proportion of visible minorities in Ontario and the 4th largest in Canada after Peel (50.0%), Toronto (46.9%) and Vancouver (41.7%).
- In 2006, the top visible minorities in York Region were Chinese (138,575), South Asian (80,595), West Asian (20,860), Black (20,770) and Filipino (17,150).
- Chinese visible minorities represent 15.6% of all residents living in York Region – this is the highest proportion of all Census Divisions in Ontario.

4.2 What does this information mean for our communities?

From the general release data, it is clear that York Region is continuing to grow and in general, residents enjoy a high quality of life. General trends that we are seeing include:

- Traditional two-parent families are still dominant in York Region.
- The majority of housing is owned.
- York Region residents are highly educated and enjoy a high median income
- York Region is growing rapidly and quickly becoming more diverse. In fact, much of the growth in York Region's population is due to an increase in the number of immigrants to the Region.
- York Region's demographics are shifting – more children, more seniors, more complex ethno-cultural mix, more people with disabilities, more non-traditional families.
- York Region has seen increases in unemployment rates and the number of low income residents. The gap between those with means and those without has widened.

Some of these trends are consistent with the image of York Region and some are indicating a shift in both the social and economic make-up of the region. Influences such as the aging population, growing immigrant population and the economic down-turn currently being experienced by the province are all influencing the “fabric” of York Region’s communities.

For employers, businesses, educators and community service providers it has become increasingly more important to understand and plan proactively for these changes. It means planning communities that are welcoming, accessible and adaptable for people of all ages, ethno-cultural backgrounds and economic situations, to live, work and play.

The Community and Health Services Department will use the information from the 2006 Census to begin to develop a master plan for our programs and services. This master plan will help the Region to better understand the needs of its residents so that it can provide responsive and effective programs reflective of the diverse needs of our growing population.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The 2006 Census data released to date is part of Statistics Canada’s general public release and is made available by the federal government at no cost to the Region. The data obtained by the York Region Consortium through the Community Social Data Strategy is a special order of custom cross-tabulations that allows for more detailed analysis and is collectively purchased by the York Region Consortium. This bulk data purchase, in conjunction with other consortiums across the country, has resulted in cost savings to all participants. York Region’s portion of the cost is \$10,000, which is less than the Region’s cost to purchase 2001 Census data, and will be managed within the Community and Health Services Department’s approved Operating Budget.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The knowledge gained through the Community Social Data Strategy is intended to support community program design and services that are more responsive to York Region’s changing demographics in all nine local municipalities. *Attachment 2* provides some examples of the diversification among the nine local municipalities.

The data from the Census shows that there is much variation among York Region’s municipalities and that each local municipality is experiencing its own unique trends. What this means is that a “one size fits all” approach cannot be used for program/service planning and delivery. These differences will need to be taken into consideration for effective planning.

7. CONCLUSION

The goal of the Community Social Data Strategy is to share data as broadly as possible with community agencies and municipalities that could not otherwise afford this type of data. A number of tools, such as reports, fact sheets, brochures, presentations and a web site have been developed to support this overall goal.

By increasing awareness of the Region's diversifying and changing population, this information can be used to plan proactively to improve access to services by helping York Region's municipalities, community agencies and the business community with the following: program and service planning; understanding and assessing community needs; responding to demographic trends; and improving research and program development. By responding to these trends we can help to ensure that York Region stays robust and versatile and our residents maintain a high quality of life.

Once the custom cross-tabulated 2006 Census data is received, more in-depth analysis of the socio-economic trends and characteristics will be undertaken. This analysis will be important as it will help in identifying patterns within the population and allow for York Region and the community to create or adapt programs and services that will address specific trends.

For more information on this report, please contact Cordelia Abankwa-Harris, Ext. 2150, Managing Director, Strategic Service Integration and Policy Branch in the Community and Health Services Department.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachments referred to in this clause are attached to this report.)