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2001 CENSUS DATA IMPLICATIONS

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, September 16, 2003, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Council receive this report for information.
2. The Regional Clerk circulate this report to local municipalities, other agencies and stakeholders throughout York Region.

2. PURPOSE

This report outlines the impacts and implications of the 2001 Census data on York Region's services and operations including the Planning and Development Services Department.

3. BACKGROUND

The 2001 Census was conducted in May 2001. The Census database is a collection of social and economic data that is updated every five years.

The 2001 Census data was released in the series of eight products over the last two years. Three staff reports that analyzed the Census data were brought forward to the Planning and Economic Development Committee. The April 3, 2002 report entitled "2001 Census Data" focused on the population and dwelling units, the March 5, 2003 report entitled "2001 Census Data Update" focused on the characteristics of the population including age and gender, marital status, immigration, languages, ethnic origins, visible minorities and the June 18, 2003 report entitled "2001 Census Data Update II" focused on the education, labour force, income, housing affordability and religion.

On June 26 2003, the Regional Council directed staff to report back on the implications of the Census data on York Region's services and operations. Since this time, staff from Planning and Development Services Department have been working together with staff from York Regional Police, Community Services and Housing, Health Services and Transportation and Works Departments to identify potential impacts and implications of the 2001 Census data on both the broad corporate level and on the individual departmental business areas.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Staff from Planning and Development Services have undertaken an in depth analysis of the complete 2001 Census data set and identified the following key trends:

Demographics:

- In the 1996-2001 period, York Region was the fastest growing Census Division in Canada (population growth rate of 23% or 137,000 people).
- York Region's population was getting older – the median age increased to 35.9 years, but was lower than the national median age of 37.6 years and the provincial median age of 37.2 years.

Ethnic / Cultural:

- In York Region, the proportion of foreign-born individuals increased from 36% in 1996 to 39% in 2001.
- 43,405 or 6% of York Region's population has immigrated to Canada in the 1996-2001 period.
- In 2001, 24,000 or 3.2% of the population reported to have no knowledge of English or French.
- In 2001, 30% of York Region's population were visible minorities, increasing from 24% in 1996.

Household Types:

- In the 1996-2001 period, the growth rate of lone parent families (44%) and single person households (33%) was higher than the growth rate of couple families (25%) and multiple person households (25%).

Labour Force and Employment:

- York Region's employed labour force (15 years and over) increased by approximately 30% from 297,600 in 1996 to 387,700 in 2001. This growth rate was 7% higher than the population growth rate recorded in the same period.
- In 2001, 380,400 people reported working within York Region (including those who live in York Region and those who commute to work in York Region). Therefore, according to the 2001 Census, York Region's total employed labour force was only 7,300 greater than the number of jobs available in the Region.
- In the 1996-2001 period, the proportion of the total resident employed labour force that worked within the Region increased by 2.4% (or 51,500) from 46.7 % to 49.1%. Also, according to the 2001 Census, 41.7% of the total resident employed labour force worked outside of York Region, 0.5% worked outside of Canada and 8.7% reported to have no fixed workplace address.

Household Income:

- In 2000, the median income of all private households in York Region was \$75,719, increasing by 9.9% from the median income of \$68,905 (inflation adjusted) recorded

- in 1995. Within the province, York Region recorded the highest median income of all private households.
- In the 1995-2000 period, the number of households with total income below \$30,000 decreased from 33,695 to 31,740, the number of households in the \$30,000-\$70,000 range increased from 65,360 to 68,905 and the number of households with total income above \$70,000 increased from 78,510 to 122,535. Despite the significant increase in the number of households with total income above \$70,000, there was still a significant number of households with income below \$30,000.
 - When adjusted for inflation, the number of households with total income below \$30,000 increases to 35,794 or 16% of the total.

Housing Affordability:

- In 2000, 43,440 owner households in York Region were spending 30% or more of total household income on housing. This represents 22.6% of all household owners in the Region, the highest proportions in the GTA.
- In the 1995-2000 period, the proportion of owner and tenant households spending 30% or more of the total income on housing increased from 21% to 25%.

4.1 Corporate Wide Considerations

The key trends outlined above lead to a number of corporate wide considerations. The rapid increase in population has affected all business areas in the corporation including the police and the human service providers. Various Departments are in the process of reporting back to their respective Committees on the impacts of the Census data on their operations.

York Region's response to the rapid increase in population has been complicated by the diversification and urbanization within the Region's communities as reflected by a broad mixture of age groups, a large number of recent immigrants, a significant number of people that reported to have no knowledge of either English or French, an increasing visible minority population, and an increasing number of lone parent families, single person households, seniors and seniors living alone.

The changes in York Region's population evident from the 2001 Census and other statistical and anecdotal data require a number of responses at the corporate level including acquiring a better understanding of the make up of the vulnerable groups, looking at new ways for outreach and communication and a staffing strategy.

The needs of a diversifying population are often hidden due to a number of reasons including poor English skills, fear to seek assistance and unawareness and difficulty in accessing existing resources and services. A better understanding of vulnerable groups will allow service providers to confirm whether the type, the delivery methods and the location of the services match the needs of York Region's changing population. The Community Services and Housing Department is leading a study to develop a better understanding of low income groups in the Region.

The need to improve awareness of services provided by York Region and its community partners requires new methods of outreach and communication. Some of the outreach and communication methods used by the various departments include cultural interpretation and translation services, listing of community-based and government agencies that can be accessed in different languages, and use of ethnic press.

The Region's diversifying population requires various service providers be responsive to their different languages, customs and practices. A staffing strategy that reflects the community should be considered since greater diversity among service providers, especially those on the front line, will improve the understanding of and facilitate the communication with the population being served. A number of direct service providers in the Region are taking steps to address diversity issues, including the York Regional Police that are presently in the process of completing a five year staffing / restructuring plan. Other service delivery areas in the corporation will bring forward reports on how both the corporate wide influences and influences at the individual business area level will be addressed in their program delivery.

4.2 Planning and Development Services Department Considerations

4.2.1 Human Services

While other regions in Ontario are also experiencing growth and diversity, the pace of these changes is particularly rapid in York Region. In the 1996-2001 period, York Region was the fastest growing Census Division in Canada, but funding allocations are largely based on old funding formulas rather than population growth. Although the Ontario government has provided significant financial investment into the Region, the government needs to address the under-funding shortfalls. A consistent strategy to address historic under-funding and link funding allocations to population growth and demographic change is needed to ensure that York Region residents have accessible, quality human services and can enjoy a high quality of life in their communities.

The Human Services Planning Coalition (HSPC) was established in 2001 as a cross-sectoral planning and advocacy body. The HSPC has undertaken a number of projects to address rapid growth in population and shifting demographics in York Region (ie. documentation of under-funding in healthcare and social services). The impact of immigration on human services is the topic of a research project currently under development through a partnership with the HSPC, York University and the Centre for Excellence in Immigration Studies (CERIS).

4.2.2 Housing Affordability

According to the 2001 Census, York Region had the highest proportion of owner households spending 30% or more of their income on housing and the highest average dwelling value within the province. In the 1995-2000 period, the proportion of owner and tenant households spending 30% or more of their income on housing has increased from 21% to 25%, indicating that the housing affordability problem continued to increase.

However, the 2001 Census data also indicates that over 86% of York Region's households were owner households, the highest housing ownership rate in the GTA.

In the 1996 –2001 period, the growth rate of lone parent families and single person households was higher than the growth rate of couple families and multiple person households, as well as the senior population, including seniors living alone, increased faster than the total population. From the 2001 Census data, it is evident that the housing needs of many people – especially of the young, seniors, lone parent families and single person households are not being met. A broader variety of housing options, in particular rental units, and more affordable housing are needed to accommodate the needs of an increasingly diverse population.

4.2.3 Housing and Employment Opportunities

In the 1996-2001 period, approximately 83% of the total increase in York Region's employment occurred in the City of Vaughan, and the Town of Markham and Richmond Hill. Within York Region, the lowest average dwelling value was reported in the Town of Georgina, followed by the Town of Newmarket and East Gwillimbury. During the same time period, the proportion of the total resident employed labour force that worked within the Region has increased, however a housing / employment opportunity geographic mismatch is occurring. A wide variety of jobs are being created in the urban "inverted T" area in the Region, however workers in lower paying employment sectors have to look for housing further afield in the northern parts of the Region, in Toronto or elsewhere.

Ensuring the housing needs of all residents is a concern among York Region's employers and business owners. The primary goal of the 2000 Employer Opinion Survey was to obtain the opinion of selected employers and business owners within the Region with regard to housing related issues. The Survey identified that the housing costs in York Region were increasingly becoming an issue in attracting and retaining qualified employees.

A broader mix of housing types forms, sizes and tenures is needed to assist those individuals who now have to commute daily from parts of the Region where housing is more affordable or from other municipalities of the GTA. The housing mix in York Region has shifted from 80% single detached units in 1991 to 73% in 2002. Although the housing stock continued to diversify, the number of apartments constructed was limited. The Region is undertaking a number of initiatives identified in the Housing Supply Strategy to address the housing issues.

The Planning and Development Services Department is leading a number of studies to develop a better understanding of the housing affordability, employment and labour force in York Region. The 2003 Employee Retention Survey is intended to obtain the subjective assessment by the senior management of selected businesses in York Region of the challenges they face in attracting and retaining employees and of the challenges that employees face in working within the Region. The results of the Survey will be brought forward in a joint report to the Housing and Community Services Committee

from the Commissioner of Community Services and Housing and the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services.

Another study will examine the housing, employment and labour force issues in a comprehensive manner. It will identify the existing relationship between the skills of the municipal labour force and the jobs available in the local municipality as well as determine the extent to which housing affordability is the reason that over 40% of York Region's employment live outside of the Region. The 2001 Census data provides an important base information that will be used to update many of the demographic, housing affordability, labour force and employment statistics and identify the changes that occurred in these variables in the 1996-2001 year period. The results of this study will be available in early 2004.

4.3 Relationship to Vision 2026

This report outlines the impacts and implications of the 2001 Census data on York Region's services and operations. Further, it identifies the responses at both the corporate and the individual departmental levels required to ensure that the needs of the diversifying population and the increasing labour force are adequately addressed.

This report supports the following three goals of Vision 2026:

1. Under *Responding to the Needs of Our Residents*, the goal of "Meeting People's Basic Needs" contains the following aim:
 - "Informing people about available services".
2. Under *Quality Community for a Diverse Population*, the goal of "Celebrating Our Diversity" contains the following aims:
 - "Recognizing our multicultural population"
 - "Responding to our diversity with innovative service delivery options"
3. Under *Housing Choices for Our Residents*, the goal of "Providing Appropriate Housing Mix and Supply" contains the following aim:
 - "Encouraging the production of housing that residents can afford to rent and buy".

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The purchase of Census data from Statistics Canada has been provided for in the approved budget. Census data provides information on the characteristics of the Region's population and its economy. This base information can be used to ensure that York Region's services and operations are addressing the needs of the increasing population.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The 2001 Census data is being shared with the local municipalities.

7. CONCLUSION

As directed by the Regional Council on June 26 2003, this report outlines the impacts and implications of the 2001 Census data on York Region's services and operations including the Planning and Development Services Department. Staff from the Planning and Development Services Department have been working together with the staff from York Regional Police, Community Services and Housing, Health Services and Transportation and Works Departments to identify the potential impacts on both the broad corporate level and on the individual departmental business areas.

York Region's response to the rapid increase in population has been complicated by the diversification and urbanization within the Region's communities. A number of responses at the corporate level are required to address the changes in York Region's population including developing a better understanding of the vulnerable groups, looking at new ways of outreach and communication and a staffing strategy.

Rapid increases in population and diversity mean greater need for a range of human services in York Region. A consistent strategy to address historic under-funding and link funding allocations to population growth and demographic change is needed to ensure that York Region residents have accessible and quality human services.

In the 1996-2001 period, the housing / employment opportunity geographic mismatch was occurring and the housing affordability problem continued to increase. Although in the 1991-2002 period the housing mix in York Region has diversified, the 2001 Census data indicates that the housing needs of many residents are still not being met. A broader variety of housing options, in particular rental units, and more affordable housing are needed to accommodate the needs of an increasingly diverse population. The Region is undertaking a number of initiatives identified in the Housing Supply Strategy to address the housing issues.

The changes evident from the 2001 Census data may also impact on the operations and services provided by the local municipalities. It is recommended that this report be circulated to local municipalities, other agencies and stakeholders throughout York Region.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.