

5

COMMUNITY SOCIAL DATA STRATEGY - RELEASE OF "JUST THE FACTS ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY" FACT SHEETS

The Community Services and Housing Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report, November 6, 2007, from the Commissioner of Community and Health Services:

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. This report be circulated by the Regional Clerk to the local area municipalities.

2. PURPOSE

This report provides Committee and Council with information on four “Just the Facts about Your Community” fact sheets that will be released by the York Region Consortium and Community Reference Group as outlined in *Attachments 1 – 4* of this report. Three of the fact sheets provide profiles of three of the most vulnerable segments of York Region’s population; namely seniors, youth, and the low income population. The fourth fact sheet provides a profile of families in general.

3. BACKGROUND

York Region is one of 15 communities across Canada that has formed a consortium to participate in the Canadian Council on Social Development’s Community Social Data Strategy (CSDS). The CSDS 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. 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 partnered with the broader community to form the Community Reference Group. The Community Reference Group consists of:

- The Consortium.
- The 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 Department.
- Vaughan Chamber of Commerce.
- York South Simcoe Training and Adjustment Board.

Co-chaired by Mayor Tony Van Bynen, Town of Newmarket, and Daniele Zanotti, CEO, United Way of York Region, the CRG collaborates 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. Its last major projects include the report *"Community Snapshots: Recent Immigrants Living in York Region"* and *"What if York Region were a Village of Just 100 People?"*

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

These are the first in an ongoing series of fact sheets that will provide the "stories behind the numbers" of key segments of York Region's population. The full spectrum of Statistics Canada's 2006 Census information has not yet been released, however, the 2001 Census data gives many clues about what we can expect from the 2006 Census data and sets the context for future information when the full scope of the 2006 data is made public. As much as possible the fact sheets include the 2006 Census information that has been released to date. A more comprehensive review of the 2006 Census data will be completed in the new year.

The Community and Health Services Department works collaboratively with the Planning and Development Department to examine Census data. The Community and Health Services Department's specific role is to look beyond the numbers to what they mean for our Region in order to predict current and future socio-economic trends, and respond to organizations, agencies and the Department's need to understand the broader service implications of the trends to improve services.

These fact sheets contain information that quantifies the challenges different segments of our communities face, but also emphasizes opportunities, the important role that these groups play in our Region, and what they need to contribute as fully to York Region as possible.

The fact sheets will be widely circulated by e-mail and will also be posted on the Social Data Strategy web 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.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no immediate financial implications associated with this report. However it is clear that the rapidly growing seniors, youth and low income populations will have a wide range of implications for the communities in which we live, and the types of services and programs needed.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The knowledge gained through these fact sheets is intended to support and to promote service and community program design that is more responsive to York Region's changing demographics in all nine local municipalities. All products that the Consortium creates focus on increasing knowledge of the social and economic conditions of the diverse communities in York Region. These fact sheets will be distributed across York Region, to the area municipalities, community agencies, the business community and other stakeholders who will benefit from the findings and information contained within these fact sheets.

7. CONCLUSION

The goal of the Community Data Strategy is to share data as broadly as possible with community agencies and municipalities that could not otherwise afford this type of data. Development of these fact sheets supports this overall goal. By increasing awareness of the Region's rapidly changing social make-up, this information can be used to improve access to services by helping York Region's municipalities, community agencies and the business community: with program and service planning at the local level; with understanding and assessing community needs; understanding and responding to demographic trends; and improving research and program development.

For more information about this report, please contact Cordelia Abankwa-Harris, Director, Policy and Program Support Services in the Community and Health Services Department.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachments referred to in this Clause are attached.)