



The City Above Toronto



REGION OF YORK
CLERK'S OFFICE

File Clerk's Department
2141 Major Mackenzie Drive
Vaughan, Ontario
Canada L6A 1T1

Tel (905) 832-8504
Fax (905) 832-8535

FOR INQUIRIES: PLEASE QUOTE ITEM & REPORT NO.

June 14, 2010

Mr. Denis Kelly, Regional Clerk
The Regional Municipality of York
17250 Yonge Street, Box 147
Newmarket, ON
L3Y 6Z1

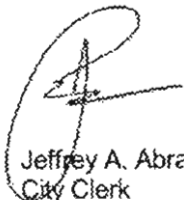
Dear Mr. Kelly:

**RE: SOCIAL SERVICES STUDY
NEW VAUGHAN OFFICIAL PLAN
FILE NO. 25.1.3**

Attached for your information is **Item 22, Report No. 26**, of the Committee of the Whole regarding the above-noted matter which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan at its meeting of June 8, 2010.

It would be appreciated if a copy of the attachments to this correspondence be forwarded to the Region of York's Social Health and Services Committee as requested by Council.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey A. Abrams
City Clerk

Attachment:

Extract

1. Social Services Study (November 2009)

JAA/pa

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 8, 2010

Item 22, Report No. 26, of the Committee of the Whole, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on June 8, 2010.

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**SOCIAL SERVICES STUDY
NEW VAUGHAN OFFICIAL PLAN
FILE NO. 25.1.3**

The Committee of the Whole recommends that the recommendation contained in the following report of the Commissioner of Planning, dated June 1, 2010, be approved subject to adding clause 4, as follows:

4. That the Social Services Study be forwarded to the Region of York's Community and Health Services Committee and the Human Services Planning Board.

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Planning in consultation with the Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works, the Commissioner of Community Services and the Commissioner of Finance/City Treasurer recommend that:

1. The Social Services Study prepared by Urban Strategies Inc. BE RECEIVED, and circulated to the Engineering, Parks Development, and Recreation and Culture Departments for their consideration.
2. In order to provide a more tangible means of achieving the Provincial and Regional targets for affordable housing, an affordable housing study should be undertaken that incorporates and builds upon the recommendations from the Secondary Suites Study, and has regard for the findings of the Social Services Study.
3. Planning Staff prepare a Terms of Reference and a budget for an Affordable Housing Study, for consideration in the 2011 Budget.

Contribution to Sustainability

The Social Services Study is an important component of a sustainable approach to planning for the future needs of the Vaughan community. Sustainability incorporates the "triple bottom line" philosophy of addressing the community's economic, environmental and social needs.

The application of sustainable community design principles, and supportive community services is expected to result in a municipality whose residents will enjoy improved quality of life and health on an individual and collective basis.

Economic Impact

The budgetary requirements of Recommendation 2 will need to be determined following the preparation of a Terms of Reference for the 2011 budget. Other recommendations of this study could have financial implications for the City; however, the recommendations would need to be considered by the respective Departments affected, and prioritized as they determine appropriate.

Communications Plan

The communications process for the Social Services Study was addressed, in part, in association with the public engagement process for the new City Official Plan (new City OP). In addition to the consultation which was done at the new City OP Public Open Houses of May 28 and

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November 18, 2009, a public opinion survey, and a daylong workshop with social services providers for the City and Region on October 8, 2009, were also undertaken. The public opinion survey was conducted by telephone, and collected a random sample of opinions from 600 residents in Vaughan, 18 years of age and older. The themes which emerged through the public survey were then compared with other relevant research and data from a variety of social service providers in Vaughan, and then vetted through the workshop on October 8, 2009. The recommendations included in this report are the result of identifying and analyzing the important themes which emerged through this process.

Purpose

To present the Social Services Study (2009), and proposed next steps to the Committee of the Whole for their consideration.

Background - Analysis and Options

Currently the social service needs of the City of Vaughan are primarily addressed through the Community Services Branch of the Region of York, and by non-profit organizations such as the United Way of York Region, Catholic Community Services, Family Services of York Region, Jewish Family and Child Services, and COSTI Immigration Services. These organizations address the needs of the population in areas such as health care, food banks, services for people with special needs, parenting programs, services for youth, and settlement support for new immigrants. With the expected growth in the City population of over 50% to the year 2031, the need for social services which cater to a diversifying Vaughan community, will also grow. The Social Services Study (Phase One), was to assess whether social service delivery in Vaughan is effectively meeting the needs of the community; and, if appropriate, to define an active role for the City in the provision of required services.

The Terms of Reference for the Social Services Study was approved by Vaughan Council on April 14, 2009. The Terms of Reference contemplated two Phases to this study; Phase One was to develop a community profile with respect to the delivery of social services at the City, and identify service gaps. The Phase One Study was also to determine whether a Phase Two Study would be required to further research the findings of Phase One, and to develop strategies to address identified social service gaps. The completed Study Report for Phase One was presented to the Official Plan Review Committee (OPRC), on September 15, 2009.

This Social Services Study (Phase One), entailed an examination of the range of social service needs of Vaughan citizens, now and in the future, and how best to meet those needs. The focus of the study was to identify the gaps in the services currently available from York Region and other providers, and to determine how such gaps can be addressed; including, defining a possible role for the City in addressing them directly in future.

The public opinion survey which was undertaken with the community asked residents their opinions regarding awareness, use, and importance of a set of 25 social services. The priority social services and areas of need which emerged as a result of the research, and community survey, focused on six key areas including:

- (i) Children and Families
- (ii) Youth
- (iii) Seniors
- (iv) New Immigrants
- (v) Affordability, Housing and Income
- (vi) Physical and Mental Health

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The data trends and needs identified within each of these six key areas are not isolated to the one area of focus, but rather there are common linkages and implications among them. The study provides a wide variety of recommendations, of which the most pertinent have been reviewed and modified to be effective as Official Plan policies or as recommendations for further initiatives. Other recommendations of the study should be reviewed and considered by the relevant Departments for possible future actions.

Select recommendations of the Social Services Study are discussed in the following section of this report.

Study Recommendations1. Physical and Mental Health Service Recommendations

The Vaughan Public Opinion Survey recorded high percentages of residents identifying the following health and specialized care services as under-served in Vaughan:

- General family physician 27%
- Specialized medical services 22%
- Services for children with special needs 22%

Additional research supports the findings of the community survey. It is documented in the Public Interest Strategy and Communications, 2009 Report, that there are only 59 general physicians per 100,000 people as opposed to an average of 72 in the Central Local Health Integration Network (CLHIN)*. In terms of mental health services, there is a shortage of appropriate care. According to statistics from the CLHIN, southwest York Region (which encompasses most of Vaughan) has 42,880 people living with mental health issues and 1 in 9 people have serious mental health illness (Public Interest Strategy and Communication 2009 Report). Vaughan has a disproportionately low number of psychiatrists with only 4.5 available per 100,000 people, whereas the Central LHIN average is 9 per 100,000.

** Local Health Integration Networks (LHIN) are provincially created non-profit organizations for the planning of health services in 14 different geographic regions of the province. The Central LHIN covers the majority of the geographic area of Vaughan.*

Creating centralized areas of healthcare service increases awareness in the community that these services are available, and encourages providers of these services to locate at these sites. These centralized locations should be easily accessible by public transit. The following policy directives related to optimizing access to health services, have been included within the draft City Official Plan:

- (i) Encourage the clustering of health care services at existing or planned health-care sites, such as the Vaughan Community Health Centre location (9401 Jane Street), and the new hospital site.
- (ii) Ensure the new hospital site in Vaughan develops as a comprehensive "campus of care", planning for a broad range of health care and health promoting functions.
- (iii) Promote through Official Plan land use policies, the establishment of health services at nodes such as regional and local centres, and along regional and local corridors, easily accessible by public transit.

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2. Affordable Housing Recommendations

A number of policy recommendations of the Social Services Study respond to the need for availability of suitable affordable housing. As per direction in the Provincial Growth Plan, and the housing policy contained within the Regional Official Plan recently adopted by Regional Council on December 2, 2009, a minimum of 25% affordable housing units are required across the City by the 2031 time frame. The Regional Plan also directs that 35% of affordable housing units shall be situated in the Regional Centres, including the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, and Regional corridors.

More than a quarter of Vaughan's residents (27.5%), are spending over 30% of their gross income on housing (The Regional Municipality of York, 2006). Currently, the percentage of rental housing in Vaughan is relatively low (7%), as noted in the Public Interest Strategy and Communications Report, 2009. Providing more affordable housing options, would help to address many economic challenges faced by Vaughan's lower income households. This would also serve the population who currently work in Vaughan, but commute from other municipalities due, in part, to a lack of affordable housing options in Vaughan. As part of the recommended study to provide a more practical means of achieving mandated targets for affordable housing, the idea of percentage minimums applicable to all new development could be explored. Care should also be taken to ensure that the required percentage of affordable housing be addressed via a variety of tenure types and dwelling sizes, in order to ensure adequate affordable housing options for families, singles, and seniors alike. The Social Services Study includes the following policy directives related to affordable housing:

- (i) **In order to provide a more tangible means of achieving the Provincial and Regional targets for affordable housing *, an affordable housing study should be undertaken that incorporates and builds upon the recommendations from the Secondary Suites Study, and has regard for the findings of the Social Services Study.**
- (ii) **Establish more flexible land use policies within the Official Plan, which encourage a wider range of housing types and tenure, including rentals and affordable housing that is suitable for families of all incomes and compositions. (Policy included in draft City OP.)**
- (iii) **The Secondary Plan for the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre shall include policies and incentives to encourage developers to build affordable housing units. (Policy included in the draft Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Secondary Plan.)**

** Affordable housing is defined by the Province and the Region as both rental and ownership housing in which the cost of shelter does not exceed 30% of the annual household income, or is 10% below market values within the regional housing market.*

Next Steps

The Terms of Reference for the Social Services Study had contemplated the possibility of a Phase Two Study, if required, to develop strategies to improve social services delivery in Vaughan. However, the Phase One Study has provided a good basis from which to develop these policies. Based on the findings of Phase One, and the recommendations, it is Staff's view that a Phase Two Study is not necessary at this time.

The Social Services Study should be reviewed by the Engineering, Parks Development, and Recreation and Cultural Services Departments to determine future initiatives with respect to various recommendations, as they see appropriate.

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Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

This report addresses the Social Services Study, a background study to the new Official Plan now in preparation as part of the City's growth management initiative.

Regional Implications

The recommendations of this study should result in increased co-ordination and efficiency between the Region of York and the City, to achieve a higher level of social service provision in Vaughan.

Conclusion

The Social Services Study was conducted as part of the City's new Official Plan process to address the social needs of a growing population. It is recognized that a comprehensive planning process that addresses the implications of significant population growth cannot ignore the social health of the community. As part of the study, a community profile was developed, and a range of social service needs from physical and mental health needs, to affordability issues were examined. The study resulted in a number of recommendations aimed at improving community health and social well being, by addressing identified service gaps. Many of the social service issues identified are addressed through policies included in the new City OP, while other recommendations of this study would require further City initiatives.

Attachments

1. Social Services Study (November 2009) (Mayor and Members of Council Only)

Report prepared by:

Anna Sicilia, Planner, x. 8063

(A copy of the attachments referred to in the foregoing have been forwarded to each Member of Council and a copy thereof is also on file in the office of the City Clerk.)

URBAN
STRATEGIES
INC

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Item: 22

JUNE 1, 2010

Vaughan Social Services Study

Vaughan Tennessee

November 2009

URBAN
STRATEGIES
INC .

Vaughan Social Services Study

Vaughan Tomorrow
OUR CITY OUR FUTURE

November 2009



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1. Introduction

Vaughan is a rapidly growing community, actively transitioning from a suburban municipality into a more urban and diverse place. Since 2007, Vaughan has been developing a new Official Plan, the City's primary tool for long term growth management. Planning for growth includes thinking and developing strategies for new infrastructure, places for living, recreation and commerce. Sustainable growth planning must also include strategies to address the social impacts of growth on a growing community.

The Vaughan Social Services Study has been conducted as part of the City's new Official Plan process to address the social aspects of Vaughan's growth, investigating the current and future social service needs of the people of Vaughan. While Vaughan is and will continue to be a fairly wealthy municipality, segments of the population have growing social service needs that should be understood and addressed.

As an equitable local government with the needs of all of its citizens in mind, the City of Vaughan has called for this study to help articulate current social service issues and determine appropriate responses to them. The objective of the Social Services Study is to understand the current state of social service provision in Vaughan and think about what actions the City can take in the future to better meet the needs of its citizens.

The need for a comprehensive planning process that addresses the implications of population growth on social services was highlighted in a recent publication by the United Way of York Region. In its report entitled "...If Addressed", the United Way starts a dialogue about the "pace, face and place" of growth in York Region.

The data and trends highlighted in the UWYR report draw attention to the residual effects of population growth such as growing low income populations, increased housing needs and lagging funding of critical supportive programs. The very name of the UWYR report, "... If Addressed" is a call to action. If the issues facing York Region are addressed, what kind of place could it become? What quality of life could be afforded to the people who call it home? What policy direction would be necessary to respond to the region's growing social service needs? The Vaughan Social Services Study seeks to explore some of those questions in the context of Vaughan, investigating the 'face' of Vaughan's growth, how that face is changing and what can be done to meet its needs.

The Vaughan Social Services Study combines information about social service needs gathered from both primary and secondary sources, including: a public opinion survey, census data and data collected through pre-existing reports and studies.

The public opinion survey was conducted on behalf of the City of Vaughan by Ipsos Reid, a leading public affairs research firm. The survey was conducted by telephone on May 12, 2009 and collected a random sample of 600 residents in the city 18 years of age and older. The survey asked residents about their opinions regarding awareness, use, importance and service coverage of a set of 25 social services. The themes that emerged from the public opinion survey were then compared with pre-existing research, reports and data from a variety of sources.

This report also has been informed by the outcome of a roundtable discussion with local social service providers. Held on October 8, 2009 at the Vaughan Community Health Centre, the roundtable attracted 42 participants who represented a range of expertise in the social service field. The participants received a presentation of the study's preliminary conclusions and provided critical feedback that has helped shape the final recommendations included in this report.

To describe the city's current social service needs this report presents a community profile focused on six key areas including:

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Children & Families | 4. New Immigrants |
| 2. Youth | 5. Affordability, Housing & Income |
| 3. Seniors | 6. Physical & Mental Health |

Within each section, current data trends are described, future implications of growth are discussed and ideas for City actions to address these trends are presented.

The recommendations for City action are an important outcome of this report and are split into two categories: Official Plan Recommendations and Strategic Actions. The Official Plan Recommendations in the report will be considered by the City to help shape new social service-related Official Plan policies. The remaining suggested Strategic Actions include a broad array of ideas for how the City could become involved in social service provision and are intended to help the City define its emerging role in the delivery of social services.

The final discussion section of this report summarizes themes in the data into four areas of focus, concisely describing the main conclusions of the study and potential areas for Vaughan's involvement in social services in the future.

Community Profile

The following section describes a community profile of Vaughan, separated into the six focus areas of children and families, youth, seniors, new immigrants, affordability, housing and income and physical and mental health.

Like any community, the data trends and needs identified within each of these focus areas is not isolated unto itself, rather there are common linkages and implications amongst many of the focus areas.

At the end of each focus area, a list of potential City actions is provided, separated into Official Plan Recommendations and Strategic Actions. Section 3 of this report provides a summary of the recommended actions that Vaughan could pursue to address the social service needs of the city as it grows.

Children and Families

Facts and Trends

According to the Background Paper on Population and Housing, Vaughan's population growth has been due largely to the continued attraction of young families with children (Hemson Consulting Ltd., 2008). This trend is projected to continue in the future with the child-rearing age cohort of 30-40 year olds remaining the largest age group in the city through 2031.

As the population of children and families grows, the social service needs related to families, including subsidized daycare, parenting programs, foodbanks and other similar services, will be expected to increase with the growing client base. Pressure on existing services such as recreational program offerings have already been identified as a service that will need to expand to meet the additional needs of new families and children in the city (Public Interest Strategy & Communications, 2009).

Vaughan is an attractive place for families and children and within that population there are different kinds of families with different types of needs. For instance, what constitutes a "family" in Vaughan reaches beyond the traditional nuclear family unit. A report by the United Way of York Region found that the single parent household was the fastest growing type of household in the region (Agnew Peckham, 2006). In addition, data from Census Canada specific to Vaughan shows that the incidence of lone parent families has increased 27 percent from 2001 to 2006, with 10.7 percent of families being lead by one parent (Public Interest Strategy & Communications, 2009).

Other data that speaks to growing social services needs among families is the incidence of low income. Whereas there were 8.5 percent of Vaughan families

living on low income in 2001, 9.6 percent of families reported living on low income in 2006 (Public Interest Strategy & Communications, 2009). To put these figures in context, there is a similar percentage of low income families in Vaughan as there is in the region as a whole; in 2006, nine percent of York Region's families lived on low income (The Regional Municipality of York, 2006). Another figure that relates to a trend of growing need amongst families is the rapid increase in the number of residents using food banks in the Region of York. The Region of York has reported that the number of residents accessing foodbanks increased by 53 percent between 2001 and 2007, evidence of a growing income gap (The Regional Municipality of York, 2006).

All of these facts and figures speak to a diversity in the make-up of Vaughan's families. While a relatively wealthy municipality on the whole, Vaughan, like all cities, is home to some families and children that have more acute needs and require more assistance than others.

Net importance is calculated by adding the people who reported a service was very important and somewhat important less the people reporting a services was somewhat or very unimportant.

Programs like subsidized child care, food banks, before and after school care, or services for children with special needs are important supports for many families. The importance of family and child-related services were apparent in the responses gathered through the public opinion survey.

Family and child-related services were among the top services that survey respondents reported using with nine percent of respondents using a parenting program and 13 percent of respondents using an early childhood development program. Use of services for children with special needs was tied for tenth overall in use, with six percent of respondents using such a service. The importance of family and child-related services was also clear in the public opinion survey results. Early childhood development programs and parenting programs ranked eighth and ninth over all with a net importance of 30 and 29 respectively. In terms of services that the respondents felt Vaughan was underserved by, five of the top ten ranked "underserved" areas related to family and children's needs.

Implications

A number of important trends emerge from the data about children and families. The growing number of single parent families and the incidence of low income, together with a significant number of people reporting that Vaughan is underserved in day care facilities, may illustrate a need for more children's care services, particularly subsidized child care places. A great expense for many families, providing more affordable child care choices would relieve a great financial burden, especially for single parents and low income families.

Another compelling trend around child care has been described by Public Interest in a 2009 report prepared for the Vaughan Community Health Center. The report links the high number of women with children in the work force, 74.3 percent according to 2006 census data, with a high percentage of people reporting performing unpaid child care work, 46.5 percent across the entire city, as evidence that child care demands are falling on multigenerational families in Vaughan.

Those who are performing the unpaid child care, often seniors, may face challenges in accessing needed services for the children they are looking after. These challenges may arise from to physical isolation, restricted access to transportation, and/or isolation due to language barriers (Public Interest Strategy & Communications, 2009).

While there is no doubt that family caregivers are providing an important function in extended families, such childcare arrangements may not be sustainable in the long term. Where is a family to turn when the extended member of the family is no longer able to care for the children? What other affordable resources are available to parents? Currently within the city, there are eighty-five places offering subsidized child care and funding for such places has not grown with the

Percent Reporting Vaughan is Underserved

Rank	Service	%
1	General Family Physician	27
2	Specialized Medical Services	22
2	Services for people with disabilities	22
2	Services for children with special needs	22
3	Subsidized daycare	21
4	Subsidized/affordable housing	20
5	Food banks	19
6	Shelters, lodges, transition homes	18
6	Counseling services for youth	18
7	Long term care for seniors	17
7	Programs for teen parents	17

Source: Vaughan Public Opinion Survey Ipsos Reid, May 2009

population. Rather, in the 2006-2007 fiscal year, the Province of Ontario reduced its investment in child care, decreasing the child care funding per resident in the 905 area to \$329, compared to a provincial figure of \$706 per resident. As a result of this funding gap, Vaughan, like other municipalities in York Region, does not have equal access to subsidized child care spaces.

Family and children's needs also extend beyond that of subsidized child care. As noted in the roundtable session, prevention programs to help build strong family units are important services to consider for Vaughan's future as such initiatives can help curtail problems before they become more serious issues. In addition, as the population grows in the future and more children and families call Vaughan their home, so too will the need for family-related services such as food banks, before and after school programs, services for children with special needs, and family counselling services.

When considering the needs of children and families, the programs and services that support their needs are important, but addressing the root cause of their need for these services should also be explored.

A central theme among the topics related to the needs of children and families is that of affordability, housing and income. The more income that is required to secure housing, the more every type of family must stretch to meet this demand. The implications of this trend are varied and can include relying on family members for child care, sharing a single family house with multiple families, or requiring the assistance of a food bank or other services and programs. Through the provision of more affordable housing choices, the City can increase the capacity of families to better support themselves by helping to fulfil their basic need for shelter.

Recommendations for City Actions

Official Plan Recommendations

- Through land use and zoning designations, encourage the development of a wider range of housing types and tenure including rental and affordable housing options that are suitable for families of all incomes.
- Modify land use permissions and zoning to permit small-scale day care uses in a wider range of locations in order to improve physical access to day care sites and make them more integral to community building.
- Through the planning process, designate areas for health and social services to be centrally located and well connected to transit, or embedded within community blocks.

Strategic Actions

- Promote the 'School as Hub' concept detailed in the Province of Ontario's Early Learning Report. Encourage schools to develop as a centralized location for "children's learning, care, health, culture, arts and recreation."
- Partner with and advocate for strengthening of existing school-based social service and child care programs within schools.
- Advocate for equitable funding from the Provincial government to support social services in Vaughan.

Youth

Facts and Trends

York Region has a large proportion of youth, comprising about 14 percent of the population (The Regional Municipality of York, 2006). Vaughan's youth population mirrors the regional data with 13.9 percent of the population being classified as youth (Public Interest Strategy & Communications, 2009). Social service needs of youth, like the general adult population, are broad and varied, including before and after school programming, specialized mental health services, and job training and placement assistance. Major issues facing youth in Vaughan are unemployment, availability of youth-focused programming, and the ability to easily access or attend services without the use of a private vehicle.

Youth unemployment in Vaughan in 2006 was 12.2 percent, compared to the regional figure of 11 percent (Public Interest Strategy & Communications, 2009; York Youth & The York Region District School Board, 2007). While there appears to be reasonable availability of employment opportunities compared to the rest of York Region, getting to work for youth—especially for those who rely on the presence of convenient public transportation—has been identified by Public Interest and by Agnew Peckham in their respective reports as a key issue for youth accessing employment opportunities.

In terms of programming for youth provided by the City, Vaughan does offer athletic programs that youth can participate in, as well as some specific programs targeted to youth, including specialized dance, public speaking, singing and creative and visual arts programs (The City of Vaughan, 2009). Vaughan also has been a leader in youth engagement at the municipal level through the establishment of the Vaughan Youth Cabinet. The VYC is a forum

that allows Vaughan youth to become involved in their communities, and also has established the position of Youth Councillor on City Council, providing an opportunity to directly participate in local government. While there are some programmed offerings for youth in the city, Vaughan has recognized deficiencies in youth programming, as described in the 2009 Youth in Action report. The report made the following statement:

“there are a lack of variety of services available to youth, barriers to accessible programs at some of our community centres, low numbers with youth memberships, and lack of awareness regarding programs, services and opportunities available for youth citywide” (Recreation and Culture Department City of Vaughan, 2009).

The awareness, use and importance of youth programs to the people of Vaughan varied depending on the focus of the service. More general services, such as before and after school programs, were well used, with 1 in 8 people reporting that they had used such a service. Before and after school programs were also among the top services that people were aware of, with 69 percent of people reporting that they were ‘very aware’ or ‘aware’ of such programming. More specialized youth services, such as counselling services for youth were used far less, with only 1 in 31 respondents reporting use of such a service, but despite low use, counselling services for youth had a relatively high importance rate (rated at 28, tied for tenth overall). When considering service levels for youth in the city as a whole, 18 percent of people thought that Vaughan was underserved in terms of counselling services for youth, and 13 percent of people thought Vaughan was underserved in before and after school programs for youth (Ipsos Reid, May 2009).

Implications

According to the Agnew Peckham report, the youth population is understood by service providers to be chronically underserved by social and health services (Agnew Peckham, 2006). Anecdotal evidence by service providers that youth is underserved is bolstered by findings from Public Interest and the City of Vaughan itself, identifying a need for more comprehensive program offerings for youth. Furthermore, at the recently opened Vaughan Community Health Centre, youth are one of three key client groups for the Centre, reflecting a need for services.

Connected to the gaps in youth service provision and youth unemployment is the challenge faced by youth traveling within the city to attend programs or places of work. The challenge of transportation for youth is perhaps the most important implication from an urban planning perspective. The reports consulted for this study and feedback from the roundtable have confirmed that affordable and reliable transportation options are a prerequisite to having a mobile, well-served youth population in Vaughan.

The evidence also suggests that youth need more opportunities for constructive ways to spend their time, and places for that activity to happen. One tangible way to address the need for youth-friendly space is to create more program offerings or drop-in centres. Another longer term way to address this issue is to do so through city-building with the youth population in mind. The creation of more public spaces that function in a variety of ways -- parks, sports fields, public squares or small scale plazas on local shopping streets-- could contribute to a richer public realm that provides opportunities for youth to spend their time in places outside of movie theatres and malls. In addition, the establishment of mixed use public buildings, supporting the Province's "school as hub" concept, that combines a school with other public facilities such as a library or a community centre could provide youth better access to services and programs.

Recommendations for City Actions

Official Plan Recommendations

- Develop and implement open space development guidelines, with an emphasis on creation of well-programmed public spaces.
- Encourage the development of smaller scale community recreation spaces within neighborhood blocks to provide places for youth to easily engage in programs within their neighborhoods.
- Promote alternative modes of transportation including active transportation and public transportation and encourage the creation of transit oriented developments in Vaughan.

Strategic Actions

- Promote the 'School as Hub' concept detailed in the Province of Ontario's Early Learning Report. Encourage schools to develop as a centralized location for "children's learning, care, health, culture, arts and recreation."
- Advocate for the extension of the existing Youth Cabinet program into area schools to engage more youth in city-building activities.
- Advocate for improvements to transportation service in the city that encourage and improve youth ridership including mobile phone applications, text alerts for bus arrival times, and expansion of the existing VIVA program, "Youth On-Board".

Seniors

Facts and Trends

The terms "young-old," "old" and "oldest-old" derive from terminology developed in the mid 1970's by Bernice L. Neugarten, a leading gerontology scholar, to describe different segments of the seniors' population.

A well documented demographic trend that is affecting most communities in Canada is that of an aging population. According to the Government of Canada, seniors (those aged 65 and above) are the fastest growing population group in the country. Furthermore, the growth of the seniors population will account for close to half of the growth of the entire Canadian population over the next 40 years (Health Canada, 2002).

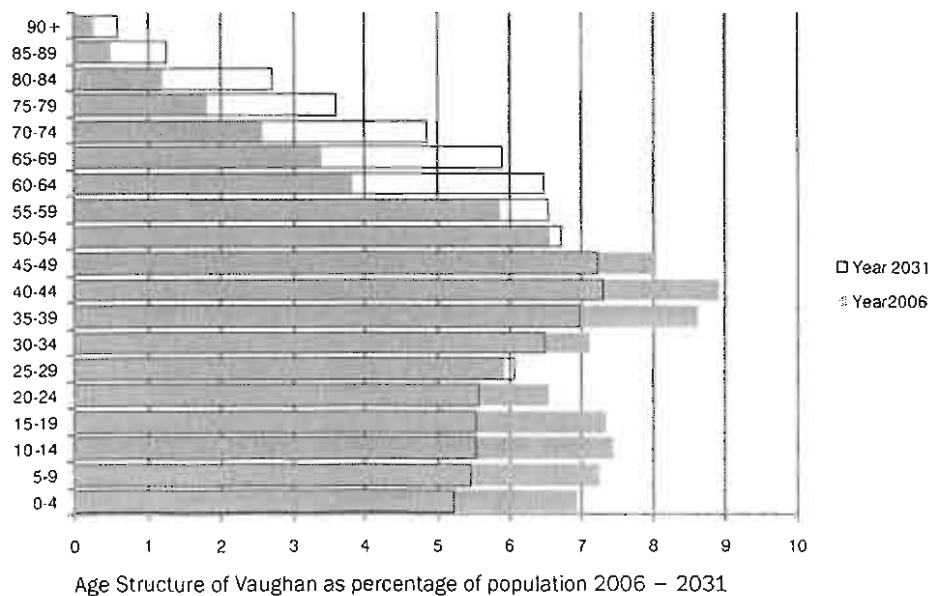
In the Region of York, seniors make up approximately ten percent of the current population compared to the Provincial and national average of 14 percent, but among urban municipalities, York Region has one of the fastest growing senior's populations (York Region Community Health Services Department, 2006). The seniors population in Vaughan is also expected to grow significantly in the future. According to population projections developed by Hemson Consulting for the development of Vaughan's new Official Plan, the city's population 55 and over will more than double between 2006 and 2031 (Hemson Consulting Ltd., 2008). By 2031 in Vaughan, the "young-old," those aged 55-65, will comprise roughly 12 percent of the population, "the old," ages 65-75, will account for 11 percent of the population and "the oldest old," those 75 years or more, will total seven percent of the population. While the young old are relatively mobile, independent and financially secure, the old and the oldest old have greater dependence on and needs for social services.

The demographic trend is clear: Vaughan will be home to many more seniors in the future - a change in the population profile that will likely have a large impact on many social services.

According to the Central Local Health Integration Network (LHIN), seniors today utilize a high proportion of health services, and constitute a majority of the clients served by community support agencies, a trend that will continue to grow as the population of seniors expands (Central LHIN, 2006).

In addition to usage of health-related and other services, socio-economic information about seniors in Vaughan is important to consider in order to fully understand the current needs of the population. Currently, around 12 percent of seniors are living alone in Vaughan (Public Interest Strategy & Communications, 2009). This figure compares to 16 percent in the Region of York and 25 percent in the Province as a whole (The Ontario Trillium Foundation, 2004). Of the 12 percent of seniors that are living alone in Vaughan, ten percent fall into the low income category (Public Interest Strategy & Communications, 2009).

Age Structure



Living alone, particularly for those seniors that are not independently mobile, can be an isolating event. Many seniors who live alone and no longer drive are isolated as a result of their physical environment, unable to easily leave their neighbourhoods without the use of a car. Isolation can also arise from financial barriers. As indicated at the roundtable session, seniors with low income face significant barriers in accessing programs that are offered for a fee which can contribute to a sense of social isolation. Language barriers can also contribute to feelings of isolation. In 2001, 62 percent of seniors in York Region were immigrants (The Regional Municipality of York, 2006). Many seniors in Vaughan are first generation immigrants to Canada, some of whom have little command of the English language. As reported through anecdotal evidence gathered by Public Interest, many immigrant seniors are living with their children's families, often being left alone during the day. Without the ability to communicate in English, these seniors are unable to access services that could better integrate them into their new communities.

These facts demonstrate that, while the majority of the senior population in Vaughan may be living comfortably, there are still significant needs among a segment of the population. The public opinion data collected by Ipsos Reid provides a clearer insight into the awareness, importance and use of senior-related services.

Among the senior-focused services that were included in the questionnaire, survey respondents were most aware of long term care for seniors, with 30 percent reporting that they were very aware. While awareness was moderate, reported use of senior's services was lower: seven percent reported use of in-home care for seniors, six percent reported use of day programs for seniors, and six percent reported using long term care for seniors.

In the survey, questions were asked about the importance of a service to a household and perceived level of service in Vaughan. These categories are the most interesting when considering needs of the city now and in the future. Long

term care for seniors and in-home care for seniors were ranked fourth and fifth respectively out of the 25 services in the survey in terms of net importance to respondents. As well, 17 percent of the respondents felt that Vaughan was underserved in terms of long term care services for seniors. A need for long term care was also highlighted by social service providers at the roundtable event.

To contextualize the responses gathered through the public opinion survey, seven percent of the respondents to the survey were over 65 years old, and 9.7 percent of the current population of Vaughan is considered to be 'senior'. According to the opinion survey, the concern for seniors care reaches beyond the affected population and speaks to a greater public concern.

Implications

Over the next 20 years, seniors will become a much more visible segment of the Vaughan population and their use and need for services is expected to increase as the population grows. The rise of the senior population in Vaughan is not only connected to health and care-related services, but to a range of other issues like accessibility to services (both financial accessibility and physical accessibility), transportation options and housing. These topics are connected to service delivery and quality of life for Vaughan's aging population.

With an increase in the presence of seniors in Vaughan, more attention needs to be given to providing appropriate housing options for the elderly and aging, as well as to the creation of social spaces that are physically accessible to people as they age—both in terms of building design and layout and location within the city, close to public transit and neighborhoods. Investing now in retrofitting existing infrastructure to meet the needs of an aging population and committing to planning and designing future buildings and communities with a life-cycle approach will, in the long run, be a cost-effective measure that will make Vaughan a better and more livable place for all.

Recommendations for City Actions

Official Plan Recommendations

- Encourage the development of a range of housing types including seniors-targeted housing within existing communities, as infill projects or new developments.
- Establish a consistent, city-wide emphasis on the creation of walkable, accessible neighbourhood design.
- Promote alternative modes of transportation including active transportation and public transportation and encourage the creation of transit oriented developments in Vaughan.

Strategic Actions

- Execute an accessibility audit of public buildings in Vaughan; develop an accessibility plan and design guidelines for new development; Raise the profile of the existing Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- Advocate for the provision of seniors-focused services in multiple languages, as well as targeted outreach to specific communities with high levels of immigrant seniors.
- Ensure the involvement of seniors in consultative processes that relate to their issues of interest.
- Develop partnerships with the school boards to investigate shared use of school busses during non-peak times to provide local transportation to seniors.

New Immigrants

Facts and Trends

Since World War Two, immigrants have played a role in defining Vaughan. The war precipitated an influx of newcomers to Vaughan including the arrival of people of Italian, Jewish and Eastern European descent in large numbers (The City of Vaughan). Through the 20th and now into the 21st century, Vaughan has continued to be a community shaped by immigrants, new and old, their families and cultures. Today, new immigrants from places like Russia, India and the Ukraine are noticeable in the city and the percent of visible minorities has risen to 27 percent of the population in 2006 (Public Interest Strategy & Communications, 2009).

While the older immigrant groups in Vaughan have had time to establish extensive networks that connect them to culturally appropriate service providers, newer immigrants may lack an extended network to assist their settlement in the city. Because of this, new immigrants can require more social services than other segments of the population. Settlement services to aid integration into Canadian society, English-language courses, language and culturally-specific services, and accreditation and qualifications assistance, are among the specialized services that new immigrants may need to help them overcome barriers and function well and happily in society.

The 2006 Vaughan population was comprised of 45 percent immigrants, ten percent of which can be classified as recent immigrants, arriving in Vaughan between 2001 and 2006 (Census Canada, 2006). While immigration rates have been stable around four percent from 2001 to 2006, the number of people speaking a language other than English at home has doubled to 27 percent of the population (Public Interest Strategy & Communications, 2009). This statistic supports the notion that not all social services are linguistically accessible, and that there is a lack of culturally appropriate services in the city (United Way of York Region, 2004).

According to Census Canada, immigrants are persons who are or have ever been landed immigrants in Canada. A landed immigrant is a person who has been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities. Some immigrants have resided in Canada for a number of years, while others are more recent arrivals. Most immigrants are born outside Canada, but a small number were born in Canada.

The social service needs of recent immigrants tend to be greater than the mainstream population, as reflected in the York Region report *Immigrants Living in York Region*. The report states:

"recent immigrants, probably due to lower income levels, are more likely to spend a greater proportion of their household income on all types of housing... many recent immigrants face initial challenges in finding work commensurate with their skills, enhancing their occupation-specific language skills, securing affordable housing, and finding the appropriate supports and services to improve their employment and earnings."

These findings echo the need for affordable housing choices and social service supports for employment-related initiatives described in the Affordability, Income and Housing section of this report.

In the data collected through the public opinion survey, services for immigrants did not rank high in awareness, use or importance. This may reflect the very specialized nature of such services that would not necessarily be needed for all of the immigrant population, but rather appeal to and be important for a small segment of the newcomer population.

The public opinion survey found around 60 percent of respondents were "aware" or "somewhat aware" of language training for new immigrants while only 32 percent of people were aware or somewhat aware of settlement and integration services. Use of immigrant-focused services was low, with seven percent of people reporting using language training services and two percent of people reporting using both settlement services and accreditation and qualification assistance. Two of the three immigrant-related services that were included in the survey ranked second to last and last in terms of services that the respondents felt Vaughan was underserved by: 11 percent of people reported Vaughan was underserved in accreditation and qualifications assistance for new immigrants while nine percent of people reported that the city was underserved in language training and settlement services.

Implications

While the use of immigrant-specific services may have been reported to be low, the needs of this population go beyond specialized services. Like the general population, immigrants face similar barriers to accessing services in the form of a lack of adequate and reliable public transportation. This need is of particular concern in York Region because one of the most common modes of transportation to work for recent immigrants is public transit, a rate that is double that of the total population (The Regional Municipality of York, 2006).

In addition, recent Immigrants in York Region are two to three times as likely to be within the low income category compared to the total population. This reinforces the need to provide the related supports that lower income families need such as family and child-related services, counselling, food banks or affordable housing, within a delivery model that is culturally appropriate and linguistically accessible.

According to a report by United Way, many people seeking culturally appropriate services feel that they are underserved in York Region. There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that people leave the region to go south to Toronto to access services in their language (United Way of York Region, 2004). As Vaughan grows and attracts new families with a diversity of ethno-social backgrounds, the city will need to become a place where culturally appropriate services and physical access to those services are more readily available.

Recommendations for City Actions

Official Plan Recommendations

- Through land use and zoning designations, encourage the development of a wider range of housing types and tenure including rental and affordable housing that is suitable for families of all incomes, both immigrant or non-immigrant.
- Promote the development of public transportation and encourage the creation of transit oriented development.

Strategic Actions

- Advocate for geographically localized services in certain communities to address specific cultural needs.
- Coordinate with the Department of Recreation and Culture to include more diverse programming offerings at a variety of locations in the city. Establish relationships and contacts with community leaders, partner on events to show a City interest in diverse programming.
- Establish a Community Advisory Board to provide input into the design of public spaces that meet various cultural needs.
- Advocate and plan for improved transit service in areas with large immigrant populations. Undertake a study to understand specific travel patterns and assess need for new or improved transit service.

- Enhance existing relationships with school programs to connect with new immigrant families and provide them with connections to culturally appropriate programs and supports.
- Investigate the potential of providing preferred access to programs to new immigrants in order to better serve their needs.
- To increase the sense of inclusion and belonging, establish a Vaughan Orientation program for newcomers and new immigrants that provides a tour of the city and an overall introduction of the services and programs available to residents in the city.

Affordability, Housing and Income

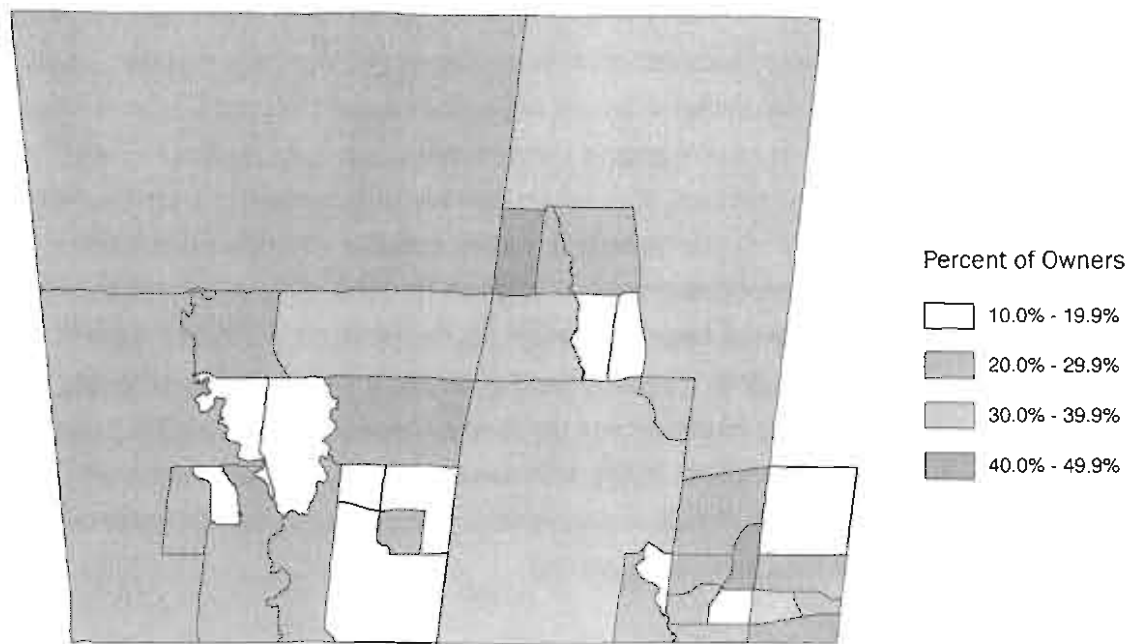
Facts and Trends

Affordability, housing and income are key topics that relate to social service needs in the city. The types of dwellings people chose to live in, the percentage of their income they use to provide shelter for themselves, and the housing types available to them are important to understand, as they have many connections to one's need for supportive social services. The following data illustrate the state of affordability, housing and income in Vaughan, and the connection of these factors to social service needs.

Not surprisingly, as a popular place for families to settle, Vaughan is dominated by ground-related housing, particularly single detached homes. In 2006, 68.9 percent of the housing in Vaughan was single detached houses, with a growing proportion of semi-detached and row homes (Hemson Consulting Ltd., 2008). While single detached housing may be the dominant housing type in the city, there is evidence to suggest that this housing type is not meeting the needs of some of the population. Recent data provide indications of a need for more affordable and diverse housing choices, including affordable housing and rental options, not widely available in Vaughan. For instance, while the median income for families has risen slightly in the city, from \$80,557 to \$88,317 between 2001 and 2006, the cost of home ownership in Vaughan increased greatly, rising nearly 50 percent over the same period of time (Public Interest Strategy & Communications, 2009). With housing costs rising, income not keeping pace and a lack of diversity in housing choices, the ability of Vaughan residents to purchase a home is diminishing.

In addition to rising housing costs, almost a third of Vaughan's residents are spending more than a third of their income on housing. The proportion of people spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing, an important measure of affordability, is 27.5 percent in Vaughan as a whole which is comparable to the Region's average of 27 percent (Public Interest Strategy & Communications , 2009). The following map illustrates Vaughan by census tract and shows where more than 40 percent of households are spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing (The Regional Municipality of York, 2006).

Owners Spending 30% or More of Income on Housing Costs



Source: The Regional Municipality of York

The outward appearance of neighborhoods in Vaughan belies the realities of many of the families within. In order to continue to afford to live in the city, some households in Vaughan contain families that have decided to live together in a multi-family housing arrangement. An increase in the number of multifamily households in Vaughan has been linked to growing affordability problems and indicates that important poverty and social service issues are hidden in the city (Public Interest Strategy & Communications, 2009). This assertion is supported by a report by Agnew Peckham that found evidence of multiple families living in a single home who pool their resources to maintain their dwelling (Agnew Peckham, 2006). While cultural preference cannot be discounted as one explanation of this trend, the evidence discussed above supports the notion that there is not an adequate amount of alternative and affordable housing choices for these populations.

The need for a more diverse housing stock, including affordable and rental housing, has been recognized in a number of reports created by York Region including "Housing and Our Economy: Remaining Competitive" and "A Profile of York Region's Low Income Population: Research Highlights". There is a very low proportion of rent-geared-to-income housing available in York Region and a lack of rentals in Vaughan: currently only seven percent of homes are rentals in Vaughan, and there are only 470 social housing units in the city (Public Interest Strategy & Communications, 2009; The Regional Municipality of York Geomatics Division, 2006). The Region is aware of the need for affordable housing, however, as the Region's Housing and Shelter Facts Sheet states, "the Region is leading the way but cannot build affordable housing on its own. The absence of national and provincial comprehensive housing strategies and meaningful, stable funding remain a major issue" (The Regional Municipality of York, 2006).

Implications

As a core human need, shelter and the means with which to secure it are of major concern when trying to understand the social service needs in Vaughan. While the City cannot change the forces of the housing market that dictate costs, it can influence the range and diversity of housing types that are offered within the city. According to the public opinion survey, 20 percent of people that participated in the survey stated that Vaughan was underserved in subsidized and affordable housing. The lack of different options of housing tenure in the city, including rentals and apartments, has resulted in people resorting to solutions like multi-family households in order to meet their housing needs. Providing people with a range of housing types and tenure arrangements that is suitable for their needs and income levels may alleviate their compounded needs for social services, such as employment income support or food banks. Providing an array of housing choice is a highlighted element of the York Region Sustainability Strategy which recognizes the connection between affordable housing choices and the development of healthy communities.

In addition to the socio-demographic data suggesting a need for a more diverse housing stock, there is Provincial direction found in the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* which describes how growth should be accommodated in municipalities across the region. The *Growth Plan* requirements were investigated in the Housing Analysis and Employment Land Needs report prepared as part of the City's Official Plan project. The report concluded that in order for the City to reach the density targets prescribed in the *Growth Plan*, markets will need to shift towards housing intensification in more compact urban forms including apartments and row homes (Hemson Consulting Ltd., 2009). The *Growth Plan* also contains policies that directs municipalities to implement minimum affordable housing targets.

Providing a more diverse array of housing types and implementing a minimum affordable housing target may not only assist in alleviating social service needs for Vaughan's population, it is a necessary move needed to achieve the city's long-term growth requirements as outlined in the *Growth Plan*.

Related to the ability to make an affordable housing choice is one's ability to earn a decent income, suitable to meet basic needs. Supporting and improving the earning ability of Vaughan residents should not be overlooked as an important area of social service. As described at the roundtable session, there is a strong desire in the local social service community to improve people's self sufficiency and encourage entrepreneurship. The City's ability to assist in this area may include implementing broader land use permissions for in-home businesses, designate more neighbourhood commercial areas and protect employment areas to ensure for a range of income generating opportunities for residents.

Recommendations for City Actions

Official Plan Recommendations

- As per Provincial direction in the *Growth Plan* and the housing policy that appears in the Draft Official Plan for the Region of York, establish a minimum requirement for 25 percent of new housing units in the City to be affordable.
- To reduce the stigma associated with affordable housing, encourage affordable housing to be integrated with market rate units, not developed in isolation.
- Develop incentives to be used in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre to encourage developers to create family-sized and affordable units.
- Encourage, where appropriate, infill development of a range of housing types including secondary suites, “granny flats,” basement suites, duplexes and laneway housing. Regulate these kinds of housing choices to ensure they are safe for residents.
- Create policies that require the tracking and reporting of tenure and type of new housing to Council on an annual basis to indicate if housing developments coming forward are providing an appropriate diversity of housing types.
- Implement broader land use permission for in-home businesses, designate more neighbourhood commercial areas and protect employment lands to ensure for a broad range of income generating opportunities for residents.

Strategic Actions

- Establish a centralized place or resource centre in multiple languages for people to access information about affordable housing choices.
- Establish a housing advisory board or a subcommittee of council to manage, develop and advocate for more affordable housing choices in the City.
- Identify appropriate locations and policies to permit larger homes to be converted to multi unit residential buildings.
- Develop partnerships with appropriate agencies to advance entrepreneurial opportunities to improve residents' earning power.

Physical and Mental Health

Facts and Trends

Physical and mental health services, the doctors, nurses and specialized practitioners that are visited for a variety of ailments and conditions, are among the most visible social services provided in Vaughan. Many people access physical health services in Vaughan and the demands on the health care system in the city are clear. The opening of the new Vaughan Community Health Centre at Jane and Rutherford in early 2009, and the recent announcement of a hospital site at Jane and Major Mackenzie, are both indications that the need for health services are strong and growing. As the population grows and ages in the future, the services provided to address physical and mental health issues in the city will need to grow along with it.

Needs related to physical health are strongly correlated to the overall health profile of a community. According to the Active Together report, 45 percent of the York Region population over the age of 18 is considered to be overweight to obese. This figure is in keeping with the figure for Vaughan, which, according to Public Interest, is also 45 percent of the adult population. Obesity and low levels of physical activity are conditions that are widely connected to the incidence of type 2 diabetes and heart disease. Vaughan has the second highest diabetes rate in the Central LHIN at 6.1 percent of the population (Public Interest Strategy & Communications, 2009). Along with these statistics comes a growing need for related health and doctor's services. As it is today, there are only 59 general physicians per 100,000 people as opposed to 72 average in the Central LHIN (Public Interest Strategy & Communications, 2009). The need for appropriate medical care and an adequate number of general physicians is compounded by the growing trends towards ageing, obesity, inactivity and the related health problems of Vaughan's citizenry.

Local Health Integration Networks are Provincially-created non-profit organizations responsible for the planning of health services in 14 different geographic regions of the province. The Central LHIN covers the majority of the geographic area of Vaughan.

In terms of mental health services, there is a shortage of appropriate care. According to statics from the Central LHIN, the south west York region (which encompasses most of Vaughan) has 42,880 people living with mental health issues and 1 in 9 people have serious mental health illnesses (Public Interest Strategy & Communications, 2009). In addition, Vaughan has a disproportionate amount of psychiatrists with only 4.5 available per 100,000 people where as the Central LHIN average is 9 per 100,000.

The need and importance of health services in Vaughan was clearly expressed in the public opinion survey. There was a great amount of awareness, use and importance attributed to general physicians and specialized medical care. By far, the greatest amount of reported use of services was for a general physician at 56 percent, whereas 18 percent of people reported using specialized medical services. General physicians and specialized medical services were also rated very highly in terms of net importance at 80 and 73 respectively. Of the people surveyed, 27 percent felt that Vaughan was underserved by general physicians and 22 percent reported that Vaughan was underserved in terms of specialized medical services.

The reported use and importance of mental health services was far lower, with four percent of people reporting using mental health services. While use was low, a need for additional service coverage was identified with 22 percent of people reporting that Vaughan was underserved in terms of mental health services.

Implications

It is clear that the demographic shift expected in Vaughan to a more aged population and the high obesity and diabetes rates in the city will have an impact on health services as the city grows. Connected to providing the health services that people need is providing the ability for people to get to those services on convenient reliable public transportation.

The need for health services is connected to a variety of factors, some of which are related to the very way in which the places we live are designed. Sedentary, unhealthy lifestyles are compounded by an urban form that makes it difficult to walk places, reach recreational spaces or access health care. Thoughtful city building and the development of complete, healthy communities can contribute to the prevention of future health care needs.

Needs for mental health services are also connected to a variety of other conditions, for instance there is a documented correlation between mental illness and poverty. According to the report "Poverty and Policy in Canada: Implications for Health and Quality of Life", "poverty and the material and social deprivation associated with it, is a primary cause of poor health among Canadians" (Raphael, 2007). Maintaining an adequate supply of mental health services will be important to Vaughan to ensure that as its population's socio-demographic profile shifts and changes the mental health needs of people are met.

Recommendations for City Actions

Official Plan Recommendations

- Through land use designations, permit health and wellness-related offices in mixed use buildings or retail plazas so that services can be better integrated into communities and more easily accessible.
- Encourage the use of urban design guidelines to plan healthy, walkable communities that are well connected to recreational trails, public spaces and amenities.
- Ensure the new hospital site develops as a comprehensive “campus of care,” planning for a broad range of health care and health promoting functions.

Strategic Actions

- Encourage clustering of health services and the development of a campus of health care services at the pre-existing health-care nodes of Jane and Rutherford and Jane and Major Mackenzie.
- Promote the establishment of health services at nodes or along corridors, locations that are easily accessible by transit.

3. Discussion

The social service needs of Vaughan are as diverse as its population. While each of the focus areas require individualized attention to understand issues, data and trends on a detailed level, when looking at the combined needs at a broader level, common threads emerge.

The following discussion is intended to distill the City actions recommended in this report and assist the City in advancing its thinking about how it can be involved in social service provision in the future.

In assessing the potential City actions described throughout Section 2, four main themes emerged:

1. Housing
2. Urban Design Controls and Land Use Permissions
3. Transportation, Mobility and Accessibility
4. Advocacy and Outreach

Housing

Throughout the study, data and trends related to housing needs were clearly apparent. The data collected for this study has made a case for creating housing choices to meet the needs of a diverse community. From seniors to large families, single parent households to new immigrants, housing choice is an important part of developing healthy, strong communities in Vaughan. A focus on creating a range of housing choices for residents may relieve the pressure on multi-family living arrangements or provide opportunities for those with low income to make better housing decisions. Housing, and specifically the provision of affordable, adequate housing choice, is a major area of social service improvement in Vaughan.

The City should consider implementing measures in its Official Plan to ensure the development of more affordable housing choices in the future, with a focus on affordable units, family-sized units and seniors-focused housing. The City should provide a diverse range of places for people to live and make an effort to make as much of that new housing affordable and accessible to future Vaughan residents as possible.

Urban Design Controls and Land Use Permissions

When considering long term planning, especially in a city like Vaughan that is not yet fully built out, it would be short-sighted not to consider the impact that targeted, urban design and land use policies can have on improving the quality of citizens' lives and affecting the ways in which people interact with social services. Decisions implemented about urban design and land use can help improve physical access to services. Policy that directs new services to locations well served by transit, and produces environments that are more conducive to walking and cycling, would create more opportunities to lead an active lifestyle, reducing the need for health-related services.

In addition, such policies would shape the design and use of land in new neighbourhoods to ensure that they provide a range of services, open space and housing choices for new residents. In addition, land use and urban design policies can help address the specific cultural needs of a population. Examples such as Peace Village (at Jane Street and Teston Road), a traditional subdivision designed for the Ahmadi community, illustrates how culturally-appropriate designs can help create community support. Peace Village was intentionally designed with homes that suit the space needs of the Ahmadi, and it was programmed to have easy, walkable access to the Mosque, a hub for both spiritual and social life.

Urban design and land use approaches to addressing social service issues are a long term investment, but one that is imperative for the City of Vaughan to treat as a priority as it develops its new Official Plan. Land use designations and secondary plans can be used to improve access to employment opportunities and to guide the location of social service uses on transit routes in specific areas of need. Modifications to land use designations are an important way for the City to impact social service delivery.

Transportation, Mobility and Accessibility

Changing and enhancing options for getting around the city could have a significant impact on people's ability to access social services and also provide a degree of independence for residents who have limited mobility or do not have ready access to a private automobile. Improvements to public transportation should focus on increasing ridership and value of service for people who need and use the service the most, including youth, new immigrants and seniors. While public transportation may not be a social service itself, it is a critical component of the quality of life in Vaughan. Without reliable, convenient and accessible public transportation, people are unable or unwilling to go to places where social services are being provided. From improving existing service on YRT or VIVA, to investigating opportunities for the shared use of school buses at off-peak hours, to providing local transportation for seniors, interesting opportunities exist to provide better transportation options to Vaughan's residents.

Advocacy and Outreach

Although the City of Vaughan is not the provider of many of the services discussed in this report – that responsibility in many cases falls to the Region of York and to independent agencies – the City should not shy away from being involved in the social health of its citizens. Vaughan can play a large role in defining the social service agenda in York Region through advocacy and outreach. As this report has indicated and comments from the roundtable confirmed, Vaughan and other York Region municipalities are chronically underfunded by the Province to assist in the delivery of social services. As one of the Province's fastest growing cities, Vaughan has a pressing need to provide for its citizens. Advocating for equitable funding from the Province is a key element to meeting these needs.

Vaughan can also advocate to the Region to ensure coordination and reinforcement of efforts to improve social services. For example, ensuring that new Regional service locations are situated along public transit lines, and convenient to the communities in most need, are decisions that the City should be involved in.

More directly at the City level, there is a great opportunity for the City to reach out into the community and enhance awareness of and engagement in social services through partnerships, particularly with schools. Schools play a unique role in the community, as they represent a common place where people from many backgrounds interact with one another and the society at large. To date there are already efforts underway in York Region to use the school setting as the common denominator for the delivery of specialized community programming.

For example, Together for Maple, a collaborative 'community planning table' developed by COMPASS (Community Partners with Schools), community leaders, the York Region District School Board, the York Region Catholic School board,

local service providers and stakeholders, is a prime example of an innovative approach to delivering services to a population with many needs. The goal of Together for Maple is to respond to the changing needs of youth and children in Maple. Often, the school is seen as the central hub for the location of a variety of student, family and community supports to achieve this goal. Programs range from "Families and Students Together", a program that brings families to schools to strengthen family and community relationships, to "Triple P Parenting Programs," delivered by social service agencies in partnerships with local schools.

As the Together for Maple example illustrates, school-based programming is beneficial in addressing specific needs focused in a certain geographic area. Since the school is a pre-established node in the community where such issues may be occurring, it is a natural place to interact with families to provide them with connections to programs and other supports. This approach has been recently supported by the Provincial government through their "school as hub" concept that appeared in the Early Learning Report of June 2009.

The City has already begun to engage with initiatives such as Together for Maple. The Vaughan Recreation and Culture Department is operating two literacy/ recreation camps as after-school community supports, and may want to investigate further partnership opportunities. Working with the strength and momentum of initiatives such as Together for Maple, it may be valuable for Vaughan to position itself as a leader in this kind of community development, as such a collaborative approach to social service delivery seems to be of growing interest to policy makers. As the Province's Early Learning Report and "school as hub" concept begins to gain traction, Vaughan could be an ideal pilot location for new Provincially-led programming.

An additional example of a school-related partnership that would reinforce the City's commitment to a number of factors affecting social service could be with

the Active and Safe Routes to School (ASRTS) program. Some schools in Vaughan already take part in ASRTS programs such as iWalk or the Walking School Bus. A City-school partnership to further the reach of these programs would reinforce the City's policies that encourage active transportation and healthy, walkable communities.

As a municipal government representing a diverse range of communities, Vaughan has taken many steps already to engage a wider audience and inspire people to become involved in their local governments. Extending the reach of programs like the Youth Cabinet, championing the Walking School Bus program, diversifying the offerings of the Department of Recreation and Culture, or becoming a pilot location for the Province's "school as hub" are all actions that the City can take to positively influence the social service profile of the City.

To formalize and centralize the City's advocacy and outreach efforts, the City should consider creating a full time staff position dedicated to coordinating, implementing and monitoring community outreach efforts. Such a position would encourage ongoing, constructive partnerships between the City and community partners and signal a clear dedication to improving social services in Vaughan.

Steps

The Social Services Study represents the first of many steps towards creating a comprehensive strategy to address social service needs in Vaughan. The City actions recommended in this report will be vetted by City staff and where appropriate, incorporated into new Official Plan policies. The remaining strategic action recommendations presented in this report provide the City with the basis for new ideas about how to engage in social service provision on a local level.

To move forward with the findings of this study, a further Phase II to the Social Services Study is recommended to be undertaken. The Part II study would investigate the viability of the recommendations for strategic action and develop an implementation strategy to define and establish what Vaughan's role in social service provision could be in the future.

Appendix: Compilation of Recommendations

Official Plan Recommendations

Children and Families

- Through land use and zoning designations, encourage the development of a wider range of housing types and tenure including rental and affordable housing that is suitable for families of all incomes.
- Modify land use permissions and zoning to permit small-scale day care uses in a wider range of locations in order to improve physical access to day care sites and make them more integral to community building.
- Through the planning process, designate areas for health and social services to be centrally located and well connected to transit, or embedded within community blocks.

Youth

- Develop and implement open space development guidelines, with an emphasis on creation of well-programmed public spaces.
- Encourage the development of smaller scale community recreation spaces within neighborhood blocks to provide places for youth to easily engage in programs within their neighborhoods.
- Promote alternative modes of transportation including active transportation and public transportation and encourage the creation of transit oriented developments in Vaughan.

Seniors

- Encourage the development of a range of housing types including seniors-targeted housing within existing communities, as infill projects or new developments.
- Establish a consistent, city-wide emphasis on the creation of walkable, accessible neighbourhood design.
- Promote alternative modes of transportation including active transportation and public transportation and encourage the creation of transit oriented developments in Vaughan.

New Immigrants

- Promote the development of public transportation and encourage the creation of transit oriented development.
- Through land use and zoning designations, encourage the development of a wider range of housing types and tenure including rental and affordable housing that is suitable for families of all incomes, both immigrant or non-immigrant.

Affordability Housing and Income

- As per Provincial direction in the *Growth Plan* and the housing policy that appears in the Draft Official Plan for the Region of York, establish a minimum requirement for 25 percent of new housing units in the City to be affordable.
- To reduce the stigma associated with affordable housing, encourage affordable housing to be integrated with market rate units, not developed in isolation.
- Develop incentives to be used in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre to encourage developers to create family-sized and affordable units.

- Encourage, where appropriate, infill development of a range of housing types including secondary suites, “granny flats,” basement suites, duplexes and laneway housing. Regulate these kinds of housing choices to ensure they are safe for residents.
- Create policies that require the tracking and reporting of tenure and type of new housing to Council on an annual basis to indicate if housing developments coming forward are providing an appropriate diversity of housing types.
- Implement broader land use permission for in-home businesses, designate more neighbourhood commercial areas and protect employment lands to ensure for a broad range of income generating opportunities for residents.

Physical and Mental Health

- Through land use designations, permit health and wellness-related offices in mixed use buildings or retail plazas so that services can be better integrated into communities and more easily accessible.
- Encourage the use of urban design guidelines to plan healthy, walkable communities that are well connected to recreational trails, public spaces and amenities.
- Ensure the new hospital site develops as a comprehensive “campus of care,” planning for a broad range of health care and health promoting functions.

Strategic Actions

Children and Families

- Promote the 'School as Hub' concept detailed in the Province of Ontario's Early Learning Report. Encourage schools to develop as a centralized location for "children's learning, care, health, culture, arts and recreation."
- Partner with and advocate for strengthening of existing school-based social service and child care programs within schools.
- Advocate for equitable funding from the Provincial government to support social services in Vaughan.

Youth

- Promote the 'School as Hub' concept detailed in the Province of Ontario's Early Learning Report. Encourage schools to develop as a centralized location for "children's learning, care, health, culture, arts and recreation."
- Advocate for the extension of the existing Youth Cabinet program into area schools to engage more youth in city-building activities.
- Advocate for improvements to transportation service in the city that encourage and improve youth ridership including mobile phone applications, text alerts for bus arrival times, and expansion of the existing VIVA program, "Youth On-Board".

Seniors

- Execute an accessibility audit of public buildings in Vaughan; develop an accessibility plan and design guidelines for new development; Raise the profile of the existing Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- Advocate for the provision of seniors-focused services in multiple languages, as well as targeted outreach to specific communities with high levels of immigrant seniors.
- Ensure the involvement of seniors in consultative processes that relate to their issues of interest.
- Develop partnerships with the school boards to investigate shared use of school busses during non-peak times to provide local transportation to seniors.

New Immigrants

- Advocate for geographically localized services in certain communities to address specific cultural needs.
- Coordinate with the Department of Recreation and Culture to include more diverse programming offerings at a variety of locations in the city. Establish relationships and contacts with community leaders, partner on events to show a City interest in diverse programming.
- Establish a Community Advisory Board to provide input into the design of public spaces that meet various cultural needs.
- Advocate and plan for improved transit service in areas with large immigrant populations. Undertake a study to understand specific travel patterns and assess need for new or improved transit service.
- Enhance existing relationships with school programs to connect with new immigrant families and provide them with connections to culturally appropriate programs and supports.

- Investigate the potential of providing preferred access to programs to new immigrants in order to better serve their needs.
- To increase the sense of inclusion and belonging, establish a Vaughan Orientation program for newcomers and new immigrants that provides a tour of the city and an overall introduction of the services and programs available to residents in the city.

Affordability Housing and Income

- Establish a centralized place or resource centre in multiple languages for people to access information about affordable housing choices.
- Establish a housing advisory board or a subcommittee of council to manage, develop and advocate for more affordable housing choices in the City.
- Identify appropriate locations and policies to permit larger homes to be converted to multi unit residential buildings.
- Develop partnerships with appropriate agencies to advance entrepreneurial opportunities to improve residents' earning power.

Physical and Mental Health

- Encourage clustering of health services and the development of a campus of health care services at the pre-existing health-care nodes of Jane and Rutherford and Jane and Major Mackenzie.
- Promote the establishment of health services at nodes or along corridors, locations that are easily accessible by transit.

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