

TO PROSPERITY: TORONTO POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY



MAYOR JOHN TORY



Dear residents of Toronto,

I serve as Mayor of this entire city, and it's my job to ensure that we invest in the well being of every resident, including the most vulnerable among us.

A snapshot has emerged in recent years of a city unfairly and unjustly divided by income, class and geography. In Toronto, there are 150,000 kids growing up in poverty – and 15 neighbourhoods with poverty rates 40 per cent or higher.

This cannot be allowed to continue. As a city, we must work to address these disparities.

When I took office, I appointed Councillor Pam McConnell as one of Toronto's deputy mayors with a specific focus on developing a poverty reduction strategy.

She has thrown herself into this important work, and I thank her, City staff, Council Standing Committees, Boards, the Community Advisory Committee and the thousands of Torontonians that participated in the development of this strategy.

TO Prosperity is the beginning of this process. We will not end poverty or bridge the divides in our city without hard work and meaningful collaboration. But I believe that acting on this strategy is the only way to live up to our values as Canadians and our commitment to build a prosperous and fair city for all.

The work has already begun. While this strategy was being developed, funding was allocated in the 2015 budget to undertake some immediate measures to address poverty in Toronto. These initiatives included:

- Expanding the Student Nutrition program up to 27 new schools;
- Launching a pilot program to assist single parents on Ontario Works to achieve meaningful employment;
- Children under 12 years of age riding the TTC for free;
- Doubling the number of employers participating with the City's Partnership to Advance Youth Employment (PAYE) to increase access to jobs for young people;
- Providing greater transportation opportunities for seniors to get to appointments, access services and participate in community events; and
- Expanding Youth Hubs at four Toronto Public Library sites for the after-school drop-in program to provide grade 7–10 students with free tutored help, workshops and other activities.

These investments help our most vulnerable residents as well as the health of our economy – and they are the right thing to do.

We will build upon this work with the launch of this long-term strategy, with the goal of making measurable strides toward poverty reduction in Toronto.

Together, we will address the neglect and isolation faced by residents in too many of our neighbourhoods. We will continue to tackle our unacceptable youth jobless rate. And we will build a strong, inclusive city of opportunity from Etobicoke to Scarborough and from North York to the waterfront.

I am the Mayor of the whole city, and I intend to live up to that obligation. This plan is a step in the right direction.

Mayor John Tory

I DREAM OF A TORONTO...

“that looks for every opportunity to help people to get on their feet. A city that actively looks to remove barriers and enhance opportunities.”

“that listens, respects, and reflects the voices of individuals with lived experience of poverty. That values evidence-based decision making. That questions whether decisions will increase or decrease poverty and income inequality.”

- Toronto residents



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46%**OF RECENT IMMIGRANTS LIVE
IN POVERTY****37%****OF FEMALE LONE PARENTS LIVE
IN POVERTY****33%****OF PEOPLE IN RACIALIZED
GROUPS LIVE IN POVERTY****30%****OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
LIVE IN POVERTY**

INTRODUCTION

One in four children and one in five adults live in poverty in Toronto.

Fearing eviction, walking to save a token, always choosing the cheapest and least nutritious food, telling government agencies the same information over and over again, and worrying that the opportunities enjoyed by other children will be denied to yours. That's what life is like for too many of us.

It hasn't always been like this. Back in the '70s, one in 10 adults were poor, not one in five; two in three neighbourhoods were middle income, not one in three; the majority of people looking for work qualified for employment insurance, not the minority; income supports assisted us in times of need, not food banks.

Toronto remains a prosperous and vibrant city, a global leader across a range of indicators, including livability. While the city still works, it no longer works for many of us.

It used to be that education led to jobs, jobs led to stability, and social supports allowed us to get back on our feet if a crisis struck. That path is broken.

Good jobs are increasingly hard to find. Almost half of Greater Toronto Area workers have temporary, contract, part-time jobs with variable hours, little stability, and no benefits.

Education remains a smart long-term investment, but it offers no immediate guarantees: almost one in four college graduates are working low-wage jobs.

Employment Insurance is less accessible. Ontario Works rates lost more than half of their value in the last 20 years. Child care is increasingly unaffordable.

At the same time, life in Toronto is getting more expensive every day. Housing, transit, and healthy food are costly even to middle-income families with good jobs,

never mind to people living on insecure low wages and eroding social supports.

The City of Toronto has been tackling these issues for many years. City strategies, programs, and services provide targeted supports to individuals, families, and neighbourhoods. Some of these initiatives are now best practices adopted by other cities.

We must continue to do the things that work, and do more of it.

But that is not enough. We must also try new strategies to ensure that the benefits of growth and prosperity are widely shared – so that everyone can live in dignity.

TO Prosperity sets a vision for our city, lays out objectives for our long-term fight against poverty, and proposes ways to act on it now.

an inclusive strategy

An effective strategy to address poverty cannot be drafted behind closed doors. It must be written where poverty is real with the people it hurts.

TO Prosperity is based on an inclusive and collaborative process. People in all four corners of the city shared their stories, visions, and solutions. Most significantly, residents with lived

101
COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

10
DAYS OF DIALOGUE

635
COMPLETED ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRES

experience told us how to make this strategy a truly effective one.

While acknowledging the roles and responsibilities of other orders of government, this broad consultation process focused on what the City and its local partners can and should do to overcome growing poverty.

We can and should address people's immediate needs. It is unacceptable that in a city as prosperous as Toronto people cannot meet their basic needs for food, clothing, shelter, and transportation. For people living in poverty, the long term is too far off.

We can and should support people to transition out of poverty. Too many residents find themselves persistently vulnerable to poverty, frequently flowing in and out of it, with few prospects of achieving a better, more stable life.

We can and should change the systems that make people poor in the first place.

Residents spoke. We listened. Together we crafted this strategy.



IN PURSUIT OF ETERNAL COMFORT

This bus has seen much more than you could
ever believe,
And word to Davis more Miles than one should ever
achieve.

The young lady now runs because if she's to succeed
She has to make the 5:30, to most that's hella early.

But you gotta pay back Lady OSAP OSAP.

They just cut off her phone you didn't know that,
know that.

Had to live, so her loans she would blow that, blow
that.

Thinking about school, she wishes she didn't go back,
go back.

After all she did it for the peace of mind,
now the piece of my

Employment would be the only way she gets hers,
Figured it would make life easy,

Figured it would make life breezy,

And she was only half right because now they shut
off her heat

And she genuinely understands what it is like to live
life breezy.

But what's a young girl to do?

Nobody ever came in

And changed a game over night.

So she continues to play,

In pursuit of eternal comfort

She continues to pray.

by Simon Yohannes

notice to readers

This document was developed with creative
contributions from Torontonians, which are intended to
show readers what it is like to live in poverty.

POVERTY IN TORONTO – THREE WORRYING TRENDS

1. the struggle to make ends meet

As housing, food, energy and other costs have risen steadily over the past decade, it has become even more difficult for low income residents to make ends meet.

Over the past six years, the cost of child care rose by 30%, public transit became 36% more expensive, and rents increased by 13%. In 2014, for the sixth consecutive year, GTA food banks had over one million visits, with an increase of nearly 40% in Toronto's inner suburbs since 2008.ⁱ

For a family of four to meet basic expenses of rent, food, child care, transportation, and clothing, both parents need to work full-time at \$18/hour, which is considerably higher than the current minimum wage.ⁱⁱ

2. the broken pathways

Toronto's labour market is increasingly polarized between high and low quality jobs, while social and income supports are becoming more difficult to access.

The most obvious marker of these changes is the shift from full-time continuous employment to precarious employment with limited job security and few, if any, benefits. In 1984, only 11% of Toronto's jobs were part-time while in 2014, the number had more than doubled to 23%.ⁱⁱⁱ At the same time, changes made to the number of hours needed to qualify for Employment Insurance have restricted access to it: only 20% of unemployed Toronto workers qualify.^{iv} Finally, Ontario Works rates have lost more than half of their value since the mid-1990s, when they were cut by 21%.

Among previous generations, there was a broad and deeply held consensus that if people invested in their education they would be sure to get ahead, and that finding a job would lift them out of poverty. The polarization of the labour market means that for too many Torontonians these prospects no longer hold true.

3. poverty is systemic

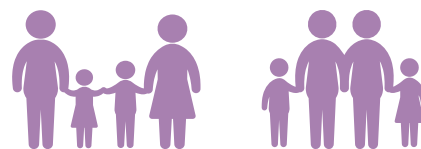
There are much higher levels of poverty and a much greater risk of poverty among specific

population groups and neighbourhoods. In Toronto, poverty is gendered, racialized, and geographically concentrated.

Recent immigrants (46%), Aboriginal people (37%), female lone parents (37%), members of racialized groups (33%), and people with disabilities (30%), have higher rates of poverty than the general Toronto population.^v While existing data sources are not yet disaggregated to include other communities such as the transgender community and consumer survivors, qualitative evidence points to significant challenges with poverty as well.

Between 1970 and 2005, the percentage of low-income neighbourhoods grew from 19% to 53%, middle income neighbourhoods decreased from 66% to 29%, and high-income neighbourhoods grew from 15% to 19%.^{vi}

These trends are making Toronto a city of sharp and undesirable contrasts. In response, TO Prosperity: Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy sets a bold vision and three objectives for addressing poverty in Toronto.



**FOR A FAMILY OF FOUR TO
MEET BASIC EXPENSES,
BOTH PARENTS NEED TO WORK
FULL TIME AT \$18/HOUR**

VISION

Toronto will: address the issues

create solutions

drive systemic change

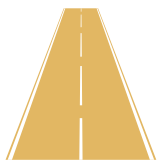
By 2035, Toronto is a city with opportunities for all: a leader in the collective pursuit of justice, fairness and equity. We want to be renowned as a city where everyone has access to good jobs, adequate income, stable housing, affordable transportation, nutritious food, and supportive services.

TO Prosperity identifies three complementary, overarching objectives that inform efforts to build a prosperous and inclusive city:



address immediate needs

Growing numbers of Torontonians are living in poverty. The current social support system does not address many of their basic needs for housing, food, childcare, healthcare, and transportation. Actions that address immediate needs will focus on ensuring that essential services are well funded, coordinated, and meet the immediate needs of those living in poverty.



create pathways to prosperity

The increasingly high cost of living in Toronto, coupled with the scarcity of quality jobs, means that many Torontonians are persistently vulnerable to poverty, with limited prospects of achieving a more stable life. Actions that create pathways to prosperity will focus on improving the quality of jobs in the city, attracting investments to low-income areas, and ensuring that City programs and services are integrated, client-centered, and focused on early intervention.



drive systemic change

Torontonians do not choose to be poor: social, economic, and financial policies have led to the racialization, feminization and geographic concentration of poverty. People with disabilities, Aboriginal people, and newcomers are also overrepresented among the city's poor. Over time, these policy choices have made Toronto the most unequal city in Canada. The City and its partners can do things differently. Governments can make ongoing choices that reduce poverty. Actions that drive systemic change will focus on creating an accountable and participatory government wherein reducing poverty and inequality is an integral part of day-to-day business.

It takes a lot of work and commitment to build a prosperous and inclusive city. In some areas, the City of Toronto has the tools, resources, and authority to lead the way. In other areas, the City must collaborate with other orders of government, the private sector, labour, and community organizations to counter poverty, promote inclusive economic growth, and ensure community development. A later section of this document (Moving to Action) describes the Implementation and Accountability Structure that will coordinate sustained, effective, and integrated poverty reduction actions.

HOUSING STABILITY

Stable housing enables people to build a future. Once established in a community, people can pursue what is important for them, whether it is education, employment, or services. Children can stay in the same school, learn the ins and outs of their local park, and grow up with friends who will support them for many years to come.

While Toronto is one of North America's fastest growing cities, with a booming private housing sector, there is a severe shortage of affordable housing.

Individuals and families with low income cannot afford safe, secure, and adequate housing without sacrificing basic needs

such as food, clothing, and transportation. Aging rental units are often in a poor state of repair, which negatively impacts people's health and quality of life.

As market rents continue to rise, moving out of social housing becomes an unachievable dream. Fewer people moving out creates longer waiting lists. Shelter use stays high as people cannot move into social housing and there is a limited supply of transitional housing.

Toronto needs a lot more quality affordable housing.

Do we want to fund the high cost of homelessness (emergency shelters, hospitals, jails) or the lower cost of stable housing?



address immediate needs

1. RECOMMENDATION:

Improve the quality of all affordable housing

PRELIMINARY INDICATOR:

CMHC Adequacy Standard:

percentage of city housing that, based on surveyed occupants, does not require repairs to defective plumbing, or electrical wiring, or structural repairs to walls, floors or ceilings

2015–2018 TERM ACTION PLAN:

- 1.1 Increase investments in repairs to existing social housing
- 1.2 Strengthen the enforcement of minimum housing standards
- 1.3 Expand incentive programs for private landlords and low-income homeowners to improve the quality and energy efficiency of affordable homes through essential health, safety and accessibility repairs and modifications
- 1.4 Increase support and uptake of building energy retrofitting programs that lower hydro costs in affordable units
- 1.5 Develop a rooming house policy framework and an effective enforcement strategy



90,000

**HOUSEHOLDS ON THE
SOCIAL HOUSING WAIT LIST**

+16,000

**PEOPLE USED SHELTERS
IN 2014**

2. RECOMMENDATION:

Assist low-income individuals and families to secure and maintain affordable housing

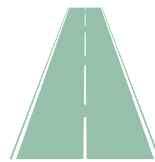
PRELIMINARY INDICATOR:

Ontario Housing Measure:

percentage of households, with children under 18, with incomes below 40 per cent of the national median household income, paying more than 40 per cent of their income on housing

2015–2018 TERM ACTION PLAN:

- 2.1 Provide more housing allowances
- 2.2 Develop more integrated housing stabilization supports for people discharged from other service systems and in crisis situations
- 2.3 Advocate for more flexible provincial funding rules to provide housing subsidy options that better meet local housing needs



create pathways to prosperity

3. RECOMMENDATION:

Increase the supply of affordable housing

PRELIMINARY INDICATOR:

Number of **Affordable Rental and Ownership Homes Completed** with federal, provincial and city investments, in partnership with private and non-profit developers

2015–2018 TERM ACTION PLAN:

- 3.1 Update and expand the City's menu of funding and other incentives for the development of new affordable rental and ownership housing
- 3.2 Affirm affordable housing as a priority community benefit for any development applications where contributions are proposed pursuant to Section 37 of the Planning Act

- 3.3 Advocate for legislative amendments to enable municipalities to enact inclusionary zoning powers
- 3.4 Seek opportunities to provide affordable housing in existing or proposed public buildings
- 3.5 Provide surplus government land for new affordable housing development, incorporate affordable housing in developments on government lands, or dedicate a percentage of the net proceeds from the land sales to affordable housing
- 3.6 Develop strategies to maintain, sustain and leverage Toronto's social housing assets to provide affordable housing over the long term





Toronto was a pioneer in implementing a Housing First approach that is now standard practice across North America.

Toronto had one of the first Rent Banks in North America and in 2014 it helped 741 individuals and families stay housed.

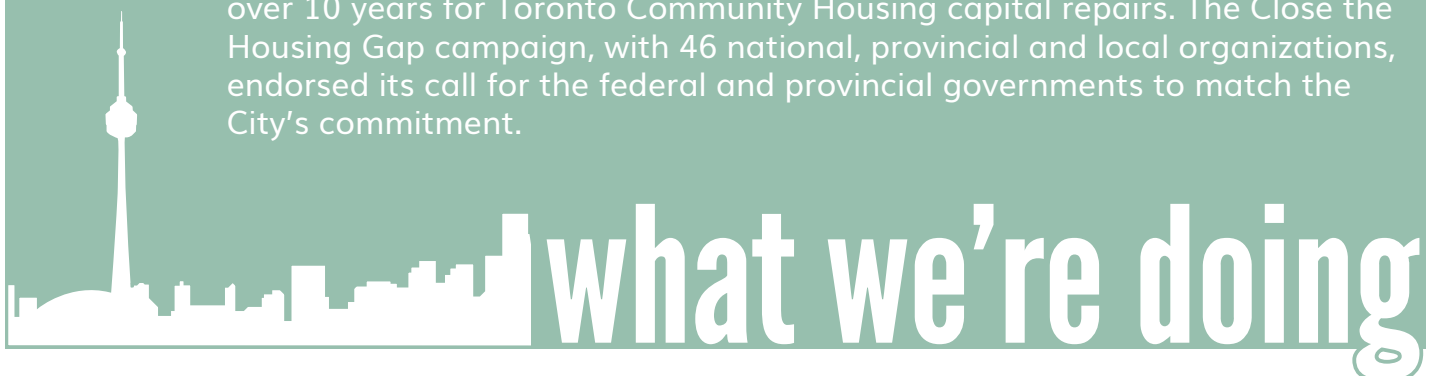
The Homemakers and Nurses Services Program provides services such as light housekeeping, shopping and meal preparation to more than 2,600 low-income individuals who need assistance with daily living activities to help them stay in their homes.

Toronto Renovates will provide \$5 million for the repair of rooming houses in 2015/16.

To date, 655 affordable homes have been built on surplus City lands.

In 2014, through the implementation of the City's Official Plan Housing and Rental Protection policies, the construction of 140 affordable rental housing units was secured, in addition to the replacement of 157 units slated for demolition through the redevelopment process.

The Putting People First report launched a City commitment of \$865 million over 10 years for Toronto Community Housing capital repairs. The Close the Housing Gap campaign, with 46 national, provincial and local organizations, endorsed its call for the federal and provincial governments to match the City's commitment.



HOUSING

Everyone values their home. It's your sanctuary, a safe space. You should be proud of your living situation, not embarrassed or feel burdened by the conditions you live in.

I personally live in a private building that looks great on the outside. However, as you walk inside you'll soon find out it's anything but nice. The elevators are always broken which makes it hard to get to work on time, not to mention how terrifying it is for my four-year-old daughter.

When I visit other communities, it's hard not to notice the difference. The grass is well kept, the paint is fresh and the buildings are well maintained. It makes me wonder why my building doesn't look like theirs. Is it because my community is usually on the news? Is it because nobody cares? Does that mean we don't deserve a healthy living environment?

It would be nice to see my community cherished like others I see. Maybe if the landlord or head office showed pride in their tenants living environment, the tenants would take better care of the building and feel happy to be residents.

Another issue I feel burdened by is the cost of living. Rent is extremely high even for a one bedroom. Not to mention the lack of space. It's worse if you are on Ontario Works or social assistance, your whole cheque goes towards your rent, and if you're lucky, maybe you're left with 100 dollars for the month – which isn't much for groceries and other bills.

It's a struggle month to month, one that you can never get used to.

by Khadiija Sayaadi

SERVICE ACCESS

Cities provide many vital services to their residents. These services must be provided in the right amount, so people's basic needs are met. They should be widely promoted, so everyone knows about them. They should be easy to access, so everyone can participate.

In Toronto, many City services make the lives of residents easier, safer, and more enjoyable. However, not all residents find the services they need when they need them. Waiting lists are common, and in some cases, unacceptably long. Services can also be difficult to navigate — with

too many forms, calls, and visits required. In some neighbourhoods, services are not available at all.

The availability of services depends on budgets, but also on innovation. New ways of working help cities to provide residents more and better services.

Governments everywhere are looking at creative ways to improve services, using new technologies and new delivery models.

On both fronts, the City can do more to make services available, effective, and to meet existing and emerging needs.

Are we providing the services people need or the services easiest for us to provide?



address immediate needs

4. RECOMMENDATION:

Increase service access and availability

PRELIMINARY INDICATORS:

Ratio, by neighbourhood, of individuals experiencing low income to the number of community service listings in the 211toronto.ca database

Percentage of City services rated as good or excellent in the annual City-wide Customer Service Satisfaction Survey

2015–2018 TERM ACTION PLAN:

- 4.1 Expand digital access and literacy to ensure residents can effectively access programs and services online
- 4.2 Ensure user fees for social and community services do not create barriers for low-income users
- 4.3 Revise program registration, outreach and delivery to ensure services are accessible to vulnerable residents
- 4.4 Integrate health system and mental health services with other City programs and services in accessible community locations
- 4.5 Expand dental care for low-income seniors and adults
- 4.6 Increase access to financial literacy and advocacy tools that support people to achieve financial stability
- 4.7 Ensure that homelessness and housing support services meet the diverse needs of low-income Torontonians
- 4.8 Advocate for the expansion of culturally appropriate mental health services



16,802

**CHILDREN ON WAITLIST FOR
CHILD-CARE FEE SUBSIDIES**

19%

**OF CHILDREN AGED 1–12
HAVE ACCESS TO
LICENSED CHILD CARE**

Baby has to eat.
Mama has to work.
Either way she has to find a way
to make it work.

Daddy's back home,
working oil and gas,
We see him every couple months,
if his work is fast.

But back to reality,
this city we live in.
Sometimes I ask my Mama what's
the real cost of living?

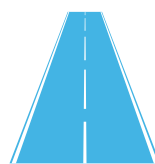
I'm 9 years old,
4th grade to be exact.
The soldier when daddy's gone,
I have to watch my Mama's back.

Sometimes I wish I were older
So I could watch my sister at home.
Mama wouldn't have to call in sick
just so we weren't alone.

See the daycares are pretty packed
Around the place we live
And the last thing Mama wants to do
is leave her kids
With a stranger or a babysitter far from
where we live.

Mentally, Mama goes through a lot:
balancing her children, work and
maintaining a family. It is not easy
for her. I always wish she could get
help with relieving stress and anxiety.
When life gets rough, Mama needs
someone to talk to. There are never
any mental health services around our
neighborhood, or at least none that I
know of. When you don't have much, you
are left to fend for yourself.

By Funmilola Lawson



create pathways to prosperity

5. RECOMMENDATION:

Improve access to high quality programs
for children and youth

PRELIMINARY INDICATOR:

Percentage of children aged 0–12
in licensed child care

2015–2018 TERM ACTION PLAN:

- 5.1 Increase the City's tax base
contribution to funding child care
fee subsidies
- 5.2 Increase the number of licensed
and subsidized child care spaces
- 5.3 Support growth in the number of
high-quality, out-of-school-time
programs for children and youth
- 5.4 Advocate to the provincial and
federal governments for increased
support and funding for child care

34,963 children from 24,516 families received child-care fee subsidies in 2014.

40,000 residents with low incomes had access to recreation programs through the Welcome Policy in 2013.

The Toronto Challenge is a 5k run and walk in which participating non-profit community agencies raise funds to support local senior programs and services.

Libraries have after-school clubs and youth hubs where school-aged children and youth can connect and learn in a safe and welcoming environment.

Toronto is promoting access to library services to children and teens in Neighbourhood Improvement Areas by forgiving fines and giving them a fresh start.

Libraries offer free Ready For Reading programs that develop early literacy skills in babies, toddlers and preschoolers. Attendance totalled 288,000 in 2014.

The Sun Life Financial Museum + Arts Pass (MAP), available through Library branches, allows families (2 adults & up to 5 children) to explore Toronto's 18 best museums and art galleries for free.

Public Health nurses and family home visitors make 45,000 home visits to vulnerable parents with young children each year.



TRANSIT EQUITY



36%

TTC FARE INCREASE IN
THE LAST SIX YEARS



TRANSIT IN THE DOWNTOWN
CORE IS THREE TIMES BETTER
THAN IN THE INNER SUBURBS

How 'public' is our
transit system if it is not
reliable or affordable to
those who most need to
access it?

An affordable and reliable public transit system connects people to jobs, services, and civic life. It takes residents to opportunities and brings opportunities to neighbourhoods.

In Toronto, living downtown is extremely expensive. Low-income families and individuals are more likely to live in the inner suburbs, which are designed for cars.

Low-income people in these areas depend on transit to get to work. Jobs are often low-paying shift work with irregular schedules that don't always match transit availability. High fares require people to spend a significant portion of their earnings on getting to and from work. Unreliable bus services require them to spend even more time commuting, or risk losing their jobs.

Low-income parents rely on transit to provide for their children. If they can't afford monthly passes on the first day of the month, they use tokens for necessary errands such as picking up a child from daycare, visiting the doctor, and going to the store that sells fresh food. Fare costs add up quickly. Too soon in the month parents start making choices that they should not have to make.

To unite Toronto, public transit needs to be affordable and available for those who most need it.



address immediate needs

6. RECOMMENDATION:

Make transit more affordable for low-income residents

PRELIMINARY INDICATOR:

Cost of monthly transit pass as a per cent of monthly minimum wage income

2015–2018 TERM ACTION PLAN:

- 6.1 Children 12 and under ride free
- 6.2 Ensure the roll-out of the new Presto Pass technology includes a fare-gear-to-income capacity
- 6.3 Evaluate a demand model that includes fare-gear-to-income criteria
- 6.4 Comply with Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act's requirement that all stations be fully accessible by 2025



create pathways to prosperity

7. RECOMMENDATION:

Improve transit services in the inner suburbs

PRELIMINARY INDICATOR:

Transit Connectivity Score:

number of stops within 500 metres of the centre of a Census block, and how often a bus, subway, or street car stops there in a specific hour

2015–2018 TERM ACTION PLAN:

- 7.1 Work with the Province to harmonize service and fares across public transit systems in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area
- 7.2 Restore previous service cuts that disproportionately impact the inner suburbs where demand warrants
- 7.3 Increase reliability across bus, subway, and LRT modes
- 7.4 Consider the needs of low-income neighbourhoods and inner suburbs in capital and service planning

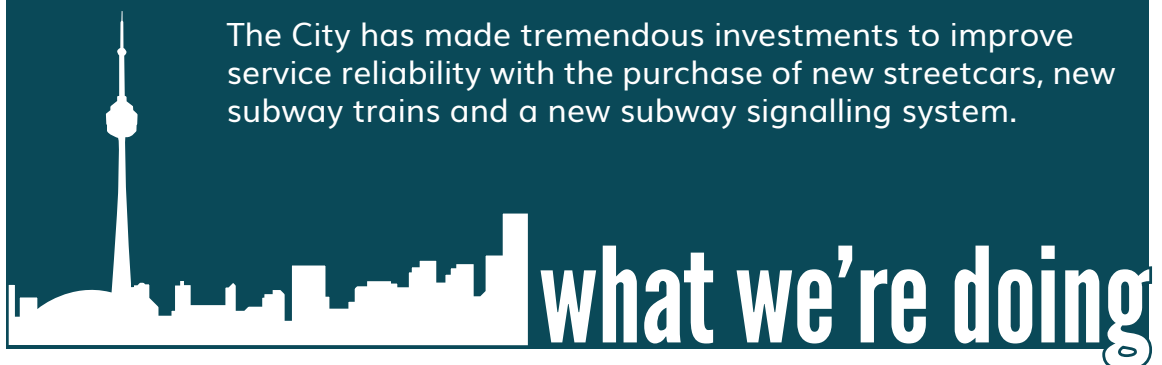
Kids 12 and under now ride free on the TTC. This was the first big new City commitment to poverty reduction in 2015.

The TTC service cuts from 2011 have been restored.

If you buy an annual transit pass, you pay the equivalent of 11 monthly passes.

Transit passes are more affordable than tokens and can be claimed against income taxes.

The City has made tremendous investments to improve service reliability with the purchase of new streetcars, new subway trains and a new subway signalling system.



A photograph of a man in a striped shirt and white cap working at a food stall. The stall is filled with various food items, including what appears to be fried noodles and fresh produce like avocados and oranges. Other people are visible in the background, suggesting a busy outdoor market setting.

FOOD ACCESS

In our incredibly diverse city, food helps to distinguish and unify us. Nutritious food, however prepared, is what makes our children healthy, adults vigorous, and our communities vibrant.

However, when knitting together a life with precarious work and low wages, nutritious food is hard to obtain. Low-income neighbourhoods often lack grocery stores with fresh produce.

When quality food is available, chances are it is expensive. Food banks have limited, if any, fresh food. Setting up community gardens where people can grow fruits and vegetables is too complicated, with many forms to fill out.

Torontonians, especially in many low-income communities, need better access to affordable, nutritious food.

In a wealthy city like Toronto, why do food deserts exist and many children lack enough food to meet their potential?



address immediate needs

8. RECOMMENDATION:

Eliminate hunger

PRELIMINARY INDICATOR:

Household Food Security Survey Module, Canadian Community Health Survey: percentage of households who self-report uncertain, insufficient or inadequate food access, availability and intake due to limited financial resources

2015–2018 TERM ACTION PLAN:

8.1 Expand student nutrition programs in collaboration with school boards, community agencies and other orders of government

8.2 Develop mechanisms that make it easy and cost-effective for public sector and community organizations to procure healthy food

8.3 Expand provision of nutritious food in City-run and supported programs



1,040,000

VISITS TO FOOD BANKS PER YEAR IN THE GTA

38%

INCREASE IN VISITS TO FOOD BANKS IN THE INNER SUBURBS SINCE 2008

AFFORDABLE FOOD

Poverty, to me, is a crime.

Poverty is an illness that needs to be abolished. Poverty, to me, is not being able to afford the necessities in life.

Poverty is not being able to focus in school most mornings because you haven't had a healthy breakfast. You are also starving at the lunch table. I remember those days like it was yesterday because it was quite literally yesterday. I was at lunch one time and had to pretend I was fasting while my friends chowed down on their sandwiches because of pride.

Poverty for me was watching my parent's struggle to put food on the table. My mother and father both work menial jobs to try and secure a better life for us. Poverty is eating fast food because there isn't a farmer's market anywhere close to where I live.

Poverty is violent. It kills like a bullet through the head, one shot and that's it. Poverty is eating chicken wings every single day until your days all become the same and you ask, "What are we having today, Mom?" Her reply, "Chicken wings".

Poverty is having low self-confidence because when you're walking through the halls at school and all the kids are making fun of you. Poverty is breaking down and crying in a little corner near the stairwell.

by Abdi Mohamed



create pathways to prosperity

9. RECOMMENDATION:

Increase access to affordable, nutritious and culturally appropriate food

PRELIMINARY INDICATOR:

Modified Food Retail Environment Index: ratio of healthier to less healthy food store locations within a 1 kilometre walking distance for each city block

2015–2018 TERM ACTION PLAN:

- 9.1 Support innovative business models that help retailers sell healthier food in underserved communities
- 9.2 Establish enabling policies and processes to facilitate food initiatives on City land and in City facilities
- 9.3 Ensure rules related to commercial food production, preparation and sales are clear and accessible
- 9.4 Remove barriers to expand urban agriculture on government lands
- 9.5 Empower residents with food skills and information
- 9.6 Invest in community-based food infrastructure that increases access to affordable, nutritious and culturally appropriate food

There are 40 farmers' markets in Toronto.

The City of Toronto supports Meals On Wheels by preparing 2,400 meals per week distributed from five sites.

In 2014, the Youth Into Food Processing pilot provided training to 50 unemployed post-secondary graduates, 75% of whom found a permanent job.

A new e-commerce platform (foodreach.ca) enables communities and agencies to combine their purchasing power and to buy wholesale nutritious food with on-demand delivery.

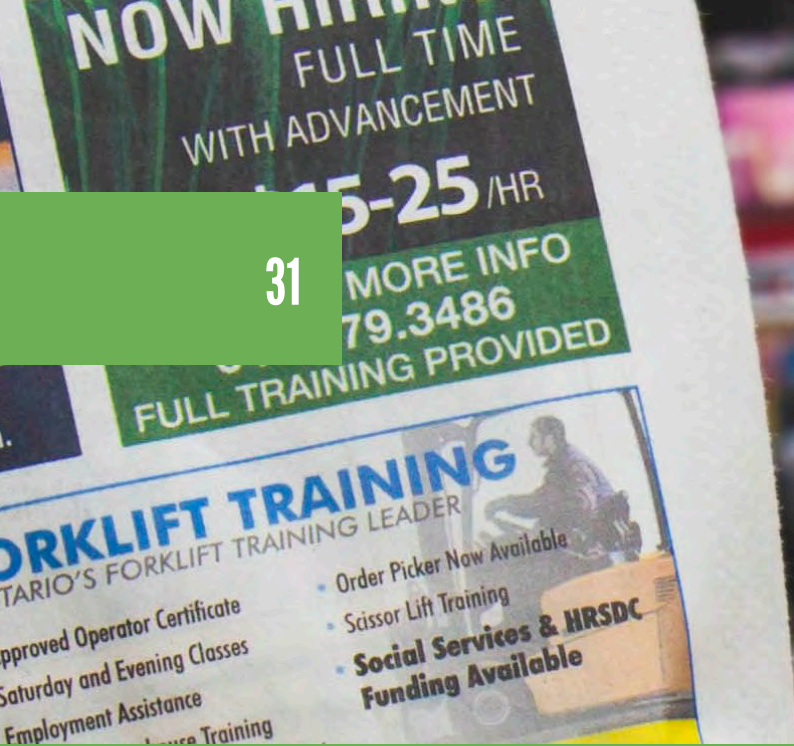
A new mobile market will sell high-quality fresh produce at affordable prices through a retrofitted TTC bus in communities underserved by supermarkets.

Toronto's Peer Nutrition program provides nutrition education in 25 different languages to 2,000 families with young children each year.

The City endorses GrowTO, an urban agriculture action plan that, by working with community agencies, supports access to quality food through agricultural activities that are affordable, sustainable and educational.



what we're doing



QUALITY JOBS & LIVABLE INCOMES

A good job is the best path out of poverty. It provides the income and stability required to meet current needs and build a prosperous future. As Canada's major economic engine, Toronto attracts skilled workers from everywhere in the country and the world.

However, over the past 20 years, job quality in Toronto has increasingly declined, with full-time, well-paid jobs replaced by jobs with lower wages and few, if any, benefits. The disappearance of 'mid-level' jobs has made it harder to move up from entry level jobs.

The earnings of many residents do not keep up with the cost of living. In Toronto, the minimum wage does not cover basic necessities — it is far from being a living wage. For those unable to find work, income supports such as Employment Insurance and social assistance have been dramatically reduced, and many residents who need them are now ineligible.

Toronto cannot achieve its vision of being an equitable and inclusive city while so many residents are unable to find quality jobs. Moving forward, Toronto needs good jobs and adequate income supports.

How can a city be prosperous without quality jobs and livable incomes?



address immediate needs

10. RECOMMENDATION:

Improve the quality of and access to income supports

PRELIMINARY INDICATORS:

Average length of time Ontario Works recipients require assistance before finding employment

Ratio of social assistance rates to the cost of a nutritious food basket, adjusted to family size

2015–2018 TERM ACTION PLAN:

- 10.1 Better ensure income supports and services respond to and meet vulnerable residents needs
- 10.2 Advocate to the Ontario government to raise social assistance rates

- 10.3 Improve health benefits, including dental services, drug benefits, and eye glasses to those transitioning off Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program into stable employment
- 10.4 Better assist low-income and vulnerable residents to access child care spaces and fee subsidies



43%
OF WORKERS ARE
PRECARIOUSLY EMPLOYED

20%
OF UNEMPLOYED TORONTO
RESIDENTS QUALIFY FOR
EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

11. RECOMMENDATION:

Create employment opportunities for low-income groups with high unemployment rates

PRELIMINARY INDICATOR:

Percentage of youth and young adults who are **Not in Education, Employment or Training** (NEET)

2015–2018 TERM ACTION PLAN:

- 11.1 Work with the private and public sectors to create effective paths to good careers for low-income youth
- 11.2 Remove barriers that limit employment opportunities for people with experience in the justice system
- 11.3 Incubate flexible child care models that align with the current labour market reality



create pathways to prosperity

12. RECOMMENDATION:

Improve the quality of jobs

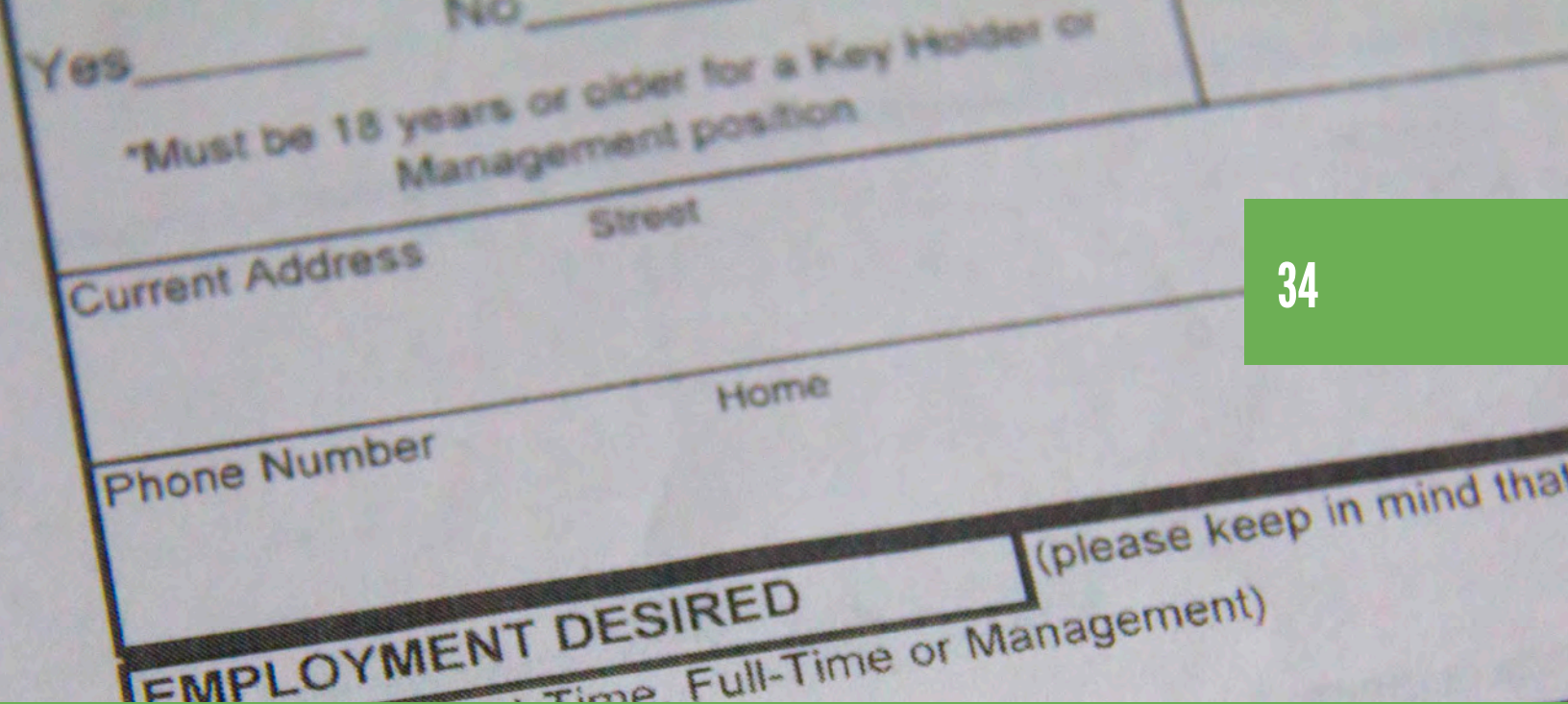
PRELIMINARY INDICATORS:

Percentage of jobs paying the living wage

Percentage of jobs that are full-time, permanent jobs

2015–2018 TERM ACTION PLAN:

- 12.1 Champion a living wage standard across Toronto
- 12.2 Give preference to vendors providing goods and services to the City who pay a living wage
- 12.3 Support provincial effort to strengthen employment standards
- 12.4 Develop a job quality assessment tool, and apply it to City jobs, City contractor jobs, and procurement processes



BANKRUPT DREAMS

Fortune's daughter's socks were shadowed with holes and I hated staring into them. But I couldn't avoid it either. Those shadow socks filled me with an emptiness I couldn't run away from. Her socks were yellow, due to the mere fact that nothing in our apartment stays white. Everything stains. Everything shades. Everything becomes dull.

I've still kept her photo. Fortune's photo. In my clock pendant that her old man gave me, years before I met her. He had an obsession with clocks. He didn't have sofas or chairs. Just a bed and tower clocks. He was one of the three people I knew with extraordinary abilities. He could look up at the sky, close his eyes and tell the exact time, down to the minute. His gift was passed to Fortune. She eventually learned to become obsessed with money like her father was with time.

The first time I met Fortune's old man I had three dollars left to my name. I was

trying to find my mum. I just wanted to find her before someone from the neighbourhood did. Or the cops. She was addicted to heroin and running away. In high school, that's how I got into track. I was the fastest because when I ran, I wasn't running towards the finish line. I was running away. Away from the holes in my wallet. Away from my mum and her needles.

From across the street, I could see him take off his coat and leave it by her side. By the time I caught up, he had already begun walking away.

Mum put the coat on and rested on the concrete in the fetal position. I called him back to say thank you. He shook my hand and with his other one gave me an envelope. Told me to take care of her. I didn't open the envelope 'til I got home. Five one hundred dollar bills. From a complete stranger. First thing I bought the next morning was groceries and clean socks.

by Faduma Mohamed

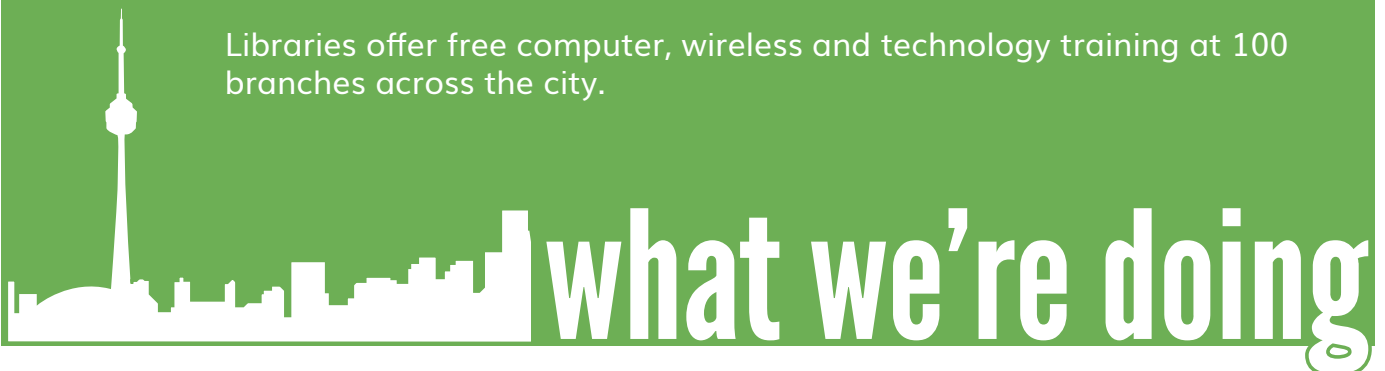


The City supports people moving from Ontario Works to work by offering extended health benefits for up to one year.

Toronto's banking sector is a key participant in the Partnership to Advance Youth Employment program and sector leaders are working to broaden the program's reach to other segments of the industry, such as insurance and asset servicing.

Libraries provide access to market research and business start-up advice through the Entrepreneur in Residence, Business Inc. and other programs. Attendance topped 16,000 at business- and employment-related programs last year.

Libraries offer free computer, wireless and technology training at 100 branches across the city.



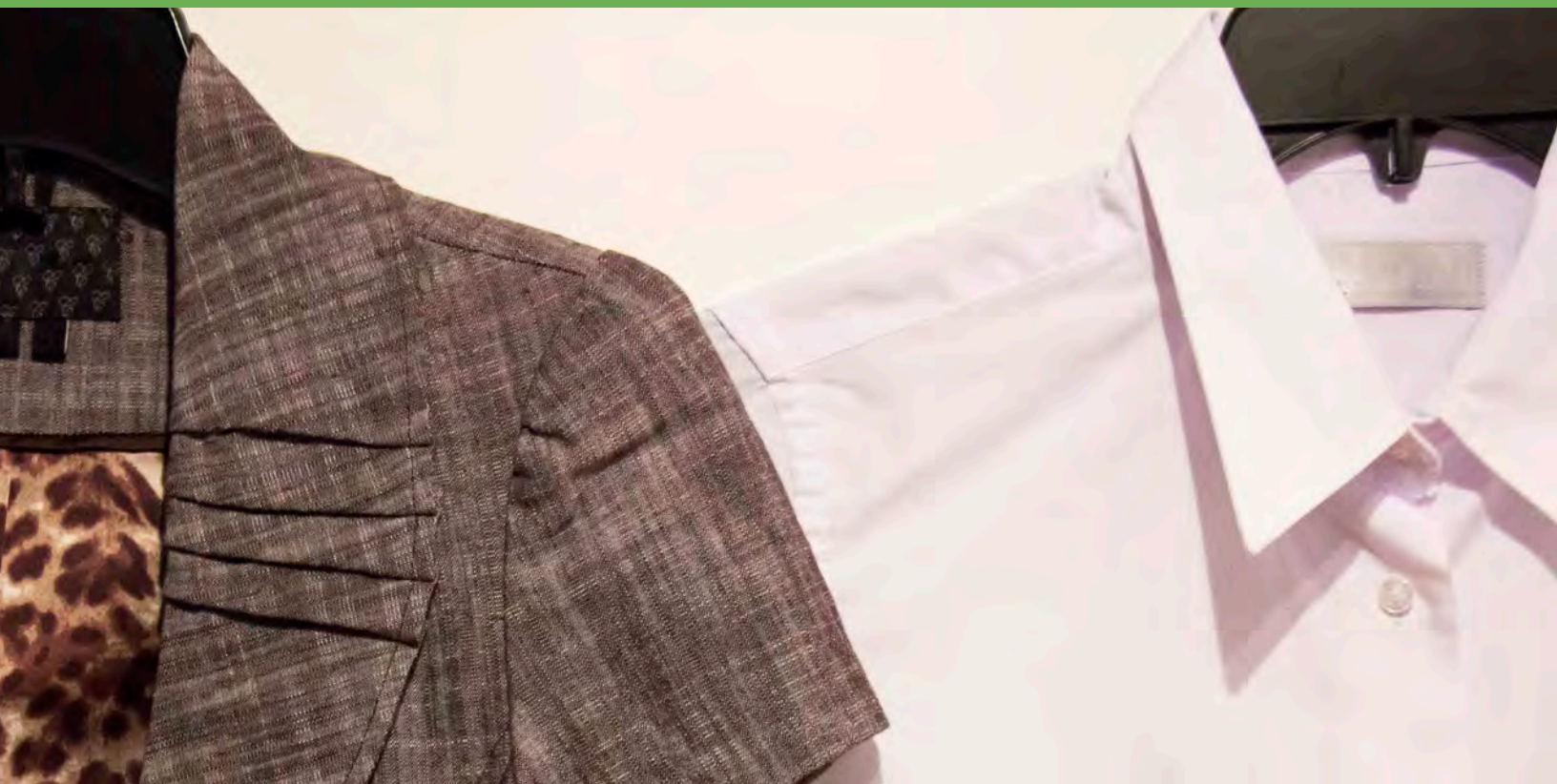
THE UNFAIR INTERVIEW

Calvin Dubson, a 25-year-old Hispanic man is getting ready for his job interview. Calvin applied to a clothing store that was looking to hire somebody that has experience as a supervisor. Calvin previously worked as a supervisor at a clothing store for two years until another company bought it out. Calvin has no criminal record and has a diploma in business management. The same day he handed in a resumé, he received a phone call from the manager, telling Calvin that he wants to meet him because he looks like the perfect match for the job.

As Calvin arrives to the store, he finds and approaches the manager. The manager says he's not interested in donations. Calvin says no, and explains that he is the man that applied for the supervisor position. The manager looks at Calvin with disgust and says, "You're Calvin Dubson?" Calvin says yes and puts his hand out to shake hands with the manager. The manager says he doesn't want to shake his hand because he's sick. The manager then says that he thought that Calvin was white. Calvin says, "No sir, my parents are from Ecuador but I was born in Canada." Before Calvin gets the chance to ask him a question, the manager quickly says that they are not hiring anybody at the moment.

Two days later, Calvin sees his Caucasian friend Harry at the mall. Calvin then asks what he's been up to. Harry says that he went for a job interview at a clothing store and he instantly got the job. Harry says that he was surprised that he got the job because he has no high school diploma and has a criminal record. Calvin ends the conversation and leaves the mall. Calvin then looks up at the sky and says, "Why isn't life fair?"

By Heavy Steve AKA Steven Rafael Gomez Salguero





SYSTEMIC CHANGE

Mobilizing an entire city to reduce and ultimately end poverty will take new ways of thinking and new ways of working.

It will require a City government where budget decisions take into account short, medium, and long-term impacts on poverty. Where programs and services to residents are viewed as investments. Where measurements capture what really matters: the well-being of families and communities. Where every strategy is drafted in close collaboration with the people it affects the most.

Ending poverty needs an accountable and participatory government that recognizes that everyone has a part to play. Residents, community and business partners, labour, and other orders of government will need to devote time, energy, and resources to build a prosperous and inclusive Toronto.

The City of Toronto can, should, and will lead the way. The best way to lead is by example. We will act creatively to spur innovation. We will act boldly to do things differently. And we will act wisely to invest in what works.

Why expect different results if we continue doing things the same way?

FROM TRINIDAD TO TORONTO

Growing up as a single child in a single parent home, my mom, like many moms, is my hero.

I was born in Canada, but I spent the first five years of my childhood growing up in Trinidad. When my mom's papers got settled, then we came to Canada. Not knowing much about the country, I just knew that it was a better living situation than what we had in Trinidad.

My journey in Toronto with my mom has been a great struggle. We have lived in 14 different homes: from sharing a two-bedroom apartment with my mom's friends to now renting a town house with my mom and her husband. My mom worked her way up the ranks to an executive assistant but when she got laid off, it has been really hard for her to find another job. No employer wants to pay her what her experience is actually worth. They'd much rather find a graduate student looking to pay back school tuition, willing to start at \$12. At the end of the day, the time and effort that people put into their work was not valued.

An excerpt by René Dhinsa

13. RECOMMENDATION:

Leverage the economic power of the City to stimulate job growth, support local businesses, and drive inclusive economic growth

2015–2018 TERM ACTION PLAN:

- 13.1 Design and implement a community benefits program for City purchasing and capital investments
- 13.2 Design and implement a City social procurement policy
- 13.3 Working with local anchor institutions, connect job seekers, start-up businesses, and worker-owned co-operatives with economic opportunities
- 13.4 Develop models to enhance economic development in low-income areas

14. RECOMMENDATION:

Create a seamless social support system

2015–2018 TERM ACTION PLAN:

- 14.1 Stabilize funding for community based organizations
- 14.2 Integrate the intake and administration of core means-tested programs
- 14.3 Coordinate seamless care and support among hospitals, the child welfare system, correction and mental health facilities and City services
- 14.4 Develop, resource and use effective models to meaningfully engage people with lived experience, agencies, and community partners in City decision-making

- 14.5 Work with the Province to remove legislative and financial barriers to the creation of one stop community access sites for key health, education and social services that also serve as focal points for community building
- 14.6 Protect and increase service levels for the provision of effective services and infrastructure for vulnerable residents

15. RECOMMENDATION:

Coordinate and evaluate the implementation of TO Prosperity

2015–2018 TERM ACTION PLAN:

- 15.1 Create a staff unit to support activities related to the planning, implementation, and evaluation of poverty-reduction actions
- 15.2 Develop monitoring and measuring processes and tools to inform the implementation and evaluation of this Strategy

16. RECOMMENDATION:

Engage City staff and residents on poverty reduction efforts

2015–2018 TERM ACTION PLAN:

- 16.1 Develop change management and staff training tools that promote a poverty-sensitive culture across the organization
- 16.2 Champion poverty reduction as a priority to Toronto residents, businesses, and the Provincial and Federal governments
- 16.3 Partner with community agencies, residents, labour, private sector, faith communities, academia, funders and others to develop, implement and evaluate TO Prosperity

17. RECOMMENDATION:

Dedicate funding to poverty reduction actions

2015–2018 TERM ACTION PLAN:

- 17.1 Embed mechanisms that assess the impact of budget choices on poverty reduction in City Council's decision-making processes
- 17.2 Explore stable and sustainable funding options, including new revenue tools, to invest in reducing poverty



POVERTY AND ITS EFFECTS

It hurts to say, but the facts are true. The effects of poverty are common and are most often interrelated; one problem hardly ever occurs alone. These effects can be felt at almost every level of society. Whether it's high crime rates or serious health conditions, poverty reaches just about every aspect of life.

Poor families don't have the access to highly nutritious foods. Even if they do have access to these foods, it's unlikely they'll be able to purchase them. Being on a small budget and not being able to afford good food leaves them more likely to purchase cheaper unhealthy alternative.

With the family lacking nutritious foods, it only means worse is to come. Our bodies' ability to fight off diseases decreases. Diseases are common among people living in poverty. Some can be minor, but more times they can be life-threatening. People living in poverty cannot afford appropriate medicines to treat or prevent illnesses.

Education is largely affected by poverty. Without an education, people are unlikely to find a paying job. This mean high unemployment rate, which impedes on a country from progressing.

It doesn't stop just there.

Poverty also has social effects. A lot of people living in poverty are homeless and living on the streets. When people are unemployed and homeless, social unrest can take over and lead to an increase in crime, which creates many problems within society. By improving poverty, health can be improved and economies can prosper.

Everyone can benefit if we all played a part and make decreasing poverty our main priority. Today!

by Kobe Akanni James

A young boy in a yellow shirt is playing basketball on a court. He is in the middle of a jump shot, with the ball in the air. The court is surrounded by a chain-link fence, and there are trees in the background. The scene is outdoors and appears to be a public park or schoolyard.

MOVING TO ACTION: THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TO PROSPERITY

TO Prosperity contains 20 recommendations. Each recommendation is linked to a set of actions to be carried out over a four-year period.

Combined, these recommendations and actions comprise the 2015–2018 Term Action Plan. This Plan reflects key concerns and issues prioritized by Toronto residents during a broad engagement process, as well as knowledge of best practices to address poverty in Toronto and other jurisdictions. Recognizing that priorities, knowledge, and economic landscapes constantly evolve, the City will evaluate and revise the Action Plan every four years.

Annual work plans will identify key City initiatives to address poverty and deliverables expected in the short-term. An annual progress report and a revised work plan will be brought to City Council for consideration each year.

T0 Prosperity Organizing Structure

20 Year
Strategy

2015–2018
TERM ACTION
PLAN

2015 Work Plan
2016 Work Plan + 2015 Progress Report
2017 Work Plan + 2016 Progress Report
2018 Work Plan + 2017 Progress Report
2018 Progress Report

2019–2022
TERM ACTION
PLAN

2019 Work Plan
2020 Work Plan + 2019 Progress Report
2021 Work Plan + 2020 Progress Report
2022 Work Plan + 2021 Progress Report
2022 Progress Report

2023–2026
TERM ACTION
PLAN

2023 Work Plan
2024 Work Plan + 2023 Progress Report
2025 Work Plan + 2024 Progress Report
2026 Work Plan + 2025 Progress Report
2026 Progress Report

2027–2030
TERM ACTION
PLAN

2027 Work Plan
2028 Work Plan + 2027 Progress Report
2029 Work Plan + 2028 Progress Report
2030 Work Plan + 2029 Progress Report
2030 Progress Report

2031–2035
TERM ACTION
PLAN

2031 Work Plan
2032 Work Plan + 2031 Progress Report
2033 Work Plan + 2032 Progress Report
2034 Work Plan + 2033 Progress Report
2034 Progress Report

Implementation and Accountability Structure

The City is stepping up to take a lead role in poverty reduction, but it can't do it alone. It will take all of us working together to realize the bold vision set out in the Strategy. Yet, while we need to work together, we will also need to work differently. Collective Impact is an evidence-based approach used by cities around the world to address complex and dynamic issues like poverty. TO Prosperity is guided by a collective impact approach to drive change, and to develop, implement and evaluate this Strategy.

The Five Conditions of Collective Impact	
COMMON AGENDA	All participants have a shared vision for change including a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon actions.
SHARED MEASUREMENT	Collecting data and measuring results consistently across all participants ensures efforts remain aligned and participants hold each other accountable.
MUTUALLY REINFORCING ACTIVITIES	Participant activities must be differentiated while still being coordinated through a mutually reinforcing plan of action.
CONTINUOUS COMMUNICATION	Consistent and open communication is needed across the many players to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and create common motivation.
BACKBONE SUPPORT	Creating and managing collective impact requires a separate organization(s) with staff and a specific set of skills to serve as the backbone for the entire initiative and coordinate participating organizations and agencies.

Source: Hanleybrown, Kania and Kramer. (Winter 2011). "Collective Impact." Stanford Social Innovation Review

Building the Foundation: Implementation and Accountability to Drive Change

The five bodies described below form the Implementation Accountability Structure that ensures that the City's efforts are responsive to community needs and contribute to reducing poverty in Toronto. This Structure will be supported by the Poverty Reduction Unit, a backbone support organization housed within the City of Toronto. This Unit will also coordinate internal and external alignments and ongoing community engagement to maintain a shared vision and commitment, facilitate ongoing communication, evaluate, track, and move initiatives forward.

ACCOUNTABILITY TABLE

Community sector, residents, business, labour, academia, and key funding institutions to oversee the effective engagement, implementation, and measurement of the Strategy.

SENIOR STAFF STEERING COMMITTEE

Chaired by the Deputy City Manager, Cluster A, with membership drawn from City divisions, agencies, boards, and commissions coordinates City service and policy alignments.

LIVED EXPERIENCE ADVISORY GROUP

Toronto residents with lived experience of poverty contribute their expertise to the effective development, measuring, and monitoring of poverty reduction initiatives.



MONITORING AND EVALUATION WORKING GROUP

Measurement and evaluation experts monitor key indicators and measure the effectiveness of the Strategy's recommendations and actions to address poverty.

PRIVATE SECTOR ROUNDTABLE

Toronto business leaders, United Way Toronto & York Region, and the Toronto Region Board of Trade contribute strategic advice and identify opportunities that meet economic and employment goals.

You have just read Toronto's first poverty reduction strategy.

It reflects a widely shared sense that too many Toronto residents are poor.

It is motivated by the conviction that this city can and must do more to reduce poverty.

It is inspired by the steps the City has taken over many years to make Toronto livable for all, but also by the ideas that other cities are putting into practice to create new pathways to prosperity.

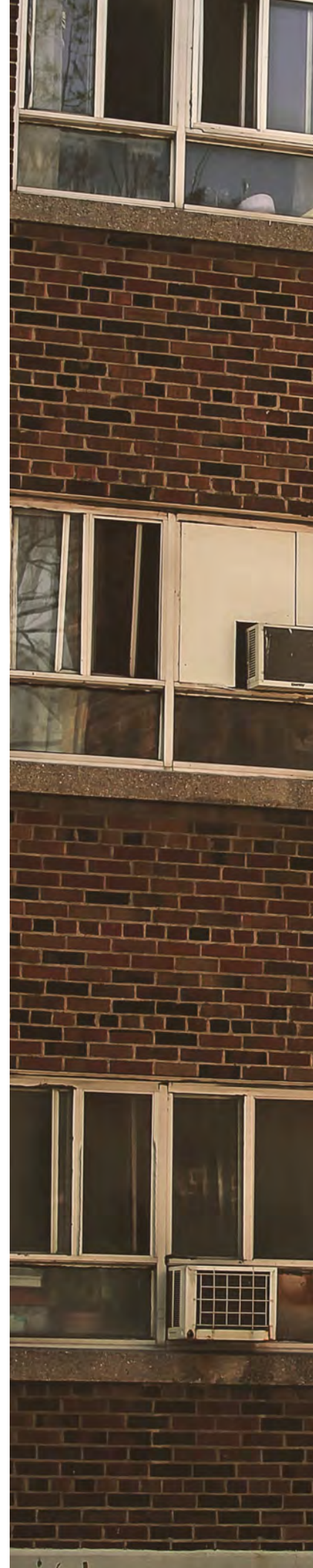
And it is grounded in the passion, experience, and expertise of Toronto residents, advocates, community organizations, businesses and public servants.

This strategy, our strategy, must be a cornerstone of Toronto's push to become a city where prosperity is shared and poverty is reduced. The test of our success will be whether we can say in two or five or 10 years,

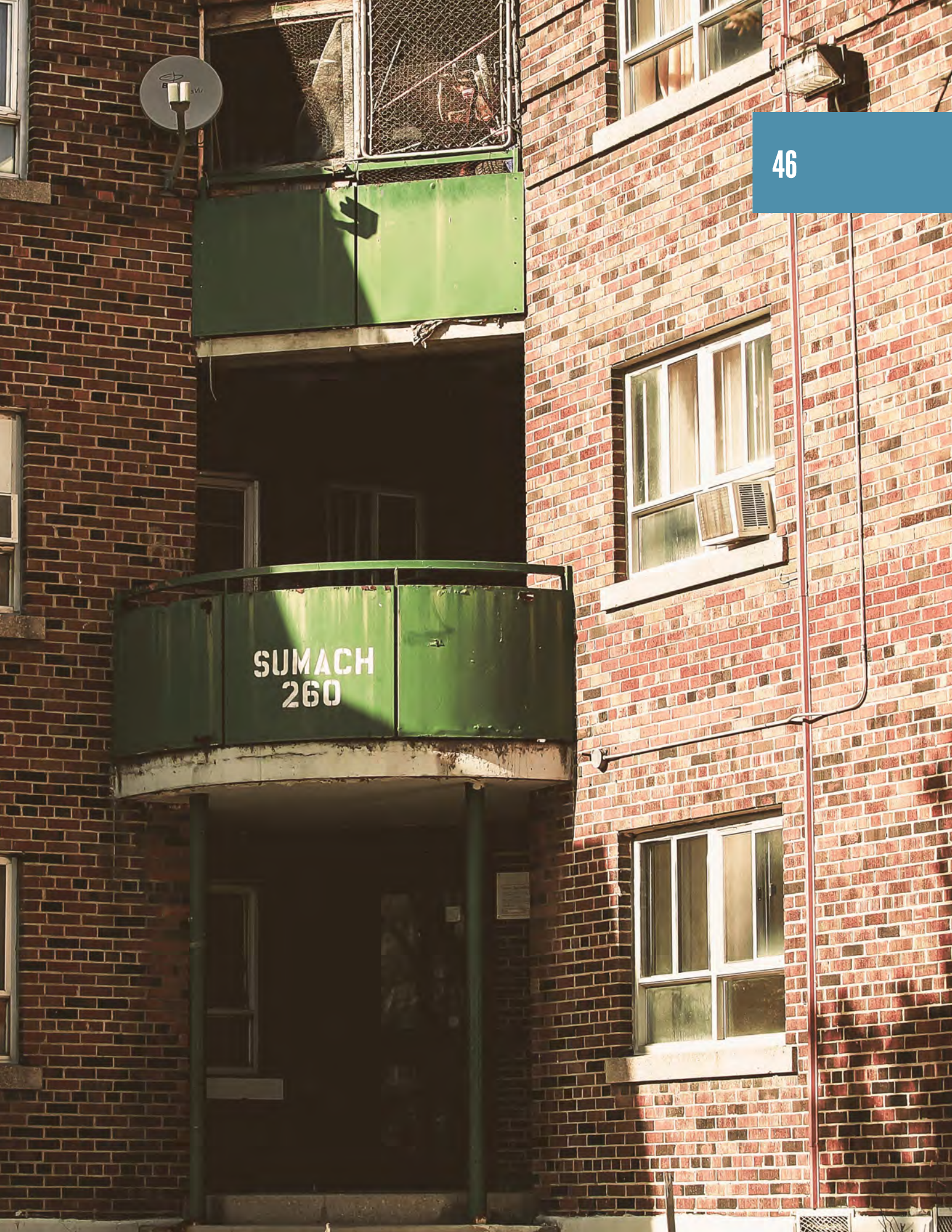
TO Prosperity made a difference.

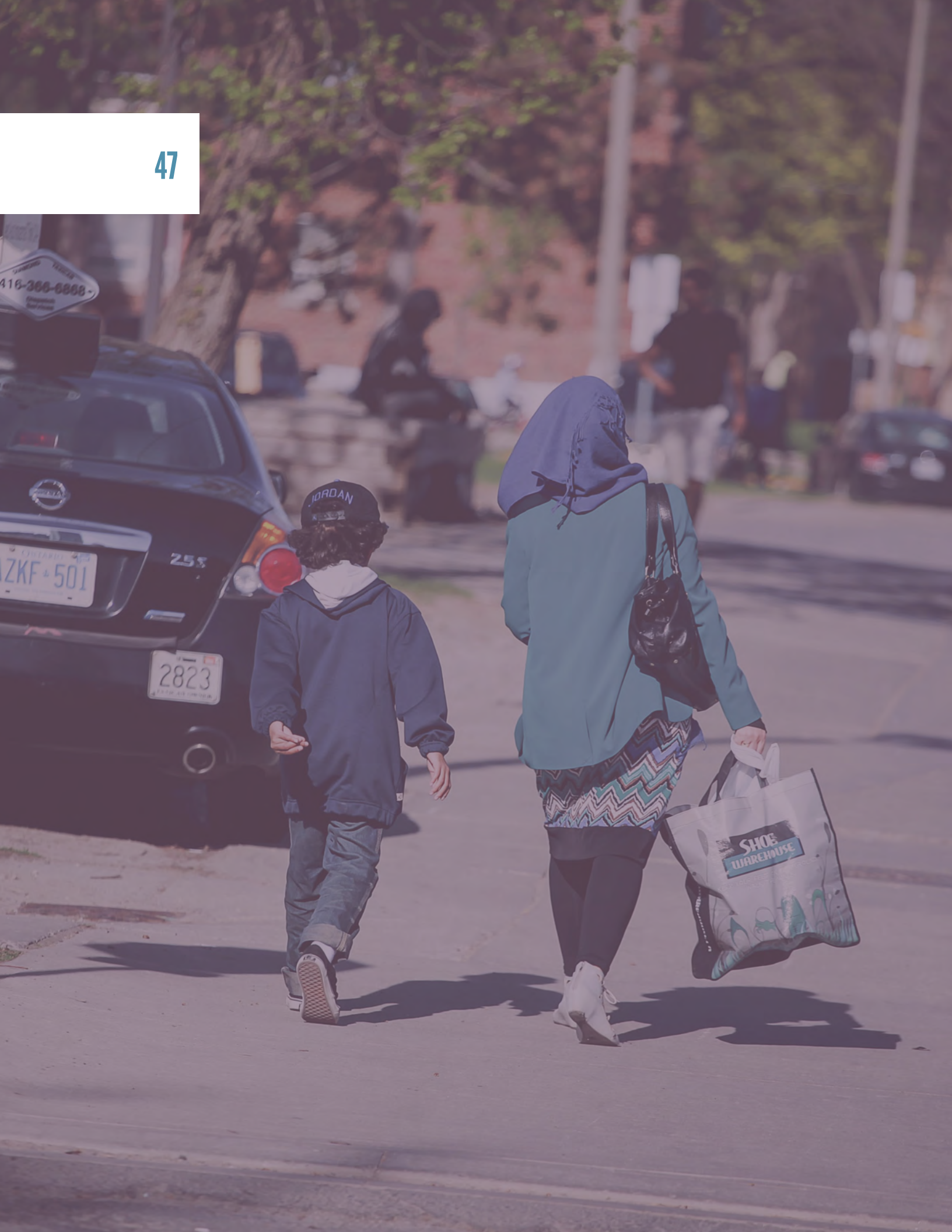
It bears repeating – this is not a moment, this is a movement.

Join us!



SUMACH
260





DEPUTY MAYOR PAM MCCONNELL



Dear Residents of Toronto,

The TO Prosperity: Poverty Reduction Strategy is only a first step on a journey that will require all our efforts to make Toronto prosperous for everyone.

With this strategy, we have developed a vision with concrete actions to address the unacceptable levels of inequality we face in Toronto. I am inspired by its ambition to address the obstacles we face and to find solutions.

This work must begin immediately. It is time for a commitment from all sectors to move forward. Partnerships for ongoing action are critical. We need governments to work collaboratively to succeed.

Income polarization diminishes us all, as those living in poverty struggle and cannot participate in our city. Toronto's most precious resource is its people. The health of our residents is reflected in the health of our neighbourhoods, and in turn in the strength of our city.

I call on all Torontonians to ensure that the prosperity of Toronto is shared by all. Poverty is everyone's business.

Deputy Mayor Pam McConnell

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Residents and partners made this strategy possible.

Thank you to [thousands of Torontonians](#) for sharing their time, wisdom, commitment and stories.

Thank you to our [community facilitators](#) for leading meaningful and productive discussions in all four corners of the city.

Thank you to our [community partners](#) for leading community conversations that significantly increased the reach and scope of the engagement process.

Thank you to [United Way Toronto & York Region](#), [Maytree](#), and [Wellesley Institute](#) for valuable collaboration in crucial aspects of this policy development process.

Thank you to our [civic leaders](#), [community organizations](#), and [researchers](#) whose ongoing work has paved the way for this strategy.

Thank you to our [Advisory Committee](#) for the continuous, honest, and invaluable support. Members of the Advisory Committee included:

Angie Draskovic, Yonge Street Mission

Anita Khanna, Family Service Toronto/
Campaign 2000

Brad Cartan, Our Place Community of Hope

Collette Murphy, Atkinson Foundation

Diane Dyson, Woodgreen/The Alliance for a
Poverty Free Toronto

Grace-Edward Galabuzi, Ryerson University

Joe Abbey-Colburn, Faith in the City

John Campey, Ralph Thornton Centre

John Stapleton, Open Policy Ontario/Metcalf
Foundation

Kara Santokie, Toronto Women's City
Alliance

Leila Sarangi, Women's Habitat of Etobicoke

Michael Polanyi, Children's Aid Society of
Toronto

Mike Creek, Working for Change

Natasha Apollonova, Toronto Region Board
of Trade

Pat Capponi, Voices From the Street

Pedro Barata, United Way Toronto & York
Region

Rob Howarth, Toronto Neighbourhood
Centres

Sean Meagher, Social Planning Toronto

Sevaun Palvetzian, CivicAction Alliance

Sharon Simpson, Labour Council/Labour
Community Services

Simone Atungo, Toronto Community Housing

We would also like to thank people who contributed their stories, poems and photography.

[Nia Centre for the Arts](#) is a Toronto-based not-for-profit organization that supports, showcases and promotes an appreciation of arts from across the African Diaspora. We create opportunities for young people to develop healthy identities and for communities to enhance their creative capacities.

Most of the photos throughout this document were taken by the following:



Gervais Nash

Anthony (Tony) Gebrehiwot

Candace Nyaomi

Farhia Jama

Leilah Dhoré

[Nomanzland](#) first and foremost is a family. We are raw and revolutionary. We rep the hood. Nomanzland is a collective that comes together to create theatre, poetry, music, and art that represents the struggle of marginalized and oppressed people all over the world. We are: Real Life. Real Drama. Real Theatre.



Mister Taylor

Funmilola (LolaBunz) Lawson

Andrea (Drea) Walsh

Kobe Akanni James

Khadiija Sayaadi

Heavy Steve AKA Steven Rafael Gomez

Abdi Mohamed

Salguero

[Reaching Intelligent Souls Everywhere \(RISE\)](#); a multifaceted collective of Artists and Activists providing a welcoming and safe platform for the arts.

Faduma Mohamed

René Dhinsa

Paul Ohonsi

Simon Yohannes



Stories and poems were edited by Whitney French.

APPENDIX A: INDICATORS

	#	Recommendation	Preliminary Indicators
HOUSING STABILITY	1	Improve the quality of all affordable housing	CMHC Adequacy Standard: percentage of city housing that, based on surveyed occupants, does not require repairs to defective plumbing, or electrical wiring, or structural repairs to walls, floors or ceilings Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
	2	Assist low-income individuals and families to secure and maintain affordable housing	Ontario Housing Measure: percentage of households, with children under 18, with incomes below 40 per cent of the national median household income, paying more than 40 per cent of their income on housing Source: Government of Ontario
	3	Increase the supply of affordable housing	Number of Affordable Rental and Ownership Homes Completed with federal, provincial and city investments, in partnership with private and non-profit developers ⁱ Source: City of Toronto Affordable Housing Office
SERVICE ACCESS	4	Increase service access and availability	Ratio, by neighbourhood, of individuals experiencing low income to the number of community service listings in the 211toronto.ca databaseⁱⁱ Source: City of Toronto Social Policy, Analysis and Research Percentage of City services rated as good or excellent in the annual City-wide Customer Service Satisfaction Survey Source: City of Toronto
	5	Improve access to high quality programs for children and youth	Percentage of children aged 0–12 in licensed child care Source: City of Toronto Children's Services
TRANSIT EQUITY	6	Make transit more affordable for low-income residents	Cost of monthly transit pass as a per cent of monthly minimum wage income Source: City of Toronto Social Policy, Analysis and Research
	7	Improve transit services in the inner suburbs	Transit Connectivity Score: number of stops within 500 metres of the centre of a Census block, and how often a bus, subway, or street car stops there in a specific hour Source: Martin Prosperity Institute

ⁱAffordable rental housing units are rented at, or below, 80 per cent of average market prices, which are calculated by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

ⁱⁱStatistics Canada defines the Low-income measure after tax (LIM-AT) as a fixed percentage (50%) of median adjusted after-tax income of households observed at the person level. Median income is the middle income if all incomes are lined up in order from lowest to highest. For example, in 2012, the individual median income in Canada was \$27,000. This means that half of the population earned anything below \$27,000, and the other half earned anything above \$27,000. Low-income individuals earned 50% or less of \$27,000, that is, \$13,500 or less.

FOOD ACCESS	8	Eliminate hunger	Household Food Security Survey Module, Canadian Community Health Survey: percentage of households who self-report uncertain, insufficient or inadequate food access, availability and intake due to limited financial resources Source: Statistics Canada
	9	Increase access to affordable, nutritious and culturally appropriate food	Modified Food Retail Environment Index: ratio of healthier to less healthy food store locations within a 1 kilometre walking distance for each city block Source: Toronto Healthy Environments Information System
QUALITY JOBS & LIVABLE INCOMES	10	Improve the quality of and access to income supports	Average length of time Ontario Works recipients require assistance before finding employment Source: City of Toronto Employment and Social Services
			Ratio of social assistance rates to the cost of a nutritious food basket, adjusted to family size Source: City of Toronto Employment and Social Services
	11	Create employment opportunities for low-income groups with high unemployment rates	Percentage of youth and young adults who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) Source: Government of Ontario
12	Improve the quality of jobs	Percentage of jobs paying the living wageⁱⁱⁱ Percentage of jobs that are full-time, permanent jobs Source: City of Toronto Social Policy, Analysis and Research	
SYSTEMIC CHANGE	13	Leverage the economic power of the City to stimulate job growth, support local businesses, and drive inclusive economic growth	Actions in this section require performance measurements. Since the implementation of this strategy will be a collective effort, stakeholders will need to agree on how success will be measured. The Poverty Reduction Unit will coordinate the collective design of key performance indicators for these recommendations.
	14	Create a seamless social support system	
	15	Coordinate and evaluate the implementation of TO Prosperity	
	16	Engage City staff and residents on poverty reduction efforts	
	17	Dedicate funding to poverty reduction actions	

ⁱⁱⁱThe living wage is calculated by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives based on a common national methodology. It includes income from employment and tax transfers in relation to household expenses needed for full social inclusion. In 2015, the living wage for a two-parent two-child family in Toronto was \$18.52 an hour.

APPENDIX B

Issue	Recommendation	#	Actions	City of Toronto*		Annual Work Plan
				Lead(s)	Partners	
HOUSING STABILITY	Improve the quality of all affordable housing	1.1	Increase investments in repairs to existing social housing	SSHA	AHO, TCHC	2016
		1.2	Strengthen the enforcement of minimum housing standards	MLS		2015 2016
		1.3	Expand incentive programs for private landlords and low-income homeowners to improve the quality and energy efficiency of affordable homes through essential health, safety and accessibility repairs and modifications	AHO	SDFA, MLS, SSHA	2016
		1.4	Increase support and uptake of building energy retrofitting programs that lower hydro costs in affordable units	SDFA		2016
		1.5	Develop a rooming house policy framework and an effective enforcement strategy	MLS, Planning		2016
		Assist low-income individuals and families to secure and maintain affordable housing	2.1	Provide more housing allowances	SSHA	
	2.2		Develop more integrated housing stabilization supports for people discharged from other service systems and in crisis situations	SSHA		2016– 2018
	2.3		Advocate for more flexible provincial funding rules to provide housing subsidy options that better meet local housing needs	S&CP, SSHA		2016– 2018
	Increase the supply of affordable housing	3.1	Update and expand the City's menu of funding and other incentives for the development of new affordable rental and ownership housing	AHO	Planning, Finance	2016
		3.2	Affirm affordable housing as a priority community benefit for any development applications where contributions are proposed pursuant to Section 37 of the Planning Act	Planning	AHO	2016

2015–2018 TERM ACTION PLAN

HOUSING STABILITY	Increase the supply of affordable housing	3.3	Advocate for legislative amendments to enable municipalities to enact inclusionary zoning powers	Planning, AHO	S&CP	2016
		3.4	Seek opportunities to provide affordable housing in existing or proposed public buildings	AHO		2016-2018
		3.5	Provide surplus government land for new affordable housing development, incorporate affordable housing in developments on government lands, or dedicate a percentage of the net proceeds from the land sales to affordable housing	Build Toronto, AHO	RES	2016
		3.6	Develop strategies to maintain, sustain and leverage Toronto's social housing assets to provide affordable housing over the long term	SSHA	AHO	2015 2016
SERVICE ACCESS	Increase service access and availability	4.1	Expand digital access and literacy to ensure residents can effectively access programs and services online	TPL		2016
		4.2	Ensure user fees for social and community services do not create barriers for low-income users	Financial Planning	TPL	2015 2016
		4.3	Revise program registration, outreach, and delivery to ensure services are accessible to vulnerable residents	PRU	TPL, SDFA, PFR	2015 2016
		4.4	Integrate health system and mental health services with other City programs and services in accessible community locations	PRU		2016-2018
		4.5	Expand dental care for low-income seniors and adults	TPH	TESS	2016
		4.6	Increase access to financial literacy and advocacy tools that support people to achieve financial stability	SDFA	TESS, SSHA	2015 2016
		4.7	Ensure that homelessness and housing support services meet the diverse needs of low-income Torontonians	SSHA		2015 2016
		4.8	Advocate for the expansion of culturally appropriate mental health services	SDFA	S&CP	2016-2018

Issue	Recommendation	#	Actions	City of Toronto*		Annual Work Plan
				Lead(s)	Partners	
SERVICE ACCESS	Improve access to high quality programs for children and youth	5.1	Increase the City's tax base contribution to funding child care fee subsidies	CS		2015 2016
		5.2	Increase the number of licensed and subsidized child care spaces	CS		2016
		5.3	Support growth in the number of high-quality, out-of-school-time programs for children and youth	CS, PFR		2015 2016
		5.4	Advocate to the provincial and federal governments for increased support and funding for child care	CS	S&CP	2015– 2018
TRANSIT EQUITY	Make transit more affordable for low-income residents	6.1	Children 12 and under ride free	TTC		2015
		6.2	Ensure the roll-out of the new Presto Pass technology includes a fare-geared-to-income capacity	TTC		2017
		6.3	Evaluate a demand model that includes fare-geared-to-income criteria	SDFA	TPH, TTC, TESS	2016
		6.4	Comply with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act's requirement that all stations be fully accessible by 2025	TTC		2016
	Improve transit services in the inner suburbs	7.1	Work with the Province to harmonize service and fares across public transit systems in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area	TTC		2017– 2018
		7.2	Restore previous service cuts that disproportionately impact the inner suburbs where demand warrants	TTC		2015
		7.3	Increase reliability across bus, subway, and LRT modes	TTC	PRU	2015– 2018
		7.4	Consider the needs of low-income neighbourhoods and inner suburbs in capital and service planning	TTC	PRU, TPH	2015 2016

FOOD ACCESS	Eliminate hunger	8.1	Expand student nutrition programs in collaboration with school boards, community agencies and other orders of government	TPH		2015 2016
		8.2	Develop mechanisms that make it easy and cost-effective for public sector and community organizations to procure healthy food	TPH	SDFA, SSHA, CMO, PMMD	2016
		8.3	Expand provision of nutritious food in City-run and supported programs	TPH	SDFA, CS, SSHA, PFR, TESS	2016
	Increase access to affordable, nutritious and culturally appropriate food	9.1	Support innovative business models that help retailers sell healthier food in underserved communities	TPH	EDC	2016
		9.2	Establish enabling policies and processes to facilitate food initiatives on City land and in City facilities	SDFA	TPH, MLS, PFR, RES, Facilities, Building	2016
		9.3	Ensure rules related to commercial food production, preparation and sales are clear and accessible	MLS	PFR, TPH	2016
		9.4	Remove barriers to expand urban agriculture on government lands	SDFA, TPH	PFR, Planning, MLS, RES	2016
		9.5	Empower residents with food skills and information	TPH		2016– 2018
		9.6	Invest in community-based food infrastructure that increases access to affordable, nutritious and culturally-appropriate food	TPH		2015

Issue	Recommendation	#	Actions	City of Toronto*		Annual Work Plan
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QUALITY JOBS & LIVABLE INCOMES	Improve the quality of and access to income supports	10.1	Better ensure income supports and services respond to and meet vulnerable residents needs	TESS		2016
		10.2	Advocate to the Ontario government to raise social assistance rates	TESS	S&CP	2015–2018
		10.3	Improve health benefits, including dental services, drug benefits, and eye glasses to those transitioning off Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program into stable employment	TESS		2015 2016
		10.4	Better assist low-income and vulnerable residents to access child care spaces and fee subsidies	CS		2017–2018
	Create employment opportunities for low-income groups with high unemployment rates	11.1	Work with the private and public sectors to create effective paths to good careers for low-income youth	TESS	SDFA, EC	2015 2016
		11.2	Remove barriers that limit employment opportunities for people with experience in the justice system	TESS	SDFA	2015 2016
		11.3	Incubate flexible child care models that align with the current labour market reality	CS		2017–2018
	Improve the quality of jobs	12.1	Champion a living wage standard across Toronto	SDFA	EDC, Fair Wage Office, HR, PMMD	2016
		12.2	Give preference to vendors providing goods and services to the City who pay a living wage	SDFA	PMMD, Fair Wage Office	2016
		12.3	Support provincial effort to strengthen employment standards	SDFA	TESS, S&CP	2015
		12.4	Develop a job quality assessment tool, and apply it to City jobs, City contractor jobs, and procurement processes	SDFA	PMMD	2016

SYSTEMIC CHANGE	Leverage the economic power of the City to stimulate job growth, support local businesses, and drive inclusive economic growth	13.1	Design and implement a community benefits program for City purchasing and capital investments	SDFA, TESS	PMMD, Planning	2016
		13.2	Design and implement a City social procurement policy	SDFA, PMMD		2016
		13.3	Working with local anchor institutions, connect job seekers, start-up businesses, and worker-owned co-operatives with economic opportunities	EDC	SDFA, TESS	2016
		13.4	Develop models to enhance economic development in low-income areas	EDC	SDFA, TESS	2016
	Create a seamless social support system	14.1	Stabilize funding for community based organizations	SDFA		2015 2016
		14.2	Integrate the intake and administration of core means-tested programs	HSI	TESS, CS, SSHA	2016
		14.3	Coordinate seamless care and support among hospitals, the child welfare system, correction and mental health facilities and City services	SDFA	SSHA	2016
		14.4	Develop, resource and use effective models to meaningfully engage people with lived experience, agencies, and community partners in City decision-making	PRU SDFA	S&CP	2016
		14.5	Work with the Province to remove legislative and financial barriers to the creation of one stop community access sites for key health, education and social services that also serve as focal points for community building	SDFA	S&CP	2016
		14.6	Protect and increase service levels for the provision of effective services and infrastructure for vulnerable residents	CMO		2016– 2018
	Coordinate and evaluate the implementation of TO Prosperity	15.1	Create a staff unit to support activities related to the planning, implementation, and evaluation of poverty-reduction actions	PRU		2016
		15.2	Develop monitoring and measuring processes and tools to inform the implementation and evaluation of this Strategy	PRU	SDFA, TESS	2016

Issue	Recommendation	#	Actions	City of Toronto*		Annual Work Plan
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SYSTEMIC CHANGE	Engage City staff and residents on poverty reduction efforts	16.1	Develop change management and staff training tools that promote a poverty-sensitive culture across the organization	PRU	HR, EDHR	2016
		16.2	Champion poverty reduction as a priority to Toronto residents, businesses, and the Provincial and Federal governments	PRU		2015–2018
		16.3	Partner with community agencies, residents, labour, private sector, faith communities, academia, funders and others to develop, implement and evaluate TO Prosperity	PRU	SDFA, TESS	2015–2018
	Dedicate funding to poverty reduction actions	17.1	Embed mechanisms that assess the impact of budget choices on poverty reduction in City Council's decision-making processes	PRU	Financial Planning	2017
		17.2	Explore stable and sustainable funding options, including new revenue tools, to invest in reducing poverty	PRU	Finance, S&CP	2017

LEGEND: City Divisions, Agencies, and Commissions

AHO	Affordable Housing Office
Building	Toronto Building
Clerks	City Clerk's Office
CMO	City Manager's Office
CS	Children's Services
EDC	Economic Development and Culture
EDHR	Equity, Diversity & Human Rights

LEGEND: City Divisions, Agencies, and Commissions

Facilities	Facilities Management
Finance	Corporate Finance
	Financial Planning
HR	Human Resources
HSI	Human Service Integration
LTCHS	Long-Term Care Homes & Services
MLS	Municipal Licenses and Standards
Paramedics	Toronto Paramedic Services
PFR	Parks, Forestry and Recreation
Planning	City Planning
PMMD	Purchasing and Material Management Division
PRU	Poverty Reduction Unit
RES	Real Estate Services
S&CP	Strategic and Corporate Policy
SDFA	Social Development, Finance, and Administration
SSHA	Shelter, Support, and Housing Administration
Stratcom	Strategic Communications
TCHC	Toronto Community Housing Corporation
TESS	Toronto Employment and Social Services
TOP	Toronto Office of Partnerships
TPS	Toronto Police Services
TPH	Toronto Public Health
TPL	Toronto Public Libraries
TTC	Toronto Transit Commission
Transportation	Transportation Services

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