

TO PROSPERITY: INTERIM POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY

June 2015



I DREAM OF A TORONTO

“The job is for every opportunity to help in the
of our lives. A job that is not only to help
people to find and create their own lives.”

“The job is to respect and collect the words
of individuals who have experienced
their lives and to help them to find
their own lives. The job is to help
to find and create their own lives.”

Toronto, Ontario



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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 as many as needed 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.

DEPUTY MAYOR PAM MCCONNELL



Dear Residents of Toronto,

It is with great pride that I submit to you TO Prosperity: Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy, and with it I call on you to be a partner in making Toronto prosperous for everyone.

While Toronto residents see a building boom and a thriving business centre, we also see one in four children living in poverty. We see one in five adults living in poverty. We see neighbours struggling in jobs that don't provide enough of a salary to pay rent and put food on the table. Our youth unemployment rate is 20%. That number skyrockets to 25% for Aboriginal youth and to 30% for black youth.

This inequality is simply unacceptable. Toronto can do better.

With this strategy, Toronto is responding. Together, we will address the issues, create solutions and drive systemic change. We are putting forward a vision rooted in concrete actions that will lead us towards a Toronto in 2035 that is truly equitable for all residents. The safety net will be strengthened to prevent people from falling into poverty and lifelines will be provided to those who have fallen into poverty.

I would like to thank the Community Advisory Committee of stakeholders from community agencies and organizations who have been working on these issues for their invaluable advice and support in the drafting of this strategy. I would also like to thank City staff under the leadership of Social Development, Finance & Administration and Toronto Employment & Social Services for their dedication and hard work on the development of this action plan and for all divisions for embracing this exercise with such enthusiasm.

Most importantly, I would like to thank the thousands of Torontonians who have experienced poverty in their lives for providing their expert advice throughout this process. I hope that this report reflects what you have told me that we can do to make your lives a little bit easier. I look forward to your continued engagement and feedback as we move from the interim strategy to the final strategy by the end of 2015.

This is the moment that Toronto chooses a different path forward. We can and will do this together.

Deputy Mayor Pam McConnell



CONTENTS



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.

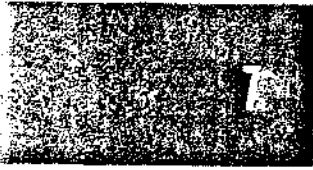
never mind to people living on insecure, low wages and eroding social supports.

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.



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 hello
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

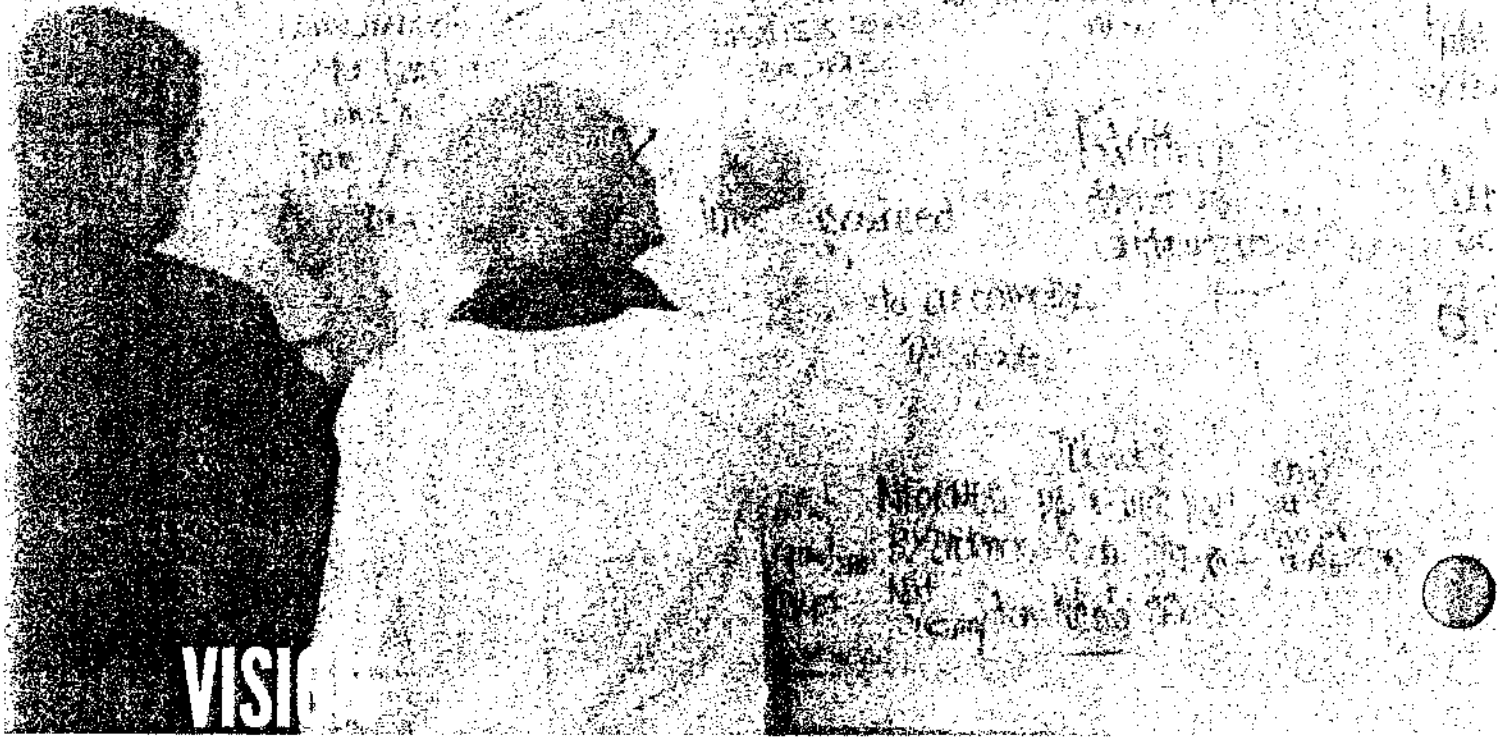
And changed a game over night.

So she continues to play,

In pursuit of eternal comfort.

She continues to pray.

by Simon Johannes



Toronto will:

the issues

solutions

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, co-ordinated, and meet the immediate needs of those living in poverty.

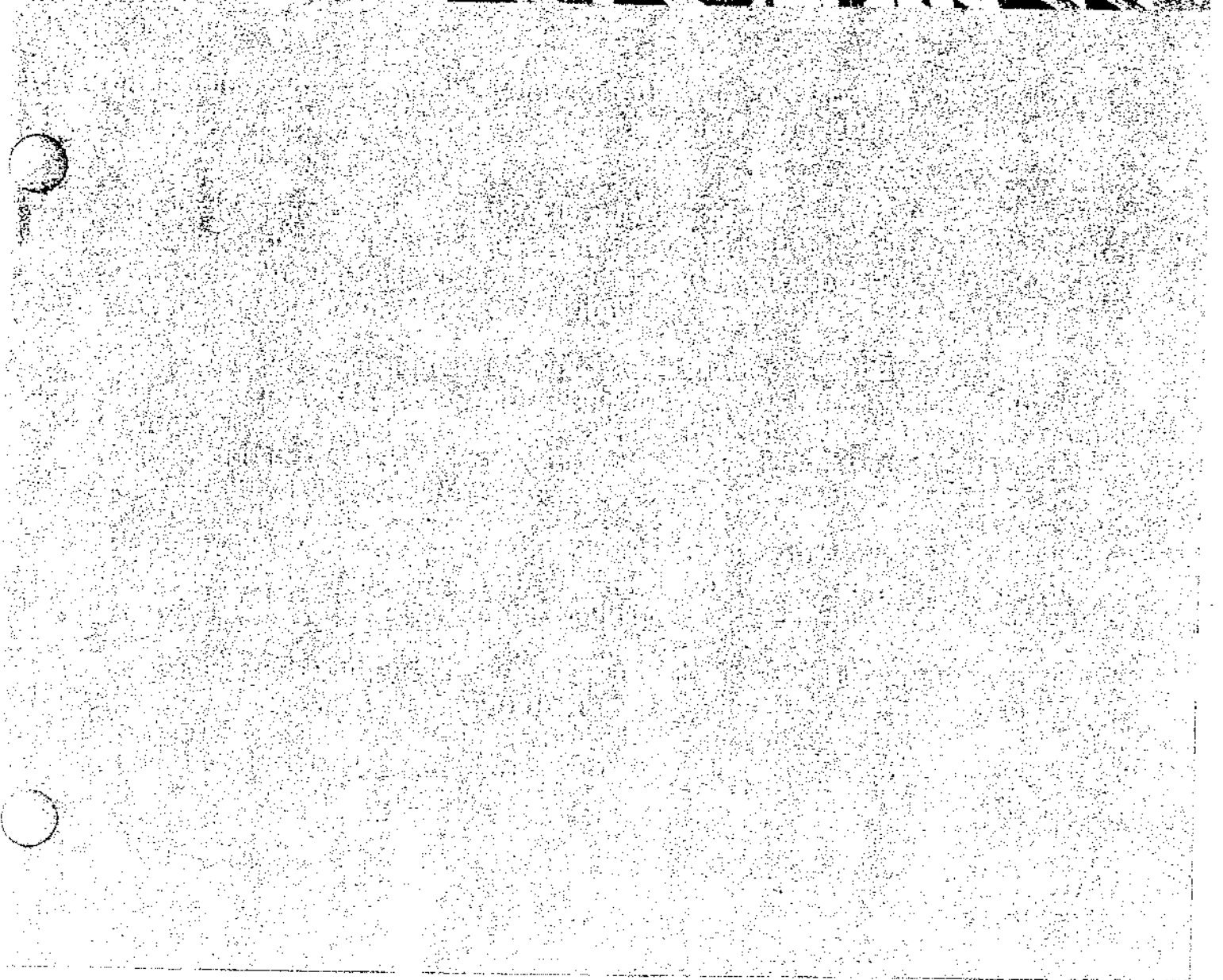
create pathways to prosperity

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 requires collaboration with other orders of government, the private sector, labour, and community organizations to counter poverty, promote inclusive economic growth, and ensure community development.



ACCESS TO SERVICES

Cities provide many vital services for 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:

Adopt an integrated service approach and ensure all staff and community partners have the tools to help people navigate the social service system.

ACTIONS:

- 4.1 Expand Digital Access and Literacy to ensure residents can effectively access programs and services online
- 4.2 Ensure user fees do not create barriers for low-income users
- 4.3 Develop non-monetary penalties that instill responsible use of resources but do not discourage low-income users from accessing services
- 4.4 Implement a new registration process for all City programs, not limited to recreation, that ensures the system is accessible, fair and equitable for low-income users
- 4.5 Promote health services to residents and clients of City programs and services



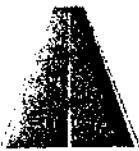
16,802

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

19%

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

- 4.6 Create collaborative communication practices that ensure information is co-ordinated, consistent, accurate, and timely
- 4.7 Train staff and partners on the new collaborative communication and co-ordination practices and develop customer service standards based on the revised expectations



create pathways to prosperity

5. RECOMMENDATION:

Ensure all programming for children and youth is integrated, inclusive and responsive to current needs.

ACTIONS

- 5.1 Leverage the resources provided by the Province by committing to a matching ratio that supports child-care fee subsidies from the tax base

- 5.2 Ensure the existing equity model for child-care fee subsidies is nimble enough to match the subsidy allocation with child-care spaces available
- 5.3 Incubate flexible child-care models that align with the current labour market reality
- 5.4 Explore all opportunities to increase the number of licensed child-care spaces across the city
- 5.5 Provide a range of accessible, high-quality, out-of-school-time programs for children and youth in neighbourhoods across the city



drive systemic change

6. RECOMMENDATION:

Work across the health and social services sectors to create a seamless support system that takes into account the social determinants of health.

ACTIONS:

- 6.1 Plan with funded agencies as partners, recognizing they operate programs and services that are the foundation of Toronto's service system.
- 6.2 Stabilize funding for quality community-based programs
- 6.3 Review criteria for means-tested supports to ensure children have access to stable, quality programs
- 6.4 Align the intake and management of all means-tested services
- 6.5 Actively provide input to other orders of government on policies related to hospital care, home care, and corrections and mental health services, including discharge procedures
- 6.6 Expand dental care for low-income people

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

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.



what we're doing

OUR MOST PRECIOUS CURRENCY

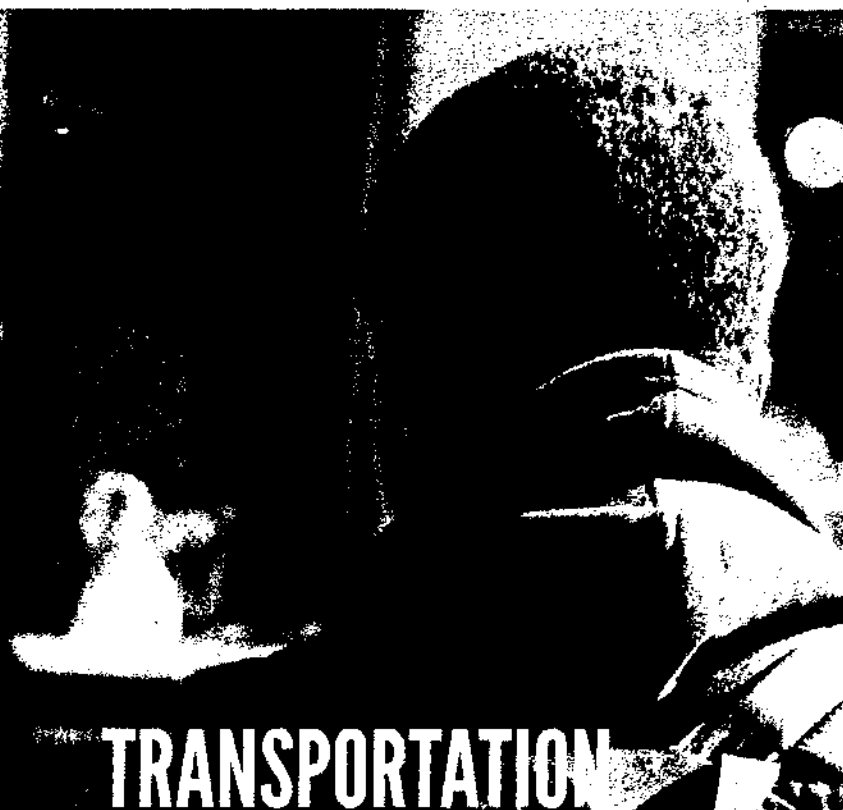
Poverty is a result of a certain number of people simply having too much. This earth is infinitely abundant, and able to sustain its inhabitants. There are over 1,000 other different human tribes and societies that live in union with the resources around them. In understanding that you also have to give back. Our society simply takes too much to sustain, we don't see it, because we are in it, but upon taking oneself out of the way of living that he was born into, he begins to see the cost of sustaining this western way of life. In Toronto there are over 2.6 million people and with a good majority of them living paycheque to paycheque, one missed pay away from living on the streets.

We are resilient here, we are able to smile in the face of such adversity and simply learn to live with it, accepting it as 'the way it is'. We feel unable to create a big enough ripple effect to change it. Poverty is not just the lack of physical wealth, it's a mental state where a person believes they do not have the tools necessary to get them out of a situation that doesn't serve them. The physical manifestation of poverty (i.e. people living on the streets) is a much deeper psychological issue inherent in most humans that live here.

An excerpt by Paul Ohnsi.



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TRANSPORTATION



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

7. RECOMMENDATION:

Make transit more affordable.

ACTIONS:

- 7.1 Children 12 and under ride free
- 7.2 Ensure the roll-out of the new Presto Pass technology includes a fare-gated-to-income capacity
- 7.3 Consider new fare and service models for transit users who require accessibility assistance



create pathways to prosperity

8. RECOMMENDATION:

Improve services in the inner suburbs.

ACTIONS:

- 8.1 Evaluate a demand model that includes fare-gated-to-income criteria
- 8.2 Integrate seamlessly with the rest of the GTA transit system
- 8.3 Ensure the existing system is maintained and improved (do not cut services)
- 8.4 Restore previous service cuts that disproportionately impact the inner suburbs

ABUSE OF POWER

"I have no bus fare," Kevin said. Kalid only had bus fare for himself, but he spoke up. "I got you fam," and that was that. They were on their way.

"Your student cards are expired."

"It's summer, Kalid replied, "we don't get new ones 'til September when school starts." The driver said, "That's not my problem."

"So what are we supposed do?" Kalid asked.

"Get off the bus smart guy before I call the police." The driver was annoyed by this time. "We did nothing wrong, we're just trying to get to our basketball game," Kalid said.

The bus driver called the police and the boys got scared and tried to leave. The driver grabbed Kalid and as he struggled to get free, the cruiser pulled up behind the bus.

by Andrea (Drea) Walsh



drive systemic change

26

9. RECOMMENDATION:

Make decisions on services and capital planning that prioritize those most in need of services.

ACTIONS

- 9.1 Ensure that low-income people are not disproportionately affected when considering service reductions
- 9.2 Increase capital investment in the bus fleet to improve reliability
- 9.3. Develop a capital and service planning approach that focuses on building infrastructure improvements faster and meeting the immediate needs of the inner suburbs
- 9.4 Increase transit capacity when new high-density housing is built

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 are being restored.

When you pay for an annual transit pass, you only pay the cost of 11 months.

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.



what we're doing

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.



address immediate needs

10. RECOMMENDATION:

Find ways to ensure children and families have access to affordable, nutritious food.

ACTIONS:

- 10.1 Include healthy food as part of programming for children affected by poverty
- 10.2 Ensure people on income assistance can afford healthy food
- 10.3 Support food banks to improve the quality of their food stock, provide culturally specific food, and

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

increase access and eligibility to food for people in need



create pathways to prosperity

11. RECOMMENDATION:

Support initiatives that bring nutritious food to low-income areas.

ACTIONS:

- 11.1 Develop mechanisms that make it easy and cost-effective for community agencies and schools to procure healthy food
- 11.2 Eliminate food deserts by providing incentives for food provision in all communities
- 11.3 Remove red tape and support small- and medium-scale retailers that sell healthy food



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

- 11.4. Encourage local markets in public spaces, and open civic land and spaces to host food markets
- 11.5 Develop clear, consistent and concise communication on all rules, regulations and policies related to food production, sales and preparation
- 11.6 Support mechanisms to increase student nutrition programs in collaboration with school boards



**drive systemic
change**

12. RECOMMENDATION:

Remove barriers that limit the opportunities for local food production and food skills development.

ACTIONS:

- 12.1 Remove barriers (zoning, licensing, planning) to maximize urban agriculture and food production on public and private space and land
- 12.2 Streamline and actively support processes to access public lands for community gardens

- 12.3 Create clear policies that support the development of community kitchens, outdoor bake ovens, community cooking classes and other food-oriented activities that support social cohesion and food access, and create economic opportunities

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 who acquired 16 food-related certificates and achieved a 75% permanent job placement record.

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 supports access to quality food through agricultural activities that are affordable, sustainable and educational by working with community agencies.



what we're doing

NOW HIRING
FULL TIME
WITH ADVANCEMENT
\$15-25/HR
FOR MORE INFO
79-3486
FULL TRAINING PROVIDED

FORKLIFT TRAINING
TARIO'S FORKlift TRAINING LEADER
 Approved Operator Certificate
 Saturday and Evening Classes
 Employment Assistance
 Order Picker Now Available
 Scissor Lift Training
 Social Services & HRSDC
 Funding Available



QUALITY JOBS & LIVING WAGES

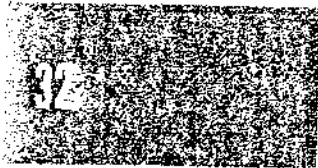
Quality jobs are those that provide a living wage, benefits, and a path for advancement. In the current economy, many workers are struggling to make ends meet. Quality jobs are those that provide a living wage, benefits, and a path for advancement.

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Quality jobs are those that provide a living wage, benefits, and a path for advancement. In the current economy, many workers are struggling to make ends meet. Quality jobs are those that provide a living wage, benefits, and a path for advancement.

How can we be progressive without quality jobs and living wages?



address immediate needs

13. RECOMMENDATION:

Advocate for adequate income supports and extend assistance for residents transitioning into secure employment.

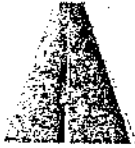
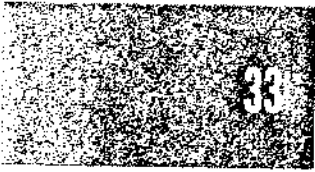
ACTIONS:

- 13.1 Better promote income support programs with the goal of increasing uptake for people in need
- 13.2 Provide start-up funds for newcomers and people leaving mental health institutions, hospitals, homelessness and the criminal justice system
- 13.3 Expand access to health benefits, including dental services, to those transitioning off Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program into stable employment
- 13.4 Expand access to child care, by increasing subsidies and creating models that meet the needs of low-income people in non-traditional working arrangements
- 13.5 Remove barriers that limit employment opportunities for people with experience in the justice system



43%
OF WORKERS ARE
PRECARIOUSLY EMPLOYED

20%
OF UNEMPLOYED TORONTO
RESIDENTS QUALIFY FOR
EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE



create pathways to prosperity

14. RECOMMENDATION:

Become a living wage employer and advocate to other employers.

ACTIONS:

- 14.1 Become a living wage employer and require City contractors to pay their workers a living wage
- 14.2 Champion the advantages of paying a living wage to all Toronto employers
- 14.3 Advocate for stronger employment standards that protect employees and are based on current labour market realities
- 14.4 Recognize the value of entry-level jobs for students

15. RECOMMENDATION:

Develop a job quality assessment tool.

ACTION:

- 15.1 Develop a job quality assessment tool, and apply it to City jobs, City contractor jobs, and procurement processes



drive systemic change

16. RECOMMENDATION:

Incent inclusive economic development throughout the city, particularly in areas of need, with an emphasis on strategies that leverage the City's economic power.

ACTIONS:

- 16.1 Design and implement a community benefits program for City purchasing and capital investments
- 16.2 Design and implement a City social procurement policy
- 16.3 Working with local anchor institutions, create local incubators that connect job seekers and start-up businesses with economic opportunities
- 16.4 Develop a community benefit program at Toronto Hydro and other City agencies
- 16.5 Support Business Improvement Areas and co-operatives in low-income areas in the city in order to enhance local business development

Current Address

Phone Number

Home

EMPLOYMENT DESIRED

(please keep in mind that

Time Full-Time or Management)

BANKER JIM DREAMS

Fortune's daughter's socks were shadowed with holes and I hated to take them. But I couldn't avoid 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 neighborhood stays white. Everything stains. Everything fades. Everything becomes old.

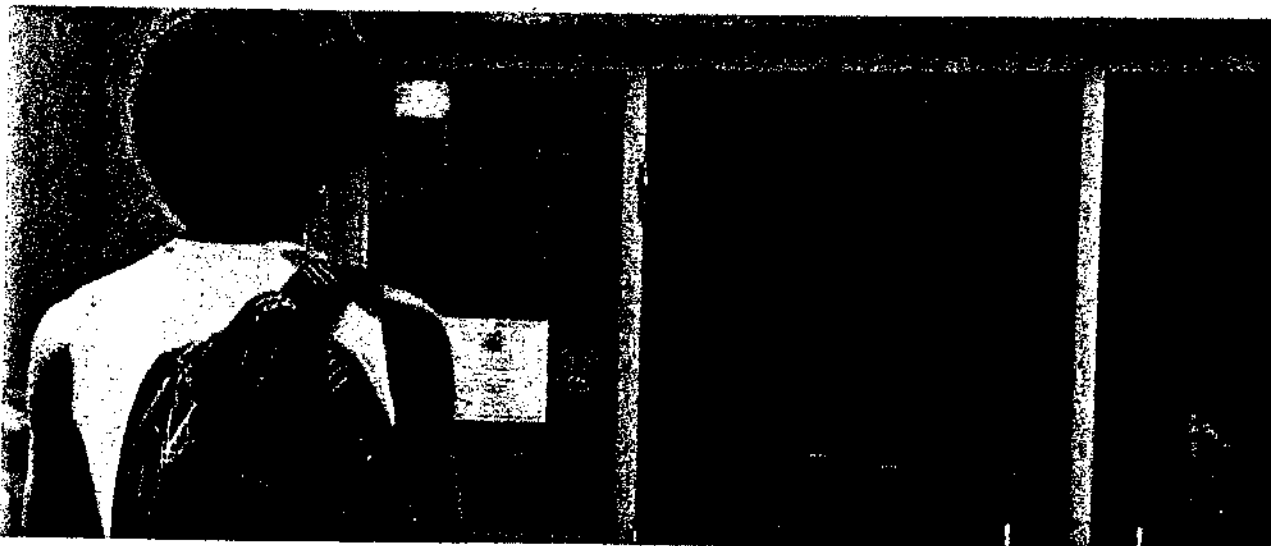
I've still kept the photo of a man in a photo album. I don't know how the old man gave me a year's worth of time. He had an easy smile with a look of a man who's seen a lot of things and knows how to deal with them. He was one of the three people I knew with extraordinary abilities. He could look up at the sky and see the stars and in the extra time he'd give me. He could see his own way of life and the way of others. She eventually learned to read and to see to you.

He still lived in her Fortune's old home. I don't know where he is now.

I was trying to find my mind. I just wanted to find her before someone from the neighborhood did. Of the cops. She was addicted to her own life, running away. In high school, that's how I got into trouble. I was the fastest because when I ran, I wasn't running toward the finish line. I was running away. Away from the holes in my walls. Away from my mom and her needles.

From across the street, I could see him take off his coat and throw it by the side of the line. I thought she had already become a walking shadow. I didn't see the coat or the residue of the coat on the ground. He had a look that said, "I don't want you to see this." I don't know how long it took for me to see him. I don't know how long it took for me to see him. I don't know how long it took for me to see him. I don't know how long it took for me to see him.

He was so much more than...



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 branch programs and collect ops. 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.

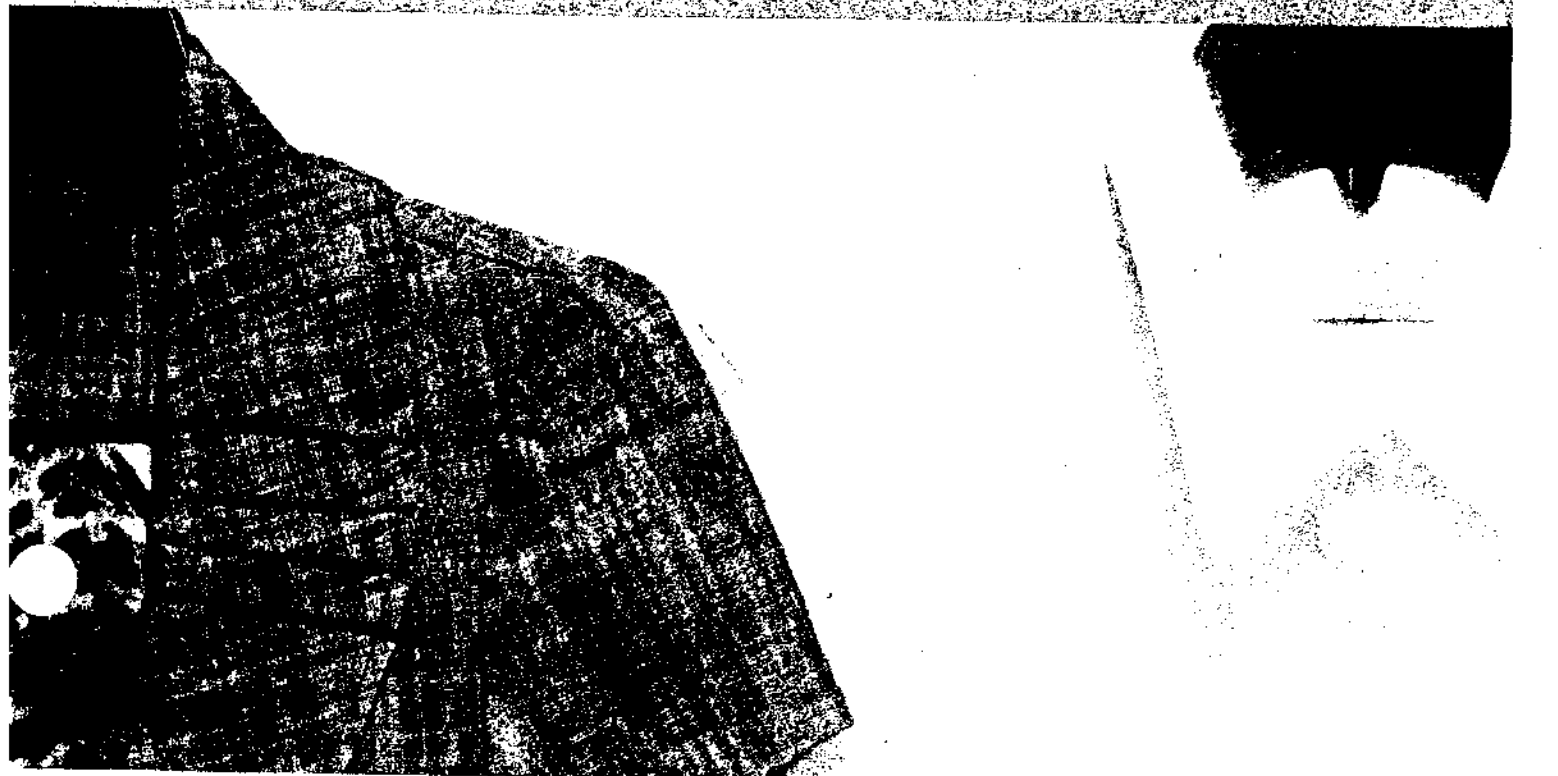
what we're doing

Calvin is a 25 year old Hispanic man is getting ready for his job interview. Calvin applied for a clothing store that was looking for the supervisor. The store manager for the store that Calvin previously worked as a supervisor of a clothing store for two years. Calvin has a college degree in retail management and has a job in retail management. The same day he finished his interview, he received a phone call from the manager of the store that he wants to meet him because he looks like the perfect match for the job.

At Calvin arrives to the store he finds and approaches the manager. The manager says that he is interested in Calvin. Calvin says no, but explains that he is the manager of the store. The manager looks at Calvin with disgust and says "No, he Calvin is Black". Calvin says yes and shakes his hands with the manager. The manager says he does not want to shake his hands because he is white. Calvin then says that he is a Hispanic man. Calvin says "No, I am not Hispanic, I am from Chicago". Calvin says "Before Calvin asks the manager to ask him a question, the manager quickly says that they do not hire anyone of the manager."

Calvin sees the manager's friend Harry at the mall. Calvin then asks Harry how he got the job. Harry says that he went for a job interview at a clothing store. He got the job. Harry says that he was surprised that he got the job because he only has a 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 is it like this?"

By Henry Garcia, NY State Editor, Gomez Calicut





INSTITUTIONAL 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.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

17. Oversight: Create a mechanism for designing, implementing, and evaluating poverty reduction and inclusive growth initiatives across

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.

the city, which also coordinates new efforts with existing City strategies, regional agendas, provincial strategies and federal priorities

18. Better Measuring & Monitoring of Needs & Outcomes: Ensure that measuring and monitoring is based on useful, meaningful and disaggregated data and not limited to the data currently collected. Ensure reporting and measuring considers both city- and neighbourhood-level outcomes
19. Poverty-Sensitive Budgeting: Create a mechanism that encourages a decision-making environment in which the impact of budget choices on poverty is duly considered

20. Community Wealth Creation: Leverage the economic power of the city to create jobs, support local businesses, and strengthen the economic resilience of neighbourhoods across the city.

21. Change Management & Staff Training: Changing a large organization takes time. Top-down directives do not create change. Ongoing staff training, leadership building and clear and consistent communication are some of the tools required to implement a change in operations, behaviours and outcomes. Commit to engage staff in the development of effective change management strategies

POVERTY

wake up every day. I am thankful to the most high for that, always. Today will be another day like yesterday, a struggle to get to my underpaying job - a struggle just to eat.

Looking out of my window I can see the police and other emergency vehicles. Not this script again not another young black man gunned down by other black young men or the cops.

I am tired of this. Every day I can feel the rope tightening around my neck. Waking up to no food and no money. It seems the harder I work, the poorer I get. The harder I work, the more bills I have to pay. Corporate CEO's own our government and no one but the poor seems to care. Now this.

I reach outside. It's a frenzy of crying family members. News reporters paint pictures of the poor as minorities who live as savages in modern society. The upper class eats it up and asks for seconds, even thirds.

They judge us as the worst, not giving a conscious thought to all the things we poor have given them, socially, culturally and even sexually. We live in a society that acts as though we are divergent from the norm, one that will force-feed their own image of how you should be.

All they do is come up with reasons why we act this way. Why we are in this position? They don't understand because they have disconnected from their humanity.

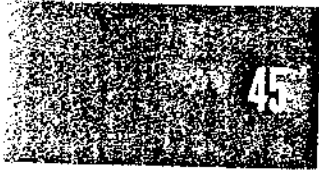
Despite everything, we poor have something they don't. The truth about what we are and who we are, all that we have given and all that we have taken. We are poor, yes, but we are rich in our hearts. Our pain is shared. So keep painting us as savages, continue to keep us down, judge us, kill us, for you are ignorant and cowardly. You will never change society.

Man, I'm hungry. Sucks to be poor.

by Mister Tavian

notice to readers

TO Prosperity: Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy was developed with creative contributions from Torontonians. These creative works are intended to help readers understand what it is like to live in poverty in Toronto.



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|---|--|
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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
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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
Andrea (Drea) Walsh
Khadiija Sayoadi
Abdi Mohamed

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Kobe Akanni James
Heavy Steve AKA Steven Rafael Gomez
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