

Regional council requests report on how it's been dealing with poverty

In response to a recent Toronto Star series of stories describing income disparity and poverty in Peel, Regional council last week directed staff to draft a report chronicling the past two decades of economic and population growth trends, and identifying the benefits and challenges that have accompanied the change.

The issues mentioned in the Star stories have been on council's agenda for years, according to a news release issued Friday by the Region. A strategic review of poverty in 2006, together with continuing coverage by Peel media sources on the local socioeconomic climate, identified a growing component of Peel's population slipping into poverty, in particular immigrants, minorities, female seniors and families with young children.

While there has been strong and diversified economic and social growth throughout Peel, fluctuating trends in trade, industry and finance in Canada and around the world have also had an impact on the region. Peel has been receiving almost 30,000 newcomers a year - a dynamic evolution that is positive for Peel and Canada, but that is not without its challenges.

"Regional council routinely makes good and informed decisions that make a difference at the Regional level," said Regional Commissioner of Human Services Janet Menard. "We try to keep pace with growing demand by making changes and improvements locally and working with other levels of government to raise awareness and understanding of the need."

The staff report will build on existing research and work conducted by the Region in collaboration with community partners.