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INTRODUCTION

Influence of neighbourhood-based agencies in improving quality of life

In 2015, The Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton (SPRC) partnered with three social housing providers, Hamilton East Kiwanis Non-Profit Homes Inc., Victoria Park Community Homes Inc. and McGivney Community Homes Inc., to explore the potential of initiating a resident engagement initiative in Hamilton’s South Mountain neighbourhoods of Barnstown, Butler, Chappel East and West. As a result of the partnership, the SPRC received a two year grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to create a resident engagement project that would have a benefit to the local community and broader positive impact to the individual residents in the neighbourhood.

Kiwanis, Victoria Park and McGivney Homes have a combined total of 394 residential units in the identified South Mountain neighbourhood area. This specific area was chosen by the social housing providers for this project as it was identified as an area with a higher concentration of social housing units and lower levels of community engagement opportunities.

Social housing providers have historically had an important role in community development initiatives to support residents. Over time, pressures related to an aging stock of housing and changes in funding have meant that the role of a social housing provider has shifted.

Beyond typical landlord supports, many social housing providers also have a mandate to engage and support their tenants in supporting their overall health, wellness and connection to community. The Ontario Non Profit Housing Association identifies the restoring community development initiatives as a core component of social housing management in strengthening social housing communities:

“Community development is the key to turning a series of units into a community, to fostering a neighbourly and inclusive atmosphere, to offering meaningful activities to those who rarely leave the building, and to giving tenants some measure of control over the matters that affect them. It is also an effective way to harness the power of tenants to support each other.”

The City of Hamilton’s Housing and Homelessness Action Plan (HHAP) also identifies the importance of community building efforts in improving quality of neighbourhoods and supporting residents in safe, suitable housing that meets their needs. The HHAP’s core value of Place and Neighbourhood includes critical investment strategies centred on community building efforts:

“Plan and implement community building efforts that will develop a ‘sense of community’ in all social housing (e.g. activities that will positively enhance neighbour relations)”

“Some people may not feel safe in their housing. Negative social dynamics can play a role in diminishing housing quality, so positive community building to improve the social quality of housing communities needs to be encouraged.”

Development of this neighbourhood profile report

Kiwanis Homes Inc. Victoria Park Community Homes Inc. and McGivney Community Homes Inc. partnered with the SPRC to create a project that would have a benefit to the South Mountain community and have a broader positive impact to the residents in the neighbourhood.

This collaboration came as a result of the noted improvements in other neighbourhoods through the work of previous and ongoing community development efforts in the city, including Hamilton’s Neighbourhood Action Strategy. Seeing the potential impact of resident-led asset based community development, the collaborating partners determined that a similar approach could have a positive impact in Hamilton’s South Mountain neighbourhoods.

This demographic profile of the South Mountain neighbourhood has been developed to aid the social housing providers, the South Mountain Community Engagement Initiative, the community developer for South Mountain, the resident-led Planning Team, as well as other stakeholders to better understand the neighbourhood they serve. We anticipate that an additional use of this profile will be to help residents and agencies bolster the arguments they make to funders and donors about the realities of their communities and leverage additional investments for community-based responses.

For the purpose of this report, the South Mountain neighbourhood includes eight city neighbourhoods: Barnstown, Butler, Chappel East, Chappel West, Ryckmans, Allison, Eleanor, and Broughton West. This broader area is bounded by Upper James Street, Stone Church Road East, Upper Ottawa Street, and Twenty Road East. The focus neighbourhoods that the South Mountain Community Engagement initiative is working in includes Barnstown, Butler, Chappel East and West. This focus area is bounded by Upper Wellington Street, Stone Church Road East, Upper Sherman Avenue and Twenty Road East. The rationale for including all neighbourhoods is due to census data; the eight neighbourhoods combined together make up four census tract areas, which is how data used in this report was presented. Table 1: Population, household and family estimates reports on the four focus neighbourhoods, while South Mountain includes all eight neighbourhoods. For the remainder of the report, South Mountain refers to the eight neighbourhoods listed above.

Map 1 on the following page highlights the geographic location and boundaries of both the broader South Mountain neighbourhood and the Community Engagement project’s focus neighbourhoods.
South Mountain boundaries and project focus area

Legend

- South Mountain project focus area: Barnstown, Bulte, Chappel West and Chappel East planning units
- South Mountain boundaries used for data in profile (based on Census tract boundaries)

Selection of content for neighbourhood profile and data sources

This profile is meant to highlight some demographic, income and health data available for the South Mountain neighbourhood. The selected indicators are based in large part on what service providers often ask the SPRC for when preparing strategic plans or grant proposals: age breakdowns, poverty rates, cultural diversity, educational attainment and housing, as well as health outcomes.

The profile is presented with comparisons between the neighbourhood, the mountain, and the overall City of Hamilton. To facilitate these comparisons, all data are presented as proportions of the overall population, which are available in Table 1.

Table 1: Population, household and family estimates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Focus neighbourhoods</th>
<th>South Mountain</th>
<th>Mountain</th>
<th>City of Hamilton</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>9,655</td>
<td>22,268</td>
<td>150,220</td>
<td>519,949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total households</td>
<td>2,875</td>
<td>6,790</td>
<td>55,685</td>
<td>203,810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Families with children under 18 at home</td>
<td>1,121*</td>
<td>2,650</td>
<td>14,275</td>
<td>104,805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Social Housing Units</td>
<td>544</td>
<td>589</td>
<td>4,086</td>
<td>12,676</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data source from 2011 Census, and City of Hamilton Affordable Housing building selection form (2010). * Families with children under 18 for the focus neighbourhoods is estimated based on South Mountain data, due to that variable not being available for custom geographies.

The demographic data is from the last Census and National Household Survey (2011). While the data are now five years old, the census is the only source for detailed data at the neighbourhood level. 2016 Census and National Household Survey data will not be fully released until late-2017.

Due to the lower quality data available from the 2011 National Household Survey, the poverty data in this report is from the 2006 census, which is a more reliable data source for income at the neighbourhood level. The poverty line used for this data is the Low Income Cut Off (before tax) as the poverty line. More information about poverty statistics and how they are calculated is available in the Incomes and Poverty in Hamilton report on the SPRC website. The poverty data is based on household incomes from 2005 and this table shows the low income thresholds use to calculate the poverty rates, as well as what the equivalent low income thresholds were in 2014 dollars.

Table 2. Low Income Cut off (LICO) poverty measure, before tax (Statistics Canada)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2005 $</th>
<th>2014 equivalent $</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 person</td>
<td>$20,791</td>
<td>$24,328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 persons</td>
<td>$25,884</td>
<td>$30,286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 persons</td>
<td>$32,821</td>
<td>$37,234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 persons</td>
<td>$38,635</td>
<td>$45,206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 persons</td>
<td>$43,819</td>
<td>$51,272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 persons</td>
<td>$49,420</td>
<td>$57,826</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 persons or more</td>
<td>$55,022</td>
<td>$64,381</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other data include selected indicators from The Hamilton Spectator’s Code Red series. The health data from Code Red includes usage of health care facilities (such as hospital admissions and emergency rooms visits) and death records (to calculate average age of death). The average age of death has often been reported as “life expectancy”, which is a similar measure but not an accurate term, as life expectancy data is much more difficult to calculate and not available by neighbourhoods. The age at death data in Code Red is simply the average age at time of death of all the people in each neighbourhood who died in the 2006-2008 time period. It is important to note that average age of death is influenced by a number of factors beyond residents’ health, including the age distribution of each neighbourhood. For example, a neighbourhood with a higher concentration of seniors’ residences, will naturally have a higher average age of death than a nearby neighbourhood, just because there are so many more older residents. For South Mountain, there are fewer seniors and a higher proportion of children under 18 years of age compared to the City of Hamilton. The average age of death, in this particular case, will be lower than the average for the City of Hamilton.

High school completion rates are also from the Hamilton Spectator’s Code Red series. The Hamilton Spectator was provided this data by the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board and the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board, and the numbers represent combined data from both boards.

The data in this report is a complement to another neighbourhood profiles report the SPRC completed for the United Way of Burlington and Greater Hamilton which aided the City of Hamilton’s Neighbourhood Action Strategy (NAS). The Neighbourhood Report is available on the SPRC website and offers demographics of 11 neighbourhoods across Hamilton: Beasley, Crown Point, Jamesville, Keith, Lansdale, McQuesten, Quigley Road, Riverdale, Rolston, South Sherman, and Stinson.

This neighbourhood profile paints just a small part of the diversity and complexity of the neighbourhood and does not touch upon other important indicators of neighbourhood health such as community assets, safety or connections between neighbours. This profile should not be used in isolation, but it is hoped that this report offers some frequently requested data that can be helpful to residents, service providers and funders in their efforts to improve quality of life for all residents.

**National Household Survey data quality concerns**

This report includes data from Statistics Canada’s National Household Survey (NHS). The NHS is a voluntary survey and was introduced in 2011 as a replacement for the mandatory long-form Census. The NHS has produced lower quality data than available previously through the Census, especially at the community level and for smaller population groups. The SPRC follows the recommendation of the Social Planning Network of Ontario and only uses NHS data when higher quality data is not available.

Statistics Canada has said their evaluations of NHS data “support the general reliability of the data at the national, provincial and territorial levels” but they have not extended this confidence to using NHS data at the community level. They have noted that the “risk of error in NHS estimates increases for lower levels of geography and smaller population.” NHS data in this report is not compared to previous Census data due to changes in methodology between the two data sources. Statistics Canada’s indicator of data quality for the NHS is the “global non-response rate”, which combines how many households refused to participate in the NHS as well as households who only answered some of the NHS questions. The global non-response rate was 29.0% for the City of Hamilton compared to an average of 26.1% across Canada. Data from the NHS in this report should be interpreted with caution.
NEIGHBOURHOOD PROFILE OF SOUTH MOUNTAIN
The South Mountain neighbourhood has a higher proportion of children and youth under 20 years of age when compared to Hamilton as a whole (31% vs. 23%).

There is a smaller proportion of seniors living in South Mountain (8%) compared to the mountain and city as a whole (16%).

South Mountain and the city have similar proportions of adults between the ages of 20-64.

Those aged 35-64 make up the larger portion of age groups in South Mountain as well as Hamilton as a whole.

Almost three in ten South Mountain families with children under the age of 18 are headed by lone parents (both female and male combined). The majority of families with children under 18 are headed by married parents at 68%, similar to Hamilton.

More than one in four South Mountain residents identify with a visible minority group, which is higher than the average for the mountain and the city at less than one in four.

The three visible minority groups that South Mountain residents most identify with are Black (5.4%), South Asian (3.9%), and Filipino (3.6%).
NEIGHBOURHOOD PROFILE SOUTH MOUNTAIN

INCOME AND HOUSING

HOUSING AND MOBILITY

KEY FINDINGS

The vast majority of homes in South Mountain are owned compared to the city as a whole (by 15%).

Apartment buildings with 5 or more storeys make up almost 1% of South Mountain, compared to 16% for the city. Apartment buildings of all storeys, including duplexes, make up 2% of South Mountain occupied dwellings.

There are fewer renters living in unaffordable housing in South Mountain (22%) than Hamilton as a whole (43%) due to the number of social housing units available. NHS data shows that almost half of South Mountain renters live in different types of social housing.

South Mountain residents are slightly less mobile (3% - 4% less likely) than the city as a whole. The majority of South Mountain and Hamilton residents stay in their homes for more than five years.

The 2006 Census was used to capture poverty rates for this profile. South Mountain as a whole was comparable to the city of Hamilton (17%-18%).

South Mountain seniors had a 5% lower poverty rate compared to Hamilton. South Mountain children under 6 years of age, however, had a 6% higher poverty rate compared to the rest of the Mountain and Hamilton.

It is strongly suspected that current poverty rates for South Mountain are lower than the 2006 data.
**KEY FINDINGS**

South Mountain residents aged 25-64 have a 5% higher college level completion rate compared to the average for the city (31% vs. 26%).

South Mountain residents have a 4% lower university level completion rate compared to the city (18% vs. 22%).

More than 7% of South Mountain students do not complete their high school diploma, which is slightly higher than the city's average (5.9%).
KEY FINDINGS

It is important to note that the average age of death is not a life expectancy rate but is instead the average age at time of death of all the people who died in the 2006-2008 time period. The lower average age of death for South Mountain (69.8) compared to the city average reflects the particularly small proportion of seniors (aged 65 and over) in South Mountain (8%), while Hamilton as a whole has a senior population of 16%.

South Mountain residents are less likely to visit an emergency room as compared to the city. On average, there are 153 less emergency room visits per thousand residents in South Mountain compared to the city.

5.4% of South Mountain residents visiting an emergency room report having no family doctor, slightly less than the average for the city as a whole (6.2%).

Data sources:
Population Characteristics, Housing and Mobility, and Education from 2011 NHS and Census Data.
Poverty Rates from 2006 Census Data.
Health from The Hamilton Spectator’s 2010 Code Red Report.