Staff Report for Committee of the Whole Meeting

Date of Meeting: May 7, 2019
Report Number: SRCM.19.01

Department: **Office of the City Manager**
Division: **Strategic Initiatives and Communication Services**

Subject: 2019 Socio-Economic Study

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to update Council on the findings of the Richmond Hill 2019 Socio-Economic Study.

Recommendation(s):

a)   That the staff report on the 2019 Socio-Economic Study (SRCAO.19.01) be received for information.

Contact Person:

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Report Approval:

Submitted by: Meeta Gandhi, Director of Strategic Initiatives and Communication Services

Approved by: Neil Garbe, City Manager

All reports are electronically reviewed and/or approved by the Division Director, Treasurer (as required), City Solicitor (as required), Commissioner, and City Manager. Details of the reports approval are attached.

Background:

In 2008, Richmond Hill released its first Socio-Economic Study. This document used data from the 2006 Census as a primary source of information and provided details on the people, communities, businesses and context of Richmond Hill. In 2015, this document was updated based on new 2011 Census and National Household Survey (NHS) data, and was expanded to include additional information about Richmond Hill, reviewing what had changed since the release of the first study.

All data from the most recently completed 2016 Census was available by the end of 2017. As a result, the 2019 Socio-Economic Study (Appendix A) was created with data from the 2016 Census, along with additional data resources. The 2019 Socio-Economic Study aims to answer the following four questions:

- What is the make-up of Richmond Hill?
- How does Richmond Hill compare to other municipalities in York Region and the Greater Toronto Area?
- How has Richmond Hill changed over time?
- What opportunities are there for Richmond Hill in the future?

The 2019 Socio-Economic Study is based largely on data from the 2016 Census, but also draws on additional information from other sources, including:

- Tax-Filer information available through the Income Statistics Division of Statistics Canada, based on annual income tax returns;
- 2016 Transportation for Tomorrow Survey, a comprehensive travel survey conducted in the Greater Golden Horseshoe Area completed by the University of Toronto once every five years; and
- York Region Annual Employment Surveys, completed by York Region, an annual database inventory of businesses for each municipality within York Region.

The 2019 Socio-Economic Study provides an updated picture of Richmond Hill, allowing for a better understanding of our community. It will help inform and guide future City plans and policy decisions. The 2019 Socio-Economic Study is also an important tool for academic and private sector market research.

Staff also prepared complimentary Ward-specific socio-economic profiles which will be made available on the City's website along with the attached Socio-Economic Study 2019.

Discussion and Findings

Many of the trends and findings in the 2019 Socio-Economic Study are consistent with those in the previous 2015 Socio-Economic Study. Similar to the 2015 Study, the 2019 Socio-Economic Study data is grouped according to five themes: demographics,

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economics, transportation, housing, and affordability. A summary of key findings for each of these five sections is provided below.

<u>Demographics</u>

Richmond Hill's population continues to increase, although the rate of growth has slowed, as is the trend in York Region overall. Between 2011 and 2016, the City's population increased 5.1% (9,481 people) to 195,022. The City's population is aging. The median age of Richmond Hill residents is 42.4, up from 39.8 in 2011. The largest proportion of the population falls within the ages of 40-59, making up 33.1% of the City's inhabitants. The proportion of residents aged 50 and up increased between 2011 to 2016, while the proportion of residents aged 24 and under has decreased in the same in the same period. The number of households in Richmond Hill increased by 5,460 from 2011 to 2016, bringing the total number of households to 64,115. The most common household type is a one-family household. Richmond Hill also has a growing amount of multi-generational households. The City's average household size is 3 persons, and 2-person households are most prevalent.

Richmond Hill remains a culturally diverse community with an increasing immigrant population. There are several measures of cultural diversity reported by the Census. In 2016, 57.4% of the City's residents were immigrants, meaning they were born outside of Canada. This is the second highest proportion of immigrant populations in the GTA (next to Markham). The top three countries of birth for immigrants to Richmond Hill are China (21.5%), Iran (15.6%) and Hong Kong (11.7%). Ethnic origin measures a person's ancestral roots. The top three ethnic origins reported by Richmond Hill residents are Chinese (30.2%), Iranian (10.9%) and Italian (9.9%). In total, 60% of residents self-identify as a visible minority, an increase from 52.9% in 2011. Next to English, the top three mother tongues of Richmond Hill residents are Chinese, Farsi, and Russian. While many Richmond Hill residents speak other languages, 93.9% of all people living in the City can converse in English.

Richmond Hill remains the most educated community in York Region, with over half of residents aged 25-64 having earned a university certificate or above. Significant proportions of Richmond Hill's labour force are employed in professional, scientific and technical services (13.2%), retail trade (11.3%), finance and insurance (9.0%), health and social service industries (9.0%) and manufacturing (7.7%). However, the proportion of residents in manufacturing continues to decline in Richmond Hill and Ontario in general. Richmond Hill's unemployment rate is 6.9%, slightly higher than York Region's rate of 6.4%. In 2016, Richmond Hill's labour force participation rate (the proportion of residents aged 15+ who are working or looking for work) of 65.1% was the 2nd lowest in York Region. Decreased participation rates are a provincial and national trend, influenced by many contributing factors, including unprecedented population growth among older Canadians coupled with a decreasing proportion of youth. Consistent with the national trend, Richmond Hill's high proportion of seniors who are no longer in the workforce is likely influencing the City's labour market participation rate.

Household incomes in Richmond Hill continue to increase. Richmond Hill's average household income ($115,526) increased 6% between 2011 and 2016. The median household income ($88,353) increased by only 1%, suggesting that top earners are making more income in 2016 than in 2011. Between 2011 and 2016, the proportion of households making less than $40,000 per year increased, as did the proportion of households earning more than $100,000 per year, while the proportion of middle-income households ($40,000 - $99,999) decreased. The 2017 United Way report "The Opportunity Equation Update" highlights that this trend is being observed by the GTA and Ontario in general.

Economic Characteristics

Richmond Hill has a diverse economy with the highest proportion of jobs in health care and social assistance (13.1%); retail trade (11.7%); and professional, scientific and technical services (11.1%). In 2016, the number of Richmond Hill-based jobs was 67,866, an increase of 7,841 jobs since 2011. In 2011, Richmond Hill had 323 jobs per 1,000 residents, which increased to 348 per 1,000 residents in 2016. Richmond Hill's economy is driven primarily by small businesses (19 employees or less); however, the proportion of medium-sized businesses (20 – 99 employees) has increased since the last Census.

Transportation

The personal vehicle remains the dominant mode of transportation for Richmond Hill residents for commuting and recreational travel, with 77.4% of residents in City driving themselves to work every day. Similar to residents of Richmond Hill, people who work in Richmond Hill (but may or may not live in Richmond Hill) also predominantly use their vehicles to commute, with 83.2% of workers driving to work.

The most common location of work for City residents is the City of Toronto (36.5%), followed by Richmond Hill (27.1%) and Markham (13.0%). Employees of Richmond Hill businesses are most commonly from Richmond Hill (35.4%) City of Toronto (21.1%) and Markham (13.6%).

Commuting patterns related to public transit have shifted somewhat. After increases in the proportion of Richmond Hill residents using public transit for work between 2001 and 2011, there has been a decrease in residents reporting use of public transit to commute to work between 2011 (16.4%) and 2016 (14.6%). Conversely, there has been an increase in the proportion of people using public transit to get to work in Richmond Hill, from 5.6% in 2011 to 6.6% in 2016. When compared to other similar suburban GTA municipalities, residents of Richmond Hill have similar commuting patterns as residents of these comparator municipalities.

Traffic congestion remains a top issue in York Region and the broader GTA. Richmond Hill residents continue to adjust their commute times, with an increasing amount of residents leaving for work before 7 a.m. and after 8:30 a.m. Additionally, since 2001,

there has been a steady increase in the proportion of Richmond Hill residents who work from home, have no fixed workplace, or work outside of Canada, and a decreasing proportion of residents working at a usual place (such as an office or warehouse).

<u>Housing Profile</u>

The majority of Richmond Hill residents in 2016 were homeowners (82.4%). Dwellings in Richmond Hill remain relatively new, with a limited number of homes requiring major repairs. While single-detached homes continue to make up over half of Richmond Hill's housing stock, there has been an increase in the proportion of semi-detached houses, townhomes/row houses, and apartments/condominiums. Housing prices in Richmond Hill have increased significantly in Richmond Hill over the past decade. Average resale housing prices are 6.3% higher than the York Region average, and are the second highest of York Region municipalities (behind King Township). The average sale price of a single-detached home was just over $1 million. Rental prices in Richmond Hill are high when compared to several other municipalities in the GTA, while vacancy rates remain low. This indicates an inadequate supply of rental housing.

<u>Housing Affordability</u>

Nearly 1 in 5 households (18.7%) were identified as low-income households in 2016. A household is considered low-income if its income is less than half of the median income of all households. Housing affordability is a predominant concern across the GTA, including Richmond Hill. According to the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), households spending more than 30% of their total gross income on shelter costs may be struggling with housing affordability. Based on this threshold, the proportion of residents who are experiencing affordability issues has increased from 31.1% in 2011 to 37.7% in 2016. Richmond Hill has the highest proportion of households experienced housing affordability issues of all York Region municipalities.

Financial/Staffing/Other Implications:
There are no financial or staffing implications associated with this report.

Relationship to the Strategic Plan:
The Socio-Economic Study is a background document that supports many City strategies, policies and plans. The Study provides useful information about Richmond Hill's residents that relate to objectives that aim to achieve progress towards all four of the Strategic Plan goals.

Conclusion:
Richmond Hill's 2019 Socio-Economic Study provides information about our community. It aims to answer questions about who our residents are, how the City compares to other municipalities and within the broader GTA context, what has changed over time and what opportunities may exist in the future. The key findings from this Study will be

used to inform existing and future City plans, programs and services. This Study will be made available to residents, businesses and community organizations on the City's website.

Attachments:

The following attached documents may include scanned images of appendixes, maps and photographs. If you require an alternative format please call the contact person listed in this document.

- Appendix A: 2019 Socio-Economic Study

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRCM.19.01 2019 Socio-Economic Study.docx
Attachments:	- Richmond Hill Socio-Economic Study Final Draft.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Apr 24, 2019

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Meeta Gandhi - Apr 24, 2019 - 12:19 PM

Neil Garbe - Apr 24, 2019 - 2:03 PM