

HAMILTON PUBLIC LIBRARY INNER-CITY SERVICE PLAN

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1 INTRODUCTION

This report, presented in February, has been updated to reflect the Board discussion and subsequent discussions both internally and with the community. It provides an overview of the longer term service development possibilities. The recommendations, specific to the area of the city served by the Picton branch, are included in a separate memo.

The City of Hamilton has identified poverty reduction as a priority. This report proposes service changes to improve access to library services to residents in the inner city. In providing many services to different population groups, the Library has found that targeting services to specific groups is more successful and more likely to play a transformative role in individual lives than focusing on underutilized building-based services.

Hamilton Public Library continuously reviews service delivery to meet strategic needs within its community. Library services evolve, providing the opportunity to make adjustments optimizing resources and providing the flexibility to respond to changing needs. In adjusting the service mix, the service goals and key components of library service remain the same, but how they are delivered is changed. Because resources are limited, and because of the current economic climate, it is not only necessary, but imperative, to examine the current allocation of resources and reallocate them where they have the most impact.

Our primary goal is to provide library services for underserved populations and extend the library's services to people who have difficulty getting to the library because of disability, language, or economic isolation. This population has diverse needs, skills and backgrounds and may have no other access to new technologies, computer training, or library resources.

The service goals remain:

- Provide inner-city residents with accessible services targeted to their needs
- Make it easier for the residents of these neighbourhoods to use library materials.
- Provide more computer access to neighbourhood residents (including related training).
- Provide literacy-focused programs.
- Contribute to the social fabric of the community.

The key components of library service remain:

- Loan of materials
- Access to information
- Literacy support and development (including programming for all ages)
- Provision of computers for personal computing, including training
- Provision of public spaces

1.1 BOUNDARIES OF THE "INNER CITY"

This report focuses on the area surrounding the Central Library and reaching eastward towards Kenilworth and Red Hill branches. It includes neighbourhoods such as Central, Beasley, Landsdale, Gibson, Stiple, Stinson, North-end, and Riverdale. It recognizes that there are similar areas on the mountain which could also benefit from similar service adjustments, but they have not been addressed in this report.

Inner city Hamilton has been loosely defined as the area from the 403 to Centennial Parkway. This area of the city is well-served by library buildings: Central, Picton, Barton, Kenilworth and Red Hill.

It includes the following census tract neighbourhoods: Central, Beasley, Strathcona, North End East and West, Keith, Gibson, Landsdale, Stipley, Corkdale, Stinson, Crown Point, Parkdale East and West, McQuesten, Riverdale East and West, Kentley,

This area of the city accounts for 56% of the sq. ft. of public library space in the city, and 30% of the City's population¹ lives in this area. Libraries include: Barton (6,272, sq. ft.), Central Library (146,000 sq ft.), Kenilworth (8,000 sq. ft), Red Hill (11,760 sq. ft.), Picton (3,172 sq. ft.) There are also several bookmobile stops.

1.2 POVERTY IN HAMILTON: SPECIFIC AREAS TO BE TARGETED

Map 1: Average Individual Income by Census Tract (2005)

This map indicates that almost the entire inner city has an average income of less than 80% of the City average.

Two census tracts stand out – Central and Beasley – as having the lowest income levels less than 60% of the City average in the city.

Map 2: Prevalence of Low income before Taxes by Census Tract, 2006

This map, illustrates the stratification of income levels.

- Beasley and Central are the lowest income neighbourhoods with 47% - 57% of residents having a low income. The Central Library is located within the Central census tract. (dark red on the map)
- Keith, Gibson, Corktown, St. Clair, Stinson, Parkdale East, Parkdale West, McQuesten, McQuesten West have 37.9% to 47.7% residents with low income. Barton Library is located within the Gibson tract. (red on the map).
- McAnulty, Crowne Point, Kentley, Riverdale East and Riverdale West, St. Clair, North End East and West, Stipley, Landsdale have 28% – 37.9% of the residents with low income. Kenilworth branch is located on the edge of the Crowne Point tract. Red Hill is located in the Kentley tract. (deep pink on the map)
- The remaining inner city census tracts have 18.1 – 28% of the residents with low incomes. (light pink on the map).

2 ALTERNATE LIBRARY SERVICES

2.1 TRADITIONAL LIBRARY SERVICE - THE COLLECTIONS

The Central Library Service Review indicated that Central role would increasingly focus on its immediate communities, and less emphasis would be placed on its role as a research/ reference library. The latter role has decreased in importance as customers have chosen to use their

¹ Source: *Hamilton Public Library Facilities Master Plan – Part 2B Application of Per Capita Measures and Library Standards to Branch Data.*

community branch libraries instead of travelling to a large central facility. This change is successful as 2008 saw the reversal of the long-term decline of the Central Library as it experienced an 18.5% increase. This increase, a reflection of economic times, is also due to the increase in non-print materials since a browsing DVD collection was introduced to Central in 2008. This change has been gradual, and by the time the Central Library renovations are complete in 2010, this transformation will be complete.

Central is, and will continue to be, a hub for specialized materials. Central continues to house some anchored (i.e. not shared) collections, specifically: non-fiction, multilingual materials and literacy materials. All other collections are shared and move freely between Central and the branches. An analysis of circulation indicates that Central is now circulating more non-print (50.8%) than print materials. Only Barton Library has a similar borrowing pattern (54.4% non-print). This heavy use of non-print indicates that non-print must be heavily emphasised in the inner-city core.

Red Hill Library provides a secondary hub for the East end with its anchored collections of job and career materials, literacy materials, and collections in many languages.

2.2 BOOKMOBILE SERVICE

Bookmobile service is the most viable and sustainable service option for small neighbourhoods. A weekly (two-hour) bookmobile stop typically serves a neighbourhood of approximately 5,000 people, and circulates 20,000 - 25,000 items. As customers are increasingly using holds to preselect the materials they borrow (25% of total circulation is holds-based) delivery-based services are a customer-convenient service option.

The bookmobile service currently has excess capacity and can take on additional stops (with some schedule modifications) at no additional cost to the system. New opportunities for service arise, since the schedule is reviewed regularly. Fridays, as well as a couple of afternoons and an evening slot are open for reassignment. Beyond this, additional staff (driver) would be required to make more use of the vehicle and serve more neighbourhoods and hamlets.

Customers of the bookmobile service highlight the friendliness and personalized service as the key reasons, in addition to convenience, for their continued loyalty to this service. In addition, the rotating popular collection located on the bookmobiles provides more browsing variety than the small branch-based collections.

In the future, wireless capabilities will expand to the vehicles. Both new bookmobiles have been designed to incorporate computers when wireless access becomes more prevalent.

The bookmobiles currently provide service to the Riverdale community (east of Centennial Parkway) and to the Stinson neighbourhood within the geographic boundaries of this report.

2.3 THE LIBRARY WITHOUT WALLS

Youth flock to the library for access to electronic gaming and other social-networking. Since service agencies which run homework help and youth programming often lack the resources to provide computers to support these new youth interests, the Library can help by providing equipment, technical assistance, and training to their staff on web-based homework assistance. The benefits of public computers can spread more widely if the service is no longer limited by library staffing and space constraints.

Recent changes to the Library's technology set-up permit the expansion of computers beyond the walls of the library. The *Useful* application uses one CPU to run up to 6 screens and technical support is provided by a 1 800 number. In addition, the repair and maintenance of equipment has been contracted to a 3rd party which can provide support for a much larger number of computers.

Together these changes make it feasible to consider and test the application of the “library without walls” at selected community agencies, and if successful expand this service expansion strategy.

2.4 COMPUTER TRAINING / MOBILE LAB

A trial of a mobile computer training lab has determined this to be a successful mechanism for public training (basic computer literacy and processing skills) for up to eight people at a time.. Self-improvement is cited as the main reason for participation. A permanently funded solution would enable the library to provide this service at branch libraries without training labs and at a variety of outside locations. The branch libraries have the high speed network access to implement this immediately. Dedicated equipment (8 laptops and a projector) has been purchased.

In the future, the mobile lab could be co-joined with bookmobile service so that the 2nd vehicle becomes the travelling mobile lab providing access to information to those communities which have less access than required.

A computer lab is needed at Red Hill Library to offer ongoing computer classes for the east-end community. This is dependent upon the transfer of equipment from another branch. Staff of the mobile computer lab would help to meet the training demand, as will the new Red Hill librarian position. The computers can be used when not used for training to meet the demand in this community for access to computers.

2.5 PROGRAMMING & OUTREACH

The current service delivery through the “bricks and mortar” model hampers the Library’s ability to provide outreach. There is an unmet demand for more programs delivered through partnerships with community agencies to meet the needs of diverse clients. The ability to meet demand is limited by staffing constraints.

Traditional library programming is evolving. The ongoing provision of outreach, services to families and newcomer services will continue. We continue to work with SISO and other agencies to provide such cooperative programs as settlement workers in the library (Central, Red Hill) and summer reading club programs at other agencies such as the Barton Library/ Eva Rothwell Centre program which ran the summer of 2008. The library participates in various *Best Start* initiatives and with other community groups.

The Library’s full range of specialized preschool story times, targeted to specific age groups (baby times, toddler times, preschool story-times) can only be held in libraries with sufficient population to support them. Drop-in programs for wider age groupings (no registration) are becoming more popular.

2.6 APPROPRIATE POLICIES

Circulation policies restrict borrowing when accumulated fines reach a threshold, or until lost materials are paid. These policies, applied universally, have the impact of being more detrimental to the residents of the very communities recognized as needing access to library materials. Some different ways of addressing this have been tested. For example, a fine forgiveness program targeted towards street youth was successful, but a more general one offered through the summer reading program did not work as expected in poorer areas of the city.

2.7 DONATIONS TO SOCIAL AGENCIES

The library recently provided two service agencies (Eva Rothwell Centre and St. Mathews House) with donated paperbacks, magazines and children's materials on the condition that they be given to or used by, their clientele. Both agencies run book exchange rooms on the honour principle. In highly transient communities this could become a preferred service option because it reduces the need to return materials on a preset schedule, and gets materials into the hands of those who have barriers to conventional library service.

2.8 JOB DISCOVERY CENTRES

These provincially-funded centres have been a heavily-used service at five branches, two, of which (Red Hill and Barton) are located within the inner-city area defined by this report.

2.9 BRINGING PEOPLE TO THE LIBRARY

An affordable alternative is to rent school buses to bring people to the library on a prescheduled weekly basis. Not only does this ensure that people can access services, it enables them to visit a larger library location with a broader range of services which they can access. Staff costs are limited because the larger facilities have sufficient resources to accommodate group visits. This service would be feasible for dense neighbourhoods where residents face barriers to getting to the public library because of barriers to public transit and poverty issues.

The annual cost of a weekly trip from a neighbourhood to the Central Library would be about \$7,000. This includes the pick-up and return to a location with an extended time for a visit. Additional pick-up locations are possible for a small added charge.

The *Core to Shore* bus runs each summer between the downtown and the Bayfront Park. This free bus service could be of benefit, helping the residents of the Picton branch catchment area get to the Central Library at no personal cost.

2.10 KIOSK ACCESS

Kiosk access to the library website and catalogue in non-library community settings such as Community Recreation Centres has been suggested for those who do not have a computer at home. A durable, low-maintenance equipment option needs to be tested, to ensure that it can withstand vandalism in low-supervised public spaces.

3 LONG-TERM ACTION PLAN

3.1 TRADITIONAL LIBRARY SERVICE – THE COLLECTIONS

Central Library's collection continues to evolve to meet changing needs. The heavy use of non-print, as demonstrated by Central and Barton, will be a consideration when collections are supplied within the inner city. In addition, multicultural materials, literacy, job and career materials are identified as collections required here. Red Hill Library will continue to be a secondary hub of similar materials for the east end of Hamilton.

Both Central and Barton continue to show high increases in the use, a reflection of the needs of the community. The use in January and February 2009 vs. the same months in 2008 show a 39% increase at Barton; 18.9% at Central. In contrast, Picton shows only a 1.8% increase, while Kenilworth and Red Hill are closer to the system average of 8.5%.

3.2 BOOKMOBILE SERVICE

The bookmobile is the preferred first step for providing more services to the inner city community. Within the existing staffing constraints, the bookmobile can service additional neighbourhoods at no additional costs, specifically:

- Fridays: the bookmobile service has rearranged schedules to make Fridays available
- Two existing neighbourhood slots will be available when Turner Park opens.

Beyond this, with additional staff, the vehicles could pick up stops during the mornings and evenings.

The bookmobiles have been using an off-line circulation system. Electronic Services will make it a priority to enable the bookmobiles to circulate materials on-line beginning with the first replacement vehicle before May 2009, and the 2nd replacement vehicle in June 2009. They will also work to ensure that there are two computers for public use on each vehicle to access the Internet, electronic resources and the Library catalogue. To fund this will require funding outside of the current departmental operating budget.

PROPOSED NEW STOPS

- *NORTH-END NEIGHBOURHOOD (PICTON) – JUNE 2009*

Propose: Two stops to be provided: a weekly neighbourhood stop (2 hours) weekly on either Monday or Thursdays (6 – 8 p.m.) and a bi-weekly stop at the Bennetto Family Literacy Centre (Wednesdays either 10 – 11:30 or 11:00 – 1:00 p.m.) The proposed weekly stop takes place at the busiest times the Picton branch is now open. Customers would be able to pick up their holds at either stop.

It is proposed that these stops begin in June 2009 to enable a smooth transition.

- *KEITH NEIGHBOURHOOD: EVA ROTHWELL CENTRE – JULY OR SEPTEMBER 2009*

This centre has indicated a desire to begin bookmobile service immediately with an after-school time slot the preferred option since the local children are currently bussed to nearby schools (Bennetto and Cathy Wever) and then dropped off here for after school programs.

- *GIBSON- LANDSDALE NEIGHBOURHOOD: WEVER HUB – FALL 2009*

This neighbourhood hub provides a range of services which the bookmobile will complement. There is parking, as the Community Health Bus makes regular visits. The Centre has not yet been contacted as a time slot has not yet been identified.

- *BEASLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD: BEASLEY COMMUNITY CENTRE – FALL, 2010*

When this centre opens in September 2010, there will be parking for mobile services such as the Community Health Bus and the Bookmobile.

3.3 THE LIBRARY WITHOUT WALLS

The Eva Rothwell Centre (Keith neighbourhood) has been approached and is interested in a partnership in which the library supplies computers for their after-school programs. The children from this neighbourhood (west of Wentworth St.) currently attend Bennetto school in the Picton neighbourhood. This can be initiated quickly with the new Useful application which uses 1 CPU to run up to 6 desktop applications concurrently. As indicated earlier, external technical support will make this a sustainable option.

3.4 COMPUTER TRAINING / MOBILE LAB

One of the most urgent system needs, is to deliver computer training (basic computer literacy and word processing skills) at branch libraries and community agencies where we plan to provide computers. A staff position is required to deliver this. Because of the cost (a minimum of \$40,000) any recommendations to add a position to the staff complement will be dealt with as part of future budget deliberations.

In addition, city-owned facilities will be investigated to determine suitability (appropriate space and either having existing high speed network or the capability to be added) for a partnership program. The Beasley Community Centre is opening in the fall 2010, with access to the school library and school computer lab after school hours. The Library has offered to partner with the Centre.

3.5 PROGRAMMING & OUTREACH

The Saltfleet librarian position has been re-described as a Red Hill/Saltfleet position to provide more programming and outreach in the east-end to the east-end community agencies, and to coordinate outreach library services with Central Library outreach staff.

The Picton neighbourhood schools are being transferred, effective spring, 2009, to the Central Library school visit list, as these schools already visit Central Library, at their request.

As part of an ongoing review of staff, the ability of Central (Children's and Adult), Bookmobile, Barton and Kenilworth branches to deliver more outreach programs for all ages will be examined, but realistically changes are not anticipated before the Central Library renovation is complete.

3.6 APPROPRIATE POLICIES

Library policies will be reviewed to determine how, on an individual basis, borrowing privileges can be reinstated for those in need while balancing the Library's need to have materials returned and the integrity of the collections agency processes maintained.

3.7 DONATIONS TO SOCIAL AGENCIES

Two centres (Eva Rothwell and St. Mathews House) received donations of materials removed from the collection in December. These have been well-used and distributed to residents of the community for their personal use. The Eva Rothwell Centre is interested in more materials. Materials could be offered selectively to other community agencies such as Kiwanis Boys and Girls House, Living Rock which providing direct services to their clientele.

3.8 JOB DISCOVERY CENTRES

Currently funded by the provincial government, these Centres are heavily used, and have positively influenced services. They have introduced new clientele to the branch libraries where they operate. Given the economic times, it may be necessary to modify these centres. There could be an impact on the operating budget, in 2010 or after. Annualized operating cost per centre is approximately \$ 80,000 - 90,000 (estimate).

3.9 BRINGING PEOPLE TO THE LIBRARY

At a cost of \$7,000 annually for a weekly visit, this is financially attractive. The demand for this needs to be assessed, and tested, perhaps in conjunction with a neighbourhood hub. This would

be a perfect partnership opportunity with a service club to support the services in a neighbourhood hub.

In addition, the *Core to Shore* Bus service operates between downtown and the Bayfront Park during the summer months. This free bus service will be included in any publicity regarding Picton Library as it will provide a means for neighbourhood residents to get to the Central Library at no personal cost.

3.10 KIOSK ACCESS

Priority will be placed on other means of providing access such as wireless access on the bookmobiles and provision of computers to community agencies will be a higher priority.

Meanwhile, on an ongoing basis, the costs, wiring connections and potential locations for off-site kiosks will be monitored and discussions with city staff regarding network considerations and feasibility or providing library kiosks in the lobby of recreation centres will take place. It is possible that the wireless bookmobile service and computers located in service agencies could make this option redundant.

4 POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS: SOME STARTING POINTS

Hamilton Public Library already partners with many agencies and is a member of several umbrella partnerships which address the needs and issues of the inner city, including:

- Hamilton Round Table for Poverty Reduction (over 60 initiatives are underway beginning at the grass roots level.)
- Best Start
- Early Literacy initiatives

The following is a partial list of the community agencies located near each branch, but there is overlap in service areas of the agencies and multiple branches.

CENTRAL LIBRARY

Current outreach to new immigrants reflects their desire to visit “the big library with the market” and not the neighbourhood libraries which may be more conveniently located. The reasons given are space for the whole family to spread out, and access to more services such as literacy tutoring, materials in many languages, longer hours, and the relationship with the market.

- Beasley Community Centre (Ferguson and Wilson) with after-hours access to Dr. J. E. Davey School – opening September 2010 (99 Ferguson, just south of Wilson). Currently children attend Sandford Ave Middle School until the new school is built. The facility is designed for local service buses such as a bookmobile. The school library/ computer lab will be open after hours. Developing a partnership to deliver appropriate joint services such as bookmobile service, and computer training is a priority. This neighbourhood hub has identified early learning and parenting as a priority.
- SISO (Settlement and Immigrant Services Organization)
- The Living Rock – provides outreach and services to street youth; (Central library staff currently works with this Centre.)
- Good Shepherd Shelter and Services – Cannon St.
- St. Mary’s After school/community program
- Good Shepherd/ Notre Dame School – outreach program on James. St North
- Early Years Centre, Queen St.

- St. Joseph's Immigrant Centre
- Public Health Dept. (Murray St.)

BARTON LIBRARY

- Eva Rothwell Centre (Keith neighbourhood; Wentworth St. north of Barton, near Burlington St.). Recently a large donation of used materials was given to this centre was positively received. They have given them to their customers who come for clothing and furnishings. Their breakfast club feeds children from both Bennetto and Cathy Wever schools. Consider: bookmobile service; mobile computer training lab. The Keith neighbourhood hub has identified health issues as an area of improvement.
- St. Mathews House (Gibson neighbourhood located 1 block from Barton Library). Recently a large donation of used materials was given to St. Mathews House to support their programs for families and adults in need. Consider the potential of providing computers to support their homework clubs; mobile computer training lab site.
- Wever Community Hub: (Cathy Wever Elementary School , 160 Wentworth St. North, and the Normal Pinky Lewis Recreation Centre) The Hub provides before and after school care through our Umbrella Family Daycare, after-school homework clubs, and parent education in cooperation with Public Health. Remedial instruction after school in literacy and numeracy and the offering of a variety of free after-school recreational activities in co-operation with the Pinky Lewis Recreation Centre is also provided. The Community Healthy Bus visits each week. This hub serves the Landsdale and Gibson neighbourhoods.

PICTON LIBRARY

- Bennetto School Family Literacy Centre (drop in program 4 mornings per week). Consider bookmobile stop and some cooperative programming for preschoolers and family members. This school is attended by children from the North End and Keith neighbourhoods, west of Wentworth.
- Bennetto Community Centre. Consider catalogue/ network access; mobile computer training programs, as space permits. Recreation centre scheduled for future renovation, at which time more small group spaces will be made available.
- Welcome Inn. Consider partnership potential of providing computers to support their homework clubs and mobile computer training lab site.
- North Hamilton Community Health Centre (2011, after new facility opens). Consider options of providing library component for their preschool and after-school programs; and the use of the Community Program room for library-outreach programs to their clientele and the residents of the immediate neighbourhood.
- Eva Rothwell Centre (see Barton) serves children attending Bennetto school.

RED HILL LIBRARY

- Kiwanis Boys and Girls House - 45 Ellis Ave. Consider providing donation of used library materials to support their clientele (2009). Consider the potential of providing computers to support their homework clubs; mobile computer training lab site.
- Riverdale Community Centre – currently a bookmobile site. Consider the provision of materials for a book exchange within the high-rise complex or recreation centre. Consider the potential of providing computers to support their homework clubs; mobile computer training lab site.

5 APPENDIX A: FROM 'BRICKS AND MORTAR' TO ALTERNATE SERVICES

This illustrates the impact of transferring resources from “bricks and mortar” to alternate services using the Picton Library as an example. \$140,000 in annual operating funds (excluding materials) could become available up over a period of 2009 – 2011 and used to phase in the proposed service changes.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

If Picton were to close in 2009, operating funds of \$140,000 required to cover the costs would incrementally decrease until January 2011 at which point the funds would be used fund other services

Then funds would be available on this schedule

- For the balance of 2009, \$6,800 per month (\$40,000 - \$50,000 for 6 months).
- In January 2010, an additional \$40,000 - \$50,000 for an annual total of \$80,000 to 100,000 annually
- In January 2011, an additional \$50,000 to a maximum of \$140,000 (in 2011 dollars).

SOME EQUIVALENTS

With \$90,000 staff costs, Picton Library provides

- Circulation of 23,000 items
- 16 hours of access to 6 public computers
- Seasonal programming, including a weekly story time, and book club.

With \$50,000 facilities costs, Picton library provides

- 16 hours access to a 3,100 sq. ft. facility
- Service to a community of 5,000 people.

With equivalent funding, alternate services could be provided

- A mobile computer lab with trainer and assistant delivering 18 hours programming weekly (\$45,000)

AND

- Expand bookmobile service to 8 additional neighbourhood stops delivering 160,000 items and reaching about 40,000 people (\$60,000)i **OR** provide a full-time Outreach position to work with the community

AND

- Set-up two additional service agencies with 3 computers and maintain networks costs for previously set up agencies. Equipment and initial network costs : \$10,000 and ongoing network connections and support per centre: \$2000. Total cost for 6 centres over 3 years: \$22,000 set-up and maintenance costs; \$12,000 annually after three-year phase in. (KIT????)

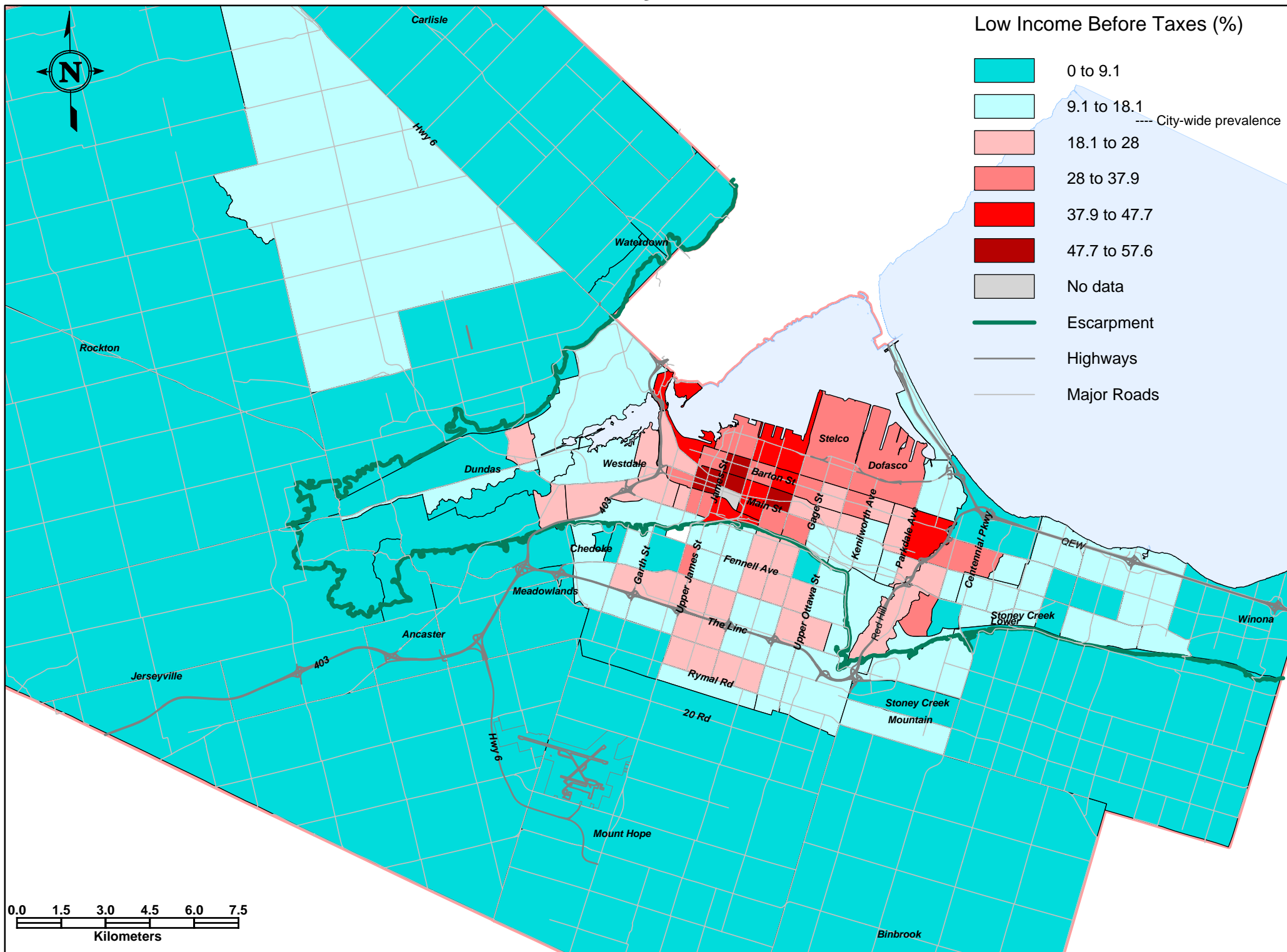
AND

- Ten programs at ten community agencies: (\$15,000)ii

ⁱ Based on top-up of a part time delivery position and an info clerk position from PT to FT

ⁱⁱ Based on use of added hours (3 hours per week per person for 20 weeks; repeated at 10 community agencies.)

Prevalence of Low Income Before Taxes, by Census Tract, 2006



Average Individual Income by Census Tract, 2005

