



The Quality of Life in Ottawa

1990 - 2000

Fall 2001

**Social Planning Council of Ottawa
In partnership with the
Social Planning Network of Ontario**

THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN OTTAWA 1990 - 2000

Released Fall 2001

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ISBN # 1-895732-16-6

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OVERVIEW OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE PROJECT

This report looks at changes in the quality of life in Ottawa from 1999 to 2000 and also for the ten year period 1990 - 2000.

Research concerning the quality of life (QOL) in communities or regions is a relatively recent phenomenon, having only fully emerged as a mature tool of analysis in the last decade. However, people are taking notice, and as a result, these types of studies have had significant impacts. For example, quality of life research has been used as a tool to direct funding allocations, to improve the understanding and profile of particular regions, and to impact on policy decisions at various levels of government. Many organizations have developed Quality of Life measurement tools.¹

The Quality of Life Index

The Ontario Social Development Council, in partnership with the Social Planning Network of Ontario, designed a quality of life tool for community development and action, to help local communities to improve the conditions which affect quality of life. The quality of life, as defined by the Social Planning Network of Ontario, is the product of the interplay among social, health, economic, and environmental conditions. The Quality of Life report provided here is one of many reports from communities across Ontario, which measures change in local areas, using a shared Quality of Life index.

Unlike methods that determine the health of a region only through an analysis of its GDP and other macroeconomic indicators, this report provides an examination at the community level by considering social, health, economic and environmental indicators. The Quality of Life index (QLI) is a composite index using these four categories, each of which contains three indicators, for a total of 12 indicators. Each community that produces a Quality of Life report uses these 12 indicators to achieve a basis for comparison across regions. The index includes both positive and negative measures and reflects a number of factors that influence our collective quality of life.

The index is determined by combining the changes in each indicator over time. The actual data for each indicator in the index is pegged at a value of 100 in the base year (1990) and the impact of changes over time are interpreted as having either a positive or a negative impact on the quality of life. Each indicator has been given equal value. No weighting factors are used.

¹ In particular, see

Jacques Whitford Environment Ltd., Quality of Life Indicators Building a Sustainable City: The New City of Ottawa Baseline Report. A Report to the Transition Board. Ottawa: Jacques Whitford Environment Ltd., January 2001, and
Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Focus on Quality of Life. Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2001.

A methodological report by the Ontario Social Development Council provides a summary of the criteria used to identify and select these 12 indicators along with a description of how the index is calculated.² As well, the methodology for this report is summarized at the end of the report.

Why the Quality of Life Index is Worthwhile

Conducting successive reports on the quality of life in a region allows the tracing of community well-being over time. The Quality of Life report has the potential to identify immediate priority issues within the community and draw a relationship between these issues and local policies or practices. The quality of life index can positively contribute to the public debate regarding the quality of life in our communities. It can facilitate discussions around policy decisions made at the federal, provincial and municipal level. It can help to decide where human and financial resources might best be allocated to improve the well-being of the community. Finally, it can aid in the implementation of new programs and initiatives to enhance the quality of life of individuals in the community, and support programs and planning or evaluation activities that are already in progress.

Limitations of the Quality of Life Index

A Quality of Life report such as this cannot cover every important indicator for a region. An assessment of change in the twelve indicators gives a basic overview and begins the process of raising questions about current public policy and its impact. The tool, however, does not tell us about the full spectrum of concerns which might serve as indicators of our well-being, nor does it provide data on the quality of life for specific groups in the population. For example, this guide does not include data on the suicide or crime rate of the region, the number of families or children who use food banks, or whether wages are keeping pace with housing costs. It is a starting point, but is not intended to represent all developments and concerns in the community.

Since the Quality of Life report measures the quality of life during a specific time period, the indicator data is collected for the most current calendar year. For example, this report measures the Quality of Life for the Ottawa area for the year 2000, and only uses statistics from the year 2000 in the weighing of the different indicators. Where the data has not yet become available for a particular indicator for the 2000 calendar year, the most recent available data is provided in the report and is discussed in relation to trends since 1990, but the indicator is given a neutral weight so as not to affect the final quality of life score for 2000. This is the case for air quality and new cancer cases.

In some cases, indicator data is not available for the base year of 1990. Such is the case for statistics on the elderly waiting for long-term care placements and for tonnes diverted to blue

² The report is entitled "Manual for Community Partners" (1999); please consult the report for more details on the methodology used.

boxes. For these indicators, the base year is identified as the year for which comparable data was first available. As well, due to restructuring efforts and new management among certain organizations, there have also been changes in how the data is collected. For example, changes in the management of public housing in the region has affected what data is available. These types of changes may skew the results of a long-term comparison.

The report cannot be produced until the relevant data is made available. Therefore, although this report is published in the fall of 2001, it is important to remember that the report analyses trends only to the end of 2000. This is particularly notable with respect to employment and unemployment trends, which have changed significantly in Ottawa since the beginning of 2001.

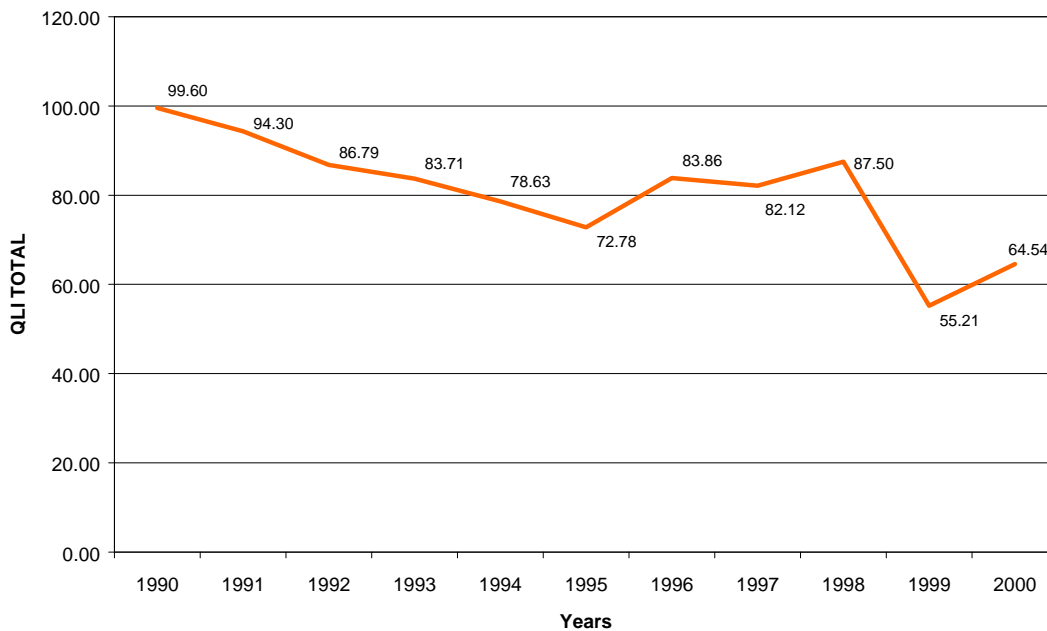
Finally, it can sometimes be difficult to identify what a change in an indicator value means. For example, does an increase in recycling mean that there is less waste in the region and that people are becoming more environmentally aware or could it indicate that people are consuming more and are producing more waste overall, including recyclables? The Quality of Life index raises some important questions about assumptions in the community related to specific indicators. As well, it is important to note that the effects of a policy on a community may only occur after some time. Changes in indicator data from year to year may sometimes be aftershocks from changes to policies or legislation years before. Establishing causal relationships can be complex.

QUALITY OF LIFE IN OTTAWA 1990 - 2000

Ottawa is the fourth largest urban area in Canada, but is famous for its green spaces and the availability of outdoor activities in the city. Ottawa is one of top five world leaders in telecommunications research and development, and its advanced technology sector has been expanding at a dramatic rate.³ In 1994, *Chatelaine* magazine published the results of a cross-Canada survey that recognized Ottawa as the best place to live and work in the country. As well, Ottawa has been identified internationally as one of the best cities in the world in which to live.

At the same time, individuals and community organizations across our city are noting high levels of stress among residents⁴, and the City is grappling with the challenges of "smart growth". These trends are reflected in the local community data in the Quality of Life index. We see that the overall quality of life in Ottawa has steadily declined between 1990 and 1995, with a very sharp decline between 1998 and 1999. There is a small increase in the quality of life between 1999 and 2000, but, we are still significantly below the standard set by the 1990 base year.

QLI TOTAL FOR 1990-2000



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³ Of course, a major downturn hit the advanced technology sector in early 2001 and continued until the time of writing this report. The data included, however, represents 2000 figures, and therefore, does not capture the downturn.

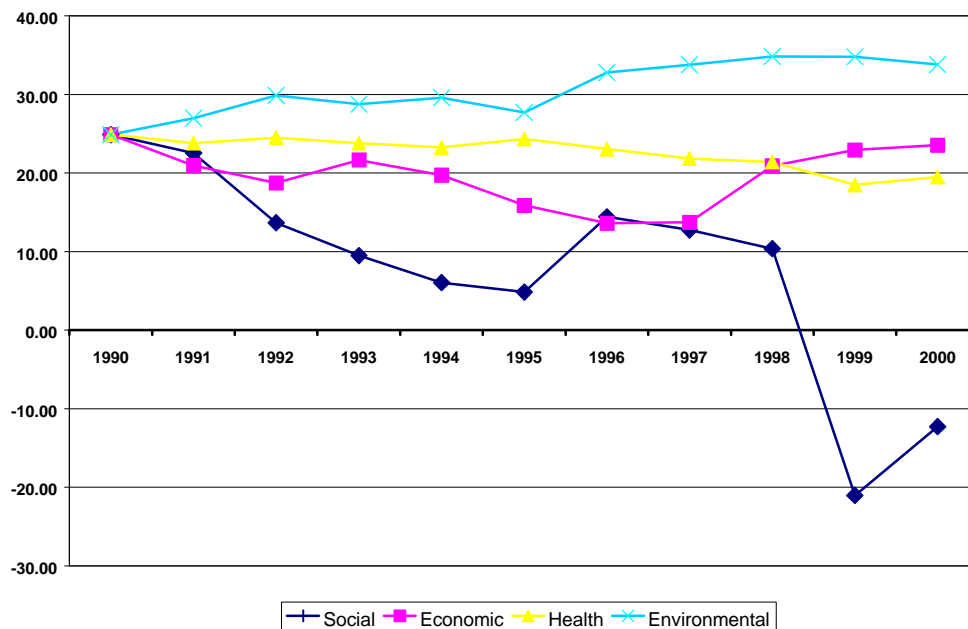
⁴ Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton. Community Agencies At a Crossroads - A Portrait of Competing Demands. Ottawa: Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton, June 2001.

he Sectoral Trends chart (below) reveals a clearer picture of where progress or decline is occurring in Ottawa. While the environmental sector has fluctuated, overall it has increased since 1990, thus indicating improvements in that aspect of our city's quality of life.

In Ottawa as of 2000, the environmental indicators in the Quality of Life Index have improved as a whole over the last decade, with an 8.91 point increase in the QLI since 1990. However, while this sector is still well above 1990 levels, its' QLI has changed direction and has been in a slight downturn since 1998.

The economic sector shows an upswing in the last few years, but in 2000, stops just short of the 1990 QLI level. The QLI value of this sector has never been so close to the 1990 levels as it was in 2000, which is certainly an encouraging sign.⁵ The fluctuations in the economic indicators mimic the nation's economic booms and busts during the 1990s. There is a steady decline in regards to the health indicators since 1990, with 1999 being the worst year, followed closely by 2000. However, since the data for new cancer cases is only available up to 1998 at this time, the assessment of this sector can only reflect yearly changes in low birth weight babies and long term care. The decline in the health indicators since 1990 is greatly overshadowed by the massive decline in the social indicators, plummeting to a dramatic low from 1998 to 1999, and just beginning an upward climb again in 2000. It is clear that this sector reflects the most significant decrease in Ottawa's quality of life, largely due to the deepening housing crisis in Ottawa. The social sector indicators, as a whole, have declined significantly almost every year since 1990, except for 1999 to 2000, where there was a slight improvement. In 2000, this sector is a staggering 37.19 points below the QLI base year.

QLI Sectoral Trends for Ottawa
1990-2000



⁵ Early 2001 saw significant lay-offs in Ottawa, in contrast to the trend cited here.

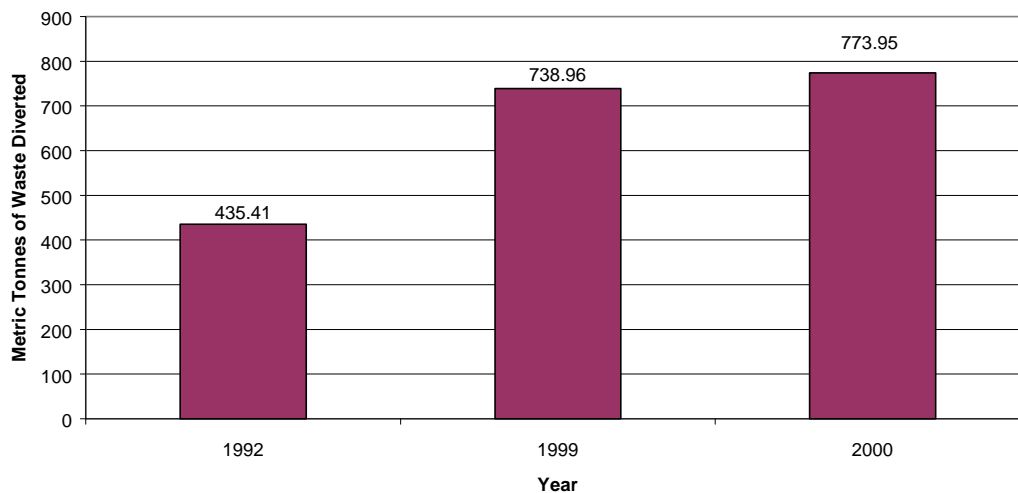
THE STATE OF SPECIFIC QUALITY OF LIFE INDICATORS

Environmental Indicators

Tonnes diverted to blue boxes: **↑ Improvement From Base Year (1992)**
↑ Improvement 1999 - 2000

Environmental Indicator: Metric Tonnes Diverted to Blue Boxes

Rate per 10,000 pop. Source: Solid Waste Services - Transportation, Utilities and Public Works



An increase in this indicator is interpreted as a positive influence on Ottawa's quality of life. This increase may reflect increased citizen participation in environmental programs and creation of less waste. However, there is a possibility that an increase in tonnes of waste diverted to blue boxes might also reflect increasing consumption level. If this is the case, increased depletion of resources would logically follow, which would make it difficult to argue that the environment is faring much better.⁶

The data for this indicator is only available from 1992.⁷ In general, however, this indicator has been following an upward trend. The 2000 statistics show a slight increase from the

⁶ "The amount of garbage collected increased by less than 2% between 1997 and 1999, despite an estimated 3.5% increase in population during this time." (Jacques Whitford Environment Ltd., *Quality of Life Indicators Building a Sustainable City: The New City of Ottawa Baseline Report*. A Report to the Transition Board. Ottawa: Jacques Whitford Environment Ltd., January 2001, pg. 20). Although it is not conclusive, this would suggest that increased consumption does not account fully account for the increase in tonnes diverted to blue boxes.

⁷ 1992 data for Ottawa only. 1999 and 2000 data are for Ottawa-Carleton.

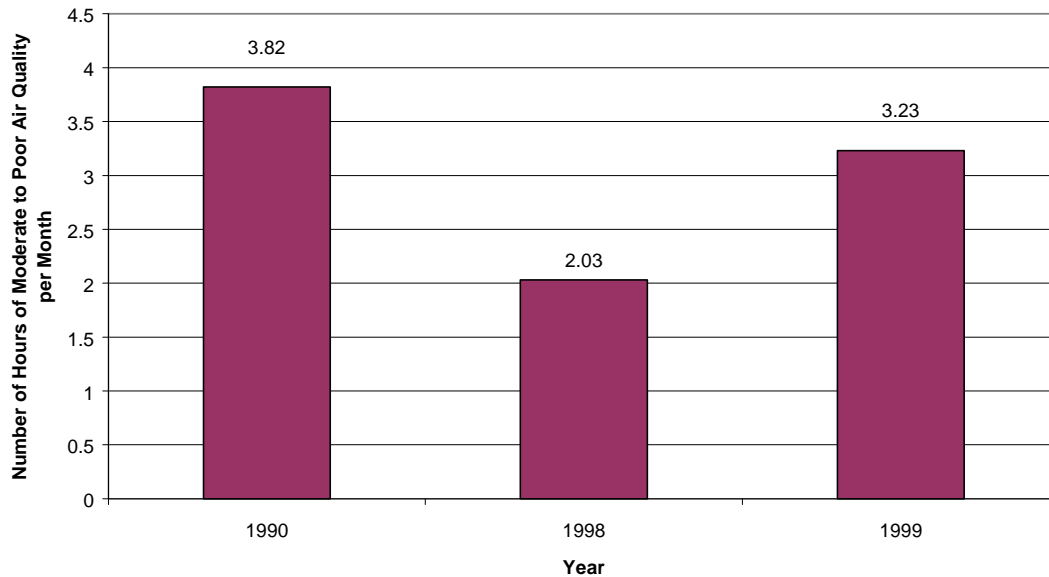
index reflects only the absolute number of reported spills, not the size or nature of reported spills. A challenge for Ottawa is the debate to define "toxic", particularly in the context of the Province's permission for spreading of biosolids in parts of the rural areas of Ottawa.

Air quality: Not Available

Environmental Indicator: Moderate to Poor Air Quality

Rate per 10,000 population.

Source: Ministry of Environment & Energy, Air Quality & Meteorology



An increase in this indicator would have a negative impact on Ottawa's quality of life in that our air quality would be deteriorating. This graph is a perfect representation of the up and down nature of statistics on air quality. After monitoring the levels of six air pollutants, the data is converted into a monitoring scale. This scale ranges from 0-15 (very good) to 100+ (very poor). Moderate air quality, on this scale, falls between 32-49, and poor air quality is between 50-99. In Ottawa, 272 hours of moderate and 7 hours of poor air quality were reported in 1999.⁹ Since smog advisories can be considered a measure of air quality, it is interesting to note that in Ottawa, the statistics for 1999 show that three smog advisories were called, lasting a total of four days. In 2000, no smog advisories were called.

The Ministry indicates that it expects to see an increase in the number of smog alerts for the province because of advances in monitoring and reporting changes in air quality.¹⁰ While the Ontario Ministry of the Environment claims that Ontario's air quality has been steadily

⁹ There was a total of 46 days having at least 1 hour of moderate air quality, and 2 days with at least 1 hour of poor air quality. Source: AQI Statistics for 1999, Ministry of Environment & Energy, Air Quality and Meteorology.

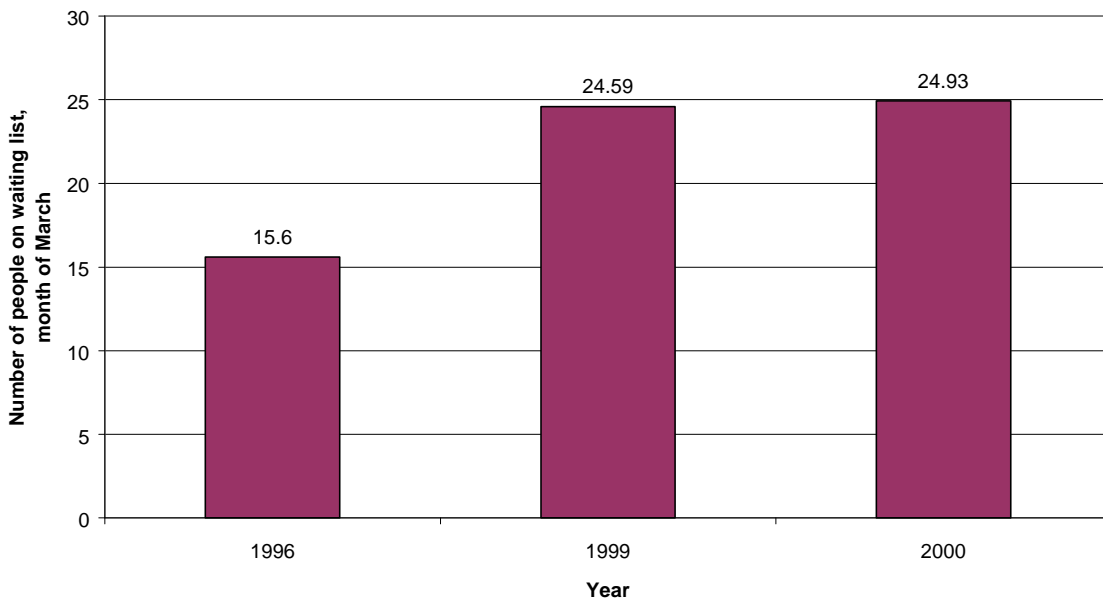
¹⁰ Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Air Quality Ontario. Available at <http://www.airqualityontario.com/press/faq.cfm#1>

decline in the number of low birth weight babies being born in Ottawa (1999 to 2000) may mean that more expectant mothers have access to a safe, healthy environment during pregnancy, producing healthier babies.

Long-Term Care Waiting Lists: **↓ Deterioration From Base Year (1996)**
↓ Deterioration 1999 - 2000

**Health Indicator: Elderly on Waiting List
for Long-Term Care Facility**

Rate per 10,000 Population Source: Community Care Access Centre

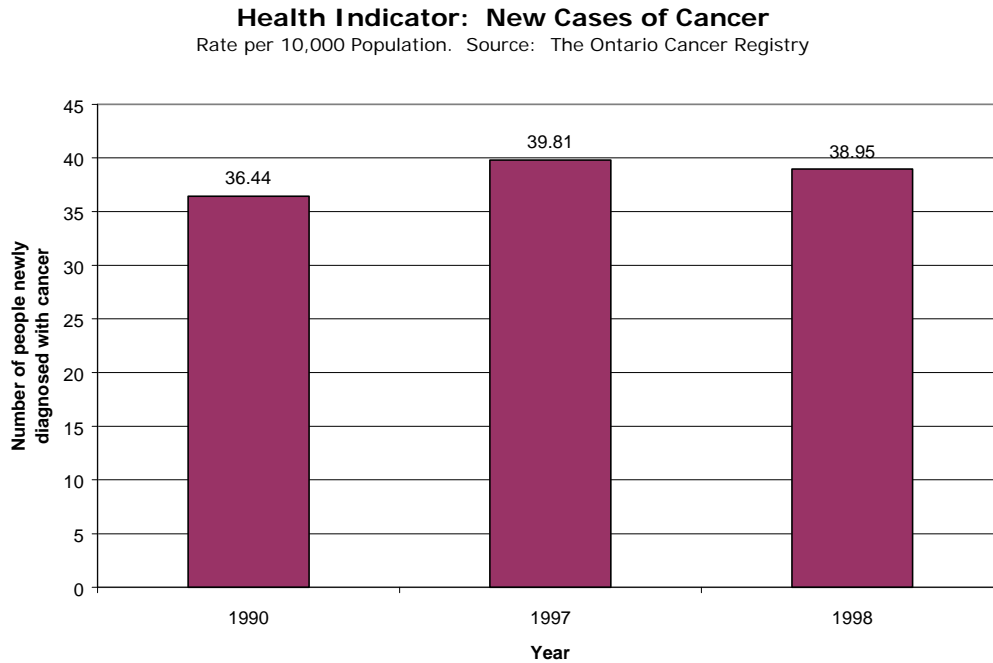


This graph depicts a substantial increase from the base year of 1996, in the number of people waiting for long-term care placement in Ottawa. This increase is interpreted as a negative impact on our quality of life, in that there are insufficient resources available to meet the needs of elderly people requiring special care. Those who are on the waiting lists may be suffering real hardship while they wait, as they may not have access to proper medical attention or treatment. It is important to note that individuals are not placed on the waiting list unless they already meet the criteria for long term care, i.e. they are already in need of the service.

11% of Ottawa's population are seniors. According to the Council on Aging of Ottawa-Carleton, of all the Canadian cities, only Victoria BC has a higher proportion of seniors than the city of Ottawa. The Ottawa-Carleton Community Care Access Centre reported in June 2001 that they have experienced a growth of 36% in the number of clients since 1997. In addition to the aging of the baby boom generation, people are increasingly living longer and healthier lives. Given these trends, and the fact that hospitals tend to discharge patients much

earlier these days than in the past, there is a growing need for long-term care services, as well as home care services. The dramatic shortage of long term care beds is a significant negative factor on the quality of life in Ottawa.

New Cases of Cancer: Not Available



The above chart reveals an increase in new cases of cancer in Ottawa from the base year of 1990, despite a slight decrease in the number of cases diagnosed between 1997 to 1998. An increase in the number of newly reported cases of cancer is interpreted as a negative impact on the region's quality of life. While the current statistics for new cases of cancer in Ottawa are unavailable, on the national level, the Canadian Cancer Society estimates that in less than 15 years, there will be a 70 percent increase in the rate of newly-diagnosed cases of cancer.¹⁵ The Ottawa Regional Cancer Centre reported that in 2000, 17,825 patients were seen, and of the 4,733 new patients, 816 women had breast cancer, 644 people had lung cancer, 522 men had prostate cancer, and 525 others had colorectal cancer.¹⁶

This increase may be a result of increased awareness among individuals who would consequently be more likely to better monitor their health, or better detection technology in the medical field. Alternatively it may reflect the aging population in Ottawa (cancer has a long latency period) or the presence of increased risk factors. For example, the National Cancer Institute of Canada has found that there is a relationship between lower socio-economic status and increased rates of cancer mortality, as well as being associated with "increased (cervical) or decreased incidence of certain cancers."¹⁷ Decreases in this

¹⁵ *Challenge Magazine*, Spring/Summer 2001, page 27.

¹⁶ Statistics from the Ontario Regional Cancer Centre, available at http://www.orcc.on.ca/CancerIntra/whatsnew/foundation/invest/stats_2001.htm

¹⁷ National Cancer Institute of Canada: Canadian Cancer Statistics 2000, available at <http://www.cancer.ca/stats2000/geoge.htm>

indicator may possibly be a result of our stressed health-care system, in terms of being short-staffed, and patients having to endure long waiting periods for detection, medical attention and treatment.

Economic Indicators

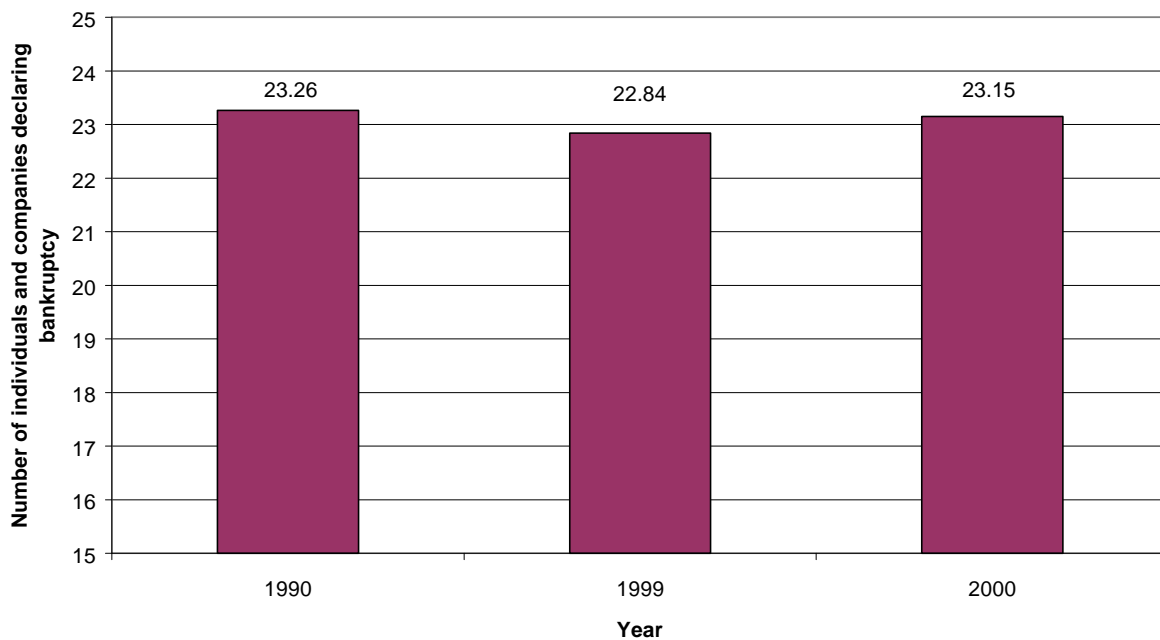
Rate of Bankruptcy:

↑ Improvement From Base Year

↓ Deterioration 1999 - 2000

Economic Indicator: Bankruptcy Rate

Rate per 10,000 population. Source: Annual Statistical Report, 2000, from the Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy Canada



An increase in the level of bankruptcy is interpreted as a negative impact on the quality of life index, in that more people are living in strained economic conditions. This indicator shows a slight increase over the 1990 base level, although there has been a slight increase in the number of individuals and companies declaring bankruptcy in Ottawa from 1999 to 2000. Levels of bankruptcy in Ottawa reached their peak for the decade in 1996 and 1997, with personal bankruptcies specifically reaching a record-breaking high in 1996. Levels of bankruptcy declined in 1998 and 1999, reflecting Ottawa's improving economy during that period.

The bankruptcy indicator is a measure of economic well-being among those families and individuals whose income depends on the survival and profitability of their professions and/or business. One study of personal bankruptcy in Canada indicates that the unemployed

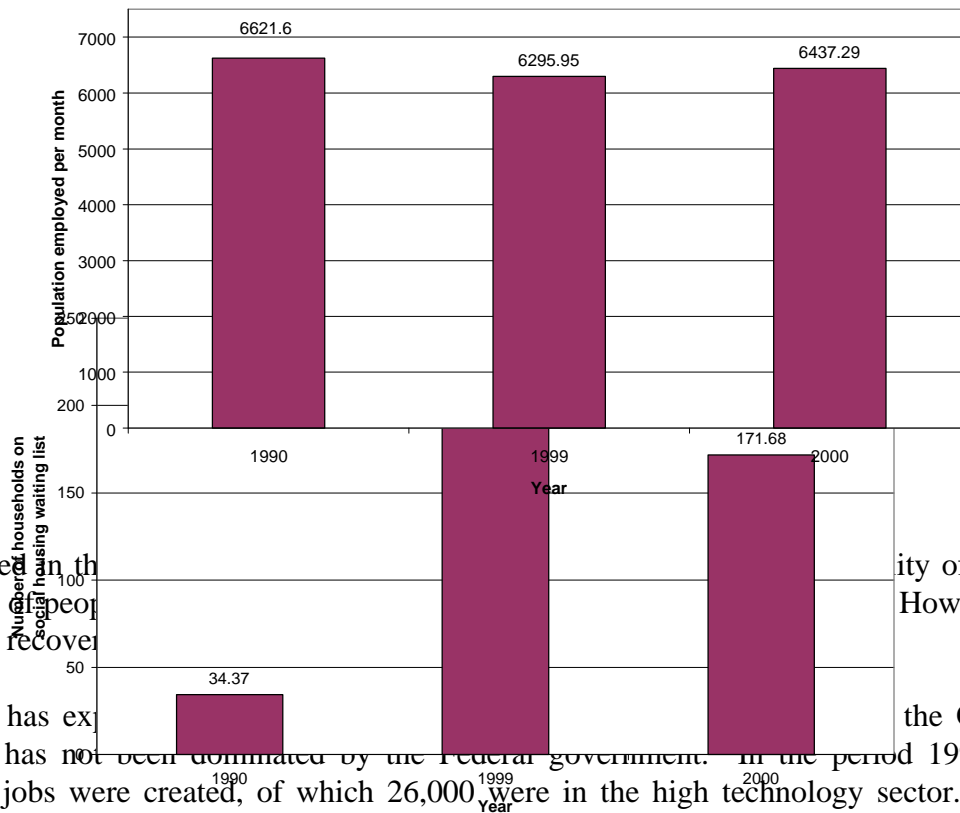
Labour Force Working:

↓ Deterioration From Base Year

↑ Improvement 1999 - 2000

Population

Rate per 10,000 population. Source: Monthly Labour Force Surveys, Statistics Canada



employed in the number of people still not recovered

Ottawa has experienced

market has not been dominated by the Federal government. In the period 1999 - 2000, 44,800 jobs were created, of which 26,000 were in the high technology sector. The other sectors that experienced growth were educational services, manufacturing, health care and social assistance, and professional, scientific and technical services.²³ This diversification of the key employers is seen as a positive development.

ity of life. The However, it has

the Ottawa job

Unfortunately, the benefits of Ottawa's expanding job market are not being enjoyed evenly across our population. The increase in part-time and contract work is one problematic trend. As well, there has been substantial polarization of working time, with many workers experiencing long work hours and others not having a full work week. Finally, there is a significant gap between the number of high-end and low-end jobs, with a growing rate of poverty in the face of tremendous wealth. Even full time work is no longer necessarily a means to keep out of poverty, if that work is at a minimum wage rate.²⁴ Although average incomes for families, households and individuals in our region are higher than in Ontario or Canada, the percentage of low-income families has also been increasing.

Social Indicators

Public Housing Waiting Lists:

↓ Deterioration From Base Year

↑ Improvement 1999 - 2000*

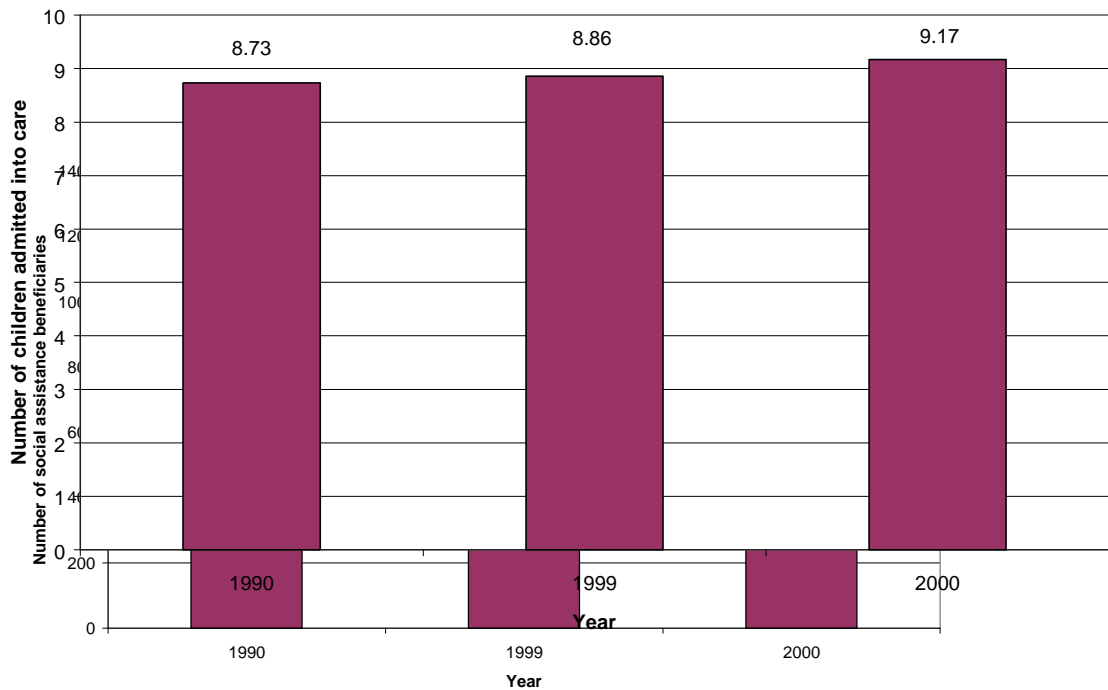
²² This report highlights statistics to the end of 2000, and therefore, does not capture the major lay-offs of early 2001.

²³ Social Planning Council, *Ottawa @ Work, Our Social Capital* Vol. 1 No. 1, Sept. 2001, pg. 5

²⁴ Social Planning Council, *Ibid*, pgs. 6 and 7.

Social Indicator: Child Welfare Admissions to Care

Rate per 10,000 population. Source: Children's Aid Society of Ottawa



An increase in this indicator is interpreted as a negative indicator in the quality of life index. This statistic indicates the number of children admitted to care has increased between 1990 and 2000, as well as between 1999 and 2000. Reported cases of sexual abuse have been declining while reported cases of physical abuse have increased.²⁹

This interpretation of this indicator is complex. The increase may reflect increased stress on families and deterioration in the ability of some families to cope in a positive manner. Recent changes to provincial legislation regarding the definition of child abuse and neglect and grounds for admissions to care are beginning to take effect, and these broadened definitions may account for an increase in this indicator. Some argue that higher levels of admissions to care may be due to increased community awareness resulting in increased reporting of incidents. Alternatively, the increase may reflect changes within the legal system.

Social assistance beneficiaries: **↓ Deterioration Since Base Year**
↑ Improvement 1999 - 2000

²⁹"Report Card to the Community on Ottawa's Children" *Success By 6*, June 2000 (Ottawa, Ontario: 2000), page 3.

A decrease in the number of social assistance beneficiaries is interpreted as having a positive impact on the quality of life of Ottawa. There is a substantial deterioration in this indicator from the base year of 1990. However, Ottawa has seen an improvement in this indicator from 1999 to 2000.

It is assumed that the reduction in the number of social assistance recipients reflects an expanding economy and growing employment opportunities. In 2000, 800 people left social assistance for permanent employment.³⁰ Others leave social assistance when their circumstances change, for example, they marry. However, many people have been terminated from Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program as a result of stringent administrative requirements.³¹

People on social assistance face a severe gap between their income and the cost of housing. Before the social assistance cuts in 1995, 36% of recipients in Ottawa were paying (non-subsidized) rent equal to, or greater than their maximum shelter allowance; while after the 1995 cuts, 84% of recipients were paying more than their maximum shelter allowance.³² These recipients have to use the "basic needs" portion of their cheque to help pay their rent, leaving them with inadequate money for basic food and other necessities.

CONCLUSION

Changes in the Quality of Life from 1990-2000

³⁰ Dick Stewart, General Manager People Services, in a presentation on "Charting A Course", December 12, 2001.

³¹ See also Social Planning Council, The Experience of People with Disabilities in Ottawa and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) Report of the Public Forum, October 2001.

³² Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton, Homelessness: Environmental Scan, March 1999.

The most significant finding of this report is that our quality of life in 2000 is substantially below 1990 levels. From a baseline of 99.6 in 1990, our quality of life has dropped in ten years to a measure of only 64.54. The environmental indicators showed improvement, from 24.9 in 1990 to 33.81 in 2000. The three other sectors all showed declines, with the social indicators, particularly the housing indicator, exerting a very strong downward pressure on the quality of life. From a 1990 baseline of 24.9, the social indicators dropped to a score of -12.29 in 2000. The score of the health indicators dropped to 19.47 in 2000 from 24.9 in 1990. After significant lows in 1995 and 1996, the economic indicators, at 23.24 in 2000, have almost recovered to the 1990 level of 24.9.

Changes in the Quality of Life from 1999-2000

The quality of life in Ottawa has improved slightly from 1999 to 2000. The Quality of Life Index has risen in 2000 to a score of 64.54, from the score of 55.21 in 1999. A number of indicators have resulted in this progression. Improvements in the economic sector, with higher employment and lower unemployment have been important in this change. Consistent with the ten year trend, the number of tonnes diverted to blue boxes has increased. On the health front, the number of low birth weight babies has decreased. The social indicators showed an improvement, with a reduction in the number of social assistance beneficiaries. These results have all contributed to a positive impact on the quality of life in Ottawa.³³

Four indicators show setbacks in the quality of life in Ottawa from 1999 to 2000. Spills of toxic substances have increased, as have the waiting lists for placement in a long-term care facility. The bankruptcy rate and child welfare admissions to care have increased. These results have all weighed negatively against Ottawa's quality of life. As we have seen, the waiting list for social housing remains very high.

The Challenges

The index highlights the tremendous need for affordable housing in Ottawa. This is a serious challenge for the city. As a result of federal and provincial downloading of responsibilities for housing, municipalities are now totally responsible for public housing. They have not, however, received the funding necessary to meet this increased responsibility. As well, the City of Ottawa must manage the tremendous challenge in the availability of housing, which was generated by the rapidly expanding economy.

The report also highlights the challenge of changing demographics, most notably the growing population of seniors in Ottawa. The severe shortage of beds in long term care facilities points to a critical need for enhanced services for the elderly.

³³ These figures represent an improvement, with the caveats articulated in the report. The social housing waiting list also showed a reduction, although this was an administrative change rather than a reduction in demand for social housing, as indicated in the text.

The growing income gap creates a particular challenge to the quality of life in Ottawa. As the report shows, the benefits of an expanding economy have not been distributed evenly throughout the population. For example, not everyone is able to benefit from high end jobs available in the newer industries. As well, the strong expansion in employment has created added pressures on the housing market, thereby affecting the quality of life for a very broad section of the community. It will be a great challenge for the City to identify ways that all residents can benefit from the changes generated by economic growth.

The value of the Quality of Life report is its ability to prompt action where the index indicates a problem. The index serves as a starting point to encourage debate on the significance of various changes, the assumptions behind interpretations of the data, and the relationship of any changes to policy or other changes in the local environment. To maximize the usefulness and accuracy of the QLI, we encourage readers to supplement the statistical analysis with additional information from other related local reports and publications in order to provide a comprehensive picture of the quality of life in the community.³⁴

Looking to the Future

It is clear that there is still much work to be done in our region. It may take many years before Ottawa's quality of life reaches even 1990 levels. The aim, however, should not be just to reach those levels, but to surpass them.

The City of Ottawa has gone through major changes recently. As of January 1st, 2001, the twelve municipalities that made up the region of Ottawa-Carleton were amalgamated to create the new City of Ottawa. Instead of having 12 heads of council (11 mayors and 1 chair) there is only 1 mayor. There is now only 1 city manager instead of 12. The number of elected representatives has decreased from 84 to 22. The new City of Ottawa has set itself the goal of "smart growth", with the intention of planning for change in a way which enhances the quality of life of its' residents.

The Quality of Life index is a dynamic tool which can evolve to reflect current understanding within a community. The twelve indicators used in this report can be expanded to capture an enhanced snapshot of the quality of life in our community. With additional public input and resources, the Quality of Life index can become a truly representative community project, and a tool in monitoring progress in the City's goal of "smart growth".

³⁴ In particular, the documents footnoted in this report are an excellent starting point.

Appendix 1

METHODOLOGY FOR DATA GATHERING AND ANALYSIS

In order to provide the most accurate comparisons, every attempt has been made to ensure that the statistics gathered in 1990, 1999 and 2000 are comparable and are measuring the same data. Many of the sources used to gather the data for this report are used in other community Quality of Life reports across Ontario. When possible, the data for this report has been gathered from local sources, such as the Children's Aid Society of Ottawa, and People Services, City of Ottawa, to name a few. In most cases, the data for 2000 was readily available. However, statistics were not available for new cancer cases in Ottawa (1999 and 2000) or for air quality (2000). For this reason, both indicators have been given a neutral weight for the relevant years.

Methodology for QLI Measurement

As noted above, the Ontario Social Development Council has created a report that provides an overview of the methodology used to calculate the QLI. In brief, the index is determined by combining the changes in each indicator over time. A single QLI score is constructed to represent the quality of life for an entire period over time. The QLI is pegged at 100 in the base year (1990) and the impact of changes have either a positive or negative impact on the quality of life. Each indicator has been given equal value. No weighting factors are used.

The data for most indicators has been converted into a rate per 10,000 population to account for population growth since 1990. The percentage changes in indicators are calculated on the basis of percentage increase or decrease from the rate in 1990 to the present year, and the impact is determined by analyzing whether the percentage change has resulted in a positive or negative impact on the quality of life in the area.

$$\frac{\text{Base rate} - \text{Current rate}}{\text{Base rate}} \times 100 = \% \text{ change}$$

There are, however, two exceptions in how the QLI is calculated. For "air quality" we have first taken the number of hours of moderate to poor air quality as a percentage of the total number of "valid hours" measured, and then converted this number into a rate per 10,000 population. For the indicator for "low birth weight babies", instead of rating it per 10,000 population, this number has been rated per 100 live births in order to reflect the rate of low birth weight babies being born as a proportion of the overall number of babies born in Ottawa.

For further information on the statistical analysis, please contact the Social Planning Council.

Quality of Life Calculations

INDICATORS	Base Year	BASE RATE per 10,000	1990 BASE QLI VALUE	1999 RATE per 10,000	2000 RATE per 10,000	2000 QLI VALUE	QLI CHANGE 1990-2000
Social Indicators:			24.90			-12.29	Negative
1: Social Assistance Beneficiaries	90	773.89	8.3	1225.25	1110.39	4.69	Negative
2: Child Welfare Admissions To Care	90	8.73	8.3	8.86	9.17	7.88	Negative
3: Public Housing Waiting Lists	90	34.37	8.3	203.94	171.68	-24.86	Negative
Economic Indicators:			24.90			23.54	
4: Labour Force-# Working	90	6621.60	8.3	6295.95	6437.29	8.07	Negative
5: Labour Force-# Unemployed	90	521.89	8.3	629.26	607.75	6.93	Negative
6: # of Bankruptcies Reported	90	23.26	8.3	22.84	22.58	8.54	Positive
Health Indicators:			24.90			19.47	
7: # New Cancer Cases	90	36.44	8.3	n/a	n/a	8.30	N/A
8: Elderly Long Term Care Waiting List	96	15.60	8.3	24.59	24.93	3.33	Negative
9: # Low Birth Weight Babies* / 100	90	5.21	8.3	6.23	5.50	7.84	Negative
Environmental Indicators:			24.90			33.81	
10: # Hours Moderate/Poor Air Quality	90	3.82	8.3	3.23	n/a	8.3	N/A
11: # Spills	90	3.56	8.3	2.35	2.51	10.75	Positive
12: Tonnes Diverted to Blue Boxes	92	435.41	8.3	738.96	773.95	14.75	Positive
QLI COMPOSITE INDEX			99.60			64.54	

*Low Birth Weight Babies indicator is per 100 not 10,000.