**NIA Selection Methodology FAQ**

**How are Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIAs) selected under TSNS 2020?**

NIAs are selected based on how neighbourhoods in Toronto fare across 15 indicators measuring outcomes related to economic opportunities, social development, participation, health, and physical surroundings. The goal of TSNS 2020 is to identify neighbourhoods experiencing inequitable outcomes across a broad range of factors.

Neighbourhoods with the most inequitable outcomes compared to other Toronto neighbourhoods were recommended as NIAs.

**What indicators are included in the Neighbourhood Equity Index (NEI)?**

15 neighbourhood-level indicators were provided by the Urban HEART@Toronto research initiative, a joint project between the Centre for Research on Inner City Health, the City of Toronto, the United Way, the Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network, and WoodGreen Community Services.

*Economic Opportunities:*

* Unemployment rate;
* Prevalence of low income (LIM-AT);
* Social assistance rate.

*Social Development:*

* Likelihood of graduating high school;
* Ontario Marginalization Index;
* Post-secondary education attainment rate.

*Participation in Decision-Making*:

* Municipal voting rate.

*Physical Surroundings:*

* Community spaces for meeting;
* Walkscore;
* Access to healthier food stores;
* Access to green space.

*Healthy:*

* Premature mortality rate;
* Self-assessed mental health;
* Preventable hospitalizations;
* Diabetes prevalence.

**How were indicators selected?**

The indicators were selected by the Urban HEART@Toronto steering committee based on the recommendations of 80 researchers and experts through an online Delphi process. Indicators were selected based on several criteria, including data availability, whether the indicator revealed a unique neighbourhood inequity and comparability over time.

**Why were other indicators such those measuring transit access and housing not included?**

Many possible indicators, including those relating to housing, transit and safety, were considered when deciding on the final set of 15 indicators. Unfortunately, high-quality indicators measuring these issues are not currently available for a neighbourhood-level analysis. There is, however, a significant opportunity to develop these indicators in the future.

**How is NIA selection different from the way Priority Neighbourhoods for Investment (PNIs) were selected?**

The previous PNIs were selected based on a combination of indicators measuring access to service, sociodemographic risk/vulnerability, and areas identified in the Community Safety Plan.

**How have PNIs changed over time? Using the 2005 criteria, how are PNIs doing today?**

It is difficult to determine how neighbourhoods selected as PNIs in 2005 have changed due to lack of high quality comparable neighbourhood data. Because of the change in methodology from the Census to the 2011 National Household Survey, socioeconomic indicators that formed a part of the 2005 strategy cannot be compared across time.

**How does the TSNS 2020 NIA Selection Criteria differ from the 2005 strategy?**

The previous strategy selected neighbourhoods based on inputs (e.g. service access) and particular issues (e.g. crime and safety). TSNS 2020 is a significant broadening in scope from the previous strategy. The NIAs are selected on *outcomes*. Consequently, the indicators used to select NIAs for TSNS 2020 are different, with a different goal than the previous strategy.

**How were the indicators combined? Why are some indicators weighted more heavily?**

Indicators that consistently explain more of the differences between Toronto neighbourhoods are weighted more heavily. Indicator weights were calculated using a statistical clustering method called principal component analysis (PCA).

**Why is "Access to Green Space" negatively weighted?**

Green space is negatively weighted because the PCA analysis showed that neighbourhoods that lacked green space had greater overall inequities across the 5 thematic domains as compared to neighbourhoods with large amounts of green space. This negative weighting reflects a tension regarding the optimal density of neighbourhoods.

**Why 31 neighbourhoods? Why not more or less?**

All 31 neighbourhoods fell below the neighbourhood benchmark. This benchmark was mathematically calculated based on the indicator weights used to calculate neighbourhood scores and benchmark values provided by Urban HEART. This resulted in a composite benchmark value of 42.89.

**How do NIAs demographically compare to the rest of Toronto neighbourhoods?**

NIAs are, on average, have more children, newcomers, and visible minorities. NIAs have greater socioeconomic challenges across a wide range of issues, such as housing and income.

**How do the results compare with the "three cities" concept of Toronto?**

The geographical locations of the NIAs roughly fall within the "U" of poverty in Toronto identified in David Hulchanski's report. This is not surprising because income and socioeconomic status is contained within the Neighbourhood Equity Index.

**What role did Urban HEART@Toronto play in selecting NIAs?**

Urban HEART@Toronto and TSNS 2020 are two related but different projects. Urban HEART@Toronto provided the raw data and benchmark indicator values that underpin the selection of NIAs. However, NIA selection under TSNS 2020 does not use the "red/yellow/green" classifications that is a key component of the Urban HEART project.