

Planning the Future of Toronto's In-Between City: Is Zoning the Problem or the Solution?

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Abstract

In this paper, I examine mid-century high-rise apartments in Toronto, Canada. I analyze how diverse private and public actors define and plan their impending renewal. And question how effective the new Residential Apartment Commercial Zone will be in creating more complete apartment tower communities. The City of Toronto currently has 1,189 mid-century high-rise residential apartment towers housing over half a million people, representing more than thirty percent of Toronto's total households (Young, 2011). Socially, vertical apartment neighbourhoods are Toronto's most culturally diverse and socially mixed communities (Young, 2011). And compared to the city's housing stock as a whole, high-rise residential towers provide the most spacious, and relatively inexpensive rental units in the city.

Toronto's mid-century high rise residential towers were constructed with strict building codes. When appropriately maintained and renewed once every fifty years, most towers are expected to last at least another 200 years (Stewart and Thorne, 2010). This current era marks their first cycle of renewal, with most towers requiring retrofits to reduce energy consumption, modernize shared spaces and improve aesthetics. Some involve larger projects to resolve structural issues that most likely resulted from owners not performing routine maintenance.

Mid-century high-rise residential towers are scattered in clusters across the periphery of the City of Toronto; they were planned and built-in hybrid-built environments that form somewhat of an *in-between city* (Young, 2011). They are mostly located in unique, mixed landscapes with high-rise private and public housing surrounded by two-story houses, vast parklands, schools, plazas, malls, highways and post-secondary institutions. The vast majority are owned and managed by private corporations (Stewart, 2007).

Foreword

Throughout my tenure as a graduate student at the Faculty of Environmental Studies, I continually challenged myself to critically explore how to plan for low income, minority communities in modern capitalist cities. During this process, I uncovered the complexity in 21st century urban spaces, and realized that community building is a delicate process that requires patience, demands the appreciation of diverse cultures, and necessitates collaborating with residents to expand their own self-determination.

In my Plan of Study, my learning objectives were primarily based on community development, affordable housing and socio-spatial inequality. As a learning strategy, I enrolled in courses, workshops and attended events that contributed to and challenged my understanding of the aforementioned subjects. For instance, to get a real life, on the ground understanding, I worked as an intern with City of Toronto's Neighbourhood and Tower Renewal for 9 months. Likewise, I was accepted to attend the Spring Institute at Florence and Milan, Italy. Held by York University's Global Suburbanisms. It was a 2-week workshop that included class work and day trips to historical and contemporary sites in Italy. In one of our trips, we visited a suburban neighbourhood outside Milan. The residents were mainly new immigrants, and unlike other places in Milan, the neighbourhood was lively, people congregated, kids were playing outside and local patios were filled. I was interested and captivated by the neighbourhood because it was primarily made of mid-century high rise residential towers that already had small convenience stores and cafes on the first floor. From this experience, I witnessed residents support their local economy by purchasing coffee and groceries from their local shops. It made me question why Toronto was so late at introducing The Residential Apartment Commercial (RAC) Zone.

As a student at FES, I explored the relationship between state policies, marginalized communities, urban inequality and global economic influences on the city. Through the courses, internships and workshops I joined, I was able to understand 21st century city building. Additionally, I understood that community development is a complex process that at times is beyond the local scope. In a globalized world, influences from neo-liberal capitalism, population growth and national/provincial interests can outweigh local decisions. Ultimately, I learned that

large cities such as Toronto, attract investment by renewing urban cores, improving mass transit and developing interesting neighborhoods. But often overlooked is retaining the character of the community and creating spaces where the young, old and disadvantaged resident still feel welcome in the changing streetscape. With that in mind, in this paper, I outline how I believe Toronto's mid-century high-rise apartment tower neighborhoods can be improved in a way that is inclusive and beneficial to all residents.

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INTRODUCTION

In this Major Paper I explore the historical development of 20th century mid-century high-rise apartments in Toronto, Canada. I critically analyze how diverse private and public actors define and plan their impending renewal. Specifically, I question how effective the new Residential Apartment Commercial Zone will be in creating more complete apartment tower communities in Toronto. With the largest stock in North America, the City of Toronto currently has 1,189 mid-century high-rise residential apartment towers housing over half a million people, they represent more than thirty percent of Toronto's total households (Young, 2011). Built largely in the post war boom, from the 1950s to the 1980s, they were originally marketed as *towers in the park*, and were widely perceived as a modern solution to the city's post-war housing needs. Planned primarily as rental units, a vast majority of mid-century residential towers were built and are still managed by private corporations (Stewart, 2007). Socially, vertical apartment neighbourhoods in the in-between city are Toronto's most culturally diverse, and socially mixed communities (Young, 2011).

Mid-century high-rise residential towers are scattered in clusters across the periphery of the City of Toronto; they were planned and built in hybrid-built environments that form somewhat of an *in-between city* (Young, 2011). They are mostly located in unique, mixed landscapes consisting of high-rise private and public housing surrounded by two story houses, vast parklands, schools, plazas, malls, highways and post-secondary institutions. Compared to the city's housing stock as a whole, high-rise residential towers in Toronto's inner suburbs provide the most spacious, and relatively inexpensive rental units in the city. Toronto's mid century high rise residential towers were constructed with strict building codes. If maintained properly and renewed once every fifty years, most towers are expected to last at least another 200 years (Stewart and Thorne, 2010). This current era marks their first cycle of renewal, with most towers requiring retrofits to reduce energy consumption, modernize shared spaces and improve aesthetics. Some involve larger projects to resolve structural issues, which most likely resulted from owners not performing routine maintenance.

Furthermore, several high-rise communities represent some of Toronto's most socioeconomically disadvantaged communities. The United Way's *Vertical Poverty* report illustrates how poor transit, lack of employment and distant social services are some of the many issues hampering residents' socio-economic progress (United Way Toronto. 2011). Consequently, popular media routinely cast some high-rise residential communities as the city's most dangerous and least desirable in which to reside. As a possible solution, the Province of Ontario and the City of Toronto introduced a number of policies between 2005 and 2016. Transit City/The Big Move, Priority Neighbourhoods, Tower Neighbourhood Renewal and Residential Apartment Commercial Zoning (RAC) are part of a long term multifaceted strategy aimed at improving transit, renewing physical structures, supporting social services and loosening zoning laws around mid-century high-rise residential towers.

In my Major Paper, I evaluate the Residential Apartment Commercial Zone (RAC), a land use zoning category implemented in 500 tower districts city wide. Approved by City Council in 2013 and by the Ontario Municipal Board in 2016, RAC removes prior zoning restrictions to permit small scale commercial/social uses at the base of apartment towers. An integral part of the broader Tower Neighbourhood Renewal program, Residential Apartment Commercial Zoning (RAC)'s main objective is to create "integrated, vibrant, and diverse community hubs" in mid-century high-rise residential towers. It does not actually require changes be made to existing tower neighbourhoods; rather, it is hoped that the removal of regulatory barriers will encourage others to undertake positive changes (City of Toronto, 2015).

In my research, I question the extent to which the Residential Apartment Commercial Zoning (RAC) alone can enhance mid-century high rise neighbourhoods. Will the policy lead to the creation of "integrated, vibrant, and diverse community hubs" in mid-century high-rise residential towers? And can it help convert them into complete communities? Overall, what opportunities can a land use zoning change present for a tower neighbourhood?

Or are the issues too large for a land use zoning change to resolve. Is the policy limited? And what else is required to address the full range of needs of tower neighbourhoods?

CHAPTER ONE: RESEARCH DESIGN

I utilize a mixed approach where I employ both quantitative and qualitative methods to conduct my research on mid-century high-rise residential towers in Toronto's In-between city.

Quantitative

I employed data from the 2016 Statistics Canada Census. I used the smallest available scale to find focused and accurate data on the tower clusters alone. I analyzed five neighbourhoods in different parts of the City of Toronto. The purpose of my analysis is to better understand the social and economic conditions faced by residents in these communities.

Neighbourhoods:

- a) Mount-Olive Silverstone, Etobicoke
- b) Kingsview-Westway, Etobicoke
- c) West Hill, Scarborough
- d) Black Creek, North York
- e) Broadview North

Searching for:

- a) Total Population Households in 5+ Story Apartment Towers
- b) Average Household Size
- c) Youth (14-25)
- d) Seniors (65+)
- e) Household Income
- f) Visible Minority %
- g) Low Income Average
- h) Housing Tenure

Qualitative

I employed four qualitative research methods: i) policy document analysis, ii) literature review, iii) semi-structured interviews, and iv) case study analysis. I analyzed policy documents relating to the City of Toronto's Tower Neighbourhood Renewal program and the RAC zoning focusing on both programs' history and stated agenda. My analysis considers the opportunities and limits they present. Those documents include:

1. Toronto's Residential Apartment Commercial Zone (City of Toronto, 2016)
2. Toronto's Tower Renewal Plans and Policies (City of Toronto)
3. Mayor's Tower Renewal Report (Towerrenewal.com)
4. Places to Grow Act (Province of Ontario, 2005)
5. The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Province of Ontario, 2017)
6. The Big Move (Province of Ontario, 2008)
7. The City of Toronto Official Plan (City of Toronto, 2002)
8. The Neighbourhood Improvement Area Profiles (City of Toronto, 2014)
9. The Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020 (City of Toronto, 2015)

I undertook a literature review of modernism, suburbanization, urban neoliberalism, in-between cities and land use zoning. This literature review is the subject of Chapter Three in this Major Paper.

I conducted one-on-one in-person interviews with 10 participants: three with municipal employees, two business people, one family doctor, one youth worker and three residents. Interviews sought information about residents' and professionals' experiences in the community. The sessions were semi-structured, with a script of questions prepared beforehand. Most interviews ranged from 30 minutes to an hour.

Residents were given anonymity while professionals who allowed me to use their names were only published in the paper. I interviewed professionals at or near their places of work or business, usually at their office or a nearby café. Residents' interview locations varied; two were held in Yorkgate mall, one at the Driftwood Community Centre and one resident allowed me to interview him in a first-floor lounge at his apartment tower. During the interview process, I followed York University's guidelines for conducting ethical research.

I began each session with a brief explanation of the research goals, then clearly detailed participants' rights, and provided a quick explanation of interview type and questions. Prior to interviews, participants provided written informed consent. (See Appendix A for the approved research ethics protocol, Appendix B for a list of interview questions and Appendix C for a sample of the Informed Consent Form)

The Interviewees Were:

1. Lauralyn Johnston, Project Manager, Social Development, Finance & Administration at City of Toronto (February 4, 2019 at a Café in downtown Toronto)
2. Dr. Salim, Family Physician based in Kingsview-Westway, Etobicoke (September 20, 2019 at Dr. Salims office)
3. Revitalization and Renewal Communities Manager, Toronto Community Housing (Feb 25, 2020 at TCH Revite office)
4. Olu Villasa. - Community Services Coordinator – Economic Development, Toronto Community Housing (January 20th at TCH office, 389 Bloor St, Toronto.)
5. Farah Mohamed. – Co-owner Yorkgate Travel. Yorkgate Mall, Toronto. (November 8, 2019 at Yorkgate Travel)
6. Owner, RJ Smith Apartments Convenience Store (January 21st, 2020 at store)
7. Abdi Dayr. – Youth Outreach Worker, Delta Family Resource Centre (April 12, 2019 at Delta Family Resource Centre)
8. Resident, 15 Tobermory rd, Black Creek (Interview at Yorkgate Mall, May 18, 2019)
9. Resident, Edgeley Village, Black Creek (Interview at Residence, December 9, 2019)
10. Resident, Homeowner in Black Creek (Interview at Residence, December 10, 2019)

The fourth and final qualitative research method was a case study of the Black Creek community. In order to gain a rich understanding of the Black Creek community, I combined maps, historical context of the neighbourhood, a demographic analysis of the community and indepth interviews with residents.

I chose to focus on Black Creek because it is an excellent example of an inner suburban high-rise community in Toronto. The neighbourhood was initially designed with modern planning concepts and was an attempt at creating a functional, self-sustaining community (Young, 2006). Its built form consists of a hybrid landscape with vast parkland, rows of high-rise public/private apartments, two storey homes, townhouses, small shopping malls, commercial plazas, libraries, several schools, a college and a university. Black Creek is also rich in diversity and maintains a youthful subculture. The community has social problems, such as high concentrations of low-income residents and rising childhood poverty, a result of years of underfunded social services and schools. The latest 2016 census found that Black Creek has a total population of 21,737, and 56 percent of households live in apartments that are buildings with five stories or more. 78.1 percent of are of visible minority and 33 percent of all residents fall below the low-income threshold (Statistics Canada, 2016). The case study of Black Creek is presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER TWO: THE LITERATURE REVIEW

I approach my research with theoretical considerations of modernism, neoliberal urban governance and land use zoning. In the end, I will explore more than built form and examine the socio-economic nature of urban space.

I utilize the concept of post-Fordism, described by Harvey as “new systems of production and marketing, characterized by more flexible labour processes and markets, of geographical mobility and rapid shifts in consumption practices [and] the revival of entrepreneurialism and of neo-conservatism, coupled with the cultural turn to postmodernism” (Harvey, 1989).

Comparatively, Fordism is characterized by mass accumulation and state regulation policies that arose after 1945 in developed capitalist countries. In Canada, a focus on exporting resources and importing capital was rolled out with a commitment to continental integration (Young, 2006).

To illustrate spatial differences when comparing the urban core and inner suburb, I utilize the idea of the *in-between city* by Sieverts. He argues against the myth of an ideal compact city, rather he proposes that most urban residents live and work in an environment of scattered built and unbuilt areas (Sieverts, 2003). The *in-between city* is in reference to the large swaths of highrise residential towers that stand at the edges of the city of Toronto. In referring to the inner suburbs, I mean the historical suburbs of Toronto: North York, Etobicoke, Scarborough and East York. Today, most mid-century high-rise residential towers stand in hybrid landscapes offering a unique streetscape, with both urban and suburban spaces. Rows of two-story houses surround clusters of high-rises, commercial plazas, schools and parks (Keil, 2018).

By employing R. Keil and D. Young’s research about Toronto’s inner suburbs, I examine the structural systems that produced the planning/housing policy in question along with the socio-economic systems within which it currently exists. Modernist mass housing such as Toronto’s mid-century high-rise residential towers is the most widespread architectural and planning scheme of the last century (Urban, 2012). Most of these rental residential towers were built during the 1950’s to 1980’s, in a time when governments were welfare-state oriented and they planned and developed

mass housing for their citizens. In three decades following the end of World War 2, a building boom led to the construction of more than one thousand high rise residential towers in the City of Toronto (Young, 2011). Supported by multiple levels of government, state planners viewed the residential towers as a progressive and modern mass housing solution in a growing city like Toronto. Today, the same high-rise residential towers exist in an era of neoliberalism, which is characterized by an international free enterprise market, one in which cities compete to become the control centres of a globalized economy (Keil, 2018).

Finally, I also examine a specific zoning by law, The Residential Apartment Commercial Zoning (RAC), its historical development and purpose. Historically, Toronto's planning laws can be traced back to the Ontario Planning Act, 1946. Amended several times, it established the public regulation of the land development processes. It also set a hierarchy and defined the specific roles pertaining to multiple levels of government (Doumani, 2017). As a result, there remains a top-down approach to land use planning and the Province of Ontario maintains its position as the final decision maker in all land development processes through the Ontario Municipal Board (now called the Land Planning Appeal Tribunal -LPAT) (Doumani, 2017). It maintains that all land use changes must be "*consistent with*" or "*shall conform with*" or "*have regard to*" provincial interest, policies and plans, such as the Greenbelt Protection Act, 2004 (Robert G. Doumani, 2017). Municipalities are granted broad powers by the province mainly through an Official Plan which sets local land use regulations, subdivisions and zoning by-laws. Official Plans broadly contain the objectives and policies that are established to manage land changes in each city. The Residential Apartment Commercial Zoning (RAC) is a new land use zoning by-law in Toronto; it was approved by city council in 2013 and by the Province in 2016. It removed previous restrictions aimed primarily at separating land uses in high rise communities. Consequently, those same restrictions prevented apartment towers residents from establishing small business/social services within their own immediate communities.

Modernism

The project of modernity is largely influenced by the works of 18th century enlightenment philosophers who believed in linear progress, absolute truths and rationalism (Harvey, 2000). The modernist approach is based on the search for order, discipline and hierarchy. Modernist principles reject abstract concepts and theism, rather they prefer technocratic systems and scientific explanations. Modernists believe that space is something to be shaped for a greater social purpose. Urban planning, to them, was an important tool for establishing stability and structure in a world full of chaos and change (Irving, 1993). In the early 19th century modernist planners and philosophers argued that European cities were aging, war torn, crowded, dense and messy (Harvey). To achieve urban progress and prosperity, they proposed large scale, functional and efficient city plans. The modernist ideas of Le Corbusier were widely employed to revitalize cities and build new transportation networks, hospitals, public spaces and mass housing (Harvey, 2000). He proposed rebuilding the city with strict zoning based on separation of uses, new highways to connect spread out areas, ample parking for cars, technological innovation, huge parks and residential super blocks.

Early 20th century Toronto provides evidence of modernist ideals, planning and architecture in the built environment. For instance, the City Beautiful Movement led to building University Ave as a grand boulevard that connects Union Station to Queens Park (Irving, 1993). Furthermore, the tower-in-the-park architecture and typology is found throughout Toronto, many of them are in clusters lining the edges of the city (Young, 2006). The tower in the park building and neighbourhood design were invented by the late architect Le Corbusier. He designed them to be superior to other forms of buildings because they depended on less land and still produced more housing. Many observers draw a connection between Toronto's concrete residential towers and Corbusier's no frill architecture. Toronto's inner suburbs are till today widely influenced by the legacies of modernist ideals in city building, such as large-scale housing developments, efficient transportation networks (roads), technology and strict zoning. Modernism's influence was immense, and it left an ever-present legacy of redeveloped downtowns, tower in the park typology and sprawling suburban housing developments (Irving, 1993).

Architecturally, opponents of modernization argue that it reproduces images of power, wealth and prestige for corporations and governments (Harvey, 2000). For instance, Toronto’s glass bank towers or The Trump Tower in New York City are modernist icons celebrating power and wealth (Irving, 1993). Previously celebrated modern mass housing solutions for low income residents have begun to take on negative images of poverty, dehumanization and alienation (Harvey, 2000). Many argue that modernist mass housing solutions are no longer enough, as was with the case in St. Louis, where the Pruitt-Igoe public housing project was torn down only three decades after being built. Symbolically, Irving states that the demolition of Pruitt-Igoe is closely related to society’s transition from modernism to postmodernism (Irving, 1993). Moreover, architectural historian and critic Charles Jenks famously wrote "Modern Architecture died in St. Louis, Missouri on July 15, 1972 at 3:32 PM (or thereabouts) when the infamous Pruitt-Igoe scheme, or rather, several of its slab blocks, were given the final coup de grace by dynamite” (Bristol, 2015). However, many scholars argue that architecture was a minor factor in the demise of the Pruitt-Igoe, the real problems were rooted in social, economic, political and racial issues. From its inception, the housing project was shaped by practices of ghetto containment and racial segregation veiled under the promise of community revitalization (Bristol, 2015).



Figure 3.1 (Pruitt-igoe, St. Louis, US) (From Archdaily.com)

Harvey explains that the transition from modernity to postmodernity is closely related to the evolution of capitalism and its change from Fordist Keynesian to neoliberalism. He states that modernist approaches such as large-scale planning, transportation networks, and highdensity developments were necessary and complimentary to a growing global capitalist system (Harvey, 2003). Especially in the Third World, modernization was marketed as a gateway into systems of international trade and politics. Irving argues that 20th century modernism represents images of the machine, speed and the car. He states that urban planning became one of the tools for managing capitalism and producing favorable results for developers and corporations (Irving, 1993). Just look at how suburban mass development and the production of communities at the periphery is promoted and profited from. In contrast, postmodernists embrace a world of uncertainty, choice and a diversity of views. Postmodernist values and principles are based on spontaneity, deconstruction, difference and plurality (Hirt, 2009). As a result, postmodern planners seek out organic and pluralistic approaches to urban design and development. Postmodernists see space as independent, autonomous and shaped largely for aesthetic purposes. Post modernists do not plan cities, they simply design them (Irving, 1993).

Late 20th century postmodern planners believed that cities were collages made up of fragmented styles, ephemeral forms and distinct landscapes. They are occupied with finding avenues for expressing diverse aesthetic traditions and forms (Irving, 1993). For that reason, postmodernists are opposed to the modernists' ideas of large scale, technical, functional city building. Instead of grand plans and separation of uses, postmodernists pursue diversity, distinct spaces and a mix of uses. To them, urban design generates specialized spaces and customized architectural forms to meet specialized needs. Hirt explains that many of the tenets found in postmodernism are also present in the Charter of New Urbanism. These include a mix of uses, human scale developments, and a rich local built heritage and tradition (Hirt, 2009). Interestingly Hirt holds the opinion that although postmodern ideals and new urbanist-built environments are promoted, they are at the same time restrained through regulations, zoning codes, and found only in preselected islands in the city. As a result, mass produced, car friendly, segregated cities are still the most common urban form found in industrialized cities worldwide (Hirt, 2009). Charles Taylor, in *The Malaise of Modernity* (1991), describes three aspects of modernity and their effect

on society. Firstly, the growth of individualism has severely diminished the idea of a larger order, higher purpose and communal identity and bonds. Secondly, our thinking has changed dramatically, and we view the most efficient and economical use of everything as best. Thirdly, our individualism has led to loss of individual freedom. For example, if a city is designed for the private car and not for public transit, then a person will find it difficult to “free oneself from needing a car” (Taylor, 1991).

Neoliberalism

Theodore and Peck state that neoliberalism is not authorless or omnipresent, rather it is a constructed project with clear goals (Theodore and Peck, 2012). At this point, neoliberalism is practically everywhere, it is “heterogeneous, multi-sited and seeps into every part of urban life” (Theodore and Peck, 2012). It is characterized by policies that push for an entrepreneurial approach to local economic development, for instance, market orientated modes of regulation, involving the private sector in municipal administrations and a retrenchment of the welfare state and its redistributive policies. To grow and sustain neoliberalism urbanism, there is a need for global-urban integration where large cities become national economic engines and regional centres of transnational flows of capital (Theodore and Peck, 2012). For this coveted position, cities must compete regionally, nationally and globally to become one of a few centres of international capital.

In *Changing Toronto*, the authors detail how the introduction of neoliberal policies have drastically shifted the political and economic landscape of the city. They list six different “lenses” through which to view urban neoliberalism in Toronto (changing the space of politics, the reluctant global city strategy, bourgeois urbanism, the re-scaling of the urban imaginary, ecological modernization and new social disparities). The election of Mike Harris as Premier of Ontario in 1995 brought forward an intense episode of urban neoliberalism. One of the first moves the new government made was to amalgamate seven different cities to create a large metropolitan city, the City of Toronto (Boudreau, Keil and Young, 2009). Furthermore, the Harris government downloaded social housing and transit to municipalities and cut several options for cities to create

taxes. The municipal government aimed to make Toronto a global city and a centre for international capital accumulation. To this end, the provincial government began a strategy to market Toronto as a large, diverse metropolitan with a growing local economy. This strategy continues until today, whereby Toronto is under a process of reinvesting in and renewing its inner core. As a method, this has produced wonderful results for real estate agents, condominium developers, investors and mortgage financiers. However, in many cases, the real estate/condo boom leads to a sanitization of the inner city and the creation of spaces to stage “global elite culture and spectacle” (Boudreau et al, 2009). This can lead to gentrification of inner-city cores and wide disparity between different economic classes.

David Harvey argues these strategies of dispersal, community improvement and competition are fundamental to understanding how the urban process works under capitalism. In this urban system, there always exists a domination of labour by capital because the capitalist class controls work processes and organizes those processes for the purpose of producing profit for themselves (Boudreau et al, 2009). Brenner (2004) says that we are in a period (1970s – present) of urban austerity that affects almost all aspects of urban life. Governments use ‘austerity’ as a rationale to take measures to reduce public spending, mostly through the claw back of social services. In Toronto, residents experienced the Harris government amalgamating seven municipalities to save costs, downloading social housing to cities and reducing monthly welfare amounts. Today, the city of Toronto is fully entrenched in neoliberal urbanism; it embarks on multiple public-private partnerships to ‘revitalize’ public housing, privatizes city assets and sells municipal land to make up for the loss of provincial funding. Opponents to this form of urban economics argue that the province is interested in offloading costs so that others can assume the responsibility of fiscal cutbacks. It can be argued that Toronto is in a period of “permanent austerity” (Brenner, 2004). As a result, although investments for public housing renewal and transit are critical in Toronto, provincial and national governments are reluctant to fill the void. Rather they push for public-private partnerships whereby the market can invest and take the lead in urban development. For instance, Toronto’s new Eglinton LRT, the Crosstown, is a public private partnership, as was the renewal of Regent Park and other public housing communities (Boudreau et al, 2009).

Land Use Zoning

In this section of the literature review I explore Land Use Zoning: its origins and evolution. I begin with a definition of and rationale for land use zoning. I then provide an explanation of a few different forms: single use, performance based, inclusive and incentive zoning. Lastly, I discuss some of its negative aspects, such as exclusionary zoning, and its connections to capitalist urbanization. I give examples from several cities including New York City, Euclid Ohio, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Baltimore, Houston and Toronto. The ultimate purpose of this chapter is to define zoning, outline the conditions that led to its widespread adoption and consider how it is utilized in today's urban societies in the context of austerity urban governance.

History of Zoning

The earliest forms of zoning can be traced back to civilizations in Ancient China. The Zhou Dynasty (104-256 BC) established city plans with detailed layouts that regulated the width of roads, setbacks and the form and colour of buildings (Hirt, 2014). Likewise, walled cities in The Roman Empire (31 BC-476 AD) enacted rules to remove unwanted uses such as waste disposal and slaughterhouses from the core to periphery of the city. This allowed the inner city – which contained civic buildings, religious institutions and residences - to remain free of undesirable odours and unsanitary tasks.

The history and evolution of land use regulations in Europe highly influenced our modern systems of zoning. An early example is 1672 Paris, where the King of France, Louis XIV ordered both the public and private realms to follow land use regulations. The new zoning was largely aimed at preventing fires, loss of life and property (Hirt, 2014). Furthermore, massive industrialization, unregulated uses of land, lack of sanitation, overcrowding and pollution led to a public health crisis in 19th century German cities. To maintain order, health and prosperity, Germany developed modern zoning laws in the 1870s for newly urbanizing lands that surrounded old city cores (Hirt, 2014).

In modern times, several attempts were made to create a comprehensive zoning framework to guide urban design and life. A successful attempt is the Standard State Zoning Enabling Act (SZEA), which was issued in 1922 and is pivotal in the evolution of land use planning in the U.S. SZEA is a law, introduced by the Department of Commerce, which set the guidelines for enabling zoning regulations in U.S states (Wickersham, 2001). The law grants cities and incorporated villages the power to regulate the height of buildings, lot and yard sizes, population density and location and use of land. Proponents of SZEA argued that such a step would promote health, safety and the general welfare of the community.

Similarly, there was also a global push to create an urban framework for decent, habitable living standards. Early in the 20th century, The Athens Charter was promoted as a guideline to create urban environments that improved almost all aspects of life. Published in 1943, it emerged from a study of 33 cities and was highly influenced by the work of architect Le Corbusier (Frampton, 2002). Le Corbusier aimed to solve multiple issues faced in the industrial city, which he argued was entering a state of chaos. To mend the problems, he claimed that firstly cities need to be massively reconfigured to foster order. This way they could begin to contribute to the biological and physiological needs of humans. Secondly, to create harmonious urban environments, private interests should always be subordinate to the interests of the community (Frampton, 2002). Recommendations were that residential communities should be dense and planned on the most suitable locations that have a minimum set amount of solar exposure. The charter divided land uses by type, separated industry from residences and used walkable parklands to reduce travel time for residents (Frampton, 2002). Comprehensive Land Use Zoning was officially introduced in America by the early 1900s. It revolutionized how land was regulated, planned and developed. One of the crucial preconditions for the widespread use of land use zoning was the adoption of an intra-urban transportation system. The development of electric-powered street railroads in the 1880s made it possible for urban workers to live in exclusively residential districts and commute daily to their jobs in the city. As the streetcar lines were constructed, there followed a growing demand for housing away from the industrial core (Elliot, 2012).

One of the first examples of widespread zoning was in Washington D.C. in 1899, whereby the city enacted regulations to control the height of new developments. In 1908, Los Angeles also introduced zoning by-laws to protect residential communities from expanding factories and industries (Sloane, 2012). Eight cities in the U.S. had zoning by the end of 1916. By 1923, 218 municipalities had adopted it, and between 1926 and 1936, zoning was adopted by 1246 additional municipalities (Fischel, 2001). New York City pioneered America's first citywide zoning code, referred to as the 1916 Zoning Resolution. The city was undergoing a wave of new developments where each new structure competed in height and building type. However, as they went higher, the new buildings affected pedestrian sunlight and air quality. The straw that broke the camel's back was 120 Broadway, Manhattan, also referred to as the Equitable Building. It was built as a bulky building which rose to 41 floors without any setbacks. The shadows from the Equitable Building negatively affected civic life and led to complaints from pedestrians, nearby property owners and planners. The 1916 Zoning Resolution aimed to restrict new buildings which prevented light and air from reaching the sidewalks and pedestrians (Hirt, 2014). Although it did not affect height limits, it required architects to design buildings with a minimum setback to ensure light and air reach the sidewalks. It had an immense impact on how cities are built worldwide and how architects design tall buildings.

The most widely used zoning type is single use or Euclidean. It materialised out of Euclid, Ohio. Establishing this type of zoning was contentious because of a 1926 Supreme Court case, *Euclid v. Ambler*. Residents of Euclid, Ohio feared that Cleveland's growing industrialization would eventually creep into their suburban town and negatively affect the Village's character and livability. As a result, residents of Euclid, Ohio proposed zoning with six classes of use, three classes of height and four classes of land use (Hirt, 2014). Nonetheless, Ambler Realty which owned sixty-eight acres of land in Euclid held the opinion that single use zoning was limiting their property rights. Ambler feared that such restrictions would eventually devalue their land because they were unable to build as they saw fit. Even so, residents argued that Ambler Realty was firstly not following the Village's established zoning laws, and secondly, they did not take the issue to the zoning board at all, and as a result they had no merit to sue the village (Elliot, 2012). In the

Lower Courts, the decision was in favour of Ambler Realty because they viewed zoning as a method of appropriating Ambler Realty land. Furthermore, the Courts found the proposed zoning law as unconstitutional and restrictive in nature because it indirectly prevented different ethnic peoples from moving into the Village.

In response, the Village of Euclid decided to take the case to the U.S. Supreme Court. The Court held the opinion that zoning laws were an extension of existing police powers and were not discriminatory or racist. Additionally, the courts found that Ambler's claim of land devaluation was not based on any facts, rather on speculation. In the end, The Supreme Court found that Euclid's zoning by-laws did have a rational basis for controlling how land was used and developed. They concluded that the new land regulations were a reasonable extension that was focused on protecting public welfare. Since this ruling, governments all over the world have introduced zoning bylaws to control and plan urban land use.

Modern Zoning

Today, the most dominant system of zoning in North America is single use/functional zoning, also referred to as Euclidean Zoning. Euclidean zoning is based on the concept of separating land uses based on activity. It usually relies on a list of specific uses to define what activities may or may not be permitted in each zone (Wickersham, 2001). Residential, commercial and industrial are separated based on use, density and type of development. Proponents argue that it is easy to implement and is effective in controlling how land is currently utilized and developed in the future.

At the same time, single use zoning is a contentious issue because of its role in problems affecting cities throughout the world. It is argued that Euclidean zoning/single use zoning leads to suburban sprawl, loss of farmland, increased car use and pollution (Wickersham, 2001).

Furthermore, Jane Jacobs' ideas about the livable city espoused in her book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, is at odds with Euclidean zoning. For instance, Jacobs argues for high population density and activities, mixed uses, pedestrian friendly blocks and retaining old buildings and mixing them with the new (Jacobs, 1961). On the other hand, Euclidean zoning favours restraining density in order to control crime, reduce congestion and increase orderly development. Others argue that controlling size, height and population density of a given area can also lead to exclusionary regulations and socioeconomic segregation. Many see it as a violation of their property rights since they ultimately cannot control what is built on their own land.

Nevertheless, Euclidean zoning remains the dominant land use control system in North America. Hence, proponents of zoning continue to argue that it is an effective and indispensable tool in promoting public welfare, orderly development and environmental protection. Today, over ninety-five percent of incorporated communities and cities in the U.S zone, with Houston, Texas being the largest un-zoned city in America. Although Houston is un-zoned, the city does have tools that regulate land and control development. For instance, the city has historic zones, airport zones, and even minimum lot sizes. The problem with Houston's land development protocols is a lack of control and predictability. Communities – with no historic distinction- can suffer from massive developments with no regard to the area's history or image. Consequently, developers have the power to decide where and how to build, leaving the public to the mercy of the private (Hirt, 2014).

Performance based zoning is an alternative method of land use regulation. The focus is largely on the effect rather than the use of land. It is a method that is mostly aimed at preventing adverse effects to the community or nearby properties. The approach is site specific, flexible and based on quantifiable performance standards. Performance based zoning has two categories, site regulations and activity regulations. Site standards regulate lot sizes, building coverage, density, building setbacks, height and community character. Activity standards regulate the intensity or output from the land in question. For example, activity standards may regulate water use, waste and even traffic congestion.

In order to maintain the standards, the activity being assessed must be objective and quantifiable. In residential cases, performance-based zoning is focused on development intensity and design, but an overall goal is preserving the natural habitat. The advantages of performancebased zoning are that it establishes quantifiable standards and is less reliant on interpretation. It is also flexible in nature and allows small communities to preserve the environment through site designs (Moos, 2018). Finally, since intensity and impacts of development can be managed in performance-based zones, different industries can be mixed, along with light, medium and heavy industrial uses. The downsides of the performance-based approach are that it requires a lengthy review process and multiple inspections to ensure that performance standards are met. Finally, maintaining consistent standards can become a burden to small communities that lack professional planning or support.

In recent years, zoning by-laws were employed in diverse ways, from incentivized to inclusionary techniques. Incentive zoning is an innovative approach to land use regulation because it involves negotiations between governments and private interests to determine what works best for both parties. In return, the city offers a relaxation on current zoning laws to let developers build something that would in normal circumstances not be allowed. It is a method that ensures new developments contribute to the infrastructure of the city, such as new parks, public places, street art, schools, daycares, affordable housing, community amenities and more (Morris, 2000). For instance, Section 37 of the Planning Act is an incentive-based system that derestricts certain bylaws for benefits like parks, street art and community spaces. For example, new condominium developments can exceed height limits if they are willing to pay for local benefits and amenities.

Inclusionary zoning refers to by-laws and policies that would make developers include a set number affordable housing in new residential developments. In May 2016, The Province of Ontario introduced inclusionary zoning, through The Promoting Affordable Housing Act, 2016. The proposal is optional for municipalities in Ontario, and is implemented through zoning bylaws passed by lower-tier and single-tier municipal councils. It could be a powerful tool to help address

Toronto's affordable housing needs and could be a catalyst for creating mixed income communities. In Ontario, municipalities decide the number of affordable housing units that must be included in new developments, who maintains the units, as well as how long the units stay affordable. These planning tools can help cities lure developers into mutually beneficial agreements.

Mixed use zoning is an alternative to single use zoning because it permits residential, commercial and some light industries to coexist in the same spaces. This method of mixed uses was championed by urban activists like Jane Jacobs because it promoted lively, diverse neighbourhoods made for live, work and play (Moos, 2018). Advocates claim that it encourages development around transit routes, reduces auto dependency, maintains safety, encourages economic activities and produces lively neighbourhoods. Toronto was an early adopter of mixed use zoning and has a long history of implementing these zones in its downtown core (Moos, 2018).

Negative effects of Zoning

As land use zoning progressed and spread to the majority of cities in the U.S., it negatively evolved from protecting property rights and values to at times having racist and exclusionary motives. Exclusionary zoning is a residential zoning plan in which the zoning requirements can have the effect of excluding lower income or diverse populations. The most frequently used practice in exclusionary zoning is the condition that lots must be of a minimum size and houses must be set back from property lines (Serkin, 2013). That prevents affordable housing because the large plots of land required to build residences on are unreasonably overpriced for low income households. Exclusionary zoning has evolved, and at its worst, it can be a deliberate planning tool for racial discrimination. Restrictive covenants were used for a long time to place rules, such as who can live on the property, on specific parcels of land. Restrictive covenants are technically not zoning, but they can function in a similar way because they can place restrictions or obligations which dictate how the owner uses their land. In the past, these covenants have been used to restrict

who can purchase certain lands and in most cases were a tool to discriminate against undesirable races.

In 1917, the issue of exclusionary zoning and restrictive covenants in America was taken to the U.S. Supreme Court. The case of *Buchanan vs. Warley* was about a city ordinance in Louisville, Kentucky that restricted the sale of property to blacks in neighbourhoods that were majority white. The Supreme Court unanimously agreed that it violated the Fourteenth Amendment because it “destroys the right of the individual to acquire, enjoy and dispose of his property” (Roger, 1968). Before this case, several cities across the United States had some type of restrictive zoning mechanisms that legally prevented minorities from moving into majority white neighbourhoods. Still, once the ruling was made, home owners, developers and neighbourhood associations began inserting clauses into deeds and introduced bylaws with wording that hid their discriminatory intent.

In other cases, certain minorities were economically discriminated against or outright excluded. An example can be found in 1880. The city of San Francisco, California decided to restrict public laundries from operating in wooden buildings. In order to continue the business, owners were required to cease service and apply for a new permit. At the time, 89% of laundry workers were of Chinese descent and 75% of the laundries were owned by Chinese entrepreneurs. Discrimination was found in the permit application and approval process. For instance, only 1 of 200 Chinese applicants was approved, while applications from non-Chinese business owners were all approved. Eventually, in 1886, the issue was taken before the US Supreme Court, in the case *Yick Wo v Hopkins*. The Court ruled that even though the law is non-discriminatory, it was applied and administered in a prejudicial manner. Even worse, several cities in the United States introduced expulsive zoning; which is when large and often heavily polluting industries are allowed to open in majority ethnic communities (Shertzer, 2014). Urban scholars contend that this type of zoning is environmental racism because industrial activity in minority neighbourhoods often leads to high levels of toxic exposure, health problems and low land values for property owners. Though expulsive zoning is widely condemned and outlawed, research continues to show that minorities remain disproportionately isolated in neighbourhoods that are exposed to higher levels of toxic waste and pollution (Shertzer, 2014).

Capitalist Urbanization and Zoning

In the current neoliberal economy, the focus is on decentralisation of government, deregulation of laws and liberalisation of private enterprises. The idea of individualism, whereby people are self-reliant and entrepreneurial is promoted, in neoliberal urbanization. Neoliberal cities are heavily influenced by the private market and the public sector is narrowed to specific functions. Land is a complicated matter in modern capitalist urban centres because it isn't exchanged or viewed like other assets. According to David Harvey “land is a fictitious form of capital that derives from expectations of future rents” (Stein, 2019).

From a neoliberal perspective, much of urban planning is seen as a practice to increase land values and grow the local urban real estate economy (Gleeson and Low, 2000). As a result, capitalist urbanization’s main goal is to create spaces that foster or further economic growth. Although the practice of Zoning is widely accepted and in some way exercised in almost all capitalist cities in the western world, there is still disagreement about how it should be implemented. Proponents of zoning argue that it is a needed spatial regulation because it facilitates economic growth. The regulations that zoning impose create an environment of order and consistency which provides certainty to the market.

However, since many small businesses begin in the home, opponents of zoning claim that it stuns entrepreneurship because bylaws can be dated and the subjective categorization of land uses impede on property rights. Additionally, opponents of strict zoning codes argue that it can foster a local land supply and demand mismatch. For example, Vancouver currently has a housing crisis but there is a high vacancy rate on commercial property. If zoning codes were relaxed, a smart approach can be taken to convert some commercial land to residential. This would help both resolve the housing crisis and reduce the oversupply of commercial properties in Vancouver.

Toronto, Ontario Context

In Canada, provinces are responsible for land use control. This power relates to land and any developments that are constructed on said land. Therefore, the provinces can choose to empower the municipalities under their jurisdiction by laying a foundation of laws that they can build on. In Toronto, the Province of Ontario is the governmental body that establishes and decides on major land use issues such as the greenbelt through the Provincial Policy Statement.

The Province defines land use zoning as dictating “what land uses may be permitted, where buildings and other structures can be located, which types of buildings are permitted, lot sizes and dimensions, parking requirements, building heights and setbacks from a street or lot boundary” (Government of Ontario). The Ontario Planning Act of 1946 mandated municipalities to create comprehensive zoning bylaws, whereby all land was zoned or pre-zoned even before any development. These policies are aimed to protect property owners; whose major asset relies on the stability of the neighbourhood to retain its value from the threat of undesirable development nearby.

The City of Toronto has an intricate zoning system, partly due to its history of annexation and amalgamation (Sewell, 1993). Until Toronto was amalgamated in 1998, each municipality - Etobicoke, East York, North York, York, Scarborough and the old City of Toronto - had their own zoning bylaws and Official Plan (Sewell, 1993). In addition, the upper tier municipality Metropolitan Toronto had an Official Plan. In order to streamline the planning process, the city of Toronto consolidated all the rules and regulations into one Official Plan. Later, the six sets of zoning by-laws were consolidated into a single document. Presently, there are nine different zone categories, each having its own detailed guidelines.

They breakdown into these categories:

- a) Residential**
- b) Residential Apartment**
- c) Open Space**
- d) Utility and Transportation**
- e) Commercial**
- f) Commercial Residential**
- g) Residential Apartment Commercial Zone**
- h) Commercial Residential Employment**
- i) Employment Industrial and Institutional.**

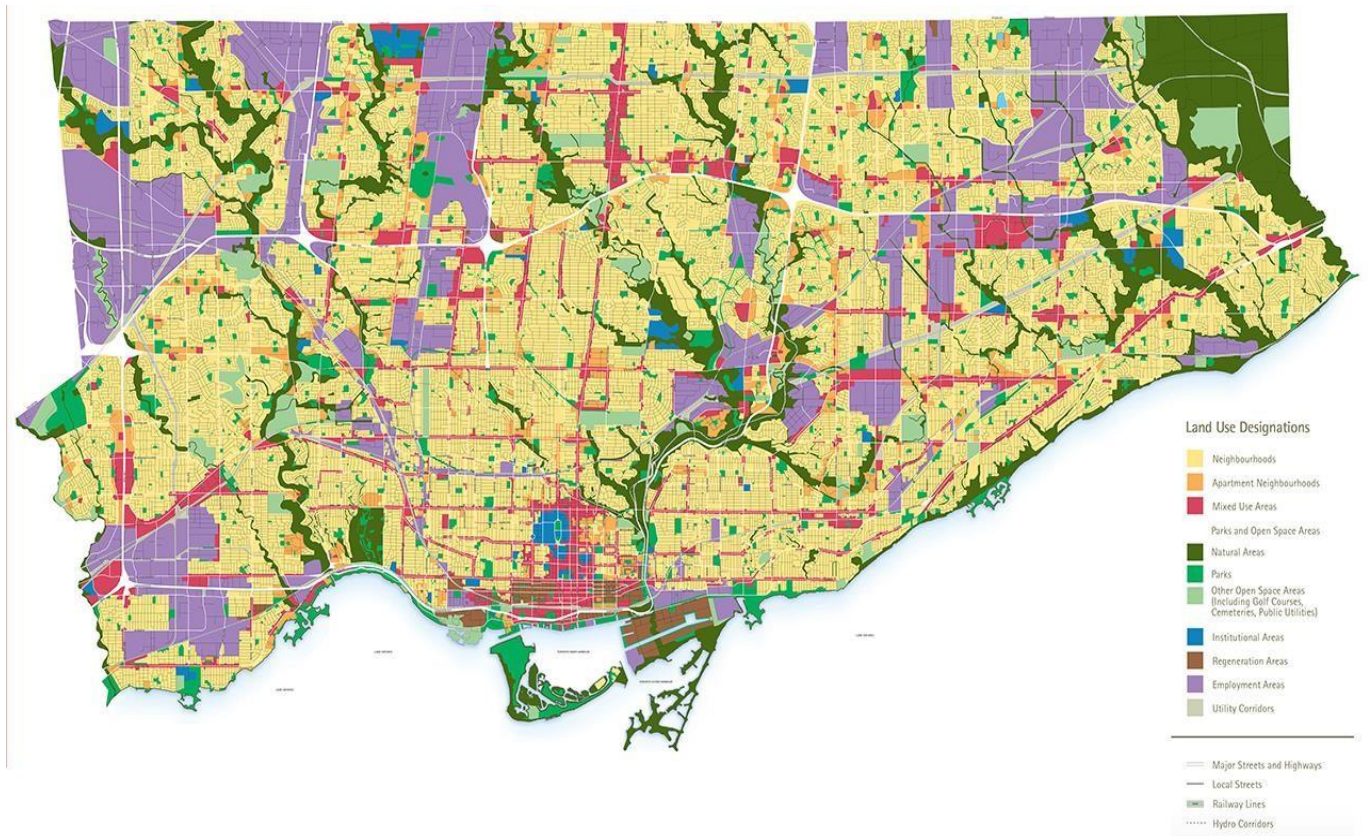


Figure 3.2 City of Toronto land use designations (toronto.ca)

Toronto's land use plans and zones have evolved over the last two centuries, but zoning itself was not fully developed until the 1940's and bylaws were not passed until the 1950's. Until then, bylaws were mostly aimed at preventing fires and establishing a limited amount of construction guidelines (Sewell, 1993). For instance, in 1859 Toronto passed an act to prevent the development of easily flammable buildings. In 1866, Toronto adopted section 14 of the bill for bylaw no 431, which established what areas could and couldn't be used for certain trades. To promote better health standards, the city restricted butchers from operating in houses or in the streets. In 1874, Bylaw 627 was passed, and it contained some land use constraints aimed at preventing the spread of fires. In 1904, the city fell victim to a large fire, referred to as The Great Fire of Toronto. It devastated massive parts of downtown Toronto, in total destroying over 100 buildings. In response, Toronto adopted its bylaw no.4408 in 1904. It limited the height of residential and public buildings based on construction types. It also set a height limit of 100 feet unless there was a special approval from a fire inspector. The fire remains the largest to have ever occurred in the city of Toronto (Sewell, 1993).

Toronto at the turn of the 20th century was a growing economic hub. In 1943, the City of Toronto published its first-ever Official Plan. Despite being rejected by City Council, it was the first comprehensive document to envision a plan for the city (Sewell, 1993). It set the stage for the following decades in Toronto, by envisioning the Don Valley Parkway and Gardiner highway system, amongst others. The plan also included measures for the Humber River by protecting the ravines that run throughout the City. The built form before this time was mostly single- or semidetached dwellings with rows of commercial strips (Sewell, 1993). Detached dwellings constructed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries either hosted multiple families under one roof or were gradually separated into apartment units.

By the middle of the 20th century, Toronto was growing at an unprecedented rate but issues such as overcrowding, unsanitary spaces leading residents towards a poor quality of life. Massive population growth in the 1950's and 60's led to a demand for more housing to accommodate growing families and new residents. At the time, planners and city officials encouraged suburban

density and the tower-in-the-park typology. Planners were concerned with the impact of urban sprawl and they recognized the need to “constrain development to a defined area, increase densities within that urban area, and protect access to green space in the process” (City of Toronto, 2006). As a result, Apartment neighbourhoods were planned to be strategically located near transit, large green spaces, and adequate services for residents. They believed this would allow families in highrise apartment neighbourhoods to live in large units, overlooking green spaces and most importantly, away from the crowding and congestion of the city core (Mayors Tower Renewal, 2006).

In the 1960’s and onward, the city sought to accommodate growth through plans and policies that promoted mixed use developments along transit corridors. In 1986, the City of Toronto rewrote its zoning bylaws and officially included mixed use zoning into its regulatory framework (Moos, 2018). An example is Toronto’s Kensington Market, where zoning bylaws were amended to promote mixed uses and to protect the culture and heritage of the area. The two Kings in Toronto, Spadina/King and Parliament/King are excellent examples of deindustrialization of downtown leading to mixed uses. Both areas were once thriving manufacturing districts, but in 1970 these industries began to move further away from the city’s core. In the mid-90s, Toronto decided to update the by-laws and allowed for all uses except some heavy industries. Since this change, both neighbourhoods continue to thrive, reflecting some of Toronto’s best known cultural and economic spaces. One of the city’s largest annual attractions, The Toronto International Film Festival, is held right by King St. and Spadina Ave.

Toronto’s most recently implemented zoning category, Residential Apartment Commercial Zone (RAC) is a type of mixed-use zoning that promotes small scale commercial and social services in what was before exclusively residential spaces. The new zoning bylaw is part of a multifaceted response to solve the socioeconomic and physical issues found in Toronto’s vertical apartment communities. For instance, in 2011, United Way Toronto released the report, *Poverty by Postal Code 2: Vertical Poverty*, which documented the growing trend of

increased concentrations of poverty in Toronto's inner suburbs in general, and specifically in Toronto's many older high-rise rental apartment communities.

RAC Zone ultimately aims to improve the health, wellbeing and quality of life of residents in the city's high-rise residential apartment communities. The new zoning bylaw permits residents in Toronto's mid-century rental apartment towers to establish small businesses or social services within their own communities. It was passed by City Council in 2012 and by the Ontario Municipal Board (The Local Planning Appeal Tribunal) in 2016. As a result, approximately 500 existing apartment sites have been identified for inclusion in the new zone.

Permissions include a "community centre to hold community activities such as arts, crafts, recreation, social, charitable and educational activities". RAC zone also includes "art gallery" which is the exhibition, collection or preservation of works of art for public viewing (City of Toronto). All commercial uses permitted in the RAC zone are limited to a maximum of 200 square metres per shop. The total amount of commercial floor area is also tied to the number of apartment units at a given location (City of Toronto). The Residential Apartment Commercial zoning category is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

In conclusion, this chapter has provided an extensive literature review for the Major Paper. The literature review delved into the complex topics of modernism, land use zoning and neoliberal urban governance. A good portion of the chapter explored the history, laws and current role of land use zoning. I also touched on some of its negative aspects such as exclusionary, and expulsive zoning. Analyzing modernism provides the paper with a historical context about evolving ways of thinking and building. Lastly, exploring neoliberal urban governance set the framework for the literature review because it intersects with both land use zoning and modernism.

CHAPTER 3

TORONTO'S IN-BETWEEN CITY

According to Wu and Phelps, urbanization has entered a new stage that is starkly different from the misconception that every city is dense and compact. Rather, most industrialized cities have a multitude of urban forms, including compact downtown cores, spaces with a mix of land uses, complex polycentric hubs connected by transportation networks and spacious suburban residential communities (Wu and Phelps, 2008). To describe this phenomenon, terms such as in-between cities, edge cities and technoburbs, amongst others, have been used. However, one of the primary challenges is finding terminology that adequately captures these unique urban forms (Young, 2011). Sieverts explains that although spaces with characteristics of both city and country are found all over the world, a suitable name that captures their complexity is yet to exist (Sieverts, 2003).

Sieverts claims that the compact city was only a stage in the long-term evolution of human settlements. Since the introduction of the industrial revolution, new technologies such as complex rail and digital networks have drastically expanded industrial and post-industrial cities into their immediate countryside's (Wu and Phelps, 2008) and different social and spatial forms. Today, most cities have both urban and suburban elements that form a hybrid built form. And although in-between cities give an unplanned impression, they were built through individual, long term rational decisions. Sieverts explains that most cities in the world have urban spaces that are in-between city and country. Therefore, today's urban environments can no longer be described simply as a city or a suburb, rather they are increasingly made up of complex polycentric spatial patterns and large residential/commercial development clusters (Sieverts, 2003). He explains that since these hybrid environments do not fit the traditional urban mould, they must be viewed as a new urban typology, an in-between city that has both urban and suburban characteristics and functions.

Likewise, he contends although half of the world's population lives in these in-between cities there is yet to exist a cultural and political identity for residents. Furthermore, the current approach to urban planning clouds the reality of new in-between urban forms and the needs of residents from the wider urban periphery (Sieverts, 2003). This is a result of the Tucholsky principle, whereby the simultaneous yearning for both the urban and rural landscape shadows the existence of other forms of human settlements. The principle comes from Tucholsky's poem "The ideal" which describes someone's desire to have a home on the main streets of the city and in the countryside (Stadler, 2008). It is an attempt to unite two opposites, the open countryside and the comforts of modern urban society. This desire for both landscapes highly influenced suburban housing developments and led to the hybrid urban environments of homes next to open, unaltered nature (Sieverts, 2003). Sieverts explains that traditional modes of urban planning must evolve to meet the complex needs of in-between cities. He argues that in-between cities and the wider society have to negotiate a new agreement on planning, agriculture, culture and economy (Sieverts, 2003).

Firstly, he proposes establishing regional governments that can maintain orderly and inclusive urban development. Secondly, a cultural identity for these complex spaces to help maximize economic potential and create a strong bond between residents. Especially in our time when culture has become a product to market globally, municipalities will need to develop cultural places that display the in-between city's cultural richness and beauty (Sieverts, 2003). Exploring these avenues for the in-between city can help establish this urban form as an attractive and distinct destination for the wider region.

Roger Keil and Douglas Young employ the idea of an in-between city to describe parts of Toronto that have both urban and suburban characteristics. They explain that using this lens allows one to explore and understand the complex social, economic and physical needs of the in-between city (Keil and Young, 2009). They contend that Toronto's in-between city should form a strong geographic identity, redefine in-between communities as a distinct socioeconomic asset and build political influence in the region. (Keil and Young, 2009). Collective actions can lead to policies that address the unique issues found in many apartment neighbourhoods.

Toronto is a city with various urban forms. The historically dense urban core is surrounded by extensive suburban neighbourhoods with a mix of high-rise apartment towers, endless two-storey houses, retail plazas and factories. This hybrid urban landscape was centrally planned during the post-war period (1950-1970) by city planners who envisioned a modern city with a mix of densities at Toronto's edges. Instead of only low rise residential suburban communities, planners opted to include vertically dense apartment communities to curb sprawl and protect surrounding natural lands. Today, the Greater Golden Horseshoe region (comprised of the Greater Toronto Area, Hamilton and the Niagara region. ...) contains 2,047 apartment towers - home to over half a million people - the second-highest number of buildings twelve storeys and over in any single urban region in North America (TNRGGH, 2010). Apartment tower neighbourhoods in Toronto were planned throughout the periphery of the city because they sought to create new communities with both urban and suburban forms. (TNRGGH, 2010). To maximize the civic infrastructure like new sewers, roads and public transit, the metropolitan government in the 1960s codified minimum density requirements for all new periphery developments.



Fig 4.1 Picture of Don Mills and 401, Toronto from 1965 (Toronto Star Archives)

The first of such communities was Flemingdon Park, North York and Thorncliffe Park, North York. The former was planned in 1958 and the latter in 1955 (TNRGGH, 2010). Both neighbourhoods were designed to be near employment centres, shopping plazas, schools, parks, highways and transit. Designed to be towns within cities, original plans for Flemingdon Park even included a cultural centre that was anchored by a new Canadian Broadcasting Corporation headquarters (Tower Renewal). Over 60 years later, high rise apartment towers present a vital part of Toronto's built form and housing strategy because they contain most of the city's stock of three and four-bedroom apartment units (Tower Renewal, 2008). A typical built form of a midcentury high-rise apartment tower consists of a single main entrance and a back door - usually hidden- that leads to the back of the building. The lobby maintains the elevators, property management offices and tenant mailboxes. Most buildings also have residential units on the main floor of the tower. On each floor, there are usually 12 or more apartment units with stairs on each end of the hallways. The units are 1, 2, 3 or sometimes 4 bedroom apartments and each unit has a kitchen, washroom, and balcony and storage space.

OPPORTUNITIES

Toronto's mid-century apartment towers were mostly planned with the tower in the park typology. Planners and Architects built buildings and communities surrounded by vast open spaces to efficiently use the land, protect the natural landscape and offer residents panoramic views. Today, these vast open spaces present an opportunity to build more flexible housing, open small stores or even hold large open-air flea markets on the weekends. Apartment towers have the necessary physical requirements to accommodate a wide range of uses, such as retail, recreation, daycares and even health clinics. If the retrofit and revitalization of apartment towers are executed properly, Toronto can utilize this vast housing option to meet the needs of all residents and can eventually lead to a more equal city made up of 140 diverse and self-sufficient neighbourhoods.



Figure 4.2- Mid-century apartment towers on Scarlett Road, Toronto (Picture by Ahmed Ahmed)

Using the open space to build more housing would reduce sprawl, provide more housing options and build larger homes to meet the demands of growing families. New housing could improve the urban fabric of Toronto, add to the aesthetic of the community, and give more housing choices for residents. Vast open green areas can also foster agricultural uses such as small-scale farming. In turn, enabling residents to partake in local food production could lead to more interactions between residents and could include training for community members and may encourage local economic development. These changes and more may transform neighbourhoods into self-sufficient communities with access to markets and services. Permitting dynamic uses at the base of buildings, coupled with better transit has the power to ignite local street life. A variety of uses at the base of apartment towers will animate the street level into more communal and vibrant outdoor spaces.

Mid-century high-rise apartment towers in Toronto offer ample opportunities for the city. If connected by adequate transportation networks such as reliable bus networks and trains, apartment communities in Toronto can emerge as vibrant, inviting areas for the rest of the city. Although there is a lack of newly built transit options, there always seems to be new plans to address the critical transit shortages in the Greater Toronto Area. The Province of Ontario created Metrolinx in 2006 to address the shortage of transit options in the greater Toronto region (GTA). In 2008, Metrolinx released The Big Move, a regional mass transportation plan that illustrated the agency's vision, blueprint and goals.

RECENT TRANSIT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CITY OF TORONTO

Recently, Metrolinx released the 2041 Regional Transportation Plan. The new plan incorporates the city of Hamilton into the regional plan and focusses on providing a standard built on reliable and accessible transit options for the megaregion. To ensure that more people can access the regional transit system, Metrolinx included multimodal alternatives like biking, walking and ride-sharing. Some highlights of the plan are:

- An extension of the Yonge-University Subway to Vaughan Metropolitan Centre opened in 2017. The extension runs through York University to the city of Vaughan.
- Yonge North Subway Extension, a proposed one-stop extension of the Yonge Subway north into York Region; links Richmond Hill to Downtown Toronto.
- Ontario Line, a proposed 15 stop subway line that extends from Ontario Place to the Ontario Science Centre.
- Scarborough Subway, a proposed extension of the Bloor-Danforth Subway eastward; links Scarborough and downtown Toronto. From Scarborough Centre to Kennedy Station.
- The Eglinton Crosstown light rail transit (LRT) is a new 25 station line under construction in Toronto. The expected completion year is 2023.
- Finch West LRT, a new light rail transit corridor along Finch Ave. It connects Finch West Station and Humber College. From Finch West Station to Humber College (below)

CHALLENGES

According to the Mayor's Tower Renewal report, apartment neighbourhoods are a vital aspect to two of Toronto's greatest modern challenges, environmental sustainability and social inequality. From an energy use perspective, mid-century apartment towers are extremely wasteful because they demand more energy use per square metre than any other housing type in the city. With over one thousand such buildings in the Toronto region, they collectively account for a significant percentage of residential greenhouse gas production (Tower Renewal, 2008).

Additionally, several high-rise communities in Toronto's in-between city are considered as Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIA). Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (previously referred to as priority neighbourhoods) are chosen based on World Health Organization research called Urban Health Equity Assessment and Response Tool/ Urban HEART (TSNS 2020). WHO sets the criteria to assess and rate a neighbourhood based on its physical surroundings, economic opportunities, the health of residents and social development opportunities, amongst others. The city of Toronto employs the Urban Health Equity Assessment and Response Tool/ Urban HEART to assess its 140 neighbourhoods. The report revealed that 31 neighbourhoods scored below the set benchmark. Interestingly, out of the 31, 25 are high-rise apartment neighbourhoods in Toronto's inner suburbs (TSNS 2020).

Similar findings were illustrated by Professor David Hulchanski in his Three cities report. His research found that between 1980 and 2006 the percentage of middle-income residents has drastically fallen in the city of Toronto. What's more, Toronto has – through a socio-economic geographic lens – turned into three distinct cities made up of distinct high, middle- and lower income communities (Hulchanski, 2008). What's of concern is that, similar to the Toronto Strong Neighbourhood Strategy findings, most of Toronto's high-rise apartment neighbourhoods are primarily located in areas with a high percentage of low-income residents, single-parent households and childhood poverty.

TORONTO'S TOWER NEIGHBOURHOODS:

In the following section, I present my findings from the 2016 Statistics Canada census data on four apartment tower communities in Toronto. I employed data to capture the socioeconomic condition of tower communities in Toronto's in-between city. I collected the smallest available scale to find focused and accurate data on the tower clusters alone. In my analysis, I concentrated on population density, income, visible minority and housing tenure.

The Neighbourhoods:

1. Mount-Olive Silverstone, Etobicoke
2. West Hill, Scarborough
3. Kingsview-Westway, Etobicoke
4. Broadview North, East York
5. Black Creek, North York (Case Study)

Searching for:

1. Total Population Households in 5+ Story Apartment Towers
2. Average Household Size
3. Household Type
4. Youth (14-25)
5. Seniors (65+)
6. Household Income
7. Average Home Prices
8. Visible Minority %
9. Low Income Average
10. Housing Tenure

MOUNT OLIVE-SILVERSTONE

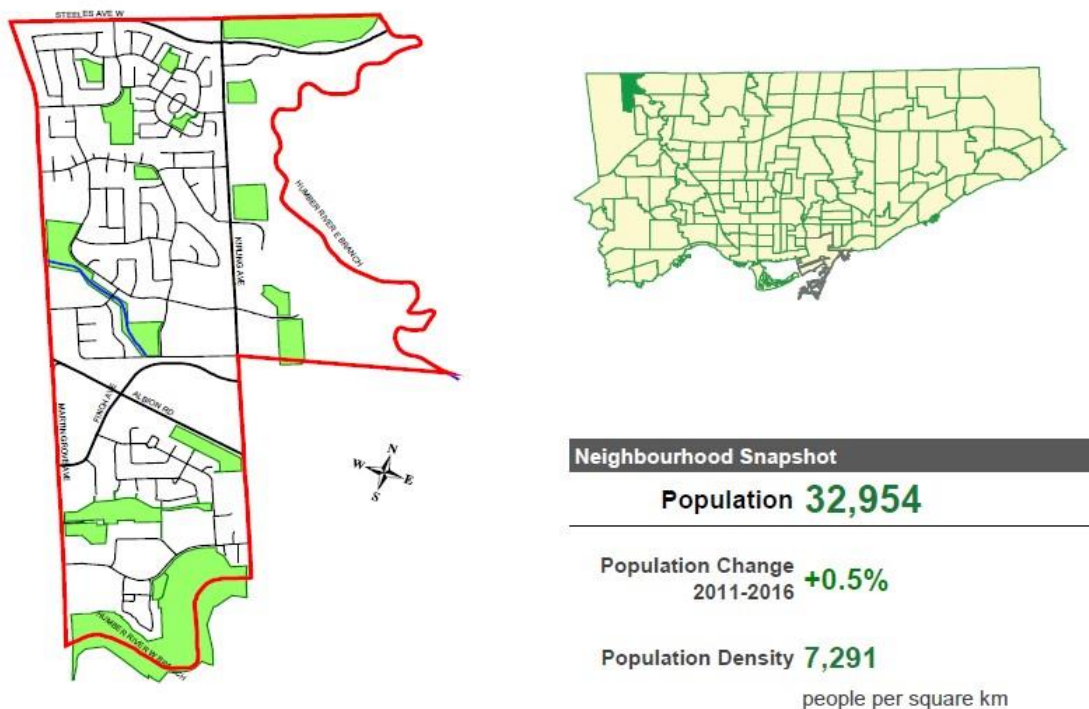


Figure 4.4 Map of West Hill neighbourhood (Toronto.ca)

Mount Olive – Silverstone is a neighbourhood in the northwest corner of the city of Toronto. It is bordered by Steele’s Ave to the north, Martingrove Rd to the west, Humber River to the South and Islington Ave to the East. The community has 32, 954 residents. Sixty-two percent of all residences are in apartment towers with five or more stories.

Mount Olive- Silverstone is a highly diverse community. 82 percent of all residents represent a visible minority. The top three non-English languages in the area are Punjabi, Gujarati and Assyrian. The community is host to hundreds of new Iraqi and Syrian refugees. Interestingly, half of all households in the area are couples with no children.

Area	MOUNT OLIVE	TORONTO
Population	32,954	2,731,571
Population Change	0.50%	4.50%
Youth (15- 24)	5,240	340,270
Percent	16%	12%
Seniors (65+)	3,570	426,945
Percent	11%	16%
Single Parent	2,440	152,595
Private Dwellings	10,220	1,112,929
% of pop in 5+ Storeys	60%	44%
Av. Family Income	\$ 60,324.00	\$65,829
Av Rent	\$921.00	1,241
Low Income %	27.90%	20%
Av Home Price	\$251,119	\$746,218
Visible Minority	85.30%	51%

Table 4.1 Mount Olive-Silverstone neighbourhood demographics Toronto (Statistics Canada)

Mout Olive SJ	Census Tract #	Population	Population in 5+ Floors	Youth (15- 24)	Seniors (65+)	M. Income (Household)	Low Income %	Av. Household Size
Mout Olive Dr	35204059	2,907	665	505	255	\$ 50,005.00	34%	3.6
Panorama	35204124	7,607	2,265	1,215	710	\$ 54,674.00	30.50%	3.4
N. Kipling	35204259	5,520	1,780	835	350	\$ 51,552.00	31.60%	3.1
Markbrook Lane	35203026	686	210	60	60	\$ 59,435.00	21.20%	3.2

Table 4.2 Mount Olive-Silverstone neighbourhood demographics focused on apartment tower clusters Toronto (Statistics Canada)

WEST HILL



Figure 4.5 Map of West Hill neighbourhood (Toronto.ca)

West Hill is located on the southeast border of Toronto. It is part of Scarborough, which is one of six municipalities that were amalgamated to create the wider City of Toronto. The area is bounded by Lake Ontario to the south, Lawrence Ave E to the north, city of Oshawa to the east and Morningside Dr to the West.

There are 22,392 residents in the area. 35% of all residences are in apartment towers with five or more stories. West Hill is a diverse community with one in two people representing a visible minority. Unfortunately, one in four residents is low income and there is a higher than normal amount of single-parent households in the community.

	WEST HILL	TORONTO
Population	27,392	2,731,571
Population Change	3.20%	4.50%
Youth (15- 24)	3,950	340,270
Percent	14%	12%
Seniors (65+)	4,260	426,945
Percent	16%	16%
Single Parent	2,025	152,595
Private Dwellings	10,318	1,112,929
% in 5+ Storeys	35	44%
Av. Family Income	\$ 68,515.00	\$65,829
Av Rent	\$686.00	1,241
Low Income %	25.20%	20%
Av Home Price	\$308,229	\$746,218
Visible Minority	55.20%	51%

Table 4.3 West Hill neighbourhood demographics Toronto (Statistics Canada)

West Hill	Census Tract #	Population	Pop in 5+ Floors	Youth (15- 24)	Seniors (65+)	Low Income %	M. Income (Household)	Av. Household Size
Orton N/Lawrence	35203331	854	300	150	70	40.40%	\$ 39,936.00	2.6
Highland Creek Park	35203340	1838	115	270	170	54%	\$ 33,810.00	2.8
Mossbank/Lawrence	35203959	1931	600	305	135	51.20%	\$ 33,472.00	2.8
Overture/ Lawrence	35203958	1124	315	180	125	28.90%	\$ 51,413.00	2.9
West Hill Park	35203766	1286	135	210	135	50.40%	\$ 26,464.00	2.4

Table 4.4 West Hill neighbourhood demographics focused on apartment tower clusters (Statistics Canada)

KINGSVIEW-WESTWAY

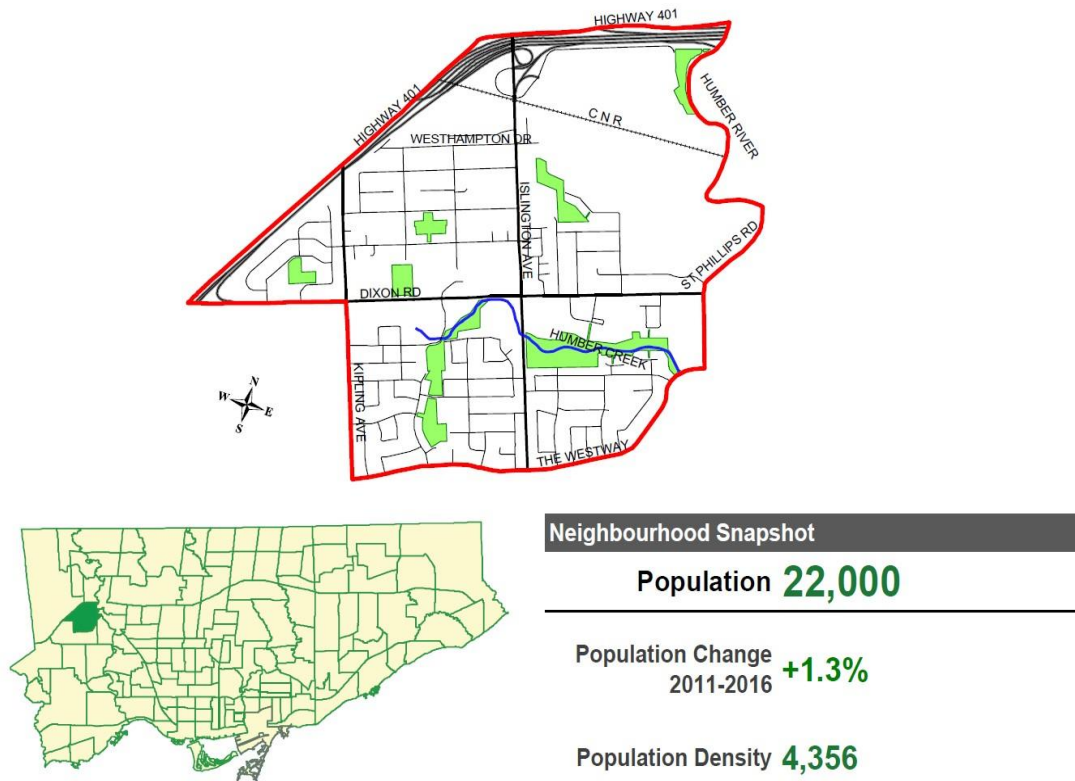


Figure 4.6 Map of Kingsview-Westway neighbourhood (Toronto)

The Kingsview-Westway neighbourhood is located on the northwest side of Toronto. The community is a part of Etobicoke, one of six municipalities amalgamated to create the wider city of Toronto. The community borders Westway Rd to the south, Hwy 401 to the north, hwy 427 to the west and Islington Ave. to the East. According to the 2016 census, The area has 22,000 residents, of which 61% live in apartment towers with five storeys or higher. With one of two people coming from a visible minority. Kingsview-Westway is a highly diversified community. The top three non-English languages are Somali, Italian and Spanish. Interestingly 49% of single young adults in the community live with their parents. This is common in immigrant households.

	KINGSVIEW	TORONTO
Population	22,000	2,731,571
Population Change	1.30%	4.50%
Youth (15- 24)	3,020	340,270
Percent	14%	12%
Seniors (65+)	3,585	426,945
Percent2	16%	16%
Single Parent	1,520	152,595
Private Dwellings	10,320	1,112,929
% in 5+ Storeys	61%	44%
Av. Family Income	\$ 67,252.00	\$65,829
Av Rent	\$1,052.00	\$1,241
Low Income %	25%	20%
Av Home Price	\$292,861	\$746,218
Visible Minority	54.30%	51%

Table 4.5 Kingsview–Westway neighbourhood demographics Toronto (Statistics Canada)

Kingsview	Census Tract #	Population	Pop in 5+ Floors	Youth	Seniors (65+)	M. Income (person)	M. Income (Household)	Low Income %
Dixon Park	35204269	6,071	1,775	985	665	\$ 18,112.00	\$ 45,070.00	39.40%
Dixon Rd. Southside	35204065	1,617	550	225	210	\$ 22,544.00	\$50,816.00	31.00%
Dixon Rd /Islington Ave	35204064	1,774	595	200	255	\$ 29,376.00	\$ 54,554.00	16.70%

Table 4.6 Kingsview-Westway neighbourhood demographics focused on apartment tower clusters (Statistics Canada)

BROADVIEW NORTH

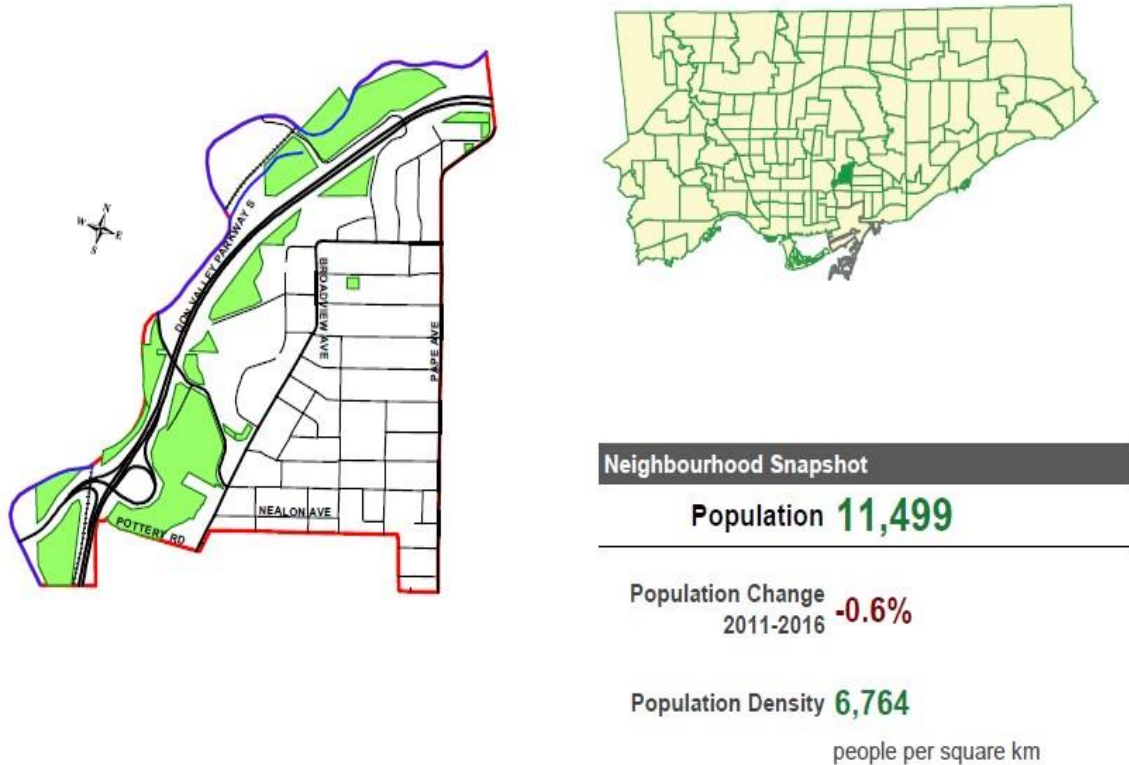


Figure 4.7 Map of Broadview North, Toronto (toronto.ca)

Broadview North is a neighbourhood located in East York, Toronto. According to the 2016 Statistics Canada Census, the community has a total population of 11,499. 990 are youth aged 15-24 and 1820 are seniors above 65. Residents in Broadview North commonly live in rental apartment towers. 58.3% of residents reside in apartment towers with 5 storeys or more. And 68% of residents rent compared to city wide average of 47.2 percent. Income levels in Broadview North fall below Toronto averages. The median household income is \$52,731, compared to city wide average of \$65,829. Over 42% of residents earn at least a bachelor's degree and the unemployment rate is 8.2%.

Area	BROADVIEW N	TORONTO
Population	11,499	2,731,571
Population Change	-0.60%	4.50%
Youth (15- 24)	1,040	340,270
Percent	9%	12%
Seniors (65+)	1,432	426,945
Percent	12%	16%
Single Parent	645	152,595
Private Dwellings	10,319	1,112,929
% in 5+ Storeys	59	44%
Av. Family Income	\$ 72,283.00	\$65,829
Av Rent	\$940.00	1,241
Low Income %	22.60%	20%
Av Home Price	\$518,555	\$746,218
Visible Minority	24.30%	51%

Table 4.7 Broadview North neighbourhood demographics Toronto (Statistics Canada)

Broadview North	Census Tract	Population	5+ Floors	Youth	Seniors (65+)	Low Income %	Av. Household Size
Pape/Gamble W	35204076	1,437	565	175	200	28.60%	2.1
Pape/Cosburn	35204077	1531	800	155	210	27.60%	1.7
Pape/Gamble E	35203864	644	255	75	75	24%	2
Gowan Ave	35203857	1,966	25	180	260	29.50%	2
Gowan/Cosburn	35203977	1,324	170	90	205	25.80%	2

Table 4.8 Broadview North neighbourhood demographics focused on apartment tower clusters (Statistics Canada)

CHAPTER FOUR BLACK CREEK CASE STUDY

Black Creek is a beautiful, diverse and dense neighbourhood. A genuine apartment tower neighbourhood, Black Creek is scattered with high rise apartment buildings, public housing, townhouses, schools, shops and extensive park spaces. Altogether there are over 7,674 private dwellings, and 56% of them are in apartment towers. Black Creek is one of the most diverse communities in all of Canada. Black Creek residents are over 80 percent visible minority, compared to fifty-one percent for the City of Toronto. The neighbourhood neighbours - in terms of physical size - Canada's largest university campus, York University. And is walking distance to a newly built Toronto Transit subway station, Pioneer Village. A resident explained that what he likes most about the community is that he is surrounded by immigrants who share similar stories, struggles and triumphs. As a result, they experience the country and city together.

According to Young, Black Creek is the result of three modernisms, the mass production of affordable housing, the deregulation of Canada's immigration policy and state experiments with new ways of planning and living (Young, 2019). Black Creek was planned and built with forward-thinking urban concepts that envisioned innovative strategies to live, work and play in the suburbs. The area's initial plan went against the common norms of car-centric suburban neighbourhoods and instead built a dense environment conducive to walking and congregating. A large number of apartments in high-rise buildings went against a longstanding belief that a detached house was the ideal housing choice for Torontonians (Young, 2001).

History

The earliest people who are known to have inhabited the area that is today named *Black Creek* came around 10,500-11,000 years ago (City of Toronto, 2006). In 1948, researchers found Iroquoian longhouses near Black Creek which dated back to 1400. As a result, Black Creek is believed to have been Iroquoian territory until about 1600 (City of Toronto, 2006). The Black

Creek neighbourhood remained mostly farmland until the 1950s. In 1954, approximately 655 acres of land was purchased by the Federal-Provincial Partnership; of the 655 acres, 476 acres were sold to York University for its new campus while 88 acres were transferred to the Metropolitan Toronto Region Conservation Authority (Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 1964). 91 acres remained for what was to become Edgely Village, an experiment in modern urban planning and housing policy. The Black Creek neighbourhood was part of a much larger planning area called District 10. The District 10 planning document detailed the initial built form of the community and how the area should evolve in the following decades. Planners extensively controlled the development of the community to the extent that, in their plans, they balanced rental and ownership tenures, set minimum park space requirements, integrated housing types, and ensured that community amenities were accessible to the whole neighbourhood.



Figure 5.3 415 Driftwood Ave. Toronto Community Housing building being retrofitted (By Ahmed Ali Ahmed)

MAP OF BLACK CREEK

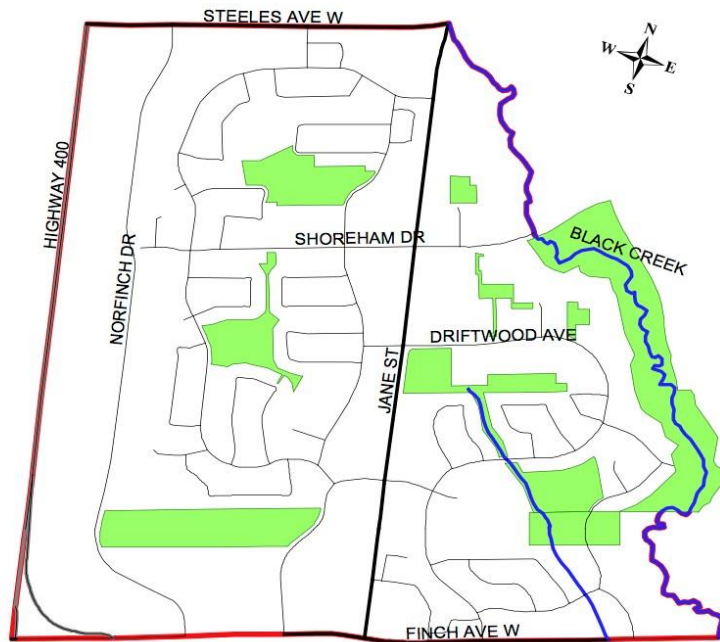


Figure 5.1 Map of Black Creek, Toronto neighbourhood (toronto.ca)

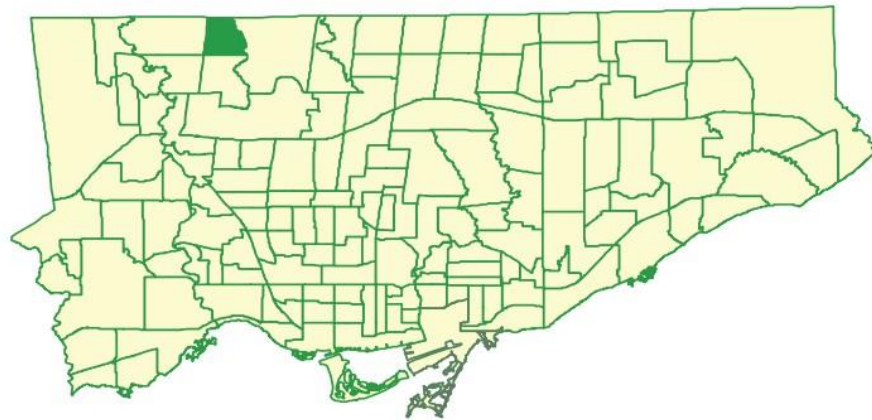


Figure 5.2 Map of Toronto with Black Creek high lighted (toronto.ca)

Community Design

The Black Creek neighbourhood was built in an era of state intervention, when governments played an active role in the city building process. At the time, it was the clearest example of modern planning experimentation in Canada (Young, 2006). During this period, planning in Toronto was largely influenced by modern ideas from the Athens Charter. Planners experimented with urban design to address ‘the problems of the city’ and to ultimately plan an ‘ideal modern city’.

The initial District Plan was an attempt at creating a self-contained community, with a functional built environment. As a result, Black Creek was built under a planning system that represented the most advanced suburban state interventionism in Canada (Filion, 35). For instance, the development proposal from the CMCH for the area was created on the central goal of achieving a maximum diversity of social classes and income groups as possible (Young, 2006). The neighbourhoods physical design is an example of forward progressive urban planning because of its mix of high rise, private housing, public housing and large educational institutions.

Edgeley Village was designed by famed Canadian architect Irving Grossman. Known and celebrated for work on large scale urban projects, such as Toronto’s Flemingdon apartments. Similar to Flemingdon Park, Grossman designed Edgeley Village wide use of high-density vertical apartment towers mixed in with low density two storey housing. In Edgeley Village, he designed pedestrian bridges over collector roads to prevent children from crossing streets, and many buildings are connected through pedestrian only walkways (Young, 2006). In order to maximize social bonds and communal cohesion, the residences in the community were planned around shared courtyards. The pedestrian malls in the area were designed to serve multiple purposes, such as access to shops and a space for social gatherings. Similarly, The Black Creek Parklands that surround the community are designed both as a public amenity and as a storm sewer (Young, 2006) Edgeley Village neighbourhood plan experimented with new ways of living and attempted to influence social aspects of the community through physical designs. For instance, Grossman

intentionally designed the community to minimize income segregation and maximize interactions between private and public housing tenants.

Black Creek maintains one of the largest public housing units in all of Toronto. Most of the public units were built in the 1960's during a period where planners were experimenting with large parcels of land. As a result, Black Creek was designed with forward looking concepts and was still accessible to most income groups in Toronto. However, as the years progressed, a common complaint against the community were the large amounts of public housing residents and units in Black Creek. Specifically, opponents argue that concentrating that many low income residents into one area would lead to segregation and would create a "culture of poverty" (Young, 2006). Furthermore, the physical design of the community, with its extensive amount of mid century concrete towers, public and private townhomes, large avenues and parking lots came to be seen as regressive and inadequate for growing families. Instead of becoming a community with towers in the park, some argue that Black Creek has turned into towers in a parking lot.

Recent proposals to improve the community included some band aid attempts by politicians to rebrand the neighbourhood. According to the local Councillor Perruzza, rebranding the community to University Heights would change the areas negative reputation. He proposed that changing the name would also lead to both York University and Black Creek to work together on community building. In my opinion, Black Creek is a community surrounded by beautiful parks, schools and towers. There is ample opportunity to remake the community into a more complete and inviting area.

The problem is not with the people; it is the planning of these apartment communities. For example, apartment towers neglected shared or green spaces and instead focused on the automobile, turning the immediate areas into parking lots. As a result, there needs to be a plan to retain the positives of the community and build on it to create more walkable and accessible high rise apartment tower neighbourhoods. Introducing social services or shops inside apartment towers or holding outdoor markets can be ideas which can propel the community into the 21st century.

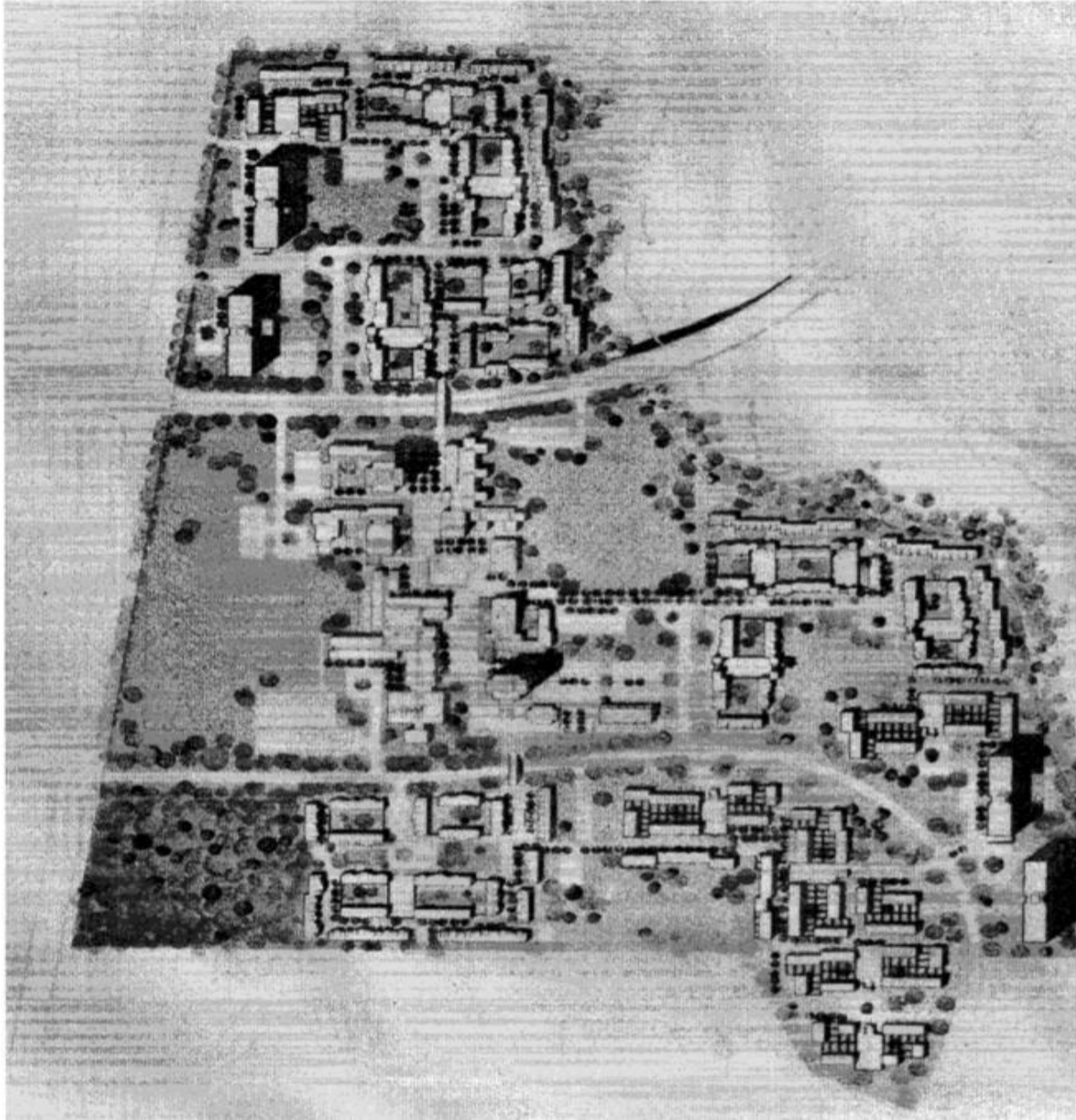


Fig 5.4: Original illustrations of Edgeley Village from CMCH, 1964 (found in D. Young, 2006)

Socioeconomics

As the Black Creek neighbourhood progressed through the 1960s to '80s, it significantly grew in population and density. The area developed so fast that it met almost 90% of projected development 15 years early (Young, 2006). By 1970, the Black Creek's population multiplied thirty times, jumping from 1,301 to 33,030. City officials did not project that rate of growth and

development in Black Creek. In the following decade, 1980-89, global markets faced an era of stagnation and inflation, which led to a drastic shift towards capitalist neoliberal policies. Facing a climate of the global market slow down, the Canadian federal government downloaded social housing responsibilities to provinces, introduced public-private partnerships to fund new state projects. Social housing plans in cities were largely abandoned, instead, target economic policies were introduced to promote growth and private development in cities (Flion, 38).



Fig. 5.5 Photo of people crossing pedestrian bridge in Edgeley Village. (from Ahmed)

Recent reports from the United Way shed light on the fact that Black Creek, along with other inner suburban communities, suffer from social and economic difficulties, such as high rates of poverty, lack of services and high unemployment (United Way, 2011). For example, thirty-three percent of residents fall below the low-income line, compared to twenty percent citywide (Census, 2016). Black Creek is a highly diverse community with residents that come from almost all parts of the world. Almost eighty percent of residents are from visible minorities. One of the main pulls for immigrants is the cost of housing. The average rent and home prices are much less than other parts of the community, for instance, rent is about \$400 less a month.

AREA	BLACK CREEK	TORONTO
POPULATION	21,737	2,731,571
POPULATION CHANGE	-1.50%	4.50%
YOUTH (15- 24)	3,290	340,270
SENIORS (65+)	2,895	426,945
SINGLE PARENT	2,370	152,595
PRIVATE DWELLINGS	7,674	1,112,929
% IN 5+ STOREYS	56%	44%
AV. FAMILY INCOME	\$53,110.00	\$65,829
AV RENT	\$846.00	\$1,241
LOW INCOME %	33%	20%
AV HOUSE PRICE	\$235,143	\$746,218
VISIBLE MINORITY	78 %	51%

Black Creek	Census Tract #	Population	In 5+ Floors	Youth 15- 24	Seniors (65+)	Income (person)	Income (Household)	Low Income %	Single Parent	Av. People Household
San Romanoway	35202042	1142	405	190	70	18560	35968	0.482	170	2.8
Stong Crt	35202045	433	140	50	30	22955	49664	0.302	45	3
Gosford Blvd S	35202046	1000	130	185	95	22016	55125	0.251	120	3.3
Driftwood Rd	35204109	2005	690	310	410	17758	23552	0.511	250	2.3
Tobermory Rd	35202019	507	165	75	45	21888	55168	0.287	45	3.1
Tobermory Rd	35202018	1354	495	225	105	17856	30592	0.583	240	2.7
Niska Rd	35202051	793	320	85	45	25621	46976	0.296	70	3.1
Jane/Steeles	35202065	2078	625	250	185	20919	50816	0.296	140	3.3
Jane/Shoreham	35203994	1529	480	250	125	19504	41344	0.359	180	2.8

- **Table 4.9 Black Creek neighbourhood demographics Toronto (Statistics Canada)**
- **Table 4.10 Black Creek neighbourhood demographics focused on apartment tower clusters (Statistics Canada)**

The tables above represent data on specific high rise residential clusters in Black Creek. The data was collected from the 2016 Statistics Canada Census and it displays the most focused numbers on specific census tracts in Black Creek. A close look at these numbers illustrate alarming socioeconomic conditions in specific areas of the community. For example, the residents in the cluster of towers and townhomes on Driftwood Rd near Jane Street have a 51 percent low income rate. In the public housing apartment tower, 15 Tobermory Rd, the numbers are eye opening. The low income rate is 58% in 15 Tobermory and there is a high concentration of single parents in the building. In Edgeley Village, one in three residents are in low income and the household income is only at \$41,344.

POPULAR MEDIA

Mass media commonly portray the community as one that is between “unwelcome notoriety (for crime and poverty) and outright invisibility” from real estate developers. (Keil and Young, 2011). On several occasions, Black Creek made national headlines, but mostly for negative reasons. The use of Black Creek and the wider Jane-Finch community as the discourse in popular Canadian newspapers have created socially-constructed ideas that continue today (Richardson, 2006). Usually, the entire community has been prescribed a position within society from outsiders who judge the community only by its worst attributes. And the neighbourhood enters the public consciousness not as an impartial geographical space but as a dangerous, unwelcoming community (Richardson, 2006). For example, *The Globe and Mail* proclaimed that Jane-Finch is "a place where guns are abundant and gang turf determines who can go where" "Where the gangs rule," In short, it is "Canada's toughest Neighbourhood" (Richardson, 2006). Additionally, the media tends to use Black Creek to symbolize failure in both modern urban planning experimentation and the deregulation of Canadian immigration policy (Young, 2001). The interest of mainstream media in

Black Creek developed alongside the arrival of new immigrants settling in the area (Young, 2001). With this population explosion came an interest within the news, which in turn portrayed the community as a violent, menacing place "where the gangs rule". Soon after, the neighbourhood developed a reputation for ethnic conflict, crime and violence.

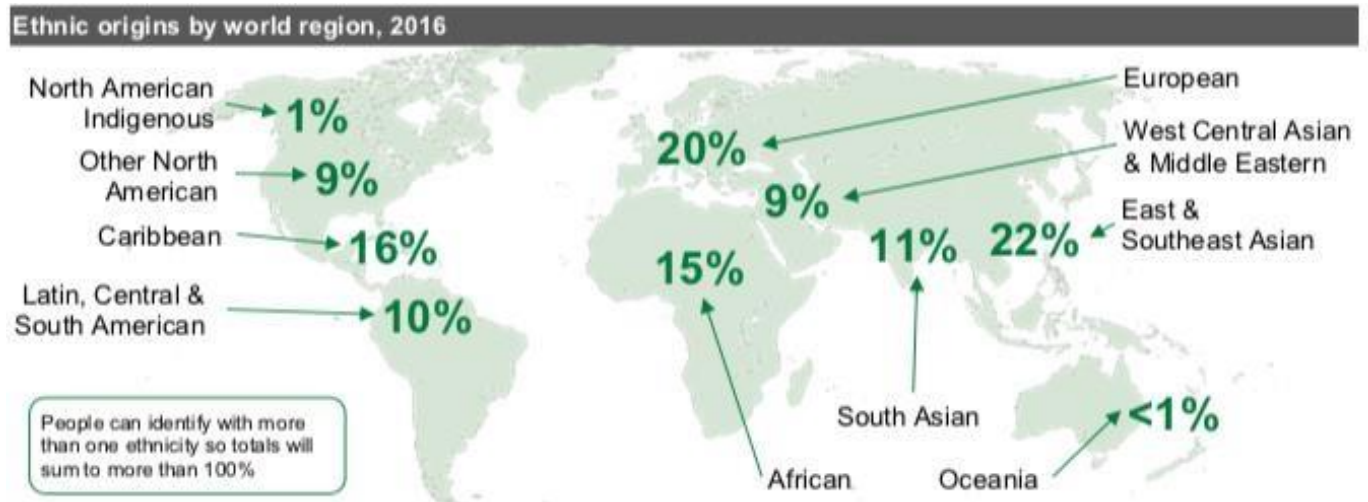


Fig 5.3 Ethnic origins of Black Creek residents, 2016 Statistics Canada Census (Toronto.ca)

In regards to Black Creek's physical form, journalists Heller and Tesher believe that all levels of government were to blame for this "monumental planning disaster" (Richardson, 2006). In 2014, *The Toronto Star* published an article titled "Black Creek neighbourhood deemed Toronto's least livable". In it, the journalist explains that the City of Toronto's ranking system based on 15 criteria such as employment and high school graduation rates ranked Black Creek as the worst in the city (Toronto Star, 2014). A contributor to mainstream Toronto society's disapproval of Black Creek as a place to live was the provision of so many of its dwellings in the form of high-rise apartments. From the early 20th century when the first apartment buildings were constructed in Toronto, apartments have been viewed as inferior to houses. Richard Harris says "in Toronto one of the most common arguments was that apartments discouraged family life...they contained unsupervised spaces, including entrance halls and corridors, that were neither public nor private, apartments were thought to threaten privacy and to encourage immorality" (Harris, 2004). Even in

2020, many Torontonians who live in the suburbs of the city hold similar opinions and prefer lowdensity houses to dense vertical apartment communities. This Toronto-based anti-apartment bias belies the reality of life in Toronto’s high-rise neighbourhoods. Recently the Toronto Star covered a massive fire near Jane Street and Steeles Avenue at 235 Gosford Rd in late 2019. A resident of Black Creek passed away in the five-alarm fire that shut down the entire 15 story building. All 700 residents had to be evacuated and many were housed in the nearby Driftwood Community Centre for days. As a sign of community solidarity and unity, residents from nearby apartment buildings and homes brought food, water and snacks to the displaced residents. Instead of shedding light on the community's resilience, the media used this fire to lay blame on tower managers and apartment owners without highlighting other factors. Similarly, 650 Parliament Street in St. Jamestown, in downtown Toronto, faced electrical issues that led to power outages in 2018. It was front-page news and even led to the Mayor of Toronto, John Tory to announce a safety blitz targeted at all mid-century apartment towers. The safety blitz was announced in February 2019 and was aimed at towers with a history of maintenance and safety issues. The city warned apartment tower managers to upgrade their buildings' infrastructure, meet city standards and safety guidelines or face fines.

COMMUNITY STAKE HOLDERS

York University

York University is the largest university, in physical size, in Canada. Over 50,000 students attend the University. The university was planned and built around the same time as Edgelely Village, Black Creek. The original planning documents mention how both communities were intended to neighbour and support one another. As a way to connect with the community, York University opened a Community Engagement Centre at Yorkgate mall as a satellite office. Named the York University-TD Community Engagement Centre, it aims to facilitate a “mutually beneficial” community building and experiential education between York University and the Black Creek community.

The university has a development arm, York University Development Corporation (YUDC). The corporation manages university property and plans future developments for the campus. One of the functions of the YUDC is to market and sell university land. Recently, York University Development Corporation sold a large portion of land that neighbours Black Creek to Tribute Communities. In turn, the developer built 845 townhomes named The Village at York University. Designed with new urbanist concepts, with closely lined townhomes, laneways, terraces and hidden parking. Currently, the average price for one of those homes is above one million dollars. Not only are these inaccessible to most residents in Black Creek, but numerous homes have become dangerous and expensive rooming homes for York university students. Over the past few years, many incidents, including a death, have raised questions about condition of residents.

Black Creek Community Collaborative (BCCC)

The Black Creek community collaborative is a network of residents, community organizations, stakeholders and service providers. The collaborative began as a community led response to rising poverty and gun violence in the neighbourhood. Residents came together to create a reference group to address community challenges by building on community assets and strengths. The reference group conducted numerous community consultations which led to the adoption of a Community Action Plan. Initiated in 2005, the action plan focuses on economic independence, improved educational services and making safe, healthy and beautiful spaces, amongst others. The city of Toronto adopted the Community Action Plan and funded the Black Creek Coordinating Committee to further plan and carry out neighbourhood improvement strategies.

Toronto Community Housing

Toronto Community Housing is the largest land owner and biggest housing provider in Black Creek. There are two large public housing communities in Edgeley Village and Driftwood Court and four mid century high rise apartment buildings in the neighbourhood. Toronto

Community Housing is currently renewing several of their communities including Regent Park, Alexandra Park and Lawrence Heights. Grassways, a public townhouse community that neighbours Black Creek is also undergoing a massive renewal project. To replace the public housing units, public land was sold to developers.

I interviewed the manager of the renewal project to find out how this development would possibly will affect the wider area, including Black Creek and York University Heights. The manager explained that renewal is a positive for residents in Grassways because it replaces their outdated homes and the new community design enhances public amenities and creates central spaces to congregate. Furthermore, the neighbourhood was reimagined to include crime prevention through environmental design, such as open, maintained and inviting spaces. She went on to explain that the renewal is positive for the wider community because it introduces new housing options, such as private high-rise condominiums and townhomes. The manager went on to explain how the new designs would open up the community to the city and would place storefronts on Jane Street to create a continuous walkable neighbourhood.

Toronto Transit Commission

The Toronto Transit Commission is a City of Toronto agency that controls city owned public transit. 1.7 million daily commuters use the TTC, making it the third largest public transit system in North America. In the past two decades, the Toronto Transit Commission has invested hundreds of millions of dollars to build a subway line and plan a light rail transit along Finch Ave. W. The LRT goes through the southern part of Black Creek and the Pioneer Village subway station neighbours the northwest side of the community. Both projects have provided much needed transit options to residents of Black Creek. However, it is worth noting that the subway line goes through York University, not the Black Creek community. I believe that it is unfair to place students and visitors above residents of the wider community. Likewise, I question why the Pioneer Village subway station is placed next to empty fields and parking lots. I believe, in a capitalist city, that this was done on purpose to prime those lands for private development.

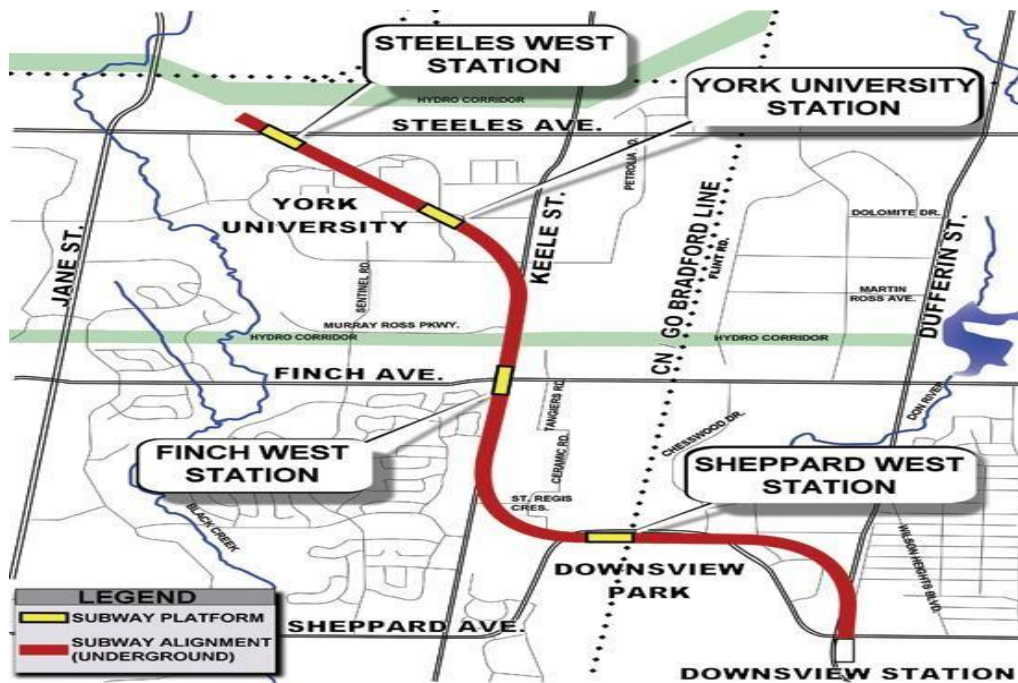


Figure 5.6 Map of Spadina-University Subway extension. (from transittoronto.ca)

PRESENT STATE

Today, The Black Creek community represents both opportunities and challenges for the city. The neighbourhood has one of the highest proportions of sole-supported families, new immigrants and public housing tenants in Toronto (Census, 2016). Moreover, Thirty-three percent of the community is considered low income and more than 1/3 of residents are believed to be living in poverty. This is unacceptable in a city that pats itself on the back for its diversity and opportunities. One reason for the decline of Black Creek's built form and its social housing stock is that the modernity of the community opposes the current neoliberal post-Fordist modes of city planning. This contributes to the decline of its built form because necessary investments from governments were diverted. And the modernism in its towers in the park built form and their residents (and the array of social issues in their lives) are now "perceived as a set of crises to be managed or governed" (Young, 2006). Apartment neighbourhoods such as Black Creek and Mount Olive Silverstone are known around the city as challenged communities that lack what the rest of the city takes for

granted: access to healthy food, good schools and essential services. Residents complain about the disrepair and neglect found in their homes and the general physical and socioeconomic decline they are witnessing in their communities. Professors Roger Keil and Douglas Young believe that most social and physical problems in Toronto's mid-century highrise apartment communities are the result of out-dated approaches to urban processes and politics (Young, 2001). And in an era of austerity and global neoliberalism, in-between cities communities such as Black Creek struggle to compete for infrastructure investments, public resources and private developments.



Figure 5.7 Photo of residents congregating in Edgeley Village. (Photo by Ahmed A)

From my interview with a resident of Black Creek, he expressed that although the community has its struggles, the area is improving. He explained that the news only come when bad things happen. However, the community is lively and people are outside together. And in the summer months, there are barbeques and block parties every week. The community also has a local economy where residents sell cooked food and drinks from their homes. Residents have reclaimed dead spaces and are now used as spaces to congregate and play cards. These forms of

urban informality are described by Henri Lefebvre as perceived spaces, where residents structure their everyday reality (Young, 2006). And as Wacquant explains, these spaces are usually to outsiders, lawless zones or wild districts (Wacquant, 2008). Young and Keil consider spaces like these as hybrid social spaces that are cultivated through exclusionary practices and popular activities (Young and Keil, 2010).



Fig 5.8: A person at Jane St and Finch Ave intersection selling sports clothes. (by Ahmed Ahmed)

As Black Creek approaches its seventh decade, the city is attempting to find a strategy to address the unique challenges faced by high-rise residential tower communities. As a possible solution, The Province of Ontario and The City of Toronto introduced numerous policies that are aimed at inner suburban communities. Two of these policies, Tower Neighborhood Renewal (TR) and Residential Apartment Commercial Zoning (RAC), are focused primarily on midcentury apartment towers like Black Creek. Additionally, recently built transit and future transit plans proposed by the province of Ontario and the City of Toronto will also immensely benefit in-between high-rise residential communities. For this paper, I focus on The Residential Apartment Commercial Zone (RAC), a land-use zoning category was implemented in 500 tower districts

citywide. RAC zone replaced prior zoning that restricted other uses such as small-scale commercial/social uses at the base of apartment towers. An integral part of the broader Tower Neighbourhood Renewal program, Residential Apartment Commercial Zoning (RAC)'s main objective is to create "integrated, vibrant, and diverse community hubs" in mid-century high-rise residential towers.



Fig 5.9: A minivan parked outside Jane and Finch Mall, Black Creek selling clothes. (Photo by Ahmed Ahmed)

CHAPTER FIVE

TOWER RENEWAL AND THE RESIDENTIAL APARTMENT COMMERCIAL ZONE

The City of Toronto introduced the Tower Renewal (TR) program in 2008 intending to renew ageing mid-century apartment towers and transform their neighbourhoods into more complete communities. Marketed as a partnership between private and public sectors, the main aim of TR is to encourage building owners to renew major physical components of the towers (mechanical systems, insulation, windows, exterior cladding, bathrooms and kitchens) and to improve the apartment neighbourhoods through social, economic and environmental interventions. Tower Renewal is an ambitious 20-year project that aims to set the context for the eventual renewal of over a thousand mid-century apartments in the Greater Toronto Area alone (McClelland, Steward and Ord, 2011). Currently, its 12 years since the program was commenced.

Toronto's mid-century towers were exceptionally engineered and were built to last for at least two hundred years. To sustain this longevity, all non-structural building elements, require a renewal every fifty years. Today, several mid-century high-rise apartment towers are at the stage of requiring their first major renewal and retrofit. Proponents argue that Tower Renewal is important because, if implemented, it would retrofit the towers to be energy efficient, enhance the buildings' physical structure and improves residents' quality of life. As a strategy, the Tower Renewal program would provide low-interest loans to building owners so that they can change windows, add cladding, fix elevators and improve energy consumption, amongst others. Once the retrofit is complete, the apartment tower will benefit from a wide range of improvements.

Firstly, reducing energy consumption and waste will improve our environment and will decrease energy costs. Secondly, replacing declining windows and doors, resealing walls and removing mould will instantly improve the quality of life for residents. In best cases, as these improvements are made, the apartment towers' market value will increase and lower maintenance costs for owners. The challenge is coordinating between all these parties and creating an even

framework to adopt tower renewal and residential apartment commercial zone. The majority of mid century apartment towers with the new Residential Apartment Commercial Zone (RAC) are private rental buildings. One in three apartment buildings are private rental buildings, 11 percent are owned by Toronto Community Housing, the rest are either owned by non profits or are condominiums.



Fig 6.1: Falstaff TCH mid century high rises undergoing a renewal. (Photo by Ahmed Ahmed)

The city of Toronto adopted the Mayors Tower Renewal Opportunities Book in 2008. The report illustrated the unique physical landscape in Toronto, the potential of apartment towers and the current challenges they face. The report goes beyond the state of apartment towers and touches on community renewal and the socioeconomic condition of tenants. For instance, the book touched on the number of towers, population size and needs of these tower communities.

The tower renewal opportunities book was championed by Toronto’s previous mayor David Miller, who pushed for further research and action (McLleland & et al, 2011). Eventually, it led to the creation of Toronto’s Tower Neighbourhood Renewal program. The program has endorsed numerous research projects that sought to create a long term strategy to renew the towers. The

program also set out to market the value of apartment towers and the potential they present for the city of Toronto.

Since Tower Renewal's inception, the program has made several advancements:

- Ontario's Social Housing Apartment Retrofit Program (SHARP) and Social Housing Apartment Improvement Program (SHAIP) allocated \$350M towards apartment retrofits across the Province of Ontario.
- 2017 Ontario Professional Planners Institute Excellence in Planning Award was awarded to ERA Architects, Centre for Urban Growth and Renewal, United Way Toronto, City of Toronto & Toronto Public Health for their work on the Residential Apartment Commercial Zone (RAC)
- Transform TO, a program that will require all residential buildings in the city to conduct energy retrofits by 2050. It was adopted by City Council.



Figure 6.2- Apartment Tower on Jane St post retrofit illustration (ssastudio.com)

TOWER RENEWAL PROGRAMS

The STEP Program

The Sustainable Towers Engaging People (STEP) Program helps property owners reduce operating costs by improving environmental efficiency. The STEP Program supports voluntary improvements. It is focused on the environmental efficiency of buildings and enhancing the quality of life for apartment tower residents. As of March 2020, only 140 of over 1100 buildings in the city participate in this program. And although it is free to partake in the program, the participation rate has been abysmal. Only multi-unit residential buildings that are eight storeys or more and were built before 1985 can participate in the program (Toronto.ca). The program offers support to teach residents about the program and to help them take action towards bettering their communities. STEP focuses on six key areas; energy, water, waste, safety, community and operations. The STEP team will provide a free assessment of energy, water and waste performance. Followed by an action report with methods to lower costs, improve physical areas and operations.

Once residents are interested, teams will introduce financing options to bring their ideas to reality (Toronto.ca). An example of a successful STEP project can be found in Brentwood Towers, Toronto. The towers are a row of five multi-unit residential buildings with 956 units. They were built in 1958-61 along Yonge Street, in Toronto's Davisville neighbourhood. The property owner, O'Shanter Development, has completed several upgrades and retrofits on the towers. This has resulted in a 30% annual savings in energy costs, translating to \$180,000. A big aspect of the retrofit was modernizing the energy monitoring system into software that provides continuous data.

Hi-Ris Retrofit Support Program (Hi-Ris)

The High-Rise Retrofit Improvement Support Program (Hi-RIS) program helps tower owners fund building improvements. The Hi-RIS program aims to improve the physical structure of apartment towers and make them more efficient to reduce energy and water consumption. This program provides residential apartment buildings in Toronto - with three-storeys or more - low-interest financing with up to 20-year terms at fixed rates.

Term	Fixed Interest Rate
5 years	3.55%
10 years	3.83%
15 years	4.04%

As part of the application process, property owners will need a building energy assessment conducted by a professional certified energy auditor. All costs associated with this assessment must be handled in full by the property owners. The report includes energy improvement recommendations, anticipated energy and water consumption and the cost range for the changes. Also, the assessment needs to include a description of the physical state of the building. So far, there is only one project out of 1,189 apartment towers in Toronto. Recently, a 20 storey apartment tower with 304 units completed a \$1.3 million renewal. The \$1.3 million has a 15-year term length a 4.25 fixed interest rate. Altogether, the project lasted almost four months. Once the renewal was complete, building owners were able to save \$120,000 a year in energy costs. In 2017, the Hi-RIS program reduced interest rates to its lowest ever, 3.5% (Toronto.ca).

Recipe for Community

Recipe for Community is a city of Toronto initiative aimed at bringing resident inspired community projects to fruition. The goal of the program is to build community cohesion, belonging and pride. Every year a different community is provided with resources and funding to revitalize public spaces or create programs. For instance, funding can be used towards murals, create trade programs or hold youth leadership camps, amongst others. The goal is to facilitate resident-inspired projects that strengthen community belonging and pride as well as build community skills and capacity. To be eligible for funding, applicant groups must be non-profit. Thus far, the communities that have participated are Alexandra Park, St. James Town, Weston Mt. Dennis, Scarborough Village, Rexdale, Black Creek and Parkdale. The City accepts applications up to a maximum of \$5,000 in funding. If more is required, additional applications must be submitted. Thus far, the city – with a budget of 13 billion dollars - has only spent about \$35,000 on this program. Extremely short for a city with over 1000 apartment towers.

Toronto Hydro Retrofit Incentives

For participating retrofits, Toronto Hydro offers incentives for building owners who are upgrading lighting, automation systems and water chillers, amongst others. For social housing projects, Toronto Hydro will advance 50% of financial incentives before the project even begins.

Enbridge Gas Retrofit Incentives

Enbridge Gas will offer free services and incentives for buildings undergoing retrofits. They offer affordable housing retrofit projects up to 50% off the total cost of the renewal.

RESIDENTIAL APARTMENT COMMERCIAL ZONE (RAC)

Land Use Zoning is a product of centuries of evolution in land use and is heavily influenced by local and global patterns in urban development. A product of the enlightenment, land use zoning reasons for rational order and a scientific administration of society. Before the spread of zoning, towns and villages used informal agreements, mutual understandings, and ad hoc laws to enforce the patterns that zoning later built on (Fischel, 2005).

Zoning rose from attempts to separate dangerous industries from residential properties. Zoning regulates the use of land by defining an area and determining what activities are allowed or prohibited. It is a legal process whereby state agencies divide and manage land into zones or subdivisions, for example -commercial, industrial, residential-amongst others. They are considered extensions of the power of the state over private property and are usually aimed at preserving the health and safety of people and property (Hirt, 2014).

Today, the most dominant system of zoning in North America is single-use/functional zoning, it is based on the concept of separating land uses based on activity. This type of zoning relies on a list of specific uses to define what activities may or may not be permitted in each zone. Many argue that controlling the size, height and population density of a given area can also lead

to exclusionary regulations and socioeconomic segregation. Opponents see it as a violation of their property rights since they ultimately cannot control what is built on their land.

Similarly, prior to the Residential Apartment Commercial Zone (RAC), mid-century apartment tower residents were heavily restricted by zoning laws. Toronto's mid-century apartment towers were built in the three decades, the 1950s, '60s and 70s. During that period, zoning regulations made it unlawful for any other uses, even small scale stores, pop up shops, clinics and services to be set up in residential areas. As a result, they had to be placed off-site, usually in retail plazas or shopping malls. Only a small number of tiny convenience stores were allowed at a handful of high-rise apartment tower sites. And even they had restrictions such as limited access and visibility. For example, the only way to enter these shops is through the interior of the apartment building (almost all apartment towers need a key to enter the lobby), limiting the number of customers they can ultimately serve.

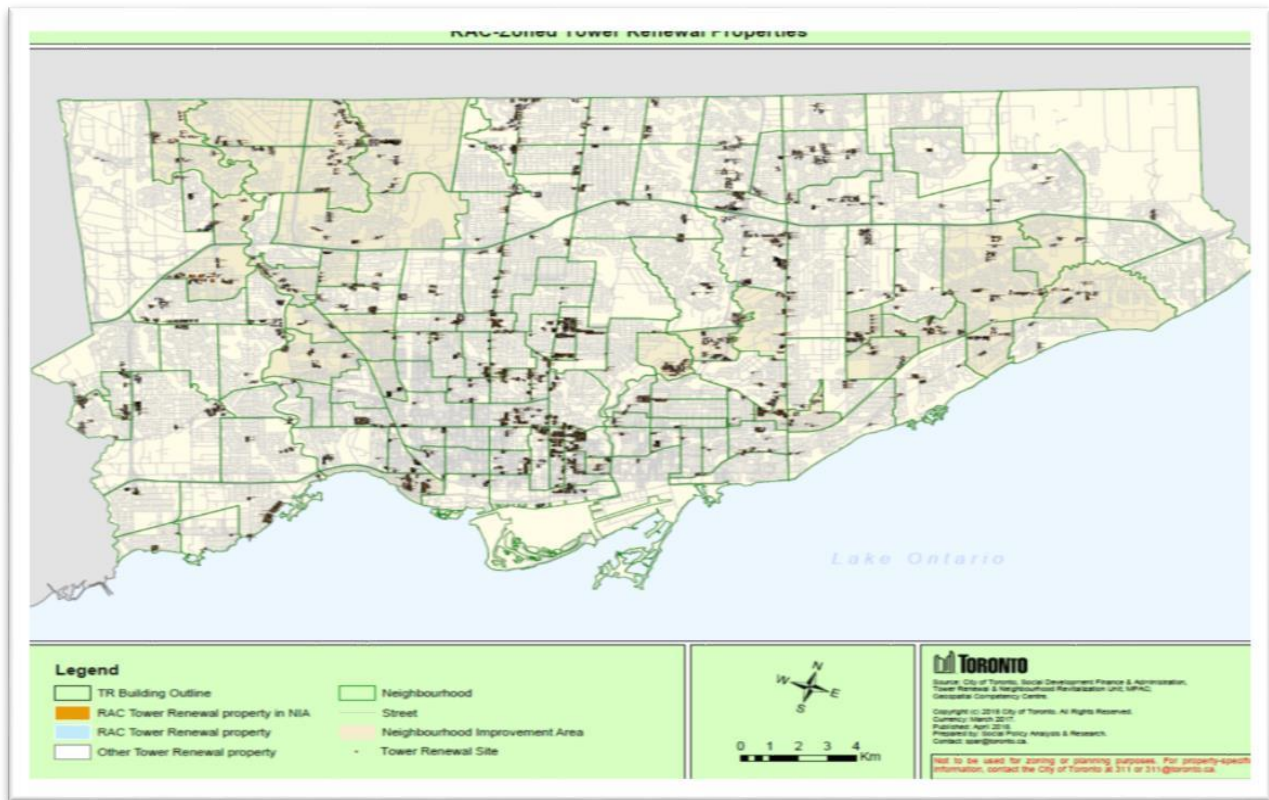


Figure 6.3 – City of Toronto map highlighting RAC zoned properties (Toronto.ca)

Finally, in late 2016, over five hundred apartment tower neighbourhoods in the City of Toronto were rezoned from Residential Apartment to Residential Apartment Commercial (RAC). Toronto's City Council adopted The Residential Apartment Commercial Zone in 2013 and the Ontario Municipal Board (now the Land Planning Appeal Tribunal) approved the new zoning category in 2016. The Residential Apartment Commercial Zone replaced an outdated land-use bylaw with more flexible zoning rules. It allows for a wide range of small-scale businesses and community services to open in high-rise apartment towers. As a result, The Residential Apartment Commercial Zone (RAC) can be categorized as a type of mixed-use zoning because it promotes small scale commercial and social services in what was before exclusively residential spaces.

The Residential Apartment Commercial Zone (RAC) was brought about by a group of partners including tower residents, politicians, the Centre for Urban Growth and Renewal, Toronto Public Health, United Way Toronto, York Region, ERA Architects and the City of Toronto. In the bigger picture, proponents of The Residential Apartment Commercial Zone aimed at resolving tower resident complaints about the state of their communities. For instance, United Way's *Vertical Poverty* report identified that mid-century apartment tower communities in Toronto's in-between city are challenged by the lack of convenient access to stores, services and transit. It concluded that these challenges are mostly the result of limiting and outdated zoning restrictions. Planners hope that introducing RAC to apartment tower communities will enable residents to improve and recreate their neighbourhoods. But there are some caveats and restrictions. Lauralyn Johnston, project manager with City of Toronto's Tower and Neighbourhood Revitalization explains that these new retail spaces are not traditional in size and changes are meant to be small interventions. As a result, the conversions would not be able to support a restaurant or a large grocery store.

In my interview with Lauralyn Johnston, I learned that Tower Renewal and the Residential Apartment Commercial Zone as a whole, are working with mid century apartment tower owners to introduce services and shops at the base of the buildings. The apartment towers located at Lawrence Ave E and Orton Rd in Scarborough currently has a bike repair shop, a sowing program and day care. The owners were convinced of these conversions by displaying how foot traffic

would decrease crime and create a lively community. At 2775 Kipling Ave in Rexdale, the apartment tower has a convenience store and a communal space to hold a sowing program. Likewise, at 415 Driftwood Rd in Black Creek, the apartment tower now has a bike hub. As a result of these conversions, residents in the community have access to local shops and services. The end goal of Residential Apartment Commercial Zone is a long term one, in which Tower Neighbourhoods become complete communities. A complete community is one that meets peoples' needs, provides convenient access to employment, local services, adequate infrastructure, a mix of housing choices and public transportation (Places to Grow, 2006). In describing the RAC Zone, the current mayor of Toronto John Tory said "The RAC zone is a proud moment for City Hall. It's specific legal and regulatory decisions like this that can truly make our city more livable, more affordable, and more functional" (RAC Zone official website).



Figure 6.4 – A convenience Store at the base of 2677 Kipling Ave, Toronto. (photo by Ahmed Ahmed)

LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF RESIDENTIAL APARTMENT COMMERCIAL ZONE

The Residential Apartment Commercial Zone (RAC) Article 15.20.20 in Zoning By-law 569-2013 is a legal framework that allows small scale commercial uses at specific mid-century high-rise apartment towers. The RAC zone provides for all of the previous legal uses on a site and permits many new ones with certain conditions. Most of these new uses are small uses, like stores or community services. Some of the uses may require other licenses or permits - for example, business licenses or public health permits. Some planning approvals may still be required for implementation, especially for bigger changes, like adding more indoor space. This rule applies regardless of any planned construction.

A change to the maximum size for individual uses is not recommended to ensure compatibility with surrounding residential uses. Any request for a slightly bigger space or increases in density or reduced setbacks must seek relief through either a minor variance application or a rezoning application. Other changes may still require a minor variance and converting residential units to other uses will still require a Residential Rental Demolition and Conversion permit. Proposals that do not comply with the City Zoning By-laws such as by-law 569-2013 may be considered for minor variance relief at the office of the Committee of Adjustment. Other requirements, such as conversion permits, building permits, public health requirements and business licensing requirements, will continue to apply. Outdoor sales such as markets, fruit stands, or display areas will be permitted under the RAC zone. There may be a need for a sign variance. Painted signs only require a sign permit but there are limitations on where outdoor sales and display can be located on the property, as the distance from the property lines.

The total amount of commercial floor area is tied to the number of apartment units at a given location and at least 100 dwelling units are needed before up to 400 square metres of commercial space is permitted. The amount increases by 50 square metres for every additional 25 dwelling units above 100 to a maximum of 1,000 square metres for individual buildings with 400 plus units. The total maximum amount will vary, depending on how many dwelling units are in the building but cannot exceed 50% of the ground floor of the building. The interior floor area of any single establishment is not allowed to exceed 200 square metres. The rules for home-based

businesses are unchanged and will be the same as in any residential zone. But RAC Zone permits any resident who wants to run any of the permitted non-residential uses from within their unit. Before any changes, apartment tower owners and management must consider the time and costs that such a project would need. Firstly, permits and approvals are required before any construction can begin, these can vary depending on the municipality. Insurance for risks about property damage, liability, and worker safety have to be prepared. Furthermore, a design team consisting of engineers, architects and planners will have to inspect mechanical, electrical and structural aspects of the retrofit. Furthermore, the project costs must be estimated and construction materials, equipment and human labour will have to be organized. Lastly, project managers will have to make sure that planning regulations and zoning ordinances are followed throughout the design and construction process.



Fig 6.5 3D modelling of an apartment tower with a cafe (source: rac.ca)

CHAPTER SIX

OPPORTUNITIES AND LIMITATIONS WITH RAC ZONE

The Residential Apartment Commercial Zone (RAC) has the potential to unleash the entrepreneurial ambitions of residents in Toronto's Black Creek community. It removes the regulatory barriers and allows the residents, owners and businesses to open commercial and social services within the towers themselves. Similarly, The Tower Renewal program can kick start the much-needed renewal of Toronto's mid-century apartment towers. The program provides the framework, guidance and low-interest loans to retrofit and renew apartment towers. These loans go towards changes such as replacing windows and doors, improving common areas and replacing balconies, amongst others.

The Residential Apartment Commercial Zone presents many opportunities that could lead to greater economic wellbeing and health outcomes for Toronto's tower residents. Communities in apartment neighbourhoods have the potential for creating a healthy food culture through informal gatherings, community kitchens, community gardens, fresh food shops, cafes and small restaurants. The size and population of apartment neighbourhoods have the numbers to accommodate a range of shops, services and programs. If marketed well, the diverse and dense population of apartment neighbourhoods can attract new enterprises, support local businesses and help grow a niche economy. Entrepreneurial activity can take advantage of the towers' diversity and promote small enterprises that serve the local community. The buildings themselves can be adapted to serve residents' needs by providing space for seniors, youth and communal space. Apartment towers have flexible spaces that can be transformed into communal offices, business incubators and support services for new entrepreneurs. The rise in local business activity can increase the economic and social capital of the community and the low overhead costs allow more people to enter entrepreneurship. Flexible first floor spaces can be amended to create spaces for meetings, classes and small community events.

The available outdoor land - a product of the tower in the park planning philosophy - can be converted. Outdoor grounds of apartment neighbourhoods provide several opportunities for collective cooking, community events and celebrations. Weekly fresh produce markets and outdoor vending for prepared food will make healthy food available to apartment tower residents. Furthermore, apartment neighbourhoods contain surface parking lots that may be converted to accommodate fresh food markets on a monthly, weekly, or daily basis. Similarly, existing surface parking could accommodate food trucks for scheduled visits.

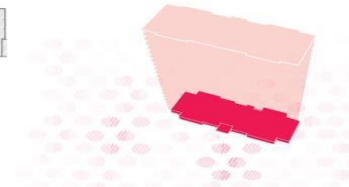
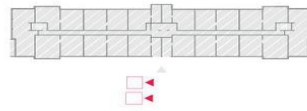
Health services in apartment towers would make them more accessible to residents, especially for seniors and parents. Recent research conducted by Toronto Public Health revealed that Canadians with low to moderate incomes have limited access to health services, mental health help and prescription drugs (TPH, 2011). In the opinion of one of my interviewees, Dr. Salim, introducing doctors or dentists' offices at the base of apartment towers will lead to healthier communities because it creates more access to medical services. Furthermore, these health services will become part of the community, doctors would be present in the neighbourhood and would be more exposed to the unique challenges faced by apartment tower residents.

Toronto's tower neighbourhoods are already dense because they were primarily designed in clusters of 3 or more buildings. Each cluster usually contains over 1,000 residents (ERA). In an interview with an owner of a convenience store in an apartment building in Toronto, he explained that his customers love the convenience. He opened his store in 2017 and he explains that over time he has become familiar with residents and he considers himself a part of the community. However, he complains that he does not have a sign outside nor a dedicated door for customers. As a result, the only way to access his store is through the lobby, which requires a key to enter. Currently, he is working on getting a sign permit and is negotiating with property management about increasing access to gain more customers. We both agreed that the Residential Apartment Commercial Zone provides an exciting opportunity for Torontonians to recreate high-rise apartment communities into more complete, vibrant neighbourhoods.

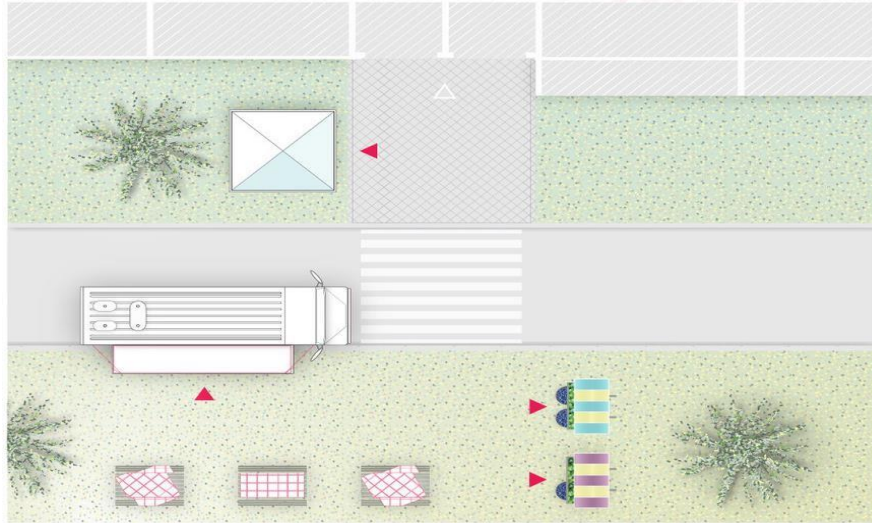
Apt. Tower Grounds

different sizes

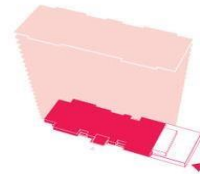
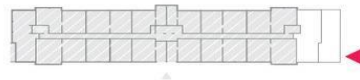
- Food Trucks
- Fruit Stands
- Kiosks
- Popup Stands
- Small Markets
- Service Events



Informal Uses



- Community Centre
- Education Centre
- Fitness Centre
- Walk-in Clinic
- Pharmacy
- Dentist Office



Library

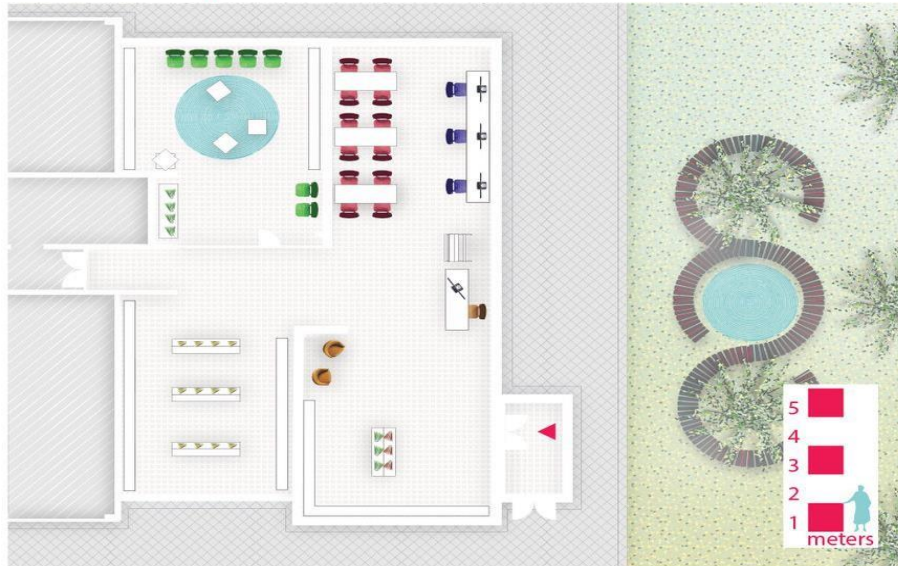


Fig 7.1 - 3D modelling of informal uses around apartment towers with a cafe (rac.ca)

RESIDENTIAL APARTMENT COMMERCIAL ZONE EXAMPLES

Artscape Weston Commons - 34 John Street, Toronto, ON

Artscape Weston Commons is a new cultural community hub located in the Mount Dennis community, near Weston Rd and Lawrence Ave in Toronto. It is placed at the base of a newly revitalized mid-century apartment tower. Opened in 2019, it offers the community a gathering place to create art and celebrate the local creativity. Artscape Weston Common provides homes for 26 artists and their families. They are provided with the opportunity to live and work in one of the newly refurbished affordable units. However, one of the downsides of this is that residents in the other rental units that are part of this large development are exempt from rent control and rents are currently increasing at alarming rates. Recently, tenants refused to pay rents amid the COVID 19 pandemic, complaining that their sources of income were disrupted (cp24, 2020)

Thorncliffe Park Women's Committee – Thorncliffe Park

The Thorncliffe Park Women’s Committee holds an annual summer harvest festival in the local park where all residents from neighbouring towers are invited to celebrate the community, meet new friends and shop locally. Sabina Ali, an organizer says that “With RAC zoning, changes are easier, and the possibilities are much greater for community organizations. We can set up cafés and other social spaces for people to sit and meet about issues, places for women to have time for themselves, usable kitchens for catering, community gardens, economic opportunities” (RAC.ca website)

Toronto Public Health and FoodShare

Mobile Good Food Market (MGFM) is a weekly fresh fruit and vegetable store on wheels. It brings good, healthy food to low-income communities who have barriers accessing fresh groceries. MGFM has not only provided access to fresh food but has also generated a new level of social activity at street level. They primarily serve communities with high single-parent families or senior population. The program stops at ten different communities in Toronto and is aimed at

clusters of high-rise residential apartment towers that are considered low-income communities. Mobile Good Food Markets helps to address the need for fresh, quality produce in Toronto's food deserts (neighbourhoods where a grocery store is far or too expensive). Mobile markets like MGFM offer a low-cost place to buy quality produce while meeting neighbours close to home. In 2008 alone they sold 57,000 pounds of fresh vegetables and fruit.

The criteria to participate in the program are that first the community must be a at least one kilometre walking distance away from the nearest grocery store. Secondly, the community should have a high amount of seniors or single parent led households. Lastly, the program only visits clusters of high-rise residential apartment towers that have a considerable amount of low income peoples.

Tower Renewal and RAC in Black Creek:

The San Romanoway Towers Revival Project

The San Romanoway Towers Revival Project sought to introduce environmental and physical improvements to the cluster of three mid-century apartment towers located at the northeast intersection of Jane St and Finch Ave West. It was brought about and funded by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. The program approaches included retrofit challenges, gardening workshops and carpentry classes to train residents. It was an integrated and comprehensive program that sought to change numerous environmental and social problems found in the neighbourhood.

The program's main accomplishments included increasing food security by introducing innovative methods for the community to grow local food. For instance, residents were provided with equipment and training to set up small gardens on their balconies. Also, a 63 plot vegetable garden was installed in the open green spaces that surround the buildings. As a result, in one year, 500 pounds of fresh produce was grown in resident balconies and surrounding green areas.

Likewise, a waste management and water conservation strategy that included collecting rainwater for gardening were introduced. Finally, a critical part of the program included agricultural training for small scale local production, small business development and employment/career workshops.

The San Romanoway Towers revival project was a successful initiative that was brought forward by Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. The success of this project has led to similar plans for other high rise residential communities across the city.

Below is an before and after picture of the final plans for The San Romanoway Towers revival project. To bring this concept to reality, the program is seeking further funding to create a more detailed plan that will convince local decision makers to support The San Romanoway Towers Revival Project.



Fig 7.2: Before and after picture of proposed changes to apartment towers in Black Creek (trca.ca)

LIMITATIONS

Tower Renewal (TR) and the Residential Apartment Commercial Zone (RAC) are ambitious first steps that may produce positive changes to high-rise apartment neighbourhoods. While these are good first steps to creating complete tower communities, ultimately they fall short of achieving their stated goals.

First of all, the Residential RAC zone encourages the opening of new shops, services and amenities, but there is almost limited financial or technical support. It is assumed that all costs will be covered fully by the tower or tenant. The policy itself only creates a framework for renewal and it allocates minimal resources to produce changes. In other words, it is up to residents, agencies and/or landlords to initiate and implement the changes that RAC now permits. Without their actions, there will be no change.

Secondly, the city of Toronto has so far deployed limited resources to the project, there is only one full-time staff that is tasked with rolling out RAC. This is extremely short-staffed because The Residential Apartment Commercial Zone is a city-wide initiative that demands mass coordination between hundreds of towers and thousands of independent owners. Most high rise apartment towers that participate in the Tower Renewal program are individually renewing their properties. Resulting in islands of tower improvements next to oceans of decline.

Thirdly, the success of the Residential Apartment Commercial zone is awfully limited because the marketing remains to be seen. Many tower residents have not heard about Residential Apartment Commercial Zone or the previous zoning laws it changed. In my interviews with residents and some professionals, I educated them on what the Residential Apartment Commercial Zone is and what were the goals of the program and how to participate. Although there is information on the city of Toronto website (Toronto.ca), RAC zone needs a wider marketing campaign to sell the idea and convince apartment tower owners to convert residential units to commercial. Lauralyn at the City of Toronto explained that they mailed out information to every apartment tower under RAC zone, made press releases and opened a website. Yet, most

Torontonians are unaware of the Residential Apartment Commercial Zone and its opportunities for mid-century apartment towers.

Fourthly, from the perspective of mid-century apartment tower owners, the Residential Apartment Commercial Zone does not make much of a business case. In Toronto, residential vacancies are low and rents are high. Furthermore, most owners dislike the RAC process because the conversion of a unit requires building assessments and safety analysis. The process may lead to more costs than first assumed.

Fifth, from a global economic outlook, Tower Renewal and the Residential Apartment Commercial Zone are examples of Rescaled Competition State Regimes or RCSRs, antiexclusion initiatives and are framed within the discourse of global economic competitiveness. (Young, 2006). They fall under the guise of the competitive city and is "characterized by entrepreneurialism, revanchist and differential social segregation, often couched in a language of opportunity and diversity" (Kipfer and Keil, 2002).

Lastly, as a state policy, the Residential Apartment Commercial Zone can be seen as a form of progressive neoliberalism because it relies on public-private partnerships whereby the government needs the private market to deliver social benefits to its citizens (Young, 2015). The Residential Apartment Commercial Zone and Tower Renewal are part of a city-wide program which is often just a short-term and minimal investment in social development. Both Tower Renewal and RAC are the results of shrinking municipal budgets and austerity. The City of Toronto does not make the changes to towers or neighbourhoods; rather, it is assumed that the removal of regulatory barriers will encourage community organizations and entrepreneurs to undertake positive changes within tower communities.

CONCLUSION

Toronto's unique and wide selection of mid-century high rise apartment towers offers residents stunning views of vast parkland in spacious and affordable apartment suites. Unlike new and small condominium units, mid-century apartment tower tenants have large spaces to configure to their individual or family needs. If maintained properly, mid-century apartment towers can help meet the challenges of 21st century Toronto and continue to provide adequate, spacious and affordable housing for hundreds of thousands of residents. The establishment of a new city-wide Residential Apartment Commercial zone is a good first step towards achieving vibrant apartment neighbourhoods. However, the success of these programs is largely based on effective and productive partnerships between residents, tower owners, social enterprises, not-for-profit organizations, small businesses, and the city.

Based on my research, The Residential Apartment Commercial Zone has the potential to unleash economic opportunities for residents of Toronto's mid-century apartments. The land activities that the RAC zone promotes can lead to better communal cohesion, local economic prosperity and improved access to shops and services. The RAC zone is one part of a complex process to remove barriers and to provide a framework for creating complete high-rise communities in Toronto's mid-century apartment neighbourhoods. So far, the results have been minimal, but the opportunity to remake Toronto's mid-century apartment tower communities into integrated, inviting and vibrant neighbourhoods are important goals to pursue.

To ensure the success of the Residential Apartment Commercial Zone and Tower Renewal, I recommend an inclusive approach led by residents, that brings together, community social services, schools and local businesses to co-design the future of their neighbourhoods. Likewise, there must be an equal strategies and policies to maintain affordability in Toronto's high rise apartment communities. As tower neighbourhoods redevelop, policies should be introduced to limit displacement before, during and after the renewal process. It is vital because Toronto's housing market is becoming so unaffordable and unreachable for most residents, that even without

renewals, high rise apartment towers are becoming appealing places to reside, resulting in increasing rent prices.

On a municipal scale, local governments must make sure that tower neighbourhoods in the city do not turn into islands of decline. This can be achieved by regulating building standards or even renewal timelines for mid century apartment towers. For the Residential Apartment Zone to achieve its goal of transforming tower neighbourhoods into complete communities, there must be a more realistic approach. The city should multiply its investment into the program by introducing more monetary and human resources into the project. Likewise, RAC Zone should be widely marketed throughout high rise rental communities. Only through direct investment and marketing can RAC achieve its ambitious goals.

Ultimately, I judge the success of the Residential Apartment Commercial Zone based on whether it empowered local residents to take control and better their own communities. The end goals should be to improve the quality of life and provide economic opportunities for tower residents. Equally, The Residential Apartment Commercial Zone and the wider Tower Renewal program should emphasise retrofitting and modernizing units, improving energy consumption, remaking public/common spaces, and preserving the communities local character and culture.

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Sample Interview Consent Form



Office of Research Ethics York University | Kaneff Tower Fifth Floor – 4700 Keele Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M3J 1P3 | ore@yorku.ca research.info.yorku.ca

STUDY NAME: Planning The Future of Toronto’s In-Between City: Opportunities and Limits with the Residential Apartment Commercial Zone (RAC)

RESEARCHER NAME:

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416-272-2883

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH:

The City of Toronto has changed the zoning rules in a lot of high-rise neighborhoods to allow people to open retail stores/services on the ground floor of apartment towers. The new zoning law is called *Residential Apartment Commercial Zone (RAC)*.

I want to find out:

- What people think about this change?
- Do they think it will improve high-rise neighborhoods?
- What recommendations residents/professionals have?

WHAT YOU WILL BE ASKED TO DO IN THE RESEARCH: You will be invited to volunteer for an interview that should last approximately one hour. The interview will be audio-recorded.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS: I do not foresee any major risks or discomfort from your participation in the research. I do acknowledge that sometimes it can be hard to talk about negative experiences. I will take the time to make sure that you are OK as I go along. You may skip any questions that you do not wish to answer and still participate in the study; or you may end your participation in the study at any time without any adverse consequences. The interviewers are also prepared to seek assistance for any participant who appears to need further support or intervention.

BENEFITS OF THE RESEARCH AND BENEFITS TO YOU: I will find out if people think that the new RAC zoning will improve high-rise neighborhoods. If you like, I will provide you a copy of my final report.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time. In the event you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed wherever possible. Should you wish to withdraw after the study, you will have the option to also withdraw your data up until the analysis is complete. Your decision not to volunteer will not influence the nature of your relationship with York University either now, or in the future.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Unless you choose otherwise, all information you supply during the research will be held in confidence and unless you specifically indicate your consent, your name will not appear in any report or publication of the research. I will audio record your interview.

Once transcribed, the audio will be deleted immediately. Transcripts will be kept in a password protected folder on google drive. Only the researchers will have access to it. They will all be deleted on Jan 1, 2021. Any other data will be destroyed after the study.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RESEARCH? If you have questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, please feel free to contact my Supervisor, Dr. Douglas Young by e-mail dogoyo@yorku.ca.

This research has received ethics review and approval by the Delegated Ethics Review Committee, which is delegated authority to review research ethics protocols by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board, and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in the study, please contact the Sr. Manager & Policy Advisor for the Office of Research Ethics, 5th Floor, Kaneff Tower, York University (telephone 416-736-5914 or e-mail ore@yorku.ca).

LEGAL RIGHTS AND SIGNATURES:

I _____, consent to participate in Planning the future of Toronto's In-between city, conducted by Ahmed Ali Ahmed. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

Signature _____ Date _____
Participant

If you choose to waive anonymity, please sign and date below

Signature _____ Date _____
Participant

Signature _____ Date _____
Principal Investigator

1. Audio recording

I consent to the audio-recording of my interview(s).

Signature _____ Date _____
Participant Name:

Please use the following pseudonym (nickname) when referring to me in the research: _____