Rethinking Transportation Planning

Citizen Participation and Inner Suburban Social Justice in Toronto

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Abstract

This paper examines how to move towards a more socially just transit system in Toronto. Much of the conversation regarding transportation focuses on the needs of the downtown core. The needs of inner suburban residents, despite dependency on public transportation, are not fully taken into consideration in efforts to improve transit. Employing critical planning theory as a theoretical lens, I examine the transportation planning process with a focus on high-rise neighbourhoods in inner suburban districts by analyzing the transportation planning process of the Finch West Light Rail Transit (LRT) project. Examining mobility as a basic social justice issue reveals that the unequal distribution of transit services is connected to social and political processes that lead to uneven development and socio-spatial polarization in Toronto.

The main objective of the paper is to identify the actors involved in the Finch West LRT planning process and the extent to which citizens have agency in transit planning in the context of the Finch West LRT planning process. I also seek to determine the role of politics in the decision-making process in urban planning, and finally, identify some strategies for the building of a socially just transit system.

For my research, I undertook a review of urban planning literature with the goal of understanding the complexity of civic engagement, social justice and politics in relation to transportation planning. In addition, I conducted semi-structured interviews with politicians, planners and residents, analyses of key planning and transportation documents, observation of community meetings, and direct site observation of Finch West.

My research uncovered key characteristics of inner suburbs that were present in Finch West, such as food deserts, physical decay, increased poverty, inadequate services, lack of employment, lack of a sense of safety, and high crime rates. My findings regarding transportation along Finch West reveal enormous congestion, large parking lots that discourage walkability, and a high dependency on public transport. The bus routes suffer from overcrowding with ridership over capacity, and reduced services on weekends. I conclude that the political instability at the municipal and provincial levels is an obstacle in creating a unified vision and subsequent plan for action. Furthermore, although citizens were informed of the Finch LRT plan, there were few opportunities to contribute to the consultation process at the beginning stages. Lastly, I suggest an approach to civic participation where planners and residents see themselves as both *active educators* and *active learners*.

I suggest that transit does require a more equal distribution of goods across the city, and movement towards a socially just transit system would enable citizens to contribute to the decision making process to a greater degree than is currently conceived. I conclude that planning processes, when carried out in a critical manner, can address social disparity, and to do so, greater citizen participation is required.

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Firstly, I would to thank my family: my parents and brother living in Portugal, Aryan Ziaie my brother-in-law, and in particular my wife Hoda Farahmandpour, for their unconditional support throughout the last two years.

I am grateful to Professor Douglas Young who guided me not only in order to complete this paper, but also through the last two years of my undergraduate degree. Much of what I know about inner suburban neighbourhoods stems from his introduction to the topic. I am appreciative of our Thursday morning meetings over coffee to discuss not only this paper, but also to engage in great conversations about the role of planning in society.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the tireless and committed staff and volunteers at the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC), City Hall, and Metrolinx that make thousands of commuters' journeys possible. I would also like to acknowledge every resident, especially those living in tower communities dependent on public transit, who endures an often difficult daily commute to get to work or home.

I must also thank all those I came across during my MES program, the students and Professors, who have become like extended family. I can only hope to continue interacting and conversing with all of them over the coming years.

As a final thought I want to recall Zeca Afonso's song "Grândola, Vila Morena." The song is played during the Portuguese Freedom Day, a national holiday, calling for societal change and the involvement of people in decision making:

Grândola, vila morena	Grândola, swarthy town
Terra da fraternidade	Land of fraternity
O povo é quem mais ordena	It is the people who lead
Dentro de ti, ó cidade	Inside of you, oh city
Dentro de ti, ó cidade	Inside of you, oh city
O povo é quem mais ordena	It is the people who lead
Terra da fraternidade	Land of fraternity
Grândola, vila morena	Grândola, swarthy town
Em cada esquina, um amigo	On each corner, a friend
Em cada rosto, igualdade	In each face, equality
Grândola, vila morena	Grândola, swarthy town
Terra da fraternidade	Land of fraternity
Terra da fraternidade	Land of fraternity
Grândola, vila morena	Grândola, swarthy town
Em cada rosto, igualdade	In each face, equality
O povo é quem mais ordena	It is the people who lead

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Foreword

This Major Paper contributes to the requirements of a degree of Master in Environmental Studies, with a specialization in the Planning stream. The focus of my research connected the three components of my Plan of Study: urban sustainability and the built environment; public participation in planning; and Toronto's inner suburbs.

My Area of Concentration, *urban sustainability and civic engagement in planning*, aimed at examining the role of civic engagement in the transformation of Toronto's aging apartment towers, especially those in the inner suburbs so that they become desirable living spaces with a better standard of living. A focus on transit is one way to improve living conditions in inner suburban districts. In this paper I have sought to examine the relationship between citizenship participation and inner suburban social justice in transit planning.

By focusing on one element of the planning process, transportation, I have been able to explore two of the components in my Plan of Study in great depth. Firstly, by conducting a thorough literature review that examined the complexity of civic engagement, social justice and politics in relation to urban planning, I was able to gain a deeper knowledge of public participation in planning theory and to identify public approaches to participation in planning. I did this through my theoretical lens, critical urban planning theory. This enabled me to accomplish all three of my learning objectives with respect to the *Public Participation in Planning* component.

Secondly, by selecting Finch West Light Rail plan, I examined the historical development of the area, my onsite observations and interviews helped me better understand the social, environmental and physical conditions of inner suburbs, and gave me clues on how transportation planning could improve the conditions of such areas. Through this element of my research, I was able to fulfill two of my *Toronto's Inner Suburbs* component's learning objectives.

Much of the foundation of the research for this Major Paper was laid in my undergraduate and graduate course work, and my internship at the City of Toronto's Tower Renewal Office. My interest in tower neighbourhoods is not only though my internship and studies, but the fact that I have lived in an inner suburb for most of my Canadian life and have experienced first hand the difficulty in accessing the rest of the city.

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Chapter 1
Introduction

The *Growth Plan* for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, prepared under the *Places to Grow Act*, is the Ontario government's planning framework to manage growth and development in the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area (GTHA). One of the priorities set out by the *Growth Plan* is the need for major investment in transportation infrastructure in the GTHA (Ministry of Infrastructure, 2006, p.25). The *Growth Plan* identifies several growth centres throughout the region, and *The Big Move* 25-year plan, created by Metrolinx, the regional transportation agency that manages and integrates all modes of transportation, looks at connecting these growth centres with other areas of the region through rapid transit. The project seeks to improve the mobility conditions within growth centres by turning them into places "where residents can take transit, ride a bicycle or walk to fulfill their day's activities, and where children can once again walk to school" (Metrolinx, 2008, p.ii). Many of the region's apartment towers are within these growth areas, and can be considered as areas for potential infill and mixed-use intensification. Using transit to improve the conditions of inner suburban growth areas would benefit from a better understanding of tower neighbourhoods, and the planning system in place that provides transportation to its residents.

The City of Toronto is Canada's post-war high-rise capital, containing 1189 multi-unit rental residential buildings with eight stories or more built between 1945 and 1984 (City of Toronto, 2011). Many apartment neighbourhoods approaching their fourth and fifth decades of existence are showing signs of disrepair, neglect, and decline. These communities have become impoverished through many circumstantial factors. For example, in several of these

communities, social services are being reduced because of funding cuts, immigrants have limited opportunities for employment, there is a general lack of affordable housing and a rise in private housing prices. These are just a few of the factors that have contributed to Toronto's income polarization (United Way Toronto, 2011). Tower neighbourhoods, when built in the 1960s, were seen as density nodes from which residents would commute to other areas by car. Today, many tower residents have no other choice but to use public transit owing to the rising costs of operating and maintaining a vehicle.

The aims of the *Growth Plan* are significant in better connecting the region and helping Toronto further prosper, however, greater consideration must be given to the approaches employed to realize these aims. To this end, I will examine transportation planning in Toronto from a critical planning perspective with a focus on high-rise neighbourhoods in inner suburban districts. Improving mobility in these places, especially transit and walkability, is a basic social justice issue. The unequal distribution of, and access to, transit services across the city, between inner suburbanites and inner city residents, is not a coincidence, but connected to social and political processes that have led to uneven development, and socio-spatial polarization in the city.

I plan to analyze the transportation planning process of the Finch West Light Rail Transit (LRT) project first proposed by former Toronto Mayor David Miller and then by the regional transit agency, Metrolinx. This analysis will show who was involved in the planning process, how they were involved, and what outcomes occurred. I will explore the importance of planning not only for those who can afford transit, but also for all who need it. I will look at social

inequality in the provision of, and access to, public transit in Toronto. Much of the conversation about transportation in Toronto centres on how to improve bicycle lanes in downtown neighbourhoods, to remedy the effects of the Gardiner Expressway on waterfront redevelopment, or to connect the downtown core with the rest of the region. Although all of these challenges are important and need to be addressed, residents living in the inner suburbs of the city – those districts that are the former municipalities of Scarborough, North York, York, East York and Etobicoke – are mostly excluded when improving transit (Figure 1.1).

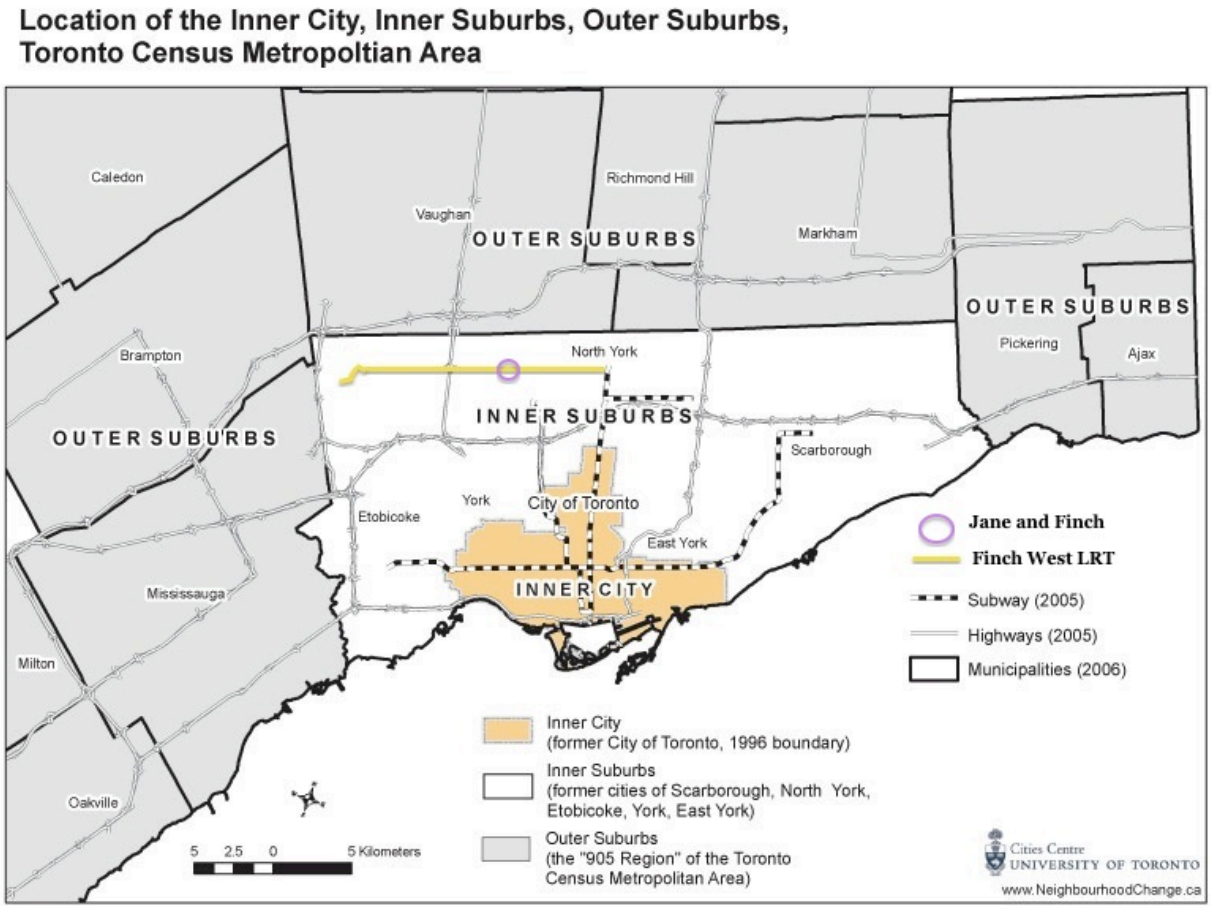

Figure 1.1. Location of inner city and inner suburb in Toronto. Source: http://3cities.neighbourhoodchange.ca/wp-content/themes/3-Cities/pdfs/Toronto-CMA-Inner-Outer-suburbs-location-map.pdf

In order to address the overarching aims of this paper, as presented above, four research questions were formulated to guide my data gathering and analysis:

1. What transit access issues are there in the Finch West corridor that reflect its location as an inner suburb?

2. What actors were/are involved in the Finch West LRT planning process? To what extent do/did citizens participate in transit planning for the Finch West LRT planning process?

3. What is the role of politics in urban planning and Transit City, a public transport plan put forward in 2007 to build several LRT lines in Toronto?

4. What are some strategies for building a socially just transit system? Can Toronto's Transit City be considered a social justice statement in its potential impact on suburban neighbourhoods?

This paper comprises six chapters. Following this introductory Chapter, Chapter 2 describes the various qualitative and quantitative methods used to collect data and the epistemological position of the researcher for this project. Chapter 3 introduces the theoretical context I have adopted for my research, which draws on critical planning theory as the central theoretical lens, as well as a review of relevant urban planning literature about three concepts for my analysis: urban planning and social justice, planning and politics, and civic engagement. Chapter 4 is a case study of transportation planning in Toronto. It explores the conditions of tower neighbourhoods in Toronto inner suburbs, looks specifically at the Finch West LRT project proposed by Transit City, and seeks to address my first two research questions. In chapter 5, I analyse my data, answer the remaining research questions above, and suggest a strategy to

increase the participation of residents in the planning process. Lastly, Chapter 6 is a general analysis of the results, and I situate my research in the context of existing literature.

Chapter 2
Research Methodologies

I used several qualitative research methods to collect data to better understand citizen engagement in transportation planning as well as, more generally, action taken to contribute to social justice. I used one quantitative method to analyze the transportation and demographic patterns of the area of study.

The first qualitative method was an analysis of key planning and transportation documents to understand the policies and decisions that govern transportation planning and citizen engagement in Toronto, with a particular focus on the Finch West LRT as a case study. These documents include:

i) *The City of Toronto Official Plan*: an Official Plan is neither a statute nor a law passed by a legislature; rather, it has been judicially interpreted as a statement of policy. An official plan sets out a framework of goals, objectives, and policies that shape and structure operative planning decisions. These decisions establish broad principles that generally govern the municipality's land use planning (Toronto City Planning, 2010)

ii) The *Places to Grow Act* is the Ontario Government's framework and statement of policies that regulate planning across the GGH (Ministry of Infrastructure, 2005). The act guides the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* (GGH), which includes goals, objectives and policies that shape and structure growth across the GGH (Ministry of Infrastructure, 2006). The *Growth Plan for the GGH* includes

significant new policies regarding transportation investment and policies that impact Toronto.

iii) Toronto City Council *Minutes and supporting documents* from 2009 to 2014 that covered topics such as 'Transit City' and 'Finch West LRT'. Although most Council decisions were in some way covered by the media, analyzing these documents gave a more in-depth understanding of the decision making process at City Hall and a more accurate chronological account of decisions, with the added bonus of knowing which City Councillors voted *yes* or *no* on each motion.

iv) Metrolinx's *The Big Move*: Metrolinx is an Ontario Government crown agency created to coordinate all modes of transportation, with a particular focus on improving public transportation in the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area (GTHA). *The Big Move* is a 25-year transportation plan set out by Metrolinx for the GTHA (Metrolinx, 2008). The government of Ontario has allocated $11.5 billion to begin the construction of *The Big Move*.

v) *Etobicoke-Finch West Light Rail Transit, Transit Project Assessment, Environmental Report*: this report is known as an 'Environmental Impact Assessment' (EIA), which, when completed for transit projects, is known as a 'Transit Project Assessment Project' (TPAP). It normally takes a period of 6 months to complete the EIA. A TPAP is an in-depth study of the potential positive and negative impacts of the transit project on the environment and traffic, and it includes recommended measures to mitigate negative impacts. In this TPAP

phase of the project, there are mandatory public meetings, where locals can give their input on the project (Finch West LRT EA, 2010)

vi) Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) *Annual Reports* (Toronto Transit Commission, 2010). The TTC is Toronto's public transportation agency that operates buses, streetcars and subways across the city. Every year the TTC releases a report describing its activities and financial statements. I examined the reports from 2008 to 2012 (the latest available).

vii) *Tower Renewal Guidelines*: The *Tower Renewal Guidelines* is an extensive study prepared for the City of Toronto's Tower Renewal Office by the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Toronto in 2009. The Tower Renewal Office was established in 2009 as a response to climate change with the objective of reducing carbon consumption in Toronto. The Office not only focuses on the recladding of the exterior of the postwar high-rises but also looks at how to improve the social life of the tower communities. The *Tower Renewal Guidelines* informed, in detail, the Toronto Renewal Office about the condition of Tower Neighbourhoods in Toronto, providing an in-depth analysis of infrastructure and social conditions (Kesik & Saleff, 2009).

viii) Documents that describe the increasing poverty of the inner suburb: Poverty By Postal Code 2:*Vertical Poverty* is a report prepared by United Way on the growing concentration of poverty in Toronto's high-rises (United Way Toronto, 2011)*; The Three Cities Within Toronto* is a report prepared by University of Toronto's Cities Centre about the income polarization in Toronto over a 35-year

period (Hulchanski, 2010)*; Tower Neighbourhood Renewal in the Greater Golden Horseshoe* is a study of the condition and potential of 1,925 post-war apartment towers in the GGH prepared by the Centre for Urban Growth and Renewal (2010)*;* and *Walkability in Toronto's High-Rise Neighbourhoods* is a study prepared by Paul Hess and Jane Farrow that examines pedestrian conditions in eight Toronto high-rise neighbourhoods (Hess & Farrow, 2010).

ix) A selection of newspaper articles from *The Toronto Star, The Globe and Mail* and the *Torontoist,* published from 2007 to 2014, about Transit City and transit planning in Toronto. The selection of articles, numbering some 25, helped to capture the nature of the conversation in the media about Transit City that informed both Torontonians and politicians. It also assisted in accessing data quoted in the articles, no longer accessible to the public, on the City of Toronto website about Transit City.

The second qualitative method I employed was conducting semi-structured interviews with eleven key informants:

i) Two City Councillors who were involved in the planning of the Finch West LRT -- Anthony Perruzza of Ward 8 and Maria Augimeri of Ward 9. Councillor Augimeri had also recently been appointed as Chair of the TTC;

ii) Jamie Robinson, Director of Community Relations and Communications at Metrolinx;

iii) David Miller, the former mayor of Toronto (in office from 2003 to 2010), under whose administration the Finch West LRT was proposed;

iv) Adam Giambrone, the Chair of the Toronto Transit Commission at the time of the planning of Transit City;

v) Rod McPhail, Transportation Planning Director at the City of Toronto during the planning of Transit City;

vi) Jackeline Barragan and Richard DeGaetano, two members of the Community Action Planning Group (CAPG), an activist group representing the residents of Jane-Finch;

vii) Sabrina Gopaul and Wanda MacNevin, two residents from the Finch West community at large;

viii) Marco Covi, a representative of TTCriders, a community-based organization involved in issues pertaining to transportation in Toronto.

Out of the eleven interviewees, David Miller and Jamie Robinson were part of a pre-established list I wanted to interview; the other nine were identified through a snowballing sample. I decided to work through each person I met and ask him or her to guide me to the next (Kitchin & Tate, 2000). A risk in using snowballing sample is that all interviewees have a similar say about the topic, but I made sure I was directed to people who not always agreed with the interviewee to hear a different opinion. The interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes and all interviews were audio recorded. Ten interviews took place in person and one took place over the

phone. The interviews were conducted in accordance with a research ethics protocol approved by York University's Faculty of Environmental Studies Research Committee. Each interviewee submitted a Written Informed Consent form, three of which were mailed, and all interviewees waived confidentiality (Appendix A).

Nine pre-determined questions were designed to guide the analysis and ensure that valuable data related to the research questions would be gathered (Appendix B). The conversation then flowed according to each respondent. Seven of the questions were identical for all eleven interviewees. Two of the questions differed depending on whether the interviewee was a public official (former or current) and planner, or resident. The interview questions for the public officials and planners were designed to determine their vision of the role of citizens in urban planning and, more specifically, who was consulted with during the planning of the Finch West LRT. The interview questions for the residents were designed to draw out their views about transportation planning in the Jane-Finch area and to determine the extent to which they have been involved in the process of planning for the Finch West LRT.

My approach during the interview was to follow a set of questions that guided the conversation and at the same time allowed it to adapt according to the responses of the respondents. The interviews were intended to create a space for reflection, so that the interviewees' own thoughts and opinions about their experience regarding Finch West could be shared. Participants were also encouraged to cite examples, whenever possible, to further illustrate their ideas.

A third qualitative method employed was to attend three community meetings. The first meeting was held on October 23, 2013, at Jane-Finch Community and Family Centre. This was attended by about 70 people, organized by Toronto Environmental Alliance (T.E.A.) and conducted by the TTCriders organization. The second meeting, held on March 14, 2014, at Brookview Middle School, was attended by 20 people and organized by the TTCriders organization. The Community Action Planning Group (CAPG) organized the third meeting, which was held on May 1, 2014 at Yorkwoods Library and attended by about 80 people. All the meetings were held to politically engage the residents of Finch, with particular focus on Jane-Finch residents, about the LRT project.

My approach while attending the three community meetings was to follow a set of questions I had posed to myself to better understand the role of a planner, politicians, community members, and the organizers in community meetings and the interaction between the various actors:

1- What is the layout of the meeting?
2- How much “experts” talked and residents talked?
3- Are the answers of the residents answered? If not, which ones are avoided?
4- What was the tone of the conversation?
5- How many people attended? How many people spoke?
6- What was the role of the moderator in the meeting? What was the role of the panellist? And what was the role of the residents?
7- How different was this community meeting different from statutory planning public engagement meetings?

The fourth and final qualitative method I used was direct site observation. These field visits were made on foot and by transit to directly experience transportation issues in the urban landscape. I recorded these field visits with photographs. I took the Finch West 36 bus from Finch Station to its terminus at Humber College (a distance of approximately 18 km) several times during afternoon rush hour. During these trips I focused on the change in landscape along the way, spending most of my time at the Jane-Finch district because it is a much-discussed district of Toronto due to its various socio-economic problems, and because it is a good example of an inner suburban high-rise neighbourhood in the city.

The quantitative methods I used were an analysis of data in the report, *Vertical Poverty* (United Way Toronto, 2011); neighbourhood demographics based on the census information compiled for *13 Priority Neighbourhoods Report* (City of Toronto, 2011a); and the bus schedule along Finch West and other bus routes that connected Jane-Finch to major rapid transit stops (Appendix C). This analysis gave me a better understanding of the living and transit conditions in the area.

My time spent as a researcher was not without challenges, as I had to continually examine my epistemological position. I wanted to ensure that my epistemological position – that is, the way I see the world, understand reality, and construct knowledge – did not prevent me from gaining a fuller understanding, to the extent possible, of the diverse elements underpinning planning processes and participation in Jane-Finch. Being a middle-class graduate student living in Toronto for the past 5 years in a highrise in an inner suburban neighbourhood has shaped my own perceptions of issues related to urban planning and social justice. I began this research

committed to my own beliefs regarding the importance of civic engagement, social justice, and the political process, and had to be aware of how such beliefs shape my perceptions. Moreover, in engaging with residents who are from stigmatized neighbourhoods in Toronto, I had to take care lest preconceived ideas regarding their agency shaped the way I understood their thoughts. A heightened consciousness of my limitations as a researcher, as well as articulating a clear theoretical framework and research questions, enabled me to overcome these challenges. More specifically, I remained committed to understanding and analyzing the various forms of data – such as interviews, literature reviews and attendance at community meetings – through an articulated framework, rather than through my own perceptions alone.

Chapter 3
Literature Review

In this chapter I will analyse the urban planning process through three concepts: urban planning and social justice, planning and politics, and civic engagement. Each concept is examined through a critical planning lens, centred on the urban planning process.

Urban planning is the realm of urban governance that attempts to regulate the processes of urbanization related to the development of the built environment. It focuses primarily on land use but can have indirect influences on social issues. Planners and politicians are among many actors that are central to the planning process of a neighbourhood, but are often outsiders; local residents are one of the key actors in the planning process, but do not take a central role (Lenihan, 2012). There is often a dissonance between the planning work and the representation of local interests, despite the representative nature of democratically elected representatives of constituencies. Unlike politicians, planners do not have the same representative responsibility towards local residents. They often carry out their work, therefore, disconnected from the people who live in a given locality. In light of this, planners do not necessarily understand the social reality of the neighbourhoods or areas that constitute that locality, and frequently impose their own conceptions to the development of the area. This is a cause for concern because so long as planners – however proficient they may be – operate at a comfortable distance from the residents of a given area, they will miss the knowledge that the local population has on how to build systems and structures that most effectively benefit residents.

Despite acknowledging the importance of public participation in principle, the scope of decision-making in urban planning that is left to the population of a neighbourhood is at best secondary, determined by goals that they are often unable to change and limited to a range of choices made by institutions inaccessible to them. Rather than a top down approach to the development of a neighbourhood, what would it take for people to be more involved in finding alternative solutions to planning problems and for the residents of a neighbourhood to seek a path of development for themselves? Is it possible for a community to set in motion a process of deliberation, action and evaluation, in which residents can learn from their endeavours over time? (Lenihan, 2012).

Lastly, with greater inclusion of the community in decision-making, the planning process is no longer the mere delivery of goods and services to residents - a phenomenon that occurs especially with marginalized communities - but rather a process of capacity building in residents to be more informed participants in planning, thereby drawing closer to greater civic participation. A critical planner would expose the ideas of planning and progress that are imposed on neighbourhoods, propose a different way of engaging residents in planning, and create the process that would allow residents to be part of decision-making.

3.1 – Theoretical Lens: Critical Planning Theory

According to Marcuse (2010), critical planning can be best represented by the maxim '*expose*, *propose*, and *politicize'*. *Exposing* requires analysis, to step back and examine a situation in order to expose the root of particular problems "making clear what forces and actors

are responsible for it and what structural conditions bring it about" (Marcuse, 2010, p.15). *Proposing* describes developing a vision that is both realistic and strongly desired (Marcuse, 2010, p.16). *Politicizing* means to address issues of power and develop the strategies to be used in achieving change; it involves "organizing, grassroots work, education, public relations and a long-term approach" to change (Marcuse, 2010, p.16). This framework allowed me to conduct my research coherently and purposefully.

Critical planning is derived from critical theory. Critical theory emerged in the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt Germany in 1923 as a theoretical framework to critique structures and systems that promote consumerism, authority, alienation, and power imbalances. Critical theory promotes ideals and goals of democracy, freedom, agency and social justice with the purpose of achieving critical consciousness of communities. Paulo Freire explains that critical theory is a lens that allows the researcher to perceive "social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against oppressive elements of reality" (Freire, 1970, p.35). McNiff and Whitehead (2000) explain critical theory as:

> the formal term given to a system of thinking that begins by understanding that nothing in human relations is given. Everything people do and say is conditioned by other influences, both from the external social world and also from the inner mental world. Personal-social situations are not given; they are created by people in situations. (p.178)

Every action and inaction is conditioned by a certain ways of thinking. A profound analysis of these modes of thought allows for questions of power and oppression that were once obscured to be brought into the open for dialogue (McNiff and Whitehead, 2000, p.178). This framework was developed for the purpose of seeing beyond a superficial perspective of a

capitalist society – to think, critique and analyze (Wink, 2010, p. 45). The rationale is that because privilege, oppression and power emerge in the context of capitalism, another framework is required to contest, rather than merely reaffirm, the values and subtle influences of capitalism in society's thought and action.

Critical thinking explores problems and proposes solutions, but to be effective it needs to go further; it should operate as a response to elicit political action (Marcuse, 2009, p.194). Joe Kincheloe (2008) introduces the central characteristics of critical theory, which include a social vision of equality and justice, and a critique of capitalist society. He further explains that such a social vision needs to be reflected in a dedication to helping alleviate human suffering and oppression, concerning oneself with the delicate balance of fostering social change while cultivating the intellect, and focusing on the empowerment of the marginalized and oppressed. Critical thinking, according to Marcuse, has led various urban thinkers such as Lefebvre and Fainstein to a "fundamental rejection of the prevailing capitalist system" (Marcuse, 2009, p.194). This rejection has called for the elimination of "profit as a means and motivation in the political sector", ensuring that political decisions are not affected by the power of wealth (Marcuse, 2009, p. 195).

Critical theory grew from the Marxist critique of capitalism and prediction of social revolution. Critical theorists explored the enduring nature of capitalism and how it sometimes took form in fascism and totalitarianism. While Marxism focuses almost exclusively on economic and class struggles to promote social revolution, critical theory seeks to politicize social problems to understand their root causes and promote progressive social change.

Critical planning uses the ideas of critical theory as the lens to observe and shape urban planning. When a critical theoretical framework is used in the field of urban planning, it is not as a call for social revolution, but rather for progressive social change in which the urban planner is an agent of change who is always '*exposing*, *proposing*, and *politicizing*'. When the bedrock of planning is '*expose*, *propose*, and *politicize'*, planning problems can be addressed "in the interests of social justice" (Marcuse, 2010, p.16).

Social justice implies, at one level, a fair distribution of opportunity, wealth and privileges in a society. David Harvey defines social justice as the application of principles of justice to address conflicts in order to achieve social cooperation (Harvey, 2009, p.97). He elaborates further, relating social justice to the "social and institutional arrangements associated with the activity of production and distribution" (Harvey, 2009, p.97). This is similar to Rawl's conception of justice as a set of principles needed to identify the kind of social arrangement required in determining a division of advantages. For Rawls, principles of social justice "provide a way of assigning rights and duties in the basic institutions of society and … define the appropriate distribution of the benefits and burdens of social cooperation" (Rawls, 1999, p.4-5). Thus, a conception of social justice includes both an even distribution of benefits, such as wealth or opportunity, as well as providing a framework within which institutions can function and ultimately administer just practices and policies.

3.2 – Urban Planning and Social Justice

A city is not a mere container of people, but instead the expression of society, a collective expression of goals, and the conflicting philosophies of people about who they are (Egger, 2006). A major actor in the shaping of cities is the urban planner. Planning as a profession emerged as a "response to the nineteenth-century industrial city" (Campbell & Fainstein, 2003, p.5). At the time, urban areas were facing "rapid population growth combined with a laissez-faire economic philosophy", that created difficult environmental and health conditions for urban residents (Bayer, Frank & Valerius, 2010, p.5).

As a response to such problems, " public health professionals and civil engineers advocated for well-planned sewer and water systems, drainage of wet areas in cities, and the creation of city parks where people could enjoy fresh air away from the smoke and dust of the city streets" (Bayer, Frank & Valerius, 2010, p.5). Not everyone's intentions for better living conditions were the same. For example, capitalists wanted to ensure that they and their workers were healthier so that the economy could continue to grow and productivity increase, whereas factory workers were concerned over the growing mortality rate due to unhealthy conditions at the factories.

Since that time, land use planning has been critically important in deciding where to build homes and factories, locate parks and schools, and provide roads and public transit, sewers and other essential services. The rules and regulations of land use planning establish the conditions for growth and the provision of services, shaping communities accordingly. Therefore, the

philosophies that determine approaches to planning are crucial in the way this relatively new profession shapes urban form.

Central to urban planning is the role of the urban planner. While urban planners play an indispensable role, there are other important actors in the process (Hague, 2000). For example, urban planners consult and discuss with elected officials, businesses and residents to solve problems and achieve a vision for the city's future (Hall & Tewdwr-Jones, 2011). Planners are in a unique position because they work closely with both communities and politicians. Planners have the purview to engage with communities and get to know their history, development, and help identify planning issues that require improvement. Generally, it is up to the individual planner to determine how to interact with the community, the degree to which their judgments are well informed, and what mechanism they utilize to devise solutions.

Although planners have an important role in planning, they are not decision makers. A planner's solutions are drafted into a plan submitted to politicians who decide whether to implement it. Following this, the planner presents the plan to the community for feedback. Ultimately, the politician makes a decision, but the extent to which the urban planner knows the political system is, in many ways, commensurate with their ability to devise executable plans. According to Campbell and Fainstein, "the most powerful planners are those who can marshal the resources to affect change and get projects built. They bend the role of the planner and alter the traditional separation between the public and private sectors" (Campbell & Fainstein, 2003, p.8).

The role of a planner is shaped by two major factors: the way the planner views his or her role, and the planning system in place that validates his or her actions. For example, when a planner sees his or her role as the expert and the system does not require the planner to consult with others, the planner can devise plans according to personal preferences and ideas. This is known as expert-based planning, in which someone deemed to have comprehensive and authoritative knowledge, and often through a non-democratic decision making process, makes a plan for an area.

Therefore, the practice of planning raises questions of power and authority. Critical planners would question how their own conceptions of their role is affecting and limiting those for whom they are planning, and whether a capitalist political economy has an inordinate influence on their decisions. Such an analysis enables planners to propose and politicize innovative ways of planning that would struggle against current forms of planning which has its roots in microeconomics theory, that is, the study of how individual behaviour affects the supply and demand of goods and services (Campbell & Fainstein, 2003, p.8).

Pamela Blais (2011) describes urban planning as having its roots in microeconomics theory, as it addresses market shortcomings related to land use and urban development. She explains that there are two categories of market shortcomings that planning addresses: externalities and public goods. Externalities are the "impacts of a market decision whose cost is not accounted for within the price used in the market transaction" (Blais, 2011, p.44). For example, the growing percentage of air pollutants associated with vehicles is a cost that is not reflected in the price of transportation. This externality is a market shortcoming that planners try

to address with various planning policies and projects, such as containing development to a downtown core and avoiding sprawl. Public goods are seen as "essential if the city's economy, and society as a whole are to function" (Blais, 2011, p.44). Despite this, one challenge is that "individuals or the private market may not be able to willing provide them" (Blais, 2011, p. 44). Public transportation is one example of a public good. Thus, Blais offers an economic and functionalist view of the role of urban planning in which the main concern of the planner is to solve market shortcomings.

Other scholars present different views about planning and its relationship with the private market. For some "the functioning of planning is to confront the private market directly every step of the way (Harvey, 1985), [while] others see planning as helping the market along (Frieden and Sagalyn, 1989)" (Campbell & Fainstein, 2003, p.7). Planners are constrained by a capitalist political economy and a democratic process. They struggle, on one hand, with developers, consumers, politicians and other powerful groups that have an influence on the outcome of urban forms; on the other hand, planners are challenged by a "governmental bureaucracy" that frequently causes them to play "frustratingly reactive, regulatory roles" (Campbell & Fainstein, 2003, p.8).

While this, in some instances, can be true, I argue that the role of the planner goes beyond confronting or helping a market economy, or just performing a regulatory role. A planner has the opportunity to address social justice and equity issues, if aware of the constraints and limitations imposed by the existing planning and political system. Campbell and Fainstein argue that although rational-comprehensive planning, a common form of planning that attempts to

"coordinate the multiple development and regulatory initiatives" for communities to address market shortcomings, is a worthy attempt, it fails to tackle social justice issues. Rational-comprehensive planning allows those with power to drive decision-making and generally ignores the poor and marginalized (Campbell & Fainstein, 2003, p.9). In contrast, equity planning, as a means to serve the interests of the least powerful within the planning system, emerged as a critique to overcome comprehensive planning (Campbell & Fainstein, 2003, p.9).

Equity planning is closely connected with issues of social justice, as it focuses on the redistribution of public and private resources for the benefit of the poor and working class. Additionally, it focuses on advancing strategies that foster the de-marginalization of the underrepresented in planning discussions (Campbell & Fainstein, 2003). For example, in the case of transportation planning, it would involve providing better mobility to disadvantaged people without solely basing decisions on economic dialogues.

It is worth establishing, firstly, that planning efforts can promote a false dichotomy between two dimensions of planning: the socio-moral and technical. The challenge is to transcend this reductive binary, so that plans and designs are sound not only for a few but for all inhabitants of a city (Taylor, 2004). The social and moral dimension is important, and an issue of justice insofar as municipal planners do their best to serve everyone in the community, particularly the underprivileged. These planners are called 'advocate planners' as they are aware of the social needs of the city and try to design solutions that would alleviate the social problems of underprivileged citizens. Advocate planners, for example, aim to promote social housing and affordable housing, and re-adjust the zoning bylaws so poorer areas can run businesses out of

their homes. At the same time, planners need technical skills to devise systems that serve the population of a given area. The efficacy of planning rests in large part on this technical dimension as, for example, the sewage system and road system need to be well planned to ensure a well functioning city (Albrechts, 1991).

The planning profession, by questioning the purpose of planning and what dimensions of the urban environment require addressing, is able to refine its practice and further learn how to reconcile two different, but necessarily connected, dimensions of planning. These two dimensions are essential to the learning process of the urban planning profession. In advancing both, the planner goes beyond operating merely as a 'technocratic engineer' or a 'politically engaged social worker'.

3.2.1- Transportation Planning

Transportation planning is one of the branches of urban planning. Although embodying many of the principles of urban planning explored above, transportation planning focuses mainly on the assessment and design of transportation systems. During the era of cheap and abundant oil, the main focus of transportation planning was to offer more supply to satisfy the growing demand, which resulted in more roads and more cars (Mercier, 2009, p.146). But in recent years, because of fears of unsustainable patterns of oil consumption, the focus of much debate and research has been on sustainable transportation methods, with an emphasis on how to meet "the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own

needs" (Haughton & Hunter, 1994, p.16). The concept of sustainability has come to the forefront of environmental and urban planning.

William Black (1996) also expresses a similar idea that urban transportation is considered sustainable when "satisfying current transport and mobility needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet these needs" (p.151). This definition of transport sustainability has almost become a staple phrase, being repeated in talks by planners and even in official documents such as Toronto's *Official Plan* (2010, p.4). However, the concept is devoid of questions of class, race and gender, only raising further questions of 'whose future will it be focused on' and 'whose needs'?

Transportation planning is still practiced in a very technical way, reflecting the influence of transportation engineering in using "a substantial amount of quantitative data", evaluating "alternative scenarios of a plan in an objective manner", and setting the objective of plans in dollar figures (Deka, 2004, p.334). Despite this, there are emerging tensions between technocratic transportation planners and planners looking to incorporate social justice into the planning process.

Transportation planners can look at the technicality of improving transit. A common exercise done by transit planners is transportation forecasting to predict travel behaviour and the infrastructure required. These methods, although very helpful in the field of transportation planning, do not incorporate social justice into the planning process. Devajyoti Deka, in a chapter of *The Geography of Urban Transport,* further explains that:

> Urban transportation planning models predict future growth patterns on the basis of existing patterns; such forecasts, which are the basis for transportation investments, do not aim to disrupt existing patters of inequity. When a computer model generates and distributes trips, splits trips among modes, and assigns trips to transportation networks on the basis of existing land use distribution and travel behaviour, it reinforces the status quo without any consideration of redistribution or change. (Deka, 2004, p.335)

The efforts undertaken to resolve the tensions between these two dimensions of urban planning are leading to a more balanced approach to transportation planning, with a closer connection to social justice, and are moving beyond just having discourses on economics, personal preferences and aesthetics. Transportation planning's alignment with social justice principles allows planners to recognize that accessibility is an essential aspect of urban life. For many residents of inner suburbs, public transportation provides the necessary mobility to access job opportunities. Therefore, access to public transportation can be considered a social privilege of urban citizenship. The right to use a public service like transit is an entitlement that urban residents must "cry out of necessity and a demand for something more" (Marcuse, 2010, p.190). Henri Lefebvre explains the right to the city as:

> the right to information, the right to use of multiple services, the right of users to make known their ideas on the space and time of their activities in urban areas; it would also cover the right to the use of the center. (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 34)

In contemporary society there is a general understanding that the need for food, shelter and education are basic rights of an urban citizen, and there are many forms of help to support such needs. Society is much less clear, however, "in determining whether needs for mobility and accessibility are basic needs" (Deka, 2004, p.336).

3.2.1.1- Inclusionary and exclusionary approaches

Lisa Benton-Short and John Rennie Short (2009) argue that transportation planning, if closely connected with social justice, would widen access to the city by establishing a transportation system that reflects the needs of various generations and diverse geographical landscapes. Such a system would "[minimize] social exclusion, and [improve] or [not] overly diminish an individual's quality of life" (Boschmann & Kwan, 2008, p.139).

Mercier (2009) expands on this point by explaining that transportation planning can have inclusionary and exclusionary approaches. Walking, public transit and cycling are inclusionary approaches, as they connect and promote closer proximity among people, which contributes to the strengthening of relationships between individuals in the community. An exclusionary approach is the investment in the automobile-oriented transportation system, which contributes to the further separation and isolation of individuals. Therefore, the "insufficient mobility in society and environment built around the assumption of high mobility" can become an expression of exclusionary approaches if it isolates people. Public transit can be exclusionary to the extent that is unaffordable and isolates those who cannot afford it (Kenyon, Lyons & Rafferty, 2002, p.211).

In exclusionary approaches to transportation planning, private needs and desires trump public ones because they allow the individual to pursue what he or she desires. A single individual's desires is not always what is best for society's environmental and social wellbeing, especially when there are less powerful people who do not have a voice in sharing and obtaining

their wants (Mercier, 2009, p.149). For example, in a city that is built around the assumption that everyone has access to some kind of transportation, some can choose to take taxis or car-share to the hospital at night, while others have no other means but to take public transit that does not run frequently.

Kipfer (2012) explores the impact of the cost of transit on inclusion and exclusion, and expresses gratification at the recent campaigns in Toronto for free public transit. He argues that free transit would alleviate the detrimental effects of social exclusion that immobility has on certain segments of the population in Toronto. Free transit would alleviate these negative effects by giving people - dependent on transit and isolated due to the cost of transportation - the rights of being a citizen. These people are mainly comprised of inner suburb residents. While public transit is meant to be for the public, in Toronto "transit did not always serve primarily public purposes" (Kipfer, 2012, p.4). For example, in Toronto the creation of the TTC in 1921 had as the main objective to expand the streetcars to support private real estate development, and further "real-estate speculation and promote boosterist urban development" (Kipfer, 2012, p.4). Although these are interesting points, one cannot forget that just because something is free, it does not mean it is distributed according to the needs of all segments of the city's population.

Though Kipfer argues the need for free transit, he recognizes that this would be insufficient and calls for expanding transit capacity and limiting the funding of car transportation. For Kipfer (2012), to fund such projects will require a shift in budgeting and thinking from the province and municipalities. A shift needs to occur from the private usage of cars and funding of roads and infrastructure towards financing free public transit, because "from

a macro-economic and social efficiency point of view, public transportation is far less expensive than the existing privatized system" (Kipfer, 2012, p.6). Today, Maria Augimeri, the Chair of the TTC, is asking the province for operating subsidies to allow for low-income fares. Despite being a recent development, and an exciting advancement, it is still far from what Kipfer is arguing for.

3.2.1.2- Accessibility and connectivity

From a social justice point of view, inclusionary approaches to transportation planning are manifested in accessibility and connectivity of residents to important daily activities, such as going to grocery stores and accessing places of work. Access to food is very important "because grocery shopping is a necessity for every household" (Deka, 2004, p.336). In many inner suburban neighbourhoods there are food deserts (areas in which it is difficult to access fresh produce). Access to work, nevertheless, "is more important than access to any other activity because most people depend on work for their livelihoods", and access to jobs from low-income areas often involves long commutes (Deka, 2004, p.336)

Accessibility and connectivity are essential for a community's well being; they can contribute to higher levels of community life and improve residents' health conditions. A study conducted by the Ontario Medical Association found that higher density neighbourhoods with streets adequately connected to transit services and mixed land-uses encourage people to bike, walk and take public transportation, all of which are beneficial factors to individual health (Ontario College of Family Physicians, 2005). A neighbourhood designed for public transportation reports an increase of "30 minutes more walking" by the residents each week

compared to those living in more suburban car-oriented designs (Frank, Sallis, Conway, Chapman, Saelens & Bachman, 2006).

According to Putnam - in his book *Bowling Alone* (Putnam, 2000) - social, political and economic interactions that inspire trust and reciprocity among citizens are eroded by a transportation system that encourages separateness. Kenyon, Lyons and Rafferty point out that "the unique interplay of a number of factors, whose consequence is the denial of access, to an individual or group, to the opportunity to participate in the social and political life of the community, [result] not only in diminished material and non-material quality of life, but also in tempered life chances, choices and reduced citizenship" (2002, p.209). In *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jane Jacobs (1961) describes the importance of well-connected streets and intersections in making a neighbourhood and a city liveable.

Although such arguments seem compelling, it is important to note that simply spending less time commuting does not necessarily increase community participation. Someone might work from home, or even be unemployed and be completely disconnected from their communities. But for those who are engaged, and have the desire to contribute to community life, commuting long hours takes away time that could be spent contributing to the community.

3.2.2- Going Beyond Distributive Justice

As previously mentioned, just distribution in present day capitalist society is expressed as "whatever the market dictates, and that a just organization of social life, or urban investment and

of resource allocations is best arrived at through the market" (Sandercock, 1998, p.183). Significantly, however, the consequences of distribution inequality are the creation of segregated land uses, segregated communities and a wider geographical gap of income. According to Sandercock, concerns of distributive justice are all based on material outcomes with the conclusion that a socially just planning system is achieved by the "redistribution of urban goods and services under the umbrella of a more general class-based politics" (Sandercock, 1998, p.83). What is missing from this approach "is a broader definition of injustice or inequality which includes but it not limited to the material, the economic reality" (Sandercock, 1998, p.183).

Injustice refers to oppression and domination. Sandercock goes beyond the notion that injustice is merely about who possesses what materially, and helps the reader understand that people, neighbourhoods and communities can be oppressed and dominated under a system that does not allow them to have a voice. Excluding communities and neighbourhoods from matters such as "decision-making procedures, division of labour, and culture" is another symptom of injustice, the consequences of which can be long lasting. (Sandercock, 1998, p.184).

Any "attempt to 'soften' the power of the oppressor in defense to the weakness of the oppressed almost always manifests itself in the form of false generosity; indeed, the attempt never goes beyond this" (Freire, 1970, p.44). The injustice that stems from voicelessness, therefore, would require planners to incorporate discourses of inclusion and social justice beyond the delivery of goods and services. Failing to do so would perpetuate the dynamics of the oppressed. Take, for example, a community that lacks access to buses on weekends. Planners and

politicians may, in the name of justice, grant them access to such services. This, too, constitutes an attempt to soften the power of the oppressor by giving more freedom to the oppressed. From one perspective such an action is evidently commendable, however, from another perspective, this community would likely remain dependent on what others are deciding for it, thereby reinforcing both the validity of exclusionary decision-making and their own powerlessness. This is an expression of "false modesty" to which Paolo Freire refers (Freire, 1970, p.44). A similar example can be offered in the field of International Development. When a country is facing food scarcity, one approach is to send food aid. Again, although a commendable and sometimes necessary action, it does not solve the problem of food scarcity; instead, when a country is helped to improve its food production and become self-subsisting, then it is able to better tackle the food scarcity problem.

This condition of injustice can happen with all types of communities and neighbourhoods across the city, but inner suburb residents suffer the most because, in most cases, there are no choices and options. A resident that is dependent on transit has no other option of commuting, and is restricted to that mode of transit; and if that resident has a very limited voice in the decision making arena, it binds the resident to how others want him or her to experience the city. Therefore, planners that try to achieve socially just plans would need to stop "regarding the oppressed as an abstract category and [see] them as persons who have been unjustly dealt with, deprived of their voice", and give them the space to have a voice (Freire, 1970, p.50). Translating social justice ideals into action becomes more effective when the oppressed have the voice to raise their own problems, express solutions, and politicize the course of action that can be taken.

3.3 – Politics and Planning

> There's nothing more political than epistemological struggles. From the debates about how best to arrive at truth to all of the critiques of Enlightment epistemology, the wars of words and philosophies have enormous practical consequences. They are debates about what counts as knowledge and who counts as a knower. (Sandercock, 1998, p.75)

Politicians at all levels of government make decisions that impact the daily lives of people. It is remarkable that those who are elected with relatively short tenures – four years in the City of Toronto and in the Province of Ontario – have the authority to make decisions that require long-term thinking beyond their tenure. Politicians make decisions to elevate their campaign above their opponents during campaign season, but continue to try to outshine fellow politicians during their tenure. The decisions they make are often short-term, like reducing property tax. What about the long-term decisions that will drastically impact the quality of life of Torontonians? With a municipal election scheduled for October 2014, each of the Toronto mayoral candidates has acknowledged the importance of transit in their respective campaigns, and is making concerted efforts to make a transit plan that attracts the most votes.

In matters of urban planning, politicians "believe that they alone have the ultimate responsibility for making decisions", while other actors are mere contributors to the process (Jill Grant, 1994, p.171). Jill Grant explains that "power" given to politicians through a political structure and system is the "organizing element" in the planning process; this "power is exercised by the politicians and implemented by its planners" (Grant, 1994, p.171). In this process, planners potentially have the ability to shape what Council decides by explaining the policies and other technical aspects of the work, and juxtapose ideals set by Council with

legislative planning documents. Such recommendations are not always taken and, regardless of their recommendations, planners have to carry out the plans and vision of Council.

Planners are seen as practitioners who influence discourse in a governance system and give 'objective' analysis about the uses of land. The ability to navigate a system and understand it, and be able to know how to influence it, is a great challenge, but the efforts bring about the most effective change. Forester explains that planners work in conditions of uncertainty, becoming accustomed to negotiations and dealing with the interests of various actors (Forester, 1987). Planners therefore play a negotiation and mediation role in local planning conflicts and can have the ability to address power imbalances that affect planning outcomes. It is important to note that municipal planners are portrayed as neutral by politicians and the planning system, working to apply planning principles to various projects and offering 'expert' opinion based on planning facts. A crucial point, however, is that they are not neutral; planner's opinions "inevitably either perpetuate or challenge existing inequalities of information, expertise, political access, and opportunity" (Forester, 1987).

A challenge in politics is ensuring that decision makers function in a democratic way and reflect the interests of all of their constituents and not only the interests of a small powerful group. An area of great contention is the influence developers have on municipal politics. According to MacDermid (2009), the development industry is the most influential protagonist in the campaigns of many political candidates who win the elections. Developers can contribute to the financing of a campaign and help organize it, while putting other candidates at a big disadvantage, particularly those not associated with such sums of money and influential power.

For example, in the study carried out by MacDermid, all development contributions in most cities in Ontario, including Toronto, "went to just one candidate, the eventual winner" (2009, p.32). MacDermid refers to this as an "impressive level of coordination of giving" (2009, p.32).

Developers contribute to election campaigns not only through their corporations, but also as individual citizens, given that they are allowed to make direct contributions to a political candidate. The influence of developers comes from the fact that, for municipal politics, "property taxation is its principal source of revenue." Although not proven, the financing of a mayoral and council candidate can have many beneficial outcomes for developers, particularly because their projects rely on the approval of municipal planning (MacDermid, 2009). Municipal planning is of paramount importance to developers, as it is in the planning phase that developers earn most of their profits, and it is with growing development that a municipality gains most of its operating budget (Macdermid, 2009). For example, the City of Toronto projected a revenue of $3.762 billion from property taxes in 2014. This equates to 38.9% of total revenues that the City would receive, making it the largest single revenue source. The next largest source of revenue at $1.866 billion, or 19.3% of total revenue, is provincial grants and subsidies (City of Toronto Council, 2014, p.14).

The influence of developers is broader than simply financing politicians in their campaigns and also includes the role developers often play as leading figures in many communities. A pressing matter is the great desire of developers to build around rapid transit. Over the past 15 years, Toronto has seen a growing polarization of land use, in which areas closest to rapid transit have experienced both a growing high-income population and an increase

in development. This provides a more compelling argument as to why developers might have a special interest in how and where transportation is planned. Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to examine the relationship between the increased interest of politicians in transit and the role of developers in transportation, it would be an interesting area of in-depth study.

Reducing the influence of personal interests from such small yet influential groups requires, on one hand, figuring out new ways to generate substantial municipal revenue besides property tax and, on the other hand, communities to gather around "political principles that give priority to the wide range of needs in our communities" (MacDermind, 2009).

3.4 – Citizen Engagement in Planning

A planner's understanding of reality is founded on assumptions about how the world functions and carries "biases and prejudices that accompany disciplinary training" into the profession (Lélé & Norgaard, 2005, 975). The challenge is to move away from rational-comprehensive planning — the mere application of rational rules to planning decisions — and work towards a more democratic system. Jill Grant explains that in a "democratic society, politicians must implement the will of the people" (Grant, 1994, p.172). In a capitalist society, however, the democratic process is often in question, with concerns such as who the beneficiaries of certain decisions are. Implementing the will of the people requires a more intimate understanding of the dynamics of communities through, for example, the daily interactions between its members and neighbours.

Community does not have one meaning, and it is not a value free-term (Dictionary of Urban Geography, 2009). Thorns (2002) explains that the concept of community can be expressed in three different forms: as a geographical expression, as a local system, and as a kind of human relationship. To be more specific, community can be expressed as a geographical territory such as a '*neighbourhood'*, it can be explained as a '*network of acquaintances and friends that have a common purpose'*, and a '*sense of belonging'*. A sense of community is defined as "a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together" (Bashir, 2002).

3.4.1- Social capital and citizen engagement

According to Hancock (2001), the significance of a community should be measured according to diverse capitals — human, economic, environmental and social. Hancock argues that social capital — social networks and the associated norms of reciprocity — gives important value to a community, even if a capitalist society's value of community is linked mainly to economic derivatives. He explains that social capital gives rise to a collective purpose towards action and the political will to work together towards a particular purpose in a community.

Robert Putnam, author of *Bowling Alone,* argues that the weakening of social capital is linked to the decline in American political participation. He explains that the premise of social capital is that "social networks have value" (Putnam, 2000, p.19). He elaborates that it "refers to connections among individuals, social networks and norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness

that arise from" such connections (Putnam, 2000, p.19). Putnam refers to L. J. Hanifan as one of the first people to explore this concept. Hanifan refers to social capital as:

> Those tangible substances [that] count for most in the daily lives of people: namely good will, fellowship, sympathy, and social intercourse among the individuals and families who make up a social unit. … The individual is helpless socially, if left to himself. If he comes into contact with his neighbor, and they with other neighbors, there will be an accumulation of social capital, which may immediately satisfy his social needs and which may bear a social potentiality sufficient to the substantial improvement of living conditions in the whole community. The community as a whole will benefit by the cooperation of all its parts, while the individual will find in his associations the advantages of the help, the sympathy, and the fellowship of his neighbors. (Putnam, 2000, p.19)

Putnam (2000, p.22) makes an important distinction between two types of social capital — bonding and bridging. Bonding forms of social capital "are, by choice or necessity, inward looking and tend to reinforce exclusive identities and homogeneous groups", for example, a golf country club is a form of bonding social capital because it creates "in-group loyalty" and "out-group antagonism" (Putnam, 2000, p.22-23). Bridging forms, in contrast, are "outward looking and encompass people across diverse social cleavages". A "civil rights movement" is a form of bridging social capital because it generates "broader identities and reciprocity" (Putnam, 2000, p.22-23). Bonding and bridging, shaped by social networks, reciprocity, and trustworthiness operating at the neighbourhood scale, provide the groundwork necessary for citizen participation (Putnam, 2000).

Hancock explains that the reference to capital in "social capital" is similar to economic capital: an investment is made to yield some fruit for individual and collective well being (Hancock, 2001). When social capital is present in neighbourhoods, the fruit is the increased

participation of individuals in contributing to the well being of the collective. Mayer explains that social capital stands for the "attitudes and habits conducive to civic engagement" (Mayer, 2013, p.110). Putnam argues that social capital produces civic engagement because when connections among people are based on reciprocity and trust, it makes people want to work with their neighbours to improve their neighbourhood, creating an environment of "mutual obligation and responsibility for [political] action" (Putman, 2000, 21). Therefore, social capital increases political participation of residents because it allows them to be aware of the conditions of all those living in a neighbourhood, and to have the ideal social network to consult on how to address their problems.

Social capital theory is not without challenges. For example, Margit Mayer explains that social capital "makes it look as if success has finally been achieved" against a capitalist system (Mayer, 2003, p.108). She states that it is promoted in a biased, positively-charged message of civic engagement as the means to challenge the imbalance of power that has caused urban inequality and poverty. Although Mayer is aware of social capital's benefits, she puts forward important arguments against its rise in popularity and gives suggestions to complement the discourse around it. A question she puts to promoters of social capital is: "social capital for whom and to what end?" She argues that civil society is not free of conflict, and it is inaccurate to present social capital as a uniform perspective from which civil society will address political problems without conflict (Mayer, 2003, p.116). She gives an example of the occasional need for conflict in urban politics through protest mobilizations and adversarial movements that lead to much-needed outcomes. For example, in Toronto the opposition to the Spadina Expressway by the Stop Spadina Save Our City Coordinating Committee was crucial in saving neighbourhoods

like the Annex. As Mayer writes, “not all movements fit into the particular understanding of a (harmonious) relationship between civil society and the state inherent in the social capital perspective” (Mayer, 2003, p.116).

Mayer argues that the community requires some institutional capacity to collaborate with various levels of government, enabling communities to consult, set demands, hold politicians accountable, and when necessary not “[shy] away from conflict with corporations or state power” (Mayer, 2003, p.117). In this way, social capital would “have a chance to contribute to strengthening the vitality of the ‘civic community’” (Mayer, 2003, p.125). Mayer is able to critique the idea of social capital and offers insightful comments, but falls short when she offers ways of adapting the concept instead of questioning its validity.

Thus, social capital theory offers a useful analysis of the necessary conditions for citizen participation and engagement. It expands on the idea that in most cases individuals alone cannot effect the change required to address systemic issues raised from capitalism, and it focuses on the need to appreciate the value of people’s networks. For example, the social networks, reciprocity, and interconnectedness of a community can strengthen collective will and action — an important element in bringing about collective decision making. In this sense, social capital is useful in understanding how communities can come together to participate in political or social processes that influence the development of their community.

At the same time, social capital theory does not seem to consider the existing power imbalances that contribute to urban inequality. Because social capital theory reduces the concept

of community to a set of transactions between people, it avoids examining the deeper implications of a capitalist system on the ability of individuals and communities to effect change. Although civic engagement can be a means by which the collective is drawn together to address inequalities or challenges, it doesn't explain how or why such inequalities emerged in the first place, and it assumes that these relationships are being developed within a vacuum.

A critical planner would argue that development and access to social capital is not always egalitarian. Communities or individuals, depending on their economic or political context, are not able to develop and expand their networks in the same way. For example, not all segments of society have the ability to develop social networks, because they have to work long hours either owing to long commuting or numerous jobs.

3.4.2- Citizen Engagement and Decision Making

Building and preserving a civic community can be challenging when 'top-down' decisions are not informed by grassroots action. In many cases, large sums of money are invested in projects that do not meet the needs of local residents, namely because very little, if any, power is given to local inhabitants to make decisions. 'Bottom-up' planning is the engagement of local residents in initiatives that involve their direct participation in the decision making processes and, in turn, contribution to the development and management of projects more commensurate to the needs of their community (Fordham, 1993, p.303). Jarrett Walker, a very prominent advocate for public transit, explains that "you, and your community, get to choose 'what' you want and

'why'. [And a planners] job is to help with 'how'. It's a crucial distinction, one that often gets lost" (Walker, 2012, p.5).

According to Freire, the power balance between an 'expert' and 'non-expert', in which the expert is seen as holding knowledge and the non-expert receives the knowledge, is equalized through a 'problem-posing education' model. Such an approach assumes that a process of change should involve critical thinking, dialogues and action for all actors. An inherent part of the 'problem-solving education' model is participating in a continual process of reflecting and acting in the world in order to transform it. The trust by all, that everyone has the ability to engage in reflection that can leads to desirable decisions, is a necessary prerequisite for progressive change (Freire, 1970).

To have "open-entry participation at the grassroots level, and low involvement of the government in the decision making process" requires a dialogical approach (Avritzer, 2009, p.84). Paulo Freire explains dialogics as individuals engaging in the process of dialogue among various actors and directly addressing the problem, trying to solve it collectively (Freire, 1970). Non-dialogical actions manipulate and distort communication for the benefit of the few and reproduce power and privilege. Dialogical action allows for all actors to have a role in the planning process (Freire, 1970, p. 69). They can be understood as enterprises that build capacity in a community in which a community has a system in place to carry out its own projects and, as result, builds its "collective commitment, resources and skills" for future projects (Bruce, 2005, p.25). Community capacity building:

> not only entails imagining how things might be, but realizing what it takes to get there and then translating plans into action. It involves challenges to the status quo, and in some cases, conflict with the established modes of behaviour and governance. (Kleiner et al, 2004, p.7-8)

McArthur (1993) explains that building capacity in a community to participate in the decision-making process encourages the community to be more tightly knit, and to build institutional capacity to provide for the community. As communities engage in the process of decision making and action towards implementing decisions, the quality of decisions and actions will improve and correspond more fully to the actual needs of local residents, and institutional policies will become aligned with such needs. Communities might know what is best for the neighbourhood as they engage with it the most, but the process of action and reflection — a process of engagement — in planning allows communities to learn to use the planning system for the benefit of the community (Fordham, 1993).

Lloyd Axworthy (1972) explains that when there is lack of community participation, the decisions that move ahead are not the most suitable solutions for the problems they address. In Toronto, planners and politicians would say that citizens currently have access to some decision-making spaces, such as open information sessions and statutory public meetings. In these spaces, however, citizens do not have any assurances that their input gets implemented and taken into account. Toronto's current planning situation considers citizen knowledge as devoid of the same level of expertise as trained and qualified planners, engineers, architects, and developers. Although acknowledging the gulf in expertise is valid, it is tenuous insofar as it denies the participation of others in planning matters. More than 40 years ago Lloyd Axworthy (1972) wrote in his introduction to "The Citizen and Neighbourhood Renewal":

> Citizen involvement is an essential element in planning a good environment. The involvement of people in the planning process gives them an opportunity to express their needs, as they see them, to take on responsibility for the improvements in their own community, to acquire a stake in what is done. Without effective participation in urban planning, the outcome is often an ill- suited solution to the problem. (Axworthy, 1972, p.29)

Sherry Arnstein, an oft-quoted contributor in the field of citizen participation, is best known for her work *A working model for public participation* (Arnstein, 1969). In her paper, published in 1969 and developed out of her involvement in the War on Poverty movement in the U.S., she explains that citizens need to gain power over the decision-making process through greater participation, because "it is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included" (Arnstein, 1969, p.216). Even though civic engagement is an important step towards empowering people who are not part of the decision making process, those who are engaged do not always have the same degree of power in this process. Arnstein argues that there is a spectrum of participation that varies across projects. In some cases planners and politicians refer to citizen engagement but do not put real control of the decision-making process in the hands of participants, while in other projects citizens have the decision-making power and the ownership of the process.

To illustrate this continuum of participation, Arnstein uses the metaphor of a ladder of participation that includes eight steps which ascend from 'non-power' to 'citizen control'. The steps represent "the extent of citizen power in determining the end product" (Arnstein, 1969, p. 217). The bottom steps are in the category of 'non-participation'. The processes in the 'non-

participatory' section are meant to help participants accept the expert's projects. The middle steps are in the category of 'tokenism', a group of steps that are more concerned with giving participants access to power-making spaces, such as open meetings and information session, but citizens do not have any assurance that their input is taken into account. Finally, the top steps provide participants with real opportunities to make decisions. These steps include processes where those who normally do not have power in decision making become equal actors in the decision-making process. Therefore, their input and ideas are equally valid and, most importantly, the power structure of decision making allows for the public to participate in final decisions. This reflects the "demands for participation from the have-nots as well as the gamut of confusing responses from the power holders" (Arnstein, 1969, p.217).

A word of caution is raised by Leonie Sandercock; she urges planners, on one hand, to "make an effort to listen to those who are least powerful", but, on another, to think about the power structures in which they operate (Sandercock, 2004, p.77). Planners can try to represent the voices of the poor and marginalized in the planning process and yet, without realizing, still deny them a voice. For example, a planner may engage with residents of inner suburban areas in Toronto, but whose vision is actually being voiced and who gets to make the decision? Although the attempt by planners to work with poorer and disempowered communities is commendable, as an alternative to the expert-oriented planning practices, the planner has to avoid becoming the "ventriloquist for poor communities", where the planner's role leaves "the structure of power intact, confident in the workings of plural democracy" (Sandercock, 1998, p.90). Therefore, the mere engagement of citizens is not enough; planners must question to what extent residents are contributing and the power struggles at play. Far from planning being a unilateral process in

which the planners "educate the community about planning", Sandercock argues that "members of poor communities [have] political skills often superior to those of planners", and planners, therefore, have much to learn from them (Sandercock, 1998, p.90).

When planners accept the notion that the community can contribute to the dialogue, the idea of participatory citizenship becomes more about the recognition of "citizens as 'makers and shapers' rather than 'users and choosers' of services designed by others" (Gaventa, 2004). Communities move from "passive beneficiaries" of experts' decisions to active agents who can contribute to the betterment of their neighbourhoods and communities (Cornwall & Gaventa, 2000). It is important to note that an expert's opinion is very important, but it is equally important to note the embedded malfunction that many communities have suffered when the 'expert's' opinion becomes the only voice heard and the community is therefore considered incapable of making important decisions. Walker explains that, through his many years in the field of planning, he has seen that the growing number of "informed and caring citizens – expressing themselves with courtesy, clarity, and persistence – almost always leads to better outcomes" (Walker, 2012, p.10). He argues that when citizens are actively engaged in planning, "better decisions are made, decisions that lead to better mobility, a stronger economy, a more just society, or whatever goal the community is pursuing" (Walker, 2012, p.10).

There is an assumption, by some of its proponents, that citizen participation is, *ipso facto,* the solution to all planning problems. According to such thinking, the mere involvement of all citizens, with each one of them raising any concerns they may have, will – irrespective of the mode and content of such participation – make the city a better-planned place. Abu-Lughod

argues that the citizens' "goals are certainly not 'value free'" (Abu-Lughod, 1998, p.232). At times, some citizen plans are "effective in achieving their goals whereas others, equally participatory, fail" (Abu-Lughod, 1998, p.232). She agrees that when there is no involvement from citizens in planning, in its extreme form, it is like having an authoritarian system of planning, but, on the other hand, too much citizen participation can result in "anarchy, which undermines efficacy" (Abu-Lughod, 1998, p.236). She therefore calls for a "healthy balance" between the role of an institution, like a municipality and its planners, and the role played by a community in planning. This balance of power, in a way, has to be constantly re-examined by both actors so that it does not fall into the trap of one group overpowering the other. A 'learning mode' needs to be established, therefore, in which both actors approach their work together with an attitude of learning. Beyond this, however, there needs to be an understanding of the role accorded to each actor in the planning process, where the political and institutional planning system delivers projects according to their responsibilities. In a similar vein, the community and neighbourhoods need to be empowered to contribute towards the planning of the given area (Abu-Lughod, 1998, p.237). Such a relationship between communities and institutions is not free from struggle and politics, but this approach allows for the struggle and politics to be focused on 'learning to collaborate', instead of 'learning to oppose and dominate'.

3.5 – Summary

This chapter began by introducing critical planning theory as a framework to analyze my research and to explore the themes of social justice, transportation planning and citizen engagement.

Although urban planning has its roots in micro-economics and is focused on compensating for market shortcomings, I argue that the role of the contemporary planner can go beyond confronting or helping a market economy or just playing regulatory roles. A planner has the ability to operate in a way that addresses social justice and equity issues, if aware of the constraints and limitations imposed by the existing planning and political system.

At the same time, this chapter has also revealed that to overcome the limitations of the constraints imposed by the existing planning-political system, planners needs to transcend the false dichotomy between the socio-moral and technical dimensions of planning. This would enable planners to go beyond acting as either a ‘technocratic engineer’ or a ‘politically engaged social worker’.

This chapter has undertaken a literature review with the goal of highlighting some strategies for building a socially just transit system. Transportation planning is one of the branches of urban planning and, when closely connected with issues of social justice, it can address the redistribution of public and private resources for the benefit of the poor and working class. Transportation planning’s alignment with principles of social justice allows planners to recognize that accessibility is an essential aspect of urban life. For many residents of inner suburbs, public transportation provides the necessary mobility to access job opportunities. Therefore, access to public transportation can be considered a social entitlement of urban citizenship, as a right to be part of the city.

In this chapter I have suggested that a socially just planning system can be achieved by moving away from the notion that injustice is simply about who possesses what materially, and that communities can be oppressed and dominated under a system that does not allow them to have a voice. Translating social justice ideals into action becomes more effective when the local residents have the voice to raise their own problems, express solutions, and politicize the course of action that can be taken.

Lastly, this chapter explored the research question about the role of politics in urban planning. A problem in politics is ensuring that decision makers function in a democratic way and reflect the interests of all of their constituents and not only the interests of a small powerful group. Planners potentially have the ability to shape what elected politicians decide, and when planners reflect social justice ideals, plans can be made that are commensurate with the needs of communities.

The next chapter presents a case study that explores the conditions of tower neighbourhoods in Toronto's inner suburbs and the Finch West LRT project proposed by Transit City.

Chapter 4
Case Study: Transportation planning in Toronto

Torontonians may remember March 2007 as the month the wheels for transit started spinning, and since then, the spinning has only gotten faster. I still remember reading the plan for Transit City for the first time in the newspapers. The *Toronto Star* had a map and an article entitled "Success driven by TTC: Miller". The article indicated, "it will take 15 years and about $6 billion to build the light rail network that the Toronto Transit Commission envisions connecting virtually every neighbourhood in the city" (Kalinowski & Spears, 2007). From then, through the election of Rob Ford as mayor in the fall of 2010, to the provincial election in June 2014, the debate over transit has become more and more of an important issue for Torontonians.

Parallel alarming reports from Metrolinx, a crown agency with the purpose of managing and integrating road and public transportation in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA), suggest that annually congestion costs $3.3 billion to commuters and $2.7 billion dollar cost to the local economy. Metrolinx explains that this cost comes from travel delays, unreliability in trip times, increased vehicle operating costs, higher frequency of accidents, environmental costs due to car emissions, and reduced productivity of the services produced (Metrolinx, 2008). More recently, there are reports in various newspapers about an increase of health problems among commuters in the GTHA, with increased stress being one of the main symptoms (Eastwood, 2014). With economic and health risks exposed by the media, the dialogue about the need for better public transit is seen as an important step towards a better functioning economy and better quality of life.

In relation to public transit, the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) notes that in 2012 – the latest operating statistics provided by the TTC – approximately 514 million passenger trips were registered through the whole system. This accounts for trips by subway, streetcar, Scarborough RT, and bus (but excludes Wheels Trans, a door to door transit service for registered residents with physical disabilities), and amounts to an increase of 13 million since 2011. The estimate for 2013 is 528 million total passenger trips (Toronto Transit Commission, 2012). Although not all routes are at capacity, there is much talk about certain bus routes and the Yonge subway line being at full capacity during rush hour (Toronto Transit Commission, 2012).

As Metrolinx and the TTC look ahead to solve their transportation problems, they cannot ignore the effects of the substantial population growth the GTHA is expected to experience. By the year 2036, the GTHA is expected to grow by an additional 2.5 million people, from 6.4 million in 2012 to 8.9 million (Ministry of Finance, 2012). This will put enormous development pressure on all parts of the region, including outlying city centres, inner suburban communities and agricultural land, and consequently on all types of transport infrastructure. The city of Toronto is expected to grow from its estimated 2012 population of 2.79 million to 3.45 million in 2036. Despite being below the Ontario growth rate, this will exert great intensification pressure on a city that has already developed much of its land (Ministry of Finance, 2012).

The mode of transportation chosen by travellers is a defining factor in the quality of life of many GTHA communities. In this regard, the GTHA sees two transportation systems related to different development patterns: one that requires long commutes because of sprawling development, and another that facilitates short commutes and encourages more active

transportation. There are many studies of the negative impact on quality of life in areas developed with segregated land use patterns and low densities, neighbourhood streets disconnected from arterial roadways, and little or no employment land thus requiring commuting to other areas with job concentration. On the other hand, there are several studies and plans that encourage the development of walkable, transit supportive neighbourhoods, that decrease reliance on the car as the sole means of transportation, like many existing neighbourhoods in downtown Toronto.

But this binary description does not capture the complexity of unequal access to transportation infrastructure in the region. For example, a 45-minute ride in an air-conditioned luxury car along an un-crowded freeway is a qualitatively different experience than a 45-minute ride in a crowded streetcar funded by an exorbitant monthly transit pass. Although there is much to praise for the efforts made in downtown Toronto, there is a word of caution raised by Graham and Marvin in their book, *Splintering Urbanism*. They argue that social segregation is re-enforced where urban landscapes emerge with premium network spaces constructed mainly for affluent segments of society (Graham & Marvin, 2001). This "sociotechnical partitioning of the metropolitan" is seen today in Toronto.

4.1 – Sociotechnical Partitioning of Toronto and the Modernist Legacy

The City of Toronto is Canada's post-war high-rise capital, containing 1189 multi-unit rental residential buildings built between 1945 and 1984 with eight stories or more (City of Toronto, 2011). During the rapid rate of post-war housing growth, there were many attempts to

emulate modernist planning techniques, especially the layout of high-rise tower-in-the-park apartment buildings (Figure 4.1).

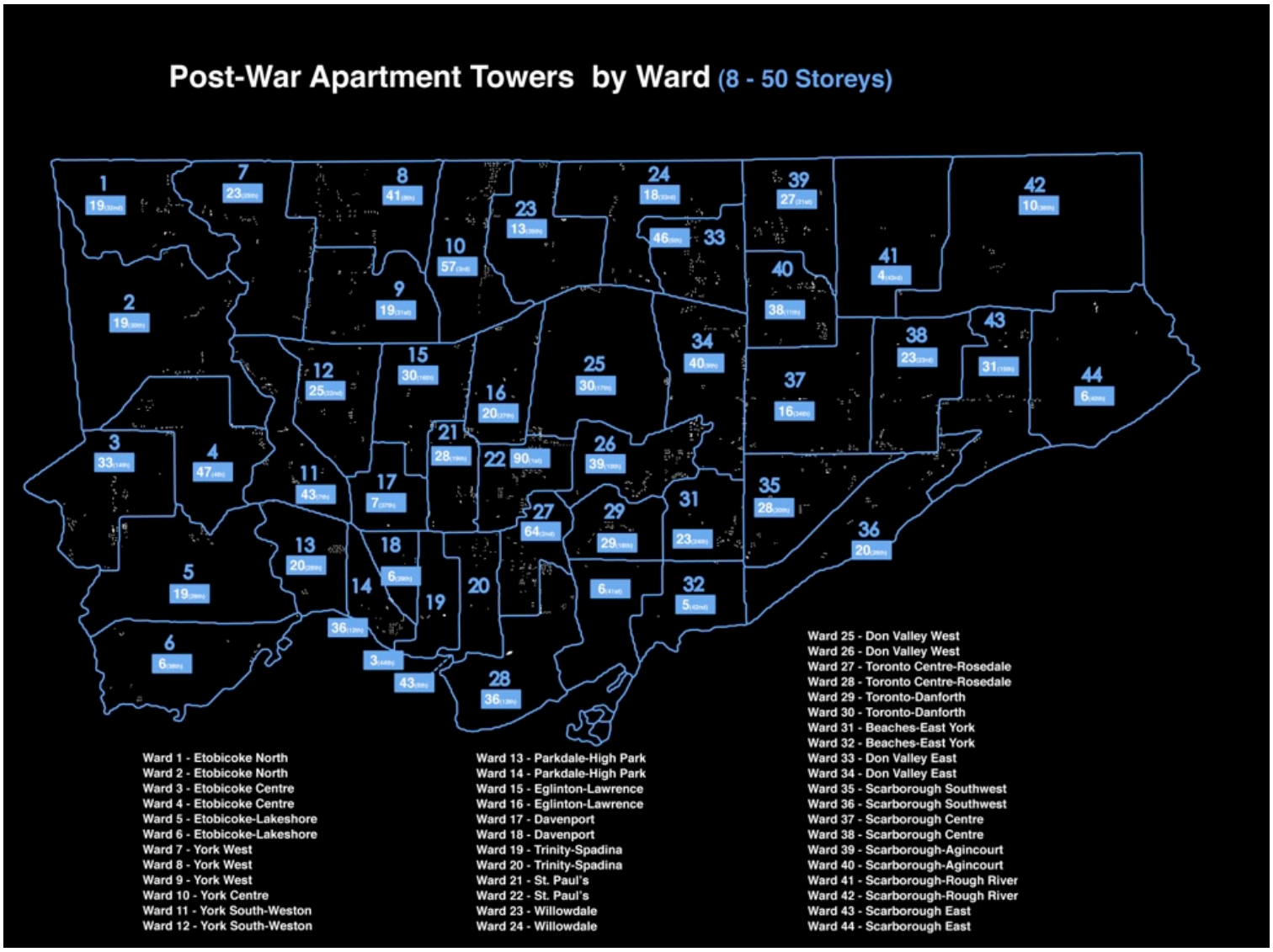

Figure 4.1. Toronto's post-war apartment towers by ward. Source: http://www.towerrenewal.com/?p=868

Taylor and Nostrand (2008) suggest that certain areas in Toronto's inner suburbs are noteworthy for the widespread presence of the tower-in-the-park concept, first proposed by Le Corbusier in the early 1900s. The tower-in-the-park neighbourhoods feature a number of high-

rise apartment structures that sit on large green spaces of land. These apartment neighbourhoods were a direct reflection of the explosive growth of post-war urban Toronto during the period of the 1950s to the 1970s (Centre for Urban Growth and Renewal, 2010). This model of development was based on the new modern ideas of planning. During this time urbanization was influenced by "the modernist idea that planning and development should focus on large-scale, metropolitan-wide, technologically rational and efficient plans, backed by absolutely no frills architecture" (Harvey 1989, p.66). Technological and efficient plans were driven by values of functionality, which often took precedence over form.

One of the goals of modernist planning was to have self-sufficient neighbourhoods as an important component of the city, contributing to the "enrichment of daily life" (Harvey 1989, p.12). The enrichment of daily life was considered achievable through a drastic change in city structures and grandiose plans. Projects and plans during the modernist era were described as the 'dreamworld' and this 'dreamworld' was seen as a possibility in the minds of a few – those few who understood planning, economy and politics.

These apartment neighbourhoods are defined by a cluster of tower buildings (Figure 4.2) that were implemented mostly by private developers who saw opportunity in the economic expansion of the period. These high-rise tower developments during the 1960s to the 1980s left Toronto with a unique inheritance, of modern looking communities managed by private owners that, in a majority of cases, have disregarded the maintenance and well being of the buildings and consequently of their residents.

Figure 4.2. Cluster of tower apartments at the intersection of Jane and Finch. Photo by Saba Haie.

Today, many of these apartment neighbourhoods are showing signs of disrepair, neglect and decline, and have become impoverished through many circumstantial factors. Recent research from David Hulchanski (2010) indicate that over the last twenty-five years the proportion of middle income neighbourhoods in Toronto decreased from 66% to just 29%, high-income neighbourhoods grew from 15% to 19% and low-income neighbourhoods grew from 19% to 53%, creating a geographically divided '3 cities' within Toronto. He characterizes these cities as: City #1, which is the area of concentrated wealth and gentrification; City #2, mainly a middle income area; and City #3, which has areas of concentrated poverty. City # 2 and #3 each

comprise about 40% of the land area of the City of Toronto (Figure 4.3). The majority of apartment neighbourhoods facing the challenge of increased poverty and inadequate services can be found in City #3 (Hulchanski, 2010).

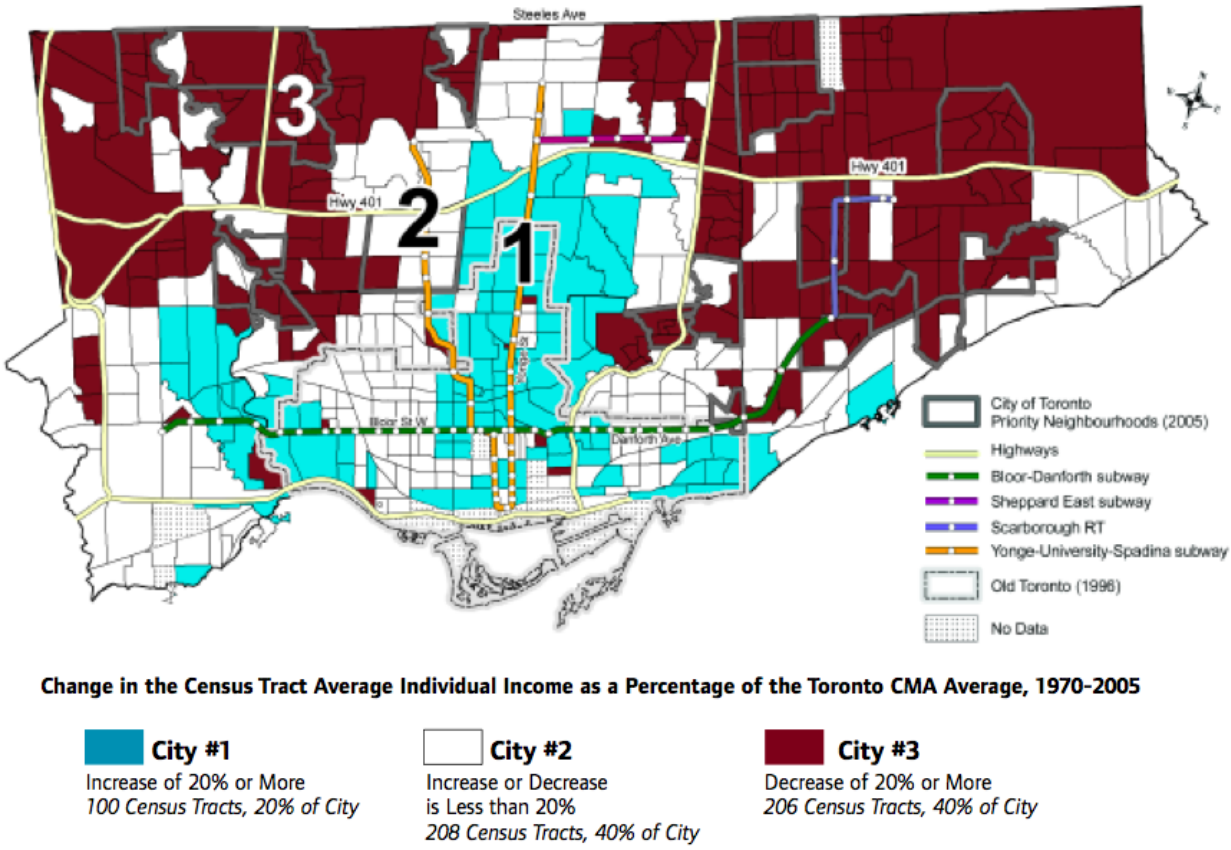

Figure 4.3. Toronto's income polarization. Source: (Hulchanski, 2010, p.2).

Inner suburban tower neighbourhoods face two types of problems. One is physical decay, including old elevators that are regularly out of service, widespread vermin infestation, cracked walls and pavements. The areas surrounding the buildings have large garbage dumpsters left open. There are also expansive parking lots with garbage and rusted fences. Many of the residential units do not have proper heating and the boilers are too old to support the usage, so the buildings are not energy efficient. The other type of problem is social, with reports of

increased poverty, lack of employment, a lack of a sense of safety, and high crime rates often as a result of drug trafficking (United Way Toronto, 2011).

In contrast to Toronto's downtown core, many of these inner suburban neighbourhoods do not have easy access to the same daily requirements of life. People have to commute in order to work, buy groceries, and take their children to school; their neighbourhoods do not have easy accessibility to various amenities compared to downtown neighbourhoods. For example, a study by the Martin Prosperity Institute noted that food deserts have become a prominent feature of Toronto's inner suburbs. The study explains that:

> Many grocery stores are located either next to new commercial developments in the inner city or alongside large, retail developments in the outer suburbs. As a result, they are often a considerable distance away from those who live in these inner suburbs and Priority Neighbourhoods, making them difficult, time consuming and costly to access without a car. (Martin Prosperity Institute, 2010, p. 2) (Figure 4.4)

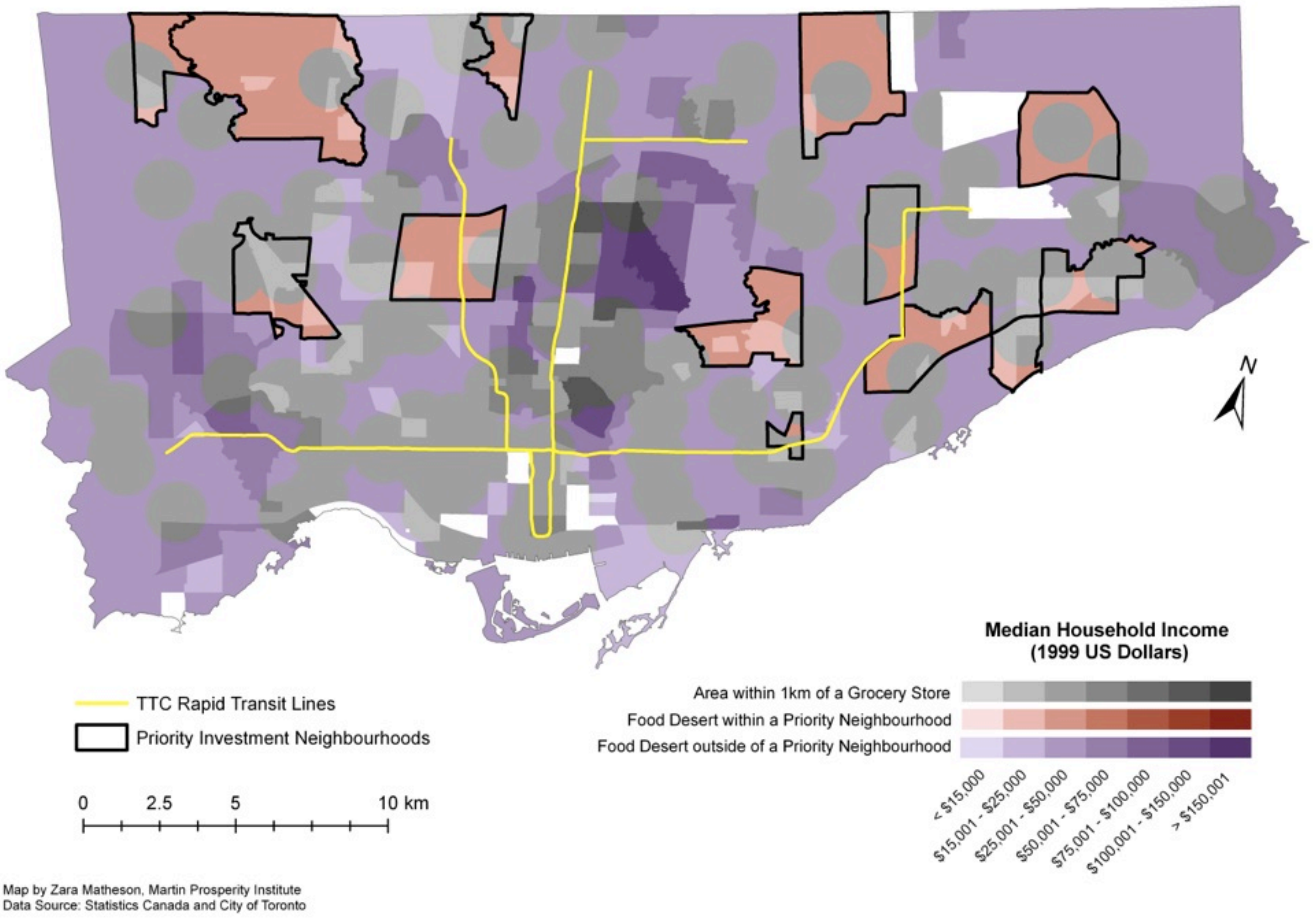

Figure 4.4. Map of food deserts in Toronto. Source: (Martin Prosperity Institute, 2010, p.2)

Paul Hess, from the Department of Geography at the University of Toronto, conducted a study in partnership with Jane Farrow (the Director of Jane's Walk), to better understand the ways people get around Toronto's inner suburban neighbourhoods. The focus of the study was on walking patterns in inner suburban neighbourhoods and how more 'complete street' (consideration of all modes of travel when designing a street) systems could be built with connected streets, houses, businesses and amenities, with direct access to sidewalks. The study concluded that of the residents that participated in the study:

> 42% were from households that do not have a car, and many more share cars between several adult household members. Walking is clearly the most important way they travel to shop, do errands and take children to school. Sixteen percent also walk to work, and 41% walk to transit as part of their work trip. (Hess & Farrow, 2011, p.10)

In addition to walkability, an important aspect for tower neighbourhood residents is access to public transit. One of these tower neighbourhoods is Jane-Finch (further description about the neighbourhood in subsection 5.4). To service the Finch West corridor of the city and directly benefit the Jane-Finch district, the then mayor of Toronto, David Miller, proposed to build, as part of his Transit City plan, a $1 billion Light Rail Transit (LRT) line along Finch Avenue West. In *The Big Move* plan, Metrolinx adopted the Finch West LRT after the Transit City plan was abandoned. Since then, Council has approved the Finch West LRT for construction, set to begin in 2015 and be completed by 2020.

4.2- Transit City

Transit City was a transit plan proposed for the City of Toronto in 2007 during the administration of the former mayor, David Miller (Figure 4.5). Transit City was "a proposed network of seven new light rail lines that would provide comfortable, efficient rapid transit throughout Toronto" (Toronto Transit Commission, 2010). Adam Giambrone, chair of the TTC from 2006 to 2010 who helped prepare the Transit City project, explains that the political side, in this case mayor David Miller, set the direction for the Transit City project, and the " TTC and Service Planning with some connection with the city's Transportation Planning Department and Planning [checked] and [made] sure of the details" (Giambrone interview, 2014). According to a

2012 amendment to the Toronto Official Plan, Transit City was an "affordable option for extending rapid transit to areas of the City poorly served by rapid transit" (City of Toronto, 2012).

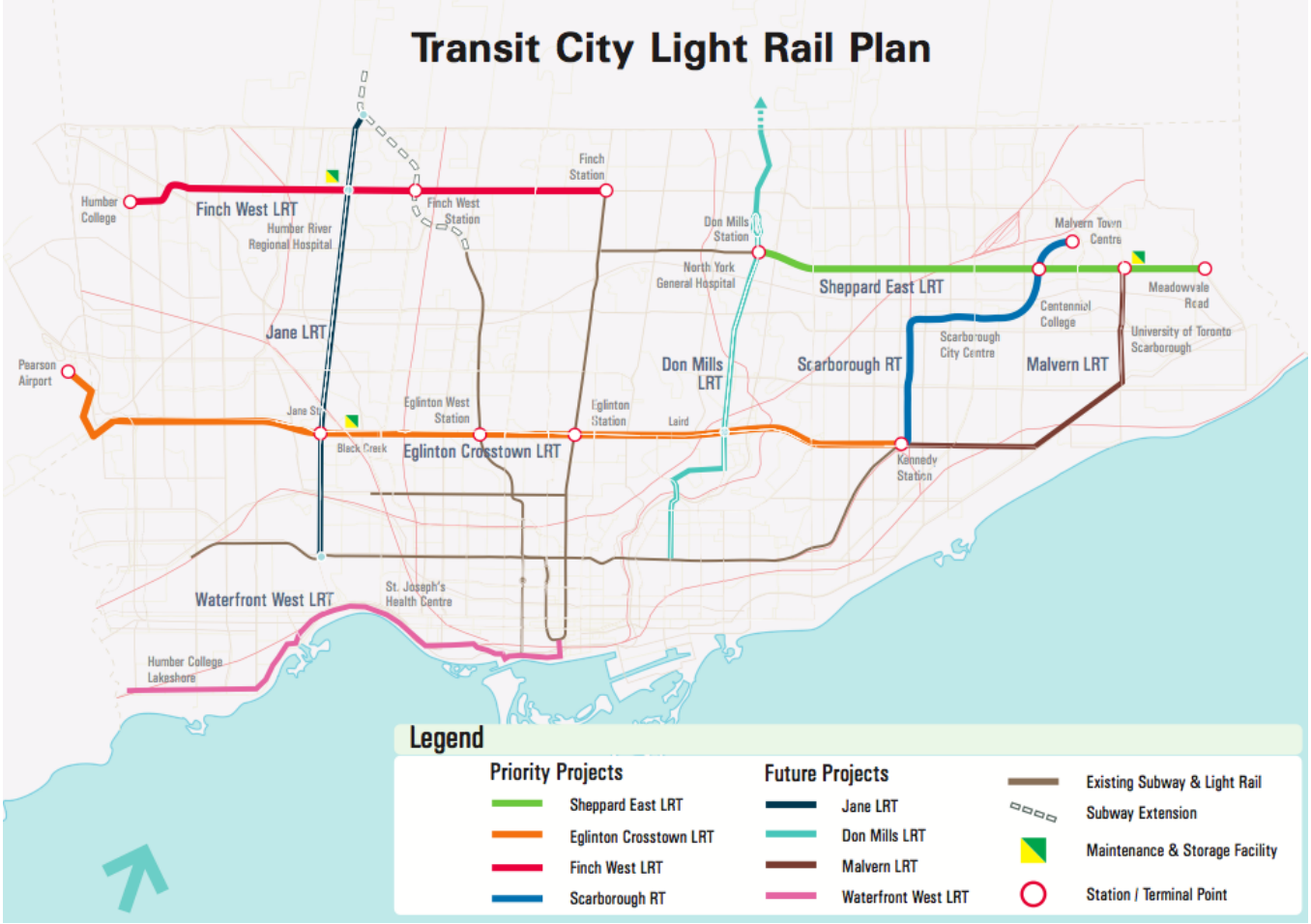

Figure 4.5. Map of the Transit City light rail plan for Toronto. Source: http://www.ttc.ca/PDF/About_the_TTC/Transit_City_Map_Aug_2010.pdf

The purpose of Transit City was to increase rapid transit services with 120 km of new light rail with the carrying capacity of 175 million riders a year (Kalinowski & Spears, 2007). The total cost of the project was estimated at $8 billion, with $7.2 billion of the funding being provided by the Provincial Government (Ministry of Transportation, 2009). Giambrone explains

that the Transit City Light Rail Plan (Figure 4.6) was derived from the city's Official Plan: "if you overlap Transit City with the Official Plan Transit Priority map, you will see that they overlap exceptionally well. The idea was to create a network of transit lines and building on the official plans, that no one should be disadvantaged. To be able to do that, you needed a network concept, a grid. And Toronto is very lucky because Toronto already is built like a grid" (Giambrone interview, 2014).

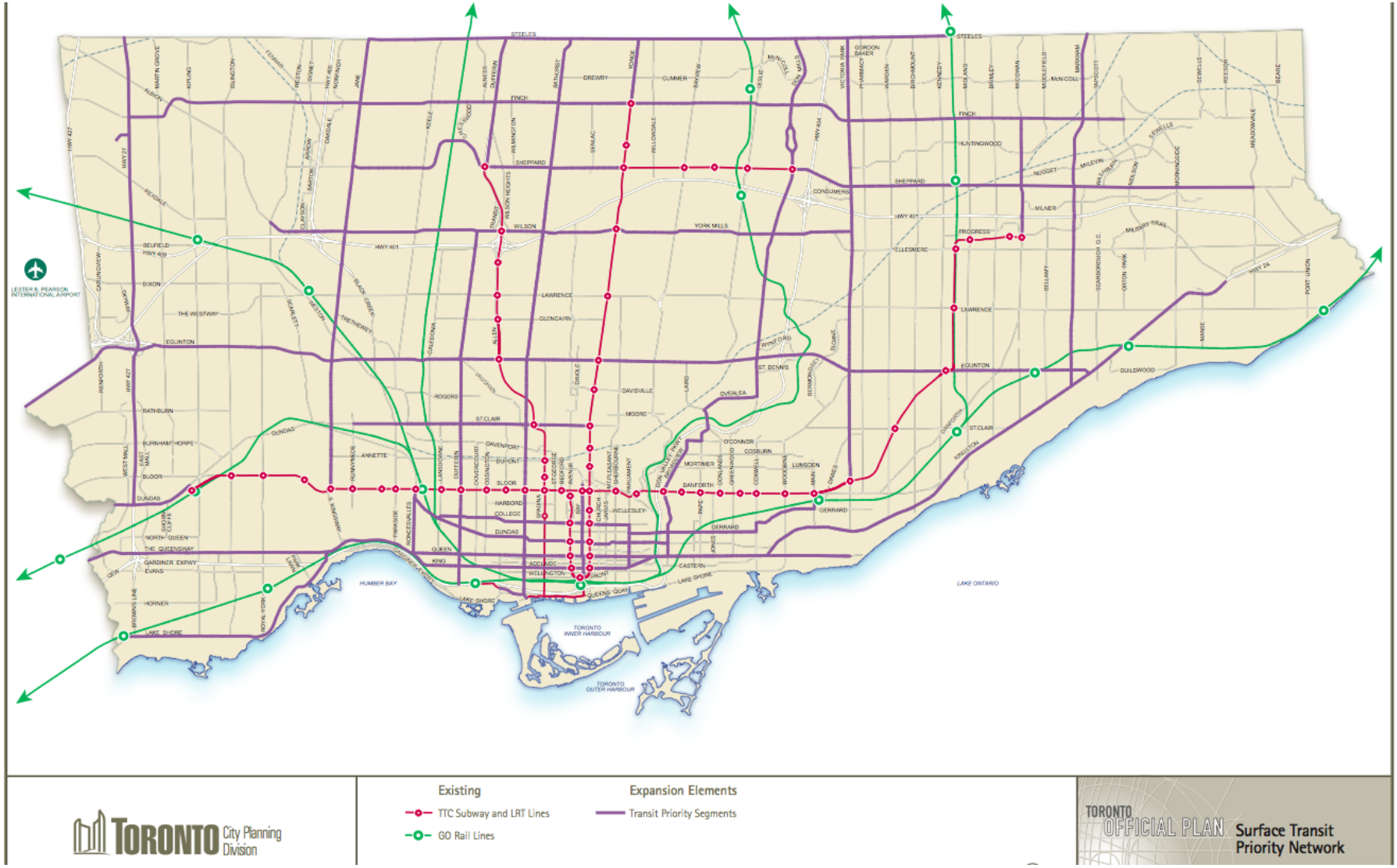

Figure 4.6. Map 5 of the City of Toronto's official plan detailing the surface transit priority network. Source: (Toronto City

Even though much of the background work was completed for Transit City, the project was never implemented. The project came to a halt in 2010 when Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty postponed $4 billion dollars for the project. This was followed by the election of mayor Rob Ford. One of Ford's first objectives as new mayor was to kill Transit City. In 2010, the TTC reported that "the mandate of the new mayor has been to implement underground transit initiatives and the Transit City Plans are currently under review" (Toronto Transit Commission, 2010). This decision created much controversy in both the media and political spheres, because there were a number of speculations that as mayor, Ford did not have the power to cancel a project already in motion. Under the City of Toronto Act, the power for such decisions lie with City Council, not solely with the mayor. Lawyers from the firm Cavalluzzo, Hayes, Shilton, McIntyre & Cornish explain, "the mayor does not have the authority to speak for the city independently" (Kalinowski, 2012). Nevertheless, under Rob Ford's direction, City staff set in motion a new transit plan, one that focused on subways and three adapted lines from Transit City (Sheppard East, Finch West, and Eglinton Crosstown). During a Council meeting in 2011, an agenda item was the proposal to build the Eglinton Crosstown fully underground. Council did not approve a fully underground project, and it was decided to immediately start the construction of the Eglinton Crosstown LRT project that was proposed in Transit City.

4.3- Metrolinx – The Big Move

The Province of Ontario, as part of the implementation of the *Greater Toronto Transportation Authority Act*, created a regional transportation crown agency called Metrolinx.

The agency was created with its current name in 2007 and its headquarters are located in downtown Toronto. Its purpose is to develop regional transportation plans for the GTHA, and create an integrated transportation and transit system in the GTHA. The TTC signed an agreement with Metrolinx for all projects that need to be built in Toronto. This stipulates that the TTC will operate the transit system, while Metrolinx will fund much of the transit extensions.

Figure 4.7. Map of the Big Move's transportation plan. Source: (Metrolinx, 2008, p.23.)

'*The Big Move: Transforming Transportation in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area*' is one of Metrolinx's first plans (Figure 4.7). The purpose of the plan is to create a "common vision for transportation in the region" (Metrolinx, 2008, p. i). The commitment of *The*

Big Move is to spend $11.5 billion to build over 1200 km of rapid transit, so that more than 80 per cent of GTHA residents will live within two km of access to rapid transit. A large portion of the project focuses in aiming to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase accessibility to the growing "senior and low-income populations which rely on transit to get around daily" (Metrolinx, 2008, p. ii).

Metrolinx is the organization specifically tasked with distributing the funding that the Ontario Government had allocated for Transit City. Towards the end of 2009 and beginning of 2010, however, the LRT lines proposed for Transit City were incorporated under Metrolix's *The Big Move* plan. This happened in the period during which Premier Dalton McGuinty withheld almost $4 billion from Transit City, delaying the project, and when Rob Ford subsequently dropped it following his election into office. It was not until November 28, 2012, that a Master Agreement was signed between the TTC, City of Toronto and Metrolinx, in favour of the construction of the Sheppard, Eglinton and Finch LRT lines. This committed Metrolinx to the implementation of the LRT lines, which now formed part of *The Big Move* strategy (Metrolinx, 2012). This event was acclaimed by the media as a big step forward towards building the rapid transit Toronto needed; the *Toronto Star* describes it as "the path to Toronto's transit expansion is clear" (Kalinowski, 2012a).

4.4- Finch West

The construction of a light rail transit line between Yonge Street and Humber College along Finch Avenue West was proposed as part of Transit City and subsequently included in *The*

Big Move plan, (Figure 4.8). The Etobicoke-Finch West LRT, as it is referred to, would connect various inner suburban neighbourhoods to two major subway stations, Finch subway station and the Finch West subway station, the latter of which is currently under construction as part of the Spadina subway extension.

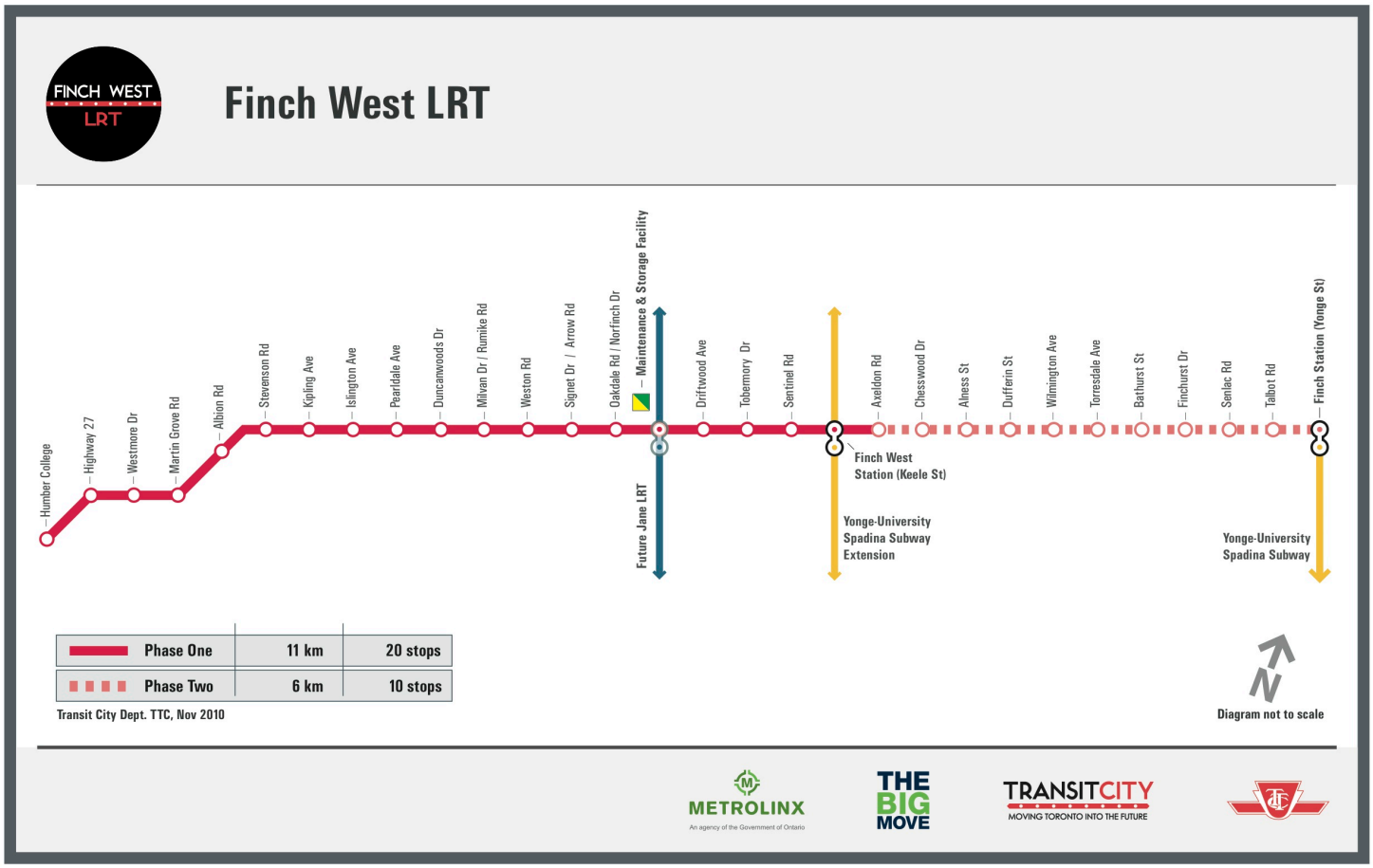

Figure 4.8. Etobicoke-Finch West LRT map with stops, connections and transfer hubs. Source: (Finch West LRT EA, 2010)

Taking the existing public transit along Finch Avenue West, from Finch Subway station to Humber College, (a journey that will henceforth be referred to as the Finch-West bus journey), requires a minimum of one hour and twenty minutes during rush hour with the 36 Finch West

bus. Along the route, one sees a difference in income and urban landscape. Approximately one third of the journey, from Yonge St. to Dufferin St., is through neighbourhoods that have an ‘average’ private 2-bedroom apartment monthly rent of $1114 - $1156 (CMHC Rental Market Report, 2010) in relation to the rest of the city, while the other two thirds of the journey is through neighbourhoods with ‘much below average’ monthly rents for the same size of apartment of $953 - $998 (Figure 4.9). This is one demonstration of the large social discrepancy between the areas closer to subway stations in relation to those areas furthest away from subway stations. The disparity in rent prices is also seen in the condition and upkeep of the buildings along Finch West.

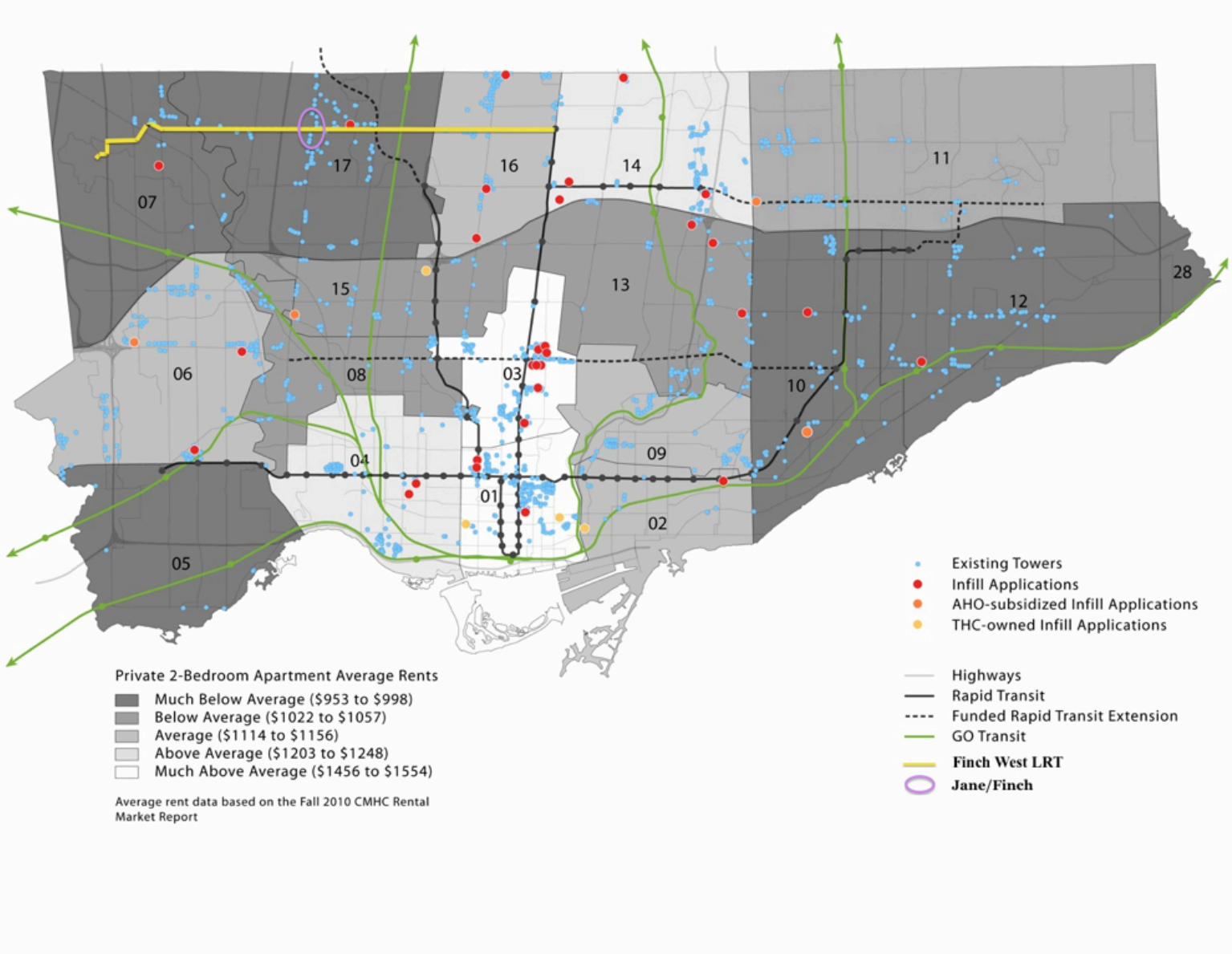

Figure 4.9. Apartment Average Rents relative to existing tower residential buildings and transit. Source: http://www.towerrenewal.com/?p=1444

The corner of Yonge and Finch is full of newly built glass condominiums that are in excellent condition, with gyms and swimming pools. The outside of the buildings does not show any signs of disrepair; on the contrary, they are clean and better looking (Figure 4.10 and 4.11). The intersection has high walkability, and a mix of land use. This differs from places like Keele-Finch, Jane-Finch and Kipling-Finch where the rental apartment buildings have visible signs of

decay and neglect. Outside the subway station at Yonge and Finch, there is a 23-story office tower, with Starbucks, Scotia Bank, and all kinds of restaurants in the area, whereas at Jane-Finch one finds large parking lots, gas stations, McDonalds and Cash Money stores (Figure 4.12). At Jane-Finch the intersection is very wide, mainly built for car usage, and surrounded by malls and parking lots (Figure 4.13). Along the Finch-West journey, one sees that there are more towers as the bus journeys westward, and there are more and more visible signs of suburban development, with large parking lots, strip malls, and tower buildings.

Figure 4.10. Contrasting the buildings of Jane and Finch (on the left) to the newer condominium developments on Yonge and Finch (right). Photo by Saba Haie.

Figure 4.11. Aerial view of the condominium development at the corner of Yonge and Finch. Source: http://www.tridel.com/about-tridel/tridel-communities. Photo by Saba Haie.

Figure 4.12. The intersection of Jane and Finch with strip malls. Photo by Saba Haie.

Figure 4.13. The southeast corner of Jane and Finch is a large parking lot for the Jane-Finch mall. Photo by Saba Haie.

Jackeline Barragan, a member of a Jane-Finch planning group, believes that most neighbourhoods along Finch were not planned for people to live, work and play, but rather, the area "was planned as dormitories for the working class" (Barragan interview, 2014). For example, the transportation system was built for cars to take workers from their apartments to their work and back; cars have occupied the "space that is supposed to be for people" (Barragan interview, 2014). Some roads in the Finch corridor, according to Councillor Perruzza (interview, 2014), "barely work anymore, neither for transit nor for automobile". With oil tank refineries at the corner of Keele and Finch, a section of Highway 400 and Finch Avenue is "very heavily laid with big tanker trailers which makes it very, very, difficult for Finch Avenue to operate" (Perruzza interview, 2014). Area resident Richard DeGaetano explains that "sometimes I come home at 7:00 at night, and Finch Avenue still has enormous congestion" (Gaetano interview, 2014). The public transportation system is even worse; the communities along Finch "are very

isolated, not only ethno geographically, but they are isolated in terms of public transportation networking around the city" (Augimeri interview, 2014). At the same time, most "people along the Finch corridor, in priority neighbourhoods in particular, and in towers, a lot of those people do not own cars, they are captive riders, they have to use transit" (McPhail interview, 2014).

As one travels west on Finch, it becomes clear that the residents have increasingly fewer options for travel. For example, at Yonge and Finch, residents have access to York Region Transit, GO buses, TTC Subway, TTC buses, and various car-sharing options spread in parking lots above ground and inside condominium parking lots, such as ZipCar and AutoShare. Residents at Jane-Finch, however, have either their vehicles or have to take the TTC bus.

Finch 36 buses are notable for suffering from overcrowding and congestion (Toronto Transit Commission, 2012a, p.1); Oakland Ross calls the Finch 36 bus "among the slowest and most frustrating bus routes in town" (Ross, 2011). Overcrowding means a bus arrives but it is too full and requires that you to wait up to another 15 minutes for the next one (Figure 4.14). Congestion is the result of traffic slowing down the speed of travel, which can also adversely affect the reliability of the buses arriving on time. This can result in longer waiting times. According to bus schedule research, during peak hours there are almost two buses every five minutes along Finch West stops but, because of overcrowding, a wait time of only a few minutes can be prolonged to twenty minutes (Appendix C).

Figure 4.14. Passengers trying to embark on an already full bus at the corner of Jane and Finch. Photo by Saba Haie.

Marco Covi, a TTCriders representative who organizes transit workshops at Jane-Finch, shares the resident's experience that although the TTC has a schedule, there is not much adherence to it (Covi interview, 2014). Councillor Perruzza explains that, for example, "during peak hours you have the buses that bunch up, so you get one, two, three, buses that come in a row, then you have to wait for a long period of time to wait for the next bus" (Perruzza interview, 2014) (Figure 4.15). This causes "crowded buses, or [people] having to wait for a long time for a bus" (Covi interview, 2014).

Figure 4.15. Buses bunching at the corner of Keele and Finch. Photo by Saba Haie.

Jane-Finch resident, Sabrina Gopaul, explains that because of distance, delays, and hours spent commuting, living along Finch can be very isolating (Gopaul interview, 2014). One of the main reasons Finch West was identified to be upgraded to an LRT was because of its ridership numbers and for being over capacity. For example, the 2013 (the most recent) bus ridership report from TTC shows that the Finch West 36 bus, being the main bus along Finch West, carries 44,000 customers per day with a fleet of 35 buses, while the subway ridership report shows that the Scarborough RT only carries 40,000 customers per day and the Sheppard Subway carries 49,000 customers per day, which is only 5,000 more than the 36 Finch West bus people per day (Toronto Transit Commission, 2013).

Interestingly enough, during the Rob Ford administration, the Eglinton Crosstown was presented as the most needed project that requires completion due to overcrowding and ridership of buses over the other Transit City lines. According to the 2013 TTC bus ridership report, the 32 Eglinton West bus carries 48,700 customers per day with a fleet of 51 buses, meaning that each bus carries around 954 customers per day. While the 36 Finch West carries 44,000 customers per day with a fleet of 35 buses, meaning that each bus carries around 1,257 customers per day. This creates a discrepancy between the two bus routes of 4,700 customers, a fleet of 16 buses, and a difference of customers per bus per day of 303 customers. With regard to both bus lines, there is no doubt that a better transit system is needed, but by bus overcrowding alone, the Finch West LRT project seems to take priority over Eglinton, even though by overall ridership the Eglinton Crosstown has more customers.

Schedule research shows that hours of bus service decrease more significantly on weekends in relation to subway stations. It is often less frequent too. During peak hours, in lieu of having two buses every five minutes, there are two buses every eleven minutes, and service generally starts later in the morning and ends earlier at night (Appendix C). Transit-dependent people that start work early on weekends need to find a different mode of travel. Additionally, the transit-dependent individual who likes going out late on weekends might need to stay home if no service is available.

In general, fewer buses than usual on weekends mean fewer mobility options and control for those who are transit-dependent. This means that their time is not used as efficiently on

weekends, as more of it is spent waiting at bus stops, whereas those with cars or access to rapid transit do not have to wait so much when they travel. These are all issues suffered only by are transit-dependent individuals. Choice riders with their own cars or those in close proximity to rapid transit do not need to worry about such issues of timeliness. A quote included on the TTCriders website, and stated by a community member from Jane-Finch attending a TTCriders meeting, puts this in perspective:

> Our transit system does not reflect the needs of many Torontonians that work late shifts or start a very early work day. If someone needs to make a hospital visit, the cost of an ambulance or a taxi is prohibitive to many Torontonians but few options exist for public transit to fill the void. Similarly, parents of children going to school outside of the neighbourhood are rightfully worried when they do not arrive home within a reasonable time after school. Often kids are stuck on the congested streets on a bus, or have to wait for several crowded buses to go by before they can get on to one. (TTCriders, 2014)

4.4.1- Jane and Finch

Jane-Finch is one of the districts in the inner suburbs along the Finch West corridor that is most affected by poor transportation infrastructure. The Jane-Finch district is located in the northwest part of Toronto and derives its name from the intersection of two major roads, namely Finch Avenue West and Jane Street (Figure 4.16). Jane-Finch has a population of around 81,825 (City of Toronto, 2011a).

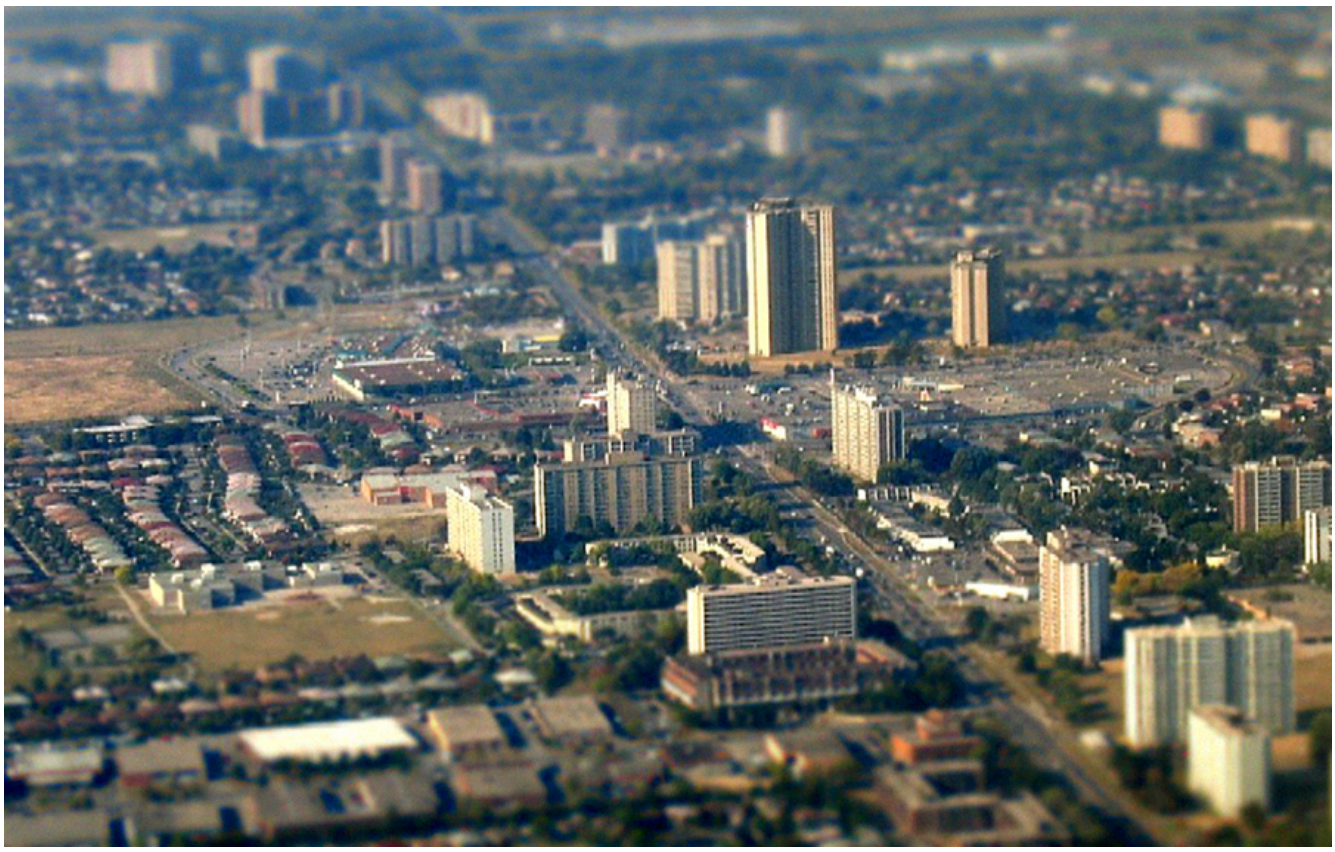

Figure 4.16. Aerial view of Jane and Finch. Source: http://www.towerrenewal.com/?p=26

The earliest record of people living in the Jane-Finch area come from the village of Elia, inhabited by the First Nations. In the 1800s, English and Scottish families settled in the area and until the early 1900s it remained as a small farming community (Neighbourhood Guide, 2014). It wasn't until the 1960s that a small area of today's Jane-Finch developed as a post-war suburb called Edgeley Village, with private and public apartment towers and town homes meant to house the growing population of the city (Sewell, 1993, p.225). Over the years, the population growth has been rapid, "from 1,300 people in 1961 to 33,00 in 1971, and continual increase since then" in particular through immigration (James, 2012, p.33). Sewell explains that, from the beginning, Jane-Finch was not built with the necessary social infrastructure to host such a large population (Sewell, 1993, p.228). *Vertical Poverty* further elaborates by explaining that:

> During the 1970s and 1980s, the broader area of Jane/Finch received an influx of newcomers working in low-paying jobs. Social services in the area did not keep pace with the rising population density and residents found that extensive green space, deemed priceless in the initial building plans for fostering a sense of community, soon became empty zones where crime moved in. (United Way Toronto, 2011, p.182)

Carl James, a York University Professor who has been researching Jane-Finch for two decades, explains that in the years leading up to 1960 Italian immigrants mainly populated the neighbourhood. Between the 1960s and 1970s, "the area received Black women arriving alone from the Caribbean to work as domestics and, later, other family members" (James, 2012, p.33). From the late 1970s to 1994, there was an increase in Vietnamese people who were escaping refugee camps and, most recently, "Somalis fleeing years of civil strife in their homeland have settled in the area" (James, 2012, p.34).

Today the neighbourhood – a testament to its diversity –accommodates more than 49,765 immigrant residents, and more than 56% of its population's mother tongue is other than English and French (City of Toronto, 2011a). The area is known as "Toronto's most multicultural area", housing "over seventy-two countries [with residents who] speak about 120 languages" (James, 2012, p.34). A walk around the neighbourhood reflects this, wherein one easily observes people from various cultural and religious backgrounds, and restaurants selling various ethnic foods.

The neighbourhood is also facing an increase in deteriorating building conditions. More than 28.2% of the residents in high-rise buildings report trespassing, 18.7% of the residents - compared to 9.9% of low poverty neighbourhoods citywide - do not feel safe going to building parking areas, and one-in-twenty report infestations in the buildings (United Way Toronto,

2011). Residents have reported that 33% or more of households spend 30% of their total income on shelter costs (City of Toronto, 2011).

The neighbourhood has generated a lot of discussion by Toronto and Canadian media because "of its high density, concentration of racial and ethnic minorities, low-income housing, gangs, drug problems and violence" (James, 2012, p.32). The media, stigmatizing the area by primarily dwelling on the negative, often overlook the "systemic inequity [that] limits opportunities that might have helped individuals to better their situations" (James, 2012, p.36).

Although these neighbourhood conditions mentioned above are not always the most pleasant, a large percentage (45.7%) of private sector tenants agree that Jane-Finch is a good place to live, while 25% strongly agree that Jane-Finch is a good place to live; and a similar statistic but with slightly smaller percentages see it as a good place to raise children (United Way Toronto, 2011, p.104). According to Carl James, the residents not only see the area as good for raising children, but are "prepared to put effort into addressing" the issues that "brand their community as 'troubled'", so "they can live in a safe and dependable community" (James, 2012, p.46). He draws attention to an article published that highlights "the resilience, the determination and the hard work of current and former residents, especially the youth, to find their voices and realize their aspirations" (James, 2012, p.47). Through their efforts residents have been able to establish "social and education programs that have operated to support the education, art and creative talents of the young people" (James, 2012, p.47).

4.5 – Summary

This chapter began by referring to the growing attention paid to transit planning in the City of Toronto. Today the city is facing pressure from population growth and a transit infrastructure that reflects signs of needed expansion. In light of such pressures the political sphere does not reflect the clarity of vision needed to build the needed transit infrastructure. Much of the recent debates are from the introduction of Transit City by David Miller and the strong ideas Rob Ford has against at grade rapid transit and a preference for cars and subways.

This political debate about transit and the continued pressure for investment in transit have the most effect on areas of Toronto that are most dependent on transit. With much of the debate focused on downtown investment, social segregation in the city is reinforced. Social segregation is deepened when urban landscapes emerge with premium network spaces constructed mainly for affluent segments of society

This chapter further explains the growth in disparity Toronto is facing, especially felt in the inner suburb apartment neighbourhoods. Many of the apartment neighbourhoods are showing signs of disrepair, neglect and decline, and have become impoverished through many circumstantial factors. These neighbourhoods face two types of problems. One is physical decay, and the other is social, with reports of increased poverty, and lack of employment. To answer the question ‘what transit access issues are there in the Finch West corridor that reflect its situation as an inner suburb?’, I explore the walkability and car dependency of inner suburb residents.

One of these apartment neighbourhoods is Jane-Finch. To service the Finch West corridor of the city and directly benefit the Jane-Finch district, the then mayor of Toronto, David Miller, proposed to build, as part of his Transit City plan, a $1 billion Light Rail Transit (LRT) line along Finch Avenue West. The next chapter analyzes the politics in planning for Transit City and the level of engagement used in transportation planning in Finch West.

Chapter 5
Analysis

David Miller explains how Transit City grew from an idea to address an environmental issue to a social justice issue characterized by an inclusion initiative:

> Transit City started as a transportation initiative, got some more momentum as an environmental initiative, but most important as a social justice inclusion initiative, because people who can't get transportation quickly and easily are isolated from other aspects of life. The reason it is a social justice issue - an issue about social inclusion, if we provide a rider an extra half an hour or two hours a days because the transit comes on time, and at a higher speed, the person would recapture that time and maybe go to school, be at home, be more involved in the community and influence the neighbourhood. But the person's ability to participate in the political, economic and social life of the city is dramatically diminished by the fact that the bus services are running as opposed to rapid transit. (Miller interview, 2014)

For Miller, the delay in building rapid transit along Finch demonstrates a lack of support for socially just initiatives. He shares that "when people say let's build a subway knowing that it won't be built in so many years from now, what they are really saying is, pointing a finger at people saying, just get on the bus, sit at the back of the bus, we don't care about you" (Miller interview, 2014). For Rod McPhail, Transportation Planning Director at the City of Toronto during the planning of Transit City, the reason why Transportation Planning had several meetings with Tower Renewal was to "consult and see where the stops could be and how much it would impact tower neighbourhoods" (McPhail interview, 2014).

5.1 - Politics and Transit City

Toronto's City Council has the responsibility to determine what the most pressing needs are in various communities across the city and how to prioritize them, but whatever Council deems to be significant must be supported by provincial policies set out by *Places to Grow*, and *The Big Move*. The traffic congestion and lack of adequate public transit to alleviate the problem is a pressing need that is recognized both by local and provincial governments as well as by the Toronto media.

Municipalities across Ontario, such as Toronto, are heavily reliant on limited tools for revenue generation to pay for transit projects, depending greatly on financial support of provincial and federal governments. Although there is a great need in the GTHA to reduce congestion, there seems to be confusion in terms of where to turn to alleviate the transit problem. In May 30, 2014, Royson James, a columnist for the *Toronto Star,* reported the dilemma through which Toronto is currently going:

> At a time when the Toronto city region is building the most expensive and expansive transit improvements in history, the public is confused, discouraged and generally pessimistic about our ability to tame, much less improve on encroaching gridlock.
>
> In short, our political and transportation leaders have failed to inspire us. Rather, they have filled us with skepticism and doubt.
>
> Metrolinx, the provincial agency in place to guide us, is too guarded and careful not to vex its political masters in the provincial government.
>
> The Toronto Transit Commission, dependent on city hall for sustenance and political relevance, too often bends to the prevailing doctrine.

> Citizen advocates get co-opted, as evidenced by the pro-transit community's full embrace of Transit City, the all-LRT plan for Toronto, despite some obvious flaws. (James, 2014)

TTCriders' representative, Marco Covi (Covi interview, 2014), argues that the history of transit investment in Toronto shows "peaks and drops". He explains that some years there is a lot of investment on "very costly subways", followed by several years of "very little investment " (Covi interview, 2014). Wanda McNevin sees this trend currently in Toronto, where there is an opportunity for major transit investment along Finch, but Mayor Ford is "trying to delay the process, by convincing people that subways are better [than LRT]. Like this we will not see anything happening [(referring to rapid transit infrastructure)] along Finch any time soon" (MacNevin interview, 2014).

Mayor Rob Ford's push for a Finch subway instead of an LRT is yet another hurdle towards a clear vision for transportation planning in Toronto. Rod McPhail explains that, for a new project like building a subway along Finch, which is being promoted by Mayor Rob Ford, the City needs to go through all the approval processes. This takes at least six years, because "they don't have any of the approval processes [for the proposed subway along Finch] at the moment" (McPhail interview, 2014). There is even a risk that a subway project along Finch might not get approved, which would further delay the possibility of Finch West getting some sort of rapid transit in the near future. The demand for transit is growing in the inner suburbs and Rod McPhail is worried that "we are not building" (McPhail interview, 2014). Instead there are debates, and some Councillors have changed from initial political positions because of political alliances. Giorgio Mammoliti, for example, "jumped on the Mayor's bandwagon to support subways, and that wasn't his initial position on Finch" (McPhail interview, 2014). Interestingly,

from all the City Councillors that I contacted for an interview, Giorgio Mammoliti was the only one who did not answer my calls and email.

One cause of inaction is the result of the influence exerted by provincial government on municipal politics. Specifically, instead of promoting a view of transit as a social service, the provincial government seems overly concerned about how to prevent the GTHA economy's annual loss of $3.3 billion dollars. The 2013 Premier, Premier Wynne, created an advisory board to determine how the province could create a dedicated funding model to alleviate congestion in the GTHA. Unfortunately, Premier Wynne rejected some of the ideas due to external political pressure at the time. In an interview she gave on *Metro Morning*, Matt Galloway suggested "that her refusal to push ahead with transit-dedicated tax hikes is a calculated political move, perhaps designed to forestall an election" (Kupferman, 2014).

In the 2013 provincial government budget, the province described how they have a vested interest in transit infrastructure in order to reduce congestion given that hurts the province's overall economy. The budget for the 2013 fiscal year allocated $2.5 billion for transit expansions across the province (Ministry of Finance, 2013, p.319). This amount illustrates how the provincial government does acknowledge the importance of funding, but is not enough to sufficiently address the transportation needs of the region.

David Miller argues that if "Premier McGuinty hadn't cut Finch West LRT in the 2010 budget, we would have moved and done everything possible to get all the last pieces of engineering done and have Finch under construction in September 2010, and it would be open by

the end of 2014" (Miller interview, 2014). This is yet another indication of the political system not fully supporting plans that can have a major impact on quality of life and, more broadly, social justice in Toronto. Miller further argues that "If this had happened you would have Sheppard, Eglinton and Finch under construction and completely changed the political debate", encouraging further funding and support towards Transit City (Miller interview, 2014). Once built, these lines can be 'ambassadors' for light rail, demonstrating their efficacy in alleviating transit problems.

In Toronto politics, the change in leadership, with Rob Ford being a strong advocate of subways over LRTs, dramatically affected the direction in which transportation planning was heading. Most of Transit City's plans were changed and consequently, transit planning was left in a "state of flux" (Augimeri interview, 2014). All those interviewed agreed that the unstable political climate at the municipal and regional levels caused delays in the construction of rapid transit in Toronto. David Miller explains that the problem with Finch West was not financial, but political, with the big delay in the construction of Finch West LRT being " because of the political battle at City hall, and I think the main risk for Finch is the political battles, the money [($1 billion)] is there allocated for Finch. Political battles are not allowing it to be built, when it should be up and running by the end of [2014]. This impacts millions of people that most need it" (Miller interview, 2014). Jamie Robinson explains that when the City had an agreement with Metrolinx in 2012, Finch and other lines were supposed to be built, but when "Council later on re-wrote the master agreement and they wanted [an] extension of Scarborough and the Relief Line, when council re-writes the master agreement, what do you want to do?" (Robinson interview, 2014).

Jane-Finch resident, Sabrina Gopaul, states that although the transit debate turned into a "political platform" for elections and to gain popular confidence, her concern goes beyond that (Gopaul interview, 2014). She argues that at City Hall and the TTC there is a lack of "connection Toronto wide", where areas like Jane-Finch are often forgotten in the discourse of planning and growth of the City; instead, the focus is on downtown development. Rod McPhail echoes the same sentiment. One of the reasons he thinks Finch West did not get built was because it wasn't "sexy enough" (McPhail interview, 2014). Because the "people who live in the corridor are from the lower station of the social structure, if you will, there are not a lot of big jobs, there are not big employers [but] mainly resident[s]" (McPhail interview, 2014).

All in all, it is the "shared opinion of many knowledgeable people in the region that better transit is needed", and that it is very important for the advancement and competiveness of Toronto in the global arena (Keil & Young, 2008, p.748). It is agreed, as well, that a better transit system would bring to Toronto, and the region overall, "social, health, and environmental benefits". While such great need for transit regionally is understood, it has not resulted in a resolute decision-making government. Ontario, instead, has adopted an approach of "'non-decision-making' under the name of democracy" towards building the necessary transit to alleviate congestion Keil & Young, 2008, p.748). One of the biggest obstructions to finding solutions for regional transit problems is "municipal politics caught in the 'local trap'", such as the Toronto discourse on transit being led by a "suburban mayor" that is "balanced – so it seems – with heavyweights of downtown interests" (Keil & Young, 2008, p.748-749).

The current Premier of Ontario, Kathleen Wynne, ran during the 2014 Provincial elections on a platform that included priority in addressing congestion and gridlock. In her plan, she allocated $15 billion of Provincial funds for transit investment in the GTHA, and with a majority government tackling gridlock at the level of the Province, there is hope for an increased priority (Rider, 2014). The government's plan includes how it will raise the $29 billion of dedicated funding for all Ontario transportation projects in 2014. Although prior to the provincial elections Wynne did not fully support such a motion, she has to this end allocated 50.3% of the funds, a total of $14.54 billion to be raised through gas tax, and HST on gas tax (Wynne, 2014, p.4) (Figure 5.1). According to Wynne's plan, the government is "committed to protecting middle- and low-income earners by not increasing the gas tax, the HST or personal income taxes, other than on the most affluent of Ontarians" (Wynne, 2014, p.4). Although the document mentions that the provincial government will continue to support *The Big Move*, and lists all the projects it will support, the plan fails to mention the Finch West LRT project, instead making a vague statement about the future of the project – "Transit solutions for Sheppard East and Finch West in Toronto" (Wynne, 2014, p.5).

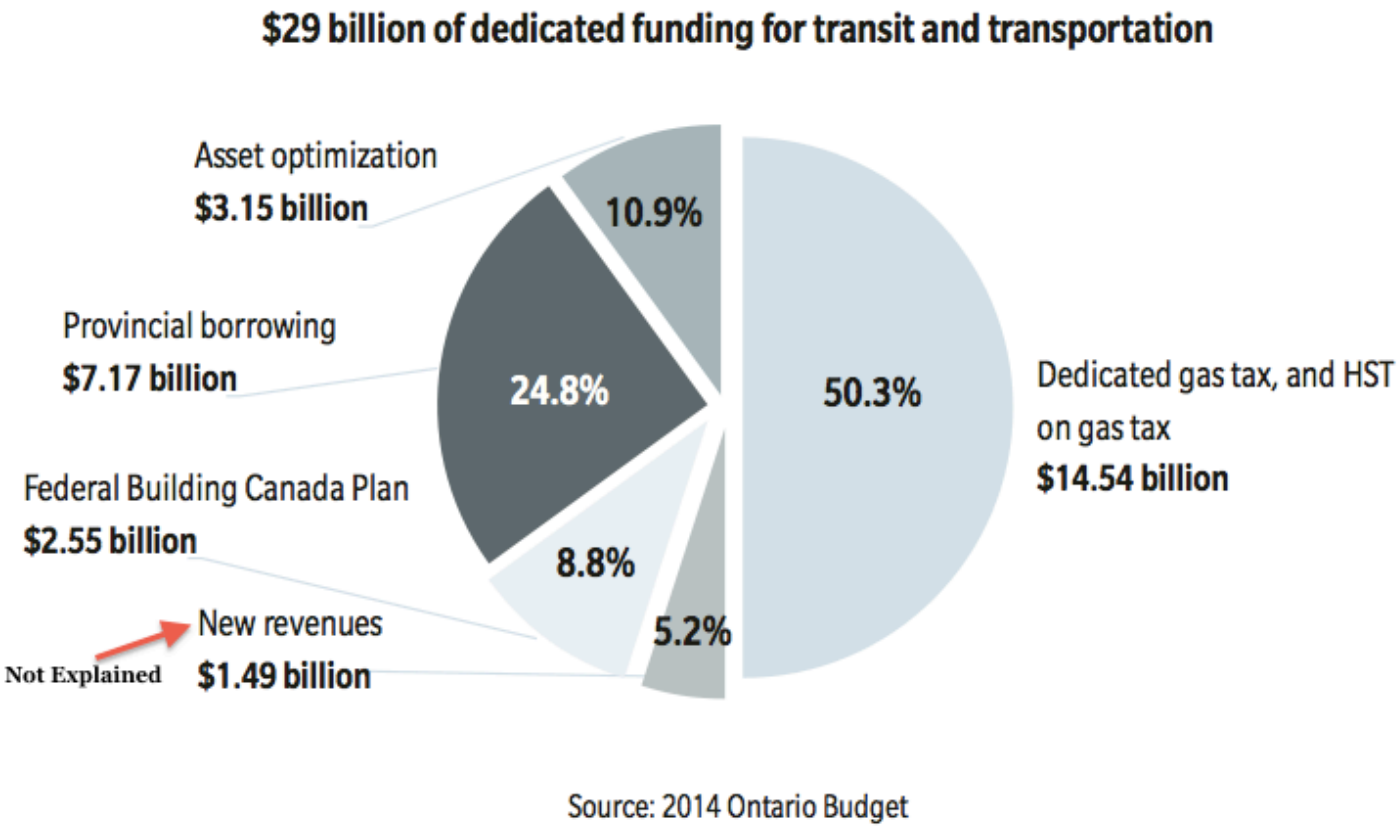

Figure 5.1. Kathleen Wynne 2014 dedicated funding for transit and transportation. Source: (Wynne, 2014)

5.2 – Citizen Engagement and Transit City

During the Finch West transit project assessment project (TPAP), the TTC held two rounds of public open houses in 2008, so that the residents could engage with the team members leading the project. The first round of consultations comprised of three public meetings and the second round of four, with seven in total spanning from July to December of 2008, and a total of 555 participants attending the events. The project team, in addition, provided a website for online comments and the possibility of leaving comments via telephone (Transit Project Assessment Environmental Project Report- Appendix M). Additional public meetings and presentations

were arranged by local councillors along the Finch West LRT route, but these were not part of the TPAP.

Ward 8 Councillor Perruzza explains that there were various occasions where TTC staff and Adam Giambrone accompanied him on visits to neighbourhoods along Finch (Ward 8's section of the route of the LRT project covers from Dufferin St. to Highway 400 along Finch) and engaged residents in conversation about the upcoming Finch West LRT project. Through a process of sending out invitations to Ward 8 residents through mail, posters (Appendix D) on bus stops and posts in local gazettes and newspapers, the affected communities were invited to the open houses and were able to engage with the project team. Another way the Councillor and TTC tried to engage residents was through displays on sidewalks along major avenues and malls of Jane-Finch, where plans were "rolled out" (Perruzza interview, 2014). On all these occasions, "people had an opportunity to look at what was being discussed, and they had the opportunity to give input to that process" (Perruzza interview, 2014).

Giambrone personally outreached in local malls along Finch, for example in Rexdale Mall and Yorkgate Mall, as well as giving presentations at subways stations to explain the project. David Miller explains that Adam Giambrone and the TTC staff did "around 80 public meetings along Finch" between 2008 and 2009 (Miller interview, 2014). In addition to residents, Adam Giambrone visited the Business Improvement Areas (BIA) – a coalition of business owners of an area with the purpose of enhancing the desirability of the area to more visitors and new businesses- along Finch, and "a question [he] always got was: do you come to me when the plan is already done?" (Giambrone interview, 2014). The tone of the presentations were along

the lines of: “Here is the overall strategy, here is the plan, here is where Finch fits in, we are not here for you to say no to the overall plan (of course we did not say it like this), but are here to have the plan fine tuned to meet your local concerns and what matters to you” (Miller interview, 2014). With the impressive number of meetings in the community, the approach towards the public meetings was that informing local residents would be sufficient for a progressive government as it helped the government to identify and set in motion a much needed project for the area.

This is the result of what Rod McPhail explains as ‘press release approach’, where before the conversations have happened with the public, a project this big - like Transit City - is announced as an almost finished product. Therefore, most of the consultations for Transit City happened internally, “when road engineers, urban designers, politicians, transportation planners, and TTC consult on the best way for the plan to be designed and implemented” (McPhail interview, 2014). Sabrina Gopaul, a resident at Jane-Finch, describes how when politicians and planners enter a community the “trust in engaging in a conversation [on the part of the residents] is no longer there” (Gopaul interview, 2014). Ultimately, residents often feel that such open houses and presentations are “more tokenism” (Gopaul interview, 2014). Where only “minor aspects of the project are open for consultation”, residents, like Sabrina, engage with the process “more like an observer, where a project gets announced and we just have to wait for it to be built” (Gopaul interview, 2014).

Information sessions, according to Sabrina Gopaul, are very important, because the media and political debates confuse people of the truth about the LRT project, for example, by

"comparing [the Finch West LRT project] with the street car extension of St. Clair". Therefore, having accurate information for a community is crucial in making informed decisions, but Sabrina explains her frustration that "beyond (being informed), there is little as a resident I feel I can do" (Gopaul interview, 2014).

5.3- Finch West: Citizen Engagement and Community Planning Groups

While Sabrina feels like there is little she can do, there are other residents that have organized themselves with the purpose of exposing, proposing and politicizing. One such group is 'Community Action Planning Group' (CAPG), a Jane-Finch resident led group interested "in having a voice in the planning process of the area" (Barragan interview, 2014). At the moment, one of the group's main priorities is to support the building of the Finch West line proposed in Transit City. Wanda MacNevin, one of their members, who is a not only a resident but also a community worker at Jane-Finch, explains that the motivation for the group comes from the planning system of each former municipality that existed prior to the amalgamation of the seven municipalities of Metro Toronto into what is today known as the City of Toronto. Prior to amalgamation, it was much easier for the planning department to communicate with residents and have ongoing relationships with activist groups (MacNevin interview, 2014). The group feels that there is a big "disconnect between the planning department and communities across Finch; the planning department does not have the resources to hear the voices of the residents" (MacNevin interview, 2014). With the constant growth of the city, Wanda sees CAPG as a step towards bringing politics and decision making to the grass roots so that politicians can hear what the residents actually need.

CAPG is at its early stages of development, and at the moment the current members are interested in engaging residents that have a great interest in the development of the city. They engage such residents mainly through word of mouth, by tapping into individuals that work in various local organizations, and in the various events they organize for Jane-Finch. The ultimate goal is to "build local planning capacity, by starting with those that are most interested and then go beyond a small core of educated and experienced people to the rest of the community" (DeGaetano interview, 2014). The purpose is to be able to have a marginalized community, like Jane-Finch, to articulate its planning needs and present the ideas at City Hall, because "if no one is speaking for these populations at City Hall, the planning is not going to take place" (DeGaetano interview, 2014). Some would argue that it is the politician's role, but Richard DeGaetano explains that "our politicians have never been very good" at expressing and putting into action the needs of the community (DeGaetano interview, 2014).

Jackeline Barragan explains that CAPG organizes community-planning meetings, and invites "key players in the [Finch West transit] debate" to present and engage with the Jane-Finch community (Barragan interview, 2014). Members of CAPG see that Metrolinx, the TTC and politicians have only been engaging the community to give information about the Finch West LRT line, but the conversations have not gone beyond mere clarification of the engineering of the project. For CAPG, the "right people" to talk to are those who hold influence over the decisions made around transit, such as municipal and provincial politicians, who in their eyes are the ones shaping transit in Toronto. For example, CAPG wants to meet with local politicians and

York West Liberal MPP Mario Sergio until there is enough pressure, and enough of the community is mobilized towards promoting the construction of the Finch West LRT.

At a recent meeting on May 1, 2014, organized by CAPG (Appendix E), a representative from Metrolinx and TTC, and Councillor Augimeri were invited to present the plans for transit improvement for Jane-Finch. The meeting was held in the evening at Yorkwoods Library and was attended by 80 people. Over a period of about forty minutes, a moderator posed questions to the panellists, followed by an open floor during which residents had the opportunity to ask questions to the panel.

During the open floor, residents asked the panellists several questions about the kind and degree of involvement that the Jane-Finch community will be able to have as regards the planning of a Finch West rapid transit project. Jamie Robinson, representing Metrolinx, responded that just like other Metrolinx projects, once the Finch West LRT is approved for construction they would have "offices on site to educate and work with folks" (CAPG meeting, 2014). Someone from the audience made the comment that the danger with this approach is that consultation with the community has been left to after most decisions have already been made. Two of the panellists did not address that comment, while Jamie from Metrolinx responded that "several millions are for beautification projects, this is how we can work together", referring to citizen engagement as figuring out how to use the beautification money (CAPG meeting, 2014).

Immediately after this, another resident asked "how do we stay in touch with the project, is there a way of getting in front. We want to be involved, is that even possible?" Councillor

Augimeri responded that “the market runs the development projects”, implying that there isn’t that much people can to do be involved besides what Jamie had shared about allocating beautification money (CAPG meeting, 2014). Lastly, before thanking everyone, the moderator asked the panel if there is any dedicated provincial funding support for Finch West. The TTC representative responded that “in this city everyone uses transit and wants more but there is no funds. Go to politicians and ask them to fund building and consistent operations of transit” (CAPG meeting, 2014). At the end of the meeting the panellists stayed behind to answer lingering questions.

The meeting did not go beyond an information session; it was not organized to be a planning exercise and was not much different from City of Toronto public engagement meetings. The main differences between this type of public engagement and the ones prepared by the City Planning department is that people expressed that they felt they were able to have a two way discussion, which does not always happen in meetings. The meeting did not feel combative, nor did it seem that residents were being deceived or lied to. When unclear comments were made, the moderator made sure that the public understood and was satisfied with what was being said. Another difference was that a local restaurant prepared the food provided, there was childcare so parents could attend the meeting, and there was a presentation by a local theatre group that portrayed the conditions of riding the 36 Finch bus. They performed various scenarios with humour, portraying rude bus drivers, residents who don’t have enough money to get on the bus, the bunching of buses, and lengthy waiting times for the bus. They also offered some solutions on how fare collection should be done with more kindness and an understanding of people’s circumstances.

Although some residents and interest groups are skeptical of Metrolinx and local politicians intentions, both local politicians and representatives of Metrolinx re-assure these skeptics that they only want what transit users want for the city. Jamie Robinson, for example, made it clear that what Metrolinx ultimately wants to build on Finch is "what serves people, so as many people can get on board and engage with us, the better off the project is going to be" (Robinson interview, 2014). Residents, like Sabrina, would argue that such remarks are merely to appease the public's sentiments because, at the end of the day, what ends up happening is dictated by local politicians decision-making power.

Local planning groups, like CAPG, still operate within a planning system that holds particular views regarding participation and expertise, and therefore conceives of participation in a somewhat reductive manner. The meeting, for example, rather than being an opportunity to re-conceptualize in action the planning process so that it operates as a bilateral and dialogical process in which residents and planners learn from each other, perpetuated the unilateral mode of functioning in which "expert" actors informed residents of what had already been decided.

Members of CAPG and residents that were interviewed shared their aspirations for a better planning system, and their struggle against the current planning process. During all interviews of residents and CAPG members, each of them touched on the idea that the current planning system which is supported and carried out by politicians and planners excludes residents from the decision making process. In all accounts, nevertheless, it was difficult for them to articulate clearly at what level and how exactly they would like to be part of the decision

making process. What was shared, instead, were ideas of "holding politicians accountable", or "to have adequate decisions made" (Wanda interview, 2014).

Residents that had difficulty in accepting the existing planning system seemed focused mainly on a particular problem or decision, while groups like CAPG are focused on advocating for a new system that addresses various planning problems. This form of advocacy that calls for better services for areas like Finch West, and engages local residents by providing information and education, allows for a growing body of residents to become more involved and engaged in mobilization that calls for change.

In the audience there was a feeling that the community is able to handle transportation planning at a higher level than beautification projects. During the meeting, people were calling for more progressive and revolutionary modes of community planning that require a new system in which planning is decided at the level of the neighbourhood. The challenge with this approach is that, although aspects of transportation planning - like planning for how money should be allocated for beautification projects - are simple enough for most people to engage in, other aspects of transportation planning are not as easy. Jarrett Walker explains that there are "some facts about how transit works" that are not "intuitive and obvious" (Walker, 2012, p.4). For example, the location of stops requires knowledge of population density, the budget required to build a certain number of stops, and the type of land use in a particular location. All these aspects of transportation planning need the help and guidance of a planner, along with other experts.

Jarrett Walker explains that the transportation planning process could be set up so that a community gets to choose “what” they want and “why”, while the planners’ “job is to help with “how”” (Walker, 2012, p.5). This approach is only possible when there is constant communication with the community. In the case of Transit City the “what” and “why” were already decided before approaching the community to have a more socially just transit system, however, regular meetings need to be held throughout the planning process, in which the community and planners “engage in a conversation” over the “what” and “why” sought by the community (Walker, 2012, p.5). This does not mean that planners and politicians do not have some preconceived ideas. Naturally, a planner can suggest ideas for a plan and why he thinks his ideas are helpful, but be open to converse with the community early in the process and hear feedback and ideas. This model can be more successful when there is a two-way approach:

1) Planners as active educators and learners,

2) Residents as active educators and learners.

When planners are active educators, they engage with local residents and resident led groups to help them better understand the complexity of planning and the various ways of being involved in decision making. A strategy that would be helpful to implement this would be to hold on a regular basis ‘planning education workshops’, where planners regularly, either monthly or bi-monthly, run workshops in various neighbourhoods in Toronto. Local groups and residents can attend these to learn about different aspects of planning. This way, communities around Toronto have access to the knowledge that planners have, and learn about the planning process and how to shape it.

Planners as active learners require a renewed attitude towards the knowledge communities possess to listen and give more opportunities for residents to share their concerns and aspirations for the neighbourhood. This allows for on-going dialogue between planners and communities, allowing for a dialogical approach where both sides are learning. This strategy would allow planners to interact with residents outside public meetings, some of which can become heated and contentious, and instead learn of, and from, their thoughts and aspirations for the area. Residents, in turn, can learn about the planning process and how to be more actively engaged in the decision making process.

Strategies for transportation planning are not only the responsibility of institutions; residents have a responsibility towards improving their physical environment. Jarrett Walker shares that through his experience, when "lots of citizens care, and choose to learn a bit about transit so they can advocate more clearly and confidently better decisions get made, decisions that lead to better mobility" (Walker, 2012, p.10).

Residents as active educators could follow the example of residents-led projects like CAPG in which residents choose to take action by first informing themselves and other residents about transportation planning, so to prepare better to engage in transit advocacy. Residents as active learners describes individual residents who, according to their interests and time, are able to become more knowledgeable about various fields of planning through, for example, planning workshop attendance.

One last strategy is for planners to help form planning activist groups, like CAPG. These activist groups assist planners and politicians to interact with local communities, and for local communities to be organized and engage with planners and politicians in a more systematic way. This way, local planning groups can work with planners, and learn and gain the skills from the field of planning. It is important to remember that planners have skills and knowledge that can help residents recognize and seize opportunities, and when planners work with such groups, and help them prepare, the groups can have a more credible voice when they act politically.

5.4- Concluding Remarks

The current political climate in the municipality and, more generally, the province is posing challenges for the future of transit expansion, and is not conducive to devising a transportation plan that is striving towards socially just objectives. Transit City was an attempt in this direction. Even though the Finch West LRT is slated to begin construction by 2015, it is not under the most ideal conditions. Firstly, the line that is most recently proposed is shorter than the one envisioned in Transit City (Figure), with 11 fewer stops running only from the future Finch West station to Humber College - already, a disadvantage for the residents of the area. Secondly, because construction has yet to begin, there are fears that the line may be cancelled altogether. A recent newspaper report in the *Toronto Star* on June 5, 2014, warns that the "Finch West LRT will never be built. Not as conceived. Not with opposition building" (Eastwood, 2014). The article states that the traffic on Finch West has increased to such a degree that the Light Rail technology is no longer feasible, and that road travel times will triple as a result of the LRT. It appears that the conditions on Finch West have reached such a state that it is casting further

doubt on the construction of the LRT. The article also states growing opposition from City Councillor Giorgio Mammoliti and the BIA that operates in his ward. What this article fails to mention is that the Emery Village BIA, part of Councillor Giorgio Mammoliti's ward, are the ones who commissioned the study to determine the impact of LRTs through Finch West, and that the original source of the news is from a Toronto Sun article written by Giorgio Mammoliti himself (Mammoliti, 2013).

Figure 5.2. Revised Finch West LRT line, 2014. Source: http://www.metrolinx.ca

Finally, both my interviews and participation in community meetings reveal a lack of clarity around how exactly residents can be engaged in the planning process. This is understandable, as the question does not admit easy answers. How does a planning process that is generally internal, with little need for external input, transform into one in which external input by way of residents and community groups becomes not only necessary but helpful in the planning process? One potential step in this direction is how residents and planners conceive of their roles, which would in turn help them function differently and potentially create new approaches. These are all steps that would help us see what changes can be made at the level of policy and procedure.

Chapter 6
Conclusion

I started this research project to understand more fully how urban planners can address social justice issues through their work. I realized that, in order to fulfil this task, I had to draw on critical theory to examine the characteristics of the planning process. The critical planner is one that questions everything, exposes ideas, identifies problems and poses solutions. It is through this rigorous mode of operation that the critical planner can appropriately, and often creatively, address social problems.

From the outset, it was clear that deep social inequalities existed within neighbourhoods across the GTHA. In the Toronto inner suburban district of Jane-Finch, as explored in this research, transit and social infrastructure is less developed and residents face an array of social problems in greater degree than in other areas of Toronto. This disparity, it is evident, is not a random configuration that formed in a political and planning vacuum and, as a corollary, can be addressed by the planning process.

In order to gather empirical data that would shed light on how the urban planning process can tackle issues of social justice, four questions were posed in the first chapter, the results of which were analyzed and explored in chapters 3, 4 and 5. Some general comments and final conclusions are now presented.

6.1- Unequal distribution and Finch West

My research confirms that inner suburb tower neighbourhoods along Finch West have social challenges that disproportionately affect them in comparison to, say, residents of Yonge-Finch. A key problem they face, as explained above, is access to rapid transit. Improving mobility in the inner suburbs is a fundamental social justice issue that is connected to basic rights such as accessing work and accessing food. Disparate challenges in accessing transit are not arbitrary, but stem from political processes and spatial designs that unequally distribute resources across Toronto.

Residents of tower neighbourhoods along Finch West are captive public transit riders, dependent on public transit as their only mode of transportation. The undersupply of transport in this part of Toronto demonstrates a failure to regard transit-related social problems with due concern. A main aim of Transit City was to remedy these problems by improving mobility in the inner suburbs. Mayor Rob Ford abandoned Transit City, and projects like the Finch West LRT - despite pre-allocated funds for their construction - are now left in the hands of politicians that are running for municipal election. This delay in decision-making has created a delay in transit investment, and the conversation on transit investment in Finch West – once introduced in Transit City – has slowed, with discussions now focusing on other parts of the city. This further demonstrates the need for urban planners to understand the constraints of current political processes, and calls for greater scrutiny on the approval of transit plans.

Furthermore, the inaction preventing the construction of the Finch West LRT reflects a mode of thinking, adopted by municipal and provincial governments, that views transit as a business instead of as a means to redress social injustice. This is problematic because it challenges fundamental ideals of democracy as envisaged by critical theory, such as the elimination of profit making as the impetus behind the political process. As long as profit is a primary motivating impulse behind political action neighbourhoods such as Finch West will continue to lag behind.

6.2- Mobility and Civic Engagement as a Social Justice Statement

My research asserts that planners can employ socially just planning practices in order to address social inequalities and injustices. A key component, in this regard, is the adoption of inclusionary approaches to transportation planning. Residents require greater accessibility to important daily activities, such as being able to go to grocery stores and having access to places of work. Transit City can be considered a socially just transit plan, because it addressed the need to alleviate congestion and the dependency of inner suburban residents on transit.

Transit City was a noble attempt to tackle one facet of social justice, namely the redistribution of transportation services so residents in less affluent areas have greater access to transit. A key reason that it did not survive beyond Miller's tenure, or at least was so easily discarded by Ford, is that it lacked citizen participation. Had the planners and politicians involved in Transit City fostered substantive citizen participation – a mode of participation that went beyond attendance at information sessions – residents may have been galvanized to undertake political action and lobby against Ford scrapping the project.

A lasting strategy towards a socially just transit system is to go beyond the redistribution of goods and services, to also include communities in the decision making process and give them a bigger role in the process. Excluding communities and neighbourhoods from matters such as "decision-making procedures, division of labour, and culture" is a form of injustice (Sandercock, 1998, p.184). A resident dependent on transit has no other option of commuting; and if that resident has a very limited voice in the decision making arena, it makes the resident bound to how others want him or her to experience the city.

Recognizing that urban citizenship confers on individuals the right of access to transit has implications for the planning process. Improving the transit system is not merely an aspiration, but rather the realization of an entitlement fundamental to urban citizenship. It should be of great concern, then, that areas such as Jane Finch have been ignored, and urban planning can – in fostering greater participation – seek to remedy this.

When residents have a say in plans - or at least some input about what they think, the pros and cons, or when the plan should be implemented - there is greater support from residents because more people are given a degree of ownership towards the realization of such plans. The outcomes of a process of consultation with the community will not always be easy, because residents will come to the table with different opinions and perceptions regarding the needs and nature of transit, but a process of action, reflection and consultation will be critical in helping a unified vision emerge. It, at the very least, begins a process of progressive social change where

the urban planner and resident can be seen as agents of change who are always '*exposing*, *proposing*, and *politicizing*' (Marcuse, 2010, p.16).

Resident led groups like Community Action Planning Group (CAPG) at Jane-Finch are an example of how residents take proactive steps to stay informed, and figure out ways to have a bigger stake in the decision making process. At the moment, for Finch West, the plan is already made and the budget allocated, but the political climate has not assured residents that it will be built within the estimated timeframe. Therefore, when planning groups are organized they can politicize and set out political pressure for the Finch West LRT to be built. Once the project is underway, CAPG can organize the community to have a bigger stake in planning where transit stops should be, the allocation of beatification money, and becoming a present entity in the neighbourhood with whom planners can converse.

6.3- Rethinking Transportation Planning

The role of a transportation planner is shaped by two major factors: one is the way the planner views his or her role and the second is the planning system in place that validates his or her actions. In the contemporary planning process, planners are enmeshed in a constraining legislative framework that - although it receives public input - does not satisfy the desire of the residents interviewed who expressed that they want to have a greater say in the process. To alleviate this tension, Janet Abu-Lughod (1998) calls for a "healthy balance" between the role of an institution, like a municipality and its planners, and the role played by a community in planning (p.236).

To rethink transportation planning requires establishing an 'education mode' and 'learning mode' in the planning process. For transportation planners, to be able to go beyond being technocratic, they would benefit from being engaged with residents; and for residents, learning about the planning process would benefit from engaging with planners and organizing themselves. This model can be implemented in the two-way approach of (1) *Planners as active educators and learners,* and (2) *Residents as active educators and learners*.

This strategy is conducive towards a more democratic society that has social justice at its core. Jill Grant explains that in a "democratic society, politicians must implement the will of the people" (Grant, 1994, p.172). What better way is there to know "the will of the people" when a system is set up, than to be closer to the people, to hear their ideas and solutions? And what better way exists of having a socially just transit system than for those who most depend on it contributing to its planning? This would address the need to stop "regarding the oppressed as an abstract category and [see] them as persons who have been unjustly dealt with, deprived of their voice", and give them the space to have a voice (Freire, 1970, p.50).

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Interviews

Augimeri, Maria, Toronto City Councillor and Chair of the TTC. 26 February 2014. Toronto

Barragan, Jackeline, CAPG member. 14 March 2014. Toronto

Covi, Marco, TTCriders representative for Finch West. 14 March 2014. Toronto

DeGaetano, Richard, Jane-Finch resident and founder of CAPG. 25 February 2014. Toronto

Giambrone, Adam, former Chair of the Toronto Transit Commission. 12 March 2014. Toronto

Gopaul, Sabrina, Jane-Finch resident. 27 February 2014. Toronto

MacNevin, Wanda, Jane-Finch resident and CAPG member. 14 March 2014. Toronto

McPhail, Rod, former Transportation Planning Director at the City of Toronto. 18 March 2014. Toronto

Miller, David, former Toronto Mayor. 24 March 2014. Toronto

Perruzza, Anthony, Toronto City Councillor. 7 March 2014. Phone interview.

Robinson, Jamie, Director of Community Relations and Communications at Metrolinx. 1 May 2014. Toronto

Community Meetings Attended

CAPG meeting. May 1, 2014.

T.E.A. meeting. October 23, 2013.

TTCriders meeting. March 14, 2014.

Appendix A
Informed Consent Form

Date:

Name of Participant:

Study Name: Citizen Agency and Transit Justice in Toronto's Suburban Tower Neighbourhoods.

Researchers: Saba Haie, sabahaie@gmail.com, 647-818-8576

Purpose of the Research: I am writing to request your participation in a Major Research Paper I am completing in the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University as part of my Master in Environmental Studies degree program.

What You Will Be Asked to Do in the Research: I would like to interview you some time in the month of January about your knowledge and experiences with the planning of the Finch West Light Rail Transit line. The length of the interview would be 30 to 60 minutes.

Risks, Discomforts and Benefits: There are no risks or benefits to you associated with this research, and you have the right to not answer any questions.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision not to volunteer will not influence of your relationship with York University either now, or in the future.

Withdrawal from the Study: You can stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if you so decide. Your decision to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions, will not affect your relationship with the researchers, York University, or any other group associated with this project. In the event you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed wherever possible.

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. The interview will be collected by a digital recording device. Your data will be safely stored in a locked facility and only research staff will have access to this information. [Indicate how long the data will be stored, e.g. for a minimum of two years, and whether it will be destroyed after the study (and how) or will be data be archived (and if so, where).] Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law.

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 Professor Douglas Young either by telephone at (416) 736-2100, extension 77829or by e-mail dogoyo@yorku.ca. This research has been reviewed and approved by the FES Research Committee, on behalf of York University, 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, Research Tower, York University (telephone 416-736-5914 or e-mail ore@yorku.ca).

Legal Rights and Signatures:
I,_____ consent to participate in Citizen Agency and Transit Justice in Toronto's Suburban Tower Neighbourhoods study conducted by Saba Haie. I have understood the nature of the 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

Signature _____ **Date** _____
Principal Investigator

Appendix B
Interview Questions

1. How did Transit City Start, and how were you connected with the planning of it?
2. Transit City proposes a line along Finch West, what transit access issues exist in the Finch West community?
3. How have you been involved in the planning of the Finch West LRT? How would you describe the role of each of the following groups in the transit planning for Finch West: transportation planners/engineers, politicians, and residents?
4. What sort of public consultation took place?
5. What are some strategies for socially just transit systems? Can Transit City be considered a social justice statement in its potential impact on suburban neighbourhoods?
6. Do you think the unwillingness of provincial politicians to embrace new revenue tools bodes ill for the Big Move? Would you say that Finch West is at risk of not happening?
7. How do you envision the Finch West community in the next ten years? How do you envision its transit system?

Initial questions to Finch West residents and CAPG members

1. How long have you lived in the Finch West community? How would you describe the community?
2. How do you get around? Bus, walk, car, bicycle? What has been your experience with the Finch West transportation system?

Initial questions to public officials and planners

1. How long have you been, and what is your role in this organization?
2. What has been your experience with the Finch West transportation system?

Appendix C
Finch West Bus Schedule

Jane and Finch Bus Service				
Bus Route	**Monday-Friday**	**Saturday-Sunday**	**From:**	**Destination:**
36 Finch West	5am-6am two buses every ten min., 7am-6pm two buses every five min., 7pm-1am two buses every ten min	5am-8am one bus every ten min., 9am-6pm two buses every eleven minutes, 7pm-12am seven buses every hour, 1am four buses every hour	Finch at Jane East Side	Finch Subway Station
309 Finch West	2am-4am one bus every forty min.	2am-4am one bus every forty min.	Finch at Jane East Side	Finch Subway Station
84 Sheppard West	6am-6pm two buses every ten min., 7pm-12am one bus every ten min., 1am one bus every twenty min., 2am one bus per hour, 4am one bus per hour	7am-8am one bus every twenty min., 9am-1pm one bus every fifteen min., 2pm-6pm one bus every seven min., 7pm-10pm one bus every ten min., 11pm-1am one every twenty min., 2am one every hour	Sheppard at Jane East Side	Downsview Subway Station
108 Downsview	5am-6am one every fifteen min., 7am-7pm one every six min., 8pm-12am one every fifteen min., 1am one per hour	9am-11am one every fifteen min., 12pm-6pm one every nine min., 7pm-12am one every twenty min., 1am one per hour	Driftwood at Jane East Side	Downsview Subway Station
35 Jane	6am-9am one every five min., 10am-3pm one every eight min., 4pm-7-pm one every five min., 8pm-1am one every ten min.	6am-8am one every thirty min., 9am-1am one every ten min	Jane at Finch North Side	Jane Subway Station
195 Jane Rocket	8am-9pm one every ten min	9am-7pm one every ten min	Jane at Finch North Side	Jane Subway Station
313 Jane	2am one every hour, 3am-4am one every thirty min.,	2am one every hour, 3am-4am one every thirty min., 5am one	Jane at Finch North	Jane Subway

Appendix D

TORONTO Building a great city – *together*

The City of Toronto holds public consultation as one way to engage residents in the life of their city. Toronto thrives on your great ideas and actions. We invite you to get involved.

Proposed Etobicoke–Finch West Light Rail Transit (LRT)

Planning Study — Notice of First Open House

The Study
The City of Toronto and the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) are examining ways to significantly improve transit service on Finch Avenue West between Yonge Street and the Highway 27 area.

The Etobicoke-Finch West LRT is one component of the Transit City Light Rail Plan - a proposed network of seven new light rail lines that would provide comfortable, efficient rapid transit throughout Toronto.

Toronto's Official Plan focuses on city-building and establishing key avenues and nodes for future growth. The Official Plan and the TTC's Ridership Growth Strategy also stress the importance of making high quality transit a more attractive option for travel. Modern, environmentally-sustainable LRT service will support the growing travel needs of people who live and work in the Finch West Corridor and beyond, and will also make the street livelier, more attractive, and more people-friendly. This is part of Toronto's Climate Change and Beautiful City initiatives to make all of Toronto a more pleasant place to live and work.

Preliminary planning of the Etobicoke-Finch West LRT is underway in preparation for an Environmental Assessment of the project.

What Are We Recommending?
We are recommending that the bus service on Finch Avenue West, from Finch Subway Station to the Highway 27 area be replaced with modern electrically-powered light rail vehicles operating in dedicated transit lanes, separated from traffic. This would make transit a fast, reliable, and comfortable way to travel on Finch Avenue West and support the growth management objectives of the Official Plan.

We Want Your Input
We are having three open houses to explain the study, to show you what we hope to achieve, to get your comments, and to answer any questions you may have.

Tuesday, July 29, 2008
6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
North York Memorial
Community Hall
5110 Yonge Street
(adjacent to Mel Lastman Square)

Wednesday, August 6, 2008
6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Jane-Finch Mall
1911 Finch Avenue West
(SE corner Finch Ave and Jane St)

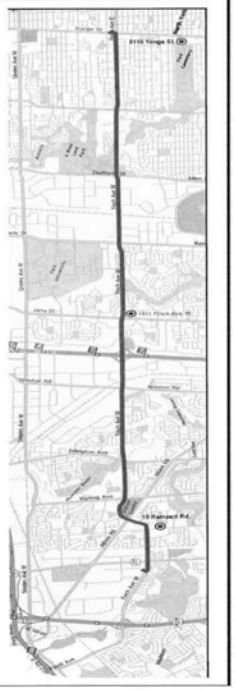
Thursday, August 7, 2008
6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Elmbank Community Centre
10 Rampart Road
(off Martin Grove Road, south of Finch Avenue)

Please drop in any time between 6:30 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. at either of the Open Houses. We look forward to meeting you there.

Need More Information?
Please visit the project website for more information or contact us to be placed on the project mailing list:

Public Consultation Unit
City of Toronto
Metro Hall, 19th Floor
55 John Street
Toronto Ontario M5V 3C6

Tel: 416-392-6900
Fax: 416-392-2974
TTY: 416-397-0831
Email: finchtransit@toronto.ca
Web: www.toronto.ca/involved



Finch West Open House Posters

TORONTO Building a great city - *together*

Etobicoke-Finch West Light Rail Transit (LRT)

Notice of Commencement of the Transit Project Assessment Process and Open Houses

The City of Toronto and the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) are holding four Open Houses where you can learn more about this transit project, ask questions and share your comments. Each Open House will be held between 7:00pm to 9:30pm. Details are as follows:

Tuesday, Dec 1	RJ Lang Elementary and MS (cafeteria) – 227 Drewry Avenue
Thursday, Dec 3	Julius Banquet Centre - 2201 Finch Avenue West (at Arrow Rd)
Monday, Dec 7	Charles H Best MS (gym) - 285 Wilmington Avenue
Wednesday, Dec 9	Elmbank JMA - 10 Pittsboro Drive (east of Martingrove)

Background

The City of Toronto and the TTC are planning a new Light Rail Transit (LRT) route to significantly improve transit service on Finch Avenue West between Yonge Street and the Highway 27/Humber College area. Electrically-powered Light Rail Vehicles (LRVs) will travel in reserved lanes providing a smooth, fast and comfortable transit experience. The Etobicoke-Finch West LRT will connect to the Yonge subway line at Finch Station and the future extension of the Spadina Subway line at the planned Keele Station.

The City of Toronto Official Plan outlines initiatives to implement transit priorities throughout the city, intensify growth in rapid transit corridors and reduce car dependency. Transit City will achieve these goals by moving more people to more places by transit. Once implemented, the Transit City LRT lines will support local economic development and reduce greenhouse emissions by allowing people to choose public transit as a convenient alternative to the private automobile. Each line will provide seamless connections with the existing TTC subway system, GO Transit, other Transit City LRT routes and regional public transit networks.

At the upcoming open houses, TTC and the City will present final passenger stop locations and traffic management strategies as well as details related to all environmental aspects of the project including mitigation measures for the preferred design .

Public consultations during the preliminary planning stage were held in July and August 2008. Responses to questions and comments submitted to date are posted in the FAQs section on the project website:
toronto.ca/transitcity
(see: Etob. Finch West LRT)

The Process

The environmental impact of the Etobicoke Finch West LRT will be assessed in accordance with Ontario Regulation 231/08, Transit Projects and Greater Toronto Transportation Authority Undertakings (2008). An Environmental Project Report is being prepared as part of the Transit Project Assessment Process.

Next Steps

Following the open houses, there will be an opportunity to incorporate feedback. A formal public notice of study completion will then be issued. At that time a Environmental Project Report will be made available for a 30 day review period on the project website: toronto.ca/transitcity (see: Etob. Finch West LRT). The notice of completion will include a number of locations to review a hard copy of the report. Please attend an Open House to review the plan and share your comments and questions with project staff.

If you would like to provide comments or obtain more information, please contact:

Toronto Transit Commission
Transit City Dept
Etob. Finch West LRT
Rick Holli
TTC Project Manager
5160 Yonge Street, 13th Floor
Toronto, ON
M2N 6L9

Tel: 416-392-6900
Fax: 416-338-0251
TTY: 416-397-0831
finchtransit@toronto.ca
toronto.ca/transitcity (see Etob. Finch West LRT)

Information will be collected in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. With the exception of personal information, all comments will become part of the public record.

Appendix E
CAPG Community Meeting Poster

COMMUNITY ACTION PLANNING GROUP–YORK WEST PRESENTS:

PUBLIC TRANSIT

What are the plans for Finch West, Jane Street

Join us on

Thursday

May 1st - 6 pm

York Woods Library

1785 Finch Ave. West

Moderator:

◊ **Nigel Barriffe** – Rexdale teacher, transit and green jobs advocate

Guest Speakers:

◊ **Maria Augimeri** – TTC Chair, Ward Councillor

◊ **Mitch Stambler** – Toronto Transit Commission

◊ **Jamie Robinson** – Metrolinx

◊ **Open discussion** (after the speakers)

◊ **Refreshments**

◊ **Child minding**

Performance by:
NOMANZLAND

For more information, email: capg.yw@gmail.com

Sponsors: Jane and Finch; Black Creek Community Health Centre; Eyetrove; Jane Finch Community and Family Centre; Toronto Public Library; Social Planning Toronto