

**Public Participation in Planning as Urban Citizenship:
Contrasting Two Conceptualizations of Citizenship in Toronto's
Ward 20**

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A Major Paper submitted to the Faculty of Environmental Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Environmental Studies.

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May 1 2013

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Acknowledgements

Many thanks are owed to the planners and community members who generously shared their experiences and knowledge with me. This paper is built on their participation.

Throughout the research process, I relied on my professors and mentors in the Faculty of Environmental Studies. I am especially grateful to my supervisor for her patience, support and advice.

And without the unflagging encouragement of friends and family, this paper would not exist.

Abstract

In the past four decades public participation has become widespread in urban planning and more generally in urban governance because it is believed that outcomes that result from deliberation and dialogue are better and more just, and because decisions that follow consultation are believed to have more legitimacy. In planning for redevelopment, participation may be particularly crucial because established communities are disrupted. However, 'public participation' is a difficult concept to nail down. Participatory processes are defined and implemented in flexible ways that can empower residents but can also constrain their ability to meaningfully engage with decision-making. This paper argues that public participation in planning decisions represents an exercise of urban citizenship, and different conceptualizations of citizenship underlie differences in how planners and residents engage in participatory processes. Through a comparison of planners' and residents' understanding of public participation in redevelopment decisions in Toronto's Ward 20, a 'limited' and an 'expansive' conceptualization of urban citizenship are contrasted. The former conceptualizes urban citizenship in terms of knowledge-sharing within a broader governance system and emphasizes citizens' responsibility to participate. The latter seeks to expand democracy by claiming a partial 'right to the city'.

Foreword

This research paper links the three components of my Plan of Study: Urban Planning and Public Involvement; Redevelopment; and Urban Citizenship in order to fulfill the requirements of a Master in Environmental Studies degree.

In this paper, I have delved into the concepts of 'citizenship' and 'urban citizenship' through a literature review. This component of my research allowed me to develop my understanding of how citizenship is enacted at different scales, with a focus on the urban, the array of rights and responsibilities that characterize the citizen-state relationship, the practices through which citizens exercise their rights claims and fulfill their responsibilities. Through this element of my research, I have fulfilled my learning objectives to better understand normative and performative differences of citizenship, to explore and articulate how urban citizenship is practiced through public involvement in planning decisions, and to gain a solid understanding of the concept of the 'right to the city' and its meaning for citizens.

A second component of my research involved a review of the literature that explores public participation in planning decisions, with a focus on whether participation can promote a more democratic planning process. This allowed me to achieve my objectives of formulating an excellent understanding of both the advantages and the shortcomings of public participation. I incorporate an analysis of both the theoretical issues and the practical issues that limit the effectiveness of public participation to produce more just

and democratic planning outcomes, and consider how it might be improved, employing my understanding of different conceptualizations of urban citizenship.

To link these two strands of research, I conducted background research to develop my understanding of the policies that govern planning and redevelopment planning in Toronto, and I undertook interviews with planners, residents and a local councillor in Toronto in order to tease out the ways that urban citizenship is actually practiced through public participation in redevelopment decisions. These interviews also allowed me to further develop my understanding of the redevelopment planning process by examining how it is carried out in practice, including through informal processes that are not governed by city planning policy. Redevelopment was chosen as an area of focus because of its potential to negatively impact communities in a variety of ways, including marginalization as a result of direct or indirect displacement from the city; it is an area of planning where I feel a great deal is at stake, and in which meaningful public involvement is crucial.

Introduction

The incorporation of opportunities for members of the public to participate in planning decisions represents one of the most widespread changes in planning practice in the past four decades (Goodlad, Burton and Croft, 2005). These opportunities, however, may admit only a limited range of concerns and ideas from the public. Although planners must solicit feedback from residents, their recommendations to municipal decision-makers must also be based on sound planning principles and have regard to existing development policies. Land use decisions and the production of urban space are also influenced by political and economic forces, such as inter-urban competition for capital investment (Harvey, 2008). In an environment of intense development pressure, conflict between residents' aspirations for their neighbourhoods and their capacity to influence the decisions that will actually shape the physical spaces of their lives is highly likely.

New modes of urban governance have sought to make meaningful community engagement a key component of the planning process (Brownill and Carpenter, 2007). This requires capacity building and culture change to promote and facilitate public involvement, in addition to policies that define local consultation practices and guiding principles (*ibid*). The collaborative and communicative approaches to planning suggest that through engagement in these processes, participants develop new skills that enable them to become more engaged in future decisions (Healey, 2003), as well as networks

for sharing knowledge and ideas and achieving a shared framework for understanding the problem, which empowers them to shape the final decision (Booher and Innes, 2002).

In the Ontario context, public participation is enshrined in the provincial *Planning Act*. Section 22 and Section 26.1 of the *Act* require that public meetings be held before municipal governments may amend or update Official Plans, and that councils shall have regard to written submissions and feedback given during the public meeting. Section 34 requires public notice, an open house, and a public meeting prior to approving a zoning by-law amendment. An additional community consultation meeting is required in Toronto, as part of the development approvals process (City of Toronto, 2010). Public participation is also a prominent theme in planners' professional organizations, further reinforcing its importance. Respect for diversity and equity are matters of professional concern for planners. The Canadian Institute of Planners' Codes of Professional Practice states that in order to fulfill their responsibility to the public interest, planners shall "practice in a manner that respects the diversity, needs, values and aspirations of the public and encourages discussion on these matters" (Canadian Institute of Planners, 2013). The Ontario Professional Planners' Institute Professional Code of Practice (2013) states that its members will respect diversity, balance the needs of communities and individuals, and foster public participation by all individuals and groups. Inherent in these ethical codes is the recognition that planning decisions can produce outcomes that are socially unjust, but that planners can practice in ways that reduce injustice.

The emphasis on citizen participation in planning in these professional codes and in municipal and provincial legislation follows from the assumption that planning has emancipatory potential that can be furthered if it employs the “right decision-making process” (Huxley and Yiftachel, 2000, p. 334). Although communicative planning theories are diverse, they typically conceive of planning as the facilitation of communicative interaction between stakeholders and community members and often position this participatory process as a way to empower communities, promote the recognition of difference, and foster the growth of a deliberative local democratic culture (*ibid*). Urban planning has increasingly come to emphasize the importance of public participation as an essential part of both the underlying theory that defines the principles of ‘good planning’ and the practices that enact those principles. Three reasons for this emphasis are of particular interest.

First, scholars and planners who identify with the “collaborative” tradition take the position that planning decisions that are taken after broad consultation with the affected publics will be objectively better, because they draw on a wider range of perspectives and knowledge (Healey, 1998; Healey, 2003; Innes and Booher, 2004). Beyond the claim that planning decisions made with broad public input produce better outcomes because the stakeholders bring novel ideas as well as in-depth knowledge to the table, a second strand of thought holds that public participation will lead to outcomes that are more socially just (Healey, 2003). Planning activity is inherently concerned with justice, because it is an activity that requires ethical judgments about

contested issues (Campbell and Marshall, 2005). Finally, participation represents an opportunity for development proponents to gauge the degree to which residents accept particular proposals, and to legitimate them in the eyes of the public (Bedford, Clark and Harrison, 2002; Brownill and Carpenter, 2007).

Despite these presumed explanations for how public participation improves redevelopment planning, however, it is also the subject of several lines of critical inquiry. Planners and residents may not conceive of the role of public participation in the urban planning system in the same way. Planners are experts in the systems that govern municipal decisions relating to land use, as well as the standards and expectations of their profession; citizens are experts in how they use and experience the space around them in everyday life. Bringing these two forms of expertise together, particularly in the context of neighbourhoods that are undergoing extensive redevelopment in response to the pressures of urban growth, is problematic in the Ontario planning context. Land use decisions made in response to a development application are constrained by a process that is intended to be consistent and fair to all of the stakeholders; residents, however, may have concerns about the application that fall outside of those constraints. Although extensive consultation may occur in order to produce the Official Plans, Secondary Plans, and other municipal policies that are intended as general guides to development over a significant period of time and/or for a large geographical area, in areas where redevelopment is producing dramatic changes to the urban fabric within a relatively short timeframe, residents are restricted to a

participatory process that approaches each new development application individually.

The Significance of Redevelopment

Redevelopment is an important form of economic growth and physical transformation in some cities, but more significantly, it offers examples of many of the major social justice issues that planners face because redevelopment decisions necessarily affect current residents. Displacement, both direct and indirect, illustrates how spatial form and the social processes of capitalism interact in ways that produce uneven geographies (Harvey, 2000, p. 148). Evidence from central urban areas that are undergoing gentrification shows that poorer residents are increasingly unable to access housing in the core (Lees, Slater and Wyly, 2008). The displaced or excluded residents are relegated to peripheral areas that are located at a considerable distance from places of employment, as well as a range of other necessities, including public transportation. Such literal marginalization can occur directly, as when existing and occupied buildings are demolished to make way for new construction, but may also be the indirect result of increasing development pressure on adjacent areas (*ibid*).

'Gentrification' is one of the clearest examples of how planning regimes can produce unjust social outcomes. In particular, the evolution of "municipally managed gentrification" (Slater, 2004) can be understood in terms of a transformed relationship between municipal decision-makers and the interests of capital, which led to changes in the factors that are considered in planning decisions. Historically, gentrification was understood as a process through which lower-income populations in inner-city

neighbourhoods were gradually displaced by “pioneer gentrifiers” who sought out inexpensive housing that could be renovated, often through personal effort (Lees, Slater and Wyly, 2008). While it may produce unfair results - often in waves, as the pioneers may well be displaced in turn - the municipal government does not play a role in promoting or facilitating the activity, and it is not the result of *planning*. More recently, however, gentrification has come to be understood not simply the result of individual action but also as the result of a coherent municipal policy agenda. In Toronto's Parkdale neighbourhood, for example, city by-laws were used to limit the number of rooming houses as part of a strategy to attract families (Slater, 2004, p. 315). Such “municipally-managed gentrification” (*ibid.*, p. 314) is the result of distinct relationships between the new residents of Parkdale and the local government on one hand, and the Parkdale community and the local government on the other. By establishing policies that would support the former group's right to access and control the neighbourhood above the latter's, many lower-income residents were denied essential rights of urban citizenship.

Urban redevelopment represents an opportunity to learn more about how planners and members of the public interact through participatory processes and to consider how members of the public understand their role in redevelopment decisions. In a highly urbanized city like Toronto, a significant amount of future development is expected to be accomplished through redevelopment or intensification, and will necessarily impact existing neighbourhoods (City of Toronto, 2010). Both resistance to

development and dissatisfaction with participatory planning processes are common, and planners and municipal policy-makers must address conflicts while maintaining or building residents' trust in the process.

Conceptualizing Urban Citizenship to Understand Public Participation in Redevelopment

The significance of collaborative planning as a coherent approach to practice has been overstated (Yiftachel and Huxley, 2001), yet in North America and Europe, planning has embraced participation and the language of collaboration. Nonetheless, in many cities, Toronto included, residents continue to resist new developments and to argue that they do not feel that they have been consulted, and it appears that planners and residents are still talking past each other. By examining how they relate to one another through the participatory components of redevelopment decisions and using the concept of 'citizenship' to contrast the differences in how planners and residents understand their relationship and engage with one another through those processes, this paper aims to shed light on how that relationship might be strengthened and turned in a more collaborative direction.

This notion harkens back to Arnstein's influential "ladder of citizen participation", in which the most meaningful form of public involvement in planning is cast as "citizen control" over public decisions and public institutions (Arnstein, 1969, p. 217). Full citizen control is rarely - if ever - achieved, however. In the context of urban planning decisions, it is useful to view participation in the process as an exercise of

citizenship because it is a key opportunity for urban residents to interact with the local state and exercise the rights and responsibilities that are associated with their membership in the political community.

This research paper aims to uncover the differences in how urban planners working in a downtown Toronto Ward that is currently experiencing a very high degree of development pressure on the one hand, and residents of that Ward on the other, understand the purpose and contributions of public participation in land use decisions. Redevelopment has been chosen as the specific focus because such decisions are often controversial and entail significant impacts on the lives of neighbourhood residents. Those impacts may include both changes in residents' daily lives as a result of a more dense population, and a greater potential for social exclusion of some residents as the result of shifts in the socio-economic make-up of the community.

Methodology

In order to identify and analyze differences in how planners and members of the public understand the purpose and impacts of public participation in redevelopment planning decisions and link these views to different conceptualizations of urban citizenship, this research began with a literature review. The purpose of this review was twofold. First, an examination of the critiques of public participation identified several factors that limit its potential to achieve just and democratic outcomes. Second, a review of the academic literature on citizenship aimed to articulate a general definition of urban citizenship. A distinction is made between a 'limited' form of citizenship that is

focused on the needs of the local government and a more 'expansive' form of urban citizenship that emphasize social justice. These two strands of knowledge are linked through the second component of the research project, a case study analysis that compares planners and residents' approach to public participation in Toronto's Ward 20 (Trinity-Spadina). The choice to examine a specific location in detail in order to compare different understandings of citizenship that are enacted through public participation in planning was appropriate because citizenship is a place-based, socially constructed phenomenon, and will depend on local context. Case study approaches are well-suited producing such context-dependent knowledge (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Brownill and Carpenter (2007, p. 632) also suggest that "a focus on the narratives, experiences and everyday realities of participation", rather than attempts to measure the extent to which public participation affects planning outcomes, represents a potentially useful avenue for better understanding the potential that participation holds for planning. This approach is consistent with the suggestion that day-to-day planning practice should be linked with the study of wider relations of power in order to identify opportunities for change (Huxley and Yiftachel, 2000).

The case study of Toronto's Ward 20 drew on policy documents and census data, media reports, attendance at community consultation meetings, and interviews with the local councillor, planners, and residents. The review of planning documents, media reports, and academic literature about the planning framework within Toronto and documentation of redevelopment projects within the boundaries of the case study area

provided an understanding of the local context for planning decisions, the potential barriers that some residents might face, and the way that public participation has been institutionalized by the municipal government.

The semi-structured interviews lasting thirty minutes to one and a half hours were conducted with the local councillor, four planners who work or have worked in Ward 20, and three residents who are currently engaged in participatory processes. The interview questions were designed to draw out their views on who ought to be involved in planning decisions, the avenues available for residents to participate, and the impact of participation on social justice. The residents were recruited by contacting neighbourhood associations who were present at community consultation meetings. The interview responses and the comments made by residents and the local councillor at the community consultation meetings were recorded in detailed notes, and then subject to a thematic analysis.

Observation at three community consultation meetings related to development applications also afforded an opportunity to gather information about how residents actually engage with planners, as well as development proponents and their councillor. Through attendance at public meetings, it was also possible to observe residents using Councillor Vaughan's framework for collaborative identification of community needs, which is unique to Ward 20 and is described in more detail in the next section.

Citizen Participation in Toronto's Planning Process

Toronto's Official Plan provides some useful clues about how the municipal government and the Planning Department approach participation. The Official Plan sets out the policies that govern the formal process through which residents are able to participate in local land use decisions. Its policies also hint at what it means to be a citizen of Toronto. For example, the Official Plan suggests that residents have a responsibility to be active and engaged in the process of shaping their communities. It also calls for Toronto to be a city of "leaders and stewards", where individuals and community members "actively participate in decisions affecting them" and "people are engaged and invested in city living and civic life" (City of Toronto, 2010, p. 1-5). The values that identifies, "a successful city with an enviable quality of life is diverse, equitable, and inclusive..." (City of Toronto, 2010, p. 1-3) speak to the importance of participation. The principles of diversity, equitability and inclusivity entail rights for residents that include access to appropriate and affordable housing, as well as equitable access to opportunities, resources, and services in every neighbourhood. This suggests that the city will promote and encourage active citizen participation in land use decisions. It also sets out an aspiration to ensure that Toronto is a socially just city, through an engaged citizenry involved in civic life as well as through policies that are intended to produce equitable access to housing and the resources and opportunities associated with urban living.

These commitments imply both a right to appropriate urban spaces, and a right to

participate in the creation of those spaces. They are thus consistent with Lefebvre's (1996) notion of the 'right to the city'. They can also be understood as a guideline for how the city will relate to its citizens. However, apart from these general statements, the policies laid out in the Official Plan are not clearly tied to these commitments. Other goals may take precedence over the promotion of socially just development. The public participation framework is somewhat vague as to how the city will "encourage" participation, and are more focused on how residences can become *informed* about planning decisions than on how they can make substantive contributions to such decisions.

Both the public consultation processes that are mandated by the Planning Act and the additional opportunities for community consultation that are sometimes used in Toronto can easily be reduced to - and perhaps subverted by - residents who are firmly against a particular proposal, or some elements of it. Although residents may have valid concerns about the impacts that new developments may have on their neighbourhoods, 'not in my backyard' opposition often masks an attempt to keep certain groups of people out of particular neighbourhoods. The reduction of public engagement to opposition also may, in the end, negate residents' opportunity to positively shape the outcomes of new development.

Terms such as "public consultation", "public participation", "community involvement" and "citizen engagement" are often used interchangeably, but this glosses over some important nuances. Sheedy (2008) distinguishes public communication,

public consultation, and public participation by the direction of the flow of information. Public participation is characterized by a two-way flow of information between the public and the state or private sector actor. "Citizen engagement" similarly involves a two-way flow of information, but Sheedy argues that under this ideal, citizens share in setting the policy agenda and developing policy proposals, and their contributions are evident in the policy outcomes (*ibid*). It should be broad-based, interactive and iterative, and involves a decision-making process (*ibid*). Public involvement in planning decisions is more accurately characterized as public participation than citizen engagement because final decisions are the preserve of City Council. However, some participatory planning activity in the city may come closer to "citizen engagement". For example, the working groups sometimes established to help reach a compromise for a development that is agreed-upon by residents as well as the developer.

Public involvement is addressed in section 5.5 of the Official Plan, "The Planning Process". In this section, the Plan notes that Ontario's *Planning Act* "encourages" public involvement in the planning process. Toronto does so by:

- a) encouraging participation by all segments of the population, recognizing the ethno-racial diversity of the community and with special consideration to the needs of individuals of all ages and abilities;
- b) promoting community awareness of planning issues and decisions, through use of clear, understandable language and employing innovative processes to inform the public, including the use of traditional and electronic media; and
- c) providing adequate and various opportunities for those affected by planning decisions to be informed and contribute to planning processes, including:
- d) encouraging pre-application community consultation;
- e) holding at least one community meeting in the affected area, in addition to the minimum statutory requirements of the *Planning Act*, for proposed

- Official Plan and/or Zoning By-law amendments prior to approval;
- f) ensuring that information and materials submitted to the City as part of an application during the course of its processing are made available to the public; and
 - g) ensuring that draft Official Plan amendments are made available to the public for review at least twenty days prior to statutory public meetings, and endeavouring to make draft Zoning By-law amendments available to the public for review at least ten days prior to statutory public meetings, and if the draft amendments are substantively modified, further endeavouring to make the modified amendments publicly available at least five days prior to consideration by Council." (City of Toronto, 2010, p. 5-20)

These policies guarantee that public involvement will be a part of all development applications in the city, and with regard to certain planning activities, such as amendments to the Official Plan or Zoning By-laws, they require the city to engage in more public involvement than the provincial *Planning Act*. Beyond that, however, the policies concerned with public involvement in planning in Toronto are quite flexible. The policy does not specify *how* city planners or the local councillor should work to involve residents of all backgrounds, ages, and ability, for example, nor does it require that the city work to educate residents about planning issues than to employ plain language and use a variety of media. Residents who wish to make a substantive contribution to planning decisions must educate themselves about what constitutes good planning. Pre-application community consultations are "encouraged", but not required. Emphasis is given to *informing* the public about planning issues and decisions, but there is no policy direction on how input from community members should be taken into account.

In essence, this set of policies means that there will be opportunities for public input, but it does not give any assurances that the city will heed the public. It calls upon

residents to become involved, but it makes few suggestions as to what their involvement ought to be and how they can contribute to the process, except by informing themselves. Toronto's chief planner, Jennifer Keesmaat, recently spoke to a local industry group, the Building, Industry and Land Development Association (BILD), suggesting that "Toronto needs a model of city building that recognizes the shared interests of city planners and the development industry" in such activities as the creation of a spectacular public realm and a high-quality public transportation system (Quoted in Starr, 2013). While Keesmaat's remarks were tailored to her audience, it is nonetheless notable that citizens were not named as a third partner in the collaborative relationship that produces Toronto's urban fabric.

A Profile of Ward 20

Several trends in Toronto's Ward 20, a central district bounded by the waterfront to the south, Bathurst Street and University Avenue to the east and west, and Dupont Street to the north, mean that this Ward presents an ideal opportunity to compare the different ways that planners and citizens approach public participation in redevelopment planning. The area's suitability as a case study includes the significant degree to which redevelopment has been occurring in certain parts of the Ward, the sense of community identity in its distinctive neighbourhoods and emerging communities, and a strong interest in urban planning and public participation in current Ward councillor, Adam Vaughan.

Vaughan, who has represented Ward 20 since 2006, brought strong opinions

about the role of city planning to his work. The councillor ran on a pledge to reform the planning process, and since taking office, has worked with neighbourhood associations to create a comprehensive map of Ward 20 and a database of land-use patterns within the ward. The councillor has also actively supported the development of informal community plans for each neighbourhood within the ward. His goal has been a more proactive planning process that places neighbourhoods and communities at the forefront in shaping the development patterns across the ward (Vaughan, 2012). This initiative exists within the context of provincial planning law and municipal policies, creating an opportunity to consider how formally mandated public involvement processes mesh with negotiation of priorities and interests between citizens, planners, the local councillor and development proponents. In addition to these informal processes, Councillor Vaughan has been a consistent advocate for intensification that is inclusive and based on widespread community consultation to give residents a voice in the process (Wallace, 2009).

Growth and Development

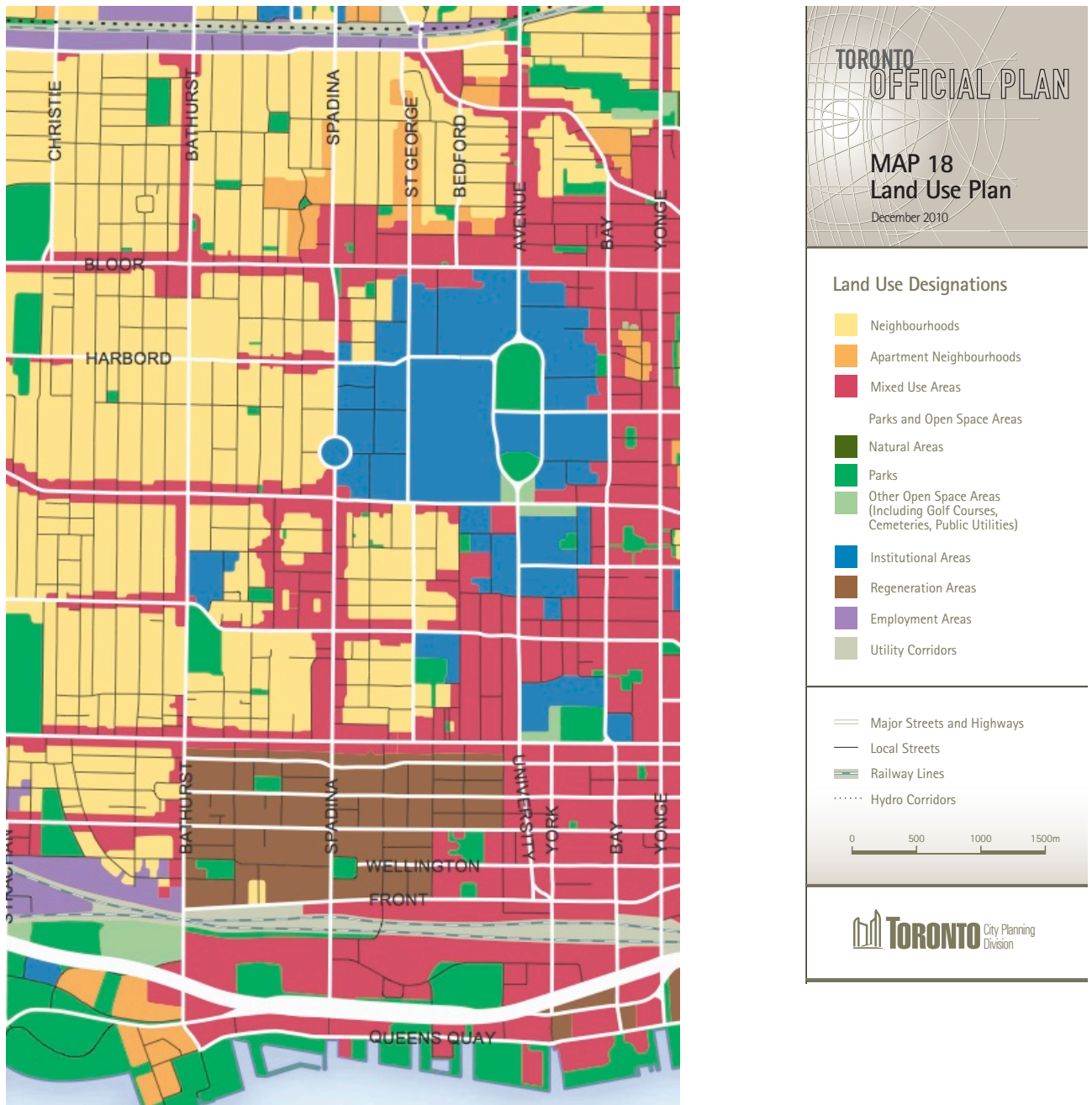
The most recent census paints a picture of significant growth and intense development pressure in Ward 20. In comparison to Toronto as a whole, Ward 20 experienced dramatic growth between 2006 and 2011, with a population increase of 25.5 percent; more than five percent (5.5%) of the city's total population now resides in Ward 20, although it represents just under three percent (2.9%) of the city's total land area (Statistics Canada, 2012). It encompasses a number of distinctive neighbourhoods

including Chinatown, Kensington Market, and the Annex. In addition, in the southern end of the Ward where redevelopment, primarily in the form of condominiums, has been most intense, there are newly emerging vertical neighbourhoods.

The key municipal land use policies in Ward 20 include the Toronto Official Plan and the King-Spadina Secondary Plan, as well as the secondary plans for the western, central, and a portion of the eastern railway lands. As shown in Figure 1, south of Queen Street, the land use designations are primarily Mixed Use Areas to the east and Regeneration Areas to the west, and it is in these areas that a significant amount of redevelopment has occurred.

Two broad categories of redevelopment are currently taking place in Ward 20. On one hand are the individual development applications put forth for redevelopment on single sites, particularly, although not exclusively, in the Ward's southern neighbourhoods. On the other hand, Ward 20 also encompasses Alexandra Park, a Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) complex slated to be completely redeveloped into a mixed-income community that will replace the subsidized units and add new market-rate housing (City of Toronto, 2012). This redevelopment called for much more extensive citizen participation and took place in a somewhat more flexible way (Vaughan, 2012). There are thus opportunities to examine citizen participation in the planning process at multiple scales and with different needs and interests.

Figure 1: Land Use Designations in Ward 20 (City of Toronto, 2010)



Given the rapid pace of redevelopment in Ward 20, it is not surprising that there is evidence that local residents and business owners are increasingly concerned about

the scale and pace of change. In the Entertainment District, a four-block area in the downtown core, for example, there were 51 condo developments under construction or approved as of January 2013 and residents fear that the existing neighbourhood will be erased and local infrastructure overwhelmed by high-rise residential construction (MacDonald, 2013). Similar concerns have been raised about the proposed redevelopment of Alexandra Park, with some residents fearing that an influx of newcomers will be detrimental to the neighbourhood's tight-knit community (Grant, 2010). This context of political support for public participation, combined with resident unease about redevelopment, mean that Ward 20 is a fruitful area to examine how urban citizenship is conceptualized and exercised by planners and residents in redevelopment planning.

Assessing The Limits of Public Participation in Planning Practice

Participation is seen as an intrinsic good (Day, 1997) that is believed to foster trust in government institutions and decisions, social cohesion, and greater democratic participation by citizens with the capacity for collective problem solving (Bedford, Clark and Harrison, 2002; Goodlad, Burton and Croft, 2005; Brownill and Carpenter, 2007). It is also seen as a means to produce fairer outcomes by including those who have been excluded and accommodating differences (Sandercock, 2000), resulting in decisions that are characterized by "transparency, comprehensibility, integrity and legitimacy" (Bedford, Clark and Harrison, 2002). Participation is a key component of articulations of

planning as a progressive or emancipatory activity that is oriented toward societal transformation (Campbell and Marshall, 2005). Despite its ubiquity in practice and its prominence in current planning theory, however, the effectiveness of public participation as a component of planning and urban governance remains contested and its implementation fragmented. This unsettled status is in part the result of the inherent tension between planning as a technical-bureaucratic activity and planning as a democratic process (Day, 1997). Other issues include such questions as what constitutes an appropriate degree of public participation, how to evaluate its outcomes, and the validity of the underlying assumptions about its effectiveness.

Challenging the Belief that Participation Leads to Justice

Much of the support for public participation in planning decisions can be ascribed to the belief that it is necessary to achieve “a just outcome justly arrived at” (Healey, 2003, p. 105), but the presumed link between participation and justice has been questioned (Huxley and Yiftachel, 2000). Collaborative planning theories draw on an abstract concept of justice and an ideal of rational discourse to explain how multiple actors produce knowledge and reach decisions (Campbell and Marshall, 2005; Fischer, 2009). Theorists, such as Healey, who emphasize the importance of citizen participation have tended to concentrate on procedural fairness, at the expense of a coherent explanation of how fair outcomes will be recognized and assured through that process (Fainstein, 2010).

Conditions of social injustice and marginalization may be produced and

reproduced through the influence of power in planning (Fainstein, 2010). Collaborative and communicative planning theorists draw on Habermasian "discourse ethics" to argue that through citizen participation in a rational dialogue, the disproportionate ability of socially, politically and economically dominant groups to influence decisions can be countered (Fainstein, 2003; Healey, 2003; Campbell and Marshall, 2005). Power is pervasive, however (Brownill and Carpenter, 2007b). In planning systems, which regulate who can plan, the issues that can be addressed through planning, and who will be bound by those decisions, public participation will always take place within a complex power structure (Ploger, 2001). It is through power that "rationality" is defined, and power relationships tend to be stable and continuously reproduced, so that dialogue often results in the reinforcement of existing power relationships (Flyvbjerg, 2003). The underlying socio-politico-economic context influences the opportunities for such discourses to occur, and planners may be constrained in their ability to initiate them. Public participation by individual citizens, in the context of urban governance regimes dominated by business interests and homeowners' associations, will not lead to social transformation, although controversial developments may be prevented (Fainstein, 2009, p. 35).

Furthermore, local institutions themselves may have multiple policies that may come into conflict, and these conflicts are typically resolved by local councillors and planners rather than through citizens' input (Bedford, Clark and Harrison, 2002). Planning approaches that centre on collaboration and participation thus do not address

the ways that the process of planning itself can reproduce urban injustice; “planners embody institutional and political discursive power”, which distorts communication (Ploger, 2000, p. 221). The values that are central to these approaches, which include communication, negotiation and democratic decision-making, do not permit an examination of “the role of planning in creating, maintaining, or reproducing social control, oppression, inequalities and injustices” (Yiftachel, 1999, p. 268).

Knowledge, and the power to *define and validate knowledge* in planning processes, is a critical issue in the production of unjust outcomes. The emphasis on rational discourse in collaborative planning approaches reduces the opportunities for other forms of knowledge, including emotional knowledge, to be brought into the discursive process, although the validity of these forms of knowledge is not disputed (Brand and Gaffikin, 2007). Seeking to bridge the gap, Fischer (2009) argues that “discursive” planning helps to fit different forms of knowledge together. Participatory planning processes are typically focused on local, concrete issues such as the affordability or density of a proposal for a new housing project. These processes also represent opportunities for a discursive examination of social justice at larger and more abstract scales; a critical communicative planning practice should seek to make those links explicit, but too often does not do so (Fischer, 2009).

Defining the ‘public good’ is also problematic for collaborative planning theorists. Planners face an ethical dilemma that results from their multiple obligations to both the public(s) and the institutions of local government which can only be resolved through a

combination of procedural justice in planning processes and a dialogue between professional planners and planning theorists to articulate a concept of the “common good” and identify collective responsibilities for the social construction of local environments (Campbell and Marshall, 2000, p. 309). Advocates of “just city” approaches to planning instead argue for a normative standard of justice that provides planners with the tools to negotiate these tensions and actively attempt to shift participants toward an explicit commitment to justice (Fainstein, 2010, p. 66). While participation may be an important element of such a normative concept, dialogue alone cannot overcome the conflicting interests and real-world power differentials between stakeholders that produce uneven spatial outcomes (Fainstein, 2005; Brand and Gaffikin, 2007). Power constitutes and manipulates planning outcomes in general, and also has a distorting effect on the dialogue between stakeholders (Campbell and Marshall, 2005; Fainstein, 2003).

Participation is Not Understood the Same Way By All Participants

The preceding discussion illustrates that public participation in planning may not be effective in producing the results that are predicted by collaborative and communicative planning theorists. Beyond these theoretical limits, it is necessary to consider what is actually intended as the outcome in real-world participatory processes; questions such as whether all participants share the same goals and agree on what constitutes “participation” must be explored (Brownill and Carpenter, 2007).

Public participation may entail a “developmental role” for the participants (personal

growth and community-building through engagement), an “instrumental role” (substantive democratic involvement in decision-making), and a “due process” role (Goodlad, Burton and Croft, 2005, p. 926-927). Civic officials, for example, may expect that the primary purpose of participation is to gather information, while citizens anticipate that the participatory process will allow them to help make the decision (Shiple and Utz, 2012). Competing policy objectives, such as greater participation and faster decision-making, may also be difficult to reconcile (Kitchen and Whitney, 2004), further complicating the participatory process. Differences in understanding of the purpose and impacts of public participation by the actors in the process, including planners, community members, and policy-makers, result in differences in process.

Flexible Planning Practices Limit the Emancipatory Potential of Participation

The potential for public participation to achieve such goals as greater trust in the institutions of government and legitimization of decisions at specific times and in specific places is limited by the nature of the participatory tools and techniques, and the ways that they are implemented in practice. Theoretical approaches to public participation rarely make distinctions between different methods of engagement (Shiple and Utz, 2012). Planners have borrowed and developed many techniques and strategies to engage with the public(s) (*ibid*). However, their impacts are highly contingent on the legislative context, the way the participatory elements are structured and incorporated, and on the appropriateness of particular strategies for engaging with specific communities at different times and places.

The legislative context that governs planning activity influences how different forms of participation will affect outcomes; the distinction between formal (mandated) and informal (non-mandated) consultation is critical. The latter is problematic both because non-mandated activities may be disregarded by policy-makers, and because they may not take place consistently. Activities that take place outside of the participatory processes that are required by local planning legislation may result in ideas that are developed through collaboration and have significant community support, but which have no force in law (Brownill and Carpenter, 2007; Brand and Gaffikin, 2007). There are discretionary elements in both mandated and non-mandated participatory planning processes. In Ontario and elsewhere, planning legislation sets out minimum requirements for public involvement, and local governments are able to establish additional components (*Ontario Planning Act 2001*; Bedford, Clark and Harrison, 2002).

Lehrer's (2008) account of the attempt by a community group, Active 18, to develop an alternative redevelopment plan for Toronto's West Queen West Triangle, in response to development applications that were seen as out of step with the neighbourhood and counter to the city's vision of mixed income and use, is a case in point. It illustrates both the failure of the local government to consistently involve residents in the planning process through the mandatory consultation processes, and the challenge of persuading the local government and development proponents to abide by the outcome of consultations when there is no legislative requirement that they do so (Lehrer, 2008).

Political legitimacy is a related issue in planning practice, as the groups and

individuals who engage with planners cannot be assumed to speak for all those who stand to be affected by a decision (Bedford, Clark and Harrison, 2002).

The structure of participatory processes and their place within the overall planning system also impacts their effectiveness. Local governments may adopt policies that reflect the ideals of collaborative planning, yet contain contradictions that undermine it (Brownill and Carpenter, 2007). For example, 'frontloading' participation is intended to make the process more transparent and enable the stakeholders to share knowledge, develop ideas, and reach consensus (*ibid*). In practice, participants may develop 'consultation fatigue', and may be frustrated that their involvement is separate from the decision (*ibid*).

Participatory planning processes rely on a very broad range of techniques, which may not be well understood by the planners who implement them. The set of activities and events that constitute 'participation' are defined very flexibly, and a single definition is problematic. Healey (2003) explicitly acknowledges this issue, and argues that given the fact that interactions between institutional structures and agents within them are co-constituted and dynamic, it is not possible to develop an exhaustive set of communicative processes from which planners can choose. Planners are thus required to learn and implement techniques for public engagement without a set of clear theoretical tools or criteria that enable them to do so consistently. A study of the use of "visioning" techniques in the Region of Waterloo, for example, revealed that the planners involved had neither formal training in the use of the popular technique nor a

clear understanding of how the process was supposed to work (Shiple *et al.*, 2004). In the absence of such knowledge, planners may not be able to articulate the purpose of the participatory exercise or provide participants with a realistic appraisal of how their input will be used. Furthermore, when planners do not have a solid theoretical foundation underlying their use of participatory practices, they may use techniques that are inappropriate to the situation at hand (*ibid*). Citizens may also be asked to take on responsibilities or participate in activities for which they lack adequate expertise (Ghose, 2005).

The current analytical tools available to examine the role and impacts of citizen participation in planning processes are inadequate. In practice, participation remains at best loosely connected to a theoretical framework, and ad hoc and inconsistent implementation presents a challenge to attempts to understand how it can further the progressive goals of planning. At the same time, citizen participation responds to the shared values of the planning profession, including equity, diversity and democracy (Fainstein, 2010), as well as planners' professional obligation to seek the 'public good'. It is difficult to make generalizations about the effectiveness of citizen participation because it occurs in widely differing contexts, using a broad range of methodologies, and reaches for multiple and sometimes conflicting goals: it can be like "comparing apples and aardvarks" (Day, 1997, p. 422).

Conceptualizing 'Citizenship' to Bridge the Gap Between Participation's Promise and Limitations

Different conceptualizations of urban citizenship may suggest ways to improve public participation, as certain views of urban citizenship may enhance democracy (Baubock, 2003). Participatory planning processes are a form of governance, in that public involvement takes place within an institutional system that regulates the shape of any collaborative activities (Ploger, 2000). As such, they can be examined through an understanding of the relationships between citizens and local governments at different times and places. 'Citizenship', as a concept that describes the relationship between individuals and the state (Rose, 2000, p. 99), offers a framework that can be used to analyze the interaction of planners, elected municipal officials, and residents in participatory planning processes. Planners and citizens relate to one another in dynamic and often ad hoc processes that are shaped by the local institutional context, the distribution of power and influence, and the values and interests of the actors themselves. A robust account of citizenship as a component of planning theory and practice can describe the rights accorded to citizens with regard to the production of urban space, their responsibilities and obligations to one another and to the city itself, and clarify the role of planners, as agents of the local state, in ensuring equitable access to those rights and an equitable distribution of obligation.

'Citizenship' is a complex concept; it denotes "political membership, cultural belonging, access to rights, and duties, as well as to heterogeneous everyday practices

in social, political, civic, cultural, and economic domains" (Guarnizo, 2012, p. 16). It is also socially constructed "in and through the contradictions of community" (Staehele, 2008, p. 18) in an ongoing process that transforms over time. There is thus not a single conceptualization of 'citizenship'. Individual citizens may have multiple relationships with different orders of government at different scales, and the rights and responsibilities associated with citizenship transform over time.

One of the key issues for critics of collaborative approaches to planning is the question of *who* is able to participate. 'Citizenship' can be understood as a marker of membership and identity that defines who belongs (Kymlicka and Norman, 1994). It is a continuous social process through which individuals construct their identities as members of political communities across multiple scales (Isin, 2000). The multiple organizational and institutional contexts through which individuals move in their daily lives, taken together, can produce situations of "social closure" or *exclusion*, or they can lead to a greater degree of social integration (Smith and McQuarrie 2012, p. 4). The overall environment produced by overlapping and interacting institutions and organizations has implications for equity, social mobility and democracy. Isin (2000, p. 1-2) identifies a related problem with citizenship: while groups who have been traditionally excluded from full membership in the modernist state have been able to form identities and seek recognition, competition between groups for scarce resources has grown, and these identities furthermore become difficult to escape or change. If to be a citizen is to be a member of a particular political community, to hold a particular

identity, then other people, by definition, are excluded from such membership (Evans and Advokaat, 2001; Marcuse, 2009)

The significance of 'citizenship' as a lens to understand public participation in planning lies in the fact that it is in cities where the public realm, within which diverse publics are concentrated and interacting, is located (Holston and Appadurai, 1996; Beauregard and Bounds, 2000). Although in recent years citizenship has been understood largely as the relationship between individuals and the nation-state, contemporary scholars of citizenship argue that it is multi-scalar, influenced by the conditions, processes and institutions at the local, national, and international scales (Staeheli, 2003, p. 99; Desforges, Jones and Woods, 2005). Turner (1990) further argues that the construction of a citizenship relation initially requires an urban environment such as an autonomous city where diverse social groups are in competition for resources. Citizenship is constructed in part through engagement with place, as it is within communities that are geographically defined and delimited that citizens take action, and as a result, may have different meanings at these different scales (Desforges, Jones and Woods, 2005). Although it has been transformed by global neoliberal forces, the city remains a crucial location for the delivery of public services and the practices of public life; it is thus an object of citizenship practices (Isin, 2000). However, many contemporary cities exist on far too large a scale for meaningful participation in local decisions (Light, 2003), and local decisions may have impacts at multiple scales (Purcell, 2006).

The implication of the preceding discussion is that the city is a site for the practice of citizenship and can itself be the object of citizenship practices. It is thus reasonable to view public participation in planning decisions as a potential opportunity to practice citizenship. Citizenship is comprised of both a legal status and a substantive or performative element. It is through practice or performance that citizenship is constructed, answering questions such as who is a citizen and what citizens *do*, and how citizenship enables claims to a right to the city and the production of space (Lepofsky and Fraser, 2002). In this view, urban citizenship is enacted in the public realm through processes of debate and deliberation; it is a process, rather than a status conferred by the local government (Beauregard and Bounds, 2000; Kymlicka and Norman, 1994). It is performed through the practices and actions associated with the exercise of rights and fulfillment of responsibilities (Holston and Appadurai, 1996). Isin (2000) characterizes these practices as part of a continuous social process of claiming, expanding, or losing rights, suggesting that the meaning of 'citizenship' is contextual and continuously evolving. The emphasis is on the "norms, practices, meanings and identities" of the participants in this process (*ibid*, p. 5). This process is relational in that particular relationships between individuals, social groups, and the local state emerge through the ongoing social construction of rights (Staeheli, 2003).

The 'citizen' that emerges is a political subject who can take actions that influence the community and who has – or should have – rights as a member of that community (*ibid*). Substantive citizenship is thus acquired through participation, and it is enacted or

exercised through participatory democracy; it is a matter of practice, rather than a right conferred by the state (Brown and Kristiansen, 2009, p. 16-17). The performative component is thus of greater interest in an exploration of citizen as it relates to urban planning.

Claims to rights and the exercise of responsibility thus represent two key components of citizenship as a practice or performance. The rights associated with citizenship, however, are not something possessed by individuals but a social relation with a corresponding party – typically the state – that has an obligation to take action in order to affirm and uphold those rights (Campbell, 2006). 'Citizenship' offers a useful lens through which to examine participatory planning processes because these processes can be understood in terms of both rights and responsibilities to participate, though planners, elected representatives, and citizens may disagree on the exact nature of these rights and responsibilities. The specific rights and responsibilities associated with citizenship, urban or otherwise, are socially constructed through the practices of citizenship, and as such they vary, and they may be defined differently by citizens and by governments. Planners' and elected representatives' responses to rights claims are a key determinant of whether planning outcomes lead to a more just distribution of the benefits of urban life, while citizens' different approaches to making claims influence both the ways that planners and politicians will respond to them and the degree to which particular claims will be made or heard at all.

Marshall (1987, p. 8; originally published in 1950) divides citizenship rights into

three categories: civil, political, and social. The civil component is comprised of a set of rights related to individual freedom or autonomy, including freedom of speech and thought, freedom of assembly and property rights, and also includes the right to justice. The political component is a formal right to participate in elections, although other scholars have explored alternative avenues for the exercise of political rights through democratic participation, discussed below. Finally, the social component of citizenship spans a range of rights, from a standard of economic welfare to "full inclusion in the life of the community" (Marshall, 1987, p. 8; Isin, 2000). These rights emerge over time, through struggle and negotiation, because political or democratic rights cannot be fully realized in the face of inequality (Turner, 1990). The specific set of rights and the relative weighting of the three components of citizenship for a given time and place depend on the nature of the political, judicial and social institutions and their relationship (*ibid*). Public participation in decision-making can be understood as an exercise in claiming and negotiating rights, balanced by the responsibility to be engaged (Kymlicka and Norman, 1994). For example, participatory processes that are intended to ensure equal treatment of citizens before the law and serve as a means to minimize the power of the state enable claims to civil rights, while participation in substantive decision-making represents a claim to a political right (Goodlad, Burton and Croft, 2005).

For these rights to be meaningful, however, they must be guaranteed in some way by the state (Turner, 1990; Beauregard and Bounds, 2000). The local government's responsibility lies in regulating the public realm to ensure that it remains open and

inclusive, while citizens engage with one another rather than with state agents (Beauregard and Bounds, 2000 p. 249). This understanding of the role of the state is compatible with the role of the planner that is envisioned in Fainstein's (2010) 'just city' argument, but it also suggests that involvement in planning decisions is a civic responsibility that is held by all those who use and benefit from the city (Beauregard and Bounds, 2000, p. 253). In this view, to be a citizen is to have the capacity to take action in relation to the political, social, and physical environments in which one exists (Rose, 2000, p. 99).

An examination of how citizen participation in planning decisions is accomplished, and the extent to which citizens' needs and interests are taken into account, can shed light on how citizens claim and exercise political, civil and social rights within different institutional contexts. Urban space is produced through citizens' claiming and exercising of rights and fulfillment of their responsibilities. However, this production may occur in different ways. The distinction can be seen in the contrast between the conceptualization of 'active citizenship' that is prominent in UK policy (Rose, 2000; Marinetto, 2003; Raco and Imrie, 2000), and the radical social movement claims to a 'right to the city' (Mayer, 2009).

In the following sections, two perspectives on citizenship provided by planners and residents in Toronto's Ward 20 will be explored. One perspective is described as a 'limited' form of citizenship practice, in that residents are expected to participate, but the ways in which that participation can occur are highly constrained; this

conceptualization of urban citizenship is consistent with the idea of 'active citizenship' described above. The second is described as an 'expansive' conceptualization of urban citizenship, in that it involves claims to a right to participate more fully in the production of urban space.

The purpose of this paper is not to examine, in detail, how political membership in the urban polity and ability to participate in urban governance is shaped by political membership in the nation-state. Rather, it is to explore how urban citizenship is understood and enacted through participation in planning decisions, and how such 'citizen participation' is shaped by that understanding. In this view, participation in planning decisions can be conceived of as both an exercise of citizenship rights and an obligation of urban citizenship. However, in the absence of a process that empowers all citizens to engage with planners in such a way that their concerns are met, such participation is a hollow exercise. It is thus important to understand how both planners and citizens conceive of participation in planning processes: what is its purpose, and how will it affect decisions? Further, do they understand it as a civic obligation, a basic element of living together (Light, 2003), or simply a formal exercise, like voting, rather than a critical element in a sustained dialogue about the city?

It is possible to claim rights and citizenship itself without the benefit of a state-sanctioned process to enable it. However, the mandated opportunities for public consultation or participation that have been incorporated into planning legislation in Ontario and across Canada represent a process through which citizens can engage in the

exercise of claiming rights to the spaces they live in. These rights claims take place through the communication of their needs and goals for their communities to urban planners, development proponents, and municipal decision-makers. At the same time, the structure of these processes and the way that they are understood by both planners and residents will influence the degree to which mandated public involvement in planning decisions can improve the outcomes of those decisions. Residents who view participation in such processes as a civic obligation or a right they wish to exercise are presumably more likely to become engaged. Planners who view it as a civic obligation may be more likely to take resident concerns into account, and to seek to reach out to the residents who do not become involved as a matter of course.

From the Planners' Point of View: Citizenship and Governance

From the point of view of planners working in Ward 20, citizen participation in the process of redevelopment is part technical process and part political negotiation, and takes place within a fluid system of governance. Citizen participation in redevelopment decisions is seen as an essential element in the process, and "residents are the first priority" (Anonymous, 2012d). At the same time, the opportunities for residents to participate in redevelopment decisions are constrained by the political and institutional structures within which they take place, and these structures are not questioned. This approach to public participation suggests a conceptualization of 'urban citizenship' that is constructed around knowledge, education, and responsibility, and that is consistent

with the governance-focused concept of 'active citizenship'.

The understanding of public participation articulated by planners and the local councillor for Ward 20 rests on the assumption that it will occur through the formal development approval process. On the one hand, it has the potential to increase residents' capacity to participate, but on the other, it narrows the scope of the public discourse by channeling it into particular directions that conform to the local government's other priorities and obligations. This conceptualization of the relationships between residents and their relationships with the municipal government - what it means to be an 'urban citizen' - entails a right to participate in the processes of urban governance, but *not* to define those processes or their subjects. For these planners, the participatory processes mandated by legislation are clearly separate from the more flexible negotiations and discussions that occur between residents, development proponents, and the local councillor. Planners do not determine how those non-mandated processes occur, although they may provide advice or assistance. Even at mandated community consultations, the planners typically restricted their role to describing the proposed development and the development application, while the councillor responded to questions (City of Toronto, 2012). As one planner said, "My job is to *listen*" (Anonymous, 2012b). As critical as listening is, however, it does not represent a collaborative process in which the planner shares his or her knowledge with citizens. In contrast, residents' interview comments about why they participate in planning decisions, what they hope to achieve through participation, and their

frustrations with the process suggest that they are employing a more expansive conceptualization of urban citizenship.

Knowledge Production in Participatory Planning Processes

The four municipal planners interviewed for this project described participatory planning processes as a way to obtain experiential data about the community that is then used in the technical analysis of specific development proposals. Residents' input provides planners with "a key piece of expert knowledge on the particular site" to be developed (Anonymous, 2012d). In this view, the role of the citizen is to share his or her personal knowledge about how the community makes use of the site or will be affected by development on it. However, although these participatory processes represent opportunities for citizens to advocate their interests to their elected representative, it is the planner who controls how the information provided is used in later analyses.

Planners' use of the experiential data that is produced through community consultations is guided by professional and legislative standards, and not all of such information is deemed equally valid under these standards (Anonymous, 2012d). Planners in Ward 20 thus have some tools to make ethical judgments (Campbell and Marshall, 2005) and to balance different dimensions of justice (Fainstein, 2010). The participatory component of the planning process in Toronto was described as most valuable when the community's feedback is clearly linked with an accepted planning rationale (Anonymous, 2012d). This limitation may have positive implications for social justice in some cases; for example, the fear that housing for people with low incomes

will lower property values would not be considered an “acceptable” planning rationale (Anonymous, 2012c; 2012d). Concerns about the potential disruption of the existing community by new residents or a changing retail environment would be more difficult for the planner to support. An expected increase in traffic or excessive demand on local infrastructures that would result directly from a new building, on the other hand, would be usable in a planning recommendation.

However, this constraint on the use of experiential data also channels residents' feedback in particular ways in situations that reduce residents' ability to exercise democratic control the process of redevelopment. The planners who were interviewed for this project discussed citizen participation primarily in the context of the development approvals system, rather than on opportunities to participate in broader planning activities that would guide redevelopment in specific areas such as Secondary Plans or Avenue Studies, as development applications represent the most frequent opportunities for public involvement and the most directly related to redevelopment (Anonymous, 2012b; 2012d). A “community consultation” is required in Toronto as part of the development approval process whenever a Zoning By-Law Amendment or Official Plan Amendment is requested; pre-application consultation meetings between the local councillor, developer, and community are also encouraged, though not mandated (City of Toronto, 2010). In the case of the southern portions of Ward 20, because of the volume of applications, residents seek to comment on their overall impacts, but each application to redevelop a specific site must be judged by the planner on its individual

merits (City of Toronto, 2012a; 2012b; 2012c). Residents' concerns about the impact of *all* redevelopment occurring in their community are difficult to address through these processes. One planner indicated that she would like to be able to engage with residents more often outside of the development approvals system because it is a constraining system (Anonymous, 2012b).

Urban citizenship, in this view, is not constituted by a set of practices that are collectively defined by the citizens themselves through their interaction with the local government (Raco and Imrie, 2000). Citizens have several opportunities to become involved in redevelopment-related planning decisions in Ward 20, but those opportunities are largely pre-defined through the Ontario *Planning Act*, the Toronto Official Plan, and the local councillor. Those processes are further shaped around the goals and interests of the planners and councillor as much as they by the needs of the citizenry. Participation "is invariably mediated by 'power'" (Swyngedow, 2005, p. 1998); in Ward 20, much of the power to decide who will be able to participate and in what ways rests outside of the citizens, although in cases where there is sufficient community mobilization they may be able to assert a greater degree of influence over the shape of the process.

The participatory components of planning throughout Toronto are designed to provide citizens with a voice while fulfilling two other goals: ensuring that the approvals process is equitable for the proponents of development applications, and that it results in land use decisions that will be upheld by the Ontario Municipal Board (Anonymous,

2012a; Vaughan, 2012). Several planners working in the area noted that this limitation is problematic in the case of rapidly redeveloping areas like the Entertainment District, because residents' concerns are much more likely to be with the 'big picture' (Anonymous, 2012c; 2012d). Interviews with residents (Anonymous, 2013a; 2013b; 2013c) and observation at several public meetings (City of Toronto, 2012a; 2012b; 2012c) where applications to redevelop downtown properties as condominium towers were discussed provide additional support for this argument.

Building Capacity Through Education

In addition to knowledge production for planners, public participation represents an opportunity to provide the residents of Ward 20 with the tools and knowledge they need to engage with local decision-making processes more effectively (Anonymous, 2012b). *Education* was described as professional obligation, because knowledge of the planning process empowers citizens to be active participants and make meaningful contributions to land use decisions. The participatory processes that occur in the course of redevelopment applications were described as an opportunity to educate citizens about the specific planning issue at hand, the decision-making process more generally, and the opportunities for the citizens to become involved (Anonymous, 2012b). By educating residents about how planning works in Toronto and the language and strategies they need to use to be treated as serious partners in land use decisions, the planners simultaneously support capacity-building activity among citizens and reinforcing the existing planning system.

This view of the purpose of citizen participation reflects the belief that engagement in civic life is an intrinsic good, and as such it is important to build citizens' capacity to be agents for change in their own communities (Day, 1997; Goodlad, Burton and Croft, 2005). However, in Ward 20, the capacity-building component is concentrated on strengthening citizens' ability to engage within the narrow constraints of the development approval system, rather than on enhancing democratic control over the production of urban space.

In addition to the relatively narrow scope of capacity-building efforts in Ward 20, the planners also emphasized that working in the city's Planning Department means that they are always working with constrained financial resources and limited time, particularly for those working in neighbourhoods where development pressure is highest (Anonymous, 2012a; 2012b; 2012c; 2012d). As a result, they cannot engage in sustained educational efforts for the majority of the development applications that they shepherd, although explaining the relevant parts of the Planning Act and Toronto's Official Plan is one component of the community consultation meetings that are required for applications for amendments to the Official Plan or zoning by-laws in Toronto. When the state promotes a "community-based ethic" by encouraging individuals to take responsibility for their own collective well-being, in order to promote community-building and citizenship, but do not otherwise provide resources to help with that project, questions arise about who belongs and how inclusion is negotiated between community members (Staehele, 2008).

Taking Responsibility

While both the planners and the local councillor described the need for outreach to involve citizens in the planning process and to encourage marginalized groups to participate, the planners in particular suggested that residents bear some responsibility to engage with the process, learn what they need to know to participate effectively, and take action together. As one planner put it, the citizens' role is "up to them" - they have to want to know if development applications are being made in their neighbourhood, and they have to take some action in order to get involved in the participatory components of the planning process (Anonymous, 2012d). The councillor also stressed that although it's necessary to recognize that not everyone arrives with the same capacity to participate, citizens have "an obligation to be at the table from the beginning" (Vaughan, 2012).

The planners viewed residents' lack of education about the principles of good planning and the process itself as a significant barrier to their participation, which they have a professional duty to help overcome (Anonymous, 2012a; 2012b; 2012c; 2012d). However, some of their comments also suggest that citizens do have a corresponding responsibility to be proactive in seeking it out (Anonymous, 2012c; 2012d; Vaughan, 2012). All four planners who were interviewed for this project reported that when residents telephone them or ask for a meeting to discuss a development application, they are happy to take the opportunity to answer questions about both the planning system and the specific proposal under consideration, and most also reported that they

will meet with groups of residents to give special presentations about the planning process upon request. Citizens, in turn, must take some responsibility to monitor what is happening in their communities, learn where and how they can seek out further information, and then make use of that information. Resident interviews, however, suggest that the narrow limits of the development approvals system leave them feeling as though they are being asked to comment on issues in which they do not have expertise. Where the planners see themselves asking for experiential information, comments by one resident suggest that it is not fair that they are asked to become experts in issues such as traffic engineering (Anonymous, 2013c).

These views suggest that both planners and the councillor for Ward 20 frame participation in planning decisions as a responsibility that is balanced with a right. The concept of 'active citizenship', as it came to be used in policy in the UK, emphasizes citizen involvement in decision-making as a way to balance the rights and duties associated with citizenship (Marinetto, 2003). Consistent with the focus on the *responsibilities* of citizenship, 'active citizens' are encouraged "to monitor their own health and welfare, while generating new activities for administrators and professionals in developing educative and preventative functions" (Raco and Imrie, 2000, p. 2191). This understanding of what it means to be an urban citizen treats citizenship as a set of ongoing practices, but focuses on a set of responsibilities that citizens are expected to fulfill as a condition for their ability to claim the corresponding rights.

The language of the City's Official Plan also reinforces the emphasis on the

responsibility of citizens to participate in local decisions. The Official Plan envisions Toronto as “A City of Leaders and Stewards”, in which “individuals and communities actively participate in decisions affecting them” and people are “inspired to become involved in affecting positive change” and “engaged and invested in city living and civic life.” Everyone is asked to bear some responsibility for the natural environment and for the children and youth in their communities (City of Toronto, 2010, p. 1-5). The public involvement policies that relate more directly to the City's planning process put some onus on the municipal government to encourage participation by giving consideration to the diversity of the community and the needs of individuals of different ages and abilities, ensuring that information about planning issues is available and understandable to residents, and requiring at least one community meeting in addition to the statutory public meeting required by the *Planning Act* prior to the approval of proposed Official Plan or Zoning By-Law Amendments (City of Toronto, 2010, p. 5-19). Residents, however, must still do their part by making use of those opportunities.

Residents are also asked to take some responsibility to organize themselves in order to participate in redevelopment decisions; local community organizations can play an important role in ensuring that residents can participate effectively. One planner indicated that when a development application is made, if residents have concerns, it is ideal if they meet with one another prior to the required community consultation meeting in order to identify the concerns that they share; then when the residents speak to the planner with a unified voice, their message is stronger and will likely be

given more weight (Anonymous, 2012d). According to the planners who were interviewed, in addition to the formal participatory processes, residents are able to become involved in planning decisions by attending meetings, getting to know the neighbourhood and the local organizations there, and remaining in contact with the planner and councillor (Anonymous, 2012a; 2012b; 2012c; 2012d).

In the UK, public involvement in policy formation and governance has been characterized as a partnership between community organizations and local governments, but in order to access resources to enact local initiatives, those organizations have had to show that their goals are consistent with other government policies, such that urban regeneration funding has been used to encourage decisions that are consistent with the objectives of the government (Raco and Imrie, 2000). Citizens are expected to be active participants, individually and through civil society organizations, in formulating and implementing local urban regeneration initiatives, yet in order to get access to the resources that are available for those plans, they must play the government's game by setting goals and adopting plans that are consistent with those of the government.

Urban policy becomes reliant on strategies, initiated and implemented by governments at different scales, which "activate" citizens "take greater responsibility for their own government" (Raco and Imrie, 2000, p. 2187). Citizens have both social and political obligations, although how those obligations are to be fulfilled remains subject to debate, with some theorists emphasizing consumer practices while others focus on

political participation and the formation of a diverse civic culture (Andrews *et al.*, 2008). 'Active citizens' are agents with the capacity to challenge and shape the institutions that govern daily life (Raco and Imrie, 2000). However, this capacity for agency is shaped and directed; government institutions play a central role in enabling participation, which includes the dissemination of information and civic education (Andrews *et al.*, 2008).

A 'Limited' Conceptualization of Urban Citizenship

The relationship between residents and the municipal government that emerges from the planners' interviews is at once active and limited. While citizens are encouraged – and to an extent, supported - to participate in the local decisions that affect them, their participation takes place on the municipal government's terms. This conceptualization of urban citizenship is consistent with the governmentality of advanced liberalism (Isin, 2000; Rose, 2000), which centres on a citizen-state relationship in which citizens' active participation in a collaborative decision-making process becomes an instrument by which citizens regulate themselves to conform to the policies and goals of the government (Raco and Imrie, 2003; Marinetto, 2003).

In contemporary urban governance, local governments have become one agent among many actors who have been given some degree of governmental authority (Isin, 2000; Rose, 2000). Citizens are also active participants in the work of governing their communities, as individuals and as groups (Rose, 2000, p. 97). "Active citizenship is regarded as a strategy of government" that enables efficient, de-centralized social regulation by making use of existing community-based practices and by directly shaping

the processes through which community involvement can be exercised (Marinetto, 2003, p. 110). Although both planners and the local councillor in Ward 20 are committed to engaging citizens in redevelopment planning, the methods that are typically employed represent such a top-down understanding of citizenship.

This form of urban governance has been described as “Janus-faced” for its focus on increasing democracy on one hand, and its “impoverished practice of political citizenship” on the other (Swyngedow, 2005, p. 1993). Interviews with municipal planners and the local councillor for Ward 20 indicate a sincere commitment to a participatory planning process that empowers residents and encourages redevelopment to address their needs and aspirations for their communities. At the same time, however, that process is defined from the top down, which results in limited transparency and a sense that the process has been designed to elicit pre-defined responses. The tension inherent in this limited conceptualization of urban citizenship is that collaborative forms of governance that seek to involve citizens in local decisions are embedded in a neoliberal political context that may be fundamentally at odds with citizens’ goals (Swyngedow, 2005). Swyngedow (2005, p. 1994) cites “a common purpose, joint action, a framework of shared values, continuous interaction and the wish to achieve collective benefits that cannot be gained by acting independently” as the purpose “governance-beyond-the-state”. The participatory process is also limited in that the primary focus is information gathering. The potential for capacity-building is secondary and is not measured; further, this element is undermined by emphasis on

citizens' responsibility to actively seek out information and mobilize themselves.

Redevelopment planning in Ward 20 thus reflects a bounded or limited form of citizenship. Participation occurs, but it does not entail a meaningful transfer of power over the relevant decisions from the municipal government to still more localized communities (Marinetto, 2003). Furthermore, the key policies that promote and facilitate downtown redevelopment are established through separate processes, and are separated in time from individual redevelopments that collectively may no longer be consistent with the existing guidelines. These two modes by which citizen participation in redevelopment planning illustrate the tension between the desire to make decisions democratically in collaboration with empowered citizens and the often undemocratic character of urban governance processes, with their "fuzzy institutional arrangements, ill-defined responsibilities and ambiguous political objectives and priorities" (Swyngedow, 2005, p. 1999).

Beyond the essential fact that official opportunities for citizen participation are defined in terms of the needs of the planners and councillors rather than the citizens, elements of the participatory process that expand on the minimum requirements set in the *Planning Act* and Toronto's Official Plan are flexible. Efforts to promote "effective" citizenship in the UK have typically been voluntary and are defined for specific projects, so that the resources expended to increase participation vary and may be insufficient, and there is no sustained commitment (Andrews *et al.*, 2008). Effective citizenship is contested, in that participatory practices may have instrumental value for the local

government but provide less benefit to citizens themselves, which makes it challenging to evaluate the success of different strategies (Andrews *et al.*, 2008).

From Residents' Point of View: Reaching for an Expansive Right to Participate in the Production of Urban Space

Ward 20 residents' approach to public participation is quite different from that of planners. Interviews, observation at community consultation meetings, and examination of media coverage of planning decisions in downtown Toronto indicate that residents who become involved in the planning process desire to direct both the pace and the extent of redevelopment in their neighbourhoods. Participation in redevelopment planning decisions in Ward 20 is rooted in concern with the *overall* impact of urban transformation on both the social and the spatial qualities of their neighbourhoods. Residents seek to engage with the planning system on that basis, and are frustrated with the more limited participation that occurs through the development approvals system. They appear to be reaching out for a more democratic process. The concept of the 'right to the city' can thus be used to examine some of the claims they are making through their exercise of urban citizenship.

The 'right to the city' is comprised of number of associated rights, according to Lefebvre (1996), but three are often identified as key: a right to difference, a right to participation and a right to appropriation (Isin, 2000; Schmid, 2012). The right to participation is the right to contribute to the production of urban space, while the right

to appropriation is a right to “access, occupy and use space, and create new space that meets people’s needs” (Brown and Kristiansen, 2009, p. 15). It is the right to live at the centre, instead of being relegated to the margins.

These rights [which define civilisation] ... would change reality if they entered into social practice: right to work, to training an education, to health, housing, leisure, to life. Among these rights in the making features the *right to the city* (not to the ancient city, but to urban life, to renewed centrality, to places of encounter and exchange, to life rhythms and time uses, enabling the full and complete *usage* of these moments and places, etc.) (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 179).

Lefebvre’s original articulation of the concept did not clearly define what is included within the ‘right to the city’ or what is meant by ‘the city’, but it has prompted the reintroduction of *space* as an important concept in urban theory (Fainstein, 2009, p. 27).

The right to the city is about both using and democratizing urban space (Isin, 2000), and rejects the assumption that urban space should be produced by capital and purchasing power rather than the exercise of collective political and social action (Harvey, 2008).

Urban space and the rights of citizenship are produced in relation to one another, and the ability to enjoy such rights as democratic participation and self-actualization is contingent on spaces that support and facilitate them (McCann, 2002). In this view, to exercise a ‘right to the city’ is to be included in the process of making decisions, and to be empowered to participate in political life and decisions without regard to one’s “similarity to or difference from other individuals or groups” (McCann, 2002, p. 78). It is an expression of “urban citizenship”, defined as the “practice of articulating, claiming and renewing group rights in and through the appropriation and creation of spaces in the city” (Isin, 2000, p. 15). David Harvey (2008) suggests that the ‘right to the city’ is a

human right, in that the city enables residents to shape, create and remake their environment; at the same time, this process shapes human society and social ties, the relationship to nature, and values. Values and attitudes toward society, conversely, shape the choices about the kind of city we hope to build. The 'right to the city' is also a *collective* right, exercised not by individuals but by groups (*ibid*).

Lefebvre's notion of the 'right to the city' offers on one hand a partial articulation of the 'expansive' conceptualization of urban citizenship that underlies Ward 20 residents' approach to participatory planning processes. On the other, it also permits a critical analysis of how the residents' approach to those processes may continue to fall short of the goal of a democratic transformation of both the planning system and the processes of urban governance. In defining what is meant by a 'right to the city', three critical issues must be answered: whose right is it, what rights are associated with it, and to which city does that right apply (Marcuse, 2009). Interviews with residents in Ward 20 suggest that when they engage with the planning process, they are reaching for some of the rights associated with the 'right to the city', but not all. They may not consistently consider the question of "whose city". In addition, although they may mobilize in resistance to particular planning decisions or issues, there is little evidence of a broader mobilization with the aim of transforming the process of urban governance in Toronto among the residents who were interviewed.

The Totality of Neighbourhood Impact

Residents are seeking a more expansive right to participate in the production of urban space than they are able to exercise through the existing planning process in Ward 20. While the planners focused on citizens' participation in the development approvals process, through which individual applications to redevelop specific sites are reviewed, residents' comments stressed that their real concern is the total impact of all redevelopment. It is these issues that they wanted to address at community consultation meetings. For example, the planners' comments indicated that they are seeking residents' feedback on such issues as how often they use a laneway that would see a traffic increase from a proposed new residential development. In interviews and at three community consultation meetings, residents in Ward 20 consistently stated that their concerns were with the *overall* increase in traffic caused by *all* redevelopment (City of Toronto, 2012a; 2012b; 2012c; Anonymous, 2013a; 2013b; 2013c). This distinction is significant because planners must judge the alignment of development applications with the principles of good planning on their own merits. Approved developments are taken into account in the technical analysis of impacts such as shadow studies (City of Toronto, 2012a; 2012b), but in parts of Ward 20, many applications are being made simultaneously within a limited area. As a result, residents seek to focus on larger neighbourhood issues in community consultation meetings in Ward 20, and they feel

that their concerns are not being adequately addressed because development applications continue to come forward (City of Toronto, 2012a; 2012b; Anonymous, 2013a; 2013b).

Traffic and infrastructure impacts are a case in point. Although an increase in traffic, particularly in areas where roads are already operating at capacity, is viewed as a legitimate planning argument, at three community consultation meetings for different condominium development applications, residents' comments were rarely restricted to the anticipated traffic impacts of the specific proposal. Instead, while some comments referred to the long-term effects that would be felt if the proposal were approved and constructed, most related to the spacing of new construction and the lack of infrastructure to support *all* of the current levels of new construction.

Similar concerns were raised about the increased demand on services and infrastructures including public transit, water and electricity. In several public meetings, residents' comments to the councillor, planner and developers in attendance indicated that they had been affected by rolling blackouts or were increasingly unable to use public transit due to the crowding on streetcars (City of Toronto, 2012a; 2012b). It was clear that many of the residents were dissatisfied with the local councillor's reassurance that there is sufficient capacity in the system to deal with the new development and that a transportation study is in process to identify needed improvements to the system (City of Toronto, 2012a; 2012b). Interviews with some of the residents in attendance at these meetings indicated that they were unaware of this study and that they felt the

councillor was not taking their concerns seriously. Residents are also concerned that the existing public green spaces are overcrowded, and that not enough has been planned to accommodate the population growth that will accompany all the new development, particularly in the Entertainment District and surrounding area. They expressed frustration and a feeling that “there is no plan” that sets out clear limits on what developers may propose and what may be approved (Anonymous, 2013a; 2013b).

The notion of a ‘right to the city’ is associated with an argument that city’s use value - the value derived from the city as a focus of social and political life, and a centre for the generation of knowledge, wealth and the arts - is being increasingly overwhelmed by its *exchange value* (Harvey, 2008). This problem is reflected in Ward 20 residents’ concerns about the overall negative impacts of redevelopment in their neighbourhoods. Their ability to use and enjoy the urban spaces in which they live is being overwhelmed by the political and economic forces that are driving new construction at a rapid pace. When residents focus on the overall spatial and social impacts of redevelopment on their communities, they are giving primacy to the *use value* of the city as the site of everyday life. Overcrowded sidewalks and streetcars, the absence of parks, and the lack of local access to basic amenities like groceries are all examples of the ways that redevelopment can either negatively impact the use value of a neighbourhood, or at least fail to positively affect it.

Preserving and Enhancing Neighbourhoods: Rights to Difference and Rights to Inclusion

In addition to the rights to participation and to appropriation, Lefebvre's (1996) notion of the 'right to the city' includes a 'right to difference'; this right includes coexistence within the myriad ways of living in the city (p. 109) and the right to encounter difference (p. 129). In urban space, difference is brought together and becomes productive (Schmid, 2012). This component of the 'right to the city' was less clear in residents' approach to public participation in planning decisions, but the importance of distinctive neighbourhoods in Toronto suggests that while residents may not emphasize *encounter*, they do value the right to difference in ways of life.

Residents (Anonymous, 2013a; 2013b; 2013c) and business owners (City of Toronto, 2012b; 2012c) stressed the need to preserve the unique features of their neighbourhoods and communities through their participation in redevelopment planning decisions. This goal can be understood as a claim to a right to difference. In the Entertainment District, that may mean protecting the clubs, theatres, and restaurants from new residential development that could result in pressure to limit the city's nightlife (Anonymous, 2013a). The merchants and residents of Kensington Market are resisting the encroachment of Starbucks (Ballingall, 2013), while tenants of the Toronto Community Housing Corporation in neighbouring Alexandra Park have fought to ensure that the redevelopment of their subsidized apartment complex does not result in the displacement of their community (Dempsey, 2012). Residents near the York Quay aim to

preserve access to Harbourfront and to ensure that new condominium development interfaces with the street (Anonymous, 2013c). By preserving the distinct character of their communities and resisting the homogenizing forces of condominium development, residents in Ward 20 are asserting their rights to live in different ways, and to encounter difference (Schmid, 2012, p. 48).

Related to the right to difference is the issue of inclusion. The 'right to the city' is a right for all citizens to be included in the centres of power and decision-making, knowledge production and information, rather than pushed to the margins (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 195). Questions of belonging and inclusion in Ward 20 are complex. In Alexandra Park, low-income residents of subsidized housing mobilized to advocate for their right to remain in their neighbourhood during and after its redevelopment, and won a clear commitment to a principle of "zero displacement" from the TCHC (Anonymous, 2012a; Vaughan, 2012). In more affluent neighbourhoods, patterns of exclusion are evident, however. At one public meeting, some residents were concerned that the design of publicly accessible portions of a development application would encourage use by homeless individuals (City of Toronto, 2012a). At another, several residents argued against both additional condominium development and the inclusion of affordable housing in new construction on the grounds that it will reduce property values for current owners (City of Toronto, 2012b). Yet residents also stated that one motivation for their engagement with the participatory planning process is to advocate on behalf of those who visit and use their neighbourhoods but do not live there

(Anonymous, 2013a; 2013b; 2013c). These residents are claiming a right to preserve the use value of their neighbourhoods and unique ways of living both for themselves and for a set of potential users, while aiming to limit access by groups who they perceive as less desirable.

Are there Seeds of Transformation in Public Participation in Ward 20?

As a radical challenge to the capitalist system and a call to action to bring about a more just urban society, Lefebvre's notion of the 'right to the city' is not meant to imply a right to a specific city. However, there is a body of research that explores the ways that associated rights are claimed at particular places and times: the right to access public space, the right to participate in local decision-making, the right to housing, the right to environmental or spatial justice. Staeheli (2007) points to examples such as a community garden in New York City that both represented an appropriation of physical space and a site for organizing the gardeners to lay claim to further rights by accumulating and sharing knowledge about how to engage with the municipal government. The residents may not have used the language of the 'right to the city', and they may not have considered their work in the garden as a way of laying claim to full membership in an abstract notion of urban society, yet through their actions, the residents who were involved were engaged in reconfiguring their relationship with the local state.

A number of scholars have examined the question of what it means to enact a 'right to the city' in daily life. One strand of scholarship maintains that the 'right to the

city' cannot be granted, but rather must be seized through political mobilization and action (Mayer, 2009; Harvey and Potter, 2009). This argument suggests that planners, as mediators or representatives of the local state, cannot play a role in granting a 'right to the city'. However, the presumed goal of such political mobilization is to induce the state to change its decision-making process or the content of its decisions in response.

The 'right to the city' is not concerned with rights to a specific city; claiming such a right ought to move beyond localized, community-specific concerns toward broader collective action rooted in an "urban perspective" on justice and inequality (Routledge, 2010, p. 1173). When residents in Ward 20 participate in community consultation meetings to discuss the impacts of applications to redevelop properties in their neighbourhoods, they are typically concerned with very localized issues. At the same time, however, they are working to expand the terms of the discussion from an opportunity to comment on an individual project toward a larger conversation about how their neighbourhoods are being transformed through redevelopment. Furthermore, interviews with representatives from two of the downtown residents' associations suggest that residents are also concerned with how people outside their communities who use their neighbourhoods will be affected by redevelopment (Anonymous, 2013a; 2013c). Mobilization for justice is not yet occurring in the more affluent neighbourhoods in Ward 20 that are experiencing redevelopment, but the willingness to adopt a broader perspective may be an opening for such advocacy to begin.

Marcuse (2009) writes that in order to bring about that future city, the democratic or just society, it is necessary to eliminate the profit motive from the political sector and to eliminate the role of wealth and the power that accompanies it from public decisions. This implies a much broader range of participation in planning decisions, and it entails recognition by municipal governments that 'ordinary' citizens, those without wealth or status, have an equal right to participate in those decisions. However, the corollary of Marcuse's point is that elite interests are overrepresented in municipal institutions, and something must be done to change that situation.

Expanding on Lefebvre's description of the 'right to the city' as both a "cry and a demand", Marcuse (2009) argues that the "demand" arises from those who have been shut out of the benefits of urbanity. The "cry" represents the aspirations of people who share in the material benefits of the contemporary city, yet whose opportunities for creativity and self-actualization are constrained (*ibid*). In Ward 20, those who live in rapidly transforming condominium communities have benefited from their access to capital and to central space, but much of their focus in their involvement in planning decisions is on preserving their neighbourhoods as spaces for living, rather than for capital accumulation by developers.

The right to the city is a moral claim to participate in the social and political life of the city and to benefit from its complexity, which must be defined and refined through struggle (Marcuse, 2009; Mayer, 2009). The 'right to the city' is thus also a collective right, in that it depends on mobilization in order to access that right (Harvey, 2008). It

has become a rallying cry for social movements, but increasingly, the call is for the institutionalization of rights to what is offered by “the existing city” rather than the potential of the future city (Mayer, 2009). In Ward 20, residents attend consultation meetings where they articulate their neighbourhood-wide concerns about the impacts of redevelopment, but they said very little in interviews about how the process could be different.

Ward 20 residents described their participation in terms of *resistance* to the decisions being made by planners, City Council, and developers. While several planners indicated that one of the frustrations of promoting public participation in planning decisions is that people do not pay attention until something occurs that they oppose, this observation can be unpacked to provide a deeper understanding of the issues. The residents tended to view planners and the local councillor as complicit in the promoting the process of urban transformation that they perceive to be excessive, although in interviews they acknowledged that the city planning department is distinct from the development proponent (Anonymous, 2013a; 2013c). Their frustration stemmed from the perception that planning policies to control development, particularly those that limit height and density, are either lacking or simply being ignored (Anonymous, 2013a; 2013b; 2013c).

Bridging the Participation Gap? Informal Neighbourhood Planning

Opportunities for citizen participation in planning for redevelopment may be extended beyond the required community consultation meeting and statutory public meeting.

The optional pre-application consultations are one example, but such additional exercises do not need to be confined to development approvals. Local councillors in Toronto have a considerable degree of discretion to engage the public within their wards (Anonymous, 2012d). During the interviews, several planners indicated that the local councillor typically organizes opportunities for participation in planning decisions outside the formal process on a case-by-case basis, although resident demand is an important driving force in the decision to do so (Anonymous, 2012a; 2012d; Vaughan, 2012).

Adam Vaughan's efforts to facilitate dialogue between residents and developers, and to encourage community members to sit down together to identify the needs in their neighbourhoods, can be read as an attempt to empower citizens by creating opportunities for them to participate in the ongoing transformation of their spaces in the city. Staeheli (2008) observes that it is through building and empowering *communities* that individuals can become empowered as citizens in the broader public realm. This view is consistent with how Adam Vaughan described the "special" planning process at work in Ward 20, and also with how planners characterized citizen participation in planning decisions (Vaughan, 2012). The tension lies in the fact that the development approval system is highly influential in redevelopment decisions, and this process is not conducive to community building.

In Ward 20, as described in the case study background, after his election in 2006 Adam Vaughan sought to establish a "consistent framework" for development

applications by first engaging with residents in every neighbourhood in the ward, with assistance from Ryerson University planning students and the Centre for City Ecology, to identify local needs (Vaughan, 2012). A similar process may also take place in relation to specific, individual development applications, using a "community checklist" developed during the original consultations (City of Toronto, 2012c; Vaughan, 2012). However, while this process enables residents to speak to the broad neighbourhood-level issues of concern, it occurs entirely outside of the city's official planning system. It offers citizens a chance to voice larger concerns about their neighbourhoods rather than restricting them to commenting on the impacts of a specific new building on one hand, but what they suggest is not binding on either the developer or the city; as one resident described it, the process was "useful", but it wasn't clear how the councillor used the information afterward (Anonymous, 2013c). It simply provides the local councillor with additional information that can then be used in negotiation with planning staff and the developer. In comments about "working groups" to develop compromise positions on development applications, one planner also noted that while these groups permit in-depth discussions and typically are used when there is significant resident opposition or concern about a particular issue, participation is determined by the councillor (Anonymous, 2012c; 2012d). Thus, although these more flexible opportunities for participation can be more responsive to citizens' interests, they are of limited use in influencing decisions, and while they may be established as a response to resident mobilization, they may not be transparent.

In addition to the lack of transparency and the limited opportunities for participation, these informal participatory processes may not address the needs of people who are marginalized. Although residents' claims to rights to participate and to occupy space in their neighbourhoods suggest an expansive conceptualization of urban citizenship consistent with a claim to a 'right to the city', there are elements that are missing. The 'right to the city' is a compelling articulation of urban citizenship, but it is a complex task to untangle the question of whose rights (Marcuse, 2009). The 'city' should not be understood as a literal city, but rather a term that stands for contemporary urban society (Lefebvre, 1996; Harvey, 2003; Marcuse, 2009). However, there is an explicitly *spatial* form of justice, and that the 'right to the city' entails rights to access physical space (Iveson, 2011).

The 'right to the city' is not solely concerned with rights to access the social and material resources of the city, but it is related to class, in that the process of urbanization produces spatial concentrations of wealth and poverty (Harvey, 2008). Urban development processes also result in the spatialization of other social and cultural divisions within a given community, which may overlap with class divisions. In Toronto, the result has been the concentration of more affluent residents in the city's centre, while poorer residents are only able to access housing on the margins (Hulchanski, 2010). It is essential first to ask 'whose right to the city' because, for example, financial powers, property owners and speculators, political actors, and the media may already *have* a 'right to the city' in that they are amply represented in local

decisions (Marcuse, 2009). The informal participatory processes in Ward 20 can and do create opportunities for advocacy for strategies to increase access to the city centre by marginalized groups, such as the construction of affordable housing (City of Toronto, 2012c). However, they may not consistently enable those who have been marginalized to speak for themselves and to stake claims to their rights to the city and to social justice.

Conclusion

Participatory planning processes also represent an opportunity for claims to new rights to the city, although they may not be successful in enabling such claims; through critical engagement with these processes and their outcomes, a clearer understanding of their potential may be achieved (McCann, 2002). In this paper, the goal has been to examine participatory processes in Ward 20 by examining the way that residents, planners and elected representatives enact their relationship, and to identify their underlying conceptualizations of citizenship. At least two distinct conceptualizations of urban citizenship are influencing the way that public participation in redevelopment planning takes place in Ward 20. Where planners view participation as a form of involvement in a governance system that exists within a constrictive policy framework that permits little space for redevelopment to be citizen-directed, residents view the process more expansively. Residents are seeking, at the least, the right to participate more fully in ensuring that redevelopment in their neighbourhoods takes place within a coherent

plan. By examining the differences between this 'expansive' conceptualization of urban citizenship and the more 'limited' citizenship relation envisioned by planners, and considering how they impact the structure and content of public participation, some light can be shed on what participation *means*, to all of the actors within the planning system. Through that understanding, it may be possible to highlight the limits on how participation can result in more just outcomes, identify how to bring planners and residents closer together by reframing the process, and to pinpoint opportunities for advocacy to change the system. The question then becomes, how is this reframing and advocacy to be achieved, and by whom.

Still Searching for the Just City

This research cannot answer the question of whether public participation can genuinely result in more socially just outcomes, but it may point to some possibilities that could lead to more just processes and highlight areas where political advocacy could begin. Two critical issues include who has control over the planning agenda and planning process, and who can participate in the process – i.e., who is a citizen?

The dissatisfaction expressed by the residents in their interviews and at the community consultation meetings suggests that lack of power to set the planning agenda is an issue that limits the potential for public participation to produce more just outcomes. Neither the planners' conceptualization of urban citizenship nor the residents' more expansive view of democratic involvement in redevelopment planning decisions suggests that planning activity could be driven primarily – or even partially –

by the needs and interests of the existing community.

If *control of the agenda* is one criterion of democracy (Dahl in Agger and Löfgren, 2008, p. 150), it is fair to say that planning processes that are reactive - citizens are presented with a plan that is already in process, or a fully formed development proposal, and are expected to give feedback on it; as a rule they do not have the opportunity to define what ought to be included in the proposal. A *Toronto Star* columnist lamented that planning in Toronto is increasingly moving away from the "fun stuff" - planning cohesive new neighbourhoods and precincts - in favour of greater emphasis on the review and management of individual development applications (Fiorito, 2012). In this view, neither citizens nor planners have control of the agenda and the democratic potential of the planning process in this city is compromised. The special Ward 20 planning process described by Adam Vaughan was intended to bring back some control of the agenda by empowering citizens to identify the issues in their neighbourhoods that needed to be addressed and that could be addressed in future redevelopment. It represents one answer to how the right to the city - the right to control to the agenda of the city - can be re-appropriated, but it lacks authority because it is not part of an officially sanctioned planning process.

Related to control of the planning agenda, control of the participatory process itself is a critical issue that affects the potential for just outcomes in redevelopment planning. Inputs can be channeled into particular paths very subtly. For example, in the suggestion that residents should establish a unified position on a development

application in advance, in order to be heard most clearly by the planning staff, little space has been left for differentiation within the local community (Staehele, 2008, p. 18) or for dialogue and evolution of opinions. The authority of local councillors to establish complementary, albeit informal, dialogues with developers and citizens is also problematic because while it appears to be responsive to residents' concerns, the councillor retains control over the duration, type, and extent of participation within the process. In situations where the planner and (most) residents adopt the same position with regard to the development application, this may not pose a problem, but even so, it will always have the appearance of being an exclusionary process. Most critically, however, residents are limited to discussing the development applications that are actually made, which means that the "substance of the debate" has already been set by their proponents (Fainstein, 2010, p. 23)

Public participation in Ward 20 and across Toronto is a formal and frustrating exercise for residents, and one that appears to be doing little to curb the negative impacts of redevelopment, because it takes place on a case-by-case basis. Within the formal development approval process, residents' primary opportunity for participation occurs through the required community consultation meeting and through pre-application meetings for each development application. Particularly for residents of the downtown neighbourhoods where most new construction is in the form of high-rise condominium towers, residents feel that every new application exceeds what they consider to be an acceptable height and density. As a result, public participation has

become primarily an exercise of rejection, rather than an opportunity for dialogue about how redevelopment *should* be occurring, what it *should* look like. Councillor Vaughan's community checklist exercise can help to address the problem, but in the face of an application to develop a 70-storey tower it accomplishes far too little. Residents are able to articulate what they want in their neighbourhoods through that process, but from that point on, the participatory process is largely seen as an opportunity to comment on something that has already been deemed to be unacceptable.

The example of Alexandra Park, a Toronto Community Housing Corporation complex in Ward 20 which has been slated for redevelopment in its entirety, hints at what may be possible when planning activity is detached from the development approval system. The community had an advantage in that the TCHC was prepared to collaborate with residents with full support from the councillor and planning staff, (Anonymous, 2012a) and to train and employ community animators to activate their neighbours to become involved (Sidhu, 2008). This strategy may have been self-serving in that the TCHC had been subject to a considerable degree of criticism for failure to adequately consult the community when planning a similar project, the redevelopment of the Regent Park housing complex (Kipfer and Petrunia, 2009). However, as a result, the residents of the complex were able to negotiate several significant changes to the plans that may reduce negative impacts, such as displacement, associated with the redevelopment of public housing (Urban Strategies, 2011).

Inclusion and Belonging

In interviews, neither planners nor residents clearly expressed who should be included in the planning process, leaving some question as to who is considered an urban citizen and under what circumstances. "Everyone" should have the right to have a say in planning decisions, according to one interviewee (Anonymous, 2012a), but practically, that is a challenge. Nearby residents were seen as the most critical group to contact, and planners in particular were clear that both homeowners and tenants need to be involved and that they take some actions to ensure residents are contacted. Some residents, on the other hand, had a tendency to dismiss the legitimacy of the voices of others who disagreed with them about the direction of the neighbourhood. In some cases in the more affluent downtown areas, a few residents were also heard to argue that a specific group (tenants, particularly those with low incomes) did not belong in 'their' neighbourhoods. These views are not especially surprising, but if planning activity in Toronto is to become a more just process, it is necessary to begin to address these potential conflicts and promote inclusivity, which would be in accordance with city policies (City of Toronto, 2009, p. 1-3). Education to promote the idea that all citizens have a right to participate, and to explicitly define 'all citizens', could help provide residents with the tools to address conflicts more productively and to recognize one another *as* citizens, despite differences.

Reframing Participation for Planners and Residents

Municipal planners working in Toronto are enmeshed in a constraining legislative framework that was designed to permit public input. Within those limits, though, they have professional obligations to identify and uphold the public good. Many of the residents who are frustrated with the planning process and who are seeking to have a greater say in how their neighbourhoods transform do not have that obligation to one another. While they may be concerned with how to preserve the spaces they value for their own enjoyment and for visitors to the city, they are not always concerned the needs of people who are marginalized. Planners must become more active educators to help residents understand the multiplicity of public interests, and residents, at least those who are already benefiting from the city, must assume a greater responsibility to ensure that they are advocating for just outcomes. In their desire for greater control over the transformation of their neighbourhoods and their efforts to claim a right to the city, residents are reaching for an expansion of democracy in Ward 20.

Planners know that residents often perceive planning decisions as unfair or wrong, and may be sensitive to accusations that they do not take their professional obligation to uphold the public interest seriously. Educating residents about what is entailed by this obligation may do more than expand the number of people who are working to plan in the public interest. It may also lead to better understanding and hence smoother communication and cooperation between planners and residents.

Fainstein's (2010, p. 173) call for planners to actively promote equity within deliberative settings suggests one way that residents and planners in Ward 20 can move toward a system that is more democratic and yet does not lose sight of the diverse needs and inequality within Toronto. In interviews, planners described their role in the planning system as both listener and educator, but at community consultation meetings, they listened much more than they spoke. Bringing these two roles more into balance, by speaking directly to issues of equity, inclusion and belonging, as well as democracy and self-direction, could help residents to become more educated not just about the technical and bureaucratic aspects of planning, but its utopian potential as well (Harvey, 2000). Those residents who already share in many of the benefits of the urban environment, and who can thus be said to have a 'right to the city' of some kind, must also acknowledge that if Toronto is to achieve a more democratic planning system that affords a stronger ability to direct redevelopment, they too will have accept responsibility to consider how those who are marginalized will be affected and work with them to bring them into the system.

However, if the city is to become a more democratic space, residents must expand their notion of urban citizenship still further by reaching out across communities and neighbourhoods. In Trinity–Spadina, urban restructuring is taking place on a significant scale that crosses spatial, class and cultural divisions to impact condo dwellers and tenants, and transform both emerging communities and those that are long-established. Marcuse (2009) suggests that the dispossessed and the discontented both reach out to

claim a Lefebvrian 'right to the city'. For the dispossessed, they are demanding the right to share in the wealth of the city, while the discontented recognize that in the commodified city they will always be constrained in their creative and social opportunity (*ibid*). In Ward 20, the breadth of change suggests that new opportunities for collective action and mobilization to claim a 'right to the city' for all those who inhabit it may be opening. There is a role here for planners and the local councillor, who are positioned to see the similarities between these groups as well as their differences, to begin to draw them together.

In recent decades, there has been a deep shift in the 'organizational norms' of municipal governments (Campbell and Marshall, 2000, p. 303). There have been internal changes in how municipalities conduct business, such as a shift toward managerialism and an emphasis on performance indicators (*ibid*), but there has also been a shift toward *entrepreneurialism* which has led to local governments around the world becoming more aligned with local businesses and developers; these groups then become partners in the planning process. A side effect may be a decreasing emphasis on the voices of citizens about what is needed with regard to guiding the future of their communities.

Is There Potential for Transformation?

A conceptualization of citizenship that bridges the gaps between planners and residents must be teased out, and the participatory process reshaped if Toronto's planning system is to be transformed into a more democratic process that is concerned with rights to

participate and rights to the appropriation of space. A part of the answer here may be a more explicit conversation about just what is meant by 'citizenship' in this city.

Such re-conceptualization and re-shaping could take place at a highly local scale. It is unlikely that additional resources and staff time will be provided to the Planning Department to enable it to carry out more frequent formal reviews of local Secondary Plans in rapidly redeveloping neighbourhoods. However, Councillor Vaughan's "special planning process" could be revised to make the results more open and transparent; for example, providing the community with a clear statement of how the results of those activities will be used in the formal planning system. Participatory urban planning does not currently permit a claim to a truly Lefebvrian 'right to the city' (McCann, 2002), and citizens are not yet making such a claim – but it remains a possibility.

Dikeç's (2009) view of the 'right to the city' as a right to be actively engaged in the city's political life is consistent with the concept of a city of "leaders and stewards" described in Toronto's Official Plan. The 'right to the city' implies a right to *political* as well as physical space; urban citizenship is a political identity based on identification with the city itself (Dikeç, 2009, p. 76). However, Dikeç also writes that 'right to the city' ought not just be a practice of claiming rights by citizens; it must rather be conceptualized in such a way that the factors that influence the spatialization of social relations within the city, including planning and urban policy in general, can be challenged and transformed (Dikeç, 2009, p. 83).

If there is potential for a transformation in limited and often unsatisfying system

used to guide redevelopment decisions in Toronto, the first step may lie in the recognition that the system *can* be changed, although the peculiarities of the Canadian provincial-municipal relationship mean that some elements of the planning process may remain outside the city's control for the foreseeable future, and the looming shadow of the Ontario Municipal Board will continue to be a significant presence. The residents who were interviewed struggle against the planning process, but they do so in the context of individual decisions, rather than by advocating for an entirely different way of making decisions. Local civil society groups (e.g. the Centre for City Ecology and People Plan Toronto) do advocate for a planning process that better serves citizens' needs in addition to providing education about the existing planning system. Yet there remains a need for others to join in this dialogue as well, and it must remain an ongoing conversation. Mayer (2009) emphasizes that in the 'right to the city', Lefebvre sought to create rights through social and political action. In Ward 20, residents are engaging with their elected representative and with planners through their attendance at consultation meetings, and associations are forming in both old neighbourhoods and new, as residents begin dialogue with each other. These may be the seeds of a mobilization for change.

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