

‘Participation’ in place-based planning in Kingston Galloway/Orton Park: the case of the
proposed Community Planning Board

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Foreword

“The idea of citizen participation is a little like eating spinach: no one is against it in principle because it is good for you.” - Arnstein (1969:216)

This paper represents a final submission for the Master of Environmental Studies (Planning) Program at York University. It has been influenced by and embodies the coursework, fieldwork, and research that I have undertaken throughout the Master of Environmental Studies program at York University. The program requires that students create their own Plan of Study, outlining their personal academic goals and how they wish to achieve them through coursework, fieldwork, research and the final Major Paper. I have chosen to focus on the Urban/Regional Planning stream, which required enrolling in prerequisite planning-related courses in order to receive planning accreditation, and recognition from the Canadian Institute of Planners and the Ontario Professional Planners Institute.

My Major Paper topic incorporates all three components of my Area of Concentration as outlined in my Plan of Study, through the examination of the role of public participation in a neighbourhood characterised by territorial stigmatisation and racialised discourses of poverty. My research related to my key areas of inquiry: participation and participatory practices, place-based policy, and place/place-making. My research interests throughout my Masters has focused on a several areas of concentration: on place, power and politics; on planning theories and their influence on practice, specifically examining literature pertaining to public participation and place-based planning; exploring policies and formal planning procedures/practices; and focusing on the role of public participation as well as alternative participatory practices. I chose to examine the proposed Community Planning Board in Kingston Galloway/Orton Park as a case study as it related to, and was situated within the above mentioned areas of concentration.

I would like to thank my family and friends who have been supportive throughout my graduate studies, with their unconditional love and understanding, genuine curiosity, infinite wisdom about life, and generous patience throughout my graduate studies. Their support reminds me everyday that I am part of a wonderful community and that just because someone chooses to pursue academia it need not be a solitary journey, but one where social support systems are in place in order to help you succeed. I would also like to thank all the interview participants and mentors who took the time to meet with me. I would like to extend a thank you to my coworkers at The STEPS Initiative who allowed me to disappear for a few months in order to work on finishing my paper. I would also like to thank the many professors at the Faculty of Environmental Studies that I had the pleasure of getting to know and learning from, especially my advisor/supervisor Stefan Kipfer who has really guided my experience at FES and helped me critically question the type of planner I wish to become.

Abstract:

Place-based participatory planning is an ongoing trend in planning theory and practice, resulting in many policies across Europe and North America, focusing on issues of neighbourhood decline and poverty. In Toronto, the conversations have revolved around 13 designated ‘priority neighbourhoods’, centring on improving quality of life through place-based solutions and participatory practices. In 2014, the *Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020* is being implemented, which has the potential for dramatically changing how poverty is addressed at the neighbourhood level and how ‘quality of life’ and ‘equity’ are measured. Kingston Galloway/Orton Park (KGO), a ‘priority neighbourhood’, has gained significant momentum through place-based initiatives. A group consisting of residents, organisations, community workers, and planning professionals, have begun a conversation to address how the community can deal with potential development and planning initiatives. Embedded in the neoliberal context of racialised poverty and territorial stigmatisation, this research examines how public participation in planning takes place on the ground, in Toronto’s inner suburbs. It also focuses on how one neighbourhood is looking to shift the discourse of participatory planning towards a proactive process, led by a largely marginalised community, through the formation of a *community planning board*. Embedded at the intersection of top-down management and neighbourhood planning, the proposed board provides an opportunity for residents to drive place-based planning and address limitations in current planning practice, by politicising participatory practices through leveraging social networks and political power.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 General Introduction

Place-based participatory planning is an ongoing trend in planning theory and practice, resulting in many policies across Europe and North America, focusing on issues of neighbourhood decline and poverty. In Toronto, the conversations have revolved around 13 designated ‘priority neighbourhoods’, centring on improving quality of life through place-based solutions and participatory practices. In 2014 the *Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020* will be implemented, which has the potential for dramatically changing how poverty is addressed at the neighbourhood level and how ‘quality of life’ and ‘equity’ are measured.

Kingston Galloway/Orton Park (KGO), a ‘priority neighbourhood’, has gained significant momentum through place-based initiatives. A group consisting of residents, organisations, community workers, and planning professionals, have begun a conversation to address how the community can deal with potential development and planning initiatives. Embedded in the neoliberalist context of racialised poverty and territorial stigmatisation, this research examines how public participation in planning takes place on the ground, in Toronto’s inner suburbs. It also focuses on how one neighbourhood is looking to shift the discourse of participatory planning towards a pro-active process, led by a largely marginalised community, through the formation of a *community planning board*.

This research is important in highlighting the socio-political context in which the planning board is situated, while addressing potential benefits and drawbacks to the planning board, through an analysis of literature on participation, power, and place-based policies. The community struggles with defining the terms of operation, teaching residents at large about the planning process and participatory practices and tries to sort out the difference between formalised participatory processes (acceptable through legislation and practice) and informal,

often transformative, methods of participation. In this context, this research presents a platform for the community to begin asking important questions in order to better define their structure and potential for neighbourhood planning. A community planning board could be a means of reclaiming participatory practices and be an influence to planners, city officials and other communities/organisations across Toronto interested in and/or dealing with issues of neighbourhood poverty and participatory planning practices. Through the review of planning literature and theory, and participant interviews and observation, this research examines and questions the use of a community planning board as embedded within the ‘priority neighbourhood’ of Kingston Galloway/Orton Park. Located at the intersection of top-down management and neighbourhood planning, the Community Planning Board provides an opportunity for residents to drive place-based planning and address limitations in current planning practice, by politicising participatory practices through leveraging social networks and political power.

In 2004, a report was released by the United Way of Greater Toronto (UWGT) titled *Poverty By Postal Code*. It mapped Toronto over a twenty-year period, tracing migration patterns, and highlighting a ‘geography of poverty’. The report worked to bring issues of poverty to the forefront of public attention. It argued that poverty is not only an issue for the suburbs but has wider implications for the rest of Toronto. The Strong Neighbourhood Task Force (SNTF) was formed as a partnership between the City of Toronto and UWGT with the goal to ‘revitalise’ Toronto neighbourhoods and create an image of Toronto as a ‘world-class city’ with cohesive, welcoming, inclusive and participatory neighbourhoods “where no one is disadvantaged because of where they live” (Strong Neighbourhoods, 2005, p. 27). The Task Force created the *Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy* (TSNS) adopted by Council in 2005, that targeted social investment into 13 ‘priority neighbourhoods’, identified as areas in need of immediate assistance.

TSNS focused on creating a place-based approach to poverty, where problems and solutions were spatially bound to the neighbourhoods themselves, and where policy/practice needed to be place-based in order to ensure that neighbourhood decline would not ‘negatively influence’ other areas in Toronto (Siciliano, 2010).

In January 2011, UWGT published *Poverty by Postal Code 2 - Vertical Poverty* (PBPC2), refocusing attention on poverty and demographic changes in tower neighbourhoods of the post-war suburbs. This report reiterated that place-based approaches were necessary for addressing conditions that contribute to poverty within neighbourhoods and set out a series of recommendations, such as amending and diversifying land-use zoning in order to support the enhancement of local economic development within tower neighbourhoods. Furthering *Poverty by Postal Code 2*, the Strong Neighbourhood Task Force put forth a report, approved by Council in March 2012, regarding the next iteration of the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy, projected into 2020 (TSNS 2020). TSNS 2020 provides significant changes to current policy and practice in Toronto as it has the potential to shift the way poverty and neighbourhood improvement are addressed and managed on the ground as well as institutionally. TSNS 2020 will focus on developing a ‘neighbourhood lens’ while monitoring and evaluating social equity in neighbourhoods through an adapted tool by the World Health Organisation (called *Urban HEART*).¹ This may mean eliminating many structures and practices that have already been in place.

Place-based policies and participatory planning have become standard practice across the UK, US and Canada. Although in theory, public participation is an open process allowing all

¹ Urban HEART stands for “Urban Health Equity Assessment and Response Tool” launched in 2010 by the World Health Organisation to help city leaders maximize their collective impact for meaningful change. An adaptation of this framework will be used by the City of Toronto. For more information see: <http://www.stmichaelshospital.com/crich/projects/urbanheart/>

² Jessop categorizes this form of governance as ‘neo-corporatist’, which also focuses highly on increasing

community members to participate, participatory practices need to be further examined within a context shaped by gentrification, racialisation, and territorial stigmatisation. Participatory methods continue to be heavily critiqued based on the extent to which they afford the redistribution of power to participants in ways that allows the latter to influence or determine outcomes, have agency, and participate in meaningful and engaging ways (Arnstein, 1969; Brownill & Parker, 2010). Within the current context of neoliberalism and the neoliberalisation of planning, public participation has become further reduced and streamlined, silencing opposition and focusing on ‘consensus’ building, and often used as a strategy of manipulation (Kipfer & Keil, 2002; MacLeod et al., 2003; Brownill & Parker, 2010).

In response to these experienced frustrations and the proposed policy changes in priority neighbourhoods, in May 2012, Social Planning Toronto announced a new initiative to create a Community Planning Board in East Scarborough (Kingston Galloway/Orton Park). This initiative is intended to address growing concerns about resident engagement in the planning process and advocate for significant improvements to the reactive and unequal public participation process. The Board would create an opportunity for residents to connect physical planning to its social context while also engaging residents on planning issues, developing a community vision, and addressing the disconnect between formalised participatory processes and on-the-ground experiences (Ahmed, 2012). In order to understand how the Board will operate, it is important to address the role of public participation in planning, specifically as it is situated in a racialised and marginalised neighbourhood. The Community Planning Board must be considered within the broader context of place-based management policies in the neighbourhood as well as addressing or challenging conceptions of place and place-making.

Place-based policies focus on the local with the assumption that the local level might lead to more democratic decisions, resulting in social change for the neighbourhood. Urban issues have

been intrinsically connected to place, and the local scale has been used as a strategy for solutions obscuring other (possibly more effective) options. The proposed Planning Board situates itself within this place-based discourse by adopting the belief that locally based planning solutions will inherently result in better community planning. However it is important for the Board to be critical of the local trap, while seeking to address systemic issues that manifest at the local level. As the Planning Board wishes to address issues of participatory processes, it needs to be better understood within the racialised and spatially stigmatised neighbourhood of Kingston Galloway, heavily governed by place-based programming in the wake of new objectives and regulations set out in the TSNS 2020. This research paper evaluates participatory theories and practices, the advantages/disadvantages of place-based policies, and examines how the Community Planning Board in Kingston Galloway/Orton Park can better navigate top-down management strategies and neighbourhood planning by politicising participatory practices and using their social networks and political power in order to bring about the change community residents wish to see.

1.2 Data and Methods

To understand the role of public participation in planning, specifically through the use of a planning board as a form of place-based policy embedded within the context of a ‘priority neighbourhood’, I examine discourses and understandings of participation (among stigmatised populations) as well as explore broader implications of localisation and place-based policies. My research examines the relationship between the Planning Board and the City’s place-based policy for Kingston Galloway/Orton Park, notably the *Toronto Strong Neighbourhood Strategy (2005/2020)*, and how the Board relates to other place-based participatory initiatives in Kingston Galloway. I sought to examine the meaning of ‘participation’ in a context shaped by racialised inequality, territorial stigmatisation and policies to manage stigmatised spaces and to highlight

the circumstances in which the Board can become a politicised entity, reclaiming the participatory process. This research explores the connection between local participation and top-down place-based management policies, and how the Community Planning Board can leverage power to influence neighbourhood planning outcomes.

In order to better understand how a community planning board could operate or how it could change participatory planning practices in Toronto, I undertook a literature review, analysed relevant government and organisation documents, conducted participant interviews and gathered notes from participant observation of community programming, meetings and gatherings/events. Data was obtained through document analysis from various sources in order to examine how different discourses have been constructed, hegemonized and challenged. Through the analysis of relevant policy and planning documents from 2004 to 2013, I was able to examine place-based/place-management policies and practice regarding the planning of ‘priority neighbourhoods’. Close examination of various City of Toronto and United Way reports, City of Toronto *Official Plan*, the *Places To Grow Act*, the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*, the *Planning Act*, and other community organisation documents and reports provided the necessary data.

I chose to examine the Community Planning Board as a case study of how participatory methods can question power structures and allow communities to better navigate through the planning system, seeking more ‘proactive’ rather than ‘reactive’ participatory processes. I was able to conduct my MES fieldwork experience (Fall 2012) with The Centre for City Ecology (CCE), a nonprofit organisation (based in downtown Toronto and one of the main organisations supporting the creation for the Community Planning Board). Through my work with CCE, I learned about the proposal to create a community planning board in Kingston Galloway/Orton Park and was interested in exploring its implications in a racialised and territorially stigmatised

place. Following my internship, I began participating in community gatherings and in meetings pertaining to the Board. As a researcher and participant, I declared my motives to residents, community members, and the various organisations involved, stating that my presence at meetings was in the role of a participant observer. I helped with minor administrative tasks however I was not involved with the programming or implementation of the meetings during my research so as to avoid any conflict of interest. My research is based on my observations of an ongoing *Working Group* and *Professional Advisory Committee*, as they work to figure out their objectives, mandate, membership and operational framework.

In addition to participant observation, I conducted 13 interviews that included City of Toronto staff connected to Kingston Galloway/Orton Park and/or the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy (2005/2020) such as Councillor Paul Ainslie (City Councillor for Ward 43), East Scarborough Storefront Staff, Social Planning Toronto Staff and various resident members (a full list of participants is provided at the end of this paper). Interviews were semi-structured, which allowed for flexibility with interview questions in order to better explore the answers that participants gave, specifically how they understood place-based participatory processes, priority neighbourhood discourse (and the underlying assumptions of policy geared towards priority neighbourhoods), and how they understood their role and power as ‘participants’ within the planning of their neighbourhood. Interviews provided a platform for exploring differences and similarities in discourse and provided a counterpoint to generalisations or discourses defined by ‘professionals’ (see Appendix C for a list of questions asked). Each participant was provided with a Letter of Consent that provided background information about my research and intention, highlighting a confidentiality agreement and an assurance of anonymity. It was explained to each participant that s/he could answer or abstain from answering any questions, or withdraw from the interview process at any point with no negative

repercussions. I also informed participants that I would keep their information confidential and secure for a period of two years, at which point after it would be destroyed.

During my research some issues arose related to research and data collection. The majority of the residents I was able to interview were due to the connections I had made through my internship with The Centre for City Ecology and as such were a certain subset of the neighbourhood population: those that have a higher degree of participation in their community and are integrated in the Storefront's network and more likely aware of external discourses. It was evident that many of the residents felt very close ties to the Storefront and to the people working there and it is possible that residents' responses in interviews were skewed due to a fear of negating anything connected to the Storefront and any potential repercussions if they spoke negatively about programs or the Storefront. Due to time constraints and difficulty of reaching out to residents, it was simply not possible to interview more participants or to connect with residents that were completely disconnected to the Storefront or the Centre for City Ecology. If a different subset of residents had been interviewed, research findings could have resulted in different perspectives and conclusions. Another limitation of my research was a lack of criteria for participants. I did not seek to interview residents with particular demographic criteria but based my participant choice on ease of access. I could have implemented a more controlled sampling selection which could have influenced my research. Additionally, after I conducted my interviews and had already begun this research paper, it became evident that I should have asked more pointed questions pertaining to racial relations among groups and community members in Kingston Galloway to better understand how this might impact the Community Planning Board's structure. Unfortunately, at the time, I was not able to explore these relations for this research paper.

Furthermore, during the process of conducting my research the Director of the Centre for City Ecology changed, which has had an influence on the vision and process of the Planning Board. Another potential dilemma related to my research is that in 2014, Chief Planner Jennifer Keesmaat decided that if the Community Planning Board in Kingston Galloway/Orton Park were to be replicated in other communities then they should be called ‘advisory boards’, in order not to give any false impression of power to community members (City Staff, personal communication, March 12, 2014). While this decision will have long term implications on the Community Board in Kingston Galloway, I was not able to research how this decision might influence the participation of current members of the Working Group or Professional Advisory Committee.

1.3 Chapter Organisation

This research paper is organised into chapters examining the case study of the Community Planning Board in light of its socio-political context and participatory planning practice in Toronto.

In Chapter 2 I set up the socio-political context in which the Board is situated. I examine the role of neoliberal policies and planning practices in general (section 2.1) and its spatial manifestations, particularly the impact of neoliberal governance on Toronto’s urban form (section 2.2). Chapter 2 also focuses on the creation of ‘priority neighbourhoods’ (section 2.3), particularly examining the discourse of spatialised and racialised poverty that resulted from the City’s place-based policies. The chapter specifically examines the *Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy* (2005) and its recent transformation to *Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020* (section 2.4).

In Chapter 3 I examine literature related to public participation and place-based policy. The chapter begins with an outline of how participatory rhetoric gained popularity and evolved over time in planning (section 3.1), the role of power structures present in participatory practice (section 3.2), while the subsequent sections highlight some problematic assumptions in participatory planning practice such as issues of ‘representation’ pertaining to identity and ethnic categorisation and limitations of particular participatory processes or methods (section 3.3), and the depoliticisation of participation and community organisations (section 3.4). The chapter does not specifically focus on planning boards as a means of participatory practice but sets the stage for a better understanding of participatory planning in Toronto.

Chapter 4 presents the case study of the Community Planning Board in Kingston Galloway/Orton Park by first examining the importance of place and place-attachment in participation (section 4.1), and the ‘creation’ of Kingston Galloway/Orton Park, focusing on the stigmatising discourse and territorial stigmatisation of Kingston Galloway as a ‘priority neighbourhood’ (section 4.2). Section 4.3 outlines the context that led to the creation of the Community Planning Board, and section 4.4 examines direct versus representational forms of board participation, as a means to understand the success and/or limitations for participatory practice on the Board. The chapter concludes with an examination of the developmentalist ethos and prospective development pressures in the neighbourhood and its impact on community planning (section 4.5), followed by an examination of the potential influence and limitations of the Community Planning Board (section 4.6).

This paper concludes with a discussion on how the Planning Board might be reclaimed for the purpose of genuine participatory planning processes and transformative change while also analysing key aspects to take into consideration when moving forward with the creation of and implementation of the local planning board (section 5.1). Chapter 5 concludes by presenting

opportunities for further research and examination (section 5.2). On the one hand, I believe that a planning board can bring about some transformative change for those involved and could potentially create a platform for a conversation of participatory practice. On the other hand, I believe the Planning Board can further marginalise people from the planning process if issues of representation, participation, power, and agency are not addressed in a meaningful and transparent manner. Since the Planning Board *has yet to be implemented*, I hope my observations will help the Planning Board-Working Group discuss its limitations and points of influence. My conclusions question the use and implementation of a community planning board as a means to obtain change within Toronto's planning structure.

Chapter 2: Policy and Planning Context

It is important to understand the socio-political context in Kingston Galloway/Orton Park because it is in this context that the Community Planning Board is situated and must operate. Particularly focusing on the Toronto Strong Neighbourhood Strategy (TSNS), this chapter examines the rise of neoliberal planning policies in Toronto and their impact on the post-war suburbs. As a spatially selective political strategy, TSNS targeted poor residents, creating a discourse and representation of a racialised criminal population in need of targeted place-based management strategies. The Strategy focused on participatory (or ‘engagement’) efforts as a means of supporting residents however the state- and market-incorporation of such participatory efforts became a means of depoliticising community organisation and action on the ground. This chapter seeks to set the foundational understanding for this socio-political context.

2.1 The Rise of Neoliberal Planning: Socio-political Context

Beginning in the 1970s global shifts in migration, state governance and economic structures led to post-fordist, post-welfare multi-scalar re-regulation and restructuring, manifesting in socio-political scalar changes in the Toronto landscape. What once originated as a utopian intellectual and philosophical movement, neoliberalism became a political project in the 1970s and 1980s, between the Pinochet coup and the election of Reagan and Thatcher. A deeply contradictory ideology that has impacted contemporary urban governance and development, neoliberalism has exacerbated many of the basic problems that were sought to be ‘fixed’, meanwhile triggering popular resistance to key regulatory structures (such as transportation policy, environmental policy and economic development) and new formations of elite strategising (Brenner & Theodore, 2005, p. 104). Problematically, neoliberalism has been (mis)represented as a cookie-cutter model of policy implementation with universal trajectories

and results while ignoring the contextually specific landscapes in which it operates.

Neoliberalism (and neoliberalisation) is not a universal law or single paradigm with determined social and political outcomes but rather a spatially embedded strategy characterised by contradictions, uncertainties, and discursive power.

Neoliberalism can be conceived as three overlapping perspectives in relation to the nature of neoliberal urbanisation: “(a) as a modality of urban governance; (b) as a spatially selective political strategy; and (c) as a form of discourse, ideology and representation.” (Brenner & Theodore, 2005, p. 103). In a constant state of flux with destructive and creative moments, neoliberal governance and political strategies led to new forms of polarisations, socio-spatial inequalities, and multi-scalar territorial competition. Cities have become the playgrounds and laboratories for experimentation in neoliberal policies, from entrepreneurial planning, business incubation, branding and ‘creative class’ promotion, to place-marketing and strategies for social control, surveillance, and policing (see Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Kipfer & Keil, 2002; Siciliano, 2010 for some examples). Neoliberal urban policies have resulted in the creation, re-creation and destruction of sub/urban spaces as places for elite consumption practices and market-oriented economic growth, through the "destruction of traditional working-class neighbo[u]rhoods in order to make way for speculative redevelopment" and the "'creation of gated communities, urban enclaves and other 'purified' spaces of social reproduction; 'rolling forward' of the gentrification frontier and the intensification of sociospatial polarization” (Brenner & Theodore, 2002, p. 24).

Neoliberalism is inherently based on contradictions and is contingent in nature; it constitutes competitive forces, state downsizing and public service ‘reform’. It should not be simply reduced to its ‘concrete manifestations’ but analysed as a *process* (Peck & Tickell, 2002; Brenner & Theodore, 2005). Although it has been described in stages, these stages should be described as

moments that are always in flux and can exist simultaneously with varying weight and to different degrees. Broadly, in the Anglo-American context, neoliberalism can be understood in two main stages as described by Peck and Tickell (2002). The first stage, described as *roll-back neoliberalism*, is generally characterised as a condition of the 1980s, resulting from macroeconomic crisis conditions, which blamed Keynesian welfare state regulations and over-regulated labour markets. During this stage, arguments for making a clean break from the ‘failing’ institutions to a focus on market systems became idealised and prioritised. The early 1990s were described as *roll-out neoliberalism*, reflecting the ‘Third-Way’ politics of the time. Shifting towards social interventionism, roll-out neoliberalism marked the creation of new forms of government intervention and institution-building in “an attempt to mediate and alleviate some of the contradictions and tensions triggered by the earlier phase of urban entrepreneurialism” (Mayer, 2007, p. 91). While no longer narrowly focused on market mobilisation/extension due to its normalisation, instead roll-out neoliberalism focused on “‘social’ and penal policy-making, concerning specifically with the aggressive reregulation, disciplining, and containment of those marginalized or dispossessed” (Peck & Tickell, 2002, p. 42). This shift in neoliberalism represented a change in a focus on policymaking, reanimating the process of state-building. The same groups that were in support of 'less government' were now demanding “‘more government’ to mask and contain the deleterious social consequences, in the lower regions of social space, of the deregulation of wage labor and the deterioration of social protection” (Wacquant, 1999, p. 323, as quoted by Peck & Tickell, 2002, p. 42). In addition to the mentioned moments of neoliberalism, Allahwala et al. (2010) recognise a third, *roll-with-it neoliberalisation*, characterised by the active role of neoliberal subjects to “co-construct, sustain and also contest a now normalized neoliberal social reality” (213; also see Jessop, 2008; Keil, 2009). It is important to keep in mind that neoliberalism is not one thing, one single system or stagist in nature. “It

combines with other models, modifying them. It borrows, evolves and diversifies. It is constantly ‘in process’” (Hall, 2011, p. 708). Peck and Tickell’s, and Allahwala et al.’s explanations acts as a guide to understanding different manifestations of neoliberalism but is not to be thought of as a static, structured or linear process.

Current planning practice and public policies in Toronto reflect neoliberal and neoconservative regimes. State planning has been replaced by market superiority where the role of the planner has been altered to that of a facilitator, driven by financial and economic interests and referred to as the neoliberal or entrepreneurial planner (Baeten, 2012). Under the Progressive Conservative government of Brian Mulroney in the mid-1980s, neoliberal ideologies took foot through a series of cut backs to core funding for transportation, welfare and employment insurance, health care, public education, and affordable housing. Following the recession of the 1990s, Ontario emerged with an accelerated neoliberal politics strongly rooted in the Mike Harris government (followed by Ernie Eves) with their ‘Common Sense Revolution’ as the cornerstone to their neoliberal regime emphasizing market deregulation and the retrenchment of social welfare (Kipfer & Keil, 2002). During the Conservative regime (1995-2002), the Common Sense Revolution resulted in many changes such as severe withdrawal of governmental support for welfare benefits, abolishing provincial housing programs, the downloading of responsibilities from provincial to municipal governments, and the amalgamation of Metro Toronto with surrounding municipalities. Not only did the Harris government roll out “a multifaceted strategy to remake the local state across the province” but also conducted “frontal attacks on labour, the public sector, and people of colour” (Kipfer & Saberi, 2014, p. 124). This ‘revolution’ left municipal governments short handed to manage necessary service provisions, resulting in greater dependency on non-profit and private sectors concerning administration and policy development (Bourdeau, Keil & Young, 2009; Sicilliano, 2010, p. 17). Neoliberalism and entrepreneurial

agendas restructured planning and policies towards increased privatisation and deregulation of land-use planning, commodification of land, and weak local socialism (Kipfer & Keil, 2002).

The shift toward a strategic neoliberal governance structure consisted of policies and strategies aimed at ‘entrepreneurial’ solutions (such as attracting highly skilled workers, newcomers, the ‘creative class’ and new business/economy promotion), guised as solutions to ‘quality of life’ issues. Unlike the welfarist vision of the ‘standard of living’, a neoliberal ‘quality of life’ equated an availability of market choices privileging the consumer. Social ‘problems’ became knowable and visible in such a way that post-Keynesian discourse resulted in a logic whereby social welfare was “re-fashioned not as an entitlement of citizenship but as a response to ‘problem’ citizens” (Siciliano, 2010, p. 18). Rather than resolving issues within urban governance, neoliberalisation resulted in the formation of “new forms of elite strategizing...and reconstitute[d] the terrain of political-economic governance- and social struggle - in the [Toronto] urban region as a whole” (Brenner & Theodore, 2005, p. 104). Under neoliberal planning, land change has become profit driven and the ideology of the city reduced to that of a ‘competitive city’ governed by market and economic agendas, and marked by limited/limiting citizen participation to that whereby only local elites drive policy or planning through consumption practices, development, and market forces. Planning has become commodified with a profit driven agenda through ‘make a deal’ planning rhetoric, increasingly moving power from the state to the private sector and away from the urban subject (Kipfer & Keil, 2002, p. 240; MacLeod et al., 2003, p. 1656).

Under Mayor Rob Ford, an aggressive form of ‘roll-back neoliberal’ practice dominates where an “authoritarian populism” is being forced from the top-down, claiming to be anti-establishment and reflective of the people (Kipfer & Saberi, 2014, p. 122). The Ford government has resulted in aggressive privatisation, “selective fiscal constraint, anti-labour measures and

racialised law and order” in addition to magnifying sociospatial divisions between an ‘elitist’ downtown and suburban ‘Ford nation’ (Kipfer & Saberi, 2014, p. 130). Ford moved away from “neoliberalized multiculturalism” to a homophobic, sexist and racist populism against the “diversity management” regimes of Mayor Lastman and Miller (Kipfer & Saberi, 2014, p. 127). Targeted, racialised place-based policies, policing and management were not new to the Ford regime, and have had a long lasting spatial impact on the suburbs, further discussed in section 2.2. While, in theory, neoliberalism aspires the creation of a ‘utopia’ of markets freed from the state, in practice, it has tried to *impose* markets on all aspects of social life through the intensification of disciplinary and coercive forms of state intervention. Neoliberal frameworks manifest themselves spatially while the ideology lends itself to ‘spatial fixes’ within the planning region and (sub)urban landscapes of Toronto. As a spatially selective political strategy, neoliberalism and neoliberal urbanisation has greatly impacted the Toronto sub/urban context. This is also true for social and planning policies, particularly the use of place-management social policy and the incorporation of participatory planning efforts as a means of depoliticising civil action. The following section will discuss the spatial manifestation of neoliberalism.

2.2 Spatial Manifestations: Impact of Neoliberal Governance on Toronto’s Urban Form

The spatial manifestations of Toronto’s inner suburbs have developed due to pre-amalgamation interventionist policies and post-amalgamation neoliberal policies. Built, for the most part, between 1946 to 1971, the post-war suburbs (the former cities of Etobicoke, North York, and Scarborough) were developed and managed according to interventionist urban planning and service policies. While income polarisation has marked the suburbs today, its current context is a direct result of past interventionist practice, influencing the built environment and service structure (Filion, Osolen & Bunting, 2011, p. 183). The administration of the inner

suburbs can largely be broken down into three time frames: Metro Toronto's interventionist planning of the 1950s and 1960s; and a bifurcated neoliberal planning from 1980 onward, as well as from the inception of the City of Toronto in 1998 (Filion, Osolen & Bunting, 2011). As such, the spatial manifestation of the post-war inner suburbs reflect various administrative policies that set the context in which they exist today: characterised by social polarisation and the suburbanisation of poverty.

In 1953, the provincial government created a second-tier municipal government, combining existing and independent local jurisdictions, under the administrative jurisdiction of the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto (or Metro Toronto). Set up largely to address insufficient infrastructure and financial obstacles facing rapid suburban growth, Metro Toronto functioned as a "contradictory territorial compromise between inner city and the postwar suburban municipalities" (Kipfer & Keil, 2002, p. 238). Additionally, Metro Toronto engaged in shaping sub/urban development through infrastructure and service management. With an interventionist agenda, a few principles guided Metro Toronto's involvement in influencing suburban development: the promotion of geographical equity among the territories, through shared public housing, residential density, and rationalising public transit services and networks; mixed-use development; and the standardisation of services among the municipalities (Filion, Osolen & Bunting, 2011).

While Downtown Toronto focused on investment in and expansion of services as linked to social rights and distributive equity throughout the neighbourhoods, suburban municipalities focused on targeted investment. Suburban municipalities viewed public services in a 'cost-effective' manner, which prioritised access for particular social groups that could privately consume them. What resulted in the pre-amalgamation post-war suburbs was an inevitably uneven distribution of facilities and infrastructure among neighbourhoods and jurisdictions. The

bare minimum of resources was devoted to lower-income groups and areas within suburban communities, particularly those most in need but without the resources to pay for them (Cowen, 2005, p. 346). The political rationality of the suburbs showed a deferral to market-based services and private family responsibility for social welfare, highlighting that there were “important relationships between substantive citizenship in the suburbs, and contemporary practice in the amalgamated city” (Cowen, 2005, p. 346).

Metro Toronto’s interventionism goals sought to equally distribute services in Toronto’s inner suburbs through government funding, and subsequently, as a result of provincial cut backs starting in the 1980s, the inner suburbs were disproportionately affected (Filion, Osolen & Bunting, 2011). The 1980s marked the adoption of entrepreneurial city planning politics, through ‘make-a-deal’ planning, focusing on density negotiations through the creation and ongoing development of density nodes throughout the territories. The 1990s showed a more aggressive neoliberalism with the election of a Conservative government in 1995 and with the 1998 amalgamation of Metro Toronto (with surrounding municipalities), marking a “neo-liberal strategy aimed at achieving economies of scale and reducing resources allocated to the political process” (Filion, Osolen & Bunting, 2011, p. 192).

Increasingly, planning became a source to centralise power in the City. This was achieved through tax incentives, removing ‘outdated’ discretionary zoning, and liberating land use. Intensification objectives focused on developing arterial roads as ‘avenues’, with mixed-use density, transforming the previous low-rise suburban landscapes. Another implication of the centralised planning authority was through the creation of the new City’s *Official Plan*, which sought to minimise ‘messy’ public participation in favour of the involvement of a selective ‘stakeholder’ group to create a ‘unified’ vision “that [would] be sold to the public after the fact” (Kipfer & Keil, 2002, p. 247). What is important to note in this case is the shift from focus on

social objectives of Metro Toronto's interventionist agenda of the 1950s/60s to a developmentalist ethos, through the avenue scheme, to different parts of the inner suburbs (Filion, Osolen & Bunting, 2011). Planning in the amalgamated City built on trends from the 1980s and 1990s, focusing on the creation of a competitive city, "entrenching the imperative of competitiveness, centralising decision-making, dissociating development from public politics, and aestheticizing urban development" (Kipfer & Keil, 2002, p. 250).

The advance of neoliberal governance from Metro Toronto to the amalgamated city, marked the dismantling of social citizenship and planning approaches that for the most part focused on 'universal', welfarist forms of practice, to the rise of 'targeted' social policy as regular practice (not only in suburban jurisdictions but throughout the whole of the amalgamated city). The relevant example of targeted social policy is that of the *priority neighbourhoods*, discussed in the following section.

2.3 The Birth of Priority Neighbourhoods

With the Liberal government and Mayor Miller coming to power in 2003, a series of neoliberal policy changes have been implemented. The Province has moved to broaden its notion of the Toronto region to the Greater Golden Horseshoe, implementing protective legislation for the Greenbelt, and intensification mandates for urban development under the *Places to Grow Act* (2005). In addition, Toronto has followed UK and US policy trends towards 'localism' and place-management policy production. Place-based policies have resulted in territorial competition for the limited resources available post-amalgamation. The majority of focus on reinvestment shifted to the downtown core and only select suburban subcentres. The post-war suburbs were the hardest hit by a lack of resources and services, while also trying to respond to

the unique needs of a growing immigrant population, declining material and social infrastructure, and record levels of poverty (Cowen, 2005; Walks, 2001).

In June 2002, following the Waterfront strategy and failed Olympic Bid, Mayor Lastman initiated an elite alliance building exercise, bringing together ‘civic elites’ for Toronto’s first City Summit. The purpose of the summit was to discuss and embrace a regional vision for Toronto based on neoliberal urban governance ideology in which state-power and decisions were dependant on private and civil sectors. Toronto’s new ‘civic regionalism’ was characterised by restructuring negotiations between public, private and third-sector actors, with the aim to foster co-operation and balanced competition, “based on commitment to social accords as well as the pursuit of private economic interests in securing the stability of a socially embedded, socially regulated economy” (Jessop, 2002, p. 462).² What resulted from the City Summit was the formation of the *Toronto City Summit Alliance* in June 2002 (later changing its name to *CivicAction* in December 2010), consisting of a coalition of civic leaders within the Greater Toronto region. CivicAction recruited groups and organisations across sectors to address economic, environmental and social challenges within the Greater Toronto (and Hamilton) Area.

An initiative that resulted from CivicAction was the creation of the *Strong Neighbourhoods Task Force* (SNTF), in 2005, in conjunction with the City of Toronto and the United Way of Greater Toronto (UWGT). SNTF was prompted by a series of research reports and articles in the early 2000s highlighting increasing racialisation of poverty in the inner suburbs. The suburbs were described as serious problem areas: “once neighbourhoods reach a ‘tipping point’ it is almost impossible to turn the cycle of decline and disinvestment around. What’s worse, it tends

² Jessop categorizes this form of governance as ‘neo-corporatist’, which also focuses highly on increasing the actors and stakeholders in decision making processes (even though still an elite group of actors, although different from the ‘traditional’ actors under Fordism, such as trade unions, big businesses, and an interventionist state) (Allahwala et al., 2010, p. 218).

to *spread*.” (Strong Neighbourhoods, 2007, p. 2-3, emphasis added). One such report, titled *Poverty By Postal Code*, was published in 2004 in a context of increasing instances and growing perceptions of violence in Toronto. The report mapped Toronto over a twenty-year period, tracing migration patterns and highlighting a ‘geography of poverty’. The report worked to bring issues of poverty to the forefront of public attention and was extremely influential in creating a racialised spatial imaginary of the suburbs, where poor immigrant or non-White communities became associated with violence and poverty.

Not only did poverty become an intrinsic (spatial) issue of the suburbs but the wider implications of poverty (and its associated suburbs) was that it was conceived as problematic for the *rest* of Toronto. Poor neighbourhoods needed to be ‘revitalised’ in order to prevent any ripple effects in other neighbourhoods, the City, the Province and the country at large (Strong Neighbourhoods, 2005, p. 7). Racialised discourse ‘explained’ gun and gang violence at the time with reference to the class and ‘race identities’ of the neighbourhoods most affected. Instead of viewing these identities as *analytical* characteristics, they became *explanatory* characteristics, “suggesting that it wasn’t that the bodies in these spaces were prone to criminality, but that neighbourhood *concentrations* with particular social characteristics generated pathological environments” (Siciliano, 2010, p. 31, emphasis in original). In 2004 the City launched the *Community Safety Plan*, which focused on crime reduction (often related to *perceived* crime as opposed to *actual* crime) and targeted four low income (‘priority’) suburban neighbourhoods: Jane-Finch, Jamestown, Malvern and Kingston Galloway (later expanded to include Orton Park). While actual crime data showed these areas to have *less* crime than other neighbourhoods, in the city, they were of ‘importance’ because of “their disproportionate concentration of low income people of colour” (Siciliano, 2010, p. 58). The Plan helped solidify popular belief in the association of crime and racialised poverty.

In support of prevailing discourse, SNTF's goal was to 'revitalise' Toronto neighbourhoods and create an image of Toronto as a world-class city with cohesive, welcoming, inclusive and participatory neighbourhoods "where no one is disadvantaged because of where they live" (Strong Neighbourhoods, 2005, p. 27, emphasis added). The Task Force created *The Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy* (TSNS) adopted by Council in 2005, that targeted social investment in nine 'priority neighbourhoods', which were identified as areas in need of immediate assistance (Staff Report 2005, p. 1).³ While TSNS focused predominately on increasing social infrastructure such as community services and facilities in these neighbourhoods, the strategy solidified the City's spatial approach to poverty and its assumption that crime is intrinsically linked to the spatial concentration of poverty.

The Toronto Strong Neighbourhood Strategy and the Community Safety Plan combined to identify a total of 13 priority neighbourhoods. The two strategies operated predominately under the guidance of the original Community Safety Plan, which focused on crime reduction and youth engagement. As a result many of the original recommendations from the Strong Neighbourhoods report were not in fact implemented (City Staff, personal communication, May 16, 2013). The subsequent place-based policy and management-project was heavily rooted in a 'neighbourhood effects' thesis. It assumed that poverty and crime are best explained as a result of "local environmental conditions generated from spatial concentrations of immigrant and visible minority population, housing tenure, education levels, average income, etc." (Siciliano, 2010, p. 63). Spatially targeted policy places responsibility on the residents themselves, while misdiagnosing poverty as purely a local problem. Instead of addressing the root causes of

³ The criteria used to define priority neighbourhoods were dominantly based on access to services and youth crime rates. Specifically: "whether the neighbourhood lacked community facilities and programs; whether there were more residents who would benefit from community facilities and programs than there were in other neighbourhoods; and whether the neighbourhood was experiencing more gun and gang violence than other neighbourhoods" (City of Toronto, 2013b, p. 6).

poverty directly, it focuses on place-based initiatives that prioritise ‘social capital’, ‘civic engagement’, and behavioural or cultural change at the local scale. Instead of recognising the complex social networks that influence the everyday lives of residents, such spatial-policy approaches oversimplify these everyday realities and create “arbitrary boundaries for residents and agencies in access[ing] resources” (Cowen and Parlette, 2011, p. iv).

The creation of ‘community’ legitimised policy interventions that viewed these spaces as ‘problems’ for the rest of the city. Crime, gang violence, and poverty (and subsequently minority and immigration status) became thrust “onto a faceless demonized other” turning these geographies into “a *blemish of place*” (Wacquant, 2007, p. 67). The inner suburbs as ‘places’ were conjured up as ‘problematic’ spaces associated with their previous ‘success’ and ‘public past’ (Hayden, 1995; see Manzo & Perkins, 2006) as ethnically homogenous, middle-class places implying a sense of nostalgia for a unified past in comparison to the ‘detriment’ that it has become today. Targeting practices construct particular groups of people as static and inherently problematic, “serv[ing] to pathologize difference as well as place the designated groups under increased state surveillance and administrative control” (Brodie, 1997 as quoted by Cowen, 2005, p. 337). Targeted social policy allows for the identification and treatment of problem groups as ‘non-normative citizens’(Cowen, 2005, p. 337). While the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy seeks to ‘solve’ problems of racialised poverty of the suburbs, by focusing on service and infrastructure provision, the challenges associated with the built form of the suburbs, its long legacy of social investment, and larger systemic issues, are often ignored.

2.4 Place-based Management and Neoliberal Experimentation: TSNS 2005 and TSNS 2020

The focus on place or the local in urban democracy, politics, and community development, is founded on the assumption that decentralising authority to the local scale will inherently produce greater democracy and autonomy for the local people, and that decisions made at this scale will be more just and democratic. In community development this further assumes ‘community’ to represent a very localised group that should be in control of their own lives, supporting the push for decision-making to be as localised as possible. Normative theories of participatory democracy focus on the local as site for urban democracy. The idea that the ‘local’ is inherently ‘good’ and that other scales of interaction are ‘undemocratic’ represents what Purcell (2006) describes as the *local trap*. Assumptions about the local scale stem from participatory democracy theory, which posits that people reach their full potential by being able to participate in political decisions and develop most fully as citizens. Participatory-democratic theory injects “a strong tendency to assume that the local is more democratic than other scales” (Purcell, 2006, p. 1926). An underlying belief to this argument is that “localisation is conflated with democratisation, even though localisation can just as easily lead to tyranny and oppression” (Purcell, 2006, p. 1924). Assumptions about localisation have driven place-based management policies in Toronto specifically with the neoliberal experimentation of the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy. It is important to critically examine the focus on place as the prime location for problem solving, at a policy level and related to the creation of the Community Planning Board. The Board needs to be aware of narrow, problematic solutions and the local trap by seeking to adopt a more integrated approach to place-based neighbourhood planning. A focus on the local or neighbourhood level is not necessarily bad in and of itself; it becomes problematic when ‘solutions’ ignore other scales and the systemic issues that may be at the root of said problems.

The preference of the local coincides with neoliberal ideology and agendas that support the offloading of responsibility onto lower levels of government and subsequently community groups, organisations, and finally ‘the people’. In this view, decentralisation is the essence of democratisation. The discourse of localism is justified by neoliberal and anti-neoliberal supports that maintain the democratic assumption, leading to the popularity of a ‘new localism’ within participatory and place-based policies of Third Way politics. There are several inherent problems with the discourse of localism: it assumes that localisation is an end goal in and of itself rather than a means to an end, and that the ‘local’ is always desirable, inherently obscuring all other scalar options that could be equally if not more effective for a desired outcome. Scales are socially constructed; any particular qualities associated to a given scale (such as it being inherently ‘good’ for democracy) are contingent rather than ontologically given characteristics. They result from social struggles “among particular actors in particular times and places” (Purcell, 2006, p. 1927). There is nothing inherently good about any particular scale. Local, regional, national, or global decision-making do not necessarily lead to more democratic outcomes. In Purcell's words,

“Localisation should raise no *a priori* assumptions; it points to an on-going struggle among competing interests. It invites inquiry to discover what actors and agendas brought about and were empowered by localisation. It is those actors and agendas that produce outcomes, not the scale through which the agendas are realised” (2006, p. 1929).

The Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy focuses on place as the inherent location for addressing issues of poverty and violence. The Strategy builds on the Official Plan’s discourse of fostering a ‘world-class city’ composed of ‘strong’ neighbourhoods. The local is equated to sites for intervention “to location-specific challenges” (Strong Neighbourhoods, 2005, p. 8) ignoring

other scales as possible contributors to issues or as possible sites for ‘solutions’.⁴ Solutions were contingent on the ‘local people’ engaging in the development of their communities, contributing to their ‘capacity’ and fostering ‘social capital’ and ‘social cohesion’. The Toronto Strong Neighbourhood Strategy supported neoliberal preference for decentralisation and assumed the local to be the site for democratic involvement and social control. By assigning 13 priority neighbourhoods as the sites for place-based management, TSNS assumed a static relationship between poverty and space, while placing responsibility on the local residents as the only actors responsible for change. The Strategy failed to integrate the place-based work within the designated communities *to each other*. The Strategy advocated for the creation of two broad working bodies: Action for Neighbourhood Change (ANC) and Neighbourhood Action Partnership (NAP).⁵ Cowen and Parlette (2011) have shown that much of the success of Kingston Galloway/Orton Park (typically attributed to the Strategy) was in fact due to efforts made by community agencies *prior to and predating* the ‘priority neighbourhood’ designation.

⁴ Although it was briefly mentioned in the *Strong Neighbourhoods* (2005) report that place-based interventions were not complete solutions since they do not address systemic issues at hand, this discourse was dropped and never mentioned afterwards. See Cowen & Parlette (2011) for critique.

⁵ The goal for ANC was to establish a resident-led neighbourhood association in each of the priority neighbourhoods (or to connect with one already existing). These associations were intended to be hubs, supporting local resident-led initiatives, leadership opportunities and providing a coordinated platform for residents to bring about their own change. In the case of Kingston Galloway/Orton Park, the East Scarborough Storefront became the local organization that ANC operated through. ANC operates as a United Way strategy component of the Strong Neighbourhood Strategy. Neighbourhood Action Partnership (NAP) on the other hand is an ‘action team’ facilitated by the City of Toronto. Set up in each of the priority neighbourhoods, NAPs are “compris[ed] [of] staff from all relevant city divisions. These are responsible for ensuring a coordinated city response to neighbourhood issues, to be achieved through targeted resources, better cross-sectoral linkages and new service partnerships” and “made up of local residents, government representatives, other funders, community organizations and other interested stakeholders. Their role is to coordinate investment at the local level” (Toronto City Summit Alliance, 2007, p. 13). NAP is meant to operate as a forum for community agencies to connect through, share resources and communicate about their successes or concerns, while ANC is meant to channel and coordinate resources through United Way as the community affiliate. Although NAPs were conceived to help establish an integrated approach, they were still limited in scale since they focused dominantly on the locality in which they operated and there were no provisions for integration *across* or *between* them (Cowen & Parlette, 2011).

Although the designation helped support existing social networks, the basis for community-organised projects were not new to the neighbourhood. Place-based strategies that focus on poverty reduction have not in fact proven to be successful due to misdiagnosing poverty as a local problem rather than focusing on the systemic structures at play. “Targeted investment...is not in and of itself a strategy for poverty reduction...[s]olutions emanating from such a narrow focus are also highly localized” (Cowen & Parlette, 2011, p. vi).

In June 2011, Councillor Crisanti (Ward 1, Etobicoke) put forth a motion to evaluate and update the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy. Through a series of community consultations, City Staff created a set of recommendations highlighting the success and drawbacks of the original Strategy (City Staff, personal communication, May 16 2013). What resulted was an updated iteration of the place-based management strategy, the *Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020* report, approved by Council in March 2012. At the time of writing this paper, City staff have been finalising the details for the implementation of TSNS 2020, as is evident in the changing content of different staff reports since March 2012. Overall, TSNS 2020 differs from TSNS 2005 in a few significant ways. Mainly: setting clarified objectives and goals; using *Neighbourhood Improvement Areas* (NIA) as the new designated label for targeted neighbourhoods (in order to address stigmatising issues with the original label ‘priority neighbourhood’); implementing evaluation and monitoring processes with regular reporting; and the development of a *Neighbourhood Lens*,⁶ “to ensure broader regional, provincial and national policies, programs and funding priorities are informed by a

⁶ A seemingly positive addition to TSNS 2020 includes a monitoring and evaluation framework, as well as a *Neighbourhood Lens*, to regularly report on neighbourhoods and provide feedback for policies in different levels of government including the City’s place-based policies and strategies. “[T]he *Neighbourhood Lens* will take shape as a series of questions and case studies that bring important characteristics of neighbourhoods into focus. This focus on neighbourhood characteristics is intended to help policy makers, program planners and decision makers work more effectively by revealing the ways in which their work impacts the wellbeing of neighbourhoods” (City of Toronto, 2013b, p. 8).

neighbourhoods perspective” (City of Toronto, 2012b, p. 1). TSNS 2020 broadens neighbourhood selection categories using the *Urban HEART@Toronto* research-based model, adopted from The World Health Organisation and implemented through the City, United Way of Greater Toronto, the Centre for Research on Inner City Health, and other community partners (City of Toronto, 2013b).⁷ Both TSNS 2005 and TSNS 2020 take on a scalar place-based approach to poverty reduction and neighbourhood development. While TSNS 2005 focused on youth and crime reduction through the creation of social infrastructure in the designated priority neighbourhoods, TSNS 2020 shifts the focus towards equity and ‘health’ of neighbourhoods, still supporting the spatialised/racialised poverty rhetoric.

With Urban HEART and the Neighbourhood Lens, TSNS 2020 intends to create ‘simple’ snapshots of neighbourhood health using “only two or three carefully chosen indicators of equity for each of the five policy areas” (City of Toronto, 2013b, p. 4). Such ‘simplicity’ can ignore the multi-dimensional reality that plays out at the local level. Under the 2020 Strategy, a Neighbourhood Equity Score⁸ will be used to designate the Neighbourhood Improvement Areas. NIAs are geographically defined based on the City’s 140 social planning neighbourhood

⁷ *Urban HEART*, an acronym for *Urban Health Equity Assessment Response Tool*, was developed and launched by the World Health Organization, as a tool to help research neighbourhood decline based on social determinants of health in underdeveloped neighbourhoods. TSNS 2020 will focus on building “an equitable set of social, economic, and cultural opportunities for all residents, with the goal of advancing equitable outcomes across all neighbourhoods” (City of Toronto, 2013b, p. 3).

While TSNS 2005 defined priority neighbourhoods based on access to community facilities and programs, and “whether the neighbourhood was experiencing more gun and gang violence than other neighbourhoods” (City of Toronto, 2013b, p. 6), TSNS 2020 broadens the selection categories using the *Urban HEART* research-based model to identify a set of criteria to measure equity across 5 policy areas. These include: Social & Human Development, Governance, Economic Opportunity, Health, and Physical Environment and Infrastructure.

⁸ “The recommended Neighbourhood Equity Score is a single number designed to capture the total weight of unnecessary, unfair and unjust differences faced by neighbourhood residents in five key areas: Economic Opportunities, Social Development, Healthy Lives, Participation in Decision-Making and Physical Surroundings. The Score and Benchmark have been calculated using *Urban HEART@Toronto*” (City of Toronto, 2014, p. 1).

boundaries. According to these administrative boundaries, the original 13 ‘priority neighbourhoods’ were actually 23 neighbourhoods. TSNS 2020 has recommended 31 neighbourhoods as NIAs, including some of the previously designated priority neighbourhoods and the addition of others. If a neighbourhood scored below the Equity Score then they would be designated as a Neighbourhood Improvement Area.⁹ Some communities that have lost their ‘status’ (and thus funding support), leaving community workers and organisations in fear of supporting and operating their community programs (Dale 2013; Armstrong 2013). In addition to the NIA selection criteria, the Lens will be developed to monitor how action on the ground can be/should be continually influencing the Strategy. Although this seems to break out of the local trap by incorporating inter-scalar policies, it continues to assume that the neighbourhood scale is the ‘inherent good’ that can inform municipal, regional, provincial and national programs and policies (City of Toronto, 2012b, p. 3), while there is no explicit indication that place-based work will also be informed by such evaluation.

The Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2005 and 2020 are examples of place-based risk management policies and neoliberal experimentation, which is evident in the choice of Urban HEART, a framework that was developed for targeting place-management in underdeveloped countries, as opposed to a framework specifically designed for the Toronto context. Additionally, City staff working on the development of TSNS 2020 recognise that the Strategy is limited and unable to address issues of poverty, although this reality is not discussed at the public level.

⁹ The 31 recommended neighbourhoods include 15 of the original ‘priority neighbourhoods’ (out of the 23) with the addition of 16 new neighbourhoods. While some ‘priority neighbourhoods’ were not originally included in this list, Council members have voted to include them under the strategy (City of Toronto, 2014, p. 1).

I think the Strategy in some ways assumes there's something we can do about those trends. I certainly think there are things we can do in priority neighbourhoods to improve the life of its residents, but there's lots of things that the city can't do. We're not going to change the economic system, that is a much bigger issue than is under city control....so all of those underlying structural issues....it's not going to effect any of that and the strategy certainly doesn't come out and say that in any way.

Certainly in talking about the Neighbourhood Lens, there's acknowledgement that there are a lot of things that affect the neighbourhood that we have no control over or that are not place-based. You can't address issues of poverty one neighbourhood at a time, because its part of a broader set of issues...[But] there are real things that we can do to improve the quality of life in all neighbourhoods but we're not going to solve poverty...if poverty is the issue in a Neighbourhood Improvement Area at the end of the strategy the only way that neighbourhood is not going to be poor is by gentrifying it, probably...we're not going to solve all the income problems of residents there. Place-based work is not effective for those kinds of things, it's effective for building collective assets in a place, so its effective for building services...facilities...networks, all of those kind of collective assets...but it's not good at solving the broader system[ic] issues, and we're not going to do that at the neighbourhood level. - (City Staff, personal communication, May 16, 2013)

The commentary above from a City staff person (working directly on the creation of TSNS 2020), indicates the reality of risk-management neoliberal strategies are not about achieving *fundamental* change but instead about targeting investment into neighbourhoods to shift responsibilities onto local residents. Such a strategy depoliticises local problems through their pacification by focusing on the market-driven values of communities instead of addressing systemic issues. Although the interviewee mentions that the Strategy does not *explicitly* state that it will solve structural issues, it *does* however continue to support the discourse that place-based solutions are *necessary* in order to improve poverty at the neighbourhood level, and thus the Strategy continues to *imply* and *focus* on locality and place, ignoring other scalar solutions and structural issues.

The Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy (2005) had two central aims: “to invest in underserved communities and to transform the way in which local residents, city staff and service providers participate in community planning” (Cowen & Parlette, 2011, p. iii). What resulted through the strategy was a dramatic reorganisation of how social investment was

implemented, particularly emphasizing ‘resident engagement’ and place-based community planning. Generally, there are two different rationales for place-based investment: targeted investment as a result of decades of underinvestment and changing demographics; or targeted investment as related to neighbourhood effects theory. Spatially targeted policies from the City of Toronto have largely been motivated by the latter. In the case of TSNS, the responsibility for problems experienced at the neighbourhood level were placed on the neighbourhood itself, assuming cultural explanations as opposed to addressing systemic causes of concentrated poverty. The strategy supported a “top-down, cookie-cutter approach to neighbourhood investment, undermining the agency and autonomy of the communities [which it] ostensibly aim[ed] to support” (Cowen & Parlette, 2011, p. v). Place-management approaches and theories to address issues of poverty downloaded the responsibility onto the poor people and the poor neighbourhoods.

The Strategy built heavily on two dominant theories: neighbourhood effects and social capital. Neighbourhood effects theory relies on cultural and social assumptions about poor neighbourhoods and its inhabitants suggesting “that independent of variables such as individual or family poverty, living in neighbourhoods with high levels of poverty has a negative impact on social development” (Cowen & Parlette, 2011, p. 26). When poverty is approached as a local problem, rather than one of persistent barriers to accessing cultural, social and economic resources, place-based approaches “take the shape of resident engagement initiatives rather than poverty reduction or economic development...[and] risk exacerbating some of the experiences of poverty that they ostensibly aim to mediate” (Cowen & Parlette, 2011, p. 310). Resident engagement and participation become both the source of the problem and solution, with the assumption that poverty can be ‘fixed’ through cultural or behavioural changes.

With this focus on resident participation, TSNS 2005 (and subsequently 2020) has depoliticised resident participation in community planning. ‘Participation’ has become pacified through the state incorporation of place-based participatory practices and instead focuses predominantly on the quantity and amount of *funding* poured into neighbourhoods without fundamentally linking efforts back to systemic solutions,¹⁰ absolving the state from any accountability or responsibility. Participation has become about *numbers*: the number of state/private funding dollars, the number of people present at events and gatherings, the number of programs and/or organisations in a community, etc., as opposed to a platform for residents to influence or change structures and systems. Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods (and subsequently United Way of Greater Toronto’s) model of ‘participation’ and ‘empowerment’ is thus a prescriptive one where residents are *expected* to engage, within pre-established boundaries, “steer[ing] grassroots community development from above” (Cowen & Parlette, 2011, p. 50). Residents take on greater and greater responsibilities for community development work while the Strategy does not allow for or support participation that can garner any fundamental change. Participation is emphasised for participation’s sake, without questioning its purpose or function.

The focus on place-based solutions overlooks the complexity of spatially manifested problems and the dynamics at play beyond the local scale. Discussion of the local trap is important for the Community Planning Board to keep in mind as planning issues should be discussed and considered in relation to, and not in isolation of, other scales. The Board should strive for an integrated approach when discussing place-based neighbourhood planning, one that seeks to combine a place-sensitivity while also integrating and building networks between

¹⁰ An example includes United Way’s publication, *Building Strong Neighbourhoods* (2013) that highlighted all the ‘successes’ since the implementation of the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy. This report focused predominantly on the amount of funding dollars spent on programs, the number of programs instigated through that funding and the number of people accessing programs. However, a focus on statistics does not address any *fundamental* changes that resulted, nor candidly speak to the successes or failures of such programs.

jurisdictions and organisations. As Bradford (2004, p. 4) advocates, “[t]he point is to equip local communities to revitalize themselves on terms of their own choosing in accordance with democratic mandates, while also ensuring that the ‘new localism’ does not breed greater disparity between places. Neither centralised command-and-control regulation nor open-ended devolution will do the job. And one size-fits all approaches must give way to an ‘urban policy lens’ attuned to the diverse needs and capacities of places, from the big city regions to the smaller remote centres.” A place-based approach is not inherently better than other scales, however it is not a question of either-or (local or regional) approaches but a matter of creating an integrated platform where scale can be an operating strategy allowing for inter-scalar influence (from the local to the larger policy level). The Community Planning Board can help break down barriers and connect residents to broader systems. A combination of *investment* at the neighbourhood level is necessary in order to provide a community with conduits to the broader systems¹¹. The following Chapter focuses more closely on the role and limitations of participatory methods and practice, furthermore connecting to the Community Planning Board case study in Kingston Galloway/Orton Park.

¹¹ In the TSNS 2020 – 2012 Staff Report, it appears that some integration is an objective for TSNS 2020. Neighbourhood Action Teams and Partnerships will continue to operate however, where appropriate, their work will expand to engage a broader range of residents and partners and will work more closely with “aligning local priorities in order to take advantage of broader City strategies where appropriate... [such as] the Workforce Development Strategy and Economic Development Strategy... [which are not place-based themselves but] will have a significant impact on the social, economic and physical infrastructure of neighbourhoods and on the achievement of equitable opportunities for residents” (City of Toronto, 2012b, p. 9).

Chapter 3: Public Participation and Place-based Policies

Participatory practices have been present within policy and planning practice to various degrees over the past several decades, however gained massive popularity following the anti-war and civil rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s. The existing governments during this time were unable to support growing pressures ‘from below’ for more participatory methods, calling for greater democratisation and recognition of citizens’ rights within public decision making (Moini, 2011). Citizen participation became a hot topic in progressive city politics where ‘participation’ was organised by different facets of government in order to “nurture a strong neighbourhood movement” (Clavel, 1986, p. 12). With decreasing faith in governmentally imposed ‘solutions’ (and an increasing reliance on multi-scalar/multi-sectoral networks and relationships), new governance practices have propelled ‘participation’ to the forefront through place-based management policies and community ‘supported’ organisations. The rise of participatory theory and practice merits acknowledgement as it has come a long way and contains a history of progressive politics, although has become heavily depoliticised and limited through neoliberal governance strategies. Although critiqued for its lack of effectiveness, participatory practices became widespread by the 1990s as an essential characteristic of planning and a political project of neoliberalisation in order “to re-establish the conditions for capital accumulation and to restore the power of economic elites” (Harvey, 2005, p.19).

Within the context of neoliberal planning and a shift to a “piecemeal, project-oriented, and entrepreneurial planning model” the role of the public has become further reduced and streamlined, while public meetings have become more performative, seeking consensus and silencing opposition (Kipfer & Keil, 2002, p. 243). Growing concern and attention has focused on the role of the public within the planning process as well as the exploration of alternative processes/tools/mechanisms to capture different forms of public participation and allow for the

redistribution of power within these processes. This chapter examines various literature critiquing and challenging notions of public participation in planning, examining the role of identity and representation, power and knowledge, and participatory theory and practice, setting the foundation for evaluating the case study of the Community Planning Board.

3.1 The Rise of Participatory Theory and Practice

Observing the role of the public and participation in planning processes, we see a progression towards an acceptance (or theoretical acceptance) of a plurality of voices in planning processes and practice. While the representation and power of these voices in planning may still be problematic, scanning history we can see an increasing tendency towards participatory planning in Anglo-American practice. Following a period of industrialisation and rapid urbanisation during and in-between both World Wars, planning was conceived as a ‘blueprint’ machine intended to divide parcels of land or precincts, with the aim to codify with ‘certainty’ and a fixed end or objective. Planning was viewed as a deliberate rational science. Plural options or the opinions of the people were neglected (Lane, 2005). Planning was viewed as an apolitical entity with the concept of the ‘public’ as one, unified interest (with no room for alternative interests).

The planning profession of the 1950s was focused predominantly on master planning. Planning was a very top-down process stemming from a tradition of state-led provisions and regulations. By the 1950s and 1960s blueprint planning was largely replaced by *synoptic* or *systems planning*. During this time public participation in planning gained importance, changing the role of the planner and planner-public relationships. The image of the all-knowing technocratic planner began to deteriorate. However, public participation was still constrained to that of commentary on planning goals, with the continued view of a homogeneous public voice and public interest. Participation was essentially about consensus building, obscuring “the fact

that planning is fundamentally distributional and that there are both costs and benefits of planning interventions which are disproportionately shared among all classes and groups in society” (Lane, 2005, p. 290). Assuming that the public was homogenous undermined the importance of participation, reducing it to a tool for legitimising hegemonic planning agendas, for stigmatising opposition, and dismissing any critical voices.

The 1960s pushed for more ‘rationalistic’ planning whereby “[p]lanners would provide aid to decision makers, where they were, and this meant an emphasis on their methodological and tactical skills, without regard for ideological or goal-setting commitments.” (Clavel, 1986, p. 7-8). This perspective was not universal to the profession; in contrast to theories of rationality other planning approaches sought to move away from the rigidity¹², such as *advocacy planning*¹³.

Advocacy planning aspired to bring about social change by accommodating different voices and seeking equality of representation within the planning process. Advocacy planners became advocates for the public (specifically those historically not represented), “providing professional assistance to disadvantaged groups...aim[ing] to increase the relative power of citizens” (Innes & Booher, 2004, p. 2). Participation was viewed as a collaboration between not only citizens but

¹² Moving away from the rigidity of the synoptic view and conceptions of a homogenous public was the ‘science of muddling through’ or the *disjointed incrementalist* variant approach to synoptic planning developed by Lindblom (1959). This approach critiqued rational-comprehensive models, viewing decision making as a process of continuously (re)adjusting, (re)constructing, and (re)mediating; Although this approach acknowledged pluralistic public interests and incorporated other actors into the planning system, participation was still restricted to that of a consultative role. The incrementalist view marked an important shift in planning discourse and public participation. Another variation from the synoptic view was the *mixed scanning* approach developed by Etzioni (1968), which involved the centrality of the planner, a limited role for the participant, and both normative and functional planning and decision-making. Although these approaches offered a move towards recognition of the public in planning, planning was still viewed as “distinct from politics and the unitary public interest model” (Lane, 2005, p. 292).

¹³ First introduced by Davidoff (1965), and later refined by Mazziotti (1982). This approach broke away from the synoptic view of a unitary, apolitical approach to planning, and instead assumed a political and social pluralism, building upon the concept that there is inequality in access to power, access to political structures, and unequal representation of groups (Lane, 2005). Advocacy planning is considered to be the planning movement that led to the creation of Community Planning Boards in New York City during the 1960s civil rights movements (Bressi, 2000).

included public, private and governmental ‘stakeholders’, interacting and influencing one another.

Fundamental criticisms of rational-comprehensive planning models led to other theories and approaches, such as *transactive planning*, *bargaining*, and *communicative theory*, each seeking to bring about some form of social transformation in planning (rather than the previous objective of social guidance) (Friedmann & Kuester, 1994). Transactive planning developed by Friedmann (1973; 1994) sought to link knowledge to action, placing focus on mutual learning and relying on interpersonal dialogue and discussion in order to validate ideas through action. A central caveat to this approach is to empower people to control and direct their own welfare, achieved through the decentralisation of planning institutions (see Friedmann 1992; 1994). With this methodology, the role of the planner and the public changed dramatically, where the former became a conduit to disseminate information and the latter were to actively engage in public processes. Bargaining techniques shifted the view of planning as a separate field, to one that was a component of policy-making (McDonald, 1989, p. 333), recognising the uneven distributions of power and the plurality of political ideologies. This approach saw planning as a fundamental political process whereby decisions resulted as a product of give and take between participating actors. The important shift with the bargaining method was to view participation not as an aspect of normative planning (where the public has a particular function *for* the planner) but as the *principle* aspect of decision making (Lane, 2005).

As the scientific-rationalism of planning began to unravel, the role of ‘reason’ began to be reconsidered while viewing the role of power and power relations among participants as the underpinning aspect of planning. ‘Rationality’ thus meant to “understand and know things and use that knowledge in action” (Healey, 1992, p. 150) while recognising a plurality in rationality. Individual actors, and their actions, were to be considered and understood as culturally, socially

and personally situated and motivated. *Communicative theory*¹⁴ postulates that participation needs to take place through forums of argumentation, discourse and dialogue, involving debate, bargaining, and negotiation. It is argued that this approach leads to collaborative and deliberative forms of participation that ultimately seek to challenge and resolve deeply rooted differences and conflicts at the community level, although often critiqued as being a small-scale and resource-intensive form of participation (Healey, 1996; Forester, 1989; Booher, 2008; Beebejuan & Vanderhoven, 2010).

Collaborative planning models emerged with the intention of creating inclusionary practices, while deliberately challenging existing technocratic planning practice that focused on the ‘rationality’ of experts and government. Instead these practices sought to provide a platform that offered greater transparency and were adopted by some progressive governments in order to focus policies and practice on representing the interests of the working class, poor, and marginalised. In many cases, planning was used as a redistributive practice (Clavel, 1986). Collaborative approaches have been critiqued, for their lack of consideration of power structures and the pervasiveness of power exercised in the ‘real life’ politics of the everyday, rather than just centred around the who and where of planning processes (see Flyvbjerg, 1998).

The dynamic of participatory practice and participatory democracy arose in the 1960s during post-war/cold war politics that resulted in anti-establishment political uprisings through youth and student movements in the US and Europe. Soon after, governments used ‘participation’ as a diffusion tactic and by the time of the 1968 French student riots, participation became an object of mockery, indicative through the popular slogan *je participe, tu participe, nous participons, ils profiterait*. “Throughout the 1970s, talk from above of ‘participation’ became synonymous with

¹⁴ Communicative theory emerged out of “a converging set of ideas: Habermas’s (1984, 1987) notion of communicative rationality, Dryzek’s (1990) concept of discursive democracy, and Giddens’ (1994) notion of dialogic democracy” (Lane, 2005, p. 295).

evading questions of power and diverting serious challenges to the established order” (Wainwright, 2009, p. 20). The remainder of this chapter will examine the power struggles and limitations of participatory practices today.

3.2 Participation and Power

The increased use of participatory planning practices, models, and discourses reflects a belief that participation (and different participatory practices) will increase the ‘power’ of those involved, specifically empowering those typically marginalised and underprivileged. Power and participation thus become synonymous with equalisation, which is thought to be obtained ‘automatically’ through participation. Understanding the interplay between power and planning is crucial to the debate about participatory methods and discourse. It is also something that needs to be explicitly spoken about and taken into consideration by the Community Planning Board-Working Group as well as the wider community they seek to engage.

Participatory methods have long been critiqued for their inability to (and extent to) redistribute power from the ‘haves’ to the ‘have-nots’. Arnstein’s (1969) *ladder of participation* highlights the importance of power in various planning methods, and the positionality and role of actors within the practice. The ladder analyses a participant’s access to and degree of power in shaping outcomes through their participation. Arnstein argued, “[t]here is a critical difference between going through the empty ritual of participation and having the real power needed to affect outcomes of the process” (1969, p. 216). Although the ladder has been critiqued as overly simplistic in relation to the complex realities of participatory action, it still provides a powerful reminder that the simple act of ‘participation’ does not lead to ‘empowerment’, power dissemination, or influence over decisions (Brownill & Carpenter, 2007a, p. 620; see Sharp & Connelly, 2001 for critiques of Arnstein). Some have replaced the ladder with a network model

highlighting flows of power, information, and dialogue between actors, whereas others have related participation to vested political and economic interests (see Healey, 1997; Flyvbjerg, 1998; Yiftachel et al., 2001). The ladder depicts participation as only ‘successful’ by having power in decision-making while ignoring other possible benefits associated to forms of participation or outcomes of interaction found through information exchange or dialogue (which Arnstein views as ‘tokenism’) (Lane, 2005, p. 286; see Painter, 1992).

It is generally believed that participation can result in positive experiences through narratives and networks, viewed as sources of power themselves with the ability to provide some form of transformation in space and planning practice (see Sandercock, 1998; Bridge, 2005). Additionally, placing the planner or institution at the nexus of such power struggles fails to consider how other actors in the process “either consciously or unconsciously subscribe to particular rationalities and therefore become embedded in the tensions” (Brownill & Carpenter, 2007b, p. 425). Regardless of the model or theory, the relationship between power and participation influences the extent to which participation influences planning outcomes and results in a limitation of participatory practices. Participatory discourses and strategies have become depoliticised, where ‘participation’, as a community organising and planning tool, has become devoid of meaning. The reality of participation lies within structures of power and how they limit the impact that various degrees and forms of participation can actually have on decisions and outcomes (Bedford et al., 2002).

In critiques of participation, the duality of power, as a generator of positive and negative outcomes, is often overlooked. It can help marginalised groups and individuals become empowered and transform planning and community practice. However, it can also maintain structures and the position of elite actors through the use of ‘empowering’ practices and discourse that work to depoliticise groups as opposed to allow for meaningful engagement. This

duality is important to remember when critiquing the role and presence of power in relationships, because both positive and negative uses of power can act simultaneously, between and among all actors involved. While public participation in planning has developed a ‘rationality’, power structures operate with a rationality of their own, in the form of networks, ‘truth’ production, discourse, and knowledge. Even in seemingly ‘collaborative’ forms of planning, participants, actors, discourse, and praxis are embedded and reproduced within a larger context in which “power is ‘omnipresent’, situated and relational” permeating participation and planning with “power, tactics, strategies and the ‘micro-physics of power’” (Pløger, 2001, p. 228, as quoted by Bedford et al., 2002, p. 313).

The realities of power are evident in participatory planning practices and the actors involved in organising and participating in them. It is not only important to consider the wider socio-political and discursive context within which participation takes place. It is also crucial to consider how power plays out in the participatory methods, structures and tools used, specifically in the case of the Community Planning Board.

3.3 Limitations of Participation: Structure and Practice

There has been a shift towards a mode of governance emphasising the ‘active citizen’. Although it is generally accepted that public participation ‘enhances’ community input, what constitutes ‘good’ participation remains unresolved, difficult to define, and left contested. By the 1990s, participatory processes became incorporated into the practice of neoliberal governance, shifting discourse towards an *empowered* and *responsible* public and placing focus on community and community organisations as “newly empowered [trying] to pick up the pieces left by the retreat of the state” (DeFilippis, Fisher & Shragge, 2010, p. 27). Terms such as ‘participation’, ‘involvement’, and ‘engagement’ are used interchangeably without understanding

their provenance, specially, “the political context and relations to power, visible and invisible, in which they [are] being used, by whom, and for what purposes, overt or hidden” (Wainwright, 2009, p. 27). Often the goal of participation is not understood, or reduced to increasing the *quantity, not the quality* of participation. Political and technical aspects of participatory processes have limited the role of local participation and mobilisation, through the technical nature of practice and methods used, such as the structured prescription of rules, roles, and routines (Moini, 2011, p. 159). Limitations are evident at all levels, whether state, private, or community-organised. Efforts to increase participation often do not address existing power structures and inequalities, while the processes and methods themselves entrench inequalities along class, ethnicity, income, gender, or other dimensions. Participation focused on ‘inclusionary’ practice often categorize groups as homogenous even when this might not be the case. This section seeks to address some of the ways in which participatory planning methods, discourses, and projects can create a hegemonic understanding of participatory practices. Participatory practices have been heavily critiqued¹⁵ and while going through the extensive catalogue of literature is

¹⁵ People are increasingly asked to participate in a frustrating planning system where their participation is mainly a reaction to proposals that are often not understood and “at a scale for which they have little control” (Lydon et al., 2012, p. 1). This lack of meaningful participation is used as a strategy of manipulation (Brownill & Parker, 2010, p. 278). While the role of the local participant has been enhanced in urban political discourses, in reality they are mainly left out of decision-making processes, while limited and reduced to a ‘supporting role’ (MacLeod et al., 2003, p. 1660). As a reaction, communities, groups and individuals are testing out their own understandings of planning issues through ‘insurgent urbanism’, incorporating their own solutions and using their agency to develop new practices, narratives, and place-based solutions to place-based planning issues (Holston, 1995; Lydon et al., 2012; Chang, 2012; Hou, 2010). These practices are characterised as transgressive, counter-hegemonic, and imaginative (Miraftab, 2009, p. 33). Alternative methods in participatory practices try to shift away from formalized methods to informal tools and processes with the hope to create more proactive participatory practices. Methods include the use of storytelling, video, community mapping, and the Internet/social media, among others (Throgmorton, 2003; Al-Kohmany, 1999; van Dijk, 2011; Goodspeed, 2008; Minaji, 2011; Evans-Cowley, 2010; Brabham, 2009; Albrechts, 2005; Rowe & Frewer, 2005). These alternative methods address various limitations such as issues of representation, knowledge dissemination, or incorporating history, stories, and everyday understandings and interactions of space and place (Albrechts, 2005; Blomley, 2004; De Certeau, 1984).

redundant, I will highlight a few limitations related to structural and technical components, as well as issues of representation.

LEGAL LIMITATIONS:

The *Planning Act* (2012) specifies the format and timing of notifications and participatory meetings. While the Act ensures that public participation is a legal requirement to be incorporated into any zoning, land use, or official plan amendments, it does *not* have any provisions that monitor or evaluate the outcomes of processes or methods used. Although there are provisions for the timing of open house or public meetings as well as the information and materials that must be provided to the public, there are no legal requirements for making these meetings and materials *accessible* and *understandable* for the public. There are also restrictions for *when* the public has the opportunity to intervene, such as only during public meetings, open houses or in written format to council (for example: for Official Plan amendments, see section 17.15- 17.26 of the Planning Act). The right to appeal decisions are only afforded to “[a] person or public body who, before the plan was adopted, made oral submissions at a public meeting or written submissions to the council” (Planning Act, 2012, s.17(24-1)). As a result, anyone unable to attend the meetings or submit something in writing, due to a multitude of barriers such as time, language, fear of participation, etc., has little support or opportunity to participate in the process. The Planning Act does not account for participation outside of that which is formally defined.

Recent shifts have pulled the governance of planning away from a participatory model towards a more competitive model, focusing on economic dividends and ‘performance monitoring’ through such practices as ‘frontloading’. Frontloading participation has become common practice in order to obtain quicker ‘consensus’, shifting the role of planning to that of a

competitive, as opposed to a participatory model (Beebejwan, 2006; Brownill & Carpenter, 2007b). Frontloading appears to provide an economic advantage for organisations by conducting public meetings earlier in the consultation phase in order to obtain seemingly higher degrees of consensus, which is monitored by counting the number of objections over time (Brownill & Carpenter, 2007b, p. 422). This form of participation values earlier stages of participation over others, which can also be problematic because it assumes that consensus obtained early on must also be valid at any other point in the process. However postponing participation can also be problematic because it often means that big decisions are decided upon *before* the public has any opportunity for input or critique. Focusing on any one stage of participation in the process can downplay later stages. It is dangerous to base any participatory processes/strategies “on the assumption that power can be contained or suspended” thus risking “the danger of producing a normative framework for what planning should be rather than a more flexible [approach] for exploring the lived realities of examples of planning in practice” (Brownill & Carpenter, 2007b, p. 425).

TECHNICAL LIMITATIONS:

Technicalised forms of participation shift power structures in favour of the ‘expert’ while trying to define and confine the role of the public, creating a form of participatory ‘theatrics’ where participation is not used as a tool to advance equality or justice, but as a method to gain legitimacy from the public and to meet legislative requirements. Participatory practices are limiting in how they are physically organised, how information is disseminated and to what extent the public is allowed to engage in the process. Technical limitations range from accessibility of information (on public notices, on billboards, during meetings etc.), to format and organisation of participatory methods. What is defined as ‘formal’ and/or ‘acceptable’ forms

of information/knowledge informs participatory practices, and as such limits how the public is allowed to participate (for example oral history and storytelling are not traditionally considered a means of participation). Depending on how knowledge is understood and defined, will influence how ‘experts’ interact with ‘everyday’ residents (Wainwright, 2009, p. 95). Most often participation is restricted to open house or open forum public meetings where information is presented in a top-down manner with little room for actors to manipulate and interact with the information outside of prescribed, ‘allowable’ parameters. Through physical layout and rules of speaking, power is distributed and outcomes are controlled. The public is only allowed to engage in one-way communication with no structured opportunity for discussion. The rules are set to ‘legitimise’ decisions and create acceptable behavioural norms, favouring situations where participants are restricted in *how* they can participate. The technical structure depoliticises participation, detaching it from conflict and value, by “colonizing a participatory space, through the discursive design of a deliberative setting” (Mathur, 2006, p. 78 as quoted by Moini, 2011, p. 160) and creating a ‘manageable’ participatory actor through prescribed rules of engagement and generally an uncritical acceptance of power.

Often public participation meetings are restricted to topics that may not correspond to what people actually want to discuss and that narrows the array of issues open for negotiation. To the organiser, participation gives the impression of increasing transparency and providing a platform for meaningful citizen input. To the individual, this is an entirely different situation. Consultation practices are often used as a means to diffuse opposition as opposed to creating a platform for change. The sign of a ‘successful’ consultation session is measured by a low number of objectors. Objectors are typically classified as ‘self-interested’ and/or ‘ill-informed’ and their opinions are delegitimised on the grounds of being ‘unrepresentative’. Often organisers (such as developers, or ‘expert’ groups) look to dismiss active voices as ‘non-representative’ of the

general public by stating that they either represent a ‘special interest’ group, or are NIMBYists (‘Not In My Back Yard’). As such local opposition might be undermined, where a plurality of voices is both a means of legitimating and delegitimizing public concerns (Bedford et al., 2002, p. 323-4).¹⁶ It is with this understanding that a collectively mobilised group of actors on the Community Planning Board can still work within these limitations to appropriate the process either by complementing or sidestepping it through political action and social power (which will be further discussed in Chapters 4 and 5).

IDENTITY AND REPRESENTATION:

Increasingly, objectives in public participation have been to include those not traditionally represented in the planning process, shifting discourse from a unified homogenous public to one involving a plurality of voices. However there are concerns with representation and the construction of a ‘cohesive other’ joined under generic umbrella categories that actually serve to manage participation as opposed to promote empowerment and expression (Brownill & Carpenter, 2007b). The incorporation of marginalised or ‘other’ groups into participatory practice is not a proxy for equality and there needs to be greater discussion on identity and representation as well as what constitutes ‘good’ participation. Encouraging ‘participation’ by ‘othered’ groups while ignoring power relations within and between such groups (and others)

¹⁶ In a plural/multicultural society ‘representation’ can act as a means to legitimise or delegitimise public opinion. Local opposition is often classified by developers as a form of NIMBYism which can lead to an internalisation of this discourse, by the actor, who begins to classify objecting behaviour as “a pejorative form of public interest” (Bedford et al., 2002, p. 323). Technical limitations of participatory practices further influence the definition and meaning that people associate with their own behaviour or practice (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003). Certain participatory methods (such as those based on written commentary) result in actors having difficulty situating their opinions in relation to others and doubting themselves. They have no idea if others (or how many of them) share in their concerns, or whether they are entitled to have an opinion and if it is shared among others. Without the sharing of social knowledge among and between the actors, such participatory methods can result in dispersed, individualised opinions, legitimising them as ‘unrepresentative’ (Bedford et al., 2002).

can actually serve to further marginalise them (Beebejuan, 2004). Concepts of ‘race’ and ‘ethnicity’ are socially constructed and often used without acknowledgement of their colonising, historical, and hegemonic histories. These constructed identities gain meaning and are mediated by power and are spoken about or understood as static/solid entities, ignoring their fluid and contested nature in everyday life. Participatory practices focusing on identity and representation while prioritising specific ethnic or community membership needs to be considered with precaution. This is of particular importance to the creation of the Community Planning Board as residents seek to organise their board structure and discuss what ‘representation’ or ‘identity’ might entail in an ethnically diverse community (further discussed in section 4.4)

Planners often assume that people of the same ethnic group do or should constitute a community (particularly if in spatial proximity), without taking into account the differences among them.¹⁷ Imagining areas (or groups of people) in this manner produces a certain ‘realness’ and solidity in viewing these spatially defined spaces as ‘coherent communities’. Using the lens of ethnicity/race or poverty as the underlying characteristic of an arbitrary community assumes a ‘community’ where one might not actually exist. Participation does not always lead to a transformative or enlightened experience for those involved. Depending on how the process or practice is organised, participation can actually reinforce power structures while further entrenching stigmatising class, gender and age norms. For example, there is the expectation that participating ethnic/racial communities (due to the assumption of their shared discriminatory experiences) will prioritise racial equality (or equality in general) when advocating for any

¹⁷ Often planning practice seeks the participation and involvement of a defined ‘community’ (particularly marginalised); however, the idea that a community is a coherent whole is problematic. “Community is a fundamentally political concept...the idea of community is saturated with power. As such community is a continually contested term” (Hoggett, 1997, p. 14). Communities are often defined geographically, socially or politically. “Planning processes rely upon a narrative of community to operationalise ethnicity and race...[assuming there to be a] reality of groups out there waiting for the professional to classify them and bring them into the mainstream” (Beebejuan, 2006, p. 13).

policy or planning changes, or that the participation of such groups is coupled with the imagined benefit and transformation that participation creates for its actors, ignoring power relations among and between multiple publics (Beebejwan, 2006).¹⁸

Community and/or group associations are constructed ideas, always subject to redefinition while heavily embedded, defined and redefined through social interactions, conflict and events. They are often socially and spatially constituted and ‘imagined’ by those who share them. As Martin argues, “the process of identifying a community and reinforcing that identity has a spatial element regardless of whether the community itself is spatially contained” (2003a, p. 369). Defining a community by clumping together heterogeneous groups on the basis of a shared characteristic such as ‘ethnic minority’ status, ignores inter-group differences and assumes a ‘group’ voice as the sole, authentic voice for that ‘community’. As such community representation is problematized with the prioritisation of ‘ethnicity’ “over any other allegiance” (Beebejwan, 2006, p. 5). It is dangerous to reify such categorisations or identities, and to uncritically accept such identities in isolation of power relations within society and the political processes that created them (Rose, 2000; Harvey, 1996). How a group, community, identity, or

¹⁸ Beebejwan (2006) found that the political use and focus on ethnic group participation was centred on several value-laden assumptions about how these groups participate and/or how participation ‘should’ impact these groups. Analysing a UK-based case study, Beebejwan also found that planning and city officials adopted different standards of judgment when engaging with ethnic minority groups so that any actual views expressed by a minority group were unquestioned under the guise of achieving some form of ‘representation’. Additionally, certain minority groups used the label of ‘difference’ to gain power by claiming to represent a homogenous voice of the ‘other’. Beebejwan (2006) calls for further research to explore how the act of identifying groups for participation subsequently turns them into objects and how the process of participating can influence how participants are understood, feeding back into “the creation of an idea in which identities are important and thereby communities are identified” (p. 5). As Beebejwan & Vanderhoven (2010) warn:

“We must exercise caution as to how we construct community interests, rejecting simplistic understanding of viewpoints as virtuous or selfish. We need to shift our attention from selection and election to the processes that construct the content of what is represented in order to assess informal representations...important to understand public participation in terms of a complex process of representation, rather than simplistic assessments based on number of people attending a consultation.” (p. 295)

characteristic is framed impacts how they are treated. In turn, we need take into account how various social, historical, and political contexts and experiences help create a collective voice (if one does exist). Groups are expected to arrive at a consensus through participatory practices, even though perhaps their perceived connecting factor is a top-down label or defining characteristic (Beebejwan & Vanderhoven, 2010, p. 286; see Friedman et al., 2003).

In an unequal society, it is difficult to ensure ‘adequate representation’ or to even define what this means. Instead what needs to be questioned and challenged is what *accounts* for representation. Participatory practice needs to look at what *differences* are important and to have adequate representations of any large group (see Young, 2000, O’Neill, 2001). Negating representation and creating a discourse of “other” that needs to be engaged perpetuates discourses of race and ethnicity, often erasing the contingent, constructed, or contested nature of such communities. Creating a ‘community of interest’ sets up minority groups through a colonising discourse of assimilation and accommodation. In the case of participatory planning, it creates “the impression that ethnic difference is a problem facing a white majority society which is threatened, challenged, or even diluted by the presence of the ‘other’” (Beebejwan, 2012, p. 18). Ethnic ‘participation’ can lead to a misguided ‘common voice’ as opposed to tackling deeply embedded prejudices and opening up debates about diversity and representation. Identifying representative groups is not a neutral or objective process, but one that is ridden with power. Planning in Toronto, a city who’s official motto claims its pride in diversity, needs to consider ways in which a plurality of voices can be better understood and where ‘diversity’ is not a matter of blanket policies that still categorise different groups into the generic ‘other’ (minority/non-white) communities. These inter-cultural narratives need to be better acknowledged in participatory practices, specifically for the Community Planning Board, whilst unpacking the discursive narratives that have constructed them.

Understanding the legal, structural and representational limitations of participatory practices is of importance for the creation of a Community Planning Board. The Board must struggle with navigating the legal requirements or limitations of participatory practices imposed by the City or developers. Additionally, the Board must question how it wishes to interact with the Kingston Galloway community regarding planning issues and what participatory methods to use (along with the advantages and disadvantages of them). Furthermore, situated in a highly diverse community, issues of ‘representation’ and ‘othering’ should be of importance for the Community Planning Board in order to seek the creation of a progressive and proactive participatory body, as opposed to further marginalising its community members. As Harvey (2000, p. 186) reminds us, “[w]e need alternative visions...visions should emerge out of ‘critical and practical engagement with the institutions, personal behaviours and practices that now exist’” (as quoted in Throgmorton, 2003, p. 138). The Community Planning Board can be an example of an alternative participatory institution that ideally supports processes whereby the voices, concerns, and needs of a community can be represented and genuinely discussed, suspending the need for ‘formalised’ methods and processes, but one that allows for messy, genuine deliberation. The Board has the potential to provide a platform where the structural and technical limitations of existing practice are brought to the forefront, and where participation allows for actors to gain the social/political/planning knowledge necessary in order to have an influence on existing planning processes and strive to make a difference.

3.4 Depoliticising Participation

Planning is an inherently political field since it deals with ethical, distributional, and technical issues. As a political activity in a democratic state, planning *should* have some form of citizen participation. However participation is inherently contested because it can take on many forms but in general is seen as a ‘right’ and a ‘good’ thing to do. Although citizen participation operates under the goal of representing a public interest, this ‘interest’ is often ill defined, inexplicit and changes based on the objective, setting, type of planning activity and nature/type of agency organising the participatory activity (Day, 1997). The term ‘participation’ (and its variants) is used frequently to refer to a wide variety of different situations and contexts. It has become a widespread catch-all term that has lost any significant (and political) meaning or content (Wainwright, 2009, p. 27; Pateman, 1970). Participatory practices are often used as an additional planning technique, whether by choice or due to legislative requirements, with little thought “given to the considerable complexities of democracy, its theory and practice, or issues of representation. Many of the traumas generated within participation practices may be traced to naïve conceptions of democracy” (Fagence, 1977, p. 9, as quoted by Day, 1997, p. 422). The more fundamental debate about the contribution and role of participatory practices should not only be about the technical or organisational aspects but also about discussions of power and politicizing actors.

The growing popularity of participatory planning in government and private/public sectors is an element of a neoliberal mode of governance, which assumes and gives the *impression* of empowerment through participation. However, power continues to exist, inevitably leading to inequalities of outcomes questioning the purpose and nature of participation (Flyvberg, 1998). Participation thus becomes a ‘new tyranny’ by giving the feeling of democracy and inclusion, but ensuring that power remains centralised and that any decisions made continue to support

economic competitiveness (Brownill & Carpenter, 2007b, p. 404; Cooke & Kothari, 2001).

Through the administrative restrictions of participation, conflict becomes depoliticised by focusing on the technical aspects of participation, detaching conflict from historical, social or political values (Moini, 2011, p. 160). As such, the reality of participation lies within structures of power and how they limit the impact that various degrees and forms of participation can actually have on decisions and outcomes (Bedford et al., 2002).

Under the neoliberal framework, the market is viewed as *the* only source for solutions; irrespective of the strategy or policy, a central idea is that local economic development will act as a means to fix urban problems, (for example related to poverty, unemployment and affordable housing). Coupled with a focus on the local and place-based management strategies, the ‘community’ becomes the level through which all problems must be addressed. As such, place-based strategies such as the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy and funding opportunities through the United Way, target communities and community groups with/for particular participatory programs. This ‘support’ is both an enabling and limiting means of social change since “community organizations are in a position of being responsible for the provision of social services, but not in a position of control over those services” while top-down strategies are not particularly understanding of “localizing processes and traditions (DeFilippis, Fisher & Shragge, 2010, p. 91). Section 2.4 further highlighted issues pertaining to a narrow focus on the local as the source and solution of urban problems.

The creation of a ‘non-profit industrial complex’ in the US has evolved whereby private and state interests use non-profits as a means to: “monitor and control social justice movements; divert public monies into private hands through foundations; manage and control dissent in order to make the world safe for capitalism; redirect activist energies into career-based modes of organizing instead of mass-based organizing capable of actually transforming society; allow

corporations to mask their exploitative and colonial work practices through ‘philanthropic’ work; [and] encourage social movements to model themselves after capitalist structures rather than challenge them” (Smith, 2007, p. 3). Top-down social change management processes and strategies work to diffuse any meaningful political work or challenge, depoliticising any community based groups, stripping away any potential power for instigating social change (Jones de Almedia, 2007). One of the central aims of the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy, was to transform how service providers, city staff, and local residents participated in community planning. The Priority Neighbourhood framework was rooted in the neighbourhood effects literature, misdiagnosing issues of poverty as a local problem and downloading responsibility onto the neighbourhood itself. The adopted top-down approach, undermined the agency of the communities and members that it was seemingly trying to help.

Although targeted funding and investment do provide necessary support for residents, they do not allow for the structural changes needed and are “not in and of itself a strategy for poverty reduction... Targeted investment oversimplifies the spatial complexity of social networks and everyday life... creat[ing] arbitrary boundaries for residents and non-profit agencies in accessing resources.” (Cowen & Parlette, 2011, p. vi). The nature of funded work is that organisations need to meet the requirements set out by their funders. In most cases, funding agencies do not allow applicants to steer away from top-down prescribed goals and objectives. Although the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy emphasizes ‘resident engagement’, community-based organisations do not always allow for (or have the capacity to allow for) meaningful resident participation. Additionally, social capital theories inform the Strategy and by extension, the work of many community organisations. However such theories “underplay the political nature of marginality... suggest[ing] that poor people lack either the engagement or appropriate skills to make positive change” (Cowen and Parlette, 2011, p. vii). As such, organisations become more

preoccupied with meeting funders goals or creating a dependency on funding sources. What has resulted is increasingly powerful top-down processes that manage the course and content of community work, as well as diffuse any meaningful political work to challenge or change systems.

Funding bodies want to invest in groups that focus their work on ‘low-income’ members from ‘priority neighbourhoods’ and often these targeted communities and its residents do not interact with organisations from a position of strength but rather a position of dependence (DeFilippis, Fisher & Shragge, 2010, p. 92-3). Social change becomes less about structural barriers and reimagining solutions, and more about reporting on funding ‘results’. Jones de Almeida (2007) sums up the depoliticising nature and restrictions of funding ‘engagement’,

“We are too busy being told to market ourselves by pimping our communities’ poverty in proposals, selling ‘results’ in reports and accounting for our finances in financial reviews...In essence, our organizations have become mini-corporations, because on some level, we have internalized the idea that power - the ability to create change - equals money...it becomes harder and harder to entertain the possibility of restructuring our lives in a radically different way. After all, capitalism is not only around us in the society we live in - it is also within us in terms of what we value, how we live, and what we believe is possible” (p. 187).

In an interview with one community worker in Kingston Galloway/Orton Park, the community worker mentioned how the priority neighbourhood framework and associated community funding has done little to bring about long-term and long-lasting change, instead it is a strategy that “is not addressing [the root causes but only] scratching the surface. It’s an intervention to...keep people quite” (personal communication, May 2, 2013). When asked about whose responsibility it is to change the system, the interviewee responded,

“I think it’s the people’s. It is our [referring to community-based organisations such as The East Scarborough Storefront] responsibility to organise and offer the leadership, to organise people to start thinking about those issues. But if you are looking for a sustainable solution, it’s only the people who can be able to do it collaboratively. Of course with agencies like the Storefront, we need to take the initiative to offer that leadership to begin that process to take place but ultimately it is the responsibility of the people to say no, and to either change things through

*voting, through lobbying. **When people shout, they will listen. If people can shout, and shout together, then everybody will listen.***” (East Scarborough Storefront Staff #2, personal communication, May 2, 2013 - emphasis added)

Participation in larger top-down planning processes and within community organisations has become narrowly defined and limited, removing any opportunity for organisations and people to question or challenge top-down structures instead of inadvertently supporting them and operating within the frameworks that restrict them. Participatory practices need to be re-politicised and the Community Planning Board can act as a potential platform for such action. The Board has the opportunity to support residents in questioning participatory practices and planning processes in Kingston Galloway/Orton Park or Toronto as a whole, moving beyond questions of zoning or development to address more fundamental issues reflecting their vision of justice and structures of society.

Chapter 4: Community Planning Board: A Case Study

Kingston Galloway/Orton Park (KGO) is a City of Toronto and United Way designated 'priority neighbourhood' located in East Scarborough. It falls within two ward boundaries (Woburn and West Hill) under the political jurisdiction of Councillor Ainslie (Ward 43). Identified as a priority neighbourhood in need of social infrastructure investment in 2004, Kingston Galloway is bounded by Scarborough Golf Club Road to the west, Manse Road to the east, Ellesmere Road to the north and south to Kingston Road (Appendix A). With close to 24,000 people in population, and the highest concentration of subsidised housing, KGO is inhabited predominantly by newcomers and visible minority groups (About, 2012; City of Toronto, 2011). In 2005, 29% of its residents lived at or below the income poverty line with 5.4% unemployed and 1.2% above the rate of unemployment (City of Toronto, 2006). The area is geographically isolated due to weak public transportation infrastructure (City of Toronto, 2006).

This chapter culminates the theory and policies presented earlier in order to analyse the potential for a community planning board to address issues of public participation and neighbourhood planning. The Board has the ability to act as a platform or institution that can possibly allow for genuine participation, however its usefulness is currently uncertain and contingent on institutional conditions (structure, mandate, legalisation/formalisation with the City) and non-institutional considerations (such as people's capacity to lead; urban literacy). This chapter highlights some of the ways in which the Board can begin to organise its structure, and identify ways in which the community can mobilise the necessary social power to bring about neighbourhood change.

4.1 The Importance of Place: Place-attachment in Participation

Our thoughts, beliefs and feelings about our local environment impact how we behave in and towards spaces/places, ultimately influencing how we might participate in local area planning. Theories of place have been studied in different fields, such as environmental psychology, geography, and sociology, each bringing to the forefront discussions on lived experiences, place-attachment, and a sense of community. Although studies of community, place, and participation can be found in planning theory as well, Manzo and Perkins (2006) argue that they have been developed predominantly in isolation from other disciplines. A cross-disciplinary discussion of place can lead to a better understanding of how people participate, and the limits or motivations of individual and group behaviour. While previous chapters highlighted the political and technical aspects and limitations of participatory practices, a discussion about participation should also be read and understood within place and participants' interaction with, discourse of, and attachment to the spatial context in which they are participating. As discourses of place become increasingly used within the neoliberal context, it is important to unpack different conceptions of place, neighbourhood/community, and the local as pertaining to public participation and participatory planning practices.

Various academics have attempted to define ideas of place and space. Among the first was Tuan's (1974, 1977) classic work examining how people attached meaning to place, arguing that undifferentiated 'space' evolves into 'place' through the act of knowing, interacting, and placing value on it, acquiring deep meaning through experience and the "steady accretion of sentiment" (Tuan, 1974, p. 33). For a space to become a place, the place must be able to come to life, have history and embedded experiences. A place is formed when individuals appropriate their identities through language and "the unformulated rules of living know-how" (Augé, 1995, p. 101). Harvey (1996) conceptualizes place as a social construct. Spaces become charged with

history, narratives, and movement over time, which in turn constructs places that consist of re-occurring social activity over space and time. Places become marked with class struggles, where ‘otherness’ and ‘difference’ are produced due to uneven geographical and capital divisions (Harvey, 1996; McCann, 1999; Martin, 2003a, 2003b). Places cannot be thought of without the forces around them and the discourses used to construct them; places acquire their “distinctive character from the collective activities of people...who shape the land through their activities” (Harvey, 1996, p. 310).

While some theorists distinguish between space, place and non-places (Harvey, 1996; Augé, 1995), Lefebvre (1991) does not: *place* is not a categorical entity and there is only produced space, which is always conceived, perceived and lived, albeit in widely differing ways. Lefebvre (1991) conceptualises ‘abstract space’ as ahistorical and saturated with hegemonic definitions of appropriate activities and meanings, intended to prohibit or promote certain forms of expression. These spaces are made possible through a consensus of behaviour established and supported by the compliance of large groups. “Abstract space is fundamentally contradictory because while it is a space that emphasizes homogeneity, it can only exist by accentuating difference...only be achieved and maintained through a continued state-sponsored process of fragmentation and marginalisation that elides difference and thus attempts to prevent conflict” (McCann, 1999, p. 171). Three moments or aspects of social space exist that mediate practice in social space: *representations of space*, which are conceived spaces (rather than those directly lived) and central to the production of abstract space; *representational spaces*, which are lived spaces, symbolised experiences that may involve counter discourses; and *spatial practices*, which are the everyday activities and experiences. This third form of space mediates between the other two moments of social space. Abstract spaces are produced and enforced through normative definitions in order to maintain a functional and/or hierarchical segregation of space and people.

These forms of social space and their normative definitions are evident within the priority neighbourhood discourse and place-based management practice. For example the political creation of priority neighbourhoods as spaces of the violent, racial and poor, could be conceived as representations of space, where the everyday spatial practices and lived realities within these spaces might be different as representational spaces.

Whether externally imposed or internally normalised, the impact of discourse of a place is just as fundamental to place construction as physical materials, resulting in conflict over the creation and mobilisation of place identities (see McCann 1999 for US based case studies). Stories and discourses create a permanence in places that allows for specific cultural identities to be perpetuated, which have powerful implications in controlling cities. Through power relations, state and neighbourhood organisations can influence place imaginaries and discourses. Within a competitive city discourse, the ideal branding of neighbourhoods are as ‘safe’ and ‘beautiful’ as a means to facilitate consumption and commodification. The success of these spaces becomes intrinsically tied to discourses of place that can help *sell* them. As a result, pre-existing place-based identities either become wiped clean or reinvented and instrumentalised/essentialised in order to create a unified vision that can be sold to the public. The constructed (often imposed) discourse tries to instil and manage everyday interactions, place-based associations and meaning. Discourses of place are evident in City of Toronto’s Official Plan as well as the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy, as alluded to in Chapter 2. Toronto is conceptualised as a city of neighbourhoods. These places are spoken about as the location for economic, social, and cultural development. They are Toronto’s best ‘assets’ and thus need to be supported and cultivated. Terms such as ‘pride’, ‘sense of belonging’, ‘attractive’, ‘vibrant’, ‘complete community’ are used throughout the Official Plan. Emphasis is placed on the importance of these places as necessary for the maintenance of a branded image of Toronto, and any ‘threat’ to these places

must be addressed, such as the perception of gang and gun violence and growing poverty of the suburbs. The discourse of the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy coincides with the Official Plan and supports the place-based management. Top-down discourses of place are evident in the neoliberal management of these places, shifting blame for ‘problems’ onto place. These discourses are either internalised or rejected and lead to the territorial stigmatisation of these places (further discussed in section 4.2).

With trends in place-based planning policies and place-specific participatory practices, the ‘local’, the ‘neighbourhood’ or the ‘community’, form the foundation for participatory governance practices and discourses, constituting place as both a political-economic and humanistic construct. Regardless of how space and/or place are defined, the relationships of people to places are critical to understanding their involvement in the local community or participatory practices. How people bond with places constitutes *place-identity* (first coined by Proshansky in 1978), consisting of continuously transforming feelings, values, preferences, goals, and beliefs in relation to a physical environment. It follows that people bond with places they deem significant and that these bonds are due to the values and identities they ascribe to those places. Fostering such bonds leads to a sense of community, ultimately (positively) impacting people’s engagement with these places. Where someone feels they belong is influenced by power relations and individual identity; it is manifested in the class-based, gendered and ethnicised everyday meanings and uses of place. Such relationships further influence how one participates in neighbourhood processes. As such “place attachment, place identity, and sense of community can provide a greater understanding [for] how neighbourhood spaces can motivate ordinary residents to act collectively to preserve, protect, or improve their community and participate in local planning processes” (Manzo & Perkins, 2006, p. 347).

Normalised discourse dictates that increased participation *must* lead to positive feelings and attitudes towards place (Manzo & Perkins, 2006). Fostering ideals such as ‘community’, ‘social cohesion’, and ‘social capital’ have become key goals in governance policies focusing on place-based solutions and place-based participation. These ideals are forced upon diverse groups that share a common geographical space but not necessarily a sense of community among them. Through policy practice and discourse, places can also be highly stigmatised, where such negative connotations and relationships of place can in fact lead to a distancing of one’s self (and others) from the place, making participatory efforts difficult. The influence of creating bounded places based on political agendas results in arbitrary ‘communities’ forcing social practices or goals upon its residents, with the assumption that the residents will inherently *want* to participate together in bettering their neighbourhood. This has been evident with ‘priority neighbourhood’ discourse and practice, and the creation of politically bounded geographies, which have led to territorial stigmatisation (Wacquant, 2007) of these areas through stigmatised discourse, spatialised poverty, and racialisation. Residents of these ‘communities’ are assumed to be ‘dis-engaged’ and lacking in high levels of participation, which has led to neighbourhood decline. Although territorial stigmatisation can lead to lower place-attachment values, in some cases it can also influence and motivate people to change or appropriate those stereotypes. The following chapter section will discuss discourses present in Kingston Galloway/Orton Park. It is important to understand discourses of place and place-attachment among residents of Kingston Galloway because it will have an impact on how residents might interact with the proposed Community Planning Board and vice versa.

4.2 The Creation of KGO: Discourse, Place, and Territorial Stigmatisation

‘Priority neighbourhoods’ often incorporate parts of several different/existing wards, or clusters of road intersections containing high populations of immigrants. The areas are ethnically diverse and relatively poor, and thus correspond to the popular image of the inner suburbs. While priority neighbourhoods were meant to be ‘apolitical’, the geographic bounding and creation of these neighbourhoods was fundamentally a political activity, saturated in power, legitimising a neoliberal ideology and discourse of racialised and spatialised poverty. The narrative of priority neighbourhoods on the one hand allowed for a focus on place-based management while diverting conversation away from the historical context and spatial manifestations of neoliberal economic structuring. ‘Place’ was created and imposed onto people by virtue of living in a particular location. Service workers perpetuated the cycle by referring to the neighbourhood and their place-based work as attached to ‘Kingston Galloway/Orton Park’, while city officials catered programming and funds to this ‘community’. But the new place name did not necessarily reflect the every day reality of those living there. During participant interviews, residents did not refer to their community as ‘Kingston Galloway/Orton Park’ (or any derivation of it) unless they had direct contact with social workers and/or place-based programming. Many people referred to their community as their exact address (specifically the tower building in which they lived) or their main intersection highlighting the reality that “*within Kingston Road Orton Park there are 5 points where Kingston Road, Morning Side and Lawrence all intersect. Within that nucleus there are 5 different areas where people will come and that will be the meeting point and from there [they] go to their own community. It’s one of the few unique intersections of Toronto where a community is divided into 5 areas just by how the roads intersect*” (Community Development Officer, City of Toronto, personal communication, May 1, 2013).

Interviewees recognised the stigma that comes with being a priority neighbourhood. One resident highlighted how outsiders speak about his community and alluded to how he has internalised the stigma associated with the term ‘priority neighbourhood’.

I guess it depends on the person I'm talking to. I kind of want to figure out their perspective of my area first...[when] they ask me where I live, I ask them, do you know where Scarborough is...and it's funny cause they always have this negative connotation...oh you're from Scarborough...oh guns, gangs and all that stuff...[I ask], do you know where Galloway is? Where Orton Park is? [And their reaction is], oh you're from that area? Oh that's really bad. [People] think it's bad cause the media says this and the media says that...but in reality there's all these community engagement events we're doing...there's a lot of growing and engaging going on in the community and that's what a lot of people don't know and that's what's not being seen.

Unless they're familiar with [the label Priority Neighbourhood] ...not everyone knows that where they're living is a priority neighbourhood...and more so because why would you want to say 'I live in a ghetto'? I would say it's degrading...people wouldn't bring that up [especially] with the stigma that others have towards it. So I guess I tell them I'm from Orton Park and when they ask where it is I tell them it's in a priority neighbourhood and I ask them how [they] feel about a priority neighbourhood cause they already have their connotations about it, and when I explain to them what we do and how the community has developed from where it was to where it is now I kind of get to change their perspective of it. It's cool seeing what society makes them believe where I'm from and how to perceive it and then after I talk to them how their perception changes
- (Resident #5, personal communication, May 16, 2013)

Although this resident saw the negative implications of priority neighbourhood discourse, he alludes to ‘social capital’ discourse in the way that he speaks about his community in a state of ‘growing’ and ‘engaging’ as what he assumes to be positive ways to bring the neighbourhood out of poverty.

Although boundaries were meant to be kept ‘apolitical’, the priority neighbourhood discourse resulted in a form of environmental determinism, asserting that geographical location determined socioeconomic status and criminal behaviour (Siciliano, 2010, p. 31). Such discourse brought images of concentrated, racialised poverty into public consciousness by defining ‘place’ or ‘neighbourhood’ “as an explanatory means of accounting for acute class differences in the city

by way of ahistorical and asociological theories of ghettoization and neighbourhood effect” (Siciliano, 2010, p. 20). These bureaucratically defined ‘neighbourhoods’ were bounded and isolated as vilified places that could become permanent fixtures in the Toronto landscape, threatening to impact the rest of the city and the branded image of Toronto as a ‘city of neighbourhoods’. The discourse of territorial stigma became prominent ‘from above’, through media and political discourse as well as ‘from below’, internalised in the daily vernacular. As written by Bourdieu (1999),

“the stigmatized neighbourhood symbolically degrades those who live in it and they degrade it symbolically in return, since, being deprived of all the assets necessary to participate in the various social games, their common lot consists only of their common excommunication. Assembling in one place a population homogeneous in its dispossession also has the effect of accentuating dispossession.” (Bourdieu, [1993] 1999, p. 129, Wacquant’s translation; Wacquant, 2007, p. 69).

Territorial stigmatisation is internalised but it can also strengthen interpersonal relationships among those working to change the stereotype through collective community action (Manzo & Perkins, 2006). Both these cases were evident in the interviews. Some spoke about how they were motivated to participate in their community in order to challenge stereotypes while others recognised the territorial aspect of stigmatisation. For example one resident said:

It’s a very diverse neighbourhood and I think it’s full of people who are really...from what I’ve seen and met with people in the neighbourhood...that they are proud of who they are. For the most part, they are proud of this. It may not be Forest Hill or those things but it’s ours. And I think that has changed over the last few years but unfortunately the media, the good ol’ fashioned media, does not present a good face on a lot of things and they always tend to glorify the negative and if there’s something positive going on you very seldom see it. I don’t think I’m alone in my opinion of that. - (Resident #1, personal communication, April 29, 2013)

Goffman (1963, p. 4-5) categorises three main types of stigma; one such category is marked by religion, nationality and race and can be transferred and maintained through lineages, contaminating all future members of a family. This form is most akin to territorial stigma since it

is attached to a particular locality and can equally transfer to all members of a family. However territorial stigma can presumably be easily annulled or dissimulated through geographic mobility. Being categorised with such stigma can lead to the dissolution of ‘place’, such as “the loss of a humanized, culturally familiar and socially filtered locale with which marginalised urban populations identify and in which they feel ‘at home’ and in relative security” (Wacquant, 2007, p. 69). These places became feared, viewed as possible ‘threats’ and ‘potential voids’ for the rest of the city (Smith, 1987 see Wacquant, 2007), and is evident in what a long-time resident of the neighbourhood says below.

It's not just the buildings that make [this neighbourhood] ...you can change the buildings or try and do [whatever]. Even with Regent Park, it's not going to change the mentality of a lot of people. They're still there. They're still Regent Park. Do they still have the same mentality about how they feel towards themselves? That's an important issue. It's how people feel about themselves...it's the people within the neighbourhood that are the change agents because they know who they are, they know who they want to be...and the ones that don't want to join the club...you're always going to have some of them. - (Resident #1, personal communication, April 29, 2013 emphasis in original)

Furthermore she adds about the external discourse about residents of Regent Park (or other poor neighbourhoods):

The best part of what you hear [about Regent Park] is that they don't live there anymore.

Interviewer: Some people say that?

Yes they do! That they got themselves educated, got a job...so they didn't have the stigmatism of living in Regent Park so they were able to move out anywhere else.... - (Resident #1, personal communication, April 29, 2013)

This response represents an attempt to deal with territorial stigmatisation (which conflates physical spaces and bodies) by escaping the physical space on an individual basis. In contrast, some younger residents in the community have been adopting the negative discourse as a means to obtain more ‘credibility’ among their peers (either within Kingston Galloway or from other

neighbourhoods). For them, territorial stigma provides an opportunity to unify residents. For example one resident said,

I think it goes deeper than that, I think some people like the negative stigma a little bit, because you gotta 'rep' your neighbourhood...but ya the priority neighbourhood has in a way been a unifying voice but not always positively. I feel like it is a way to conjure an image. I think that some of the youth like saying 'ya I'm from KGO', this neighbourhood did happen, Drake made a song about it. It's a matter of having something you can say that people will recognise. - (Resident #2, personal communication, May 15, 2013)

Another young resident highlights his own struggle with identifying where he comes from and how he refers to his neighbourhood depends on his audience and what impression he wants to give of himself and of his community. While sceptical of inverting the stigma, he also refuses to deal with the stigma by fleeing the community. Instead, he deals with place-identity tactically, in situation-specific ways.

Sometimes I'll say [that I'm from] Galloway. I guess it's based on the question, 'what neighbourhood do you live in'. If [I'm asked] 'where do you live', I'll say Overture.¹⁹ Sometimes too I'm a bit careful about where and when I say Galloway and when I'll say Overture. Just to avoid the attention or being asked questions of where I live, I'll say Overture. If you say Galloway sometimes, it's like 'oh you know the bad guys' cause that's the image people have of Galloway. If I'm in a group of service providers, I'd say I'm from Galloway so they can see that I'm from a priority neighbourhood cause I'm serving a priority neighbourhood, [and because] lot of people don't know where Overture is.

Cause I work with young people, if one of them asks me where I'm from, sometimes I'll say Overture, sometimes if I just want them to react and act goofy and ask questions then I'll say I'm from Galloway. They get all impressed and stuff. Sometimes I do it purposely. At times I'll say Overture just cause I don't want to be bothered with it.

I think it depends on the person [I'm talking too], young guys or teenagers they want to be cool so they see this illegal lifestyle as cool, even if they're not part of it...they want to associate themselves with it...where the people have a reputation of being tough... Young teenagers are idolizing [the stigma] ...so they brag that they have a cousin there. [But] adults, especially service providers, they look down on the area. - (Resident #3, personal communication, May 15, 2013)

¹⁹ Overture Road is the name of road located in Kingston Galloway/Orton Park (see Appendix A).

The discourse about priority neighbourhoods and its inhabitants can become naturalised as ‘common sense,’ which profoundly impacts the (re)production of social practices and social control “through the negotiation of consent with the governed, or those lacking in the hierarchy of power” (Parlette, 2007, p. 11; Gramsci, 1971). The hegemonic naturalisation of such discourse ignores all historical and systemic structures contingent to the spatial manifestations of racialised poverty of the suburbs, legitimising ‘truth’ in such stigmatised discourse, creating a distanced and value-free observer. Some residents are aware of the discourse and seem to be actively playing with it, whether as a means to claim ‘street cred’ or to break down external perceptions. They demonstrate that hegemonic discourse is a site of struggle when they are trying to produce and assert varying degrees of power in their everyday existence. It is vital to recognise the power of unequal structures of urban governance and the sites of discursive struggle that afford actors the ability to exercise their own discursive power and to work within and upon them in order to change them. It seems that the internal and external discourse about Kingston Galloway/Orton Park is open to some degree of change that can potentially afford residents the power to challenge the territorial stigma of their neighbourhood. How the community is spoken about and understood has an impact on how residents participate in bringing about social change. This discussion is of importance when the proposed Planning Board begins to engage with residents, communicate about the neighbourhood internally and externally, and thus interact with, perpetuate or challenge existing discourses of the neighbourhood.

4.3 Community Planning Board and The Professional Advisory Committee

Over the last several years, Kingston Galloway/Orton Park has been experiencing increasing interest from professional and academic bodies resulting in various initiatives, projects, and

partnerships related to planning and community development.²⁰ As a result of the interest in planning related initiatives, in May 2012, Social Planning Toronto (SPT) announced an initiative to create a planning board in East Scarborough (Kingston Galloway/Orton Park) with the intention to address growing concern about resident engagement in the planning process, advocating for significant improvements to reactionary and unequal public participation processes (Ahmed, 2012). The Board would create an opportunity for residents “to connect their community vision with the official plan through a participatory engagement process” (Ahmed, 2012). The basis for the Planning Board would be to connect physical planning back to its social context while also engaging residents on planning issues and “address[ing] this disconnect by incorporating social and physical planning issues in a localized participatory framework” (Ahmed, 2012).

The proposal of a community planning board has received the support of the community Councillor Paul Ainslie (Ward 43). The Councillor put forth a motion in May 2013 to the Planning and Growth Management Committee, with recommendations to create Community Planning Boards in the four districts of the City of Toronto and to recognise the implementation

²⁰ Beginning with the implementation of the Community.Design.Initiative (CDI) in 2008, a partnership between planners, architects and designers, working with youth in the community to conceptualise, redesign and build the East Scarborough Storefront. This initiative has garnered a lot of success and popularity among the community, inspiring a lot of youth to engage with the planning of their neighbourhood (Gawor, 2012). Following CDI, in June 2012, United Way announced an investment of \$800,000 in pilot project funding for tower neighbourhoods starting with Kingston Galloway and Rexdale as the first pilot projects (Yao, 2012). Focused on the residential towers at 4000-4100 Lawrence Ave East. The East Scarborough Storefront alongside residents have been working with teams of urban professionals to address questions about the physical space surrounding their buildings and what cultural, social or recreational programming can be put in place to respond to community needs. In addition to these initiatives, in the summer of 2012, the Centre for City Ecology (CCE), began the Toronto Envisioning Neighbourhoods Together (or TENT) project. Phase 1 of the 2-year project resulted in a weekly meeting with residents where they were taught about various planning processes, design skills, and learned how to use Google SKETCH UP (a mapping tool in order to create a 3D Google map of their community). The purpose of this project was to help the community create a vision(s) “as a basis for dialogue about its future with decision-makers in both the public and private sectors” (CCE, 2012). Phase 2 of the project has shifted focus to helping with the creation of the Planning Board.

of a pilot project in Ward 43- Kingston Galloway/Orton Park (Ainslie, 2013). The Committee referred the Councillor's motion to the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning "for inclusion in the 2014 Work Plan, and [to] report back to the Planning and Growth Management Committee on the role, feasibility, and efficiency of the City establishing Community Planning Boards or other mechanisms to engage communities more effectively" (City of Toronto, 2013a). Councillor Ainslie's support for the Board lies with his current direction (2013/2014) in city politics.²¹ Councillor Ainslie's motives seem to coincide with Social Planning as well:

If I can do a planning process proactively and know what my community wants I can say to the city planners, well if [developers] are giving us money for a community benefit, here's a list already of everything of what my community [wants]. [T]hat increases the ability to get things done quickly but it also engages residents in the community ahead of time. If you have a local planning board and you're cognisant of what residents want, I think you get people more involved in the process than just being reactive to a developer showing up and saying, this is what I want to do. I want to see the local planning board proactively envisioning what we want in the neighbourhood, [while] engaging residents. I think the local planning board helps add a voice and it's a cohesive voice that would be stronger than if you just had individual residents complaining about something. - (Councillor Paul Ainslie, personal communication, June 2, 2013)

The Councillor alludes to how he wishes the Community Planning Board to function: as a Board that isn't 'complaining' about development but that allows development to occur in the community (and even *welcomes* it). Participation becomes distilled to the mere distribution of Section 37 funds in the community whereby the function of the Board would be to decide its allocation. Section 37 of the *Planning Act* allows for Councillors to "secure cash or in-kind contributions from developers in return for allowing them to exceed existing height and density restrictions" (Moore, 2013, p. i). However this assumes that developers will be developing *beyond* as-of-right zoning in order for the Councillor to seek Section 37 funds (which currently is *not* the

²¹ With recent debates at City Hall, Councillor Ainslie, once a strong Ford ally, has distanced himself from the Mayor's politics, showcased through voting against proposed casino developments and the subway expansion in Scarborough (he was in support of the LRT instead) (Mendelson, 2013).

case, as explained in section 4.5). ‘Participation’ based on the allocation of Section 37 funds cannot be thought of as de-facto participation because it focuses on allocating funds for ‘desirable visual amenities’ such as public art located in the immediate vicinity of the developments (Moore, 2013). Even when used for socially progressive purposes, Section 37 funds are not seriously redistributive and as such, ‘participation’ in this manner is not about addressing social equity or accessibility issues within the community but about creating ‘beautified landscapes’. However, the use of Section 37 funds can provide the Community Planning Board with an opportunity to seriously consider alternative developments in the community and how best to leverage these funds or allowances. The Board can either allow for or flat-out refuse certain types of development, but instead leverage its social power for alternative planning objectives such as inclusionary housing or affordable housing units. (The power and influence of the Board is further discussed in section 4.6).

The Centre for City Ecology (CCE) and Social Planning Toronto (SPT) have been working in the Kingston Galloway community alongside a series of academics and students, planning and architect professionals, community workers, and politicians in order to conceptualise how to support the creation of a Community Planning Board. Referred to as the *Professional Advisory Committee*, these individuals gather once a month to discuss how best to leverage political support, and how to proceed with the implementation and design of the Board. On November 18 2013, CCE and SPT hosted *Shape Your Neighbourhood*, an ‘open house’ composed of residents and various community groups, showcasing past and ongoing community initiatives.²² The purpose of the open house was to connect with Chief Planner Jennifer Keesmaat, whom at the time was contemplating the objectives and implementation of community planning boards in the

²² The open house entailed presentations from youth from the CDI program, students from University of Toronto - Scarborough, participants from SKETCH UP, representatives from the Boys and Girls Club, Tower Neighbourhood Renewal, Residents Rising, and The East Scarborough Storefront.

2014 Work Plan. Another intention of this open house was to connect with a wider group of residents informing them about the various planning related initiatives taking place in the community, to stimulate interest in community members and to get them to sign up to be part of the Community Planning Board-*Working Group*.²³ Approximately 60 people were present at the open house, and 17 residents signed up to be part of the Working Group, however the number of active members has dropped significantly since the initial meeting.

During the Open House, Keesmaat expressed her interest and the commitment of the City Planning division in exploring and studying how a formalised process can be effectively leveraged to “bring the ideas and values of Toronto’s community together to better inform planning processes” and to “work closely with [Planning Board members] throughout the implementation of this pilot project in order to achieve the best possible outcomes”

(Memorandum to Councillor Ainslie, Nov 28 2013). Keesmaat raised several questions to help guide the development process (emphasis added):

1. What are some of the existing *assets* in the community (BIAs, Residents Associations, other local organizations)? How can these assets be *leveraged* to support the Community Planning Board?
2. How does the existence of the Board increase the *efficiency* of the planning process?
3. What is the scope of the Board’s responsibilities? Should the mechanism developed be uniform across the city, or should it be flexible in order to adapt to the needs of the particular communities?
4. How many people will sit on the Board? How will we ensure that membership is truly representative of the community and that the process is fair?
5. What will the governance model of the Board be? How are decisions made and recorded? How will these decisions be fed into the overall planning process?
6. What will the relationship of the Board be to the City Planning Division?

It is important to unpack some of the terms used by Keesmaat in the above memorandum. When referencing terms like efficiency, assets and leveraging/assessing assets, it seems that Keesmaat

²³ The intention of the Working Group is to shift conversations outside of the Professional Advisory Group, opening up the process to define the parameters, function, approach, objective and intentions of the Community Planning Board, as led by the residents, for the residents.

is placing the role and function of the Planning Board within a market-driven context. Terms such as efficiency and asset regard community-based work, specifically planning work, as market-based work, depoliticising and diminishing its ability to bring about long-term social change. Furthermore, following the Open House meeting, this discourse has been internalised and used by the Community Planning Board - Professional Advisors Committee as is evident in their proposed 2014 Work Plan (see Appendix B). The Work Plan emphasizes cataloguing such ‘community assets’ as opposed to extensively discussing structures and relations of power, how to best leverage social networks, or discussions of inclusion, representation, agency, and objectives for social change. Instead of setting their own agenda and keeping an arms-length from the City, it seems the Community Planning Board is under direct influence from the same structures they wish to question and challenge. The Board has the *potential* to provide an opportunity for community members to reorganise themselves around issues of participation and neighbourhood planning, as *they* deem appropriate. The Board has the potential to mobilise community members and the necessary social power from below to obtain desired changes and make use of formal institutions that would otherwise ignore or dismiss their voices. In order for the Board to do this, members need to take into account – and insist - that they are community-based organisation and not an extension of the City, allowing members to really explore and identify progressive ways to address neighbourhood planning issues.

4.4 Potential Board Structure: “Representational” Participation

As the Community Planning Board defines its mandate and framework, it is important to consider participation and membership structures on the Board. How members are organised changes the daily relations of power and while it is important for the Board to create a form of ‘legitimacy’ with the City, it is important for the Board to also be an arms-length group that

allows for a diverse array or avenues for participation from residents in the neighbourhood. The Community Planning Board must take the limitations of participatory structures into account when considering how they will define the Board structure and levels of resident participation. It is important to critically examine representative and direct forms of participation and bring to question what democratic and/or administrative deficits they produce. Social Planning Toronto and The Centre for City Ecology have been working closely with the East Scarborough Storefront with the implementation of the Community Planning Board. As such the Board may be embedded within the Storefront's operating framework, and be influenced by its membership and resident leadership structures. Since the Community Planning Board-Working Group is still in the process of forming a terms of reference/operational details, it is important to consider what "public participation" through a Board means, either as direct or representational.

Representative participation treats participation as an 'administrative' rather than 'political' act, whereby citizen *input* is sought rather than empowerment in decision-making (Warren, n.d., p. 18). Participation based on a self-selection basis is less inclusive for it favours those with fewer barriers to participation (such as education, access to resources), resulting in increased political inequality in participation (Cain, Dalton & Scarrow, 2003). Representation, done through random selection or an appointed process, is also limiting in that the represented group becomes a symbolic public, representing people who may not identify with its members. Furthermore, representative participants can shape the representations of those they are representing (Brown, 2006, p. 221) (for an example see discussion in section 3.2 on issues of identity in participation).

Direct participation ideally allows for the development of individual participants into responsible, social and political actors "through the effect of the participatory process" (Pateman, 1972, p. 24) and "[i]t is by participation at the local level that individuals 'learn democracy'" (p.

31). As such, for democratic theorist Pateman, the fundamental role and function of participation is an *educative* one, whereby education is not restricted in the academic sense but involves cultural, social and psychological elements, and the development of/practice in democratic skills and procedures. Direct participation is much harder to achieve at large scales, while representative participation seems to be the most necessary, however it takes away from the fundamental role and educative function of participation (Pateman, 1972, p. 31). Representative participation limits the opportunities for non-representatives as their role is restricted to the election of leaders. For example, if participation of Kingston Galloway/Orton Park residents were strictly restricted to selecting Community Planning Board representatives, then the frequency of their participation would be limited to the administrative terms served by board members. A combination of direct and representative participation is needed to allow for daily, local level direct participation as well as larger scale representative participation.

New York City's Community Boards (CB) are often looked to as the main example of 'successful' neighbourhood planning, however, they are not without their flaws²⁴. Under the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP), Charter of the City of New York, Community Boards became formalised and legally mandated by the city, although to this day remain in a purely *advisory* position. Board members are appointed and do not necessarily provide an ideal representation of the community but rather a *political* one²⁵. Furthering political relations and

²⁴ Community Boards emerged out of the anti-state and civil rights movements of the 1950s as a means to address civil rights issues through administrative reform and anti-establishment structures (Marcuse, 1987). Community Boards were incorporated into New York City Charter in 1963 and later solidified in their present form in 1975 Charter revisions. 59 Boards were established to advise on service delivery, budgetary decisions, and planning and development proposals. In 1968 the administrative scope of Community Boards was broadened to include other areas not limited to planning and as such the term 'planning' was dropped from their formal name.

²⁵ Each Board is composed of up to 50 volunteer (unpaid) members to serve on 2 year-staggered terms. Members "are appointment by the borough president with half nominated by the City Council member(s)" (Hum, 2010, p. 464). As such, New York Community Boards are politically appointed

potential avenues for corruption, issues of group-representation can arise on boards. Boards in New York City have not always resulted in democratic participation or opportunities for participation by minority groups (Hum, 2010). As extensions of elected council members, Boards “often function as a form of ‘symbolic inclusion’ and are rarely able to affect progressive redistributive outcomes” (Hum, 2010, p. 462). Community Boards do not always seek reflective representation or engage multiple publics in any meaningful way and might in fact advance ethnic tensions between minority groups. They are supposed to function as an ‘official’ structure supporting community participation in local governance and planning decisions, however, in the case of New York City, have resulted in a form of “bureaucratic enfranchisement” (Fainstein & Fainstein, 1982, p. 12), since members are appointed as opposed to collectively selected or voted in. The Boards reflect the white middle class New York City electorate; “[r]acial disparity is chronic, and even in diverse immigrant neighbo[u]rhoods, community boards are defined by acute underrepresentation of the population majority” (Hum, 2010, p. 474). Consequently, various minority-representation non-profit community organisations have pushed to create the necessary public spaces to challenge the status quo and have their voices heard²⁶.

As a place-based pilot project, the Kingston Galloway/Orton Park’s Community Planning Board is situated within an already established network of community initiatives and structures through the East Scarborough Storefront. Operating since 1999, the Storefront is a resource

bodies, which constrain their ability to act independently, or against appointing councillors. There are expectations and pressures to support the borough president’s vision, resulting in Community Boards that are not necessarily representative of the best interests of its community members but of those in leadership (Hum, 2010). Community Boards, much like planning processes, become governed by political processes operating power and influence onto board members.

²⁶ Outside of the appointed body structure, Hum demonstrates that non-profit community-based organizations provide a platform for ethnic-member engagement by “operat[ing] between markets, households, and the state’, they may be integral to cultivating a migrant civil society that supports immigrant incorporation and activism” (Theodore & Martin, 2007, p. 271 as quoted by Hum, 2010, p. 462).

centre and hub space, connecting the community to over 40 service delivery partner agencies, 30 neighbourhood partners, and a diverse array of programming opportunities in the community.²⁷ Through their more than 10 years of existence, the Storefront has established a successful framework for community operation and programming. At the core of their work, The Storefront seeks to build networks, connections, and trust among institutions, groups, and people. Operating within two key networks, Neighbourhood Action Partnership and resident networks (such as Residents Rising), The Storefront works to support neighbourhood organising while always placing resident leadership at the core of its operating model. Residents give direction to the organisation and opportunities for leadership and participation are dispersed throughout the organisation and “accomplished by giving up control and sharing power...The governance structure required to support a collaborative organization is one that tolerates uncertainty and the messiness of shared decision-making. It requires clearly articulated roles and responsibilities and systems and processes that provide broad parameters within which the organization can operate without providing too many restrictions or constraints” (Mann, n.d., p. 22). The Storefront appoints its success to creating meaningful opportunities for residents to participate in leadership roles (whereby meaningful equates to the opportunity for power sharing). “The Storefront disperses leadership throughout the organization. It requires many people leading in many

²⁷ In the late 1990s a growing influx of refugee families housed in strip motels along Kingston Road, began to give rise to community needs that were not being met on the ground. Concerns about serving these needs led to the creation of the East Scarborough Storefront with the clear understanding that no singular organisation or agency could meet all of the challenges in the changing community, but what was needed was a collective entity to help bridge the gap (Mann, n.d.). With the mandate to facilitate collaboration, build community, and support people, the Storefront has been a pivotal connecting agency not only for residents but professionals, funders, and city officials. The Storefront offers residents with meaningful opportunities to participate in their community to varying degrees. Every 3-5 years, The Storefront undergoes a revision process whereby residents are asked to review and re-envision the role of the Storefront in the community, which helps to guide the organisation and challenge it to continually meet the needs of the residents (Mann, n.d., p. 12).

different settings. One of the key characteristics of leadership at The Storefront is that it is accomplished by giving up control and sharing power” (Mann, n.d, p. 22).

The East Scarborough Storefront seems to provide both direct as well as representative participation, by allowing residents to participate to varying degrees on committees, in programs, or other volunteering positions. However participation is not limited to residents but takes on a representative role through agency and working group participation (for example on the steering committee). What seems to support this duality of participation is maintaining resident leadership as a core mandate and vision governing all activity operating out of and connected to the Storefront. However in order to maintain this vision, “[a]ll stakeholders - residents, staff, partner agencies, volunteers - have their roles, responsibilities and expectations clearly articulated via various documentation, which is part of the larger governance infrastructure” (Mann, n.d., p. 42). Clarifying expectations has allowed the Storefront to create “collaborative relationships” which have been “a powerful contributor to [their] success” (Mann, n.d., p. 29). Through their ‘hybrid’ model, The Storefront seems to have created an opportunity where power is shared among various actors through different networks of influence as opposed to top-down or bottom-up hierarchical structures. Although it does seem that even within The Storefront, points of participation decrease and become more ‘representational’ as one moves up in the organisation.

Adopting a hybrid approach could prove useful allowing for residents to have more opportunities for direct participation while also having representative participation when connecting with developers, city officials, agency groups, etc. As such more open, direct opportunities for public participation can help increase ‘democratic education’ and knowledge sharing among residents and expert groups. Representative participation will also prove useful for organisational and administrative purposes of the Board. In order for the Community

Planning Board to be successful it must firstly be educative, bridging the gap for community residents about what constitutes planning, how planning processes and systems work, and provide a platform for the community to reclaim and politicise participatory practices, ultimately advocating for their collective vision. The following sections examine the developmentalist ethos for the neighbourhood and the potential influence and limitations of a Community Planning Board.

4.5 Development and Community Planning in KGO

In addition to the momentum that has motivated the Community Planning Board initiative, there also seems to be a timely push due to actual, perceived, and/or wanted development pressures in the Kingston Galloway/Orton Park area. A developmentalist ethos has developed as a result of legislative objectives and development pressures through the *Places to Grow Act* (2005), *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* (2006), the *City of Toronto Official Plan*, and more specifically development goals of the local Councillor. The Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy parallels some of the developmentalist goals for the area.

The Places to Grow Act has identified 25 areas designated as ‘urban growth centres’ with density targets and growth policies (or secondary plans) outlining intensification. Places to Grow calls for 40% of new development to be built within the former suburbs. The Scarborough City Centre is one of these designated areas, listed under the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, with a Secondary Plan under the City of Toronto Official Plan. Located to the north-east of the Kingston Galloway community, between Brimley Road (east), Highway 401 (north), Bellamy Road North (west), and Ellesmere Road (south). Intensification objectives for The Centre are upwards of 40,000 residents and 23,000 jobs (City of Toronto, 2009b). Furthermore,

the Official Plan focuses on structuring growth in the city along Avenues and Centres. Avenues are designated as “important corridors along major streets where reurbanization is anticipated and encouraged to create new housing and job opportunities” (City of Toronto, 2010, p. 2.15). Centres are focused on residential and economic intensification, mainly concerned with transit development and acting as places for growth outside of the downtown core (located in the post-war suburbs) (City of Toronto, 2010, p. 2.14). Kingston Galloway/Orton Park is located between the proposed intensification at the Scarborough City Centre and along Kingston Road, coupled with Councillor Ainslie’s development goals for the area.

Over the past several years there have been development discussions and City staff reports for areas surrounding Kingston Galloway/Orton Park such as Avenue Studies along the Kingston Road corridor, the Kingston Road Improvement report (City of Toronto, 2009a), as well as Metrolinx’ GO Train ‘transportation hub’ development in the neighbouring community of Guildwood. In addition, Kingston Galloway has been selected as part of the United Way Tower Neighbourhood Renewal pilot project, which entails the expansion of the East Scarborough Storefront through the Community.Design.Initiative. With the new Harmonized Zoning Bylaw and future implications of Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020 (regarding community development and planning), many see continued potential for growth in Kingston Galloway, particularly Councillor Ainslie. The Official Plan identifies (a portion of) Kingston Road as an avenue where future (residential and commercial) development is anticipated and encouraged. Although this portion does not extend upwards, the Councillor wants to have an avenue study for the Kingston Galloway community as well. Councillor Ainslie wants to promote more intensification along Kingston Road or Eglinton Road, beyond the 8-storey as-of-right development requirements in the area in order to increase density, avoid town-house development, and to support his objectives of installing in an LRT along Kingston Road (to

justify the ridership) (Councillor Paul Ainslie, personal communication, June 2, 2013).

Councillor Ainslie sees the development of the Guildwood GO station as a lost opportunity for density and intensification since development was predominantly as-of-right.

Another significant goal from Councillor Ainslie is to promote economic development, to find ways to incentivise development in Scarborough and ultimately increase property values for his constituents, *“I need the economy to improve a bit to get these developers to put a shovel in the ground and I think that’ll really improve the community as well”* (Councillor Paul Ainslie, personal communication, June 2, 2013). Development and increased property values are “positive” changes that the Councillor wants to see happen in his community however when asked what will happen to the large low-income populations residing in the neighbourhood once property values increase, he was stumped, retaliating by expressing his hope that intensification will also bring more community investment, more businesses into the area and potentially increase job opportunities (Councillor Paul Ainslie, personal communication, June 2, 2013).

The discourse of development equates growth to prosperity and ‘quality of life’, which can only be obtained through rationalistic strategic planning, and certain *types* of growth. Places to Grow speaks about growth as a necessary element of “global competitiveness” with a long-term vision to intensify the inner suburbs. The Official Plan mimics this discourse of ‘positive’ growth and ideal intensification through its objectives of creating “vibrant neighbourhoods” where a “successful city is one with a competitive advantage over others locally, nationally, and internationally. It has a quality of life that will attract and retain people who have capital, skills, knowledge, ingenuity and creativity” (City of Toronto, 2010, p. 1.3). This discourse is further paralleled in the Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy, focusing on the place-based management of neighbourhoods in order to ensure “Toronto’s standing as a world-class city” and to “regain its reputation as a city of great neighbourhoods” (Strong Neighbourhoods, 2005, p. 3). The Strategy

focuses on ‘revitalising’ targeted neighbourhoods through social and physical infrastructure development to create neighbourhoods ‘worthy’ of future development and intensification, maintaining the City’s branded image. Caught between development zones, as well as under the developmentalist ethos of the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy, the proposed Community Planning Board has a real opportunity to leverage power and influence development processes within the neighbourhood. The Community Planning Board has an opportunity to guide development within Kingston Galloway with both the potential to influence physical and social planning and development in the community but also to create a platform for social change.

4.6 Power, Influence and Limitations of the Community Planning Board

Community planning boards have generally been postulated as the ‘best way’ to create a democratic platform that promotes and supports meaningful citizen engagement within the planning process. The Community Planning Board in Kingston Galloway/Orton Park has many potential positive impacts for the community and for its participants, while possibly influencing larger city participatory methods and practice. However there are significant limitations with a planning board in Toronto and it is important to clearly articulate and understand where the power and potential for influence lies. As addressed throughout this paper, power plays a role in participatory planning in a myriad of ways. To recall a few: in the participatory tools, methods, and processes used; among and between different participating actors and ‘expert’ and/or elite groups; and through policy, discourse and place-based management strategies imposed from the top-down and/or through community organisations. The Community Planning Board needs to be evaluated in light of these power relations and limitations in order to analyse how best it can have an influence on neighbourhood planning. The Board faces legislative, political, structural

and administrative limitations including: difficulty recruiting participants, a lack of legislative legitimacy, a lack of participatory legitimacy, and unequal power due to geographic location and resources. Drawing on New York City's Community Boards, I will show the fundamental drawbacks and potential for influence of planning boards, clearly summed up by Craig Hammerman, District Manager of Community Board 6, Brooklyn, NYC, "We are advisors. We make recommendations. We are not in a position to implement anything. We need to be as savvy as we can about influencing the decision-makers. That is really what it comes down to." (CCE Event, Nov 21 2013). Despite limitations, the Community Planning Board provides an opportunity for residents to leverage social networks and political power in order to influence and drive neighbourhood planning, while evaluating limitations to participatory practices and critically examining how to reclaim participatory processes in Toronto.

Planning boards can help to decentralise decision making processes by providing a platform for community residents to discuss the physical and social development of their community, outside of private or state interests. Breaking up and diffusing power furthers the benefits of boards by reducing the number of opportunities for corruption (Day, 1997). Additionally, participation on a board can help foster inclusion among community members. It is generally assumed that participation in one's community has many positive benefits, specifically participation can function as an educative tool, strengthening democracy, and increasing government and organisational accountability (Pateman, 1972). In general, boards strive to foster local leadership, increase civic awareness/knowledge and serve to help communities identify contentious issues in order to better communicate them to their elected officials (some of these normative ideals of participation have been critiqued in Chapter 3 and are not without their flaws of assumption or operation). Planning boards were conceived in order to help decentralise planning decisions, and promote or support a platform for meaningful participation at the

community level. However, even if power is illusory, “[t]he very ability to participate in governmental affairs...can enhance feelings of self-confidence and empowerment. The result can be, depending on historical circumstances, real empowerment...cooption...or frustration and disillusionment” (Marcuse, 1987, p. 284), while the latter can result in alienation and disenchantment from the public decision making process (Silverman, 2003, p. 11).

Participation on boards has also been critiqued as a form of ‘tokenism’, whereby residents/participants are consulted but have no real power over decision-making and advisory or community boards can result in a form of weak citizen participation (Silverman, 2003; Arnstein, 1969). The appointed nature of membership of New York City’s Community Boards results in a form of representative participation that is highly contentious and political, where politicians have been accused of selecting their supporters and firing their opposition. Neighbourhoods, Board managers, or members need to gain ‘allies’ within the political structure in order to have their motions supported or their master plans adopted/approved. As politically appointed bodies, their ability to act independently is severely constrained (Hum, 2010). Consisting of volunteer members, often times NYC’s Community Boards have many vacant spots, which are difficult to fill as participation is very time intensive and people are reluctant to commit. The poor can be blocked out of participation on boards either because they are not appointed, they lack access to supportive resources needed to participate (such as time), or perceived/actual ‘technical’ expertise, which can further alienate them from decision making bodies and processes.²⁸

²⁸ In addition to barriers to participation on a board, in the case of Kingston Galloway, some housing structures support the temporary placement of newcomer and transitioning populations and thus result in high turnover rates. These groups become challenging to engage in participatory processes or activities let alone wider neighbourhood based or city-based issues, something that the Community Planning Board needs to consider when deciding on direct or representative participation.

A resident worker from Kingston Galloway commented on the difficulty of engaging with resident groups that have a higher turn-around rate often associated with the different housing tenures in the community. There is a “*large newcomer population and there’s a bit of transition around year 5, where some people*

Although Community Boards are legally required in New York and part of the planning process, they still do not have a lot of political clout. Even after jumping through political/administrative hoops, any recommendations put forth by Boards are strictly *advisory* to higher levels of government, however master plans can be used internally to help the community establish a guided/common vision. Ultimately, it is still up to the community to be consistently present during application processes and meetings to push their recommendations forward. Planning is a very political game and community boards are not immune to these politics as Hammerman's opening quote highlights. The power that "Community Boards may have on city actions does not come from their *legal powers*. At the most, they can throw some sand into the smaller wheels of government; at the least, they have no effect whatsoever. If the Community Boards in New York have any impact, *it is because of their political, not their legal, power*" (Marcuse, 1987, p. 279, emphasis added). In wealthier communities, boards tend to receive development proposals to review and act upon, however their actions generally fall in line with the interests of upper-income residents in the district. As Marcuse highlights,

"Poor areas do not generally have major development proposals submitted to them, because developers are not interested in areas where there is no effective demand. Thus Boards in poor areas generally have little development over which they could exercise control even if they had control to exercise; their land use powers, such as they are, are mostly irrelevant. Gentrification changes that picture." (1987, p. 281)

move out of the neighbourhood. [Also] we have City of Toronto residences in our neighbourhood and it shelters 500 families. And those families [that] arrive here could be [for] 2 weeks, could be a year. That's another dynamic of transition." - (East Scarborough Storefront Staff #1, personal communication, April 29, 2013)

Another resident worker mentioned that often it is hard to get residents to participate in community matters because it is hard for them to go "*beyond their boundaries*". "*If they can't even tackle the issues of their house, about the safety of their own building, then [they don't want to talk about larger issues in KGO]*" - (East Scarborough Storefront Staff #2, personal communication, May 2, 2013)

As such by no doing of their own, Community Boards can gain ‘power’ due to real estate market changes and “simply because events on their turf were suddenly of real importance to someone else” (Marcuse, 1990, p. 155).

Marcuse refers to the power that comes with gentrification in poorer neighbourhoods. The capacity to participate and become an ‘active’ Board with influence or power only becomes a reality when development pressures increase in a neighbourhood, allowing the Board to potentially negotiate some community changes and pressures. This reality seems to allude to future possibilities for community planning boards in Toronto’s poor inner-suburbs, particularly drawing on Councillor Ainslie’s desires for intensification and development of Kingston Galloway/Orton Park. There is greater potential for active community boards located in Toronto’s *downtown* neighbourhoods where there is a higher exchange value for land (such as social housing blocks that have become the hotspot for ‘mixed-use development’, such as Regent Park or Alexandra Park). Community boards can help influence the future of their communities, however there is no guarantee that this will be for the ‘betterment’ of all members. Boards can also exercise exclusion and corruption such as the case in New York City, where boards are under political pressure to meet the desires of politicians and where boards generally represent the status quo as opposed to the marginalised populations. However, in poor communities where there might not be development pressures, community boards only really become influential when there is an increased desire to develop the land (high exchange value). In this instance, community boards can exercise their power and try to influence the planning and development of their community, to mitigate some of the negative effects of inevitable gentrification in their neighbourhood.

Within the current structure of the Planning Act and the Official Plan, there are no provisions to recognize planning boards as legitimate groups with power. Planning boards would be able to

operate as advisory boards or committees, and even in the case of New York, once decisions have been passed on to Council (or further still to the Ontario Municipal Board), the boards would not have any power to change final outcomes. Although the Community Planning Board has been approved by council as a pilot project, with a motion for Chief Planner Keesmaat to review the validity and possibility of community boards throughout Toronto, the possibility for legalisation are non-existent. In a recent conversation with the Stakeholder Engagement Officer, the Chief Planner wants to put forth that these groups *not* be called Community Planning Boards for that gives them an “illusion of having power” but instead should be called Advisory Committees, further stripping them from their potential power (personal communication, March 12, 2014). Despite the legalisation or formalisation component, The Community Planning Board must leverage its social networks and social power, in order to bring about the change that its members want to see. Without clear expectations, participation through the board can further distance already marginalised people from the planning process. In an advisory capacity, the Board could still have an influence by operating as a platform for a collective voice for a community, collaborating with ‘experts’ such as industry professionals, council representatives, and various established community organisations in order to gain more social and political power, and create a vision/mandate or plan to advocate for neighbourhood planning with their local Councillor.

As previously mentioned, ‘formalisation’ depoliticises processes/participation and the Board can easily be co-opted by political or externally imposed objectives. As is the case in New York, boards can be an arms-length organisation of the City, seeking approval for developments that fall in line with a councillor’s agendas as opposed to maintaining their own. In contrast, it is important to keep the Community Planning Board as political as possible and to reclaim participatory neighbourhood planning. Although not legally recognised by the City, the Board

can still have the potential to make a lot of noise and to use their political, organisational, and social power to bring about change. A board need not be formally/legally incorporated but through their political and social pressures can be informally recognised by those in power as an influential group, capable of having a great impact or influence on processes and developments.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

In order to have a successful Community Planning Board, community members must start to think of themselves as the *subject* of policy and not the *object* of them. They must begin to set their agendas and invite the government to respond. Communities that are strongly organised have more independence, impact and power on formal processes, using systems both ‘inside and outside’ the state (formal and informal structures) to persuade and influence governments and corporations to meet their local demands. In order for the Community Planning Board to be successful there needs to be open discussions of power and participatory practices in Toronto. Only when participation is reclaimed and politicised can the Board begin to gain more public control over neighbourhood planning processes. Located at the intersection of top-down place-based management (the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy) and neighbourhood democracy, the Board should work towards reclaiming participatory planning processes through appropriating resources and identities that come with the former. The Board is in the best position to begin this process prior to increasing developmental pressures in the area. The Board has the opportunity to set the ground work for neighbourhood planning through the creation of a strong vision and operating structure that can help mitigate the negative impacts of gentrification. The Board needs to understand the limitations of participatory practices, identify how it wants to be organised, and identify critical social and environmental objectives to guide the process. The Board can have an impact through mobilising the necessary social power, and mobilising the community *beyond* the Board’s current membership. In this final chapter I will summarize how the Board can begin this process.

5.1 Reclaiming Participatory Planning

The Community Planning Board needs to understand the limitations and potential of participatory practices and structures. Although community boards have no formal position in Toronto, there is still potential to mobilise social power. In the case of New York City, even though community boards are legally required, their formalisation has also resulted in their depoliticisation. Even though they evolved out of the civil rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s, they now work mainly to maintain the status quo of its elite members. Clavel (1991) highlights past American progressive governments and how community groups/organisations can be used for a powerful, politically decentralised community planning process. However planning has become deeply embedded within the neoliberal market system through competitive, market driven planning objectives resulting in the loss of the political nature of community planning. As the authors from *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded* highlight, many community organisations lose their ability or vision to be driven by social justice issues first and foremost once they become incorporated as part of the ‘not-for-profit industrial complex’. Relevant to Toronto’s case, community planning boards are not a legal requirement for state or private participatory practices. This places the Community Planning Board at an interesting crossroad, one which could lead to a politicisation and reclaiming of participatory practices and community planning in Toronto, or one which could lead to a depoliticised, market driven, advisory body. The former is definitely a struggle to achieve however can lead to greater social transformation, not only for residents and members involved in the process but potentially for community planning and participatory practices at large. The latter could lead to a community board that perpetuates existing power struggles, further marginalises community members, and provides minimal short-term benefits for its residents. For the planning board to be successful, it must

reclaim the politics in participatory planning, moving *beyond* itself to seek long-term social justice for its residents. This is, of course, not a simple endeavour.

The normative discourse of participation in poor neighbourhoods, particularly priority neighbourhoods, treats the poor as a disengaged, inactive body, unaware or lacking knowledge of local issues and lacking the motivation to do anything about it. This has created a stigmatised image of marginalised residents that are not incorporated into participatory practices or when they are, they are categorised by their “difference”. Their participation becomes essentialised, tokenized, or ‘representative’ of a collective whole. Categorisations such as gender or ethnicity become grouping factors that ignore history and difference and can further exasperate marginalisation. In *Strong Neighbourhoods* (2005) poverty became a spatialised issue and responsibility was placed on the person and geography. It was assumed that people were poor and marginalised (and associated with crime and violence) because they were not *engaged* or did not have opportunities to engage in their community. Rhetoric promoted engagement as a form of ‘helping citizens help themselves’ out of poverty because ‘all communities should have equal opportunity’. The imposed participatory discourse created a very colonial stigmatising view of poor neighbourhoods and the people who inhabit them, automatically assuming that ‘those people’ did not participate in their communities whilst ignoring larger systemic and historical structures that are in place. It created a categorised ‘other’ that needed to be ‘engaged’ through place-based policies as governed by the city, ignoring any existing networks and participatory practices that might have already been present in those communities. It is within this context that the Planning Board finds itself and thus it is necessary to understand the limitations of participatory practices, and identify how to organise a structure and mandate that addresses issues of representation, participation, power and agency.

Accounting for a plurality of voices in planning and policy is difficult to implement, particularly in the Canadian context where ‘diversity’ and ‘multiculturalism’ are spoken about in broad, generalising terms, used more as ‘trendy’ catchment phrases that mask problems of difference and brush them under the rug. In theory, multicultural rhetoric boasts our differences (as positive attributes) but then leads to creating blanket policies that clump all the ‘difference’ together. The Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy (2005/2020) has been no different with these assumptions by speaking about Toronto as a ‘city of neighbourhoods’, proud to show its diversity. However policies focus on the most ethnically diverse communities facing issues of poverty and use cookie-cutter place-based approaches while never explicitly addressing any of the ‘diverse’ differences among people and between the communities. Although diversity and diverse representations are important within participatory planning theory, in practice the broad category of ‘difference’ becomes a ‘unifying’ category as opposed one that truly deals with or addresses those differences. Conceptions of diversity and difference become essentialised, focusing on the cultural nature of these differences while ignoring the contested, constructed, and contingent nature of these communities (see O’Neill, 2001; Sayer & Storper, 1997). It further creates an assumption about these communities as cohesive and distinct, however creating an image of the ‘ethnic other’ unable to properly integrate with the City’s branded image (Beebejwan, 2012).

While the intentions for this shift towards a plurality in planning is essential, as it does open up the process to consciously include non-white, non-upper class participant voices, identity and ethnic ‘representation’ in planning can be flawed if the categories falsely assume community membership based on a set of marginalising characteristics as opposed to based on shared concerns or realities (as discussed in chapter 3). Problems can arise with assumptions of engagement and representation that the Community Planning Board should be aware of and

continually monitor. As a representative of a 'collective' voice for the community, the Board needs to ask whose voice is being represented, who pays, and who benefits in every situation. A 'unifying' voice might not always be representative, in fact it can often ignore certain options even within the community it is trying to represent. A 'unifying' voice can also be a negative, exclusionary one, and so the role of the Board should be to ensure that some form of plurality is present and that decisions would strive to be inclusionary, seeking to increase social equity for all as opposed to further marginalising some populations. Instead of operating on a 'consensus' basis, the Board can consider creating a platform whereby participants can air out their concerns and desires. Differences of opinion and controversy should be understood through debate, instead of eliminated, ignored, or diffused and framed as NIMBYism. The Board has the opportunity to break down this barrier and work towards a model of cooperation and understanding that may lead to more equitable and just decision making.

Participatory democracy is an ongoing process of struggle and contestation rather than consensus or adoption of imposed design. Participatory practices should be seeking ways in which people can be more actively embedded in and take control of governing processes. Participation in terms of agency, group or elected representatives leads to a limited form of participation. Simply broadening the table at which organisational representatives sit does not equate to meaningful participation as it does not distribute power to the most number of people. Representative participation has the potential to perpetuate the status quo and create a form of participatory tokenism. It is important for the Community Planning Board to recognise the limitations of representative participation and seek to incorporate more direct forms of participation from the community. The Community Planning Board needs to grapple with issues of representation and participation, particularly connected to the East Scarborough Storefront. Embedded within the existing network of community partners, organisations and programs can

potentially be an asset to the Board when dealing with issues of scale and reaching the most number of residents. However this also runs the risk of missing those that do not frequent or associate themselves with the Storefront. Thus it is important for the Board to leverage networks but also establish broader connections with the community and learn to work *outside* of the Storefront. It will be hard to find any ‘neutral territory’ in Kingston Galloway/Orton Park, and the Board will be far from a ‘neutral’ organisation, nor should it be. It should collectively consider who and what it wants to represent. Putting the needs of the most marginalised residents first will build towards creating a strong foundation of social justice from the bottom-up, ultimately supporting all residents as opposed to the status quo. As development pressures begin to rise in the community, the Board has the opportunity to organise resistance to gentrification *before* the latter changes the composition of the neighbourhood, and sooner or later, the make up of the Board. Creating a board with a strong mandate rooted in social justice will ideally help mitigate future social power dynamics as the neighbourhood gentrifies. A long term mandate that places residents at the forefront and seeks to use development as a means for social transformation can lead to a very powerful community planning board. As Marcuse (1987, p. 286) clearly stated about New York City’s Community Boards,

“What gives it strength lies not in its form, but in what it contains, where it comes from, under what circumstances it exists. Its potential for expanded democracy lies in the availability of its forms as a forum for discussion, as a focus for organizing, as an instrument providing visibility to different groups, not in its legal structure or powers. Its forms have an at least equal potential to contribute to rather than reduce the centralization of power; it can permit greater central control over local activities, more direct central impact on neighbourhood decisions, more effective central control over the distribution of resources and the conduct of citizens.”

As such, it is important to recognise the social power that the Community Board can have on building a better and stronger community for those most in need. To do so, the Board must seek ways to reclaim participatory practices and understand that there is no ‘formula’ for how power can be shared through the state or aspects of the public decision-making process. What is known

is that there needs to constantly be a struggle for access to power in order to protect rights to participate and to ensure that the state is acting in a manner that protects the well-being of the people. There is importance in the struggle in order to maintain accountability. People need to keep experimenting with ways in which to practice their right to participate. It is not necessarily important to find the ‘perfect’ design but rather “what is needed is an attempt to learn from current innovations and frustrations from below as well as contemporary openings and blockages from above” (Wainwright, 2009, p. 385).

5.2 Moving Forward

In this paper I have hoped to highlight the socio-political context that has resulted from the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy and ‘priority neighbourhoods’, specifically the creation of Kingston Galloway/Orton Park. In the context of the proposal for the creation of a community planning board, I have sought to highlight some limitations to participatory practices and processes that the Board should be aware of when discussing their mandate and structure. This research can be further developed to support community members seeking to create a planning board. Particularly more research needs to be done on the understanding of ethnic relations within groups and networks in Kingston Galloway/Orton Park. Furthermore there needs to be a better understanding of how people interact with their surrounding space in order to potentially promote a production of place that is symbolically different from the existing territorial stigmatisation, and that has a potential (positive) impact on place-attachment and place-based participation on the Community Planning Board. In order for the Board to be successful in creating long-lasting social change it needs to move beyond itself and mobilise people despite technical or structural limitations of participatory planning in Toronto, and in order to do so it must reclaim and politicise participatory processes.

Categorising communities as ‘hard-to-reach’ can create influential typologies that further solidify the impression that ‘difference’ is a problem which threatens, challenges or dilutes a majority society by the presence of an ‘other’. Categorising and identifying groups is not neutral or ‘objective’ but involves an exertion of power that is evident in the lived realities of these communities. This is of importance in Kingston Galloway/Orton Park since it is a highly diverse neighbourhood and one that has experienced the hegemonic categorisations of ‘othering’ through place-based policies. Racialised discourse in Kingston Galloway is not only state imposed but also present within community groups and members. Tensions between groups needs to be further researched and better addressed by the Community Planning Board - Working Group and Professional Advisory Group. The Board has the potential to create a platform and an opportunity to reach out to groups within the community, to draw upon shared experiences and create inter-cultural narratives that can link to ethics of justice. Instead of ignoring the political, social and power structures at play, the Board can create an alternative space for open debate about diversity to look more honestly at issues of diversity and blanket ‘multicultural’ policies, which have created essentialised ‘others’ in participatory practice.

Aside from being a racially stigmatised community, Kingston Galloway is also a territorially stigmatised place, with externally imposed conceptions of ‘community’ that are different from those internally understood, which is another important issue that the Board should take into consideration. The term ‘Kingston Galloway/Orton Park’ is a highly contentious label for the area because it does not necessarily create a ‘place-categorisation’ that connects with residents of that area. This becomes of particular importance as the Board grapples with setting operating boundaries. Further research needs to be conducted on ways in which place can be produced symbolically that is different from the existing territorial stigmatisation, either by ‘returning’ and appropriating the stigma or by replacing it with something else. This might be of particular

importance when understanding motivations for participation and how discourse of place influences place-attachment and subsequently participation.

Governments can impose the use of place-based policies, which can actually be problematic because these policies make assumptions about place and the people who occupy them. They can also be problematic because they impose neoliberal agendas and ‘solutions’ onto people that might not be open to or wanting to receive them. The Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy imposes a place-based policy and discourse onto ‘problematic’ people/places and although there have been benefits for communities, such as increased funding for projects, there were no long term monitoring systems in place to ensure that programs or initiatives were working to bring about some form of change that the residents actually wanted. What emerged were many organisations receiving funding, starting up programs/projects, and once funding dried up would leave the community, resulting in no momentum for long-term/systemic change. Under the guise of ‘place-based’ policy, these programs were considered a ‘success’. A Community Planning Board instigated *by* the community could have the potential to change the operation of normalised place-based planning initiatives by questioning top-down processes where ‘place’ is dominated through colonial hegemonic structures, but rather create a means for a community to imply their own meanings of place into larger structures. This could provide a transformative and more ‘true’ integration of what power place can have and how communities could leverage what place can do.

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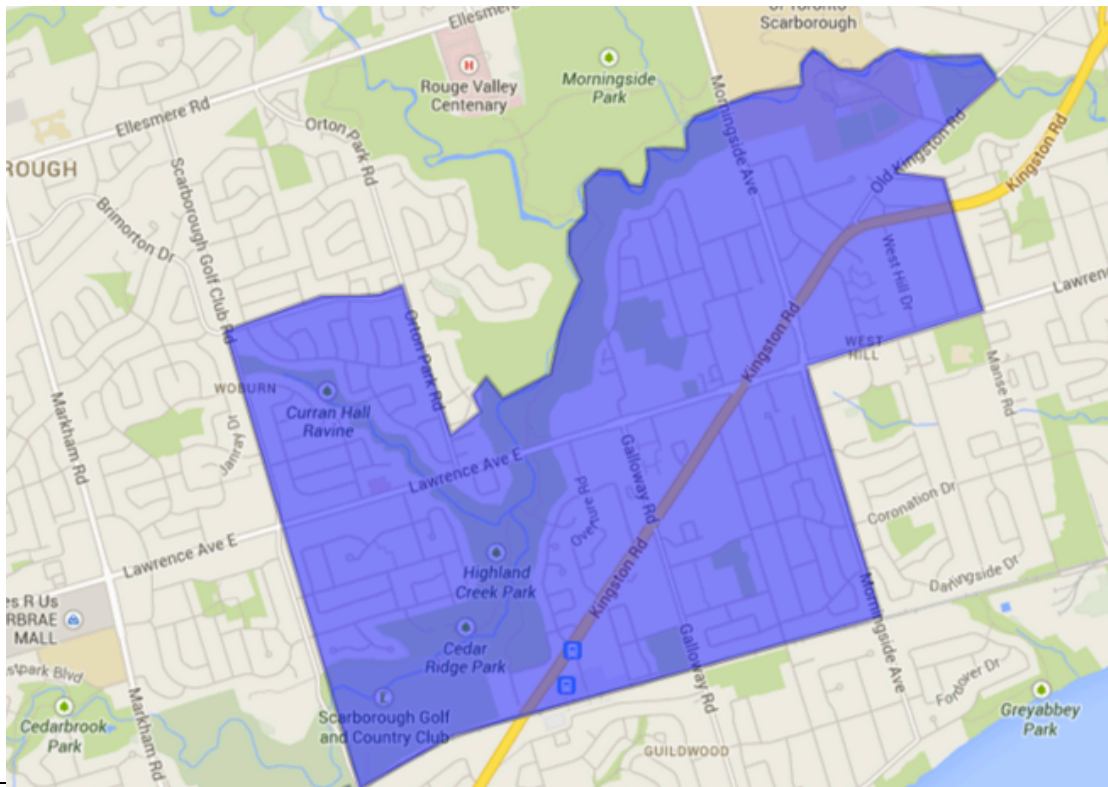
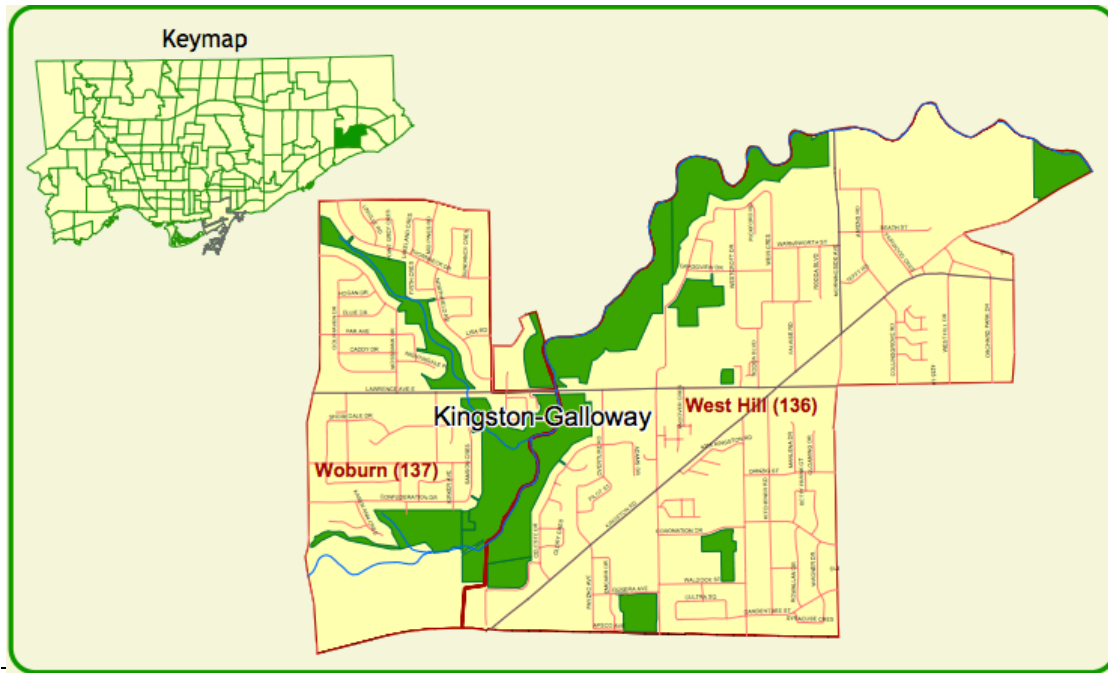
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Appendix A - Map of Kingston Galloway Priority Area boundaries (City of Toronto, 2006, p. 1)



Appendix B: Community Planning Board 2014 Workplan, (CCE 2013)

CPB PILOT PROJECT :: WORKING GROUP :: 2014 WORKPLAN		
MONTH	TOPIC	PUBLIC EVENTS [dates tbd]
J	Why have a Community Planning Body - What are they and what can they do? HOMEWORK: make a list of 5 things you want your CPB to do	CPB EXHIBIT -pop-up community space/shop <i>grand opening</i> and exhibit launch [w/ student volunteer help]
F	Planning 101 - workshop on the publication + introduction to the concepts of planning HOMEWORK: on a photo from the neighbourhood [CAP provides] label what is affected by 'planning'	
M	Learning from Local Examples [Active 18, The Annex Ratepayers, Lakeshore Planning Council etc...] HOMEWORK:	PLANNING MOVIE NIGHT -free screenings and discussions: Rezoning Harlem, and My Brooklyn
A	Governance [How do we Recruit Members and make sure we represent our diversity] HOMEWORK:	
M	Local Development: What is on the Boards in KGO - walks through sites + looking at current applications HOMEWORK: find information[phone or internet search] on a local project [contacts to be provided]	JANE'S WALKS -local walks by residents on planning issues and civic engagement
J	Governance [How do we make Decisions] HOMEWORK:	
J	CPB Pilot Project - Terms of Reference HOMEWORK:	BRIDGING FESTIVAL -tent by residents on planning issues/civic engagement and pilot CPB
A	CPB Pilot Project - Terms of Reference HOMEWORK:	
S	Summit organization + CPB pilot presentation prep HOMEWORK:	CPB CITY SUMMIT -a city wide summit on the role CPBs will play in participatory democracy
O	CIVIC ELECTION 2014	



Appendix C: Semi-structured Interview questions

MES Major Paper – Semi-structured Interview Questions

Mojan Jianfar

[Questions will vary based on who is being interviewed, interviews will be semi-structured, questions act as a guide.]

Questions for residents:

1. 1. Please tell me about yourself
 - a. a. Who are you, what do you do, do you live/work in KGO, how long have you been in the area...anything else you'd like to share.
- b. 2. What does KGO mean to you?
 - c. a. How would you describe the area? The community/neighbourhood? [boundaries, place, geography, people]
 - d. b. What are your feelings towards this neighbourhood? What does the label 'priority neighbourhood' mean to you? Do you think this label influences people's ideas or image of KGO? How?
 - e. c. What do you think are others' thoughts/impressions of the neighbourhood?
- f. 3. Are you involved in the community? In what ways? What groups (formal or informal) do you participate in? How do you participate?
 - g. a. Why are you involved with these groups? What motivates you to continue your participation?
 - h. b. If you're not involved, why not? Do you feel connected in other ways? What might make you want to participate or be a part of the community?
 - i. c. Have you ever participated in meetings/gatherings/organizations relating to issues about planning or development in your community?
 - i. i. [Explain what these meetings might entail or give examples if interviewee is not sure]
 - ii. ii. Expand on answer: how did you feel, what did you like, dislike, did you understand the topic/reason for the meeting, did you participate, did you feel comfortable voicing an opinion, or wish you had...
- iii. 4. Did you know there is a goal of creating a local planning board in East Scarborough? [Provide a general explanation if person doesn't know]. How could a local planning board operate in KGO? What influence or power could it have on planning issues?
 - j. a. How do you think the boundaries of participation will be defined? Who should be or will be 'allowed' to participate? What issues should the board address?
 - k. b. What do you think are drawbacks or benefits to this type of organization?
 - l. c. What influence could a local planning board have in a 'priority neighbourhoods'?
- m. 5. Do you know about the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy? [If not explain; if yes, ask what interviewee thinks about it, how s/he feels it has impacted KGO and what has resulted from it?]

- n. a. In March 2012 the City approved the TSNS2020...what do you think the new requirements set out in TSNS2020 mean? How and in what ways might it change KGO? [Discuss and explain the TSNS2020, bring a copy to the interview to go over] [Possibly discuss implications of changing the term Priority Neighbourhoods to Neighbourhood Improvement Areas].
- o. b. What does development or 'physical infrastructure' mean to you? What do you think it could mean for KGO? What impact do you think it could/could not have or would you like it to have/not have?

Questions for non-residents:

- a. 1. Please tell me about yourself
 - b. a. Who are you, what do you do, what connection do you have to KGO...anything else you'd like to share.
- c. 2. What does KGO mean to you?
 - d. a. How would you describe the area? The community/neighbourhood? [boundaries, place, geography, people]
 - e. b. What are your feelings towards this neighbourhood? What does the label 'priority neighbourhood' mean to you? How do you think this label influences people's ideas or image of KGO?
 - f. c. What do you think are the general thoughts/impressions of the neighbourhood?
- g. 3. How would you define public participation KGO? Are people involved in their communities? Who participates? How might they participate?
 - h. a. Are you involved in the community? How and why are you involved?
 - i. b. What might motivate residents to become involved or participate in their community?
 - j. c. Do you think KGO residents participate in meetings/gatherings/organizations relating to issues about planning or development in your community?
 - i. i. Expand on answer: what is your impression of this participation? Do they understand the topic/reason for the meeting, do they participate, do they voice an opinion or share in other ways, do they feel empowered or are they left unengaged...
- ii. 4. Did you know there is a goal of creating a local planning board in East Scarborough? [Provide a general explanation if person doesn't know]. How could a local planning board operate in KGO? What influence or power could it have on planning issues?
 - k. a. How will the boundaries of participation be defined? Who is/will be involved? Who is/will be 'allowed' to participate? What issues will the board address or seek to address?
 - l. b. What objectives does the board seek to address? (How do these objectives relate to other place-based policies and TSNS2020?)
 - m. c. What do you think are drawbacks or benefits to this type of place-based planning?
 - n. d. Can participation influence other place-based policies in priority neighbourhoods?

List of Personal Communications:

Ainslie, Paul: City Councillor Ward 43, City of Toronto.
June 3, 2013.

City Staff, Community Development Officer, Kingston Galloway/Orton Park (former).
May 1, 2013

City Staff, Policy Development Officer.
May 16, 2013.

Community Planner, Social Planning Toronto.
May 14, 2013.

East Scarborough Storefront Staff #1.
April 29, 2013.

East Scarborough Storefront Staff #2.
May 2, 2013.

East Scarborough Storefront Staff #3.
May 2, 2013.

East Scarborough Storefront Staff #4.
May 2, 2013.

City Staff, Stakeholder Engagement, Office of the Chief Planner, City Planning Division, City of Toronto.
March 12, 2014

Resident #1, Kingston Galloway/Orton Park.
April 29, 2013 and May 2, 2013

Resident #2, Kingston Galloway/Orton Park (nearby).
May 15, 2013.

Resident #3, Kingston Galloway/Orton Park.
May 15, 2013.

Resident #4, Kingston Galloway/Orton Park.
May 15, 2013.

Resident #5, Kingston Galloway/Orton Park.
May 16, 2013.

Resident #6, Kingston Galloway/Orton Park.
May 16, 2013