Can Placemaking in Canadian Public Greenspaces Bring Suburban Communities Together? Case Studies of City Park Community Gardens in Mississauga, Ontario and Surrey, British Columbia

by

Geena Richards

supervised by

Dr. Laura E. Taylor

A Major Paper submitted to the Faculty of Environmental Studies in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Master in Environmental Studies
York University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

July 31, 2020

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to understand how placemaking in public greenspaces can help to build a stronger place identity for suburban communities. The paper addresses the research question, "how can planners encourage placemaking in public greenspaces?" by examining park community gardens in two cities, Mississauga, Ontario and Surrey, British Columbia, as case studies. I conclude that a more collaborative and inclusive approach is needed in the planning, design, and management of public greenspaces. I draw upon a conceptual framework based on environmental planning, radical planning, and resource mobilization theory, with a focus on three major themes of interest: the connection between community and nature, the typology of nature in a place, and people in the public realm. My investigation includes primarily virtual site observations and interviews using qualitative research methods. My research findings emphasize the significant role placemaking plays to help strengthen community ties between people and nature using community gardens in suburban city parks as a successful example.

Foreword

When I began the Master in Environmental Studies (MES) Program at York University, I knew from the very beginning that the topic of my final major paper would be about the environment in some aspect. My interest in environmental planning and topics concerning many environmental challenges afflicting the Earth have always been apparent to me since a young age. However, it was the MES Program that propelled me into studying the connections between environmental planning, community engagement, and placemaking in public greenspaces. Often when thinking of public greenspaces like city parks, I believe most people think of sports and recreational amenities, such as baseball diamonds, soccer fields, or playgrounds. But when I hear the word "greenspace" or "park," I think of the sight of many trees and their beautiful leaves, green grass, a river or lake, and the presence of wildlife running free. I am often left thinking about how many public greenspaces in suburban communities, are not exceedingly natural, and contemplating the reasons for those changes. In this paper, I have the opportunity to learn why and how the planning of public greenspaces in suburban communities has greatly transformed over time as urban planning has evolved since its inception. As an inspired future environmental planner, I have learned what I can do to help bring nature back to public spaces in cities like parks, as I discuss in this paper.

My major research is an essential learning strategy to fulfill the MES Planning Program, as set out in my Plan of Study. My Plan of Study outlines the three components of my area of concentration, which are environmental planning, community engagement, and placemaking. The learning objectives and strategies of my MES program provides the foundation of my research proposal created to write my major research paper to answer the question, "how can planners encourage placemaking in public greenspaces?" In my major research paper, I fulfill all the requirements of the MES Planning Program, including the fundamental learning objective of the planning program by using planning knowledge, skills, and competencies I learned throughout my program to complete my paper and to prepare me for my career.

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

Table of Figures

Introduction

I believe placemaking in public greenspaces can advance building stronger and more vibrant suburban communities, while also bringing greater awareness and appreciation of nature. As Charles Montgomery once wrote, "…nature in cities makes us happier and healthier. We know it makes us friendlier and kinder. We know it helps us build essential bonds with other people and the places in which we live" (Montgomery, 2013, p. 123). To plan and design strong and vibrant communities with great respect for the natural environment, planners must create a strong social public realm that also reflects vibrancy and sustains nature. The "public realm" is defined as, "all aspects of the social world that are not exclusively private," such as public spaces (Neal, 2010, p 624). My notion of the public realm emphasizes the social aspect of the public realm that refers to the social interactions between people every day in shared spaces (Neal, 2010, p. 627), such as public greenspaces. I believe some common city planning policies have often focused too much on regulating how people use and interact in public spaces (Healey, 1998, p.7), which impacts the relationship between people and space, particularly in public greenspaces. I think past planning ideologies have also undermined the importance of sustaining nature in public spaces and has led to a minimal presence and over management of nature in public spaces. The planning policies for public greenspaces, for example city parks, needs to effectively establish a greater relationship between communities and nature in order to better reflect the interests and needs of both people and nature.

It is very important planners help to sustain nature in cities, specifically within suburban communities. Canada is often described as a "suburban nation," because of the approximately 80% of the country's population that lives in an urban built environment (i.e. downtown, inner-city suburban, and exurban development), nearly two-thirds of the 80% reside in suburban communities (Gordon & Janzen, 2013, p. 198). A suburban community is primarily comprised of single-detached homes and have an auto-dependent streetscape and public realm (Gordon & Janzen, 2013, p. 198). I believe the value of protecting nature has continually been overlooked in the planning and design of cities, especially its suburban communities, because preserving nature in the public realm has often been an afterthought in policymaking. There is a need now to shift how people, particularly living in the suburbs of cities, connect with nature through community-building in the public realm. My personal observations of common planning and design practices through my lived experiences has led me to the main purpose of my research study to answer the question, "how can planners encourage placemaking in public greenspaces?" Placemaking is defined as:

"A collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximize shared value. More than just promoting better urban design, placemaking facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution" (Project for Public Spaces, 2007).

Placemaking is only successful if strategies for placemaking are included in planning policies and involves community participation in the decision-making process. Planning policies that do not overlook the human element in the development of public spaces demonstrate the importance of a well-planned, effectively designed, and well-managed public realm. Public greenspaces that are developed to ensure the wellbeing of both people and nature, as well as builds a stronger connection between people and nature reflects good policymaking. My research study highlights the benefits of planning policies being adaptable in order to better meet the unique needs and interests of specific communities. I use the creation of community gardens in city parks as an example of successful placemaking in public greenspaces. The main factor to ensure effective placemaking in public greenspaces is crucial public feedback and engagement in the planning process and management of parks. Public greenspaces should reflect the diverse and vibrant groups of people that inhabit those spaces and the surrounding communities. I believe placemaking is a unique approach to the planning, design, and management of public greenspaces. Placemaking can be an effective approach to help connect people with nature in public greenspaces through consistent community participation to create a sense of place.

Placemaking helps foster a sense of place, or place identity, for a community by helping community members experience feelings of comfort, welcome, and belonging among each other in public spaces, such as greenspaces (Healey, 1998, p. 4). Place identity is defined as, "the ways in which physical and symbolic attributes of certain locations contributes to an individual's sense of self or identity" (Devine-Wright, 2009, p. 428). In my research study, I observe community gardens located on city parkland in Mississauga, Ontario (i.e. Figure 1) and Surrey, British Columbia (i.e. Figure 2). The community gardens show successful placemaking in city parks and supports a place identity for both cities that emphasizes the importance of nature.
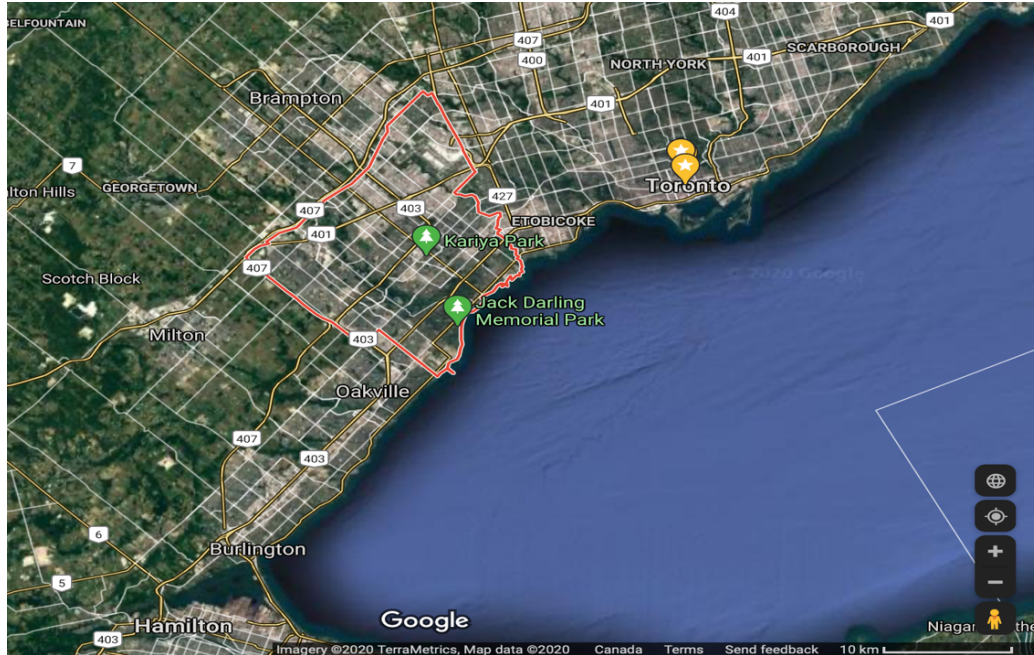
Figure 1: Mississauga, Ontario, Canada (outlined with red border). Source: Google Maps, 2020.
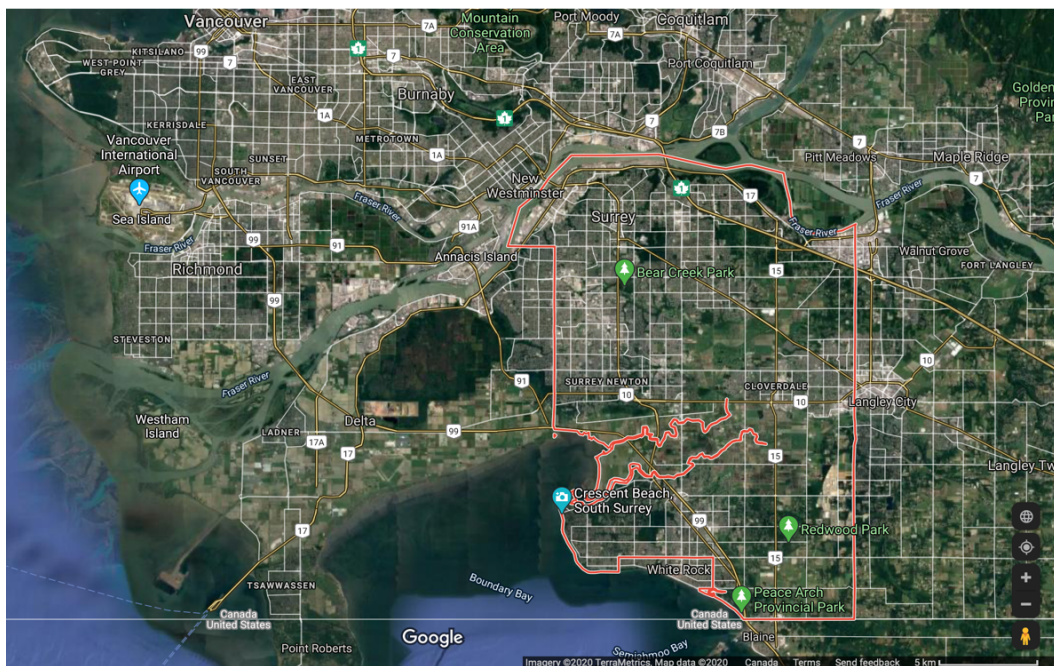
Figure 2: Surrey, British Columbia, Canada (outlined with red border). Source: Google Maps, 2020.

Community gardens in parks are a prime example of uniting people with nature as they connect the two together in one space. Parks and other greenspaces in cities provide natural spaces for

people to escape every day urban life. The designated uses of parks in cities has evolved over time as made clear through historical teachings and reflects the people who live there (Pincetl & Gearin, 2005, pp. 365-366). There are different styles of urban gardens that serve different needs and interests for a community, such as being a food source to grow fruits and vegetables, enhancing community beautification, being an educational tool for people, to help grow social capital among residents, to help preserve mental health, and to help encourage more sustainable and local agricultural practices (Harnik, 2010, p.83). Hou and his colleagues discuss how community gardens have often been considered as an undervalued use of open space, in comparison to space used for recreational activities, such as sports fields and playgrounds (Hou et al, 2009, p. 4). Past planning policies have encouraged a bias thinking about the value of community gardens in cities by planning community gardens to be used as temporary place holders that safeguard vacant land for prospective development (Hou et al, 2009, p. 4). I think the past misconception about community gardens being economically invaluable despite other clear communal benefits displays the misguided understanding about the worth natural spaces add to people's lives.

It is evident though that there has been a shift in thinking about the value of community gardens since many of them are now being built for long-term use in public spaces. My interest in choosing community gardens for my research study illustrates an example of progressive planning policies and public programs by city governments. Park community gardens encourage people to rethink the physical appearance of city parks by them no longer needing to have a typical manicured appearance, to instead embrace the beauty of an unkempt appearance (Hou et al, 2009, p. 4). Community gardens in city parks also help to build stronger communities by supporting park activities for residents that use nature as the focus. I believe that community gardens, particularly the park community gardens of my research study, demonstrate successful placemaking in city parks of suburban communities because of the strong focus on engaging community members through community-led park programs that are supported by the city government.

Figure 3: Garden plots in a park community garden in Surrey, B.C. Source: DIVERSEcity, 2020.	*Figure 4: Gardens plots in a park community garden in Mississauga, ON. Source: Geena Richards, 2020.*

This paper is divided it into seven main sections: the introduction, the conceptual framework concerning bringing people together in parks, an overview of planning and park community gardens in Mississauga and Surrey, the research methods, the research findings, the discussion, and the conclusion. Each section of my paper stipulates information necessary to address the research question of my major research study by discussing community gardens as an example of placemaking in public parks. In my paper, I draw on the findings from my major research study to display the influence of planning policies to effectively encourage placemaking in public parks. The end goal of this paper is to demonstrate that planners, urban designers, and community organizers play important roles in encouraging placemaking in public greenspaces by recommending ten best practices that supports placemaking in public spaces.

Planning, Public Greenspaces, and Placemaking: A Conceptual Framework concerning Bringing People and Nature Together in Public Parks

In this section of my paper, I discuss my conceptual framework, which is focused on three planning approaches, and three significant themes evident in my review of literature. For my major research study, I explore the connection between the planning of public greenspaces and community using placemaking. I had to further develop my knowledge of important planning concepts to be able to execute my observations and interviews to be able to analyze and

discuss my research findings. In my plan of study and research proposal, I had developed the foundation for my conceptual framework that shapes my perspective of planning. The three fundamental planning approaches - environmental planning, radical planning, and resource mobilization theory - and the three significant themes apparent through my literature review - the connection between community and nature, the typology of nature in a place, and people in the public realm - guide my major research.

The Basis of My Planning Perspective

Environmental planning is a sub-branch of urban planning and is focused on the essential consideration for the natural environment when facilitating land-use development (Beatley, 1995, p. 384). Environmental planning offers a counter approach to common urban planning practices regarding the planning and design of public greenspaces. I believe that common urban planning practices for public greenspaces encourages the creation of more public greenspaces in a city. However, planning policies do not critically focus on creating public greenspaces of an adequate natural quality. I believe greenspaces are primarily planned now for recreational uses without considering the importance of persevering greenspaces' natural characteristics. The protection of the natural features of a greenspace needs to be a principal obligation by planners. In my major research, environmental planning provides a crucial notice about the importance of nature in greenspaces by considering how placemaking can build stronger a connection between people and public greenspaces by highlighting the value of nature to a community.

Radical planning emphasizes planning as an approach that encourages social transformation, which involves having greater participation from the public throughout the decision-making process to create a more "just society" (Beard, 2003, p. 15). Radical planning is known to challenge conventional planning policies that are focused more on creating greater economic growth to continually fund the development of cities (Albrechts, 2015, pp. 105-106). Instead the objective of planning policies in cities should be primarily focused on distributing the financial resources accumulated from economic growth by having more equitable policies (Albrechts, 2015, pp. 105-106). The motivation of radical planning is to create a more just society that has more equitable and vibrant communities that are built from the empowerment of people in the decision-making process (Tironi, 2015, pp. 80-84). In my opinion, more naturalized and functional greenspaces should be a right for everyone in society. Placemaking illustrates an aspect of radical planning by rethinking how to plan, design, and manage public spaces in

communities through greater public participation throughout each step of the decision-making process. Community gardens exemplify placemaking by enabling community residents to improve the physical environment of the communities and revitalize their neighbourhoods to make it something of their own (Hou et al, 2009, p. 22). Placemaking in public spaces encourages people to revitalize public spaces to better serve the needs of their community by city governments providing them with the necessary resources and financial support. My study of radical planning helps me to expand my view on the role of placemaking to help empower people in communities, and how community gardens epitomize radical planning as a placemaking strategy that is focused on improving the wellbeing of community members.

Resource mobilization theory explains the study of social movements that are extensions of politics and analyzed in terms of their engagements of interest (Buechler, 1993, p. 217). This theory underlines the importance of public participation in the decision-making process by social movements pushing governments to act to build positive change for communities (Buechler, 1993, p. 218). While some social movements do sometimes receive public criticisms for their course of methods to bring attention to a societal issue, the key purpose of taking social action is to help people become more aware and try to attain more control and access to public resources (Buechler, 1993, pp. 221-222), for example public spaces. The push for a need to address any issues people are facing, such as the importance of more naturalized city parks that exist not just for sports or recreational uses, demonstrates an objective of resource mobilization theory. Resource mobilization theory involves rethinking how public parkland is used by the public, by way of the public initiatives encouraging more public community gardens, represents placemaking because it is involves shifting power away from governmental authorities to local residents in the park management system (Harnik, 2010, pp. 83-85). I believe placemaking highlights resource mobilization theory through the important roles of community members in the planning, design, and management of public greenspaces because they are essential to help encourage more government action to improve the lives of residents, and to protect nature, through community action.

The three planning approaches - environmental planning, radical planning, and resource mobilization theory - are fundamental to my understanding of the meaning of placemaking in public greenspaces. The interconnection between the three planning approaches demonstrates the association between policies and people in communities, as well as the planning, design, and management of public greenspaces, such as city parks. I believe the coordination between

the three planning approaches is necessary to continue transforming how parks and other greenspaces are being planned and designed in cities, particularly in suburban communities. The coordination between the three planning approaches create parks that are more natural, vibrant, and distinct to a community and their constituents' needs and interests regarding public spaces.

To support my major research, I examine numerous works of literature, which explore multiple topics and concepts that are significant to my study. Through conducting a literature review from various scholars, there are three key themes present in the literature that highlight the three planning approaches for my conceptual framework of my paper: the connection between community and nature, the typology of nature in a place, and people in the public realm. Though several of the sources I mention for my review were published more than a decade ago, the scholars' discussions surrounding these themes remain relevant. The various scholars emphasize different perspectives concerning the planning, design, and use of public spaces, such as city parks. I go into detail about each theme and their significance to my major research.

Theme 1: The Connection between Community and Nature

The first theme, the connection between community and nature, is explored through public parks, which are an important feature of vibrant communities by providing open greenspaces for people to access and use for their needs and interests. An integral focus of my major research is understanding how individuals use city parks. There is significant research that has been done that has emphasized the benefits of parks to public health, such as physical and mental health, and combating social isolation (Jennings & Bamkole, 2019, p. 5). The work of Frederick Law Olmsted, a world-renowned American landscape architect and Calvert Vaux, his business partner, who were key supporters of the "American Parks Movement" in the 19th Century, demonstrates the importance of planning public parks during the rising urbanization of cities (Larice & Macdonald, 2013, p. 36). However, there are aspects of their renowned work regarding park planning and design that continues to be critiqued.

Olmsted's park planning ideology is viewed by present-day landscape architects as being environmentally unsustainable because many popular parks designed by Olmsted and Vaux, such as New York City's Central Park, were artificially constructed (Larice & Macdonald, 2013, pp. 37-38). Olmsted's planning ideology for parks was focused on highlighting the central role

nature has as an antidote to living in urban-dense cities through open spaces filled with trees, sunlight and fresh air (Larice & Macdonald, 2013, p. 37). However, I believe his park planning and design ideology reflects counterproductive environmental planning practices because it involved destroying existing environments to build more "perfect" nature for people. Olmsted's ideology is mentioned as being a significant influence on many well-known urban planners of the past, such as Ebenezer Howard, and still has an effect on present-day urban planning practices, concerning the connection between people and nature (Larice & Macdonald, 2013, p. 38). I think it is important to understand the history of park planning in cities because the planning ideology of Olmsted contradicts many current planning processes, such as environmental planning, which emphasizes the importance of encouraging sustainable land-use development and protecting the natural environment. In my opinion, the advancement in the perspectives concerning the expertise of planning policies from Olmsted demonstrates the negative implications of planning parks focused solely on people. Parks that are created just for people encourages an unsustainable and ineffective approach to urban planning, especially park planning, from the apparent disregard to destroying a pre-existing environment. Parks do not need to be perfectly designed for people; existing nature needs to be better valued by people through viewing natural features as symbols of a community.

I found the exploration of the history of park planning to be important to my understanding of current planning of public greenspaces because of their influence on modern practices. Planning and design decisions are highly regulated through planning policies under planning laws. This is both good to ensure consistency and responsible management of land-use development in cities. However, I think many planning policies and laws disregard numerous important and dynamic considerations that significantly impact both or either the protection of the environment and ensuring the wellbeing of people. I believe the planning of public spaces like parks should be reflections of the pre-existing nature of a space that is present for all living species to enjoy. Parks are also spaces that can serve many possible uses for people without tremendously changing the existing environment. By having more sustainable planning policies, planners will encourage a stronger connection between people and the local nature in public spaces of their communities.

In Aleksandra Kazmierczak's 2013 article discussing a U.K. study about determining the uses of local parks and people's connections to local parks, Kazmierczak explains that people develop social ties in parks through the repetition of social acquaintanceships in park spaces

(Kazmierczak, 2013, p. 42). Kazmierczak's research findings supports her argument that "a neighbourhood intrinsically links the physical and social dimensions of shared and liveable spaces" (Kazmierczak, 2013, p. 32). The use of public parks in cities relies on ensuring good planning and maintenance of city greenspaces (Kazmierczak, 2013, p. 33). Kazmierczak's work is important to the theme of the connection of community and nature because it highlights the significance of people's connection to nature in parks, which is dependent on how those spaces are planned for use through city planning.

The disregard for nature in planning policies is also a reflection of a lack of human acknowledgment about the power of natural processes against human-constructed environments. Anne Whiston Spirn discusses the human disregard of natural processes in cities. Spirn emphasizes the importance of the connection between community and nature by highlighting the need for cities to be planned to essentially reflect the association between the needs of people and the needs of nature (Spirn, 1984, p. 244). The protection of a city's ecology ensures that there are communities that are liveable for all species (Spirn, 1984, p. 244). The connection between community and nature is evident when nature does not conform to the design of cities because the forces of nature are not controlled by human-built settings. Spirn stresses that there are grave consequences of inadequately planned cities that do not take a greater consideration of the natural environment and geography because ecological processes can outstrip the human design of cities (Spirn, 1984, p. 235). The consequences of cities being inadequately planned, can include the flooding and contamination of waterways and more air pollution, due to the removal of natural features, such as trees and grass (Spirn, 1984, p. 236). I view Spirn's discussion about cities that do not take greater account of the importance of existing natural features as reflecting the historic and common faults of evolving contemporary city planning. I think the approach of environmental planning takes strong consideration of ecological factors, along with economic and social factors when planning and designing new land-use development to assist in creating a stronger presence of nature in local communities.

The natural features of a city are exhibited through the place identities associated with their parks, streets, and buildings. The place identity of a city highlights the distinctive elements of the city's natural environment (Spirn, 1984, p. 11). Planning and designing the use of public greenspaces is a key focus of my major research, particularly the use of city parks. City parks can reflect the natural features of a specific setting, such as a community or neighbourhood. The place identity of a park is a reflection of the extensive history of both the preceding and

current inhabitants associated with the specific space (Spirn, 1984, p. 11). As the rising trend of urban development continues, for example the growth of suburban communities on the outer edge of cities, the natural environment significantly changes in response (Spirn, 1984, pp. 13, 36). I believe the impacts of human-led activities, such as rising urban development, has resulted in less nature being present in cities. In recent times, there has been a desire to bring more nature back into cities by planners, which has led to the creation of more public parks in cities across North America and Europe (Spirn, 1984, p. 32). City parks have been described as the "lungs of the city" because of their positive benefits of in improving the health, safety, and welfare of city residents and the sustainability of local ecosystems (Spirn, 1984, p. 32). I perceive public parks as highlighting the importance of public greenspaces in helping nurture the wellbeing of people. However, many city parks still lack distinctive attributes of their pre-existing local nature, which can exemplify a park's unique place identity.

As time goes on, planners and city builders need to continue to recognize the important value nature has to cities, as there have been attempts to bring nature back to cities in the past. A planning trend emerged with Ebenezer Howard in the 19th Century called, the "Garden City Movement," which was a vision for upcoming residential settlements like suburban communities to be surrounded by nature (Spirn, 1984, pp. 32-34). The garden city movement resulted in the creation of an "utopia," that was represented by the development of suburban communities and "mini-utopias" through the creation of parks and promenades, as a way to incorporate isolated natural features into outer-edge suburban communities (Spirn, 1984, p. 29). However, the garden city movement failed to take into account the benefits of creating a network of communities with already existing nature, and instead was building satellite residential communities surrounded by nature (Spirn, 1984, pp. 32-34). The attempt at recreating nature for each satellite community was marginally small, in comparison to what many people view as nature they find outside cities (Spirn, 1984, pp. 32-34). As a result, a limited number of people are able to enjoy both the benefits of urban living and pristine nature through their financial capability to escape to the countryside for their notion of nature (Spirn, 1984, p. 35). In comparison to a many others who cannot afford those luxuries of momentary escape or permanent relocation (Spirn, 1984, p. 35). I view this trend and the succeeding creation of common city parks to be mini-utopias of nature as a insufficient band-aid solution to previous planning decisions that did not see the importance of sustaining local nature in cities from the beginning, and results in several inadequately planned and designed public greenspaces.

The discussion surrounding the different perspectives of nature highlights the current decline of nature existing in cities, despite some efforts to bring nature back, and has adversely impacted the relationship people have with the natural environment. William Cronon expresses his doubt regarding a common perception that "real" nature can be preserved if there is minimal human disturbance to a place (Cronon, 1996, pp. 24-25), which highlights the role human beings play in nature and their relationship with nature. The common perception about what is classified as nature is apparently linked to the idea of a natural place being a presentation of the religious place of "Eden" from the bible because it is a reflection of the human culture for self-consciously constructing places (Cronon, 1996, p. 39). The idea that uninhabited nature is the only real and genuine nature acts as an antidote to everyday human activities and human behaviour that negatively affects nature, which Cronon believes needs to be rethought (Cronon, 1996, pp. 69-70). The antidotal idea, as well as other common perceptions of what is considered real nature, confines people's ability to place greater significance on the protection of the natural environment in cities where there is rising urban development (Cronon, 1996, pp. 108-110). I think Cronon's work highlights the perceived imperfect view of what is considered to be nature. This imperfect view influences people's relationship with nature because human beings primarily are told real nature must not be disturbed or interfered with but just admired from afar, ultimately leading to the diminishing consciousness about nature being able to exist in cities among human beings.

The significance of the connection between community and nature when planning public spaces is further elaborated through the exploration of topophilia by Yi-Fu Tuan. Tuan defines "Topophilia" as being "the affective bond between people and a place or setting" (Tuan, 1974, p. 4). Topophilia involves using human perceptions that are developed through human senses, such as smell, touch, and sight, which influences how different people perceive and evaluate a specific place (Tuan, 1974, pp. 5-12). Tuan labels the evolution of land-use planning and human disconnection from nature as, "a symbol of transcendence," that highlights the belief that the land-use planning practices of cities are the more powerful force and transcends nature (Tuan, 1974, p. 150). The symbol of transcendence can be displayed through the creation of suburban communities on the outer edge of city cores (Tuan, 1974, pp. 226-227). I interpret Tuan's discussion surrounding the relationship between topophilia and land-use planning practices as revealing the evolution of human settlement patterns and the planning of cities. These patterns are influenced by the extensive historical disconnection of communities and nature. I think the disconnection between community and nature has led to the common practice of individuals

forgetting nature does exist in cities, and results in a lack of appreciation or understanding of nature in these urban built environments.

Theme 2: The Typology of Nature in a Place

The second theme, the typology of nature in a place, examines the concepts of vernacular and novel landscapes. Vernacular landscapes, also known as ordinary landscapes, are defined as, "the surfaces of everyday life that we see all around us and that are created and re-created daily" (Mathenge, 2010, p. 3011). The concept of vernacular landscapes illustrates the key position human beings have in crafting and embedding multiple meanings for a particular place that is visited by many different people (Mathenge, 2010, p. 3011). The study of vernacular landscapes, which is commonly done by cultural geographers, has led to viewing these landscapes as "cultural landscapes," as they usually highlight various viewpoints about the environment (Mathenge, 2010, p. 3011). Vernacular landscapes are perceived differently by various groups of people and at different times because of multiple understandings and uses for a "landscape" (Mathenge, 2010, p. 3011). I understand the word landscape as referring to a particular space's environment, whether it is naturally existing or a human-built space. Vernacular landscapes are important to recognize because they illustrate the significant influence various human perceptions have on the planning and design of everyday landscapes, for example greenspaces. The opinion of a greenspace is not identical for everyone; what one individual views as natural, another individual may not, and what one individual views as scenic may differ from another individual (Mathenge, 2010, p. 3011). I think it is very important for planners to understand the different types of human perceptions concerning vernacular landscapes because the residential communities that are closely built near greenspaces are strongly influenced by the different planning perspectives of practitioners' responsible for developing and designing those communities and their public realm.

A key factor that is influential in shaping the appearance of vernacular landscapes are human beings' personal emotions. Michael Hough emphasizes the notion of a "sense of place," meaning the various characteristics humans use to identify a place (Hough, 1990, p. 1). Hough notes the direct influence of human emotions in transforming a natural landscape to become what an individual or group envisions for it to symbolize (Hough, 1990, pp. 20-23). I interpret Hough's key lesson as highlighting the principal impact of human emotions in transforming public spaces to express the various characteristics associated with the particular landscape. The characteristics tend to be determined by people with the authority of designing these

spaces, and the different places' identities of those spaces ultimately reflects the people's aspirations and interpretations. The physical layout of landscapes and their associated place identities are essentially reflections of human beings because all landscapes are consistently being shaped by society.

Hough also mentions the common assumption that genuine nature is aesthetic nature. Aesthetic nature is shaped by people to suit common human perceptions of natural scenery that is greatly influenced by the many art portrayals of nature (Hough, 1990, p. 23). The public's unconscious misconceptions of nature have made many individuals undervalue the importance of ordinary nature. Aesthetic nature has been vividly illustrated and overemphasized by artists, writers, and society as a whole (Hough, 1990, p. 24). In my view, the value of local public parks are unappreciated by many people, including some individuals in positions of authority. The common approach to the planning and design of many city parks displays a potentially unconscious preconception of what is considered adequate nature for a local park. Multiple individuals' personal stances or perceptions of a public space (i.e. city park), affects the design outcome of the space. Those positions or perceptions can influence other people's experiences of that same space, which can reshape the place identity of the space.

Hough discusses the historical influence of different human perspectives of nature shaping the place identities of numerous spaces. Planning ideologies that have developed over decades influence the planning and design of public greenspaces, which primarily has led to the gradual and continual loss of nature and a sense of place for many public spaces (Hough, 1990, pp. 86-87). The current trend of planning in cities is termed, "homogenizing fate of contemporary life," meaning the consistent loss of nature in cities as a result of present-day planning and design practices (Hough, 1990, p. 87). The homogenizing fate of contemporary life is exhibited by the fragmented greenspaces located throughout a city or region that lacks a continual and vibrant place identity, which can also be described as "placelessness" (Hough, 1990, p. 89). The importance of valuing the nature of a space has been strongly influenced by whether the existing nature is scenic enough to be conserved (Hough, 1990, p. 163). The conservation of nature is often done to serve the human desire for aesthetic nature, which is garnered through economic activities, such as tourist attractions (Hough, 1990, p. 163), versus the importance of nature not being determined by the economic activities using nature. My interpretation of Hough's discussion surrounding the homogenizing fate of contemporary life is that it is a common trend of planning and designing cities. This trend results in a significant loss of urban

nature because maintaining the ecology of cities is devalued, in comparison to the value of economic growth from continual urban development. I think the perception of urban nature not having as much importance as urban development has resulted in continuing the narrative of scenic or isolated nature being the most important nature to safeguard, which is far from true.

Hough also discusses the importance of urban ecology because of the impact people living in cities has to ecological processes in urban built environments (Hough, 1995, pp. 5-6). The impact of people to a city's ecology is evident through the alienation of humans from nature as a result of rising urban development (Hough, 1995, pp. 5-6). I believe it is important for planners and urban designers to recognize the essential understanding of ecology in cities regarding the planning of land-use development, which is the purpose of environmental planning. The advancement of human environmental thinking has stimulated the momentum to retransform our society that is captivated with consumerism and resource mismanagement, to instead into a society that ensures a sustainable future (Hough, 1995, p. 5). In my view, the overemphasis on valuing mainly distinctive landscapes, such as aesthetic public parks for tourism, must change. The focus on appreciating and protecting primarily aesthetic natural spaces has resulted in underappreciating ordinary nature, which is not constructive because it does not encourage an equal respect and protection of all nature by people.

As was previously mentioned when discussing Spirn, many city residents who are financially secure have the ability to travel often elsewhere outside of the city, such as to the countryside, which is labelled as their "urban playground," to experience and enjoy genuine nature (Hough, 1995, p. 14). The scenery of rural areas tends to be aesthetically pleasing to the eye, such as sprawling landforms with lakes, forests, and pastures, in comparison to the everyday nature present in cities (Hough, 1995, p. 14). However, other city residents who are not as financially privileged as those city residents do not have that same advantage, and they do their best with the local public spaces present to fulfill their needs for nature and open space in their lives (Hough, 1995, p. 14). I believe there needs to be a reconsideration about how the planning and design of cities can better sustain nature while improving the living experiences of residents who could benefit the most from local public spaces, for example city greenspaces. I think practitioners in the planning and design professions need to re-evaluate the influence of public human opinions in the planning and design processes for the public realm. Planners and urban designers offer their professional perspective about what designs and uses would be suitable for public spaces in cities, such as public greenspaces. The re-evaluation of planning and

design processes would need to realign focus on accommodating the necessities for people in the community, while also placing greater focus on sustaining the natural environment of a space.

City parks are a prime representation of the uses for public greenspaces by people being shaped by the personal values and outlooks of the people living in the city. Many city parks are planned and designed for primarily sports and recreational purposes because that is a major use for people (Hough, 1995, pp. 12-14). I think a crucial step to retransform city parks into being more naturalized spaces, as well as maintaining their sports and recreational amenities, is recognizing the spaces as vernacular landscapes. Vernacular landscapes are ordinary spaces that highlight the environmental, economic, and social necessities for purposeful uses (Hough, 1995, p. 12). Hough demonstrates the pressing need to transform how cities are planned and designed to better acknowledge the connection between urban and ecological processes so that cities have more sustainable futures for the wellbeing of their residents (Hough, 1995, p. 185). Vernacular landscapes are only one kind of landscape that reflects the different aspects of a space, such as the environmental and societal connections, there are other styles of landscapes that favourable suggest environmentally conscious public spaces.

Novel landscapes, also known as novel ecologies, are an alternative type of natural landscape. Novel landscapes are depicted as a natural space that have been crafted by humans but continue to exist without consistent human intervention (Higgs, 2017, pp. 8-9). In the view of landscapes as local public spaces, such as city parks, I perceive novel landscapes to be a substantial shift away from many traditionally designed city parks. I think the physical landscape of city parks often tend to have an absence of major ecological features, such as waterways or older and large trees, distinct characteristics nature, and involves consistent and strict human management. Due from the impacts of human activities, the creation of more novel public greenspaces can be a partial solution to help bring nature back to cities and thrive (Hobbs et al, 2009, pp. 599-605). I believe novel landscapes are distinctly different from vernacular landscapes that are constantly being changed daily by humans. Though vernacular landscapes try to maintain a fair consideration and balance between several communal factors, such as environmental, economic, and social (Hough, 1995, p. 12). Despite that effort, the place identity of a vernacular space, such as a greenspace, is continually changing to suit humans' opinions and needs, rather than evolving to sustain both the needs of people and nature.

I think the vital message gained from scholars about vernacular and novel landscapes to discuss the typology of nature in a place is that neither type of landscape is completely ideal nor perfect. The choice of what type of spaces to create does not have to be either only vernacular landscapes or only novel landscapes, the future planning of cities and their public spaces can exemplify both types of landscapes. Vernacular landscapes can symbolize the importance of maintaining public spaces that are seen as "ordinary" and evolve in use as time goes on to ensure the wellbeing of both people and the natural environment. Ordinary greenspaces like city parks found in suburban communities have just as much value as provincial or national public parks and nature found in the countryside, so action can be taken to maintain the protection of nature, while sustaining human uses for natural spaces. Novel landscapes show the possibility of retransforming insufficiently planned and designed greenspaces to be more ecologically distinct, for example greenspaces that have various tree and plant species and displays physical appearances that are less manicured and upkept by humans. Both types of landscapes are important and valuable to cities and are necessary to help cities evolve from conventional approaches to the planning and design of local public spaces, particularly public greenspaces.

Theme 3: People in the Public Realm

The third theme, people in the public realm, discusses the influence of urban design in shaping the presence or absence of nature in public spaces, specifically in cities. The current approaches to the design of public spaces, such as city parks, highlights the archetypical approach to park planning. I believe many practices of park planning in cities needs to do more to highlight the beauty of nature. For instance, maintaining the presence of native nature like mature and diverse species of trees and plants in parks. The planning and design of public spaces, such as parks and other greenspaces in cities, are predominantly focused on addressing the needs and interests of mainly human beings. The consideration of nature is frequently an afterthought when ideally it should be the primary concern and focus when planning public spaces.

The connection between current societal constructs of the public realm with urban planning and design in cities is deliberated by Paul Knox and Charles Montgomery. Knox considers the role of urban design in cities through its influences on how people create their own place identities for public spaces in connection to how those spaces meets their social and economic needs as consumers (Knox, 2011, pp. 3-4). Locally, urban design is instrumental in helping people establish roots with spaces, for instance the connection between people and their homes and to

their surrounding public realm (Knox, 2011, p. 174). The influence of urban design to the creation of different place identities is also evident through the various individual experiences from different people when visiting the same city, which is characterized by each city's various distinctive places and their physical surroundings (Knox, 2011, p. 174). The different place identities associated with particular public spaces displays the influence of globalization on consumer culture, which brands cities to encourage greater economic investment and bring more tourism (Knox, 2011, p. 174). Similarly, Montgomery discusses the influence of consumer culture and globalization on a city's place identity by urban design shaping how people interact with each other and navigate within cities, such as New York City, by making people interact with each other through its compacted design of their public realm (Montgomery, 2013, p. 123).

Montgomery also discusses the need to build nature into cities at all scales because of the benefits people receive being in close proximity to nature, which should not be a luxury but a right for everyone living in cities (Montgomery, 2013, p. 120). Montgomery specifies the need for more medium-sized parks and community gardens in cities, in addition to large destination parks, but it is dependent on how city governments and people rethink the planning, design, and use of public spaces (Montgomery, 2013, p. 120). I personally view the works of Knox and Montgomery to highlight the vital influence of urban design to a city's global place identity and people's personal perspective of a city's place identity. I think urban design can either positively or negatively impact the lived experiences of the people residing in a city or within a specific community depending on what are the civic governments and its citizens brand priorities.

Jan Gehl discusses the important role urban planning plays in addressing local environmental and health issues that are affecting people, and correspondingly how people are influenced by the spaces in which they inhabit, but have often been overlooked (Gehl, 2010, p.3). A focal point Gehl highlights is that the modern planning of cities must include a greater focus on the human dimension due to the expanding human population in urban areas, in comparison to how the human population in rural areas are growing in the 21st Century (Gehl, 2010, pp.3-8). This concept is meant to help plan cities to meet the dynamic needs of the current and future human population (Gehl, 2010, pp.3-8). Gehl promotes the creation of a new approach to planning of the public realm that aims to meet the needs of people based on four key city goals: lively, safe, sustainable and healthy, all of which are achieved through comprehensive planning policies (Gehl, 2010, pp. 6-7). Jan Gehl and Birgitte Svarre also discuss the need of planners and urban designers to ask questions regarding the complex interactions between life and form in the

public realm (Gehl & Svarre, 2013, p. 11). By planners asking more questions, it helps to better understand how the planning of cities and its internal urban systems influences how people view and use public spaces (Gehl & Svarre, 2013, p.11). I think Gehl and Svarre open an important discussion about human-centered planning, while also not disregarding the environmental importance in planning sustainable cities to accommodate human needs, as well as nature's needs to ensure the wellbeing of people living in cities.

In addition to academic work of Gehl and Svarre, Jonathan Barnett and Larry Beasley provide strong viewpoints about the significant influence of land-use planning and urban design in cities and suburban communities. In relation to Gehl, Barnett and Beasley's perspective is centered on environmental planning as the fundamental approach for land-use development in cities and suburban communities. Barnett and Beasley discuss the enactment of better planning policies and design principles that reflects the needs and interests of people in cities and suburban communities, while also ensuring the protection and wellbeing of the natural environment (Barnett & Beasley, 2015, pp. 202-203). Barnett and Beasley's discussion through an environmental perspective about the need to rethink the design and management of public spaces in cities and suburban communities stresses the importance of naturalizing the public realm (Barnett & Beasley, 2015, pp. 202). Naturalizing the public realm will help to re-establish native species and wildlife to create open-space networks benefitable to both people and non-human species (Barnett & Beasley, 2015, pp. 202-203). Barnett and Beasley also highlight the importance of maintaining public ownership of the public realm to ensure universal access and connection to public spaces and amenities for all citizens (Barnett & Beasley, 2015, pp. 190, 205). Barnett and Beasley bring great attention to the need for greater consideration of the environment in planning the public realm of cities and suburban communities.

I think there needs to be a more thoughtful understanding of the important relationship between people and their use of public spaces, particularly the use of public greenspaces in suburban communities. Peter Harnik implies that it is an art not a science to create a better balance in cities regarding parkland, structures, and streets (Harnik, 2010, p. 20). Harnik confers the growing trend of community gardens in city public spaces in North America represents an efficient use of space, which is already a common practice in Europe (Harnik, 2010, pp. 83-84). I believe the inclusion of community gardens in city public spaces is a positive example of designing spaces that aims to invite more people to the public realm, and adds several significant beneficial values to communities beyond just environmental benefits, such as diverse

economic, social, and health benefits. The planning of public greenspaces, particularly park planning, is not an easy task that can follow the same template for every space, each park should be created to suit the specific environment and its nearby residential communities. I view the works of both Barnett and Beasley, as well as Harnik, as vital references that provide a thorough understanding through an environmental planning approach to plan and design the public realm of cities and promotes the importance of transforming spaces that prioritizes the environment.

I believe the association between the environment and people can be further improved through placemaking in the public realm. Placemaking is a complementary approach to contemporary land-use planning practices that aims to foster stronger connections between people and public spaces (Project for Public Spaces, 2007). Placemaking involves rethinking the planning, design, and management of public spaces through initiatives that encourage community engagement and community-building (Project for Public Spaces, 2007). The notion of place identity and place attachment are key notions associated with placemaking, which is dependent not only on the physical features of a space, but is also influenced by the emotions and personal meanings by people connected with a particular space (Devine-Wright, 2009, p. 427). Knox underscores that a sense of place for a public space is socially constructed by people as a way for them to define both themselves and their living environments in a consumer-driven world by global markets (Knox, 2011, p. 174). Knox's viewpoint is evident through the different place identities for public spaces by different people for the same space, this is displayed through the variation between a market-driven place identity versus an individual's socially constructed place identity (Knox, 2011, p. 174). I think placemaking involves socially constructed place identities for public spaces that reflects a diverse set of perspectives from various community stakeholders through the planning, design, and management of public spaces.

However, there are some who perceive the notions of place identity and place attachment as negative place-protective actions. Place identity and place attachment are sometimes associated with the "Not in my Backyard" (NIMBY) concept, which is described as public opposition to local land-use development or community revitalization project that may be in a relatively close proximity to some residential communities (Devine-Wright, 2009, p. 430). Devine-Wright discusses that the NIMBY concept encompasses various explanations depending on the type or the size of the project that is being considered for development, such as an energy project (Devine-Wright, 2009, pp. 430-431). Devine-Wright highlights that public

opposition may not only be centered on disagreements about local development projects in a community, but it also can involve any opposition to changes in the representation of a specific place or community (Devine-Wright, 2009, p. 430). I strongly disagree with the use of the NIMBY concept by individuals or community groups based upon any discriminatory views against different groups of people to oppose local community projects. I think the notions of place attachment, place identity, and societal representation associated with placemaking do not share any similar values or objectives as relating to the NIMBY concept. The purpose of placemaking is to encourage place attachment, place identity, and ensure an equal and diverse representation of a community to strengthen community-building, support, and participation among all community members. Placemaking involves focusing on addressing the needs, interests, and concerns of all people in a community, through consistent and strong community engagement and representation throughout the planning, design, and construction processes. The end goal of placemaking is creating more welcoming and equitable communities that were planned to address the specific needs of different communities to guarantee a greater wellbeing for everyone.

Ronald Lee Fleming unravels the role a placemaker can serve in the planning and design processes, such as an antidote to the failures of modern urban design through a placemaking approach (Fleming, 2007, p. 19). A placemaking approach fulfills planning and urban design objectives that creates place meanings for public spaces by community members (Fleming, 2007, p. 19). Fleming demonstrates his view that public spaces should be planned for placemaking because it involves those in leadership roles to do their homework about a place before making any definitive decisions (Fleming, 2007, p. 288). Good leadership involves ensuring good and consistent communication with all community stakeholders, including residents, and using an integrated approach for decision-making (Fleming, 2007, p. 288). I think art is just one popular way of establishing place meanings to public spaces that Fleming discusses to be a useful and effective placemaking approach. Placemaking can be effectively implemented through various other means, such as environmental initiatives like community gardening, that contributes to place identity, community participation, and focuses on the value of nature. Placemaking is a new approach to planning and design that requires those in positions of authority, such as planners and urban designers, to be educated and informed on multiple aspects about a particular place and its surrounding community, in order to successfully uphold the overall satisfaction, health, and wellbeing of community residents, and of nature.

 Subsequently, the fundamental lessons I gained through an exploration of various scholars regarding my conceptual framework and themes explored through literature are that the planning and design of land-use development in cities are shaped by people. The three planning approaches, which are environmental planning, radical planning, and resource mobilization theory, are conveyed through the three themes of interest for my major research: the connection between community and nature, the typology of nature in a place, and people in the public realm. The relationship between people and nature is greatly influenced by how present or absent nature is in the public realm, which is shaped by planning and design policies. To understand how to plan public spaces, specifically public greenspaces, I believe planners and urban designers must understand the natural characteristics of the specific space and their contribution to the place's identity. Planners and urban designers need to better understand the influence of human emotions and behaviour in shaping planning policies and design principles that transform the planning and design of public spaces. Design principles impact the natural characteristics of a place by shaping the appearance of the space. To create a greater connection to people and nature in public spaces of their local community, it depends on how public spaces are planned for communal uses. Placemaking can help to improve human experiences in public spaces, such as greenspaces, by creating a more cohesive approach to the planning, design, and management of public spaces that directly involves community participation and protects nature.

An Overview of Park Planning and Community Gardens in Mississauga and Surrey

In this section of my paper, I discuss the details about the cities chosen as case studies and the specific park sites for my major research. I was interested in studying cities that are considered to be comprised of mainly suburban communities and are viewed as neighbouring another metropolitan city. After considering numerous cities throughout Canada and the United States, my final choices for cities as case studies were Mississauga, Ontario and Surrey, British Columbia.

The decision to have Mississauga as one of my case studies was suitable because of Mississauga's apparent suburban label after being referred to as "the archetypical Canadian suburb" in the *Globe and Mail* (Morrow, 2012 August 18). Mississauga is mentioned as being a suburb of Toronto as it is located in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), which is a provincial planning or business area (City of Toronto, 2020). Mississauga is the second most populated city in the GTA and third most populated city in Ontario behind Toronto, which is both Ontario

and Canada's most populated city (City of Mississauga, 2017, p.1; Sen Nag, 2019b). Surrey is also identified as a suburban city because of its suburban population being the fastest growing in the Metro Vancouver Region (Ramlo et al, 2017). Surrey has a demonstrably large suburban population that is stated to account for more than 53% of the 228,745 residents added to Metro Vancouver between 2001 and 2011, which makes up more than one third of the region's population (Ramlo et al, 2017). Surrey also is the second largest populated city in the Metro Vancouver Metropolitan Area, and it is considered a suburb of Vancouver, which is Canada's third most populated city (Sen Nag, 2019a). For my case studies, I investigate two community gardens programs operating on city parkland, one program located in Mississauga and the other program located in Surrey.

My choices of community organizations to study for my major research were selected after doing an online search for potential local organizations through municipal government websites. I ended up selecting Ecosource in Mississauga and DIVERSEcity in Surrey as my final two choices because I believe they were the two most similar community organizations. Both organizations are co-owners and the main operators of their city park community gardens. For my major research, that was an essential factor in my selection of community-based organizations because it signifies a continual partnership between each community organization with their city government concerning their community gardens program. Ecosource and DIVERSEcity are also both based locally in Mississauga and in Surrey and work directly with local residents for their community gardens, which is a community-based program. Another similarity between both organizations is that they each have at least two community gardens that are located on city parkland at two different park locations.

Before collecting research using my research methodology, I did an online search for general information about each case city and organization of choice. I did a review of numerous planning policies in relation to the various levels of government in each province concerning park planning, park operations, and park community gardens for Mississauga and Surrey. The planning of city parks and the operation of the community gardens can be influenced by demographic characteristics, such as population size, culture, income, and community age groups, of the people that reside in the communities throughout each city, which provides some background information behind each city government's decision-making processes.

Research Site 1: Mississauga, Ontario, Canada

Background Information

Mississauga is located in Eastern-Central Canada within the province of Ontario. According 2016 Federal Census Data, Mississauga has a population of 721,600 people, which has increased around 1.1% from 2011 until 2016 (Mississauga, 2020a). According to the 2016 Federal Census, 87% of Mississauga's population are Canadian citizens, with 53% of the population being residents who immigrated to Canada (Mississauga, 2019, p. 2019, p. 20). Mississauga's "largest source of immigration" has come from five countries: India, Pakistan, Philippines, China, and Poland (Mississauga, 2019, p. 20). Mississauga's population is comprised of various cultural groups; approximately 57% of Mississauga's population identify as a visible minority and less than one percent of people identify as Aboriginal (Mississauga, 2019, p. 20). In Mississauga, the most spoken language within the home is English (70%), the other 30% list a non-official language (other than English and French) being the most spoken language within the home (Mississauga, 2019, p. 20). In Mississauga, 10% of the population stated that one, or both official languages and non-official languages were spoken within the home, which includes Urdu (3.6%), Mandarin (2.9%), Arabic (2.6%), Polish (2.4%), and Punjabi (2.0%) (Mississauga, 2019, p. 20).

According to data from the 2016 Federal Census, the median community age of Mississauga's population is 40.0 years, which has increased by 3.5 years since the 2006 Federal Census (Mississauga, 2019, p. 19). Between 2006 and 2016, there were 12,000 fewer residents under the age of 20 in Mississauga, yet the number of residents in the 20 to 34 years age group has reasonably increased to 11,035 residents (Mississauga, 2019, p. 19). The number of residents 55 years and older has increased by 76,00 residents between 2006 and 2016, which is 27% of Mississauga's population (Mississauga, 2019, p. 19). The median average income of a Mississauga household is $83,044 before tax, and the median average income for an individual Mississauga resident is $31,197 before tax (Mississauga, 2020a). Mississauga is comprised of 11 wards and has 22 neighbourhoods (Mississauga, 2020a).

Ecosource is a charitable environmental organization located in Mississauga and operates nine community gardens on city-owned properties, seven of which are located on city parkland, and eight of the nine gardens are wheelchair accessible (Ecosource, 2020b). Ecosource's park community gardens have shared ownership with the City of Mississauga, but are managed by

Ecosource (Ecosource, 2020b). Ecosource has been in operation since 1979 and describes their organization as "an innovative Mississauga-based organization that inspires communities in the Peel Region to become more environmentally responsible through creative public education" (Ecosource, 2020c). One of Ecosource's main objectives is their park community gardens, which are to help encourage greater support for "ecosystem health and biodiversity in the urban/suburban environment and enhance residents' appreciation of public parks and engagement in keeping them clean, safe, and litter free spaces" (Ecosource, 2013, p. 2). Ecosource is also known to offer numerous additional environmental programs, education and resource tools that are available to local residents (Ecosource, 2020c). For the case study, I focus on two of Ecosource's park community gardens in Mississauga: Hillside Community Garden and Churchill Meadows Community Garden, which are further discussed in my research findings.

Mississauga's Planning Policy Framework

Planning of Mississauga's land-use development is crafted under a planning policy framework that considers numerous other planning policies from the municipal, regional and provincial levels of government. The City of Mississauga's decision-making surrounding planning and the possible uses of public spaces, such as city parks, are guided under a number of essential planning policies (more details found in Appendix A). The most fundamental planning legislation influential to Mississauga's planning decisions is The Planning Act (1990), which outlines a municipality's planning responsibilities (Foran & Harrington, 2018, p. 2). The Planning Act legislation generated the planning policy framework called the Provincial Policy Statement (2020) and other provincial planning policies, which guides the planning policy frameworks for regional and municipal governments (Foran & Harrington, 2018, pp. 2-3). Many of the policy plans by the City of Mississauga highlight some key objectives that are focused on addressing environmental challenges in their city, with a key focus being on how to improve the quantity, access, and uses of greenspaces available to residents. The policy plans most significant to the discussion surrounding the development of community gardens in city parks are the Region of Peel's Official Plan (2018), Mississauga's Official Plan (2015), Mississauga's Strategic Plan (2009), the Living Green Master Plan (2012), and the Parks and Forestry Master Plan (2019), which all discuss policy objectives in support of a more green city, for example the development of community gardens.

Research Site 2: Surrey, British Columbia, Canada

Background Information

Surrey is located in Western Canada within the province of British Columbia. According to the 2016 Federal Census, Surrey has a population of 557,310 people, with the population of Surrey rising by 11% between 2011 and 2016 (City of Surrey, 2020b, pp. 1, 3). In Surrey, 43% of the population are immigrant residents, which has grown by 17.2% between 2011 to 2016 (NewToB.C., 2018, p. 4). Between 2011 and 2016, approximately 36,335 recent immigrants settled in Surrey (Surrey, 2020b, p. 4). Surrey's population is comprised of various cultural groups, the top five groups being Caucasian (42%), South Asian (33%), Chinese (8%), Filipino (6%), and 22% of the population identify as Aboriginal (Surrey, 2020b, p.4). In Surrey, the most common language spoken within the home is English (66%), followed by Cantonese (6%), Mandarin (6%), Punjabi (5%), Korean (1%), and other languages (10%), based on the data from the 2016 Federal Census (Surrey, 2020b, p. 6).

According to data from the 2016 Federal Census, the median average household income in Surrey is $77,494 before tax, and the median average income of an individual living in Surrey is $29,822 before tax (Government of Canada, 2020). According to the 2016 Federal Census, the largest community age group In Surrey is between 35-64 years at 41%, second largest being between 0-19 years, then 20% between 20- 35, and 14% 65 years or older (Surrey, 2020b, p. 3). Surrey is comprised of eight wards and has seven neighbourhoods (Surrey, 2020a). Surrey's seven neighbourhoods are: Guildford, Newton, North Surrey, South Surrey, Cloverdale, Whalley, and Fleetwood (Surrey, 2020c).

In Surrey, there are currently nine community gardens located in public parks, and most community gardens are operated by a local community organization or group. DIVERSEcity, a community-led, non-profit organization based in Surrey for 40 years that has been working with communities in Surrey, Langley, Delta, and White Rock (DIVERSEcity, 2020a). DIVERSEcity operates two of Surrey's nine park community gardens (Surrey, 2020d). DIVERSEcity describes their objective as an organization as focusing on helping newcomers adjust to their new life and settle well in Canada by providing various programs and services to assist new immigrants, temporary workers, and refugees (DIVERSEcity, 2020b). One of the programs that is offered by the organization is a community gardens program, which offers newcomers and refugees to Surrey the opportunity to participate in the program as a way to network, and connect with their

new community, and make friends by growing their own produce (DIVERSEcity, 2020b). For the case study, I focus on two park community gardens in Surrey: Hazelnut Meadows Community Garden and the Lionel Courchene Growing Roots Community Garden, which are further discussed in my research findings.

Surrey's Planning Policy Framework

Surrey's planning policies are guided from three levels of government: municipal, regional, and provincial. The City of Surrey lies within the Metro Vancouver Region of British Columbia. There are a number of planning policies that are important to the decision-making about public greenspaces in Surrey at both the regional and municipal levels of government (more details found in Appendix A). The Local Government Act (2015) is the principal provincial planning legislation, which outlines regional and municipal planning decisions in British Columbia (Government of British Columbia, 2016). The other policy plans most influential to the development of park community gardens in Surrey are the Metro Vancouver Regional Growth Strategy (2010), Surrey's Official Community Plan (2014), the Sustainability Charter 2.0 (2016), and the Parks, Recreation, and Culture Strategic (PRC) Plan (2018).

Research Methods

In this section of my paper, I discuss the research methods I used to conduct my study. My research study position reflects epistemology, which is "focused on the ways of learning and knowing about the world," through how the experience of reality influences the knowledge of people (Ritchie et al, 2014, p. 6). I decided to use qualitative research methods for my study because qualitative research provide critical and descriptive information, mainly using images and words (Bryman et al, 2012, p. 132). My major research study used qualitative research methods to gather data to help address my research question and validate my research position, which is that placemaking is a useful approach for planners to implement to help transform the processes for the planning, design, and management of greenspaces, which strengthens ties between people and nature. For my choice of qualitative research methods, I chose to do two case studies exploring two cities, Mississauga, Ontario and Surrey, British Columbia, which involved performing virtual site observations of select city parks and their community gardens, and conducting one-on-one interviews.

In the process of identifying potential interviewees for my study, I spoke with numerous individuals who work in the planning profession and work with community organizations via

email and phone about urban planning in cities and placemaking in public spaces. Then preliminary emails were sent out to associates of city planning in Mississauga and Surrey, and associates from Ecosource and DIVERSEcity about my major research and my interest in conducting interviews for my study. The four participants for my interviews were finalized by March 2020, which included two city planners – one city planner from Mississauga and one city planner from Surrey; my other two participants were one representative from Ecosource and one representative from DIVERSEcity. Each interview participant confirmed their participation in my research by signing an informed consent form, which I also read to each participant before the start of each interview. The informed consent form was preapproved before conducting any of my interviews by the Delegated Ethics Review Committee, which is the authority responsible to review research ethics protocols by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board, and it must meet the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines, to be able to do interviews. The informed consent form outlined the terms of my major research study and the research interview, and if necessary, provided additional contact information besides myself, the principal researcher, for the participant's benefit. I also consistently reiterated to each participant that they could ask me any questions or voice any concerns they may have regarding our interview, both before and after conducting each interview.

All interviews for my major research study were administered during March and April 2020. I created two interview guides – one with questions about city planning and a second one relating to the work of the community organizations - (found in Appendix B), which were made prior to conducting the interviews. Both interview guides outlined my steps and the twelve guiding questions for my interviews. The interviews were semi-structured, which gave each participant the opportunity to further elaborate on any question or a related topic of interest. The interviews were arranged to be one-on-one and in-person conversations between myself and each interview participant.

However, I faced various challenges to gather data for my research regarding the case studies because of the COVID-19 pandemic. There were new travel and in-person meeting restrictions within Canada, both locally and nationally, from between March until approximately June 2020. The growing health risks from COVID-19 in March and April 2020 made meeting in-person for the interviews potentially unsafe for me and the interview participants. Before I began any of my interviews or started to conduct site observations, I decided to make rearrangements to aspects

of my research and research methodology after discussing it with my supervisor. As a result, I cancelled my research trip to Surrey, B.C., which was scheduled for April 2020, and I altered my interview format from in-person to instead be done via phone or videoconferencing. I also did virtual site observations due to restrictions concerning the access to parks and amenities from between March until approximately June 2020. As a consequence, I was no longer able to gather critical data about each city's biodiversity and the physical designs about public parks for the selected parks in both Surrey and Mississauga, so I removed researching those aspects entirely from my case studies.

 The responses from the participants for all the interviews were documented through my handwritten notes, which are transferred into computer word files after each interview. The purpose of chronicling all interview participants' responses through notes was so I could analyze each participant's responses to all the questions in greater detail later on. I then did a follow-up with each participant through email around mid-July 2020 to inquire about their interest in reviewing their answers to the questions from our interview that I decided to reference in my paper. I did that to confirm the accuracy of the details of my notes, and the participants who were interested to review them were given a copy of the select questions and their accompanying responses to read over.

I analyzed each participant's set of responses to my questions in order to identify any significant information, common terminology, factors, or statements from each interview about the planning and programming of public greenspaces in Mississauga and Surrey. The information gathered from each interview is meant to highlight any possible similarities or differences in planning approaches and the implementation of park community gardens programs between each research case city. My virtual site observations for parks and community gardens were performed using online web mapping tools, such as municipal GIS and mapping data systems, Google Maps and public webpages. The virtual site observations were intended to gather details regarding each city's layout of their system of public greenspaces and each chosen city park in Mississauga and Surrey. I also did a review all the public greenspaces in both Mississauga and Surrey using the city's public data webpages and the webpages from the community organizations to analyze each case city and the chosen park sites with public community gardens for my major research.

There were a few limitations of my research study. There is the possibility that my research study is too specific, so my research findings may be difficult to use for other research studies of a similar topic subject. In addition, there was also the concern that since my major research study reflects an epistemological position, the findings and analysis of my study are "value-mediated" (Ritchie et al, 2014, p. 8). Thus, it was recommended to maintain "empathetic neutrality," meaning openly recognizing that my research cannot be value free, which is evident in my assumptions, but I try to remain neutral in my research approaches (Ritchie et al, 2014, p. 8). For my major research, I maintained "empathetic neutrality" by affirming my position for my research study in the beginning of my paper through stating the purpose of my research study, which is to validate my view that park community gardens are a effective example of placemaking in public greenspaces.

Research Findings

In this section of my paper, I have split my research findings into two sections: virtual site observations and interviews. For my virtual site observations, I discuss my findings about city greenspaces and select community gardens present in both of my research study cities. For my interviews, I discuss the responses from four interview participants, identified as Participant One, Participant Two, Participant Three, and Participant Four to a selection of questions that I consider were most relevant to my major research and explain my analyses of their answers.

Virtual Observations of Research Sites in Mississauga and Surrey

For my major research, I virtually examined both the cities of Mississauga and Surrey and the chosen park sites and community gardens using GIS data from Google Maps, and each city's municipal mapping and GIS data systems, and public webpages.

Research Site 1 Observations

According to eParks, the City of Mississauga's online system about their parks, Mississauga's park system includes 502 greenspaces (i.e. Figure 5), which includes all city parks, open spaces, waterways, and wetlands (Mississauga, 2020b). Mississauga's system of city parks with Ecosource community gardens can be viewed as a network of sites throughout the city, which are located near several residential communities (i.e. Figure 6). The physical character of each city park, specifically its natural characteristics, such as the type of vegetation present like different species of trees and plants, grass, and several paths of watercourses present within or near a park, varies depending on the natural history and planning history of each Mississauga

neighbourhood. The City of Mississauga has achieved a target of 2.36 hectares of parkland per 1000 residents, which is more than their target of 1.2 hectares of parkland per 1000 residents (Mississauga, 2019, p. 35). However, the City of Mississauga's parks inventory includes park sites that are significant natural areas but are not publicly accessible, so many are used as trails or passive uses, not recreation, thus there is a desire to establish a separate inventory specifying what park sites are publicly accessible (Mississauga, 2019, p. 35).
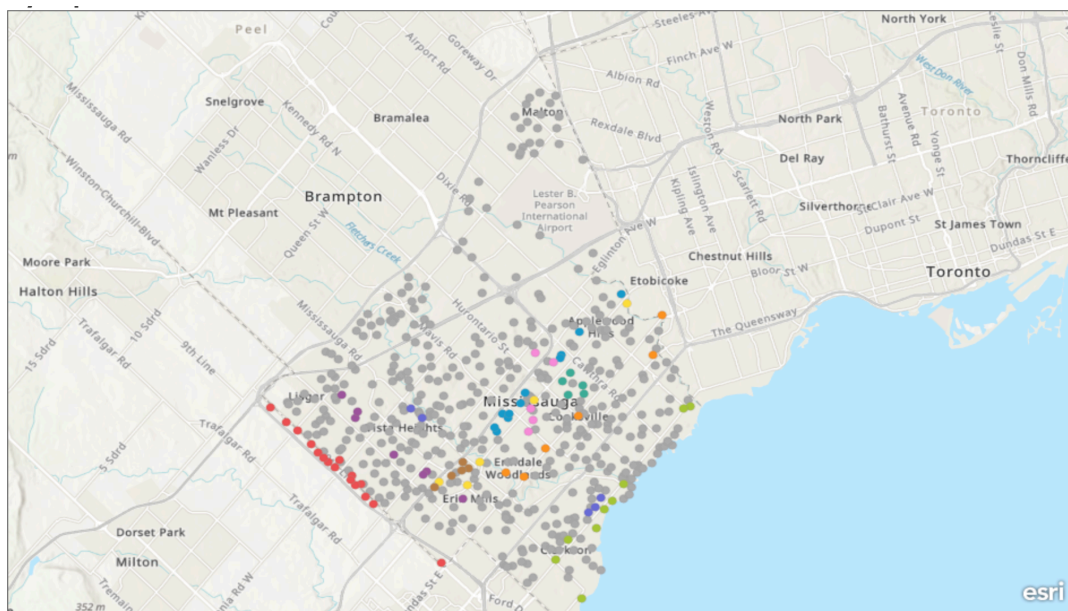
Figure 5: A map of all the city parks (indicated by various colour dots) located in Mississauga, ON. Source: Esri ArcGIS Online for City of Mississauga, 2020.

The two Mississauga parks—Hillside Park and Churchill Meadows Community Commons—are where two Ecosource park community gardens are located: Hillside Community Garden and Churchill Meadows Community Garden (i.e. Figure 6). Hillside Park is located in Mississauga's Clarkson - Lorne Park Neighbourhood in Ward 2 (Ecosource, 2020d), near Mississauga's Waterfront (i.e. Figures 7 and 8). The Clarkson – Lorne Park Neighbourhood has a population of 36,635 people based on data from the 2016 Federal Census (Mississauga, 2020a). The natural characteristics of Hillside Park appears to include large open spaces of grass with large trees dispersed in pockets throughout the property, and the community garden (i.e. Figure 7). The Hillside Community Garden in Hillside Park was created in July 2009 and renovated in 2015 with the support of the City of Mississauga and PCL Construction, and now currently has 30 individual garden plots and 5 community plots (Ecosource, 2020d). The development of the Hillside Community Garden was supported by the Mississauga Master Gardeners, who had

Figure 8: Hillside Community Garden in Mississauga's Hillside Park. Source: Geena Richards, 2020.

Churchill Meadows Community Commons is located in the Churchill Meadows Neighbourhood in Ward 10 (Ecosource, 2020a), close to the Western side boundary of Mississauga (i.e. Figures 9 and 10). The natural characteristics of Churchill Meadows Community Commons appears to include primarily open spaces of grass, a minimal presence of trees dispersed throughout the property, and the community garden (i.e. Figure 9). The Churchill Meadows Neighbourhood has a population of 49,215 people based on data from the 2016 Federal Census (Mississauga, 2020a). The Churchill Meadows Community Garden was created approximately sometime in 2017 and includes 20 garden plots (Melvin, 2017). The Churchill Meadows Community Garden is located in the South-East corner of the Churchill Meadows Community Commons entering from Thomas Street (i.e. Figure 9).
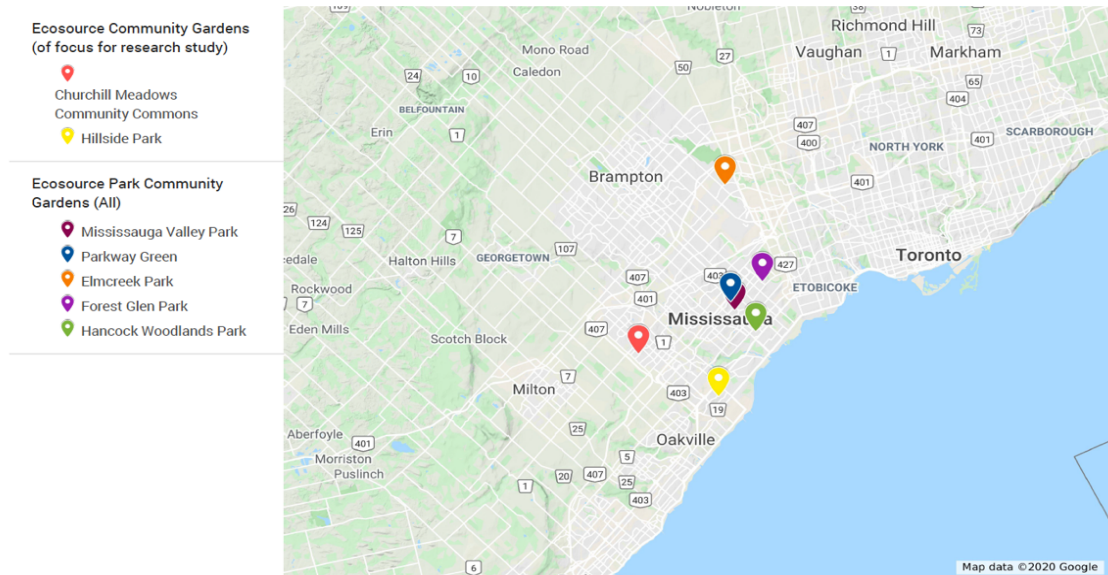
Figure 9: Aerial view of Churchill Meadows' Community Garden (red circle) located in Mississauga's Churchill Meadows Community Commons. Source: Google Maps, 2020.

Figure 10: Churchill Meadows Community Garden in Mississauga's Churchill Meadows Commons. Source: Geena Richards, 2020.

<u>Research Site 2 Observations</u>

According to the City of Surrey's Parks webpage, there are currently 200 greenspaces in Surrey (i.e. Figure 11), which includes parks, gardens, walking trails, greenways, watercourses, and

wetlands (Surrey, 2020g). Surrey's network of city parks that includes community gardens are positioned throughout the city, which is evident through multiple sites (i.e. Figure 12). The physical character of each city park, specifically its natural characteristics, such the type of vegetation present concerning the different species of trees and plants, grass, and several paths of watercourses present within or near a public park, varies throughout Surrey since it depends on the natural history and urban development history of each neighbourhood. Surrey has classified their parks into an structured system: City Park, Community Park, Neighbourhood Park, and Mini-Parks/Plazas, to help outline each type of park's functions (Surrey, 2018a, p. 40). The City of Surrey aims to reach a target of providing 4.2 hectares of parkland per 1000 residents and having a goal of a park within walking distance of 500 m (Surrey, 2018a, p. 40).
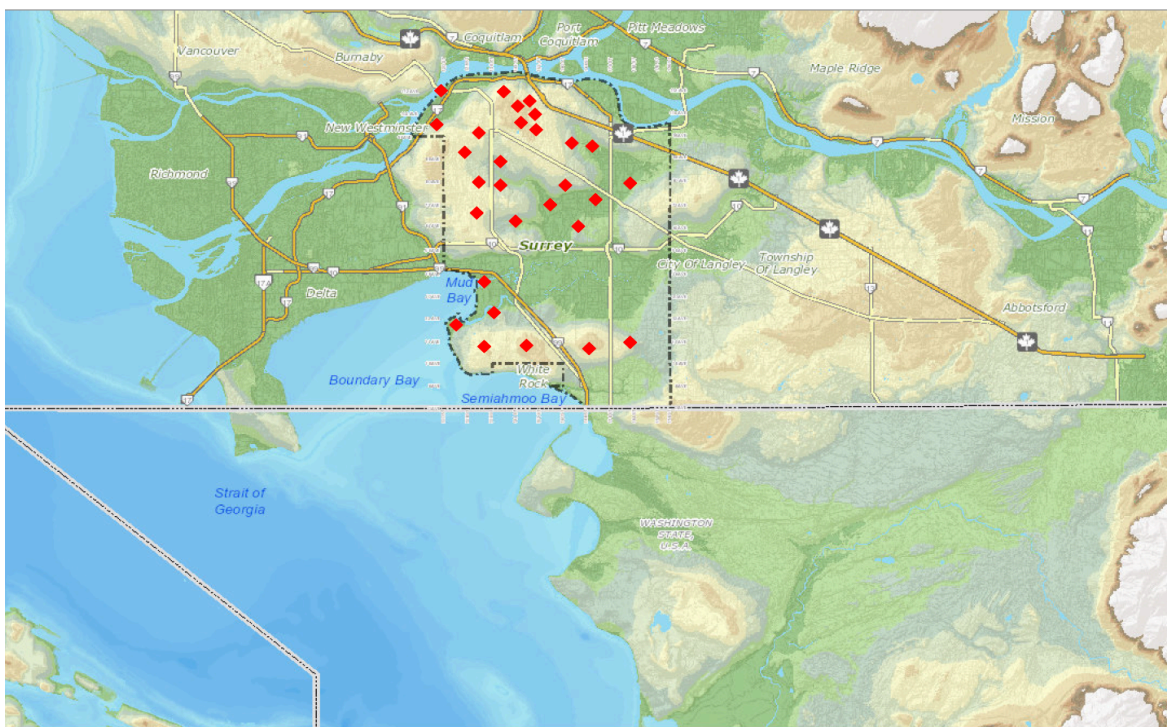
Figure 11: A map of some city parks (indicated by red dots) located in Surrey, B.C. Source: City of Surrey Mapping Online System (COSMOS), 2020.

Two park sites in Surrey - Hazelnut Meadows Community Park and Lionel Courchene Park – are where DIVERSEcity's has two community gardens: Hazelnut Meadows Community Garden and the Growing Roots Community Garden (i.e. Figure 12). The Hazelnut Meadows Community Park is located is in the Newton Neighbourhood of Surrey (Surrey, 2020d), close to the West side boundary of the city (i.e. Figures 13 and 14). The natural characteristics of Hazelnut

Meadows Community Park appears to have vast open spaces of grass and a large canopy of trees located on the property, as well as the community garden (i.e. Figure 13). The Newton Neighbourhood has a population of 149,040 people based upon data from the 2016 Federal Census (Surrey, 2020f). Hazelnut Meadows Garden was created in 2009 and has 82 garden plots (refer to interviews segment). Hazelnut Meadows Community Garden is located in the South-West corner of the park entering from 68 Avenue (i.e. Figure 13).

Surrey's Park Community Gardens
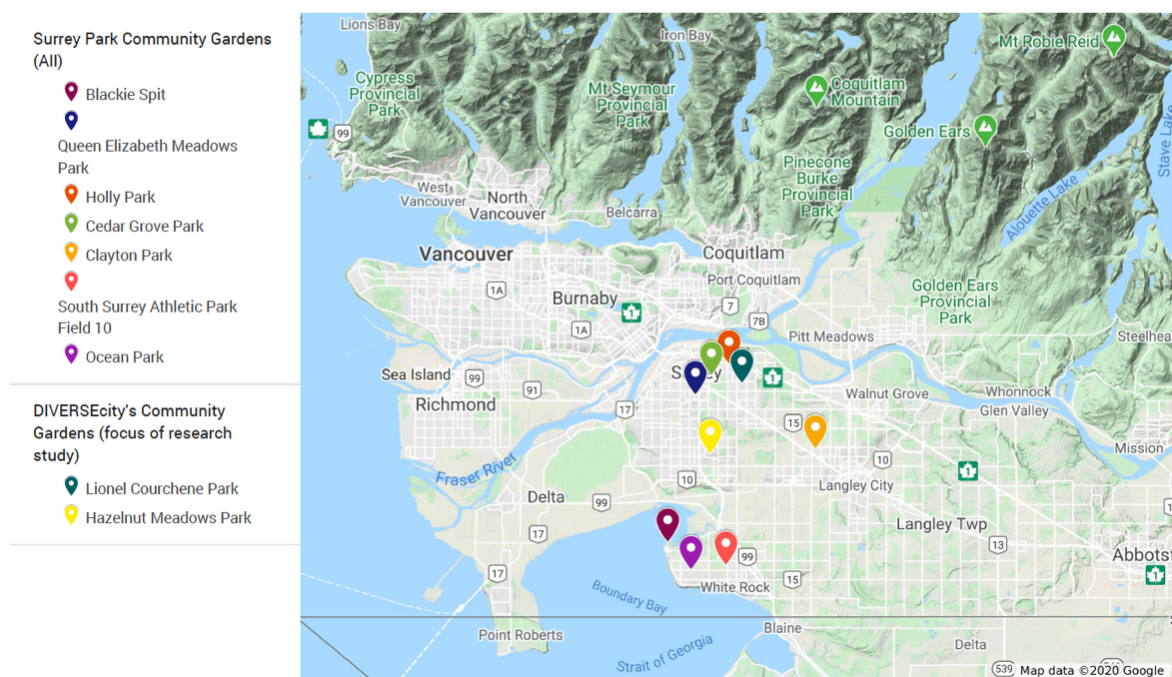
Figure 12: City parks with community gardens in Surrey. Source: Google My Maps, 2020.

Figure 13: Aerial view of Hazelnut Meadows Community Garden (red circle) located in Surrey's Hazelnut Meadows Park. Source: Google Maps, 2020.

Figure 14: Hazelnut Meadows Community Garden in Surrey's Hazelnut Meadows Park. Source: DIVERSEcity, 2020.

The Growing Roots Community Garden is located in the Lionel Courchene Park, a community park of the Guildford Neighbourhood of Surrey (Surrey, 2020d), close to the North-East side boundary of the city (i.e. Figures 15 and 16). The natural characteristics of Lionel Courchene Park appears to include a vast open space of grass fields, a minimal presence of trees located on the property, and the community garden (i.e. Figure 16). The Guildford Neighbourhood has a population of 60,745 people based upon data from the 2016 Federal Census (Surrey, 2020e). The Growing Roots Community garden was created in 2015 and has 22 garden plots (refer to interviews segment). The Growing Roots Community Garden appears to be located at the South-West corner of the park entering from 156 Street (i.e. Figure 15).
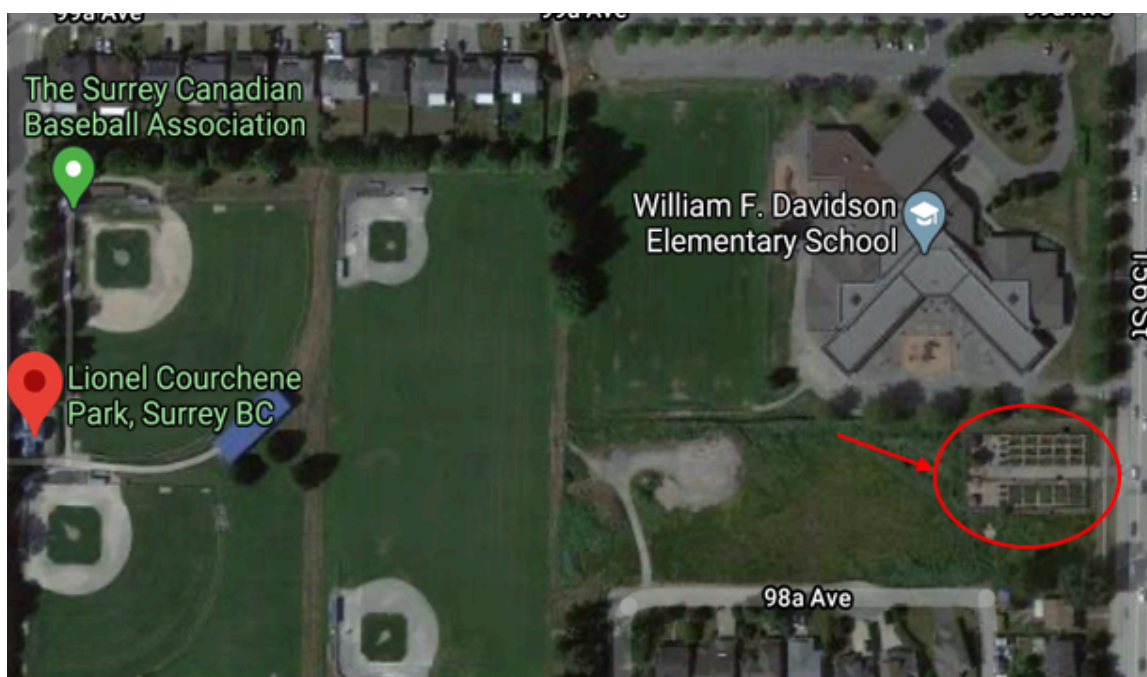
Figure 15: Aerial view of the Growing Roots Community Garden (red circle) located in Surrey's Lionel Courchene Park. Source: Google Maps, 2020.

Figure 16: Growing Roots Community Garden in Surrey's Lionel Courchene Park. Source: Google, 2019.

After reviewing both Mississauga and Surrey's parks systems, I view both cities as having a similar city parks' network, which encompasses all types of greenspaces under the umbrella term of parks. The focus of my study was on select city greenspaces I consider a community or neighbourhood park that are located within residential communities. Each research park site and their accompanying community garden has a different natural characteristics and physical design. Both Mississauga and Surrey have an abundant and continually growing park network. The City of Surrey has set a higher target for the amount of parkland per 1000 residents than the City of Mississauga's target amount of parkland per 1000 residents. The City of Surrey has established a parks inventory organized by a classification system. The City of Mississauga mentions in their 2019 Parks & Forestry Master Plan being interested in creating a parks inventory (Mississauga, 2019, p. 35). The community gardens in each city are located in publicly accessible parks within neighbourhoods of more than 30,000 people, so the gardens are located in parks serving highly populated communities in both Mississauga and Surrey.

Research Interviews

For my interviews, I spoke with two city planners from Surrey and Mississauga, Participant Two and Participant Three, and two representatives from community organizations, a representative

from Ecosource, Participant One, and a representative from DIVERSEcity, Participant Four. The purpose of the interviews was to ask questions about each city's policy plans regarding parks and each city's community engagement process for planning decisions, specifically their plans for parks and public programs in city parks. After reviewing the notes from my interviews, I organized my interview findings into two sections: City Planning and Community Organizations, which were further separated into two topics: Planning and Policy for City Parks and Public Programs in City Parks.

City Planning Interviews

I asked a total of twelve questions to a Surrey city planner, Participant Two, and a Mississauga city planner, Participant Three, during each of my interviews. I chose seven questions of the twelve questions to discuss in my paper that I consider most relevant to my major research, which are split into two topics: Planning and Policy for City Parks and Public Programs in City Parks.

I.   Planning and Policy for City Parks:

In the beginning of each interview with participants after I asked a couple of general questions about park planning and each city's parks plan, in reference to the City of Mississauga's Parks and Forestry Master Plan (2019) and the City of Surrey's Parks, Recreation, and Culture Strategic Plan (2018). I then asked Participant Two and Participant Three, *"How did the City's park planning decide on the plan's main goals?"* Participant Two in response identified there are two main pieces of Surrey's plan: the first was data gained through evidence-based research to provide the reasoning behind the objectives of the plan. The second piece was public consultation, which outlined what the public's current desires for their city parks. Participant Two stated that the plan focuses on a 10-year period, but city planning in Surrey is planning for approximately 30 to 40 years down the line. Participant Three's response to the same question discussed the important influence of public feedback gained from people about their desires and needs regarding Mississauga's plan. Participant Three also mentioned that city planning in Mississauga gained knowledge on how to facilitate a community's desires and needs through consulting with community groups or organizations, and conducting a strong background review on available data, such as census data and community surveys, to provide evidence to support the recommendations mentioned in the plan.

My observation of the answers to the question from Participant Two and Participant Three is that public consultation is a major aspect of both cities' planning process prior to the development of specific details concerning each city's parks plan.

The fifth question I asked was, *"How involved was the public in providing ideas and feedback about the plan to the City?"* Participant Two stated in response that a consultant was hired to be involved in Surrey's public consultation process, and that there were phases of the engagement process between the public and the City of Surrey in order to receive and review ideas they offered through public consultation. Participant Three's response specified that public consultation concerning Mississauga's policy plans are done at least every five years when a plan review is expected, but the engagement process begins early on through different approaches of engaging with the public, such as townhalls, board meetings, and citizen satisfaction surveys. Participant Three also indicated that city planning in Mississauga are able to establish areas of focus for plans, such sports, environment, designated space for seniors, climate change, and park amenities, through plan reviews.

My interpretation of Participant Two and Participant Three's responses to the fifth question is that the process for public engagement extends over an wide period of time, and each city's strategy for engaging with the public regarding the development of their plans for parks varied. I further explored both the City of Surrey and the City of Mississauga's engagement tactics after my interviews. In a summary of the City of Surrey's community engagement process for the PRC Plan titled, "Summary of Community Engagement: Surrey Parks, Recreation & Culture 10-Year Strategic Plan," it mentions a number of key public engagement activities that were done to invite community participation, which included community interviews, workshops, surveys and pop-up events, idea fairs and open houses, high school workshops, theme-based workshops, and staff focus groups (Surrey, 2018b, p. 4). In Mississauga's Parks and Forestry Master Plan, other consultation activities are stated, some of which were creating a public website, stakeholder focus groups, members of council and key opinion leader interviews, interviews with external agencies, and Parks and Forestry Division staff workshops (Mississauga, 2019, p. 22). I view many of the methods of engagement to gather public feedback for both city's plans for parks to be traditional outreach methods, such as townhall meetings, board meetings, surveys, open houses and workshops.

II.Public Programs in City Parks:

Halfway through each interview about city planning, I shifted gears and began asking questions regarding programming in city parks. I asked both Participant Two and Participant Three, *"Does ideas for park programming, such as community gardens, begin with City officials or the organizations?"* Participant Two's response indicated that the ownership of a project or program like a community garden is the responsibility of the community organization who puts the idea forward to Surrey's park planning, but the City of Surrey assists in the operation of the program through community funding grants. Participant Three stated in response to the same question that it is a shared effort by city officials and organizations in Mississauga to submit ideas for possible park programs, such as the Credit River Parks Strategy or the Pinchin Property. Participant Three also mentioned that a lot of work surrounding public programs on city public spaces in Mississauga is completed by the City Community Development Group.

My interpretation of the response from Participant Two are that the City of Surrey views their partnerships with community organizations as mostly an advisor and co-founder for projects or programs, rather than being a co-operator or co-owner through their partnerships. I view Participant Three's response as reflecting a similar connotation as Participant Two's response, but the City of Mississauga appears to have a more active role over a period of time in their partnerships to implement a community project or program with a community organization through the function of the Community Development Group.

The next question of the interviews I asked, *"Do you believe community park programs, such as community gardens, help to invite people to use city parks?"* Participant Two in response openly stated positively that they believe it helps to engage people in the community in different ways based on the public's interests or needs. Participant Three in response to the same question fully stated:
 "*Yes, as these programs often invite people to visit parks that they otherwise would not have known about. Public Parks offer a variety of programs that cater to all sorts of interests and needs. Park programs also create a word-of-mouth effect where residents share their experiences in parks with others*." As an example, Participant Three mentioned students who take field trips to public parks to participate in a park program, who then share the information or experience with others, such as their friends or parents.

I followed up the proceeding question by asking, *"Are there limitations to people's use of park spaces or what types of programming that can occur in park spaces?"* In Participant Two's

response, they mentioned the City of Surrey's "dawn until dusk policy" as a limitation to the specific time people are allowed to access park spaces. Participant Two also mentioned limitations that are set in place for sensitive ecosystems present in some Surrey Parks in order to preserve the ecosystems' biodiversity, which is noted through public signage meant to educate people and restrict some dogs at some parks. Participant Three's response to the question was, *"Yes,"* as there are designated park hours in place in Mississauga to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the surrounding neighbourhoods. Participant Three indicated that the suitability of some park programs is determined on a case by case basis due to regulations for the zoning of public spaces, such as a space possibly in a floodplain, or the City of Mississauga has to consider whether the soil quality would be ideal for a community garden. Participant Three also mentioned that the City of Mississauga recognizes that "passive open spaces," which they specify as "not programmed," are very valuable for multiple uses, so there are restrictions in place in order to protect against incompatible uses.

My understanding of the responses from Participant Two and Participant Three to those two questions are that both the City of Surrey and the City of Mississauga do believe parks are important spaces for public engagement, such as through their park community gardens program. Also, I observe both city governments appear to be actively concerned about preserving specific public greenspaces and ensuring community safety for residents, which resulted in regulating community access to parks at certain times of the day or preventing access entirely for some public areas. Also, I conclude from the responses of Participant Two and Participant Three that park rules concerning the use or access of park spaces are shaped through city regulations.

As I approached the end of each interview, one of the last few questions I asked Participant Two and Participant Three was, *"Is the City trying to take a more supportive rather than leadership role in park programming through partnering with community groups/organizations? If yes, why?"* Participant Two in response clearly stated that the City of Surrey is unable to sustain numerous projects on their own due to the limited availability of resources, staff, and time, so direct support from a community organization or group is essential to sustain projects or programs. Participant Three in response said, *"Yes"* as the commitment of the City of Mississauga is high. Participant Three also stated that:
"Planners work closely with groups and organizations through the master planning process to ensure parks can be programmed to meet their needs. Other City Divisions, such as the Sports

and Recreation, work more closely with these groups on implementation and day-to-day operations."

My understanding of Participant Two's response is that the City of Surrey's main objective concerning park planning and operations teams is to try to be as less directorial in their partnerships with community organizations or groups as possible by having a community group or organization be in charge of managing their prospective park program or project, which is a benefit to the City of Surrey. I view Participant Three's response as specifying that certain departments of the City of Mississauga play leading roles in the decision-making process and facilitation of park programs and projects depending on the intention of the program or project. This structure seems to allow the work to be more evenly distributed among different departments, rather than solely the responsibility of the City of Mississauga's park planning and park operations teams. Participant Three for an example mentioned the role of the City of Mississauga's Sports and Recreation Division in helping to set up a potential sports community program or project as a way to explain how exactly different City officials carry out public programs or projects that are through partnerships with community organizations or groups. So, it is inferred that some departments in the City of Mississauga are more involved in enacting programs on city-owned parkland than others for different programs. I also perceive both Participant Two and Participant Three's responses to the question as verifying that both city governments aim to be secondary players in the management and maintenance of park programs or projects. However, that action is only done once both city governments believe it is at a stage that the community organization or group can handle it primarily on their own. This appears to occur following a guideline outlining the type of city resources and amount of staff that are available to help implement park programs or projects.

For the follow-up question to my previous one I asked, *"Do you think the City would consider more community-led park programming to occur in public greenspaces? If yes, can you provide some examples."* For Participant Two's answer to the question, they discussed a couple projects and programs that are supported by local communities in Surrey, such as the River Fund Park, which was a new project recently adopted by the City of Surrey park planning officials and is partially funded by the Canadian federal government, that offers many amenities to be available at the Park like more walking paths for public access. Participant Two stated that there are other programs and projects occurring in parks that are supported by the City of Surrey, such as the Releaf program and Surrey's Natural Areas Partnership (SNAP). Participant

Two also mentioned that there are not many exclusively community-led public park programs in Surrey due to potential liability concerns, so the City of Surrey offers funding through a grants program to support more exclusively community-led programs. For Participant Three's response to the question, they stated that it is a *"Two-fold"* and most assuredly said:

 "Yes but there needs to be consideration for protecting public open green spaces for passive uses. The City will review each request on a case-by-case basis to determine its suitability for the preferred location."

Participant Three indicated as well that the availability of financial resources to fund a project or program is important as the City wants to make sure to support programs that effectively achieve their desired outcome, and that there are restrictions due to the rules of maintenance concerning a public project or program.

My comprehension of both Participant Two and Participant Three's responses is that there is an emphasis on the necessity of both city governments to support community programs and projects through funding because without the financial resources, many programs and projects would not be probable. However, city governments also face financial limitations themselves. Thus, I believe there needs to be a financial support system for community projects and programs created for municipal governments by higher levels of government, such as provincial governments, to be able to sustain financial support for current projects and encourage the creation of more community-led programs and projects.

<u>Community Organizations Interviews</u>

I asked a total of twelve questions to a representative from Ecosource, Participant One, and a representative from DIVERSEcity, Participant Four, during each interview. I chose eight of the twelve questions to discuss in my paper that I consider most relevant to my major research, which are split into two topics: Planning and Policy for City Parks and Public Programs in City Parks.

I.   Planning and Policy for City Parks:

To start each of my interviews, I asked a couple of introductory questions pertaining to the history and the main goals of each organization. For my third question I asked, *"When and how did the organization's community gardens program in public parks begin?"* In response, Participant One stated that the park community gardens program began in 2006 and is facilitated by Ecosource's local food team. They state that Ecosource adds 40 new "community

cultivators" each year to their community gardens' program. Participant One shared that Ecosource's community gardens program integrates a teaching kitchen where they hold classes for their cooking school, which is a part of their "garden to kitchen movement." Participant One also stated that around four to ten of the garden plots in the community gardens program are dedicated for the production of food that they donate to the local food bank. Participant Four's response specified that DIVERSEcity's community gardens program in Surrey began in 2009 with only one garden and the second garden was created in 2015. Participant Four also shared that the first community garden began with just 35 plots and grew to 82 plots by 2011, and the second community garden that was created in 2015 includes 22 gardens plots available for members.

My comprehension of the responses from both Participant One and Participant Four is that community gardens are popular programs in Mississauga and Surrey as both community gardens programs continue to expand the number of available garden plots since both organization's program membership appears to grow in membership each year.

As a follow-up to question three I asked, *"How did you [the organization] begin your partnership with the City in order to use the land in the park for the community gardens program?"* Participant One's response indicated that they were not certain of the details surrounding the partnership at first. However, they did share more details with me in our follow-up conversation, in which they stated:

"Ecosource has been leading the development of community gardening programs in partnership with the City of Mississauga since 2006." Participant One also affirmed that, *"Ecosource's official planning documents at both the municipal and regional level have acknowledged that incorporating community food projects are key goals as we continue our development,"* which *includes* the City of Mississauga's Living Green Master Plan, Region of Peel's Climate Change Strategy, Peel Public Health Eat and Move Strategy, and the endorsement of Ecosource's vision for a "Garden in Every Ward" of Mississauga was recognized by the City of Mississauga's Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) in 2012.

Participant Four's response to the same question indicated that DIVERSEcity partnered with the City of Surrey in 2009 for their first community garden, but the specific details surrounding the partnership are unknown to them as they joined the organization after 2009. Participant Four also added that the City of Surrey provided the infrastructure to operate the program, such as by building the garden enclosure, and is responsible for ensuring maintenance of the parkland in

which the gardens are located, but the organization maintains principal operation of the gardens.

My interpretation of both Participant One and Participant Four's answers are that the community gardens programs operated by Ecosource and DIVERSEcity are strongly supported by their city governments. I view Participant One's response as an indication that the park community gardens program is strongly supported by both the regional government, Peel Region, and their city government, which has resulted in Ecosource and the City of Mississauga planning to continue expanding their partnership for the program into more communities throughout the city. I observe Participant Four's response to imply that officials from the City of Surrey were directly involved in each stage of the program's development and implementation: planning, design, and construction of the park community gardens. I also perceive Participant Four's response as displaying that the City of Surrey strongly supports DIVERSEcity's program by helping them to maintain the wellbeing of the community gardens over time, such as providing the garden's infrastructure (i.e. enclosure space, water supply, soil), but the principal daily management of the gardens remains with DIVERSEcity.

II.   Public Programs in City Parks:
I took a shift in my interviews at this point, and began asking questions focused specifically on the programming of community gardens in parks. I continued on in my interviews by asking the question, *"How did you [the organization] decide on using these locations in public parks for the community garden program?"* In response, Participant One clearly stated that Ecosource *"plans to have a community garden in every ward."* Participant Four's response to the same question indicated that the park sites were chosen between the organization's manager and some officials from the City of Surrey's park planning, but the location of DIVERSEcity's first community garden, the Hazelnut Meadows Community Garden, was an ideal choice as it is located near the organization's office. In addition, Participant Four mentioned that there were concerns about some of the activities that were taking place in the parks, so the team from the City of Surrey saw the gardens as a way to revamp the space and make it more friendly for community use. Participant Four also stated that the second community garden, which is called the *Growing Roots Community Garden*, serves the community nearby in the Guildford neighbourhood of Surrey, which is primarily where newcomers and refugees to Canada reside in Surrey, and the two key factors of influence in the choice for those park garden sites in Surrey

were the park location and the access to the space, which Participant Four stated, *"is for newcomers and refugees."*

My comprehension of Participant One's response is that the location for each community garden is not determined solely to meet a community need or interest in a garden, though that did encourage the City of Mississauga to develop community gardens on city parkland. The decision surrounding the location of each community garden is a part of a long-term planning goal for the facilitation of their program since the City of Mississauga and Ecosource aim to have a community garden in every ward of Mississauga. I view Participant Four's response as indicating that the choice of those park site locations for DIVERSEcity's community gardens was strategically chosen for the benefit of both DIVERSEcity's garden members and the City of Surrey, which makes everything content for all involved parties. I also interpret both the responses from Participant One and Participant Four to the question as confirming that both the city governments of Surrey and Mississauga are an integral partner in the creation of the community gardens with both community organizations, and it appears to be beneficial for all parties involved in both cities.

About halfway through each interview, I asked, *"What is the criteria or rules in place to determine who can join the community gardens as a participant?"* In Participant One's response, they stated that there are no specific rules, anyone interested in joining the program is welcome, but the only requirement is that they have to be a Mississauga resident. Participant One also mentioned that in the past there were members who were not Mississauga residents that were allowed to previously join the program, but indicated that the membership criteria had changed over time. Participant Four's response to the question indicated that vital rule for to be a garden member is that they must be a resident of Surrey, as there are around 10 vacant garden spots available every year for new members. Participant Four also stated that there are few garden spots open to people who are not newcomers or refugees, and those spots are primarily occupied by garden volunteers who assist the members.

My understanding of the responses from both Participant One and Participant Four is that both Ecosource and DIVERSEcity aim to make their community gardens programs as open and welcoming to all residents of Mississauga and Surrey to participate, as long as the interested individuals are residents of each respective city. I interpret both organizations' membership restrictions to only allow residents of Mississauga and of Surrey into the program, unlike what

was done in the past, such as the case with Ecosource, is done to try to maintain spots for the gardens that are meant to serve primarily members of the communities, especially since there are a limited number of member spots available each year.

For the succeeding question I asked, *"How important is this space [referring to the park community garden] to you or your organization? Why?"* Participant One's response signified that the gardens are gathering spaces for people from May until October each year, and allow for people to gain knowledge, a sense of belonging, and connection to both nature and their community. In Participant Four's response, they stated that the gardens are a learning experience for participants as they learn new skills, and helps to make people feel hopeful and empowered, and encourages the importance of sustainability. Participant Four also added that gardening helps to reduce a carbon footprint by limiting the distance the food people eat has to travel as a reason for the importance of the community garden to them.

The next question I asked was, *"Do you believe that accessing the park improves the wellbeing of your participants [of the community gardens program]?"* In Participant One's response, they clearly stated, *"Yes,"* and mentioned that the gardens are a great space for various groups, such as *"newcomers, LBGT groups, and vulnerable youth,"* and is a welcoming space for all people within various groups. For Participant Four's response, they said, "*Yes,*" as it improves/uplifts the garden member, and is *"a space for everyone, similar to going to the mall."*

My perception of the responses from Participant One and Participant Four to both questions are that they reflect similar implications about why the park community gardens are more than just a space to grow fruits and vegetables. I think the community gardens were created to serve as a safe space for people who may face discrimination, exclusion, and societal vulnerabilities, such as financial adversity or access to various resources. The community gardens allow people to develop new skills, meet new people, network with others, and gain a local and sustainable food source. I think both Participants One and Four's responses indicates that parks can successfully serve as more functional public spaces for different groups of people in communities, which is beyond traditional uses of parks for primarily sports and recreational activities.

As I approached the end of each interview, there were a few last questions I decided to ask, one of them being, *"Have you or do you [the organization] hope to implement other community garden programs that occur in public greenspaces or through partnership with park officials?"*

For Participant One's response, they indicated that there is hope to create more community gardens and park programs that guides Ecosource's work to further take positive action for the environment. Participant One also mentioned Ecosource's hopes to engage in action with their community partners, and that their community gardens provide important ecosystem services to serve and support pollinators, the soil, and overall healthy living. In Participant Four's response, they explained that the organization already has multiple program partnerships with the City of Surrey besides just community gardens, such as DIVERSEcity's community kitchen program, which is located at a public recreation center, senior programs at community and recreation centers, youth programs that encourage youth to play sports in parks, and a number of other programs and services.

My comprehension of Participant One and Participant Four's responses is that both Participants One and Four do believe that Ecosource and DIVERSEcity can further expand their partnerships with the city government and continue to foster more public engagement in public spaces, which is evident through their current program partnerships with both municipal governments. I believe the community gardens of Ecosource and DIVERSEcity provide many benefits to the city's parks through ecosystem services. As a result, both organizations have future opportunities to provide many other community services through various other environmental programs or projects in park spaces that could be just as successful as their community gardens or other community programs occurring in public spaces, such as DIVERSEcity's other community programs in Surrey.

The second last question of the interviews I asked was, *"Do you believe the partnership with the City to implement your program on public spaces rather than with a developer on non-public properties made your program more successful?"* Participant One answered clearly stating, "*Yes,*" as it creates a sense of community and knowledge by being located in public spaces and makes them more available to people. Participant One stated that their partnership with the City of Mississauga allows them to find new ways to utilize park spaces to be more dynamic for everyone. Consequently, Participant One also mentioned that Ecosource does intend to expand their community gardens program and community partnerships to potentially establish more availability of community gardens on various types of properties, such as setting up two new gardens on school properties, gardens with faith organizations, gardens at public libraries, and possibly gardens on privately-owned public spaces (e.g. condominiums or apartments). For Participant Four's response, they stated that the city is open to having numerous partnerships

with the organization, some of which were mentioned in their answer to the proceeding question.

My interpretations of both Participant One and Participant Four's responses are that they signify the importance of partnerships between city governments and local community organizations to help transform the uses of local public spaces, particularly greenspaces, beyond just traditional purposes. I think Participant One's response also reveals that Ecosource hopes to expand their community gardens onto more public and private properties, such as privately-owned public spaces by condominiums, and provincially-owned properties, such as schools. Also, that the City of Mississauga is open to expanding community gardens onto more city-owned public spaces besides parks, such as libraries. I believe this vision for the future of Ecosource's community gardens program with the City of Mississauga hopes to grow the message of the important value naturalized spaces adds to people's everyday lives. I conclude from Participant Four's response to the question that the City of Surrey's is consistently willing to partner with DIVERSEcity for other possible park programs in the future as the success of their community gardens would certainly allow them to expand their programming in public parks for other purposes.

After reviewing the questions and responses of all four participants from my interviews, I noticed that there are numerous key words that were continually mentioned or emphasized throughout the interviews. I made a list of twelve significant words and phrases that were mentioned at least once in an interview by a participant because I believe they are important to note for my research study. The words and phrases were as follows:

1) Collaboration
2) Public Engagement
3) Public Consultation/Facilitation
4) Community
5) A Sense of Belonging/Community
6) Connection
7) Public Desires or Interests
8) Public Needs
9) Public Support
10) Maintenance
11) Space

12) Action

The list of commonly mentioned words from my interviews demonstrates the influence each word or phrase plays in the development of park planning policies, and the creation and facilitation of park programs in both Mississauga and Surrey. I think the list serves as a reflection of key indicators for my research study by supporting my understanding of what planners and community organizations in Mississauga and Surrey consider to develop park policies and park programs. Overall my research observations and interviews provides vital information I need to address the research question for my study.

Discussion

In this section of my paper, I discuss the connotations of the findings from my major research through my observations and interviews. I believe the research findings address the research question of my study, which is "how can planners encourage placemaking in public greenspaces?" To answer the question, I focus on two park community gardens programs as examples of placemaking in public greenspaces, one in Mississauga and one Surrey, the two cities for my case studies. The creation of the park community garden programs in Mississauga and Surrey are supported by planning policies from both city governments that focus on the planning and programming of city parks. Through analyzing the research findings, there are significant concepts that were emphasized that I must further discuss regarding the relationship between environmental knowledge, planning policies, and the community engagement process in the suburban public greenspaces of Mississauga and Surrey.

My Analysis of Planning, Design, & Management of Park Community Gardens

For my major research, the review of the City of Mississauga and the City of Surrey's planning municipal, regional, and provincial planning policies, and gathering data from my virtual site observations and interviews reveals similarities and differences in the process of establishing a park community garden in each city, which I explore in more detail.

A. Park Community Gardens in Mississauga

The City of Mississauga has formulated two local policy plans that outline the development of the community gardens program on city parkland: Living Green Master Plan (2012) and the Parks and Forestry Master Plan (2019). Before a community garden can be built on city parkland, a community group or organization must submit an application to the Managers of the

Parks, Forestry, and Environment Division and the Recreation Division (Mississauga, 2009a, p. 2). In the application, it must include specific details about the area, location, and size of the proposed garden (Mississauga, 2009a, p. 2). The application is then assessed by the Parks and Forestry staff to determine if the request is possible (Mississauga, 2009a, p. 2). As a part of the approval process, the Parks and Forestry staff must consult with various departments within the City of Mississauga, such as the Community Services Planning and Heritage Section, Community Services Development Section, and the Ward Councillor (Mississauga, 2009a, p. 2). In my research interviews, it was mentioned that Ecosource developed their park community gardens program in partnership with staff from the City of Mississauga.

In the concluding stages of the application process, the final approval is received from the Commissioner of Community Services only if the community garden request meets the City's expected criteria for approval, such as the suitability of the site for gardening and in relation to the community, the location of site in relation to the community organization's request, the Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles, and the site must be consistent with the City's overall plans and by-laws for specific land-use designations, such as parks (Mississauga, 2009a, p. 3). Before the proposed garden can be approved, city staff will consult with the Ward Councillor to arrange sending a public notice to community members, special interest groups, and ratepayers who are within 120 meters of the proposed garden site to receive their feedback, which is included in the application assessment (Mississauga, 2009a, p. 3). If the application is approved, the garden structure is built. Financial support for a proposed community garden can be received through the Environmental Grant Program that was established to "strengthen the capacity of local community-based environmental groups" (Mississauga, 2012, p. 32). For instance, based on information from my interviews, Ecosource's park community garden are financially supported by the City of Mississauga, and the operation and maintenance of gardens throughout the year are the responsibility of Ecosource and their garden members.

B. Park Community Gardens in Surrey

The City of Surrey has formulated local policy plans that outline the development for the community gardens program on city parkland: Sustainability Charter 2.0 (2016) and the PRC Strategic Plan (2018). Community gardens are considered a key indicator for "civic engagement and neighbourliness" (Surrey, 2018a, p. 89). For example, in the Sustainability Charter community gardens are used as an indicator of the city's "health and wellness" (Surrey, 2020i).

The process to apply to develop a park community garden begins with a community group or organization of at least 12 individuals submitting an application by September of the calendar year to Surrey's Partners in Parks team (Surrey, 2020d). The community group or organization then must indicate a potential garden site to the Partners in Parks team (Surrey, 2020d). Based on the findings from my interviews, the sites chosen for DIVERSEcity's community gardens were decided by both the organization's manager and city parks officials, who I am guessing may have been a part of Surrey's Partners in Parks team. The garden application is evaluated based upon four criteria: Location, Environment, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Principles (CPTED), and Community Support and Capacity (Surrey, n.d.). If the application is approved, the applicants are notified in late Fall, and discussions with the City take place to finalize the site plan and conduct a neighbourhood survey to confirm community support before the garden is built (Surrey, 2020d). The responsible garden group must sign an operating agreement with the City where the group must agree to the City's Community Garden Guidelines, which states the acceptance of responsibility for the garden's operations (Surrey, 2020d). In the spring, the garden is built by the City parks team before the growing season begins (Surrey, 2020d). In my interviews, it was suggested that a community garden group or organization receives some financial support for their garden from the City of Surrey through their city grant programs; support for community gardens is also gained through membership fees charged by the select garden group or organization (Surrey, 2020d). The community group or organization is responsible for the operation of the gardens and members are expected to follow Surrey's rules for using parks, which was mentioned in my interviews (Surrey, 2020d).

Overall, my analysis of the planning, design, and management processes involved in the development of park community gardens in Mississauga and Surrey signifies that both cities experience a similar application process, and have similar planning approaches and design principles (i.e. CPTED). In Mississauga and Surrey, community gardens are planned following policies and regulations that are suitable for community gardens on city-owned land, such as city parkland. In both cities, once a garden application is approved and the garden is built, there is a shared responsibility regarding the ownership of a park community garden between a community organization or group and the city government. However, the everyday management and operation of the park community garden remains the responsibility of the community organization or group and their garden members to ensure consistent maintenance of the gardens. The findings from my interviews highlight that the city governments in Mississauga and Surrey are crucial financial supporters of the gardens through city grant programs, and the use

of park community gardens must follows city park rules. In both cities, a community organization or group does have some agency concerning decisions for the development of a community garden on city parkland, such as selecting a potential site and the design ideas for the garden, but there is no guarantee of its approval until the application is assessed by each city's government officials. Before a final decision is made about the garden application, the city government and organization or group must consult with nearby community members about the proposed garden to receive their feedback that staff will take into consideration during their assessment of the application.

Despite the similarities of each city's application process for individual park community gardens, there are differences concerning the development of park community gardens in Mississauga and Surrey. In my interview with Ecosource, it is stated that the City of Mississauga aims to have a public community gardens in every ward through their partnership with Ecosource to meet their goal. As a result, more community gardens will need to be built to keep up with their program membership growth each year. Currently, there are nine public community gardens present in Mississauga that were developed through the City of Mississauga's partnership with Ecosource (Ecosource, 2020b). For Surrey, I did not find a public declaration from the City of Surrey stating to want a community garden for every neighbourhood, but rather that the City of Surrey supports any community group or organization who is interested in creating a park community garden in any neighbourhood. Yet, there is currently at least one park community garden located in five of the seven neighbourhoods in Surrey: Guildford, Newton, Cloverdale, North Surrey, and South Surrey (Surrey, 2020d). The City of Mississauga and the City of Surrey share similar priorities regarding their park community gardens, but the programs are structured differently under different city policies and regulations.

The Vital Need for New Discussions Regarding the Planning and Design of Public Greenspaces

The importance of city parks and other public greenspaces to people is more evident now at a time when the world is facing a major health crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The congregating of people to city parks and other public greenspaces is a reflection of the vital need for more greenspaces in communities. Public greenspaces provide a place for people to freely meet and build social connections outside of their homes, and also expectantly creates a stronger appreciation for greenspaces by people. Public programs in city parks reflects the benefits of nature and supports the unique needs of distinctive communities through community

participation, such as park community gardens. In order for parks and other public greenspaces to be more introspective of the various ways people can use those public spaces, there needs to be a transformation of the processes for the planning, design, and management of greenspaces with a greater focus on sustaining nature.

As noted from the work of Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, the emergence of the parks movement arrived at a time when many cities in Europe were facing a health crisis with typhoid, cholera, and typhus epidemics (leBrasseur, 2020). Olmsted and Vaux's work demonstrated the essential need of nature to people living in cities. Olmsted and Vaux's work recommends the creation of green systems in cities because greenspaces serve as a way to address the growing interconnections between space, disease control, and public health at that time (leBrasseur, 2020). Olmsted also notes the significant role parks and other greenspaces play in helping people alleviate the stress associated with living in cities, which is evident by the popularity of Central Park in New York City (leBrasseur, 2020). Larice & Macdonald however emphasize criticism of Olmsted's ideology regarding park planning and design by current practitioners in the field of landscape architecture and advocates for more ecological planning practices that hope to establish a more balanced relationship between nature and the urban built environment (Larice & Macdonald, 2013, p.38). The history of park planning illustrates the important value parks and other greenspaces adds to the lives of people living in cities, and over time how planning can work to ensure the wellbeing of both people and the environment.

Similarly, I believe the findings from my interviews demonstrate the evolution of planning suburban communities to signify the growing importance and appreciation for public greenspaces, such as city parks. The City of Mississauga and the City of Surrey highlight the progression of their park planning policies, such as policies that emphasis community-building in their public parks through their park plans. Jan Gehl and Birgitte Svarre mention the progression for the planning and development of public spaces, which has in the past made cities become "lifeless" due to conventional planning policies (Gehl & Svarre, 2013, p. 159). The existence of lifeless cities and their public spaces prompts rethinking how planning policies can address the limited functional uses of public spaces, such as greenspaces, in order to serve the different desires and interests of diverse groups of people in various communities, while also sustaining nature.

Jan Gehl's suggests that the design of the public realm in cities is a reflection of planning decisions that have overlooked the "human dimension" (Gehl, 2010, p. 3). The absence of the "human dimension" is apparent daily through the challenges people experience living in cities, such as space restrictions, noise pollution, and unsafe living conditions (Gehl, 2010, p.3). Many of those spaces include public greenspaces in cities that do not adequately serve the various groups of people inhabiting cities, probably done unintentionally, who consistently use or desire to use those public spaces. Barnett and Beasley build on Gehl's argument about planning and design of the public realm that needs to include the human dimension. Barnett and Beasley state the obligation of planners and urban designers to also consider the environment in planning and design decisions because both the environment and people require equal attention for improvement in cities and their suburban communities (Barnett & Beasley, 2015, pp. 11-12). We must begin to consider the significance of planning public spaces and communities in cities for people and nature, not just to meet the expectations of global urban planning conformity.

Spirn states that many people who live in cities are unaware to appreciate the nature present in cities, but will happily travel elsewhere outside of the city to experience "real" nature (Spirn, 1984, p. 29). Cronon explains how different perceptions and connections from human beings concerning nature are shaped by how art illustrations of the nature in cities are seen as "ordinary," in comparison to what is seen as "real" nature found in places outside of cities (Cronon, 1996, pp. 108-110). Hough highlight Spirn's argument about some city residents who will travel outside of cities to experience nature due to their financial privilege to be able to travel often to other places to enjoy greenspaces outside of the city, which are treasured for their aesthetic appearance of nature, in comparison to other city residents who do not have access to those same privileges (Hough, 1995, p. 14). The misconception that the nature present in ordinary landscapes, also known as vernacular landscapes, such as city parks, do not have as much value or importance to people or communities, in comparison to aesthetic nature seen in national or provincial parks, influences how public greenspaces are planned in cities. Many city parks are planned for primarily sports and recreational uses (Hough, 1995, pp. 12-14), rather than planning and designing space that is centered primarily on upholding natural features. Planners and designers need to continue rethinking how to plan public greenspaces that can both serve the needs of people, while protecting urban ecology through the design of spaces that people can continually access, while nature is heavily present and thriving without excessive human management of the space. My major research displays novel ecosystems in

city public greenspaces through the creation of community gardens in city parks, which are a prime example of using a greenspace, whether naturally formed or artificially constructed, to encourage nature to thrive and show no need for overly manicured or managed appearance by people.

Montgomery discusses the influence of the human emotion of happiness in the planning and design of cities and the philosophical thoughts that guide the planning and design of cities. Montgomery emphasizes the benefits of planning nature into cities that positively improves the wellbeing of people (Montgomery, 2013, p. 120). Montgomery highlights the concern of greenspaces in cities being exclusive and privately-owned spaces from discussing the history of Vauxhall Gardens in the United Kingdom, a past public greenspace that was turned into a private greenspace that people had to paid to visit (Montgomery, 2013, pp. 23-24). There are issues associated with private greenspaces in cities that would make it more difficult for vulnerable or marginalized groups of people to be able to enjoy natural spaces in close proximity to their homes for leisure and social activities with their family and friends due from the declining access to public greenspaces. Barnett and Beasley emphasize the vital importance of public ownership as a guiding principle in planning and design to keep greenspaces in cities and suburban communities public to ensure people have continual access and connection to their public realm (Barnett & Beasley, 2015, p. 205). That is why I believe the park community gardens in my major research reflect the benefits of having public greenspaces in cities to serve the people living in the surrounding communities, who use those public spaces to foster community-building with both people and with nature.

The design of public greenspaces like much of a city's public realm needs to focus on how to transform the design of the space to greater address the needs and desires that are important to the people that live in the surrounding communities while ensuring the protection of nature. Paul L. Knox discusses the importance of design in modern-day culture, which helps to establish ways to illustrate shared meanings, values, and lifestyles of people, and the spaces they inhabit (Knox, 2011, p. 12). The traditional meanings that are associated with places "mould people's consciousness of the place and of each other," which can influence how people connect to nature, develop relationships, and create their own individual identity (Knox, 2011, p. 12). Placemaking in public greenspaces reflects Knox's argument by it helping to give meaning and an identity to a greenspace through a community's direct involvement. This is reflected through my interviews when a couple of my participants mentioned feelings of welcome and

belonging being formed among garden members in their park community gardens programs in Mississauga and Surrey.

Tuan continues the discussion about the relationship between people and space by suggesting that there are two human perspectives of an environment: the visitor versus the resident (Tuan, 1974, pp. 63-64). The visitor holds an outsider's view where they judge a place by its appearance alone to determine its beauty; whereas the resident's view of a place is influenced indirectly by their local traditions, behaviour, and values (Tuan, 1974, pp. 63-64). The judgment of a place by someone is determined by their position in that particular community, but I personally believe that residents view or what they desire for their community holds more importance than a visitor's outside view or desire of the same community. In the emphasis of the planning and design of public greenspaces in suburban communities, provincial, regional, and municipal planning policies play fundamental roles in influencing how public spaces are planned and designed, which influences how people interact with public spaces. The creation of vibrant and inclusive public spaces is dependent on residents establishing a place identity for their community to reflect a community's views and priorities, and planning practitioners doing their best to support building a stronger place identity for a community that is centered on being vibrant, inclusive and diverse.

Despite most cities being mostly built spaces and having a limitation on available space to create more greenspaces, there is still a great need for new and progressive ideas to transform an already developed public realm, particularly existing public greenspaces. Barnett and Beasley emphasize that there is a need to advance the planning and design of public spaces in a community to have significant meanings that highlights a community's place identity (Barnett & Beasley, 2015, p. 176). Barnett and Beasley highlight the significance of geographic memory from the association to landmarks or public spaces in a city to people (Barnett & Beasley, 2015, pp. 176-77). The place identity is linked to a specific public space for people that is established through the different functions associated with the public space. The place identity of a public space should reflect the people of the communities near those spaces, and the public space should be able to serve the needs and interests of community members. The park community gardens in my research study exhibit how the place identity of the parks where the gardens are located has a new identity and meaning for the members of those gardens that differs from the place identities other people may have who use the same parks for different reasons.

How Can Society Create More Vibrant, Stronger and More Inclusive Public Greenspaces through Planning and Design? The Answer is Placemaking.

In my research interviews with participants, they all frequently mentioned specific words or phrases that I think are significant to the planning and design processes for public greenspaces. My observations of the reoccurrence in the terminology being mentioned throughout my interviews emphasize four fundamental factors that I believe need to be considered for effective placemaking in public greenspaces: public needs and interests, social engagement and support, planning and policy, and the environment (i.e. Figure 17). These factors to consider for effective placemaking can also be applicable to all public spaces, not just public greenspaces.

The first factor, public needs and interests, signifies the main objective of placemaking in public greenspaces, which is to address the needs and interests of people in a community. The creation of the community gardens in city parks acts as a source to supply fresh produce to members of the community, as well as providing a natural space for individuals to connect and engage with diverse groups of people in their community. This was evident through the inclusion of community gardens in the park plans for Mississauga and Surrey. The second factor, social engagement and support, discusses the importance of planners and urban designers as community stakeholders who have significant authority in the final decisions regarding planning and urban design of public greenspaces. Planners and urban designers can use their positions to regularly and actively engage with residents to be able to advocate for fair and good proposals for communities. An effective and consistent community engagement process with residents is essential to placemaking because it ensures residents' voices and opinions are heard and being considered when developing the planning and design proposals for their communities.
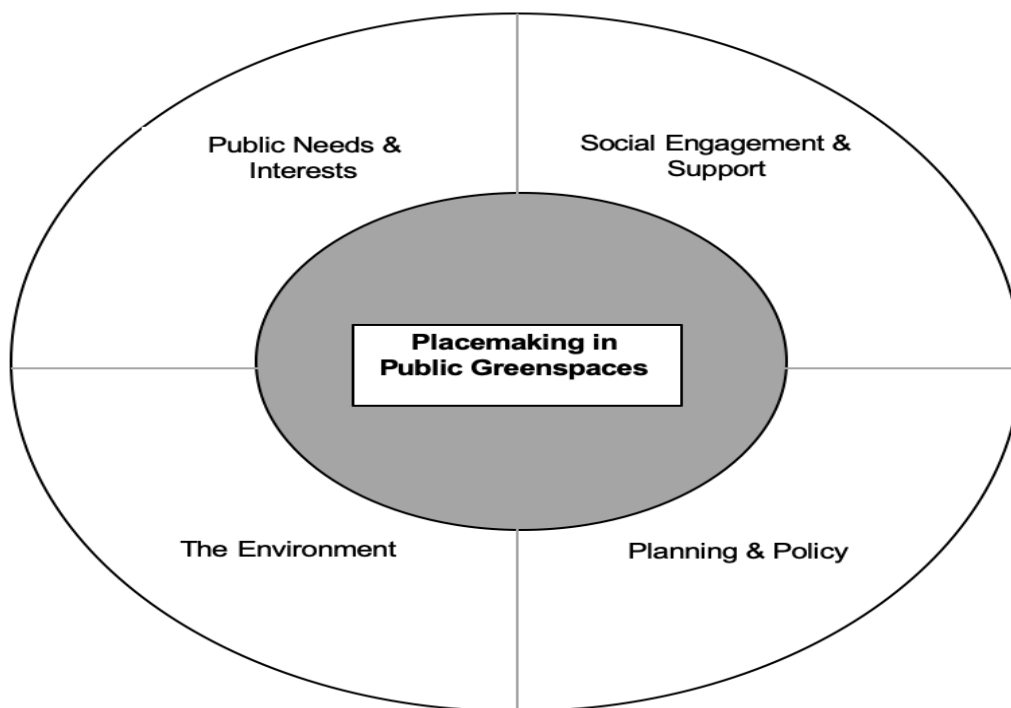
Figure 17: Concept Diagram of The Four Key Factors for Placemaking in Public Greenspaces. Created by: Geena Richards, 2020.

The third factor, planning and policy, refers to the fundamental necessity for placemaking to be included in planning policy frameworks, which is only possible if placemaking is included from the very beginning in the policy plans that shape the planning and design of greenspaces. This factor is integral to the community gardens programs in Mississauga and Surrey as community gardens are included in both cities' park plans. The examination of the park community gardens programs in my major research reflects a structured process in both Mississauga and Surrey that allows people to have agency in the decision-making process of the community gardens. The application process for a park community garden requires community stakeholders to be consulted for public input regarding a proposed garden project within their community, which has resulted in the successful implementation of park community gardens in both cities. The final factor to consider is the environment, which needs to be considered as a principal element for any planning and design decisions because sustaining nature is essential to the wellbeing of both people and the natural environment. I believe the environment is often an afterthought in the decision-making process, so making sure to take into account that nature is present in public spaces, such as ensuring that a greenspace has the presence of grass, waterways, or diverse trees and plants, and wildlife, establishes a strong natural place identity for a

community. Park community gardens do an successful job of encouraging community engagement and environmental awareness at the same time through the practice of planting and growing produce or plants in a public greenspace.

Many cities' policies, such as official plans, that outline their objectives for planning and development create distinctive neighbourhood or local area plans that outline specific planning policies, design principles, and land-use designations for a particular neighbourhood or area. This approach should also be true for the planning and design of each individual public greenspace in a city, such as a public park. This approach allows for planners and urban designers to address the specific needs and interests of residents in a local community concerning public greenspaces. Kazmierczak stresses the importance of social ties between residents and city parks as neighbourhood open spaces that should improve the wellbeing of people, especially the most vulnerable individuals of a community, concerning health and safety (Kazmierczak, 2013, p. 31). In my major research, I investigate the use of city parks for community gardens as an alternative use of parks that was not a typical or traditional use by people in the past, such as parks being more often for people to walk their dogs or to play sports. My study emphasizes the evolution in how public greenspaces like city parks can be public places that nurtures community-building and also promotes environmental consciousness through placemaking.

My Recommendations of Best Practices to Encourage Effective Placemaking in Public Greenspaces

The City of Mississauga and the City of Surrey's community gardens in city parks demonstrate the significance of planning policies that encourage community engagement in public greenspaces. The successful implementation of both cites' park community gardens is a result of city planners taking consideration of the feedback from residents to develop park policies and programs that support the interests of their communities, and improves the wellbeing of people and nature. Park community gardens are a prime example of placemaking as it focuses a development process that involves engaging with community members to implement the a community program. The implementation of park community gardens is just a single idea planners can implement to help retransform the use of public greenspaces. My conversations with planning professionals, representatives from community organizations, reading the work of various scholars, and conducting my own research have improved my understanding about the importance of connection a strong community engagement process in planning to develop great

planning proposals. As a result, I believe there are specific best practices that should be strongly considered by planners to help create stronger vibrant, inclusive, diverse and more naturalized communities in cities, especially suburban communities, by using placemaking as an effective approach. These ten best practices that I recommend planners to consider I believe help encourage placemaking in public greenspaces, and can also be applied to use for all public spaces in the public realm.

List of Best Practices:

1. A Community Space for Everyone Designed by Them: Before a public greenspace, such a park, is designed, planners and urban designers should consult with residents from the surrounding communities. Consultation with residents is necessary to receive community members' input and ideas about how the greenspace's layout and appearance, as well as the space's possible functional uses. Knox discusses how places are socially constructed, and how different personal experiences of various distinct places and their physical settings by people are important components of consumer culture (Knox, 2011, p. 173). A park, for example, is a space that is "consumed" by people as it is used by various groups of people all for various different reasons. The way a space is designed reflects the perceptions of various individuals, which can help guarantee support for a place through establishing community roots (Knox, 2011, p. 174).

The physical design of public spaces displays the numerous and complex layers of possible meanings associated with a place that can influence people's emotional connection to their culture, natural environment, society, and the local economy (Knox, 2011, p. 175). I believe Knox is emphasizing the important roles planners and urban designers have in establishing a "sense of place" for public spaces, which is influenced by people's personal experiences in those communal spaces. As mentioned in my interviews with community organizations, the enactment of the community gardens program in city parks has helped to nurture feelings of welcome and belonging among garden members in both Mississauga and Surrey. The act of designing greenspaces with input from community members reflects an inclusive contemporary method of human-centered design that focuses on sustaining nature while also addressing human needs. The method of human-centered design is focused on involving various community stakeholders in the design process for public spaces. Placemaking that is integrated in the planning and design process allows for planners and urban designers to directly receive feedback and ideas for potential planning agendas and design proposals (Project for Public

Spaces, 2014). This method promotes an efficient way to involve the community directly in planning decisions before any proposals or plans are finalized.

2. More Diverse and Inclusive Methods for Public Outreach: Public consultation for the development of planning policies and their accompanying public programs or projects should use various engagement techniques and approaches to ensure inclusivity, diversity and accessibility is met for all community members to provide feedback (Peinhardt & Storring, 2019). As discussed in my interviews, both the City of Mississauga and the City of Surrey did actively engage with community stakeholders, such as residents, during the process of developing the parks plan for each city government through different public outreach tactics. From my research interviews and my review of each city's engagement process for their parks plans, the use of outreach methods I view as being traditional were highlighted, such as townhall meetings, surveys, open houses, or workshops. Though traditional outreach methods are effective and do obtain substantial community feedback, there are many other alternative outreach methods that could also be used to engage with more of the public. There is always a chance that public feedback may not be received from individuals in the community who experience different barriers that can prevent them from contributing in public outreach for public consultations, such as a potential language barrier, a potential activity limitation, a complex work schedule, and limited or completely no access to a computer or a vehicle. Those barriers could prevent an individual from participating in both in-person or virtual public consultations concerning a proposed community plan, program or project. As a consequence, there is always a chance that the quantity and quality of any feedback received from the public about a particular plan or program is not a fair reflection of most community members, just a selective group of people.

As time goes on and society continually improves in conducting public consultations, public outreach methods need to continually evolve to be even more inclusive and accessible to as many people as possible. Alternative outreach methods to conduct public consultations should begin to take place in both public and private spaces, for example pop-up information booths at community centers and possibly in shopping centers or the common spaces at private residential buildings. Alternative public outreach methods also includes ensuring access to surveys for feedback is available online, by phone, or through mail to try to accommodate the various needs of different people. Planners could attempt to gather feedback by possibly conducting door-to-door visits to inform residents, or providing a take home "meeting in a box"

kits for residents to return at a more suitable time for them (Peinhardt & Storring, 2019), such as "design your park" kits. Planners could also seek out assistance from community organizations to co-host outreach events to expand their scope and access to people in various communities to gain feedback for prospective proposals. When planners are able to be more flexible in their outreach methods in order to receive more input from the public by expanding their scope of focus to people even more, it allows for more people to be included in the decision-making process (Peinhardt & Storring, 2019). Greater participation from the public in consultations concerning development proposals and programs results in residents feeling less disconnected from their community by giving more opportunities for people to have an equal voice, which creates more inclusive, diverse, and vibrant communities.

3. Importance of Cultural Competency in Placemaking: To ensure equity among all community stakeholders, the decision-making process should reflect consciously-thought decisions concerning a community. Policymakers and planners should consider the influence of many factors, such as age, income, and class, when considering any potential needs and interests discussed by various cultural groups, language and communication, and the potentially existing power dynamics (Peinhardt & Storring, 2019). According to the American Institute of Certified Planners' (AICP's) Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, it is a planner's obligation to incite "social justice by working to expand choice and opportunity for all persons, recognizing a special responsibility for the needs of the disadvantaged and to promote racial and economic integration" (Agyeman & Erickson, 2012, p. 1). Social justice needs to be a universal guiding principle for planners globally to always remember as a fundamental reason for being a professional planner.

As a planner, encouraging cultural competency ensures planning decisions have taken a critical consideration of all factors by being able to know how to effectively interact and communicate with all community stakeholders. Cultural competency is important to help understand the factors considered to set benchmarks that can help determine the effectiveness of public recommendations from the community to ensure greater inclusivity within communities (Peinhardt & Storring, 2019). As emphasized in my interviews, the park community gardens are a space that is open and welcome to various and diverse groups of people in Surrey and Mississauga. The community gardens are an important and inclusive communal space for various people, not just a select number of individuals. The more present cultural competency is considered in the decision-making process regarding the planning and design of greenspaces

and other public spaces, the greater the likelihood of a diverse and inclusive representation of people from a community.

4. Think Outside The Box: Planners, urban designers, and community facilitators working in the public realm need to create more creative and non-traditional ways to engage and encourage community members to use public greenspaces. The process of planning has been shaped by trends and practices influenced by the historical patterns of human settlements, which varies among different countries within their national and local jurisdictions. In Kevin Lynch's 1984 book, *A Theory of Good City Form*, he discusses that the creation of cities differs among various societies and the decide-making power tends to be decentralized, but is considered democratic by electing representatives in different levels of governments (Lynch, 1984, pp.41-42). In the planning process, the policymaker attempts to first understand the problem, then act to address it, make changes that will persist and prosper over a long period of time (Lynch, 1984, pp.42-43). The planning and design of public spaces is a reflection of Lynch's point about public spaces being a reflection of what policymakers perceive are the right decisions based upon what is their specific perceptions or planning viewpoints. Canada's planning jurisdiction powers majorly lies with the provincial, regional, and municipal levels of governments, in which the province is the principal authoritative body for planning policy development.

As was examined in my major research, there are provincial and regional policies that each municipality must follow concerning how to effectively plan and design public spaces in communities. The planning and design of the public realm in suburban communities reflects the human consciousness of what certain policymakers believe is suitable planning and design practices. Planners need to acknowledge that there is the potential influence of the human bias concerning the development of planning policies for public spaces. Effective planning of public spaces fulfills providing various places for individuals to escape for different reasons, such as for calm reflection or healing, for physical activity, or for social uses, which are all necessary functions to different groups of people and to meet different needs (Barnett & Beasley, 2015, p. 190). For instance, Toronto's Dufferin Grove Park is a notable example of a public greenspace that successfully offers various uses for a park space that is beyond just recreational activities, such as the inclusion of a community rudimentary kitchen and a stage for local talent to play music (Evergreen, 2001, p. 3). Policymakers and planners need to encourage the retransformation of existing public greenspaces by rethinking the types of planning restrictions

that may be in place that influences how people use those public spaces like city parks for more non-common uses, such as for local markets, to hold community events organized by residents, or community projects. The activation of public greenspaces transforms the functions of typical public spaces in a community to be no longer one-dimensional and solely serve a few particular needs or interests for people.

5. Stop, Look, and Listen: Before beginning the process to plan and design a public greenspace and determine the functional uses for public space, planners and urban designers should first take a moment try to have understand the space by forming their own connection to the space. As I understood from my interviews, the park community gardens are an effect from a growing interest among community members who need access to space to garden, in which the city government did listen to their request. However, the public realm of many cities often exhibits an out-of-date and typical planning blueprint that is evident in other cities, that has resulted in the decline of a specific community's place identity. The planning and design of public greenspaces needs to greater reflect the potential human and environmental place identity of a community. Planners and urban designers need to take the time to visit a potential future public space prior to developing proposals to do their homework about a space (Fleming, 2007, p. 288), by personally observing the space and speaking with residents about how the space can potentially contribute to improving a community's interests and needs. Once planners and urban designers develop a deeper understanding of a space, they are able to make more informed proposals that compliment a specific place's identity, as well as reflects the needs and interests of community members. Then planners are able to strongly advocate for prospective recommendations in proposals that may not typically be understood or supported, due to potentially limiting policy guidelines, which could possibly be amended through a bylaw to permit new ways for community members to use public spaces, such as greenspaces.

6. Expressive Community Representation is Significant: Public greenspaces should exhibit the natural features of the local landscape and the diverse cultural characteristics of the local communities. Every public greenspace should have a space dedicated to the community or represents the community. According to Fleming, the planning and design of public greenspaces like many other public spaces can be an effective representation of placemaking through four aspects: orientation, connection, direction, and animation (Fleming, 2007, p. 19). Orientation refers to the numerous layers of meanings a place can represent through the display of interactions with community (Fleming, 2007, p. 19). Connection represents the holistic and

integrated design of a place (Fleming, 2007, p. 19). Direction provides the "visual clarity" for people to easily navigate the space through elements of placemaking (Fleming, 2007, p. 19). Animation refers to examining the various complex uses and activities that can happen in and around a space (Fleming, 2007, p. 19).

The community gardens in public parks that are discussed in my research study are a prime example of a dedicated space in a public greenspace that symbolizes the diverse group of participants from the community by encompassing Fleming's four aspects. Though Fleming focuses on the role of art as an act of placemaking in public spaces, he highlights one important thing: the focus of placemaking is to help greater connect people to places (Fleming, 2007, p. 288). It is important to understand that placemaking can be displayed through various types of activities or events, not just art, as long as the focus remains on the interests of the people of a community, while also drawing attention to the importance of nature too. Examples of non-traditional placemaking in public greenspaces can include community gardening, which has demonstrated to be a positive placemaking strategy in city parks, pop-up local farmers' market, green festivals and skill workshops, and community food events. These examples of placemaking demonstrate the importance of public greenspaces to building a stronger community and creating a place identity for a public space that symbolizes a vibrant, inclusive, and diverse community of people.

7. Every Placemaking Vision Needs A Plan: Placemaking is a tool for planners, urban designers, and community organizers to help people take greater ownership of public spaces (Peinhardt & Storring, 2019), for example by reclaiming and reintroducing absent nature into the local environment, and building new community memories declining from the effects of urban development. There is an important need to include more placemaking objectives in a policy plan. Placemaking can assist in the planning and design of public spaces to help address various concerns resulting from ineffective public engagement and collaboration among community stakeholders during the decision-making process (Fleming, 2007, p. 289). A clear and detailed plan is an essential element for successful placemaking to build a strong base support through an organized approach (Fleming, 2007, p. 291). A plan, such as a master plan or strategic plan, provides the ability to clearly execute and effectively integrate various placemaking elements at numerous levels of authority (Fleming, 2007, p. 292). The city departments involved in developing the plans helps ensure that short-term and long-term goals outlined in the plan are met in a timely and coordinated manner (Fleming, 2007, p. 292). The

important role plans play to implement programs was evident in my major research study where Mississauga and Surrey outline the importance of community gardens as a key objective in each respective city government's parks master or strategic plan. This is following discussion and coordination with various community stakeholders and city departments prior to each plan's development. A plan, similar to a local area or neighbourhood plan, that is specifically created for a specific public greenspace, such as a city park. The prospective plan can outline key objectives for the space, and states clear deliverables of specific needs and interests for the community that will be the focus for planners, urban designers, and other community stakeholders to address over time.

8. Leadership and Teamwork Are Essential to Placemaking: Through speaking with numerous planning professionals, urban designers, and community organizers, a key takeaway to me is the importance of having an individual or group of people leading to achieve addressing the vital needs and interests for a community. The success of numerous community-led projects or programs begins with active and engaged community stakeholders, such as residents, businesses, local governments, and community organizations or groups participating and collaborating with each other in decision-making for a proposed plan, program or project (Peinhardt & Storring, 2019). For instance, in my research study, the community gardens in both cities are a prime example of the important role planners and community organizers have in fostering community engagement and collaboration. Planners and urban designers are leaders in their profession, it is their work and professional opinions that shapes decisions surrounding the development of planning policies and design guidelines that guides development decisions in communities. Planners have a responsibility to always seek feedback from the public to ensure any recommendations are made in the best interests of all communities, not just a select group of people. Community organizers also are leaders in their profession by doing work that is centered on improving the lives of people in communities in some capacity. Community organizers start or support programs and projects that require involvement from the community, so they help to gather new members and volunteers to participate in the community projects and programs, which ultimately determines the success of each project and program.

Leadership and teamwork are essential to successful placemaking, such as a community gardens program, due to the role leaders play in encouraging greater community involvement throughout the decision-making process. Effective leadership helps to ensure accountability regarding the development and implementation of planning policies and programs, which begins

with effective public outreach (Hou et al, 2009, pp. 39-40). For example, Toronto's Dufferin Grove Park is a popular and celebrated public greenspace through the implementation of popular park programs and projects that are intended to address the needs and interests of various people through different public uses (Evergreen, 2001, p. 3). In Dufferin Grove Park, there is a community garden, a community rudimentary kitchen, a stage for performances, which were each built in the park to support the desires of community members who use the park space, following the leadership of the Friends of the Dufferin Grove Park group, whose guidance and participation in the decision-making process made it possible (Evergreen, 2001, p. 3). All community stakeholders in the decision-making process are considered essential team players because every successful team requires strong equal participation from everyone and access to resources to successfully expand community-building and community empowerment.

9. The Creation of A Public Realm that Supports People and The Environment:
Montgomery discusses that dense places, such as cities, need to meet the psychological needs of people better than sprawl; the planning and design of places should delight, nurture, and nourish as a reward for choosing to live there (Montgomery, 2013, p. 106). In previous land-use planning decisions, consideration to address both the complex needs of people in various communities and support the wellbeing of the environment were seen as afterthoughts of the planning and design processes through planning policies. Spirn states cities that neglect to consider the interconnection between air, land, water, and human life, deal with a higher risk of unforeseen consequences to the physical design of cities as a result of poor planning decisions (Spirn, 1984, p. 235). Over time as the intensity of environmental issues became more mainstream and received greater attention, the need to contemplate the importance of environmental protection and awareness, such as climate change, in the planning process has resulted in planning policies becoming more influential.

The absence of deliberation about the importance of space functionality for residents and the lack of consideration to protect the environment leads to potential exploitation, mismanagement, and an inadequate maintenance of ecological systems in cities, while still not adequately fulfilling human needs (Barnett & Beasley, 2015, p. 233). Montgomery's states that we, as people, need "the healing touch of nature" (Montgomery, 2013, p. 106), as nature provides the dual benefit of being able to connect with others, but also a place to retreat. As highlighted through my research study, the park community gardens are both a benefit to people and the local environment by helping to build a community among garden members, while also

encouraging the further naturalization of parks. Policymakers, planners, and urban designers need to begin to view both the value of human needs and the environment as equally important because the presence of nature in the public realm positively benefits human wellbeing by improving human physical and mental health, and growing the overall wellbeing of people.

10. The Greener the Space, the Better: Greater naturalization of public spaces and the preservation of public greenspaces should be a top priority of all governing bodies with any decision-making power within planning. Spirn encourages the transition of no longer having monotonous and uniform landscapes existing as they were key the loss of local biodiversity from continual intensive urban development to meet the growing demands of the human population (Spirn, 1984, p. 195). I believe the trend of unsatisfactory city greenspaces is apparent in Canada where people travel to greenspaces on outside of highly-populated cities where the more archetypical and aesthetic natural landscapes are found, such as outside the border of Toronto and the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area of Ontario. There needs to be a more environmentally-conscious approach to planning and the presence of more effective landscape management practices that helps preserve the environment in many ways by re-establishing biodiversity in cities on local publicly-owned lands, such as city parks (Barnett & Beasley, 2015, p. 202). Park community gardens are a popular strategy to engage people with nature in suburban parks beyond the typical manicured appearance of many suburban city parks. Public spaces, not just public greenspaces, in cities can be designed to be more ecologically compatible, such as biofiltering landscape surfaces, native tree and shrub planting, re-surfacing buried watercourses, and natural habitat corridors to help re-create previous biodiversity benefits for both people and the environment (Barnett & Beasley, 2015, p. 202).

I strongly believe in Montgomery's statement that "Nature is not merely good for us. It brings out the good *in* us" (Montgomery, 2013, p. 111). An approach to planning that includes an ecological perspective about planning policies is already being implemented by some current governing authorities, such as conservation planning authorities. For instance, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) crafted a planning report called the *Living Cities Policies* in 2014. *The Living Cities Policies* is a policy framework that outlines key strategies to tackle the planning and development of communities located in the watersheds of Toronto and Region's Conservation's jurisdictions (TRCA, 2014, pp.5- 6). Significant changes to the planning and design processes of the public realm can lead to the creation of an extensive open greenspace network, which includes parks but also streets, plazas, conservation areas, and non-developed

sites (Barnett & Beasley, 2015, p. 202). I think a lot people do not realize what joy the simple benefit of nature, such as wind vibrant green leaves, the wind blowing through some trees, flowing water, or the smell of grass, for an individual's wellbeing until they do not have access to a place like a park with no trees or grass. I believe planners, designers, and policymakers, can help ensure everyone gets to experience the joy of nature by collaborating together to preserve it, and bring more nature back to cities and their suburban communities.

Conclusion

For my major research study, I examine how community gardens are a popular example of placemaking in public greenspaces. Through my research study, I was able to explore the role placemaking in public greenspaces plays in fostering stronger and more vibrant suburban communities using nature as the focus. Placemaking is a collaborative process that rethinks the planning, design and management, of public spaces (Project for Public Spaces, 2007). I observe in my study the responsibilities of various stakeholders, policies and procedures that were involved in creating community gardens located on city parkland. Much more still needs to be done by planners to further encourage placemaking in public greenspaces through more creative approaches to community engagement, especially to help improve the everyday connections between people with nature.

I introduce the concept of placemaking in the beginning of my paper, and how community gardens are an example of placemaking. Placemaking is meant to help assist the practices of planning and urban design by bridging place and space together through conveying the importance of comfort and function for people (Healey, 1998, p. 4). Community gardens in parks help to bond people to nature by connecting them together in a public open space. Community gardens create a linkage between various human and ecological processes, such as water, soil, reducing waste, active living, reducing the urban-heat island effect from its greenery, and creating habitats for wildlife (Hou et al, 2009, p. 23). Creating community gardens through the contribution and engagement of community members reflects the community's support for an environmental vision of their community (Hou et al, 2009, p. 22). The contribution and engagement of the community through programs for community gardens in parks supports building a place identity of a community that greater emphasizes its natural characteristics. The park community gardens in Mississauga and Surrey that are mentioned in my major research study have become a part of each community's place identity because they have helped to bring community members and nature closer together.

The conceptual framework of my paper provides the foundational approaches that ground my major research. The three planning approaches that guides my research study are environmental planning, radical planning, and resource mobilization theory. Environmental planning is the most essential planning approach to my planning perspective as it focuses on why the environment should be greater considered in all planning and design decisions, especially for public spaces. The radical planning approach highlights non-traditional planning practices that focus on the people in the planning process play to create more diverse, welcoming, and fair communities. The approach of Resource mobilization theory emphasizes the impact of social action, such as community participation, has influencing the decision-making process for the interests of local communities. The three planning approaches work in collaboration together to provide the foundational knowledge of my planning perspective, which helps me consider how communities can be planned and designed to be more environmentally conscious and a vibrant place for people to live.

My conceptual framework using the three planning approaches have shaped my comprehension of three significant themes that are present my review of literature: the connection between community and nature, the typology of nature in a place, and people in the public realm. The connection between community and nature highlights how the human relationship with nature in our daily lives is influenced by the planning of greenspaces in suburban communities. The typology of nature in a place demonstrates the significant influence human emotions and perceptions have to influence the planning suburban greenspaces. People may unconsciously view nature through a certain perspective, which leads to the potential risk of disregard for nature. The relationship between people and the public realm highlights the significant role urban design plays in transforming how people use greenspaces. Traditional planning and design practices have often considered the importance of nature as an afterthought. However, contemporary planning practices are beginning to recognize the importance of preserving nature in cities because good planning can serve the needs of people, while also preserving nature.

My major research study uses qualitative research methods to explore two cities as case studies: Mississauga, Ontario and Surrey, British Columbia. I look at the park community gardens present in select public parks in each city to observe the planning, design, and management of each city's public greenspaces. I gather information for my major research

through performing virtual site observations by using google maps, municipal mapping and GIS systems, and other public webpages. I also conducted interviews with participants who are knowledgeable of city planning in Mississauga and Surrey, and participants from community organizations who manage and operate park community gardens in Mississauga and Surrey. In my interviews, I was able to ask questions about the planning process and community engagement methods involved in the development of policies concerning park planning and public park programs. The findings from the interviews have provided essential information to support my view that park community gardens are an effective example of placemaking in suburban public greenspaces. Despite the promising research findings from my study that supports my assessment, there is still more that can be done to further encourage placemaking in public greenspaces and other public spaces through retransforming the planning and design processes.

In the discussion section of my paper, there are ten best practices that I believe planners should consider in their jobs to help encourage placemaking in public spaces, as well as the work of urban designers and community organizers. The ten best placemaking practices are intended to help advance the interests and needs of people, while still giving attention to preserving nature. Effective placemaking in public greenspaces must also consider the importance of supporting nature at all three processes – the planning, design, and management of public greenspaces. In my major research, placemaking exhibits the benefit of consistent and effective policies. Placemaking emboldens the impact of stronger community engagement in public greenspaces to create a stronger community connection between residents and nature. A stronger connection between residents and nature establishes a vibrant place identity for a community that makes people more aware and care about having a happier and healthier community that appreciates the natural surroundings in their communities.

Throughout my paper, I discuss the essential roles planners, community organizers, community residents, and many community stakeholders play in building stronger vibrant and natural suburban communities. Planners and community organizers should act as the mediators for all community stakeholders to try their best to navigate the decision-making process that considers everyone's interests and tries to continually evolve their approach in response. My understanding of the vital roles planners and community organizers play as placemakers is evident in my support for recommendations of best practices. In my research study, Mississauga and Surrey have taken significant steps to address the needs of each city's

constituents in the planning process through detailed policy plans that outline many of their planning objectives regarding how to build stronger engagement with people in city parks through planning, and the public programs available in city parks. In the end, there is always more that still can be done by all community stakeholders, particularly planners, in the future to help plan, design, and build vibrant greenspaces that are a part of who we are as people and our place within the natural world.

Bibliography

Agyeman, J., & Erickson, J. S. (2012). Culture, Recognition, and the Negotiation of Difference: Some Thoughts on Cultural Competency in Planning Education. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, *32*(3), 358–366. https://doi.org/10.1177/0739456X12441213

Albrechts, L. (2015). Breaking Out of the Box: Ingredients for a More Radical Planning. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *184*, 104–110. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.05.063

Barnett, J., & Beasley, L. (2015). *Ecodesign for Cities and Suburbs*. Island Press.

Beard, V. A. (2003). Learning Radical Planning: The Power of Collective Action. *Planning Theory*, *2*(1), 13–35. https://doi.org/10.1177/1473095203002001004

Beatley, T. (1995). Planning and Sustainability: The Elements of a New (Improved?) Paradigm. *Journal of Planning Literature*, *9*(4), 383–395. https://doi.org/10.1177/088541229500900405

British Columbia, G. of. (2016, January 1). *Local Government Act* [Public Service]. Courthouse Libraries B.C. https://www.courthouselibrary.ca/how-we-can-help/legislation-case-law/guides/tricky-legislation/local-government-act

British Columbia, G. of. (2020 June 17). *Local Government Act [RSBC 2015] Chapter 1*. Queen's Printer for British Columbia. http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/r15001_00

Bryman, A., Bell, E. A., & Teevan, J. J. (2012). *Social Research Methods* (Third Canadian Edition). OUP Canada.

Buechler, S. M. (1993). Beyond Resource Mobilization? Emerging Trends in Social Movement Theory. *The Sociological Quarterly*, *34*(2), 217–235. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1533-8525.1993.tb00388.x

Canada, G. of. (2020, April 21). *Census Profile, 2016 Census Charts (using rates): Surrey, City [Census subdivision], British Columbia and Greater Vancouver, Regional district [Census division], British Columbia—Income* [Government]. Statistics Canada.

https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page_figures.cfm?LANG=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=5915004&Geo2=CD&Code2=5915&SearchText=surrey&TABID=1&type=0&B1=Income&sx=TOTAL

Cronon, W. (Ed.). (1996). *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*. Norton.

Devine-Wright, P. (2009). Rethinking NIMBYism: The role of place attachment and place identity in explaining place-protective action. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, *19*(6), 426–441. https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.1004

DIVERSEcity. (2020a). *DIVERSEcity- Our Story* [Non-profit Organization]. DIVERSEcity: Community Resources Society. https://www.dcrs.ca/about-us/our-story/

DIVERSEcity. (2020b). *Welcome to DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society: Helping newcomers build a life in Canada* [Non-profit Organization]. DIVERSEcity: Community Resources Society. https://www.dcrs.ca/languages/english/

Ecosource. (2013). *How Do our Gardens Help Us to Grow?* (p. 22) [Community Program Report]. Ecosource. https://ecosource.ca/wp-content/uploads/Health-Impacts-of-Gardens-1.pdf

Ecosource. (2020a). *Ecosource: Churchill Meadows Garden* [Charitable Organization]. Ecosource: Growing a Green Community. https://ecosource.ca/churchill-meadows-garden/

Ecosource. (2020b). *Ecosource: Community Gardens* [Charitable Organization]. Ecosource: Growing a Green Community. https://ecosource.ca/community-gardens/

Ecosource. (2020c). *Ecosource: Our Story—About Us* [Charitable Organization]. Ecosource: Growing a Green Community. https://ecosource.ca/

Ecosource. (2020d). *Ecosource: Hillside Community Garden* [Charitable Organization]. Ecosource: Growing a Green Community. https://ecosource.ca/hillside-garden/

Evergreen. (2001). *Community Gardens: Themes & Ideas* (Common Grounds, p. 8) [Fact Sheet #6]. Evergreen. https://www.evergreen.ca/downloads/pdfs/CG6-Community-Gardening-Ideas.pdf

Fleming, R. L. (2007). *The art of placemaking: Interpreting community through public art and urban design*. Merrell.

Foran, P., & Harrington, P. (2018). *Ontario Planning Legislation & Commentary* (2019 Edition). LexisNexis.

Gehl, J. (2010). *Cities for People*. Island Press.

Gehl, J., & Svarre, B. (2013). *How to Study Public Life*. Island Press.

Gordon, D. L. A., & Janzen, M. (2013). SUBURBAN NATION? ESTIMATING THE SIZE OF CANADA'S SUBURBAN POPULATION. *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*, *30*(3), 197–220.

Harnik, P. (2010). *Urban Green: Innovative Parks for Resurgent Cities*. Island Press.

Healey, P. (1998). Collaborative Planning in A Stakeholder Society. *Town Planning Review*, *69*(1), 1–21. https://doi.org/10.3828/tpr.69.1.h651u2327m86326p

Higgs, E. (2017). Novel and designed ecosystems. *Restoration Ecology*, *25*(1), 8–13. https://doi.org/10.1111/rec.12410

Hobbs, R. J., Higgs, E., & Harris, J. A. (2009). Novel Ecosystems: Implications for Conservation and Restoration. *Trends in Ecology & Evolution*, *24*(11), 599–605. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tree.2009.05.012

Hou, J., Johnson, J., & Lawson, L. J. (2009). *Greening Cities, Growing Communities: Learning from Seattle's Urban Community Gardens*. Landscape Architecture Foundation in association with University of Washington Press, Seattle & London.

Hough, M. (1990). *Out of Place: Restoring Identity to The Regional Landscape*. Yale University Press.

Hough, M. (1995). *Cities and Natural Process*. Routledge.

Jennings, V., & Bamkole, O. (2019). The Relationship between Social Cohesion and Urban Green Space: An Avenue for Health Promotion. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *16*(3), 452 (1-14). https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16030452

Kaźmierczak, A. (2013). The Contribution of Local Parks to Neighbourhood Social Ties. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, *109*(1), 31–44. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landurbplan.2012.05.007

Knox, P. L. (2011). *Cities and Design*. Routledge.

Larice, M., & Macdonald, E. (Eds.). (2013). *The Urban Design Reader* (2nd ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203094235

leBrasseur, R. (2020, May 18). *Parks Matter More Than Ever During A Time of Sickness – Something Frederick Law Olmsted understood in the 19th century*. The Conversation. https://theconversation.com/parks-matter-more-than-ever-during-a-time-of-sickness-something-frederick-law-olmsted-understood-in-the-19th-century-137882

Lynch, K. (1984). *Good City Form*. MIT Press.

Mathenge, C. W. (2010). Vernacular Landscapes as Expressions of Environmental Ideas. In B. Warf (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Geography*. SAGE Publications, Inc. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412939591.n1207

Melvin, G. (2017, July 17). A New Community Garden! [News Blog]. *Churchill Meadows Residents' Association*. http://mymeadows.ca/a-new-community-garden/

Metro Vancouver. (2020 Feb 28). *Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No.1136, 2010: Metro Vancouver 2040 Shaping Our Future*. Metro Vancouver. http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/regional-planning/PlanningPublications/RGSAdoptedbyGVRDBoard.pdf

Mississauga, C. of. (2009a). *Community Gardens Site Selection* (Corporate Policy and Procedure No. 05-01–09; pp. 1–4). City of Mississauga. http://www.mississauga.ca/file/COM/policy_05-01-09.pdf

Mississauga, C. of. (2009b). *Strategic Plan: Our Future Mississauga*. City of Mississauga. http://www.mississauga.ca/file/COM/StrategicPlan_Web_04_22_2009.pdf

Mississauga, C. of. (2012). *Living Green Master Plan*. City of Mississauga. http://www5.mississauga.ca/marketing/websites/livinggreen/downloads/LGMP2012_Final.pdf

Mississauga, C. of. (2015 Aug 15). *Mississauga Official Plan*. City of Mississauga. http://www.mississauga.ca/portal/residents/mississaugaofficialplan

Mississauga, C. of. (2019). *2019 Parks and Forestry Master Plan: Future Directions*. City of Mississauga. http://www7.mississauga.ca/Departments/Rec/future-directions/pdf/2019-plans/2019%20ParksForestry%20Master%20Plan_FINAL.pdf

Mississauga, C. of. (2020a). *Census Hub: 2016 Census Results* [Government Database]. Census Hub. https://www.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=3db8a6ef7c414e63a93bdcf2c5324d9b

Mississauga, C. of. (2020b). *City of Mississauga: Parks* [Government]. EParks. http://www.eparks.ca

Mississauga, C. of. (2017). *Population, Demographics, & Housing*. City of Mississauga. http://www7.mississauga.ca/documents/business/2017/Population_Demographics_Housing.pdf

Montgomery, C. (2013). *Happy City: Transforming Our Lives through Urban Design*. https://www.overdrive.com/search?q=64790A35-4832-4525-81F2-1E800D906E43

Morrow, A. (2012, August 18). How Toronto's Suburbs are Trying to Switch from Subdivisions to Density. *The Globe and Mail*. https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/toronto/how-torontos-suburbs-are-trying-to-switch-from-subdivisions-to-density/article4487262/

Neal, Z. (2010). Public Realm. In R. Hutchison (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Urban Studies* (pp. 624–627). SAGE Publications, Inc. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412971973.n223

NewToB.C. (2018). *Immigrant Demographics: Surrey, B.C, 2018* (p. 20) [Census Information Report]. NewToBc. https://newtobc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Surrey-Immigrant-Demographic-Profile-2018.pdf

Ontario, G. of. (2020 April 17). *Provincial Policy Statement, 2020*. Queen's Printer for Ontario. https://www.ontario.ca/page/provincial-policy-statement-2020

Peel, R. of. (2018). *Region of Peel Official Plan*. Region of Peel. https://www.peelregion.ca/planning/officialplan/pdfs/ropdec18/ROPConsolidationDec2018_TextSchedules_Final_TEXT.pdf

Peel, R. of. (2019). *Peel 2041: Regional Official Plan Review: Urban Agriculture—Peel 2041 Discussion Paper* (pp. 1–31) [Government]. Region of Peel. https://www.peelregion.ca/officialplan/review/pdf/urban-agriculture-discussion-paper.pdf

Peel, R. of. (2020). *About the Peel Region Official Plan* [Government]. Region of Peel. https://www.peelregion.ca/planning/officialplan/about.htm

Peinhardt, K., & Storring, N. (2019, May 31). *A PLAYBOOK FOR INCLUSIVE PLACEMAKING: COMMUNITY PROCESS* [Non-profit Organization]. Project for Public Spaces. https://www.pps.org/article/a-playbook-for-inclusive-placemaking-community-process

Pincetl, S., & Gearin, E. (2005). The Reinvention of Public Green Space. *Urban Geography*, *26*(5), 365–384.

Project for Public Spaces. (2007). *What Is Placemaking: What if We Built our Communities Around Places?* [Non-profit Organization]. Project for Public Spaces. https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking

Project for Public Spaces. (2014, April 29). *TEN STRATEGIES FOR TRANSFORMING CITIES AND PUBLIC SPACES THROUGH PLACEMAKING* [Non-profit Organization]. Project for Public Spaces. https://www.pps.org/article/ten-strategies-for-transforming-cities-through-placemaking-public-spaces

Ramlo, A., Hernandez, Y., & Berlin, R. (2017). *Suburban Futures: A look at Employment & Population Change Throughout the Lower Mainland* [Non-profit Research Resource]. Urban Futures: Strategic Research to Manage Change. http://www.urbanfutures.com/suburban-futures

Ritchie, J., & Lewis, J. (Eds.). (2014). *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers* (2nd. ed). SAGE.

Sen Nag, O. (2019a, January 30). *The 10 Biggest Cities in British Columbia* [Geography Resource]. WorldAtlas. https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/the-10-biggest-cities-in-british-columbia.html

Sen Nag, O. (2019b, February 1). *The 10 Biggest Cities in Ontario* [Geography Resource]. WorldAtlas. https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/the-10-biggest-cities-in-ontario.html

Spirn, A. W. (1984). *The Granite Garden: Urban Nature and Human Design*. Basic Books.

Surrey, C. of. (n.d.). *Application Form for the Creation of New Community Gardens in Surrey*. City of Surrey. https://www.surrey.ca/files/CommunityGardenApplication.pdf

Surrey, C. of. (2014 October 20). *Plan Surrey 2013: Official Community Plan*. City of Surrey. https://flipbook-surrey-ca.cld.bz/Plan-Surrey-2013-Official-Community-Plan/2/

Surrey, C. of. (2016). *Sustainability Charter 2.0*. City of Surrey. https://www.surrey.ca/files/SustainabilityCharter.pdf

Surrey, C. of. (2018a). *PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURE (PRC) STRATEGIC PLAN 2018 – 2027*. City of Surrey. https://www.surrey.ca/files/PRCStrategicPlan.pdf

Surrey, C. of. (2018b). *SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Surrey Parks, Recreation & Culture 10-Year Strategic Plan* (pp. 1–99) [Government]. City of Surrey. https://www.surrey.ca/files/PRC%20Plan%20Community%20Engagement%20Summary.pdf

Surrey, C. of. (2020a). *About Surrey, BC* [Government]. City of Surrey. https://www.surrey.ca/3547.aspx

Surrey, C. of. (2020b). *City of Surrey: City Profile—2016 Census Data City of Surrey Statistics* [Government]. City of Surrey. https://www.surrey.ca/files/Neighbourhood-Profile-City-of-Surrey.pdf

Surrey, C. of. (2020c). *City of Surrey Communities* [Government]. City of Surrey. https://www.surrey.ca/about-surrey/our-communities

Surrey, C. of. (2020d). *Community Gardens* [Government]. City of Surrey. https://www.surrey.ca/culture-recreation/7108.aspx

Surrey, C. of. (2020e). *Surrey Communities: Guildford* [Government]. City of Surrey. https://www.surrey.ca/community/6801.aspx

Surrey, C. of. (2020f). *Surrey Communities: Newton* [Government]. City of Surrey. https://www.surrey.ca/community/6802.aspx

Surrey, C. of. (2020g). *Surrey Parks* [Government]. City of Surrey. https://www.surrey.ca/culture-recreation/2015.aspx

Surrey, C. of. (2020h). *Sustainability Charter* [Government]. City of Surrey.
https://www.surrey.ca/community/3568.aspx

Surrey, C. of. (2020i). *Theme: Health and Wellness—Community Gardens* [Government]. City of Surrey: Sustainability Dashboard.
http://dashboard.surrey.ca/#health_wellness/communitygardens

Tironi, M. (2015). Modes of Technification: Expertise, Urban Controversies and the Radicalness of Radical Planning. *Planning Theory*, *14*(1), 70–89.
https://doi.org/10.1177/1473095213513579

Toronto, C. of. (2020). *City Halls—GTA municipalities & municipalities outside of the GTA* [Government]. City of Toronto.
https://www.toronto.ca/311/knowledgebase/kb/docs/articles/311-toronto/information-and-business-development/city-halls-gta-municipalities-and-municipalities-outside-of-the-gta.html

TRCA. (2014). *The Living City Policies: For Planning and Development in the Watersheds of the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority* (p. 204) [Policy Report]. Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. https://trca.ca/planning-permits/living-city-policies/

Tuan, Y. (1974). *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values*. Prentice-Hall.

Figures References

Figure 1. "Mississauga, Ontario, Canada." (2020). *Google Maps*. PNG Image.

Figure 2. "Surrey, British Columbia, Canada." (2020*). Google Maps*. PNG Image.

Figure 3. DIVERSEcity. (2020). Garden plots in a community garden in Surrey, B.C." PNG Image.

Figure 4. Richards, Geena. (2020). "Gardens plots in a park community garden in Mississauga, ON." HEIF Image.

Figure 5. City of Mississauga (2020 March 26). "A map of all the city parks (indicated by colour dots) located in Mississauga, ON." *Esri ArcGIS Online*. PNG Image. Retrieved from
https://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?panel=gallery&suggestField=true&url=https%3A%2F%2Fservices6.arcgis.com%2FhM5ymMLbxIyWTjn2%2Farcgis%2Frest%2Fservices%2FCity_Parks%2FFeatureServer%2F0

Figure 6. "City parks with community gardens in Mississauga." 2020. *Google My Maps*. PNG Image.

Figure 7. "Aerial view of Hillside Garden in Mississauga's Hillside Park." 2020. *Google Maps*.
 PNG Image.

Figure 8. Richards, Geena. (2020). "Hillside Garden in Hillside Park in Mississauga." HEIF
 Image.

Figure 9. "Aerial view of Churchill Meadows' community garden in Mississauga's Churchill
 Meadows Community Commons Park." 2020. *Google Maps*. PNG Image.

Figure 10. Richards, Geena. (2020). "Churchill Meadows Community Garden in Mississauga."
 (2020). HEIF Image.

Figure 11. City of Surrey. (2020). "A map of some city parks (indicated by red dots) located in
 Surrey, B.C." *City of Surrey Online Mapping System (COSMOS)*. PNG Image.

Figure 12. "City parks with community gardens in Surrey." (2020). *Google My Maps*. PNG
 Image.

Figure 13. "Aerial view of Growing Roots Community Garden in Surrey's Hazelnut Meadows
 Park." (2020). *Google Maps*. PNG Image.

Figure 14. DIVERSEcity. (2020). "Hazelnut Meadows Park' Growing Roots Community Garden."
 (2020). JPEG Image.

Figure 15. "Aerial view of the community garden located in Surrey's Lionel Courchene Park."
 (2020). *Google Maps*. PNG Image.

Figure 16. Google. (July 2019). "Growing Roots Community Garden in Surrey's Lionel
 Courchene Park community garden in Surrey." *Google Maps*. PNG Image.

Figure 17. Richards, Geena. (2020). "Concept Diagram of The Four Key Factors for
 Placemaking in Public Greenspaces." PNG Image.

Appendices

APPENDIX A. Planning Legislations

Mississauga, Ontario

The Planning Act (1990)

In Ontario, municipal planning and development is regulated and must conform to guidelines outlined in the main planning legislation framework called "The Planning Act" (Foran & Harrington, 2018, p. 2). The Planning Act outlines the planning interests, objectives, and rules of the Government of Ontario (Foran & Harrington, 2018, p.2). Each municipality and regional government in Ontario is expected to conform to the regulations stated in the act, under authority of the Minster of Municipal Affairs and Housing, through their official plans (Foran & Harrington, 2018, p. 2). The act has been amended several times with the addition of new

regulations that introduces multiple new policies that influences how planning decisions are made in Ontario (Foran & Harrington, 2018, p. 2). In 1983, the act was revised to include the concept of provincial policy statements, which is the second key piece of legislation planning practitioners are to "conform to" during the decision-making process (Foran & Harrington, 2018, pp. 2-3). All planning policies formulated by the Region of Peel and the City of Mississauga fall under this act, so all policy plans and local regulations are expected to conform with this provincial legislation.

Provincial Policy Statement (2020)

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) was established in 1983 as significant overhaul of provincial planning legislation since 1946 (Foran & Harrington, 2018, pp. 2-3). In section three of The Planning Act, the PPS is a policy legislation that sets out Ontario's vision for land use planning throughout the province (Government of Ontario, 2020). Some areas of focus the PPS specifies are the patterns of settlements, the creation of built environments, and the management of provincial, regional, and municipal land and resources (Ontario, 2020).The PPS also outlines other provincial interests that need to be addressed in local planning policies, such as public health and safety, the natural environment, and the built environment (Ontario, 2020).

Region of Peel Official Plan (2018)

The Region of Peel's Official Plan is the strategic planning report about the planning framework for the region as a whole and each individual municipality, such as Mississauga, located in the Region of Peel. The Official Plan must conform to regulations outlined in Ontario's Planning Act, which address the important challenges occurring in the Region of Peel (Region of Peel, 2018, p.2). The Region of Peel's Official Plan highlights the importance of "protecting and enhancing Peel's heritage, ensuring the health and safety of Peel residents and workers, managing resources and regional infrastructure, protection of the region's natural environment, and ensuring fiscal sustainability" (Peel, 2020). In a review of the Region of Peel's Official Plan, community gardens are mentioned as a tool of urban agriculture in the region, and it mentions Mississauga's support for creating community gardens through the Living Green Master Plan (Peel, 2019, p. 12).

Mississauga's Official Plan (2015)

The City of Mississauga's Official Plan is the municipal plan, which outlines the City of Mississauga's planning policies that aim to "protect, enhance, restore, and expand the City's Natural Heritage System" (Mississauga, 2015, p. 1-1). The plan outlines how to responsibly encourage growth and development in the City that benefits the urban form, a stronger public transportation system, and addresses long-term sustainability (Mississauga, 2015, p.1-1). Mississauga's planning policies must conform to all authoritative provincial and regional planning frameworks. Mississauga's Official Plan highlights the need to address numerous key objectives concerning the management of their growth and development, such as a stronger and viable economy, maintaining existing infrastructure and the construction of new infrastructure to support growth in compact and efficient form, and the promotion of sustainable development that protects the natural environment in the City (Mississauga, 2015, p. 4-1).

Mississauga's Strategic Plan: Our Vision for the Future (2009)

The City of Mississauga's Strategic Plan is an official report created to outline a planning framework regarding the City's future planning and development that will help to transform Mississauga into a dynamic and beautiful global city for creativity and innovation with vibrant, safe, connected and diverse communities (Mississauga, 2009b, p. 1). Mississauga's Strategic Plan identifies the City's priority area called, "Drivers for Change," which includes the prospective opportunities, challenges and external forces, that play a vital in impact the how the City will plan for the future (Mississauga, 2009b, p. 2). The Drivers for Change includes five fundamental pillars: Move, Belong, Connect, Prosper, and Living Green, which emphasizes a unique direction statement, direction principle, and specific goals to help achieve the vision for the plan (Mississauga, 2009b, p. 3). The Green driver for change refers to the "Living Green" strategic pillar for change that is focused on helping the City of Mississauga establish a stronger co-existence between people and the Mississauga's natural environment that will help establish values that encourage maintaining a healthy natural environment for future generations (Mississauga, 2009b, p. 3). The Strategic Plan is an important planning framework to the establishment of the Living Green Master Plan (2012) and the Parks and Forestry Master Plan (2019).

Living Green Master Plan (2012)

The Living Green Master Plan is an official report for the City of Mississauga created to "prioritize City policies and programs into actions to meet the environmental objectives of the Strategic Plan" (Mississauga, 2012, p. 1). The six environmental priorities of the City include to

build on environmental success, create an environment office, raise public awareness, collect baseline data, understand Mississauga's energy future, and build partnerships and collaborations (Mississauga, 2012, pp. 3-4). Community gardens are listed as an action under the category of urban form for their "Actions to Encourage Others" section, which is focused on land-use planning decisions that transform the urban form of the city (Mississauga, 2012, p. 11). The plan sets out the actions for the City of Mississauga's goal to implement a community garden in every neighbourhood to guarantee there is access to a garden that supports local food security efforts through their partnership with Ecosource (Mississauga, 2012, p. 33).

Parks & Forestry Master Plan: Future Directions (2019)

The City of Mississauga's Parks and Forestry Master Plan aims to help the City in delivering future parks and forestry services over a span of five years but also takes into consideration the longer-term viewpoint (Mississauga, 2019, p. 2).The master plan was developed through a collaborative effort by city planning officials from numerous departments and teams, which includes park planning, arts and culture, environment, recreation, and sports and community development (Mississauga, 2019, n.d). In the plan, it clearly states "Parks are social places and one element that brings people together is community gardens. Community gardens play an important role in the casual use of parks and are well supported in the City of Mississauga" (Mississauga, 2019, p. 25). The creation of community gardens in parks is mentioned as area of focus and recommendation of their community partnerships, which is supported through an Environmental Grants Program, which was introduced in the Living Green Master Plan from 2012 (Mississauga, 2019, p. 99). The master plan was established as an agenda to aid in implementing the City's planning framework outlined in the City's Official Plan regarding the growth and maintenance of their green systems, which includes local public parkland and other natural areas (Mississauga, 2019, p. 95).

<u>Surrey, British Columbia</u>

Local Government Act (2015)

All planning legislation in British Columbia is shaped by the main provincial planning law entitled the Local Government Act (British Columbia, 2016). The Local Government Act (2015) is the primary planning legislation for regional districts and improvement districts, which outlines the framework for governance and structure, and the applicable powers and responsibilities for each level of government (British Columbia, 2020). The Local Government Act provides the provincial planning framework that helps to provide governing powers to regional and local

governments to make decisions surrounding their specific needs and the changing circumstances of their communities (British Columbia, 2016). This act gives regional and municipal governments the authority to create plans that outline their objectives and goals regarding land-use development, such as municipal official community plans (British Columbia, 2020). All planning policies formulated by the City of Surrey and Metro Vancouver Region fall under this act, so all of their plans and local regulations are expected to conform with this provincial legislation.

Metro Vancouver Regional Growth Strategy (2010)

The 2010 Metro Vancouver Regional Growth Strategy, "Metro Vancouver 2040: Shaping Our Future," is a regional plan to outline the planning policies for the entire region and the municipalities within the region, such as Surrey. The Growth Strategy endorses policies that encourage efficient human settlement that encourages social, economic, and environmental health and makes efficient use of public facilities and services, land and other resources (Metro Vancouver, 2020, p. 3). The Local Government Act gives the Regional Growth Strategy the ability to outline the objectives and policies for the Metro Vancouver Region (Metro Vancouver, 2020, p. 3). A key regional policy from the Regional Growth Strategy is to "Develop healthy and complete communities with access to a range of services and amenities," which plans out the role of regional governments have to implement the strategy (Metro Vancouver, 2020, p. 47). The strategy states municipalities are to "support food production and distribution throughout the region," and also community gardens on both private and municipally owned lands are listed as an example (Metro Vancouver, 2020, p. 47).

Sustainability Charter 2.0 (2016)

The City of Surrey created a sustainability charter in 2008 after Surrey City Council acknowledges "the need for proactive, collaborative and long-term approach to address social issues, the future viability of [their] economy, and environmental challenges (Surrey, 2016, p. 8)." The updated charter, "Sustainability Charter 2.0," was established in 2016, outlines an upgraded vision of sustainability in Surrey spanning 40 years to help the City of Surrey become a positive, green and inclusive city (Surrey, 2020h). The Charter includes eight key themes of sustainability: inclusion, built environment and neighbourhoods, public safety, economic prosperity and livelihoods, ecosystems, education and culture, health and wellness, and infrastructure (Surrey, 2020h). The goal of this charter is to continually engage residents, stakeholders, staff and elected officials to remain a leading-edge that reflects the values of their

community (Surrey, 2020h). In the charter, community gardens are mentioned as an indicator of the theme "health and wellness," and an objective is to create a "community in which all residents are healthy, active and connected" (Surrey, 2020i).

Surrey's Official Community Plan (2014)

The City of Surrey's Official Community Plan called, "Plan Surrey 2013: Official Community Plan," is a "statement of objectives and policies that guide City planning decisions" (Surrey, 2014, p.11). An official community plan discusses the long-term community development of a city and provides a framework concerning multiple types of planning, such as the physical structure of the City, land use management, community development, environmental protection, and enhanced social wellbeing (Surrey, 2014, p.11). Surrey's Official Community Plan falls under the policies outlined in the Regional Growth Strategy for Metro Vancouver, which is meant to be consistent with the objectives of the region, through a Regional Context Statement (Surrey, 2014, p. 227). In Surrey's Official Community Plan under "Theme B: Centres, Corridors, and Neighbourhoods," it mentions focusing on creating a stronger and "connected network of vibrant, sustainable and liveable places," by improving the number and access of local parks to residents (Surrey, 2014, pp. 77-79).

Parks, Recreation and Culture (PRC) Strategic Plan (2018)

The Parks, Recreation and Culture (PRC) Strategic Plan is the plan that outlines the objectives and goals concerning parks, recreation and cultural facilities and services over the next ten years (Surrey, 2018a, p. 9). The PRC Strategic Plan is a flexible policy document that is meant to help make future decisions, while also allowing the City to be responsive to current changes of their constituents' needs and demographics in order to confirm setting a direction and guide investment (Surrey, 2018a, p. 9). The policies outlined in the PRC Strategic Plan are contextual guided by the City of Surrey's Sustainability Charter and the Official Community Plan, which are the City's two main overarching policy plans (Surrey, 2018a, p. 10). The policies that are mentioned in the PRC Strategic Plan's concerning park planning and programming of Surrey's local public parks focuses on addressing significant challenges and creating potential opportunities, which includes climate change mitigation, greater biodiversity and habitat connectivity, park maintenance, and ensuring amenities for all (Surrey, 2018a, p. 39). In the plan, under "Monitoring the Plan," community gardens are listed as a key measure for the theme of "Engaged and Healthy Community" (Surrey, 2018a, p. 89). The garden program is intended to enhance community food security through residents being able to grow their own food

6. How did you decide on using these locations in public parks for the community garden program?

7. What are the criteria/rules in place to determine who can join the community gardens as a participant?

8. How important is this space to you/your organization? Why?

9. Do you believe that accessing the park improves the wellbeing of your participants?

10. Have you or do you hope to implement other community programs that occur in public greenspaces or through partnership with park officials?

11. Do you believe the partnership with the City to implement your program on public spaces rather than with a developer on non-public properties made your program more successful?

12. Is there anything else you would like to share/tell me?

IV.   Conclusion

- Thank the participant for their time.

- Go over all the participant's responses now to verify my notes about their responses to the questions are correct.

- Ask participant if they want to add anything to their responses and if they have any questions for me.

- Restate that the interview will remain confidential and their participation in the study will remain anonymous.

- Ask participants for permission to archive the transcript of the interview. Explain that it will be fully anonymized and will allow me, the researcher of the study, to use the information for my research.

- Remind participant they are welcome to contact me (the researcher of the study) to ask any questions if they wish.

Guide 2: Interview Guide for City Planning

I.   Introduction

- Introduction of myself (the researcher) and the York University FES HPRC for unfunded research.

- Introduce research study topic.

- Explain the objectives of the study and the interview.

- Explain Confidentiality and Anonymity concerning participating in interviews.

- Explain the interview process.
- Go over the Informed consent form and participants' rights concerning their decision to partake or withdraw their consent for participation.
- Ask if the participant(s) have any questions and about their position on disclosure.

II. Background Info

- Objective: to get the participant talking, and to attain some knowledge of certain personal conditions and/or interests.
- Ask them about themselves (i.e. name, job title, time in their position).

III. Interview Questions

1. Can you tell me about the City's park planning department?
2. Can you tell me about the City's park planning master plan/strategic plan?
3. How did the City's park planning decide on the plan's main goals?
4. How are the City's park planning policies/plans shaped by local and/or provincial planning law/land use regulation?
5. How involved was the public in providing ideas and feedback about the plan to the City?
6. Why did the City's decide to include certain community park programs in their park master plan/strategic plan?
7. Do ideas for park programming, such as community gardens, begin with city officials or the organizations?
8. Do you believe community park programs, such as community gardens, help to invite people to use city parks?
9. Are there limitations to people's use of park spaces or what types of programming that can occur in park spaces?
10. Is the City trying to take a more supportive rather than leadership role in park programming through partnering with community groups/organizations? If yes, why?
11. Do you think the City would consider more community-led park programming to occur in public greenspaces? If yes, can you provide some examples.
12. Is there anything else you would like to tell/share with me?

IV. Conclusion

- Thank the participant for their time.

- Go over all the participant's responses to verify my notes about their responses to the questions are correct.
- Ask participant if they want to add anything to their responses and if they have any questions for me.
- Restate that the interview will remain confidential and their participation in the study will remain anonymous.
- Ask participants for permission to archive the transcript of the interview. Explain that it will be fully anonymized and will allow me, the researcher of the study, to use the information for my research.
- Remind participant they are welcome to contact me (the researcher of the study) to ask any questions if they wish.