

**A Timely Shift in Urban Planning:
Calls to Action Address Anti-Black Racism and Inequities
in the Profession**

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Abstract

Following the murder of George Floyd, many professional organizations and disciplines released statements vocalizing their support and solidarity of Black Lives Matter during the re-emergence of the civil rights uprising and the devastating impacts COVID-19 was having on Black communities throughout North America. Urban planning institutions, schools and professionals slowly began releasing statements as a way to be accountable to the public and share their specific anti-Black racism agenda. This paper explores the calls to actions as well as specific planning policies and processes that have played a role in perpetuating inequities within our build environment. The intention of this paper is to bring light to various inequities that have emerged as a result of the planning profession, but also to display the progress that has been made by the profession following the devastating murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis in May 2020.

Foreword

I have always had a deep desire to work in a profession that granted me the ability to make real and progressive changes for people and communities. I entered this program in hopes to enrich my understanding of the built environment and developing a deeper understanding of working at the intersection of urban planning and public health. I center equity within my passion for land use and public spaces and I have discovered so much about myself and the kind of planner I know is possible for me to become. These last two years have contributed immensely to my personal and professional growth and have really shown me that it is possible to stay true to yourself and your morals, while still pursuing the professional career you've imagined for yourself. As a Black female emerging planner, I am deeply aware of many of the challenges that I will encounter; however, my deeper purpose will always shine through.

This Major Paper fulfills the requirements set forth by the Master of Environmental Studies program. This paper discusses the broader topic of anti-Black racism within planning policies and processes. My Plan of Study outlines three components which are, urban planning, social determinants of health equity and inclusive, healthy and restorative urban design which will follow.

Based on these components, the learning objectives that I have incorporated in my Major Paper are as follows:

- 1.1 To better understand zoning policies that impact planning decision making so that I have a better understanding of policies that control urban development and design;
- 1.2 To gain more knowledge around the injustices of current land use planning policies and procedures so I can identify structural impediments for health equity planning;
- 1.5 To explore the interconnectedness of race and wellbeing, and how race relationships and attitudes influence planning;
- 2.2 To better understand the needs of underserved minority and people of color communities (POC) within disadvantaged inner cities;
- 2.3 To gain a better understanding of the health disparities that exist within communities with a high population of POC;
- 2.7 To explore planning policies that perpetuate structural racism;
- 3.3 To better understand the implications of urban design on the urban poor;
- 3.4 To gain more knowledge regarding revitalization and gentrification;
- 3.6 To explore design strategies that perpetuate structural racism.

My Major Paper examines the relationship between the social determinants of health and the built environment, particularly through the exploration of the promotion and incorporation of health equity into cities through urban planning – something made even more important with the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. The primary focus of my plan was on equitable access to social determinants of health, including but not limited to the accessibility of transportation and green space, accessibility to affordable and safe housing, and healthy neighbourhood designs that increase social cohesion, strengthen social connections, and improve access to services.

My Plan of Study highlights the power structures at the macro-level that are required to change in order to address the inequities that exist for racialized and marginalized populations at the micro-level. My plan particularly considers health inequities, defined as differences in health status or in the distribution of health resources between different population groups that exist within cities, and the role that the government, market, policymakers, and planners play in creating and sustaining these injustices. The exploration of spatial justice, urban

redevelopment, and inclusionary zoning practices became critical in my plan to allow for a better analysis of what practices are preventing the implementation of equal and just cities. Health protection and promotion of disadvantaged populations are at the core of my plan. I look towards balanced and sustainable urban development that focuses on enhancing the health and wellbeing of disadvantaged communities through the establishment of spaces that advance physical and social environments and expand community resources and services. My plan of study incorporates structural racism that is embedded within planning policies and regulations and explores the interconnectedness of race and wellbeing, and how race relationships and attitudes influence planning. Planning is a discipline meant to represent the public; however, planning exists as a tool of power for social control, which occurs through restrictive policies over disadvantaged populations.

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INTRODUCTION

In the current climate and movement of Black Lives Matter and following the killing of George Floyd (in Minneapolis on May 25, 2020), many organizations and disciplines ranging from retail brands such as Nike and Reebok to professional institutions such as public health institutes, academic institutions, and urban planning, have established calls to actions and press release statements vocalizing their support and solidarity of Black Lives Matter and their specific anti-Black racism agenda.

The anti-racism calls to action released in the summer of 2020 call for urban planning as an institutional and professional practice to address their oppressive and colonial roots to move forward as an equitable and progressive discipline. Through the platform provided by the calls to action, Black urbanists in North America have demanded that the planning discipline addresses racism through concrete strategies and plans that have the capacity to create tangible outcomes and change. The institutional responses so far have been positive yet limited. We continue to see public apologies, statements of allyship and support, and symbolic means of change to distract the public from the need for tangible systemic and institutional change. The question remains, will we continue to see the same cycle of allyship and attention around the topic of anti-Black racism within the planning discipline only until the wave and pressure being placed on the discipline fades?

My research aims to assess the recent calls to action mobilized by Black planners and addressed by planning institutions and professionals, notably by the Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI), the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP), the Canadian Urban Institute (CUI), Urban Land Institute, and the American Planning Association (APA). Through this analysis, my research examines how anti-racism calls to action came about, why they came about, as

well as the authors' motivations and expectations. My research also assesses the actual responses and strategies deployed by planning institutions to effect transformation and reframe a more just planning.

My research links recent calls to action to interconnections between race, urban (re)development, market-driven forces, and unjust geographies by evaluating what has been called out within urban planning as an institutional and professional practice through various calls to action. My research examines the calls to action as a strategy to display anti-Black racism in planning and identify areas of improvement for the discipline when it comes to sustainable and progressive change. I aim to understand and identify how urban planning as a professional and institutional practice not only deals with the recent calls to action, but also reframes a profession that has perpetuated racialized inequities and endorsed anti-black racist practices in city development. Low-income neighborhoods have been systematically disinvested into for centuries, which has led to social inequalities and uneven development – and a specific lack of health-promoting resources being adequately invested into these neighborhoods as a result of poor urban design and development whose decisions are heavily political and market-driven. The recent calls to action resolutely reveal that urban planning has been failing to represent and protect Black and racialized bodies in the public realm and this is due to poor policies, lack of representation within the discipline, and a failure to address colonialism and white supremacy as a guiding force within urban planning.

As a growing profession, planning must ensure to incorporate an intersectional approach to development and design. By intersectional, I specifically mean that planning must look through a Black urbanism lens which takes into account community heritage, culture, and the significance of preservation and conservation of community history. “A Black urbanism approach embraces fundamental city-building principles such as sustainability and mixed-use development while expanding to include interdisciplinary

perspectives and lived experiences” (Eyob and Mohamed, 2021). In order to see the discrepancies that exist in our built form that are inevitably harming predominantly racialized communities, planners must begin to think more critically about the power that our built environment has in shaping positive health outcomes. Planners must also begin to see the spatialized anti-Blackness that exists as a result of policies and various forms of institutional racism.

Considering discourse regarding racial inequities and systemic and institutional racism in 2020, it is timely to explore urban planning as a professional and institutional practice and the role this discipline plays in perpetuating racial inequalities in the urban context. Racialized populations have been oppressed and have been facing inequities in various contexts such as housing, income disparities, health, and employment for centuries. In analyzing the recent calls for action in planning, my research explores urban planning’s role in perpetuating racist ideologies and systems for the discipline to progress, dismantle, and address various inequities associated with urban development and design, as well as how urban planning is approaching anti-Black racism. I am hopeful that these calls to action have publicly brought forward the professional practice in a way that will hold planning accountable for actionable change at the institutional level.

Methodology

My research begins with a literature analysis that explores the implications of specific planning policies and processes on spatialized inequities. I then utilize two qualitative methods: content/document analysis of the calls to action and semi-structured interviews with Black planners and representatives of professional organizations to garner a more detailed analysis of the planning profession in light of the Black Lives Matter movement. My research specifically examines how/why anti-racism calls to action came about, as well as the motivations and expectations of proponents. It also assesses the actual

responses and strategies deployed by planning institutions to effect transformation and reframe a more just planning agenda. Throughout my paper, but more specifically within the literature analysis I also cross-reference specific developments such as Regent Park and the Jane and Finch neighborhood to illustrate the lack of action and appropriate commitment towards progressive change for marginalized communities, and to showcase how systemic racism and oppression dictates and controls how funding is allocated; as well as to showcase evidence of disinvestment into Black communities and the professional and institutional inaction when it comes to real and progressive change that often gets masked by “plans” and “strategies”.

Content/Document Analysis

My first task was to take a deep dive analysis into 13 calls to action using a critical discourse analysis (CDA) and content analysis (CA) framework. Critical discourse analysis is a qualitative analytical approach to critically describe, interpret and explain the ways in which current discourse constructs, maintains, and legitimizes social inequalities (Mullet, 2018). Content analysis is focused on interpreting and understanding words, themes, and concepts within the texts and then analyzing the results to identify the purposes, messages, and effects of the calls to action. This analysis focuses on identifying keywords and themes within the literature that centered around: *Anti-Black racism, urban planning/development/design, (in)equities, (in)justice, environmental racism, structural/systemic and institutional racism, recommendations, and inclusiveness*. The intention here is to focus on the context as well as the narrative used in the calls to action, but also to incorporate other overlapping contexts to dig deeper into the research question regarding anti-Black racism in urban planning. My research began in August of 2020, and much of my analysis into the calls to action stopped as of April 2021 in order to allow me time to write the actual

research paper. I organize the calls to action into three subsections: institutional, professional, and educational and chronologically when possible.

Institutional calls being analyzed came from the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP), the American Planning Association (APA), the Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI), the New Brunswick Association of Planners (NBAP), the Licensed Professional Planners Association of Nova Scotia (LPPANS), the Urban Land Institute (ULI) and the Canadian Urban Institute (CUI).

Individual and collective calls from planning professionals came from the Black Planning Project's response letter to OPPI, Amina Yasin's article "Whose Streets? Black Streets" published in Vancouver-based *The Tyee*, and Jay Pitter's Call to Courage in an open letter to Canadian urbanists.

Selected educational calls were also issued by the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning, University of Toronto- Geography and Planning Department and Ryerson University – School of Urban and Regional Planning.

The calls to action reviewed in this paper are not the only calls to actions made by planning-related organizations and schools. However, for the purpose of this research, I chose to analyze the calls that were most widely spread and spoke directly to issues within the planning profession. Professional planning organisations were selected due to their institutional level of impact and power. Some of the listed planning institutions, apart from the American Planning Association (APA), were also highlighted on the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP)'s website as institutes that have made statements surrounding anti-Black racism which is why they have been selected for analysis. Organizations and professionals were selected based on their impact and involvement with the Black Lives Matter movement, as well as their influence in pushing the initiative of improving anti-Black racism within the urban planning discipline, primarily within Ontario. Lastly, educational institutes were selected because they were

also highlighted by CIP as institutions that have made statements surrounding anti-Black racism within Canada.

After reviewing the most significant elements of these calls, I proceed with a comparative analysis of the calls to action based on the four themes: systemic reform, representation within the profession, education and training surrounding combating racism and inequity, and acknowledgment of the discrimination wrought by the planning profession itself (which led to structural disadvantages in housing, transportation, education, and employment that lasts to this day). This criterion was selected based on key points identified within many of the calls to action, as well as through themes that emerged within the interviews. The selected themes allow for readers to understanding some of the essential changes that need to occur within the planning profession.

Literature review

To analyze the grounds for such calls to action, I conducted a literature review on how planning policies, processes, and strategies have been used as a clutch to distract and avoid people from progressive and legitimate systemic change. I reviewed key literature that focused on analyzing policies that contribute towards perpetuating structural and systemic racism in our built form as a result of urban planning. These policies included social mixing policies, large-scale public housing urban revitalization projects and neighbourhood improvement area (NIA) strategies in Toronto. The literature analysis pays particular attention to the history and current-day impacts of zoning ordinances to display how planning practices have contributed towards spatialized inequities for racialized communities.

As part of the literature review, my final method includes a media scope to provide a resource tool kit for planning professionals and the general public. I selected key articles, media handles and professionals that have spoken on the

topic of anti-Black racism within planning and have identified next steps for the profession. Keywords searched through 'Google' search engine for articles and books were anti-Black racism, urban planning, and Black Lives Matter.

Semi-Structured Interviews

I also conducted seven, 1-hour long semi-structured interviews with Black planning professionals in the Greater Toronto Area. Professionals selected are either urban planners or urbanists addressing equity and racism within their practices, and professionals within and outside the urbanism realm addressing social justice, systemic reform, police, public health and transformative justice. Many of the individuals who were interviewed took part in writing or supporting the development of one or more calls to action highlighted in my paper. Interviewees were provided with the interview questions prior to the interview. I allowed for these interviews to remain semi-structured to ensure that I was able to be flexible within the interviewee and the dialogue that emerged within the interviews.

Semi-structured were used to reflect on the nature of the calls and assess how both activists and professionals believe racism is informing planning practices – and how public policies have failed to address underlying historical discrimination, exclusionary policies, and management practices we see dictate urban planning. Interviews delved into the reasoning behind the calls to action and their expectations. Although some interviewees asked to remain anonymous, I interviewed a range of professionals including Abigail Moriah, and representatives from planning organizations, notably the Ontario Professional Planners Institute, Sheena Jardine-Olade from the Canadian Institute of Planners, and Silvia Vargas, EDI committee member at American Planning Association. I was also fortunate to interview other planners beyond this list but have refrained from sharing their names due to confidentiality reasons. For the purpose of my research, I utilize key information gained from individual

interviews when analyzing the calls to action and proceeding with the comparative analysis.

1. GOOD INTENTIONS, BAD PRACTICES

At the origins of these calls to action are planning practices that often have a detrimental impact on racialized neighborhoods. The planning profession in North America has publicly acknowledged the need to address the institutional racism that hinders the discipline. Statements and ‘calls to actions’ articulated a variety of recommendations ranging from education and training surrounding combating racism and inequity, better representation of some groups within the profession, and the acknowledgment of the discrimination wrought by the planning profession itself, which led to structural disadvantages of ethnic minority communities. This section presents the challenges that were already at the surface within planning policies and processes to showcase how the calls to action made over the summer of 2020 following the killing of George Floyd and countless other Black bodies acted as a trigger moment to actions that were needed and already in progress within the planning profession. This section also examines how planning’s attempts to address equity issues within its practices and processes -- although often fallen short due to institutional factors and policies that prevent planning and planners from serving the people.

My analysis focuses on key literature that addresses **social mixing policies/large-scale public housing urban revitalization** projects and neighbourhood **improvement area (NIA) strategies in Toronto**, which have brought to the forefront inequities that exist within our built form, and/or exacerbated racialized disparities to display the gap between good intentions and bad practice within the planning profession. I pay particular attention to the history and current-day **impacts of zoning ordinances** to display how planning practices that control city growth and development play a critical role

in forming equitable cities but also have played a role in the inequities that exist in our built environment, contributing towards spatialized inequities for racialized communities. This section is not intended to be exhaustive, rather is meant to provide brief context that aids in understanding the severity and criticalness of the “calls to action” that were made by urban planning professionals and institutions in the United States and Canada following the killing of George Floyd and the re-emergence of a civil rights uprising Black Lives Matter movement in summer 2020.

Strategies and policies such as neighborhood improvement areas, social mixing, and urban revitalization are often presented as tactics to improve neighborhoods, yet they can also have detrimental effects on communities, their health, and their sense of place. Despite the best intentions and directions of these policies and strategies, the result often leads to heavily gentrified neighborhoods and the displacement and relocation of racialized and low-income community members into peripheral neighborhoods outside of the downtown core. The calls to action made by planning institutions and professionals were a critical and timely demand to achieving equity within and for the profession.

It is important to analyze the demographic makeup of neighborhoods in order to understand the racialization of space and the role that planning policies have in perpetuating spatial injustices. Soja (2009: 2) states that “[spatial justice] involves the fair and equitable distribution in space of socially valued resources and the opportunities to use them”. Soja (2009: 3) refers to location discrimination as the “creation of lasting spatial structures of privilege and advantage, where discrimination often follows the lines of class, race, and gender.” I expand on concepts relating to location discrimination and spatial injustices, firstly, through a brief examination of neighbourhood improvement areas and the Toronto Strong Neighbourhood Strategy to display elements of spatial injustices.

Spatial inequalities are linked to practices of racial discrimination that create inequitable access to neighborhood resources based on the premise of race (Osypuk and Acevedo-Garcia, 2010). Racialized populations often live in neighborhoods with fewer services, amenities, and opportunities than their whites' counterparts. The racialization of space and the spatialization of race have had severe and detrimental effects on communities of color in the United States (Lipsitz, 2007). Race cannot be separated from space as the racial projects have always had a spatial presence and impact. Spatial displacement, dispossession, exclusion, and control allow for the exploitation of Black and Brown bodies to occur systematically. It is also seen historically through the theft and demolition of Indigenous land and culture, the confiscation of Black and Brown property for urban renewal/redevelopment projects and the establishment of ghettos, barrios, reservations, and Chinatowns to the disproportionate placement of toxic hazards in minority dominated neighborhoods (Lipsitz, 2007). As Lipsitz (2007) argues in the US context, the impacts and effects of slavery, sharecropping, and segregation have directly transformed African-Americans' encounters with the racialization of space and the spatialization of race. An important example of this relation is the spaces that have produced unfair gains and unjust enrichment for whites. For Black people in the United States, as clearly expressed by Lipsitz (2007), one cannot separate the struggles against the oppression of race from the struggles and challenges over space. African Americans are disadvantaged due to their birthright and face spatial injustice in the urban context as a result (Lipsitz, 2007).

Zoning Exclusion

Urban planning and its principal tool of zoning were established to serve the public. However, they have instead been used to foster inequitable development and design of neighborhoods, health, and environmental injustice

(Wilson, Hutson and Mujahid, 2008). Zoning is a powerful tool within the institutional practice of planning, which can have drastic implications for equity and public health (Maantay, 2001). Zoning is the tool that dictates and determines the categories and location of land use. This has a direct impact on the resulting environmental and health impacts that result from land use (Maantay, 2001). Exclusionary zoning is also utilized to establish districting, as in residential and business districts to protect political and economic self-interests (Wilson, Hutson and Mujahid, 2008).

Zoning was historically used as a device to keep poor people and obnoxious industries out of affluent areas. Zoning advocates use a minimum lot and setback requirements to ensure that only members of acceptable social classes could settle in affluent neighbourhoods. In other words, zoning was used by people who already lived within the arbitrary boundaries of a community as a method of keeping everyone else out. In most cases, municipalities are granted the authority to establish their zoning and planning regulations to serve the needs of the community residing within their jurisdiction. However, this structure allows for municipalities to establish planning and zoning regulations that could potentially prioritize the needs of the elite population and exclude disadvantaged populations in the discussion. Zoning was established on the premise to protect and serve the public; however, it has proved to work oppositely by offering differential protection to numerous segments of the public (Maantay, 2001). Although zoning was developed to address issues on behalf of the public, it is far from a neutral process. Decisions about the best locations for noxious uses have racial and classist implications (Maantay, 2001). This de-valorization of particular people and neighborhoods leads to discriminatory planning and exclusionary zoning which results in inequitable development in the form of public transportation, school systems, economic infrastructure, and affordable housing that harms disadvantaged populations. This inequitable system of development results in the establishment of

segregated communities based on race and class (Wilson, Hutson, and Mujahid, 2008). Post-19th century sanitary movement is when planning and zoning of cities began to focus on the aesthetics, economics, and the property rights of the privileged population and less on public health (Wilson, Hutson and Mujahid, 2008).

Zoning has historically been used as a tool for the exclusion of marginalized groups of people from urban spaces labelled as desirable as they had the power to dictate and regulate what land and location certain demographics could occupy. In his article “Ghetto Code: A History of Segregation, Racial Zoning and Spatial Isolation in American Cities,” Harris (2019) states that “zoning has been used by municipalities for the past century to steer environmental growth and direct land use agendas.”

Many municipalities enabled particular zoning ordinances and bylaws to prohibit people from certain racialized backgrounds from occupying space in a particular community. Other municipalities were indirect in their racial zoning by creating bylaws for only ‘single-family dwelling units within specific residential communities’ (Rosher, 2016: 7). This zoning designation prevented individuals from racialized backgrounds from being able to move into particular ‘exclusive’ neighbourhoods. In 1917 the US Supreme Court declared racial zoning unconstitutional because it violated the 14th Amendment’s “equal protection of the laws.” However, this ruling did not prevent municipalities from excluding particular populations from urban spaces. Municipalities discovered less intrusive ways to exclude groups from particular environments, which kept racialized individuals and communities and those within a lower income bracket out of the upscale suburban environments (Ross and Leigh, 2000: 372). Although racial zoning is no longer officially accepted, we see it emerge in exclusionary zoning tactics, which serve as “less aggressive and more socially acceptable forms of racial zoning” that define spaces in which racialized groups have “authority and means” to occupy (Ross and Leigh, 2000: 372).

Zoning operates as a planning process and policy that carries a deep history of racism and segregation in the United States but also in Canada. Zoning policies carry heavy authority and control for land use, and with a history of forward-facing discrimination, it is important to explore how the historic implications of zoning may be replicated in current day society without appropriate changes to the tool.

In present-day society, planners have established regulations and policies that prevent forms of blatant racial discrimination. For example, section 35(2) of Ontario's Planning Act (2021) states that municipalities may not pass zoning bylaws that "[have] the effect of distinguishing between persons who are related and persons who are unrelated in respect of the occupancy or use of a building" (Roshier, 2016: 7). In *Bell v Regina*, a case involving the defining of "dwelling unit" in North York, the Supreme Court of Canada established that "it is the prerogative of local government to zone for 'land-use,' it does not have the right to zone for "users of the land" because "personal characteristics or qualities are not a proper basis on which to develop zoning bylaws meant to control density or address other legitimate planning concerns" (cited in Roshier, 2016: 7). Jurisdiction only enables local governments to zone for land use, limiting the chance that people zoning may emerge within the practice. Although this ruling prevents municipalities from directly discriminating against people based on race and class, zoning still contributes to inequities that are indirectly related to personal characteristics. Zoning theoretically only allows the segregation and compartmentalization of spaces according to land uses. However, through land use, it controls what kinds of people have access to certain land parcels and spaces which directly impacts their quality of life. For example, it does so through regulating where land may be used within municipalities for certain housing types such as supportive housing, residential care facilities, or rooming houses (Roshier, 2016: 8). Although zoning is, in theory, a 'neutral' tool in the sense that it cannot explicitly discriminate against

people based on personal and characteristic traits, there are indirect ways in which it inevitably controls the movement of people within our built form (Roshier, 2016). Zoning can have drastic implications on equity and public health as it is the main tool within planning that dictates and determines the categories and location of land use (Maantay, 2001). This has a direct impact on the resulting environmental and health impacts that result from land use (Maantay, 2001). The exclusionary practices of the 19th-century sanitary movement have been perpetuated in current-day society, resulting in fragmented metropolitan regions to protect particular investments and property values. These regions “control local land use including schools and business development, and exclude undesirable populations such as people of color, poor people, immigrants and undesirable industries”.

By the nature of its purpose, zoning often serves one group at the expense of another. Zoning was designed as a technical tool to prevent certain trivial land uses such as the hazardous industry, from harming people and the community. It acts as an effective tool for communities to create legal barriers that support a hierarchy in which some human beings are privileged, and some are subordinate because of their class, race, and gender characteristic (Ritzdorf, 1997; Skelton, 2013).

Although zoning is recognized as a ‘neutral’ tool and is displayed as a technical process, Harris (2019) argues that zoning “creates spatial order and prevents environmental nuisances,” and that it was used historically as a tool to divide races and block racialized groups from entering white neighborhoods. Of course, zoning has changed throughout history into present times; however, it is still important to understand that planners use a tool that was established during a time in which there were immense class and race lines, and extreme amounts of blatant racism and discrimination – and such legacy prevails in practices and environments. This tool was established during a time in which White supremacy was at its peak – and it would therefore be misleading to think

that our current day zoning does not naturally fall within the lines and promote racist practices. A practice that is heavily used within current-day urban development and design approval processes has deep roots in slavery and racism. Without acknowledging history planners risk repeating cycles and perpetuating inequities as a result of practices and tools such as zoning that have its hands tied to a period in which racialized people were not regarded as human beings deserving of an equal quality of life to their White counterparts. That is not to say that in the present time Blacks are equal to white populations but centuries of protesting, advocacy and persistence by Black people and communities have gotten them to a place in which they have the presence to continue to resist racism and discrimination. However, without legitimate institutional change racialized populations will always be at a disadvantage and be exposed to harms in the built environment and within public space.

Toronto's Strong Neighbourhood Strategy and Priority Neighbourhoods

Neighbourhood improvement areas (NIA) emerged through the Toronto Strong Neighbourhood Strategy (TSNS) which is a social development plan created to achieve equitable opportunities across all Toronto neighbourhoods. NIA's and the TSNS are important to analyze when discussing spatial injustices and inequalities due to the demographic of the communities that have been recently identified as 'priority areas' (despite being historically marginalized or blatantly ignored). The City of Toronto has analyzed 140 of its neighbourhoods to identify which ones are considered 'priority areas.' A total of 23 of the City's social planning neighbourhoods were designated as part of the Priority Neighbourhood Areas for Investment by Council under the 2005 Strategy. The recommended 31 Neighbourhood Improvement Areas in TSNS (2020) include 15 of these social planning neighbourhoods and 16 new neighbourhoods. These neighbourhoods have been categorized as needing targeted support given their "significant inequities in economic opportunities, social development,

participation in decision making, healthy lives and physical surroundings” (Brillinger, 2012: 1).

The TSNS municipally led policy response is meant to address the inequitable socioeconomic and geographic distribution of wealth and public infrastructure across the city’s neighbourhoods. The overall goal of the TSNS is to “ensure that every Toronto neighbourhood has the public, private and community infrastructure required for equitable resident opportunities, and to ensure broader municipal, regional, provincial and national policies, programs, and funding priorities are informed by a neighbourhood’s perspective” (Brillinger, 2012: 1).

When a location has been identified as an NIA, it is officially made eligible for specific funding and focused policy efforts. However, many of these policies and processes have lacked sustainable and long-term funding (Jane and Finch Task Force, 2015: 19). As an example, real investment interest in the Jane-Finch community is not a priority. There is a lack of community insight and direction for policy initiatives and the city government places a heavy emphasis on reports and recommendations that lead to no tangible changes at the institutional or local level (Jane and Finch Task Force, 2015: 19). Instead, the City of Toronto focuses on investing in locations in which there is a possibility to generate revenue and growth, such as within the downtown core. These areas are prioritized due to the low risk and high payoff that they offer. This form of profit-driven policy worsens the spatialization of poverty in the city and puts racialized communities in harm by significantly decreasing their quality of life (Jane and Finch Task Force, 2015). The geographic patterning of the city’s investment in socially mixed redevelopment projects demonstrates how segments of people and professions responsible for building and planning Toronto’s urban space focus on consolidating gentrification trends, opposed to establishing a policy response to address the underlying issues which cause concentrated poverty (Jane and Finch Task Force, 2015).

The amended 2012 Toronto Strong Neighbourhood Strategy changed the identification of ‘priority neighborhoods’ to ‘Neighbourhood Improvement Areas’, proposing new ways to target funding, and listing new ways to determine the priority that act as a more progressive and ethical criterion (Brillinger, 2012). However, there were still concerns with the way these indicators would be regarded and understood across geographies and social and class lines (Jane and Finch Task Force, 2015). Strategies that have been added to the amended plan are a new community consultation requirement and five key indicators: economic opportunities, social development, participation in decision making, healthy lives, and physical surroundings (City of Toronto, January 28, 2014). It is intended that these processes will improve some of the underlying concerns from the 2005 Plan. However, it would be naive to believe a program that was unable to equitably execute the task of improving many ‘priority neighbourhoods’ will be able to accomplish goals with minor adjustments when the premises of the plan remain the same.

Through their policies and reports, NIA’s and the TSNS sought to accomplish a similar mission to the many planning institutions’ ‘calls to action’ by holding themselves and the profession accountable and addressing inequities within our built form. However, without tangible change and deep institutional examination, programs such as NIA’s make superficial changes and continue to operate within structures that do not support equity initiatives.

It is critical to re-examine the intention of the social development plan and understand some of the deeper systemic issues that must be addressed before attempting to ‘enhance’ many of these communities that are at a disadvantage due to factors outside of their control. Without considering place making practices and truly centering the needs and perspectives of the community, institutional bodies such as urban planning will continue to perpetuate many of the injustices crippling these low-income and racialized communities.

Urban Revitalization and Social Mixing

In current times, urban planning heavily focuses on development that promotes complete, walkable, and livable communities through strategies such as smart growth and new urbanism. However, without prioritizing the inclusion of equity and social justice into these nuanced processes, planners continue to inadequately serve the health and well-being of disadvantaged populations. As development increases and communities endorse upscale design and expansion, disadvantaged groups continue to be displaced and unable to reap the benefits of the resources being brought in that center around economic opportunities and health promotion. Community revitalization is viewed as a strategy to improve the health and wellbeing of community members; however, we continue to see inner cities in distress because community revitalization does not adequately account for “structural racism, power, and social class inequality in its approach to development” (Taylor and Cole, 2001: 2).

There is an apparent gap between good intentions and bad practices when analyzing the outcomes of many planning policies that were put in place to help communities thrive. Urban revitalization and social mixing projects in Toronto are good examples of how policies put in place to restore aspects of a community end up causing disproportionate harm and benefits across geographies. There is a disproportionate burden faced by disadvantaged populations (historically excluded) through urban revitalization, as these projects generally benefit affluent populations through social, economic, and environmental developments resulting in inequities within our built form (Wilson, Hutson, and Mujahid, 2008).

The built environment in inner cities have become the epicentre where structural racism and inequality are reflected and displayed through the overrepresentation of “economic marginalization, low-wages, inadequate schools, bad housing, abandoned buildings, dilapidated neighborhoods, blight,

poverty, poor health, crime, violence, and family instability” (Taylor, 2001: 2). The combination of racism, financial limitations or outright precarity, and the land rent structure of the urban region creates a dynamic that forcibly drives low-income groups to live on the cheapest and most undesirable residential lands in the metropolitan regions (Taylor, 2001). There is an obvious contradiction that exists within inner-city development and communities. The inner city’s wealth-producing communities contribute to regional growth and development; however, they do not offer the same contribution to the growth and development of inner city’s resident communities: “they are in the community, but not of the community” (Taylor, 2001: 2). This contradiction needs to be understood to truly formulate strategic plans and actions that are effective in attacking structures of inequality and intensify efforts to transform the built environment. Traditional urban development approaches assume that “increased financial investments in commercial activities will have a multiplier effect on inner-city communities, which will spawn jobs and opportunities, bolster property values, and improve housing and neighborhood conditions” (Taylor, 2001: 4). However, what is often unrecognized is that poor conditions within inner cities often continue due to inadequate approaches to community development and neighborhood revitalization. The reconstructing of inner cities is most often a market-driven process to benefit developers. Therefore, initiatives are often project-oriented and evolve in a fragmentary fashion, and without direction from a comprehensive neighborhood development plan. The outcome is often a large and expensive development project that negatively impacts the lives of communities due to the institutional racism and lack of representation that remains within the city building profession.

The lack of consideration of structural racism and social class inequality into revitalization projects rejects the notion that racialization and classism shape policies and practices that “reinforce color lines and perpetuate the urban crisis” (Taylor and Cole, 2001: 2). Community revitalization was meant to aid in

transforming disadvantaged neighborhoods into communities that had opportunities by breaking the cycle of inner-city distress (Taylor and Cole, 2001). However, the movement failed to achieve the mission it sought out to accomplish. Now, as argued by Taylor and Cole (2001: 4), we see “community development fragmented into a series of uncoordinated, disjointed activities in which the sum is much less than the individual parts: enterprise zones, community development corporations, community economic development, community building, social capital initiatives, community policing, university-community partnerships, faith-based initiatives, and most recently, comprehensive community initiatives.” The revitalization movement has failed to adequately and effectively reconstruct inner-city neighborhoods because it has yet to challenge the status quo of social, political, and economic neglect within these deteriorating neighborhoods (Taylor and Cole, 2001).

The fundamental cause of inner-city distress stems from structural racism and social class inequality (Taylor and Cole, 2001). Until those issues are adequately addressed and challenged at a systemic level, we will continue to see inner-city neighborhoods crumble. A “structuralist approach” to community revitalization might be needed to appropriately address issues of distress within inner cities (Taylor and Cole, 2001: 8). The discussion of revitalization efforts cannot be fully explored and comprehended without recognizing and understanding its ties to race (Ross and Leigh, 2000). This entangled relationship between inner-city revitalization and race presents a challenge for many professionals and non-professionals due to the levels of complexity that emerges when viewing revitalizing through the lens of race (Ross and Leigh, 2000). Without this deeper analysis, we risk harming racialized and low-income people and communities. It is critical for the planning profession to reimagine the lens through which they restore and revitalize communities. Such reimagining also involves an interdisciplinary and intersectional approach to how the profession plans and designs within the

built environment. The “calls to action” made within the summer of 2020 call out and bring forward many of the racist and inequitable practices planners have been participating within and make recommendations and next step action items to move the profession in a direction that supports the true merit and purpose of urban planning.

Toronto Don Mount Court and Toronto’s Regent Park are two prime examples of social mixing and urban revitalization projects that failed to address race and class concerns. The two projects are Canada’s largest public housing redevelopment projects which transformed the entire physical layout, housing stock and population of both low-income communities. They were transformed and revitalized into social mixed communities with a combination of public and private housing and mixed land uses. This notion of socially mixed public housing redevelopments in Toronto is “the practical implementation of an urban planning and policy-making philosophy that has become the new conventional wisdom in North America and beyond” (August, 2008: 83). However, it falls short by not considering many of the race and class concerns mentioned in previous paragraphs that come to play when integrating a variety of different land uses and income brackets into a previously established community. Social mixing policy is intended to increase socio-economic diversity by correcting the “over-and under-representation of certain groups in comparison with the wider city” (Van Kempen and Ozuekren, 1998 cited in August, 2008: 83). However, this notion heavily depends on the middle class to come in and “fix” the so-called crime-ridden, and poverty-filled communities composed of primarily racialized people.

According to August (2008: 84), social mixing policies are intended to “promote social harmony, reduce social tension, and raise the standards of the lower classes by nurturing a spirit of emulation.” They are also in place to “provide community leaders in all urban areas, provide a diversified

employment base and economic stability, and to maintain essential services at a minimum expense through mix in housing” (August, 2008: 85).

When analyzing the intentions of social mixing policies, I can't help but underscore the lack of care and humanity being considered within these policies. While I do believe there are benefits within the social mix model, I see many gaps and shortcomings as the policy fails to consider culture, heritage and place-making that has occurred in many of these low-income and racialized communities that are being revitalized and redeveloped. Another concern is that these redevelopments occur within low-income neighborhoods, never within affluent communities. Such an approach essentially insinuates that these predominantly racialized and poor neighbourhoods are in need of ‘saving’ which is believed to be accomplished by bringing higher-income earning, i.e., mainly white populations into the community with the result of intense gentrification, relocation and a loss in a sense of community.

In Toronto's 1986 Official Plan, mixing is listed as the first principle for a “successful Toronto” stating that “diversity is our key to social, economic, and cultural life” (August,2008: 89). However, this idea of mixing does not consider the implications on residents that have developed a sense of culture and connectivity to their communities. It also does not consider race and class implications of social mixing. Policies such as social mix continue to reinforce institutional racism that we see being reflected in communities. The geographies of Toronto neighbourhoods (as demonstrated by Hulchanski, 2019) show that primarily low-income racialized communities are at a drastic disadvantage even when policies such as social mix attempt to sell the notion that they are for the betterment of the larger community. In Toronto, municipal policies require a mix of housing in ‘new neighbourhoods’ with a proportion devoted to affordable housing units. However, this concept is critical to analyze as many of these so-called new neighbourhoods emerge in low-income/racialized communities that end up getting gentrified. It is rare to see

such development being built in more affluent neighbourhoods, and even if such form of development is suggested or does emerge, it is likely that more affluent, often white community members will mobilize to prevent social mixed development from 'tainting' their neighbourhoods and property values.

Through social mixing, governments are essentially aiming to utilize middle-class resettlement as a tool to facilitate "social inclusion, greater social interactions and raise local levels of social capital" (Walks, Maaranen, 2008: 294) The hope is to also reduce social problems and other neighbourhood effects stemming from concentrated poverty (Walks and Maaranen, 2008). This theory; however, blatantly ignores racism and classism by shifting the blame to low income/racialized communities as being crime-ridden, impoverished and lacking social cohesion by stating that middle-class resettlement is the 'cure' to many of the "social problems and other neighbourhood effects stemming from concentrated poverty" (Walks and Maaranen, 2008: 294). Walks and Maaranen (2008: 294) contend that gentrification generally results in "heightened segregation and racial and class conflict, particularly when it involves competition for scarce housing resources in a tight rental market. In recent years, social mixing is used as a way to "justify the redevelopment of low-income communities and public housing projects" (Walks and Maaranen, 2008: 96). This powerful planning processes and the ideologies that have emerged through social mix have prevented the policy from receiving more criticism and push back regarding many inequitable factors that emerged. Many urban scholars believe that social mixing "serves as a cover for outright gentrification and displacement of the urban poor" (Mele, 2019: 36). The disadvantages tied to racialized identity and position through social mix developments are dismissed through a market-driven economic explanation that downplays the role of race and class.

Gentrification as an Outcome of Planning Policies

Gentrification is a process that is often overshadowed by concepts such as neighbourhood revitalization or urban regeneration that are said to be used as a positive public policy tool that serve social and economic purposes (Cameron, 2003; Lees et al., 2007; cited in Walks and Maaranen, 2008). Gentrification within low-income/racialized neighbourhoods is commonly presented as a way to improve and restore the community. According to Walks and Maaranen (2008: 293), this practice is accomplished by “infusing the market housing, and/or upgrading the existing stock.” However, the form of revitalization that results in gentrification does not align with the purpose of urban revitalization and/or regeneration as it misses the piece of serving its “social purpose”. Although it may accomplish its economic goal, the result is a disconnected and displaced group of people who do not get to reap the benefits that emerge from this form of community enhancement. These strategies take advantage of the land that many racialized and low-income people depend on as survival, for the sole purpose of economic gain. In Toronto, we see the correlation between quick and intense gentrification and heightened levels of income polarization and “reduced levels of social diversity and social mix within gentrifying neighbourhoods” (Walks and Maaranen, 2008: 321). The entire approach is missing the consideration of people and humanity, which as a result creates spaces that lack a real sense of place and belonging.

As outlined previously, systemic racial discrimination is a fundamental cause of the uneven spatial distribution of resources affecting the health, education and housing conditions of particular groups in cities (Mele, 2019). Race plays a critical role in how urban development unfolds, and by failing to consider class and race in urban planning policies and their impacts on the ground level, we continue to plan and create segregated and divided cities that harm our most marginalized members of society. Urban development utilizes a strategy of place promotion and image construction, bringing in race and class as a way to

promote neighbourhoods in the process of being revitalized. However, for racialized communities, the urban development process attempts to essentially mould the disparities between impoverished communities and the surrounding community and city context to show a more cohesive image of revitalization. According to Mele (2019: 29), “developers of areas within cities strongly identified as minority and poor are compelled to address the fact that race, reputation, urban space and middle-class white preferences continue to matter to any effort to allure new consumers and future residents.” This is the case of the Regent Park revitalization project, a large-scale redevelopment site in downtown Toronto which has experienced two forms of strategic racialization within the process of redevelopment: “the overemphasis on race as discursively tied to urban social problems, and the de-emphasis on race in social mix redevelopment” (Mele, 2019: 30). As Mele (2019: 30) also states, “the transformation of Regent Park over a half-century pivots around varying efforts to improve, contain and integrate the urban poor – a process in which race, or more precisely, representations of race have always figured prominently.” The image of Regent Park has always centered around the concept of a broken community, with the majority of blame casted upon the racialized members of the community. According to Mele (2019: 31), “Regent Park loomed in the public imagination as a dangerous space beset by violence, street crime and the proliferation of illegal drugs and populated by a multicultural immigrant community, composed of the uneducated, the unemployed, single mothers and unruly teenagers.” The negative image portrayal of Regent Park was attributed to the demographic composition of residents, rather than the economic conditions or the distribution of provincial and municipal housing policies (Mele, 2019). Rather than institutional and governmental bodies taking responsibility for their shortcomings of underinvestment, the community composed of predominantly low income and racialized people carried the responsibility and blame for the material decay conditions of Regent Park.

The Regent Park revitalization project's objectives heavily center around race. For Mele (2019: 33), “[t]he de-concentration of poverty through the phased displacement of all poor, minority residents, most of whom are non-white immigrant families, followed by and the phased replacement with a mixed-income community comprised of middle- and upper-class (condominium owners) and low-income (social housing renters) residents.” Over the years Regent Park became marketed as a “challenged” community. This labelling allowed city officials to utilize discourses of stigmatization to “promise a solution based on the reintegration of the ‘ghetto’ with the city at large” (Mele, 2019: 34). This discourse eventually led city officials and developers to begin imagining the redevelopment of a large area of the city core land occupied by Regent Park in 2000. That stigmatization allowed for action to occur that would create room for middle-class settlement and consumption while pronging to solve the challenge of concentrated poverty in the downtown core.

The outcome of this redevelopment was the displacement of poverty and pre-existing community members through the demolition of social housing and social life. This process does not solve urban poverty, rather it eliminates the cultural and racialized mixes that built social networks and connectivity within Regent Park. This process disrupts “social-spatial patterns and unwritten rules of public behavior and social interaction among children, teenagers and the elderly. It also weakens grassroots political mobilization among various micro-communities within Regent Park” (Mele, 2019: 34-35). When the City of Toronto announced the redevelopment plan of Regent Park the systemic problem of concentrated poverty had already been tied to race and low-income people.

As the urban planning institution continues to reimagine its processes and practices, following the events and mobilizations that took place in summer 2020, calls to action and statements emerge from different planning-related bodies. It is essential that urbanists and the urban planning profession take a critical look at the policies and processes they are currently endorsing and

following as well as the institutional racism that exists, the lack of representation within the profession, and the shortfalls of planning schools when it comes to teaching and incorporating equity and inclusion within their curriculum as these institutions are responsible for creating the next generation of planners.

2. CALLS TO ACTION: URBAN PLANNING APPROACHES ANTI-BLACK RACISM

The “calls to action” statements made by planning professionals and institutions over summer 2020 identify the role that the profession has played in many of the harms brought forth upon our built environments. These calls act as a no-longer inevitable starting point for the profession to incorporate equity and inclusion into policies and processes, moving away from performative surface-level changes.

This section examines the anti-racism calls to action made and released by planning institutions, professionals, and educational institutes. The section primarily focuses on the calls to action within the Canadian urban context in relation to city planning, development, and design primarily focusing on the Ontario context; however, I also make some references to similar calls in the United States. In analyzing the recent calls for action in planning, I aim to uncover urban planning’s role in creating and perpetuating racist ideologies and systems for the discipline to progress, dismantle, and address various inequities associated with urban development and design.

The planning profession in North America has publicly acknowledged and stated that they will begin to address the institutional racism that hinders the discipline through a variety of recommendations ranging from education and training surrounding combating racism and inequity, more representation within the profession, and the acknowledgment of the discrimination wrought by the planning profession itself, which led to structural disadvantages of

racialized communities. In light of the rise of discussion regarding racial inequities and systemic and institutional racism, it is timely to explore urban planning as a professional and institutional practice and the role this discipline plays in perpetuating racial inequalities in the urban context. Racialized populations have been oppressed and have been facing inequities in various contexts such as housing, income disparities, health, and employment for centuries. Although chattel slavery is a thing of the past, Black people and communities are still subjected to slavery in different forms – whether through the legacies and realities of Jim Crow, redlining, residential segregation, and policing to name a few.

The calls to action demand and identify the need for urban planning as an institutional and professional practice to address their oppressive and colonial roots and to move forward as an equitable and progressive discipline. It is important to highlight that these calls to action alone cannot combat and transform the profession alone. However, with further action taken by institutes, there is a possibility for the discipline to finally represent the public.

For this section, I utilized a critical discourse analysis and content analysis framework to carry out my research analysis and methodology. My analysis of the recent calls to action focuses on identifying keywords and themes within the literature that are centered around: *anti-Black racism, urban planning/development/design, (in)equities, (in)justice, environmental racism, structural/systemic and institutional racism, recommendations and inclusiveness*. The intention is to focus on the context as well as the discourse within the calls to action, but also to incorporate other overlapping contexts to dig deeper into the research question regarding anti-Black racism in urban planning.

An analysis of each call within each subsection section highlights key points and messaging of the call using selected keywords, motivations, and expectations for and from the call to action, and lastly recommendations and action items that emerged because of these calls, notably developing a

committee or task force. Following the analysis portion, I compare and contrast the calls to action within each group of interlocutors and between them. I do this by identifying 4 key topics and discuss how each call and institution addressed them: *systemic reform, representation within the profession, education and training surrounding combating racism and inequity, and acknowledgment of the discrimination wrought by the planning profession itself*- which led to structural disadvantages in housing, transportation, education, and employment that lasts to this day (APA, 2020). I chronologically organized the calls to action into three subsections: institutional, professional, and educational. The following section conducts an individual analysis of each call followed by a comparative analysis between the calls and within each group of interlocutors.

Before delving into the calls to action, I would like to reiterate that my analysis occurred between August 2020 and February 2021, therefore, some information might have been released after this time period. It is also possible that there is internal work being done within institutions that I may not have direct access to. This section is intended to be a high-level analysis based on content that was found online, as well as through a few semi-structured interviews.

Institutional calls being analyzed came from:

- Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP)
- American Planning Association (APA)
- Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI)
- New Brunswick Association of Planners (NBAP)
- Licensed Professional Planners Association of Nova Scotia (LPPANS)
- Urban Land Institute (ULI)
- Canadian Urban Institute (CUI)

Overall, these planning institutes have acknowledged the responsibility to address racism within planning and the institutional need for institutional

change at various levels within policy. Each institute covered in this paper has laid out their action items and the role they intend to move forward to appropriately address anti-Black racism within planning. Many of these institutions have acknowledged the past harms that have been placed upon Black people and Black communities in the hands of historical and continuing planning and planning practices. Some institutes such as OPPI and CIP have been more progressive and action-oriented within their next steps to create change at a systemic level, whereas organizations such as ULI and CUI have taken a step back and utilized their platform to host webinars and events that focus on dialogue and conversations.

Individual and collective calls from planning professionals are:

- Black Planning Project (response letter to OPPI)
- Amina Yasin's article "Whose Streets? Black Streets" in *The Tyee*, Vancouver
- Jay Pitter's Call to Courage (Open letter to Canadian Urbanists)

Professionals in the field have long been aware/subjected to inequities, but May 2021 generated public calls denouncing the inequities caused by the planning profession that have been occurring for centuries. Many calls initiated at the institutional level occurred as a reaction to calls and petitions being circulated by professionals on the ground level. As individuals and collectives, they are demanding for the institutional level to own their wrongdoings and make progressive changes through systemic policy reform. There is a need for planning as an institution and those working within it to acknowledge the impact of the past harms, trauma, and racism on current-day policies and regulations that dictate and control land use. Simple statements acknowledging solidarity is not enough to get at the root cause of anti-Black racism that exists within the planning profession. Professionals like Jay Pitter and organizations such as the Black Planning project have tirelessly pushed an

agenda forward with OPPI and CUI to bring forward a history of pain and suffering inflicted on Black people of color and generate a discussion of anti-Black racism in which resistance and ignorance is prevalent.

Selected educational calls were also issued by:

- Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning
- University of Toronto- Geography and Planning Department
- Ryerson University – School of Urban and Regional Planning

Educational institutes are prioritizing and recognizing the need for curriculum reform, more support for mentorship/internship opportunities for Black and Indigenous people of color (BIPOC) students, and more representation within faculty. Institutions such as the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning and University of Toronto Geography and Planning Department have laid out action items and next steps to make their planning faculty members more representative and equitable for Black students of color. However, Ryerson University has taken less of a forward-facing action-oriented approach following their call, with fewer conversations being had about hiring Black and racialized planners and adjusting their curriculum. This raises concern regarding how the school will move forward in addressing anti-Black racism within their planning department and within their curriculum. Academic institutions have undeniably acted based on pushback from students that insisted on long-overdue more intentional and proactive actions. In the following analysis, you will notice that the educational institutes released statements after the student body rallied together and demanded action through their “calls to action”.

Institutional Acknowledgement

“The Canadian planning profession has an ethical responsibility to work for the public good. Applying an equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) lens to all levels

of planning practice is required to confront and address systemic racism and discrimination in the governance systems, practices, and policies that planners implement, create, and influence” (Canadian Institute of Planners, August 5, 2020).

In 2018, the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) hosted a training session on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) guided by HRx. As an outcome the CIP Board recognized social equity as a policy priority and formed the social equity committee as a way to better understand the current state of their workforce and membership, define goals and establish strategic priorities. CIP committed to establishing a more inclusive culture within the organization and more broadly the planning profession in Canada.

As a result, in 2020 the EDI roadmap, along with necessary resourcing, was endorsed by the Board at CIP. The EDI Road map has four core areas covered over a 5-year period to be addressed and acts as a tool to “provide a structured, measurable, and systematic approach to embed EDI into the Institute and across the planning profession” (Canadian Institute of Planner, 2020).

In their leadership commitment, the CIP Board and Chief Executive Officer declare their commitment to EDI, align stakeholders around the importance of EDI and allocate resources to sustain EDI effort over time. CIP’s education and communication plan is to increase knowledge of EDI -- particularly for CIP leadership and industry change agents, raise awareness, build valuable insight into building an inclusive culture and build capacity within the profession by creating a shared understanding and common language for safe and productive conversations about EDI. “[E]quipped with foundational EDI knowledge and commitment from CIP leadership and change agents in the profession”, CIP declares being ready to identify, design, and implement systems, policies, practices, and processes that support a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive culture. These systems will begin the process of structurally embedding EDI in the profession, and the organization no longer relies solely on individuals to

champion this change. CIP commits to sustaining its efforts and measuring the impact of change initiatives, and to continuously adapt and enhance work overtime to position the organization as a leader in EDI in the planning profession.

The CIPs official statement of support highlights the accredited planning schools and provincial and territorial institutes and associations that have made commitments to recognize and fight racial injustices experienced by communities and within the planning profession. In an interview, Sheena Jardine-Olade, CIP Manager of Strategic Initiatives, shared that on behalf of CIP she also released on June 1 and June 17, 2020, a short statement on their Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook as well as in the CIP e-newsletter acknowledging the Black Lives Matter movement and their stance of solidarity. For Jardine-Olade (2020), these calls to action were a “show of solidarity and support and now we need a show of action.” She contends that the “calls helped them, and the public recognize who the leaders were and who really wanted to collaborate... where everyone was in their journey.”

Although CIP’s official statement is broad and does not lay out clear next steps or tangible items, their statement remains progressive as it follows with the release of their EDI roadmap highlighted above. CIP’s showcasing of the institutions that released calls to action and solidarity statements on their official website works to hold singular bodies that operate within the profession accountable. CIP is still in the initial phases of the EDI roadmap; however, they have made strides to build awareness and understanding, providing training for the Board, staff, and senior leadership of planning organizations across Canada. CIP launched a Diversity and Inclusion Insight survey to gain insights and statistical information about the profession.

I would've liked to see more self-reflection and accountability taken by CIP in an official statement as they act as a guiding institute for the profession of

planning in Canada. This makes them a body that many firms, planning schools and public sector planning figures look to for the next steps.

The American Planning Association (APA) had a more direct approach. The APA's call to action 'entitled Writing the Wrongs of Racial Inequality' was issued on May 31, 2020, and focuses on highlighting the killing of George Floyd that re-sparked the Black Lives Matter Movement. The institution highlights the impacts of structural racism and historical trauma inflicted on African American communities in the United States including discrimination brought by the planning profession itself "which has led to structural disadvantages in housing, transportation, education and employment that last until this day" defined in simpler terms as environmental injustice.

The APA "recognize[s] the reality of injustices and are working to help planners and others recognize and eradicate the "bad" policy decisions of the past". The APA states that they are working to center equity in all planning processes in keeping with their mission of creating "great communities for all." The following passage of the APA's statement highlights the work and policies in place to fight against racism within the profession "[f]rom our landmark *Planning for Equity Policy Guide* to the ethical principles that undergird the professional practice of planning articulated in the AICP Code of Ethics, to the new online public engagement toolkit to ensure that all voices are heard". The APA has promised to continue to develop and deliver tools, techniques, support, and encouragement to planners tirelessly combating all forms of racism and inequity.

The APA's statement was necessary as they are the planning body that the profession looks towards for guidance and direction. The statement covered a lot of ground; however, it did not go into enough detail pertaining to what the institute will do moving forward to address anti-Black racism within planning processes. The APA used inclusive language such as "great communities for all," "stand in solidarity" or "together we can take an active role in rebuilding

and transforming communities to create a society that ensures safety, health, and prosperity for all its inhabitants.” However, the language used in the statement was alarming as it discredited much of the pain and suffering that African American people have endured within the built environment and labelled the obvious racist policies and processes as “bad decisions of the past” rather than calling them out for what they were and how they currently exist in present-day society. Although we are aware that racism placed upon Black people occur worldwide, the United States receives much more attention and public display of the injustices and harms brought upon Black people and communities. I believe the APA should have highlighted this in a larger manner due to the history of racism and slavery in the US.

Still, the APA has action items and policies in place that contribute towards a progressive professional culture and that work to dismantle systemic racism. In an interview conducted with Ms. Silvia Vargas Principal Planner at Calvin, Giordano & Associates (CGA) and sitting on the APA EDI committee, she highlighted many of the so-called “next steps” that the APA is taking forward. Vargas shared that “within the next 5 years we will see a very different AICP exam” and that “there will be a new adoption of an equity credit in the next cycle of their certification exam maintenance.”. For Vargas, these changes are “permeating a lot of other things (i.e., the way they do their conference).” Vargas argues that the “APA has been talking about representation initiatives for a few years.”

Less than a month after the killing of George Floyd, the Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI) took a progressive stance in addressing anti-Black racism within the profession. A few pivotal moments occurred in the summer of 2020. OPPI first released a statement of support to what on June 8. The Black Planning Project issued an open letter response on June 12. On June 19, OPPI Council approved a motion to meet with the Black Planning Project to better understand the suggested recommendations. The meeting occurred on July 30

and was facilitated with OPPI Council and staff, and Black Planning Project members. On September 15, OPPI Council approved a motion to create a task force devoted to developing a strategy or action plan to remove systemic barriers in planning practice that discriminate against black communities.

The OPPI's "call to action" starts off by mentioning the killing of George Floyd in a similar fashion as the APA call, followed by a broad statement about standing with people along with the fight against racism/discrimination and systemic injustice in our society. The OPPI states the professional role of planners in building sustainable communities for all and highlights their ability as an institution to break down barriers and improve communities through the lens of equity and inclusiveness. The OPPI also mentions the importance of recognizing individual privilege and how it impacts the way we see the world. OPPI's call to action specifically acknowledges the responsibility that the planning profession needs to take regarding the history that has been unjust to those who are not the dominant members of our society. The call specifically acknowledges: "we are part of a complex political and social system that inherently benefits some while suppressing others. It is time to reflect on instances where we have ill-defined the public interest we serve and have some uncomfortable but critical conversations."

The OPPI states that they aim to facilitate meaningful discourse on a variety of societal issues and provide leadership and guidance for their members and for the profession overall. The call to action also highlights some positive work on Indigenous planning perspectives, but they too highlight the fact that their work needs to be a collaborative effort.

The OPPI has stated that they will "build on the conversations we've started previously on issues such as adequate housing, access to community services and healthcare, access to technology, gentrification, and many more". The OPPI also highlighted the importance of hearing from the marginalized community members in order to bring the missing pieces and insights into

important conversations about city development and planning so that planners are better prepared in their roles.

President Justine Giancola also spoke to the work done with OPPI and the Black Planning project at the OPPI general meeting on October 7th, 2020, through her President's report to the membership. OPPI highlighted that their short-term goals included the creation of a Task Force made up of Black and non-Black planners and community members. This Task Force would support goals to guide the delivery of programming and changes implemented to combat systemic anti-Black racism and improve the professional capacity of the OPPI and planning community to acknowledge the human rights of Black peoples.”

The task force was established by OPPI in September 2020. The task force is in charge of developing a strategy and action plan to remove systemic barriers in the planning practice that perpetuate anti-Black racism against Black communities and that disproportionately limits employment opportunities for, and representation of Black planners in the planning profession. The task force will also seek guidance from an advisory group that will provide direction, input and advice to the task force at touchstone moments and quarterly reports updating the OPPI council on the progress of strategic priorities and issues of strategic significance. This task force was formed due to demands and conversations made and had with members from the Black Planning project.

In response to the OPPI's call to action, the Black Planning Project developed an Open letter dated June 12th, 2020, signed by 124 planners, affiliated professionals, and planning students which called for a conversation with OPPI to implement practices that confront systemic anti-Black racism.

A facilitation session was held on July 30th with the OPPI Council and staff, and Black Planning Project members which took a deeper look into the topics addressing anti-racism in the planning profession as highlighted in the open

letter written by the Black Planning Project. The main points raised by the Black Planning Project for OPPI consideration were to:

- Open pathways for more Black people to access accredited planning education;
- Support internship programs for emerging and early career Black planners;
- Assist planning organizations to support the fair mobility of Black planners to be hired and promoted, free of the anti-Black bias that sees Black planners overlooked;
- Support the networking of planning professionals who address anti-Black racism and systemic inequalities; and
- Integrate lessons and conversations on systemic historic and present-day anti-Black racism, Black people, and Black-led innovation as part of regular planning education for planning students, Continuous Professional Learning, and other OPPI programming.

The outcome of the July 30th meeting was for ongoing dialogue with the Black Planning Project and OPPI to prepare a report to the OPPI Council meeting for September 15th, 2020. The report included a summary chart that lists proposed actions, steps, and activities, timelines and (human and financial) resources, and how these items are tied to OPPI's mandate and strategic goals. As was highlighted above, the OPPI has taken progressive steps in addressing anti-Black racism in planning since the release of their statement. Clearly, pressure from members of the Black Planning Project and others professionals helped propel much of OPPI's plans and hold them accountable in addressing obvious and underlying issues of systemic and institutional racism in the profession. Although the OPPI's response to the Black Planning Project was not overly detailed, it generated multiple meetings and reports highlighting issues that exist within the profession alongside next steps and action items.

On the same June 8 that the OPPI issued their first statement, the Urban Land Institute (ULI) opens its call to action by highlighting the violent killing of George Floyd. Although its statement of solidarity and progressive change lacked actionable items, ULI did highlight that "actions and measures to

address historic racial inequities and violence, most well intended, have proven deeply inadequate”. ULI also acknowledged that “systemic racism permeates all parts of our society and economy – and the foundations of our cultural and legislative systems.” In their statement, ULI mentions attending the Canadian Urban Institute’s webinar on “how do we respond to anti-black racism in urbanist practices and conversations.”

ULI “acknowledge[s] the pain and suffering our members, our communities, and our cities have been experiencing for generations, but messages of shock, sympathy and support and promises of change, including the Urban Land Institute’s communiqué last week, won’t go far enough”. ULI stated that “this is not their moment” to host online activity relating to racial inequity, choosing to refrain for the time being. However, ULI highlighted some events that were to take place through their organization. Unfortunately, many of these events were not directly related to Black Lives Matter or systemic racism. Many of the planned webinars stuck to talk on inclusion and equity broadly. Two events were somewhat related: the co-convening of a multi-development and real estate industry association online dialog to reflect on race and social equity in the pursuit of city-building and the Redressing Black Displacement in Canada event held on February 1, 2021.

ULI’s statement was composed of vague commitments. ULI affirms its commitment to “continuing and expanding our diversity and inclusion initiative, and to implementing other initiatives to drive this necessary change within our industry” and to use “their platform to share best practices and develop strategies to guide us through times of uncertainty and change.”

ULI’s statement was brief and lacked institutional accountability. Although ULI highlighted many issues pertaining to the planning profession, I feel that more independent accountability is needed on how it operates as an institution and ways in which it will be progressing to make an internal change. ULI rather

pointed to the fact that they provide resources to individuals and institutes who operate within the realm of planning on their platform.

Other calls to action came from smaller professional organizations later in summer 2020. On July 8, 2020, the New Brunswick Association of Planners' (NBAP) issued a call to action recognizing the “reality of systemic discrimination that has led to structural inequality that continues to have an impact on communities today.” The association acknowledges the need to “confront the history of our profession – discriminatory zoning, environmental racism, gentrification, and urban renewal, the placement of infrastructure that disrupts communities, and the creation of public spaces that favor the privileged and harm the disadvantaged.” NBAP particularly highlighted the responsibility of planners: “As planners, we play a vital role in shaping policy decisions through our recommendations to local councils and advisory committees. We also help determine what voices are elevated during public participation processes.”

The NBAP affirms its commitment to advocate for social equity and provide education opportunities to members of the profession through continuous professional learning, partnerships with educational institutions in order to elevate the awareness of planning equity issues within curricula, the creation of an equity scholarship, and advocacy of social equity as a core professional competency.

Similarly, on August 26, 2020, the Licensed Professional Planners Association of Nova Scotia (LPPANS) pledged to work against racism and discrimination. LPPANS stated that “we must acknowledge the history of racism in how our profession has failed to treat Black Nova Scotian and Mi’kmaq communities with the respect and dignity they deserve.” LPPANS pledges to work to eliminate systemic racism and discrimination from the planning profession. LPPANS called to action their position to utilize their influence and resources and to commit to fostering individual and institutional change. The organization promised to seek out partnerships with racialized communities to get some of

the suggested work started. In their call to action, LPPANS committed to working to ensure that they are developing planning practitioners who understand how institutional policies and practices systematically disadvantage Black and Indigenous communities, and who will challenge and change policies and practices to promote social equity and racial justice. Their call to action focused on educating and engaging members in an “honest discussion about systemic racism and the ways in which planning practices can perpetuate racism.” LPPANS also affirm their commitment “to amplify the voices of Black and Mi’kmaq communities and their experiences, unique histories, and cultures. This will include inviting more diverse voices to deliver the professional development opportunities we offer and working to build relationships with these communities.” Their commitment also translates into the need “to support, recruit and welcome people from Black and Mi’kmaq communities to become professional planners and to assist them through their career” while achieving their overall desire “to fight systemic racism and to build equity, social justice, and strong communities.” At the same time, LPANNS also acknowledged that they recognize that these action items are just the start of their fight against institutional anti-Black racism.

Professionals’ Calls to Courage

The Canadian Urban Institute (CUI) did not release any form of “call to action”; however, it hosted a webinar event titled: *How do we respond to anti-Black racism in urbanist practices and conversations?* on June 10, 2020.

This CUI event was moderated by Jay Pitter. Panelists included Orlando Bailey, Director of Engagement, Bridge Detroit & Detroit Host, Urban Consulate; Tamika Butler, Director of Planning for California and Director of Equity and Inclusion, Toole Design; Anthonia Ogundele, Founder, EthósLab; and Will Prosper, Montréal-Nord Républik & Hoodstock.

The event coincided with the launch of Jay Pitter’s “Call to Courage: An Open Letter to Canadian Urbanists” (June 10, 2020). Pitter’s “Call to Courage” highlights many aspects related to anti-Blackness in urbanism, as well as issues supporting how anti-Black racism is being handled, called out, and addressed at the institutional level in light of the killing of George Floyd and the re-emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement. For Pitter (2020), “the lack of action in the field of urbanism is disheartening given that a civil uprising is unfolding against the backdrop of the public realm – the central domain of urbanism practitioners.”

Pitter’s “Call to Courage” notes that the problem with many statements and calls being made in the media is that they fail to unpack the “pluralistic publics within the category of public and systemic inequities that inform whose interests are considered worthy of protecting”. Pitter also mentioned the falling short of unpacking “complex goals” within many of the calls to action. She highlighted the lack of clarity within these calls when it comes to concrete and measurable action items. She connected this lack of clarity of organizations’ role in advancing social equity as a reason behind why Black people and numerous other equity-seeking groups “have been harmed, both unintentionally and callously, by various professional disciplines.” Pitter provided various examples of how “anti-Blackness is profoundly spatialized and clearly tethered to land use, amenity use, public space enforcement, safe streets, mobility, and housing”. Pitter’s Call to Courage made clear that “the public realm and built environment are not simply a backdrop to the current civil unrest; urbanism has contributed to the racial inequities inciting it”.

Pitter’s (2020) call brought attention to the various ways that anti-Black racism is “lodged deep within the foundations of Canadian cities” through the profound history of slavery in Canada thrusting Black people into social and economic margins, through segregation laws and practices preventing Black people from freely accessing public spaces, through the denial of equal access

to colonial land grants and municipal covenants preventing Black people from settling in particular neighborhoods, and continuing today through urban renewal schemes destroying Black communities (e.g., Africville and Hogan's Alley) "leading to the obliteration of invaluable social networks and generations of displacement trauma."

The Canadian Urban Institute (2020) summarized the June 10, 2020 Panel moderated by Jay Pitter into 5 key takeaways as follow:

"Public spaces are not neutral: Alienation in the public realm is a lived experience for Black communities around the world, and Black bodies are often seen as a threat in public space. Public spaces are sites of everyday racism and oppression. The

Black communities are experiencing multiple crises at once in very different ways: While the COVID-19 pandemic continues to threaten Black communities... institutional racism represents another crisis altogether. In fact, these two intertwined crises are embedded in physical spaces themselves.

We need to make space for Black grief: The emotional burden of intergenerational trauma and alienation is immense: this cannot be borne by Black communities alone, nor is it their responsibility to educate others about history or how to be anti-racist... Everyone in the urbanist community must rethink their roles in this system and actively empower marginalized voices.

Academia and urban planning professions have a critical role to play: Academic institutions and professors need to reflect on amplifying Black experience and scholarship in the curriculum and beyond. This exclusion of Black voices does not, however, end in the classroom: it is present in the workplace as well.

There are many tangible ways to take necessary action: Uncomfortable conversations mark only the beginning of a long-term effort to eradicate anti-Black racism. Non-Black urban planners must listen to and amplify Black voices."

This particular event was a first in terms of collaboration between professionals and professional organizations. CUI took no independent accountability; rather, they brought on Black planning professions to share

their wisdom with the planners, should OPPI decide to actively resolve anti-Black racism in the Planning profession and monitor results.

These professional and institutional conversations about racism in the planning profession mark a turning point but for many Black planners, these issues were far from new. Abigail Moriah (2021) working at New Commons Development, a non-profit real estate development, who recently launched the Black Planning Project and the Mentoring Initiative for Indigenous and Planners of Colour shared that “there were private conversations about anti-Black racism in the profession which now became public”. Nevertheless, she added that for many professional organizations, “it was reckoning and recognizing that anti-Black racism is real, and needs to be acknowledged in order to move forward in addressing in.” This view is echoed by Cheryll Case (2021), owner of CP Planning, for whom these calls to action were a way to “acknowledge that the systemic racism and inequities within the profession are true and have been.” Like Moriah, Case viewed these calls as the “action that is needed to address the inequalities and systemic discrimination that has been negatively impacting the Black community.”

The importance of the moment is emphasized by Francis Kwashie, senior planner for the City of Toronto. As Kwashie (2021) states: “We have been banging the drum for a while and nothing was being done”. He shared that “the public killing of George Floyd made it so there was no longer a hiding place, adding that “no one could hide the hypocrisy and their complicity anymore.”

All Black planners interviewed agree. A planner who chose to stay anonymous stated that “George Floyd was the catalyst for these calls.” As stated by Moriah (2021), “it’s horrible but the killing of George Floyd is the reason for action. Continuing to say that “people would still be hiding, or unaware, not acknowledging anti-Black racism if it did not occur.” Many other planners such as Sheena Jardine-Oldae also stated that “without this moment we wouldn’t be where we are today.” Another anonymous planner shared that

“George Floyd was the truth and reconciliation moment for the planning profession.” This individual also contends that the calls were sparked “partly due to the pandemic and the reinforcement of the disproportionate share of haves and have nots in our society” observing that “the George Floyd moment and the pandemic made spatialized racism much more specific to planning.”

For Moriah (2021), “this is a wake-up call cannot be ignored, it was a life that shifted how people think about these things”. All interviewees pointed to the fact that if it were not for the tragic and public murder of George Floyd, there would not be the same allocated space to talk about these issues. All interviewees hope that this wake-up call will create a systemic shift. In the words of Silvia Vargas, Principal Planner at Calvin, Giordano & Associates (CGA), “last year was a time of reckoning to ensure the profession and organizations are more open and inclusive to societies as well as a time to come to terms more clearly and recognizing the role the profession has played.”

On June 18, 2020, Amina Yasin, planner and Vancouver city planning commissioner, published a captivating article entitled “Whose Streets? Black Streets” in *The Tyee*, an independent online news magazine from British Columbia. Not only did this article read as a “call to action”, but it also highlighted many of the inequities and systemic challenges that exist within the planning institution.

Yasin (2020) vividly linked the murder of George Floyd and planning actions when she states that “[i]t is unacceptable for our profession to continue to ignore the I can’t breathe call for life-saving from racialized communities being strangled by city planning initiative and policing” and concludes that “[p]lanners, elected official and lover of cities can answer their call by lifting their knee from the necks of racialized communities “to help them “breathe” and help them live.”

Yasin (2020) calls planners and urbanists to action by stating “it’s time to reckon with the racism rampant in city-building” and to acknowledge the

present-day connections between race, place, and power. For Yasin (2020) “there is no moving forward without acknowledging this historic and tethered relationship between public space, enforcement, and anti-Blackness.” Yasin (2020) identified four anti-racist actions that can be taken to progress anti-Black racism in urban planning. She calls on planners to first **recognize their role** and to reflect on the current pandemic-related limited “access to the city and its streets compares to the experiences of those who’ve always had their mobility restricted through racist policing and ableist city planning.” Yasin (2020) also asks to **divest from the theory of crime prevention through environmental design** enshrining safety for some at the detriment of others being perceived as ‘threats. Consequently, and echoing anti-racist and post-Floyd mobilizations, she calls on **defunding policing** (and instead reinvesting in health, housing, racism, opioid crises). And finally, Yasin (2020) also calls for abolishing **‘communicide’ urban planning**, as defined by Alan Morris (2018), as the systematic and deliberate destruction of a place-based community in order to disempower and disperse tenants, which results in intergenerational suffering. Amina Yasin (2020) highlights two immediate anti-racist actions accessible by all planners: “To stop systematically “revitalizing” predominantly Black and Indigenous communities while seeing other neighborhoods as being the pinnacle of peak livability or perfection ... and... to donate to and sign petitions for local Black community organizations working to redress historic city planning and policing harm.”

The Need for Curriculum Changes

The **Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP)’s anti-racism statement** (issued on June 5, 2020) begins by acknowledging the murder of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and countless other Black and Brown bodies. It does this in a similar manner as many of the other calls to action; however, it does go into more detail by highlighting the police involvement. The call also

acknowledges that these deaths show the path of racist and inequitable systems that harm and deeply affect Black and Brown people and their communities at a disproportionate rate. An important part of the call to action by ACSP (2020) reads “we are in the midst of only the most recent event in a history of violence inflicted upon Black, Indigenous and people of color in the United States. Planning practices and education have often upheld power imbalances and undergird structures of White supremacy that persist to this day.” This critical statement acknowledges the planning professional’s role in perpetuating racial inequalities. The ACSP also recognizes that such statement is only a starting point. Their call to action speaks directly to their value of inclusivity while explicitly speaking to the role planning has had in sustaining oppressive structures such as racism. ACSP (2020) has committed to continuing to work with their members to turn their statements into action in order to produce tangible actions that “center justice in planning research and education”. ACSP (2020) specifically commits to “confronting and dismantling our nation’s long history of White supremacy and in building knowledge and pedagogy that helps planners”.

An important aspect to note is that much of what ACSP is stating remains quite vague, lacks evidence and comes off as performative. Although this statement acts as an important step forward, ACSP must self-reflect and understand that there is much work that needs to be done from within. ACSP itself is white- dominated, and it is more likely than not that many people that contributed to writing this call to action were white. This speaks volumes to some of the language used in their call and some of the performative ways ACSP has highlighted they will be moving forward.

In June of 2020, the governing board of ACSP established a working group consisting of board members tasked with reviewing past reports of the Planners of Color Interest Group, the Committee on Diversity, and other task forces. A working plan was established by ACSP from the analysis of the events

of summer 2020. Action items have been categorized into three sections: near term, long term/ under consideration, and continuing actions (These can be viewed in detail on the ACSP website).

The anti-racism statement released by the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning on June 5, 2020 was met with a response from Black Faculty on June 18, 2020 (posted on ACSP, 2020).

I will not go in great detail about the **Black Faculty response to the ACSP statement**, however, it is key to acknowledge it as they bring up many critical points and highlight elements that were left out of the original call made by ACSP. Their response expressed disappointment and burden and I cite extensively:

“We wish to express our profound disappointment in the process and outcome of the *ACSP Statement Following the Killing of George Floyd...* Like many organizations, ACSP reached out to scholars of color for guidance. Similar to many organizations, ACSP had to “reach out” because it does not have Black faculty among its leaders; it does not have a standing practice of engagement with Black scholars; and it does not have effective representation of its historically Black Colleges and Universities members... Some of us felt unduly burdened by the act of “reaching out” for guidance and feedback, as there are power dynamics at play that compel some of us to contribute at a time when we have very little energy left to do so. Many declined to edit statement text because of that burden. The statement that followed was problematic and reflects the need for ACSP to listen to scholars of color -- particularly Black scholars -- on a constant basis, not just when they need to make a statement... We chose not to assist in making it more effective or more meaningful because we wanted to see what our colleagues imagined was adequate. We also did not want to participate in making the statement better without making the actions of the organization better in meaningful ways. We stand by that strategy, as this follow-up will be more impactful than a better-written statement.”

An ACSP peer reviewed statement (no date) appear to be written by Black scholars also critically responded point-by-point to the many problematic aspects of the ACSP statement. The statement emphasizes how “Black scholars and members of ACSP are significantly and uniquely experiencing pain, anger, and outrage. We are holding the emotional weight of ourselves, our families, and our Black and POC students. We are being turned to for emergency ‘help’ with diversity initiatives that are never urgent until something happens, while non-Black colleagues drift away once the spotlight has moved on. We are doing intellectual battle with the White supremacist thinking buried in the foundational texts in our field, and grappling with our positions in a professional and intellectual discipline that has done deep harms to our people.”

The responses from Black faculty were a good tactic to display how organizations composed of primarily white people are not equipped to address issues surrounding racism ACSP. This situation showed a clear line of connection to institutional barriers and challenges that exist from within that cause damages in communities and upon racialized individuals. The ACSP statement did ensure to highlight key points within their call to action. Word choice and framing within the call were at times questionable; however, for a short call to action, it did an considerable job at highlighting many of the challenges planning is currently facing as an institution when it comes to racism and took some form of accountability. Also, the near, committed, long and under consideration action plans solidify that ACSP is in the process of making change and is committed to the change.

In Canada, the **School of Urban and Regional Planning (SURP) at then Ryerson University -- currently X University** -- issued a statement against racism and discrimination on June 9, 2020. The statement acknowledges the pain, structural violence, and inequities faced by racialized communities every day by highlighting the killings of the countless Black bodies that have been occurring for centuries. The statement states that these inequities are “grounded in

systemic discrimination and White supremacy, to which planning as a socio-spatial discipline has contributed historically and still contributes today”. It also highlights forms of residential segregation, exclusionary zoning, urban renewal-induced displacement, and the creation of the Indigenous reserve system in Canada as ways in which planning as a process and institution has been, complicit with processes of injustice afflicting the same communities that once again today become the target of violence and discrimination.

The statement clearly states that “Ryerson [sic] University is committed to working as a community to keep moving forward in terms of transformations within their curriculum, pedagogical approaches, engagement with local communities, and hiring practices to ensure SURP grows to reflect the diversity of the cities in which we live and is responsive to the needs of our students.” Specific action items were not directly stated in the statement but were to be forthcoming in the following weeks.

In a zoom panel with planning coordinators from York University, Ryerson University and the University of Toronto, a Ryerson faculty shared that- “One of our first actions was to form an anti-systemic racism and discrimination Working group of faculty, students, and alumni members. This statement, the working group, and this new position are steps in our ongoing efforts to begin to address systemic racism and discrimination within SURP and Ryerson.” Ryerson’s statement approaches the topic of anti-Black racism in a progressive tone. However, the lack of tangible or actionable items is concerning. When looking at the steps Universities such as UOT are taking, Ryerson could have formulated more short-term and long-term goals that are in line with dismantling systemic and institutional racism to allow for realistic and tangible change to occur.

On June 10, 2020, the **University of Toronto’s Geography and Planning Department** issued their statement entitled_“Challenging Anti-Black and Indigenous Racism in Planning.” During the academic year 2020-2021, the

University of Toronto dedicated itself to conducting a periodic curricular and program review within their planning department. The review focuses heavily on addressing anti-black and more generally anti-BIPOC racism in the planning program. The same day, the department issued a “Solidarity Statement Regarding Anti-Black Racism” in which faculty members committed to the following actions in order to address institutionalized racism and support students and other BIPOC persons in the department:

- advocacy for enhanced University funding specifically for Black students, and for Indigenous and students of color;
- recruitment, hiring, and retention of more Black faculty members and fostering greater diversity in our faculty more generally;
- continued and enhanced efforts to recruit Black students, undergraduate, and graduate;
- continued and enhanced efforts to recruit students from diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds;
- efforts to strengthen curricula at the undergraduate and graduate levels in the areas of Black geographies, anti-oppression (broadly) and anti-Black racism specifically, and the development of an enhanced understanding of the ongoing role of systemic racism, white supremacy, and discrimination in the production of space, and of the production of forms of geographical knowledge aimed at overcoming systemic injustice;
- and the systemic development of an institutional culture of anti-oppression and respect through dialog, education, and training.

Both statements appear to have been triggered by a letter from second-year planning graduate students in the planning program faculty distributed to the Department in May 2020. The **planning student letter to faculty members** listed a set of demands for the Master of Science in Planning program at the University of Toronto to be developed and implemented as soon as Fall 2020. The students demanded curriculum reform and a long-term strategy to operationalize racial equity throughout the planning program and the planning profession. Faculty members responded to students on June 11, 2020.

Among their demands, students insisted on curriculum reform and specifically ask for the following actions in the short-term:

- require Anti-Black racism in planning theory and practice be addressed as mandatory course components in the core curriculum;
- ensure that discussion regarding the role of planning in institutionalizing and perpetuating anti-Black racism is not just listed as part of available readings, or as part of a larger ‘diversity in planning’ module, but discussed explicitly while centering the nuanced historical and contemporary experiences of Black, queer, and disabled women and trans* people in cities; and
- ensure that readings and resources are not only about Black communities but from them. This includes developing a mechanism that allows students with lived experience and other expertise to contribute to the curriculum.

Students also formulated long-term strategy to operationalize racial equity throughout the planning program and the planning profession. They ask for:

- a definition of anti-Black racism and racial equity, broadly, and in relation to the profession;
- a racial equity audit to identify existing strengths and weaknesses within the Department and subsequent solutions for implementation;
- departmental policies to ensure the hiring of more BIPOC staff and faculty, with an emphasis on Black faculty, for the planning program specifically; and
- continued support, financially and otherwise, to programs like the Mentoring Initiative for Indigenous & Planners of Colour (MIPOC) that offer off-campus mentorship opportunities for BIPOC students with alumni and planning professionals across the city.

In response to the letter from the students, faculty members committed to immediately introduce additional anti-racist material to some core courses and to develop a fuller curriculum review (in 2020-2021). Planning faculty also highlights the need for anti-oppression training for all faculty, staff, and students. Moreover, in direct response to students’ demands, they committed

to work with students to develop a definition of anti-Black racism as part of their curriculum review this coming year and that they are in support of a racial equity audit. They also view hiring more BIPOC staff and faculty as a priority and as a way to widen their student applicant pool and bring more lived experience into the faculty complement.

Although the University of Toronto's anti-racism statement emerged after a statement made by the student body, planning faculty members made positive steps forward and laid out an action plan to address many of the concerns that students brought up in regard to anti-Black racism within the institution. The University remained realistic by outlining short- and long-term goals and areas they will need to work more on. The interaction between students and faculty members shows a commitment to make real change.

It remains that for many of these calls to action, we have yet to see tangible change emerge. However, many of the calls that were analyzed above have made some progressive changes forward (i.e., taskforce formation, webinar series, staff hiring). Much of the change that is required for true systemic and institutional reformation does not occur overnight. It will likely take between five to ten years to really see what many of these institutions' statements will look like.

3. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CALLS TO ACTION

The following section analyzes the institutional, professional, and educational calls to action based on four themes:

- systemic reform;
- representation within the profession;
- education and training surrounding combating racism and inequity;
- and

- acknowledgment of the discrimination wrought by the planning profession itself (which led to structural disadvantages in housing, transportation, education, and employment that lasts to this day).

Systemic reform was highlighted in each call to action; however, it received the most significant mention in the calls made by professionals like Amina Yasin, Jay Pitter, and the Black Planning Project. For example, the Black Planning Project is pushing for more acknowledgement from OPPI to holistically address systemic anti-Black racism. They also call for the integration of lessons and conversations on systemic, historic, and present-day anti-Black racism in OPPI programming. The Black Planning Project also highlighted the need for OPPI to acknowledge the existing problem of systemic racism, apologies, and outline clear commitments to a strategy that addresses systemic and institutional barriers faced by Black planners. This is an indication that the profession in Ontario is listening and ready to translate statements into action. The implementation of an anti-Black racism taskforce at OPPI is evidence of the shift from reaction to action. Other planning bodies such as CIP have also moved from simple statements to tangible action. They have recently made public their Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Roadmap as well as made their most recent magazine publication edition of *Plan Canada* (Spring 2021) on social and racial equity. This not only displays that institutional bodies that play a critical role in how our communities are built are listening, but it also displays that they are ready for change.

Other planning organizations briefly mentioned systemic racism and how it permeates all parts of our society and economy. The Urban Land Institute (ULI), for example, highlights that systemic racism impacts the foundations of our cultural and legislative systems. Although this is simply an acknowledgment, it is a starting point in moving to the action phase of change. ULI have also continued to host many workshops, notably the first *Pathways to Inclusion Program* (launched February 2020 for 50 scholarship recipients) on June 16,

Racism & Exclusion in the Workplace: Fireside Chat with Karlyn Percil-Mercieca on July 28, 2020, and *Redressing Black Displacement in Canada* chaired by Emory Davidge on February 1, 2021. This type of action displays the Institute's stance on addressing systemic racism in the institution and also acts as a way to provide a platform for experts on the topic to speak rather than White institutions taking over the moment. The ULI also works with a broad range of stakeholders; therefore, the Institute is setting a standard and showing other stakeholders how to make tangible changes and the significances of those changes. This is important as ULI is an institution that many professionals and organizations worldwide look towards for guidance and direction on matters relating to urbanism and land use. ULI is also a membership organization; therefore, many individuals receive emails and frequent the site and their events often. If ULI takes a progressive stance on addressing anti-Black racism, it is fair to say that many other lands use bodies may do the same.

Systemic reform was lightly alluded to by other planning institutes such as the American Planning Association (APA) and Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI) through the mentioning of the impacts of systemic injustices and racism on the structural inequities in regard to housing and income placed upon Black people and communities. Such organizations also recognize the impact of the complex social and political systems that disproportionately burden Black and Brown people and communities. The OPPI taskforce was charged with developing an action plan to remove systemic barriers in planning practice that discriminates against Black communities. This taskforce emerged due to the pressure that many planning professionals and allies put on OPPI. Without advocacy on the ground level from planners such as Abigail Moriah, students from a variety of planning schools who signed calls and petitions, and professors such as Luisa Sotomayor there would be no taskforce holding OPPI accountable and working towards reducing systemic racism. The OPPI task force also acts as an example of what other provinces and states can do as a

tangible next step to work towards true institutional change. The mandate of the Taskforce is to build on the Viswali Consulting Report (2020) and develop a strategy and action plan to remove systemic barriers in the planning practice that perpetuate anti-Black racism and disproportionately limit employment opportunities for and representation of Black planners in the planning profession.

Educational institutions such as Ryerson also alluded to the impacts brought upon systemic racism and White supremacy to which planning as a socio-spatial discipline has contributed historically to and to this current time. Other universities pointed to the role the planning profession took and continues to participate regarding policies and inequitable land planning- exclusionary zoning, redlining, residential segregation, and urban renewal projects. The University of Toronto identified the action item of curriculum development on systemic racism to understand systemic injustice better and to overcome it. This is a significant accomplishment as planning schools play a critical role in shaping the future of planning. By including more equity and diversity into the curriculum, we reduce the risk of perpetuating many planning cycles crippling the profession. Rather, we create planners that not only think critically but are also interdisciplinary. This is critical as the demographic across North America continues to change. Importantly, demographics studying planning program is also changing and is now far more diverse than faculty body or professional boards. We must build cities and communities that meet the needs of all members of society. Without equitable planning programs and a diversified cohort, we risk producing planners that are not equipped to plan cities in an equitable manner. This will cause harm and devastation amongst our most vulnerable members of society.

Overall, there has been progress made that will play a role in shaping systemic reform. Above I highlight many positive leaps forward such as curriculum shifts, the formation of a task force, and webinars being held.

However, we still are in need of more actionable programming across the entire profession. Systemic reform takes time, and requires a collective effort, particularly with addressing longer-term goals. Although there have been several small victories, the profession is still at a crossroads with addressing some of the larger and systemic issues that are harming communities. It is my hope that over the next 5 to 10 years the profession will implement many of the long-term goals that will have a larger impact on systemic reform, such as full curriculum change, equitable hiring processes, appropriate representation of diversity within the profession, and the established of more bottom-up planning processes and practices that gear away from nuanced planning models such as smart growth, social mixing, urban revitalization, and new urbanism.

Representation within the profession was addressed primarily by educational institutes such as the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP) in the form of more representation needed within the governing board and planning departments. Many universities, including Ryerson and the University of Toronto, as well as York University, announced that they would hire Black professors and begin focusing on the recruitment of Black students into the planning program to create a more diversified and representative demographic of students within the faculty. Schools such as Ryerson, York and the University of Toronto created specific job postings that catered towards recruiting Black and racialized individuals to fulfill their commitment to hiring more Black faculty members. However, publicly, they did not specify much beyond that. In an interview with Abigail Moriah (2020), she shared that there is a need for more mentorship programs for racialized students, as well as for more support within their educational programs and beyond. Planning professionals shared that due to the lack of support and representation within faculties, racialized urban planning students often transfer out of urban planning programs into other fields -- or alternatively find themselves working

in jobs that are indirectly related to planning, rather than directly within the profession. This is deeply problematic as it creates an inequitable workforce that will result in inequitable built environments. When thinking about planning policies and processes that currently dictate how we develop cities, it is crucial to understand that decision-making tables lack representation; therefore, continuing to perpetuate inequitable cycles of land use discrimination and spatial injustices. With more representation and equitable teaching practices, the profession can move forward in a manner that values equity and spatial equality.

Institutions such as OPPI focused on representation through the development of their task force which focuses on finding strategies to ensure more professional representation. This task force onboarded volunteers was expressed through a general online call out, as well as appointed representatives such as Black planner Eldon Theodore as members.

Organizations such as APA, New Brunswick Association of Planners (NBAP) and Planners of Nova Scotia Association (PNSA) did not focus on the issue of representation as much as the professional and educational calls to action did.

Unsurprisingly, calls made by professionals such as the Black Planning Project most urgently highlighted the need for representation within planning institutions at both professional and educational levels and stages in the progression. Increasing Black representation among faculty and within the student body is seen as critical in regard to who chooses to pursue a career in planning and for the manner in which planning is taught and practiced. Black professionals also mentioned the need for a forensic review starting from educational systems to employment opportunities to uncover issues of underrepresentation of practicing Black planners.

The question of representation is therefore directly linked to **education and training** and such issues were primarily addressed within educational institutes as it pertains to curriculum reform and the need for mandatory anti-oppression

training for faculty and student bodies. The University of Toronto further highlighted its goal of systemic development of an institutional culture of anti-oppression and respect through dialogue, education, and training. Ryerson University acknowledged white supremacy and systemic and structural violence, discrimination, and inequities which planning has historically and contributes to contribute towards. The Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning's (ACSP) anti-racism statement also highlighted a commitment for more programming on racial justice and inclusion and more of a focus on student scholarships for travel to be more specific.

Institutional planning associations briefly highlighted education and training as significant for the progression of equity within the profession. The Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) specifically mentioned education and communication for increased knowledge of the Equity Diversity and Inclusion roadmap primarily upon CIP leadership and industry change-makers.

Calls made by professionals such as the Black Planning Project addressed education and training at a high level and called for the need for planning schools to include more training and education on Black history and planning influence on perpetuating racial inequities. The Black Planning project also addressed the requirement for more educational pathways for Black people to accredited planning programs. Planners must be better trained and educated on race issues in order to be equipped to work with racialized and marginalized communities. It is not appropriate for individuals to enter communities and conduct consultations or community engagement processes without deeply understanding the harms placed upon these communities and the disproportionate burdens placed upon them due to spatial inequities and racism. There also must be processes put in place that ensure professionals follow ethical and equitable strategies when entering vulnerable communities or working with racialized people and communities.

Acknowledgments of the harms brought forth by planners and planning institutions were addressed at all institutional, educational, and professional levels. Many planning institutes made direct statements regarding the impacts of racist planning practices on Black and Brown communities and recognized their positionality and role in perpetuating inequitable and racist planning practices that are influenced by colonialism and White supremacy. Similarly, universities such as Ryerson and the University of Toronto made a direct statement acknowledging the wrongdoings brought upon Black communities by planning practices and policies.

Black professionals such as Amina Yasin, Jay Pitter, and the Black Planning Project brought to light through personal experiences, statistics and history, the negative impacts that the planning profession has had on the development and planning of communities and public spaces that have harmed Black communities and people at a disproportionate rate. Professions, through their calls, pushed forward the necessity of the planning institution to address and acknowledge wrongdoings brought upon by their racist policies influenced by white supremacy and slavery, which have created inequities and disparities for Black people and Black communities when it comes to land use and development. Of the interviews conducted, many interviewees mentioned that the calls to action are a step forward in making true change within the planning profession, and that the calls have created momentum within the profession. It is, however, important to note that this momentum is primarily being carried by Black planners and professionals. As pointed by Black planners and faculty members in the United States, this situation reinstates the undue burden that is constantly being placed upon Black people to educate others and constantly advocate for their rights to freedom, equality, and equity.

4. RECONCILING AND REFLECTING ON NEXT STEPS: A RESOURCE GUIDE

It is only appropriate to dedicate this last section of my paper to individuals on the ground who have been leading true and progressive change on matters associated with anti-Black racism in planning, equitable placemaking, and those that have been challenging the status quo in planning before summer 2020. Although I am aware that many of these individuals have been inspired by those outside and within the realm of urbanism, I focus on the influences in urban planning to remain true to my scope of work. This list of resources does not pretend to be extensive, rather it highlights the work of people who have put joy, tears and heart into progressing racialized and disinvested communities forward.

The intention of my paper is to shed light on the role planning as a profession has in perpetuating inequities that disproportionately harm Black and other racialized, low-income communities. As a profession that is highly immersed in decisions that affect the built environment, planners have the ability to positively influence land-use decisions. Following the summer of 2020 and the civil rights mobilizations, the planning profession released calls to action to show their solidarity with Black people and communities, and to state that they will make positive changes to the profession. Although change cannot be expected overnight, the profession has shown positive steps forward by taking a stance and outlining long and short-term goals. After presenting key resources, as conclusion, I present my recommendations on steps that the planning profession must take to dismantle systemic and institutional racism within the system.

Resource Guide

The following individuals have written books, reports, articles, or have been active on social media platforms such as Twitter and have become key

interlocutors to dismantle anti-Black racism in planning. **Twitter handles to follow:** Jay Pitter, Amina Yasin, Jamilla Mohamud, Tamika Butler, Mitchell Silver, Orlando Bailey, Destiny Thompson, Kristen Jeffers, Black Urbanism TO, Paul Taylor, Cheryll Case, among many others.

Articles and reports

The following texts are of particular interest to address anti-racism and inequalities in the planning profession:

Plan Canada. (2021). Social and Racial Equity. Retrieved from https://cip-icu.ca/getattachment/Home/Section-1-Plan-Canada-Callout/Sustainability-on-the-Edge/PlanCanada_Spring2021-FINAL.pdf.aspx

This Plan Canada edition is part of CIP's Equity Diversity and Inclusion journey towards greater understanding and organizational evolution. This edition is a testament to "CIP's adaptability, vulnerability, openness, and questioning of today's assumptions and norms within the planning profession".

Mohamud, Jamilla. (2020.) Anti-Black Racism in the Livable City and Canada. Retrieved from <https://ontarioplanners.ca/blog/planning-exchange/july-2020/anti-black-racism-in-the-liveable-city-and-canada>

The author speaks about anti-Black racism within cities and highlights key points and resources relating to anti-Black racism within our built form.

Pitter, Jay. (2020). A Call to Courage- An Open Letter to Canadian Urbanists. (2020). Retrieved from <https://canurb.org/wp-content/uploads/OpenLetter-ACallToCourage-Final-June2020.pdf>

This report calls forward the role urbanism has played in perpetuating inequities and provides recommendations and next steps on how to move the profession forward.

Yasin, Amina. (2020). Whose Streets Black Streets. Retrieved from <https://thetyee.ca/Analysis/2020/06/18/Whose-Streets-Black-Streets/>

The author discusses the need for planners and urbanists to reckon with the racism rampant in city building. She provides four actions to take in moving the profession forward.

Thomas, Destiny. (2020). 'Safe Streets' are not safe for Black Lives. Retrieved from <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-06-08/-safe-streets-are-not-safe-for-black-lives>

This transportation planner addresses the harm perpetrated on communities when designing pedestrian-friendly streets without diverse public input.

Walker, Alissa. (2020). How to end Anti-Blackness in Cities. Retrieved from <https://archive.curbed.com/2020/6/17/21291761/black-urbanism-racism-cities-jay-pitter>

The article highlights Black designers and planners, and how they are mobilizing their industries to eradicate racism in urbanism.

Butler, Tamika. (2020). Why We Must Talk about Race When We Talk about Bikes. Retrieved from <https://www.bicycling.com/culture/a32783551/cycling-talk-fight-racism/>

The author discusses the importance of tackling systemic racism within the cycling realm and affirms that “any conversation about bicycling that fails to explicitly and affirmatively acknowledge this disparity is one that lacks true vision, honesty, and effectiveness.”

Norwood, Candice. (2021). How infrastructure has historically promoted inequality. Retrieved from <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/how-infrastructure-has-historically-promoted-inequality>

The author discusses how infrastructure is used as a relic of racism and classism and the role that infrastructure, construction, and maintenance have played in promoting inequality and racial segregation.

Initiatives/Projects

There are initiatives and projects also worth attention:

There's something in the water – A Netflix documentary covering environmental racism in Halifax.

Kristen Jeffers, Maryland-based planner, writer, and speaker, uses her platform *the Black Urbanist* to combat the urbanists field's racist legacy. Jeffers has long curated Black urbanist resources, including a *Black Queer Feminist Urbanist booklist*, and two new educational spaces to read and discuss key Black texts: a social network and healing space for Black, indigenous, and colonized or racialized people of color; and a virtual book club and lecture series for a white audience.

Architect Bryan Lee Jr. issued an *action strategy* for the architecture industry, hosting a national *Design As Protest* call to “dismantle the privilege and power structures that use architecture and design as a tool of oppression.”

The *Black Space Urbanist Collective*, a New York-based group with a mission to “create and preserve Black spaces and communities”, hosted a Juneteenth event as a way to celebrate the Black urbanist practitioners.

The Nova Scotia-based *Environmental Noxiousness, Racial Inequities and Community Health (ENRICH) Project* offers an interdisciplinary approach to tackling the socio-economic and health effects associated with environmental racism that disproportionately impacts Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian communities.

Hogan's Alley Society (Vancouver, BC) advocates for and with Black Vancouverites who have endured the legacies of urban renewal. The organization works to build capacity within racialized and marginalized communities to participate in city building.

The *Herongate Tenant's Coalition* (Ottawa, ON) intervened in Canada's largest mass evictions that resulted in the displacement of a predominately low-income, immigrant and Black community.

The *Black Planning Project* (Toronto, ON) created a space for people of African descent who are planning practitioners or demonstrate an

interest in urban planning in their personal lives, to share their experiences.

Books

Among a far more exhaustive possible list of books on anti-racism, the following particularly address planning issues:

Rutland, Ted. *Displacing Blackness: Planning, Power and Race in Twentieth-Century Halifax*. University of Toronto Press. 2018.

Displacing Blackness critiques urban planning causing harm despite intents to improve people's lives. Rutland focuses on practices in twentieth-century Halifax to show broader lessons on how anti-Blackness is a core practice in current planning practice.

Maynard, Robin. *Policing Black Lives: State Violence in Canada from Slavery to the Present*. Fernwood. 2017.

Maynard traces the violent anti-Black history in Canada from slavery to prisons and beyond to demonstrate how the state perpetuates poverty, unemployment, racial profiling, law enforcement violence, incarceration, immigration detention, deportation, and more.

Razack, Sherene (ed.). *Race, Space, and the Law: Unmapping a White Settler Society*. Between the Lines. 2002.

Contributions in this edited book examine how spaces are created and the role of law in shaping and supporting spatial hierarchies that in turn create oppression.

Taylor, Dorceta E. *Toxic Communities: Environmental Racism, Industrial Pollution, and Residential Mobility*. New York University Press. 2014.

Taylor demonstrates how segregation, zoning, and opportunism have resulted in poor and minority neighbourhoods that are so polluted that just living them is hazardous to health.

Hunter, M. A., and Robinson, Z. F. *Chocolate Cities*. University of California Press. 2018.

This book traces the Black experience of race, place, and liberation in the United States, mapping it from emancipation to now. The authors provide a necessary assessment of how racial and ethnic minorities

make and change the United States' social, economic, and political landscape.

Holmes, K. *Mismatch: How inclusion shapes design*. The MIT Press. 2020

This book is about inclusive design.

Hinton, E. *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime*. Harvard University Press. 2017.

This book explores the intersection of housing policy and policing black neighbourhoods in understanding where we are today.

Moore, N. Y. *The South Side: A portrait of Chicago and American segregation*. Macmillan. 2016.

The author ties her personal narrative of growing up on the South Side of Chicago with alternating chapters outlining the policies that impacted her childhood, education, employment, and housing opportunities.

Rothstein, R. *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*. Liveright. 2017.

Rothstein takes a detailed look at how private organizations, groups, and courts were able to take advantage of laws that were in the public domain, promoting everything from redlining to disinvestment in neighborhoods of color. The book underscores the need to understand the law as a complement to architecture and planning.

Concluding Thoughts

Although we are only at the beginning of an anti-racism conscientization and mobilization, the profession has addressed and taken accountability for environmental inequities and injustices that have emerged within and from the profession. There is still a lot that needs to be accomplished within the profession around anti-Black racism, but the steps taken following the calls to action were pivotal towards progressing the profession forward. Some

professional and institutional members of planning profession acted quickly following the civil rights uprising in the summer of 2020 that occurred after the death of George Floyd and too many other Black people. However, we cannot lose sight of the greater goal which is to ensure equity which is only possible with real and permanent systemic change. The profession and those who work and operate within it must continue to advocate, speak up and actively work towards changing planning policies and processes in a way that ensures that Black communities are no longer being harmed at the cause of professional practices and within public spaces.

Recommendations for the Planning Profession Moving Forward

Under the guise of planning recommendations and commitments, offered by Black professionals in their calls to courage. I suggest the following concrete actions be considered by institutional, professional, and educational groups:

1. Audit existing policies and augment them by viewing and reassembling them through an equity-based framework. Implementing such a framework will likely require hiring new staff who is experienced, as well as individuals from marginalized communities who are directly impacted by anti-racist policies to ensure steps are not missed and cycles are not perpetuated;
2. Research the history and place-based stories of communities when conducting urban design and development work. This works to ensure histories are preserved and the essence of a place is not lost in the mist of revitalization;
3. Honor community knowledge and lived to experience through the planning and development process. Each project should operate along with guidelines that honour this aspect of the community. These specific guidelines should be designed by the community and be used in a similar manner to city guidelines and official plans. This ensures community demands are incorporated into the development and design process;

4. Create a more equitable hiring/promotion process that ensures greater diversity and representation of marginalized communities. Diverse staffing would create a more wholesome environment that can attend to the requirements of all projects and will also work to dismantle racial hierarchies within the planning profession and allow for racialized individuals to move up within the profession at an even rate to their white counterparts; and
5. Racialized colleagues should not be tasked with the burden of all equity, diversity and inclusion responsibilities. Mandatory training for all staff at the private and provincial levels must be promoted so that equity, diversity and inclusion values are systematically incorporated into all aspects of planning.

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