

**RETHINKING TORONTO'S MIDDLE LANDSCAPE: SPACES OF PLANNING,
CONTESTATION, AND NEGOTIATION**

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Abstract

This dissertation weaves together an examination of the concept and meanings of suburb and suburban, historical geographies of suburbs and suburbanization, and a detailed focus on Scarborough as a suburban space within Toronto in order to better understand postwar suburbanization and suburban change as it played out in a specific metropolitan context and locale. With Canada and the United States now thought to be suburban nations, critical suburban histories and studies of suburban problems are an important contribution to urbanistic discourse and human geographical scholarship.

Though suburbanization is a global phenomenon and suburbs have a much longer history, the vast scale and explosive pace of suburban development after the Second World War has a powerful influence on how “suburb” and “suburban” are represented and understood. One powerful socio-spatial imaginary is evident in discourses on planning and politics in Toronto: the city-suburb or urban-suburban divide. An important contribution of this dissertation is to trace out how the city-suburban divide and meanings attached to “city” and “suburb” have been integral to the planning and politics that have shaped and continue to shape Scarborough and Toronto.

The research employs an investigative approach influenced by Michel Foucault’s critical and effective histories and Bent Flyvbjerg’s methodological guidelines for phronetic social science. To do this, the analysis provided draws principally from archival materials, newspapers, plans and policy documents, and interviews to reveal how socio-

spatial landscapes were made and remade both in thought and practice. In this regard, Henri Lefebvre's theoretical ruminations on the production of space are also important. Even where not made explicit, the making and remaking of the spaces discussed reveal the near constant work of "the conceived" to intervene in and reorder "the lived".

The dissertation concludes with a discussion of how we might ask new and different questions about past and current rounds of city-building, so that good and just places to live are made more possible.

Dedication

To my parents, whose choice to move to the outer edge of Metro Vancouver in the 1970s in search of housing they liked and could afford resulted in me being a child of the suburbs. They made a life for us “out there”. For better or worse.

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In other ways many people have contributed to the research contained in this dissertation and to the scholarly endeavor it represents.

First and foremost, I must acknowledge a profound debt of gratitude to my PhD supervisor Professor Ranu Basu. She listened, discussed, advised, cajoled, and most importantly never doubted that I was going somewhere interesting and worthwhile with my work. When I was stuck she knew that a trip to Scarborough for food and conversation was the solution. This dissertation “got done” as much because of her encouragement and insistence that it was worth completing as my tenacity and inability to stop.

I must also thank Professors Valerie Preston and Doug Young who kindly agreed to serve on my supervisory committee early in my PhD studies. They offered strategic feedback and advice when this project was in its formative stages and reviewed the dissertation in its later stages. Each in their own way contributed to the final product being a stronger and more readable document.

Timing and circumstance allowed me to work at the City Institute as a research assistant during its formative years. Professor Roger Keil, who served as its director at that time, is a generous scholar and someone I feel very fortunate to have crossed-paths with during my time at York.

While pursuing your studies and research (if you are lucky) you gain some good friends along the way. You know who you are, and I am grateful we met. Keep in touch and continue being who you are.

I would be remiss not to thank Ron and Verna Watson for their interest and assistance. They were kind enough to invite me to their home in Wishing Well on a number of occasions to visit and access Ron's vast archive of Scarborough documents and memorabilia, much of it related to his multi-decade involvement in local politics, first as a school trustee, and then as an alderman/councillor. My conversations with Ron, including periodic phone calls over the years, helped me fill in blanks and begin to grasp what can only really be known by someone who was there. I am sure that I have missed many things Ron (and Verna) would consider vital to what really happened. I hope my work meets with their approval anyway.

A special thank you is also owed to all the people who agreed to be interviewed as part of this research. They had no particular reason to agree to take time out of their lives to meet with me and share their recollections, insights, and thoughts. The end result is much stronger because they did.

Finally, a dissertation is a long haul for the author, but at the end their name is affixed to the front. The same is only half-true for those nearest to them. My deepest thanks are reserved for Andrea. She has been my partner for the whole ride. She enabled, though did not always enjoy, my meanderings and bouts of absent mindedness as this project went from conception to completion. Along the way, Aly was born. Her life thus far has unfolded against the constant backdrop of her father's "thesising". Occasionally she lets that be known, including that a PhD takes a long time to finish. She is truly her mother's daughter and the apple of my eye. And I see in her glimmers of her namesake now long departed, but not forgotten. My work is very much their work. It would not be the same without them.

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Foreword

During the time it has taken to complete my PhD studies at York University, carry out the research for this dissertation, and finish writing it, I have lived in the St. Lawrence neighbourhood immediately to the southeast of Toronto's financial district, in the South Riverdale/Riverside area off Queen Street East just across the Don River from Toronto's central area, and in the North End of Hamilton (a mid-size industrial city about 65 kilometres west of downtown Toronto along the Queen Elizabeth Way-403 Highway). All of these places are inner-city neighbourhoods.

Prior to starting my PhD studies my life was much more suburban than urban. Though I was born at St. Paul's hospital on Burrard Street in downtown Vancouver, my childhood and teenage years unfolded in Cloverdale—an area on the eastern edge of Surrey, a much maligned fast-growing suburban municipality south of the Fraser River about 30 kilometres southeast of downtown Vancouver. I do not claim any special insight into suburbs or suburbanisms having grown-up in one, but an awareness of how certain suburbs are discursively marginalized encouraged me to see Scarborough as a place worthy of study.

At some point during my PhD research or studies as I explained my thesis topic and interest in Scarborough to a planner a passing mention that I grew-up in Surrey prompted them to giggle and interject that they had always thought of Surrey as the "Scarborough of Vancouver". I had not previously made that connection and based on

geographic size, population, and development history had tended to see it as more like Mississauga or Brampton. But with some qualification, the negative stereotyping and overall image of Surrey within Vancouver does share much in common with how Scarborough is viewed within Toronto. For example, a *Globe and Mail* article in the early 1990s alternated between depicting Surrey as a space of explosive suburban growth and growing ethno-cultural diversity, and a place described as a "poor relation", "the ugly duckling of Greater Vancouver", and "an urban wasteland of used-car lots, shopping malls and violent crime."¹

Like Scarborough, politicians and planners in Surrey concern themselves with the area's image. In recent years, they have moved aggressively to develop a more urban vision for city, which centres around a renewed focus on creating a city centre in the Whalley area of North Surrey. Two *Globe and Mail* articles discuss the plans and the more general changes underway in Surrey, both deploying its "old" image as foil for the planned urbanism and urbanity said to be on the way. For example, Michael Heeney, whose firm Bing Thom Architects Inc. participated in planning studies for the city centre area, is portrayed as bullish on Surrey's future, but is nonetheless blunt in his assessment of the city's existing physical fabric.

It's awful. There's no "there" there, as they say, and it's miles of the same kind of car-oriented retail strips. You lose orientation. It doesn't have any character. It's pretty ghastly.²

¹ Robert Matas, "Metamorphosis of a Poor Relation," *Globe and Mail*, January 1st 1993.

² Ian Bailey, "Building a New City Centre," *Globe and Mail*, September 12th 2009.

Similarly, in the subsequent article, a quick quip from architect Bing Thom provides the segue between discussion of Surrey as a low-cost alternative to Vancouver and its current desire for an urban makeover.

Surrey was known as the armpit of the Lower Mainland ...
Vancouverites liked to say that Surrey was too poor, too young and too dumb.³

Comments such as these reveal how places – urban and suburban – are enmeshed within the production, accumulation, and circulation of symbolic capital.⁴ Whether speaking about Scarborough within the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) or Surrey within Metro Vancouver, statements by architects, planners, media pundits, and other urban-oriented members of the knowledge class, position these spaces within a grid of place distinctions. Some places are continually drawn into exercises intended to remake them in the image of whatever is held in esteem by experts and tastemakers at the time. Scarborough and Surrey are two such places.

Though, I am not an "insider" writing about Toronto, its suburban spaces, and especially Scarborough, my prior suburban lived experience has shaped and informed this dissertation and its aims. There can be no denying the shortcomings of rigidly segregated land uses and the automobile dependency it engenders. Nor should the possibility of suburban autonomy being used as a legal technology of exclusion be ignored. But equally serious is the embedding of anti-suburban rhetoric in discourses on spatial planning and urban design, social justice, and sustainability issues. Suburbs as bourgeois utopias,

³ Lisa Rochon, "Vancouver's 'Ugly Sister' Puts on a Fresh Face," *Globe and Mail*, February 20th 2010.

⁴ Kim Dovey, *Becoming Places: Urbanism/Architecture/Identity/Power* (London: Routledge, 2010).

landscapes of privilege, or consumerist dystopias leaves too much of the suburban past and present out of the picture. We need histories of the present, in the spirit of Michel Foucault's critical genealogies. Not histories that uncover final truths, but histories that help us question the limits we place upon how we think about problems, so that we might ask different questions.⁵ It is my hope that this dissertation will contribute to that endeavour.

⁵ Here I am influenced by sentiments expressed in Engin F. Isin, *Cities Without Citizens: The Modernity of the City as a Corporation* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1992). 190.

Chapter 1: Introducing Toronto's New Urban Middle

Introduction

An essay “Suburbs” appeared in *Design Quarterly* three decades ago.⁶ Far from the denouncement of the suburbs (or suburbia) one might expect in such a journal, the essay challenged urbanists and academics to revise their picture. For its author, the original images of iconic 1950s housing subdivisions had come to stand-in for suburbs as a whole in North America, trapped-in-time and frozen in their initial newness and sameness. Her point was that “[t]he aerial photograph and the long lens lent themselves to illicit metaphors of junkyards and conformity” at the same time, and in the same way, that “social scientists and planners became mesmerized by statistical information in ever larger aggregations to describe the scale and velocity of change.”⁷ The situation was ripe for powerful stereotypes and clichés to form and take hold in the collective imagination.

This dissertation is shaped by a sense that too much is presumed about suburbs based on myth and taken-for-granted assumptions: that suburbs need to be investigated as complex and dynamic places with histories of their own in order to better understand suburbanisms, suburban spaces, and the process of suburbanization. Rather than attempt to disprove “the myth” that envelopes suburbs a more productive approach is to consider why certain representations endure and assess the degree to which they reflect underlying realities, past and present. In particular, there is a need to better understand when and

⁶ Lois Craig, “Suburbs,” *Design Quarterly*, no. 132 (1986).

⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

where stereotype and cliché masquerade as conventional wisdom and distract us from attending to contemporary suburban realities, while also distorting suburban history. With Canada and the United States now thought of as suburban nations, critical suburban histories and studies of suburban problems are vital.

The focus of this dissertation is post-1945 suburbanization in Toronto, Canada and the development and transformation of Scarborough (see Figure 1). Though suburbs are global and suburbanization has a much longer history, the vast scale and explosive pace of suburban development after the Second World War has a powerful influence on how “suburb” and “suburban” are represented and understood in contemporary discourses and in popular memory. In Toronto, one powerful socio-spatial imaginary frames discourse on planning and politics: the city-suburb or urban-suburban divide. Though it has evolved over the years, can take different forms, and is employed in various ways for a range of purposes, the city-suburb or urban-suburban divide is integral to understanding planning and politics in Toronto. For that reason what follows moves between an examination of the concept and meanings of suburb and suburban, the history of suburbs and suburbanization, and a detailed focus on Toronto and Scarborough to understand postwar suburbanization and subsequent suburban transformations and change as they played out in a specific metropolitan context and locale.

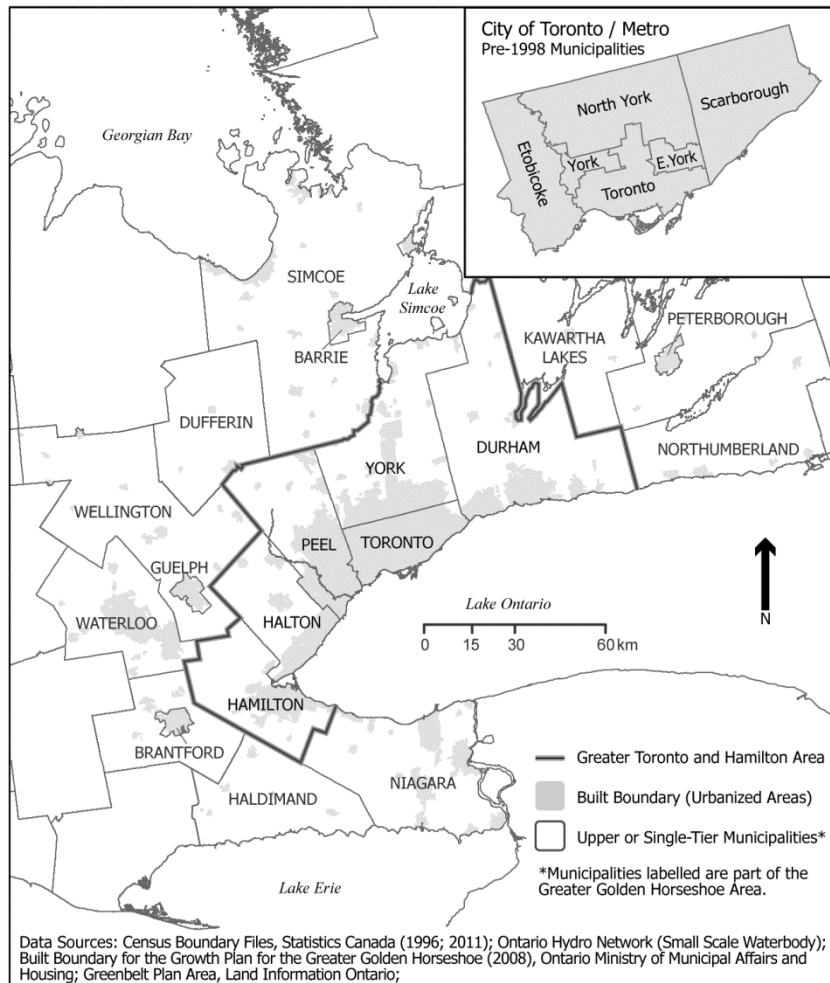


Figure 1 - Toronto Region. (Map created by author)

The Research Problematic I

It has been argued that suburbs have a rich history that deserves “less dismissive attention” from academics.⁸ Suburbs in their various guises now make up all but a small fraction of contemporary metropolitan areas and urban regions. As Peter Lang put it

⁸ Andrew Kirby and Ali Modarres, "The suburban question: An introduction," *Cities* 27, no. 2 (2010).

almost two decades ago, the omnipresent suburb has overtaken the city as the preeminent force shaping contemporary North American life, but as actual places the suburbs remain an enigma: “We think we know what happens in the suburbs, but we are missing many sides of the story.”⁹ Part of the enigma is that suburbs built after 1945 are at once places with histories of their own and regarded by many observers to be a kind of “placeless” landscape produced by the use of standardized building materials and construction techniques and the gradual imposition of hyper-planning—i.e. the careful design and rigid bureaucratic control over the form and content of built environments from the smallest details to largest patterns.¹⁰ Suburban environments built between 1946 and 1980 also form a built fabric in urban regions that is mature without yet being old enough to be widely valued as historic or viewed as distinct from what is more recent.

Inner suburban Toronto—the modern suburbs that fall within the jurisdiction of the “new” City of Toronto created via the dissolution of the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto (Metro) and the amalgamation of its local tier municipalities into one “megacity” in 1998—developed mostly between 1945 and 1980, and are not generally regarded as compact, walkable, or transit-oriented in their built form, but neither are they straightforwardly low-density, automobile-dependant sprawl. Like the Jane-Finch area near York University, Scarborough as a whole has been branded as a “poorly planned,

⁹ Peter Lang, “The Occulted Suburb,” in *Suburban Discipline*, ed. Peter Lang and Tam Miller (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997), 7.

¹⁰ Edward Relph, *Rational Landscapes and Humanistic Geography* (London: Croom Helm, 1981).

ugly, dangerous, and undesirable place in the city.”¹¹ No longer new and peripheral, Scarborough and other spaces like it are betwixt and between—they form an emergent urban middle or in-between city in the Toronto region.¹²

The broad aim of the dissertation is to explore how one suburb—Scarborough—in one metropolitan region—Toronto—was transformed from a rural township into an urban middle or in-between city space in just over a half century. It has been said that our picture of suburbanization might be improved by strategic examination of suburbs in transition, and in particular from detailed study of how specific suburbs have been transformed or changed over successive periods or eras in order “to understand and explore the history of the suburb in a situated way, within the changing context of the metropolis.”¹³ To do this what is needed are new longitudinally-focused studies of suburban places. As Nik Luka notes, we are lacking case studies that examine “how general patterns of socio-spatial sorting, emergent types of urban forms, and processes of transformation all played out in specific places.”¹⁴

The transformation of Toronto from a mono-centred metropolis with 1 million residents in 1950 to a sprawling polycentric urban-region with over 6 million residents a decade into the 21st century (depending on which boundaries are employed) points to the

¹¹ Julie-Anne Boudreau, Roger Keil, and Douglas Young, *Changing Toronto: Governing Urban Neoliberalism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).

¹² Roger Keil and Douglas Young, "Introduction: In-Between Canada -- The Emergence of the New Urban Middle" in *In-Between Infrastructures: Urban Connectivity in an Age of Vulnerability*, ed. Douglas Young, Patricia K. Wood, and Roger Keil (Kelowna: Praxis (e)Press, 2011).

¹³ Ruth McManus and Philip J. Ethington, "Suburbs in transition: new approaches to suburban history," *Urban History* 34, no. 2 (2007): 337.

¹⁴ Nik Luka, "From summer cottage colony to metropolitan suburb: Toronto's Beach district, 1889-1929," *Urban History Review* 35, no. 1 (2006): 18.

formation of a vast middle landscape between the city and the retreating countryside in the decades after World War II.¹⁵ This dissertation explores the interrelationships between planning, governance, and politics in Scarborough and Toronto at strategic moments from 1950 to present in order to better understand how that transformation, the postwar metropolitanization of the Toronto area, played out in specific places.

The Research Problematic II

Ranging between 70 and 40 years old, Toronto's inner suburbs are increasingly complex and diverse physical and social landscapes. Ontario's current planning framework, as articulated in the *Provincial Policy Statement* and *Places to Grow Act*, seeks to curtail further "sprawl" by restricting future greenfield expansion and directing growth inward to existing urbanized areas to increase both employment and population densities.¹⁶ The City of Toronto's Official Plan, which pre-dates the *Places to Grow Act* and related institutional innovations and policies such as the creation of Metrolinx and the *Big Move* plan by several years, envisions increased densities via "reurbanization" along designated

¹⁵ See Frances Frisken, *The Public Metropolis: The Political Dynamics of Urban Expansion in the Toronto Region 1924-2003* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press Inc., 2007); Edward Relph, *Toronto: Transformations in a City and its Region* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014). The term "middle landscape" first appears in Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964) in relation to the "pastoral ideal" in American culture. Here, use of the "middle landscape" is drawn from Peter G. Rowe's *Making a Middle Landscape* (Cambridge (MA): The MIT Press, 1991), which critically examines the physical and cultural landscape that developed between American cities and their surrounding countrysides from the 1920s into the 1980s.

¹⁶ Government of Ontario, "Provincial Policy Statement," (Toronto: Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2005); ———, "Places to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe," (Toronto: Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal, 2006).

transit corridors, and at designated major and immediate centres (mixed-use nodes).¹⁷

Though the focus of public and private investment has been in the urban core and central waterfront areas of Toronto, the longer-term vision includes significant transformations of inner suburban areas.

Falling roughly in line with principles articulated by proponents of Smart Growth intensification, the use of infill redevelopment and brown- and grey-field redevelopment to boost existing urban and suburban population and employment densities is presented as necessary to solve a host of local and regional problems.¹⁸ Planners and urban design professionals are nearly uniform in their support for compact, mixed-use, walkable, transit-supportive neighbourhoods and districts—i.e. what they consider sustainable urban form. At the same time, real estate and development interests are served by the emphasis in the City of Toronto's Official Plan on intensification as a means to foster economic growth and enhanced competitiveness. Environmentalists and urbanists each find cause to approve of intensified development when it is pitched as curtailing sprawl and as a way to protect and enhance the "liveability" of the City.

If we return to the question for whom is sprawl a problem, the answer embedded in policies like the *Places to Grow Act* or the City of Toronto's Official Plan is effectively all of residents of the city and region. The solution—Smart Growth

¹⁷ City of Toronto, "Official Plan," (Toronto: City Planning Division, 2002); Metrolinx, "The Big Move: Transforming Transportation in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area," (Toronto: Metrolinx: An Agency of the Government of Ontario, 2008).

¹⁸ Pierre Filion, "Towards Smart Growth? The Difficult Implementation of Alternatives to Urban Dispersion," *Canadian Journal of Urban Research*, 12 (2003): 48-70.

intensification—is constructed as equally universal. There is a collective cost to sprawl and certain consequences linked to it, such as climate change, which are felt universally. Intensification as a solution, however, falls unevenly in social and geographical terms as the City of Toronto’s Official Plan directs growth to select areas of the city that comprise approximately 25 percent of its land area. Growth, i.e. urban intensification, is to be directed away from low-rise residential neighbourhoods, which are considered to be stable areas whose physical character needs to be respected and reinforced. This arrangement, in part a legacy of citizen opposition to high-rise redevelopment in the late-1960s and ‘70s, is a concession to “not in my backyard” (NIMBY) politics and encourages intensification on-the-ground to take the form of hyper-development rather than a gradual, incremental densification and increased building heights.

In *Making Social Science Matter*, Bent Flyvbjerg argues that phronetic social science concerns itself with designing research to address the following questions in a contextually sensitive fashion:

- (1) where are we going?;
- (2) who gains, and who loses, by which mechanisms of power?;
- (3) is it desirable?; and
- (4) what should be done?¹⁹

These questions can be asked in relation to revitalization-through-redevelopment as promoted by the City of Toronto’s Official Plan. A phronetic approach to research allows

¹⁹ Bent Flyvbjerg, *Making Social Science Matter: Why social inquiry fails and how it can succeed again* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001). 145.

the questions posed above to be answered in a context dependent, value-rational manner that places an analysis of power at its centre. That is, it seeks to be problem driven and exercise practical judgment with critical acuity directed at the relationship between rationality and power in particular circumstances.

One aim of the research and analysis is to link dominant representations and understandings of suburbs with problematizations (i.e. histories of problems) about spaces in the metropolis and local and regional governance of urban growth and spatial expansion. Exploring suburban change and transformation in this manner involves the uneasy push-and-pull of accepting that the underlying geographic areas that form the empirical focus of this dissertation are in the common-sense view identified as suburbs, while the aim of the research is to unsettle the imagery and meanings that are taken-for-granted about the places so labelled. In relation to this, the aim is not to question whether suburbs exist, but instead to determine the limits that conventional definitions, images, and rhetoric place on thinking about and creating possible futures.

In 2008, a *Toronto Star* article “Reinventing Suburbia” surveyed the impact of *Places to Grow* on planning in the GTA. Markham, a fast growing municipality along Toronto’s northern boundary above Scarborough and North York was featured prominently. Valerie Shuttleworth, Markham’s director of planning and urban design, described her area’s aim to create a “six- to eight- to 10-storey European urban centre

where the pedestrian takes (precedence) over the vehicle and transit is key.”²⁰ The challenge, she argues, will be managing the evolution of Markham from “suburban bedroom community” to “urban municipality” in a way that is acceptable to area residents, a task that she notes will be aided by lessons learned from “Scarborough and North York when they went through it 20, 30 or 40 years ago.”

What are these lessons? Are they limited to what happened 20, 30, 40 years ago in Scarborough and North York, to suburban planning, or do they speak more broadly to urban and regional politics and the task of governing urban growth? What might lead us to see current problems in a new and different light?

The Suburban Question

In the preface to the English translation of *The Urban Question*, Manuel Castells described his fundamental aim as trying to develop new tools for research, “while criticizing the traditional categories with which the social sciences, technocracy and the mass media have usually conceived urban problems”; or, more straightforwardly, that it was a reaction “to a large number of unanswered questions that have emerged in the course of a first phase of empirical research that tried to go straight to the facts.”²¹ Much of *The Urban Question*’s epistemological criticism was directed at ideological discourse on “the urban” and the resultant “urbanistic thinking” that came from intense experience of problems without the problematic itself having been identified. Despite attention from

²⁰ Phinjo Gombu, "Reinventing Suburbia; An Ambitious Provincial Strategy is Forcing the 905 to Remake Itself. Will Developers and Residents Let it Happen?," *Toronto Star*, May 30th 2008.

²¹ Manuel Castells, *The urban question: a marxist approach* (London: Edward Arnold, 1977). vii.

scholars, public officials, the media, and general public, from a theoretical and analytical point-of-view it was unclear what “the urban” or “the city” were in precise terms and how they related or should be related to so-called urban problems.

In a sense, confusion over “the urban” or “the city” now seems at a minimum equally applicable to the representation, analysis, and interpretation of suburbs, which in all earnestness—viewed as a whole, rather individually—are less suburbs in the conventional sense and more a new kind of city, a reality long recognized by scholars and keen observers of cities and urban regions.²² Not surprisingly, as scholarly attention turns increasingly toward suburbs and suburban problems the same basic difficulties that underlay the urban question return without necessarily or straightforwardly appearing as such. Instead, the suburban question looms in observations about the “epistemological fragility” of the term “suburb” and the suggestion that “beyond the most perfunctory level of definition, it is far from clear as to what [suburb] actually means or indeed, whether it can be thought to possess meaning at all.”²³

For some the post-1970 sprawl, centerless form, racialized class politics, and consumptive profligacy found at metropolitan America’s outer edge have made older notions of “city” and “suburb” obsolete as the dominant mode of urbanization—post-

²² Robert Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias: The Rise and Fall of Suburbia* (New York: Basic Books, 1987); Louis H. Masotti and Jeffrey K. Hadden, eds., *The Urbanization of the Suburbs* (Los Angeles: SAGE, 1973); Peter O. Muller, *The Outer City: Geographical Consequences of the Urbanization of the Suburbs* (Washington, D.C.: Association of American Geographers, 1976); Sam B. Warner, "When Suburbs Are the City," in *Suburbia Re-examined*, ed. Barbara M. Kelly (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989).

²³ Laura Vaughan et al., "Do the suburbs exist? Discovering complexity and specificity in suburban built form," *Transaction of the Institute of British Geographers* 34(2009): 475.

metropolitan—is now subversive of the whole concept of the urb and is producing physical, social, and political spaces that reflect the unwinding of metropolitan-Keynesianism and its gradual superseding by neoliberal suburbanism.²⁴ Along these lines, others have described contemporary suburbia as the material and symbolic embodiment of neoliberalism, an assemblage of spaces and places that have “established bigness, bling, privatism, and social exclusion as normal, taken-for-granted, and implicitly desirable dimensions of American life.”²⁵ The lineage of this interpretation of suburbs, suburbanization, and suburbanism can be traced to neo-Marxian analyses a generation earlier as Fordism went into crisis. At that time, suburbanization was conceived as a historical process by which capital becomes more “generalized” or universal in space through industrial decentralization and waves of investment in the built environment in which infrastructural expansion and property booms overextend metropolitan space.²⁶

Uneven metropolitan development has become more complex since the 1970s and 1980s. Urban decline in the United States, particularly evident in rustbelt industrial cities in the Northeast and Midwest, is well documented.²⁷ The process continues to be framed not just around the rise of suburbs to political and economic dominance in the decades

²⁴ Jamie Peck, "Neoliberal Suburbanism: Frontier Space," *Urban Geography* 32, no. 6 (2011).

²⁵ Paul L. Knox, *Metroburbia, USA* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2008). 173.

²⁶ Richard A. Walker, "A theory of suburbanization: capitalism and the construction of urban space in the United States," in *Urbanization and Urban Planning in Capitalist Society*, ed. Michael J. Dear and Allen J. Scott (New York: Methuen, 1981).

²⁷ Robert Beauregard, *Voices of Urban Decline: The Postwar Fate of U.S. Cities*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2003).

after World War II, but that suburban growth during that period was parasitic—i.e. that cities were drained of investment, people, and jobs and left with shuttered factories and abandoned housing as rents and profits were cycled out into the building of new suburban areas.²⁸ Since 2000, attention has turned to suburban decline as the same process takes hold in and reworks the social, economic, and physical fabric of older, so-called inner ring suburbs.²⁹ Indeed, a new neoliberal spatial fix is said to be at work in the revalorization of urban cores, the devalorization of older, inner suburbs, and continued suburbanization at the edge.³⁰

The situation is undoubtedly complex on-the-ground, but it is accompanied by a general unease about the future of suburbia (the suburbs as a whole), particularly as perceived social and environmental costs mount. Discourses on future energy scarcity (“peak oil”) congeal around a dark vision of suburban decay and abandonment as residents—no longer able to sustain their energy intensive lifestyles—relocate to places that are more compact, denser, walkable, and transit-oriented. Representative of the most apocalyptic strand of this discourse are the bestselling polemics of James Howard

²⁸ ———, *When America Became Suburban* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006); Jon C. Teaford, *The Metropolitan Revolution: The Rise of Post-Urban America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).

²⁹ Bernadette Hanlon, *Once the American Dream: Inner-Ring Suburbs of the Metropolitan United States* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010); Myron Orfield, *American Metropolitics: The New Suburban Reality* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2002); John Rennie Short, Bernadette Hanlon, and Thomas Vicino, "The Decline of Inner Suburbs: The New Suburban Gothic in the United States," *Geography Compass* 1, no. 3 (2007); Thomas J. Vicino, *Transforming Race and Class in Suburbia: Decline in Metropolitan Baltimore* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

³⁰ Jason Hackworth, *The Neoliberal City: Governance, Ideology, and Development in American Urbanism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007). 81.

Kunstler and films such as the *End of Suburbia*.³¹ Slightly less strident are variations on the theme found in planning discourses such as the “new urbanism” and “smart growth”, which advocate a return to designing and building compact and dense, pedestrian-friendly, transit-supportive urban and suburban environments.³²

Peak oil and planning and urban design critiques of suburbs mobilize the concept of sustainability, which links suburbia (as sprawl) to deleterious economic, social, health, and environmental consequences, in order to justify significant physical alterations to suburban environments.³³ This overemphasis on spatial form and urban design to solve complex environmental, social, political, and economic problems tends to elide how big patterns relate to the cumulative effect of private consumption decisions made in a context where resources are distributed unequally within and between households in a

³¹ James Howard Kunstler, *The Geography of Nowhere: The Rise and Decline of America's Man-Made Landscape* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993); ———, *Home From Nowhere: Remaking Our Everyday World For the 21st Century* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998); ———, *The Long Emergency: Surviving the Converging Catastrophes of the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Grove Press, 2005); Gregory Greene, "The End of Suburbia," (Canada: The Electric Wallpaper Company, 2004).

³² Emily Talen, ed. *Retrofitting Sprawl: Addressing Seventy Years of Failed Urban Form*, (Athens & London: The University of Georgia Press, 2015); Congress for the New Urbanism, and Emily Talen, eds. *Charter of the New Urbanism*, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw Hill Professional, 2013); Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and Jeff Speck, *Suburban Nation: the Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream*, 10th Anniversary Paperback ed. (New York: North Point Press, 2010); Galina Tachieva, *Sprawl Repair Manual*, (Washington, D.C: Island Press, 2010); Andres Duany and Jeff Speck, *The Smart Growth Manual* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2009); Ellen Dunham-Jones and June Williamson, *Retrofitting Suburbia: Urban Design Solutions for Redesigning Suburbs* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2009); Peter Calthorpe and William Fulton, *The Regional City: Planning for the End of Sprawl* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2001); Peter Katz, ed. *The New Urbanism: Toward an Architecture of Community* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994).

³³ Thad Williamson, *Sprawl, Justice, and Citizenship: The Civic Costs of the American Way of Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Howard Frumkin, Lawrence Frank, and Richard J. Jackson, *Urban Sprawl and Public Health: Designing, Planning, and Building for Healthy Communities* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2004); Pamela Blais, *Peverse Cities: Hidden Subsidies, Wonky Policy, and Urban Sprawl* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010); Adam W. Rome, *The Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburban Sprawl and the Rise of American Environmentalism* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

market-driven system of provision.³⁴ By extension, little is said about the accommodation of private property rights and capitalist urban land economics as a basic assumption in North American land-use planning and how it greatly constrains the manner in which quality of life and sustainability issues can be advanced equitably, whether in cities or suburbs.³⁵

The suburban question involves two problems that vex scholars in terms of suburban representation and analysis. The first is the entanglement of critical evaluations of suburbs as built environments and/or socio-political spaces with more generalized critiques of the capitalist urbanization and mass culture. The second is the gulf between suburbs as a readily identifiable type of space within metropolitan areas and more theoretically informed attempts to address “the type of generic problem that the suburb represents”—i.e. what is distinctive about suburban space as “a specific and complex field of social practice.”³⁶

Defining Suburbs

The abstract for a recent article exploring the issue of how to define suburbs conceded “[t]here is no consensus as to what exactly constitutes a suburb.”³⁷ Though there is widespread agreement that suburbs exist it is difficult to pinpoint what precisely makes a

³⁴ Helen Jarvis, *Work/Life City Limits: Comparative Household Perspectives* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005).

³⁵ Nicholas Blomley, *Unsettling the City: Urban Land and the Politics of Property* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

³⁶ Vaughan et al., "Do the suburbs exist? Discovering complexity and specificity in suburban built form," 485.

³⁷ Ann Forsyth, "Defining Suburbs," *Journal of Planning Literature* 27, no. 3 (2012).

place or space suburban. Instead, we are left with suburban imaginations derived from geographically and historically specific instances or spaces whose most evident commonality is they were created by non-central population and economic growth. What constitutes a “suburb” typically centres on discussion of past and present suburbanisms, historic patterns in the landscape, shifting sociocultural connotations, and differing types of suburbs.

A necessary precursor to identifying meaningful suburban types, it has been argued, would be the establishment of a “minimum definition” of shared physical and social characteristics to which all suburbs conform.³⁸ Despite the variegated nature of suburbs, it has been suggested that location, density, and newness might form the basis of such a definition.³⁹ With regard to location, density, and newness the following questions have been posed:

How far from the center of a metropolis do the suburbs start? How far do they extend? Depending on the age of the metropolitan area, size of the core, and forms of transportation, this could be a very large area, developed over a long time and representing a wide variety of environments ... Density and newness are a little more complex ... while not common, some urban areas have suburbs that are denser than their core cities. While newness seems more obvious as part of a definition, it too raises questions. How old does a suburb need to be before it is part of the core or historic city? How should one deal with older fragments of development surrounded by new suburbs and linked physically and functionally to them?⁴⁰

³⁸ Richard Harris, "Meaningful Types in a World of Suburbs," in *Suburbanization in a Global Society*, ed. Mark Clapson and Ray Hutchinson (Bingley: Emerald, 2010).

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Forsyth, "Defining Suburbs," 279.

Given this assessment, all definitions of suburb are bound to raise questions and fall short of general applicability.

An alternative approach is to focus on the combination of suburbanization as “non-central population and economic growth with urban spatial expansion” and suburbanisms as “qualitatively distinct suburban ways of life”.⁴¹ In the *Encyclopedia of Urban Studies*, for example, it is stated that “[s]uburbanization creates *suburbs*, a plural noun that refers particularly to the residential zones of suburbanites beyond the city centers”.⁴² This does not define what a suburb is, per se, but does clarify their general character and that they form as a result of urban decentralization. The entry also provides additional clarity by stretching to address the words “suburbia” and “suburban”. Suburbia, it is noted, is a collective noun that describes the character of suburbs, both cultural and environmental, when viewed as a socio-spatial landscape. On the other hand, two meanings of suburban are put forth: a place somewhere between the poles of urban and rural; and, an epithet used to dismiss people or places for lacking either urbanity or an idealized rustic rurality.

⁴¹ Jean-Paul Addie, Robert S. Fiedler, and Roger Keil, "Cities on the Edge: Emerging Suburban Constellations in Canada," in *Canadian Cities in Transition: Perspectives for an Urban Age*, ed. Pierre Filion, et al. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2015), 415. Quoted from Michael Ekers, Pierre Hamel, and Roger Keil, "Governing Suburbia: Modalities and Mechanisms of Suburban Governance," *Regional Studies* 46, no. 3 (2012): 407. For a critical attempt at theorizing suburbanisms, see Alan R. Walks, "Suburbanism as a Way of Life, Slight Return," *Urban Studies* 50, (2013): 1471–88. See also Markus Moos and Pablo Mendez. "Suburban Ways of Living and the Geography of Income: How Homeownership, Single-Family Dwellings and Automobile Use Define the Metropolitan Social Space." *Urban Studies* 52, no. 10 (2015): 1864–82.

⁴² Mark Clapson, "Suburbanization," in *Encyclopedia of Urban Studies*, ed. Ray Hutchinson (London: SAGE Publications, 2010), 780.

Defining suburbs is not, however, as simple as outlining the process that creates them in the first instance or the ways of life found within them once they exist. While it is quite feasible to speak in general terms about suburbanization or suburbanisms, or to identify a place or community as a suburb and then proceed to describe and analyze its physical form, social relations, culture, and politics, it is much harder to pin down what specifically makes a place suburban or to draw the line between urban and suburban. An important part of the confusion that surrounds suburban definitions, to borrow loosely from Michel Foucault, is the assumption that across time words keep their meaning, that ideas retain their logic, and desires point in the same direction.⁴³ For this reason I find it helpful to approach the task of suburban definition in a manner akin to Raymond Williams' exploration of keywords. Rather than seek to fix upon words a meaning based on tradition or consensus, he sought to establish the meaning of keywords as something "inherited within precise historical and social conditions" and made and remade through use "in real circumstances and from profoundly different and important points of view."⁴⁴

Divvying Up Metropolitan Space

If urban historians trace the lineage of suburbs and suburban ideals back through the 19th century and to industrialization and the advent of omnibuses, commuter railroads, and electric street railways, the modern, postwar suburb is indelibly linked to the rise of

⁴³ Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *The Essential Foucault: Selections from The Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984*, ed. Nikolas Rose and Paul Rabinow (New York: The New Press, 2003), 351.

⁴⁴ Raymond Williams, *Keywords: a vocabulary of culture and society*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983). 24-25.

automobility. Since the 1970s in Toronto the distinction has often involved projecting “city” or “urban” onto the compact, pedestrian-oriented, transit-supportive built-form and urbanisms of pre-1946 “old city” against the dispersed, functionally segregated, automobile-oriented built-form and suburbanisms of newer, post-1945 “corporate city” expanding around it.⁴⁵ That approach now finds equivalent expression in the classification of metropolitan or city-regional space for quantitative analysis.

For example, to estimate how many Canadians live in “suburban” neighbourhoods, one recent study employed two approaches using census tract level data.⁴⁶ The first approach, called the “density” method, used population density to classify individual tracts according to their potential to support transit usage. The second approach, referred to as the “transportation” method, classified individual tracts based on their dominant mode of transportation in terms of commuting to work. Using both methods in combination, the study provided population estimates based on dividing all of the census tracts in Canada’s census metropolitan areas (CMAs) into four classes: active core; transit suburb; auto suburb; and exurban. Using this approach the study determined that 80% of Canadians living in metropolitan areas lived in suburbs, 12% lived in active cores, and the remaining 8% in exurban areas. Putting aside active cores and exurban

⁴⁵ Jon Caulfield, *City Form and Everyday Life: Toronto's Gentrification and Critical Social Practice* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994); James Lorimer, *The Developers* (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1978); John Sewell, "Old and New City," in *The Canadian City*, ed. Kent Gerecke (Montreal: Black Rose, 1991). See also Pierre Filion, "Balancing Concentration and Dispersion? Public Policy and Urban Structure in Toronto," *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 18, no. 2 (2000): 163-89.

⁴⁶ David L. A. Gordon and Mark Janzen, "Suburban Nation? Estimating the Size of Canada's Suburban Population," *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research* 30, no. 3 (2013).

areas defined by active transportation (walking or cycling) for the former and low density for the latter (population densities less than or equal to 150 people/km²), suburbs were divided between transit suburbs and auto suburbs, with the latter being far and away the dominant kind of suburb.⁴⁷ Most suburbs, following the authors' logic and results, are places where densities are low and the automobile dominates.

By contrast, another approach uses census tracts data to classify metropolitan space into zones based "on the predominant year during which their physical infrastructure was built."⁴⁸ To operationalize this approach data on period of construction of private occupied dwellings is employed as a proxy for "physical infrastructure". Effectively, this approach divides metropolitan space into contiguous zones based on a "histrio-spatial division of internal city structure" in which areas identified with a disproportionately higher level (twice the CMA average) of pre-1946 dwellings by period of construction are identified as "inner area".⁴⁹ The remaining tracts are then divided into "mature suburbs", "new suburbs", and "exurbs" by extending the approach to periods of construction post-1945 with 1970 being the breakpoint between "mature" and "new"

⁴⁷ Transit suburb has population density greater than 150 people per square kilometre, active transportation to get to work (walking and cycling) < 1.5 times the national average, and use of transit to get to work \geq 1.5 times the national average, whereas an auto suburb has population density greater than 150 people per square kilometre, active transportation to get to work (walking and cycling) < 1.5 times the national average, and use of transit to get to work < 1.5 times the national average. Using 2006 data from the Census of Canada, 11% (2,357,670) of Canadians living in metropolitan areas resided in census tracts classified as transit suburb, while 69% (14,770,965) lived in census tracts classified as auto suburb. See *ibid.*, 204-12.

⁴⁸ R. Alan Walks, "The Social Ecology of the Post-Fordist/Global City? Economic Restructuring and Socio-Spatial Polarisation in the Toronto Urban Region," *Urban Studies* 38, no. 3 (2001). See also Trudi Bunting, R. Alan Walks, and Pierre Filion, "The uneven geography of housing affordability stress in Canadian metropolitan areas," *Housing Studies* 19, no. 3 (2004).

⁴⁹ Walks, "The Social Ecology of the Post-Fordist/Global City? Economic Restructuring and Socio-Spatial Polarisation in the Toronto Urban Region," 412.

suburbs. In this approach, “exurbs” are defined as the outer zone of the metropolitan area, and are identified as rural tracts (those with exceedingly low population densities) and tracts covering areas with towns and villages not part of the contiguously built-up zone regardless of their period of initial physical development.

Either classification scheme can be used for estimating how many Canadians live in suburbs and offer a practical definition of “suburban” based on form and function. And to be fair, both approaches overlap with common-sense understandings of suburb. But the tidiness of using density, transportation, or period of initial development after 1945 to distinguish suburbs from other metropolitan spaces has important limitations. The most important is that the social, cultural, and political meanings attached to “suburban” and “suburbs” are relational in the sense that they are most often constructed against their perceived others: “urban” and “city”.

The work of suburban representation and classification for analytical purposes inevitably falls back on problem definition and intent—i.e. what are we trying to examine, measure, or comment on—and how does this align (or not) with accepted wisdom and taken-for-granted assumptions about that which is being defined. This involves making choices and accepting that definitions, particularly those used to develop classification schemes, seldom question or unsettle what is already thought. Indeed, classification, while useful, is a powerful technology and not merely a technical exercise driven by data or empirical facts, but a practice that creates boundary objects and has

ethical and political dimensions to consider.⁵⁰ In the case of “the suburbs”, attention must be paid to the different ways in which “suburb” and “suburban” are invoked, and in relation to what arguments are they mobilized, and by whom.

Plan of Dissertation

This dissertation is a work of urban geographical research. Across its chapters it is shaped by a mix of Bent Flyvbjerg’s theoretical and practical insights on workings of rationality and power in politics, planning and public administration, Michel Foucault’s approach to critical and effective history, and Henri Lefebvre’s theoretical ruminations on the production of space.⁵¹ The dissertation research was inspired by the belief that critical exploration of what happened (and is happening) in actual places and spaces is needed, rather than presume that planning and design fixes for problems like “sprawl” or critical accounts of suburbs that emphasize them as places of homogeneity, conformity, and privilege are adequate to the task of shaping new and different (sub)urban futures that are more sustainable and socially just.

⁵⁰ Geoffrey C. Bowker and Susan Leigh Star, *Sorting Things Out: Classification and its Consequences* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999).

⁵¹ Bent Flyvbjerg, *Rationality and Power: Democracy in Practice* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998); Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, Translated by A. Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1977); ———. *The History of Sexuality Volume I: An Introduction*, Translated by R. Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1978); Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, Translated by D. Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991). See also: David Garland, "What Is a "History of the Present"? On Foucault's Genealogies and Their Critical Preconditions," *Punishment and Society* 16, no. 4 (2014): 365-84; Michael S. Roth, "Foucault's 'History of the Present'," *History and Theory* 20, no. 1 (1981): 32-46; Andy Merrifield, *Henri Lefebvre: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Kanishka Goonewardena, Stefan Kipfer, Richard Milgrom, and Christian Schmid, eds. *Space, Difference, Everyday Life: Reading Henri Lefebvre* (London: Routledge, 2008).

The overarching question this dissertation explores is: How might we better conceive the postwar suburb in Toronto and its current development as a kind of in-between or new urban middle in the wider region? To operationalize and ground such a question, the dissertation research came to focus on the following: contextualizing the postwar Toronto suburb; revisiting “the metropolitan problem” in Toronto; connecting city and suburb in postwar metropolitanization; detailing the building and contesting of the “normal suburban-type community”; exploring representations, uneven development, and suburban change; and detailed examination of inner suburban revitalization through intensified redevelopment. Each forms a chapter in the dissertation that follows and provides a different window and perspective on the overarching question being explored (see the outline of chapters below).

An investigative approach was adopted for this dissertation. It was aided by methodological guidelines laid out in *Making Social Science Matter*, which it should be noted are intended as “cautionary indicators of direction” and not “methodological imperatives”.⁵² In particular, the research and analysis focused on establishing the socially and historically conditioned context in which ideas form and courses of action are chosen by “emphasizing little things” and “getting close to reality”. That necessitated searching for and immersing myself in a range of source materials. With the exception of Chapter 8, for which I attended public meetings, analyzed policy documents and staff reports, and conducted interviews with residents and members of Toronto planning staff,

⁵² See Chapter 9 in Flyvbjerg, *Making Social Science Matter: Why social inquiry fails and how it can succeed again*.

much of the dissertation is historical and involved exploring and deciphering archival materials and newspaper clippings. I augmented this with informal interviews with former politicians, planners, and other civic officials to fill out and validate my understanding of events, issues, and personalities, and to determine potential gaps in the materials and data I had assembled.

In this sense, the research approach had an iterative aspect to it: description and analysis was gradually made thicker with increased awareness of what to look for, familiarity with available materials and their contents, and a richer understanding of how different pieces fit (or not) into the overall narrative being constructed. This does not negate that knowledge of the past or present is partial and situated. As has been said, history is “an enormous jig-saw with a lot of missing parts”, but that is not the main problem, rather it is that “[o]ur picture has been preselected and predetermined for us, not so much by accident as by people who were consciously or unconsciously imbued with a particular view and thought the facts which supported that view worth preserving.”⁵³ That applies to what is presented in this dissertation, but it also can be extended to the source materials it relies upon. The facts do not speak for themselves and there is always more to the story.

Outline of Chapters

Chapter 2 reviews historical surveys of North American suburbanization and suburban histories in order to highlight the richer history of suburbanization and pluralize suburbia.

⁵³ Edward H. Carr, *What is History?* (New York: Penguin Books, 1990). 13.

An important aim is to lay the groundwork for deciphering where suburban myths end and suburban realities began with regard to Toronto. Chapter 3 attempts to demonstrate how “suburban-ness” has been constructed and the meaning of “suburb” made and remade in Toronto since 1945, while Chapter 4 examines the discourse produced in relation to “the metropolitan problem” as politicians grappled with city-suburban differences over how to resolve impediments to the orderly growth and development of the region in the early years of Toronto’s postwar boom.

Starting with Chapter 5, the focus is placed more narrowly on Scarborough and its planning and development. Scarborough went from a semi-rural township with a small urban population in its southwest corner to a large suburban borough in the span of three decades. An important part of the story is the development and gradual implementation of modern planning ideas in Scarborough in the late-1950s into the 1960s. Chapter 6 shows that conventional postwar suburban planning came under attack from “downtown” urbanists in the early 1970s at roughly the same time as interest in planning issues, particularly around high-rise apartments and social housing, took on increased prominence in Scarborough.

Chapter 7 details the transformation of Scarborough in the 1980s and 1990s. Scarborough in the mid-to-late 1970s was a still growing postwar suburb with a healthy industrial base. Though Scarborough continued to grow in the 1980s, it also began to grapple with significant deindustrialization, the emergence of retail-commercial decline in some of its older areas, and wide-reaching changes to its socio-demographic mix.

Chapter 8 focuses on a development application and area revitalization study in the one part of Scarborough to examine in a more detailed way suburban change and transformation in post-amalgamation Toronto, particularly how the new Official Plan's support for intensification plays out in local places.

Chapter 2: Learning from Historical Geographies of North American Suburbs and Suburbanization

Introduction

This chapter looks to historical scholarship on North American suburbs and suburbanization to not merely assert that suburbia should be pluralized, but to establish why postwar suburbs should be approached as complex and dynamic social spaces that deserve examination as places with histories of development that relate to internal dynamics, their relationship to the city, and their place within the wider metropolitan and national context. An important starting point is to unsettle the assumption that suburbanization has proceeded in a singular way or followed a simple line of diffusion from elite, bourgeois utopia to mass living space after World War II.

Historical geographers Richard Harris and Robert Lewis have shown how scholars represented the geography of North American cities and suburbs during the first half of the 20th century and the degree to which postwar metropolitan geographies have been retrospectively applied prewar metropolitan geographies, effectively reshaping how both city and suburb are represented and understood historically.⁵⁴ Commenting on the influence of the models of the Chicago School since World War II, they state:

The enduring model assumes that jobs were concentrated near the city center, except for a few large factories at the fringe. It supposes that jobs and low wages kept immigrant workers in central cities,

⁵⁴ Richard Harris and Robert Lewis, "Constructing a Fault(y) Zone: Misrepresentations of American Cities and Suburbs, 1900-1950," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 88, no. 4 (1998); ———, "The Geography of North American Cities and Suburbs, 1900-1950: A New Synthesis," *Journal of Urban History* 27, no. 3 (2001).

sometimes in sectors along radial rail lines. Supposedly, only affluent families could afford new suburban homes, while the exclusivity of suburbs was ensured by suburban self-rule. This view stresses inner-city poverty and suburban affluence. It has inspired many studies of central immigrant ghettos and slums and, following [Sam Bass Warner], the suburban experiences of the middle class. Recently, however, some writers have provided disconfirming evidence of industrial decentralization and of fringe settlement by workers and immigrants, facts of which contemporaries were well aware. Arguably, prewar suburbs were as socially diverse as the cities that they surrounded, and it is doubtful whether the city-suburban dichotomy was very significant.⁵⁵

Other urban geographers, sociologists, and historians have also critiqued the models of the Chicago School, particularly those associated with the Los Angeles School who have focused on the spatial transformation of the post-1970s metropolitan-region, post-Fordist economic restructuring, and the emergence of postmodern urbanism.⁵⁶

The difference is emphasis. Most accounts associated with the Los Angeles school focus on contemporary transformations and what distinguishes the postmodern city and region from the archetypal modern city. The empirical findings of Harris and Lewis, and other writers of revisionist (sub)urban histories reveal the modern city and its metropolitan fringe to be far more complex and variegated—socially, economically, and physically—than typically acknowledged in classic texts of suburban history or in centre-oriented discourses on cities and urbanization.

⁵⁵ ———, "The Geography of North American Cities and Suburbs, 1900-1950: A New Synthesis," 262-63.

⁵⁶ Michael J. Dear and Steven Flusty, "Postmodern Urbanism," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 88, no. 1 (1998); Edward W. Soja, *Postmetropolis: Critical Studies of Cities and Regions* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).

One of the principal aims of revisionist suburban histories has been to revise and clarify what suburbs have been so as to provide historical depth to contemporary suburban discourse, as well as foreground the “ideological, political, and economic issues that bound city and suburb together in the postwar world.”⁵⁷ The latter being a direct response to the treatment of city and suburb as socio-spatial opposites in discourse. In addition to the national or metropolitan-scale analyses that dominate in *The New Suburban History*, an edited collection that presents suburbs as central to understanding modern America, there are studies of particular suburbs that take a longitudinal approach to suburban development and change.⁵⁸ Studies of this sort offer a window into the ongoing development and evolution of suburban places, and reveal “what happens to a suburban seedbed after it has been planted.”⁵⁹

The literature on suburbs and suburbanization is voluminous, but canonical works tilt strongly toward the American experience and perspective. For students of Canadian suburbanization this remains both a blessing and a curse. As will be discussed further in Chapter 3 similarities between Canada and the United States can obscure important

⁵⁷ Kevin M. Kruse and Thomas J. Sugrue, "Introduction," in *The New Suburban History*, ed. Kevin M. Kruse and Thomas J. Sugrue (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 6.

⁵⁸ ———, eds., *The New Suburban History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); Barbara M. Kelly, *Expanding the American Dream: Building and Rebuilding Levittown* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993); Paul H. Mattingly, *Suburban Landscapes: Culture and Politics in a New York Metropolitan Community* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2001). Becky M. Nicolaides, *My Blue Heaven: Life and Politics in the Working-Class Suburbs of Los Angeles, 1920-1965* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002). Carolyn Whitzman, *Suburb, Slum, Urban Village: Transformations in Toronto's Parkdale Neighbourhood, 1875-2002* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009).

⁵⁹ McManus and Ethington, "Suburbs in transition: new approaches to suburban history," 318-19.

differences.⁶⁰ The rapid growth of new suburban areas and of suburbia overall in the 20th century has been a common experience, as is the ideal of owning a detached, single-family house. In other regards, however, differences are stark and obvious.

The most obvious and impactful difference: Canadian cities did not experience the “sharp” and “systematic” decay and abandonment that affected American cities after the Second World War. American suburban histories typically describe postwar suburbanization as an exodus to new suburban areas—the implication that Americans, mostly white, were fleeing cities. It is generally acknowledged this depiction and explanation of postwar suburbanization does not hold for Canada. For example, in the postwar period (between 1945 and 1980) it would be more accurate to say that a wide cross-section of Canadians, including working-class people, were both pushed out to the suburbs by housing shortages, downtown redevelopment, and urban renewal schemes, and drawn to new suburbs by the possibility of homeownership and to a certain extent by the growing supply of clean and modern rental apartments.⁶¹

Our picture of Canadian suburbs is still being brought into focus. Until Richard Harris’ *Creeping Conformity* scholars interested in Canada’s history of suburbanization had no equivalent to Kenneth Jackson’s authoritative *Crabgrass Frontier*, nor could they draw upon useful surveys of the contemporary suburbia and suburban forms such as Peter O. Muller’s *Contemporary Suburban America*, John Palen’s *The Suburbs*, or Jon

⁶⁰ See Paul-Andre Linteau, "Canadian Suburbanization in a North American Context: Does the Border Make a Difference?," *Journal of Urban History* 13, no. 3 (1987): 252.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

Teaford's *the Metropolitan Revolution*.⁶² Literature that could be called "suburban" in Canada has tended to focus on the historical development of early 20th century suburbs, though important insights on post-1945 suburbs, suburbanization, and suburbanisms can be gleaned from literature focused on other topics.⁶³ This is not surprising. As most Canadians now live in suburbs of one kind or another, "the suburbs" are integral to everyday life and are widely discussed without necessarily being the focus of analysis itself.

This chapter draws upon historical scholarship on the North American suburb and suburbanization to place discourse on the Canadian postwar suburb in a fuller historical context. It is an attempt to fill out our picture of suburbanization before focusing in a more detailed way in subsequent chapters on Toronto's postwar metropolitanization, and more specifically, Scarborough's postwar growth and development. Key to that is both exploring and complicating Richard Harris' diversity to conformity model of Canadian suburbanization, which seeks to explain the creeping shift in the non-central parts of metropolitan areas from segregated diversity to a much more standardized and uniform suburbia after the 1940s.⁶⁴

⁶² Richard Harris, *Creeping Conformity: How Canada Became Suburban, 1900-1960* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004); Peter O. Muller, *Contemporary Suburban America* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1981); John J. Palen, *The Suburbs* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995); Teaford, *The Metropolitan Revolution: The Rise of Post-Urban America*.

⁶³ Robert S. Fiedler and Jean-Paul Addie, "Cities on the Edge: Reassessing the Canadian Suburb," (Toronto: the City Institute at York University, 2008).

⁶⁴ Harris, *Creeping Conformity: How Canada Became Suburban, 1900-1960*.

To do this a range of scholarship on North American suburbs and suburbanization is drawn upon. Recent discourse on suburbia talks about the need for suburbs to become more urban or city-like via intensified development that enables growth to be used to repair sprawl or retrofit problematic spaces. There is also recognition of increased social and economic diversity in the suburbs, and increasingly of suburban decline. A close reading of suburban histories clarifies important continuities between postwar suburbanization and earlier waves of suburbanization, but also attends to how postwar suburbs were made and remade in specific circumstances. As suburbs exist as both real and imagined places critical exploration of them requires considering how geographical imaginations intersect with material realities and social conditions to produce them.

The authors of a recent academic paper “Do the Suburbs Exist?” identify four imaginations of suburban space: the one-dimensional suburb; urbanization-suburbanization teleology; self-referential multiplicity; and otherness.⁶⁵ For my purposes, I see tensions in dominant imaginations of suburban space in North America as key. The notion that suburbs grew out of a middle-class ideal must be set against the long history of social and economic diversity on the metropolitan fringe. Similarly, the expectation that suburbs are almost by default “white” and politically conservative needs to be contextualized, rather than accepted as the default norm. Finally, the gendered terrain of suburbia needs to be considered, especially in relation to the enduring image of suburbs as bedroom communities.

⁶⁵ Vaughan et al., "Do the suburbs exist? Discovering complexity and specificity in suburban built form."

Locating the Postwar Suburb in History

Toward the end of *The City in History*, Lewis Mumford contrasts the original vision of the historic suburb with its “grim antithesis”: postwar mass suburbia.⁶⁶ His critique, like that of many early postwar critics, is tinged with elitism. The original idea of creating a living space between the city and countryside that merged the best features of both, while maintaining easy access to either, was only possible for the privileged few in his view.

Whilst the suburb served only a favored minority it neither spoiled the countryside nor threatened the city. But now that the drift to the outer ring has become a mass movement, it tends to destroy the value of both environments without producing anything but a dreary substitute, devoid of form and even more devoid of the original suburban values.⁶⁷

If the suburban ideal had worthy elements, and Mumford intimated it did, they could not endure the onslaught of the masses. In blurring the original distinctions between city and suburb, the result was confused and alienating to him—an unsatisfactory environment offering neither the benefits of the city, nor of the countryside.

Given the specific focus of this dissertation, it is necessary to consider the powerful feelings that have “gathered” and become “generalized” about suburbia (mostly in the North American context) since World War II. This time period is often framed as the apotheosis of suburbanization, the point in which a critical threshold was surpassed

⁶⁶ Lewis Mumford, *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1961). 486.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 506.

and it became possible to think of Canada and the United States as suburban nations.⁶⁸

The degree to which “the suburbs” and suburbanization are seen as a post-1946 phenomenon in the popular imagination and public discourse obscures the presence and influence of earlier waves of suburbanization and visions of suburbia.

Suburbia for the “Favored Minority”

In *Bourgeois Utopias*, Robert Fishman comes to a similar conclusion.⁶⁹ As opposed to viewing the postwar era as the arrival of suburbia in full, he argues that it represents its demise. His interpretation can be drawn from the narrow definition of suburb he uses to frame his analysis. Tracing the origin and aesthetic of the “true suburb” back to late-18th century London, his definition is so exclusive it precludes the possibility of working class, industrial, minority, or socially-mixed suburbs.

Suburbia can thus be defined first by what it includes—middle-class residences—and second (perhaps more importantly) by what it excludes: all industry, most commerce except for enterprises that specifically serve a residential area, and all lower-class residents (except for servants). These social and economic characteristics are all expressed in design through a suburban tradition of both residential and landscape architecture. Derived from the English concept of the picturesque, this tradition distinguishes the suburb from the city and from the countryside and creates that aesthetic “marriage of town and country” which is the mark of the true suburb.⁷⁰

The modern suburbs of the 19th century, in Fishman’s view were “a cultural creation, a conscious choice based on the economic structure and cultural values of the

⁶⁸ Beauregard, *When America Became Suburban*; Harris, *Creeping Conformity: How Canada Became Suburban, 1900-1960*; Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

⁶⁹ Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias: The Rise and Fall of Suburbia*.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

Anglo-American bourgeoisie”, rather than an inevitable response to industrialization or transportation technologies.⁷¹ To develop this line of thought, his focus shifts from London to Manchester where the degree of middle class suburbanization in a single decade (1835-1845) surpassed what London would experience from 1770 to 1870. As he points out, while London was the birthplace of the modern suburb, the impact of suburbanization on the city's urban structure was tempered by the size and complexity of pre-modern London. The shift toward the peripheral suburb as the dominant living space for the bourgeoisie occurred gradually there. By contrast, Manchester was less fettered by past rounds of urbanization, allowing middle-class suburbanization to reshape the city more decisively, bringing “to almost completion that tendency toward class segregation and the separation of bourgeois work and residence which had first been seen in eighteenth century London”.⁷² Middle class suburbanization in Manchester, Fishman notes, produced an urban structure that became the classic form of the Anglo-American industrial city: a central business district encircled by a factory zone mixed with working-class housing, beyond which lay a suburban belt of middle class residences.

Paris serves as an alternative to the middle class suburbanization that characterized the Anglo-American industrial city. In Paris, Fishman demonstrates the role that governmental intervention and state power played in remaking central Paris for bourgeois domination.⁷³ Large swaths of the existing urban fabric were demolished so

⁷¹ Ibid., 8-9.

⁷² Ibid., 75.

⁷³ Ibid., 111-16.

that wide boulevards could be constructed. Along these boulevards large apartment houses suitable for the Parisian middle class were built, reinforcing the cultural ideal of urban apartment living and limiting the appeal of the Anglo-American suburban ideal. The process, directed by Baron Haussmann, pushed the working class outwards to the urban periphery where industry was locating. Rather than a suburban belt of middle class residences in the periphery, in Paris a working-class industrial belt formed. In England and the United States there was greater adherence to the doctrine of laissez-faire government in the 19th century. This Fishman surmises precluded their cities from following the path of those in continental Europe. In order to escape the ills of the industrial city, the Anglo-American middle class found in suburbanization a solution that matched their immediate needs and ideological outlook.

The Suburban Cliché

American suburbs are generally safer and richer than cities, but the popular tendency is to play to extremes, to juxtapose a Scarsdale or Winnetka to poor, crime-ridden Watts or Bedford-Stuyvesant, obscuring all the while that the ghetto is no more typical of the average American city neighborhood than Scarsdale or Winnetka is of the suburbs.⁷⁴

In “The Suburban Cliché” historian James L. Wunsch takes three influential suburban histories—*Crabgrass Frontier*, *Bourgeois Utopias*, and *Borderland*—to task for their focus on the spacious environment and fashionable housing of affluent commuters.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ James L. Wunsch, "The Suburban Cliche," *Journal of Social History* Spring(1995): 643.

⁷⁵ Ibid. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*; Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias: The Rise and Fall of Suburbia*; John R. Stilgoe, *Borderland: origins of the American suburb, 1820-1939* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).

Their narrow focus, he argues, allowed them to construct the formation of early suburbia in a seemingly unpopulated metropolitan fringe, which clearly overlooks the diversity of settlement types that would have been present around major urban centres in the mid-19th century. As Wunsch notes, the metropolitan fringe at the time was comprised of “a welter of towns, satellite cities and industrial areas, some as old as the central city itself”.⁷⁶ Suburbanization, he reminds us, occurred in a variegated metropolitan realm in which commuters were but one element.

Indeed, this is acknowledged early in *Crabgrass Frontier*. Wunsch’s point, however, is not that there is no acknowledgement of the longer history of suburbs as slums—a place for people and activities needed but unwanted in the city—but that metropolitan diversity is too quickly dispensed with. The transformation of metropolitan fringe areas into the affluent suburbia of commuters is too sudden and complete, in his view. It neglects the interaction between established settlements and activities in the metropolitan fringe and the new residential enclaves of wealthy suburbanites.

As a center for consumption of goods and services, the wealthy suburban household generated demand which contributed to what was already a complex, diversified and productive metropolitan economy. This is why, even in well-to-do suburbs, many more people have found employment in the metropolitan economy than have ever commuted to the central business district.⁷⁷

The suburban cliché, of course, only speaks to a limited social and geographic segment within this metropolitan realm. This is not a serious problem until one considers how a

⁷⁶ Wunsch, "The Suburban Cliche," 647.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 649.

focus on affluent commuters and their suburban spaces influences the way that suburbanization is represented and understood as a historical phenomenon.

The assumption that the modern suburb was the creation of the bourgeoisie and filtered down to the lower-middle class and working class as improvements in transportation lowered the cost of travel and made suburban living more widely affordable insinuated itself into suburban histories from the 1960s to 1980s. Part of the reason was the implicit acceptance of the idea that residential districts rise in status as one moves outward from the city centre—an idea popularized by E.W. Burgess' concentric zone model. Developed to describe the urban structure of Chicago in the 1920s, as an urban model it was basically ahistorical and did not take into account how existing patterns had developed.⁷⁸

An additional difficulty rests in the different meanings inferred by terms such as “suburban” and “metropolitan”. At present, suburbanization tends to be associated with any form of decentralization, urban expansion, or peripheral settlement, while the term metropolitan simply refers to cities and suburbs as a unified whole. In some cases, metropolitan is used to imply a city-suburban relation, but it can also function as a rough proxy for suburban. Suburban is more problematic, because it can be used pejoratively to indicate a place, thing, or person is less than urban; yet, at the same time, it can refer to the middle class ideal that finds its truest expression in the combination of owner-

⁷⁸ Harris and Lewis, "Constructing a Fault(y) Zone: Misrepresentations of American Cities and Suburbs, 1900-1950."; ———, "The Geography of North American Cities and Suburbs, 1900-1950: A New Synthesis."

occupied detached housing in residential enclaves, the separation of domestic life from work, and the careful separation of the private sphere of the home from the public realm of the city.

Making Social and Economic “Diversity” on the Fringe

In contrast to historical scholarship that places narrow focus on suburbs as middle-class spaces, a new wave of suburban histories starting in the late-1990s sought to re-examine the accepted wisdom about city-suburban differences, especially prior to the postwar period. They tend to view metropolitan space more inclusively and seek to establish more nuanced understandings of intra-metropolitan geographies of difference. For example,

Richard Harris and Robert Lewis argue:

Americans have persuaded themselves that the distinction between central cities and surrounding suburbs is basic to our understanding of the character of urban growth. In the first half of the twentieth century, this was not true. In terms of employment and social composition, we have argued that differences between cities and the suburbs as a whole were quite minor and were dwarfed by variations within the city and among the suburbs. To assume otherwise is to risk making egregious errors.⁷⁹

In their view, social and economic diversity across metropolitan space means that historians (and other urban scholars) need to consider both cities and suburbs in tandem. One cannot assume that immigrant and minority groups, the lives of middle and working class families, the retail structure, industrial location, office employment, socio-political differences, and so on, can be understood without an inclusive approach.

⁷⁹ ———, "The Geography of North American Cities and Suburbs, 1900-1950: A New Synthesis," 284.

Industrial Suburbanization

Manufacturing Suburbs edited by Robert Lewis provides a diverse collection of essays that illustrate the role that industrial decentralization played in the metropolitan development of Baltimore, Chicago, Montreal, San Francisco, Pittsburgh, Toronto, Los Angeles, and Detroit prior to 1950.⁸⁰ His introductory essay makes three key observations: (1) that urban historians are generally aware of industrial satellite cities or suburbs as they relate to the cities that are the focus of their research; (2) that scholars interested in the post-World War II metropolis have tended to overlook or minimize the economic decentralization that occurred prewar; and (3) the proliferation of histories framed around upper- and middle-class residential suburbanization have crowded out other dimensions of metropolitan fringe development. Assessing the state of suburban history, Lewis contends it has yet to adequately account for the role of industrial suburbanization in metropolitan development.

The contributors to *Manufacturing Suburbs* demonstrate collectively that industrial suburbanization played an important role in establishing a multi-nodal pattern of metropolitan development in North America long before the postwar period. For scholars interested in contemporary city-regions and urbanization it is vital that the metropolitan landscape be viewed from a historically-informed perspective that acknowledges path-dependency and sequence of development in order to recognize that urban space is made and remade through waves of capital investment in built

⁸⁰ Robert Lewis, ed. *Manufacturing Suburbs: Building Work and Home on the Metropolitan Fringe* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004).

environments. Industrial suburbanization did not take place in a single or uniform manner in the cities discussed.

In the San Francisco Bay Area, Richard Walker shows that the suburbanization of manufacturing was so intertwined with metropolitanization that it makes little sense to talk about industry suburbanizing as a process by which firms move outward and hollow out an established core area.⁸¹ Instead, he describes industrial suburbanization as so central to the area's metropolitan or urban-regional development that it "appears to be the normal mode of urban growth". As with the other cities discussed, it is the episodic flow of capital investment into new infrastructure and land development, the influence of physical geography, elite cohesion and organizational strength, labour militancy (or pliancy), and the emergence of new industries and production processes that propelled metropolitan development, determining its scale, pace, and physical form.⁸²

Two additional points must be made. First, in "A City Transformed", Robert Lewis illustrates how Montreal's social geographies were shaped in durable ways by industrial suburbanization from the mid-19th century through to the onset of the Great Depression (1930).⁸³ Not only did new suburban industrial districts (and the

⁸¹ Richard A. Walker, "Industry Builds Out the City: The Suburbanization of Manufacturing in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1850-1940," in *Manufacturing Suburbs: Building Work and Home on the Metropolitan Fringe*, ed. Robert Lewis (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004).

⁸² For earlier, more general readings of suburbanization as integral to the accumulation process and capitalist urbanization, see ———, "The transformation of urban structure in the 19th century United States and the beginnings of suburbanization," in *Urbanization and Conflict in Market Societies*, ed. Kevin R. Cox (Chicago: Maaroufa Press, 1978); ———, "A theory of suburbanization: capitalism and the construction of urban space in the United States."

⁸³ Robert Lewis, "A City Transformed: Manufacturing Districts and Suburban Growth in Montreal, 1850-1929," *Journal of Historical Geography* 27, no. 1 (2001). For a more comprehensive historical account of

infrastructure to support them) give Montreal a multi-nodal urban structure, but they played an important role in shaping the city's fine weave of social difference—he describes Montreal as a fragmented social space, segmented along class, occupational, and ethnic lines. In the broad sense, builders and speculators provided a “suburban quilt of cheap housing” which facilitated working-class suburbanization. In a greatly expanded urban region, these spaces are firmly ensconced within the urban realm of contemporary Montreal, but their initial development vis-à-vis the suburbanization of industry is key to understanding the social and physical diversity that many observers now characterize as quintessentially “urban” or “city-like”.

Second, in “Model City? Industry and Urban Structure in Chicago”, Mary Beth Pudup examines the development of Chicago’s industrial southern half, detailing the interplay between real estate promotion, railroads, and industrial location.⁸⁴ She argues that Chicago’s metropolitan landscape, and in particular its industrial geography, did not develop according to an inevitable or “natural” pattern; instead, spatial outcomes were shaped by multiple actors, whose competing interests and needs did not preclude them from cooperating or colluding where it was strategic. A vital ingredient in Chicago’s rise to prominence as America’s “second city” was the ability and willingness of powerful

the relationship between urban growth and industrial decentralization in Montreal, see Robert Lewis, *Manufacturing Montreal: The Making of an Industrial Landscape 1850 to 1930* (Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000).

⁸⁴ Mary Beth Pudup, "Model City? Industry and Urban Structure in Chicago," in *Manufacturing Suburbs: Building Work and Home on the Metropolitan Fringe*, ed. Robert Lewis (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004). See also Robert Lewis, *Chicago Made: Factory Networks in the Industrial Metropolis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

actors to forge a shared vision for metropolitan development that aligned regional competitiveness with individual motives and interests. Of equal importance, Pudup concludes that Chicago offers urban studies a very different “model city” than the ahistorical version popularized by the Chicago School in the 1920s and ‘30s. Tracing historical development, she argues, allows us to see what is “camouflaged” by observers and theorists who neglect earlier metropolitan geographies.

By extension, Richard Harris’ concluding essay in *Manufacturing Suburbs* surveys literature on suburbanization and the work-home linkage. He argues that attentiveness to the process of suburbanization and development in particular suburban places ensures that analysis and interpretation moves beyond mere description of socio-spatial outcomes, which may mislead rather than inform us.

Scholars have applied descriptive terms such as the “residential” or “industrial” suburb to describe places with, respectively, a surplus of people or of manufacturing jobs, along with an intermediate category for “mixed” or “balanced” suburbs. Such terms are applied to places that have constituted themselves as municipalities but often lack a functional identity. They describe the results of suburbanization, not the process itself. The existence of a mature industrial suburb, for example, has often been taken to indicate that industry led the way into the urban fringe. In fact, such a suburb could have evolved in different ways, beginning as a mixed or even residential community, before acquiring its industrial character. Its mature form is a fallible guide to the formative process, and the same is true for other types of suburbs.⁸⁵

In many cases, Harris notes, the resulting physical, social, and economic landscape now apparent is the product of several forms and periods of suburbanization, each contributing

⁸⁵ Richard Harris, "Suburbanization and the Employment Linkage," in *Manufacturing Suburbs: Building Work and Home on the Metropolitan Fringe*, ed. Robert Lewis (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004), 223.

with varying intensity and effect to the space's present form. As a result, only careful historical detective work can unravel how particular suburban places form and evolve over time.

Modest Suburbia: Streetcar Suburbs, Self-Built Suburbs, Sitcom Suburbs

In *Building Suburbia*, Dolores Hayden begins her chapter on streetcar buildouts by remarking that “subdividers of land near city centers provided a cut-rate version of the verdant residential ideal expressed in the picturesque enclaves.”⁸⁶ She portrays them as modest in scale, points to the variety of housing forms that appeared in them, and suggests that their diversity makes it hard to generalize about the people who lived in them, though she notes they probably housed “skilled workers and people of modest middle-class status”.⁸⁷ On the whole her assessment of streetcar suburbs is favorable, seeing them as flexible, compact, transit-oriented, and supportive of extended family living.

Hayden's mention of land subdividers is important. Sam Bass Warner's work on Boston revealed the vital role that electric streetcar lines played in opening up new suburban areas for development.⁸⁸ As Kenneth Jackson's put it in *Crabgrass Frontier*, “the areas most popular with prospective home builders were those close to the streetcar

⁸⁶ Dolores Hayden, *Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000* (New York: Vintage Books, 2003). 71.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁸⁸ Sam B. Warner, *Streetcar Suburbs: The Process of Growth in Boston, 1870-1900* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press and The MIT Press, 1962).

routes.”⁸⁹ Then as now transportation infrastructure facilitated and structured metropolitan growth, and land speculators (often linked to the railways themselves) profited from it.

A theme that runs through Warner’s *Streetcar Suburbs* is that of a metropolitan city split between slums and suburbs, with only the half of society able to afford housing in new suburban areas.⁹⁰ This tidy dichotomy has been challenged by a more recent wave of suburban histories that document the rise and fall of self-built housing and “unplanned” suburbs during the first-half of the 20th century. These suburban settlements provided a pathway to homeownership for households further down the socioeconomic ladder, and were considerably more austere places than the streetcar suburbs. Indeed, the working class (or blue collar) and African American suburbanization documented in *Unplanned Suburbs*, *My Blue Heaven*, and *Places of Their Own* departs rather sharply from the modest middle class image of compact, well-built housing associated with streetcar suburbs.⁹¹

The self-built suburbs found on the outskirts of Toronto (and other cities) were no frills places achieved through sacrifice and considerable hardship.

The growth of blue-collar suburbs had depended upon extensive self-provisioning. Men saved money by building homes and walking to work, women by making clothes and baking bread. Together they grew

⁸⁹ Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*: 119.

⁹⁰ Warner, *Streetcar Suburbs: The Process of Growth in Boston, 1870-1900*: 160-61.

⁹¹ Richard Harris, *Unplanned Suburbs: Toronto's American Tragedy, 1900 to 1950* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996). Nicolaides, *My Blue Heaven: Life and Politics in the Working-Class Suburbs of Los Angeles, 1920-1965*. Andrew Wiese, *Places of Their Own: African American Suburbanization in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

vegetables, kept animals, drew water from wells, buried or burned their wastes.⁹²

That they existed at all is a testament to the desire for homeownership amongst working class immigrants in North American cities and their willingness to endure significant privation to achieve it. The practice, however, was made possible in most cases by building settlements on cheap, unserviced peripheral land that was usually distant from transit service and other urban amenities; and by an ethos of thrift, mutual aid, and self-reliance.

Physical isolation, lack of water, sewage, and other municipal services meant keeping house was more difficult and time-consuming in self-built suburbs. In addition, self-reliance meant women grew and preserved considerable amounts of the food consumed, made and mended clothes, and reared children. Men on the other hand spent their non-working hours building, maintaining, and improving house and property. Harris acknowledges the places he documents hardly conform to the idealized image of suburbs as a sort of refuge or retreat from the bustle and grime of urban life.⁹³ He does, however, suggest that self-built suburbs offered working class households greater autonomy and control, at least in the domestic sphere, and that the practice of self-provisioning and thrift insulated them somewhat from economic disruptions and income loss.

This was true during normal economic times, when unemployment was episodic. Thrift and self-provisioning, however, could not shield working class suburbanites from

⁹² Harris, *Unplanned Suburbs: Toronto's American Tragedy, 1900 to 1950*: 233.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

the fall-out of rising taxes, or lengthy periods of unemployment or falling incomes, such as occurred during the 1930s. The cheap unserviced land that made unplanned suburbs possible contained the seeds of future problems.⁹⁴ In the 1920s, York and East York (Toronto's two largest suburbs at the time) borrowed extensively to provide water and sewage, and found that extending municipal services to already developed areas was expensive, especially given the inefficient patchwork that had resulted from speculative land subdivision in the urbanized fringe.⁹⁵ The same was true of transit service, which was only extended into the suburbs where municipal governments agreed to cover construction costs and operating shortfalls. As Harris notes, by the end of the 1920s the suburban cost of living was rising and working class suburbs quickly found themselves in fiscal crisis during the Great Depression.⁹⁶ Widespread unemployment led to tax delinquencies and foreclosures, which channeled the burden of municipal costs onto a shrinking tax base. In Toronto, only the central city and two suburban municipalities (Forest Hill and Swansea) avoided insolvency and provincial administration in the 1930s.⁹⁷

Rising costs in the 1920s and the economic hardship of the 1930s exposed the weaknesses of unplanned suburbs of self-built housing. Following the conclusion of the

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Preventing a repeat of this situation was a key impetus and rationale for reforming local government in the late-1940s and early 1950s. See Chapter 4.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Timothy J. Colton, *Big Daddy: Frederick G. Gardiner and the Building of Metropolitan Toronto* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980); Frisken, *The Public Metropolis: The Political Dynamics of Urban Expansion in the Toronto Region 1924-2003*; Albert Rose, *Governing Metropolitan Toronto: A Social and Political Analysis 1953-1971* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972).

Second World War, Harris demonstrates how tract housing developments replaced unplanned, self-built suburbs as the pathway for blue-collar suburban homeownership.⁹⁸ Surveying the broader North American context, Hayden terms the large-scale tract developments of modest housing that proliferated from the late-1940s through the '50s, the "sitcom suburbs".⁹⁹ The term itself is a nod to the popularity and long-lasting influence of 1950s and '60s television sitcoms such as *Leave it to Beaver*, *Ozzie and Harriet*, and *Father Knows Best* on how postwar suburbia is represented and understood. Accurate or not, suburban life as depicted in these shows lives on as a pop-culture reference point, reappearing whenever there is a need to contrast more diverse places to the presumed conformity and homogeneity of postwar suburbs. Despite frequent commentary on them, especially by architectural and social critics, Hayden acknowledges few studies have examined sitcom suburbs as built environments in a detailed way.

Barbara Kelly's *Expanding the American Dream* examines the building and rebuilding of Levittown, New York, one of the iconic large-scale tract developments built in the late-1940s.¹⁰⁰ Her study is useful because it details how Levitt and Sons made new houses in the suburbs a practical reality for Americans of modest means. They designed and produced, at least initially, a stripped down four-room house that was much smaller than houses found in the streetcar buildouts, picturesque enclaves, or borderlands described in Hayden's *Building Suburbia*. Critical to their success was the extensive use

⁹⁸ Harris, *Creeping Conformity: How Canada Became Suburban, 1900-1960*.

⁹⁹ Hayden, *Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000*.

¹⁰⁰ Kelly, *Expanding the American Dream: Building and Rebuilding Levittown*.

of mass produced, standardized building materials, and the development of an assembly-line style construction process. To expand access to suburban housing they made every effort to drive out inefficiencies and lower the cost of the end product. Greg Hise provides a similar account documenting the building of Panorama City by Kaiser Community Homes in *Magnetic Los Angeles*.¹⁰¹

Less well known is the process of renovating, expanding, and customizing of postwar houses in subsequent decades. In “Everyday Suburbia”, Jon Archer draws attention to the links between the critique of suburbia as conformist in the 1950s and growing unease with mass culture amongst members of the cultural establishment.¹⁰² As he notes, the tenor of the combined political and aesthetic critique of suburbia has changed little more than a half century later, and even finds its way into legitimate concerns about suburbia’s shortcomings. His essay seeks to reassert the importance of everyday suburbia as a landscape that “attests to ongoing labours of signification and material production.”¹⁰³ Kelly’s *Expanding the American Dream* approaches that process by considering how postwar housing programs provided young homeowners of modest means a platform for upward mobility. Small homes on large lots provided space for expansion, so that homes gradually morphed into dream homes. Much of that process involved sweat equity or do-it-yourself labour and shared effort with neighbours. As she notes the process of expanding and upgrading modest suburbia is not without its

¹⁰¹ Greg Hise, *Magnetic Los Angeles: Planning the Twentieth-Century Metropolis* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1997).

¹⁰² John Archer, "Everyday Suburbia: Lives and Practices," *Public* 43(2011).

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 28.

problems and contradictions: the most obvious being that it has pushed homes out of the price range of the type of lower-income buyer that it was originally designed to house.

The legacy of Levittown (and other postwar development like it in the United States) is further complicated by the conditions of its existence. Large tract housing developments of modest homes would not have been possible without federal institutions and housing policies forged during the New Deal era, with the most consequential being the creation of the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), which raised housing standards and used the strength of the United States Treasury to encourage mortgage lending on reasonable terms, and to stabilize the mortgage market.¹⁰⁴ They were part of a raft of measures taken during the Roosevelt Administration to stabilize the economy, stimulate long-term growth, expand homeownership, and support private enterprise. Federal housing policies evolved into a “two-tier” approach in which modest housing subsidies for the poor were made obvious through the construction of social housing by public authorities, while far more generous subsidies for private single-family housing (limited mostly to white, male-headed families) were less apparent to the public, because they came indirectly in the form of long-term, fixed-rate, FHA-insured mortgages that lowered borrowing costs and increased credit availability.¹⁰⁵

Federal intervention in the housing market (via FHA and closely-related Veterans Administration [VA] programs) was important in another regard. Not only did it

¹⁰⁴ Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*.

¹⁰⁵ Hayden, *Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000*. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*: 203-18.

encourage and facilitate suburbanization following World War II, but it also hastened urban decline in two ways: (1) FHA-insured mortgages made it less expensive to own a new suburban home than to rent comparable housing in the city; and (2) FHA criteria for underwriting mortgages effectively redlined large swaths of central cities because they were higher-density, mixed-use, contained older housing stock and rental units, and most insidiously, were not sufficiently segregated by income and race at the neighbourhood level.¹⁰⁶ Through the FHA policies and standards racial discrimination and suburban favoritism were institutionalized. As Kenneth Jackson put it, “[p]reviously, prejudices were personalized and individualized; FHA exhorted segregation and enshrined it as public policy.”¹⁰⁷

Suburbs at the Intersection of Race and Class

Writing about the relationship between postwar mass suburbanization and urban decline in the United States, Robert Beauregard provides a blunt assessment:

A combination of geographical concentration and media stereotyping, not to mention the well-known anxiety that middle-class and white

¹⁰⁶ Gwendolyn Wright, *Building the Dream: A Social History of Housing in America* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981); Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*; Kelly, *Expanding the American Dream: Building and Rebuilding Levittown*; Dolores Hayden, *Redesigning the American Dream: The Future of Housing, Work and Family Life* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1984); ———, *Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000*; Beauregard, *When America Became Suburban*.

¹⁰⁷ Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*: 213. With respect to mortgage lending during the 1930s, ‘40s, and ‘50s, redlining in Canada appears to have been first employed against unregulated peripheral areas without municipal services. See Richard Harris and Dorris Forrester, "The Suburban Origins of Redlining: A Canadian Case Study, 1935-54," *Urban Studies* 40, no. 13 (2003): 2661-86.

suburbanites have about minorities, has stamped [American] cities with the stigma of race.¹⁰⁸

While the image of impoverished African American central cities and white suburban affluence is inescapable in accounts of the American metropolitan experience since World War II, new suburban histories such as *My Blue Heaven* and *Places of Their Own* attempt to complicate this framework and demonstrate how race, class, and space were restructured by suburbanization in ways seldom captured by tidy city-suburban distinctions.¹⁰⁹

For example, Andrew Wiese focuses on African-American suburbanization itself, recovering suburban histories that challenge the discursive exclusion of blacks from suburbia.¹¹⁰ Echoing John Palen's assessment that African Americans, the poor, and other minorities have been "invisible" in most works of suburban history, he argues:

Whether the term evokes images of Big Wheels and minivans, political conservatism, architectural conformity, or restrictive gender roles, in common parlance "suburb" is still likely to be understood to mean a white community. Following the logic of this equation, there are many people who assume that if visible numbers of black (or poor) people lived in a community, it was not a suburb ... The truth is, however, historians have done a better job excluding African Americans from the suburbs than even white suburbanites.¹¹¹

Like Richard Harris' work on working class suburbanization in Toronto, Wiese's account of African American suburbanization challenges what typically counts as "suburban" in

¹⁰⁸ Beauregard, *When America Became Suburban*: 17.

¹⁰⁹ Nicolaides, *My Blue Heaven: Life and Politics in the Working-Class Suburbs of Los Angeles, 1920-1965*. Wiese, *Places of Their Own: African American Suburbanization in the Twentieth Century*.

¹¹⁰ ———, *Places of Their Own: African American Suburbanization in the Twentieth Century*.

¹¹¹ Palen, *The Suburbs*. Wiese, *Places of Their Own: African American Suburbanization in the Twentieth Century*: 5.

popular and academic discourses. Where major works of suburban history have incorporated race only as it pertained to the exclusion of non-whites from the suburbs, his work suggests there is a need to recover the histories of suburbanization by racialized “others” in order to show the process from their perspective and to include them as suburbanites, rather than as mere targets of suburban discrimination and exclusionary practices.

Giving Birth to the Silent Majority

In *My Blue Heaven*, Becky Nicolaides constructs a social history of South Gate, a white working-class suburb in Los Angeles, focusing on its development and evolution from the 1920s to the Watts riot in 1965.¹¹² Similar to Toronto’s unplanned suburbs, Nicolaides documents the practices of thrift and self-reliance that enabled working class households to access homeownership and carve out a degree of economic security for themselves. Unlike Harris, her analysis does not stop at mid-century; instead it follows the social and political transformation of South Gate into the postwar period, where strategies and practices—homeownership and the use of backyards for food production—from the earlier period contributed to a “working-class mentality that embraced self-reliance, independence, Americanism, familism, and racial separatism”.¹¹³

The key to understanding postwar South Gate, in her account, is to place its residents within a very specific spatio-temporal context: they were located in the heart of

¹¹² Nicolaides, *My Blue Heaven: Life and Politics in the Working-Class Suburbs of Los Angeles, 1920-1965*.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 5.

Los Angeles' industrial belt at a time when it was undergoing rapid expansion and jobs were plentiful. As she notes, when the suburban "good life" arrived after World War II the "working-class desperation that so powerfully defined prewar South Gate dissolved into a new sense of security".¹¹⁴ South Gate experienced embourgeoisement as Fordist-era prosperity propelled its workers toward the middle class. The impact on local politics was important. Industrial unions were a powerful force in South Gate, at least in the workplace. But unions played a more limited role in community life and local politics.

For South Gate's blue-collar residents, social ties forged at work rarely carried over into the neighbourhood. For most, the schism between work life and neighbourhood left room for workers to find common ground with the business class of South Gate. Economically, unions could foster a sense of militancy and economic populism, which ultimately financed a new lifestyle in the postwar era. Politically, union principles failed to translate into community politics. The workers who walked the picket line and tolerated racial integration in the factory were the same people who mobilized against civil rights in the neighbourhood.¹¹⁵

As community life and politics shifted from the struggle for economic security, South Gaters developed an increasingly racialized outlook that prefigured a turn toward the Republican Party in the late-1960s. As Nicolaidis concludes, "[w]hen class divisions dissolved into postwar consensus, race moved to the fore. It ultimately stood at the heart of a nascent political culture that united Americanism, anticommunism, economic populism, and white identity. South Gate was giving birth to the silent majority".¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 226.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 255.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 271.

Black Suburbanization: Separate and Unequal

In *Places of Their Own*, Andrew Wiese argues that the omission of early forms of African American suburbanization has led contemporary observers to portray more recent forms of middle class black suburbanization as novel and without precedent.¹¹⁷ Indeed, though a third of African Americans live in suburbs, he notes, black suburbanization often garners a hostile response from African American critics who view living in the suburbs as tantamount to “assimilation” and a threat to black culture. For Wiese, this “only makes sense if we conceive of suburbs as essentially white territory without a black history of their own.”¹¹⁸ His work reconstructs African American suburbanization, revealing its historical antecedents, documenting its characteristic forms, examining its relation to suburban discrimination, and finally, shedding light on African American suburbanites themselves.

Though a majority of blacks who participated in the Great Migration (1910 to 1970) to cities in the North and West settled in urban districts, Wiese notes that by 1940 a sizable minority could be found in four types of suburbs: industrial suburbs, domestic service employment suburbs (enclaves in affluent suburbs), unplanned subdivisions, and bungalow suburbs. Of the four, the last—bungalow suburbs, the most affluent and conventionally suburban type—was the least common. Regardless of the settlement type it was associated with, African American suburbanization occurred on separate and unequal terms.

¹¹⁷ Wiese, *Places of Their Own: African American Suburbanization in the Twentieth Century*.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 288.

His discussion of black industrial suburbs and unplanned subdivisions mirrors the main features of working class or blue collar suburbanization as articulated in Harris' *Unplanned Suburbs* or Nicolaidis' *My Blue Heaven*: thrift, mutual aid, and self-provisioning enabled black suburbanites to construct modest self-built homes in isolated fringe districts prior to World War II. Settling in the few places available to them, Wiese notes that most "were poorly situated, prone to flooding, industrial pollution, or some other nuisance"; and like the unplanned suburbs found in Toronto early in the 20th century, their black counterparts also lacked municipal services and were perceived by contemporary observers to be "slums", "shantytowns" or "shacktowns".¹¹⁹

Following World War II, the development of unplanned suburbs was curtailed by increased municipal regulation (often selectively enforced) and by the removal of some African American enclaves by the suburban equivalent of urban renewal.¹²⁰ An additional factor was changing expectations amongst African Americans. Though they did not participate in postwar prosperity on an equal footing with white Americans, their incomes and material circumstances did improve. As exclusionary practices continued to limit their access to housing, regardless of ability to pay, opening up white suburbs became part of the civil rights struggle in the 1950s and '60s. As Wiese asserts, "[d]iscrimination blocked African Americans' most ordinary aspirations, forging out of individual choices a politics of housing linked to the quest for racial equality."¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 66.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 104-09.

¹²¹ Ibid., 154.

One approach to breaking down barriers was to challenge discriminatory practices, particularly those that involved zoning or mortgage financing, in the courts. Another closely related (and sometimes overlapping) tactic involved “black pioneers” moving into all-white neighborhoods to directly challenge the color line. Regardless of approach, Wiese details the extraordinary measures, both explicit and covert, that local governments and property owners would employ to thwart racial integration. Sadly, he also documents the “white flight” that would often follow successful attempts by blacks to settle in previously white suburbs.

The Dream House, the Suburban Ideal, and Gender

Most conventional histories focus on the “suburb” as a bourgeois male paradise, an idyllic retreat from the congestion, noise, and pollution of the city, and a means for men to separate their public life in the city from their private family life at home. Feminist geographers (among others) argue that suburban studies have overlooked the degree to which suburbs are also “women’s spaces” or interrogate the gendered nature of the discourse on suburbanization.¹²² This is certainly borne out in influential North American suburban histories. Sam Bass Warner’s *Streetcar Suburbs* does not include entries for gender or women in its index, while *Crabgrass Frontier* and *Bourgeois Utopias* address women and gender relations sporadically, mostly in relation to the middle-class ideal of separating work spaces from family life.

¹²² Veronica Strong-Boag et al., “What Women’s Spaces? Women in Australian, British, Canadian, and U.S. Suburbs?,” in *Changing Suburbs: Suburban Foundation, Form and Function*, ed. Richard Harris and Peter J. Larkham (London: E & FN Spon, 1999).

Of the three, only Jackson's *Crabgrass Frontier* notes the impact of the suburban ideal on women, though it rates only passing mention in the text. For example, in the chapter "Affordable Homes for the Common Man" it is intimated that not everyone viewed suburban homeownership as ideal.

In the decades after the Civil War, Charlotte Perkins Gilman and a few kindred spirits denounced widely spaced private dwellings as "bloated buildings, filled with a thousand superfluities." They did not see the evolving suburbs as instruments of female or family liberation but as lace-curtain prisons.¹²³

Later, Jackson notes that postwar mass suburbanization elicited a similar response.

Critics regarded the peripheral environment as devastating particularly to women and children. The suburban world was a female world, especially during the day. Betty Friedan's 1968 classic *The Feminine Mystique* challenged the notion that the American dream home was emotionally fulfilling for women. As Gwendolyn Wright has observed, their isolation from work opportunities and from contact with employed adults led to stifled frustration and deep psychological problems.¹²⁴

Tracing the emergence of the suburban ideal inevitably leads back to the rise of the private home in a pastoral setting occupied by a nuclear family as the American middle-class ideal. This vision appears in most historical surveys as the cultural norm that shaped housing forms and gender roles in the 20th century.

Economic change played an important role in shifting norms. The suburban ideal of physical and social separation between work and home can be traced back to the early-

¹²³ Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*: 136.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 243-44.

19th century, and would gradually become the Victorian bourgeoisie's response to the urban-industrial conditions their combined efforts had brought about.

By the mid nineteenth century the ideals of William Wilberforce, Hannah More, and the other Clapham saints had come to provide the common discourse of Victorianism for expressing the proper role of respectable women within society and the family. Ironically, the very same economic forces that made working-class women an integral part of the factory system completed the separation (which the Evangelicals had urged) of middle-class women from the "demoralizing" sphere of work. The factories could not run profitably without a constant supply of working-class women (and their children) to tend the machines, but these same factories had no place for middle-class women.¹²⁵

There is also a need to acknowledge the work done by mid-19th century American writers such as Catharine Beecher whose works popularized "the desirability of a bucolic and quiet family life" (which implied taking up residence in semi-rural or suburban environments as the ideal to which the masses should aspire) and the gendering of the home as a female-dominated sphere.¹²⁶

Dolores Hayden's *the Grand Domestic Revolution* details the rise of "material feminism" from the mid-19th century to early 20th century, and frames Beecher's ideas as a conservative response to pressures for domestic reform.¹²⁷ Material feminism sought to socialize domestic work, while still leaving women in control of it. It formed the middle-ground between two other strategies for domestic reform: the haven strategy (Beecher was its leading advocate); and the (Marxist) industrial strategy, which sought to eliminate

¹²⁵ Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias: The Rise and Fall of Suburbia*: 97.

¹²⁶ Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*: 61-63.

¹²⁷ Dolores Hayden, *The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighbourhoods, and Cities* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1981).

the private domestic sphere by moving most housework into factories.¹²⁸ As Hayden notes, the privatism and familism of the haven strategy isolated women and glorified their domestic duties, while the industrial strategy replaced isolation with alienation. None of the three strategies, she laments, challenged the gendered division of labour.

Notwithstanding Margret Marsh's work on "masculine domesticity", which suggests there was a softening of gender roles within upper- and middle-class suburban families late in the 19th century and early in the 20th,¹²⁹ Hayden argues that little transfer of responsibility for domestic work onto men was called for in the reform strategies or took place as a result of them.¹³⁰

For Hayden the postwar link between mass suburbanization, consumer culture, and a gendered division of labour in North America was forged in the interwar 1920s and '30s as the link between homeownership and expanded domestic consumption was reinforced.

Trade unionists, who had concentrated their organizing on skilled male workers, wanted what they called a "family wage." This meant a wage for male workers high enough to assure that wives and children would not work in industry, a tactic that would, at the same time, lower the threat of wage competition by decreasing the available labour force. Industrialists, who had concentrated their money making around production rather than consumption, wanted to expand their domestic markets for manufactured goods. They saw the better-paid workers' families as potential consumers of items such as furniture, appliances, and automobiles. Both union leaders and manufacturers agreed that

¹²⁸ ———, *Redesigning the American Dream: The Future of Housing, Work and Family Life*: 67-75.

¹²⁹ Margaret Marsh, "Suburban Men and Masculine Domesticity, 1870-1915," *American Quarterly* 40, no. 2 (1988); ———, *Suburban Lives* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1990).

¹³⁰ Hayden, *The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighbourhoods, and Cities*.

more spacious, mass-produced form of housing was essential to enable workers and their families to consume. A growing number of employers decided that it would be a good idea to miniaturize and mass produce the Victorian patriarchal, suburban business-man's dwelling for the majority of white, male, skilled workers.¹³¹

Implicit was the notion that a "woman's place was in the home" as the unpaid labour needed to sustain what was essentially a return to the mid-19th century middle-class vision of ideal family life. The Great Depression of the 1930s put a temporary damper on the realization of this vision, but also intensified the promotion of widespread homeownership as a national strategy for generating long-term economic growth.¹³²

If thought and action in the 1920s and '30s, influenced by older discourses and material conditions, produced the general framework for the mass suburbanization that took place after World War II, it is worth noting that alternative models of housing and community design existed. They were overlooked or deliberately discarded. As Hayden concludes, "[t]he dream house replaced the ideal city as the spatial representation of American hopes for the good life."¹³³ This shift, she argued, profoundly influenced the nature of housing, work, and family life in the postwar period. Rather than attempt to build communities capable of meeting diverse needs, as well as supporting both working men and women, the private house, nuclear family, and "stay-at-home" mother were

¹³¹ ———, *Redesigning the American Dream: The Future of Housing, Work and Family Life*: 33.

¹³² Wright, *Building the Dream: A Social History of Housing in America*.

¹³³ Hayden, *Redesigning the American Dream: The Future of Housing, Work and Family Life*: 38.

reinforced, with the help of government housing policies, as the suburban ideal following World War II.¹³⁴

Learning from the Past?

Kruse and Sugrue's anthology, *The New Suburban History*, seeks to insert the role of political economy and the struggle for power back into historical accounts of 20th century suburbanization.¹³⁵ As is noted in their introductory essay, "the local" has seldom been isolated from wider spatial dynamics and social forces.

The history of suburbanization and its consequences is, in large part, a question of power. The division of metropolitan America into central cities surrounded by fragmented, politically and economically competitive suburbs was shaped through politics and the law. Public policies, including federal housing and economic development subsidies, state and local land-use policies and environmental regulations, locally administered services and taxation policies, and locally controlled schools, all inexorably shaped the process of suburbanization in the postwar period. The division of metropolitan areas by race and class, a division that was reified and reinforced through the drawing of hard municipal boundaries, created a distinct form of spatialized inequality in the modern United States ... Put simply, in postwar metropolitan America, where you lived has determined your access to goods and services and how much they cost in the form of your taxes.¹³⁶

At the core of the "new suburban history" is a metropolitan framework that emphasizes how struggles over growth and power cross municipal boundaries, operating within the suburbs, not just between city and suburb. Also important, key actors and institutions are

¹³⁴ This is a point also made in Veronica Strong-Boag, "Home Dreams: Women and the Suburban Experiment in Canada, 1945-60," *Canadian Historical Review* LXXII, no. 4 (1991).

¹³⁵ Kruse and Sugrue, *The New Suburban History*.

¹³⁶ *ibid.*, 6.

shown to think and act with a metropolitan awareness, including where municipal jurisdiction is employed to create uneven and inequitable outcomes.

Essays in *The New Suburban History* that focus on the impact of federal housing policies, racial integration, and Cold War military spending on suburban growth and politics flesh out aspects of postwar suburbanization touched upon in major historical works such as *Crabgrass Frontier* and *Bourgeois Utopias*. Others focus on topics such as the discursive response to postwar suburbs, the impact of immigrants and ethnic minorities on suburban politics, the politics of suburban growth controls, and the use of legal measures to limit public space and support exclusion at the municipal level. Not surprisingly, suburbanization is positioned as central to the major issues and pressing debates that shaped the American experience during the 20th century.

Another new approach calls for detailed longitudinal studies that trace how suburban communities form and evolve as the frontier of metropolitan development pushes outward. As Ruth McManus and Phillip Ethington note, a wave of new histories have succeeded in demonstrating suburban diversity and complicating how suburbanization unfolds, but few studies have followed the evolution and development of suburban places after their initial formation.¹³⁷ They argue that a longitudinal approach to suburban research would make it easier to conceive of suburban places as dynamic, evolving spaces, where diverse publics “make do” or adapt the inherited spatial form, social practices, cultural values, and institutional configurations to meet shifting needs

¹³⁷ McManus and Ethington, "Suburbs in transition: new approaches to suburban history."

and adjust to wider social and economic changes. This could be achieved, it is suggested, via new studies of “suburbs in transition”.

Such studies it is said might focus on the social history embedded in suburban landscapes, the modification of the built and social fabric in suburban places, and the processes that sustain and reproduce suburban spaces over time. But, it is argued, attentiveness to the wider context in which suburban change occurs should not be overlooked:

The suburb is not an isolated entity, but intimately linked with the city from which it derived its *raison d’être*. As the city changes, so too do its suburbs. It is essential, therefore, to understand and explore the history of the suburb in a situated way, within the changing context of the metropolis.¹³⁸

Their concern is that suburban histories tend to focus on specific points in time or on particular spatial forms, activities, and people in suburbs. This tells us relatively little about how suburban places change over-time.

This chapter has shown that suburban change is inevitable. Even where outward appearances suggest otherwise, buildings and infrastructures mature, residents age-in-place, people move in and out, and technological, political, economic, and social changes impact everyday life. Change also occurs as a result of continued urban growth and spatial expansion which transforms areas previously found on the metropolitan edge into part of the urban middle. What is of interest, i.e. what studies of “suburbs in transition” can reveal, is the why and how of suburban change in particular places or metropolitan

¹³⁸ Ibid., 337.

areas. In the chapter that follows the contested making of the postwar Toronto suburb and its transformation into a new urban middle during the second half of the 20th century is outlined.

Chapter 3: Contextualizing the Postwar Toronto Suburb

Introduction

This chapter attempts to situate the terminology, conceptual framings, and imaginings commonly used to represent and understand suburbs in North America within the Toronto context. The preceding chapters have established that suburbs are complex and multifaceted. As the editors of *The Suburb Reader* state, “what a suburb is depends in large part on how and where one looks—and when.”¹³⁹

In the mid-to-late 1990s socio-political differences became anchored in an entrenched city-suburban divide as Toronto entered a period of intense economic and institutional restructuring. Betsy Donald has argued that Toronto as the “city that works” grew out of regulatory responses early in the postwar period to the need to reconfigure “governance structures, functions, and jurisdictional boundaries” in the face of “new and pressing economic, social, and political challenges.”¹⁴⁰ The most consequential response was the establishment of a two-tier federated metropolitan system of government for the Toronto area—the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto (Metro)—in 1954. The process by which Metro was brought into being is detailed in Chapter 4.

The following passage, drawn from a column written by John Sewell in response to the publication of “The Report of the GTA Task Force”, speaks to a very specific

¹³⁹ Becky M. Nicolaides and Andrew Wiese, “Introduction,” in *The Suburbs Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 8.

¹⁴⁰ Betsy Donald, “The Permeable City: Toronto’s Spatial Shift at the Turn of the Millennium,” *Professional Geographer* 54, no. 2 (2002): 190.

understanding of suburb that began to circulate in Toronto in the 1970s, becoming more entrenched in the 1980s and 1990s, particularly as Fordism began to unravel at the regional scale.

It's the disaster scenario for the city of Toronto. The city couldn't expect any worse than the recommendations of the Golden task force on governance in the greater Toronto area. There's no major area where the city doesn't lose to suburban interests ... These are very dark times for the city and the values it tries to embody. We've been turned over to the suburban lions.¹⁴¹

A particular understanding of the relationship between city and suburb developed in the three decades after World War II within the Metro federation. City-suburban polarization was evident, but it was kept in check by the forceful personality of Metro Chairman Frederick G. Gardiner during the crucial roll-out of a vast public works programme during its first five years, and managed skillfully by his successor William R. Allen until the late-1960s.¹⁴² Divergent and competing interests between the City of Toronto and the three large postwar suburbs (Etobicoke, North York, and Scarborough) gave way to more profoundly oppositional or antagonistic relations after that. Changing understandings of suburbs and their consequences or effect on “the city” and its urbanism played an important role alongside, but not distinct from wider economic changes and a rescaling of the regional politics as rapid suburban growth moved beyond Metro.

The unravelling of Fordism and with it Metro did not happen immediately, nor was it clearly understood to be happening. Indeed, even as major weaknesses in trans-

¹⁴¹ John Sewell, "Thanks Anne Golden, there goes the city," *Now Magazine*, January 18-24 1996.

¹⁴² Colton, *Big Daddy: Frederick G. Gardiner and the Building of Metropolitan Toronto*; Rose, *Governing Metropolitan Toronto: A Social and Political Analysis 1953-1971*.

Atlantic Fordism became evident in the early 1970s, “Toronto was able to maintain relative stability during this period, primarily because of its economic diversity—both manufacturing and service—and because of the richness of its institutions operating at the city-region scale.”¹⁴³ It was not until Canada signed a free trade agreement with the United States in 1988 that external forces—globalization and federal responses in terms of fiscal, monetary, and trade policy—produced a social and economic crisis in the Toronto region and southern Ontario, one that hit Metro especially hard. The Greater Toronto Task Force chaired by Anne Golden was struck in 1995 to “respond to growing concerns about the health and workability of the city-region.”¹⁴⁴ The task force was asked to make recommendations on a new course for the governance of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). It was the recommendations that were arrived at that former City of Toronto alderman/councillor and mayor John Sewell framed in antagonistic city-suburban terms in the earlier quote.

Two decades on it is clear that the “suburban lions” that John Sewell counterpoised with “the city” are the city. Suburban areas may lack the look and feel—i.e. urbanity—of the old city and cannot compete with downtown’s skyline and older gentrified districts, nor with its dominance of the symbolic economy of major financial,

¹⁴³ Donald, "The Permeable City: Toronto's Spatial Shift at the Turn of the Millennium," 196.

¹⁴⁴ GTA Task Force, "Report of the GTA Task Force," (Toronto: Government of Ontario, 1996), 9. Not unrelated, the GTA Task Force falls toward the end of the period from the mid-1970s to early 2000s that planning historian Richard White terms “the Age of Non-Planning” at the regional scale in the Toronto area—a period when regional planning was not ascendant and was “marked by steps and counter-steps in different directions.” Among the factors contributing to regional planning’s retreat and relative ineffectiveness during this period was resurgent localism, growing distaste for government intervention, and a general decline in the status of experts, including planners. See: Richard White, "Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe in Historical Perspective," (Toronto: Neptis Foundation, 2007), 32.

administrative, and cultural institutions. But the rest of the GTA is undeniably where most everything else is found, including 85-90% of the population. Given this reality, it is virtually impossible to view the suburbs that surround Toronto as mere appendages, dependent on the city for all but basic needs. The GTA is now a polycentric regional city or post-metropolis in which connectivity and access are as important as centrality and concentration.¹⁴⁵ Much of what passes for suburb in dominant spatial imaginaries is instead a complex mix of new spaces found between the glamour zones of the “creative” and “global” city of downtown and inner city neighbourhoods and the newer, high-growth areas found at the region’s edge. Neither conventionally “urban” nor “suburban” these are spaces that can be thought of as in-between cities or collectively as the new urban middle.¹⁴⁶

Revisiting the Suburban Society

If we return to the postwar boom of the 1950s, when young families in Canada and the United States flooded into new suburban developments, began to use private automobiles in ever greater numbers, and enjoyed a period of sustained, widely shared economic prosperity, a different picture of suburb emerges. Paired with other changes such as the emergence of chain stores in shopping plazas and enclosed malls and the cementing of the “consumer’s republic”, the suburbia of myth took shape and urban-based

¹⁴⁵ See Relph, *Toronto: Transformations in a City and its Region*.

¹⁴⁶ See Keil and Young, "Introduction: In-Between Canada -- The Emergence of the New Urban Middle".

intellectuals, writers, artists, and social commentators reacted critically.¹⁴⁷ Where the focus had previously been on urban problems such as poverty, overcrowded and unhealthy living conditions, labour unrest, pollution, crime and vice, the mass movement of people into suburbs led to a new discursive formation: the suburbs as a hellish place devoid of culture and home to excessive conformity and other new social pathologies.¹⁴⁸

In the United States such a reaction can be explained, at least in part, by urban decline and a sense of loss as cities were drained of people, jobs, tax revenue, and vibrancy as rapid suburban development unfurled around them.¹⁴⁹ The connection between one and the other was palpable and obvious to most observers. But that does not explain the same critical reaction in Canada where a vast suburbia grew in a context of mostly stable and healthy downtowns and central cities. And furthermore, in Canada the flood of people into the suburbs after the Second World War cannot be attributed to a flight from cities. Housing shortages in cities, an especially acute problem in Toronto, lay behind the suburban boom more than other factors.¹⁵⁰ All the same, suburbs were lampooned by Canadian writers and intellectuals for much the same reason as their American counterparts.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁷ Lizabeth Cohen, *A consumers' republic: the politics of mass consumption in postwar America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003).

¹⁴⁸ Becky M. Nicolaides, "How Hell Moved from the City to the Suburbs: Urban Scholars and Changing Perceptions of Authentic Community," in *The New Suburban History*, ed. Kevin M. Kruse and Thomas J. Sugrue (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

¹⁴⁹ Teaford, *The Metropolitan Revolution: The Rise of Post-Urban America*.

¹⁵⁰ Linteau, "Canadian Suburbanization in a North American Context: Does the Border Make a Difference?."

¹⁵¹ Hugh Garner, "You take the suburbs ... I don't want them," *Maclean's Magazine*, November 10th 1956; R. Seeley, R.A. Sim, and E.W. Loosley, *Crestwood Heights* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1956).

Much of that original discourse is now lost in a blur of social and cultural commentary, but a powerful conception of suburb was drawn from and popularized by a few now classic sociological studies. As sociologist S.D. Clark states in *Suburban Society*,

By concentrating attention upon certain suburban areas, it has not been difficult to build up a particular image or stereotype of suburbia, or, indeed, of a suburban personality. For instance, from the picture presented in *Crestwood Heights* of what was reputed to be a North American suburb, much could be made of the suburbanite's overwhelming concern for conformity, his enslavement to values of a society which placed prime emphasis upon the future welfare of the child, his deeply rooted social and political conservatism and distrust of anything which threatened his accepted way of life. The Crestwood Heigher appeared very much to be an other-directed organization man.

Had those students of suburbia who have thus used the Crestwood Heights study, however, known Toronto better, known something about the hundreds of subdivisions spreading east to Whitby, north to Newmarket, and west to Brampton and beyond, known even more that Crestwood Heights at the time it was being studied had been settled for twenty-five years or more and was made up of an upper middle- or upper-class population half gentile and half Jewish, they would have realized how little typical of a suburban community this community was, if, indeed, in any sociological sense it could be considered suburban at all. What was really being studied in Crestwood Heights was not the social process of suburbanism but the culture of a particular urban social class and, in large degree, a particular ethnic group.¹⁵²

Crestwood Heights was Forest Hill, an elite residential enclave immediately to the north of Toronto's central area. Clark, who lived in the Agincourt part of Scarborough, was

¹⁵² S. D. Clark, *The Suburban Society* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966). 5-6.

pointing out the yawning gap between his field research and the stereotypes that had already emerged about suburban society.¹⁵³

To explain this, Clark connected the dots. The “packaged” residential development, he argued, became a popular subject of study in Canada and United States in the 1950s because it was isolated from already built-up areas, had clearly-defined boundaries, and was orderly in its social structure and characteristic patterns of everyday life.¹⁵⁴ The implications of this bias are profound. Out of their initial popularity with scholars, a particular conception of “suburb” formed in the sociological imagination: the escapist, homogeneous, conformist suburbia of myth. This conception, in turn, filtered into scholarly and pop-culture representations of postwar suburbia and insinuated itself into spatialized discourses and imaginaries. In retrospect what occurred is clear. A new suburban way of life was emergent, certain kinds of suburbs appeared to typify it, and social scientists (and others) zeroed in on them and their residents as research subjects.

For their part a decade earlier the authors of *Crestwood Heights*, John R. Seeley, R. Alexander Sim, and E.W. Loosley, were attempting to offer a “a study of the culture of suburban life”, stating at the outset:

This book attempts to depict, in part, the life of a community. North Americans may know its external features well, for some community like it is to be seen in and around almost any great city on this continent, from New York to San Francisco, from Halifax to Vancouver. In infinite variety, yet with an eternal sameness, it flashes on the movie screen, in one of the those neat comedies about the upper

¹⁵³ "Professor (He's From Agincourt) Raps Bias Against Suburbanites," *Globe and Mail*, February 11th 1960.

¹⁵⁴ ———, *The Suburban Society*.

middle class family which Hollywood delights to repeat again and again as nurture for the American Dream. It fills the pages of glossy magazines devoted to the best in architecture, house decoration, food, dress, and social behavior. The innumerable service occupations bred of an urban culture will think anxiously about people in such a community in terms of what “they” will buy or use this year. Any authority in the field of art, literature, or science probably at some time has had, or will have, its name on a lecture itinerary. A teacher will consider it a privilege to serve in its schools. For those thousands of North Americans who struggle to translate the promise of America into a concrete reality for themselves, and, even more important, for their children, it is in some sense a Mecca.

The book attempts to pin down in time and space this thing of dreams for the many, and actual experience for the very few. One such community from among the many of its kind has been chosen. It will be called “Crestwood Heights.” It is “somewhere in central Canada”; the time falls in the years immediately following World War II.¹⁵⁵

The authors of *Crestwood Heights* were aware, or should have been aware, that the object of their study was not representative of the full range of places suburbanization was producing around cities at the time, a point driven home by sociologist David Riesman in his thoughtful and critically reflexive introduction to the book.¹⁵⁶

The problem is not simply that suburbs are now places with diverse populations and that stereotypes and clichés obstruct us from seeing new suburban realities. The most potent insight we can draw from Clark’s findings in *Suburban Society* is that for a host of reasons the full breadth of suburbanization has not made it into representation and analysis of the suburbs. As Chris Richardson argues, “[s]ymbolic violence has erased the suburbs that have not fit the ideal of suburbia for almost as long as they have materially

¹⁵⁵ Seeley, Sim, and Loosley, *Crestwood Heights*: 3.

¹⁵⁶ David Riesman, “Introduction,” in *Crestwood Heights*, ed. R. Seeley, R.A. Sim, and E.W. Loosley (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1956).

existed.”¹⁵⁷ The power of suburban stereotypes has been to assert that nothing exists outside the image of suburbs as attractive, comfortable, safe, and affluent. Though material realities, past and present, suggest otherwise, departures from the suburban ideal are made to seem either novel or exceptional—i.e. outside of the authentic suburban experience.

Three Lamentations about Suburbs

In *Cities in the Suburbs* landscape architect and housing policy advisor Humphrey Carver distills his critique of postwar suburbia in Canada into three lamentations: the Lament about Muddle, the Lament about Uniformity, and the Lament about What Isn't There.¹⁵⁸ He saw automobility, mortgage-financing, the standardization of house construction and building materials, and mass-consumption as combining to eliminate “variety, surprise, and contrast” in postwar suburbs and at the same time creating a “confused tangle” of uses on suburban arterials.

On the one hand, the automobile was altering the scale and structure of suburbanization as a city-building process. Suburbanization in the late-19th century and first few decades of the 20th century had been shaped by streetcars, which reinforced the existing centre and produced long fingers of growth. Automobility, Carver noted, encouraged scatteration. Cars and trucks, he argued, encouraged “a promiscuous use of land” and a “hunt-and-peck form” of real estate development, because a highly mobile

¹⁵⁷ Chris Richardson, "Defining Suburbs: Representation and Symbolic Violence Just Outside the City," *Public*, no. 43 (2011): 50.

¹⁵⁸ Humphrey Carver, *Cities in the Suburbs* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962). 12.

public freed of the constraints of walking distance and the routing of mass transit could “by-pass” or “leap-frog” sites in-between to access cheaper land further afield.¹⁵⁹

Deliberate community planning would be needed, in his view, to shape and create new centralities in the suburbanized or regional city.

On the other hand, “[s]terilized and inviolate under the protective shield of by-laws, the rows of small homes are immaculate in their uniformity, in their infinite repetition.”¹⁶⁰ Behind this common complaint about postwar suburbs—that they are physically monotonous—lay social justice and community planning concerns for Carver. A standardized, uniform landscape of detached homes, he argued, leaves “no housing for those who are outside the privileged circle of home-owners.”¹⁶¹ The problem, as Carver noted, was not physical uniformity in design or materials, *per se*. Social uniformity in new housing subdivisions was integrally linked to physical uniformity, but only in the sense that when applied to the size, form, and tenure of housing in postwar residential subdivisions it ensured most households would be nuclear families of similar income and social status.

His final complaint about suburbs—the lament about what isn’t there—is described as a corollary of the first two laments. As Carver asks,

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

What is missing in the suburban city that makes it so chaotic and so monotonous? Where is the plot, the theme, the climax? What does it all lead up to?¹⁶²

He answers, “[e]verything used to lead to the centre of the big city” and “the suburbs built by the street-car had a linear or strip system” that shaped land-values and patterns of usage, as well as everyday routines.¹⁶³ In the suburbanized city, what is missing according to Carver is not only the charming confusions of diversity and contrast (physical and social), but also “centres of human attachment” that have “concentration and meaning and permanence”, which ultimately led him to “the question of excellence.”¹⁶⁴

Excellence it turned out was “a very difficult accomplishment in an age of mass-production to serve a market of average people.”¹⁶⁵ The three lamentations about suburbs take us through a powerful strand of intellectual criticism directed mainly at suburbs: that postwar society, an increasingly suburban society, has degenerated into a comfortable, contented, middle-of-the-road kind of existence. The post-1946 suburbanized city, in Carver’s view, “is a brilliant synthesis”, a product of “contriving and smoothing and compromising”, an artwork “that satisfies the committee because it really has no expression, no meaning at all.”¹⁶⁶

¹⁶² Ibid., 19.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 72; 114.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 115.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

There is a wisp of nostalgia to Carver's assessment of the postwar suburbs. His lamentations express regret and concern about societal changes, particularly diminished individuality and the rise of technocratic decision-making, both in private corporations and government. If the suburbs were a disappointment, it seemed to him that it was because the art of city-building was being swallowed up by impersonal calculation and a rigidly scientific approach to planning and design, both of which were being directed at producing a rational and efficient city that lacked the exceptional and excellent. His diagnosis led him to a proposal for "town centres" not unlike the one planned for Don Mills, but with greater emphasis on the need for institutionalized public control of the land it would occupy to ensure a proper balance between public and private interests during the build-out phase of a community's development and to ensure a range of activities thereafter.

In the end, the malaise that so bothered Carver was a lack of central places where excellence and civic purpose might be established in the suburban communities sprouting up like mushrooms around Canadian cities. To produce "cities in the suburbs" meant adding to the suburban mix what it appeared to lack, as well as an implied demand for suburbs to be reshaped into a form and aesthetic that made them seem less "muddled", "average", and "sterile". Before assuming this assessment is specific to postwar suburbia, it is worth considering Sam Bass Warner's roughly contemporaneous thoughts, derived from historical research not firsthand observation, on streetcar suburbanization in the late-19th century Boston:

The suburb, the home of property owners and settled family life, was thought by contemporaries to be an environment that encouraged individual participation in community life. Compared to transient conditions in older parts of the city the suburbs were more conducive to integration of the individual into some sort of community activity. Their physical arrangement, however—the endless street grids and the dependence upon the downtown for work and shopping—failed to provide local centers where all the residents of a given area might, through frequent contact, come to know each other and thereby be encouraged to share in community-wide activities.

Aside from class segregation there was nothing in the process of late nineteenth century suburban construction that built communities or neighbourhoods: it built streets. The grid plan of the suburbs did not concern itself with public life. It was an economically efficient geometry which divided large parcels of land as they came on market. The arrangement of blocks of the grid depended largely upon what farm or estate came on the market at what time. The result was not integrated communities arranged about common centers, but a historical and accidental traffic pattern.¹⁶⁷

Carver's assessment of the same was a more favourable. In Toronto during the first half of the 20th century “[t]he streetcar had made a workable, simple, homely design for a city. The shops and churches and restaurants and drugstores and movies strung out along the route formed a kind of community ‘strip’ rather than a community ‘centre’.”¹⁶⁸ Residents along the strip could walk to these shops and the overall form of the city was compact and economical. Moreover, city and suburb were complementary: the long fingers of streetcar enabled suburban growth, but the routes ultimately led back to the centre and reinforced the city.

¹⁶⁷ Warner, *Streetcar Suburbs: The Process of Growth in Boston, 1870-1900*: 158.

¹⁶⁸ Carver, *Cities in the Suburbs*: 8.

Sewell on the Suburbs

A decade or so after *Suburban Society* and *Cities in the Suburbs* were published, John Sewell, an alderman and later mayor of Toronto, came at the issue of suburbs from an altogether different perspective. Where S.D. Clark had sought to complicate sociological understandings of suburban society by pluralizing the suburbs and Humphrey Carver wished to improve their planning and design, Sewell thought suburbia was a mistake. His analysis published in a special issue of *City Magazine* entitled “John Sewell on the Suburbs” was directed at uncovering where suburbs had come from in terms of planning ideas and concepts, the public policy and business practices responsible for creating them, the economic and social problems linked to them, and possible alternatives to them.¹⁶⁹ Central to his analysis and critical assessment was a detailed examination of Don Mills, presented as “Canada’s first corporate suburb” and the progenitor of contemporary Canadian suburbia.

A 1954 article in Maclean’s magazine described Don Mills as a small city, stating it would eventually house 30,000 people, and deemed it “a suburb that’s making good”, an example of “what suburbs of tomorrow will look like.”¹⁷⁰ The alternative was Ville Jacques Cartier across the St. Lawrence River from Montreal as “a suburb that went sour”, because it grew quickly into a “shacktown” during the 1940s. Jacques Cartier was unplanned and became a place of tar-paper and tin shacks built on “postage stamp lots”

¹⁶⁹ John Sewell, "The Suburbs," *City Magazine* 1977.

¹⁷⁰ John Gray, "Why Live in the Suburbs?," *Maclean's Magazine*, September 1st 1954, 11.

without water or sewers, at least initially. Don Mills was the new model suburb to aspire to, but most new suburbs fell between these two extremes—a point made in the article.

The automobile takes commuters home to every kind of suburb, from the hundred-thousand-dollar estate subdivision to shacktown. For the most part home is lost in the dull monotonous lines of strawberry boxes and ranch-style bungalows typical of the building of the postwar period.¹⁷¹

Don Mills was supposed to be an improvement on what writer Hugh Garner called “multiplication by subdivision”.¹⁷² Industrialist E. P. Taylor purchased 2,063 acres of land between 1947 and 1952, initially to build a new plant for a brewery and housing for its workers, and later to develop a master planned new community.¹⁷³ The land assembly was approximately 12 kilometres northeast of the downtown Toronto and not contiguous with existing suburban development. Though Don Mills would come to be seen as “the mother of all modern Canadian suburbs”,¹⁷⁴ it was originally intended to be a self-sufficient new town based on the influential ideas of Ebenezer Howard, Le Corbusier, and Frank Lloyd-Wright, and especially the principles found in Clarence Perry’s neighbourhood unit model and Clarence Stein and Henry Wright’s plan for Radburn, New Jersey.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Garner, "You take the suburbs ... I don't want them," 71.

¹⁷³ See “Don Mills: E.P. Taylor and Canada’s first corporate suburb” in Sewell, "The Suburbs," 28-38.

¹⁷⁴ John Barber, "In the beginning there was Don Mills," *The Globe and Mail* 1993.

¹⁷⁵ John Sewell, *The Shape of the City: Toronto Struggles with Modern Planning* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993). For a more general overview of the ideas and influence of Howard, Corbusier, and Wright, see Robert Fishman, *Urban Utopias in the Twentieth Century: Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982). For a summary and assessment of the Radburn and the neighbourhood unit, see Edward Relph, *The Modern Urban Landscape* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1987).

The success of Don Mills, a suburban development that Clark identified as “packaged” in his study, and its influence on suburban planning and development from the late-1950s onward led Sewell to focus on it. Don Mills provided him with an archetype that distilled in one place the underlying vision guiding suburban planning and development after 1945. Given his aims, Sewell did not explicitly define what a suburb is, explore types of suburb, or talk much about suburbanites. Instead, he focused on tracing out the emergence of planning and design principles embedded in Don Mills and enumerating his objections to them and the environments they produce: suburbs.

The Don Mills model is broken down into the following 7 planning principles by Sewell: (1) a planned residential-industrial assessment split to make new communities self-sufficient, which did not pan out in practice; (2) open space a key design element, so much so that land appears to be deliberately underused; (3) a hierarchy of roads separating traffic functions designed to keep non-resident traffic from intruding into the interior parts of neighbourhoods; (4) a town centre surrounded by a ring-road system within which a shopping centre and higher-density housing is usually found; (5) planned communities comprised of neighbourhoods, each with about 6,000 residents, a public school, and a park; (6) a housing mix dominated by detached houses and high-rise apartments, with some attached housing (row houses or townhouses) sprinkled in; and (7) developers in control of when houses will be built, their design, the materials to be used, marketing, servicing within developments, and pricing, and most other aspects of the

process, except aspects of land-use regulation and building codes that fell under the purview of governmental legislation.¹⁷⁶

It is instructive to briefly return to S.D Clark and Humphrey Carver's conception of "suburb" and "suburban" to make clearer Sewell's emphasis on "the suburbs" as the product of a particular kind of spatial planning and political economy that is set apart from "the city" and its characteristic forms, sociality, and ways of life. S.D. Clark's focus was narrowly sociological. Though he acknowledged the growing role of the state in shaping society and recognized that planning and large-scale development had altered the character of built environments by the end of the 1950s, his research was concerned with the emergence and formation of suburban society. How he conceptualized "suburban" flowed from that:

If the term suburban is to be used to describe all such residential areas developing beyond urban borders it can be given sociological meaning only by being made to apply to a type of society which while not yet urban is in the process of becoming urban. The suburban is a society coming into being. It is its lack of form or structure which gives it its distinctive character. When it comes to possess a form or structure it has to that extent lost its suburban character and taken on a character that is urban.¹⁷⁷

To the extent this serves as a definition, it emphasizes peripheral location and newness as key attributes, but more fundamentally it constructs suburban-ness as a fleeting or transitory condition, a quality to be lost as initial newness fades.

¹⁷⁶ Sewell, "The Suburbs," 38.

¹⁷⁷ Clark, *The Suburban Society*: 12.

Humphrey Carver's focus was on achieving excellence in the design and building of new suburban communities. He looked to the old city centres for guidance, but recognized these central areas took their shape—physically and socially—over time. The postwar boom in contrast left city-builders with little time for contemplation about their work. They were responsible for building a new city “every year, every month, every week ... in Canada there are more than a million new houses to be built in the suburbs every decade and, in the United States, a dozen times that number.”¹⁷⁸ The problem for Carver was everyone had become “accustomed to working in a hurry, accepting the mass-produced, second-rate job in the expectation that it might be done more carefully the next-time round.”¹⁷⁹ Aside from the need to create meaningful places in the suburbs, he asserted the “central creative act” needed was to devise new political processes “to nurture each new community through its period of growth and finally launch it upon the experience of self-government.”¹⁸⁰ As Carver noted at the time, “suburbs are not made by the people who live there. They arrive afterwards ... To a large extent the suburbs have been an accident, the consequence of an elaborate interplay of forces in land speculation, in traffic arrangements, and in the bid for consumer markets.”¹⁸¹

Sewell's commentary and analysis in *City Magazine* makes it is clear that his conception of suburban centred on differences in density and built form, particularly the use of private automobiles and overall underuse of land in postwar suburbs, as well as the

¹⁷⁸ Carver, *Cities in the Suburbs*: 119.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 120.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 118.

rise of land development firms as a result of government housing policies. For him, the suburbs built around cities after 1945 formed not only a distinctive socio-spatial landscape—sprawl—but a new kind of city. Far from being fleeting or transitory, or something that could be made excellent through the introduction of “town centres” or other meaningful places, postwar suburbia was fundamentally different and detrimental to the form and function of cities. The postwar suburban emphasis on automobile infrastructures, low densities, open spaces, and segregated land-uses was inimical to the social diversity and fine-scale mingling of uses Sewell valued and associated with the urbanism of the city.¹⁸²

More to the point, what Sewell adds to the discourse on postwar suburbs in Toronto and Canada is an emphasis on political and economic problems. He was critical of the overemphasis on real and imagined social problems by academics and journalists without denying their existence. For him, the political problem that suburbs represented for society as a whole had gone largely unexamined and was more important. Suburbs, in his view, were a needlessly expensive and inefficient kind of built environment. Where new mass produced housing in outlying suburban areas might have seemed the solution to acute housing shortages after the Second World War, it was clear by the mid-1970s that housing costs quickly escalated in relation to incomes, putting new houses in the suburbs beyond the means of most people. The fiscal regime of suburbs, which relied on industrial development to lessen the tax burden on residential taxpayers was showing

¹⁸² Sewell, "The Suburbs," 46-49.

clear signs of faltering as demand for industrial space fell and the economy shifted more and more toward the service sector. Finally, per capita costs for both “soft” and “hard” municipal services were higher as a result of low gross densities, and the latter combined with strict segregation of land-uses to make transit unattractive relative to the private automobile and expensive to provide.

Compared to S.D. Clark and Humphrey Carver’s respective takes on postwar suburbia, Sewell’s critical perspective aligns more closely with contemporary discourses such as smart growth intensification and the new urbanism, which see conventional suburban forms and automobile-dependant ways of life as unsustainable and in need of substantial modification. It is noteworthy that some of the planning and housing experts Sewell considered responsible for the shape of the suburbs in Toronto were critical of the creation they played an important role in shaping. Town planning consultant Eugene Faludi, for example, said the following in 1950:

Acre by acre we are transforming beautiful ravines, fields, parklands, and wooded estates into dismal rows of unsightly identical brick strawberry boxes that will be with us for a generation at least. These will be the future slums, growing more and more forlorn as dust from the treeless streets settles on them and the occupants abandon all hope of making attractive anything so basically drab.¹⁸³

Humphrey Carver, whose views have already been discussed in some detail, said in the mid-1950s overall the suburbs are “a ghastly mess.”¹⁸⁴ Sewell engages in a bit of this in his *City Magazine* special issue, but for the most part his focus was less on the aesthetics

¹⁸³ Eugene Faludi, "Homes of Today - Slums of Tomorrow," *Maclean's Magazine*, March 1st 1950, 22.

¹⁸⁴ Gray, "Why Live in the Suburbs?," 11.

of suburban housing subdivisions and more on the relationship between form, function, and everyday life.

A study conducted for the City of Toronto by the planning and architecture consulting firm Diamond and Myers on the impact of the proposed Pickering Airport had brought to Sewell's attention the consequences of sprawl—the underuse of land in the suburbs and increasing specialization of uses across the metropolitan region—for the central core.¹⁸⁵ Just as the struggle against modernist urban renewal schemes and out-of-control high-rise redevelopment in residential areas was abating, he turned his attention outward to what he more recently has termed his “lonely campaign against sprawl”.¹⁸⁶ One difficulty Sewell overlooked was the satisfaction and attachment that many suburbanites felt in relation to their homes. That oversight continues to limit how suburban change is viewed by residents and outsiders.

In *Suburban Society*, Clark recognized much criticism of suburbia ignored this crucial piece of the puzzle. He argued that his findings suggest that on the whole the postwar urban population that settled in new suburban residential areas “was one possessed of certain very definite social preferences in terms of the way it wanted to live ... People who moved to the suburbs wanted a house of their own and they wanted the sense of freedom and anonymity that a home in the suburbs afforded.”¹⁸⁷ The overwhelming majority accepted the trade-offs involved, leaving him to opine that “[i]n

¹⁸⁵ Sewell, “The Suburbs,” 46-49.

¹⁸⁶ ———, *How We Changed Toronto: The inside story of twelve creative, tumultuous years in civic life, 1969-1980* (Toronto: Lorimer, 2015).

¹⁸⁷ Clark, *The Suburban Society*: 225.

another society people may want to live differently, and what thus was conceived by the suburban dweller as the good life could there be considered intolerable”, but that it would be quite improper to disregard the overall satisfaction of residents when considering changes or refinements.¹⁸⁸ Sewell counters with the convincing argument, which has only increased in its force and salience over time, that suburbs are not islands and their impact on other spaces and society overall cannot be ignored simply because some aspects of suburban life are highly valued by suburbanites. Instead, he asks: what about the costs and consequences?

Postwar Suburbia on the Agenda

Around the same time as City Magazine published “John Sewell on the Suburbs” the Urban Studies Programme at York University hosted a symposium entitled *Suburbia: Costs, Consequences and Alternatives*. The introduction to the published proceedings describes the topic as a departure from a “fairly strong emphasis and concentration on problems which are primarily identified with the central city.”¹⁸⁹ Less than a quarter century after the provincial government created the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto (Metro) in response to rapid urbanization after World War II, a symposium on suburbs reflected a growing interest in the form that postwar metropolitan growth had taken, both in Toronto and elsewhere.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 226.

¹⁸⁹ Frances Frisken, "Introduction" (paper presented at the Symposium: Suburbia - Costs, Consequences and Alternatives, York University, Downsview, Ontario, Spring 1977), 1.

Population numbers were offered up to frame the discussion. At Metro's inception in 1954, the city's population stood at roughly 700,000 people, while the 420,000 people lived in the suburbs. By 1971, the city's population had risen slightly to 713,000 people, while the population of the Metro suburbs had grown to 1.4 million. As important, it was noted that future growth would overwhelmingly occur beyond Metro. The metropolitan fringe, comprised of the recently created regional municipalities of Peel, York, Durham, and Halton, had grown from 1951 to 1971 to encompass 11% of the region's population. This growth would continue. As of 2011, the regional municipalities now account for more than 50% of the Greater Toronto Area's (GTA) population, which exceeds 6 million residents.

The introduction to the symposium concluded “[w]hat we have is an increasing proportion of the population in this region which is living now or going to be living in those hard to describe, hard to define areas known as suburbs.”¹⁹⁰ The postwar suburbs had been subjected to withering sociological critiques in the 1950s, but interest had waned somewhat by the 1970s even as suburban growth continued unabated. In the late-1960s, opposing urban renewal, expressways and high-rise redevelopment were hot-button issues and renewed interest in the suburbs reflected the awareness that these central city struggles were not unrelated to metropolitan-scale changes, particularly the planning and development of newer areas on the periphery. Before moving on I want to

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 2.

briefly summarize the six papers given at the symposium as they offer a succinct way to introduce the emergence of sprawl and suburbia as an urban problem.

First, Humphrey Carver outlined the longstanding presence of suburbs around cities and hinted at the sense of disappointment that postwar suburbia seems to evoke for many. Neither satisfied with, nor dismissive of suburbia, Carver participated in the development of postwar housing policy and the institutionalization of urban planning in Canada, and was as suited as anyone to provide a sober assessment of the human environment created in the decades after World War II. Wistfully recounting the efficient form of the streetcar metropolis, he lamented that the postwar suburbs were built without an organizational framework beyond the scale of the subdivision.

Second, planner Frank Lewinberg brought the political context of suburbia to the fore, arguing that formal planning's orientation toward interventions of a "technical nature" in "clearly observable problem areas" evades the larger issue of how land is allocated. As a result, he noted, planners and politicians move from one fashionable planning issue to another, often achieving the desired physical results, while failing to solve the social problems that had led to calls for intervention in the first place. Suburbia and sprawl, he noted, seemed to be displacing urban renewal and the wholesale redevelopment of inner city neighbourhoods as the planning problem du jour. In the future, he foresaw suburban slums and efforts to protect and revitalize suburban neighbourhoods as issues that would preoccupy planners and politicians.

Third, policy analyst Anne Golden reviewed *Metroplan*, focusing on its background studies and summary designs which called for “structured decentralization” in Metro. Intended to lessen redevelopment pressures on the downtown core, the plan aimed to direct future urban growth outwards into sub centres (i.e., mini-downtowns) in the Metro suburbs. Offering a careful assessment of what implementing decentralization would entail, she argued that going from plan to reality would be a “formidable challenge”. Not only because *Metroplan* proposed an urban structure without detailing how it could be implemented, but also because the intensified development called for would likely spur opposition from local residents. Golden noted as well that proposed rapid transit extensions needed to serve the mini-downtowns might work against the objective of shifting office employment and cultural amenities to the suburbs. Instead, they might simply make it easier for suburbanites to travel into the urban core.

Fourth, academic Kent Gerecke detailed how family life and child-rearing dominated suburban planning and design following World War II, pointing out that schools were at the heart of the neighbourhood concept that displaced the urban street grid from the mid-1950s onwards. He feared that that the freedom many associated with open space and elbow room in the suburbs had distracted people from questioning the power that land development corporations could exert over the form, pace, and manner of urban development in Canadian cities.

Fifth, academic Robert Hoover raised loss of farmland and the complex issues facing farmers as urban development pushed further into the metropolitan fringe. With

much of Canada's most productive farmland located in the Saint Lawrence Valley and Southwestern Ontario development pressure on farmland, for him, would put food security in question, placing the problem of low-density, automobile-oriented single family housing developments in an entirely different light. While many critiques of postwar suburbia were oriented around aesthetic and social concerns, this was a critique oriented around the environmental consequences of unlimited growth and urban development—a concern that a decade later would fall under the rubric of sustainable development.

Sixth, John Sewell laid out the case against suburbia and called for a return to the city as it was up to 1945. His views on the suburbs had recently been published in a special issue of *City Magazine* as already discussed. At the symposium he covered much the same ground, except his symposium paper was if anything blunter and more uncompromising: suburbia in mode of Don Mills should be opposed, if not rolled back, on the grounds that it is wasteful, inefficient, and produces expensive housing.

Though a departure from previous symposium themes, there is nothing unusual or remarkable about the concerns expressed by symposium participants. Collectively they address the problems that routinely appear in urban discourses on the postwar suburbs: banal architecture and poor urban design, a weak to non-existent public realm, privatism, social isolation, uneven metropolitan geographies, lack of housing diversity, consumerist excess, and environmental concerns, such as the loss of farmland.

Gentrification and the Rejection of Postwar Suburbia

In his paper for the symposium, Humphrey Carver remarked that the arrival of the baby-boom generation into adulthood in the late-1960s was accompanied by a new and more skeptical attitude toward postwar suburbia. It is difficult to assess the veracity of this claim, but “in-town” living did become a noted trend amongst (mostly) young urban professionals from the mid-1960s onward. In Toronto, the trend became associated with “sandblasters” and “white-painters”, whose practice of buying and renovating inexpensive old houses in the inner city established living in urban neighbourhoods in and around the downtown core as an acceptably middle-class alternative to the suburbs.¹⁹¹ Gentrification, as the process later became known, led to an escalation in housing costs. As older housing stock was upgraded and rooming houses were converted into single family homes, low-rent housing became scarcer in urban neighbourhoods. By the mid-1970s, it was clear to observers that displacement of the poor and working-class from central area neighbourhoods was underway in Toronto.

Nevertheless, most stories on incipient gentrification in old city neighbourhoods mixed disbelief with commentary about possible displacement and salutary observations. Toronto, it was claimed, was the “miracle city”, because it was perceived to be safe and attractive to middle-class residents at a time when many American cities were in crisis.¹⁹² Seeing the class-based nature of this rhetoric, Bunge and Bourdessa argued at the time

¹⁹¹ Helen Worthington, "The town house set: They're where it's happening," *Toronto Star*, August 12th 1967.

¹⁹² See Rita Daly, "Key to a Miracle City: You can still live downtown," *Toronto Star*, May 18th 1974.

that a novel form of “spatial injustice” was at work.¹⁹³ In their view, the “restoration” of downtown neighbourhoods really involved a “spatial exchange” in which the arrival of middle-to-high income households was accompanied by the movement of lower income households outward and into suburban high-rises.¹⁹⁴ It was a line of argument that occasionally appeared in newspaper stories on housing problems and homelessness over the next decade or so.

Commentary on the embourgeoisement of inner city neighbourhoods was also noted in unlikely places. Jack Granatstein was asked by the editors of *City Magazine* to update readers on the state of Marlborough Street six years after it had fought successfully against a development proposal from Marathon Realty.¹⁹⁵ They got a pointed response from him. The physical fabric of the street had been protected, but an almost wholesale social transformation was the end result.

In 1971 there was a healthy majority of working-class homeowners, but now there are at most ten houses of the 85 that are not occupied by middle-class professionals. So the street has been white-painted and town-housed, turned into a lawyers-professors-architects ghetto ... What has happened to the original residents? No one knows (and scarcely anyone cares). They have been swallowed up by the suburbs, absorbed in the sprawl of the low-income out-skirts.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹³ William W. Bunge and Ronald Bordessa, *The Canadian Alternative: Survival, Expeditions and Urban Change*, Geographical Monographs (Toronto: Department of Geography/Atkinson College (York University), 1975).

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 116-19.

¹⁹⁵ See J.L. Granatstein, *Marlborough Marathon: One Street Against a Developer* (Toronto: James Lewis and Samuel, Ltd., 1971).

¹⁹⁶ ———, "Marlborough's Marathon run?," *City Magazine* 1977, 63.

It was a bitter conclusion that other veterans of 1970s reform politics in Toronto also came to once the initial civic revolt against urban renewal, expressways, and high-rise development in the central city faded.¹⁹⁷

Middle-class resettlement of old city neighbourhoods, Jon Caulfield's preferred description of gentrification in Toronto, had a paradoxical quality.¹⁹⁸ For Caulfield, gentrification had at least initially included middle-class in-movers, for whom living in the inner city became, in part, a form of resistance to the corporate city, and, by extension, a rejection of what James Lorimer and John Sewell both deemed its apotheosis: postwar suburbia.¹⁹⁹ An important contributor to the emancipatory discourse on gentrification,²⁰⁰ Caulfield interprets this rejection of suburbia as, in part, a statement about one's values. In his text, respondents constructed "the suburbs" as a distant locale—as the socio-spatial opposite of the city and their cultural values, politico-ideological leanings, and social practices.

The rejection of suburban life and consumerist excess noted amongst early-stage gentrifiers in Toronto, has wider resonance. Jonathan Raban makes a similar observation in *Soft City*, his wry take on the in-migration of young members of a new middle class into the inner parts of London, England.

For them the purchase of a house has become an act of conscience; and they have left the old strongholds of their class behind (believing that

¹⁹⁷ David Lewis Stein, *Going Downtown: Reflections on Urban Progress* (Toronto: Oberon Press, 1993).

¹⁹⁸ Caulfield, *City Form and Everyday Life: Toronto's Gentrification and Critical Social Practice*.

¹⁹⁹ Lorimer, *The Developers*; Sewell, "The Suburbs."

²⁰⁰ See T. Slater, "The Eviction of Critical Perspectives from Gentrification Research," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 30, no. 4 (2006).

their education and judiciously left politics have declassed them anyway), and searched out “unspoiled” areas in the city, where they can live conspicuously cheek-by-jowl with the polyglot poor. They have rejected the suburbs, and found parts near the centre of the city which had been rendered invisible to the bourgeois eye by a century of railway engineering, immigration, and progressive dilapidation. In the blackened, small-windowed brick terraces (built for better-off artisans and the shabbier members of the lower middle class in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century), they have seen an honest unpretension which fits very well their conception of themselves.²⁰¹

Turning the purchase of a house into an act of conscience, he notes, meant that sitting tenants were “alternatively harassed with eviction notices and raised rents, and romanticized, like Fenimore Cooper Indians, as ‘real’ people.”²⁰² Like David Lewis Stein’s commentary on “progress” in Toronto,²⁰³ Raban notes that high-minded intentions did little to prevent rediscovered areas from becoming “one-class communities” in short order.²⁰⁴

In the late-1960s, an article entitled “The town house set: they’re where it’s happening” was published in the *Toronto Star*.²⁰⁵ Though the article has a slightly tongue-in-cheek air, it identifies roughly the same group of people from an income and occupational point of view as Raban’s commentary on the new middle-class in London, England. In Toronto a preference for living “in-town” was also constructed around a conscious rejection of the suburbs and suburban life:

²⁰¹ Jonathan Raban, *Soft City: The Art of Cosmopolitan Living* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1974). 78.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 79.

²⁰³ Stein, *Going Downtown: Reflections on Urban Progress*.

²⁰⁴ Raban, *Soft City: The Art of Cosmopolitan Living*.

²⁰⁵ Worthington, "The town house set: They're where it's happening."

Take a street, any tree-lined residential street in the heart of the city, with houses on it which have had their faces painted white.

Chances are they're inhabited by the families of a professor, an architect, a journalist, a musician, a psychiatrist, a CBC producer, an artist ...

These are the creative people of this town. Mostly they're in the middle-middle or upper-middle income bracket.

But the criterion is not money—it's taste. Good taste!

It's hard to pinpoint the town house set. They're a diverse lot. Just about the only thing they have in common—aside from creativity—is the fact that they're smug.

They're smug about the fact that they live downtown, that they live close to the theatres, the good restaurants, to the boutiques, to where it's Happening.

They're simply not interested in a suburban strawberry box with no peeling paint and no character. They're not interested in facing bumper-to-bumper expressways for an hour at the end of each day. They're not interested in an 11 a.m. kaffee klatch as regular as the mailman's call.²⁰⁶

James Acland, an architecture professor at the University of Toronto quoted in the article, asserted “the townhouse phenomenon is what's saving Toronto”, because were his inner city house on Cottingham Street (just north of Marlborough Street – mentioned above by Granatstein) in an American city it would most likely be surrounded by a “raging slum.” In his view, the difference, aside from the perception that Toronto was a safe place to live, was the growing scarcity of homes with convenient access to downtown. As he put it: “inside the 401 girdle, we're strapped for land and the day of the

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

single, free-standing home is almost past.” As a result, centrally-located townhouses had become a “solid economic investment” as more and more people sought to live in central neighbourhoods. No additional low-rise detached, semi-detached, or row housing could be added to the existing stock, indeed some was being lost to high-rise redevelopment, so it stood likely to increase in value over time.

The preceding can also be related to aspect of contemporary writing on urbanism and inner city gentrification: the deployment of “authenticity” as a form of social distinction. When asked about the townhouses being constructed in the suburbs, the architecture professor replied: “The pure town house is the renovated old home downtown; the new town house is row housing built in the city or near the outskirts.”²⁰⁷ This distinction between a townhouse in the city and one in the suburbs ought not to be overlooked as it reflects what members of an emergent “new middle class” preferred: a renovated character home in an old city neighbourhood. Gentrification of inner-city Toronto has subsequently proceeded on the basis of that preference.

By the early 1970s worries about the displacement of low-income tenants began to surface alongside discussion of Toronto as “a near slumless city”, which was attributed to an influx of house-proud immigrants into inner-city neighbourhoods and the work of speculators and “white-painters” in converting old brick homes into “prestige town houses” and “traditional working-class neighbourhoods into enclaves for the wealthy.”²⁰⁸ In Trefann Court, the success of working-class residents in stopping an urban renewal

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ George Gamester, “New Canadians spruce up drab neighbourhoods,” *Toronto Star*, October 20th 1973.

scheme that would have razed homes and businesses was thought to have paved the way for “white-painters” and “sandblasters” to move in and profit.²⁰⁹ An article about the city’s “rooming house ghetto” found between Carlton and Queen Streets (north-south) and Parliament and Jarvis Streets (east-west) concludes that after stopping high-rise developers a losing battle was being waged against “the middle-class takeover of run-down properties”.²¹⁰

Three decades later inner-city neighbourhood change via gentrification proceeds apace across Toronto’s urban core (the inverted “T” of the old city), so that few spaces remain untouched by it. Indeed, the process seems inexorable and trend-lines point toward the production of “an urban landscape increasingly segregated by class and race, in which affordable rental housing slowly disappears, and the most accessible locations are increasingly occupied by Whites and elites for their benefit.”²¹¹ In the early 1970s when Toronto’s social landscape was still marked more by class than race, the issue of displacement focused on the de-conversion of rooming houses and the “roomers” that relied upon them for affordable housing.

As the white painters move into South of Carlton, as more and more houses are made into townhouses, even though many of them stand empty until the market picks up, more and more rooming house occupants find themselves on the streets

²⁰⁹ Val Sears, "All that's left of Trefann is salvaging a fading dream," *Toronto Star*, December 8th 1973.

²¹⁰ Warren Gerard, "The white painters are taking over South of Carlton," *Toronto Star*, October 20th 1975. An area roughly analogous is described in Keith Whitney, "Skid Row," ed. W.E. Mann, *The Underside of Toronto* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1970).

²¹¹ R. Alan Walks and Richard Maaranen, "Gentrification, Social Mix, and Social Polarization: Testing the Linkages in Large Canadian Cities," *Urban Geography* 29, no. 4 (2008): 321.

No one knows how many roomers there are in South of Carlton, but they could number more than 3,000, and most of them are on one form or another of social assistance.

No one seems to know where the roomers go when they are put out on the street. Many find other rooms in the area. A number become roomers in flop houses. Others are moving block by block to the east. But they are declining in numbers.²¹²

To understand the link between the city and suburb in the gentrification process as it played out in Toronto, one must be cognizant of subtle and complex shifts in meaning as they occur in time and space.

The transformation of working-class areas and the displacement of poor residents from downtown and inner-city neighbourhoods happened in plain view, and was reported. As might be expected what transpired had several layers to it. In 1980, the *Toronto Star* reported on the eastward movement of gentrification, referring to it as the “blue-collar no-man’s land” or “Archie Bunker City” east of the Don Valley and recasting it as “Nouveau Toronto”.²¹³ Elderly residents were selling out and moving on, or passing away, but an unmistakable undercurrent in the process was the class-based transformation of urban social space:

“My block’s like a ghost town now,” says Jenny Logan. “That’s all right. I’ve got the ghosts to keep me company.”

“When I see another of those sandblasting trucks roll into my street,” sighs Edith Marks, “I just want to pull down the blinds and hide.”

“Forty-three years ago I paid \$7,000 for the house,” grins Joe Boland. “Now they call me up with \$60,000 offers.”

²¹² Gerard, “The white painters are taking over South of Carlton.”

²¹³ Olivia Ward, “East Side story: New chic invades the old town,” *Toronto Star*, January 27th 1980.

Boland, Mrs. Logan, and Mrs. Marks are oldtimers of Toronto's East Side, residents of one of the fastest-changing areas in Canadian Urban History – where renovations are booming, real estate values are soaring, and old neighbourhoods dissolving under lashings of smart new paint.

Not so 10 years ago, when East Side was the stronghold of the workers, the hopeful immigrants, the nowhere-else-to-go people who rolled from Jarvis St. to Coxwell with the rising rents.

In those days it was Archie Bunker City – a place where a guy went to shoot the breeze and game of pool, and a young man in a neat flowered shirt was inviting a cauliflower ear just by being there.

All that is changing now. As lawyers, accountants, teachers and executives quit the suburbs and their high commuting costs, the floodtide of white wine and Perrier is rushing to the Don and beyond.

Nouveau Toronto is taking over, sandblasting and whitepainting its way through neighbourhoods that previously housed grannies and winos, Greek cooks and Scottish bus drivers. And in its wake the inevitable support system of salons, boutiques, bistros, designers and studios.²¹⁴

The gentrification or “middle-class resettlement” of inner-city Toronto can thus be interpreted through the eyes of gentrifiers as a rejection of suburbia, particularly the corporate suburbs built from the 1950s onward. But it must also necessarily be viewed with regard to wider economic changes and regional restructuring, new geographies of poverty and social exclusion, and the suburbanization of immigrants and ethnic/racial minorities in a post-Fordist, post-metropolitan Toronto. A suburban perspective is needed to fully understand how changes in the city were linked to a simultaneous reshaping of the suburbs.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

Metro's Suburbs in Transition

Since the year 2000 a number of influential studies and reports have brought changing geographies of poverty, income polarization, and social exclusion to the fore in Toronto.²¹⁵ Collectively the picture they paint is unmistakable. Over the course of several decades Toronto has become more polarized in socio-economic terms as a result of widening income equality—and that polarization is being articulated geographically at the neighbourhood scale. By the 1990s disadvantaged neighbourhoods—places of concentrated poverty and social and economic marginalization—had spread outwards becoming a pronounced suburban problem. As with most changes, social and geographic, the process was gradual. It took several decades for this socio-spatial transformation to take hold and begin to percolate and reshape dominant geographical imaginaries. The beginnings of that shift, however, were evident in the late-1970s.

As has already been discussed the displacement of “the poor” or lower-income households from downtown and inner-city neighbourhoods was known. But another element in the transformation is important to note: the degree to which Metro level planning in the crucial postwar boom years of the 1950s and ‘60s subscribed to a mixed development model. That model was premised on balanced transportation and geographical equity in school and recreational provision, as well as the spreading of

²¹⁵ City of Toronto, "Cracks in the Foundation: Community Agency Survey 2003," (2004); ———, "Strong Neighbourhoods - A Call to Action: A Report of the Strong Neighbourhoods Task Force," (2005); J. David Hulchanski, "The Three Cities within Toronto: Income Polarization among Toronto's neighbourhoods, 1970-2005," (Toronto: Cities Centre, University of Toronto, 2010); United Way Toronto, "Poverty by Postal Code: The Geography of Neighbourhood Poverty, 1981-2001," (Toronto: United Way of Greater Toronto and Canadian Council on Social Development, 2004); ———, "Poverty by Postal Code 2: Vertical Poverty," (Toronto: United Way, 2011).

public and high-density housing (apartments) across all municipalities, city and suburb alike.²¹⁶ The result is a suburban landscape characterized by subdivisions of detached and semi-detaching houses and clusters of apartment towers, wide-arterial roads dotted with strip malls and a few large shopping centres, and a sizeable transit-dependent population living in high-density nodes and corridors overwhelmingly served by buses in an otherwise car-centric built environment.²¹⁷

In the 1970s, even as the postwar suburbs were still marked by relative newness, the mixed development promoted by Metro was yielding results: social and economic diversity. By the end of the decade, the authors of a landmark report, *Metro's Suburbs in Transition*, recognized the maturation of the postwar suburbs was being overlooked as many city residents adopted a defensive posture after their involvement in struggles against high-rise redevelopments and proposed urban expressways earlier in the decade.²¹⁸ What had transpired polarized political debate and commentary in Metro along city-suburban lines, and there was “a growing tendency by non-suburbanites within Metro (and elsewhere) to reduce suburban life to a set of simple images—sprawl,

²¹⁶ Pierre Filion, Rebecca Osolen, and Trudi Bunting, "The Transition from Interventionism to Neo-Liberalism in the In-Between City: The Experience of the Toronto Inner Suburb," in *In-Between Infrastructures: Urban Connectivity in an Age of Vulnerability*, ed. Douglas Young, Patricia K. Wood, and Roger Keil (Kelowna: Praxis (e)Press, 2011).

²¹⁷ Pierre Filion, Kathleen McSpurren, and Brad Appleby, "Wasted Density? The Impact of Toronto's Residential-Density-Distribution Policies on Public-Transit Use and Walking," *Environment and Planning A* 38(2006); Paul M. Hess and Jane Farrow, "Walkability in Toronto's High-Rise Neighbourhoods," (Toronto: Cities Centre, University of Toronto, 2011).

²¹⁸ Social Planning Council of Metro Toronto, "Metro's Suburbs in Transition, Part I: Evolution and Overview," (Toronto: Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto, 1979); ———, "Planning Agenda for the Eighties, Part II: Metro's Suburbs in Transition," (Toronto: Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto, 1980).

dominance of the automobile, excessive levels of market consumption.”²¹⁹ Going further, the report’s authors make a crucial point:

Simple images can arise from a sense of distance and denial—the physical distance of not being there, and as a result, relying upon a limited range of symbols to understand what is not experienced directly; the social distance when observing lifestyles and patterns which differ from one’s own; the denial through attributing to the suburban form characteristics that are pervasive throughout the general community and culture.²²⁰

The takeaway intended was that “substantive issues” needed to be approached from a “renewed metropolitan perspective”, as opposed to simply perpetuating “the rituals of symbolic differences” or assuming that “differences exist because the social and economic interests of suburban residents are homogeneous, and differ from those of City residents.”

The 1970s was when polarization at Metro Council reinforced a “we-they” dynamic between “the city” and “the suburbs”, which continues to resonate in municipal politics in Toronto.²²¹ Newspaper coverage of the report at the time noted the gap between the dominant image of the suburbs—widely held by both suburbanites and urbanites in Toronto—and the diverse social makeup and evolving conditions found in

²¹⁹ _____, “Metro’s Suburbs in Transition, Part I: Evolution and Overview,” 5.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ A durable sociopolitical divide between the “old” city of Toronto and its Metro suburbs has been evident in mayoral elections since amalgamation, but was a strong theme in the interpretation of the 2010 results which saw suburban conservative populist Rob Ford elected. See “The Two Solitudes; A map of how Toronto voted reveals downtown and suburbs are worlds apart,” *Toronto Star*, October 29th 2010; “Our Red & Blue States; Toronto electoral map reveals stark divide between downtown, suburban voters,” *National Post*, October 29th 2010; Anna Mehler Parperny, “The Downtown-Suburban Chasm; Ford held sway in the suburbs, but Smitherman captured the pre-amalgamation core,” *The Globe and Mail*, October 29th 2010.

them.²²² The findings reported were intended to shatter two standard suburban myths: (1) that poverty is not a suburban problem; and (2) that suburbs lack social and ethnic/racial diversity.

In Toronto it was clear that neither was the case. The suburban apartment boom in the 1960s resulted in the formation of a “high-rise belt” or “Metro’s rim of problems” that stretched from Etobicoke to Scarborough.²²³ However, the more unexpected change was the arrival of immigrants from the Global South:

One of the biggest surprises is that the suburbs have now become the first home for thousands of new immigrants to Canada, many of them going through the traumatic experience of moving from a village in the Third World to a 15th-floor apartment overlooking the 401.

The figures show that immigrants who arrived here between 1971 and 1976 made up a higher proportion of the population in the Don Mills area (notably in Flemingdon Park) than in any downtown district.

But when community workers in the Jane-Finch area, another big immigrant reception area, compared themselves with Parkdale, a downtown immigrant reception area of equivalent size, they found Parkdale had 18 ethnic service agencies while Jane-Finch had only one, the Italian COSTI organization.²²⁴

The increasing suburbanization of immigrants, overwhelmingly from non-European source countries starting in the 1970s, transformed many suburban spaces over the next several decades from predominantly “white” (or more appropriately “British”) to places where visible minorities formed a majority of population.²²⁵

²²² Frank Jones, “Metro faces human crisis in suburbs,” *Toronto Star*, November 5th 1978.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Relph, *Toronto: Transformations in a City and its Region*.

Looking back on the build-out of postwar suburbs, the *Metro's Suburbs in Transition* report recognized the framework and perceptions that guided the planning and development of spaces in the postwar period. Formed in response to urban problems well before the suburban boom, policies and plans conceived the modern suburb as an alternative living environment in relation to the problematic spaces and conditions of the pre-1945 metropolis. As such the suburban home and neighbourhood were planned around certain assumptions and conditions:

1. the ability to preserve traditional family and child bearing patterns;
2. full-time parenting and community participation by the mother;
3. the ability to buy into low-rise family dwellings;
4. inexpensive forms of private transportation;
5. stable employment prospects if heavy mortgage obligations were to be met over time;
6. a secure price environment for the management of tight budgets;
7. the restraint of external influences on adolescent behaviour; and
8. a willingness by adults to defer diversified forms of personal fulfilment.²²⁶

The report's authors found there was "considerable evidence to indicate that where these assumptions and conditions have been met, there have been, and continue to be, significant levels of satisfaction by established residents with their environments."²²⁷

²²⁶ Social Planning Council of Metro Toronto, "Metro's Suburbs in Transition, Part I: Evolution and Overview," 55.

²²⁷ Ibid.

In the face of general satisfaction amongst those suburban residents for whom the above assumptions and conditions could be met, an important aim of the *Metro's Suburbs in Transition* report was to identify if social and economic trends were undermining the suburban framework and to assess the prospects for adapting postwar suburbs to meet changing needs as best they might be anticipated. To this end, they asked: “what happens when the assumptions and conditions which gave rise to the suburban environment begin to change, and in a number of areas change significantly”?²²⁸ Possible answers rest on how narrowly the vision of the modern suburb clings to the single family home, neighbourhood, and local school as its organizing features—and with what consequences and implications for households, social groups, and activities not well served by the assumptions noted above.

For the authors “the era of suburban and metropolitan innocence [was] over” and their assessment of the status quo was stark:

This report would conclude that for increasing numbers of the new social majority in the suburbs—aged adults, youth, solitary parents of young children, working mothers—existing suburban land-use patterns are not always efficient or effective in serving their needs. These are groups which are transit-dependent, benefit from compact, diverse, and public forms of community life; tend to have modest income levels; and have higher affinity and mobility needs in a residential environment.²²⁹

Several decades on the question of suburban change would develop a harder edge. The authors of *Metro's Suburbs in Transition* could not fully appreciate the extent of the

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ibid., 240.

economic restructuring that would occur in the decades to come, nor its impact on the socioeconomic status of residents, but its authors did foresee postwar suburbs becoming more diverse and complex as they matured and sought to think about what that would mean in terms of the need for adaptive changes.

Part of what the report's authors anticipated involved reimagining the postwar suburbs. The "homogeneous image of the post-war years" could be expected to recede as greater numbers of women entered the labour force, either as single parents or as part of a dual-income household, as people aged in place, as tenants became recognized as a major resident group in the suburbs, as recent immigrants changed the ethnic/racial makeup, as divorced or separated people and their families increased, and as families with young children living in apartments found themselves increasingly unable to afford a ground level family home.²³⁰ All of these changes were evident across Metro, but in the postwar suburbs they cut against the grain of what was expected as "normal" and therefore needed to be stated explicitly.

The report's authors thought "[f]rom a suburban perspective, the eighties [would] bring new urban conditions to be faced in common with residents of the central area." Instead analysis of voting patterns tell us a socio-political divide formed between the old-city and the suburbs within Metro.²³¹ As opposed to convergence, this divide has become more deeply entrenched in social distinctions linking built-form and housing

²³⁰ Ibid., 237.

²³¹ R. Alan Walks, "The Causes of City-Suburban Political Polarization? A Canadian Case Study," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 96, no. 2 (2006).

choices/preferences to political attitudes and ideology.²³² At the same time, the social and economic trajectories of old-city neighbourhoods and suburban ones have experienced a divergence that was not anticipated. There was not only an expectation that new suburban social realities would alter the physical environment of the suburbs, but also that dominant perceptions would change.

In particular, it was hoped that new attitudes would take hold and prompt a rethinking as to who lived in the suburbs, what kinds of social needs existed in them, to what degree should public resources be directed at them, and what would be desirable in terms of the form and character of suburban areas. Analyses of the changing social ecology of Toronto as post-Fordist/global city since the 1980s have shown older Fordist-era areas (mainly the inner suburbs)—places with considerable public housing and high-rise rental apartments—have been able to “absorb the poor, the unemployed and low-status workers.”²³³ This has not resulted in the kind of shift in dominant perceptions that the authors of *Metro Suburbs in Transition* were most likely seeking. Rather than a more nuanced and inclusive understanding of the new uneven social and economic geographies reshaping city and suburb alike, older rhetoric about suburban alienation has been coupled with increasing levels of social difference, marginalization, and vulnerability to stigmatize inner suburban areas as a new kind of blight. And unfortunately the question

²³² ———, “The boundaries of suburban discontent? Urban definitions and neighbourhood political effects,” *Canadian Geographer* 51, no. 2 (2007); ———, “Urban Form, Everyday Life, and Ideology: Support for Privatization in Three Toronto Neighbourhoods,” *Environment and Planning A* 40, no. 258-282 (2008).

²³³ ———, “The Social Ecology of the Post-Fordist/Global City? Economic Restructuring and Socio-Spatial Polarisation in the Toronto Urban Region,” 439.

of how to adapt suburban environments to meet diverse needs has become entangled with narratives of decline and middle-class abandonment. As the author of the influential *Three Cities in Toronto* report put it to a *Globe and Mail* reporter in 2007: “It’s an undesirable landscape, quite frankly ... People with money don’t want to live out there. It was built for the middle-income people who existed in 1971, but they’ve moved on and died.”²³⁴

The Postwar Toronto Suburb: Conclusions

The aim of this chapter has been to provide an overview of how places in Toronto identified as suburbs have been conceived and an examination of how various meanings of the suburb have been forged in the Toronto context since the 1950s. It has been said that in America the term “suburb” brings a whole world to mind.²³⁵ Across this chapter an attempt has been made to flesh out that world as it applies to the postwar Toronto suburb.

During the second half of the 20th century both Canada and the United States became suburban nations. Despite that, or as a result of it, it remains difficult to describe or define suburbs as a whole. It is certainly the case that we need to move beyond repetition of stereotypes and clichés about suburbs, but to do so requires being more precise about what constitutes “suburban-ness” in particular historical-geographical and

²³⁴ John Barber, "Toronto Divided: A Tale of 3 Cities," *Globe and Mail*, December 20 2007; J. David Hulchanski, "The Three Cities within Toronto: Income Polarization among Toronto's neighbourhoods, 1970-2000," (Toronto: University of Toronto - Centre for Urban & Community Studies (CUCS), 2007).

²³⁵ Craig, "Suburbs," 6.

socio-spatial contexts. The preceding has sought to demonstrate, via examination of the use and conception of suburb and related terms in Toronto since 1945, how meaning has been made and remade in real circumstances.

Chapter 4: Deliberating on the Metropolitan Problem, 1950-51

Introduction

This chapter examines the process that led to the establishment of a federated two-tier system of metropolitan government for Toronto in 1954. It establishes the importance of assessment, in particular the uneven geography of non-residential assessment at that time, to the way metropolitan problems were conceived and how a “sound” municipality ought to develop.

On January 16th 1950, Ontario Premier Leslie Frost brought together the reeves and mayors of Toronto area municipalities to participate in a conference at Queen’s Park. Over the next two and half months this group, called the Toronto Area Committee (TAC), met eight times in an attempt to reach consensus on the nature of, and solutions to, so-called metropolitan problems affecting their municipalities and the Toronto area.²³⁶ Transcripts of the proceedings show that little was achieved. Deep-fault lines existed, especially between the City of Toronto and most of the suburban municipalities, so no middle ground could be found. The City wanted amalgamation, while the suburban municipalities, with the exception of Mimico, half-heartedly endorsed a metropolitan county scheme, because they remained skeptical that a significant municipal reorganization was needed.

²³⁶ The records of the Toronto Area Committee, which operated under the auspices of the Ontario Department of Municipal Affairs during the first half of 1950, include proceedings of meetings as well as submissions, reports, statistics, and maps. See Toronto Area Committee Files RG 19-147. Archives of Ontario.

Premier Frost anticipated that any solution to area-wide problems would impinge upon local interests and he tried to disarm this issue upfront by encouraging the mayors and reeves to take “a big view of the future”.²³⁷ His plea fell mostly on deaf ears. As proceedings of TAC meetings capture, most participants were unwilling to focus on general principles and discussion remained mired in the details. The mayors and reeves assembled knew that altering the general principles behind local government would have far reaching consequences for their municipalities. It simply was not possible for them to focus on common problems without protecting parochial interests in relation to any proposed solution.

Lost in most contemporary discussion of this process, which ultimately led to the establishment of the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto (Metro) in 1953, is the split between the City of Toronto and the suburbs over the question of how to solve what was then referred to as “the metropolitan problem”. Understanding the city-suburban divide as it existed in the mid-20th century matters because the contemporary tendency to dichotomize city and suburb frames how the urban past is represented and understood. When the matter is examined more closely with regard to mid-20th century Toronto it becomes clear that each suburb related to metropolitan problems differently, and exposed varied opposition to amalgamation.

On a broader level, archival materials, including newspaper coverage, point to a geographical imagination that was not framed by now taken-for-granted city-suburban

²³⁷ Premier Leslie Frost, Proceedings of a Special Meeting to discuss a Metropolitan Scheme, January 16th 1950: 6. Toronto Area Committee Files RG 19-147. Archives of Ontario.

distinctions. This is more than a matter of definitional imprecision – i.e. what is city and what is suburb. The rise of mass automobility and its impact on built form is integral to common-sense definitions and mythic geographies of suburbs and suburbia now.

Progressively, since 1950 “the car” has come to be integral to how experts and lay-people classify “urban” and “suburban” in metropolitan Canada.²³⁸ Metropolitan space in 1950 was more apt to be imagined as divided along ethnic and class lines, by housing in terms of form, quality, and size, by the presence of industry, and by political jurisdiction. It was only later that “urban” and “suburban” could be mentally framed according to changes in built form linked to the rising ownership and use of private automobiles.²³⁹

The passage of time makes it possible to see the significance of Metro’s creation in historical context. Not only was it “the first major change in Ontario’s system of local government since the system was put in place by a *Municipal Corporations Act* in 1849”, it was also “the culmination of more than two decades of serious efforts to find workable ways to tackle the infrastructure deficiencies and social needs that accumulated in the Toronto region during the Great Depression of the 1930s and the six war years that followed it.”²⁴⁰ During the process that culminated in the creation of Metro, however, this outcome was not certain, and not everyone was in agreement that it was needed or desirable. Though now mostly forgotten, the process that resulted in Metro was

²³⁸ Gordon and Janzen, "Suburban Nation? Estimating the Size of Canada's Suburban Population."

²³⁹ cf. Walks, "The boundaries of suburban discontent? Urban definitions and neighbourhood political effects."

²⁴⁰ Frisken, *The Public Metropolis: The Political Dynamics of Urban Expansion in the Toronto Region 1924-2003*: 55.

politically arduous, time consuming, and exhaustive. Certainly, as Frances Frisken has noted, the decision to create Metro was “not sudden or impulsive”.²⁴¹

Setting the Scene

In the late-1940s a series of studies and reports built momentum around the idea that “the metropolitan problem” was nearing crisis proportions and needed to be solved. The phrase entered public discourse and the need to reform local government was widely recognized. Amalgamation or significant restructuring of local government was already in the air:

- The Town of Mimico had set things in motion by authorizing an application to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) in 1947 requesting the creation of an area for the joint administration of certain specified services. After a number of preliminary hearings the OMB gave final directions in October 1949 and hearings on the matter were set to begin on January 24th 1950;
- The Toronto and York Planning Board, which had a planning area that included both the City of Toronto and the County of York, published a report on December 1st 1949 that included the recommendation that the City of Toronto, Forest Hill, Swansea, Leaside, Weston, North York, York, and East York be unified;
- In November 1949 the Civic Advisory Council of Toronto’s Committee on Metropolitan Problems published its first report, which examined several proposals for reorganizing local government in the Toronto area; and
- Two other reports also informed public discourse on “the metropolitan problem”: Norman Wilson’s transportation plan was published in 1948 and was followed by the Gore and Storrie report on water and sewerage in 1949. Both were prepared for the Toronto and Suburban Planning Board, were metropolitan in scope, and offered potent arguments in favour of area-wide coordination.²⁴²

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² An overview of applications to the Ontario Municipal Board is drawn from the Decision of the Board, January 20th 1953. Ontario Municipal Board case file C02976. General – Chairman’s notes – Decision of

If the push for metropolitan amalgamation or unification had momentum, it was also resisted. Before the first meeting of TAC, Long Branch cast a pall over the proceedings when it authorized an application requesting the amalgamation of the Lakeshore municipalities (Mimico, New Toronto, Long Branch) with Etobicoke as a preemptive strike. Not surprisingly, deliberations at TAC were testy and discordant. After three meetings in which discussion remained polarized along city-suburban lines, the City of Toronto put forth its own application to the OMB requesting amalgamation of the City with Forest Hill, Long Branch, Swansea, Leaside, Mimico, New Toronto, Weston, East York, North York, York, and the urban portions of Etobicoke and Scarborough (see Figure 2). When the dust settled this application morphed into the comprehensive and exhaustive OMB hearings on Toronto amalgamation, which were followed by the decision of the board – the Cumming report – recommending a two-tier federated system of metropolitan government for the Toronto area.²⁴³

the Board – L.R. Cumming personal copy. Record on hearings into Toronto Amalgamation RG 37-6-2-13. Archives of Ontario; Reports mentioned can be found in both the Toronto Area Committee Files RG 19-147 and Record on hearings into Toronto Amalgamation RG 37-6-2. Archives of Ontario. The Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) is an independent adjudicative tribunal that conducts hearings and makes decisions on matters that have been appealed to it under specific provincial legislation (see the Ontario Municipal Board Act). The OMB's mandate and role has evolved since it was first established in 1906 as the Ontario Railway and Municipal Board (ORMB). At that time its main purpose was to regulate municipal street railways. In the 1930s, it became the OMB and began to acquire far-reaching powers to regulate the activities of local governments, including land-use planning, municipal finance, and matters related to territorial and administrative jurisdiction. At present it is mainly involved in adjudicating land-use planning and development disputes. See Aaron A. Moore, *Planning Politics in Toronto: The Ontario Municipal Board and Urban Development* (Toronto University of Toronto Press, 2013): 5.

²⁴³ Ibid.

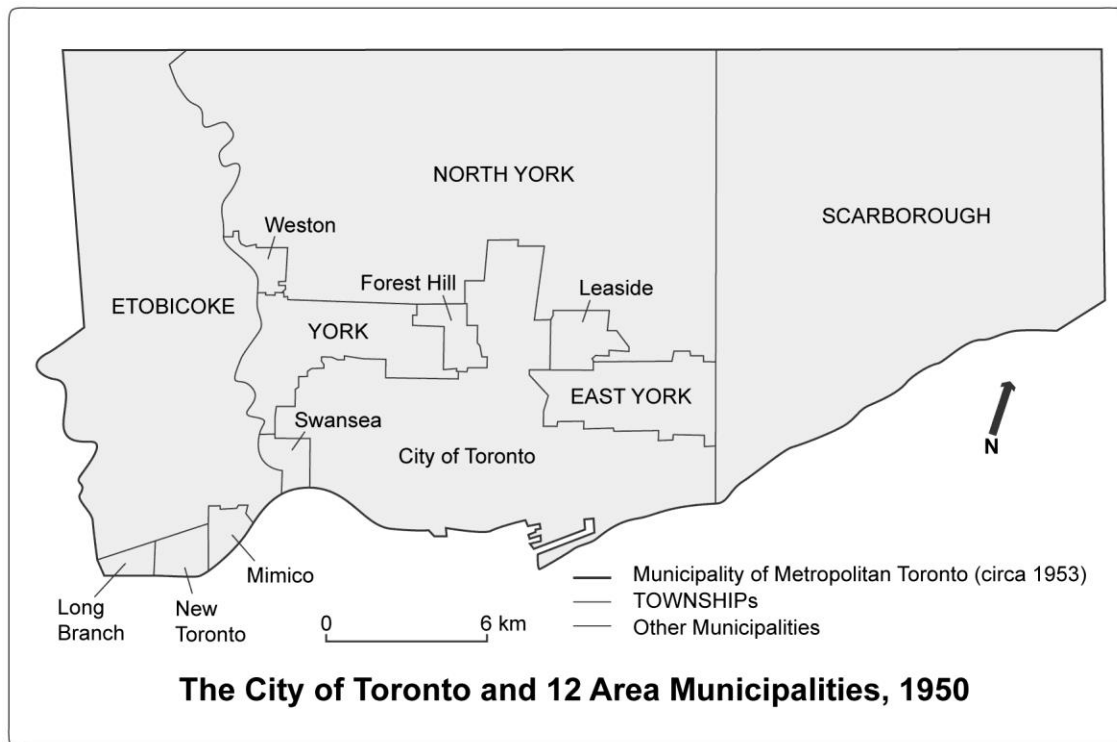


Figure 2 – Municipalities under consideration for amalgamation during the OMB hearings on Toronto Amalgamation, 1950-51 (Map by Author). Data Source: Toronto Civic Advisory Council, The Committee on Metropolitan Problems, "Final Report," (Toronto: The Committee, 1951).

A range of inter-connected issues fell under the rubric of metropolitan problems or “the metropolitan problem”, but there were two principal thrusts: (1) the need for unified planning, financing, and/or operation of certain area-wide or regional services and their related infrastructures; and (2) the difficulty attaining balanced assessment within municipalities and the unequal distribution of non-residential (commercial and industrial) assessment across the Toronto area. Above all, however, the principal concern and impetus for municipal reorganization was the pressing issue of meeting demand for new housing, especially at the modest, low-cost end of the continuum. In the years

immediately following the end of the Second World War, there was a severe shortage of housing in the City, which had the fiscal capacity and political will to support low-rent and public housing, but little room for new construction.²⁴⁴ Suburban municipalities around Toronto had ample land for development, but lacked the fiscal capacity to keep up with servicing needs, and, more important, were reticent to permit new housing that could not contribute as much in taxable assessment as it demanded in new spending on services, schools, and infrastructure.

The rise of mass automobility after World War II overshadows all else when metropolitan-scale changes and suburbanization are analyzed. Suburban histories and geographies of metropolitan regions tend to get compressed into attempts to explain how and why “sprawl” (or the modern, postwar suburb) happened. Typically, the framing of metropolitan or urban-regional space is then polarized between concentrated and dispersed realms, one urban, the other suburban. Before the broad contours of the postwar city-suburban divide ossified, the geography of cities and suburbs in North America was different. To better understand contemporary metropolitan regions there is a need to better understand the context that informed decision making and governance at mid-century. This chapter reveals the importance of “the metropolitan problem” in shaping the form that postwar suburbanization took.

It is now well established that the strain of rapid growth after World War II led to the creation of a two-tier federated system of metropolitan government in 1953. The new

²⁴⁴ Kevin Brushett, ““Where Will the People Go”: Toronto's Emergency Housing Program and the Limits of Canadian Social Housing Policy, 1944-1957,” *Journal of Urban History* 33, no. 3 (2007).

system split responsibilities between an upper tier—the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, referred to locally as Metro—that was responsible for property assessment, major physical infrastructure, metropolitan parks, and the administration of justice, and a lower tier—the existing local municipalities—which retained responsibility for local infrastructure, local parks, social welfare, public health, fire protection, libraries, and property tax collection.²⁴⁵

It is not necessary to provide a detailed assessment of Metro other than to acknowledge that it financed and built the infrastructure without which metropolitan development, especially the rapid suburbanization of the semi-rural townships of Etobicoke, North York, and Scarborough, could not have occurred as it did.²⁴⁶ Metro was an institutional compromise designed to regionalize the fiscal capacity of the City of Toronto and a few assessment-rich suburbs to provide the infrastructure to both address needs created by rapid suburban expansion and to promote further growth and development. The new metropolitan system of government, though not amalgamation which was preferred by the City and Province, nevertheless achieved unification to the degree required to ensure that metropolitan fragmentation would not impede anticipated growth in the Toronto area.²⁴⁷ It was also a contradictory territorial compromise that

²⁴⁵ Frisken, *The Public Metropolis: The Political Dynamics of Urban Expansion in the Toronto Region 1924-2003*: 74.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 77. For an overview and assessment of how infrastructure built by Metro contributed to the rapid suburbanization growth of Etobicoke, North York, and Scarborough in the 1950s and '60s, see also: Richard White, "Urban Infrastructure and Urban Growth in the Toronto Region, 1950's to the 1990's," (Toronto: Neptis Foundation, 2003).

²⁴⁷ Private correspondence between Premier Frost and Frederick Gardiner suggests that Frost shared Gardiner's view that amalgamation was necessary. Frost, however was more circumspect about the

could only temporarily hold together the divergent interests and trajectories of the City and postwar suburban municipalities.²⁴⁸ As we shall see there was a direct link between the rational and efficient development of major physical infrastructural systems and certain services, and the facilitating of large-scale housing construction in the outer suburbs. However, central city redevelopment and mass suburbanization on the edge would cease to be viewed as complementary in subsequent decades.

Metro collectivized the costs of rapid suburbanization during the 1950s and '60s and it did so by using the lucrative tax base of the City of Toronto as its "fiscal anchor".²⁴⁹ Later, critics would interpret this as using the City's wealth to finance suburban "sprawl".²⁵⁰ At the time, the situation looked different.²⁵¹ In 1950, the Toronto area had a population of approximately one million of which about 60% lived in the City. Though the City was still the dominant force in the metropolitan area, its relative weight was shrinking. From 1946 to 1951, the City's population had fallen 6%, while the region's had grown by 13%. Equally important, within the suburbs, growth was uneven. Growth in the older, inner suburbs was still significant, but was de-accelerating they became more fully urbanized and had less available land for new housing. Meanwhile

political risks of pushing through amalgamation, see: Colton, *Big Daddy: Frederick G. Gardiner and the Building of Metropolitan Toronto*.

²⁴⁸ Gene Desfor et al., "From Surf to Turf: No Limits to Growth in Toronto?," *Studies in Political Economy* 77(2006).

²⁴⁹ Rose, *Governing Metropolitan Toronto: A Social and Political Analysis 1953-1971*.

²⁵⁰ John Sewell, *The Shape of the Suburbs: Understanding Toronto's Sprawl* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009); Lawrence Solomon, *Toronto Sprawls: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

²⁵¹ The postwar situation in the Toronto area has been described in numerous reports, studies, books, and other published materials. Here, I have drawn from the overview of the situation found in Colton, *Big Daddy: Frederick G. Gardiner and the Building of Metropolitan Toronto*: 66-69.

growth in the three outer townships of Etobicoke, North York, and Scarborough was phenomenal – 133%, 206%, and 120% respectively. And more to the point, metropolitan social and economic life was becoming increasingly uncoupled from municipal boundaries, while planning, administration, fiscal capacity, public services, and major infrastructural systems remained tightly bound to them.²⁵²

The Metropolitan Problem

When Premier Frost addressed the Reeves and Mayors of the Toronto area at the first TAC meeting on January 16th 1950, he listed “six immediate” needs that required attention:

1. Arterial highways to get the traffic in and out of the City especially in rush hours. This problem cannot be solved by the City if its arterial highways can extend only to the border of the City and there create new bottle necks.”
2. Adequate water supply and sewage disposal facilities in those municipalities separated from Lake Ontario by the City.
3. Transit facilities by buses and street car lines to serve the whole area with a unified system.
4. A method of equitable distribution of industrial, and commercial assessment to relieve certain municipalities from inequitable education costs and I might say other costs.
5. Better organized fire and police protection in the several municipalities.

²⁵² The metropolis unbound indicates a postmetropolitan condition that emerged after World War II as metropolitan regions grew into polycentric urban regions in which the historically dominant core city is no longer the sole focus of social and economic life, see Engin F. Isin, "Metropolis Unbound: Legislators and Interpreters of Urban Form," in *City Lives and City Forms: Critical Research and Canadian Urbanism*, ed. J. Caulfield and L. Peake (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); Soja, *Postmetropolis: Critical Studies of Cities and Regions*.

6. Overall planning to provide for the needs present and future of a greater urban area.²⁵³

At the meeting Frost's list concluded with a seventh point addressing the shortage of low-cost housing in the Toronto area – a problem he attributed to “a municipal set-up where we have concentrations of industry in some municipalities, and the overflow of population into municipalities which have little industrial assessment. The latter municipalities are confronted with housing problems created by other municipalities.”²⁵⁴

Combined, Frost's “immediate needs” closely resemble the metropolitan problems that weighed on key figures in provincial and local government at the time. The seventh point, however, gets closer to “the metropolitan problem” itself, and reveals the linkages between federal housing policies, provincial planning legislation, and the need for an institutional framework for coordinating and financing regional improvements to ensure that housing shortages did not hinder postwar prosperity in the Toronto area, a problem that was of great concern in the late-1940s. Indeed, *Houses for Canadians* prepared for Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) in 1948 by Humphrey Carver details the housing problems of the Toronto Area.²⁵⁵

Specifically, Carver noted that intensified use of housing stock in the City of Toronto during the 1930s and '40s had absorbed population increases during the Great Depression and World War II. But he also indicated that practices such as doubling-up,

²⁵³ Premier Leslie Frost, Proceedings of a Special Meeting to discuss a Metropolitan Scheme, January 16th 1950: 5-6. Toronto Area Committee Files RG 19-147. Archives of Ontario.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

²⁵⁵ Humphrey Carver, *Houses For Canadians: A Study of Housing Problems in the Toronto Area* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1948).

renting out extra rooms to non-family members, and the splitting of larger houses into multiple dwelling units had run its course and that new housing construction was needed to not only accommodate continued, rapid population growth, but also to alleviate overcrowding in many parts of the City. It is instructive to consider how Carver himself described the situation:

Between 1930 and 1945 there were 27,815 dwelling units built in the suburban municipalities to house the increase of 103,320 in population which took place during those years; in other words, a new dwelling was provided for each additional 3.75 persons. But during the same period the population of the city itself increased by 60,278 while only 8,052 new dwelling units were built, or one for each 7.48 persons. From these facts there emerges the picture of an increasingly overcrowded city able to spill its surplus population into the suburban areas only as fast as new housing was constructed there. Overcrowding, up till the end of the war, was confined largely to the city itself and population had moved into the suburban fringe in direct proportion with the amount of accommodation provided there.²⁵⁶

In his estimation at the conclusion of the Second World War, there was an absolute shortage of approximately 8,000 dwelling units in the City of Toronto, and an immediate need for a further 10,000 dwelling units to accommodate returning veterans. Based on modest growth projections for the first postwar decade he surmised that a further 29,000 dwelling units would be needed in the Toronto area, while adding a further 5,000 would ensure a 2% vacancy rate to allow for flexibility of movement for residents. This brought the overall number of new dwelling units needed by the end of the first postwar decade up to 52,000. To achieve this target, Carver noted that housing production would need to

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 26.

exceed twice the annual rate from 1931 to 1945. Further dwelling units would be needed to replace worn-out housing stock.

Housing loomed in the background of all the deliberations and wrangling that took place in relation to metropolitan problems. Housing shortages during and in the immediate aftermath of World War II were generalized. A wide cross-section of Canadians were impacted regardless of their economic circumstances. As labour, materials, and capital became more readily available in the early postwar years, and housing production resumed, the housing situation improved for higher-income households, but remained problematic for other households. Carver realized that the problem was less a housing issue and more a wage issue. To put it simply, the private sector would not or could not build new housing at a cost that typical households could afford. There was a need to reduce the cost of new market housing and expand the role of the public sector in the construction and management of rent geared-to-income housing projects.

Support for social housing was not shared by senior management at CMHC or their political masters in the federal government, who favoured policies to stimulate market provision and homeownership.²⁵⁷ They favoured policies that encouraged consolidation in the construction industry, as well as the modernization of Canada's system of mortgage financing. It was thought the best way to reduce the cost of new housing was through driving efficiencies and achieving economies of scale. The flipside

²⁵⁷ John C. Bacher, *Keeping to the Marketplace: The Evolution of Canadian Housing Policy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993).

to stimulating and supporting market provision via expanded access to homeownership was reducing the need for social housing and undermining public support for it. The construction of modest houses in new suburban areas was aided by provincial planning legislation that provided greater certainty to financial institutions about future land use decisions, which was a necessary prerequisite to make mortgages widely available on terms and at interest rates that a wide cross-section of households could afford.²⁵⁸

The evolution of land use planning in Ontario during the first half of the 20th century culminated in the 1946 Planning Act. The Act provided municipalities with the needed authority to establish a planning function that “would address itself to the creation and maintenance of conditions capable of attracting and supporting development without at the same time imposing too many restrictions on the private land development process.”²⁵⁹ The same bias toward non-intervention found to have shaped housing policy in the early postwar period also ensured that social planning and public-sector intervention were sidelined in favour of measures to support free market capitalism, not transform or replace it. As such planning in Ontario became a governmental function to ensure that development took place in an efficient manner that conformed to minimum standards.

Housing policies and planning legislation responded to and shaped responses to “the metropolitan problem” in a subtle and indirect manner. Though metropolitan

²⁵⁸ Harris, *Creeping Conformity: How Canada Became Suburban, 1900-1960*.

²⁵⁹ J. David Hulchanski, "The Origins of Urban Land Use Planning in Ontario, 1900-1946" (Dissertation, University of Toronto, 1981), 322.

problems were felt with varying intensity by each municipality, the fundamental problem revolved around the uneven distribution of assessment across the Toronto area. In particular, there was a spatial mismatch between where new housing could be accommodated and the assessment (i.e. tax revenue) needed to finance the services and infrastructure to support rapid growth and urban development. Lorne Cumming, OMB chairman, put it this way in his decision on Toronto amalgamation:

In the opinion of the Board the basic problem to be solved in the Toronto metropolitan area is indicated in the significant contrast between the underlying social and economic unity of the area on the one hand, and the illogical and inequitable but extremely rigid divisions of political jurisdiction and available taxable resources on the other.²⁶⁰

Putting aside specifics, “the metropolitan problem” at its core pointed to the need to regionalize the fiscal capacity of the City of Toronto and certain assessment-rich suburbs. Without such a redistributive mechanism, regional inequities would thwart the rational development of physical infrastructure and efficient delivery of public services across the metropolitan area. Though “the metropolitan problem” became a rubric for talking about a number of interconnected problems, the notion of “balanced assessment” emerged during the OMB hearings on Toronto amalgamation as a benchmark that needed to be achieved by municipalities as part of sound planning and development.

²⁶⁰ The Decision of the Board (dated January 20th 1953): 46. Ontario Municipal Board case file C02976. General – Chairman’s notes – Decision of the Board – L.R. Cumming personal copy. Record on hearings into Toronto Amalgamation RG 37-6-2-13. Archives of Ontario.

“Balance Is the Key”

More than any one issue or problem raised during the TAC or OMB hearings into Toronto amalgamation, the notion of “balanced assessment” seemed to weave the City’s case into a coherent whole, and A.J.B. Gray, more than anyone else, was responsible for that. Reporting on his testimony at the hearings in September 1950, *the Globe and Mail* noted:

The case for amalgamation has gained considerable strength by the testimony of Mr. A.J.B Gray, the Toronto Assessment Commissioner, in the current hearings of the Ontario Municipal Board. Mr. Gray is a man of long experience in municipal affairs, and is acknowledged to be the Province’s leading authority on the mysteries of assessment. So long as property taxes remain the main source of municipal revenue, the question of assessment will remain the key to sound municipal development.

Mr. Gray stated that it is desirable to have assessed values divided between industrial and commercial properties and residential property in an almost equal ratio. Businesses can bear a relatively higher rate of tax than individual home owners. If residential assessment predominates in a municipality, the burden on the taxpayer for essential services is much heavier than in another where industry carries its proper share. This is the nub of the whole amalgamation controversy. Some of the suburban municipalities have a considerable proportion of industrial property. Others, like Mimico and North York, almost none. Those that still have land and the facilities for industry are competing earnestly to increase their share of this desirable assessment.

The logical arrangement would be to pool the assessments of the whole area. Then the cost of new roads, schools, transportation, water mains and sewerage, police and fire protection, and the other burdens of municipal government, would be borne more equitably. The substantial financial strength of the City of Toronto would bring stability and easement of pressure to the rapidly growing suburbs.

It is difficult to understand the refusal of the suburban leaders to see this logic. Faced with a gigantic problem in the provision of school

accommodation alone, they have been putting a bold face to the world, apparently in the belief that if the worst comes to the worst the Province would bail them out. Why should it, when a proper sharing of metropolitan municipal assets would not only make the financial load more equitable, but enable balanced planning of educational services and the elimination of the overlapping and duplication which at present exist? The same thing might be said in relation to other types of services essential in a modern urban community.

It is also true that Toronto would benefit from a practical form of amalgamation. Its citizens are called upon to provide services which are beyond their own needs to accommodate the requirements of many who live outside the city limits. For these extra services there is often no return. This is not fair business. The unbalance in this situation will continue to get worse, because without central control over development it is impossible to plan wisely and economically for the future.²⁶¹

One can see from this “the metropolitan problem” was not at its core about municipal services or infrastructure, but about how local government was organized territorially and how inequality and governance issues were being created by the status quo. Other witnesses shed light on issues of growth, planning, infrastructure needs, inter-municipal relations, education, and so on, but it was A.J.B. Gray who put forth the strongest case for amalgamation, arguing that these other problems if solved would still leave the underlying question of unequal and unbalanced assessment unresolved.

At the time of the OMB hearings on Toronto amalgamation, Gray was the City of Toronto’s Assessment Commissioner. He had been Reeve and Deputy Reeve of York Township in the early 1930s, served on the York County Council, and was appointed by the Province to a Board of Supervisors when the Township defaulted on its debt

²⁶¹ "Balance Is The Key," *The Globe and Mail*, September 8 1950.

obligations during the Great Depression. In addition to his experience as a municipal politician, Gray also worked in the provincial civil service, serving as deputy minister in the Department of Municipal Affairs from 1941 to 1947. Having served on several committees tasked with examining metropolitan problems, he had detailed knowledge of the area municipalities and their specific problems and knew well the limitations of the existing system of local government in the Toronto area. His lengthy testimony at the OMB hearings revealed in painstaking detail the financial weaknesses and inequities of the existing municipal setup, and highlighted, in particular, the precarious situation of Mimico and York Township, two working-class suburbs that did not possess much non-residential assessment and were comprised largely of “working men’s homes”.²⁶²

This was important as it allowed Gray to also establish a link between these two older suburbs and the situation unfolding in the large semi-rural townships of Etobicoke, North York, and Scarborough. By reconstructing how York Township came to find itself in financial distress in the 1930s, he effectively demonstrated what might occur again if rapid growth in the outer suburbs were to proceed under the same system of municipal government. Just as Etobicoke, North York, and Scarborough were experiencing rapid expansion fueled by tremendous demand for housing, York Township experienced the same in the decade that followed World War I. Rapid growth meant a huge increase in

²⁶² A.J.B. Gray, Transcripts of evidence for Hearings on Toronto Amalgamation held between June 21st 1950 and June 7th 1951. A.J.B Gray, Assessment Commissioner of the City of Toronto, provided evidence over nine days between September 6th and October 18th 1950. See “Index to Transcript of evidence – Witnesses and exhibits file.” Record on hearings into Toronto Amalgamation RG 37-6-2-353. Archives of Ontario; References to Transcripts of evidence, i.e. testimony, cross-examinations, and arguments, are hereafter cited as OMB Hearings on Toronto Amalgamation.

debt to pay for the public works – water and sewerage, schools, transportation systems – to take care of a growing urban population. The problem was then compounded by earlier piece-meal annexations by the City of Toronto that removed mostly the “good” parts from the Township, as well as decisions by North York, East York, Forest Hill, and Swansea to secede in the 1920s, which left the municipality in a “very weakened position”.²⁶³ Gray concluded that York Township’s ability to improve its assessment situation was rather limited because industry and affluent households would avoid locating there out of fear that taxes would become onerous.

Looking at the older suburbs around Toronto, Gray argued that for a municipality to be self-sustaining it needed to be comprised of either high-value residential assessment or possess sufficient industrial and commercial assessment to offset its lower value residential assessment. He stated that a 50-50 split was preferable, but noted that achieving that would be nearly impossible in older suburban municipalities whose physical character was already determined. The problem with the status quo is well captured in a back-and-forth interaction between Gray and OMB Chair Lorne Cumming:

The Chairman: Why was the area not suitable for that type of development which would be self-sustaining?

Gray: Because scattered throughout it were small homes of the class of \$1000 or less, which had already determined the character of the area, and the result was that it had to be finally developed with wartime housing, and when we hear of this criticism of North York’s position I think it is only fair to point out that that was one of the difficulties with which the council was faced. So that surely in the absence of other areas throughout – for example, you have your Leaside and Forest Hill

²⁶³ A.J.B Gray, OMB hearings on Toronto Amalgamation: 1004.

zone, they are areas which would not provide any working men's homes to be erected. In the northern part of Leaside I am certain there have been small types of homes erected now which will now provide some type of home for working men, but none of the very low cost homes which are needed for the type of artisan we need for the industrial development of a large city like Toronto and Forest Hill has a larger type of homes other than that portion of Eglinton and just west of Avenue Road and east of Spadina Road. Generally speaking they are all of the very large type of home which did not provide accommodation for the working class.

The Chairman: But which were more self-sustaining from the point of view of meeting educational costs?

Gray: Yes. You will find as you study this area that your small home development has had to be in areas like East York and the south end of Scarborough other than Fallingbrook. There are only about two areas which could be taken out of that and that is the Cedarvale area and Baby Point ... Now, Mimico and Long Branch are all small homes. You also have the small type of home in New Toronto but that was well balanced by the industrial assessment. Now, in Leaside, in this part of the bottom, are all fairly well established home providing adequate funds and I think it is only this northern portion which is close to the industrial area where there has been any real development of the small, little bungalow type home.

The Chairman: Now, do you think that those restrictions in the form of zoning by-laws were done for the purpose of excluding persons of low income or for the purpose of securing adequate assessment per house?

Gray: I say that the restriction by-laws in addition to creating an orderly type of development were made definitely for the purpose of avoiding the necessity of having to take care of the type of development which would be a responsibility.

The Chairman: They wanted an asset and not a liability?

Gray: Yes, and you will find, Mr. Chairman, if you want to check into it that a great many of your zoning by-laws throughout the Province of Ontario that is a condition which is being found everywhere – a tendency to develop these areas with the type of home that will provide a sufficient amount of revenue to try and meet the cost of services and

the answer has always been up to the Department, as you know, by these working class people: 'You want us in time of war but not in peace.' All I could say was that one cannot very well quarrel with the council in a desire to improve the environment of its area but, nevertheless, we must respect the needs of these people so that if it was necessary through the character of the Townships of York and East York and the south end of Scarboro and Long Branch and Mimico to provide those areas and the rest of the areas benefit from industrial, commercial or a highly industrial assessment, yes let us develop them – let us improve them but do not let us ask them to escape the responsibility. In my opinion the succession of the Village of Forest Hill was an escaping of its responsibilities to its parent municipality.²⁶⁴

From this exchange, we can see that Gray thought the existing municipal setup not only reinforced inequality based on where coveted non-residential assessment was located within the Toronto area, it also encouraged municipalities to practice a form of exclusionary zoning in order to be financially sound going forward.

In the United States, exclusionary or fiscal zoning has been described as a practice that suburbs employ to preserve their social, economic, and racial/ethnic homogeneity, and to keep taxes low, while providing excellent public services and well-funded public schools.²⁶⁵ In the Toronto area, it would appear that a mix of motives lay behind practices that resemble exclusionary or fiscal zoning. Where it might be inferred that Forest Hill and Leaside, two better off suburbs, employed the restrictive zoning to protect their social and physical character, as well as to escape, as A.J.B. Gray put it, their responsibility to

²⁶⁴ A.J.B Gray (with OMB Chairman Lorne Cumming), OMB hearings on Toronto Amalgamation: 1054a-1056a.

²⁶⁵ Many authors have noted the use of exclusionary zoning, the role of zoning or other legal mechanisms for shaping the character of communities, and the impact on metropolitan social-political geographies and patterns of inequality and uneven development. For a primer, see: Gerald Frug, *City Making: Building Communities Without Building Walls* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); ———, "The Legal Technology of Exclusion in Metropolitan America," in *The New Suburban History*, ed. Kevin M. Kruse and Thomas J. Sugrue (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

share in the cost of providing services and schooling to less affluent area residents, for working class suburbs such as York Township, East York, Scarborough, Long Branch, and Mimico the motivation was different. These latter suburbs were shaped, in part, by blue-collar, working-class people who sought out places in the fringe where they could forgo basic services in exchange for lower taxes and the freedom to build homes for themselves.²⁶⁶

In *Unplanned Suburbs*, Richard Harris concludes that “[t]he problem with the sorts of suburb that grew up around Toronto after 1900 was not that they were owner built but that they were completely unregulated. The lack of regulation was in part a result of rapid urban growth, which overwhelmed fringe areas before either the city or suburban municipalities could take stock of the situation.”²⁶⁷ A.J.B. Gray’s testimony suggests that more than a lack of regulation or planning was at play. Beyond the obvious difficulties and extra cost incurred to service areas where homes preceded municipal infrastructure, the problem of unbalanced assessment in 1950 points toward uneven spatial development, with amalgamation being sought as a necessary “scalar fix” to ensure that a “spatial fix” – mass suburbanization – could proceed.²⁶⁸

Gray was aware that under the present system it was unrealistic to expect individual municipalities to refrain from restrictive zoning directed at ensuring new

²⁶⁶ Harris, *Unplanned Suburbs: Toronto's American Tragedy, 1900 to 1950*.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 274.

²⁶⁸ See Walker, "A theory of suburbanization: capitalism and the construction of urban space in the United States."; Neil Brenner, "A Thousand Leaves: Notes on the Geographies of Uneven Spatial Development," in *Leviathan Undone? Towards a Political Economy of Scale*, ed. Roger Keil and Rianne Mahon (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009).

houses would be self-supporting in value. Rather than fight against self-interest or self-preservation, making the Toronto area one large municipality offered the simplest way to remedy the problem. As he put it: “That is the beauty of amalgamation. Once adopted you have one responsibility, one equal service, one equal basis of taxes, one equal basis of equalization.”²⁶⁹ Other approaches were possible, but far more complicated and difficult to enact. Amalgamation was simple and direct. It aligned municipal jurisdiction with the full breadth of the metropolis as a social and economic unit. Given the character and land use in the older suburbs had already been forged and newer suburbs were not expected to develop lucrative commercial-retail districts such as the downtown core possessed, “balance” could only be achieved, in his view, by bringing the whole area together in a way that ensured that resources and responsibilities would be shared across the entire metropolitan area for common benefit.

For the City of Toronto, which would be a major net contributor to the fiscal health of the whole area via amalgamation, the benefit was greater political control over suburban development, which would now take place within its boundaries. Indeed, where the City had equated boundary expansion via annexations with suspicion for more than a quarter century, assuming they would place suburban “burdens” on Toronto and its ratepayers, now a unified city was seen as strategically important and vital to growth and economic prosperity.²⁷⁰ For wealthier suburbs loss of local autonomy must be seen in this

²⁶⁹ A.J.B Gray (during cross-examination by H.E. Manning, legal counsel for Forest Hill), OMB hearings on Toronto Amalgamation: 2345.

²⁷⁰ Colton, *Big Daddy: Frederick G. Gardiner and the Building of Metropolitan Toronto*: 65.

light. As legal counsel for Forest Hill noted during cross-examination, “[t]he twelve municipalities largely mistrust the charitable intentions of Toronto.”²⁷¹ Later in reply to legal counsel for York County, Gray would remark, “[w]ell, I just would like to see the family get together again, and be one great community, where we share our problems and share our revenues.” That in a nutshell, he explained, was the principle behind the push for amalgamation. Rich or poor, area municipalities should pool resources to address metropolitan problems, and move toward “balance” – which meant a more equitable framework for local government that allowed for “one equal basis of equalization” within the Toronto area. That would not be possible if area municipalities continued to compete against each other for desirable assessment in a zero-sum game.

D-Day for Scarborough

Periodically during the proceedings of the TAC meetings and OMB hearings on Toronto amalgamation utterances stand out. Usually they are off-hand remarks, sharp retorts, or noteworthy turns of phrase. Occasionally, however, they capture the deeply felt sentiments of the participants, particularly how they framed the political import of the moment. At a crucial moment in A.J.B Gray’s testimony it was implied by H.E. Manning, legal counsel for Forest Hill, that his rationale for amalgamation – the sharing of revenues and responsibilities across the whole area – was similar to Communism. Red-baiting was a minor undercurrent in arguments against amalgamation, and Gray’s retort

²⁷¹ Mr. Manning (during cross-examination of A.J.B. Gray), OMB Hearings on Toronto Amalgamation: 2145a.

was cutting: “I believe in God. I am not a Communist and you are too much in the habit of saying people are Communists.”²⁷² Similarly, accusations of Marxism were leveled against Eric Hardy, director of the Bureau of Municipal Research, during cross-examination at the OMB hearings. As a witness for the City of Toronto, he testified that his work for the Bureau strongly supported amalgamation.

The *Globe and Mail* reported that “[o]ne of [Hardy’s] contentions was that the concentrated wealth of several component municipalities—Toronto, Leaside, Forest Hill, should be levied upon to pay the cost of municipal services in the entire Greater Toronto area.”²⁷³ To this H.E. Manning replied, “[h]ow does that differ from (the doctrines of) Karl Marx, who says that you should take from the man who has and give to the man who has not?” Aside from commenting on the difficulties posed by “dormitory” municipalities, i.e., places where most people have residences, but few places of employment exist, Hardy also flagged a belief in the legal principle of “home rule”, which maintained a patch-work of smallish suburban municipalities and metropolitan balkanization in the United States, as an obstacle to good administration.

In January 1950, The Township of Scarborough published “A Submission on Proposals for Unification of the Toronto Area” – a short pamphlet addressed to Ontario Premier Leslie Frost and members of the Executive Council of the Province of Ontario

²⁷² A.J.B Gray (during cross-examination by H.E. Manning, legal counsel for Forest Hill), OMB hearings on Toronto Amalgamation: 2345.

²⁷³ "Research Bureau Views Held Akin to Marxism by Forest Hill's Counsel," *Globe and Mail*, September 13 1950.

(i.e. the provincial cabinet). It opened with the following cover letter signed by Reeve

Oliver E. Crockford:

In presentation of this submission on the subject of "THE TORONTO METROPOLITAN PROPOSALS" it is the desire of the Township of Scarborough to direct attention to:

The erroneous assumptions on which most of the clamour for a unified political control is based. Viz: "That conditions in the suburbs are intolerable and that something must be done."

That no alternative, other than complete control vested in a central political body or central authorities is practical.

That the magic touch of unified control will solve Toronto area problems, create harmony, reduce cost and improve efficiency

The arguments presented in the following pages we believe will disillusion individuals who hold and advocate above ideas. We have also endeavoured to convince sober thinking individuals that existing conditions in the suburbs are not as bad as pictured. We also have proven that present system of control has not done such a poor job after all and that with a little common sense, harmonious co-operation and respect for other citizens rights, every problem can be conveniently solved under the present setup.

Included with this submission are pictures and a few pertinent facts about Scarborough. The lack of knowledge prevalent as to true status of suburbs is appalling. This is quite apparent in the reports of "CIVIC ADVISORY COUNCIL", "TORONTO & YORK PLANNING BOARD", "WILSON REPORT ON TRANSPORTATION" and "GORE & STORRIE REPORT ON WATER & SEWAGE". In each of these some statements and assumptions re suburbs are definitely incorrect and misleading.

Although of necessity limited in detail and scope, we trust the information given may convey some idea of the progress and development in Toronto Suburbs. Scarborough is characteristic of all others, except in varying degree, and vastness which of course is limited by smaller size of some municipalities.

We trust that you may have a more adequately “Informed Opinion” and a clearer knowledge of “The True Facts” through perusal of these pages.²⁷⁴

The pamphlet represented a substantial effort on the part of the Township of Scarborough to articulate its opposition to amalgamation or unification. Running just over 30 pages in length virtually every aspect of the debate at the time was covered, with care taken to refute every claim made in favour of amalgamation or unification. From Scarborough’s point of view the main difficulty facing it and other suburban municipalities was the failure of the provincial and federal government to adequately take care of the costs of education connected to modest homes and low-cost rental housing – i.e., residential assessment that did not pay for itself.

Toward the end of the booklet, in a section titled “Informed Judgement Lacking”, it was insinuated that unification would be the first step toward Fascism or Socialism in the area. Again we see push back against arguments for amalgamation that favour greater regional equity – the need to share resources and responsibilities across the whole area – on the basis that they infringe upon the rights of individual municipalities and confiscate from their residents assets built-up though years of sacrifice and struggle. More insidious was the notion that area-wide political unification had to mean a serious erosion of democracy itself: “[i]f we are a Democracy let us retain our Democracy and cease this

²⁷⁴ Pamphlet dated January 1950. A Submission on Proposals for Unification of the Toronto Area by the Twp. Of Scarborough. Toronto Area Committee Files RG 19-147. Archives of Ontario.

continual centralization of control.”²⁷⁵ Putting aside doubts about the need for and cost of amalgamation, the centralization of power and authority that would come with it was itself suspect and something to be resisted on principle.

With this in mind, Scarborough began its closing arguments at the OMB hearings on Toronto amalgamation by noting that they would be made on the anniversary of D-Day.²⁷⁶ Perhaps intended as just a passing comment that it was felt necessary to remind those in attendance of the great sacrifices made in the recent past to preserve freedom and democracy reveals the depth of feeling held by legal counsel for Scarborough, and by extension a majority of the Township’s Council, toward Toronto’s application for amalgamation. It was not simply viewed as a request for a better administrative or institutional framework, but as something that was profoundly undemocratic. Township council had not agreed to it, nor had Scarborough residents been asked to express their will on the matter via referendum or plebiscite. Amalgamation was being forced upon them by others. It appeared to be a do-or-die moment for the Township, at least as an independent municipality and political community.

“Those Who Benefit Pay”

In closing arguments, legal counsel for Scarborough focused on undermining the claims made by proponents of amalgamation: (1) that as urban growth proceeded metropolitan fragmentation would occur in a manner that would leave “weakened” municipalities in its

²⁷⁵ Pamphlet dated January 1950: 21. A Submission on Proposals for Unification of the Toronto Area by the Twp. Of Scarborough. Toronto Area Committee Files RG 19-147. Archives of Ontario.

²⁷⁶ Hollis Beckett (Scarborough’s closing arguments), OMB Hearings on Toronto Amalgamation: 8973.

wake; (2) that services like water and sewerage, transportation, police and fire protection, and schooling needed to be brought under unified control; and (3) that suburban governments and administration were not up to the task of planning for and regulating the growth anticipated for their areas. An important line of argument that weaved together the specifics of the Township's response to the appellants at the OMB hearings on Toronto amalgamation was to detail how Scarborough – in contrast to the York Township – had maintained itself, without territorial changes, since it was first incorporated in 1850. As Hollis Beckett, legal counsel for the Township of Scarborough, put it in closing arguments, “we are the only municipality of the thirteen that has remained as we were since incorporation.”²⁷⁷

As a geographically large rural-agricultural township that had experienced suburbanization along the Kingston Road axis, and in particular spillover growth in its southwest corner adjacent to the City of Toronto, starting in the 1910s, Scarborough had already confronted the challenges that had caused York Township and other suburban municipalities to break apart into smaller territorial units. Consisting of an area of 72 square miles, the Township of Scarborough was twice the size of the City of Toronto, and would comprise nearly one-third of 240 square miles of the proposed amalgamated area. Drawing from the evidence given by the Township's clerk, Edward Knott, legal counsel for Scarborough detailed the administrative stratagems that had been put into practice to hold off attempts to divide the Township. Twice farmers in the Township had requested

²⁷⁷ Ibid.: 8973

that Scarborough be divided, first in 1923 and again 1933. In both cases, the Province turned down the request. In the second instance, however, refusal was followed by a bill to divide the Township into two wards, mainly for election purposes. As a result, the Township was effectively split between a large rural ward in the north and a smaller urban ward covering the south, with two representatives elected to Council from each and a Reeve elected over the whole Township. Additionally, it was stipulated that the Deputy Reeve, the councillor who obtained the highest number of votes in the ward opposite to the one in which the Reeve lives, was to sit on York County Council so that each ward was represented. Later an additional elected representative from each ward was added to Council, which along with two elected representatives on the Public Utilities Commission, brought the total number of elected officials in the Township of Scarborough to nine. This figure did not include school trustees, who were addressed separately later.

After some back and forth about the quality of Scarborough's public administration and the responsiveness of its political setup relative to what might result from amalgamation, discussion pivoted toward the use of special areas to ensure that costs for services are borne only by the people who receive them. An interjection by OMB Chair Lorne Cumming served to highlight the principle at work in Scarborough: "The whole Township seems to be fairly well organized on the basis of various charges

being limited to the persons receiving the benefit of the services provided.”²⁷⁸ Asked to clarify whether the impetus for the practice related to the “peculiar division” of the Township of Scarborough into two wards, one urban and the other rural, Hollis Beckett, Scarborough’s legal counsel at the OMB hearings, replied: “No, Mr. Chairman, because that didn’t come into being until 1933. I attribute it to what you might call the good administration of the Township, Mr. Chairman.”²⁷⁹

Beckett had already noted that when he was on Council a quarter century earlier there had been a levy for water, but it only applied to a water area, and not the whole Township. In response to Cumming asking what limits he would place on “the theory that no person should pay taxes unless they get personally or their property definitely gets some particular benefit from it”, he indicated that the theory was sound as “those who benefit pay”.²⁸⁰ He did not see the need to place limits on the principle, but acknowledged in practice that it was applied to physical services such as water, sewers, and garbage, and not to public health, police protection, and services provided by York County – these were paid for by the Township as a whole.²⁸¹ Cumming replied, “Now I am curious to know why services such as that are charged over the Township as a whole without objection whereas other services, including even schools and so on, have been

²⁷⁸ Lorne Cumming (during Scarborough’s closing arguments). OMB Hearings on Toronto Amalgamation: 8980.

²⁷⁹ Hollis Beckett (during Scarborough’s closing arguments). OMB Hearings on Toronto Amalgamation: 8981.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.: 8982.

²⁸¹ One clear exception was fire protection, which was charged to areas based on the level of service they received. See Hollis Beckett (Scarborough’s closing arguments). OMB Hearings on Toronto Amalgamation: 8981-8986.

pretty well subdivided so as to limit the costs to the persons within particular areas?”²⁸²

Legal counsel for Scarborough did not provide a clear answer – replying only that it might be a question of whether the Township had the authority to divide itself up for police protection, and that he didn’t consider it practical for health purposes. Cumming pressed him further on the matter: “I am just wondering whether we can discern any principle of determining the services which may reasonably be charged over an entire municipality as distinct from the others.”²⁸³ Beckett never directly answered. He simply noted that to his knowledge it had been Scarborough’s policy to charge for police protection and the administration of the health department over the Township as a whole from the beginning.

The principle of “those who benefit pay” was further complicated by the administration of education in the Township of Scarborough. Edward Knott, the Township’s clerk, detailed the administrative setup as it existed in 1950 as follows: three School Areas, each with their own Board of Trustees; two Separate School Boards; and six school sections (i.e. rural school boards). In addition, the Township of Scarborough was also governed by a Collegiate Institute Board and Continuation School Board. The cost of education was one of the difficulties facing Scarborough as a fast-growing Township. During cross-examination by legal counsel for Mimico, Scarborough’s Reeve Oliver Crockford was asked about how industrial assessment benefits each School Area

²⁸² Lorne Cumming (during Scarborough’s closing arguments). OMB Hearings on Toronto Amalgamation: 8983

²⁸³ Ibid.

in the Township. Specifically, he was asked: “Does the levy in School Area 1 benefit at all from the industrial assessment in School Area 2?”²⁸⁴ Crockford replied, “Not at the moment.”²⁸⁵ At question was the principle of whether industrial assessment concentrated in one part of the Township should benefit all of Scarborough, or just the School Area in which it was located.

Effectively the table was being turned. Crockford acknowledged in response to being asked if amalgamating School Areas was being considered, that:

The opinion has been expressed by some of the School Boards themselves, that they feel that Scarborough is of sufficient size, and their education development is of such a character at the present moment, that we are getting to the stage where a Board of Education for the whole Township would be a practical thing for us, and in that way the industrial assessment will be spread over the whole Township at large.²⁸⁶

Here the principle of “those who benefit pay” does not seem to apply. Why should residents of one area benefit unduly from industrial assessment simply because industry has located within the arbitrarily drawn administrative boundary where they happen to reside?

OMB Chair, Lorne Cumming tried to tease this out in a back-and-forth with Crockford that touched on the spatial unevenness of industrial assessment in relation to administrative boundaries used to determine levies on ratepayers, the appropriateness and

²⁸⁴ G.W.G Gauld (during cross-examination of Scarborough Reeve Oliver Crockford). OMB Hearings on Toronto Amalgamation: 4950.

²⁸⁵ Oliver Crockford (during cross-examination), OMB Hearings on Toronto Amalgamation: 4950.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.: 4950.

ability of government to determine where industry should locate, and the relationship between industrial and residential development in the Township of Scarborough.²⁸⁷

The Chairman: I think you said, Mr. Crockford, that the prospects of amalgamating the various school areas were improved as the rates in the different areas tended to become equal?

A. I think I said that, Mr. Chairman, specifically in regard to the sewer areas.

Q. Oh.

A. But the same is applicable in regard to the school areas, and we would not make any Board of Education that would penalize any one area, you understand my meaning.

Q. I suppose though that theoretically you could never be sure that the industry was going to be located in the same school area where the people in that industry are living and sending their children to school?

A. Yes, that is right.

Q. So that on principle do you agree that the industrial assessment should be spread over perhaps more than one area when you finally get a static condition and able to find ---

A. Well, I don't think that it is absolutely essential that it should be done. Perhaps I might explain it in this way. The building in No. 1 School Area has got to the point where it will be static, and consequently they should not have any great rise in the number of pupils and future cost.

On the other hand in Area 2 where we have a tremendous development and much more acreage for development, they are naturally going to be faced with more schools and more expensive construction than Area 1, because of the number of homes being erected there and the development there is much greater. I think that the preponderance of industrial assessment in that area – we could still remain in individual areas and not hurt anybody.

²⁸⁷ Oliver Crockford and Lorne Cumming (questioning of the witness by the chairman during cross-examination). OMB Hearings on Toronto Amalgamation: 4951-4954.

Q. But as to the actual location of that industry in any particular area, isn't it a matter of the Council or School Boards or anyone else, deliberately attempting to get the industries evenly distributed as between the two areas?

A. No, no. Mr. Chairman, I would say that would be a very dangerous thing, this idea of telling an industry, for instance an American firm so large, for example, as General Motors, to go along and say to them: "Well, now, you want to build a factory in Scarborough. You want to build it in Area 2. We won't let you build it. They haven't assessment in Area 3 or Area ---"

Q. So that is what I mean, so that it would be quite impossible?

A. Quite impossible, and the same thing is applicable in regard to the talk about distributing industries equitably over the whole Toronto area. I believe that would paralyze and destroy our industrial development, by telling an industrialist who is investing his own money: "You have not got to put your investment in Etobicoke. We won't let you. You put it in Scarborough." I don't think that principle could be followed.

Q. Going back to your own Township, it is quite possible, I take it, for that reason alone, that the Council can do only very little towards the ideal of having the proportion of industrial and residential assessment identical in any two school areas?

A. Yes, although I would say that the only thing we could do would be this. For instance, we do know the industrial development in the Geco area, with this pretty well filled up, then we could deliberately choose to service and provide land in another area we felt we could do it and by planning we could do it.

Q. You could encourage your individual residential growth to go into the same area?

A. That is right.

Q. Where you have what you could call the surplus of industrial assessment?

A. And they want to know it comes in.

Q. They want to get closer to the industry?

A. The builder feels: “Here is an industry employing 3,000. If I build within a reasonable distance of it, I have a potential sale for my homes.” And the thing works in a better way.

In retrospect, this exchange not only captures in miniature “the metropolitan problem”, but it also reveals an important cleavage within the suburbs. If we turn our attention toward Forest Hill it becomes apparent that different kinds of suburbs existed, and different stratagems were pursued under the guise of good administration. Not all suburbs sought out industry to “balance” their assessment. As A.J.B Gray pointed out in his testimony at the OMB hearings, larger type homes produce enough taxable assessment that they are self-supporting. In contrast to Scarborough and the desire amongst other working-class suburbs for industrial assessment, Forest Hill had since the 1930s implemented a plan to rid itself of existing industry.

“A Severe Epidemic of the ‘Gimmes’”

In closing arguments, F.A.A. Campbell, legal counsel for the City of Toronto, returned to the question of assessment and its uneven distribution across the metropolitan area. We have already seen that Forest Hill, an affluent residential suburb, was a staunch opponent of amalgamation. Amongst the objections leveled against amalgamation by legal counsel for Forest Hill was that as redistributive mechanism it was confiscatory and akin to communism or socialism. This line of argument had appeared in the past when serious discussion of amalgamation or metropolitan government appeared to be in the offing. In the late-1930s, as reeve of Forest Hill, Frederick Gardiner branded discussion of

metropolitan government “just another skirmish in the endless war between those who have and those who have not.”²⁸⁸

Not surprisingly, legal counsel for the City of Toronto saw it differently, arguing that Forest Hill was trying to escape metropolitan responsibilities. As legal counsel put it, “they showed that they wanted the type of residence we find in Forest Hill because of the fact that the municipality spent a good deal of money for expropriation of industry and industrial lands in order that the municipality might be a municipality for high class homes without having industry at its doors.”²⁸⁹ It has already been noted that Forest Hill split away from the Township of York in the early-1920s to become an independent village—a move, which had the effect of separating Forest Hill from York’s predominantly working-class residents and in the process insulate village ratepayers from the obligation to share or pool tax revenues with the Township as a whole. As a separate municipality Forest Hill could provide high-quality municipal services and schooling to its residents and their children without having to worry about the cost of doing so for areas comprised of smaller houses for working-class people (i.e., areas without the taxable assessment to carry the cost).

This arrangement, while defended vigorously by Forest Hill, was part of a zero-sum game. As legal counsel for the City of Toronto rightly pointed out in closing arguments, the scramble by municipalities for assessment that would be an asset and not a liability may have made sense for individual municipalities, but not for the collective

²⁸⁸ Colton, *Big Daddy: Frederick G. Gardiner and the Building of Metropolitan Toronto*: 59.

²⁸⁹ F.A.A. Campbell (Toronto’s closing arguments). OMB Hearings on Toronto Amalgamation: 8134-35.

whole. Assuming every municipality sought legal means such as restrictive zoning by-laws to secure only assessment that would be an asset – i.e. be self-sustaining or pay more than it cost in services – the result would be a “tendency to prevent the small man getting a place to live.”²⁹⁰ For this reason, Campbell then argued “[t]hese men, the labouring men who work with their hands, must be taken care of in the whole area by the assessment of industry being made available to the whole area.”²⁹¹ In pushing for amalgamation, the City’s guiding impulse was that the overall “wealth and purchasing power should be made available to all the parts and help to develop all parts of the area.”²⁹² In resisting amalgamation, Forest Hill was seen to be defending parochial interests and shirking its wider obligation to contribute to metropolitan development and regional prosperity.

Forest Hill through a deliberate course of action had established itself as a “bourgeois utopia” or “landscape of privilege” in Toronto by 1950. At that time the suburb of Leaside, much of North Toronto (a suburban district inside the city limits), and certain residential developments in Etobicoke also fit the mould, but none fully embodied the suburban ideal as an exclusive residential enclave to the same extent as Forest Hill. At the OMB hearings on Toronto amalgamation, Forest Hill was most trenchant in its defence of local autonomy for the suburban municipalities. Located directly north of the City of Toronto, its residents had ready and reliable access to the City for employment,

²⁹⁰ Ibid.: 8134.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Ibid.: 8083.

shopping, and other social and cultural activities, but its ratepayers were not required to contribute to the upkeep of city facilities, at least not directly. Forest Hill did pay for and receive water and select other municipal services from the City, but it remained separate and could opt to provide higher-quality infrastructure and services to its residents if and when it wished, which it did, notably in the case of education.

In closing arguments at the OMB, legal counsel for Forest Hill, H.E. Manning, laid bare his thoughts on the appellants' case from the get-go.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice-Chairman. I have wondered throughout the very lengthy hearing in this matter whether the witnesses for the applicant and for the respondents, at any rate the respondents who opposed the application, spoke the same language; because there seems to be no common denominator in their expressions, both of the objective and of the means of obtaining the objective. There is a very considerable disagreement as to the consequences which may be expected to flow from a merger. There is very sharp disagreement as to the name of things which are desirable.

One asks why? The answer that I propose is that on the one side you have all the emotionalism of a creed of civic expansion, of municipal imperialism, with a sort of mystical faith that if you achieve a huge unitary municipality of Toronto, the covering over of a great mass of problems will somehow – no witness has attempted to say how or even, with any convincing detail, why – but that the covering over of the problems will wipe out those problems.

On the other side you have a deep rooted knowledge born of due experience and of first-hand grappling with municipal problems, that Toronto has no solutions to offer; that in the past it has been both, on its own confession, selfish (when I say “on its own confession”, the confession of witnesses who have come here to plead their guilt and their desire to repent and to start again) and it has been less than

adequate in meeting and warding off difficulties of its own, it has been extravagant and inefficient.²⁹³

One can surmise from the lengthy proceedings of the OMB hearings and the TAC that proponents and opponents of amalgamation appeared to speak a different language, lack a common denominator, and disagree on objectives and how to achieve them. But more important to the legal counsel for Forest Hill's argument was that amalgamation was nothing more than municipal imperialism disguised as a solution to an assortment of metropolitan problems. To claims that Forest Hill is being "selfish" in its resistance to amalgamation, Manning was quick to point out the City of Toronto had acted in a similar fashion in the past – refusing to annex the Townships of York and East York when they requested it during the 1930s. At that time, the City determined that it would not pay to annex new territories.

Having established the main thrust of Forest Hill's defense, Manning turned his attention to A.J.B. Gray. As already noted Gray was the City of Toronto's Assessment Commissioner and had established himself as an expert in municipal affairs via his experience as a politician in the Township of York and later as provincial civil servant. His notion of "balanced assessment" was ubiquitous and influential at the OMB hearings on Toronto amalgamation. Indeed, so central were the concept of "balanced assessment" and the uneven distribution of non-residential assessment between Toronto area municipalities to the case for amalgamation, Manning singled out Gray for special treatment:

²⁹³ H.E. Manning (Forest Hill's closing arguments). OMB Hearing on Toronto Amalgamation: 8427-28.

Now, in the very forefront and as the bulwark of this annexationist movement, we have my very old and my very valued and very much respected friend, Mr. Gray. He is the main spring, he is the kingpin, he is the Poo Bah of this picture. His broad shoulders have been used to carry every load, to hearten and inspire and give common form to the witnesses and the expression of their ideas. Witness after witness has repeated phrases which are recognizably the pet theme of Mr. Gray.

I shall have to come back to these phrases again, but I think of a phrase like “balanced assessment”. I got almost into the state of some temperamental females, that I felt like saying, “I’ll scream if I hear ‘balanced assessment’ again.” No other source exists at any rate for the endless repetition of witness after witness of the phrase “balanced assessment”. You get it in Gardner’s evidence, you get it in the Mayor’s evidence, you get it in the evidence of Messrs. Jarrett and Edwards, you get it in Dr. Rose, you get it in Mr. Hardy – to name the most conspicuous of the applicant witnesses. You get it in the formula of the Toronto and York Planning Board. You get it quite clearly in Exhibit 4 and you get it in the final report of the Civic Advisory Council which is Exhibit 292. It is the alpha and omega of this thing, the beginning and the end, for various reasons, because without the article of faith, I propose to show, no adequate reliance can be put.

You get that formula from Mr. Gray as a man who from start to finish in the 20 years of his conspicuously active association with municipal affairs, assails the conclusion of the late Commissioner Harris. He taught Mayor McCallum to recant the mistake of his predecessors who were not annexationists when it did not pay Toronto. I wonder if Mr. Gray didn’t have something to do with teaching Mr. Gardiner to recant and to become the spearhead of the annexationists. I don’t know, the evidence is not at all explicit on that point.

Now, Mr. Gray is an annexationist with extraordinarily and astonishingly inconsistent philosophy. Annexation is the patent medicine for municipal ills. It is good for septic tanks, getting rid of deficient water supply, building restrictions which prevent builders crowding the suburbs with small houses, future security and depression, misplaced schools, tax exemption on farm lands, past sins of omission, improvement assessments and broken down building codes – every one of them. It reminds one of the nerve tonic supposed to cure everything from dyspepsia and arthritis and heart disease and

dandruff down to athlete's foot: if you take Mr. Gray's elixir, you will enjoy thereafter a happy future – maybe.²⁹⁴

Manning evidently did not foresee a happy future for Forest Hill or the other suburban municipalities in an amalgamated Toronto. Not only did he argue that a one-sided faith in amalgamation blinded proponents – which included most experts and city politicians – to other solutions to metropolitan problems, Manning worried that a unitary city would be too large, unwieldy, and costly to manage. But in the end, it was arguments for equity and the redistributive aims of amalgamation that drew the harshest rebuke. Forest Hill having fashioned itself into an affluent enclave defended its right, as per “home-rule” in the United States, to be the sole beneficiary of its valuable assessment. Mimico, the lone suburban proponent of amalgamation, was described as having “a blatant desire to get at the expense of others substantial relief for its own position.”²⁹⁵ Nowhere was this argument made sharper than when provision of education was discussed. As legal counsel for Forest Hill made plain the question was not whether Mimico was paying more than others for a given service, instead “[w]hat has been said is that Mimico has not got so much money to spend; that they cannot afford to have education on the luxurious scale that is made available in Forest Hill Village.”²⁹⁶

If a principle can be drawn from Forest Hill's closing argument it would be that its ratepayers had bought and paid for their favorable conditions and situation, and as

²⁹⁴ Ibid.: 8430-33.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.: 8473.

²⁹⁶ Ibid.: 8476.

such, felt they were entitled to retain whatever benefits accrued.²⁹⁷ Demands for Forest Hill to share resources to solve metropolitan problems or to improve conditions elsewhere in the metropolis were viewed as confiscatory at best, outright theft at worst. Indeed, Manning compared the equity rationale for amalgamation to that of a child reaching over a fence to snatch an apple off somebody else's tree. It was his and presumably Forest Hill's view that amalgamation was an attack on the sanctity of private property, or in Manning's words, the "desire to have something at someone else's expense – the gimmes."²⁹⁸ He would later remark that "the buildup of the annexationist movement and its motivation" represented "a severe epidemic of the 'gimmes' and a credulity of what would happen if the magic wand were waved over the whole area" and amalgamation eliminated the local municipalities.

"To Him Who Hath Shall Be Given"

The Town of Mimico, a small older suburb immediately adjacent to the City of Toronto's western limits, was the catalyst that forced "the metropolitan problem" onto the public agenda so that it could no longer be deferred. After initiating its own study of metropolitan problems, Mimico's town council authorized an application to the OMB requesting "the creation of an area for the joint administration of education, fire and police protection, administration of justice, health and welfare, planning, sewage disposal

²⁹⁷ Ibid.: 8577.

²⁹⁸ Ibid.: 8476.

and public utilities including transportation and main highways.”²⁹⁹ The area for joint administration was to include the entirety of the City of Toronto, New Toronto, Mimico, Long Branch, Weston, Swansea, Forest Hill, Leaside, York, and East York, and “the urban sections” of Etobicoke, North York, and Scarborough. OMB Chair Lorne Cumming noted in his decision on Toronto’s application for area amalgamation that “the form of metropolitan organization proposed in the Mimico application is in direct contrast to the single centralized city government requested by Toronto.”³⁰⁰

Reflecting on Mimico’s application, Cumming noted that “[t]he question to be decided, in light of the evidence and the enabling legislation, is whether this scheme of metropolitan government can be expected to meet the needs of the thirteen municipalities as an alternative to the proposal for outright amalgamation made by Toronto.”³⁰¹ His subsequent commentary acknowledged that Mimico’s application avoided the most common objection to amalgamation from the respondent municipalities: that it would result in their dissolution and they would lose their autonomy. Instead, this scheme would preserve existing units of local government and address metropolitan problems by allocating powers and duties that concern the area as a whole to a new board of management, which would be a statutory corporation with all the powers of a municipal council. Cumming identified the “most constructive feature of Mimico’s proposal” as the

²⁹⁹ The Decision of the Board, January 20th 1953: 33. Ontario Municipal Board case file C02976. General – Chairman’s notes – Decision of the Board – L.R. Cumming personal copy. Record on hearings into Toronto Amalgamation RG 37-6-2-13. Archives of Ontario.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.: 33

³⁰¹ Ibid.: 34

principle that “the burden of supplying essential urban services should be borne by the entire metropolitan area so that its combined resources would become available to provide such services where they are needed regardless of the present or future distribution of taxable property.”³⁰²

In the end, after carefully delineating the possible advantages and disadvantages of the Mimico proposal, Cumming rejected the scheme. He considered many of its basic concepts to be sound, and acknowledged they could be “incorporated into a scheme of metropolitan municipal government for the Toronto area which would secure many of the advantages of unification while avoiding the most serious objections to complete amalgamation.”³⁰³ Nonetheless, it would seem that the provisions found in the Municipal Act to enable the creation of a board of management for an area of joint administration of certain services contained only “vague and limited powers” that would be inadequate to the task of addressing the full range of issues that comprised “the metropolitan problem”. Most damning, the provisions appeared to be directed at consolidating the administration and management of existing facilities, not the creation of a robust governmental body capable of financing and planning a construction programme for a rapidly growing metropolitan area. The Toronto area, as Cumming noted, “must find some way to keep pace with that expansion and to reorganize its present form of local government so as to

³⁰² Ibid.: 37

³⁰³ Ibid.: 40.

provide for essential new facilities. Reorganization for the purposes of making more efficient use of its existing plant, however desirable in itself, is not enough.”³⁰⁴

By closing arguments at the OMB hearings on Toronto amalgamation, Mimico had thrown its support behind the City of Toronto’s application for amalgamation. It has already been noted that Forest Hill framed this as “poor Mimico” trying to reach into its pockets and that of other better-off municipalities “in a blatant desire to get at the expense of others substantial relief for its own position.”³⁰⁵ For its part, Mimico pointed to the problem of unequal financial capacity and inequity in how provincial grants were determined. As they put it early in their closing argument, Forest Hill not only had four times the assessment, but in 1946 it received \$43.05 for each pupil it educated in provincial grants, against the \$35 that Mimico received. Long Branch, another small lakeshore municipality similar in size and socio-economic status, received \$30.90 per pupil in provincial grants, while another relatively affluent suburban village, Swansea, was given \$52.00. For Mimico’s legal counsel, G.W.G Gauld, this strange and peculiar arrangement could be summed as “[t]o him who hath shall be given.”³⁰⁶

Mimico’s legal counsel had several points to make in this regard. First, he outlined the untenable position that small suburbs like Mimico found themselves in as metropolitan needs put pressure on their weak tax bases. Second, he emphasized the unequal assessment, tax rates, and spending between suburban municipalities across the

³⁰⁴ Ibid.: 41.

³⁰⁵ H.E. Manning (Forest Hill’s closing arguments). OMB Hearings on Toronto Amalgamation: 8473.

³⁰⁶ G.W.G Gauld (Mimico’s closing arguments). OMB Hearings on Toronto Amalgamation: 8287.

Toronto area. Third, he pointed to the interests served by a maintenance of the status quo. In the final case, Forest Hill proved the easiest foil as it was unrepentant in its desire to avoid the redistributive aspects of amalgamation. The strategy can clearly be discerned in discussion of educational spending and the taxes levied in relation to it.

We see that Mimico has one school pupil to every 9.31 of population. They spent \$102.74 to educate each pupil. In order to do that they had to raise \$25.44 from each \$3,000 of assessment and they received \$35.18 from the government. Now, comparing that with our friends in Forest Hill – I was going to say that there is no particular reason for comparing with Forest Hill, but they are residential like Mimico – the comparison with Forest Hill is very startling, of course. In Forest Hill they only have one pupil to every 13.58 of population; where Mimico spends \$102.74, they spend \$182.94; but they only have to levy \$15.00 for \$3,000 of assessment; where Mimico have to levy \$25.00 for a much lower cost. On top of it all, Forest Hill gets more from government grants.³⁰⁷

Owing to Forest Hill's more luxurious taxable assessment it could spend more and therefore receive more in provincial grants, while on an equalized basis place less of a burden on its ratepayers. To Mimico the present system of municipal government and provincial grants seemed perverse.

This was precisely the vignette that A.J.B Gray painted in his testimony. He had sought to explain how the existing character of municipalities would exert a strong influence on their future character. All things being equal, he argued, with no reform or reorganization of the present system of local government, it would be difficult, if not impossible, for weaker suburbs to improve their position. The better-off suburbs – i.e. elite residential suburbs or those with ample non-residential assessment to balance

³⁰⁷ Ibid.: 8287-88.

against residential assessment – possessed a kind of durable advantage in his view. They could, in a competitive landscape, offer more services at higher service levels, while maintaining lower rates of taxation. It followed that given a choice between higher service levels and lower tax rates, and the inverse, more “desirable” ratepayers would choose to locate in the former – further strengthening their respective tax bases and deepening the inequality between municipalities that already existed.

Compounding this problem for Mimico was its status as a town. The Township of York, though also weak in terms of taxable assessment, received more than \$57.00 per pupil in provincial grants. It was noted in A.J.B. Gray’s testimony that the Township of York had considered becoming a city, but elected against the change because it would dramatically alter the size of the grants it received from the province. Thus, Mimico could point to the York Township and Forest Hill Village as evidence of two ways in which the present system resulted in inequitable funding across the Toronto area. Forest Hill because it was residential, a village, and comprised of larger, more expensive homes; York Township because it received more generous provincial grants owing to its status as a Township. Amalgamation, if chosen, would solve both problems.

Another important argument laid out by Mimico’s legal counsel was the linkage between unbalanced assessment and the territorial mismatch between home and work in the suburbs. New Toronto, a small suburb along the lakeshore immediately to Mimico’s west, served a useful counterpoint in this instance. Essentially, the problem was a mismatch between where industry was located and where its workers lived. Mimico, and

several other suburban municipalities, were mainly residential communities of blue-collar workers and their families, but did not benefit from the assessment related to their residents' employers. This arrangement could not be sustained financially as the assessment from small houses was not sufficient to cover the costs of providing education to the pupils that came from them. Far more non-residential assessment – property taxes paid by commercial businesses and industry – was needed to achieve, as A.J.B Gray called it, the “balance of assessment” to put it in a sound financial position.

The problem, as Mimico's legal counsel noted, was more extreme in the semi-rural Townships of North York and Scarborough. The early postwar years were at a time of rapid family formation and high fertility rates. Explosive suburbanization placed these areas under enormous strain as they struggled to construct and operate new schools to educate all the children needing schooling. According to Gauld, their witnesses had testified that studies done on the matter estimated on average each small-type bungalow house had one-and-half pupils, and that the cost of educating those one-and-half pupils exceeded the taxes paid by each house of this type.³⁰⁸ One can extrapolate that Mimico and several other mature suburbs were experiencing a less severe version of the same. They had fewer young families and there was less pressure to expand their school system, but they faced an overall problem financing a growing list of services, local and regional, from the modest per capita assessment against which they levied taxes. A wealthy suburb

³⁰⁸ Ibid.: 8291.

like Forest Hill could afford to be a “dormitory municipality”, so to speak.³⁰⁹ For the typical working class suburb being purely residential was a road to crushing taxes and financial ruin in the event of economic depression – a situation that was still fresh in the minds of seasoned municipal officials and politicians after the Second World War.

“There is a Cure for Suburbanitis if Properly Treated”

An editorial in the January 1951 issue of *Civic Administration* indicated that even as the OMB hearings on Toronto amalgamation were underway hope never faded that an amicable solution might be negotiated between the 13 municipalities involved:

It is encouraging in the Toronto suburbanitis problem to see that reason, logic and good will are beginning to take over in place of prejudice, sectional interests and big-stick waving.³¹⁰

We know that no consensus was found, and whether a “cure for suburbanitis” was (or could be) arrived at depends on its definition as a problem. If the problem was “the random spread of urban growth”, as described in the editorial, then the answer is likely yes.³¹¹ If it was “metropolitan integration” the answer is less clear. Antagonism between the city and the suburbs was not resolved by metropolitan government; nor was it, much later, by amalgamation. Entrenched city-suburban divisions remain a potent force in contemporary Toronto.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.: 8292.

³¹⁰ “There Is a Cure For Suburbanitis If Properly Treated,” *Civic Administration* (1951).

³¹¹ cf. Larry S. Bourne, “The Urban Sprawl Debate: Myths, Realities and Hidden Agendas,” *Plan Canada* 41, no. 4 (2001).

Are there insights that can be gained by returning to the sequence of events and processes that resulted in the provincial legislation to establish a two-tier federated system of metropolitan government for the Toronto area? The answer hinges on the degree to which we acknowledge that then, as now, the issue of metropolitan or regional political cohesiveness was a fundamental problem and that spatial imaginaries already stretched to frame existing problems against a presumed future that needed to be anticipated and planned for. The future is always imagined from a range of possibilities, but decisions that shape that future are made in the present. Choices that are made reveal the relationship between rationality and power in a specific time and place, because “power defines what counts as rationality and knowledge and thereby what counts as reality.”³¹²

What counts as knowledge and how problems are defined shapes the process through which solutions are eventually arrived at. Over a quarter century a multitude of texts developed and shaped “the metropolitan problem” and framed debate over possible solutions. At the end of the sequence the meetings of the TAC and subsequent OMB hearings stand as a testament to power/knowledge and offer us a window into the final stage of the process – the point at which metropolitan problems were perceived to be nearing crisis and a definitive course of action had to be arrived at and solution found. The final word count at the OMB hearings on Toronto amalgamation, words uttered by witnesses, legal counsel, and the OMB chair over the span of a year (76 days of

³¹² Bent Flyvbjerg, *Rationality and Power: Democracy in Practice* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998). 319.

hearings), was an estimated 3,000,000 words.³¹³ At the time it was reckoned that this “mass of verbiage” represented “the longest and probably most complex case ever dealt with by the board”.³¹⁴ Assessing the veracity of this claim is almost beside the point. By any standard the evidence, exhibits, and arguments represent a rich and detailed record of local conditions, metropolitan problems, and in important respects the development and administrative histories of area municipalities.

All this information was provided in a quasi-judicial forum so that OMB chairman Lorne R. Cumming and the public might know “the facts”. The City of Toronto asked the OMB to consider a straightforward request: amalgamate the metropolitan area – city and suburbs – into a single-tier municipality. The length and complexity of the case reflected the meticulous care and attention lavished on a problem whose solution needed to be stickhandled past entrenched opposition – essentially the political leadership in all municipalities involved save the City of Toronto and Mimico. Premier Frost understood the abundant political risk of proceeding without due caution and he saw a double purpose in the TAC and OMB hearings on Toronto amalgamation. Neither were likely to reveal much that was not already known. Instead, it was hoped that detailing metropolitan problems and the inability of the municipalities to solve them would justify provincial action on the matter.³¹⁵

³¹³ "3,000,000 Words Fill Up Record On Merger Talks," *Globe and Mail*, June 8 1951.

³¹⁴ "2,250,000 Words Heard on Merger," *Globe and Mail*, May 19 1951.

³¹⁵ Colton, *Big Daddy: Frederick G. Gardiner and the Building of Metropolitan Toronto*; Roger Graham, *Old Man Ontario: Leslie M. Frost* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990). 201.

To conclude this chapter, I wish to revisit the “basic problem” and “central question” identified by Cumming in the decision of the board issued in late-January 1953. Also referred to as the Cumming Report, the decision of the board was a fastidiously considered analysis and politically sensitive framework from which Premier Frost and his government could craft and enact the necessary legislation to bring into effect a two-tier federated system of metropolitan government as the solution to “the metropolitan problem” and a growing list of metropolitan problems. It has been noted that Frost and other ministers in his government were in regular contact with Cumming as he reviewed the evidence and deliberated on the appropriate solution to “the metropolitan problem”, which may explain how Frost and his government were able to introduce Bill 80, the legislative act that created the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, in the Ontario legislature little more than a month after the Cumming Report was published.³¹⁶

Voluminous evidence and detailed arguments from both appellants and respondents aside, the “basic problem” that led the councils of Mimico and Toronto to authorize the applications to the OMB that resulted in the hearings on Toronto amalgamation was “the metropolitan problem”. In a nutshell, over the course of the first half of the 20th century urban growth had spread beyond the city limits and created a metropolitan space in which social and economic life was increasingly interconnected and interdependent. At the same time, politically and administratively, the metropolitan area remained a patchwork of local governments, each tasked with delivering services to

³¹⁶ See Colton, *Big Daddy: Frederick G. Gardiner and the Building of Metropolitan Toronto*; Graham, *Old Man Ontario: Leslie M. Frost*.

residents and businesses within their municipal jurisdiction, each possessing different needs and fiscal capacity, and each competing against all others. By 1950 it was increasingly clear that the existing system of municipal government in the Toronto area was in need of restructuring not only to address the demonstrable inability of the status quo to respond to and support rapid metropolitan growth, but also to reduce inequality between municipalities, especially in the suburbs.

It is instructive to consider how Premier Frost understood the origins of the problem. In response to continued lobbying for amalgamation from a Toronto alderman after the OMB issued its decision, but before the government introduced Bill 80 to establish the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, Frost replied:

I think you will agree that if the City of Toronto had done what was necessary years ago in progressive annexations ... this situation would not exist ... the failure to take action on the part of many governments has further complicated the problem. Shortly after taking office in 1950 [sic] I initiated action, and I intend to do the very best I can and abide by the results.³¹⁷

The City of Toronto had moved away from a policy of annexing areas of urban growth adjacent to it sometime after 1912. Several decades on, the failure to annex progressively, as Frost put it, could not be solved by amalgamation of the urbanized areas that should have been annexed incrementally.

Municipal reorganization was needed, but pragmatic and political considerations militated against amalgamation on the scale proposed. Amalgamation could not replicate a progressive expansion of the city as growth spilled over its territorial limits. Instead, it

³¹⁷ Quoted in ———, *Old Man Ontario: Leslie M. Frost*: 203.

would bring together all at once into a single municipality the patchwork of municipalities that had grown and evolved over several decades while the City had chosen not to annex. The appropriateness of this solution, or any alternative to it, was the “central question” that Cumming had to consider. Having noted the apparent weaknesses of amalgamation, he reworked the question to be deliberated on. The problem, Cumming argued, was whether the “continued existence of local municipal governments” was incompatible with the “concurrent existence of a senior metropolitan government”, or put differently, if it were possible to distinguish and isolate purely local concerns from those of an area-wide nature and delegate powers and resources accordingly.³¹⁸

In constructing his rationale for a two-tier federated system of metropolitan government as the preferred solution, Cumming drew on precedent and Canadian political theory. Citing the British North America Act of 1867, he noted:

... in any true federation there is recognition of the need for a dual system of government, an acceptance of the idea that the establishment of a strong authority is the best method of dealing with vital problems affecting the entire area, and a conviction that the retention of local governments for local purposes is not only desirable but necessary.³¹⁹

A recent assessment likened the institutional compromise arrived at by Cumming “to the famous dictum from F. Scott Fitzgerald’s story *The Crack-Up*: ‘The test of a first rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposing ideas in mind at the same time, and still

³¹⁸ The Decision of the Board, January 20th 1953: 47. Ontario Municipal Board case file C02976. General – Chairman’s notes – Decision of the Board – L.R. Cumming personal copy. Record on hearings into Toronto Amalgamation RG 37-6-2-13. Archives of Ontario.

³¹⁹ Ibid.: 47-48

retain the ability to function.”³²⁰ Rather than a stroke of genius the cautious conservatism of the OMB Chairman’s rationale for recommending the province establish a two-tier federated system of metropolitan government was a pragmatic choice. It was a solution to “the metropolitan problem” arrived at via a process that made it clear this was a politically acceptable solution.

Though, it is seldom acknowledged suburban opposition undoubtedly pushed the provincial government onto the path that led to the creation of Metro as an alternative to amalgamation. As most commentary and analysis points out, the “cure for suburbanitis” that was arrived at was not the one favored by the City of Toronto, Mimico, Premier Frost, Frederick Gardiner, or the experts called to testify at the OMB at the time. It was a localized, context-dependent “institutional fix” that did no more in terms of municipal reorganization than was required to address the problem that precipitated it. Retrospectively, Metro is widely hailed for its successes, especially with regard to the planning, financing, and constructing of the major public works that both supported and shaped the growth of the whole metropolitan area.³²¹ This success, along with the continued vitality of urban neighbourhoods and viability of public transit, became central to the forging of Toronto’s reputation as the “city that works” in the 1970s.³²²

³²⁰ Sewell, *The Shape of the Suburbs: Understanding Toronto's Sprawl*: 21.

³²¹ Betsy Donald, "Spinning Toronto's Golden Age: The Making of a 'City That Worked'," *Environment and Planning A* 34, no. 12 (2002); ———, "The Permeable City: Toronto's Spatial Shift at the Turn of the Millennium."

³²² James T. Lemon, "Toronto, 1975: The Alternative Future," in *Liberal Dreams and Nature's Limits: Great Cities of North America Since 1600* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1996).

The choice of a two-tier metropolitan federation could not, however, resolve the intra-metropolitan differences that would emerge to complicate the tidy division between purely local concerns and those of an area-wide nature. As subsequent chapters reveal metropolitanization unfurled in the 1950s and '60s around a consensus that central city redevelopment and suburban expansion were desirable, even complementary. When resident opposition to high-rise redevelopment, expressways, and urban renewal schemes coalesced into a political movement in the City of Toronto one-side of the metropolitan consensus broke down. At the same-time across Metro's suburbs local opposition was growing to high-rise apartment towers and public housing projects as they began to proliferate rapidly as a result of Metro planning concepts and the housing policies of the Ontario and federal governments.

In the 1970s as the form and pace of development became a political issue in both the city and suburbs a chasm developed between urbanism and suburbanism in Metro. Key figures in the reform movement that had emerged in old city neighbourhoods in Toronto, such as John Sewell, began to conceive of the form and function of postwar suburbs as generative of problems in the city. To the extent that link was brought to the fore and used to frame planning debates in Metro it became less and less possible to separate purely local concerns from decisions or choices that had area-wide implications. Metro became a less effective institutional compromise as the metropolitan parts increasingly disagreed on what form the metropolitan whole should take and how it should function.

Chapter 5: Connecting City and Suburb in Postwar Metropolitanization

Introduction

In the late-1960s and early-1970s, a popular movement in Toronto's downtown and old city neighbourhoods formed to oppose the particular form that postwar city-building and metropolitanization had taken. Battles over high-rise redevelopment and clean-sweep urban renewal in Trefann Court and elsewhere, not to mention the stopping of the Spadina Expressway, fueled the rise of a neo-reformism in Toronto.³²³ These were the obvious flashpoints at a time when the modernist impulse to remake the physical fabric of the historical city reached its unquestioned peak in the mid-to-late 1960s. The resulting political rupture, which for a brief time in the 1970s brought a fragile coalition of urban "conservatives" and "radicals" together to fight the destructive excesses of a recklessly pro-development old-guard, "acted as a kind of course-correction for Toronto's development."³²⁴

Most writing and public commentary on this important period in Toronto has paid little attention to the city's suburbs, other than to paint them as the metropolitan backdrop to events that unfolded in the city's centre. Newspaper coverage of the pivotal 1972 municipal elections, which resulted in a reform-oriented council in the City of Toronto, suggests the focus should be wider. To be sure, attention focused on the "civic

³²³ Graham Fraser, *Fighting Back: Urban Renewal in Trefann Court* (Toronto: Hakkert, 1972); John Sewell, *Up Against City Hall* (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1972); Harold Kaplan, *Reform, Planning, and City Politics: Montreal, Winnipeg, Toronto* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982).

³²⁴ Caulfield, *City Form and Everyday Life: Toronto's Gentrification and Critical Social Practice*: 64.

confrontation” underway at city hall between a pro-development coalition of old guard politicians (and civil service advisers) and an anti-development coalition led by a wave of new aldermen backstopped by community and ratepayer associations, but overall election coverage suggests a wider discontent with the status quo had spread across Metropolitan Toronto (Metro). As the *Toronto Star* put it, voters in the three postwar Metro suburbs – Etobicoke, North York, and Scarborough – “all deserted ‘establishment’ candidates for mayor and went for fresher people.”³²⁵

In the City of Toronto it was possible to depict the election as a clash between two clearly defined groups, each with different answers to the following questions:

- Should more and more high-rise apartment buildings be our main answer to population pressure?
- Should we sacrifice green space on any account?
- Should private entrepreneurs be allowed to transform familiar sections of the city as they see fit?
- Should an old and familiar building be razed to make way for new buildings?
- Should our expressway system be completed by running a combined expressway and subway line to the northwest corner of the city? Should we build the Spadina?³²⁶

In the postwar Metro suburbs the hot-button issues were high-rise apartments, public housing, and citizen participation in important decisions. This was especially true in Scarborough where the incumbent mayor’s close working relationship with developers

³²⁵ "Restless boroughs elect fresh faces," *Toronto Star*, December 5th 1972.

³²⁶ Martin Dewey, "Civic Confrontation: Two powerful coalitions clash over future of Toronto," *Toronto Star*, October 25th 1971.

and clear track record of support for Ontario Housing Corporation (OHC) projects, as well as aversion to public consultation and citizen participation, had made him vulnerable.

As the campaign wore-on the improbable started to look possible and Scarborough elected a new mayor. In a strange twist, reformism in the suburbs shared with its urban counterpart an essentially conservative outlook toward growth and development. As will be revealed, the fault-line in both the City and Scarborough was development, particularly the notion that development, virtually any development, meant progress. In both places, the reform side campaigned on the basis that it would take back control from developers and protect the character of residential neighbourhoods.

Similarities aside, the reform movement in the City was spawned by the callous disregard that pro-development “old-guard” politicians on Toronto council showed for existing residential neighbourhoods, especially south of Bloor Street. Reform-minded politicians, activists, and citizen groups had through experience become attuned to the destructive impact of high-rise redevelopment, which was usually preceded by block-busting as developers assembled the needed land.³²⁷ They had also borne witness to urban renewal schemes, which expropriated and razed homes in older, lower-income areas. Where urban renewal projects had already proceeded the results were not encouraging:

³²⁷ Graham Fraser, "Land assembly: the real reason houses decay," *Globe and Mail*, March 16th 1974.

less not more low-cost housing was the outcome and it was achieved at great cost, emotional and financial, to residents.³²⁸

Ultimately it was the formation of “web-like links among ratepayer leaders, political issues and political campaigns” that emerged in the 1969 municipal election which laid the groundwork for a “concerted election effort by an interlocking citizens’ movement” in the 1972 elections.³²⁹ But the ascendancy of the reform opposition to a slim majority on Toronto city council, backstopped by the Confederation of Residents and Ratepayers Associations (CORRA), paralleled an important socio-political dynamic in Toronto: the emergence of a cohort of middle-class professionals—prominent among them lawyers, journalists, teachers, professors, and architects—in old city neighbourhoods such as the Annex, Cabbagetown, Riverdale, and the Beach.³³⁰ The reform movement was not, it should be noted, a movement rooted in a shared ideology, or even a coherent set of shared values and interests. Instead, “reform” can be thought of as a “chaotic concept”, with the movement that coalesced around its banner having a number of internal divides.³³¹ The most obvious of these divisions was plain to see even at the time: the uneasy co-presence of working-class and middle-class groups and

³²⁸ G. Tori Salter, "Trefann Court residents and how they live," *Toronto Star*, September 21st 1968; John Sewell, "City Council: 'Talk, talk but do nothing'," *Toronto Star*, September 21st 1968.

³²⁹ "Election shows connections: Most roads lead to CORRA," *Globe and Mail*, December 25th 1972.

³³⁰ See “People, Politics and Bureaucrats” in Jon Caulfield, *The Tiny Perfect Mayor* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1974).

³³¹ ———, "'Reform' as a Chaotic Concept," *Urban History Review* XVII, no. 2 (1988).

interests in many old city neighbourhoods, as well as a more general sociopolitical divide between neighbourhoods located north and south of Bloor Street in the city.³³²

This aspect of the 1970s urban reform era in Toronto has been documented. Less has been said about disenchantment with the scale, form, and pace of development in the rest of Metro, or that in the three largest suburban municipalities—Etobicoke, North York, and Scarborough—this disenchantment led to political turnover in the 1972 elections, though it registered more forcefully at Metro council than in local councils. At the time, the key pillars of Metro’s postwar agenda for regional growth and prosperity—office and residential high-rise redevelopment in the core, an expressway network to move people and goods around, and suburban expansion—had lost their authority. In the city, many observers have interpreted Toronto’s subsequent tradition of “progressive middle-class urbanism”, as both the cause and consequence of that lost authority.³³³ For Metro’s postwar suburbs no equivalent sociopolitical formation is discussed, though presumptions and inferences are often made about suburban conservatism.

Michael Goldrick’s critical assessment of urban reform in Toronto offers a useful way to approach 1970s “reform” in the suburbs.

[T]he geographic basis from which the reform movement originated favored an electoral solution and discouraged the definition of reform in ideological terms. Issues typically arose in geographically discrete neighbourhoods and they engaged residents without regard to their political or class affiliation: you did not have to be a conservative or

³³² ———, *The Tiny Perfect Mayor*.

³³³ Julie-Anne Boudreau, *Megacity Saga: Democracy and Citizenship in this Global Age* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2000); Caulfield, *City Form and Everyday Life: Toronto's Gentrification and Critical Social Practice*.

socialist to oppose the construction of a highrise tower next door. So it was easy for people to unite in opposition to a common threat.³³⁴

Even more than in the City, the reform impulse in Metro's suburbs was linked to development threatening the character of residential neighbourhoods. In this sense a similar opposition to high-rise development and public housing propelled desire for political change in Etobicoke, North York, and Scarborough, but is more likely to appear as straightforwardly NIMBY to contemporary observers. Given the contemporary transformations occurring under the rubric of smart growth intensification it seems necessary to ask if this is all there was, and is, to the story?

To answer, this chapter focuses on Scarborough. The 1970s were a period of maturation and continued growth in Scarborough. It was also a period of contestation in which the making of Toronto's middle landscape began to be re-negotiated. The election of Paul Cosgrove as mayor serves as signpost in Scarborough's postwar development. At the time, his election might have seemed a critical juncture as he sought to improve the quality of development and planning in the still fast-growing suburb, brought an increased sophistication to key policy debates, and reflected a wider desire for enhanced citizen participation in policy- and decision-making.

Scarborough entered the 1970s with over 300,000 residents. It had experienced tremendous growth post-1945, mostly in its southern half. In the late-1960s, booming growth and development was unfurling north of the 401 highway. The combination of

³³⁴ Michael Goldrick, "The anatomy of urban reform in Toronto," *City Magazine* 3, no. May-June (1978): 35.

explosive new growth and maturation of older areas began to preoccupy Scarborough politicians and officials. Trying to structure future growth and create a centre a concern and longer-term objective. At the same time, Scarborough had to respond to pressure from the province of Ontario and Metro for it to accommodate more subsidized and low-cost housing units, which conflicted with efforts to improve the borough's tax base. Other issues like rapid transit and improving suburban aesthetics also crept into the picture. It was also a period in which city-suburban antagonisms simmered in the background, but had not yet morphed into a deep-seated socio-political divide of the sort that would shape politics in Metro and "megacity" Toronto in the decades to come. In what follows these strands are explored starting with the election of a new mayor for Scarborough in 1972.

A New Mayor for Scarborough³³⁵

In Scarborough, the changing mood of voters was registered by the election of Paul Cosgrove as mayor. A lawyer with a young family, Cosgrove was 37 years old and had served just one term on Scarborough council before being elected mayor. He had been endorsed by the *Toronto Star*, but his victory was still viewed as an "upset".³³⁶ In the previous election, the incumbent, Mayor Robert White, had been elected easily only a couple of months after taking over from Albert Campbell who had become Metro chairman.³³⁷ Newspaper coverage of the election points to development and planning as a

³³⁵ The Toronto Star editorial board endorsed Paul Cosgrove for mayor slightly more than a week before election day in an op-ed entitled "A new mayor for Scarborough," *Toronto Star*, November 24th 1972.

³³⁶ "Metro Election '72-Scarborough," *Toronto Star*, December 5th 1972.

³³⁷ "Mayor only two months, White easily keeps job," *Toronto Star*, December 2nd 1969.

major theme in campaigns across Metro. As one story put it, “the biggest issue in the election promises to be the pace and style of Metro’s development.”³³⁸ In Scarborough, it was reported that a “shortage of concrete issues” had left candidates “little foundation for solid campaigns”, yet at the same time it was said that “[o]ne central theme in all candidates’ campaigning is Scarborough’s lack of planning.”³³⁹ An earlier newspaper story portrayed Mayor White as staunchly pro-development, while Cosgrove expressed a desire for more consultation with residents and lamented that younger people active in community associations were “tired of Scarborough being a developers’ borough.”³⁴⁰

After the election, the *Toronto Star* dubbed Mayor-elect Cosgrove “the giant killer” for defeating a “well-entrenched” incumbent.³⁴¹ The election result turned on a flight taken by Mayor White in 1970 to return from a conference to cast the deciding vote at council on a development application before it. It was later revealed the flight was paid for by the project’s developer.³⁴² Election night, as returns looked increasingly gloomy, White conceded that being labelled a “developer’s man” had damaged his re-election bid. But he remained adamant that development and growth was vital to Scarborough, saying “[i]f you take it away, you have nothing. There’s still 25 per cent of the borough to be developed.”³⁴³ His counterpart, Cosgrove, had campaigned on a trifecta of issues: the

³³⁸ "Pace of development will be biggest issue in election campaign," *Toronto Star*, November 9th 1972.

³³⁹ "Planning, or lack of it big issue, say hopefuls in booming Scarborough," *Toronto Star*, November 13th 1972.

³⁴⁰ "Scarborough building boom the pride of Mayor White," *Toronto Star*, August 24th 1972.

³⁴¹ "Restless boroughs elect fresh faces."

³⁴² "Mayor says firm paid his way home for rezoning vote," *Toronto Star*, June 23rd 1970.

³⁴³ William Bragg, "Cosgrove to seek transportation inquiry," *Toronto Star*, December 5th 1972.

need for citizen participation in development decisions, rapid transit as an alternative to expressways, and dissatisfaction with planning and opposition to high-rise apartments.

Mayor White had made it relatively easy for opponents to paint him as too pro-development. His rebuttal to claims he was in the “pocket of developers” emphasized Scarborough had a lot of land to develop, that developers do the building, and that as mayor “[y]ou have to deal with them, you have to work with them. And the best way to get results is to get to know them as people.”³⁴⁴ This did little to allay the concerns of his critics at the time, but Mayor White’s candid views on high-rise apartment development and public housing suggests a more nuanced interpretation is worth retrospective consideration.

Scarborough participated in the apartment boom that swept across Metro in the 1960s and was said to have more public housing than any other Metro municipality. Mayor White was seen as having “promoted this kind of development vigorously”.³⁴⁵ This deserves more sensitive assessment, however. For instance, in response to growing opposition to Ontario Housing Corporation (OHC) projects, he acknowledged there were problems associated with their facilities, but defended the need for public housing and emphasized Scarborough could and should accommodate it.

With Ontario Housing, unfortunately, you do get some real bad ones in there. I have them right next to my florist business (on Kennedy Rd. south of Eglinton Ave.) and we have a terrible time. They’re continually throwing beer bottles through the glass.

³⁴⁴ Michael Cobden, "Scarborough's White: I've never been in anyone's pocket," *Toronto Star*, November 15th 1972.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

But they're only a small percentage of the people. Most of them are fine and we should welcome them. We got the space.³⁴⁶

Similarly, with regard to high-rise apartment buildings, his views evinced a pragmatic recognition that housing needs were being met by their construction, even if they were not his preferred kind of housing.

We have a lot of applications for (rezoning to permit) apartments. People don't like apartments generally, and I'm not in love with them. But it's one of the ways to satisfy the housing needs.³⁴⁷

By contrast Cosgrove appeared in newspaper coverage to be a reform candidate seeking to improve planning and governance in Scarborough. His focus was on "[t]he need for more industry in the borough if homeowners' taxes are not to rise steeply; the need for a more discriminating approach to development, particularly to high-rise and public housing; and the need for an administration which is more open to the views of the public at large and to community groups".³⁴⁸ One story was framed around Cosgrove recounting a couple of incidents during his first term on Scarborough council that prompted him to run for mayor.

The first incident involved a phone call from someone claiming to be an aide to a Liberal senator, who wanted Cosgrove on short notice to meet with him to discuss a real estate deal on behalf of a large firm locating in Scarborough. Because the meeting request conflicted with the timing of an important council meeting he declined and suggested a

³⁴⁶ Ibid.

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

³⁴⁸ _____, "Cosgrove feels like a David challenging Scarborough Mayor," *Toronto Star*, November 14th 1972.

later time. The council meeting in question, Cosgrove points out, was to vote on a public housing project in the Kingston-Galloway area in West Hill. Another alderman, also opposed to the project, received a mysterious invitation to lure him away from the council meeting to discuss a business deal. Both declined, attended council, and in the end the development application before council was rejected. The vote was the second time this particular development proposal had been before Scarborough council. In the first instance it was approved by council. When it was later revealed that Mayor White had flown back for the vote on a plane chartered by the developer to cast his vote in favour the matter was reopened. Ontario Housing Corporation (OHC) appealed the council's decision to reject the proposed development to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB), which ruled in their favour and the development was eventually built.

The second incident involved Mayor White stopping borough staff from mailing out invitations to community associations asking them to “comment in writing on how they thought council operated and how it related to the community at large.”³⁴⁹ The mailing had been authorized by a Council committee, and Mayor White's actions were clearly contrary to Cosgrove's call for public consultation and communication with residents and community groups. Mayor White told the *Toronto Star*, “I had a lot of calls saying, ‘What did we put you there for, White? If we're going to make all the decisions

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

we don't need you. If we elect you, we expect you to run it as best you can and do the best for us.' So there you are."³⁵⁰

In retrospect, as public sentiment toward high-rise development and public housing moved increasingly into hostile territory, it is clear that Mayor White failed to sense he was politically vulnerable until it was too late. As a result, Cosgrove won handily, collecting more than double the number of votes as the incumbent White.³⁵¹ It would be a mistake, however, to personalize the result or frame it too narrowly within the confines of an election cycle. The path to that moment wound its way for a couple of decades through tensions and interactions between planning and politics, residential growth and industrial development, housing forms and citizen involvement, and local priorities and metropolitan pressures.

Preoccupation with Assessment

Nearly a year after being elected mayor the *Scarborough Mirror* sought Cosgrove's views on planning and the state of the borough. The story was framed around the need for "good town planning" given that Scarborough was the only part of Metro with large tracts of land that remained undeveloped. Good town planning could refer to a range of concerns, but Cosgrove emphasized the biggest challenge facing Scarborough was its assessment mix, which he felt was "heavily loaded in housing's favour" and to "even it

³⁵⁰ _____, "Scarborough's White: I've never been in anyone's pocket."

³⁵¹ The unofficial result for the 1972 mayoral contest, as reported the next day, was 40,645 votes for Paul Cosgrove to 16,982 for Robert White. "Paul Cosgrove wins in Scarborough White far behind," *Toronto Star*, December 5th 1972.

up ... Scarborough must court more industry.”³⁵² Though he had also expressed an interest in cleaning-up suburban streetscapes by removing the visual pollution of roadside signs earlier in the year,³⁵³ the ease with which industrial land in Scarborough was being turned over to housing had more serious long-term implications.

Not surprising then, Cosgrove told the *Scarborough Mirror* “[o]ur prime objective must be to prevent the erosion of our industrial base.”³⁵⁴ He worried that a recent provincial housing task force study would put pressure on Scarborough to free industrial lands for housing development. There was good reason to fret. Housing affordability, especially for families, was front and centre on the public agenda, and Scarborough, which Cosgrove pointed out, had “more National Housing Act (NHA) financed lots and public housing than any other part of Metro.”³⁵⁵ He felt the Malvern project made Scarborough a leader in accepting reduced-cost housing and that the borough had demonstrated its willingness to provide a mix of housing types. To maintain “balance” and protect existing taxpayers, Cosgrove was adamant that Scarborough needed to resist the pressure to accommodate more housing and allow industrial development to catch-up.

The need to balance residential growth with industrial development in order to lessen the tax burden on homeowners had been central to political discourse in

³⁵² Roger Whittaker, "Legacy of '60s tarnishes golden promise: More industry seen key to future," *Scarboro Mirror*, October 3rd 1973.

³⁵³ Janice Dineen, "Mayor fights uphill battle against Scarborough's neon jungle," *Toronto Star*, July 16th 1973.

³⁵⁴ Whittaker, "Legacy of '60s tarnishes golden promise: More industry seen key to future."

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

Scarborough on planning and development for several decades. Gus Harris, a member of the board of control and long-time Scarborough politician, placed Cosgrove's thinking in historical context in a letter to the editor published in the *Globe and Mail* in 1973:

Twenty years ago, we flooded Scarborough with every type of residential development. There were few restrictions on developers. We were told by the political friends of developers that residential development carried itself as far as taxation was concerned. When it was discovered the taxes on the \$13,000 strawberry boxes did not even cover the cost of education we were told apartments and more expensive houses would be self-supporting. We built apartments at Cliffcrest and what was planned as the finest subdivision of houses in Guildwood.

Later we discovered the taxes on the apartments did not cover education costs and the houses "up to \$50,000" did not materialize because of a drop in the economy.

The flood of residential development resulted in a six mill increase in 1956; the highest in the history of the municipality. In six months we held up the subdivisions to see where we were going. We also rezoned 5,000 acres of land to industrial to off-set the residential (Industries do not send children to school).

Then the supposed break came when all school costs were shared across the Metropolitan area. We were told this would solve the problem. It did not work—taxes continued to climb.

We were then assured that high-rise would be the bonanza we were searching for. On paper, it looked good. Six single-family houses on an acre of land providing about \$4,000 in taxes compared to a 20-storey high-rise on the same area netting tens of thousands of dollars in taxes. Again, the flood started which has resulted in 50 per cent of the 350,000 residents now living in apartments. But still the taxes go up, and here is the reason.

Where education costs were the burden, now other services for the huge population is the problem.

Just take one service, recreation and parks. The budget for this department has gone up 25 per cent a year for the past four years. It is now \$4-million with a request for one mill (\$800,000) more for park acquisition. The 15-year parks and recreation program for this operation is estimated at \$38-million which will double when the money is borrowed. The cost of libraries, fire protection, health services, etc. increase rapidly with the growth of the population of 70 square miles.

One-third of the municipality is still to be developed. The bulk of it is in the hands of developers holding it for residential development...³⁵⁶

The problem, as Controller Harris made plain, was that as fewer and fewer households earn enough to buy a house the pressure on municipal politicians increases to “approve small lots, semis, multiples and townhouse developments” in order to address the problem. Whether called small, modest, reduced-cost, or affordable, housing that could not “carry itself” had long befuddled Scarborough officials and politicians.

In 1974, all four of Scarborough’s controllers were asked by a reporter from the short-lived *Scarborough Herald* for comment on the borough’s planning and future development. Each differed somewhat in their outlook and on “what Scarborough should be like ten years from now”, but a common thread amongst them was acceptance that it would likely become denser—that “[t]he age of the big house on a large lot [was] dead.”³⁵⁷ The controllers did not view this with great enthusiasm, but reluctantly seemed to accept that market conditions, a finite supply of undeveloped land in Scarborough, and rising construction costs were fast changing what was possible. Controller Harris

³⁵⁶ Gus Harris, "Scarborough controller points to residential development mistakes," *Globe and Mail*, February 2nd 1973.

³⁵⁷ Catherine Haller, "Scarborough's controllers talk on planning for the borough," *Scarboro Herald*, April 3rd 1974.

summed up the dilemma: “I don’t know how young people are ever going to afford a house.” On this point all four controllers agreed.

None, however, had a clear answer for the problem of escalating housing prices. They agreed that something had to be done to provide “reasonably priced homes”, but each differed on the alternative housing forms available, how acceptable they were, and whether the borough could afford to allow them. As might be expected their views differed on the priority the borough should place on preserving a suburban life-style based on larger single-family homes in relation to the need for denser forms of housing, especially high-rise apartment towers, to reduce unit prices for housing. Brian Harrison, one of the more conservative controllers, remarked “[y]ou get to the point when there are not enough people left to subsidize the subsidized”.

It is unclear whether this comment was directed at rent-geared-to-income public housing units such as those in OHC projects, or to any form of residential development—market or non-market—not of sufficient per unit assessment to “carry itself”. Part of that calculation requires addressing the relationship between the actual cost of providing services to new residential development and the tax revenue (i.e. assessment) gained. One difficulty is that service levels and standards are subject to change. Controller Harris’ remarks in the letter to the editor quoted above point to increased spending on parks and recreation, libraries, fire protection, and health services. All four controllers seemed to recognize that expectations for so-called “soft” services had risen and were at least partly behind the increased cost of housing. The more conservative controllers, Ken Morrish

and Brian Harrison, felt that people were “prepared to work hard in order to pay for life’s luxuries” and that “the ever increasing demand for soft services, which people fully realize they must pay for through taxes, [was] an indication of the strength of this ideal.”³⁵⁸

The conundrum facing Scarborough politicians was to thread the needle between competing demands. While some residents wanted and were willing to pay for larger homes and more and better municipal services, others preferred fewer frills and keeping tax increases to a minimum. The pressure to accommodate more and more subsidized, reduced cost, or affordable market housing was thought to necessitate seeking forms of development that could more than pay for itself. While this was a recurrent theme as Scarborough morphed from a rural township into suburbanized city after World War II, it was less of an issue during the first-half of the 20th century when services were limited and part of the allure of the suburbs for working class people was cheap land, less stringent regulation, and lower taxes. It is to the shaping of early postwar Scarborough that we shall turn next.

The Need For a Pattern

As development filled Scarborough’s open spaces, land use conflicts emerged. In a sense, planning issues in early postwar Scarborough were quite straightforward, though the pace of development was incredible and relentless. Debates about development and the need for planning tended toward practical and financial concerns, such as ensuring the efficient

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

and economical layout of physical infrastructure and delivery of municipal services, or determining whether a form of development would provide the taxes needed per dwelling to pay for the schooling of the children expected to call it home.

For example, the debate about the development of the Golden Mile centred on “planning” lessons learned in the 1930s: non-residential—i.e. industrial and commercial—assessment lessens the tax burden on homeowners. As Reeve Oliver Crockford wrote at the time, “[i]nstead of being a drain on the community, the amazing industrial growth which has taken place in Scarborough has meant lower taxes, more recreational facilities, libraries, better municipal services and more schools.”³⁵⁹ His assessment corresponds to arguments made at the OMB hearings into Toronto amalgamation in 1950-51 about the importance of maintaining an appropriate balance between residential and non-residential assessment.³⁶⁰ One of the City of Toronto’s key witnesses, its commissioner of assessment A.J.B Gray, gave lengthy evidence that outlined the importance of municipalities having balanced assessment, which he described as at least a 50-50 split between residential and non-residential assessment. This ratio ensured a municipality was financially sound in his view. Exceptions were places like Forest Hill Village where per capita residential assessment was high on account of it being disproportionately made up of large, stately homes. For blue-collar or working-class suburbs comprised of modest homes it was considered essential that

³⁵⁹ Oliver Crockford, "Scarborough's Industrial Boom," *Civic Administration*, June 1952.

³⁶⁰ "Balance Is The Key."

industrial assessment be sought to improve the fiscal position of the municipality, and, especially, to lessen the burden of education costs.

In early 1950s Scarborough there was a clear concern that residential growth was not being matched by sufficient industrial development. In August 1952, Councillor Gus Harris successfully moved a motion directing the Township Treasurer, Assessment Commissioner, Engineer, and Building Inspector to hold a meeting to study the Township's financial position and development program, and that a representative of the Department of Municipal Affairs be invited to the meeting in an advisory capacity. Newspaper reportage on the Township Council meeting contrasted his position, "we should stop and have a look around July's building report shows 70 per cent of permits issued for housing development and we should study this residential problem" with that of Reeve Crockford, who stated in response: "I do not see why housing development in Scarboro should be stifled."³⁶¹ Crockford reframed the problem as one relating to school costs, which he claimed "were common to all communities where there is residential development."

Reeve Crockford's position is explicated in a brief entitled "Residential Subdivision Costs to the Municipality", which he prepared and sent to the Minister of Municipal Affairs in advance of the special meeting.³⁶² It drew attention to the difference between modern subdivisions and the construction of individual homes by property owners or contractors on existing streets, sub-standard homes (shacks or basement

³⁶¹ "Stop Home Building, Have Look About, Scarboro Told," *Toronto Star*, August 26th 1952.

³⁶² _____, "Residential Subdivision Costs to the Municipality," (1952).

dwelling), and houses constructed without building permits. For unplanned development, the Township had to take out debentures to pay for improvements such as water mains, sewers, curbs, sidewalks, and paved roads, but with modern subdivisions the sub-divider was responsible for servicing costs on their land. This change significantly reduced the debt burden taken on by the municipality to provide the needed physical infrastructure to support growth and development. The brief also sought to emphasize that average assessments were higher in modern subdivisions, so new residential development of this type actually improved the financial position of the Township. In contrast to his critics, Reeve Crockford positioned “too low” assessment in old areas of the Township as an inherited problem that was slowly being ironed out by new assessment that pulled the per capita number upward and contributed more in taxes than it cost.

It was in this context that debate in the Township crystallized around Reeve Crockford and Councillor Gus Harris, with the latter continually questioning the merits of unbridled residential growth and demanding that it be more tightly controlled to allow industrial development to make Scarborough’s assessment more balanced.³⁶³ Rapid growth was making Scarborough larger and more urban. As awareness of the Township’s intensifying transformation grew, calls for a “master plan” to guide development and achieve an optimal pattern of development arose. Ontario’s Planning Act of 1946 provided municipalities with the authority to devise and enact an Official Plan to

³⁶³ "Financial Position Good?," *The Enterprise*, October 2nd 1952.

designate land uses across the entirety of their geographic territory, as well as determine the phasing of development. Planning or “the need for a pattern”, as an editorial in *the Enterprise* (a weekly community newspaper) put it, was necessary given the tremendous growth underway in the Township.³⁶⁴ Without a plan it was feared Scarborough would “become a hodge-podge settlement” rather than “a joy to the eye and a comfort to every citizen who lives within its boundaries.”

Not everyone agreed. Some on Township Council, including the Reeve, questioned whether the future could be reliably forecast. Opponents of the master plan idea thought it would mean being inflexible, that it would curtail growth and development. Still, as growth continued and non-residential, especially industrial, development began to encroach upon housing subdivisions the idea gained more adherents. Reiterating their call for a master plan, the editors of *the Enterprise* decried opponents’ “hole-in-the-ground attitude” and argued “that land purchasers should know just exactly what they can expect to happen to adjoining property in the future. It is ridiculous for a man to build a \$20,000 or \$25,000 home on property which might next year be next door to a pickle factory or a tomb-stone salesroom.”³⁶⁵

Unhappy over plans for three factories on Eglinton Avenue East near Cedar Brae Boulevard (now Bellamy Rd) a group of concerned residents appeared before Scarborough Council on October 29th, 1951 seeking to have development limited to commercial

³⁶⁴ "The Need For A Pattern," *The Enterprise*, March 13th 1952.

³⁶⁵ "Hole-In-The-Ground Attitude," *The Enterprise*, January 22nd 1953.

uses.³⁶⁶ The residents claimed that smoke and chemical fumes from the proposed factories and increased truck traffic would lower the value of their homes and cause their neighbourhood to become run down and blighted. At a subsequent Council meeting a delegation of roughly 100 area ratepayers asked “that a restrictive by-law be passed on land bounded by Lawrence Ave., Midland Ave., Golf [Club] Road, and Lake Ontario.”³⁶⁷ A year later another “planning” controversy in the area arose over Canadian National Railway’s (CNR) plan to build a marshalling yard along its mainline just south of Eglinton between Brimley Road and McCowan Road.³⁶⁸

The marshalling yard, to be located on a 130-acre property owned by CNR for more than 30 years, raised the ire of area residents whose concerns were not unlike those opposed to factories on Eglinton Avenue East. The number of people opposed was much greater, however. Several community and ratepayers groups in the area established a civil action committee and presented Scarborough Council with a petition signed by more than 2000 residents opposed to the marshalling yard. Passions ran high as a number of homes in the area were built under the Veterans’ Land Act (VLA) and were owner-built. One resident described the situation in personal terms:

³⁶⁶ "Residents Oppose 3 Factories On Eglinton; Ask that Property be Restricted for Commercial Use Only," *The Enterprise*, November 1st 1951.

³⁶⁷ "Ratepayers Ask Restrictions On Ind. Land; 'Homes Being Jeopardized by Factories on Eglinton' - Residents," *The Enterprise*, November 15th 1951.

³⁶⁸ "2400 Ratepayers Protest Railroad Marshalling Yard," *The Enterprise*, February 12th 1953; "2,400 Fear For Lives, Homes If 40-Track CNR Yard Built," *Toronto Star*, February 6th 1953.

How can we move? I broke my back building that house. My wife mixed mortar while I laid the bricks. We won't move and we won't stand by and watch the railway put a yard in here.³⁶⁹

Aerial photographs of the area dated to 1962 show that several factories along Eglinton Avenue East just to the north of the CNR mainline were built, while a modest number of siding tracks are visible where the large marshalling yard was to be constructed.³⁷⁰ At the time, the railway stated the rail yard had long been in their plans and that its "main function would be to serve the booming industries of Scarboro."³⁷¹ The Oakridge and Golden Mile industrial districts were nearby, and both had undergone rapid development and were serviced by various rail sidings. Aerial photographs also reveal the overall infilling of areas, so that across Scarborough south of the 401 Highway (roughly phase one in its Official Plan) open spaces were slowing filling in.³⁷² It is unclear how seriously proponents of industrial development considered potential opposition that might emerge as factories and related infrastructures located near to existing homes.

It is clear, however, that in the early days of the postwar boom planning came to be viewed increasingly as both a means to shape the Township's growth and as a way to give homeowners assurances that their mortgage-financed homes would not fall in value because of incompatible future development. Planning became oriented to the protection of residential property values even as attracting industry to the Township was deemed

³⁶⁹ "2400 Ratepayers Protest Railroad Marshalling Yard."

³⁷⁰ Aerial Photographs of the Metropolitan Toronto Area, 1962. Fonds 220, Series 12, City of Toronto Archives.

³⁷¹ "2,400 Fear For Lives, Homes If 40-Track CNR Yard Built."

³⁷² See Scarborough Planning Board, "Official Plan for the Borough of Scarborough," ed. Scarborough Planning Department (Township of Scarborough 1957).

essential to keeping property taxes manageable for ordinary home-owners. Early industrial development, such as the GECO munitions complex, did not elicit vocal opposition from homeowners. But as time passed the question of where industry should go, as well as the appropriate separation between major types of land use, the appropriate size and mix of dwelling units, introducing road and retail hierarchies, and aesthetic considerations would grow in importance alongside the growth and evolution of planning as a governmental function.

The Township Probe

Planning in Scarborough at the onset of the postwar boom was minimal. The Township was an early adopter of subdivision servicing agreements to transfer the upfront costs of building infrastructure like water and sewerage for new housing developments to their land sub-dividers and/or home-builders. But under the leadership of Reeve Oliver Crockford, Scarborough was slow to devise an Official Plan or adopt zoning by-laws to structure and control growth and development. Crockford was an unabashed growth promoter and employed boosterist rhetoric during yearly elections or when challenged about the desirability of unbridled growth at Council, especially with regard to housing. Though Scarborough experienced considerable industrial development during his tenure, its progress toward “balanced assessment” was attenuated by more rapid housing development.

Elected to Township Council for the 1946 term and then as reeve in 1948, Oliver Crockford's relentless promotion of growth and development saw him re-elected each year until a bribery scandal in 1955 dethroned him. The scandal erupted following the disquieting appearance of \$500 cheques on the desks of two councillors, who were members of the Township Planning Board, as well as those of the Township's Clerk and Director of Planning. A judge was appointed with wide powers to investigate the matter and the resulting inquiry, dubbed the "township probe", eventually determined that a land development firm, Gramarcy Building and Development Limited, had attempted to bribe Scarborough Township officials and councillors who it should be noted were cleared of any wrong-doing. Reeve Crockford, however, came under scrutiny when it was learned that he had purchased a Cadillac limousine from Walter Pugh, a sub-divider and home-builder, in a cash deal without proper paperwork.

Apparently, one of several companies controlled by Walter Pugh and his four brothers had owned a Cadillac car and traded it in to a dealer in order to buy a newer one. The difference between the trade-in and the new car, \$1,300, was paid by cheque from the company, but the new Cadillac was purchased in Crockford's name and delivered to him. Crockford gave evidence that he paid Pugh for the car in three installments, each involving cash transactions for which no witnesses, receipts, or written memoranda existed. The sale of his existing car to a private individual and the proceeds from the disposition of some land in the Township (land originally purchased in partnership with

several others, including the real estate dealer who handled the transaction) to an oil company, also raised suspicion.

Judge Forsyth, who handled the inquiry, found the account given by Crockford and Pugh troubling. He summarized the situation as follows:

Crockford has the right to buy a Cadillac car from any person he pleases. The circumstances surrounding the purchase of this car, however, give rise to grave suspicions. Pugh was engaged in pressing a very substantial claim against the township and the claim was not acknowledged. Crockford owned a 1952 Chrysler and had no immediate need for a new car.

If he wanted, a new car, he could have turned in the Chrysler for that purpose, and the question arises as to why he would arrange with Pugh to buy him a Cadillac.

The method of paying for the car is most unusual as is the payment of such large amounts in cash and the failure to give receipts.

The collection of the \$2,000 from the sale of the Chrysler over a period of five or six months with no receipts, no cheques and no memoranda in writing is difficult to believe. The transaction for the sale of land raises the same doubts.³⁷³

Though, Crockford was not directly linked to the bribery scandal involving Gramarcy Building and Development Limited, the township probe shone a light on the cozy, questionable links between the reeve and individuals and firms with a direct financial interest in decisions made by the Township Council and Planning Board.

³⁷³ Quoted from "Gramarcy Tried Bribery Crockford Car Purchase Creates Suspicion," *Toronto Star*, November 24th 1955.

In summation Judge Forsyth's declared: "[t]he most charitable view that could be taken is that [Crockford] has acted in a most imprudent and irregular manner."³⁷⁴ Coming only 12 days before the 1955 municipal election, Crockford had little time to recover from the blow to his public image. Critics, especially his opponent in the election, Gus Harris, a former school trustee and sitting councillor, were the main beneficiaries. On election night, riding a wave of voter outrage, Harris defeated Crockford handily, acknowledging in his victory speech to supporters that "it was a protest vote ... a vote against the type of business that the public evidently will not condone."³⁷⁵ For his part, Harris had campaigned as a reformer promising to "reduce taxation by establishing a better ratio of industrial and residential development, an independent industrial commissioner, night meetings of council so residents [could] attend, council making policy with township officials administering it, and 100 percent cooperation with Metro, particularly in planning and development."³⁷⁶

Much later, a 1981 story in the *Toronto Star* revisiting Crockford's legacy would dub him "Mr. Scarborough", and, brushing past the scandal that ended his tenure as reeve, credit him with turning "Scarborough from a rural backwater into a modern, heavily industrialized and financially sound municipality."³⁷⁷ By this time Harris—many years removed from his single one-year term as reeve in 1956, was mayor of Scarborough having been elected in 1978 after a long career as a councillor, alderman,

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

³⁷⁵ "Make Plenty Now, Nobody's Business -- Crockford," *Toronto Star*, December 6th 1955.

³⁷⁶ "Crockford seeks 9th term in Stiff Scarboro Battle," *Toronto Star*, November 30th 1955.

³⁷⁷ William Bragg, "Architect of the Golden Mile turns 88," *Toronto Star*, March 17th 1981.

and controller—was more magnanimous toward his erstwhile rival, remarking “I didn’t agree with the way he did things, but I did agree with most of the things he did.”³⁷⁸ In retrospect, Crockford’s legacy had become twofold: he was the dynamo behind Scarborough’s early postwar industrialization, the “architect” of the Golden Mile, and in Harris’ words, “he also made it possible for thousands of people to buy low-cost homes.”³⁷⁹

“Cadillac” Crockford, the Golden Mile, and the “unplanned” sprawl of bungalows from the 1950s have become interconnected elements in a kind of lore or mythic geography that has enveloped Scarborough closer to the present—the simplified historical narrative mobilized to explain Scarborough’s rise and fall as postwar suburb, and link it to more general thinking about postwar suburbia. For example, a recent *Toronto Life* article reduced the Golden Mile area and Crockford’s role in producing it to the “postwar model for success: workers who earned a living wage, lived close to the industry that employed them, and made things that they then bought at the nearby shopping centre. This was the symbiotic dream.”³⁸⁰ The truth was a little more complicated. As the author points out, during Scarborough’s formative postwar years Crockford “worked both sides of the street—champion of the people and the developers.” Aside from his role in pushing forward with the purchase of the GECO lands and

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

³⁷⁹ Ibid.

³⁸⁰ Don Gillmor, “The Scarborough Curse: How Did Boring, White-Bread Scarberia, The Butt of Mike Myers Jokes, Become Scarlem--A Mess of Street Gangs, Firebombings and Stabbings?,” *Toronto Life*, December 2007, 89.

attracting industrial firms to build new plants on serviced lands sold to them by the Township at a profit, Crockford is also said to have allowed “the highest density of single-family units per acre in the city, maximizing profits for developers and giving working people a chance to own their own homes.”³⁸¹

Like the postwar suburb more generally, assessing Crockford and his impact is far from easy or straightforward. Both are multi-layered, complex, and contradictory. Comparing later accounts with newspaper coverage at the time helps to distinguish between myth and reality. Crockford was a colourful character with a driven, willful personality, but his achievements were not forged alone or in a vacuum. He had allies on Township Council and was remarkably popular with Scarborough voters for a time. He was also polarizing, and was opposed on council by vocal critics who questioned the impact of his pro-growth approach on the Township’s finances. They also brought unwanted attention to the less than transparent governance practices and management style that had evolved under his leadership. But ultimately, Crockford’s rise and fall tells us something more.

In *the Suburban Society*, sociologist S.D. Clark discusses “the Crockford movement” in Scarborough. For Clark, Crockford’s rise to power and 8-year reign during the intense, first postwar decade of rapid suburbanization can be explained by his ability to stoke internal grievances and direct them at scapegoats that could bind together enough

³⁸¹ Ibid.

old and new residents to give them “a sense of common purpose and identity”.³⁸² He points out that amongst municipal and planning experts there was concern about the precariousness of Scarborough’s finances in the late 1940s. There was also wider concern about municipal finances across the Toronto area. As a result, the province initiated serious deliberations on the reform of local government as related to so-called metropolitan problems. During the ensuing political wrangling, the City of Toronto applied to the OMB to annex the built-up areas of municipalities adjacent to it. That aroused suspicion and anti-urban sentiments in the suburbs, which had already made their vocal objection to unification known.

Crockford was a conservative populist and particularly vociferous opponent of amalgamation. He was able to tap into that issue and use it to stir a kind of reactionary populism that focused on protecting Scarborough from an external threat to its existence. Even though amalgamation was being entertained by the City and province to address the fiscal pressures placed upon suburban municipalities by rapid metropolitan growth, and sought to tap the rich assessment of downtown Toronto to alleviate the strain placed on modest suburban tax bases, “[w]hat developed under Mr. Crockford’s leadership was something of a mass crusade directed at saving the suburbs from the city.”³⁸³ His arguments against amalgamation hinged on inverting the situation and suggesting that the City of Toronto was poorly managed and it was now attempting to spread its burdens onto the suburbs. The attachment to Crockford in Scarborough, according to Clark, was

³⁸² Clark, *The Suburban Society*: 200.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, 202.

based upon his ability to make residents feel that criticism directed at him was criticism of the Township itself. The revelations of the township probe shattered the “us” versus “them” dynamic, and refocused critical attention inside Scarborough on Crockford himself, revealing the slipshod mixing of public- and self-interest in his dealings.

In retrospect, this made Crockford an important, but transitional figure. He emerged at the start of a new wave of suburbanization after an interregnum had tempered the suburban trend. The Scarborough he emerged to lead was still essentially a product of the first wave of suburbanization in the Township. The first half of the 20th century was marked by a slow transition from a wholly rural, agricultural township into one split between an urban population oriented toward Toronto in the southwest corner and to a certain extent along the length of the Kingston Road, and the still largely rural rest of Scarborough. During the two decades that followed the Second World War, Scarborough was transformed from a rural township with a suburban community growing in its southwest corner into a sprawling postwar suburb, and more importantly, a new kind of city. And in the immediate postwar years, rapid urban growth proceeded faster than institutional reforms to municipal governance. It was in that context, that Crockford pushed Scarborough through the early years of its postwar transformation.

The Boom Continues

Following his defeat as reeve in 1955, Crockford became a municipal consultant. He stated to reporters on election night after conceding defeat, that “[a]t least I can make

plenty of money on real estate now and it's nobody's business."³⁸⁴ Or as the *Toronto Star* reported: "Mr. Crockford now plans to market his municipal experience and offers to help municipalities, industrial concerns, subdividers, and promoters who wish expert advice on getting plans through municipal and provincial bodies."³⁸⁵ In effect, he was taking his boosterism and expertise to do for hire what had got him into trouble as a politician. His lobbying on behalf of clients as a municipal consultant would garner him occasional newspaper coverage in the late-1950s and early-1960s, and in the mid-1960s, Crockford enjoyed a brief comeback in local politics, getting elected to Township Council for a couple of years before fading from public view after a final, unsuccessful run for the Scarborough Board of Control in 1966.

Commenting on the Liberal nomination meeting that selected Crockford to run for the York-Scarborough seat in the Ontario legislature in the 1959 election, the *Toronto Star's* Ron Haggart noted "the lamb who did not get the nomination, was the present reeve of Scarboro—quiet, parochial and spectacled school teacher Ab Campbell" did not mention "all that past tawdry business with which Judge Forsyth concerned himself."³⁸⁶ Albert Campbell lost, but would dominate Scarborough politics at the municipal level for the next decade. First as reeve from 1957 to 1966, and then as mayor after the Township

³⁸⁴ "Make Plenty Now, Nobody's Business -- Crockford."

³⁸⁵ "Gramarcy Tried Bribery Crockford Car Purchase Creates Suspicion."

³⁸⁶ Ron Haggart, "Brand-New Name on Reform Ticket: 'Cadillac' Crockford," *Toronto Star*, January 15th 1959.

became a Borough in 1967. In the fall of 1969, Campbell became Metro chairman and stepped down as Mayor of Scarborough.³⁸⁷

We can glean valuable insight into Scarborough's maturation into a large, suburban community or metropolitan borough from Campbell's rise to Metro chairman. A 1969 *Globe and Mail* article assessing his potential fit as Metro chairman paints him as the personification of Scarborough's gradual shift from rural-suburban backwater to a place embracing the beginnings of metropolitan urbanity.

Rural Ontario clings to the man who has been Scarborough's mayor for three years and reeve for 10 years. It is apparent in his soft, slow speech, in the economy of his words. It shows in his reluctance to part with an acre of the remaining 19-acre family farm at Markham Road and Eglinton Avenue. It shows when he objects to a horse barn for Metro Police horses costing \$100,000.

But the shift from farmer-school teacher to full-time politician does not seem to have been difficult for Mr. Campbell. For one thing, Scarborough has been urbanized at about the same rate as Mr. Campbell, and for neither is the process complete.

However, just as the open spaces of Scarborough are gradually being filled with buildings, so too is a noticeable urbanity creeping into some of the mayor's statements.

For instance, in 1958, after only one term as reeve, Mr. Campbell objected strongly to Toronto's new \$27-million City Hall, calling it "a futuristic luxury." This year, his greatest project has been shepherding through planning board and council plans for a \$400-million town centre, which will house Scarborough's municipal functions along with a shopping centre and recreational complex. In the area of civic

³⁸⁷ "Scarborough now needs a new mayor," *Toronto Star*, October 1st 1969.

development, both Scarborough and its mayor have come a long way.³⁸⁸

When he passed away in 1973, after battling cancer, a *Toronto Star* columnist wrote “They called him Honest Ab—and he was”, describing Campbell as a man of “leanings and inclinations rather of burning, crusading convictions ... quiet and unpretentious.”³⁸⁹ Their counterpart, the *Globe and Mail* described Campbell as a “folksy urban politician in the Metro Toronto civic federation”, tellingly noting “he enjoyed informal get-togethers with small groups of citizens but was also concerned that growing citizen involvement in civic affairs could lead, in the wrong hands towards a radical confrontation that would achieve nothing for the community.”³⁹⁰

This seeming tension or paradox—between Campbell’s down-to-earth, folksy persona and preference for meeting and talking with ordinary citizens and his reticence toward increased citizen involvement in decision-making—provides valuable insight into how Scarborough grew and developed from the late-1950s through the 1960s, as well as the momentous changes during his term as Metro chairman from 1969 to 1973. In the middle of his tenure as reeve and mayor of Scarborough, in 1962, the *Toronto Star* endorsed his bid for re-election as reeve on the basis that he had “given Scarboro level-headed administration.”³⁹¹ A year earlier, a reporter observed that Campbell’s “carefully

³⁸⁸ Susan Anderson, “The shift from rural to urban: Can a farmer become Metro chairman?,” *Globe and Mail*, July 28th 1969.

³⁸⁹ Michael Best, “They called him Honest Ab--and he was,” *Toronto Star*, August 31st 1973.

³⁹⁰ “Albert McTaggart Campbell: Folksy former Chairman wanted more authority for Metro, less provincial interference,” *Globe and Mail*, August 31st 1973.

³⁹¹ “The Suburban Candidates,” *Toronto Star*, November 23rd 1962.

worded comments and sage advice drawn from a vast experience have a quieting influence on council discussions ... For the members of council, [he] will list off facts and figures, rules and responsibilities of various levels of government to prove his points.”³⁹² Campbell seemed to excel at quiet diplomacy and generally staked out carefully considered positions on matters before council.

It is not as though the context—rapid growth and development—had changed much, however. Campbell was reeve and mayor during a period of sustained rapid growth that matched, if not outstripped, that of Crockford’s tenure. As important, growth from the late-1950s through the ‘60s involved the suburban apartment boom and the proliferation of supermarkets and larger, enclosed shopping centres. It was also a period in which large public housing projects in the suburbs appeared. In short, Campbell’s time as reeve and mayor did not lack for planning issues and controversies. High-rise apartments, in particular, aroused opposition from residents and ratepayer groups, which in turn was reflected in political discourse, especially at election time. As one *Globe and Mail* article put it during the 1964 municipal elections, in the larger municipalities of Metro “[e]very candidate has had a fling at defending the single-family homeowners from the intrusion of these 20-story monsters into their residential areas.”³⁹³

Despite the potential for conflict and discord over the costs and form of suburban growth and development in the 1960s, Campbell appears to have never faced a serious challenge to his political leadership as a result of it. His tenure as reeve and mayor, in

³⁹² Godfrey Scott, "Scarboro Class Was Out of Order," *Globe and Mail*, April 7th 1961.

³⁹³ ———, "High-Rise Apartments Key Issues in Suburbs " *Globe and Mail*, December 7th 1964.

retrospect, was characterized by a continuation of the postwar boom and a steady, but discernable maturation of Scarborough. Indeed, an important part of his campaign pitch to voters in the 1964 municipal election was “that only after he took over was order brought out of Scarboro’s planning chaos ... he want[ed] voters to judge him on his record of guiding the township’s explosive growth since [1957].”³⁹⁴

As has already been noted, Scarborough’s growth and development under Crockford was not thought to have been well “managed”. Though Crockford eagerly promoted and sought industrial development, he also campaigned on a platform of “unrestricted residential development”. Critics saw that as irresponsible because it placed a heavy burden on the existing tax base.³⁹⁵ In the early 1950s, it was still feared that the debt-load being assumed to extend roads, water mains, and trunk sewers, as well as increase pumping and treatment plant capacity, might overwhelm township taxpayers should an economic downturn cause growth prospects to dim as had happened during the 1930s. More than that, the influx of young families into predominantly modest new houses placed significant financial pressures on suburban municipalities like Scarborough as they strained to build and operate new or expanded schools and educational facilities to keep pace with increasing demand. Education costs were making residential

³⁹⁴ "Metro's municipal elections: the people and the issues," *Toronto Star*, November 23rd 1964.

³⁹⁵ "May Restrict New Housing Debate Heated in Scarboro," *Toronto Star*, September 25th 1952; "Give Crockford Sixth Term Sly Apps is new Trustee," *Toronto Star*, December 9th 1952.

development “no longer a profitable practice” in the large suburban municipalities that possessed the land to absorb the bulk of Metro’s rapid population growth.³⁹⁶

The provincial government looked to Metro to alleviate the financial stresses placed upon suburban municipalities by rapid population growth and development. Within Scarborough itself, planning was looked to as a means for growing in a more “systematic and orderly fashion”.³⁹⁷ The completion and adoption of an Official Plan for the Township roughly coincided with the start of Albert Campbell’s tenure as reeve in 1957.³⁹⁸ The plan was intended to guide development in Scarborough until 1980, curb land speculation, and protect the value of properties in areas that were already developed.³⁹⁹ The Official Plan was influenced by the design and planning of the Don Mills area in nearby North York and was concerned with determining the pattern of overall land use, organizing new residential areas into communities and neighbourhoods, with each centred on a shopping centre and public school respectively, and the phasing of development through the timed installation of public works. A desire for balanced assessment can be detected in the large tracts of land set aside as industrial areas. It was hoped the Official Plan, along with expanded administrative support and capacity for

³⁹⁶ Alex Henderson, "Declare Backbreaking Education Costs Kill All Plans for Housing," *Toronto Star*, May 2nd 1952.

³⁹⁷ "20-Year Plan For Expansion Kept Flexible," *Globe and Mail*, May 9th 1958.

³⁹⁸ See Scarborough Planning Board, "Official Plan for the Borough of Scarborough." Scarborough’s Official Plan approved in 1957 and was then amended as needed (revised editions were published with a list of amendments) through to 1985 when it was significantly overhauled. See Scarborough Planning Department, "City of Scarborough Official Plan: Office Consolidation to May 1, 1985," ed. Scarborough Planning Department (City of Scarborough 1985).

³⁹⁹ "Scarboro Studies Development Plan for 480,000 Population," *Globe and Mail*, April 6th 1957. See also "Land-Use Plan Wins Approval," *Globe and Mail*, April 12th 1957; "Land-Use Plan is Approved in Scarboro," *Toronto Star*, April 12th 1957.

planning, would gradually make decisions by council and planning board on development less arbitrary or ad-hoc.

In retrospect, Reeve Campbell was a both a shaper and product of the times.

Though he belonged to the rural past, he did not lack enthusiasm for growth and development. His comments on Metro as it neared its tenth anniversary capture this well:

When I was a young fellow in Ridgetown, I used to dream of seeing places develop. I never expected to be in the midst of it. I get a thrill now to drive around Scarboro and think back 10 or 12 years. I go to the corner of Warden and Lawrence, and remember how I went there one day and they were threshing.

Everywhere you go now in Metro, you can see the bulldozers working and the steel going up and the trucks on the road. I like it: it's growth. The reason for it? I'd say opportunity. Opportunity makes opportunity.⁴⁰⁰

Crucially, Campbell's tenure as reeve and mayor benefited from the presence of an official plan to guide development decisions before council and overlapped with the contributions of Metro to the development of physical infrastructures needed public works to support growth and development. Unlike Crockford, who bitterly opposed the creation of Metro, Campbell came to view Metro entirely differently:

Where Metro really helped Scarboro was in putting the capital assets of the entire area behind our financing. Sewers were our big problem. Because of Metro, we were able to get the money to build them where we wanted and when we wanted. This was a great help to our development, and it let us put an effective end to septic-tank subdivisions. Metro helped us with the financing of schools, roads, and everything else ... If we were still a separate municipality, and had to

⁴⁰⁰ Richard J. Needham, "Boomtown Metro!," *Toronto Star*, October 24th 1963.

borrow on our own, we just couldn't afford it. Our development would be stymied.⁴⁰¹

Though seldom acknowledged, Metro paid political dividends for suburban politicians. Metro made it easier for Scarborough to approve development in general, because it shifted decision-making away from the plane of year-to-year or immediate local fiscal capacity and toward a comprehensive longer-term vision for growth and development as was codified in Scarborough's official plan, as well as that of Metro.

The Suburban Apartment Boom

According to Graeme Stewart, "between the late 1950's and the 1970's the Toronto area grew to a region of millions regulated thoroughly by guidelines" laid down by Metro planners.⁴⁰² Large-scale, high-rise apartments grew to become the predominant form of housing during this time period—indeed, by 1966, he reports, "nearly 40% of the [Metro's] housing stock and 77% of housing starts were apartments of this type." As a Metro suburb, Scarborough was a participant in this mass housing boom, but it participated in the production of what Stewart calls the "inverted metropolis" less for the reasons laid out by architect-planners who saw apartment towers as a way to combine "the best housing standards possible with the responsible use of land", and more because

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

⁴⁰² Graeme Stewart, "The Suburban Tower and Toronto's First Mass Housing Boom," *Architecture and Ideas* VI, no. 1-2 (2007): 85.

“[d]ensities offered profit margins for both speculative developers and municipalities looking for tax revenues.”⁴⁰³

Though industrial assessment was still sought to achieve a more balanced assessment mix overall, by the late-1950s Scarborough Council saw apartment houses as a way to improve its assessment mix on the residential side.⁴⁰⁴ As Reeve Campbell put it apartments could be considered an asset to the township because they cost “the municipality less to service, per unit, than single-family houses.”⁴⁰⁵ Another problem, not unrelated to assessment mix, lay behind this support for apartment houses, however.

We’re particularly interested in limited dividend apartment buildings as a means of solving our housing problem and eliminating the need of basement apartments ... These limited dividend apartments are the type of housing we need to alleviate conditions where two or three families are living in single-family houses. If anyone wants to help those persons in the lower-income brackets who cannot afford to buy homes, this is one of the ways it can be done – and done quickly and cheaply.⁴⁰⁶

Scarborough Council had tried to enforce its bylaw prohibiting basement apartments, but the practice was thought to be widespread, involving as many as a quarter or one-third of homeowners. Campbell was opposed to the conversion of houses into apartment units, but “condoned the use of small basement apartments for relatives and said many homeowners rented their apartments because they were forced to financially.”⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰³ Ibid., 97.

⁴⁰⁴ "Apartment Buildings Sought by Scarboro," *Globe and Mail*, August 23rd 1960.

⁴⁰⁵ "Reeve Asks New Deal For Scarboro's 200,000," *Globe and Mail*, December 29th 1960.

⁴⁰⁶ "Rising Total Of Apartments Wins Approval," *Globe and Mail*, May 9th 1958.

⁴⁰⁷ "Scarboro Plans Tests in Court On Cellar Rental," *Globe and Mail*, September 4th 1957.

The problem for the township was a financial one as it had to provide services to the additional adults and children in basement apartments without a means for generating the tax revenue needed to cover the increased costs. One newspaper article referred to residents living in basement apartments as “ghost citizens”, a problem for Scarborough’s board of education “because, since they don’t pay school taxes directly, their children show up for school with no advance warning.”⁴⁰⁸ It was reported that if finished basements were detected homeowners were required to pay an additional \$60 dollars per year in taxes—far less than the approximately \$190 a year in taxes that could be expected from a conventional apartment unit. Ratepayers not renting out their basements were also critical of the practice, worrying that it was “unsanitary” and would negatively impact their property values.⁴⁰⁹ The problem, however, could not simply be addressed by enforcing the bylaw against basement apartments, as “[a] crackdown on illegally occupied basements would turn hundreds of families into the streets; followed by their landlords. The effect on real estate and the economy of the whole area can be imagined.”⁴¹⁰ As a result, other low-cost housing, particularly apartment houses, it was thought, would lessen the demand for basement apartments and offer a better long-term solution.

Apartments were not without their own complications, though. For one, the provincial government halted construction of new apartments in the fall of 1959 until

⁴⁰⁸ "Half Council Lazy Should Quit: Reeve," *Toronto Star*, October 8th 1959.

⁴⁰⁹ "Scarboro Plans Tests in Court On Cellar Rental."

⁴¹⁰ Stanley Westall, "Future of Reeve Depends on Basement Apartments Issue," *Globe and Mail*, August 26th 1959.

Scarborough tightened its planning framework by adopting secondary plans to clarify where different types of residential development were to be permitted.⁴¹¹ Scarborough had already approved the construction of apartments on Eglinton Avenue East and Kingston Road. Indeed, the planning board was said to be “packing ‘em in on Eglinton Ave East.”⁴¹² According to Don Easton, Scarborough’s Director of Planning, the stretch between Birchmount Road and Kennedy Road on Eglinton Avenue East had become “one of the most densely populated sections in the Township” with some 3,000 people already living in seven apartment blocks.⁴¹³ For that reason he advised against the rezoning of a commercial site for another apartment building, pointing out that the Ionview community was already deficient in park land and had no sidewalks for children to use for getting to and from the local public school, which was already the largest in the Township. Reeve Campbell let it be known he was “not happy” with the application, but only because it would require amending the area’s secondary plan so soon after the planning board and council had approved it.⁴¹⁴

That concern aside, it is clear that apartments were in vogue with Scarborough planners and politicians. The recently approved secondary plan for the area was expected to result in the construction of another ten apartment buildings in the same stretch of

⁴¹¹ "Official Wants Explanation: Says Nickle Tinkered with Scarboro Plan," *Toronto Star*, October 30th 1959; "Metro News: Apartment Ban to End?," *Toronto Star*, December 4th 1959.

⁴¹² "Another Block for 'Apt. Row'," *Toronto Star*, December 29th 1960.

⁴¹³ Ibid.

⁴¹⁴ "Scarboro Reeve 'Unhappy': High-Rise Apartment Zoning Change Sought," *Toronto Star*, January 9th 1960.

Eglinton Avenue East.⁴¹⁵ The primary motivation for permitting apartments was also transparent. Rezoning the property in question from its existing commercial designation to permit a high-rise apartment could be expected to double its tax yield.

Though Scarborough's official plan designated lands at the centre of new communities for apartments and other higher-density housing, by the late-1950s and early-1960s much of the Township had already developed in a unwieldy, unplanned fashion. Booming growth was accepted, expected to continue, even celebrated as progress, especially by politicians. Residents were often less enamored, however, and often led by ratepayer and community associations, they appeared at Scarborough's planning board and township council to voice their opposition not only to apartments but also to plans for "low-rental" housing projects, which began to multiply in number during this time period. The latter were linked to a Provincial-Federal government partnership with Metro that aimed to build 9,000 units of low-cost rental housing on suburban sites by 1965, including developments in Thistletown in northern Etobicoke, the Jane Street and Keele Street district of North York, and eventually the Malvern area in Scarborough.⁴¹⁶ Smaller projects were proposed for Scarlett Road in South Etobicoke and Warden Avenue in Scarborough, as well as off O'Connor Drive in North York.

Three cases are illustrative. The first involved a proposal for a low-rental housing project to be built on Orton Park Road between Lawrence Avenue East and Ellesmere Road. After Metro council announced the plan several hundred residents from the Curran

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

⁴¹⁶ "9,000 Units by '65, Low-Rental Program," *Globe and Mail*, March 17th 1959.

Hill Park, Heather Heights, and Churchill Heights subdivisions in the area planned to attend the next Scarborough council meeting to protest it.⁴¹⁷ They were reported to be fearful that a subsidized housing project would lower the value of their homes. After Reeve Albert Campbell expressed his strong opposition to the project at Metro council, Scarborough residents were accused by another councillor of being “snobs”. Charles Middleton, president of the Curran Hall Park Ratepayers Association, later replied:

It’s not a matter of being snobbish. After all, most of us here have sunk our life saving in these homes and we feel we live now in a decent subdivision and all we’re interested in is trying to prevent their value from being set back. It’s all right for people to talk who live nowhere near a subsidized housing project, but when there’s one going up right next door it’s another story.⁴¹⁸

Reeve Campbell couched his opposition in economics. Scarborough, he argued, had a relatively weak assessment base and more children to educate than most other municipalities in the Metro federation—it could not afford the financial burden that a public housing project would place on the Township.

Ron Haggart of the *Toronto Star* questioned whether the situation was so burdensome to Scarborough.⁴¹⁹ The low-rental housing project being planned, he noted, was to include 97 single-family detached houses for rent, while another 283 homes were to be built by private builders and sold to the public. And Scarborough was expected to receive full taxes from all 380 houses, along with generous subsidies from the senior levels of government to defray other costs associated with the project. Haggart concluded

⁴¹⁷ "Area Fights Subsidized Housing," *Toronto Star*, October 17th 1958.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid.

⁴¹⁹ Ron Haggart, "Scarboro's Subsidy Swiftly Subsidies," *Toronto Star*, October 24th 1958.

all things considered Scarborough did not come out too badly in the arrangement. For him, Reeve Campbell was seeking to join with opponents of low-cost, subsidized housing, but without wishing to be associated with the nasty rhetoric of area homeowners, who were thinking less about taxes and more about “glorified slums”, “depreciated property values”, and “beat-up automobiles”.

The second case concerns a battle against an “apartment city” by three ratepayers groups in Scarborough’s upscale Guildwood Village neighbourhood.⁴²⁰ The East Guildwood Community Association, the Guildwood Village Community Association, and Guildcrest Homeowner’s Association launched a last minute effort to curtail aspects of the Guildwood Community bylaw, which Scarborough Council had passed in late-1960, but which remained stalled at the OMB. The two community associations wanted lower densities, height restrictions, and landscape controls. Several areas within Guildwood Village were slated for apartments at 40 units per acre with no height limits. It was estimated that apartments housing as many as 3,000 people could be constructed. Both groups seemed principally concerned about the addition of taller buildings in the midst of a built-up single family area and wanted to ensure the apartments would be in line with the existing heights and character of the area. A third group, the Guildcrest Homeowner’s Association, which represented people on Guildcrest Drive in the west end of the neighbourhood, wanted to ensure that any remaining vacant lots would not be divided and have their frontages reduced from 100 to 50 feet.

⁴²⁰ Gordon Bleasdel, "Fight Apartment City in Swank Guildwood," *Toronto Star*, June 14th 1961.

In the end, only a handful of apartment blocks were constructed in Guildwood Village, including a couple of high-rise buildings on Livingston Road. A compromise appears to have been worked out that reduced densities and restricted heights where construction of apartments was most contentious, especially along Guildwood Parkway on either side of the Guild Inn.⁴²¹ The new secondary plan (Guildwood Community bylaw) and vocal opposition from residents may have dissuaded the developer H. Spencer Clark, also the owner of the Guild Inn, from fully pursuing what had been initially planned. Guildwood Village had been heralded in the *Globe and Mail*, a few years earlier, as a carefully planned “garden community” set to include homes, apartments, schools, churches, a shopping centre, parks, and recreation facilities.⁴²² From this description it would be tempting to see Guildwood Village as patterned on Don Mills. But space for industry was not included in the plans and the development had a more exclusive, higher-end aspect to it. A few houses situated on top of the Scarborough Bluffs with panoramic views of Lake Ontario were expected to sell for approximately \$100,000.

The third case involves an individual homeowner who appeared at the OMB on behalf of himself and his neighbours on Oakridge Drive (off Brimley Road) in order to speak against a rezoning of a six acre land parcel for a high-rise development.⁴²³ The resident, Patrick McGran, arrived at the OMB with 17 letters from his neighbours, who

⁴²¹ "Restrict Guildwood Density," *Toronto Star*, June 23rd 1961.

⁴²² Albert Warson, "Five Years of Planning for Gracious Living: Guildwood - the Fulfillment of a Dream," *Globe and Mail*, September 7th 1957.

⁴²³ Lex Schrag, "Little Man Speaks Up to Oppose Rezoning Bid," *Globe and Mail*, May 27th 1965.

he noted “had to work and couldn’t come to the hearing.” The chair, after initially pointing out the OMB gives little weight to letters, seemed more receptive when it was conveyed they authorized McGran to speak on behalf of their authors. He informed the chair that he and his neighbours opposed the rezoning on the grounds that high-rise apartments would mean a loss of privacy and depreciate the value of their properties. Asked by the chair why the latter should be expected to occur, he replied: “An appraiser for a real estate firm told me so.” Noting this was hearsay, the chair then asked why he had not called the appraiser as a witness? McGran pointed out that he and his neighbours could not afford to pay the appraiser to do so.

In the end, the OMB dismissed the rezoning application.⁴²⁴ The Township and the developer had not established the need for the subject lands to be developed at the 60 units per acre proposed. Nearby homeowners expected the zoning in place would ensure a certain type of development—single-family detached houses—would occur. In its decision, the OMB seemed to implicitly accept this argument, suggesting the “whole area should be restudied to determine what the ultimate land use be” and cautioned against allowing “piecemeal applications which cause the residential user to appear before the board time and time again to defend his [sic] rights at no little inconvenience.”⁴²⁵

Scarborough had adopted an Official Plan in large measure to guide development. That meant for some to ensure that further growth be directed toward achieving an efficient, economical pattern and form of development. For others, an Official Plan was

⁴²⁴ “Scarboro neighbours win stop Brimley Rd. hi-rise,” *Toronto Star*, June 11th 1965.

⁴²⁵ ———, “Fight for the Low-Rise Won for Little People,” *Globe and Mail*, June 11th 1965.

about protection—i.e. knowing with reasonable certainty what was permitted in a given area, so that they could invest or take on mortgage debt to purchase houses confident that their value was secured against detrimental changes. Unfortunately, the Official Plan and zoning were still new planning instruments as Scarborough underwent its initial period of explosive postwar growth in the 1950s. Even after the Official Plan was approved in 1957 it took several more years for the Township to draft and approve more detailed secondary plans for the residential communities and industrial districts south of the 401 Highway, area that had already undergone extensive development. The suburban apartment boom happened in that context and was met frequently with resistance from residents.

A New Kind of City

By the mid-to-late 1960s, another question began to emerge: how might Scarborough develop into something more than a disconnected patchwork of bungalows, ranchers, and split-levels, criss-crossed by roads lined with hamburger joints, car lots, gas stations, strip malls, and apartment towers, interspersed with sprawling industrial districts?

A 1965 *Toronto Telegram* article entitled “20th Century City Without A Centre” echoes that assessment, but is noteworthy because it drew attention to the abject beauty of the postwar suburban main street, and asked rhetorically if Scarborough was representative of a new kind of city:

SCARBORO A CITY? If a city then a city without a heart, a city with a five-mile neon drag strip for a main street and hamburgers its most prominent product.

If a city, then not one in the old sense of the word, but a new twentieth century sort of city without centre and without focus. Not an entity so much as a massive spawning of cheap housing across the countryside willy-nilly.

And yet with a flashy, tin-horn sort of beauty to it. Scarboro's main street, Eglinton Ave. (and some would even argue which is its main street) is an unpleasant sprawl of gaudy signs and untidy apartment blocks by day.

But if the sun sets right the neon signs flash against darkening skies, the buildings are shadows, and for a few moments Eglinton Ave. is beautiful.⁴²⁶

It is unclear what prompted the author to conclude that Scarborough might be "a new sort of city without centre and without focus", but the observation was prescient and anticipated discourse on the urbanization of the suburbs that would surface in the 1970s.⁴²⁷

Eglinton Avenue East in Scarborough provides a window into the combined role of suburban industry and shopping plazas in shaping Toronto's postwar suburbs. The Golden Mile was not simply a district of modern industrial plants, but also home to one of Ontario's first major shopping plazas. The Golden Mile Plaza opened in 1954 and was the site of Queen Elizabeth II's first visit to a supermarket in 1959. It opened with 35 stores, including a Loblaw groceteria, two department stores, a bowling alley, and a

⁴²⁶ Frank Jones, "20th Century City Without a Centre," *The Telegram*, June 18 1965.

⁴²⁷ Masotti and Hadden, *The Urbanization of the Suburbs*.

theatre.⁴²⁸ The Golden Mile Plaza was soon joined by the Eglinton Square shopping centre across the street, the Cliffside Plaza on Kingston Road, Parkway Plaza on Ellesmere Road, and a host of smaller neighbourhood plazas tracked residential development across Scarborough. At the time, it was noted: “[t]o the sprawling, mechanized suburb, glittering shopping plazas are fast becoming the modern counterpart to old village main streets.”⁴²⁹ Many plazas were designed with office space above the stores to make them more complete commercial entities. Gradually early postwar shopping plazas and their later, larger successors would satisfy more and more of the shopping needs of Scarborough residents, lessening their need to go downtown or to more established retail strips in the city.

Further north, the Township sought to repeat the success of the Golden Mile on a grander scale. Again the Township assembled and serviced the land, then parceled it off to industrial firms. The resulting 1,000 acre Progress industrial district, located from Ellesmere Road north to the 401 Highway between Kennedy Road and Markham Road, was to be a Golden Mile for the 1960s.⁴³⁰

The Township’s plans for the Progress area underline industry’s catalytic role in postwar metropolitanization. The 401 highway, completed in the mid-1950s, was envisioned as a “big magnet” for new industries on a metropolitan scale.⁴³¹ An

⁴²⁸ "Glitter to Mark Debut of Golden Mile Plaza," *Globe and Mail*, April 8th 1954.

⁴²⁹ "Plazas Follow Hard on Heels of New Houses," *Globe and Mail*, May 9th 1958.

⁴³⁰ "Tract Promoted As Golden Mile of New Decade," *Globe and Mail*, May 5th 1961.

⁴³¹ Alan Armstrong, "Toronto's \$13,000,000 By-pass Big Magnet for Industries," *Toronto Star*, June 13th 1953.

illustration published in *Toronto Star* in the early-1950s provides us with a snapshot of Fordist industrial Toronto in embryonic form, and portrays the 401 highway as new and integral connective tissue for the postwar metropolis's emergent space economy (see figure 3). If one looks closely at the two men standing in the old City of Toronto near the bottom of the map, one is saying to the other: “My beltline has expanded too”. A reference to the old belt line railway built to connect new suburban areas in the 1890s to Union Station downtown, the new by-pass highway is framed as the equivalent for a now much bigger and still-expanding urban area.

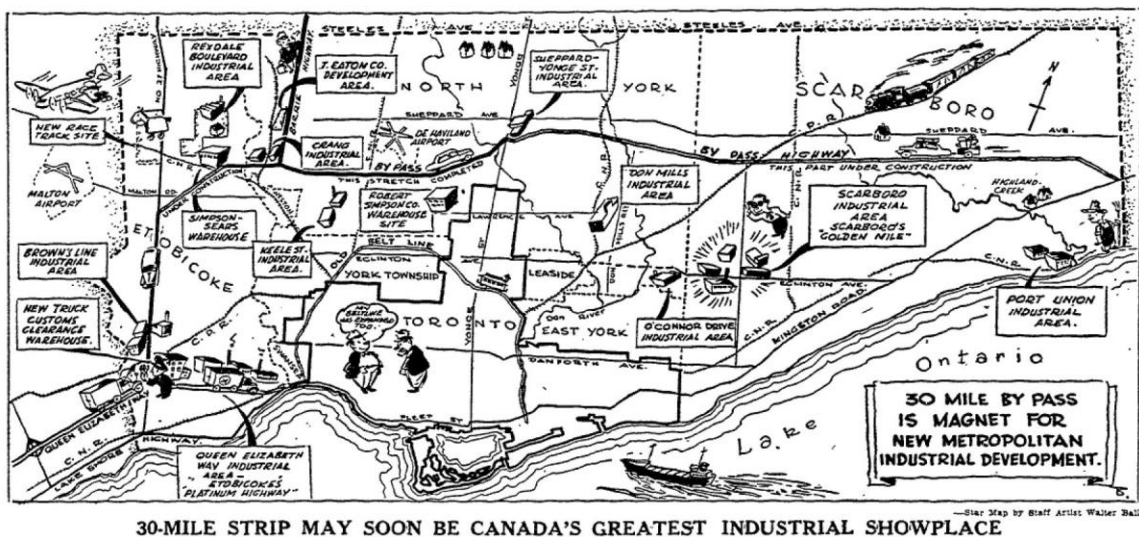


Figure 3 - Cartographic Depiction of Industrial Development (*Toronto Star* - June 13th 1953) © Toronto Star Newspapers Limited

Industrial districts located along or near Eglinton Avenue East—in Leaside (Laird Drive), North York (Don Mills Road), East York (O’Connor Drive), and Scarborough—would all be gradually superseded by industrial development closer to the 401 Highway and later along other 400-series highways outside of Metro. And in retrospect we can add

future retail nodes—community, regional, and super-regional shopping centres—and clusters of high-rise apartment towers to the map to create a fuller picture of the development and spatial structure of Metro as it would evolve over the next couple of decades.

The Golden Mile emerged first as an industrial centre, but quickly evolved into a multi-use node. As its drawing power grew retail-commercial activity began to emerge as an important feature and retail expansion would begin to compete for space with industry. In 1964, Steinberg—a department store and supermarket chain—applied to rezone the Lucas-Rotax plant at Eglinton Avenue East and Birchmount Road for a shopping plaza. The plant was idled after the Canadian government cancelled the Avro Arrow in 1959, and Steinberg was looking for a site in the Golden Mile area. Speaking to Scarborough’s Planning Board, Steinberg’s legal counsel described the company’s intentions as “[w]e seek to bring as many department stores together as possible, to transplant downtown to downtown Scarboro”.⁴³² Part of the company’s pitch was that the shopping centre would draw customers from all over Toronto. The proposal was opposed by Scarborough’s reeve and its planning director, and was ultimately rejected by its Planning Board.

Don Easton, Scarborough’s planning director, tabled 43 objections to the proposal, but three are worthy of mention. First, he defended the “careful planning” that went into the placement of commercial areas across the township and argued that “locations were calculated on the number of people in the community and their buying

⁴³² "Kill 'downtown Scarboro' Plan," *Scarborough Mirror*, March 25th 1964.

power ... and you cannot justify the need for another 100,000 sq. ft. of commercial development in that community.”⁴³³ Second, he cautioned that the Official Plan expressed the word of council and had shaped the investment decisions of others, including industrial firms. The precedent of rezoning an industrial area to commercial use would weaken confidence in the Official Plan. Third, he pointed out to the Planning Board assessment gained from the proposal, always attractive to municipal politicians, would likely be offset by the failure of smaller, existing businesses nearby. The proposed shopping centre, in his view, would not be large enough to be a regional draw and would simply cannibalize sales from within the existing community—i.e. local trade area.

Toronto Star columnist Ron Haggart neatly summarized the planning issues, political undercurrents, and competing interests at play in the rezoning decision in an article called “How Scarboro halted the Steinberg push”.⁴³⁴ He noted Steinberg had ruffled the feathers of municipal politicians and officials in Scarborough by commissioning a push-poll and using the results to proclaim wide support existed for their proposal and insinuate that “various vested interests” were opposing it. Those vested interests turned out to be the industrial neighbours and existing merchants. Haggart cuts through the specifics to highlight an important tension introduced by planning as directed by an Official Plan. Karl Mallette, a councillor and member of the Planning Board, had remarked: “We have a responsibility to our residents to attempt to control commerce but

⁴³³ Terry Carter, "How will we meet the EXPLOSION?," *Scarboro Mirror*, January 15th 1964.

⁴³⁴ Ron Haggart, "How Scarboro halted the Steinberg push," *Toronto Star*, March 20th 1964.

we have no right to limit competition in a free enterprise system.”⁴³⁵ Haggart picked up on this thread. For him, the matter was more about the proper function and limits of municipal planning—how much it should intervene in “competitive enterprise”—and had less to do with the immediate problems, specifics, or practical concerns raised by the Steinberg rezoning application.

The Steinberg proposal was in conflict with Scarborough’s Official Plan and its division of space into residential communities and industrial districts, and the rational allocation of commercial space to each. Scarborough would later revisit the issue of rezoning industrial land for commercial and residential use in response to plant closings, economic restructuring, and deindustrialization.⁴³⁶ In the mid-1960s, however, attracting industry in order to balance residential growth was a prime objective of municipal staff and politicians, and commercial space was rigorously determined by ratios and the projected population of planned residential communities.

Putting a Centre in the Middle

In the 1960s, Scarborough’s municipal politicians did begin to turn their attention toward the need for a new central core. One of the options first mentioned was the Lawrence Avenue East-Markham Road area—a new growth area to the north and east of the

⁴³⁵ "Kill 'downtown Scarboro' Plan."

⁴³⁶ Gay Abbate, "Plan for Knob Hill Store Stirs Competition Fears," *Globe and Mail*, October 15th 1986; ———, "'Supercentre' Proposal for Golden Mile Strip Comes Under Criticism," *Globe and Mail*, April 22nd 1986; D. Leblanc, "Not Much Remains of Scarborough's Golden Mile," *Toronto Star*, July 28th 2006.

Golden Mile, and the location of the new Cedarbrae Mall.⁴³⁷ Just as Kingston Road in Birchcliff and the Golden Mile became centres in the 1920s and 1950s respectively, continued growth was creating yet another centre in Scarborough. In 1958, the *Globe and Mail* reported that “one lonely and as yet unopened supermarket” at Lawrence Avenue East and Markham Road seemed to herald what might be one of the largest shopping developments in Metropolitan Toronto.⁴³⁸ Two shopping centres were already planned for the intersection, which lay at the centre of a community that after only two years of development already had 30,000 residents and was expected to eventually top out at 45,000. The Cedarbrae Mall, the largest plaza or shopping centre in the area, opened in 1962 and was anchored by a Simpson’s department store, which interestingly enough was described as “the establishment of an urban department store in a suburban community.”⁴³⁹

Again the comments of Scarborough planning director Don Easton are illuminating. Noting that the Cedarbrae community was amongst the fastest growing in Metro, he outlined how the Township’s Official Plan called “for the highest density of population to be in the core of the community, around Lawrence and Markham, where construction of a number of apartment blocks is under consideration. A circular road, to go right around the intersection, is already one-quarter completed.”⁴⁴⁰ Easton had already commented that the community, which covered 2,400 acres was comprised of nine

⁴³⁷ "Scarboro's proud review ends in discord, gloom," *Globe and Mail*, January 4th 1966.

⁴³⁸ "Big Project Is Heralded By Lonely Supermarket," *Globe and Mail*, November 29th 1958.

⁴³⁹ "Simpson's Opens Scarboro Store," *Globe and Mail*, August 6th 1962.

⁴⁴⁰ "Big Project Is Heralded By Lonely Supermarket."

neighbourhoods, each with a public school to serve it. Cedarbrae appears to be the first community in Scarborough where the Official Plan and its attempt to replicate the Don Mills model finally caught up with development and at least partially shaped the result.

Unlike the Golden Mile, Cedarbrae was not destined to become the new centre of Scarborough. The Township's municipal offices did not relocate to the Lawrence Avenue East and Markham Road area. Instead, by the late-1960s growth and the decision to build a new super-regional mall (the Scarborough Town Centre) and civic centre on a farmstead moved the centre further northward and back to the geographic centre of Scarborough, not far from where township council met before suburbanization began in the 1910s.⁴⁴¹ The projected was conceived shortly after Scarborough was transformed into a borough via a provincial restructuring of Metro. Now mayor instead of reeve, Albert Campbell announced Scarborough was to be the first borough in Metro to combine "its civic centre with a business and shopping centre" and that "it would be one of the greatest planning and development achievements conceived for the borough."⁴⁴² In contrast to the thinking that rejected the proposed Steinberg rezoning, support for this project was explicitly about creating a "heart" or "downtown" for Scarborough, but the locational choice was not merely about moving back to the geographic centre, it also reflected a new alignment between automobile, expressway, and retail-commercial activity in Toronto's metropolitan or urban regional space.

⁴⁴¹ "Scarboro considers move for civic offices," *Globe and Mail*, December 9th 1966; "Huge business centre planned," *Globe and Mail*, January 17th 1968.

⁴⁴² "Huge business centre planned."

David Philpott, president of Triton Centres Ltd., foresaw that “the area fronting on the [Macdonald-Cartier] Freeway between Kennedy and Markham roads was the undisputed core of future commercial growth”, while James A. Murray, an architect and planning consultant working on the project, noted that “Scarboro in every way is a city in itself, but needs a town centre to produce a dynamic urban image.”⁴⁴³ Curiously, where just four years earlier Scarborough officials claimed that Steinberg’s proposal for a 100,000 additional square feet of retail floor space would result in the Township having twice as much retail-commercial as it needed, proponents of the new development claimed that only 20% of the retail facilities for Scarborough’s eventual projected population of 500,000 existed.⁴⁴⁴

A new thinking or conception of Scarborough was taking hold. Just a decade earlier, Scarborough’s official plan had rationally and comprehensively divided up space into major land-use zones and organized residential areas into communities and neighbourhoods with retail-commercial space allocated to them according to their projected populations. Now municipal politicians and civic officials were prepared to support a business centre with more than 1.5 million square feet of retail space, parking for more than 8,000 vehicles, and assorted facilities for a trade or market area of more than a million people.⁴⁴⁵ In part, this shift can be attributed to Scarborough’s growth moving north of the 401 highway.

⁴⁴³ "Scarboro town centre project 'could begin in 2 years'," *Globe and Mail*, January 19th 1968.

⁴⁴⁴ "Kill 'downtown Scarboro' Plan.;" "Scarboro town centre project 'could begin in 2 years'."

⁴⁴⁵ "Huge business centre planned."

By the mid-to-late 1960s the higher-end Bridlewood area north of Sheppard Avenue East was under construction. By the early 1970s, new developments were north of Finch Avenue East in that area and moving eastward across the whole of northern Scarborough, particularly as the Malvern development—a federal-provincial low-cost housing project—got underway. While Scarborough’s Official Plan still called for neighbourhoods of about 5,000 residents with a small retail plaza, public school, and park organized as groups into communities with a major shopping centre and high schools, grafting a town centre or borough downtown into the mix came to be seen as a positive and necessary step.⁴⁴⁶ Not only was it thought a new centre or downtown would stimulate growth in Scarborough’s remaining blank spaces, but also there was a symbiotic relationship between northern residential development and the Town Centre project: the extension of municipal services to residential areas in the north would run through and serve the Town Centre area and industrial district near the 401 Highway.⁴⁴⁷

When the Town Centre and Civic Centre was set to open in May of 1973 the *Scarborough Mirror* published a special issue entitled “Scarboro’s heart starts beating” to commemorate the achievement. In one of the articles, former Scarborough Reeve and Mayor Albert Campbell recounts how the Town Centre and Civic Centre project came about.⁴⁴⁸ According to his version of events the T. Eaton Company Ltd. approached him

⁴⁴⁶ Terrence Belford, "Scarborough called Metro's last development frontier," *Globe and Mail*, March 24th 1972.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁸ "A deal in '65 -- a heart in '73," *Scarboro Mirror (special edition: Scarboro's heart starts beating)*, May 1st 1973.

in 1965 after they had acquired 170 acres of land from Brimley and McCowan Road wedged between Ellesmere Road and the 401 Highway. They told him they wanted to build a new store and he replied “[i]f you just want to build another department store and you haven’t any plans for the rest of 170 acres, I don’t think you’ll get any encouragement from us.” From that exchange a proposal for the site, which included a shopping centre, public square, and civic centre later emerged and was approved by Scarborough council. As the project came to fruition, Campbell, who had become Metro Chairman in the intervening years, declared: “the Scarboro Town Centre is the proper way of developing sub-core areas in Metro ... There’ll always be a central core in Toronto and a financial centre, but other core areas should form.”

The desire in Scarborough to have a downtown or core area form near its geographic centre did not occur in a vacuum. Nor did it go unaided by political changes occurring elsewhere in Metro. During the 1960s the City of Toronto worked on a major revision of its Official Plan, which coincided with a boom in apartment and new office construction, as well as private renovation of low-rise housing in downtown neighbourhoods. The resulting 1969 Official Plan ran headlong into a rising tide of public opposition to expressways, high-rise redevelopment, and urban renewal, which placed a coalition of ratepayers’ groups, tenants associations, urban professionals, academics, and community workers in conflict with the new plan’s pro-development, pro-growth

objectives and strategies.⁴⁴⁹ In 1972, opposition had coalesced into a reform movement strong enough that candidates it supported won a narrow majority on Toronto City Council. Among the consequences was a major overhaul of the Official Plan, and, in particular, the Central Area component of the plan.

Toronto's 1969 Official Plan supported extensive redevelopment of inner city residential neighbourhoods into high density apartment and commercial districts and permitted near "unlimited" expansion of major cultural, health, and education linked institutions, as well as places of entertainment. As the plan itself asserted:

The heart of the City is the functional centre of the Toronto region. This centre provides the region with governmental, financial, commercial, entertainment, educational, cultural, medical and other services. It is the policy of Council that, in the mutual interest of the City and the region, this situation shall continue as the region grows in extent and population.⁴⁵⁰

This vision came under near immediate attack as the reform movement began to assert itself on City Council. Among the chief concerns raised was the impact of rapid office development on transportation needs, the stability of residential neighbourhoods, and the appearance and character of the downtown environment. The groundswell of opposition reflected a lack of agreement on the proper role of the core—how to balance regional and local needs and interests.

Office towers and expanded institutional uses in the core not only put redevelopment pressure on adjacent residential neighbourhoods, but also increased the

⁴⁴⁹ Frances Frisken, *City Policy-Making in Practice: The Case of Toronto's Downtown Plan*, Local Government Case Studies (London: The University of Western Ontario, 1988).

⁴⁵⁰ The objectives and policies of Toronto's Official Plan as quoted in *ibid.*, 28.

demand for transportation facilities (transit, roadways, and parking). Gradually a consensus formed around creating suburban centres or downtowns, which could be linked to each other and downtown Toronto via a rapid transit system.⁴⁵¹ Suburban politicians were generally supportive. They favored the decentralization of new office development as it would create opportunities for work and recreational activities in their sub-centres. Metro planners were also supportive. They were keen to delay the need to increase rapid transit capacity south of the Bloor-Danforth subway. They also thought “the concept of decentralized growth centres” would encourage the Toronto area to develop into “a well-balanced metropolitan city” with jobs, housing, and recreation activities distributed more equally throughout its various communities.⁴⁵² As a result, the 1976 Metroplan (a draft Official Plan prepared by Metro’s planning department) proposed creating “major centres” in North York and Scarborough, as well as a number of “intermediate centres” at strategic intersections across Metro.

Just as Scarborough’s aspirations for a centre (i.e. downtown) did not materialize in isolation, neither did support for decentralization among Metro’s planners. The Metropolitan Toronto Transportation Plan Review (MTTPR), led by Richard Soberman and initiated by Metro and the province of Ontario after the cancellation of the Spadina Expressway, analyzed land use and transportation choices in combinations. The study which commenced in the summer of 1972 de-emphasized complex computer models,

⁴⁵¹ Ibid., 36.

⁴⁵² Marilyn Anderson, "Metro in 2001: 2.8 million people and still safe? Planners dream of three downtowns for Metro," *Globe and Mail*, May 8th 1976.

used a wide range of evaluative criteria, placed less emphasis on roads, tried to employ greater public participation, and was completed in December 1974.⁴⁵³ For most of its existence the MTTPR reported to Metro's Planning Board, as well as to the Joint Technical Transportation Planning Committee (JTTPC), which was made up of senior technical officials from Metro, the province, and the TTC. When the MTTPR published its findings in January 1975 one of the preferred options was the creation of high density, non-central area concentrations of employment and commercial activity, or sub-regional centres with enhanced accessibility and connectivity provided by regional and intra-urban rapid transit.⁴⁵⁴ Juri Pill, a member of the MTTPR's planning staff, would later write the ideas behind the policy shift articulated in Metroplan's "Concepts and Objectives" report—support for subcentres within Metro and a comprehensive transit network, rather than radial lines focused on downtown—"had germinated simultaneously in a number of places...but to a certain extent were brought into focus and given a substantive basis by the Transportation Plan Review."⁴⁵⁵

Like Scarborough and other Metro suburbs, the City of Mississauga to the west of Metro was also seeking to become more "self-sufficient" and was exploring the need for a core area or downtown, even if politicians and planners were unsure how residents felt

⁴⁵³ MTTPR, "Choices for the Future: Summary Report -- report no. 64," (Toronto: Metropolitan Toronto Transportation Review, 1975).

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid., 137-39.

⁴⁵⁵ Juri Pill, *Planning and Politics: The Metro Toronto Transportation Plan Review* (Cambridge (MA): The MIT Press, 1979). 165.

about the idea or where the new centre should be.⁴⁵⁶ Mayor Martin Dobkin saw it as simple choice:

You've got a place called Mississauga that has tripled its population in the past 10 years, is the fastest growing municipality in Canada, and in January 1974 became officially a "city." It's got a projected population of three-quarters of a million people.

Now, does it want to keep on being a dormitory suburb of Toronto, as it is now, only bigger and bigger, or does it want to be a city?

Do we want to keep on being an ugly, faceless, sprawling patchwork of subdivisions and shopping centres, with a lot of crummy strip plazas thrown in for trimmings—which is all we are now?

Or do we want to be a city, with a heart and an identity and a life of its own?⁴⁵⁷

Mayor Dobkin seemed convinced that Mississauga City Council and most residents supported becoming a city.

Others were less certain. Even if they supported the self-contained or self-sufficient vision for Mississauga, including the need for a downtown core, the changes needed to make it happen cut against the grain of what existed. Past decisions, especially the decision to allow construction of virtually no housing other than single-family detached homes on large lots, had made Mississauga the second wealthiest municipality in Canada.⁴⁵⁸ To become more city-like and create a downtown core would involve much higher density development than previously permitted, and Mississauga's new "reform"

⁴⁵⁶ Graham Fraser, "Mississauga wants a downtown: Getting to the core of the matter," *Globe and Mail*, February 10th 1975.

⁴⁵⁷ Rita Daly, "A dormitory suburb seeks its own destiny as a city," *Toronto Star*, March 13th 1975.

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

councillors ran for office in 1973 on anti-development platforms, and in particular, opposition to the “oppressive slabs of high-rise apartments that have been thrown up indiscriminately all along our main thoroughfares.”⁴⁵⁹ Existing residents might like the excitement, cultural amenities, and shopping found in downtown Toronto, but keen observers wondered if they would accept the social changes that would accompany an influx of “affordable” housing—i.e. apartments and medium density family housing like townhouses.

By the mid-1970s the thinking in Scarborough was that “public buildings and rapid transit would create the climate for development of a core about the size of downtown Toronto’s with living space for about 2,400 adults (but only 50 children) and working space for about 28,000.”⁴⁶⁰ Despite the desire for a downtown core to develop in Scarborough, like Mississauga, there was general opposition to more high-rise apartments. As Mayor Paul Cosgrove stated bluntly, “I just don’t believe high rise is suitable for family accommodation. Anything that stands high on the horizon is not going to be welcome.”⁴⁶¹ The desire to become more city-like had limits.

Scarborough had other reasons or motivations for seeking the development of a centre or downtown. Concerned about housing shortages, especially in terms of affordable family housing, Metro and the provincial government looked upon

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁰ Michael Keating, “Will Scarborough Find True Happiness...and a Downtown?,” *Globe and Mail*, December 12 1975.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid.

Scarborough's remaining vacant land with "bedroom eyes".⁴⁶² Key officials and politicians in Scarborough saw their centre or downtown as a place for civic administration and non-residential land-uses—i.e. as a major node of office and retail employment, but not living space. Scarborough saw the development of its "downtown" as a way to create balance within itself. Just as industry was looked to as a means to offset the impact of low-cost housing in the 1950s, office and retail development started to edge into the equation by the 1970s.

Connecting the Middle to the Centre?

John Sewell, a Toronto alderman, outlined the objective of decentralization as threefold: "to stop the concentration of office jobs downtown; to allow people the opportunity of living close to their place of work so expensive commuter systems are not necessary; and to create independent centres in Metro which have a life of their own."⁴⁶³ It was essential in his view that offices be built in "appropriate quantities in the chosen locations." Future problems would ensue if office space and jobs were scattered across the suburbs, though. The challenge for politicians and planners was to ensure that enough office space was built to foster new centres with enough on-the-ground activity to make them real downtowns, albeit in miniature. Crucially, Sewell recognized consensus had formed around the idea of connecting the new centres via rapid transit to downtown Toronto in order to catalyze private development interest. He argued it was unclear if such an

⁴⁶² Ibid.

⁴⁶³ John Sewell, "'New downtowns' at no cost to taxpayers?," *Globe and Mail*, December 21st 1976.

approach would work. Following the historical pattern of downtown development, he saw it as more logical to build a radial transit system in the suburbs to feed into the new centres. Failure to do that while at the same time providing rapid transit connectivity to downtown Toronto was more likely to encourage travel downtown and work against the basic idea of decentralizing office space to suburban downtowns.

The MTTPR staff and JTTPC had determined that a rapid transit line to serve the northeast sector of Metro, Scarborough, should be the highest priority.⁴⁶⁴ The cancellation of the Spadina and Scarborough expressways had turned governmental attention and resources toward rapid transit, and a subway extension was already approved for Spadina corridor. Scarborough, by contrast, was poorly served by transit and had the largest amount of vacant land available for development in Metro. And it was thought to be the place where a new transit facility would have the greatest potential to impact upon future land-use patterns.

But there were complications: competing needs and objectives. The Scarborough Expressway would have connected the eastern leg of the Gardiner Expressway to the 401 highway, while running through east Toronto and the southern half of Scarborough. It was not conceived to support the Scarborough Town Centre area become a sub-regional centre, but rather to connect Scarborough, and points further east, to downtown Toronto. By contrast, the new transit facility discussed by the MTTPR, a rapid transit line which after several twists and turns became the Scarborough Rapid Transit (SRT) line

⁴⁶⁴ Pill, *Planning and Politics: The Metro Toronto Transportation Plan Review*.

connecting the end of the Bloor-Danforth subway to the Town Centre, first emerged in the 1960s. New rapid transit lines emerged not simply as substitutes for cancelled expressways. They were conceived as part of a “balanced” transportation system for Metro that included expressways.

In 1966, the TTC considered removing streetcars from inner-city routes and redeploying to new routes on dedicated rights-of-way in North York and Scarborough.⁴⁶⁵ In Scarborough opposition from nearby homeowners led Township council to vote down the plan, 7 to 1.⁴⁶⁶ In 1968, two years after the Bloor-Danforth line opened, extensions added 2.72 miles and three stations to the east, including Warden Station in Scarborough, and 3.44 miles and 6 stations to the west, which took the subway into Etobicoke. The day the extensions opened a newspaper story pronounced: “Subway rolls to the suburbs.”⁴⁶⁷ The following year, a proposal for streetcar loop through Scarborough appeared as part of a long-term TTC plan that also included a Queen Street Subway, Eglinton Subway, and Spadina subway.⁴⁶⁸ The eight mile section of the streetcar loop through Scarborough was to “form an eastward extension of the Bloor-Danforth subway ... angle its way through the middle of the borough, passing close to its proposed Town Centre on Ellesmere Road and [end] near Malvern where Ontario Housing Corp. [was] to build housing for 40,000 people.” A version of this transit line was eventually built, but not using streetcars and it

⁴⁶⁵ "Buses for Toronto: Trams may vanish in 10 or 12 years," *Globe and Mail*, May 16th 1966.

⁴⁶⁶ "Council vetoes tram line," *Toronto Star*, June 28th 1966.

⁴⁶⁷ Doug Sagi, "Subway rolls to the suburbs: Day will live 'in song, verse,' Horton says," *Globe and Mail*, May 11th 1968.

⁴⁶⁸ Thomas Claridge, "Will use Queen Street trams: TTC plans street car line extension of subway through Scarborough," *Globe and Mail*, September 18th 1969.

has yet to be extended to Malvern. Indeed, more than 40 years later there is still no rapid transit operating north of the 401 Highway in Scarborough.

In 1971, Premier William G. Davis effectively put the brakes on expressway building in Metro by stating, “[i]f we are building a transportation system to serve the automobile, the Spadina Expressway would be a good place to start. But if we are building a transportation system to serve people, the Spadina Expressway is a good place to stop.”⁴⁶⁹ The decision soured relations between the province and Metro as the former had without warning unilaterally overturned a key component of the latter’s 1966 transportation plan.⁴⁷⁰ The aforementioned MTTTPR was tasked with the job of reviewing Metro’s 1966 transportation plan and fell into this crucible, becoming the de facto mechanism for determining how best to move forward under the new circumstances. Almost immediately, Scarborough council asked Premier Davis for an answer on how the cancellation of the Spadina Expressway might impact the Scarborough Expressway, only to be told that “any discussion at this point would be premature.”⁴⁷¹

A little over two months before the Spadina cancellation, the *Toronto Star* ran a story entitled “Now Son of Spadina rears its head in the east end.” The author noted the Scarborough Expressway decision was about competing needs and interests.

Metro, still growing and uncomfortably cramped, is faced with the agonizing choice between helping suburban residents get to work downtown faster by car, and preserving the homes and neighbourhoods

⁴⁶⁹ Statement in the Ontario Legislature by Premier William G. Davis, June 3, 1971. Quoted in Pill, *Planning and Politics: The Metro Toronto Transportation Plan Review*: 43.

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁴⁷¹ “Davis: Wrong time for freeway talk,” *Toronto Star*, June 16th 1971.

of those who live along the proposed route, which links the Gardiner Expressway with Highway 401.⁴⁷²

Opposition to the Scarborough Expressway was concentrated initially in the east Toronto neighbourhoods most directly impacted by the proposed route. It was estimated construction of the expressway and its on-and-off ramps beyond the extension along Lakeshore Boulevard to Coxwell Avenue would require the expropriation and demolition of approximately 1,220 houses.⁴⁷³

A neighbourhood group called ForWard 9 in the Beach area of east Toronto emerged as the early voice amongst opponents of the expressway and was soon joined by other residents and ratepayers groups, as well as veterans of the fight against the Spadina Expressway.⁴⁷⁴ After the Spadina Expressway cancellation it appeared the public had soured on expressways in Metro, prompting the *Toronto Star* to ask on its editorial page: "Where have all the supporters gone?"⁴⁷⁵ The night before the *Toronto Star* had sponsored a forum on the Scarborough Expressway at the St. Lawrence Centre Town Hall. It was attended by a 350 people, the vast majority of whom were strongly opposed to the roadway's construction.⁴⁷⁶

A panelist at the forum, a resident of Ward 1 in Scarborough's southwest corner and a member of the Scarborough Expressway Coalition, noted that opposition in

⁴⁷² Robert Gowe, "Now Son of Spadina rears its head in the east end," *Toronto Star*, March 20th 1971.

⁴⁷³ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid; Robert Sutton, "Scarborough Expressway foes say they'll fight," *Toronto Star*, September 7th 1973; Val Sears, "Scarborough Expressway plans zapped!," *Toronto Star*, September 17th 1973; Margaret Daly, "Stop-Scarborough movement grows," *Toronto Star*, October 6th 1973.

⁴⁷⁵ "Where have all the supporters gone?," *Toronto Star*, November 21st 1973.

⁴⁷⁶ Bill Bragg, "Star Forum audience applauds; Expressway called destructive," *Toronto Star*, November 21st 1973.

Scarborough was growing and that “a long-term solution would be building self-contained communities with employment, shopping and entertainment readily accessible.”⁴⁷⁷ Karl Mallette, Scarborough controller and TTC chairman and once staunchly pro-expressway, joined the ranks of opponents saying that “the Scarborough Expressway would be an inefficient people-mover and its use for the movement of goods could also be questioned.”⁴⁷⁸ Richard Soberman, director of the still in progress MTTTPR, chose not to take a side in the debate, but offered “[i]t all depends on what the objectives are ... [w]e’re attempting to zero in on the important issues.”⁴⁷⁹ Of course, central to the debate, he pointed out, was whether politicians and citizens want to curb the use of the automobile in Metro or not. Metro chairman Paul Godrey said he would vote in favour of constructing the expressway on the basis of the information available, but was waiting for the report of the MTTTPR before fully committing to a position on the matter.⁴⁸⁰

Premier Davis’ bold decision to cancel the Spadina Expressway—interpreted by some as a political gamble to rebrand a Tory government viewed as stale having been in power since 1943 and to differentiate himself from his predecessor Hon. John P. Robarts—delivered a majority government in the 1971 provincial election as Metro voters sent more members of his party to Queen’s Park to represent them. Two years after the decision Premier Davis pronounced himself “more satisfied than ever” that his government had made the right choice, but was non-committal on the question of the

⁴⁷⁷ "Total opposition to route forecast," *Toronto Star*, November 21st 1973.

⁴⁷⁸ "Expressways are out of date says Mallette," *Toronto Star*, November 21st 1973.

⁴⁷⁹ "Soberman settles for just 'maybe'," *Toronto Star*, November 21st 1973.

⁴⁸⁰ "I'll decide in February says chairman," *Toronto Star*, November 21st 1973.

Scarborough Expressway's fate.⁴⁸¹ Clearly, his unwillingness to publicly support the Scarborough Expressway emboldened opponents and gave them a certain legitimacy, which gradually translated into newspaper coverage and opinion pieces that hued toward qualified acceptance of anti-expressway arguments and a willingness to see rapid transit and expressways as competing, rather than complementary, elements in Metro's long-term transportation plans.⁴⁸²

The shift in public discourse was clearly aided by the consultation process and thorough analysis done by the MTTPR, and its conclusion the Scarborough Expressway could not be justified and recommendation that "immediate consideration be given to an alternative rapid transit line" to connect the east end of Scarborough to downtown Toronto.⁴⁸³ On the strength of the MTTPR report, Metro chairman Paul Godfrey backed away from his earlier support for the Scarborough Expressway on the grounds that "different conditions now prevail", though he continued to disagree with Premier Davis' decision on the Spadina Expressway.⁴⁸⁴ Michael Best, the *Toronto Star's* columnist at city hall, concluded favorably that in contrast to the unilateral decision by the provincial government to cancel the Spadina Expressway, "the Metro decision on the Scarborough expressway was cool and rational, the result of careful, expert study."⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁸¹ Thomas Coleman, "2 Years later: Davis 'more satisfied than ever' with Spadina decision," *Globe and Mail*, September 25th 1973.

⁴⁸² "Goodby highway, hello trolley," *Toronto Star*, March 8th 1974; "Not of these times," *Globe and Mail*, March 9th 1974.

⁴⁸³ _____, "Scarborough Expressway 'can't be justified,' report finds," *Globe and Mail*, March 8th 1974.

⁴⁸⁴ "Godfrey supports Soberman stand on killing freeway," *Toronto Star*, March 9th 1974.

⁴⁸⁵ Michael Best, "The proper way to halt an expressway," *Toronto Star*, March 13th 1974.

On its face, the question of how to move suburban commuters around Metro seemed to have been resolved in favor of transit improvement, especially the expansion of rapid transit into Metro's suburbs. That consensus, however, was fragile and masked deeper tensions. New rapid transit lines were certainly less destructive than expressways, but for some subways were not much better. Criticism of the proposed Queen Street subway, for example, echoed opposition directed at expressways. Ward 7 alderman John Sewell felt the proposed subway through his ward "would be an intrusion that would not bring any benefit to the area. They'd just be carving us up for another quick route downtown from Scarborough."⁴⁸⁶ He added: "What makes the people from the suburbs think they have some God-given right to travel through our area back and forth to work every day on subways and expressways? Let them take a street car so they can slow down and relax a bit."

He and fellow Ward 7 alderman Karl Jaffary feared that a subway would be accompanied by redevelopment pressures and the loss of homes and businesses. They also felt the inner city neighbourhoods they represented, which stretched from Sherbourne Street to Logan Avenue (east to west) south of Bloor Street and Danforth Avenue to Lake Ontario, were already well served by the existing streetcar system. They did not favour the use of rapid transit as a substitute for getting people from the suburbs in and out of downtown Toronto, but instead wanted decentralization to relieve the pressures being placed on the downtown core and surrounding neighbourhoods. In their

⁴⁸⁶ Thomas Coleman, "Little old ladies prefer street car: Queen St. residents against subway as threat to homes, business," *Globe and Mail*, December 11th 1973.

view, it would be more productive to direct growth pressures to corridors further north like Eglinton or Lawrence Avenue.

These comments hint at the deeper tensions growing within Metro. Both the centre-periphery structure and postwar consensus of central city redevelopment and suburban expansion appeared to be in flux. The mono-centric metropolis of dominant centre surrounded by dependant suburbs would become increasingly polycentric or multi-nodal going forward.⁴⁸⁷ But the new sub-centres or suburban downtowns would not supplant the dominance, real and symbolic, of the central city and downtown core of Toronto. The structure and patterns of everyday life in the sprawling post-1945 metropolitan or regional city could not simply be wished away. Nor, as would become apparent as time passed, could the divide between “old city” and “new city” be easily reconciled once it became rooted in differing interests and closely associated with values embodied in different spatial forms.⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁷ Relph, *Toronto: Transformations in a City and its Region*.

⁴⁸⁸ See for example: Sewell, "Old and New City."

Chapter 6: Contesting a “Normal Suburban-Type Community”

Introduction

Scarborough, as a large and still fast-growing postwar suburb, found itself placed in a metropolitan context in which its needs and development aims had to co-exist and be balanced with those of Toronto and the rest of the region. The election of Paul Cosgrove as mayor of Scarborough at the end 1972 was in large part a verdict on the style of development and governance that had prevailed in Scarborough during the 1960s. As noted in the previous chapter, his predecessor Robert White was seen as having been too cozy with developers and not sufficiently critical of proposals for apartment towers in established residential neighbourhoods. Cosgrove ran a simple campaign that called for better planning and greater involvement of citizens and neighbourhood groups in the planning and development process. Not anti-development, he nonetheless raised concerns about planning and development that echoed those heard during the boom years of the 1950s when Oliver Crockford dominated Scarborough politics and civic administration.

To better understand the reform impulse discussed in Chapter 5 that carried Paul Cosgrove into the mayor’s chair in the 1972 municipal election, it is necessary to attend to the balancing act that Scarborough increasingly had to perform as booming growth made it larger, more complex, and variegated. In the early-1970s, Scarborough was known as Metro’s “last frontier”, because it possessed the area’s final remaining large tracts of developable land and therefore was still being transformed by outward growth

on farm fields. At the same time in more established areas infill development and redevelopment was an important consideration and an aspect that would become increasingly important in the years to come. As Peter Poot, a senior Scarborough planner, put it: "Once we've got the blank spaces on the official plan filled up in the north then we go to the bottom of the map and start all over again."⁴⁸⁹

It is also important to consider the mindset of Scarborough residents and elected officials. The depiction of Scarborough as the "town where the boom never stops" was less boosterist rhetoric and more a statement of fact based on recent history and expectations for the next 15 years. Having grown almost tenfold since the end of the Second World War to approximately 250,000 residents in 1964, township planners and officials thought Scarborough was still set for the "biggest population explosion" in its history.⁴⁹⁰ Starting in 1966 they expected "marriages, births and new family formations" to surge and large areas north of the 401 highway were expected to begin to rapidly develop. This anticipated growth was projected to double Scarborough's population by 1980. Planning for this "explosion" was seen as vital in order to "eliminate possible damage" that might stem from it.

If the mid-1960s represented the midpoint of the boom, it was also a chance to take corrective measures to ensure future growth did not repeat past mistakes. In particular, it was hoped that the remaining development of Scarborough would unfold in a better planned and more orderly manner than had happened in the 1950s. *A History of*

⁴⁸⁹ Belford, "Scarborough called Metro's last development frontier."

⁴⁹⁰ Carter, "How will we meet the EXPLOSION?."

Scarborough's puts a celebratory gloss on the transformation that occurred as "farm after farm was quickly devoured by the bulldozers of subdividers" to make way for housing subdivisions, apartment towers, and factories in Scarborough's southern half. The harsher reality is much of that development occurred or was approved before a plan existed to guide it. As a result, the plan's principles were partially implemented as scattered development had already taken place. It was hoped that development of the still rural northern half of the Township would unfold in a more rationally and comprehensively planned manner.

Developing Metro's Last Frontier

As noted in Chapter 5, Scarborough adopted its first Official Plan in 1957. The development of southern Scarborough had transpired subdivision by subdivision, plaza by plaza, in an ad-hoc manner. Though not clearly stated the Official Plan sought to replicate the basic elements of Don Mills going forward. The Plan called for residential communities, each with a shopping centre surrounded by higher density housing, further divided into neighbourhoods, each with a public school and park. On a broader level major land-uses were to be separated from each other and the Official Plan detailed what was to be their overall pattern across Scarborough—i.e. how commercial, industrial, and institutional spaces were to be located in relation to residential areas. Finally the Official Plan divided the whole area into phases of development.

In practice, the Official Plan and its principles could only be fully realized in the large greenfield areas that made up the second phase of the plan. That meant 3,500 acres of land north of Sheppard Avenue East between Victoria Park Avenue and Highway 48 (Markham Road)—an area largely untouched by development, because water mains and trunk sewers had not yet reached that far north. Anticipated population figures for the first three communities to be developed in north Scarborough give an idea of the scale and scope of the transformation to come: Tam O'Shanter (25,500), L'Amoreaux (38,600), and Agincourt North (30,650).⁴⁹¹

The three communities were built over the next 10-15 years in a style and form representative of high modernist planning in Metro. On the ground low-rise subdivisions of mostly detached family housing predominate, but apartment towers loom in the background and dominate the skyline. Plazas and shopping centres are found at many intersections. The major roads are wide and framed by grassy boulevards and the fences of rear-facing lots. Apartment towers are found within the inner quadrants formed by the ring-roads that surround each community's shopping centre. The ring-roads also serve to separate the higher-density core of each community from its lower-density neighbourhoods. Viewed as a landscape, the northern parts of Scarborough bear the imprint of what geographer Edward Relph has dubbed suburban hyperplanning—not

⁴⁹¹ "Scarboro Plan Provides Homes for 100,000," *Globe and Mail*, October 30th 1964.

mere planning, but “control over the largest patterns and the smallest details of development” via an interlocking mix of plans, regulations, codes, and standards.⁴⁹²

In the early 1970s, Scarborough’s growth and development moved north, to the lands above Finch Avenue East. There the borough was finalizing plans for two residential communities, Steeles and Milliken, and an industrial district called Tapscott. In 1974, the *Globe and Mail* reported that “[m]ost of the land is already spoken for; bought up and assembled by various development and holding companies”.⁴⁹³ The largest land assemblies in the Steeles and Milliken areas were reported to be owned or substantially controlled by Robert McLintock Ltd and George Wimpey Canada (a subsidiary of its British parent George Wimpey Company Ltd). But collectively the ownership and control of developable land in north Scarborough lay in the hands of a complex web of development and holding companies linked to each other “through a bewildering number of interlocking directorships, shareholders and outright ownerships”. The actual linkages reported are too numerous and complicated to summarize, but the other major players in northern Scarborough included Monarch Construction, Markborough Properties Ltd, Deltan Corporation, Pinetree Development Corporation Ltd, Runnymede Development Corporation Ltd, Richard Costain Ltd, Consolidated Building Corporation, Frasmet Holdings, and Northview Heights Developments Ltd.

Here the rise of the land development industry in Canada, and the concomitant emergence of “the corporate suburbs”, comes to the fore. More than anyone else, John

⁴⁹² Relph, *Rational Landscapes and Humanistic Geography*: 94-100.

⁴⁹³ Jeff Simpson, "Developers await the go-ahead on 'Last Frontier'," *Globe and Mail*, May 6th 1974.

Sewell and James Lorimer, two figures central to the reform movement in Toronto, were among the first to critically analyze postwar suburban development and note the importance of Don Mills as the archetype.⁴⁹⁴ Much is made of it from an architectural, landscape design, and community master plan point of view, but both Sewell and Lorimer highlight the business innovations as equally distinctive and revolutionary. Don Mills was a “new town” made possible by a single firm that put together the land assembly, developed a master plan for it, financed the installation of physical services, and sold off lots to home-builders.

Urban historians point to Westdale in Hamilton and a few other elite garden suburbs like Thorncrest Village and Kingsway Park in Etobicoke, Uplands in Victoria, and Tuxedo in Winnipeg as prominent examples of corporate land assembly and planned housing subdivisions prior to 1945.⁴⁹⁵ But these were elite, “packaged” suburbs and had little immediate influence on the shape and development process in fringe areas where

⁴⁹⁴ Lorimer, *The Developers*; Sewell, "The Suburbs."

⁴⁹⁵ Linteau, "Canadian Suburbanization in a North American Context: Does the Border Make a Difference?"; Larry McCann, "Suburbs of Desire: The Suburban Landscape of Canadian Cities, c.1900-1950," in *Changing Suburbs: Suburban Foundation, Form and Function*, ed. R. Harris and P. J. Larkham (London: E & FN Spon, 1999); Ross Paterson, "The Development of an Interwar Suburb: Kingsway Park, Etobicoke," *Urban History Review* 13, no. 3 (1985); ———, "Creating the Packaged Suburb: The Evolution of Planning and Business Practices in the Early Canadian Land Development Industry, 1900-1914," in *Suburbia Re-examined*, ed. Barbara M. Kelly (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989); John C. Weaver, "From Land Assembly to Social Maturity: The Suburban Life of Westdale (Hamilton), Ontario, 1911-1951," in *Shaping the Urban Landscape: Aspects of the Canadian City-Building Process*, ed. Gilbert A. Stelter and Alan F.J. Artibise (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1982).

speculative streetcar build-outs and owner-building in unplanned suburbs were more dominant forms of suburbanization during the first half of the 20th century.⁴⁹⁶

By contrast the imprint of Don Mills quickly proliferated after the mid-1950s and profoundly shaped the suburban landscape in Toronto and other urban areas in Canada. To achieve a master planned “community” in a context where fragmented land ownership was the norm, public-sector planning evolved to provide coordination via secondary plans. That is clearly what happened across Scarborough’s northern expanse as generic versions of Don Mills were constructed, not as “new towns” located at some distance beyond the existing built-up area of the borough, but as orderly extensions of it.

Careful Planning Becomes Sprawl

Reflecting upon the building of the postwar suburbs at a symposium held at York University in the late-1970s, planner and landscape architect Humphrey Carver tried to put what had transpired into context.⁴⁹⁷ Despite the achievement modern suburbs represented in terms of community planning and housing policy, his review and commentary comes across as a wistful lament for what might have been. Though suburban communities like those found in the northern half of Scarborough embody many of the ideas and concepts he and other influential town planners in Canada espoused after 1945, the overall result to him seemed mediocre. Suburban growth during

⁴⁹⁶ Harris, *Unplanned Suburbs: Toronto's American Tragedy, 1900 to 1950*; ———, *Creeping Conformity: How Canada Became Suburban, 1900-1960*.

⁴⁹⁷ Humphrey Carver, "The Suburbs: Their Purpose, Growth and Design" (paper presented at the Symposium: Suburbia - Costs, Consequences and Alternatives, York University, Downsview, Ontario, Spring 1977).

the first two postwar decades simply outpaced the ability of planners to shape communities as a whole—at least initially, they had neither the resources, nor institutional capacity to move beyond addressing immediate needs or think more broadly than the scale of the subdivision plan. Only after the suburbs had experienced a considerable amount of postwar growth and development did modern, comprehensive planning begin to take hold.

To a large extent, as has been noted already, that summarizes what happened in Scarborough. The Don Mills model tried to create a more self-sufficient community that both drew upon the possibilities for more spacious living offered by automobility and at the same time tried to protect residents from its negative impacts. In Scarborough, few places were able to realize this model of development in the 1950s. It was only in the 1960s that secondary plans were adopted to coordinate development at the community scale. This advance in planning can be discerned in the built environment. Newer areas conform to the familiar suburban pattern of superblock development—i.e. of subdivisions demarcated by arterial roads with an internal network of looping streets and occasional cul-de-sacs. In general as one moves northward or eastward from the southwest corner of Scarborough a transition away from the “unplanned” rectangular street grid occurs and the imprint of large-scale planning becomes increasingly evident, culminating most clearly in the four northern most communities identified by the ring-roads at their centres.

Another participant at the York symposium, Toronto alderman John Sewell, entitled his presentation “Getting Rid of Suburbs”, which makes his contribution to the

event rather self-explanatory.⁴⁹⁸ If Scarborough had spent much of the late-1950s and '60s seeking to move toward the implementation of Don Mills made generic, which Carver's critique of postwar suburbia implicitly endorses with some qualifications, Sewell questioned the basic soundness of postwar suburbs. Much later he would dub his mid-1970s efforts to contest suburban planning as "a lonely campaign against sprawl".⁴⁹⁹ There can be little doubt that it would have been. Regardless, Sewell's efforts contesting low-density suburbs as "sprawl" are important because he managed to piece together a practical account of how postwar suburbia in Canada came to take the precise form it did and link that form to emergent metropolitan problems: the rising cost of housing and public services, the difficulty providing cost-effective and convenient public transit, the destruction of historic urban fabric for expressways, parking lots, and high-rise redevelopments in the urban core and old city neighbourhoods.

Sewell's interest in the suburbs was sparked by the *Pickering Impact Study* prepared for the City of Toronto's Planning Board by a team of consultants lead by the architecture firm Diamond and Myers.⁵⁰⁰ Reform aldermen had convinced Toronto City Council to commission a study examining the proposed Pickering Airport and North Pickering community, which not only questioned the need for a new airport in the

⁴⁹⁸ John Sewell, "Getting Rid of Suburbs" (paper presented at the Symposium: Suburbia - Costs, Consequences and Alternatives, York University, Downsview, Ontario, Spring 1977).

⁴⁹⁹ ———, *How We Changed Toronto: The inside story of twelve creative, tumultuous years in civic life, 1969-1980*.

⁵⁰⁰ See Diamond and Myers, Jack B. Ellis and Associates Ltd., and Institute of Environmental Research Inc., "Pickering Impact Study, Vol.1: Summary Report," (Toronto: City of Toronto Planning Board, 1974); ———, "Pickering Impact Study, Vol.2: Study Report," (Toronto: City of Toronto Planning Board, 1974).

Toronto region, but ended up talking about the effect of prevailing patterns of suburban development on the city. Implicitly equating suburbs with sprawl, which the report's authors defined as "extensive low-density suburban growth only self-sufficient in basic needs, and largely dependent on a distant urban concentration for employment, entertainment, and the supply of higher-order goods and services", the study argued that devoting large areas to a single use, a hallmark of modernist planning, was detrimental to both city and suburb.⁵⁰¹

Sprawl had appeared in public discourse about the form of urbanization in the Toronto region before. In fact, concern about urban sprawl appears on-and-off in both the *Globe and Mail* and *Toronto Star* starting in the 1950s, at first in relation to fears about loss of valuable farmland around cities in southern Ontario, later branching out to encompass the need to preserve natural features and set aside parkland for recreational needs, as well as the more familiar critiques of sprawl as low-density, automobile-centric suburban development and its environmental, economic, and social consequences. Regardless of time period or the specific context in which it was used, sprawl almost always appears as a pejorative term, and usually implies a failure to plan or the failure of extant planning to shape growth and development in ways seen as orderly, efficient, and desirable.

The term most likely entered the lexicon via an essay written by sociologist William H. Whyte for the magazine *Fortune* in 1955, which was republished a few years

⁵⁰¹ Jack Diamond and Barton Myers, "A service plan that increases suburban sprawl," *Globe and Mail*, December 7th 1974.

later in an influential book *The Exploding Metropolis*.⁵⁰² In the late-1950s, an editorial in the *Toronto Star* noted efforts by fruit growers in Santa Clara County near Los Angeles to protect themselves from “urban sprawl” by having their land zoned for agricultural use only.⁵⁰³ The editorial suggested that Ontario might need to do the same in order to prevent more of its best “fruit and market garden” lands being taken over by industry and housing. It was feared that an increasing amount of farm land was “being made idle by and for land speculation” and that “the further the suburban sprawl extends, the more food costs the city dweller.”⁵⁰⁴ This extended to concern that “progress” meant the constant spread of the city outwards and the inevitable development of a continuous urbanized space with Toronto at its centre, and stretching from Hamilton in the west to Oshawa in the East.⁵⁰⁵

In the early-1960s, planning consultant Norman Pearson sounded the alarm on sprawl’s appetite for farmland, warning that immediate action was needed to halt the “ugly patchwork of houses and factories [that] is rapidly springing up in shapeless strip cities west of Toronto.”⁵⁰⁶ He noted that “the urban shadow of the great city has spread far out west of Toronto, and its influence is seen in the widespread weed-patches which were once productive farms but are now potential subdivisions.” Pearson called this a

⁵⁰² William H. Whyte, "Urban Sprawl," ed. Fortune Magazine, *The Exploding Metropolis* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1958).

⁵⁰³ "Rich Farm Land Saved From Concrete Gobble," *Toronto Star*, April 25th 1957.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁵ Bruce West, "City on March: Frontier Goes Back and Back," *Globe and Mail*, June 29th 1960.

⁵⁰⁶ Norman Pearson, "The staggering, shapeless patchwork of 'strip cities' rapidly building up into an urban mess west of Toronto is becoming a ... Planner's Nightmare " *Toronto Star*, April 30th 1962. See also Stanley Westall, "Bungalows, Not Industries, Are Intruding on Niagara's Tender Fruit Soil," *Globe and Mail*, March 23rd 1960.

wasteful misuse of land, decried the lack of parkland being protected for future use, and noted the inadequate tax base of most new communities was forcing them to zone out low-income groups and compete with each other for assessment from industry and shopping centres. The overall result, he argued, was a patchwork of local governments with conflicting interests and responsibilities, while new highways and transportation infrastructures were set to accelerate the spread of urban development across the region with no framework to coordinate and shape it into a more logical pattern.

In 1964, the *Toronto Star* featured a special report on its front page entitled “Golden Horseshoe loses its shine.”⁵⁰⁷ It warned the extended region, a rapidly urbanizing swath of land next to Lake Ontario stretching from Oshawa to Niagara Falls with Toronto in its centre, could “become a solid mass of industry and residential development ... 100-mile-long city” if, as expected, it doubled in population to 5,000,000 people over the next couple of decades. Each municipality, it was noted, was busy trying to plan for the future according to their own needs. No one appeared to be interested in tackling problems affecting the region as whole. Municipalities lacked the ability to act in areas beyond their jurisdictional limits. The provincial government, which had the power and resources to act, was reluctant to do so. Regional planning would mean taking considerable authority away from local municipal councils and that came with obvious political risks. A comprehensive plan—one that designated the most suitable areas for

⁵⁰⁷ Frank McGee, "Golden Horseshoe loses its shine," *Toronto Star*, May 9th 1964.

agricultural, industrial, residential, recreational, and commercial uses at the regional scale—would create winners and losers.

That would be especially the case with individual property owners, including speculators, who bought land with the expectation that it might be used in a way no longer allowed. The *Toronto Star*'s special report made it clear that many persons of "substance and influence" owned land in the urban periphery on the expectation that they would profit substantially in the future as metropolitan growth spread outwards to encompass their holdings. Their interests, as well as those of farmers planning to sell their lands to speculators in order to retire, were not advanced by regional planning that sought to curtail urban expansion. This problem would plague provincial efforts to create regional governments or embark on regional planning initiatives like the *Toronto-Centred Region* or *Design for Development* concept, which first emerged in the late-1960s and was later combined Niagara Escarpment/Parkway greenbelt from Hamilton to Cobourg. One pundit noted opposition to these schemes was directed at their merits—curbing urban sprawl—as much as for any defects.⁵⁰⁸ Developers did not support anything that would limit their operations, while farmers and other rural land owners bristled at the idea of the provincial government telling them what they could do with their land.⁵⁰⁹

Returning to Metro, the *Pickering Impact Study* brought to the fore an emergent shift in thinking about conventional suburban development and planning as it had

⁵⁰⁸ Desmond Morton, "'Regional government: Davis paid a high price for peace'," *Toronto Star*, March 14th 1973.

⁵⁰⁹ Bruce Kirkland, "Escarpment farmers angered by land-saving plan," *Toronto Star*, June 14th 1973.

evolved since the 1950s. Sprawl was not simply a problem created by lack of planning—i.e. a failure to control or shape growth and development—but instead could also be directly attributable to it. Recognizing this, John Sewell expanded his activities to include contesting suburban planning at Metro Council, and when unsuccessful, represented Dr. Jeremy Carver, a Cabbagetown resident and former member of the Confederation of Residents and Ratepayers Associations (CORRA) executive, at the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) hearings on the Steeles Community Plan in mid-1975.⁵¹⁰ Sewell argued at the hearings that the secondary plan (and the conventional suburban planning it embodied) would result in automobile dependent “sprawl” because the planned densities were too low, something he also felt increased the cost of new housing beyond what most Toronto households could afford. Taken together his arguments held that low density suburban growth placed “unbearable pressures on the city.”

Those pressures, according to Sewell and the authors of the *Pickering Impact Study*, were related to specialization: “just as suburban land is specialized for housing, it forces the city to become equally specialized to provide what the suburbs need: jobs, roads and parking.”⁵¹¹ On its surface the argument appears to reduce suburbs to so-called “bedroom” or “dormitory” communities and overlooks not only the desire of suburban municipalities in the Toronto area to attract office and industrial employment, but also the increasingly multi-nodal structure of metropolitan regions across North America. Their definition of sprawl as “low-density suburban growth dependent on a city for all but basic

⁵¹⁰ Graham Fraser, "Sewell: high hopes for suburbs," *Globe and Mail*, June 30 1975.

⁵¹¹ *Ibid.*

needs” assumed that the vast majority of suburban residents traveled into the city’s urban core for work. Not only did this discount the importance of industrial employment in the suburbs, but the decentralization of office employment that was already underway in the 1970s and would increase with each passing decade.⁵¹²

Still, Sewell’s arguments at the OMB hearings on the Steeles Community plan and those of the *Pickering Impact Study* took the reform movement’s rejection of modernist planning and the corporate city to the suburbs. At the OMB, Sewell was contesting the planning of what Scarborough’s director of plan review Peter Poot described as “a normal suburban-type community”.⁵¹³ Asked by Sewell what the effect would be of increasing the planned densities from 30 to 50 people an acre, Poot answered “you’re into completely replanning the north section of the borough to make that kind of thing work” and he doubted that nearby residents would accept it, saying “it would have a different character, different from the ways they’re used to. People have moved in the expectation that things would eventually develop logically in the ways that they have been developed until now.”⁵¹⁴ Sewell was nonplussed. He felt the careful separation of residential, commercial, and industrial uses from each other worked against the kind of vitality found in city neighbourhoods where uses were mixed and people could walk to work or to corner stores and small shops.

⁵¹² See Canadian Urban Institute, "The New Geography of Office Location and the Consequences of Business as Usual in the GTA," (Toronto: Canadian Land Institute, 2011).

⁵¹³ Graham Fraser, "OMB hearing on Scarborough development: Housing plan for 'executive types' upheld," *Globe and Mail*, June 3rd 1975.

⁵¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Planning for “A Normal Suburban-Type Community” upheld

Scarborough mayor Paul Cosgrove, who was opposed to high-rise apartment development and took a keen interest in planning issues, disagreed publicly with Sewell. He argued that most people in Scarborough thought densities were already too high, and claimed that increasing densities would lead to more of what the borough had been working to reverse: “a mumble-jumble of different uses.”⁵¹⁵ Moreover, Cosgrove questioned whether it was appropriate for Sewell to interfere in Scarborough planning—after all, he was not familiar with the Steeles or Milliken areas and did not know what local residents wanted. The provincial government seemed to concur. The Ontario Minister of Housing Donald Irvine told the *Toronto Star* “I don’t think Scarborough’s plans are any business of John Sewell” and worried that his involvement would delay the construction of badly needed housing on the lands covered by the Steeles and Milliken Community Plans, the final tracts of undeveloped land in Metro.⁵¹⁶ Curiously when asked “if he would like to see more people living in the two projects”, Irvine replied: “I would”. After having said so, he quickly backtracked and qualified his statement. He did not plan to impose his views on Scarborough, remarking “I’d be called a dictator.” Sewell was undeterred. He saw Irvine’s comments as politically motivated and charged “the province is really interested in going through this fast ... so he can boast of housing starts.”

⁵¹⁵ _____, "Sewell: high hopes for suburbs."

⁵¹⁶ Bruce Kirkland, "Queen's Park tells Sewell not to meddle in Scarborough plans," *Toronto Star*, June 5th 1975.

A year earlier, Scarborough Mayor Paul Cosgrove had been highly critical of a proposed new provincial housing policy to address constrained supply and escalating prices.⁵¹⁷ Specifically, he worried the new policy would infringe on local autonomy as it proposed that municipalities implement master plans prepared by the province that would control the mix of housing types and specify yearly production targets. The problem, as Cosgrove saw it, was his municipality would no longer have final say on densities, and increased density was widely seen as a solution to the housing problem. An editorial in the *Scarborough Mirror* echoed Cosgrove's concerns about the presumed negative impact on the existing tax base.

Most of the houses in Scarboro have always been small, modest working man's homes. The borough has more than its share of senior citizens' quarters and double—on a per capita basis—the public subsidized housing of any other part of Metro.

Industrial development—the essential ingredient to provide a healthy tax base—has never kept up with residential development.

And now the government wants to ram in more cramped housing, the kind that attracts the larger families with a greater need for social and other services.⁵¹⁸

At the OMB hearings on the Steeles Community Plan Sewell had asked Scarborough's director of plan review Peter Poot about the housing mix. He replied Scarborough wanted "to achieve a 'normal mixture of social and economic groups' through its planning", but acknowledged "Scarborough is a little short of 'executive types' right now and is trying

⁵¹⁷ Paul Cosgrove, "Housing policies: a dangerous package of threats and bribes," *Scarborough Mirror*, June 12th 1974.

⁵¹⁸ "Boroughs to suffer from government's squeeze play," *Scarborough Mirror*, June 26th 1974.

to attract them with large areas of ‘high-class’ single-family detached houses.”⁵¹⁹

Scarborough it was felt could not hope to attract the “executive types” it desired if the densities planned for the Steeles and Milliken communities were doubled.

Cosgrove and other Scarborough politicians were also sensitive to public opinion. There was a pervasive belief that, as journalist Graham Fraser put it, the variety and excitement of urban life praised by urbanists like Sewell and Jack Diamond was “often the very reason that a suburban homeowner moved to the suburbs.”⁵²⁰ In other words, the privacy, orderliness, and spaciousness produced by Scarborough’s planning framework were thought to be favoured by people moving into new residential communities on the periphery. Sewell’s attack on conventional suburban planning and call for higher suburban densities, therefore, cut against the grain of what suburbanites wanted and expected. It also seemed inconsistent with his opposition to high-rise development, urban renewal schemes, and other megaprojects in Toronto’s downtown core and surrounding inner-city neighbourhoods.

Sewell was a staunch advocate for citizen participation in planning and development decisions and had a “mystic faith” in the ability of neighbourhood groups to make their elected representatives act in their best interests.⁵²¹ Looking back from the vantage point of the early-1990s, *Toronto Star* urban affairs columnist David Lewis Stein noted:

⁵¹⁹ Bruce Kirkland, "Scarborough needs 'high-class' houses planner tells OMB," *Toronto Star*, June 3rd 1975.

⁵²⁰ Fraser, "Sewell: high hopes for suburbs."

⁵²¹ Stein, *Going Downtown: Reflections on Urban Progress*: 17.

... citizens defending neighbourhoods against intruders of all kinds ... became and still remains the dominant theme of city politics. It seemed so clear, so simple when the reform movement began in the early seventies. The good people were the plain ordinary citizens. The bad guys were the developers. They wanted to tear down the comfortable, old houses of Toronto that had been built for raising children and creating whole family histories in. The developers wanted to force us all to live in soulless, concrete highrise apartment blocks that we scornfully called “filing cabinets for people.”⁵²²

This thinking about the virtues of local politicians listening and being responsive to the wishes of local residents put his campaign against sprawl on a collision course with homeowner and community associations in Scarborough, including those in the area just to the south of the Steeles area.

In the two years prior to the OMB hearings on the Steeles secondary plan community associations representing nearby residents in the area formed and became active. They quickly turned their attention toward planning and development issues and were especially concerned about the number of apartment towers permitted by L’Amoreaux Community Plan. In May of 1975, roughly coinciding with the OMB hearings on the Steeles Community Plan, Scarborough’s planning board approved a special study to review the residential densities in the L’Amoreaux community. The study was patterned after one conducted in the previous year for the West Hill area, which resulted in apartment sites being downzoned to townhouses. Community associations in the L’Amoreaux area sought a similar outcome, arguing their almost ten year-old secondary plan was “flooding their residential area with apartment towers”,

⁵²² Ibid.

which they associated with crime, traffic, overflow parking problems, loss of privacy, and litter.⁵²³

In response, Sewell argued that suburban residents had not been made properly aware of the benefits of higher densities. But an undercurrent in his and others' arguments about sprawl was that "Metro as a whole [could not] afford the costs of development that happens to be what adjacent residents want."⁵²⁴ At the hearings, Jack Diamond testified on the effects of low-density development, saying that "[t]hirty people per acre means predominantly single-family houses on 60-foot lots" and "if we are to have any kind of richness in the urban environment" higher densities would be necessary.⁵²⁵ Metro's planning staff had estimated Metro's population would increase by another 410,110 people before reaching a "mature state" and Diamond surmised that one way to accommodate this would be to develop the remaining tracts of land in Metro at an average density of 58 people per acre.

Under cross-examination by Scarborough's legal counsel, Diamond was asked how he would deal with ratepayer groups in the area who were opposed to increases in density. He replied, "I think those fears can be allayed if it's shown what the increases would be ... The public's perception is one that sees problems, but that can be

⁵²³ "Residents fear crime rate, try to stem flood of 30 high-rises," *Toronto Star*, September 30th 1975. This sentiment was also conveyed in a letter from the L'Amoreaux Community Association to Mayor Cosgrove dated February 27th, 1973 and to C. R. Brewer, Chairman of the Scarborough Planning Board dated February 7th, 1974. Personal files of Ronald Watson (former Ward 10 alderman and councillor).

⁵²⁴ Fraser, "Sewell: high hopes for suburbs."

⁵²⁵ _____, "OMB told proposed community too dependent on cars," *Globe and Mail*, June 5th 1975.

overcome.”⁵²⁶ It is difficult to comment on this assertion, except to note that opposition to high-rise apartment towers seldom differentiated height and density. For example, the community associations in the L’Amoreaux area targeted apartment towers for downzoning in their efforts to have permitted densities reduced. Overall sentiment toward increasing densities via incorporating more semis and townhouses into subdivisions of single-family houses is unclear. It is clear that by the mid-1970s, however, neighbourhood opposition to high-rise apartment tower development across Metro was increasingly ubiquitous and that a wider mix of housing options in suburban communities was needed, especially as rapid price inflation of detached homes continued.⁵²⁷

Convincing residents of the merits of higher residential densities was only part of the problem. Municipal politicians and civic officials also had to be convinced it was a worthwhile idea. In the 1970s an obvious contradiction emerged between the need to keep house prices within reach for new home buyers and the desire of each municipality to improve their tax bases. As an editorial in the *Toronto Star*, put it:

Every municipality in Metro is happy to have big houses on big lots, the kind that yield good taxes and don’t need proportionately more water, sewerage or schools. What each would like to foist off on to others are subsidized and low-income houses on small lots which, for instance, may produce many children to the block, creating a demand for more schools.⁵²⁸

⁵²⁶ Ibid.

⁵²⁷ John Doig, "Some house prices in Metro go up by \$4 every hour," *Toronto Star*, March 16th 1974; Pat McNenly, "Era of high-rise is over in suburbs, Godrey says," *Toronto Star*, March 23rd 1974; James Purdie, "Thousands deprived of home of their own by soaring prices," *Globe and Mail*, April 18th 1974.

⁵²⁸ "Housing policy is Metro's responsibility," *Toronto Star*, June 18th 1974.

The provincial government had recently passed legislation that required municipal housing policies to be brought in line with Metro's once a provincially approved housing plan was in place. It was hoped that this measure would ensure that the housing programs of senior levels of government would not be frustrated by the "narrow interests" of local residents and municipal governments.

The province sought to ensure that the interests of the regional whole could be advanced in a context where the parts had competing interests. Coverage of the OMB hearings on the Steeles Community Plan focused on John Sewell and his attempt to put postwar suburbia on trial as sprawl. The involvement of landowners and developers in the hearings rated occasional mentions, perhaps because their presence was expected and hardly newsworthy. Nonetheless their involvement was important. They were at the hearings to protect their interests. In the same way that municipalities might scramble for the most desirable forms of development from a net tax perspective, landowners and developers sought to have their property holdings designated for those uses that would be the most lucrative for them. An objection from one landowner (or anyone else) might alter the secondary plan, which could spillover and impact everyone else. No one wanted their lands to be designated for greater public use, i.e. for schools and parkland, so Sewell was operating alongside the solicitors for landowners and developers. Several were there to object to how the plan allocated certain uses to lands owned by their clients, while the others were there to protect their clients should changes to the plan ensue.

In the end, the Board's decision summarized the issues before it as "objections were taken to the density, the lack of provision for specific types of housing, the transportation policies, the provision for parks and the alleged lack of equitable distribution of uses within the plan."⁵²⁹ Though it gave due consideration to each objection, the Board approved the Steeles Community Plan, and in so doing, upheld Scarborough's planning process and vision for "normal-type" suburban communities.

On the matter of density, the Board rejected the suggestion that Scarborough should revise the plan to "at least double the density". The rationale given was four-fold:

- Sewell had not provided sufficient evidence that "the net effect would be to increase the amount of housing in the community at a lower per unit cost", nor had he addressed "the degree to which prices would actually be affected, or of what effect there would be on external services such as trunk water and sewer systems, roads and transit."
- The projected populations used in Scarborough's Official Plan represented not only what the municipality had decided could be "accommodated physically and financially" within its jurisdiction, but also formed the basis for how it determined its servicing and capital works programmes, the size and location of schools, parks, and shopping facilities. It was thought that increasing the planned density might lead to a "complete reappraisal" of its plans, and by extension, those of Metro, which used the same projected populations in its plans.
- In suburban terms, the Steeles Community Plan was deemed to be "relatively high density".
- It was not seen as appropriate to impose a substantial increase in density on one community alone within Metro.

⁵²⁹ Decision of the Board delivered by L.P.D Staples on OMB Case File R 75162 (July 14th, 1975), re: an application by the Corporation of the Borough of Scarborough for approval of proposed Amendment Number 373 to the Official Plan for the Borough of Scarborough Planning Area, on a reference to this Board by the Honourable Minister of Housing. RG-37-5. Archives of Ontario.

Not surprisingly, the Board's separate assessment of evidence presented on the impact of low suburban densities on transportation was similar. It accepted evidence given by the Toronto Transit Commission's (TTC) director of transportation planning that dismissed the objection that "allegedly low densities" in the Steeles Community Plan would not be supportive of public transit, as well as the claim that if communities between the Steeles area and downtown had been developed at higher densities they would also be better served. In the TTC's view, existing bus service on arterial streets could be extended to service the community and it did not consider the walking distances from the interior of the housing subdivisions (neighbourhoods) to the arterial streets—1,300 feet at their maximum—to be excessive. Speaking more generally, the TTC's director of transportation planning also stated before the Board that "density itself does not determine the modal split, and that travel time is of great influence when choosing alternative modes" and that it was the TTC's preference "to see high density development around the existing rapid transit systems rather than in other parts of Metropolitan Toronto."

The preceding can be explained, at least in part, by the OMB's expressed interest in the stability of the regulatory process—i.e. the spatial comprehensiveness of land-use controls and uniformity in the application of regulations—which "places the burden of proof on those who wish to change the existing order rather than on those who wish to

maintain the status quo.”⁵³⁰ This is especially the case when objections are made to municipal plans. The Board views the municipality as a policy-maker “acting in the best interests of the inhabitants of the community over which it has jurisdiction” and consequently has tended to uphold plans or bylaws unless it could be established they represent or would result in an inappropriate selectivity in the application of land-use regulations.⁵³¹

Lawyers for several land-owners defended Sewell involvement in the hearings.⁵³² Their clients were not interested in his arguments about sprawl so much as they too wanted the OMB to refer the Steeles Community Plan back to Scarborough to be revised. It was their hope that a revised plan would designate less of their land for public uses. The Board rejected arguments that “too many public services such as parkland and schools were turning up on their properties” and upheld the borough’s plan, save for one neighbourhood, “saying they were in the public interest.”⁵³³

In the case of the one neighbourhood for which approval was withheld, the OMB was sympathetic to a land-owner’s objection that too much of their property was being earmarked for parkland. The Board did not “quarrel” with the Scarborough’s desire to establish a substantial district park on the lands in question, but it allowed that 95 acres might be more than required under even the Borough’s generous parkland requirements.

⁵³⁰ Gerald M. Adler, *Land Planning by Administrative Regulation: The Policies of the Ontario Municipal Board* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971). 69.

⁵³¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵³² Bruce Kirkland, "Sewell's role defended in Scarborough Plan," *Toronto Star*, June 6th 1975.

⁵³³ Michael Keating, "One of last tracts of raw Metro land approved for homes," *Globe and Mail*, July 16th 1975.

The solicitor for the land-owner had presented the Board with an alternative proposal that was found to have “some merit”. Though the Board chose not to elaborate further, it stated that Scarborough should study the proposal before returning to the Board at a future date to address it, adding the alleged over-allowance in parkland was found in the only neighbourhood in the plan that had no allocation of medium or high-density housing.

There were objections from other land-owners of a similar nature—in some manner each felt that Scarborough’s plan asked them to provide more than their fair share of land for public uses and sought to have the plan revised to allocate uses differently between major land-owners. On this point the OMB made a number of interesting observations about the planning process and the procedure that Scarborough had used to draft the Steeles Community Plan. The Board recognized that the Borough could either consult owners beforehand or wait until after a draft plan was prepared to consult with them. Either approach had merit, according to the Board, but no process could guarantee the satisfaction of owners, because “the parcellization of ownerships may be such that making land use designation boundaries coincide with ownership boundaries, or even making a close to equal distribution of uses within parcels of land is impossible to attain.” The Board did allow that “[t]he municipality can act as a mediator between the competing desires of various owners”, but made it clear that “good planning principles should not be sacrificed to those interests.” Moreover, while the municipality might try to negotiate an equitable sharing of land-uses between land-owners, the Board recognized

that the ability to do so was dependent on the willingness of land-owners to negotiate amongst themselves.

Planning Changes

Upon receipt of the OMB's decision on the Steeles Community Plan, Scarborough Mayor Paul Cosgrove issued a press release terming the Board's approval of the plan "a complete endorsement of Scarborough's planning process."⁵³⁴ That may have been the case, but the previous two years had seen the beginnings of important planning changes in Scarborough. As noted in previous chapters, Paul Cosgrove was elected as mayor in 1972 on a reform platform heavily oriented to planning and development concerns, and already as mayor he had directed energy and resources toward a number of files with implications for the future planning and development of the Scarborough. In his first term, Cosgrove garnered attention for endeavours such as fighting to impose limits on high-rise development, campaigning for esthetic improvements along thoroughfares like Eglinton Avenue East and the Kingston Road, and on-going efforts to develop a "downtown" around the Scarborough Town Centre. Also significant was a Borough Administrative Review Committee (BARC) in 1974 that found Scarborough's planning department was "poorly managed and its staff overworked and underpaid" and recommended a long-term reorganization plan.⁵³⁵ Planning Commissioner Don Easton,

⁵³⁴ Press release from Scarborough Mayor Paul Cosgrove dated July 16th, 1975. "O.M.B. Approval Puts 6,300 Homes on Line in Scarborough. Personal files of Ronald Watson.

⁵³⁵ "Scarborough begins administrative review of civic departments," *Toronto Star*, October 16th 1973; Stan Josey, "Planning revamped in Scarborough," *Toronto Star*, March 6th 1974.

who had held the job since the late-1950s, was relieved of some of his responsibilities and two new senior planners, one to focus on urban design and the other on development applications, were added as a first step.

Around that time, in the fall of 1973, the *Scarborough Mirror* asked Easton to assess the state of planning in Scarborough.⁵³⁶ The resulting article described the “autumn idyll” that then existed north of the hydro-electric power corridor (HEPC) located between Finch Avenue East and Steeles Avenue East, named the developers who owned the land and stood poised to transform it into new communities, and posed two questions:

Drive east or west along Passmore Avenue in northern Scarboro and see an illusion.

See miles of cows, barns, trees and fields. And see the developers’ signs dotting the pastures.

Passmore Avenue’s farms of today are tomorrow’s crescents, drives and cul-de-sacs ...

A map of property owners north of Highway 401 is divided into squares and rectangles bearing such names as Scarboro York Development, Verity Investments Ltd., Holden Investments Ltd., Monarch Construction Ltd., Wimpey Homes Ltd., Curran Hall Development Ltd., Woodlurch Development Ltd. and London Gate Ltd., Leyburn Holdings Ltd. and Gulf Leaseholds Ltd.

That’s only the north side.

Among the owners on the south side of Passmore Avenue are Curran Hall again, Post Rd. Realty Ltd., Great Falls Agencies Ltd., Melford Development Incorporated, Runnymede Investment Corporation Ltd. and, again, Gulf Leaseholds.

⁵³⁶ "Planning confusion requires explanation," *Scarborough Mirror*, March 13th 1974.

While the owners no longer have rural tinge, Passmore Avenue itself does.

From Midland Avenue to Neilson Avenue, Passmore is a four-mile autumn idyll.

Busy Steeles Avenue, paralleling it to the north, can be seen but is forgotten. Couples park their cars on the dirt road and let their dogs run on the fields. Cattle graze. Birds fly from tree to tree. The leaves are magnificent.

But can Scarborough, in putting the city into the country, control the urban spring that will transform Passmore Avenue's rural autumn?

Can the borough's planning department ensure that houses won't fight, colours will conform and styles don't jar?⁵³⁷

To these questions, Easton replied Scarborough could try but the provincial Planning Act left him with only the ability to "ask and persuade" rather than "police and dictate".

Essentially, he wished the law allowed him "to enforce a finer cut of cloth" and felt the existing regulatory framework left his department as the mercy of developers with regard to quality control and aesthetics.

In addition, the Planning Commissioner acknowledged the need to improve communications with the public, so they could see for themselves what was planned, and so the borough's planning goals and objectives might be better understood. An information centre was expected to be established soon to achieve this. Finally, in a continuation of the long-standing pre-occupation with balanced assessment, at the end of the article it was noted a recent report sent by Easton to the Planning Board highlighted "Scarboro's non-residential assessment is Metro's lowest and the mill rate for those uses

⁵³⁷ Ibid.

is the highest”, that employment in the borough is heavily oriented to industry, and therefore developing industrial areas was vital to generating jobs and improving Scarborough’s assessment mix. For that reason, he argued Scarborough should discourage applications for commercial uses and “other encroachments” on industrial lands. Other encroachments was likely a reference to residential development, though it should be noted that the Scarborough Town Centre and Civic Centre had been carved out of the Progress Industrial District.

What does not appear in the *Scarborough Mirror*’s article confirms the main thrust of the BARC report’s criticism of the planning department—that “[i]t is safe to conclude that a dynamic management team does not exist to give the leadership essential to an innovative, productive and motivated department.” Planning Commissioner Don Easton makes no comment about future planning and development needs. Instead, his remarks speak to the preoccupations that had governed Scarborough planning for the previous decade and a half: the orderly development of greenfield lands into a mix of residential communities and industrial districts. Although development of the remaining tracts of developable land was expected to add another 115,000 people to Scarborough, bringing its estimated population to 480,000 by 1980, the postwar suburban planning framework was already being questioned and Scarborough’s politicians were beginning to look to a future in which the borough was fully developed.⁵³⁸

⁵³⁸ Haller, "Scarborough's controllers talk on planning for the borough."

The OMB may have upheld Scarborough’s planning process in approving the Steeles Community Plan, but the kind of planning it represented was already being subjected to internal critique, though no consensus had formed on what reforms needed to be undertaken. The BARC report, published a year before the OMB hearings and decision on the Steeles Community Plan, contained a summary of concerns and opinions expressed by people interviewed as part of the committee’s work—members of Council and the Planning Board, Planning Department staff, other Borough staff, and representatives of other Planning Departments in Metro. A selection of these concerns and opinions are worth noting:

- Department has no goals, objectives or philosophy – or if these exist, there is no communication with the [Scarborough Planning] Board to effect understanding, acceptance, rejection or alternatives;
- Need for a 70’s approach to Planning – innovative, motivated and involved;
- Department so governed by initiatives of developers that it has no time to pursue its own initiatives and, generally, those of the [Scarborough Planning] Board. There is no overview, no charting of “where we are”, “where we want to go” and “how and when we are going to get there”;
- Dynamic planners are little interested in the Borough, because of the department attitude and because Borough politicians have a reputation for rudeness. We need people of a higher calibre, broad in outlook, interested in challenge, in personal fulfilment of “a job well done and known to be well done”;
- Need for new Official Plan, new thinking, new concepts; and
- Zoning by-laws obsolete – actually impede good design.⁵³⁹

⁵³⁹ Items in this list are reproduced verbatim from several pages of “concerns” and “opinions expressed” found in the BARC report on the Planning Department. Borough Administrative Review Committee,

It would be a mistake to take from these points that dissatisfaction had crystalized into support for a dramatically different vision for Scarborough. Instead, it came as part of Scarborough's ongoing development and maturation. In the main, it arose out of the growing sophistication of politicians and residents and from an expectation that Scarborough should be better run.

The 1972 municipal election resulted in a council that supported the desire of residents to "have less highrise ... have more parks, less government subsidized housing and a focal point—or downtown—in the civic centre", but a couple of years later its support for enhanced citizen or public participation in decision-making was mixed and its view of it more nuanced.⁵⁴⁰ The emergence of citizen participation was an outgrowth of Scarborough's transition from boomtown to metropolitan borough. The challenge of planning in this context was highlighted in an article that appeared in the *Scarborough Herald* in 1974.

The old and the new together, is what Scarborough council wants. And the new, with the exception of the civic centre development, must blend with the old and allow for the existing residents. Scarborough does not plan solely for the newcomers, any development must now not only meet with council's approval but also with the general consent of residents in the area.⁵⁴¹

The need to inform nearby residents of development and gain their support for it required a different approach to planning, though high-rise apartment development had long raised

"Report 1: Planning Department" (February 1974), 6-11. Personal files of Ronald Watson (former Ward 10 alderman and councillor).

⁵⁴⁰ "Planning Scarborough, for today and tomorrow," *Scarborough Herald*, April 17th 1974.

⁵⁴¹ *Ibid.*

the ire of homeowners, as discussed in Chapter 5. On a practical level, incorporating greater involvement by citizens increased the workload of municipal staff and politicians and made council meetings longer and less manageable. More substantively, it proved difficult to determine how much participation or involvement from the public was desirable or should be permitted and in what form was it desired by most residents or community groups?

By 1975, the *Scarborough Mirror* reported that the hey-day of citizen participation had passed and apathy was setting in: the hot-button planning concerns that drove residents and community groups to demand a role in decision-making were being addressed.⁵⁴² As such, in the absence of perceived threats to local communities it proved difficult to sustain a high level of direct involvement in civic affairs. The crux of the problem was well summarized in a column by Derek Nelson:

If the public is invited to a meeting to discuss something abstract like housing policy, the future of the civic centre, or the budget, the turn-out is abysmal.

If they're informed a high-rise, crematorium, or some obnoxious commercial enterprise is scheduled for their neighbourhood, they're out in force.

What citizens perceive as a concrete threat to their neighbourhood, or sometimes more important, their property values, arouses them instantly.⁵⁴³

Citizen participation, in his opinion, was a fraught endeavour for this reason. Most residents were content to allow elected officials and municipal staff to make the

⁵⁴² "They'll participate if they want to," *Scarborough Mirror*, March 19th 1975.

⁵⁴³ Derek Nelson, "Citizen participation requires policy change," *Scarborough Mirror*, March 26th 1975.

decisions, except when those decisions were, in their opinion, going to negatively impact their neighbourhoods, and especially property values. That needs to be considered when assessing dissatisfaction with planning in Scarborough as it emerged in the early-1970s. Calls for better planning were generally directed at stronger protection of low-density residential neighbourhoods and not the sort of changes or reforms being urged by critics of sprawl and conventional suburban planning.

By the late-1970s, it was increasingly evident that the next two decades would bring new challenges and that planning in Metro and Scarborough would need to change in response. Some of the changes that would shape planning debates and future plans were already evident. The idea of multi-use centres or suburban downtowns first appeared on the scene in the 1960s, as did plans for rapid transit expansion further into the suburbs. The late-1970s vision for Scarborough anticipated it would become “a busy, bustling, self-supporting community of nearly 700,000 with its own social, cultural and employment opportunities and sophisticated transit network reaching into the most remote areas to tie it all up.”⁵⁴⁴ Metro’s new draft official plan, which aligned with Scarborough’s aspirations, called for the Scarborough Town Centre to have 35,000 to 40,000 jobs, smaller office concentrations with 5,000 jobs at strategic nodes like Kennedy Road and Sheppard Avenue East, Kingston Road and Lawrence Avenue East, and Kennedy Road and Eglinton Avenue East, and smaller centres with 1,000 jobs. It envisioned an urban structure of decentralized employment nodes and increased

⁵⁴⁴ Cos De Giusti, "Scarboro: What sort of community are you planning to move into?," *Scarborough Mirror*, February 8th 1978.

residential densities along strategic corridors in order to support expanded rapid transit and lessen automobile-dependency. Unfortunately, the high-density development called for along the planned transit corridors was expected to be “an abrasive proposal to communities pledged to combat high-rise.”⁵⁴⁵

“Scarborough Looks to the Future”

In 1980, Scarborough’s planning commissioner, Don Easton, was removed from his post following a review by the management consulting firm Currie, Coopers and Lybrand Ltd., and appointed to a newly created position, commissioner of research and special projects, before leaving the employ of the borough a year later.⁵⁴⁶ Easton had worked for Scarborough since 1953 and had served as its planning commissioner for 20 years. At the time, Scarborough mayor Gus Harris praised Easton’s contribution, especially his role in guiding Scarborough’s postwar development from the late-1950s through the 1970s. Harris acknowledged, however, that new ideas were needed to confront future needs.

We were so busy we did not have time to research and study in depth traffic changes and patterns, redevelopment of older areas, energy programs, population movements, the preservation of neighbourhoods and the effects of the integration of industrial, residential and commercial areas.⁵⁴⁷

At the Council meeting where Easton’s fate was decided, the management consultants reported that "work of a moderate or a non-controversial nature is done very well by the

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁶ Kathleen Harford, "Scarborough to dismiss special projects chief," *Toronto Star*, April 7th 1981; William Bragg, "Scarborough planner shifted to new post," *Toronto Star*, February 19th 1980.

⁵⁴⁷ ———, "Scarborough planner shifted to new post."

planning department.” Given that Scarborough was set to enter a new phase in its development when planning would likely become more controversial it appears that Council decided it needed someone different to bring greater leadership and managerial skill to the planning department. The decision to remove Easton as planning commissioner came more than half-a-decade after the BARC report came to a similar conclusion, but equivocated by recommending the hiring of two new senior planners to head divisions under the planning commissioner, rather than dismissal.

To replace Easton, Scarborough hired Kenneth Whitwell, a planner who had worked the previous 8 years for the City of Toronto.⁵⁴⁸ For more than a decade, according to the *Toronto Star*, “[t]ransforming Scarborough from suburb to urban centre” had been a goal of civic officials, so a new commissioner with more urban sensibilities was needed. Whitwell, described as “a staunch advocate of public transportation and downtown design principles—high density, buildings close to the street”, reflected the new direction sought in Scarborough. In contrast to the rigid adherence to zoning bylaws and other regulations that characterized Scarborough planning under Don Easton, Whitwell favoured a more flexible approach and argued that past and present policies had resulted in garish developments and an abundance of strip plazas with parking lots in front of them. His hope was to use future growth to gradually transform Scarborough into a less automobile-oriented place. But his initial task was to improve the morale of

⁵⁴⁸ Dan Burke, "Planner plots exciting Scarborough future," *Toronto Star*, June 9th 1981.

Scarborough's planning department and "improve their reputation in the eyes of politicians, developers, and citizen groups."

Whitwell's arrival in Scarborough coincided with the increasing importance of infill development and the onset of greyfield and brownfield redevelopment in Scarborough's southern half. On the one hand, a major focus of planning in Scarborough remained the completion of development in remaining greenfield areas, particularly Milliken and Malvern. On the other hand, the anticipated connection of the Scarborough Town Centre to the eastern terminus of the Bloor-Danforth subway via a light rail transit (LRT) line ramped up development expectations for the surrounding district. At the same time, economic changes were beginning to be felt and in the early-1980s Scarborough's older industrial areas, most notably the Golden Mile on Eglinton Avenue East, entered a period of long-term decline that began with major plant closings during the 1981-82 recession.⁵⁴⁹ Older retail plazas and shopping centres also began to show their age. For most of the 1980s, however, Scarborough continued to experience booming growth. Until the Toronto region experienced a prolonged real estate slump, one that started in 1989 and lasted thru the early 1990s, Scarborough, which officially became a city in 1983, proudly trumpeted its economic development successes. Office and condominium development, particularly near the Scarborough Town Centre, was looked to by civic

⁵⁴⁹ Stan Josey, "Scarborough's Golden Mile hits the skids," *Toronto Star*, September 22nd 1983.

officials and politicians, notably mayor Gus Harris, as a way to change Scarborough's image from suburban backwater to sophisticated urban centre.⁵⁵⁰

Scarborough's first official plan, adopted in 1957, had been amended as needed but not comprehensively revised, and was by the 1980s out of sync with changing needs and development pressures. Whitwell recognized this, telling the *Scarborough Mirror* early in his tenure as planning commissioner:

The time has come to review the official plan in light of changing conditions such as, more office development potential and greater use of transit ... We're changing from the first phase of development, which is raw land to suburban development, and going into the second phase which is suburban to urban development.⁵⁵¹

Across the previous three decades, Scarborough had looked to industrial development for non-residential assessment and employment. The new vision for Scarborough reflected not only changing economic conditions and trends, it aligned more closely with a desire to encourage finer-grained mixed use development and more pedestrian-oriented or walkable urban design.⁵⁵²

Alongside a changing vision and outlook for Scarborough and the introduction of new planning ideas, a mid-1980s *Globe and Mail* article about Scarborough's Planning Department paints a picture of near frenetic activity.⁵⁵³ Scarborough continued to

⁵⁵⁰ Jim Byers, "Scarborough hopes mini-downtown will put to rest the 'Scarberia' image," *Toronto Star*, April 13th 1984; Royson James, "Developers boast they killed image of bleak 'Scarberia'," *Toronto Star*, November 27th 1985.

⁵⁵¹ John McClyment, "Planners ponder the course of future development," *Scarboro Mirror*, November 3rd 1982.

⁵⁵² Malcolm Johnson, "Next century for pedestrian; Borough will be cosmopolitan: Planner," *Toronto Star*, November 9th 1982.

⁵⁵³ John Allemang, "Municipal Planning No Academic Exercise," *Globe and Mail*, October 20th 1984.

experience considerable development and attempts to do long-range planning still had to compete with the day-to-day work of processing development applications.⁵⁵⁴ The population had reached just over 440,000 and the now City of Scarborough was still adding thousands of new housing units each year, even as maturing areas needed to be re-planned or at least their planning reviewed in anticipation of infilling and redevelopment. Tellingly, the director of Scarborough's division of research and official plan review, admitted that she had little time to deal with new ideas, but had more available than planners doing the routine work of processing development applications. Asked how planners fit into the political framework, she offered a well-rounded assessment of the overall job of a planner in 1980s Scarborough:

We're certainly influenced by politicians. What they want as a rule is a reasonably unbiased opinion. Of course there are some planners who believe that rules are there to be followed but others are willing to ignore the rules. Some plan by numbers, some by what makes sense. After a municipality has been developed to the degree of Scarborough, a planner's job, I feel, is not nuts and bolts but the management of change. We're at the stage of trying to make a better urban place by retaining the best parts of the suburbs and the rural areas.⁵⁵⁵

Not surprisingly, it proved a challenge to implement policies to transform Scarborough into a more urban place. Office developers pushed back against limits on parking spaces in the Scarborough Town Centre area, arguing it cost them potential tenants.⁵⁵⁶ Some councillors and residents hoped that limiting the supply of parking would encourage public transit usage and reduce traffic on surrounding residential streets,

⁵⁵⁴ _____, "Modern Pioneers: It's Boom Time on Metro's Last Frontier," *Globe and Mail*, July 14th 1984.

⁵⁵⁵ _____, "Municipal Planning No Academic Exercise."

⁵⁵⁶ "Scarborough parking policies hurt development, council told," *Toronto Star*, August 13th 1984.

while others worried that a lack of parking would lead commuters to infiltrate residential neighbourhoods in search of places to park. When plans for the Scarborough Town Centre district were outlined in 1981, community associations representing areas to the south of the district sought height limits for their neighbourhoods, while planners sought to steer the tallest buildings to the core of the area nearest to the proposed LRT line that would become the Scarborough Rapid Transit line.⁵⁵⁷

Plans for the Town Centre district, Scarborough's "downtown" core, anticipated 40,000 office jobs and up to 10,000 residential units by 2001. Initially, in the late-1960s the idea of Scarborough establishing a "downtown" at its geographic centre was linked to proximity to the 401 highway. By the early-1970s, the idea of suburban centres as decentralized nodes of office employment connected to each other via a grid of rapid transit lines held increasing sway as discussed in Chapter 5. The initial automobile-oriented layout and function of the Town Centre area complicated the situation and worked against efforts to shape it into a pedestrian-oriented "downtown" as office development and a rapid transit connection to Toronto materialized in the 1980s. During a panel discussion entitled "are suburban downtowns in our future?", Scarborough planning commissioner Kenneth Whitwell, admitted the Town Centre area would never resemble downtown Toronto, but suggested it was too soon to know what might

⁵⁵⁷ John Moore, "Residents supported in planning policy," *Scarboro Mirror*, June 17th 1981.

develop.⁵⁵⁸ He argued suburbs were becoming urbanized on their own terms, and developing transit-oriented centres or downtowns within them was part of that process.

Writing in the early-1990s about suburban downtowns in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), Edward Relph cautioned, that in practice most were “little more than a collection of offices and high-rise apartment buildings around a regional mall”, though in quite a few cases a city hall and civic square were also present, and that in all likelihood they would retain a distinctively suburban character going forward “because of their undeveloped spaces, relatively low densities, wide arterial roads, and continuing dependence on automobiles.”⁵⁵⁹ Rather than “embryonic attempts to urbanize suburbs”, he argued that suburban multi-use centres contributed to polycentric metropolitan form in the GTA without generating spaces that resemble traditional downtowns in terms of look and feel. Relph continues to emphasize polycentricity. In *Toronto: Transformations in a City and Its Region*, he points to Pierce Lewis’ 1980s observation that the downtown-centric metropolis was “a pre-automotive urban form” held together by the convergence of rail and other transportation systems and argues that networks of communication, including highways and cars, have led to an equalization of places that undermines centrality.⁵⁶⁰

The forces that have loosened the urban structure of metropolitan areas and brought suburban centres into being also work against compactness and intensity of use

⁵⁵⁸ John Allemang, "Looking into the future of our suburbs," *Globe and Mail*, October 13th 1984.

⁵⁵⁹ Edward Relph, "Suburban Downtowns of the Greater Toronto Area," *Canadian Geographer* 35, no. 4 (1991): 421; 25.

⁵⁶⁰ ———, *Toronto: Transformations in a City and its Region*.

in them. Dueling public/private interests and urban/suburban forces in Scarborough's Town Centre district can be gleaned from the early 1980s decision to build an interchange at Brimley Road and Highway 401 to service the area's present and future transportation needs from automobile access point of view.⁵⁶¹ Developers and civic officials supported the interchange, seeing it as necessary for the long-term growth and development of the Town Centre area. Scarborough's planning commissioner felt that "to go against it signals to a lot of people that Scarborough is not committed to the town centre", while his department shared with its Metro counterparts the belief that another interchange was needed to address future traffic congestion on Kennedy Road and McCowan Road.⁵⁶² Community associations in the area were opposed to the interchange's construction and associated road widenings, fearing it would split their neighbourhoods, increase through traffic, and generally depreciate property values.

Plans calling for the creation of a pedestrian and transit-oriented space were clearly being hedged. Developers and planners continued to see access by private automobiles as vital to the near-term success of the Town Centre. Resident opposition suggests that creating higher-density nodes in the suburbs ran against the grain of expectations in communities planned in accordance with the neighbourhood unit concept and its emphasis on intimacy, quiet, green spaces, and limiting of non-local traffic. In

⁵⁶¹ Alden Baker and Denys Horgan, "Lack of a roads agreement imperils centre, council told," *Globe and Mail*, October 1st 1981; Rita Daly, "Long road ahead for Brimley link," *Toronto Star*, June 30th 1981; Kathleen Harford, "Road widenings 'monstrous' error resident warns," *Toronto Star*, June 30th 1981; Denys Horgan, "Mistakes haunt development," *Globe and Mail*, September 24th 1981.

⁵⁶² Daly, "Long road ahead for Brimley link."; Horgan, "Mistakes haunt development."

neither case, were priorities aligned with the vision of the Town Centre as a pedestrian and transit-oriented place in which a concentration of retail activity, administrative and office jobs, and high-rise residential apartments would lead to a “downtown” environment less reliant on automobiles.

The difficulties fostering such an environment in the Town Centre district can be extended to understand why new planning ideas and concepts starting in the 1980s have had a limited impact on the overall form and function of the built environment in Scarborough. This is not to say, however, they had no impact. Planning and design changes are evident to the observer aware of what to look for. But these interventions are minor in relation to the impact of earlier waves of development that set down the basic framework and still dominate the physical fabric of most spaces. That extends to the latest wave of development, which includes a significant number of new condominium towers, particularly around the Scarborough Town Centre. Despite talk of finally creating the critical mass to transform Scarborough from “sleepy bedroom community”, critics still find the on-the-ground results less-than-urban.⁵⁶³

Divergent Foci: Planned Sprawl and “Scrambled Eggs” Planning

In Chapter 5, the gradual and halting process by which modern planning took root and began to shape built environments in Scarborough was discussed, along with the tensions engendered by growth and development. This chapter has sought to examine the

⁵⁶³ Theresa Boyle, "Scarborough Rising; Since 1992, City has 64 New and Planned Towers: Intensification is Shaping the Community's Future," *Toronto Star*, February 24th 2007; Christopher Hume, "Bleakness at the Heart of Car-Borough," *Toronto Star*, May 24th 2008.

divergent responses to the modern suburban environment and particularly the contesting of its planning precepts. For critics, the planned segregation of major land-use categories, careful planning using projected populations to determine the size and location of public and commercial facilities and needed infrastructure, and automobile-centric design produced an undesirable low-density “sprawl” lacking the positive qualities, particularly “human-scale”, of pre-1946 cities and their more variegated and textured streetscapes. In Scarborough, the initial focus of discontentment with the inherited legacy of the post-war boom years was directed at the influence of developers, lack of community involvement in planning and development decisions, and the perceived aesthetic failings and lack of order on major arterial roads.

Legislative changes in the mid-1940s gave municipalities in Ontario the ability to draft and adopt official plans in order to better shape land-use patterns and control the pace and timing of development. The purpose was to encourage development to proceed in a manner that would be cost-effective to service and yield enough assessment to pay for the municipal services demanded by residents and businesses. Although design considerations were always part of the story, by the 1970s improving the aesthetics of boom era excesses became a priority, as well as realigning transportation and land-use choices. In Scarborough, Mayor Paul Cosgrove opposed the Scarborough Expressway, advocated for light rail transit (LRT) to connect the Town Centre to the Bloor-Danforth subway, and fought to “clean-up” the jumble of uses and “cluttered chaos” found on major streets such as Eglinton Avenue East, Lawrence Avenue East and the Kingston

Road. Ironically, as urbanists began to celebrate the fine-scale mix of uses, jumble of architectural styles, diversity of housing choices, and compact transit-supportive form of urban neighbourhoods, visual order and the tidy separation of uses was still the order of the day in the suburbs, while density held mostly negative connotations and was associated with high-rise apartments.

During the same time period that architect Jack Diamond and Toronto councillor John Sewell were singing the praises of dense, mixed-use urban neighbourhoods and their variegated streetscapes while contesting Scarborough's planning framework at the OMB in 1975, Mayor Paul Cosgrove's focus on planning had him leading the charge in Scarborough to stop or scale-back high-rise apartment developments wherever possible, to reduce the visual pollution of the "neon jungle" on Eglinton Avenue East, and to make the "scrambled eggs mixture of retail, industrial and commercial development that occurs on some major Scarboro roads ... a thing of the past."⁵⁶⁴ In retrospect, each highlighted tensions deeply embedded in the planned neighbourhood unit as it evolved in Scarborough, while framing what was undesirable differently and seeking different changes. The former viewed the basic planning of Scarborough and its built environments as flawed, while the latter saw it as his job to make Scarborough a more pleasant place to live, which meant protecting and enhancing the qualities that had enticed people to reside there in the first place.

⁵⁶⁴ "Mayor predicts high-rise for half of Scarborough," *Toronto Star*, May 7th 1973; Dineen, "Mayor fights uphill battle against Scarborough's neon jungle."; McNenly, "Era of high-rise is over in suburbs, Godfrey says."; "'Scrambled-eggs' planning probed," *Scarborough Mirror*, February 26th 1975.

On that final point, we can look to the “suburban” highway commercial strip to see in miniature the tension that has animated city-suburban antagonisms since the late-1960s in Toronto (and elsewhere in North America). Excepting the authors of *Learning from Las Vegas* and landscape studies pioneer J.B. Jackson, popular and professional opinion has typically regarded the highway strip as an aesthetic and planning failure.⁵⁶⁵ Around the same time as journalist Graham Fraser was reporting on John Sewell’s activities at the OMB, he also wrote a number of incisive articles for the *Globe and Mail* on the dominance of shopping centres; the emergence of highway commercial strips and the planning and design struggle to tame them; and the long-term implications of suburban design that not only accommodates the private automobile, but assumes that most people would use one to get around.⁵⁶⁶

A basic tension is clear across his articles: the perceived shortcomings of suburban environments were part and parcel of what many residents like about them. This conundrum still confronts planners and politicians when they consider planning issues that at their root can only be addressed through trade-offs that strike at the very heart of postwar suburbanism.

The suburban dream was a quasi-rural idyll: large lots, green space, room for children to play, few cars, separation from the noise and

⁵⁶⁵ See R. Venturi, D. Brown, and S. Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas* (Cambridge MA: The MIT Press, 1977); Timothy Davis, "Looking Down the Road: J.B. Jackson and the American Highway Landscape," in *Everyday America: Cultural Landscape Studies After J.B. Jackson*, ed. Chris Wilson and Paul Groth (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003).

⁵⁶⁶ Graham Fraser, "The war against strip development," *Globe and Mail*, August 20th 1975; ———, "How Las Vegas snuck into sleepy Brampton," *Globe and Mail*, August 19th 1975; ———, "The smothering embrace of the giant plaza," *Globe and Mail*, December 27th 1975; ———, "Transit's big foe—the family car," *Globe and Mail*, May 31st 1976.

intensity of urban life. But inflation, cost of gasoline, land costs, and sheer numbers have made the automobile dependency of suburbia a burden.

Suburban neighbourhoods have intentionally been segregated from retail stores; these have been centralized into shopping centres, surrounded by acres of asphalt, perpetuating the need for the car.⁵⁶⁷

Some four decades later, plans for suburban revitalization and adaptation butt up against this legacy when they see low-rise commercial plazas and the acres of parking around shopping centres as sites for intensification. This approach seeks to transform the form and function of commercial strips, now referred to in Toronto's Official Plan as Avenues, by making them more like streets produced in the era of the streetcar suburb before the advent of mass automobility.

If we return to the problem of suburban highway commercial strips, Fraser noted in the mid-1970s that "[c]ritics have denounced them for years for their ugliness, their commercialism, their vulgarity. More recently, people have expressed concern about the amount of land being wasted for parking, and the problems of having land use revolve so completely around the automobile."⁵⁶⁸ Several municipalities were in the midst of determining how to tackle their strips and their approaches. He states they fell into three categories, with each revealing fundamentally different attitudes toward highway commercial strips, and with each likely to yield different results. Two of the strategies in evidence, Fraser says, address the nature of the strips via land use changes, while the third accepts the existing land use and function of strips and merely tries to improve their

⁵⁶⁷ _____, "Transit's big foe--the family car."

⁵⁶⁸ _____, "The war against strip development."

appearance. Scarborough fell into the third camp in the 1970s. It sought to make commercial strips more orderly and attractive through regulation of their visual qualities, and where commercial strips had not yet formed, Scarborough's plans worked to prevent their development.

Planner John van Nostrand sums up the result neatly:

Look at Sheppard Avenue in Malvern (the new community in Scarborough). If it had been developed in 1930, it would look like Bloor Street West, or Danforth Avenue, with shops lining the sidewalk. If it had been developed in 1950, it would look like the Golden Mile. Now there's nothing ... When you drive along, you drive past a chain link fence and people's backyards.⁵⁶⁹

Graham Fraser was more cutting in his conclusion, saying the logical extension of designing streets for cars leaves us with an "uncomfortable choice between chaos and sterility."⁵⁷⁰

That works as an imperfect, but fitting summation for the widening city-suburban divide over land use and transportation planning and the divergence between John Sewell and Scarborough over the planning of Metro's last frontier. It also speaks to the difficulties faced by Kenneth Whitwell during the 1980s when as commissioner of planning he attempted to bring an urban sensibility to planning and development in Scarborough. Attempts to implement so-called downtown planning principles could not wish away the spatial form that had developed since the 1950s. Instead, planning changes were limited to increasing the flexibility of Scarborough's land-use planning regime and

⁵⁶⁹ Quoted in Ibid.

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid.

improving design guidelines to ensure that as infilling and redevelopment happened along major arterials and in designated centres, most importantly the Town Centre district, a more urban look and feel would gradually be produced. Using new development to retrofit existing built environments and give Scarborough more transit- and pedestrian-oriented streetscapes—was far from straightforward in practice. Looking to the future meant having to deal with the exigencies of the present, while having choices framed by the past—a point that will be expanded upon in the next chapter.

Chapter 7: Becoming In-Between

Scarborella takes place in the far eastern Kingdom of Scarbruh in an age somewhere between “once-upon-a-time and “they-lived-happily-ever-after”.⁵⁷¹

Introduction

On December 27th, 1975 a story entitled “New bungalows in suburbs looked like ‘seventh heaven’” appeared in the *Toronto Star*.⁵⁷² The masthead for the page read “the 50s: the way we were” and the text detailed the story of Jane and Ted Ribbans who had bought their “dream house” in the southwest of Scarborough in the spring of 1950.

They were in the wilderness off graveled Pharmacy Avenue just north of St. Clair Avenue West and stood in a sea of mud.

The two-bedroom bungalows, tiny by today’s housing standards, marked the first post-war wave of suburban development that in later years was to be branded as “sprawl” by the planners, and deplored by architects for its repetitive mediocrity.

But Jane Ribbans’ eyes still light up when she remembers that first impression. “There was so much space, so many cupboards. We were in seventh heaven,” she said, sitting in the immaculate doll-size living room of that same Clairlea Crescent house where she and her husband still live.

The planners and architects can say what they want, but for the Ribbans’ and the eight original 1950 families still living on Clairlea Crescent the little houses provided a rock against inflation, a cosy, if sometimes a bit crowded home in which to bring up their families, and now a perfectly scaled haven for their future retirement.

⁵⁷¹ The setting for a light-hearted political satire written and performed at the Scarborough Civic Centre by the mayor, members of Council, and civic staff in the mid-1970s. See John Wimbs and Alan Robinson, *Scarborella: A Musical Adaptation in One Act* (1975). Reference copy available in the Scarborough Local History collection housed at the Cedarbrae Branch of the Toronto Public Library.

⁵⁷² Frank Jones, "New Bungalows in Suburbs Looked Like 'Seventh Heaven'," *Toronto Star*, December 27 1975.

They had moved to their new house in Scarborough from a smaller bungalow with no basement in the City's east-end, which they had purchased for \$2400 after Ted was discharged from the military. The move was aided by a further \$1000 that Jane had saved out of her pay as an Army secretary. Their new house cost them \$9400 and was purchased with the help of a 20-year mortgage at 4.5 per cent interest. Their initial monthly housing costs, including taxes, were \$54, and Ted worked as a draftsman for Canadian General Electric.

The rest of the article betrays a wistful nostalgia for the "pioneer days" and "self-sacrifice" that was required to achieve homeownership and raise a family in the suburbs after World War II. Part of the reminiscing that frames the story works to contrast the struggles of the postwar generation with young baby-boomers then beginning to enter the housing market and struggling with affordability issues of their own. The Ribbans' comment about their house coming with no fixtures, appliances, sod, or landscaping, and for many years getting by with minimal, second-hand furniture paints an austere picture of postwar suburban life. Their experience speaks to suburbanisms in Scarborough that are more in keeping with the ethos of thrift that permeates Richard Harris' account of blue-collar, unplanned suburbs built around Toronto during the first half of the 20th century than the material abundance and consumerist excess typically emphasized in accounts of postwar suburbia; and it suggests the suburban conformity that Harris writes

about in *Creeping Conformity* may have unfolded in a more complicated and gradual way in Scarborough after World War II.⁵⁷³

By the 1970s, the modern suburb patterned after the Don Mills was the unquestioned template for new suburban areas. Within Scarborough, it was embedded in plans for remaining undeveloped areas and its key tenets still held sway. As we have seen, new thinking about suburban planning and design was emergent. But it was emanating from the City. Reform-oriented suburban politicians and citizens' groups did not so much reject the Don Mills model as focus on refining it and eliminating its unwanted aspects. Their efforts were directed at improving suburban aesthetics, down zoning of high-rise areas, adding high-quality open spaces and recreational facilities, and the need to increase taxable assessment from industry. The problems that held the attention of Scarborough planners and politicians continued to relate more strongly to shaping and managing growth. If there was awareness that a process of maturation was slowly taking hold, especially in the older parts of the borough's southern half, it registered as a modest, distant concern.

That would change in the 1980s. Economic change and the social changes wrought by it, along with the impact of immigration from the Global South to Scarborough, first began to register in the 1980s. The importance of deindustrialization, combined with a real estate bust starting in 1989 and generally depressed economic conditions in the Toronto region during the first-half of the 1990s shaped Scarborough's

⁵⁷³ Harris, *Unplanned Suburbs: Toronto's American Tragedy, 1900 to 1950*; ———, *Creeping Conformity: How Canada Became Suburban, 1900-1960*.

transition from Metro's last frontier to in-between city or new urban middle. Structural changes in the economy and governmental policies exacerbated certain trends as Scarborough became a place with little vacant land to develop and more complicated questions began to confront it. The 1980s and '90s also saw the intensification of anti-suburban rhetoric, particularly in Scarborough-specific forms.

Becoming "in-between" speaks to the process of (sub)urban change that while differing from the central city in certain respects is nevertheless poorly understood when approached with expectations drawn from conventional understandings of "urban" and "suburban". The planning of northern Scarborough and its contestation, especially with regard to the Steeles and Milliken areas discussed in Chapter 6, and the changes that in planning that first emerged fitfully in the mid-1970s with the BARC report and became more entrenched after the hiring of Kenneth Whitwell as Planning Commissioner in 1980, will now be extended to consider the maturing process, the entrenching of city-suburban binaries, and discourses on suburban decline in Toronto.

"No Room for Nostalgia"

A short article entitled "No Room for Nostalgia" appeared in the *Globe and Mail* in 1991 detailing social changes transforming Scarborough and making it clear the planning and design assumptions embedded in its postwar-era built environments were out-of-sync with new realities:

Scarborough was a city designed for the suburban dream: a house, some land around it, a quiet street, and roads for endless, easy movement in the family car.

But families are changing. While for many families such a lifestyle still has all the charms it ever did, newcomers to Canada or people not living in traditional two-parent families can find themselves at odds with the suburban environment.

Whatever growth has occurred in Metropolitan Toronto in the past decade has been almost entirely the result of immigration, Metro planning commissioner John Gartner said. And Scarborough is attracting the lion's share of immigrants.

The new residents are of a variety of races and cultures, and most are very different from the people in the traditional white, middle-class families for whom suburban communities were designed.

Many of the newcomers—some estimate about 5 per cent of Scarborough's population, as many as 25,000 people—live in illegal basement apartments in houses designed for single families.

To them, the houses set far apart for privacy can seem isolated, and the double driveways and spreading lawns represent a long walk to the bus, a hard trudge with groceries or laundry. Winding streets designed to discourage through traffic make providing public transit more expensive and make police patrols more difficult.

Others live in subsidized housing developments, of which Scarborough has the highest concentration in Metro, often built on the fringes of the city. The hectares of parking lots and featureless lawns around the buildings can mean wind-swept desolation.⁵⁷⁴

⁵⁷⁴ Jane Coutts, "No room for Nostalgia," *Globe and Mail*, January 4th 1991. A couple of years prior a study commissioned by Scarborough Council on changing neighbourhoods was aborted because its examination of residential intensification became entangled with opposition to basement suites. The study was intended to explore how existing housing and neighbourhoods might be adapted to changing suburban realities as Scarborough matured into a more urban place. See Berridge Lewinberg Greenberg Ltd., Clayton Research Associates Ltd., George Przybylowski, and Patrick H. Hare Planning and Design. "Scarborough: Maturing Neighbourhoods, Volume 1: Interim Report," (City of Scarborough, 1989); David Lewis Stein, "Will Scarborough Council Shoot the Messenger?" *Toronto Star*, June 5 1989.

As noted in Chapter 3, the problem of adapting postwar suburbs to better accommodate new realities and social needs made its way onto the policy agenda more than a decade earlier.⁵⁷⁵ The Social Planning Council of Metro Toronto's study and its final report, "Metro's Suburbs in Transition", spoke to changes already evident in the suburbs and offered sharp criticism of conventional suburban land use planning and its insensitivity to diverse social needs, arguing "we have reached another cross-road in the evolution of Metropolitan Toronto, in which the achievements of the past are no longer a guarantee for the future."⁵⁷⁶ The report was prepared during a period of high-inflation, persistently high-unemployment, and weak economic growth, and set against the rise of a "neo-market perspective in Ontario" that reduced the priority placed on social spending and cutbacks.

The report's authors recommended developing a network of services and facilities at the community level to address changing social needs and conditions in the suburbs. The "Metro's Suburbs in Transition" report did not, however, envision suburban adaptation as "the physical transformation of what exists into something new or different", but rather as "a process of refinement and tailoring in which essential characteristics are preserved, while modifications necessary to deal with diversity are

⁵⁷⁵ Social Planning Council of Metro Toronto, "Metro's Suburbs in Transition, Part I: Evolution and Overview."; ———, "Planning Agenda for the Eighties, Part II: Metro's Suburbs in Transition."

⁵⁷⁶ ———, "Planning Agenda for the Eighties, Part II: Metro's Suburbs in Transition," 10.

introduced.”⁵⁷⁷ It is helpful to consider the “critical factors” seen at the time to be shaping forms of adaption. The report lists these as including:

1. Profound shifts in family structure;
2. Changing roles of women;
3. The presence in the suburbs of a continuity of family life—large numbers of youth, and a growing senior adult population;
4. The ethno-cultural diversity of recent immigrants to Metro;
5. High inflation with an unstable economy;
6. A relatively uniform suburban housing stock and land use pattern, with limited vacant land in Metro for new residential development.⁵⁷⁸

The strongest criticism of the postwar suburban framework was directed at the home, whether in the form of a house or apartment, as the social centre of community experience. The report’s authors noted that reduced opportunities for social contact and interaction and argued existing public and private community facilities did not invite or encourage causal uses. Retail plazas, however imperfectly and unintentionally, seemed to have taken on this function, they suggest, becoming a space for causal social encounters in Toronto’s postwar suburbs.

Scarborough’s response to the report was to establish a Special Committee of Council on the “Metro Suburbs in Transition”, which itself produced a report in

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid., 118.

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid., 119.

December of 1979 entitled the “Scarborough Community Services Project”.⁵⁷⁹ In the introduction to that report the findings of “Metro’s Suburbs in Transition” are said to describe “a series of profound social changes occurring in Metro suburban municipalities—some effecting society as a whole, others peculiar to Metro suburbs in this decade—that are converging to challenge almost every aspect of human services and social policy in the suburbs.”⁵⁸⁰ A key thrust, which the Special Committee focused on, was the “lack of adequate community response in terms of leadership, coordination, and planning” to adapt services and policy to meet the needs of the “new ‘social majority’ in the suburbs: the lone parents, the working mothers, the immigrants, the neglected youth.”⁵⁸¹ Not surprisingly the Special Committee’s report emphasized “the lack of any recognized centre of public responsibility for social development needs” and the fragmentary nature of social services funding and delivery.

As will be discussed subsequently, the problem of suburban adaptation is ongoing as is the task of elevating social planning and more fully incorporating it in land use planning and development decisions. It is noteworthy that Scarborough’s Special Committee of Council acknowledged that “Metro’s Suburbs in Transition” was highly critical of the Borough’s land use planning, particularly its outmoded community plan model, but deferred to the Scarborough Planning Board on issues related to the physical

⁵⁷⁹ Special Committee of Scarborough Council, "Scarborough Community Services Project: Report on the Metro Social Planning Council Report, "Metro Suburbs in Transition'," ed. Dave Hawkins (Borough of Scarborough 1979).

⁵⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁵⁸¹ *Ibid.*

form and design of the suburban environment, effectively reproducing the split between physical and social planning. As discussed in Chapter 6, though, Scarborough had begun in the 1970s to question its planning department and reform how it planned. That process was halting. And initially it was not driven by an outright rejection of the planning ideas and practices associated with the Don Mills model. Discontent with the results of modern planning precepts had not yet coalesced into an alternative vision or framework. Instead, the political impetus for changes, as detailed in Chapter 5, grew out of upset over high-rise apartment development and Ontario Housing Corporation (OHC) projects, the influence of developers, and lack of citizen involvement in planning and development decisions.

Beyond design considerations and physical changes, moving into the 1980s, Scarborough's new planning commissioner, Kenneth Whitwell, also recognized that social relations and identity (or image) were in flux:

No longer can the borough be referred to as a typical dormitory suburban community populated mainly by blue collar workers.

Many business and professional people now make their homes in Scarborough and their homes in Scarborough and there is a rapidly growing ethnic population.

These dramatic changes in the character of the borough will set the tone in the next decade or two, Whitwell says.⁵⁸²

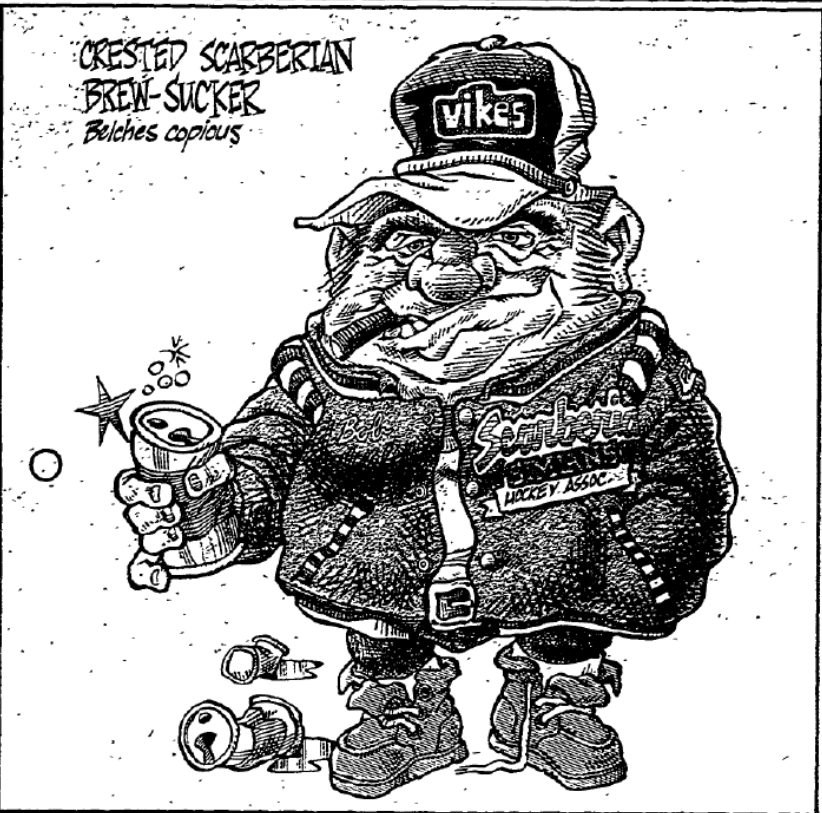
The link between the increased emphasis placed on creating pedestrian-oriented streetscapes with new buildings constructed closer to the street line and parking provided

⁵⁸² Johnson, "Next century for pedestrian; Borough will be cosmopolitan: Planner."

under or behind them has to be considered as part of a larger shift taking place to remake Scarborough aesthetically in order to update its suburban image. An important aspect, at least one emphasized in plans and rhetoric starting in the 1980s, was the desire to give Scarborough a more “urban look” patterned after increasingly fashionable areas in the city being recast as urban villages. Less acknowledged, but evident, the new vision dovetailed with the increasing importance of the service sector in the economy.

With the old still very much present, changes that were just glimmers in the 1970s would become more evident and pronounced during the 1980s. Part of that involved a class- and race-based transformation. The old image, formed during the middle decades of the 20th century when Scarborough attracted considerable industrial development, particularly branch plant operations, became that of a somewhat low-brow, white (though more accurately British), blue-collar suburb. As Fordist Scarborough entered its twilight, an editorial cartoonist for the *Toronto Star* summed up its identity in a caricatured portrayal of the working-class Scarborough male, the “crested Scarberian brew sucker” (see figure 4).

Bill Suddick's
Field Guide to Torontonians



MEASUREMENTS: 50 inches to 60 inches around the girth. Weighs up to 350 lbs.

DESCRIPTION: Prominent beer gut; baseball cap (crested); multi-hued, crested hockey or softball jacket with the name "Bob" embroidered on it; crew cut; long, pointed sideburns; work-boots (unlaced). Summer garb consists of white singlet, Bermuda shorts and sweat socks. It feeds on Export Ale, cheeseburgers, chips and pickled eggs. The raucous call sounds like:

"HIT-THAT-*#@!! & %".

HABITAT: Can usually be found at any **Scarberia** McDonalds, the Brewers' Retail, Birchmount Arena or any local bar equipped with a wide screen.

Figure 4 – The Crested Scarberian Brew-Sucker, *Toronto Star* July 22nd 1983 © Bill Suddick

Around the same time, Barbara Moon, a columnist who described herself “as a sometime resident of Scarborough”, wrote a tongue-in-cheek article in the *Globe and Mail* in response to the efforts of local boosters seeking to improve the image of “Toronto’s most pitiable suburb and cultural wasteland.”⁵⁸³ Cautioning against “me-tooism”, she pokes fun at the pretensions of Toronto’s increasingly gentrified and urbane inner-city neighbourhoods. In her words,

... a Torontonian’s superior urbanity requires a contrast, a wrong-headed, boring, inferior and faintly ridiculous collectivity, preferably in reasonable proximity, that can stand for all he [sic] disavows. This is Scarborough’s special, crucial function ... In a modern capitalist society, somebody has to read the Harlequins, wear the singlets, buy the aluminum flamingos, use the Hamburger Helper. Somebody has to dress in polyester and enter supermarket contests. Somebody has to settle for whatever housing is affordable. Somebody has to be the proletariat. And if Toronto needs so badly to believe it’s us, why not? There are other satellite cities I could mention that have no image at all.⁵⁸⁴

Unfortunately, Scarborough did have an image and it bothered local politicians and notables. They began to take the problem seriously in the 1980s, which led them to seek city status. Proponents of the change, which was also under consideration by Metro’s other large boroughs at the time, trumpeted its positive impact on image and reputation as the main reason for switching from a borough to a city, as otherwise it had no appreciable benefit or impact in terms of organization, powers, or municipal finance, and would be

⁵⁸³ Barbara Moon, "Scarberia: In Praise of Urban Banality," *Globe and Mail*, October 27th 1983.

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid.

accompanied by the cost of changing signage and stationary.⁵⁸⁵ Scarborough officially became a city in June 1983.

Mayor Gus Harris spearheaded the campaign to become a city, arguing it would boost Scarborough's image: "[i]f you're trying to convince an investor to put millions of dollars into your area, it's much more impressive to say you're from a city than from a borough."⁵⁸⁶ The president of Canadian Manufacturers Association poured cold water on that notion, saying "[f]rankly, I don't think it matters one bit whether a place is called a borough, a town or a city."⁵⁸⁷ That said, there was more to Scarborough's image concerns than attracting investment. There was also a strong desire for respect and acknowledgement that Scarborough was no longer a sleepy suburb. As Alderman Bill Belfontaine put it "Toronto always gets the glory. It's time for Scarborough to shake its inferiority complex and become a city."⁵⁸⁸ The problem was attempts to contest its image as a "physical and cultural wasteland 'somewhere east of Toronto'" also drew attention to the negative perceptions of outsiders and further entrenched the use of the portmanteau "Scarberia" in popular discourse.⁵⁸⁹

⁵⁸⁵ Aldon Baker, "Do Cities Have More Pull? Three Boroughs Taking Status Step," *Globe and Mail*, June 28th 1983.

⁵⁸⁶ "Scarborough Eyes City Status," *Globe and Mail*, March 29th 1983.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁸ Kate Burbidge, "City of Scarborough? Sounds good," *Toronto Star*, April 5th 1983.

⁵⁸⁹ Rita Daly, "Borough Won't Accept 'Wasteland' Label," *Toronto Star*, February 23 1982; Christopher Hume, "Sculptors Chisel Away at Old 'Scarberia' Image," *Toronto Star*, June 4th 1994; Sterling Taylor, "Crusade's on to Shed 'Scarberia' Label," *Toronto Star*, November 1st 1994; Tracy Hanes, "Fighting to Bury the 'Scarberia' Myth," *Toronto Star*, November 29th 1996; Stan Josey, "Mayor Believes City's 'Scarberia' Image Fading: Scarborough Cutting Crime, Wooing New Jobs," *Toronto Star*, June 10th 1996; Terrence Belford, "Eastern Borough Sheds Old Image: Urban Updates: Mondeo Springs Attracts First-Time Homebuyers," *National Post*, August 4th 2001; I.D., "Myths of Scarborough; I.D.'s Final Segment of

Sometime later, “Scarlem” would be added to the mix as a nickname that speaks to the popular association of Scarborough with ethno-racialized poverty, crime, and violence.⁵⁹⁰ It is difficult to assess the import of this new nickname, and other racialized monikers, as they only appear in print media in a limited way, most often in stories about street slang or in responses to media coverage of violent crime.⁵⁹¹ Though problematic, these new monikers do speak to the racialization of poverty and crime in Scarborough, which emerged in media discourse during the 1990s and intensified in the 2000s until a concerted effort was made by politicians and others to call it into question.

Though nostalgic renderings of postwar suburbia often draw upon television sitcoms such as “Father Knows Best” and “Leave it to Beaver” that emphasize the domestic side of suburban life, as has been emphasized elsewhere in this dissertation industrial development was an integral component of postwar suburbanization in Toronto. An important aspect of becoming “in-between” was the painful round of

the Growing Up Series: Quick, Think of Scarberia. Does a Beach Come to Mind? The City's Tough and Gritty Reputation Too Often Overwhelms Every Other Aspect, Writes Raju Mudhar," *Toronto Star*, August 3rd 2004; Rosie DiManno, "A Cheeky Look at the Rump of Toronto; Shhh on the S-word, Coupled With Crime, Councillors Say," *Toronto Star*, January 15th 2007.

⁵⁹⁰ Gillmor, "The Scarborough Curse: How Did Boring, White-Bread Scarberia, The Butt of Mike Myers Jokes, Become Scarlem--A Mess of Street Gangs, Firebombings and Stabbings?."

⁵⁹¹ Anthony Jenkins, "Street Slang: The unvarnished, really offensive Toronto," *Globe and Mail*, March 25th 1995; J. Alexander Ferron, "Local hip-hop 'outlaws' keep their music real," *Toronto Star*, May 6th 1995; Marc Weisblott, "Saying a Word for Scarborough," *Globe and Mail*, January 20th 2007; Gillmor, "The Scarborough Curse: How Did Boring, White-Bread Scarberia, The Butt of Mike Myers Jokes, Become Scarlem--A Mess of Street Gangs, Firebombings and Stabbings?."; John Spears, "Don't call it 'Scarlem' - Scarborough councillors to debate today if area gets fair shake from city," *Toronto Star*, January 15th 2008. Search of online databases returned 10 hits for the term “Scarlem” in the *Toronto Star*, including a couple of letters to editor, and 2 hits in the *Globe and Mail*. It is worth noting that one of the first hits in 1995 was triggered by comments attributed to the hip-hop artist Saukrates. He acknowledged the term’s existence and use, but questioned its appropriateness and suggested it reflects attempts by some to make Scarborough seem “tough” and “hard”.

economic restructuring that took place in the 1980s and '90s. Major plant closures and significant industrial job losses thus undermined a key component of Scarborough's postwar growth formula and forced municipal officials to confront a new set of problems, including how to manage not just growth, but maturation, even decline, as well as social and economic change. Although new social and cultural geographies are often the focus of discourse on suburban change, there is a need to bring changing political and economic circumstances—especially the rise of neoliberalism, post-Fordist transition, and deindustrialization—into focus as key elements in the evolution of spaces in Scarborough.

“Farewell to Generous Mother”

As Scarborough became an increasingly multicultural place in the 1980s and 1990s, many of its branch plants began to close, especially after Canada's 1988 Free Trade Agreement with the United States. In the late-1970s, the *Scarborough Mirror* published a special issue entitled “Salute to Industry”, which celebrated and detailed the many industries found in Scarborough. According to an essay in the special issue, “From glue plants to sophisticated technology”, 1,400 industrial firms operated in Scarborough in 1977.⁵⁹² At the time, development commissioner Cliff Tripp noted that Scarborough had 19 areas designated as industrial districts in its Official Plan comprising 9,825 acres of land of which about 2,500 acres of that total was still available for development. Despite sluggish economic conditions, he noted that industrial growth had improved in the past 3

⁵⁹² "From glue plants to sophisticated technology," *Scarborough Mirror*, February 15th 1978.

or 4 years, suggesting that Scarborough did not expect, nor foresee, the economic restructuring that occurred in the 1980s.

It is apparent now that major plant closings on the Golden Mile in the early-1980s marked the beginnings of deindustrialization. In 1983, the *Toronto Star* reported that Scarborough's former showpiece and "one-time hub of industry and commerce" had fallen on hard times as "large industries that provided 10,000 highly paid jobs over the years ... started to move out."⁵⁹³ Canadian General Electric had announced that it would close its large steam turbine plant on Eglinton Avenue East—a factory building that had housed the John Inglis Company in the 1950s. Their announcement came shortly after factory closures in the Golden Mile area by SKF Ltd. and Link Belt. Combined job losses totaled more than 1250 jobs and led Scarborough politicians to worry about the social and economic implications of widespread industrial decline and job loss. Scarborough still possessed a significant industrial base in the mid-1980s, however. The General Motors (GM) van plant on the Golden Mile employed some 2,000 to 3,000 people and elsewhere in Scarborough major plants like Johns-Manville in the Port Union area, the Lily Cup and Pilkington Glass on Danforth Road between Warden Avenue and Birchmount Road, Atlantic Packaging and Bick's Pickles along Progress Avenue to the west of the Scarborough Town Centre, and Eli Lilly at Danforth Avenue and Birchmount Road were operational.

⁵⁹³ Josey, "Scarborough's Golden Mile hits the skids."

It is difficult to get a handle on deindustrialization as it unfolded in Scarborough. Large plant closures might receive newspaper coverage, but they represent only a portion of the overall picture. The loss of smaller operations garnered little attention and can only be gleaned from overall job loss numbers. Still, coverage of major closures does offer important insights. Due to its size and importance, the closure of GM's Scarborough van plant on May 5th 1993 received extensive coverage, including a feature story in *Toronto Life* magazine.⁵⁹⁴ Its road to closure started in the fall of 1989 when GM announced that van production would cease in 1991 with no new product scheduled for the plant.⁵⁹⁵ At the time it was unclear what plans GM might have for the facility and union representatives held out hope that it might be allocated a new vehicle or be shifted to parts production. In 1991, GM announced it planned to close the Scarborough van plant, saying "[w]e've got too much capacity and not enough market ... [w]e've been looking for something to put in there, but we can't do it."⁵⁹⁶

With the closure, Scarborough lost its largest employer with an annual payroll of \$100 million and its largest taxpayer at \$3.9 million.⁵⁹⁷ *Toronto Life's* expose "The Last Van" highlighted the resignation and sense of loss as the closure became real for autoworkers and management at the plant. Workers, in particular, had to toil on the plant's assembly line for several years knowing that it was slated for closure, and that

⁵⁹⁴ Heather Robertson, "The Last Van," *Toronto Life*, October 1993.

⁵⁹⁵ Ken Romain, "GM intends to shift van plant to Flint, Mich.," *Globe and Mail*, October 13th 1989; Jane Coutts, "GM to continue van production until 1991," *Globe and Mail*, October 21st 1989.

⁵⁹⁶ Martin Melbourne, "GM plant to close in '93," *Scarboro Mirror*, July 21st 1991.

⁵⁹⁷ Robertson, "The Last Van."

their well-paid jobs would be hard to replace. Workers were said to make an average of \$20/hour and with overtime and the opportunity to work double-shifts could earn between \$40,000 and \$80,000 per year. A certain denial existed. As the author puts it, “the G-van [had] been a cash cow, and ‘Generous Mother,’ as GM was fondly known to her children in the golden years, [had] never yet closed a plant in Ontario.”⁵⁹⁸

But the plant did close, and with it and the closure of other postwar factories by the mid-1990s, Scarborough bid farewell to an era when industrial development was a key growth vector and symbol of its prosperity. A little over a decade later, in his “Architourist” column, the *Globe and Mail*’s Dave Leblanc would remark, “the Golden Mile was a golden flame that burned brightly for nearly half a century until it was snuffed out by big-box stores.”⁵⁹⁹ It would perhaps be more accurate to depict what transpired as a meteoric rise in the 1950s, a plateauing in the 1960s, followed by a long, slow fade that lasted into the 1990s. But that fails to do justice to the more complicated history of change on the Golden Mile and the spatial dynamics of uneven development that work upon the urban landscape to produce both gradual changes and episodic spasms of “creative destruction” that visibly transform spaces.

Industrial suburbanization is one component of the urban process and involves the movement of new production facilities, particularly capital intensive ones, outward to the expanding edge of the city and metropolis. That process may be accompanied by residential development geared toward providing accommodation for workers. In

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁹ Leblanc, "Not Much Remains of Scarborough's Golden Mile."

Toronto, Gunter Gad suggests there is evidence of manufacturing decentralization dating back to the 1880s.⁶⁰⁰ The process of decentralization, in his view, was two-sided—it involved industry being pulled outward into the suburbs by new infrastructure and the availability of low-cost land, while at the same time competition for land by non-industrial users pushed industry from more established areas. In Scarborough, the closure of the Lucas-Rotax plant in 1959 and the subsequent attempt by Steinberg—a department store and supermarket chain—in 1964 to rezone the site for use as a junior department store, as discussed in Chapter 5, illustrates competition between retail and industry for space on the Golden Mile predates the industrial decline in the 1990s and 2000s that transformed the area into a major node of big-box retailing.

Indeed, one does not need to venture far from the Golden Mile to find other examples of industrial to retail conversion. Shopper's World on the Danforth, a plaza and enclosed mall near Victoria Park Avenue offers an earlier, albeit smaller-scale, example of the process. In 1923, the Ford Motor Company built a factory on Danforth Avenue just outside the city limits near Victoria Park Avenue near the street railway's terminus at the Luttrell Avenue.⁶⁰¹ Industrial development was accompanied by speculative land subdivision and house building nearby, not unlike what occurred to the north and south of the Golden Mile in the 1950s:

⁶⁰⁰ Gunter Gad, "The Suburbanization of Manufacturing in Toronto, 1881-1951," in *Manufacturing Suburbs: Building Work and Home on the Metropolitan Fringe*, ed. Robert Lewis (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004).

⁶⁰¹ "New Industries for Danforth," *Globe and Mail*, October 17th 1922; "Contract Awarded for Ford Factory," *Globe and Mail*, January 17th 1923.

On Danforth avenue builder, with 45 acres subdivided into building lots situated between Dawes road and Victoria Park avenue, just north of the ravine, and known as the Dawes Road Estate, is making provision for possible demand for workingmen's houses. Only a 15-minute walk from the supposed Ford Motor Company site, he believes the Dawes Road Estate will appeal to the employees seeking homes in the district.⁶⁰²

When the new Ford plant was nearing completion, the main building, which covered 5 and half acres, was said to be "a fine specimen of modern factory construction."⁶⁰³ The new plant was built to replace a more centrally located factory at Dupont and Christie Streets just over 4 kilometers to the northwest of downtown Toronto. Ford used the Danforth Avenue plant until sometime early in the Second World War when it was leased to the Canadian Army, after which it was sold to Nash Motors in 1946 who continued to use it as an assembly plant into the late-1950s.⁶⁰⁴

Ford went on to build a large assembly complex in 1953 in Oakville off the Queen Elizabeth Way (QEW) approximately 35 kilometers west of downtown Toronto, while Nash and Hudson Motors merged in 1954 to become American Motors, idled the Danforth Avenue plant 1957, and then decided in 1960 to build a new plant in Brampton about 30 kilometers to the northwest of downtown Toronto.⁶⁰⁵ The Danforth Avenue plant was then sold to a developer who proposed to convert it into a 260,000 square foot,

⁶⁰² "When Ford Builds Down In East End," *Globe and Mail*, January 6th 1923.

⁶⁰³ "Wheels soon to Turn," *Globe and Mail*, August 16th 1923.

⁶⁰⁴ "Nash Motors Buys Ford Plant on Danforth," *Globe and Mail*, August 17th 1946; "Resume Production of Rambler Cars in Canada," *Globe and Mail*, January 20th 1960.

⁶⁰⁵ "Peel Village Is Site of Rambler Production," *Globe and Mail*, March 23rd 1960.

45-store shopping plaza that was expected to be the largest in Metro upon completion.⁶⁰⁶

In 1962, when the new, enclosed and climate controlled shopping centre—Shoppers' World on the Danforth—opened it housed 50 stores, with 15 more still under construction, and boasted an impressive list of tenants, including Eaton's, Zellers, Dominion Stores, Bata Shoes, and Tip Top Tailors.⁶⁰⁷

Restructuring the Golden Mile

In the 1980s as factories began to close on Scarborough's Golden Mile the pressure for residential, retail, and commercial redevelopment of industrial land increased. At the same time, older retail-commercial plazas were struggling as they were surpassed by newer malls. The Golden Mile Plaza, which Queen Elizabeth II had famously visited in 1959, had fallen on hard times and was losing out to the larger, enclosed Eglinton Square Shopping Centre across the street, which had been expanded and renovated.⁶⁰⁸ Other changes were also afoot as proposals for new retail formats emerged to take advantage of spaces along Eglinton Avenue East left vacant following plant closures. The process of change, as we shall see, was far from straightforward or certain. Indeed, inertia, competing private interests, divergent public and private visions for change, the spatial dynamics of real estate capitalism, and planning-related objections from local residents all worked to shape the transformation of the Golden Mile, which continues with the construction of the Eglinton Crosstown Light Rail Transit (LRT) project.

⁶⁰⁶ "Auto Plant to House Plaza," *Globe and Mail*, June 3rd 1960.

⁶⁰⁷ Samuel Campbell, "Shoppers' World Mall Home for 50 Stores," *Toronto Star*, May 15th 1962.

⁶⁰⁸ John Fitzgerald, "The mall: renovate or rust," *Globe and Mail*, November 8th 1984.

Knob Hill Farms, a supermarket chain in the Toronto area, purchased the former Canadian General Electric plant just to the east of the Golden Mile Plaza in 1984 with plans to build a grocery store and warehouse on the site. A few years later, the *Globe and Mail* would describe the intersection of Pharmacy Road and Eglinton Avenue East as “where grocery giants fight over land.”⁶⁰⁹ On the northwest corner, the Golden Mile Plaza had been demolished and construction of a Loblaw Supercentre was underway, while on the southwest corner a new Dominion store had been added to the Eglinton Square Shopping Centre. Knob Hill Farms had run into fierce opposition to its plan to construct what it claimed would be the “world’s largest grocery store.”⁶¹⁰ Nearby residents objected to the traffic impact on their neighbourhood streets and the two existing grocery stores in the area preferred not to have another competitor siphoning away market share. Scarborough’s planners recommended approval of the rezoning, but several hundred people showed up at the Council chambers to speak against the application and council voted 16-2 to reject it. Knob Hill Farms appealed the decision to the OMB, but in the end the Board upheld Scarborough’s council’s decision on the grounds that the store “would generate too much traffic and possibly kill several nearby food stores.”⁶¹¹

The Loblaw Supercentre was no less controversial, but since the Golden Mile Plaza site to be redeveloped was already zoned for retail use, Scarborough was limited to

⁶⁰⁹ Robert Matas, "Where grocery giants fight over land," *Globe and Mail*, March 6th 1987.

⁶¹⁰ Gay Abbate, "Scarboro rejects supermarket plan," *Globe and Mail*, July 17th 1985.

⁶¹¹ Royson James, "Knob Hill loses bid for Scarborough store," *Toronto Star*, May 9th 1987.

withholding site plan approval if it had aesthetic or design objections.⁶¹² Planning Commissioner Kenneth Whitwell echoed the sentiments of many Scarborough politicians and civic officials when he stated:

We were hoping for a lot more. This is basically an old-style development that won't do much for the image of Scarborough ... We wanted a spectacular, attractive development that would revitalize the entire area. This sure as hell isn't attractive and it's not very inviting.⁶¹³

It was suggested that Scarborough re-open negotiations with the developer and offer higher density and mixed zoning on the property in order to catalyze a development project more in keeping with the new vision for the Golden Mile. It had been hoped that the redevelopment of the Golden Mile Plaza would be mixed use. The eventual compromise added a series of small stores in front of the main building along Eglinton Avenue East and situated things to allow for future development on the property parcel.⁶¹⁴

The Knob Hill Farms and Loblaw Supercentre development applications were representative of shifting trends in retailing. After several decades of continuous growth in the size and number of planned shopping centres in Toronto and other Canadian cities the boom was over. Operating in a competitive landscape, shopping centres were increasingly faced with the choice of either upgrading and modernizing their facilities or

⁶¹² Abbate, "'Supercentre' Proposal for Golden Mile Strip Comes Under Criticism."; Damien Cox, "Scarborough councillors 'not thrilled' by plaza plan," *Toronto Star*, April 14th 1986; ———, "Golden Mile's future sparks uproar," *Toronto Star*, April 16th 1986.

⁶¹³ ———, "Golden Mile's future sparks uproar."

⁶¹⁴ ———, "Agreement expected on Golden Mile plan," *Toronto Star*, July 22nd 1986.

losing market share and gradually drifting toward failure.⁶¹⁵ Since the 1950s planned shopping centres had grown larger in terms of anchor tenants and overall size and had become enclosed and climate-controlled, but the basic format had evolved rather than radically changed. The grocery store battle that played out in the mid-1980s against the backdrop of industrial decline hinted at a powerful new trend that would reshape the retail landscape in the 1990s: the rise of big-box stores, power centres, and category killers.⁶¹⁶

The impact of big-box stores and power centres on the retail landscape is now well advanced. More recently, attention has turned to their impact on urban form and structure in the Toronto region. Post-2000, municipal and provincial plans and policies have looked increasingly to smart growth intensification and re-urbanization to curtail automobile dependent sprawl and promote the creation of compact urban form and walkable, transit-supportive neighbourhoods, but trends in non-residential development are not encouraging.⁶¹⁷ As Larry Bourne notes, sprawl's "largest and most variable costs are on the regional scale: in the arrangement of uses, the rapid growth of non-residential uses, and specifically in the disjuncture between residential and commercial-industrial activities."⁶¹⁸ His assessment can be illustrated via the evolution of the retail landscape

⁶¹⁵ Fitzgerald, "The mall: renovate or rust."

⁶¹⁶ Kenneth G Jones and Michael J. Doucet, "The big box, the flagship, and beyond: impacts and trends in the Greater Toronto Area," *Canadian Geographer* 45, no. 4 (2001); Tony Hernandez and Kenneth G Jones, "Evolving retail landscapes: Power retail in Canada," *Canadian Geographer* 50(2006).

⁶¹⁷ Ron Buliung and Tony Hernandez, "Places to Shop and Places to Grow: Power Retail, Consumer Travel Behaviour, and Urban Growth Management in the Greater Toronto Area," in *Neptis Studies on the Toronto Metropolitan Region* (Toronto: Neptis Foundation, 2009).

⁶¹⁸ Bourne, "The Urban Sprawl Debate: Myths, Realities and Hidden Agendas."

since 1950.⁶¹⁹ Prior to 1950, the retail landscape was dominated by department stores and retail districts located in or adjacent to the downtown core, complemented by retail strips along streetcar lines. In the postwar period, strip plazas initially mimicked retail strips in peripheral areas, though they were set back from the street in order to accommodate parking for cars. Starting in the 1950s, shopping centres were introduced and grew in size and trade area, topping out as “catalytic” super-regional malls typically exceeding one million square feet of floor space by the 1970s. Since the late-1980s, big-box stores have proliferated forming power centres and power nodes, most often on former industrial lands in the older, inner suburbs of Toronto or adjacent to highway interchanges in the newer, outer suburbs in the regional municipalities of Halton, Peel, York, and Durham.⁶²⁰

In the mid-1990s, after General Motors closed its van plant on the Golden Mile, it was quickly demolished to reduce the property taxes payable on the vacant factory.⁶²¹ The plant had attracted no interest from other industrial users, despite the efforts of Scarborough’s economic development committee. It was reported the van plant paid \$3.9 million in property tax during its last year in operation, \$2 million the year after production stopped, but would pay only tens of thousands per year after all buildings on the site were demolished. Loss of industrial assessment such as this was part of a devastating trend. Scarborough lost 12,000 jobs in the early-1990s and had 10 million

⁶¹⁹ See Kenneth G Jones and Tony Hernandez, "Dynamics of the Canadian Retail Environment," in *Canadian Cities in Transition: Local Through Global Perspectives*, ed. Trudi Bunting and Pierre Filion (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2006).

⁶²⁰ Jones and Doucet, "The big box, the flagship, and beyond: impacts and trends in the Greater Toronto Area."; Hernandez and Jones, "Evolving retail landscapes: Power retail in Canada."

⁶²¹ John Spears, "GM Plant Comes Down Under Property Tax Axe," *Toronto Star*, September 21st 1994.

square feet of industrial space vacant. In 1995, a consortium of developers bought the 28.3 hectare property and put forth a proposal to redevelop the former van plant site into stores, offices, and 1,000 townhouses.⁶²² After that proposal was blocked, because Scarborough's long-term plan for development in the Golden Mile area called for commercial, retail, and residential development along the main arterial roads and for the internal areas to remain industrial, a follow-up proposal was advanced for a power centre style retail development on the northern half of the former van plant lands adjacent to Eglinton Avenue East.⁶²³

A journey along Eglinton Avenue East from Victoria Park Avenue to Birchmount Road reveals a mostly new Golden Mile of big-box stores punctuated by occasional reminders of its past industrial glory. The SKF factory, which closed in the early-1980s, was converted shortly thereafter into a Bank of Nova Scotia data processing centre and office complex.⁶²⁴ The aluminum foil plant at Pharmacy Road is still standing and is used as a converting facility by the Flexible Packaging Corporation. The factory building that once housed Rootes Motors remains largely intact at Warden Avenue and has become a mix of small retail stores, restaurants, and offices with a large flea market occupying the bulk of the interior. Most of the factory buildings are gone, though. The General Motors van plant lands house a big-box Canadian Tire store, numerous standalone big-box outlet stores, and a Cineplex Odeon multi-screen theatre complex. Across the street where

⁶²² Sterling Taylor, "Townhouses proposed for ex-GM site," *Toronto Star*, April 6th 1995.

⁶²³ _____, "Mammoth Retail Outlet Planned for Former GM Land: Proposal Replaces Mixed-Use Plan," *Toronto Star*, April 18th 1996.

⁶²⁴ "Development plans are welcome news," *Scarborough Mirror*, December 8th 1982.

Canadian General Electric's plant once stood is a SmartCentres power centre anchored by a Wal-Mart supercenter. Where the Thermos factory was once located between Warden Avenue and Birchmount Road, a Riocan power centre stands, anchored by a shuttered Target store. There is little evidence of residential infill or intensification. The portion of the Golden Mile Plaza once thought to be a space for future office and residential development remains a large parking lot. No residential or office space was included in the redevelopment of the General Motors van plant. What little residential intensification occurred is found west of Victoria Park Avenue. There, the Golden Gate Apartments were built in the 1980s, followed by the construction of three high-rise condominium buildings on the north side of Eglinton Avenue East and a townhouse complex on south side in the late-1990s.⁶²⁵

Off Eglinton Avenue East, the larger industrial district that stretches to the north and south is still home to a number of industrial operations such as Ipex, a maker of thermoplastic piping, Griffith Foods, a product development firm, and S.A. Armstrong Ltd., a pump maker and integrated building energy solutions provider, as well as considerable small-scale light industry, including a host of distribution, storage, and wholesale facilities. Industrial development is no longer envisioned as integral to Scarborough's future, but it would be misleading to translate postindustrial to mean non-industrial or to portray the process of deindustrialization as total or complete. In a few places, such as in the Oakridges industrial area off Danforth Road between Warden

⁶²⁵ Tony Wong, "The heyday of '50s and '60s gone, the huge Scarborough tract is resurging under residential and retail redevelopment," *Toronto Star*, July 12th 1999.

Avenue and Birchmount Road where the Becker's Milk plant, Patterson Industries, and the Lily Cup and Pilkington Glass factories once stood, or in the Port Union area, the site of the massive Johns-Manville asbestos pipe and fiber glass insulation plant, a significant transformation from industrial to residential use has taken place and the industrial past has disappeared or is slowly receding from view.⁶²⁶ More often, though, the transformation is partial. What once was is no longer, but the buildings remain and what should happen to them and on the industrial lands they occupy continues to be an important planning issue.

From Brownfields to Greyfields

Shopping centre saturation and the proliferation of new retail formats, including large-format retailing, i.e. big-box stores, have negatively impacted shopping centres, especially mid-sized ones, in recent decades.⁶²⁷ Such shopping centres, classified as a "community-serving centres" by the International Council of Shopping Centres (ICSC) with between 100,000 and 400,000 square feet of gross leasable area (GLA), face dual pressures.⁶²⁸ Many struggle to compete with the range of fashion stores, department stores, and niche services found in larger super-regional malls, while at the same time they are squeezed by newer retail formats such as power centres, outlet malls, heritage

⁶²⁶ Ian Harvey, "Extreme Makeover: Boomtown - 3,000 homes are being built on southwest Scarborough's old industrial lands," *Toronto Star*, May 24th 2008.

⁶²⁷ Sallie A. Marston and Ali Modarres, "Flexible Retailing: Gap Inc. and the Multiple Spaces of Shopping in the United States," *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie* 93, no. 1 (2002).

⁶²⁸ See ICSC, "Canadian Retail Real Estate Standard: A Framework for Shopping Centre and Other Retail Format Definitions," (New York: International Council of Shopping Centres, 2010). Url: <http://www.icsc.org/uploads/research/general/Canadian-Shopping-Centre-Definitions.pdf> [Accessed May 16, 2016]

markets, and lifestyle centres, not to mention a resurgence in the popularity of urban retail streets and boutique forms of retailing.⁶²⁹ Mid-sized shopping centres also lack the convenience function and low-cost structure of smaller plazas and “neighbourhood centres”—the small linear, “U”, or “L” shaped plazas with modest parking lots and no enclosed common areas. The result has been destabilization and restructuring.⁶³⁰ Owners of mid-sized shopping centres, confronted with chronic financial underperformance, lack of chain stores, and persistently high-vacancy rates, have the option to remix tenants, expand, and/or renovate. If these do not promise sufficient returns on capital invested then reformatting and redevelopment (partial or total) are more extreme options. In areas where retail overbuilding or trade area decline is serious enough and insufficient demand exists for redevelopment, a process of disinvestment, closure, and long-term abandonment occurs.⁶³¹

In Scarborough, the “reformat” option occurred in the case of the Morningside Mall (located at Kingston Road and Morningside Avenue), which was demolished in late-2007 and replaced with an open-air retail environment comprised of attached retail

⁶²⁹ In addition to Marston and Modarres, "Flexible Retailing: Gap Inc. and the Multiple Spaces of Shopping in the United States.", see also Jones and Hernandez, "Dynamics of the Canadian Retail Environment."

⁶³⁰ Buliung and Hernandez, "Places to Shop and Places to Grow: Power Retail, Consumer Travel Behaviour, and Urban Growth Management in the Greater Toronto Area."; Jones and Hernandez, "Dynamics of the Canadian Retail Environment."

⁶³¹ See: DeadMalls.com (www.deadmalls.com). Kris Hudson and Vanessa O'Connell, "Recession Turns Malls into Ghost Towns," *Wall Street Journal*, May 22nd 2009; Nelson D. Schwartz, "The Economics (and Nostalgia) of Dead Malls," *New York Times*, January 3rd 2015; David Uberti, "The death of the American mall," *Guardian*, June 19th 2014.

units placed around the edges of the property with a large central parking lot.⁶³² Described in a *Globe and Mail* article as “the brown brick eyesore”, it was assumed that few mourn the Morningside Mall’s disappearance.⁶³³ The article’s main focus was directed at the redevelopment potential of older, small- to mid-sized enclosed malls as part of wider-reaching area revitalization efforts, the difficulties associated with greyfield development, and the belief that redevelopment projects like the one transforming the Morningside Mall are about making money and improving communities. The article’s author was either unaware or chose to overlook that a couple of years earlier several hundred people, “[s]eniors and youth, young families and single, many of them newcomers, mostly people of colour and all residents of this heavily stigmatized neighbourhood, [had] rallied to protest against the loss of ‘community space’.”⁶³⁴ Lack of social infrastructure in the area had led to community programs and services being offered at the mall, while common areas became spaces for informal activities such as practicing Tai Chi or gathering to socialize over coffee in the food court. In short, the mall had become a gathering spot valued by many area residents as something more than just a place to shop.

A critical unpacking of Morningside Mall’s closure and transformation runs through the globalization of retailing and logistics, but more importantly speaks to the

⁶³² Vanessa Parlette and Deborah Cowen, "Dead Malls: Suburban Activism, Local Spaces, Global Logistics," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 35, no. 4 (2010).

⁶³³ Lori McLeod, "The Ultimate Fixer-Upper," *Globe and Mail*, October 6th 2007.

⁶³⁴ Parlette and Cowen, "Dead Malls: Suburban Activism, Local Spaces, Global Logistics," 794.

social functions and community use of shopping centres.⁶³⁵ The mall as civic space is generally absent in representations of them as privatized spaces of sanitized middle-class consumerism and privilege—the antithesis of the urbanity of “the street” as public realm and space for encounters with difference. Dead malls and the decline of inner suburbs, as Vanessa Parlette and Deborah Cowen reveal in their analysis of Morningside Mall, should be approached with an eye toward the rhetoric and realities of revitalization.⁶³⁶ The “remaking of urban social space and economic space” entailed by revitalization targets spaces that fail to conform or live-up to their intended economic purpose or “highest and best” use.⁶³⁷ The rhetoric and process of revitalization seldom value spatial practices rooted in use value that loosen a space from its economic function, and, instead, often construct social uses and the public realm in terms of vibrancy and liveability so as to enhance the production of space for profit.

Warden Woods Mall in southwest Scarborough off Warden Avenue just north of St. Clair Avenue East is an example of the “redevelopment” option in which an underperforming mall is converted into mainly new housing. Opened in 1982, Warden Woods Mall was a 300,000 square foot, two-storey shopping centre on a 22-acre site that included 1,650 parking spaces and was next to the commuter parking lot for the nearby Warden subway station.⁶³⁸ The shopping centre had an eight theatre Cineplex, a 120,000 square foot Simpsons department store, and a 43,000 square foot Dominion grocery store

⁶³⁵ Ibid.

⁶³⁶ Ibid., 794.

⁶³⁷ See also Blomley, *Unsettling the City: Urban Land and the Politics of Property*.

⁶³⁸ “Warden Woods Mall gets set to open,” *Toronto Star*, March 2nd 1982.

as anchor tenants when it opened. A decade later the mall sought to transform itself into a discount mall with a range of warehouse style discount retailers as tenants.⁶³⁹ Hudson's Bay, which had replaced Simpsons as the mall's department store anchor was not profitable and had decided to relinquish its lease. At the time, the managers of Warden Woods Mall stated: "We're looking for retailers that sell high volume and operate on low margins."⁶⁴⁰ It was their hope the switch to a discount mall would expand their trade area and help them compete for customers in a retail landscape being transformed by the arrival of big-box chains.

A later newspaper story on the transformation would note that Warden Woods Mall was "built in the wrong place and probably at the wrong time" and had never been much of a success.⁶⁴¹ It was thought that because the mall was built at the end of wave of shopping centre construction in Toronto it had lost out to other nearby mid-sized malls such as Shopper's World on the Danforth to its south and Eglinton Square on the Golden Mile to its north, and to the extended reach of the super-regional Scarborough Town Centre. A decade after re-opening as a discount mall, Warden Woods Mall (now the Warden Power Centre) closed for good, becoming a greyfield redevelopment site earmarked for a medium-density residential community.⁶⁴² A few years later, in 2008, the area from Warden Avenue east to Birchmount Road between Danforth Road and St. Clair

⁶³⁹ Maureen Murray, "Warden Woods to Become Discount Mall: The Bay to Close, Lay Off 99 as Plaza Seeks Superstores," *Toronto Star*, November 17th 1993.

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁴¹ Sterling Taylor, "Southern sales ploy may revitalize mall," *Toronto Star*, December 22nd 1994.

⁶⁴² Theresa Boyle, "Houses planned for shopping mall site - Power Centre to be demolished next month Builder's plan includes range of housing styles," *Toronto Star*, February 26th 2005.

Avenue East, including several factories, was described as “booming again” with 3,000 new residences expected to be built on land “carved from industrial and commercial lands”.⁶⁴³ The city’s desire for intensification of underutilized lands was portrayed as driving the “boom” underway, though it was noted that city staff were uneasy about the loss of employment lands.

Towards the “Suburban” Cosmopolis

In 2001, the *Globe and Mail* published an article on a historical project about the Agincourt area in northern Scarborough entitled “An evolution from village to Asiancourt”.⁶⁴⁴ The article contrasted the childhood memories of life-long resident, 82 year-old Bill Walton, with the perspective of a more recent arrival, Catherine Uy, a 25 year-old and 13 year resident of the area. Walton could recall playing hockey at an ice rink at Glen Watford Drive when Agincourt Village was a rural hamlet consisting of a short strip along Sheppard Avenue East between Kennedy and Brimley Roads with a hotel, railway station, general store, churches, butcher and blacksmith. By contrast, Uy had moved to the area from downtown Toronto with her parents, who “were attracted to Agincourt by the large number of Chinese shops, and the availability of new homes.” For her, “Agincourt [meant] Asians and Chinese shopping centres.”

The transformation located between these two perspectives bypasses an intervening period when the area went from semi-rural to suburban in the 1960s and ‘70s

⁶⁴³ Harvey, "Extreme Makeover: Boomtown - 3,000 homes are being built on southwest Scarborough's old industrial lands."

⁶⁴⁴ Gay Abbate, "An evolution from village to Asiancourt," *Globe and Mail*, December 29th 2001.

and focuses on the rise of a suburban Chinatown along Sheppard Avenue East at Glen Watford Drive. The purchase of a roller rink at that intersection in 1984 by a group of Chinese investors to convert it into an Asian-oriented shopping mall, the Dragon Centre, brought to the fore what had slowly been occurring for several years without much fanfare: the development of a sizeable Chinese community north of the 401 highway in Scarborough. More than a decade and half after the Dragon Centre caused an uproar—partly due to legitimate traffic and parking issues, partly due to resistance to change in general, and partly due to racism or xenophobia—the discord and controversy had receded. The new gradually had won out over the old, but that elides the complexities of the transformation. As Bill Walton put it, “It’s like two different lives. I liked the way it was years ago, but it’s changed and you have to accept it and like the way it is now.”⁶⁴⁵

Agincourt offers a window into Scarborough as a suburb in transition in no small part because it was a site of intense change that included public controversy and contestation, illuminating Scarborough’s evolution into a multifarious suburb during the final decades of the 20th century. *The People of Scarborough: A History* summarizes the evolution of Scarborough that took place between 1971 and 1996:

In this 25-year period, Scarborough, once a mainly British, English-speaking, and Protestant community, became extraordinarily international. Such a major cultural transformation did not occur without problems and tensions. However, though it was a difficult period of adjustment for both established residents and newcomers, the city’s government, schools, libraries, and recreational and social service agencies gradually came to reflect the new multilingual and

⁶⁴⁵ Ibid.

multicultural realities of the population they served. And, in turn, many newcomers had a profound impact on the city's social, economic, and cultural life. In short, after 1971 modern Scarborough was born.⁶⁴⁶

Census data reveals the magnitude of the change that took place. Though overall growth was slower than during the 1950s and '60s, Scarborough added 109,000 new residents between 1971 and 1981, 81,245 between 1981 and 1991, and 68,699 between 1991 and 2001, bringing its total population to 593,297. During that period, Scarborough's immigrant population went from 89,050 people or 27% of its 334,485 residents in 1971 to 323,545 or 55% of total population in 2001, with just under half of the foreign-born population having arrived in Canada since 1991.

More important than overall numbers and percentages, "[t]he 1981 census confirmed that Scarborough's immigrants were decreasingly from the United Kingdom and Europe, and increasingly from Asia and American countries other than the United States", a trend that has continued to remake Scarborough's ethno-racial makeup.⁶⁴⁷

There has been the precipitous fall in the number of Scarborough residents who report via the census that their ethnic origin is British—from 70% in 1971 to 19% twenty years later.⁶⁴⁸ According to the City of Toronto's Community Council Profile created using data from the 2011 Census of Canada and National Household Survey, 59% of Scarborough residents (354,355) were born outside Canada, with over 60% having

⁶⁴⁶ Barbara Myrvold, *The People of Scarborough: A History* (Scarborough: The City of Scarborough Public Library Board, 1997). 143.

⁶⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 147.

⁶⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 150.

arrived as immigrants since 1991.⁶⁴⁹ Indicative of the diversity of Scarborough, no source country exceeds 10% of the total population, and reflective of the shift in immigration from the United Kingdom and European countries, 70% of Scarborough's population is classified by Statistics Canada as visible minority, with South Asian (24%), Chinese (19%), Black (10%), Filipino (8%), and West Asian (2%) listed as the 5 largest visible minorities by population.⁶⁵⁰ Scarborough's ethno-cultural diversity is further revealed by mother tongue data. In 2011, less than half of Scarborough residents reported English as their mother tongue. After English at 46%, the five most common mother tongues were Tamil (7%), Cantonese (6%), Chinese, n.o.s. (6%), Tagalog (4%), and Mandarin (4%).⁶⁵¹

The multicultural reality of Scarborough, which the preceding statistical profile details, is reflected in the physical fabric as industrial and commercial spaces have been transformed to meet the needs of increasingly diverse publics. Change seldom occurs without resistance and contestation, and, as Scarborough became home to an increasing number of diverse publics, religious and retail land-use changes became flashpoints of conflict. In *Being Political*, Engin Isin argues:

The city is not a container where differences encounter each other; the city generates differences and assembles identities. The city is a difference machine insofar as it is understood as that space which is constituted by the dialogical encounter of groups formed and generated immanently in the process of taking up positions, orienting themselves for and against each other, inventing and assembling strategies and

⁶⁴⁹ City of Toronto, "Community Council Profiles - 2011 National Household Survey: Area D - Scarborough," (Toronto: City Planning, Strategic Initiatives, Policy & Analysis, 2014).

⁶⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁵¹ ———, "Community Council Profiles - 2011 Census: Area D - Scarborough," (Toronto: City Planning, Strategic Initiatives, Policy & Analysis, 2014).

technologies, mobilizing various forms of capital, and making claims to that space that is objectified as “the city”.⁶⁵²

Land-use conflicts are more than just struggles over the physical environment and its use. They can also be struggles for recognition in which immigrant and minority groups forge new possibilities and make space for themselves in the city, while “resisting, subverting, and exposing strategies of racialization that are enacted through space.”⁶⁵³ It has been noted that Toronto’s policy approach to multiculturalism celebrates diversity, while the planning framework it operates within is less accommodating, particularly as it was conceived to mediate between interests and rights within a technical and legal process that assumes universal applicability and an undifferentiated public.⁶⁵⁴

Since 1980, Scarborough has been confronted with the need to integrate newcomers, manage change for existing residents, and work towards becoming a suburban cosmopolis that is open to new possibilities and ways of life. But as Leonie Sandercock warns,

The great danger is that difference will further fracture, fragment, splinter the fragile urban social fabric as new demands for rights to the city emerge: rights to voice, to participation, and to co-existence in the physical spaces of the built environment, which are then opposed by

⁶⁵² Engin F. Isin, *Being Political: Genealogies of Citizenship* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 283.

⁶⁵³ Engin F. Isin and Myer Siemiatycki, "Making Space for Mosques: Struggles for Urban Citizenship in Diasporic Toronto," in *Race, Space and the Law: Unmapping a White Settler Society*, ed. Sherene Razack (Ottawa: Between the Lines Press, 2002), 206.

⁶⁵⁴ Ruth Fincher et al., "Planning in the multicultural city: Celebrating diversity or reinforcing difference?," *Progress in Planning* 92(2014).

those who feel threatened by the disruption to their accustomed way of life.⁶⁵⁵

As we have seen, Scarborough has experienced several transformations since the 1950s. Each was accompanied by contestation and the invention and assembling of strategies to manage or shape changes. What is unique about the post-1980 period is that land-use conflict was at least in part about ethno-racial transformation, which adds a new layer of complexity to suburban change.

Making Space for Multicultural Diversity

The difficult adjustment experienced as Scarborough became more diverse played out in miniature in Agincourt as the steady growth of the Chinese community began to transform the social and physical fabric of the area. The success and rapid proliferation of Chinese businesses in the area led some to dub it “Chinatown III” and prompted a group of residents “who had been quiet for 15 years” to resurrect their dormant ratepayers association “to get rid of the traffic and preserve the ‘social character’ of their streets.”⁶⁵⁶ Three decades later it is difficult to disentangle the basic land-use planning objections that accompanied the development of Chinese commercial plazas around Sheppard Avenue East at Glen Watford Drive with the more nebulous and problematic desire to preserve the social character of the area. A representative of a local ratepayers association indicated attempts were made to invite Chinese residents and businesses to meetings

⁶⁵⁵ Leonie Sandercock, *Cosmopolis II : Mongrel Cities of the 21st Century* (New York: Continuum, 2003). 127.

⁶⁵⁶ Suzanne Goldenberg, "Scarborough's Chinatown having some growing pains," *Globe and Mail*, June 4th 1984.

without much success. At the same time, during a well-attended meeting held to discuss the parking problems generated by the Dragon Centre organizers failed to stop audience members from shouting “let them learn English”, which supports claims that racism and anti-Chinese sentiments were “flickering through the neighbourhood” and some people were using “parking as an excuse to dig up other issues.”⁶⁵⁷

Still, beyond the undercurrent of racism or xenophobia certain basic planning-related issues need to be acknowledged. The overwhelming success of the Dragon Centre did catch municipal officials, especially planners, by surprise, suggesting complaints about traffic and parking by nearby residents and businesses were not entirely without merit. For example, it was acknowledged that no planning had been done for the area since the early-1960s and the old zoning permitted the type of commercial development that had taken place. And speaking to the Dragon Centre itself, planning commissioner Kenneth Whitwell stated “[t]he whole layout quite frankly is an atrocious design way of doing it”, while the local alderman added, “[i]t was a dumb idea to have the shopping centre on a collector road in a residential area.”⁶⁵⁸ For their part, the Dragon Centre’s investors saw traffic congestion and inadequate parking as signs of success, and evidence that they were catering to previously unmet needs.

There is a need from a land-use planning point of view to link the Dragon Centre in operation to what was expected in terms of a conventional shopping centre of its size and configuration. Based on prior experience, the Dragon Centre did generate traffic and

⁶⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁸ Ibid.

demand for parking far in excess of a typical retail space of its size. In that sense, it did generate legitimate planning concerns.

A commercial policy study completed in the mid-1970s as part of Scarborough's Official Plan Review provides some insight into how the retail landscape was understood just a decade earlier.⁶⁵⁹ The study's analysis of the existing commercial facilities found there was no apparent visual order to the retail fabric, that more retail floor space existed than would be needed by 2001 based on the planned for population, and that retail facilities were not evenly distributed. As a result, the study recommended that Scarborough encourage retail-commercial facilities to develop into a four-tiered shopping centre hierarchy based on facility size and the spatial demand curve of the goods and services offered.⁶⁶⁰ In a nutshell, as one moves up the hierarchy the size of the facilities gets larger and the goods and services offered become more specialized and infrequently purchased. The proposed commercial hierarchy for Scarborough included: (1) the *Town Centre* (over 600,000 square feet) to provide a commercial focus and offer mainly

⁶⁵⁹ Jame F. MacLaren Limited, "Scarborough Official Plan Review: Commercial Policy Study," ed. Borough of Scarborough Planning Board (Borough of Scarborough 1976).

⁶⁶⁰ See Kenneth G Jones and Jim W. Simmons, *Location, Location, Location: Analyzing the Retail Environment*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Nelson Canada, 1993). 33-39. The spatial demand curve brings together two notions—that the frequency of purchases declines as the price increases and the full cost of a good increases with distance from the point of purchase—to suggest that the range of goods and services offered determines the spatial market or geographic trade area of a store or shopping centre. In practice this means that stores or shopping centres offering more specialized services and a greater selection of expensive goods purchased infrequently have larger geographic trade areas as customers will travel further to gain access to them (the increasing cost attributable to travel is either offset by lack of availability closer to home, or the infrequency of purchase and high unit price makes the cost associated to travel an acceptable proportion of the overall cost). On the opposite end of the spectrum convenience items that are purchased more frequently, like milk and bread, have relatively small geographic trade areas. The retail hierarchy proposed for Scarborough in the Commercial Policy Study done as part of their 1970s Official Plan review was developed around this logic.

specialized goods with ample choice, selection, and quality; (2) *District Centres* (200,000 to 300,000 square feet) to provide a large variety of goods and services, though fewer specialty shops than the Town Centre; (3) *Community Centres* (70,000 to 110,000 square feet) to offer goods and services needed on a weekly basis such as food and banking; and (4) *Convenience Centres* (5,000 to 12,000 square feet) to provide access to small frequently purchased items like bread and milk. Most important, each tier of the hierarchy assumes a population or trade area to be served by facilities of its size.

The Dragon Centre and other nearby Chinese-oriented plazas offered a specialized mix of goods and services that accommodated in the retail hierarchy described above and generated much larger trade areas than their size in gross leasable area (GLA) would suggest. One consequence was traffic volumes and parking needs far greater than their GLA would suggest. This was not previously contemplated by Scarborough's planners. The discord or conflict that ensued for a time was complicated as planning-related objections were entangled with hostile reaction to wider social changes. There can be no doubt that planning and traffic problems were generated, but unease and hostility toward the social and cultural transformation represented by the introduction of Chinese-oriented retail facilities was evident in comments made by politicians trying to calm the waters at the time.⁶⁶¹

A couple of years later, a proposed "Chinese movie theatre" as part of the Chartwell plaza at Huntingwood Drive and Brimley Road just northeast of the Dragon

⁶⁶¹ Gay Abbate, "Serious racial problems predicted for Scarboro," *Globe and Mail*, July 9th 1984.

Centre prompted similar complaints about traffic and parking, and raised similar questions about what lay behind the local opposition.⁶⁶² Certainly, there was concern the proposal could “rekindle racial conflict in Agincourt” and resident interest (and opposition) was strong—1,000 people attended a 4-hour open house on the development plans and 800 people signed a petition opposing it.⁶⁶³ In this instance, Scarborough Council voted to reject the development application after hundreds of area residents attended a planning committee meeting at the Civic Centre to voice their opposition.⁶⁶⁴

The next year the same community and ratepayer associations opposed the use of a proposed 52,000 square foot addition to the Chartwell Plaza for a restaurant and banquet hall. Again nearby residents were concerned that the “neighbourhood-zoned plaza [was] being turned into a regional plaza” and argued changes to the Planning Act were needed to give “communities some voice over new developments that intensify the use of existing facilities.”⁶⁶⁵ The alderman for the area, who had supported plans for the Chinese theatre, accused the community and ratepayer associations of “abusing the citizen-input process”, stating “[t]hey don’t want anything there.”⁶⁶⁶ Echoing this sentiment, another alderman claimed some members of council were “selling their souls

⁶⁶² David Lewis Stein, "Is parking or racism at issue?," *Toronto Star*, February 17th 1986.

⁶⁶³ Warren Potter, "Renewed racial conflict feared in wake of Chinese theatre plan," *Toronto Star*, February 6th 1986.

⁶⁶⁴ Jim Foster, "Developer may scrap Chinese theatre plan," *Toronto Star*, March 3rd 1986; Marianne Steeves, "Planners reject bid to construct Chinese theatre," *Toronto Star*, February 14th 1986.

⁶⁶⁵ Gay Abbate, "Scarboro ratepayers fight restaurant plans," *Globe and Mail*, November 25th 1987.

⁶⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

to the community” and rejecting legitimate developments because it was politically expedient.⁶⁶⁷

Similar disputes took place when immigrant or minority groups sought to establish places of worship. Though opposition tended to focus on “technical” planning concerns—particularly the location, size, and parking needs of the proposed facility—there were also indications that planning considerations were operating as a proxy for resolving “who belongs, and on what terms?”⁶⁶⁸ In Scarborough, the case of a Sikh temple on Middlefield Road just north of Passmore Avenue and a mosque on Nugget Avenue at Markham Road are illustrative.⁶⁶⁹

The first case, elicited concern that it would “create traffic chaos and parking problems” and set a precedent that would “leave all industrial lands vulnerable to church construction.”⁶⁷⁰ But local opponents also argued that a Sikh temple locating so close to an existing Hindu temple might bring “homeland conflicts to the residential neighbourhood of Milliken.”⁶⁷¹ Scarborough Council voted 15-4 for the temple and several politicians and a representative of a community association in the area were critical of the “mass hysteria” that had taken hold. The second case, if anything is more complicated, because it involved a protracted OMB appeal. Again traffic and parking

⁶⁶⁷ Royson James, "Scarborough council keeps spinning its wheels," *Toronto Star*, August 25th 1987.

⁶⁶⁸ See Isin and Siemiatycki, "Making Space for Mosques: Struggles for Urban Citizenship in Diasporic Toronto," 197.

⁶⁶⁹ "Landoner objects to mosque plan," *Globe and Mail*, November 13th 1984; Royson James, "Sikh temple approved despite residents' fears," *Toronto Star*, November 11th 1986; Maureen Murray, "Religious wars: Opposition to Sunni Muslims building a mosque in East York is about a lack of parking. Or is it the darker side of red tape?," *Toronto Star*, October 8th 1995.

⁶⁷⁰ James, "Sikh temple approved despite residents' fears."

⁶⁷¹ *Ibid.*

concerns were raised, but the main objection came from a property owner across the street whose own plans included building a large restaurant and banquet hall.⁶⁷² He worried the mosque's owners, the Islamic Foundation of Toronto, would oppose a future application for a liquor license.⁶⁷³

After lengthy debate, Scarborough Council gave unanimous approval to build a mosque, a day-care centre, and private elementary school. Despite gaining approval, the mosque, at the time reputed to be the largest in Canada, remained stuck in legal limbo for years before it was constructed in the early-1990s. A former member of the mosque's board would later say: "[n]o one ever said so, but it (the fight) went beyond just parking. I think people were afraid of a new set of people coming into the community."⁶⁷⁴

The preceding examples illustrate that making space for multicultural diversity was a gradual process. It involved "collective claims to urban citizenship and belonging through rights to urban space."⁶⁷⁵ Because immigrant and minority groups sought to establish places of worship, commercial environments, recreational facilities, and community centres to satisfy their needs and desires, land-use conflicts resulted. These conflicts revealed the limitations of modern planning. Assumptions of universality underpinned planning frameworks, like Scarborough's Official Plan, so that planned populations determined the location and size of schools, libraries, community centres,

⁶⁷² "Landowner objects to mosque plan."

⁶⁷³ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁴ Murray, "Religious wars: Opposition to Sunni Muslims building a mosque in East York is about a lack of parking. Or is it the darker side of red tape?."

⁶⁷⁵ Isin and Siemiatycki, "Making Space for Mosques: Struggles for Urban Citizenship in Diasporic Toronto," 189.

parks, and shopping centres. That evolved into a rigid, overly prescriptive, approach to planning not well suited to accommodating new and diverse needs. The emphasis in planning jurisprudence on conformity with existing uses, official plans, bylaws, and avoidance of undue negative impacts on nearby properties further complicated the situation.

As Isin and Siemiatycki foreground, “[o]wners of property can be counted on to object to new land uses they feel will undermine the enjoyment or value of their property”, while planning laws designed to give residents a voice in the planning process can be used as tools for NIMBYism and ethno-racism.⁶⁷⁶ It is telling that when the decision to approve the Sikh temple on Middlefield Road went before Scarborough’s planning committee, the chair ruled “the question of who uses the property once it is rezoned is not a planning issue and therefore would not be allowed.”⁶⁷⁷ Because residents were concerned about strife between users of the proposed Sikh temple and those of the existing Hindu temple nearby, they simply made reference to “the forbidden topic” or to “the unmentionable” in their comments, which led a member of the committee to lament that “[p]erhaps the saddest part of this process tonight was that we couldn’t face it and discard it for what it is.”⁶⁷⁸ At the same time, the appellant in the OMB appeal opposing Scarborough Council’s decision to allow the Islamic Foundation of Toronto to build a mosque on Nugget Avenue and Markham Road was adamant that he had advanced bona

⁶⁷⁶ Ibid., 197.

⁶⁷⁷ "Forum wrong to raise issue of temple bid, panel rules," *Globe and Mail*, October 25th 1986.

⁶⁷⁸ Ibid.

vide planning objections, saying “[i]t was a mistake ... If you come [to the mosque] on a Friday afternoon, the area is paralyzed. There is still nowhere near enough parking.”⁶⁷⁹

Notwithstanding a point made by a race relations expert that there is often more to these disputes than straightforward, innocuous planning considerations, the mosque in question, according to one report, attracts approximately 2000 worshippers for Friday afternoon prayer.⁶⁸⁰ It therefore shares with the Dragon Centre the distinction of being a more intense use and generator of traffic and parking needs than anticipated by existing zoning regulations and land-use plans. In a formal planning framework that encourages individual property owners to focus on self-interest, it is not surprising the perceived impact of increased traffic and possible spill-over parking would come to the fore. It is much harder to assess, however, where legitimate planning considerations end and resistance to change, particularly to the introduction of social, ethno-racial, and cultural difference, begins. It is clear that since the 1990s faith-based groups have increasingly sought to establish places of worship in inner suburban industrial areas, because it is more palatable than locating in established residential areas given the likelihood of local opposition.⁶⁸¹

⁶⁷⁹ Murray, "Religious wars: Opposition to Sunni Muslims building a mosque in East York is about a lack of parking. Or is it the darker side of red tape?."

⁶⁸⁰ Ibid; Anna-Kaisa Walker, "The golden temples of the suburbs," *Globe and Mail*, May 24th 2008.

⁶⁸¹ Jason Hackworth and Kirsten Stein, "The Collision of Faith and Economic Development in Toronto's Inner Suburban Industrial Districts," *Urban Affairs Review* 48, no. 1 (2012).

In-Between Spaces

Jane Jacobs observed in her classic book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* that [t]ime makes the high building costs of one generation the bargains of a following generation.”⁶⁸² Her closely related axiom that “[n]ew ideas must use old buildings” really points to economically marginal activities needing access to low-cost space, usually in the form of aged, ordinary buildings in the time window before they are either redeveloped or extensively renovated to move them up-market.⁶⁸³ Across inner suburban Toronto old factory buildings, rental units in industrial malls and business parks, and stores and offices in strip malls have become home to places of worship, small businesses, and recreational and hospitality facilities linked to the myriad ethno-cultural groups and immigrant communities present across the city and region. The availability of affordable space in suburban industrial areas and strip malls has transformed them into a kind of integrative infrastructure for marginalized immigrants and ethno-racialized minorities.⁶⁸⁴

Ethnic and immigrant businesses are an increasingly recognized feature of inner suburban Toronto. As a late-2000s, *Globe and Mail* story put it: “So much for the sameness. On Lawrence [Avenue East], a strip-mall cosmopolitanism isn’t emerging, it’s

⁶⁸² Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 1992 ed. (New York: Vintage, 1961). 189.

⁶⁸³ See *ibid.*, 187-99.

⁶⁸⁴ Murray Whyte, "Urban Inversion: T.O. Inside Out; The Latest Wrinkle in Toronto's City Building Cycle is How Our Vaunted Diversity Has Been on the Move," *Toronto Star*, August 10 2008. See also: John Lorinc, "Stripping Away Stereotypes: Toronto's Retail Plazas," in *uTOpia: Towards a New Toronto*, ed. Jason McBride and Alana Wilcox (Toronto: Coach House Books, 2005); ———, "Suburban," *Spacing*, Fall 2012.

here. Every storefront is occupied in a dizzying array of difference.”⁶⁸⁵ The framing of the story presents the recent, or more accurately several decades long, social and economic transformation of Toronto’s postwar, inner suburban areas, as a “demographic inversion” or the “city turning itself inside out.” Interpretation of that transformation is divided. For some, immigrant newcomers and other marginalized groups are being pushed out of more centrally located neighbourhoods as “the moneyed class recolonizes the core.”⁶⁸⁶ An alternate interpretation recognizes the multicultural diversity of strip malls as markers of vibrancy and possibility—that a certain shabbiness brought on by age and changes in the economy and retail landscape has created spaces of opportunity and enabled places like Scarborough to become more complex and less marked by their initial planning and imposed spatial ordering.

Strip-mall cosmopolitanism should be approached critically, however.

Celebratory accounts that emphasize “exotic” signage or the fine-grained mix of different ethnic groups found in low-slung plazas downplay the simultaneity of opportunity, inclusion, marginalization, and exclusion in such spaces. As private property interests still determine the use of old retail plazas and industrial buildings, and the timing of their renovation or redevelopment, there is an inherent in-between-ness or liminality to their function as integrative infrastructure for new immigrant and refugee communities.

Unplanned and economically marginal uses exist in the spaces and windows of time

⁶⁸⁵ Whyte, "Urban Inversion: T.O. Inside Out; The Latest Wrinkle in Toronto's City Building Cycle is How Our Vaunted Diversity Has Been on the Move."

⁶⁸⁶ Ibid.

when uneven development creates marginality between cycles of investment in buildings, infrastructures, and public amenities. In such spaces social, political, and economic forces may have combined to cause prior uses to cease both in a gradual or incremental way and in periods of crisis and intense restructuring. Regardless the so-called “highest-and-best use” envisioned for the future can and does change in official plans, as does the perception of an area amongst businesses, particularly higher-order tenants, such as well-capitalized chain-stores and upmarket boutiques, and influences their willingness to invest and locate in particular spaces. Though some spaces maintain a consistent status and appeal, most areas within cities and regions experience changing fortunes and cycle through periods in which they move on a continuum between being perceived as “attractive” and “repellant”, especially in relation to middle-class expectations and values.⁶⁸⁷

Urban affairs writer and Toronto-based journalist John Lorinc was among the first to raise the alarm and ask whether something is lost when old strip plazas are seen as soft targets for intensification.⁶⁸⁸ He acknowledges that “[i]n any taxonomy of urban retail establishments, the strip plazas around Toronto’s inner suburbs enjoy the status of a weed species.”⁶⁸⁹ They lack the size and drawing power of super-regional malls and power centres, which now dominate the retail landscape. And they do not impress urbanists who

⁶⁸⁷ Ute Lehrer, "Re-Placing Canadian Cities: The Challenge of Landscapes of 'Desire' and 'Despair'," in *Canadian Cities in Transition: Local Through Global Perspectives*, ed. Trudi Bunting and Pierre Filion (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2006).

⁶⁸⁸ Lorinc, "Stripping Away Stereotypes: Toronto's Retail Plazas."

⁶⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 133.

favour the pedestrian-scale of inner-city retail strips such as those found along Queen, College, and Bloor Streets. But looking past built form, Lorinc makes a crucial point: that with a little imagination, urbanists and policy-makers might develop an appreciation for the place-making function and potential of old plazas and see them as “small-scale Kensington Markets sprinkled around North York, Scarborough, Etobicoke and East York.”⁶⁹⁰

We shall consider in greater detail the City of Toronto’s post-amalgamation Official Plan in the next chapter, which examines the proposed redevelopment of the Bridlewood Mall in northwestern Scarborough and the Finch-Warden Revitalization Study that accompanied it. Here, the linkage to be drawn is to an insight from Henri Lefebvre’s *Production of Space*—that “lived experience invariably gets crushed and vanquished by the conceived, by a conceived *abstract space*, by an objectified abstraction.”⁶⁹¹ Planned retail environments exist first and foremost to generate income for their owners. All other uses, including those valued by their customers and the wider community, are ancillary to this primary function. As a result, the decision to invest capital in renovation, expansion, or reformatting of a shopping centre or plaza is based on strategic financial considerations: what sort of investment will increase spending by customers, which ultimately drives what tenants can and do pay in rent, and does this offer a more attractive rate of return than other investment options?⁶⁹² New retail formats

⁶⁹⁰ Ibid., 137.

⁶⁹¹ Andy Merrifield, *Henri Lefebvre: a critical introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2006). 111.

⁶⁹² James R. Lowry, "The Life Cycle of Shopping Centers," *Business Horizons* (1997).

generate competitive pressures, multiple spaces of shopping, and a restructuring of existing retail landscape.⁶⁹³

Caught in the maw of the “creative destruction” that is development as revitalization are the spaces of “subaltern cosmopolitanism”.⁶⁹⁴ Fluid and ephemeral, such spaces are immanent to geographically uneven development, emerging where devalourization is underway and in spaces that have “fallen” from their “planned” or preferred use.

For example, prior to redevelopment of the Golden Mile Plaza into a Loblaw Supercentre in the late-1980s, the original supermarket within the plaza had become a flea market that provided space to small-merchants, many of whom were recent immigrants. The *Globe and Mail* described it thus as the Golden Mile Plaza drifted into its twilight:

Where there is empty space, some entrepreneurs have found new uses for it. Khoren Mahseredjian, a short, wiry Armenian-born upholsterer who came to Canada in 1968 with \$68 in his pocket, joined his brother two years ago in turning the former Loblaws store in the Golden Mile into a flea market. He says it’s flourishing. Paying a \$65 rental fee for a three-day weekend, 140 small-time merchants, many of them recent immigrants, offer clothing, knickknacks, food and furnishings. Food sellers display vegetables and fruit along a wall outside. The ambience is of outdoor Caribbean and east Indian markets.⁶⁹⁵

⁶⁹³ Marston and Modarres, "Flexible Retailing: Gap Inc. and the Multiple Spaces of Shopping in the United States."

⁶⁹⁴ Ranu Basu and Robert S. Fiedler, "Integrative Multiplicity Through Subaltern Realities: Exploring Diversity Through Public Spaces in Scarborough," *Urban Geography* 38, no. 1 (2017).

⁶⁹⁵ Fitzgerald, "The mall: renovate or rust."

Viewed from the perspective of a retail analyst, the replacement of a supermarket with a flea market or of chain stores by independent retailers (so-called mom-and-pop stores) signifies decline and underperformance. Quite different from land-use conflicts over retrofits or purpose-built ethnic-oriented shopping centres and places of worship, the gradual transition of a shopping centre (or planned retail environment) in this manner represents a filtering-down process at work. The notion that old buildings, or affordable rents, serve an important economic and social purpose in cities, speaks to the collective benefits of micro-scale diversity. Property owners typically act out of more narrow self-interest. The redevelopment of the retail-commercial properties or grey-field sites, particularly after Toronto's new Official Plan came into force in 2006, therefore offers us valuable insight into the making and remaking of place in the in-between city or new urban middle.

Chapter 8: Remaking the In-Between



Image 1 – Live Here, Shop Here! Celebration Condo advertising on the Bridlewood Mall in 2011. The foreground is at the corner of Finch and Warden Avenue. In 2008, a 38 storey condominium tower was proposed at this location as part of a development application for 8 buildings and 1370 residential units on the surface parking around the mall. (Photo by Author)

Introduction

This chapter's geographic focus—Finch-Warden—takes its name from a major intersection located approximately 17 kilometres northeast of downtown Toronto. Over the span of three years, from 2007 to 2010, the Finch-Warden Revitalization Study (FWRS) and a development application for 2900 Warden Avenue (the Bridlewood Mall)

moved through the formal planning and development application process with little fanfare beyond the immediate Steeles-L'Amoreaux area. Yet for precisely this reason the FWRS and development application for the Bridlewood Mall offers an important window into planning and development in post-amalgamation Toronto, and specifically the degree to which growth and development are equated with revitalization in the mundane day-to-day work of implementing the vision for the future embedded in the City of Toronto's Official Plan.

This chapter is influenced by Bent Flyvbjerg's detailed analysis of the Aalborg Project in Denmark. Aalborg's historical centre had for decades been forced to accommodate an ever-increasing number of cars, doing untold damage to it.⁶⁹⁶ In the 1970s, city officials decided the situation needed to be reversed—that henceforth the car would have to adapt to the city. This shift in thinking led to the Aalborg Project, which went on to become an award winning scheme and model for other cities seeking to integrate environmental and social concerns into city politics and planning. Flyvbjerg takes the shine off the Aalborg Project as he guides readers through its many twists and turns, weaving together a critical analysis of the project that offers readers a cautionary tale:

The Aalborg project may be interpreted as a metaphor of modern politics, modern administration and planning, and of modernity itself. The basic idea of the project was comprehensive, coherent, and innovative, and it was based on rational and democratic argument. During implementation, however, when idea met reality, the play of

⁶⁹⁶ Flyvbjerg, *Rationality and Power: Democracy in Practice*.

Machiavellian princes, Nietzschean will to power, and Foucauldian rationality-as-rationalization resulted in the fragmentation of the project. It disintegrated into a large number of disjointed sub-projects, many of which had unintended, unanticipated, and undemocratic consequences ... Planners, administrators, and politicians thought that if they believed in their project hard enough, rationality would emerge victorious; they were wrong. The Aalborg Project, designed to substantially restructure and democratically improve the downtown environment, was transformed by power and *Realrationalitat* into environmental degradation and social distortion. Institutions that were supposed to represent what they themselves call the “public interest” were revealed to be deeply embedded in the hidden exercise of power and the protection of special interests. This is the story of modernity and democracy in practice, a story repeated all too often for comfort for a democrat.⁶⁹⁷

Though Flyvbjerg suggests that case studies do not travel well, he encourages readers to see Aalborg as a “reference point” that can be used to explore the dynamic interplay between rationality and power elsewhere. Other cases, he suggests, can be subjected to the question: “Do we have an instance of Aalborg here”?

The FWRS was not a “project” in the straightforward sense. Instead it was a city-led planning study set in motion by a major development application to build condominium units on the Bridlewood Mall’s parking lot, something encouraged by the Toronto’s Official Plan, an important consideration. The FWRS process did not emerge *de novo*, but was conditioned by the Official Plan, provincial policies, and a “live” development application for an important land parcel located at the centre of the study area (see Figure 5). Putting aside specifics, this chapter is not principally directed at critiquing the Official Plan’s vision for Toronto, nor does it seek to assess the merits of

⁶⁹⁷ Ibid., 225.

the Bridlewood Mall development application. Rather, the principal aim is to consider how the Official Plan’s vision and aims are worked through on-the-ground in ordinary suburban places like Finch-Warden (for a description and statistical profile of the area, see Appendix A). In that sense, Flyvbjerg’s case study of Aalborg directs us to be alert for the play of Machiavellian princes, Nietzschean will to power, and Foucauldian rationality-as-rationalization when examining specific instances of planning and development such as the FWRS.

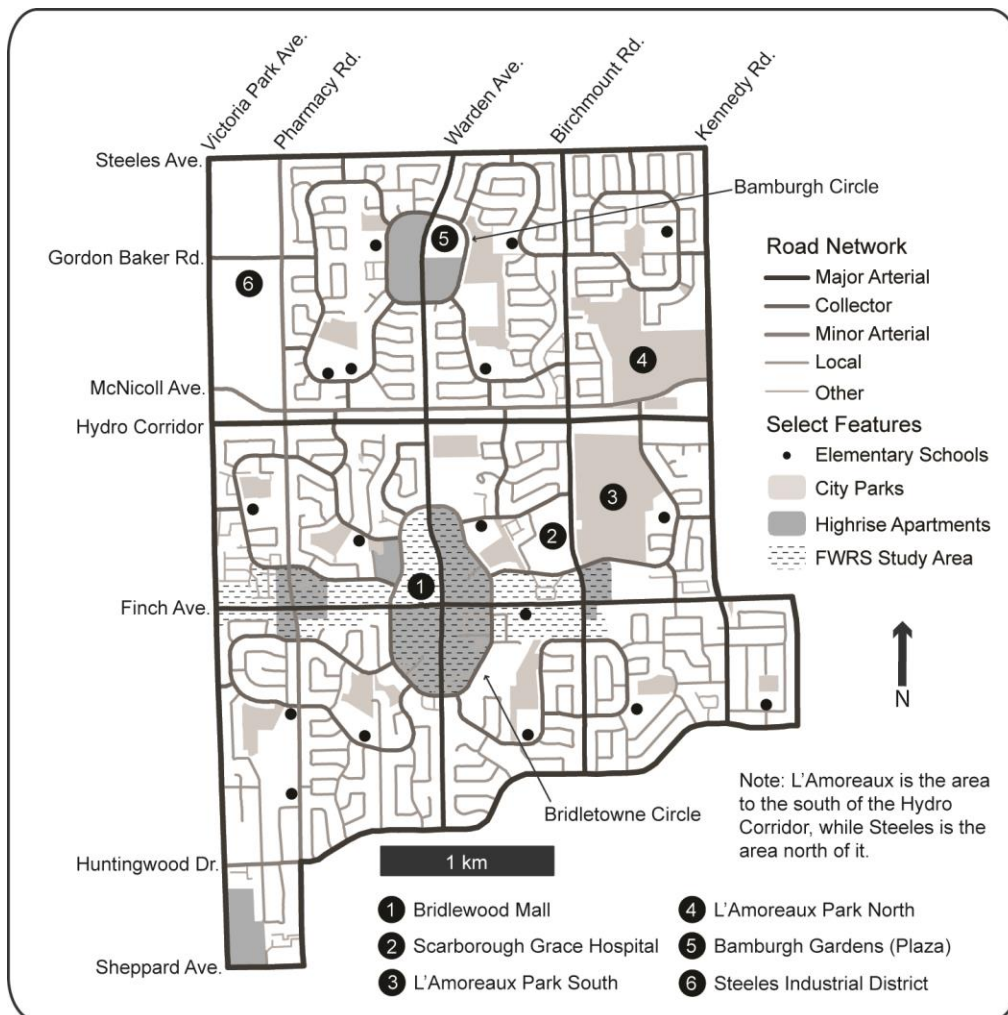


Figure 5 – Steeles-L’Amoreaux Area and FWRS Study Area. (Map Created by Author). Data Sources: Centre Lines and Neighbourhood Polygons from the City of Toronto (www.toronto.ca/open).

The FWRS and Bridlewood Mall Development Application⁶⁹⁸

The Official Plan’s purpose is to provide a framework for “making the right choices and shaping Toronto’s collective future.”⁶⁹⁹ The FWRS and a development application for the Bridlewood Mall reveals how the Official Plan’s choices and vision for Toronto’s collective future work in practice in inner suburban Toronto. After outlining the process that led to the adoption of the FWRS and approval of the development application for the Bridlewood, my analysis focuses on feedback from a public meeting held to discuss the FWRS draft report, as well as insights on the process drawn from 10 interviews conducted with city planning staff and area residents who were members of a working group that participated in the revitalization study.

The express intention of the Official Plan is to steer urban growth into transit-supportive compact centres and corridors in order to make better use of existing infrastructure and services, reduce automobile dependency, and increase the supply of housing in mixed use environments, while protecting established residential areas from undue negative impact. In this sense intensification is intended to be transformative, so there is an acknowledged need to control and manage impacts where significant intensification is proposed on land adjacent to a “Neighbourhood” or “Apartment

⁶⁹⁸ The City Planning Division hosts a collection of electronic documents related to the Finch-Warden Revitalization Study, accessible via: (http://www.toronto.ca/planning/finch_warden.htm).

⁶⁹⁹ City of Toronto, "Official Plan," 1-1.

Neighbourhood”⁷⁰⁰ Avenue or area-based studies, therefore, are recommended in such cases and form the basis for managing change and diffusing conflict where redevelopment or infill sites are situated at the interface between established residential neighbourhoods and areas designated for change.

In the case of Finch-Warden, the Councillor for Ward 39, Mike Del Grande, sent a letter to Norm Kelly, Councillor for Ward 40 and Chair of Council’s Planning and Growth Management Committee (PGM), requesting the Committee consider two motions at its February 13th, 2008 meeting given a potential residential development had emerged that would “change the face of the community” in his ward:

1. the Acting Chief Planner and Executive Director of City Planning to report to the Committee meeting on April 10, 2008, on how intensification applications for residential developments that intensify the neighbourhood are addressed; and
2. that an Area Revitalization Review be established for the area bounded by Finch Avenue East to the south; Birchmount Road to the east; Pharmacy Avenue to the west; and McNicoll Avenue to the north, and which includes a timeframe.⁷⁰¹

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid., 2-22.

⁷⁰¹ This the exact wording of the motion passed at PGM Committee making the request on behalf of Councillor Del Grande, see "Minutes of Planning and Growth Management Committee of Council, Meeting 13 (April 10th), Item PG13.13," (City of Toronto, 2008). The PGM Committee minutes provide a link to Letter February 13, 2008 from Councillor Del Grande (<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2008/pg/bgrd/backgroundfile-11192.pdf>)

At the meeting, PGM Committee directed the Acting Chief Planner and Executive Director of the City Planning Division, Gary Wright, to report to it on April 10th, 2008 on the first request, and agreed that an Area Revitalization Review be established as per the second request. Scarborough District Planning Staff were tasked with determining the parameters for the study and liaising with the Ward Councillor, Mike Del Grande, before initiating the study.

In advance of the PGM Committee's April 10th, 2008 meeting Gary Wright submitted a report summarizing the policy framework for considering applications for residential development that intensify neighbourhoods, as well as the general process that the City Planning Division employs to review intensification applications.⁷⁰² He recommended the PGM Committee receive the report for information purposes. The report itself outlined the City's "tool kit" for assessing intensification applications, noting it contains both policies and procedures, with the policy framework being "set out primarily, but not exclusively, in the City's Official Plan." Other City policies and by-laws, as well as the Provincial Policy Statement and Plans (i.e. Places to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe) are also brought to bear in the evaluation of any planning application and the City Planning Division must operate in accordance with the provincial *Planning Act* and *City of Toronto Act*. With regard to the comprehensive set of policies that must be considered when assessing an application for intensification, Wright's report notes a holistic evaluation would consider not only the specific

⁷⁰² Acting Chief Planner and Executive Director, "Intensification of Mixed Use Sites - Development Process, March 25th," (City of Toronto, City Planning Division 2008).

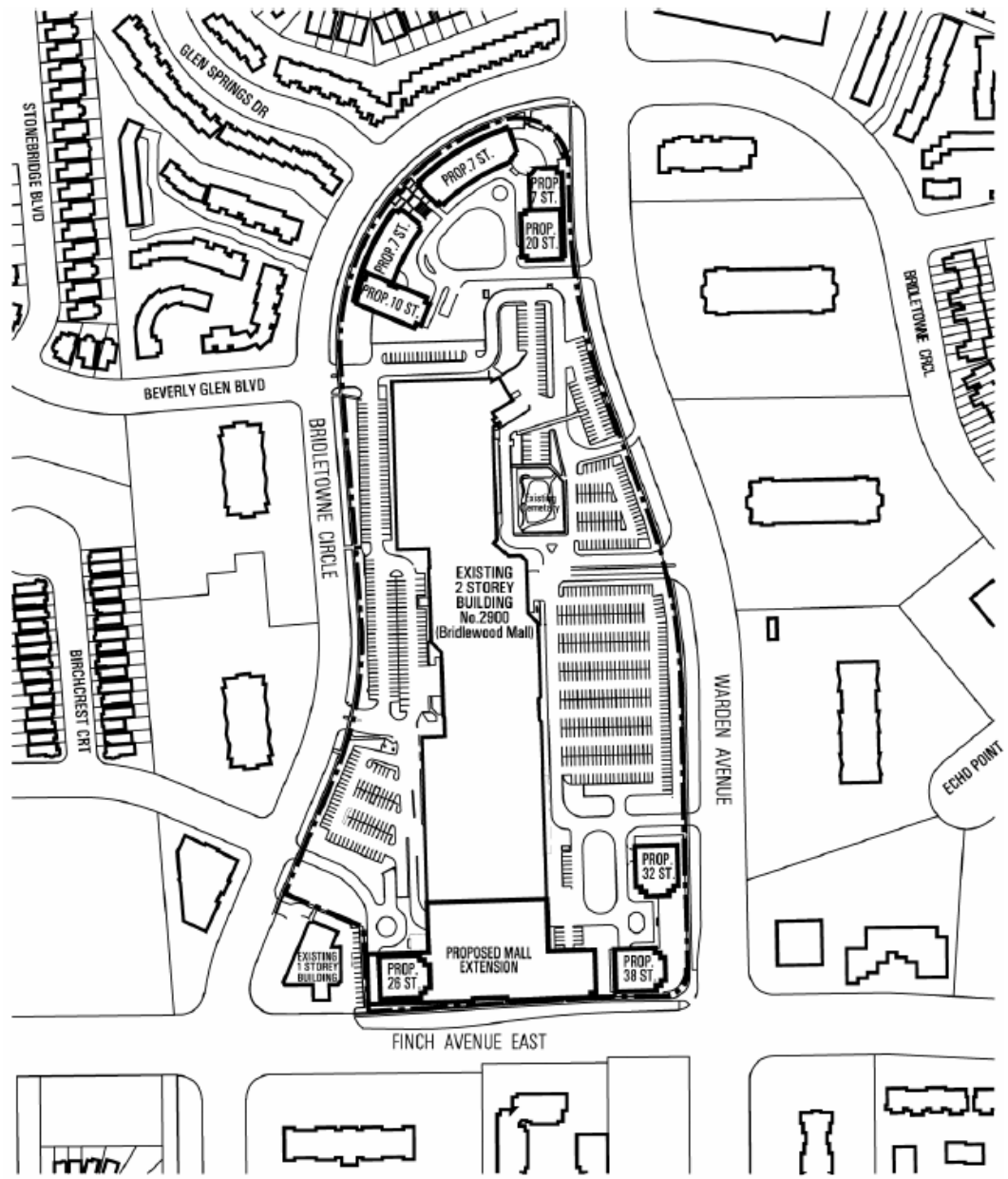
development criteria set out for the “Mixed Use Areas” in the Official Plan, but all relevant policies, including those intended to ensure that the intensity and scale of proposed development could be accommodated by existing social and physical infrastructure. In other words, the City Planning Division’s evaluation of the development application for the Bridlewood Mall could find that it met the criteria set out for intensification within “Mixed Use Areas”, but was deficient with regard to criteria laid out in other policies deemed relevant.

Several days before the PGM Committee meeting on April 10th, 2008 the City received a rezoning application for 2900 Warden Avenue (the Bridlewood Mall parcel) to permit a “comprehensive mixed use development consisting of 1,370 residential units in 8 residential buildings and an expansion of the existing mall.” A Staff Report to Scarborough Community Council (SCC) dated May 22nd, 2008 provided preliminary information on the application and sought direction from the SCC “on further processing of the application and on the community consultation process.”⁷⁰³ Specifically, the City Planning Division recommended that the application “be processed and considered in the context of the area study being undertaken by City Planning” and that “Staff be directed to schedule a community consultation meeting together with the Ward Councillor”, who it is noted in the report had already initiated several well attended community information meetings prior to receipt of the subject application. It was also recommended that “Notice for the community consultation meeting be given to landowners and residents within 120

⁷⁰³ Community Planning Director, Scarborough District,, "2900 Warden Avenue - Rezoning Application - Preliminary Report, May 22nd," (City of Toronto, City Planning Division, 2008).

metres of the site, and Notice for the public meeting under the Planning Act be given according to the regulations under the Planning Act.”

The preceding hints at the procedural aspects of processing a development application. The report also provides background information and summarizes the applicant’s proposal for the Bridlewood Mall. The existing mall on the 9.4 hectare (2900 Warden Avenue) parcel was constructed in the mid-1970s and contained approximately 90 stores with Zellers (later Target and now vacant), Price Chopper, Dominion (now Metro), and Shoppers Drug Mart as anchor tenants. The mall also houses a branch location of the Toronto Public Library. The key elements of the proposal were the aforementioned 1,370 residential units in 8 residential towers split between three 7-storey buildings that step up to 10 and 20 storeys on the northern part of the parcel and three residential point towers—26, 32, and 38 storeys in height—on the southern part of the parcel along the Finch Avenue East frontage, as well as a 77,610 square foot, 2-storey addition that would extend the mall out to the Finch Avenue East frontage with another 30,463 square feet of at-grade ancillary commercial space located along that frontage (see Figure 6). The proposal would increase the total commercial floor area on the 2900 Warden Avenue parcel from 320,020 square feet to 427,341 square feet, and include 1,395 commercial and 1,595 residential parking spaces. At the time of the application the Bridlewood Mall was surrounded by a large asphalt parking lot totaling 1426 spaces. The proposed development would place a considerable amount of parking in structures. At full build-out only 795 of the commercial spaces were expected to remain at-grade.



Site Plan 2900 Warden Avenue
 Applicant's Submitted Drawing
 Not to Scale 05/22/08 File # 08-143653 OZ

Figure 6 - Site Plan for proposed development at the Bridlewood Mall. City of Toronto. © City of Toronto

The Staff Report to SCC also outlined the policy framework that City Planning would use to review the proposed development in much the same fashion as previously noted in the Chief Planner's report to PGM Committee. The report then details the existing zoning for the subject lands—Community Commercial in the L'Amoreaux Community Zoning By-law No. 12466, as amended—as well as confirming the applicant would be required to submit a site plan control application as part of City Planning's comprehensive review of the proposal. Rezoning was deemed necessary in order to permit the proposed residential uses, density, height, and additional floor area for the expansion of the Bridlewood Mall, while the site control application would address access, traffic, building placement and built form, landscaping, lighting, privacy, and site circulation and storm water management issues. Finally, the report commented on the Area Revitalization Study: its geographic extent and purpose, with the latter being “to develop a planning framework to guide development within the study area, identify required infrastructure, identify possible road network improvements, identify community services and facilities and public transit facilities that might be needed, and to determine the appropriate mechanisms to implement proposed development in the area.” In particular, the Area Revitalization Study (which eventually was named the FWRS) was to produce recommendations, including “the creation of site and area specific [Official Plan] policies to guide growth and/or site and area specific zoning provisions”

and “urban design guidelines or other recommendations that would facilitate the orderly development of the lands within the study area.”

A “public kick-off meeting” was held several months later on September 10th, 2008.⁷⁰⁴ At that meeting City Planning Staff discussed the purpose of the Area Revitalization study for the Finch-Warden area; introduced and explained the working group they planned to establish with people from the community and representatives of local organizations; outlined issues raised by the community in relation to future development; detailed the “core city” agencies involved with the study; and provided a tentative number and timing of working group and public meetings, as well as set spring 2009 as a target completion date. The process was to involve 3-4 working group meetings spaced approximately 2-4 weeks apart, with one meeting to function as a design charrette. In addition, 2-3 public meetings were expected over the course of the study. After the conclusion of the FWRS, a Status Report on the FWRS and 2900 Warden Avenue Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments to SCC dated December 16th, 2009 noted a total of 13 meetings had been convened in relation to the FWRS between September 2008 and October 2009.⁷⁰⁵ Of these meetings, 9 involved the working group, including a full-day design charrette that was open to members of the public; 4 were community consultation meetings, with 1 employing an “open house” format to enable

⁷⁰⁴ Presentation Slides for the FWRS “Public Kick-off Meeting”.

http://www1.toronto.ca/city_of_toronto/city_planning/community_planning/files/pdf/finchwarden_kickoff_pres_10sept08.pdf

⁷⁰⁵ Community Planning Director, Scarborough District., "Finch Warden Area Revitalization Study & 2900 Warden Avenue Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment - Status Report, December 16th," (City of Toronto, City Planning Division, 2009).

the public to view a preliminary version of the final draft of the Area Revitalization Study and interact with City Planning Staff and other members of the public in attendance. The report disclosed that approximately 200-300 people attended the community consultation meetings, while the FWRS final report thanks more than 40 residents and other stakeholders for their participation in the working group. Interviews with City Planning Staff and residents who participated in the working group indicated that approximately 10-15 members of the working group attended consistently through the entirety of the study process.

One problem was overlap between the FWRS and the proposed development on the Bridlewood Mall parcel. The latter typically overwhelmed the former at community meetings, which typically included both as agenda items. A Scarborough Mirror article reporting on the first community consultation meeting captured how that played out in practice well:

City planners tried last week to interest local residents in what may happen to Finch Avenue properties in Scarborough's L'Amoureux neighbourhood.

But if there are development issues for the area besides the proposed addition of condominium towers to Bridlewood Mall, those who came for the meeting at L'Amoureux Collegiate voiced no opinion on them.

Rather, residents lined up at a microphone to question or denounce the Bridlewood proposal, much as they did after the community first found out about it more than a year ago.⁷⁰⁶

⁷⁰⁶ "Residents speak out about proposed condominium towers at Bridlewood Mall," *Scarboro Mirror*, September 16th 2008.

The same dynamic occurred about a year later when the draft FWRS was presented at a community consultation meeting by City Planning Staff and members of the Area Revitalization Study's working group. For many opposition to the proposed development was hard to separate from the FWRS, especially because the latter, following the City's Official Plan, was driven by the presumption that growth and future development was inevitable. In that context, the FWRS was about shaping a future in which significant intensification was assumed by City planning staff.

The proposed development on the Bridlewood Mall parcel was also located at the centre of the study area, which made it virtually impossible for the FWRS not to consider what sort of development should go there. In response to resident opposition at the community consultation meetings, as well as feedback from City planning staff and the working group, the applicant would revise their development concept twice.⁷⁰⁷ The first revision was presented to the working group on June 17th, 2009, little more than a month after the preliminary results of the FWRS and alternative plan for the Bridlewood Mall parcel prepared by Ryerson University students were revealed at an open house.⁷⁰⁸ The students, members of a first year studio course at Ryerson University's School of Urban and Regional Planning supervised by Prof. Mitchell Kosny, proposed an alternative plan that cut the Bridlewood Mall parcel in half by extending Beverly Glen Boulevard through it to connect with Warden Avenue to create a promenade and reduced the number of

⁷⁰⁷ _____, "2900 Warden Ave. - Official Plan and Rezoning Applications - Final Report, July 29th," (City of Toronto, City Planning Division 2010).

⁷⁰⁸ "Open house on Finch and Warden development plans," *Scarboro Mirror*, May 5th 2009; "Ryerson students present plan for Bridlewood Mall redevelopment," *Scarboro Mirror*, May 7th 2009.

residential units to 830, with 20% of them being “affordable”. They also proposed limiting building heights to no more than 25 storeys with one exception. The applicant’s revised proposal included a reduction in height of the two residential point towers along the Finch Avenue East frontage (from 38 and 32 storeys to 33 and 29 storeys), lowering the number of residential units from 1,370 to 1,275, including an urban plaza at the northwest corner of Finch and Warden Avenues, and improved connections to the Christie Methodist Cemetery on the parcel.

The second revision was submitted to City Planning on November 20th, 2009 a little more than a month after a public meeting held at L’Amoreaux Collegiate Institute. In this instance, further reductions in the heights of the residential point towers along the Finch Avenue East frontage were proposed (from 33, 29, and 26 storeys to 23, 23, and 25 storeys), along with further lowering the number of residential units from 1,275 to 1,175. The revised proposal maintained an urban plaza at the northwest corner of Finch and Warden Avenues, but offered improved pedestrian connections to the corner and an expanded landscaped area leading to the Christie Methodist Cemetery. By the time the development application and final version of the FWRS went to SCC for consideration prior to going to Toronto City Council (TCC) for final approval, the proposal had been further reduced to 975 residential units and 8 condominium buildings ranging from 7 to 25 storeys. The mall expansion remained unchanged. The deal also included a commitment from the developer to build a pedestrian connection to the Christie Methodist Cemetery and an urban plaza at the corner of Finch and Warden Avenues. It

also included a Section 37 offer of \$1.6 million to expand the Toronto Public Library branch within the Bridlewood Mall or other local community benefits in exchange for the increased density. City Planning Staff's recommendation to approve the application went through SCC on August 17th, 2010 and it received final approval at TCC a little over a week later.⁷⁰⁹

At the SCC meeting a number of residents spoke against intensification as planned for the Bridlewood Mall parcel, even the scaled-down version that was finally approved. As one resident put it: "This proposal was vigorously opposed at every meeting we attended ... we're not opposed to the mall being redeveloped, we're opposed to the scale of it. We don't mind low-rise or professional buildings."⁷¹⁰ Another resident active in Stand Up Bridletowne, a group opposed to the development, saw the location as inappropriate, stating "[t]his development should be on a subway line and not on an overstressed bus line."⁷¹¹ Speaking to the continued opposition from local residents, the area's councillor Mike Del Grande was both diplomatic and pragmatic: "Did everyone get what they wanted? No. But, at the end of the day we can live with it? I think so."⁷¹² With respect to the FWRS, the final report went to TCC with no recommendation at the suggestion of Councillor Del Grande, so the working group could meet one more time to go over its wording (there were concerns about the late inclusion of precise number

⁷⁰⁹ "Minutes of City Council, Meeting 52 (August 25th, 26th, 27th), Item SC37.31," (City of Toronto, 2010).

⁷¹⁰ "Bridlewood condo plan supported by councillors," *Scarboro Mirror*, August 19th 2010.

⁷¹¹ Ibid.

⁷¹² Ibid.

ranges for building heights). A meeting of the FWRS working group was held on August 19th, 2010 and it was determined that consensus existed for the final report dated July 26th, 2010 be sent to TCC without revision and its recommendations be adopted.⁷¹³ At its meeting on August 25-27th, 2010 the TCC adopted the recommendations made by City Planning Division with respect to the FWRS, which included amending the Official Plan for the lands in the Finch Warden Study Area, endorsing the FWRS to guide future development in the area, and adopting its urban design guidelines.⁷¹⁴

Good Planning, Place Character, and the FWRS Report

The notion of “good” or “sound” planning and the manner in which it has been rearticulated in Toronto to legitimize the intensification envisaged by the Official Plan is key to a critical unpacking of the development process for the intensification of mixed-use sites like the Bridlewood Mall. In *Changing Toronto*, Boudreau et al. suggest planning discourse in Toronto now hinges upon “two foundational arguments”: that building height and density do not matter as much as whether a building or development “fits” into its local context; and that intensified development in the city is vital to promoting sustainable urbanization at the regional scale to curtail sprawl.⁷¹⁵ Though city planning staff made little reference to sprawl or sustainability at either the public meetings for the FWRS or during interviews conducted for this research, they did refer to

⁷¹³ Chief Planner and Executive Director, "Finch Warden Revitalization Study - Supplementary Report, August 20th," (City of Toronto, City Planning Division 2010).

⁷¹⁴ See "Minutes of City Council, Meeting 52 (August 25th, 26th, 27th), Item SC37.30," (City of Toronto, 2010).

⁷¹⁵ Boudreau, Keil, and Young, *Changing Toronto: Governing Urban Neoliberalism*: 107-08.

good planning to frame their views on both the FWRS and the development application for the Bridlewood Mall.

This is consistent with findings reported in *Planning Politics in Toronto*, which examines the influence and role of the OMB in urban development.⁷¹⁶ Pinning down what specifically constitutes good planning is difficult, but within the institutional-legal framework of planning in Ontario the most practical assessment would be that any recommendation or advice given to a client or municipal council must ultimately be defensible in front of the OMB at a hearing. As Tom Keefe, Director of Community Planning for the Etobicoke-York District (City of Toronto) is quoted saying:

You may like to say different things to city council, because it would be easier, but in the end, you have to be able to stand up and say it is good planning. The thing you may want to say to council may not cut it. So, in the end, you give your best advice in all cases.⁷¹⁷

Similarly, asked about the influence of pressure from applicants, including the possibility of an OMB appeal, on recommendations and advice given to city council, Renwick Ashby, a Senior Planner in Scarborough District (and responsible for the development application for the Bridlewood Mall), replied:

As long as you stick to your policy documents you're fine. You'll get a lot of heat from others. ... As long as you followed those planning principles, and, at the end of the day, is this good planning? If you can say yes this is good planning, you're fine. And if it gets appealed, it

⁷¹⁶ Moore, *Planning Politics in Toronto: The Ontario Municipal Board and Urban Development*.

⁷¹⁷ Tom Keefe as quoted in *ibid.*, 99.

gets appealed. You defend your position. But if you don't, if you're not convinced, then don't sign the report.⁷¹⁸

Furthermore, when asked to comment on occasions where city council rejects recommendations from City Planning Staff, he added:

I get a paycheque every two weeks, and the reason why I get a paycheque every two weeks is to offer my recommendations to council. And that's all it is. They're going to make the decisions. Not us. So, we go through our analysis and we put this thing through the mill and we come up with a recommendation. Whether it's one, two, three or four councillors don't like it, that's entirely up to them. If they could convince the remainder of community council that this is not a good idea, then it doesn't go forward. But that's a political discussion.

Finally, asked to elaborate on what constitutes good planning, Ashby offered:

This goes back to the density argument. The numbers don't get me excited. What matters to me is how this development fits within the context of this area, this neighbourhood. And that's good planning—making it fit.

His full answer made it clear that “making it fit” offered the flexibility needed to adhere to a permissive posture toward intensification. It meant assessing a development application with an eye toward determining how the densities and building heights being proposed by the applicant could be accommodated in the best way possible without causing undue negative impacts on surrounding properties and the existing community as intensification is favoured in Toronto's Official Plan, the Provincial Policy Statement, and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

⁷¹⁸ Renwick Ashby, "Senior Planner, Scarborough District, City of Toronto," (Interviewed by Author, October 12th, 2010).

The preceding indicates the OMB has a strong effect on how professional planners approach their work, at least in terms of assessing planning applications and crafting final recommendations. Ultimately, they consider recommendations or the advice they provide through the possibility of having to give evidence and undergo cross-examination at the OMB if a municipal council decision (or non-decision) is appealed and the case makes it to a hearing. Their credibility at the OMB is established through a mix of credentials and professional expertise, as well as the strength of the planning rationale they construct to support their recommendations. All of this is to say that multiple actors play a role in the planning process. But in the event of an appeal to OMB, “[t]o win a board hearing, participants must make a legitimate argument for or against a proposal, and planning experts are the means to establish such legitimacy ... Proposals live or die at the board depending on the strength of the planning rationale supporting them.”⁷¹⁹

As we proceed to the discourse and debate that transpired at the final public meeting in the FWRS process, it is important to foreground how an aestheticization of planning and ideological belief in growth work in tandem with the removal of density and height limits from Toronto’s Official Plan to reframe what constitutes good buildings and good planning around beauty and whether a proposed development fits with its surroundings.⁷²⁰ Fit often dovetails with character, typically the stipulation in plans and urban design guidelines that development enhance the character of an area, a requirement

⁷¹⁹ Moore, *Planning Politics in Toronto: The Ontario Municipal Board and Urban Development*: 102.

⁷²⁰ Boudreau, Keil, and Young, *Changing Toronto: Governing Urban Neoliberalism*: 108.

which proves contentious as multiple and competing understandings of a place's character often exist. The construction of place character and its mobilization can be seen in the executive summary for the FWRS and is worth considering in its entirety before proceeding.

The Finch Warden Revitalization Study was requested by Scarborough Community Council as a result of a development application to build 8 condominium towers (7 to 38 storey totaling 1370 residential units) in the Bridlewood Mall parking lot. A Working Group was formed in October 2008 following a community consultation with stakeholders. The Working Group coordinated by City Planning staff, identified needs and issues, opportunities and challenges for the area revitalization.

The area is located at the core of the Steeles-L'Amoreaux community area has moved over the past decade from a "desirable neighbourhood" to a designated "priority neighbourhood". The demographics of this middle class community have been altered significantly by the influx of a mixed population of new, first generation immigrant households with a high preponderance of youths and seniors, and also seniors who have lived in this community from its inception more than 30 years ago. The Working Group has identified stressed infrastructure in the areas of community services, hospital, schools, libraries, transportation, hydro, water and sewers as having a significant impact on the community at its most fundamental level. A commitment for infrastructure upgrades is required prior to proceeding with any major development in the designated area.

The Working Group identified an opportunity to revitalize the area and re-establish "*a desirable community for people to live, work and play by enhancing its diverse residential and commercial character*". Affordable housing for seniors together with associated medical, health and wellness services could bring work to an area in desperate need. The character of the area could be enhanced by considering setback mid-rise podium buildings, wide sidewalks and safe crossings for seniors and attractive shops and terraces as a highly desirable design

point. Open spaces and greenery together with pedestrian friendly lights could further increase the area attractiveness.⁷²¹

There are two intertwined aspects of the executive summary. The first is the narrative of decline that looms over suburban areas like Finch-Warden and includes the designation of the wider Steeles-L'Amoreaux neighbourhood as a "priority neighbourhood" in *Strong Neighbourhoods*, a municipal-level urban social policy devised to reduce social exclusion in at-risk areas.⁷²² The second is revitalization as re-establishing "a desirable community" by enhancing Steeles-L'Amoreaux's "diverse residential and commercial character".

The notion of area decline is intricately bound up in the discursive and material processes that underlie the production of space.⁷²³ Maps, statistics, reports, plans, and professional advice generate a conceived space that interacts with perceptions drawn from the materiality of space, as well as lived realities, to shape how different actors view the "needs", "issues", "opportunities" and "challenges" of a particular space or place. The FWRS mobilizes "decline" to support intensification, which is presented as a means to restore and enhance its existing character.

In *Becoming Places*, Kim Dovey notes that while scholars continue to grapple with what "character" contributes to our theoretical understandings of place, it is a slippery concept, because it is used in struggles over place in competing and often

⁷²¹ City of Toronto, "Finch Warden Revitalization Study: A Community Vision," (Toronto: City Planning Division, Scarborough District Community Planning, 2010), 6.

⁷²² ———, "Strong Neighbourhoods - A Call to Action: A Report of the Strong Neighbourhoods Task Force."

⁷²³ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. D. Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).

contradictory ways.⁷²⁴ Indeed, the case studies in his analysis examine the use of place-based character to both resist and promote change. The slipperiness of place-based character is readily evident in most planning exercises, but it has a particularly strong resonance in area studies such as the FWRS.

Public remarks made at a community meeting to discuss the draft report of the FWRS and those made by city planning staff and members of the working group privately in interviews echo this split. Some residents wished to maintain the quiet “suburban” character of the area, while others shared the view expressed by city planning staff that the area had changed and would continue to change and that being proactive about guiding future development offered a means to protect and enhance qualities that were valued by many in the community. The former tended to frame change as a threat to the character of the area and adopt an oppositional posture toward development associated with intensification.

What is important at this juncture is to emphasize that the qualities or character of a place are represented and understood differently by actors when planning for the future, even where fairly strong consensus appears to exist. Thus, embedded in big-picture vision statements and general planning principles are unresolved tensions that tend only to come to the fore when dealing with actual proposals for development or major public works.

Within the FWRS report, section 5.3.1 “Support, Reinforce, and Revitalize the Local Character of Bridlewood” notes that the area was initially built as a “planned

⁷²⁴ Dovey, *Becoming Places: Urbanism/Architecture/Identity/Power*.

community” in the 1970s. This, the report states, gives the area a “specific local character and architecture” typical to that time period.

The community was arranged to create a higher density centre with tall slab buildings surrounded by lower scale residential developments, with meandering neighbourhood streets, open spaces, as well as schools and neighbourhood amenities. The original character and architecture still exist mostly intact.⁷²⁵

Though not mentioned in the report, the L’Amoreaux and Steeles areas were shaped by the neighbourhood unit concept with post-war Don Mills as its practical example. As has been discussed in prior chapters, Don Mills established the basic design elements and business practices that many observers identify as central to postwar suburban planning and development across Canada. John Sewell, in particular, constructed his critique of postwar suburban environments around the Don Mills model, which he saw as applied in serial fashion in Scarborough.⁷²⁶

The link to Don Mills involves more than mere imitation. A 1964 land use study of the northwest sector of Scarborough, “Greater Bridlewood”, was produced by Project Planning Associates, a consultancy firm headed by Macklin L. Hancock, the landscape architect/planner responsible for the layout and design of Don Mills.⁷²⁷ Prepared for homebuilder/developer Robert McClintock Ltd., the study sketches out in broad, diagrammatic form how suburban development for the area bounded by Sheppard

⁷²⁵ City of Toronto, "Finch Warden Revitalization Study: A Community Vision," 39.

⁷²⁶ Sewell, "The Suburbs."

⁷²⁷ Project Planning Associates, "Greater Bridlewood: Land Use Study, N.W. Sector, Township of Scarborough (Prepared for Robert McClintock Ltd.)," (Toronto: Project Planning Associates Limited, 1964).

Avenue (south), Steeles Avenue (north), Victoria Park Avenue (west) and Kennedy Road (east) should unfold. Almost a half-century later, the area covered by the land use study represents the mature result of recommendations contained in the report. The Steeles-L'Amoreaux area, which encompasses all but the portion of the Bridlewood south of Huntingwood Drive, is a demonstration of how concepts from Don Mills became, as Hancock would later lament, "a certain norm".⁷²⁸

The FWRS recommends that "[f]uture redevelopment should build on the inherent character of the Bridlewood community in ways that support, reinforce and revitalize it." If, as Dovey argues, neighbourhood character is "experienced by residents, constructed in the discourse of urban politics and marketing, and legislated through planning controls and covenants", then using the "inherent character" of an area as a reference point to guide future redevelopment activity is problematic.⁷²⁹ Where neighbourhood character is evoked in the FWRS it is mostly in relation to the area's urban morphology. The social dimension of the area's "inherent character" is unclear and the FWRS is largely mute on the relationship between revitalization and social change. Putting aside the question of social character, the study's recommendation that future development build upon the "inherent character of the Bridlewood community in ways that support, reinforce and revitalize it" runs head long into the critique that John Sewell advanced in the 1970s, including at the OMB hearings on the Steeles Community Plan as discussed in Chapter 6.

⁷²⁸ Barber, "In the beginning there was Don Mills."

⁷²⁹ Dovey, *Becoming Places: Urbanism/Architecture/Identity/Power*: 59.

By the early-1990s, Sewell's critique—that the basic design of postwar suburbs based on the Don Mills model was wrong—had become orthodoxy in planning thought. Don Mills itself had morphed from “a suburb that's making good” in the 1950s to “a brilliant expression of bad ideas.”⁷³⁰ For critics, Don Mills and the subdivisions based upon it were built with a street system and at densities too low to support convenient transit, with too much ill-defined and unusable open space, and too rigid a separation between different land uses.

Members of Standup Bridletowne who participated in the FWRS working group presented their “dream vision” the Finch-Warden area in a slideshow shown to participants at the design charrette held on February 7th, 2009 as part of the area study. While they stated they did not oppose change, they felt the proposed development on the Bridlewood Mall parcel represented overdevelopment, and argued “[d]evelopment must not distort the physical attributes of the area nor should it ever threaten existing residents' quality of life.” Their vision for the community focused on creating a “pleasant environment” with “more intimate streets that enhance the pedestrian experience”, more trees and better landscaping, increases in public open space and parks, and excellence in urban design.

Based on their presentation and other materials posted on a website maintained by the Standup Bridletowne group and what was observed at public meetings in terms of comments and audience reactions, it is clear the basic design of the area—i.e. its

⁷³⁰ Barber, "In the beginning there was Don Mills."; Gray, "Why Live in the Suburbs?."

suburban character—is liked by many residents. That pits those residents against the Official Plan and planning experts with regard to the benefits of intensification on properties like the Bridlewood Mall and other low-rise commercial facilities at key intersections or along major arterials in inner suburban Toronto. Property owners seeking to intensify the use of their parcels have an incentive to think in terms of narrow financial self-interest. It remains to be seen if the inherent character of the Bridlewood community and the transformative aims of the Official Plan are compatible, or more accurately for whom and in what ways are they compatible. What is at stake in formal planning processes such as the FWRS and development application for the Bridlewood Mall is how development as revitalization is negotiated between multiple stakeholders and their interests.

Talking about Revitalization as Development in Public

Toronto’s new Official Plan developed following a period of intense neoliberal restructuring during the second-half of the 1990s in Ontario, known locally as the “common-sense revolution”.⁷³¹ The progressive and visionary aspects of the new Official Plan, particularly its adoption of sustainability as a guiding principle, obscure a deeper ideological commitment to intensification as an economic development, market-driven approach to solving a range of problems in Toronto.⁷³² An important aspect of the 1990s

⁷³¹ Roger Keil, "'Common-Sense' Neoliberalism: Progressive Conservative Urbanism in Toronto, Canada," *Antipode* 34, no. 3 (2002).

⁷³² Susannah Bunce, "The Emergence of 'Smart Growth' Intensification in Toronto: environment and economy in the new Official Plan," *Local Environment* 9, no. 2 (2004).

restructuring of urban governance in Toronto involved rescaling municipal government, which dramatically altered the terrain of local politics and planning during a period of public sector austerity and intense restructuring of the economy at the provincial and national level.⁷³³ In Ontario, the near simultaneous roll-back of the welfare state and roll-out of neoliberal governance altered the role of the local state in the shaping of urban environments. The new Official Plan, and especially its orientation toward promoting and facilitating private-sector led development as revitalization, is reflected in how new built space is produced in areas targeted for change across the city. As Douglas Young explains, whereas forty to fifty years ago public sector institutions and actors were empowered to intervene directly in the production of urban and suburban landscapes in Toronto, state agencies now “see their job as ‘steering, not rowing’.”⁷³⁴

Interviews with city planning staff involved with the FWRS and development application for the Bridlewood Mall concur with this assessment. The planners tacitly accepted that for the most part it is market forces and the private-sector that determines what actually gets built and when. Though public-sector actors can exert considerable influence via the formal planning process, their comments suggest at best planners and municipal politicians can act as gatekeepers and mediators, performing a legitimization and

⁷³³ Thomas J. Courchene, "Ontario as a North American Region-State, Toronto as a Global City-Region: Responding to the NAFTA Challenge," in *Global City-Regions: Trends, Theory, Policy*, ed. Allen J. Scott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Donald, "The Permeable City: Toronto's Spatial Shift at the Turn of the Millennium."

⁷³⁴ Douglas Young, "Hyper-development or Nothing to do: Urban Planning in Toronto's In-between City," *Public*, no. 43 (2011): 77.

quality control function, in a “game” where the most important card, the decision to go forward with a project, is held by applicants (i.e. developers).

As already noted, the planners interviewed saw it as their job to make recommendations which conform to the principles and guidelines laid out in city policies, and in their professional judgment to determine if a proposed development “fits” into a local context. Part of that context is an Official Plan that designates 25% of the City’s land area for major or gradual change. As attention turns toward the final community consultation meeting for the FWRS this requirement needs to be kept in mind as does the caution that “planning” lumps together planning activities, public and private sector planners, and the planning framework.⁷³⁵ In *Thinking Planning and Urbanism*, Beth Milroy argues failure to pay attention to what is at play or how the distinctive elements within “planning” interact at a given moment can lead to serious misinterpretation. In particular, she notes “when planning is treated in the aggregate, planners can become scapegoats for what people do not like about land development.”⁷³⁶

As will become evident, members of city planning staff were viewed to certain extent this way by some audience members at the public meeting held on October 9th, 2009 at the L’Amoreaux Collegiate Institute.

⁷³⁵ Beth Moore Milroy, *Thinking Planning and Urbanism* (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2009).

⁷³⁶ *Ibid.*, 34.

Setting the Scene

Approximately a year after the official “kick-off” community consultation meeting for the FWRS a draft report outlining the findings of the revitalization study—the context for the study, an inventory of existing conditions, a community vision, guidelines for future redevelopment—was presented at a public meeting on October 9th, 2009 in the auditorium of the L’Amoreaux Collegiate Institute. In the year prior to this public meeting city planning staff and members of the working group met numerous times, with most meetings taking place between October 2008 and February 2009. This meeting was to be the final public meeting organized and run by city planning staff on the FWRS and development application for the Bridlewood Mall. A further 10 months would pass before both items would move through SCC and TCC and receive final approval in late-August 2010.

The author of this dissertation attended three public meetings, as well as the SCC meeting which sent the FWRS and development application for the Bridlewood Mall on to TCC for approval. After the process was completed and both the revitalization study and development application had been approved at TCC, interviews were conducted with the city planners responsible for the FWRS and development application for the Bridlewood Mall, as well as the Director of Planning for the Scarborough District. Through contacts established at the public meetings, interviews were conducted with 6 members of the working group who were active in the process from its inception through to its conclusion. It is evident in comments made at the public meeting on October 9th,

2009, as well as from interviews, that numerous private meetings and communications occurred within the working group, as well as between members of the working group, the local ward councillors, and city staff. It is also apparent that prior to the FWRS local Councillor Mike Del Grande held public meetings to discuss the possibility of significant development on the Bridlewood Mall site with concerned local residents and stakeholders. The mix of public, semi-public, and private forms of consultation and deliberation involved in the FWRS and development application for the Bridlewood Mall means it is necessary to be cognizant of the partial perspective on the process and outcome derived from attendance at public meetings and events, private interviews, and published materials related to the FWRS and development application for the Bridlewood Mall. Perhaps, the most important caution is that attendees at public meetings and resident and stakeholder participants in the working group were diverse, but not representative. Thus the views heard and embedded in public documents are not those of the community per se, but those of residents and stakeholders who were able and wished to participate. That requires us to be alert to who speaks and for whom they speak.

The public meeting held on October 9th, 2009 was attended by approximately 200-300 people, who were joined by city councillors for the area, Mike Del Grande (Ward 39) and Norm Kelly (Ward 40), as well as the area's Toronto District School Board trustee Soo Wong (Ward 20). Also in attendance was the area's Member of Parliament (MP), the Hon. Jim Karygiannis, who made his presence known once the floor was opened to questions and audience feedback. From the beginning it was clear the

audience was interested first and foremost in the status of the development application for the Bridlewood Mall, and, based upon their collective response to aspects of the FWRS that related to intensified development, hostile to the prospect of more high-rise towers in their area.

The inevitability of “change” was made clear to the audience at the start of the public meeting by Councillor Kelly, who as previously noted was chair of the city’s Planning and Growth Management Committee at the time.

[M]any parts of Toronto are facing change. The Scarborough that I grew up in was changing from a rural to a suburban identity and now we are on the cusp of a change from a suburban to an urban community ... So this is one of a number of exercises that are happening across the city of Toronto in the expectation of change. The key is to make sure that the residents of the neighborhoods in which change will be occurring have had a chance to make their feelings and ideas known to the politicians of the day and to the planning staff.

Councillor Kelly does not make it explicit, but “change” in this context is code for growth and intensified development. Like the strategic vision and policies in Toronto’s Official Plan his comments work to naturalize intensification making it seem inevitable and beyond debate.

Rather than ask what kind of future residents want, residents are being asked to make their feelings and ideas known after being informed about planned changes. What is left then is either to resist what has already been decided or to negotiate the manner in which it will occur. This calls into question the nature of public consultation processes and what value and impact should be ascribed to comments from residents and other

stakeholders that express “feelings” and “ideas” contrary to the Official Plan, other city policies, and provincial policies and plans like the Provincial Policy Statement, Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, and Metrolinx’s Big Move. Does public consultation simply provide a forum for comment on what has already been determined *should* occur? Or does public consultation offer residents and other stakeholders a mechanism for influencing decisions that impact them and shape places across the city?

Disrupting Consensus

The first hour of the meeting was rather uneventful. Members of the working group and city planning staff made presentations outlining key elements of the draft FWRS report. Other than an occasional groan or grumble, the audience listened politely. When the presentations concluded and the moderator, Paul Zuliani (Manager of Community Planning for the North Section of the Scarborough District), opened the floor to questions and feedback from the audience the tone changed, however.

Following an initial question from an audience member noting the presentations seemed to contain “no details”, the next speaker, the Hon. Jim Karygiannis (MP), followed with a blunt and abrasive line of questioning that zeroed in on the relationship between the FWRS and the development application for the Bridlewood Mall. Pushing the envelope, he accused city planning staff of steering the working group toward an outcome that would fit nicely with the proposal to put 8 condominium towers on the Bridlewood Mall’s parking lot.

My question is—and I do need to congratulate everyone that was involved in the study, and there was a lot of hard work done. However, there is one way to do a study and then there is another way to do a study, and you know very well what I'm talking about. You have the end and then you sort of go there, and you justify [it] by the way that you do the study in order to accomplish what you want to accomplish. When I see somebody telling me about a piazza at Finch and Warden and I see the developer talking to me about a piazza at Finch and Warden I sure as heck say to myself hmm ... I'm just wondering how much of this study, where you took a study with the working group, and how you led the working group, is to facilitate the builder and what he wants to do?

These comments triggered a number of working group members to express their frustration with the process. Specifically, it was intimated that repeated attempts to have specific height and density limits included in the FWRS draft report were rejected by city planning staff.

One member of the working group, the owner of an existing high-rise condominium unit whose view would be impacted by the proposed 38-storey tower at Finch and Warden Avenues, interjected shortly after Karygiannis.

I'm on your side. I was on the working group right from the beginning and mixed up in all this [inaudible] stuff, and I've been very frustrated by the way that the whole report has been directed and essentially laid down. Whenever we brought up issues such as density and heights we were told oh, we can't do that, we can't put numbers in there, we can't restrict that, and all that. And I felt that we've ended up with a document that does not require the planning department, the politicians, or the builders to do anything differently than they would have done two years ago. This, I've been very disappointed with this, and my colleagues know that, and they don't always agree with me ... The focus became all about infrastructure and so on. Stuff that should be there anyway. Stuff that should not depend on what development goes on. And my concern is, in the end, that we will actually end up helping the developer do – developers do – whatever kind of density,

whatever kind of rework they want, without regard to what the community wants.

Almost immediately, another member of the working group interjected to qualify that the working group as a whole did not share this view. After much deliberation, in his view, a consensus had formed in favour of the draft report, and the dissenting member was simply expressing his own personal opinion.

It was clear as feedback continued that whatever consensus existed within the working group was fragile and uncertain. Concerns about height and density were shared by other members of the working group, who began to express them in their own terms. Moreover, general unease with the relationship between the FWRS, intensified development, and the Bridlewood Mall development application permeated the collective mood of the audience.

An Open, Transparent, Fair, and Democratic Process

Paul Zuliani, manager of Scarborough District Community Planning for the north section and moderator for the public meeting, responded to questions (mostly directly those from Karygiannis) about the revitalization study's methodology by emphasizing it "was a very open, transparent, fair, and democratic process that had residents of your community participating and expressing their concerns and issues." Before he could elaborate further he was interrupted by another member of the working group who reiterated that attempts to have height and density figures incorporated in the draft report had been discouraged,

thus far, by city planning staff. Karygiannis then interjected to repeat his demand that city planning staff tell the audience what “methodology” was used.

Before the assembled city staff could answer, a third member of the working group intervened with their own explanation of the FWRS process.

I would like to try and answer that actually ... I'm part of the working group and have been since September last year. We've been a full year at this, and the working group was volunteers who came forth in a very concerted manner to try and do the best for their community and we've followed a process that has been directed by the city planners. And we've been very kind of dutifully following along taking it step by step. We've come to all the meetings. We've had meetings that have occurred outside of the community ones. We've probably been to 20 to 25 meetings, and we have produced that document. However, and to answer Mr. Karygiannis's question—I'm going to try to answer it—is that anytime we wanted to discuss density and height we have been told by all 4 people in front there [city planning staff] that this phase, i.e. this methodology as [Karygiannis] has referred to it, does not specifically address height and density, so anytime we wanted to put in not 38-stories, not 33-stories ... and anytime we tried to address the planning concepts we were told that's not what this study is about. So, we have been led here to some degree. And, I just want to say that I've been part of it, a number of us have been part of it, and we are not totally happy with the results. So, that speaks to a methodology that doesn't properly address the community's concerns. It speaks to an approach that tries to leave the door open for all kinds of things to occur.

This comment was followed by those of two more working group members who spoke briefly and voiced similar dissatisfaction with the draft report.

When Zuliani was able to respond, he tried to calm the waters by shifting the focus of the discussion back to the bigger picture.

There certainly is a lot of interest in the Bridlewood site, and I understand that, and we want to devote time to that. And so what I am

trying to say as well is that this is a big community and the Bridlewood site is one within it. There will be pressure over time, over the next 10-20 years, potentially, for development in other sites as well. And so [the FWRS] is trying to create a framework to review any application in [the study area].

While the desire to reorient the discussion back toward the broader vision is understandable, the significance of the Bridlewood Mall site within the FWRS was hard to deny. Residents were told earlier in the meeting that the Bridlewood Mall functioned as the “hub” for the wider neighbourhood and that its redevelopment could serve as a catalyst for revitalization of the area. It was therefore unrealistic to expect that the audience would put aside its concerns about the proposed development.

The Vision has to be “Reasonable” and “Defendable”

In addition to the push to have the audience consider the wider ramifications of the FWRS, the spectre of the OMB was also raised as a rationale for leaving height and density numbers out of the draft report.

What everyone has to realize as well, is that there are private property rights that owners have and there is an appeal mechanism that owners have. If they are not happy with the municipal decision they can go to something called the Ontario Municipal Board. We talked about that in our working group. And so what we have always talked about is what is a reasonable approach, so that the study, the vision, is reasonable and can be defended in front of the Ontario Municipal Board. I understand that people would like to say that I want no development on a site, and that is understandable. People do not accept change [short audience interruption] ... ok very limited development and that’s a great approach because if we have an expectation that there be no development or very little development that position has to be defended at the Ontario Municipal Board and the board will make a decision. And so in the working group it was our role as city planners to provide advice that we could find ourselves in front of this board of the

province and what happens there has to be defensible and it has to be reasonable. And so that was a debate that we had within our working group and the result was this outcome.

This immediately elicited a rebuttal from a member of the audience who, reversing the logic of the argument, suggested that if the community agreed to the FWRS in its present form they would find themselves at an extreme disadvantage should they wish to contest any future development in the study area.

We may have to defend our positions at an OMB meeting or any other meeting for that matter. You tell me how we will defend ourselves if we have all agreed that our vision is that Finch and Warden is the hub, and all buildings should be concentrated [there] with the highest around that hub and going outwards. Doesn't that in essence say that it's ok to put the tallest buildings right on that intersection and right on that property? And therefore that fits with our vision which we all agreed to here. And we've already told you that is not our vision. So how can we defend ourselves if we agree with this vision, if we go to the OMB with something like that? Because you're going to say as a planner that we listened to everyone and everyone agreed that this is a nice little community. It is like an onion, and the centre of the onion is right there, and we all agreed that's where the highest density and tallest buildings should be. Because that's what everyone's vision was. If we agree with this vision we are making ourselves defenseless. And they are putting us into this position ... when in fact everybody who started to come out, this whole thing arose for one purpose and one purpose only: to control the density because we all thought it was too high a density. That was the only purpose we had here. And if this vision comes out and doesn't include that in this document at all, what good is this document?

This sequence highlights how the possibility of OMB appeals frames what is considered "reasonable" and "defensible" in the eyes of the city's planning staff. It also reveals the divergent interests that come to the fore when city planning staff and local residents

discuss a general framework or vision that seeks to guide future development and shape changes in a specified local area.

Negotiating Intensified Development

At the end of the questions and feedback segment, Councillor Del Grande spoke about two other development applications in Toronto: the Don Mills Centre in North York and Markington Square in Southwest Scarborough. His comments reveal the negotiation that takes place behind the scenes mostly between developers, city planning staff, and local politicians as proposals for development work their way through the planning process.

Negotiation seems an appropriate way to frame the process, because it is evident that Councillor Del Grande saw public consultation and engagement as a way to determine his constituents' positions on matters of concern to the community, and by extension, the positions he would advance on their behalf.

The very first meeting was my meeting. It wasn't a city meeting, and the place was packed and everyone complained about the speaker system and not enough chairs—I remember that one very well. I attended every single meeting. Now what I want to point out is the following. The working group was a group of volunteers. I've got to tell you that I made it a point not to interfere, for fear of [people] saying that I politically interfered with an independent working group. My message that I got from everybody when we had a show of hands and stuff was, and I'm going to reiterate again, that you were not against development. But what you said was you wanted reasonable development. And I asked you, what were my marching orders? And you told me that my marching orders were, once the proposal was presented, was half. That's what you told me. You said you could live with about half of what was originally proposed. That's what you told me. Those are my marching orders. I share with you the same concerns with respect to density and height. Because if you don't see [numbers] then people can interpret things the way they want to interpret [them].

By framing public input as “marching orders” we can see that the approval process is perceived as neither technocratic, nor deliberative. It is instead conceived as a place where competing interests are negotiated. Councillor Del Grande’s remarks serve to reinforce to those present that his role was to advance their interests in the process.

Moving to the task at hand, Councillor Del Grande shifted the discussion to noteworthy cases elsewhere in the city.

Now just to bring you a little bit up-to-date. We had a very heated debate at council about the Don Mills Centre, which proposed a number of buildings for about 1400 people [sic]. And they were offering \$17 million to the community in order to build 1400 units at the Shops at Don Mills at Don Mills and Lawrence. And the local councillor got excited with that, because he said you know I will not get this opportunity to get \$17 million for my community. It’s unheard of to be quite honest with you, because Section 37 is a bit of a negotiation that goes on—and they offered \$17 million. And at the end of the day the vote was 17-16. And I was the pivotal vote, because I told Councillor Jenkins that I was going to support his \$17 million. However, that being said, I said to Councillor Jenkins let me hear the debate, because if what you tell me is true then obviously it makes sense. Ok. And I listened to the debate, as I usually do, I sit in my chair, I don’t wander in the council chamber. Councillor Adam Vaughan presented the schematics, 3D schematics, and when I looked at them I said ugh it’s going to look like St. James Town and it’s going to look like the kind of stuff I’m going have—\$17 million doesn’t cut it. So the vote was, remember I was on this side, the vote was 17-16. I went to the other side, and that whole thing lost. So the \$17 million is up in-the-air, Cadillac-Fairview is going to go to the OMB.

Councillor Del Grande’s candor is insightful. It provides a glimpse into the unpredictable realm of political deliberation. It also further reinforced his bona fides as someone who takes protecting the existing community or local character seriously whether interacting with city planning staff or casting votes at SCC and TCC. After familiarizing the

audience with the Don Mills situation, Councillor Del Grande turned to how the development application for the Bridlewood Mall might unfold by comparison.

I said to myself, here, priority neighbourhood-wise, these guys they are basically going to offer a \$1000/unit. Just round it off to 1400, it's \$1.4 million. That doesn't even get me a library. Here I am a priority neighbourhood and you put more people in the area and it doesn't even get me a library. These guys, Cadillac-Fairview, what they're offering, even if divided by half, because it's not as rich here as it is there, is \$9 million. Would I take \$9 million to give 1400 units to this developer? Honestly, the answer for me is no, because good planning is still good planning. And one of the key things they said there was that it needed to respect the integrity of the local community. And that is the message that is very clear to me, that when you drop 1400 units—anywhere from 3000 to 4000-5000 people—that is a community within a community, not part of a community. So that's again my opinion based upon what you've told me. So I'm going through the same motions as you are to come to this point, to listen to what you've said, and my colleague Councillor Kelly is in the back there and he's listening as well too. So as far as I'm concerned, what's the word, is this a done deal yet? It's not a done deal—not a done deal yet. So, I'm hearing you, I have not missed any meetings, I hear your frustration.

Again these comments place Councillor Del Grande in close alignment with vocal members of the audience who had already spoken against the plan to build high-rise condominiums on the Bridlewood Mall's parking lot.

At the same time, Councillor Del Grande was also diplomatic. As a city councillor he works with city staff, including planning staff, to address issues for residents in his ward. Unlike the Hon. Jim Karygiannis, their federal member of parliament, Councillor Del Grande had a strong incentive to strike a more conciliatory tone, while still ensuring residents felt he is one of them and looking out for their interests at City Hall.

As I said these people did a lot of work and whether, as Mr. Karygiannis has said, they were led, I'm not going to second guess the goodwill of people. But what I am also not going to second guess is the collective response. [The planners have] done their job, just as I do my job some days and people don't agree with me. I hope they agree with me 95% of the time as opposed to 0% of the time. So, I guess these guys get a little sensitive when things become personal. We've been very good as a community, we've listened, we've provided our input, we may not agree with them, but I don't want to get into any kind of personal attacks. I'm on their case all the time, trust me, and not just at public meetings. They can tell you how many times I've approached them and told them, you know, how I feel.

Reprising his speculation as to how a Section 37 negotiation might play out with respect to the Bridlewood Mall development, Councillor Del Grande made reference to “cheque-book planning” and underlined his own personal stake in the outcome as a resident.

And I've said right from the beginning that my view based on the sense I got from the developer was we're going to go to the OMB. And I'm going to lose \$1.4 million if that's the case. I'm willing to gamble \$1.4 million, because it doesn't do anything for us to change anything quality of life here. So, I'm telling you that I'm prepared to do that. If they give me \$5 million, if it's not good planning, ok, the money—cheque-book planning should not override good planning. And that's where I'm coming from, that's what you've said, I'm here to protect the neighbourhood. I live here as well too, as does Mr. Karygiannis. We all live here, some people don't live here, but we do.

This left one final piece of the puzzle to be addressed—a similar development application for Markington Square at Markham Road and Eglinton Avenue (near the Kingston Road) in southwest Scarborough.

Markington Square and the Bridlewood Mall are both community-scale shopping centres located in “priority neighbourhoods”. And both are identified in the Official Plan

as “mixed-use” areas. Aware of their similarities, Councillor Del Grande pointed out the developer associated with the Bridlewood Mall redevelopment is looking to Markington Square as their baseline.

This particular developer has looked at Markington as his example, rather than Don Mills. Markington was a development similar—with a parking lot, of about 1400 [units], and they came down to 1000 to develop Markington—and they had all these types of planning things, etc. That’s what they are looking at. They are not looking at Don Mills, which as I said lost on 17-16. At that particular thing with Markington which had similar, a number of similar circumstances, the vote at community council went, correct if I’m wrong [Councillor Kelly], went 9 to 1. Guess who the one was?

Once again, Councillor Del Grande used a development application in another ward to reinforce the notion that he was attuned to local concerns about development, and was, as an audience member put it earlier in the meeting, someone they could trust to protect their interests in the process.

So Where Are We At Right Now?

It was only in the final 10 minutes of the meeting that the city planner responsible for the development application, Renwick Ashby, was able to provide his update to those still present.

So where are we at right now? We are coming to conclusion with the study. The developers/applicants—I noted that they are present here tonight, and they have attended all the meetings. What they submitted to us, as you all know, is an application for around 8 buildings—1500 units. That’s the application on the table right now. I know throughout this process you have asked how come the applicant hasn’t revised their proposal. At the time I said – I still say – different applicants operate differently. Some would immediately revise their proposal; some would wait until the end of the process then come forward with a

proposal. And from what I gather just in working with this applicant, their approach is to wait until this study is completed, wait until all the information is in, and that would be their opportunity to now come back to the city and present a revised proposal.

An important element of his update on the development application for the Bridlewood Mall was to assure area residents in audience that no decision had been made, no recommendation from city planning staff had been arrived at. In short, as had also been indicated by Councillor Del Grande, it was not a done deal yet.

After noting that city planning staff as professional planners also had concerns about building heights and density, and were still working out possible connectivity improvements and community benefits that might come from the proposal, Ashby suggested these concerns had been conveyed to the applicant along with those raised via the FWRS process. But he cautioned that his concerns about the building heights and overall density contained in the development application did not mean that he had determined what the appropriate numbers should be for the Bridlewood Mall site or any other site identified in the FWRS.

Now I've been doing this for about 20 years, I can't pull a number out of the sky and say okay this number is appropriate in terms of height. I can't say, you know, 1500 units is appropriate at this site. I can't do that. I have to let the process work. I have to rely on information from various departments as [Paul Zuliani] indicated in order to come to a point where we can offer what I think is a recommendation. And that recommendation is based on our professional opinion as to what we think should happen here. Does the council always agree? No. But that's our job in this process is to gather all the information and come forward with what we think is a sound recommendation as to how this site should develop.

While on the surface Ashby's position on height and density fits with "good planning" as he and others define it, it provides little assurance to non-experts, especially those not involved day-to-day in the process, who simply want to know to how many units will be permitted and to what height the applicant will be allowed to build.

The difficulty, as explained by Ashby to those still in attendance, is a narrow focus on numbers overlooks how the proposed development will "fit" into its specific context, arguing for the need to translate numbers into visual images, so people could understand them from a design perspective given the site and its surrounding environment.

Right now we're are being asked about this whole height issue. What we thought might help us a little more is if we actually saw some modeling. So instead of picking 18, 20 storeys or 12 storeys or what have you, we wanted to actually see some modeling. What I mean by that is we asked the applicants for a 3D model, so we could see where the existing towers are, the heights of the mall buildings that are surrounding the community, insert the proposed buildings so that we could see from a multidimensional perspective what sort of impact these buildings are going to have on this community. So I mentioned that I can't tell you what a height is, but these are some of the tools we rely on in order to come to a conclusion as to well this height is appropriate, this height would cause less impact. I know that at one of the sessions [Robert Stephens] talked about density. I can't just look at 1300 or 1400 units. I have to look at, well, how does that density spread out throughout the site. How is that density used? What sort of impact is that density going to have on the community? This is why we have to go through this exercise.

Good planning defined and practiced in this manner places professional planners and other urban practitioners (and their expertise) in the driver's seat. Making new development "fit" based on its specific geographic context and relevant plans and

policies, while reasonable and defensible at the OMB and within professional planning and urban design circles, raises a number of difficult questions. Is planning for change relegated to reshaping physical environments? How is the planning and development process influenced by an appeal process that relies heavily on evidence given by qualified experts? Ultimately, who decides what constitutes the character of a place and what qualifies as supporting, reinforcing, revitalizing an area's local character?

Planning For Change with Local Stakeholders

Answers to the questions posed at the end of the last section require us to question and politicize intensification and growth, which Toronto's Official Plan and Ontario's Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe studiously avoid. One of the principal difficulties in analyzing planning controversies like the one being examined in this chapter is determining what choices were possible as the planning application wound its way through the approval process.

Residents typically interact with city planning staff at very specific moments in the overall planning process. And audiences tend to be dominated by local homeowners (and in some cases business owners or other impacted stakeholders) who attend primarily because they perceive the proposed changes as a threat to the value or enjoyment of their property. This is not to say that other interests and motivations do not exist and receive attention, so much as it is to acknowledge that in practice the most intense public meetings are dominated by on-the-ground concerns over how a particular parcel of land

ought to be used. In such cases, it is easier to determine what vocal participants oppose than what, if any, support exists for proposed changes.

To understand the reception the FWRS and intimately connected development application for the Bridlewood Mall received at the final public meeting, first requires placing each within the context of land-use planning as a formal government function that can never simply be local or limited to the specifics of a single decision or the planning process that led to it. Nor can planning outcomes be judged straightforwardly in relation to what “the community” wants. Each planning decision fits within a sequence that builds upon previous decisions or choices.

The Official Plan passed by TCC in 2002 and given final approval by the provincial government in 2006 had an obvious impact: it designated the Bridlewood Mall parcel and several others in the area as Mixed Use. That created the latent potential for intensification and granted the owners of such parcels the right to do more with their properties than their present uses. Because the Official Plan is not prescriptive, especially in terms of height and density, on-the-ground where it facilitates development it tends to generate local opposition as different groups and interests converge to contest and negotiate what is actually permitted.

The FWRS employed a working group of local stakeholders—residents, business owners, third-sector representatives—to develop a comprehensive vision to “inform, evaluate and shape future redevelopment; guide growth; set priorities for funding, programs and services; and identify necessary public and private realm

improvements.”⁷³⁷ Interviews with four city planning staff involved in the process and six long-time residents who participated in the working group were conducted after the FWRS final report and the development application for the Bridlewood Mall were approved by SCC and TCC. The working group members interviewed were part of a core group who participated actively throughout the entire process, including the meetings held privately and publicly about the proposed Bridlewood Mall development before the FWRS and working group were established.

The interviewees held a range of views and possessed various forms of professional expertise, political experience, and local knowledge. Few had prior experience with land-use planning. All were homeowners. Asked to describe the demographic composition of their group, one member interviewed put bluntly that they were “older, long-time residents who were resisting change—and for good reason.”⁷³⁸ As we shall see, that characterization is both accurate and misleading. It was certainly the case that the working group was dominated by older, long-time residents of the Steeles-L’Amoreaux area. But it was clear from community consultation meetings and the interviews with working group members that resisting change was not synonymous with opposition to change and development. Instead, a more complicated story emerged. That story involves a push and pull of interests—between local stakeholders and the city (and by extension the province), and between local stakeholders themselves. In the case of the local stakeholders the question of their representativeness is largely put in abeyance in

⁷³⁷ City of Toronto, “Finch Warden Revitalization Study: A Community Vision,” 7.

⁷³⁸ Murray Hedges, “FWRS Working Group Member,” (Interviewed by Author, November 3rd, 2010).

what follows. What is offered is not an attempt to determine what “the community” wanted. The aim is rather to reveal how certain members of the community and planning staff engaged in the process, as well as how they understood both the context and outcome of that process.

An Opportunity to Educate and Inform

Members of city planning staff that were interviewed approached the process as an opportunity to educate the community and saw their role as informing and advising working group members on planning and urban design and nudging them toward greater openness to development on the scale and in the form envisioned in the Official Plan.

Mike Mestyan, the planner responsible for the FWRS, put it this way:

While [a few members], perhaps, have had more involvement in city planning or city-building exercises or development application exercises, quite a few of the others, I think it was fairly apparent, did not have a whole lot of experience in the work that we do. Starting out from that premise and bringing them along, I think, many of them at the beginning were resistant to some change and sort of saw the mall parking lot as the focal point and simply did not want anything to happen. And likewise it’s probably general consensus amongst them that they like their neighbourhood the way it is, in terms of development, and did not wish to foresee taller buildings coming into their community. When you begin to explain to them sort of the thinking behind it and perhaps some of the other benefits that come with [intensification], they began to open up and say okay maybe we can accept something.⁷³⁹

The Director of Community Planning in the Scarborough District, Allan Appleby, offered as similar assessment:

⁷³⁹ Mike Mestyan, "Senior Planner, Scarborough District, City of Toronto," (Interviewed by Author, October 12th, 2010).

Sites that are designated mixed use in the Official Plan, which permits a mix of commercial and residential, are often underutilized now because they are used now for lots of surface parking and malls, either strip plazas or indoor malls, and the development potential is enormous, the opportunity for change is out there, and those often happen through individual applications. So, a mall owner puts pen to paper, sits down and draws something up, and throws in an application. That starts a bit of a firestorm. I'm not sure what it starts. But everyone gets interested, they get engaged, and they start talking about well wait a minute is this what the Official Plan is talking about for our community. How do we influence this? How do we deal with this application? So we had a number of those kinds of applications, and they happen on various sites. And they trigger for us—we try to engage the community not just on the application, but in a conversation about their community. So we do what we've been calling revitalization studies, or framework studies, to try to put the individual application in a context of change in a community ... I think when we started [the FWRS] process more people were saying they didn't want any development. But through a series of conversations, about infrastructure, about development, about examples of development, I think more and more people saw the revitalization as something that could actually be positive for their community.⁷⁴⁰

Members of the working group interviewed saw the process differently. They tended to emphasize their efforts to get city planning staff to take seriously their concerns about how intensification might impact the community and strain existing infrastructure and services in the area. They also tended to see the FWRS process and their interactions with city planning staff and other experts as more of a two-way learning process.

If you come into a community you need to know the people who live here ... so turn yourself around. You need to be them. Everybody wants good planning, long-term planning. I'm not talking about short-term. I'm not talking about political planning. I'm talking about, if I'm a planner, if I went back to school to learn about good planning, the first thing I need to learn is it's your community ... What makes a

⁷⁴⁰ Allan Appleby, "Director of Community Planning, Scarborough District, City of Toronto," (Interviewed by Author, September 24th, 2010).

community good for you? Now you have a job to do, your job is to make sure that happens, plus bring your expertise, bring your official hat ... So what you have to do is [address] what is a good community before, in the middle, and after. You have to be able to not only turn your seat around, but you also need to understand the individual personalities of these communities⁷⁴¹

Looking past intensification as too abstract, working group members were mainly focused on practical concerns drawn from their day-to-day experience as residents of the area. They acknowledged in interviews a range of problems in the area, which for some included poverty, social exclusion, and lack of services for vulnerable residents. But the FWRS process emerged in a very specific context: the proposal to build 8 apartment buildings on the Bridlewood Mall's parking lot, including a 38 storey tower at the corner of Finch and Warden Avenues. That was the spark and it framed their involvement in the process as they felt the development as proposed represented an overdevelopment of that parcel. The working group members differed in terms of specifics, but all looked to the FWRS process as a way to push for "reasonable" or "responsible" development.

There was near unanimous agreement that development in the area should not be as "high" or as "dense" as the initial proposal sought. Planning staff, to a point, shared this assessment. Renwick Ashby, the planner responsible for the development application, acknowledged when interviewed that he knew when the application came in it was not acceptable and would need to be vastly different for staff to recommend its approval. He likened the process to a game and explained some developers "shoot for the moon", while others submit exactly what they want. The Bridlewood Mall development

⁷⁴¹ Lai Chu, "FWRS Working Group Member," (Interviewed by Author, September 24th, 2010).

application was apparently a case of the former approach and planning staff expected the process to guide the developer toward something they could support based on their conception of good planning.

The wrinkle in the mix is the OMB and the appeal rights granted by the Province of Ontario's Planning Act. City planning staff do not have the final word on what fits or is reasonable. City Council chooses whether to accept or reject staff recommendations and developers amongst a host of possible appellants can appeal decisions or non-decisions by municipal councils to the OMB. As has been noted, this plays a powerful role in the land-use planning process in Toronto. For example, when asked to elaborate on the process of educating and informing residents, i.e., how planning and design choices were discussed, Mestyan replied:

Well they are both part of the process. Good planning involves urban design and brings in the best of what urban design has to offer. At end of the day there is always the reality that if we're promoting something that is not reasonable, or not feasible, it is subject to appeal. So while, perhaps, a building of 30 storeys in height is maybe too tall for a particular site, is it worthwhile for us to go and defend that, our decision, to refuse that application versus something we'd rather have and maybe have 28 storeys? We have to weigh all our options to see if it is worthwhile for us to fight the fight. If yes, then absolutely we go to the OMB and defend our decisions. But if it's not absolutely perfect according to us, but it's within the level of tolerance we can accept then we would say let's try to improve this as much as possible to eliminate any of the negative impact and then we can put our stamp on and say we can approve this as well.⁷⁴²

It was clear from interviews with planning staff that the FWRS could only be useful to them if it was consistent with their conception of good planning. So, educating working

⁷⁴² Mestyan, "Senior Planner, Scarborough District, City of Toronto."

group members and the community at large was partly about increasing awareness and understanding of urban design principles and choices, and informing participants about what could be defended at the OMB, at least from their perspective.

The Planners Tried to Walk the Line

The Bridlewood Mall development application was a major proposal for development in an area that had not seen many changes to its built environment in recent decades. It was evident to some of the working group members that the area had become a “little tattered around the edges” and that some new growth and development might be beneficial. Several of the working group members were clear that they did not oppose development, but wanted the community to have a say in shaping it. They also wanted to ensure the existing community and quality of life in the area was protected in the process. As one of the working group members explained:

... you can see looking around your city where good development is and it helps the community and then you see pockets where it's not been good and everything tanks, so not wanting this area to tank, I got involved to try to see what we could, you know, influence.⁷⁴³

This working group member was part of a small group of local residents that were instrumental in getting the FWRS off-the-ground.

... so Mike Del Grande was having these meetings and they weren't really going anywhere. It was just a lot of raise your picket flag and yell and scream, but there was no process, so I had said to [a couple of other members of Stand-Up Bridletowne] why don't we go and meet Galia Feiler [CEO of Fishman Holdings] and say that we need to have the community discuss with the mall owner how we're going to go

⁷⁴³ Patricia Sinclair, "FWRS Working Group Member," (Interviewed by Author, November 4th, 2010).

forward with this development, so it's good for them and good for us. We aren't against redevelopment and unfortunately that's where Mike Del Grande was going. He wanted to stop development. And we were saying we can't stop development. We need development. I mean this is what's gotten us in the priority neighbourhood status in the first place: the lack of development in all parts.⁷⁴⁴

There are complications to this narrative. First and foremost, the now-defunct website for Stand-Up Bridletowne was strongly oriented toward opposition to the proposed development on the Bridlewood Mall's parking lot and said relatively little about what the group considered "reasonable" or "responsible". Second and equally important, several of the residents active in Stand-up Bridletowne were vocal and persistent opponents of intensification on the Bridlewood Mall parcel. If they supported development, it was at a scale and intensity far lower than what the Official Plan, city planning staff, and the applicant were contemplating or what good planning defined as "reasonable" and "defendable" at the OMB would support. This tension between those local residents who outright opposed intensification in all but its most modest forms and those who were focused on making sure good development resulted and that infrastructure and services were in place to support it was undeniably present.

Working group members did align in other ways. In contrast to the city planners who emphasized the FWRS was an opportunity to educate residents about the benefits of intensification, it is clear from the working group members interviewed that it took a concerted effort to get high quality, credible information on infrastructure and services provided. They felt this was the basis for a meaningful discussion about the impact of

⁷⁴⁴ Ibid.

intensification and what needed to be improved to accommodate development without it impinging unduly on the quality of life enjoyed by residents.

Taking this point a little further, there was a strong sense among several of the working group members that the process was not, at least initially, geared toward getting at and solving the problems related to intensification. Instead, they felt information given to the group was incorrect and biased toward demonstrating the area could handle more development.

So the process started very nicely and it was open and giving everyone the opportunity for input and I kind of like the aspect of bringing in the experts for each [issue], but with such a process we were able to see that there were, how can I say it, deficiencies or that the experts were not that experienced at some of the matters ... Like I remember a young person working with the water department telling us that there was no problem with the pressure and there were people who could hardly take a shower in the second storey of their house and that sort of thing. Or the guy ... from the TDSB going bring the children in you know. I said boy all the schools are over 100% capacity how are you going to deal with this sir and the guy, you know, was just bring the children in and he was not saying that all the schools were full. So, we had to go over this guy and there was a letter that acknowledged that they would have to do something like bringing portables and all of it. The same thing with transportation.⁷⁴⁵

You know I think the meetings were great in the sense that hey they were willing to talk to the people. But I'm just wondering how much did they take in from what the community was saying. Now, I want to say, personalities aside—I mean, I think that Renwick [Ashby] and Mike Mestyan were great in particular—you always got the feeling how much can they control in the situation. They are getting orders from up high that this has to be done guys. You got that feeling, right, you got to push this thing through, you got to bull-doze it through. I don't know how right my take on that would be or not, but when you

⁷⁴⁵ Denis Lenoue, "FWRS Working Group Member," (Interviewed by Author, November 4th, 2010).

heard the guys coming saying oh traffic there's no problem, oh hydro there's no problem, you begin to wonder.⁷⁴⁶

I mean the planners, not to fault the planners, they were given this is the way we're going to do it, and they have a job to do and they just follow along ... the big problem for us was when we had presentations by various departments within the city and they came and they were telling us this is the way it is in your neighbourhood. And it was like no it's not. And so then we were constantly challenging their information and telling them to go back and get better information.⁷⁴⁷

The tendency of working group members to see city planning staff as operating within constraints placed on them by plans and policies, as well as directions given to them by more senior staff and possibly politicians, was evident. That led to complicated and nuanced views on the FWRS process and how it related to the Bridlewood Mall development. Those interviewed could alternate between laudatory comments about the FWRS, including positive remarks about most of the city planning staff involved and appreciation toward the process for giving the community a means to express its views and develop a vision to guide development in the area, and more cynical assessments of the FWRS and its likely impact on future development.

The preceding suggests that above all the working group members had a pragmatic and finely developed sense of how their interests meshed (or not) with those of the City. For example, one member stated:

I thought the planners tried to walk the line. They didn't want the community claiming not to have been heard. But they also knew what the City wanted to do by way of intensification and what the mayor's plan for the city was and [Councillor Kelly] being a key part of the

⁷⁴⁶ Reg Rego, "FWRS Working Group Member," (Interviewed by Author, October 22nd, 2010).

⁷⁴⁷ Sinclair, "FWRS Working Group Member."

planning and growth [committee] he certainly knew what he wanted. Norm wants intensification in a big way ... I'm trying to protect our little community, so we're kind of on different sides. I want to protect the community from the point of view of not having it overrun.⁷⁴⁸

Asked as a follow-up if he felt the planners understood the community's position, the reply was respectful, but direct:

Most definitely. They understand it. Whether they can accommodate it or not is something else. There was a great transfer of feelings and ideas and proposals. I don't think there is any question about it, the planners certainly understand. But they are under a lot of pressure to do things from the city's side of the coin, and they work for the city. You know they work for the city. They don't work for the community.⁷⁴⁹

This brings the metropolitan problem discussed in Chapter 4 and the tensions between regional and local interests in the Toronto area down to the scale of neighbourhood and municipality, in this case the City of Toronto. Balancing between the desires and interests of the whole and those of its constituent parts raises a different set of political and practical questions. The visionary rhetoric of the Official Plan effectively side-steps these.

Progress is Conceptual, Change is Real

From a planning and urban design perspective the proposal to build residential units on a mall parking lot is exactly the sort of intensification that Toronto's Official Plan seeks to encourage. And the hostile public response to the proposed development at the Bridlewood Mall is how intensification is most often greeted at the neighbourhood scale.

The challenges associated with intensification in inner suburban locales like Scarborough

⁷⁴⁸ Hedges, "FWRS Working Group Member."

⁷⁴⁹ Ibid.

formed a prominent component of an interview conducted with Scarborough District's Director of Community Planning Allan Appleby a couple months after the FWRS and development application for the Bridlewood Mall moved through SCC and were approved by TCC. Appleby had 30 years of experience as a planner at the time of the interview, and had worked mostly in and around the downtown core, including the railway lands and central waterfront area, until amalgamation in 1998. After amalgamation he worked as a manager in the Etobicoke and North York districts before being promoted to Director of Community Planning for the Scarborough District in 2005. His tenure in Scarborough and recent experience with avenue and area studies undertaken in the district allowed him to outline and provide feedback on how the Official Plan's promotion of intensification was working out in practice.

Appleby acknowledged that applications for greyfield sites like the Bridlewood Mall were a challenge, but outlined the positive work being done along avenues designated for intensification in the Official Plan such as Sheppard Avenue East, Lawrence Avenue East, Eglinton Avenue East, and the Kingston Road.

The avenue studies have been quite good. We setup reference groups. So we engage the community a lot, because they take probably 8 months, maybe a year to complete. There's some very good processes that happen through these avenue studies [in terms] of getting buy-in from the local community about how the edges of their stable residential neighbourhood are going to change, and can change in a positive way.⁷⁵⁰

⁷⁵⁰ Appleby, "Director of Community Planning, Scarborough District, City of Toronto."

In the case of the avenue studies his biggest concern was the number of kilometres that needed to be completed, with each study looking at a segment that was about 2 kilometres long. At the rate it would take the planning department a very long time to complete the process and it was hard to predict where a development application proposing significant intensification might be submitted. It was the City's preference that avenue studies be completed beforehand to avoid the sorts of difficulties experienced with the FWRS.

The Scarborough Civic Centre precinct was noted as an area where a lot of development activity, almost exclusively high-rise, had taken place over the last decade. Community consultation around intensification had thus far proven to be rather straightforward in this area:

Community consultation here is a little bit different because people are in high-rise. They see their community a little differently. They understand that they are in a high-density node of the city, and the expectations with the Scarborough Centre are very clear that this is a high-rise node. So we just approved over on the Menkes development over by Consilium a couple meetings ago at Community Council about 1500 units. It just came in as a development application, worked through the process, [went] to 1 or 2 community meetings, and then it was approved.⁷⁵¹

There is an important distinction to be made as relates to the FWRS and development proposed for the Bridlewood Mall's parking lot. Appleby noted that outside of high-rise nodes like the Scarborough Civic Centre precinct intensification is generally equated with tall buildings and "[e]verybody, almost everybody dislikes height. Height becomes a

⁷⁵¹ Ibid.

lightning rod and attracts opposition. The lower scale stuff can be poor in design, poor in quality, not well laid out and the community will say they like it.”

The real crux of the work done by engagement processes like the FWRS was framed by Appleby as “shifting minds” by detailing how change will be managed to reduce negative impacts and explaining the improvements that new development might bring to the area. He acknowledged that improvement or enhancement is subjective and the vision of transforming small precincts within low-density suburban areas into compact, transit-oriented, and walkable spaces ran against the grain of what many residents were accustomed to and see as their desired way of life.

... we did hear at the beginning of the process we don't want downtown development. We came out here because we wanted our suburban-style development with free-flowing traffic where we could get in our car and we could get through every intersection in one light. We could drive to whatever shopping we wanted. We had Sheppard Avenue which was free-flowing 6-lanes, 5-lanes, whatever it is, and be able to get anywhere relatively easily.⁷⁵²

This is where planning and urbanistic discourse on the benefits of compact urban form and increased density becomes both a technical planning problem, as well as a practical one. Making development “fit” is often dealt with first and foremost as a question of the development parcel and the immediate surrounding context. The issues raised by members of the working group interviewed as part of this research point to a deeper question of “fit” in which the now outmoded planning ideas that shaped the initial

⁷⁵² Ibid.

development of the area are pitted against a new planning vision and set of ideas that seek to rework or retrofit a portion of it.

Although the Official Plan speaks about development and change being directed to 25% of the City's land area, the remaining 75% is not isolated or unaffected. In contrast to the rhetoric, Appleby acknowledged that protecting existing low-density suburban residential neighbourhoods still leaves significant scope for change once residents leave the winding local roads and collectors of their subdivision.

That style of development, you can insulate it and make it stable within small precincts, but the overall context that [residents] travel through is going to change. They are part of an inner suburb now in a larger region and the style of the areas they pass through is going to be different. And the question is how does it change. And how do you manage that change so they are comfortable with it. And that's what a lot of the conversations were about.⁷⁵³

The tension between the Official Plan's vision for the future and the everyday reality of many residents in inner suburban places like Finch-Warden and L'Amoreaux and Steeles communities is embodied in planning exercises that seek to get residents and other local stakeholders to see the new vision as progress. For his part, Appleby was confident that most residents would eventually be pleased with the final results and chalked up the apprehension and opposition generated by development proposals to the difference between progress and change: "...everybody likes progress, and kind of accepts progress,

⁷⁵³ Ibid.

but nobody likes change. So progress is kind of that thing that, you know is conceptual, but the change is real.”⁷⁵⁴

On the ground, significant intensification or development as revitalization registers differently amongst local residents. Impacts are not perceived or felt equally, as one working group member acknowledged:

I do know that at the town hall meetings that we had to bring the community up to speed it was equally split. People recognized the need for redevelopment, because the plaza's been going down and down and down. So really it's becoming a detriment rather than something that's positive. So people who were concerned about property values and all those kinds of issues were very much in support of redevelopment with some common-sense tied to it. But there were still folks that were fighting it, because they just ... Councillor Mike Del Grande, the people living north, which was [his] ward, the people living north that lived in the townhouses and stuff like that were against increasing the density in that area because it would impact them directly.⁷⁵⁵

One member of the working group was strongly opposed to high-rise development and forced the working group to spend a great deal of time on his particular objection to high-rise towers on the Bridlewood Mall parcel. Several of the working group members interviewed commented on this and tried to place his unwavering opposition in context.

My sense of [this person] in terms of his place in the scheme of things: he lives in one of the nicer condos in that area, and he's got lots of property around his place, lots of green space, you know. The building is a 1960s style slab [block] and he lives in the penthouse. So he has a very nice view and he looks out over the city and can see all the way to the lake and he likes that. And he sees if you intensify and this is his big objection, and I think it was all vested interest: if you take that

⁷⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁵ Pat Sherman, "FWRS Working Group Member," (Interviewed by Author, October 22nd, 2010).

corner and you build buildings that are as high as his, or higher than his, that he can't see anymore.⁷⁵⁶

... in fact there were repeated nights sitting in there until 11 o'clock trying shut one person up, in particular. And it didn't matter how the planners explained it, how the councillors explained it, how we explained it to that individual, he just went on-and-on like a broken record.⁷⁵⁷

You had these, what I call, personal emphases on certain aspects of development—you can't get away from that.⁷⁵⁸

Self-interest of this sort is a wrinkle that tends to dominate accounts of NIMBY opposition to development. Caution and general unease with intensification was a more general undercurrent in most interactions with residents and local stakeholders, whether at public events or interviews.

Most people do not greet either uncertainty or disruption with much enthusiasm, and if it is unavoidable seek to minimize both. That in large measure explains the overall response at community consultation meetings from members of the public and how most members of the FWRS working group framed their views and conduct. As one working group member put it, when asked to describe what he thought would be a good place to live, “[w]ell, I’ve quite enjoyed myself here for the last 30 years.”⁷⁵⁹ His main reason for settling in the area was “reasonable access to services”, “good schools”, and “ease of access to get to my place of employment”, and he liked the stability of his immediate neighbourhood—that most of his neighbours had been in the community for a long-time

⁷⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁷ Sinclair, "FWRS Working Group Member."

⁷⁵⁸ Rego, "FWRS Working Group Member."

⁷⁵⁹ Sherman, "FWRS Working Group Member."

and did not change much. At the same time, long-residency meant he could see problems facing the community as a whole: "... you know, that it's getting a little tattered around the edges. The infrastructure is starting to wear down and the neighbourhoods, you know, they're underserviced."⁷⁶⁰

Intensification Redux

A year after the FWRS and development application for the Bridlewood Mall were approved, Ward 39 Councillor Del Grande provided a "Bridlewood Mall Update" to his constituents:

In 2007, I alerted you of the proposed Bridlewood Mall Development Project to build eight condominium buildings in the Mall parking lot. The original plan included 1,370 units with a maximum building height of 38-storeys.

A Citizens' Working Group was established to work with my office and City staff to endeavour to have a more reasonable development. The members worked tirelessly with the community and put in numerous hours of their time for a common goal to benefit the neighbourhood. Three years later, in 2010, the developer agreed to reduce the number of units to 975 and the maximum height of the buildings to 25-storeys.

In 2011, changes are proposed to this project since a new Target Canada store is planned to be built in this mall. Target indicated to the mall owners that it requires a clear sight line to Finch Avenue for their signage. Accordingly, to build 25-storeys at the corner of Warden and Finch Avenues was now not feasible and subsequently the plans have changed.

I met with the developers early this year. They indicated that the number of units will remain unchanged at 975, however, the size of each individual unit will be reduced. In addition, they are now

⁷⁶⁰ Ibid.

proposing to build all three buildings at the north end of the mall (Warden and Glen Springs Avenues) instead of in phases.

These changes would mean that construction would finish sooner than planned. In addition to the accelerated timeframe, there would also be a larger green space at the corner of Warden and Finch Avenues.⁷⁶¹

This new twist could not have been foreseen during the FWRS process, so it is an instructive reminder that unforeseen and contingent events can and do alter plans and reshape outcomes. A soft market for the project and Target's purchase of Zellers leases across Canada achieved what local opposition could not: to halt the high-rise towers planned for the corner of Finch and Warden Avenues. And five years later, the outcome continues to be uncertain. To date, condominiums have not been built, the mall expansion has not gone ahead as planned, Target has closed its Canadian operations, and the mall itself has changed ownership. Indeed, the development project appears to have been shelved.

Regardless of what ultimately transpires in the Finch-Warden area or on the Bridlewood Mall parcel there is much that can be gleaned from what has been detailed in this chapter. One interpretation of the Finch-Warden case is that we have entered a period of "roll-with it neoliberalism" in which planning and planners facilitate hyper-development where property capital sees opportunity for profit.⁷⁶² As one member of the working group put it:

⁷⁶¹ Mike Del Grande, "Fall Newsletter for Ward 39 - Scarborough-Agincourt," Newsletter, 8, no. 2 (2011), http://www.mikedelgrande.ca/images/newsletter_Fall11.pdf [Accessed in June 2012]

⁷⁶² Roger Keil, "The Urban Politics of Roll-With-It Neoliberalization," *City* 13, no. 2-3 (2009); Young, "Hyper-development or Nothing to do: Urban Planning in Toronto's In-between City."

You know stepping back, I don't think the planning department plans. They just take on an application and try to fit it in ... all they're doing is receiving applications and trying to stick them in and trying to make sure the approval goes forward, because we need more development, we need more housing to accommodate all those millions of people that are coming to Toronto.⁷⁶³

This assessment rings true if we ignore the amount of effort and staff time dedicated by the City Planning Division to the FWRS and development application for the Bridlewood Mall. As intertwined planning exercises both were directed by legal statutes, existing plans and policies, conditioned by training and professional expertise, and influenced by a range of interests.

Planning in contemporary Scarborough (and the rest of the City of Toronto) is principally directed at identifying where intensification can and should take place, devising a framework to facilitate it, and making sure that actual developments fit and use their sites well. In the aftermath of the early-1970s push for greater citizen participation in planning, an important planning activity has become informing, consulting, and involving residents and other stakeholders. The extent to which planning exercises can be construed as deliberative or participatory is still debatable. Private property confers a set of rights and establishes relations between actors. Public-sector land-use planning involves the assertion of collective property rights, which may and often do come into conflict with the interests of individuals and groups. Accepting that not all actors are equally able to advance their interests, nor are all interests equally

⁷⁶³ Sinclair, "FWRS Working Group Member."

represented, the preceding has sought to bring to the fore the complexities that surround that basic tension in planning and development as it plays out in Toronto.

Chapter 9: Reflections on the New Urban Middle

Introduction

This dissertation has explored shifts in thinking and understanding, contingent struggles, tensions, and negotiations in order to better understand how one postwar suburb, Scarborough, was made and remade from the 1950s to 2000s and place these transformations within the context of a changing Toronto. To do so, a number of related themes have been examined: (1) the distinction between defining suburbs and classifying metropolitan space; (2) unpacking the meaning of suburban; (3) historical geographies of North American suburbanization and suburbs; (4) contextualizing the postwar Toronto suburb; (5) balanced assessment and the metropolitan problem; (6) planning for the “normal-type suburban community” and the contesting and remaking of “planned sprawl”; and (7) negotiating intensification as revitalization in local places.

Throughout this dissertation attention has been paid to the relationship between knowledge and power in planning and city-building processes. The approach taken was investigative and informed by Michel Foucault’s critical and effective histories, and, more specifically, by Bent Flyvbjerg’s theoretical and practical insights on rationality and power in politics, planning, and public administration.⁷⁶⁴ Particular attention has been paid to historical moments or instances that illuminate how problems were identified and defined, and solutions to address them devised, contested, and outcomes negotiated.

⁷⁶⁴ Flyvbjerg, *Rationality and Power: Democracy in Practice*; Nikolas Rose, *The Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

Richer understanding of problematizations (i.e. histories of problems) leads back to everyday life and the dialectical interplay of conceived, perceived, and lived spaces. Here, Henri Lefebvre's theoretical ruminations on the production of space offer both insight and a caution. It is insufficient to simply document or analyze how "the conceived" intervenes in "the lived". Daily routines and everyday practices are not passive. They contribute to processes of change and transformation in both subtle and obvious ways.

In a world in which ideas and practices transfer a fuller understanding of postwar metropolitanization calls for a progressive sense of place: one that recognizes individual places are located differentially within a network of relations in which ideas, things, people, and spaces interact in ways that produce local distinctiveness.⁷⁶⁵ Particular histories of development and local specificity are more than just "noise". The task is to find the productive tension between the specific and the general, the local and global, and assess what each place contributes to how we understand the world around us, the terminology used to describe it, the processes shaping it, and our place in it. Postwar suburbanization in Toronto had a transnational aspect to it: key ideas and influences were European and American, but adapted to the local circumstances.⁷⁶⁶ As a result, Toronto's

⁷⁶⁵ See Doreen Massey, "Power-Geometry and a Progressive Sense of Place," in *Mapping the Futures: Local Cultures, Global Change*, ed. J. Bird, et al. (New York: Routledge, 1993); ———, "Places and Their Pasts," *History Workshop Journal* 39(1995); ———, "Imagining Globalization: Power-Geometries of Time-Space," in *Global Futures: Migration, Environment and Globalization*, ed. A. Brah, M. J. Hickman, and M. M. Ghail (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999); ———, *For Space* (London: SAGE Publications, 2005).

⁷⁶⁶ See Graeme Stewart, "Toronto's Modern Suburbs and the Concrete High-Rise," In *Concrete Toronto: A Guidebook to Concrete Architecture from the Fifties to the Seventies*, edited by Michael McClelland and

postwar, “modern” suburbs can be regarded as distinctive at the same time as they undoubtedly share recognizable elements and qualities of suburbs elsewhere.

In this regard, the dissertation is necessarily situated and partial in its perspective. While the focus is on Toronto and Scarborough, it is not the case that they exist or were considered in isolation. Thinking about their futures is necessarily imbued with increased awareness that suburbanization is a global phenomenon and that suburban environments and suburbanisms have both regional and global implications.⁷⁶⁷ A preliminary assessment of global suburbanization tells us two things: (1) that despite many differences in terms of histories, economies, institutions, and spatialities, suburbs have in common that they differ from their central cities; and (2) that the rhetoric and normative preferences of urban planners and urbanologists favor “city-ness”, while the lion’s share of urban growth takes the form of peripheral or suburban development.⁷⁶⁸

This dissertation was shaped at its earliest conception by the notion that much of Toronto’s erstwhile suburban realm could be more productively engaged with if reconsidered using the “in-between city”—an idea derived from German planner and

Graeme Stewart (Toronto: Coach House Books & E.R.A., 2007). For a general overview of the key people, concepts, and influences on modern planning in Toronto, see also: Sewell, *The Shape of the City: Toronto Struggles with Modern Planning*; and also within parts of the following autobiographies: Humphrey Carver, *Compassionate Landscape*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975); Hans Blumenfeld, *Life Begins at 65: The Not Entirely Candid Autobiography of a Drifter*, (Montreal: Harvest House, 1987); Len Gertler, *Radical Rumbblings: Confessions of a Peripatetic Planner*, (Department of Geography, Faculty of Environmental Studies, University of Waterloo, 2004).

⁷⁶⁷ Keil, Roger. "Global Suburbanization: The Challenge of Researching Cities in the 21st Century." *Public* 43 (2011).

⁷⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 54-61. Urbanologist is a term that loosely applies to a cadre of journalists, consultants, and media savvy academics (from business and economics schools) in North America associated with “urban age” discourse and triumphalist writing about “cities” as critical spaces of human innovation, prosperity, and sustainability, see: Brendan Gleeson, "The Urban Age: Paradox and Prospect," *Urban Studies* 49, no. 5 (2012).

theorist Thomas Sieverts and his book *Cities Without Cities*—as a framing device.⁷⁶⁹ In this way, the “in-between city” contributed to this dissertation by offering a way to rethink the “middle landscape” or vast space coterminous with the popular or common-sense meaning of “the suburbs” as peripheral areas that developed after 1945. It was evident that Toronto’s postwar suburbs were no longer conventionally suburban, but nor were they widely regarded to be fully urban or thought to be part of “the city”. And it was precisely this liminality, particularly when combined with evidence and narratives of suburban decline, that seemed key to understanding the discursive framing of Toronto’s inner suburban districts as problematic spaces in need of transformative change to make them more “urban” or “city-like”.

For this reason, Sieverts’ admonishment that the myth and one-sided love of the old or historic city is unhelpful and obstructs our view of the city as a whole had a certain resonance: it pointed toward not only a need for a less centre-oriented discourse on transformation and change in inner suburban parts of Toronto, but also a deeper appreciation for how inherited built landscapes and social geographies were shaped.⁷⁷⁰ New postmetropolitan patterns of growth and uneven development have been accompanied by a renewed effort to manage and shape regional growth. There is a need

⁷⁶⁹ Thomas Sieverts, *Cities without Cities: An Interpretation of the Zwischenstadt*, (London: Routledge, 2003).

⁷⁷⁰ The term centre-oriented discourse is drawn from Roger Keil and Klaus Ronneberger, "Going up the Country: Internationalization and Urbanization on Frankfurt's Northern Fringe," *Environment and Planning D: Society & Space* 12 (1994): 139, and in particular the following statement: “The center-oriented discourse on urbanization, in fact, appears more solid than the walls of the urban quarters which are constantly being revamped by new waves of creative destruction.”

to better understand how past attempts to shape the city and region inform our present. We lack, in particular, thick descriptions of particular suburban places and their histories of planning and development. Thick histories, much like dense case studies, are useful to the extent that they are hard to summarize precisely because their subjects are likely to be many-sided, complex, and sometimes-conflicted.⁷⁷¹ Such an approach, it is argued, might offer astute observations and insight, but should also invite readers to draw their own lessons or truths from the case(s) examined. It is my hope that this work, a dense case study of a sort, creates openings to think differently about the spaces it examines. In that spirit, this concluding chapter attempts to summarize what has been presented, assess the contribution of this dissertation to the literature on Canadian suburbs, particularly Scarborough as a postwar Toronto suburb, and offer some critical reflections.

Postwar Metropolitanization through the Looking Glass

Assessing his government's attempts at regional planning, former Ontario Premier John P. Robarts once observed:

History by and large is quite inaccurate but you see in the effluxion of time those who might correct it disappear. And so it's just there and taken to be deadly accurate, which of

⁷⁷¹ Bent Flyvbjerg, "Case Study," In *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, edited by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2011). In his essay "Case Study", Flyvbjerg draws upon Lisa Peattie, "Theorizing Planning: Some Comments on Flyvbjerg's *Rationality and Power*," *International Planning Studies* 6, no. 3 (2001) to argue that "dense case studies", appropriately analysed (to insert her qualifier), are most effective when left somewhat "open" so the "minutiae" itself can reveal the irregularity, messiness, and mixed-form of "planning" in a democracy.

course it isn't. The other thing is that all the humanity of the events is generally washed out by the historians⁷⁷²

This quote was pointed out to me early in my PhD studies.⁷⁷³ From it a dual caution can be gleaned. First, history generally looks either inaccurate or incomplete to those present during its making. Second, history can make the past seem too settled and orderly. I have tried to retain a sense that history is made by real people without the benefit of hindsight and that collective memory as much as formal history should shape the lessons that might be drawn from the past.

Chapters 2 and 3 located this dissertation in the broad literature on North American suburbs and suburbanization and then more specifically within the context of Toronto and local discourses on suburbanization and the postwar suburb. An important aim of these chapters was to provide readers with a richer basis from which to consider the spaces of Toronto's postwar metropolitanization. The rich American literature on cities and urban history complicates description and analysis of Canadian suburbs and suburbanization. Canada and the United States share a continent, and proximity leads to undeniable similarities between our cities and patterns of urbanization, but the differences are also many and important. The approach taken in this dissertation was to provide an overview of a representative selection of literature on historical geographies of North

⁷⁷² Hon. John P. Robarts quoted from an interview in Ronald Bordessa and James M. Cameron, "The Investigative Genre: Problems and Prospects," *Professional Geographer* 32, no. 2 (1980): 170.

⁷⁷³ Historical geographer and York University Professor Emeritus John Warkentin first alerted me to this article and noted that it included interviews with several of the key players in the Ontario Government during the mid-to-late 1960s when provincial interest in shaping regional growth and development in southern and central Ontario was ascendant. The interviews provide an insider's perspective on policy development as related to the ambitious, but ultimately ill-fated Toronto-Centred Region Concept.

American suburbs and suburbanization, then examine Toronto more specifically in order to think in terms of the postwar Toronto suburb as particular kind of suburban space with its own histories of development.

Chapter 4 emerged out of archival research conducted at the Archives of Ontario. Initially, I was interested in files related to the Toronto Area Committee and 1950-51 OMB hearings on Toronto Amalgamation because they offered a rich source of background information about the metropolitan area and each municipality within it. It quickly became clear that a far more interesting and important story existed in the proceedings that documented what was said at the meetings, as well as during testimony and arguments at the hearings. Of particular interest was the discourse that developed around “the metropolitan problem” and “balanced assessment”, and the way in which each suburb represented and understood itself and was positioned in relation to metropolitan problems. The outcome of the OMB hearings, a two-tier federated system of metropolitan government, has received considerable attention. The hearings themselves received some attention by Frederick Gardiner’s biographer in *Big Daddy*,⁷⁷⁴ but the bulk of the testimony and evidence to my knowledge have received little attention. Recovering the centrality of uneven geographies of non-residential assessment to “the metropolitan problem” and A.J.B. Gray’s testimony as Toronto Assessment Commissioner on the need for “balanced assessment” form an important contribution to knowledge of how

⁷⁷⁴ Colton, *Big Daddy: Frederick G. Gardiner and the Building of Metropolitan Toronto*.

Toronto's suburbs were shaped by ideas and concepts related to planning and governance that resonated at mid-century.

Concomitant with the development of the metropolitan system, the growth of the three large rural townships (Etobicoke, North York, and Scarborough) in the decades after the Second World War, as well as their political relations with the City of Toronto, remains central to understanding postwar metropolitanization in Toronto. The transformation that occurred can only be regarded as stunning. Scarborough, the place most of interest here, grew from approximately 56,292 residents in 1951 to 334,485 in 1971 (it now has over 600,000 residents).⁷⁷⁵ North York and Etobicoke experienced similar growth. As important was the general form that growth took: districts of low-rise factories and warehouses; modern residential communities planned according to the neighbourhood unit that mixed single-detached housing with townhouses and large numbers of high-rise apartments organized around schools and parks; strip malls, supermarkets, and large shopping centres; and a vast network of arterial roads and highways. The broad strokes of postwar metropolitanization are well known. The literature is sparser where suburbanization is considered as it unfolded on-the-ground in actual places. This dissertation contributes to scholarship on suburbs and suburbanization

⁷⁷⁵ See "1951 – Ninth Census of Canada, Population and Housing Characteristics by Census Tracts" (Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1953); "1971 Census of Canada, Population and Housing Characteristics by Census Tracts" (Statistics Canada, 1974); "Community Council Profiles - 2011 Census: Area D – Scarborough" (Toronto: City Planning, Strategic Initiatives, Policy & Analysis, 2014). According to the City of Toronto's Community Council Profile, Scarborough's population was 625,930 in 2011.

by examining how one place, Scarborough, was made and remade in a context sensitive to internal as well as metropolitan and regional dynamics related to planning and politics.

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 explore Scarborough's transformation from rural township into metropolitan borough and ultimately in-between city during the second half of the 20th century. This transformation is intimately connected to Toronto's postwar metropolitanization. Changes in Scarborough were interrelated to changes happening elsewhere in the urban region, Metro, and the City of Toronto. As Leonard Evenden argues, conventional urban theory struggles when it fails to recognize the specific circumstances under which suburban development takes place.⁷⁷⁶ In particular, he suggests it is crucial to recognize that community identity is integrally linked to jurisdictional boundaries in suburban places, especially those in Canada that developed within rural-agricultural townships. When examining suburban histories of development an important task is therefore to attend to the continual efforts of such suburbs to find and reshape themselves in accordance with internal prerogatives and in response to metropolitan pressures, as well as wider social and economic changes.

In the last two decades of the 20th century Scarborough became a suburb in transition as its growth rate slowed and economic restructuring resulted in plant closings and deindustrialization, especially across its southern half. As noted in Chapters 6 and 7 thinking about suburban planning and design began to shift in the 1970s and during the

⁷⁷⁶ Leonard J. Evenden, "'On the Margins of the Good City': Integrating Levels of Geographical Community at a Distance from the Centre," in *(Re)development at the urban edges*, ed. Greg Halseth and Heather Nichol (Waterloo, ON: University of Waterloo, 2000).

1980s emphasis was placed on transforming Scarborough into more of an urban landscape with a centre or “downtown” to strengthen its identity and geographic structure as a “city”. At the same time, Scarborough was transformed in ethno-linguistic terms by the arrival of increasing numbers of immigrants and refugees from countries in the Global South in the wake of changes to federal immigration policies that had previously favoured entry for people from the United Kingdom, the United States, and continental Europe. That was accompanied by land-use conflicts as newcomers sought to make space for themselves in the existing landscape. The development of new shopping facilities, theatres, and places of worship catering to specific immigrant groups were notable flashpoints.

During the 1990s and 2000s, as Toronto’s and Ontario’s post-Fordist transition increased income inequality and emergent patterns of uneven development came to be entangled with mythic suburban geographies, Scarborough became associated with the suburbanization of social problems, the racialization of poverty, vertical poverty, violent crime, and suburban decline. This transformation is unmistakably linked to the development of extensive concentrations of rental apartment towers throughout the Toronto region between the late-1950s and mid-1970s. An important stock of affordable housing, so-called tower neighbourhoods are now markers of an “othered” urbanity in which the built landscape, real and symbolic distance, and “a combination of immigration, renter status, gender dynamics and ‘visible minority’ membership has

become a predictor of structural poverty.”⁷⁷⁷ By the mid-2000s overlapping interventions were devised to revitalize inner suburban areas identified as “priority” neighbourhoods and better connect them to each other and the central core. At the same time, the City of Toronto’s post-amalgamation Official Plan, adopted by City Council in 2002, provided a framework and vision for “urbanizing” the city’s inherited suburban built landscape by encouraging higher density development at designated centres and along major arterials designated as “avenues”, as well as at nodes such as community shopping centres.

In practice, however, intensification reveals competing interests and contradictory aims in Toronto’s city-building agenda. As has been noted, tensions exist between the environmental, social, and economic rationales for “smart growth” in Toronto’s Official Plan and provincial policies.⁷⁷⁸ Chapter 8 examines how planning for “smart growth” intensification as envisioned in plans and policies played out in one inner suburban area within post-amalgamation Toronto. The planning framework is clearly directed at facilitating development first and foremost. It is possible to accept the planning and public policy rationales for intensification, yet ask if the way intensification plays out on-the-ground is problematic in certain identifiable ways. Should the latter be the case an obvious concern would be the possibility of a legitimization crisis, particularly if one or

⁷⁷⁷ Roger Keil and Jean-Paul Addie, "It's Not Going to Be Suburban, It's Going to Be All Urban': Assembling Postsuburbia in the Toronto and Chicago Regions," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 39, no. 5 (2015): 904.

⁷⁷⁸ See Bunce, "The Emergence of 'Smart Growth' Intensification in Toronto: Environment and Economy in the New Official Plan."

more of the economic, environmental, and social justifications used to promote intensification are called into question or tensions between them become unmanageable.

Chapter 8 can only be suggestive in this regard. Opposition to intensification, to the extent we can call it that, for the moment seems mostly contained to localized struggles over specific development proposals. That said, the Ontario government recently announced plans to replace the OMB with a new body called the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal, as well as a number of other changes to its planning framework, in order to give “communities a stronger voice in local land use planning decisions” and “reduce the length and cost of hearings and create a more level playing field for all participants.”⁷⁷⁹ These planned changes follow on the heels of a review conducted the previous year on the scope and effectiveness of the OMB.⁷⁸⁰ The wider context and discourse surrounding the review and planned reforms suggest growing disquiet with the scale and pace of intensification, particularly in areas under intense development pressure in Toronto, as well as the perception that private land development interests use OMB appeals (or the threat of them) to circumvent the will of democratically elected municipal councils with respect to local planning decisions.⁷⁸¹ The proposed changes have been

⁷⁷⁹ The Government of Ontario announced proposed changes to the OMB on May 16th 2017 via press release from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs: <https://news.ontario.ca/mma/en/2017/05/ontarios-proposed-changes-to-the-land-use-planning-appeal-system.html>

⁷⁸⁰ Ontario Municipal Board Review: <http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page14965.aspx> [last accessed June 2017].

⁷⁸¹ See for example the Toronto Star’s special three-part series on OMB reform: Jennifer Pagliaro, “The real architect behind T.O.’s tower struggle: Amid an unprecedented condo boom, the all-powerful, unelected OMB has been overruling city planners, quietly shaping the city and pushing neighbourhoods to the tipping point.,” *Toronto Star*, February 18th 2017; ———, “Planning, power and politics: Amid calls for reforms to the OMB, the Star investigates who’s calling the shots on how our city is planned, how they got

praised as “really important for local democracy” by Toronto’s chief planner and greeted with guarded optimism from Toronto city councillors and residents groups; real estate and development interests have reacted cautiously and expressed concern that planned changes will, in the words of the Ontario Home Builders’ Association, “only serve to empower NIMBY councils to make planning decisions to get re-elected.”⁷⁸²

Chapter 8 highlights the tension between empowering residents and the risk of NIMBY opposition to change. It also points toward a more general conundrum. Aging strip malls and retail plazas along major arterials are home to ethnic businesses catering to Scarborough’s ethno-racialized communities, while high-rise rental apartments built in the 1960s and ‘70s form an important stock of housing for residents with low or moderate incomes. Active participation in the FWRS and attendance at public meetings held about the development application for the Bridlewood Mall uncovered a selection bias toward sustained, active involvement in the planning process by older, long-time homeowners.⁷⁸³ As can be ascertained in Chapter 8, this was reflected in the planning process and the discourse that surrounded it, and harkens back to an observation made by Humphrey Carver in his early-1960s book *Cities in the Suburbs*:

there and developers' influence over the province," *Toronto Star*, February 19th 2017; ———, "Onward and Upward: The province has opened the door to reforming the OMB, which often overrules the city in land-use and planning disputes. So what is the best way forward?," *Toronto Star*, February 20th 2017. Available online: <http://projects.thestar.com/ontario-municipal-board-reform/contested-development/> [last accessed on June 2017].

⁷⁸² Pagliaro, Jennifer. "OMB Plan Restores 'Local Democracy': Planner, Council, Residents Applaud Reduction of Power but Builders Fear Nimbyism." *Toronto Star*, May 17th 2017, GT2.

⁷⁸³ Participation by homeowners in the FWRS working group included a number of people who lived in condominium towers across the street from the Bridlewood Mall, so this should not be read as just owner-occupiers of low-rise detached housing.

The problem is, of course, that the suburbs are not made by the people who live there. They arrive afterwards [...] Making the suburbs has been a complex, impersonal, greedy, industrial process for converting raw land into a finished salable product, housing and commercial services.⁷⁸⁴

Now, as then, it remains an open question who (if anyone) represents and advances the interests of future residents and those who do not (or cannot) participate fully in the planning process.

It is in this sense that Chapter 8 contributes by bringing the dissertation back in a meaningful way to the present and to those questions that Bent Flyvbjerg argues a phronetic social science should seek to answer in a contextually sensitive fashion:

- Where are we going?
- Who gains, and who loses, by which mechanisms of power?
- Is it desirable?
- What should be done?⁷⁸⁵

Growth and development was one preoccupation of local policy-makers and planners over the period examined by this dissertation. Where it should go? What forms should it take? How should it be managed to ensure the results are orderly and efficient? How might planning facilitate change, while at the same time maintain public confidence that existing quality of life will be protected or enhanced by proposed changes?

These questions do not lead to simple or lasting answers. Instead, they should be the focus of substantive planning and what a re-politicizing of density might productively

⁷⁸⁴ Carver, *Cities in the Suburbs*: 118.

⁷⁸⁵ Flyvbjerg, *Making Social Science Matter: Why social inquiry fails and how it can succeed again*: 145.

address. The overriding issue from this perspective is whether planning in contemporary Toronto keeps instrumental rationality in check by balancing it with value rationality. But whose values should prevail?

In Toronto's postwar suburbs low-rise detached and semi-detached housing is found in close proximity to multi-unit high-rise apartment towers. This results in competing notions of place character and a tendency for low-rise homeowners to "reject a perceived encroachment of the 'urban' through higher residential densities and of the 'Other' through lower-income, immigrant and 'visible minorities' renting tower apartments."⁷⁸⁶ In this context it is hard to imagine that the interests of tenants, many of whom are recent immigrants and refugees in low-income households, will be advanced unless non-local actors, including planners, intervene to curb the exclusionary demands of more privileged and powerful groups. Consultation with local stakeholders and empowering them in the planning process without considering the power relations involved is not desirable.

Concerns about social justice and equity, however, do not negate that Chapter 4 and 8 document and analyze what David Harvey has sought to demonstrate is endemic to capitalist urbanization: uneven metropolitan development and the recurrent search for "spatial fixes" to displace overaccumulation crises.⁷⁸⁷ And, by extension, either chapter could also be read with an eye to what Neil Brenner outlines in *New State Spaces* as

⁷⁸⁶ Will Poppe and Douglas Young, "The Politics of Place: Place-Making Versus Densification in Toronto's Tower Neighbourhoods," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 39, no. 3 (2015): 614.

⁷⁸⁷ David Harvey, *The Limits to Capital* (New York: Blackwell, 1982); ———, *The Urbanization of Capital* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985); ———, *Paris, Capital of Modernity* (London: Routledge, 2006).

“state spatial restructuring”, and in particular the interplay between “state spatial projects” and “state spatial strategies” in establishing new forms of state territorial organization and patterns of state spatial intervention.⁷⁸⁸ Metro emerged in the early 1950s to provide both a coordinating and redistributive function and specifically to facilitate and encourage industrial expansion, infrastructural investment, and housing development in urban fringe areas. The FWRS on the other hand reflects an attempt to give intensification as revitalization a territorial cohesion. Area studies in Toronto are overwhelmingly framed around priming spaces for private-sector investment and establishing how best to make the intensification that flows from it “fit”. They reflect a state spatial intervention to address in a highly localized manner the socio-spatial consequences of past rounds of planning and development, which now act as barriers to capital accumulation.

That the capitalist urban landscape is restless is well known and documented. What this dissertation has sought to do is explore that restlessness in relation to suburban change and transformation in a specific context with an eye to the workings of rationality and power in the politics, planning, and public administration of urban growth and development. In doing so, I have sought to critically examine suburbanization and the politics of planning and development that results from it without “descending into a pervasive elitism” in which “the suburbs” are constructed as the “placeless” foil against

⁷⁸⁸ Neil Brenner, *New State Spaces: Urban Governance and the Rescaling of Statehood* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

which the “placefulness” of other locales or types of space is substantiated.⁷⁸⁹ In this regard, my work has been shaped by three points made by social historian Dolores

Hayden in *Building Suburbia*:

- “Contestation—between residents who wish to enjoy suburbia and developers who seek to profit from it—lies at the heart of suburban history.”⁷⁹⁰
- “Suburbia conceals as well as reveals its complexity.”⁷⁹¹
- “Current environmental campaigns aim to increase sustainability and reduce the consumption of non-renewable resources. These campaigns to halt unchecked growth will fail unless most Americans know the complex history of their own suburbs, and how major developers, with increasing collaboration from the federal government, have mass-marketed ever-larger private developments while neglecting to consider the environmental consequences or to build infrastructure for public life.”⁷⁹²

Hayden’s final point must be adapted somewhat to reflect that in Canada the provinces play a considerable role in land-use planning and the provision of infrastructure in cities as local government falls under their jurisdiction in the Canadian constitutional framework. In that sense, provincial governments have been and are major collaborators in the production of suburban space.

Her most important contribution, one relevant to the Toronto region, remains that suburban history tells us “[e]xcessive private consumption was not inevitable”, that alternatives were marginalized or distorted beyond recognition as a result of “sustained

⁷⁸⁹ David Harvey, *Cosmopolitanism and the Geographies of Freedom* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009). 187.

⁷⁹⁰ Hayden, *Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000*: 9.

⁷⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁷⁹² *Ibid.*, 18.

pressure from real estate interests and their allies in government.”⁷⁹³ Without addressing this—and the consumer preferences, cultural norms, and spatial practices that have grown up and taken hold since the 1950s—planning and urban design cannot solve the problems of the suburbs any more than it could those of downtowns and inner city areas during the era of urban renewal.⁷⁹⁴ It may be the case that “[e]verywhere, residents mobilize to preserve the landscape and maintain certain social qualities of their local communities”, but it is also true that in our current moment the simple equation of “density= sustainability” can be convenient cover for “growth machine” interests and should not be left as a basic assumption—it needs to be re-politicized.⁷⁹⁵

Revisiting the City-Suburban Divide

In 2007 and 2008, when this dissertation was still in its formative stages it became apparent to me that Toronto’s inner suburban districts hardly fit the picture of an affluent middle-class suburbia of well-manicured lawns, though it could be found there. Instead, it seemed the inner suburbs were a forgotten landscape with neighbourhoods struggling to cope after several decades of widening income inequality and social polarization in the Toronto region.⁷⁹⁶ There was increasing awareness of their plight, however. But it was matched by a kind of pervasive discursive devalorization. There othering in public

⁷⁹³ Ibid.

⁷⁹⁴ See Jill Grant, "Can Planning Save the Suburbs," *Plan Canada* 39, no. 4 (1999).

⁷⁹⁵ Eric Charmes and Roger Keil, "The Politics of Post-Suburban Densification in Canada and France," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 39, no. 3 (2015).

⁷⁹⁶ See United Way Toronto, "Poverty by Postal Code: The Geography of Neighbourhood Poverty, 1981-2001."; Hulchanski, "The Three Cities within Toronto: Income Polarization among Toronto's neighbourhoods, 1970-2000."

discourse was apparent, but frustratingly hard to pin-down or quantify. Occasionally it would appear in a direct and obvious form.

One such example is found in a piece by *Toronto Star* columnist Rosie DiManno written in response to complaints that Scarborough was getting a bad rap in the media. She dismissed the criticism and remarked that the “eastern rump” of amalgamated Toronto was probably most famous for giving us the term “Scarberia”, which in her words was a “generic descriptor for urban blandness verging on blight.”⁷⁹⁷ A more backhanded example can be drawn from a review by the *Toronto Star*’s condo critic, which described the shortcomings of a new development in Liberty Village—an inner city neighbourhood being constructed on former industrial lands—as having “an unfortunately suburban feel to it; except for the fact that it’s built out to the sidewalk on the south side, it could be in some place like Scarborough, where nothing belongs, or even tries.”⁷⁹⁸

Perhaps the most revealing example appeared in an article about Scarborough published in the December 2007 issue of *Toronto Life*:

Various urbanists have pointed out that suburbs are poised to be the ghettos of the future. They have all the ingredients: uninviting and unclaimed spaces, housing stock that is neither as durable nor as adaptable to other uses as the sturdy brick buildings of the inner city, a shortage of well-paying jobs, architecture that is disposable and arbitrary, and the need for cars at a time when energy prices are rising and may become prohibitive for many. It has been Scarborough’s bad luck to be a white enclave when that notion was retrograde, when the

⁷⁹⁷ DiManno, "A Cheeky Look at the Rump of Toronto; Shhh on the S-word, Coupled With Crime, Councillors Say."

⁷⁹⁸ Government of Ontario, "Provincial Policy Statement."

city was looking to ethnic communities to deliver it from a bland Presbyterian purgatory, and then to become relentlessly multicultural at a time when multiculturalism itself is under assault.⁷⁹⁹

From this can be gleaned the complex entanglement of race and class in how the postwar, inner suburb was being constructed in mainstream discourse at that time.

An important counterpoint to such constructions could be found in Toronto Mayor David Miller's interest in the problems of the inner suburbs. Early in his second term in office, Toronto appeared to be having a "suburban moment" as Miller's regime prioritized Transit City and Tower Renewal as initiatives that alongside the Strong Neighbourhoods strategy (a spatially-targeted social policy) were to connect the disconnected parts of Toronto, retrofit aging rental towers, increase social cohesion, and catalyze private-sector reinvestment across the inner suburbs.⁸⁰⁰ Unfortunately, his attempt to generate new revenue to put the City on a firmer fiscal footing using new taxing powers granted by the province in the *City of Toronto Act* led to the introduction of the Municipal Land Transfer Tax and Personal Vehicle Ownership Tax. Regardless of their rationale, both invited popular opposition, with the latter tax, in particular, proving especially unpopular in the inner suburbs, while a lengthy strike by inside and outside

⁷⁹⁹ Gillmor, "The Scarborough Curse: How Did Boring, White-Bread Scarberia, The Butt of Mike Myers Jokes, Become Scarlem--A Mess of Street Gangs, Firebombings and Stabbings?," 92.

⁸⁰⁰ Young, "Hyper-Development or Nothing to Do: Urban Planning in Toronto's in-between City," 84; See also: Douglas Young and Roger Keil, "Reconnecting the Disconnected: The Politics of Infrastructure in the in-between City," *Cities* 27, no. 2 (2010); ———, "Locating the Urban in-Between: Tracking the Urban Politics of Infrastructure in Toronto," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 38, no. 5 (2014).

City of Toronto employees in 2009 cost him political support across the board.⁸⁰¹ In the end, Miller chose not to run for a third term.

As I conducted research interviews during the fall of 2010, tensions between city and suburb within Toronto burst forth in a predictable, but wholly unexpected way: Etobicoke Councillor and suburban populist Rob Ford was elected Mayor. He ran on a campaign of cutting waste at city hall, respecting taxpayers (limiting property tax increases), and cancelling Transit City, the vast light rail network that was the outgoing mayor's signature project, in favour of "subways, subways, subways." A more accurate assessment of his electoral success would be to say he rode a wave of voter discontent to victory. And a large part of his success could and was attributed to the strength of support that existed for Ford in the former Metro suburbs, including Scarborough. Though key city-building initiatives during Miller's second term were directed at inner suburban areas, a sentiment prevailed that "downtown-types" looked down upon the suburbs (when not ignoring them), had little appreciation for the diverse publics in them, and were generally disinterested in what suburban residents experienced, thought, or valued.

In response to Ford's election-win, Edward Keenan wrote in the *Eye Weekly*, a now defunct downtown-oriented cultural paper, about two Torontos:

As a dues-paying member of the so-called downtown Toronto elite (I work in media, go to book launches in Parkdale, wear square-framed glasses and write for *Spacing* magazine) who is now resident in Ford Country, it is particularly interesting to hear my friends raging on about the selfish suburban bigots who elected Ford. There's a feeling that

⁸⁰¹ Edward Keenan, *Some Great Idea: Good Neighbourhoods, Crazy Politics and the Invention of Toronto* (Toronto: Coach House Books, 2013)

overweight white guys driving expensive SUVs are raining on our Pedestrian Sundays. There seems, actually, to be some bigotry involved in the caricature of the Ford voter – modeled after the red-faced rage machine himself – that leads people to start semi-serious discussions about municipal separatism. As I wrote in a column last week, there’s quite a smug sense of “us” and “them” that infects any discussion of the election results. And there really is a divide – or several – in Toronto. I just wonder if the “them” is made up of the same people we all instinctively think it is.⁸⁰²

This passage and rest of his article captures succinctly the curious way “the suburbs” have been constructed in relation to “the city” since the 1970s. As an abstract socio-spatial landscape, “the suburbs” or “suburbia” routinely appear in caricatured form—as mythic places “out there”, filled with people, built environments, politics, and lifestyles unlike those of the writer and presumably “us” (his readers). But as the above quote demonstrates, the “them” is a caricature that the author is beginning to problematize. It is unclear if the reverse is true.

One contribution of this dissertation has been to historicize the city-suburban divide and illustrate how changes occurring on both sides of the divide have contributed to its entrenchment since the 1950s, while at the same time hinting at convergences and possibilities for coalition building have been impeded by parochialism and territorialized imaginaries, discourses, and identities. Metro became the City of Toronto in 1998, but its constituent parts have yet to be woven together into a cohesive whole. The concept of the “in-between city” captures the fractured and diverse socio-spatial landscape of inner suburban Toronto, including its connections, disconnections, vulnerabilities, and

⁸⁰² Edward Keenan, "A Tale of Two Torontos," *Eye Weekly*, November 4-10 2010.

possibilities, while the new urban middle reflects the unresolved (perhaps implacable) tensions between metropolitanization and regional urbanization as the project of building a metropolitan city unfolds within a now globalizing, polycentric city-region. Being in the middle is complicated and different than being at the centre or on the edge. The transition of areas from edge to middle requires a new language and way of thinking about social issues and land-use planning, and, in particular, it calls for new critical perspectives on intensification as revitalization.

Intensification as Revitalization

Ash Amin has described the good city in the most general sense as “the kind of urban order that might enhance the human experience.”⁸⁰³ Amongst planners, architects, urban designers, and other urban-oriented members of the knowledge class achieving good city form takes centre stage and the spaces that embody their ideal city form—dense, compact, and mixed use—mostly predate World War II and the roll-out of modern planning. But more importantly, in contemporary urbanistic discourse the true mark of good city form is that it rejects the needs and possibilities of the private automobile. Architect and urban theorist Jan Gehl speaks to this directly by linking the “lively, safe, sustainable, and healthy city” to human scale mobility.⁸⁰⁴ His work suggests that constructing a city for high-speed movement inhibits the fine-scale integration of

⁸⁰³ Ash Amin, "The Good City," *Urban Studies* 43, no. 5-6 (2006): 1009.

⁸⁰⁴ Jan Gehl, *Cities for People* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2010).

different activities, encouraging urban spaces to become segregated and specialized according to their dominant use.

While Gehl's *Cities for People* is focused on detailing how architecture and urban design can enhance city life and make cities more inviting and vital places, Amin's essay "the Good City" emphasizes social and political questions, arguing for a "practical urban utopianism" that works to produce a socially just city in which all residents are entitled to shape and benefit from urban life. The latter requires going beyond architecture, urban design, and planning. Better designed cities are a laudable objective, but do little to tame the hard-edges of neoliberal urbanism's market-driven prescriptions for revitalization. Indeed, land-use planning as practiced in contemporary Toronto is entirely compatible with a "roll-with-it" neoliberalism that accepts market forces as foundational. As planner Frank Llewinnberg noted in the late-1970s,

Planning only tells landowners what they may not do. Landowners still decide what, when, and how to do it; the guiding criteria usually being to maximize their personal profit, which may or may not coincide with the best interests of the community. Through planning intervention, we will create considerable value and development potential for a large number of landowners ... all in the name of social equity and the public good. The market will allocate the land and we will forget that the market process is based on values created through public intervention. We will act as if it is a God-given natural process, the furthest thing imaginable from a political issue. We will say that everybody has the right to live where they choose and that access is granted to everyone. It just so happens that you get what you can afford.⁸⁰⁵

A few years earlier David Harvey said much the same thing in *Social Justice and the City*, especially in the chapter: "Use Value, Exchange Value and Urban Land-use

⁸⁰⁵ Frank Llewinnberg, "Suburbia: A Political Context" (paper presented at the Symposium: Suburbia - Costs, Consequences and Alternatives, York University, Downsview, Ontario, Spring 1977), 21.

Theory”.⁸⁰⁶ In the years since it has become well understood that planning interventions and public investments that revalorize space under the guise of urban regeneration or revitalization are often accompanied by the dislocation and displacement of economically marginal residents, businesses, and activities.⁸⁰⁷

What makes the discourse that formed around city-suburban differences of particular consequence is how the urbanity of the city is constructed in relation to the presumed placelessness and lack of vibrancy of suburban space. A major thrust of revitalization in spaces deemed “suburban” is to use intensification to make them more city-like. That is selective and usually limited to increasing densities, using new buildings to create street walls, incorporating retail at grade in new mid- and high-rise buildings, and leveraging private investment to justify and fund public realm and open space improvements, as well as infrastructure upgrades. The rhetoric, however, takes us in the direction of a nostalgic idealizing of “the city” as urbane and virtuous.

Early in the 20th century, town planning was seen as a solution to problems of social unrest and social reproduction. A suburban solution formed around the notion that good housing, especially privately owned detached housing, would produce better citizens.⁸⁰⁸ As David Hulchanski notes in his account of how land-use planning became a

⁸⁰⁶ David Harvey, *Social Justice and the City*, Revised ed. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2009 [1973]).

⁸⁰⁷ Blomley, *Unsettling the City: Urban Land and the Politics of Property*; Loretta Lees, Tom Slater, and Elvin Wyly, *Gentrification* (New York: Routledge, 2007); Neil Smith, "New Globalism, New Urbanism: Gentrification as Global Urban Strategy," in *Spaces of Neoliberalism: Urban Restructuring in North America and Western Europe*, ed. Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002).

⁸⁰⁸ Hulchanski, "The Origins of Urban Land Use Planning in Ontario, 1900-1946."

governmental function in Ontario during the first-half of the 20th century, "Stimulating ownership of single family housing came to be defined as the best solution to both the social and physical problems of the city."⁸⁰⁹ There was little appetite for questioning the market system from which the problems arose, so improvements to the physical environment became the focus. Progressives and reformers during the first two decades of the 20th century believed that better working class housing could be achieved if planning legislation was enacted to curb land speculation, which drove the cost of land and housing beyond what working class families could afford.

Early in the 21st century, the "suburban solution" has given way to "the compact city" as the model planners and urban designers default to as the solution to a range of environmental, social, political, and economic problems. Steering a greater percentage of growth and development into existing urbanized spaces is sought to "retrofit" or "repair" the built fabric of cities and suburbs—and in the case of the suburbs to "fix" problems perceived to have been created by the planning and development practices that prevailed during the second-half of the 20th century. Housing for middle and lower-income families remains an entrenched problem for which housing stress among renters and increased mortgage debt for owners continues to be the preferred solution. Likewise, our land-use planning framework speaks about public consultation, transit-supportive densities, animated streets, and complete communities, but public policy is tepid in its support for the type of measures required to produce and sustain the kind of social and economic

⁸⁰⁹ Ibid., 66.

diversity celebrated in the writings of Jane Jacobs.⁸¹⁰ And there is a gulf between plans and policies, which call for increasing densities, mixing uses, and expanding housing choices, and the local resistance that generally emerges when it threatens to become a reality. It has also proven difficult to achieve mixed use in new developments, including those planned along new urbanist lines; in part because dominant cultural norms and spatial practices work against it, but also because developers are generally cautious and continue to regard the viability and relative market potential of neo-traditional forms of street retail outside of inner city areas as limited.⁸¹¹

One of Henri Lefebvre's key insights in the *Production of Space* was that in addition to the actions of those who seek to enhance the exchange value of property for their own benefit, space tends to be made more abstract by the interventions of planners, architects, and other experts seeking to reconfigure or remake it.⁸¹² Opposition to intensification is often characterized as NIMBY. Some certainly is. But resistance to intensification as revitalization is not reducible to that. It can involve a defense of use value and the strategic use opposition as a form of negotiation to ensure that the impacts of development are properly considered and addressed. That can include resistance

⁸¹⁰ A roughly analogous observation is made in Paul M. Hess and Andre Sorensen, "Compact, Concurrent, and Contiguous: Smart Growth and 50 Years of Residential Planning in the Toronto Region," *Urban Geography* 36, no. 1 (2015): 127–51. In particular, they conclude that focusing on increased density, contiguity, and concurrence will not be sufficient to achieve the overarching aims of Smart Growth intensification. Instead, they argue "[s]uccess will require prioritizing the creation of 'complete communities'" and necessitate further reshaping and refining of planning institutions and policies in Ontario (p. 148).

⁸¹¹ Jill Grant and Katherine Perrot. "Where Is the Cafe? The Challenge of Making Retail Uses Viable in Mixed-Use Suburban Developments." *Urban Studies* 48, no. 1 (2011).

⁸¹² Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*.

directed at the inequities and imbalances that seem likely to result from plans and development proposals. Phronesis, i.e. practical judgment or prudence, and bringing a value rational lens to bear on specific planning decisions or choices is needed as part of a re-politicizing of density that opens up space for dialogue and a reframing of key problematics without losing sight of the issues of power and strategic relations.

Final Thoughts

It is prudent to ask who gains and who loses, and by what mechanisms of power when planning and administrative decisions are made? But ultimately choices must be made and it is a practical necessity to better understand where they are taking us and determine if they are desirable. Phronetic research is guided by this and can be directed at making democratic processes less susceptible to rationalization as rationality (or realrationalitat), which is an important contribution in practice.⁸¹³ But if we move past this, we must still turn to considerations such as those discussed in Ash Amin's essay "The Good City" to link practical rationality to a normative basis for creating more just and sustainable cities and suburbs. As he notes, a more active and distributed democracy is needed to act as a counterweight to the imperatives of corporate power and market logics, and to push back against the seductiveness of "the idea of the city managed by an enlightened urban elite attending to the interests of all."⁸¹⁴

⁸¹³ Flyvbjerg, *Making Social Science Matter: Why Social Inquiry Fails and How It Can Succeed Again*; Bent Flyvbjerg, Todd Landman, and Sanford Schram, eds. *Real Social Science: Applied Phronesis* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

⁸¹⁴ Amin, "The Good City," 1021.

It may be desirable for a host of reasons to curtail “sprawl” by enacting policies and devising plans that require the intensification of existing built-up areas, just as it was sensible in the early-1950s for decision-makers to establish a metropolitan system of government for the reasons discussed in Chapter 4. But how do we ensure that the transformations that intensification promises for inner suburban Toronto are widely beneficial and do not simply displace economically marginal residents and businesses? Preventing the loss of farmland to low-density, auto-oriented forms of urban expansion is often highlighted in public arguments for intensification. The assessment growth that new development brings, however, is attractive to municipalities and represents an important policy rationale as well. In this regard, land-use planning has not travelled so far from the preoccupation with assessment that dominated the way that metropolitan problems were conceived during the 1950-51 OMB hearings on Toronto amalgamation and shaped the politics of growth in postwar Scarborough.

One of the lessons we should learn from Scarborough and Toronto’s postwar metropolitanization is that plans seldom work out entirely as intended. That can be due to changing needs and circumstances. But it is also because the spaces of planning are also spaces of contestation and negotiation. Plans change as they must. To know where things are going and whether it is desirable requires a particular kind of in-depth knowledge of the context in which planning and change unfolds: what are the frameworks, processes, ideas, and forces at work, and who are the key actors—both individual and group—involved and what interests are they advancing? All of these influence outcomes. Beyond

this it is crucial to develop a feel for situations or issues as they unfolded in real time. Looking at the past from the present allows for an entire sequence of events to be known, including outcomes. That luxury is not afforded to those involved in the making of history. Historical actors know more than archives record, but make decisions from a situated position and with partial knowledge—and they do so without the benefit of seeing how things will play out and with what long-term implications.

The preceding must be kept in mind when subjecting the current preoccupations of city-builders to critical examination.⁸¹⁵ As noted in the introduction to this dissertation, tracing out problematizations (i.e. histories of problems) is about determining the limits that conventional definitions, images, and rhetoric place on thinking about and creating possible futures. One of the clear dangers associated with contemporary efforts to make “the suburbs” or “suburbia” more “city-like” is that in practice it may result in chasing simulacrum and assessment more than fostering the kind of spatialities that enrich everyday life and make urbanism appealing to those who advocate for it.

⁸¹⁵ cf. Pierre Filion, "Suburban Inertia: The Entrenchment of Dispersed Suburbanism," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 39, no. 3 (2015): 633-40.

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Appendix A: **A Profile of Finch-Warden and Steeles-L'Amoreaux**

Finch-Warden takes its name from the intersection of Finch Avenue East and Warden Avenue, but here refers to the study area of the Finch-Warden Revitalization Study (FWRS, see Figure 5 in Chapter 8). Finch-Warden is located within Steeles-L'Amoreaux, an amalgam of two officially designated "neighbourhoods" used by the City of Toronto for planning and administrative purposes. A number of other place names are used by area residents to describe areas in northwest Scarborough. Two relevant here are Bridlewood and Agincourt. The first, Bridlewood, refers to a prominent residential area built north of Sheppard Avenue in the 1960s between Pharmacy Road and Warden Avenue, while the second, Agincourt, owes its name to a former police village located along Sheppard Avenue just to the east of Kennedy Road. Agincourt is now used loosely as a place name for much of northwest Scarborough.

In addition to its most recent incarnation as a "neighbourhood", L'Amoreaux also refers to a historical place and secondary plan. For much of Scarborough's 200-year history as an independent municipality, L'Amoreaux was a small farming settlement in its Northwest corner, which took its name from an early settler, Josue L'Amoreaux, a Loyalist Huguenot evacuated from New York by the British after the American Revolutionary War.⁸¹⁶ The area now referred to as the L'Amoreaux community, however, took shape after World War II. In 1964 a land use study prepared by Project Planning Associates for Robert McClintock Limited (a home builder and major

⁸¹⁶ Robert R. Bonis, *A History of Scarborough* (Scarborough: Scarborough Public Library, 1965). 46.

landowner in the area) proposed to develop the entire northwest sector of the Township of Scarborough.⁸¹⁷ Shortly thereafter the Township of Scarborough drafted and approved the L'Amoreaux Secondary Plan, which laid out the basic spatial form and neighbourhood boundaries for the area.

During the late 1960s and early 1970s most of the “Bridlewood” area south of Finch Avenue was transformed into a modern suburban community, roughly in the Don Mills-style. Areas north of Finch Avenue, especially those north of the hydro-electric power corridor (HEPC) covered by the Steeles Secondary Plan developed in similar fashion through the rest of the 1970s and into the 1980s. By the early-to-mid 1980s the initial suburban development of the joint Steeles-L'Amoreaux area, as it is referred to in the FWRS, was more or less complete. The area, of course, has evolved—the houses, apartment towers, and shopping facilities are now middle-aged (see images 2, 3 and 4). It is possible to describe the built environment of the area as typical of 1970s suburban Toronto, and little has changed since then. Social and economic change, however, has left a more profound and indelible mark on L'Amoreaux-Steeles.

⁸¹⁷ Project Planning Associates. "Greater Bridlewood: Land Use Study, N.W. Sector, Township of Scarborough (Prepared for Robert Mcclintock Ltd.)." Toronto: Project Planning Associates Limited, 1964.



Image 2 – The view south from the Bridlewood Mall parking lot at Finch and Warden Avenues in L'Amoreaux. (Photo by Author)



Image 3 – Beverly Glen Blvd. and Silver Spruce Dr. to the northwest of the Bridlewood Mall in L’Amoreaux. (Photo by Author)



Image 4 – Typical inner suburban Toronto landscape. View looking Southwest from Beverly Glen Park near the Bridlewood Mall in L’Amoreaux. (Photo by Author)

Census data for Steeles and L’Amoreaux provide a useful statistical snapshot of the demographic characteristics of northwest Scarborough (see Table 1). Their populations—24,705 and 45,865 respectively—and geographic size—4.5 and 7.2 square kilometres—mean they are somewhat larger than is typically associated with the term “neighbourhood”. As mentioned previously, they owe their identities and geographic boundaries to secondary plans created following the approval of Scarborough’s Official Plan in 1957. Because planning in postwar Scarborough was organized around the notion

that “community” could be fostered by using schools, parks, libraries, and shopping centres to create centrality and identity in new suburban areas, they can be regarded as neighbourhood-like spaces, or communities scaled to the mobility offered by private automobile-based travel.⁸¹⁸

Table 1 – Steeles and L’Amoreaux, 2006 Selected Population, Family, Household Characteristics

	Steeles		L’Amoreaux		Toronto		Toronto CMA	
Area (km ²)	4.5	--	7.2	--	630.2	--	5903.6	--
Population 2006	24,705	--	45,865	--	2,503,281	--	5,113,149	--
Density	5,490	--	6,370	--	3,972	--	866	--
Children 0-14	3,170	13%	7,725	17%	409,620	16%	949,940	19%
Youth 15-24	3,680	15%	6,240	14%	318,655	13%	683,940	13%
Seniors 65+	3,920	16%	7,255	16%	353,455	14%	573,680	11%
Families	7,250	--	13,030	--	670,105	--	1,405,845	--
Couple Families with Children	3,900	54%	6,740	52%	314,615	47%	749,860	53%
Lone Parent Families	1,250	17%	2,645	20%	136,135	20%	237,430	17%
Private Households	7,535	--	15,020	--	979,440	--	1,801,255	--
1 Person	965	13%	2,820	19%	295,825	30%	412,670	23%
2 Persons	1,885	25%	3,745	25%	282,685	29%	489,215	27%
3 Persons	1,725	23%	3,110	21%	161,440	16%	321,305	18%
4-5 Persons	2,365	31%	4,245	28%	200,735	20%	487,110	27%
6+ Persons	635	8%	1,160	8%	38,640	4%	90,770	5%
Average Number of Persons	3.4	--	2.9	--	2.5	--	2.8	--

Data Sources: City of Toronto Neighbourhood Profiles (<http://www.toronto.ca/demographics/neighbourhoods.htm>); Statistics Canada, Census of Canada 2006.

Despite possessing a built form that is tailored to automobility, census data shows northwest Scarborough is denser than might be expected. At 5,490 and 6,370 persons per square kilometre, the gross densities of Steeles and L’Amoreaux are in the same league

⁸¹⁸ see Carver, *Cities in the Suburbs*. It should be noted, though, that technically Steeles and L’Amoreaux were not “neighbourhoods” in Scarborough’s Official Plan, but “communities” made up of smaller planning units called “neighbourhoods”. They only became “neighbourhoods” for planning purposes sometime after the creation of the amalgamated City of Toronto in 1998.

as gentrified old city neighbourhoods such as North Riverdale (7,002) and The Beaches (5,532), though it is unevenly distributed. Gross density across both Steeles and L'Amoreaux is enhanced by the presence of higher-rise apartment blocks, which Figure 7 reveals are spatially concentrated in a few key nodes. This unevenness is evident in the aggregate data for the two areas, but is best illustrated visually using data for small areal units called Dissemination Areas (see Figure 7). For example, in L'Amoreaux only 24% of private dwellings are single-detached houses. Yet the vast majority of the area viewed in Google Maps appears as a carpet of single-detached houses. Figure 7 demonstrates the extent to which single-detached houses dominate the area's land mass.

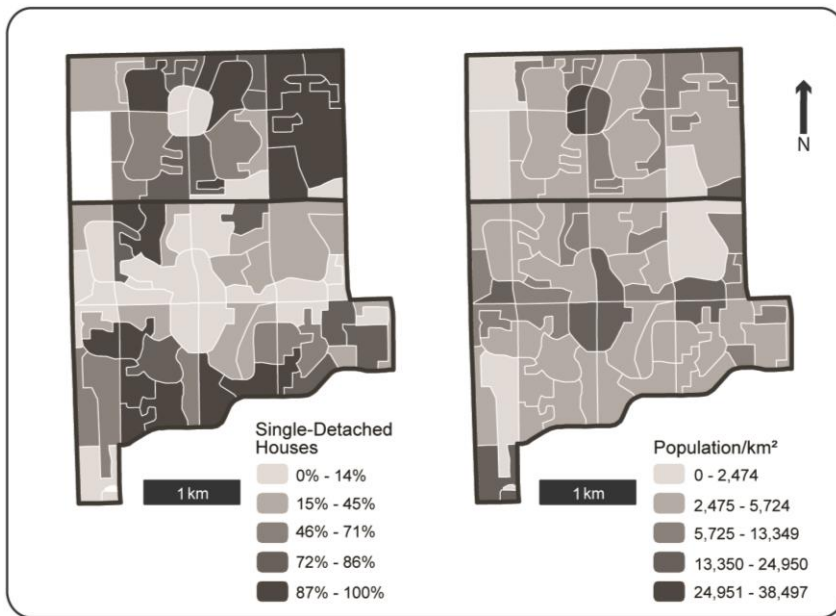


Figure 7 - Steeles and L'Amoreaux, 2006 Spatial Distribution of Single-Detached Houses and Population Density (Map created by Author). Data Sources: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada 2006, Dissemination Area data.

Census data on period of construction for private dwellings hint at how Steeles and L'Amoreaux developed. Table 2 shows that nearly three-quarters of dwelling units in L'Amoreaux were constructed between 1961 and 1980. A historical sketch found in the Scarborough Historical Collection called *Bridlewood: Then & Now* documents the transformation of the lands south of Finch Avenue between Pharmacy Road and Warden Avenue from agricultural uses to a modern residential subdivision.⁸¹⁹ The pamphlet indicates that the land assembly and suburban development commenced in the early-1960s. Photographs accompanying the text show that by the early-1970s the southern part of the area had become thoroughly suburban, while further north the transformation was still underway and remnants of the old rural landscape remained. Table 3 shows that Steeles, the northern half of the area, developed later. Newspaper coverage in the mid-1970s labeled Scarborough north of Finch Avenue as Metropolitan Toronto's "the last frontier", portraying it as a strip of land "in the shadow of high-rises, schools and subdivisions creeping northward".⁸²⁰ Steeles was largely rural until the mid-to-late 1970s, after which it developed quickly, becoming more or less fully developed by the late-1980s.

⁸¹⁹ Reesor, Lillian J. "Bridlewood: Then & Now." Toronto: Scarborough Historical Collection - Cedarbrae District Branch, 1973.

⁸²⁰ Simpson, "Developers await the go-ahead on 'Last Frontier'."

Table 2 – Steeles and L’Amoreaux, 2006 Selected Occupied Private Dwelling and Housing Characteristics

	Steeles		L’Amoreaux		Toronto		Toronto CMA	
Private Dwellings	7,560	--	15,085	--	979,440	--	1,801,255	--
Rented	1,265	17%	5,215	35%	446,855	46%	584,130	32%
Single-Detached House	3,635	48%	3,675	24%	266,880	27%	750,260	42%
Apartment Building, >= 5 Storeys	2,530	33%	6,775	45%	379,695	39%	478,550	27%
Other Dwelling Types	1,405	19%	4,610	31%	331,230	34%	572,265	32%
Period of Construction, Pre-1946	10	0%	220	1%	180,790	18%	206,175	11%
Period of Construction, 1946-1960	40	1%	730	5%	203,495	21%	255,905	14%
Period of Construction, 1961-1970	145	2%	3,440	23%	185,315	19%	262,210	15%
Period of Construction, 1971-1980	2,125	28%	7,510	50%	161,750	17%	295,605	16%
Period of Construction, 1981-1990	4,155	55%	2,190	15%	115,490	12%	320,365	18%
Period of Construction, 1991-2006	1060	14%	965	6%	132,610	14%	460,975	26%
In Need Of Major Repairs	380	5%	1,055	7%	76,335	8%	107,840	6%

Data Sources: City of Toronto Neighbourhood Profiles (<http://www.toronto.ca/demographics/neighbourhoods.htm>); Statistics Canada, Census of Canada 2006.

Also noteworthy is home ownership, which is considerably higher in both Steeles and L’Amoreaux when compared to the City of Toronto as a whole (see Table 2). While the L’Amoreaux area has a number of rental apartment buildings, housing units for seniors, and two mid-sized Toronto Community Housing (TCHC) complexes, home ownership rates in the area were influenced by the introduction of the Condominium Act in the late-1960s. The development of northwest Scarborough includes a large number of apartment buildings constructed during the first wave of condominium construction in Toronto. Also important, is the presence of gated-communities in the area. One large condominium complex in the northeast quadrant of the Bridletowne Circle (L’Amoreaux) and most found in the Bamburgh Circle (Steeles) are gated-communities with security booths at their street entrances.

Table 3 – L'Amoreaux and Steeles, 2006 Immigrant and Visible Minority Status

	Steeles		L'Amoreaux		Toronto		Toronto CMA	
Population 2006	24,705	--	45,865	--	2,503,281	--	5,113,149	--
Canadian Citizens	19,875	80%	36,110	79%	2,096,430	84%	4,429,945	87%
Non-Official Home Language	15,560	63%	23,705	52%	771,515	31%	1,363,690	27%
Immigrants, Total	18,395	74%	30,355	66%	1,237,720	49%	2,320,165	45%
Recent Immigrants	3,790	15%	7,885	17%	267,855	11%	447,925	9%
Eastern Asia	3,315	87%	4,660	59%	59,580	22%	83,035	19%
Southern Asia	135	4%	1,450	18%	69,600	26%	142,430	32%
Visible Minority	21,245	86%	34,905	76%	1,162,630	46%	2,174,070	43%
Chinese	14,510	68%	12,530	36%	283,075	11%	486,330	10%
South Asian	1,660	8%	6,320	18%	298,370	12%	684,070	13%
Black	570	3%	2,970	9%	208,555	8%	352,220	7%
Filipino	660	3%	1,470	4%	102,555	4%	171,980	3%
Arab/West Asian	405	2%	1,465	4%	65,240	3%	128,905	3%

Data Sources: City of Toronto Neighbourhood Profiles (<http://www.toronto.ca/demographics/neighbourhoods.htm>); Statistics Canada, Census of Canada 2006.

As evident in Table 3, in 2006 immigrants and visible minorities were a clear majority of area residents. Since the early-1980s, Chinese immigrants (largely from Hong Kong) have settled in northwest Scarborough, and increasingly in the suburban municipalities just to north, Markham and Richmond Hill. Their presence is recorded in the commercial/retail landscape, particularly in form of Chinese shopping centres built from the mid-to-late 1980s onwards.⁸²¹ City of Toronto neighbourhood profiles for 2006 shows that Chinese is the largest visible minority group in both Steeles and L'Amoreaux. Of the two, L'Amoreaux is more multi-ethnic. 76% of its population belongs to a visible minority group, which is lower than Steeles at 86%. But in L'Amoreaux, the visible

⁸²¹ Valerie Preston and Lucia Lo, "Asian theme malls' in suburban Toronto: land use conflict in Richmond Hill," *Canadian Geographer* 44, no. 2 (2000); Shuguang Wang, "Chinese Commercial Activity in the Toronto CMA: New Development Patterns and Impacts," *Canadian Geographer* 43, no. 1 (1999).

minority population is less concentrated in the largest group, as can be seen when the 5 largest visible minority groups in each area are considered (see Table 3). Though the percentage of immigrants and visible minorities are considerably higher in Steeles and L'Amoreaux when compared with the city or CMA as a whole, these levels are not atypical for neighbourhoods across inner suburban Toronto.

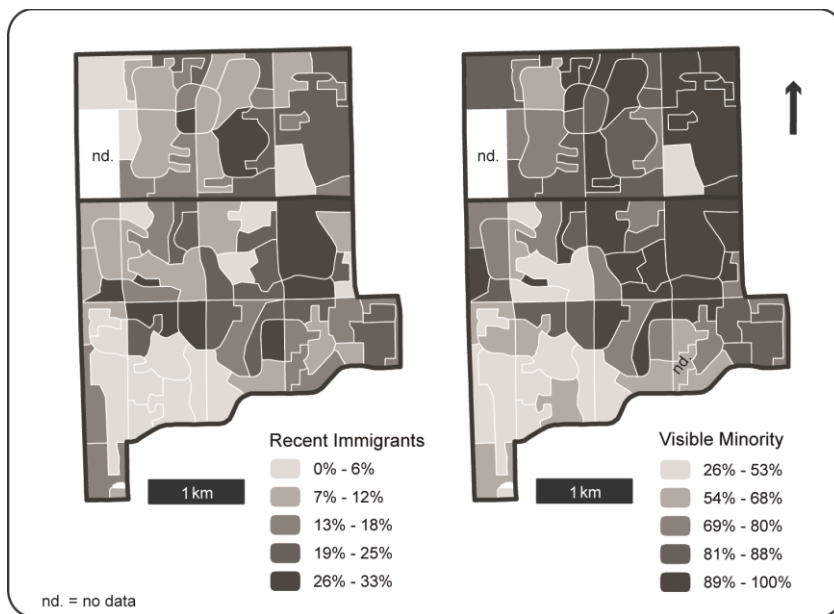


Figure 8 – L'Amoreaux and Steeles, 2006 Spatial Distribution of Recent Immigrants and Visible Minorities (Map created by Author). Data Sources: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada 2006, Dissemination Area data.

Figure 8 shows that visible minorities are found throughout Steeles-L'Amoreaux. Even in the southwest corner, the Bridlewood area, which is where the proportion of visible minorities is lowest, most dissemination areas are closer to the upper range of their category making them similar to the city-wide value. Still a subtle micro-geography is revealed, one that is echoed in income data presented below (see Table 4). Areas of

high-rise apartments and townhouse complexes found along Finch and Warden Avenues, as well as within or adjacent to the Bridletowne and Bamburgh Circles, are disproportionately where recent immigrants and persons in private households with incomes below the low income cut-off (LICO) are concentrated. To highlight this is not to argue, as is often the case in discussions of inner suburban Toronto, that recent immigrants and visible minorities are found in low-rent high-rise apartments, while the remainder of the area is more conventionally “suburban”—i.e. low-rise, non-visible minority, and middle-income. While recent immigrants are far more likely to live in dissemination areas where multi-unit housing dominates, the divide does not fall so clearly along visible minority/non-visible minority lines, especially in the northwest part of Steeles where single-detached houses dominate and the area is overwhelmingly home to visible minority residents.

Table 4 – L’Amoreaux and Steeles, 2005 Household Income

	Steeles		L’Amoreaux		Toronto		Toronto CMA	
Private Households	7,535	--	15,020	--	979,440	--	1,801,255	--
Average Income	69,697	--	62,282	--	80,343	--	87,820	--
Median Income	57,365	--	51,037	--	52,833	--	64,128	--
Household Income Under \$30k	1,970	26%	3,990	27%	270,020	28%	382,745	21%
Household Income, \$30k to \$49.9k	1,385	18%	3,400	23%	194,850	20%	317,285	18%
Household Income, \$50k to \$69.9k	1,160	15%	2,585	17%	151,700	15%	276,625	15%
Household Income, \$70k to \$99.9k	1,245	17%	2,620	17%	153,400	16%	325,365	18%
Household Income \$100k and Over	1,775	24%	2,425	16%	209,465	21%	499,225	28%
Incidence of Low Income	--	27%	--	28%	--	25%	--	18%

Data Sources: City of Toronto Neighbourhood Profiles (<http://www.toronto.ca/demographics/neighbourhoods.htm>); Statistics Canada, Census of Canada 2006.

Aggregate household income data for Steeles-L'Amoreaux highlights two important trends: first, average income falls well below the City of Toronto and Toronto CMA values, while median income in Steeles is actually above the city-wide value and L'Amoreaux falls just below it (median income in both areas is below the Toronto CMA value); second, households with incomes \$100,000 and over are present across both areas, but make up greater proportion of households in Steeles. When household income is mapped using dissemination areas, however, the difference between Steeles and L'Amoreaux is less pronounced. There are large areas in both Steeles and L'Amoreaux where single-detached houses dominate, the incidence of low income is minimal, and at least 30% of households have incomes \$100,000 and over (see Figure 9).

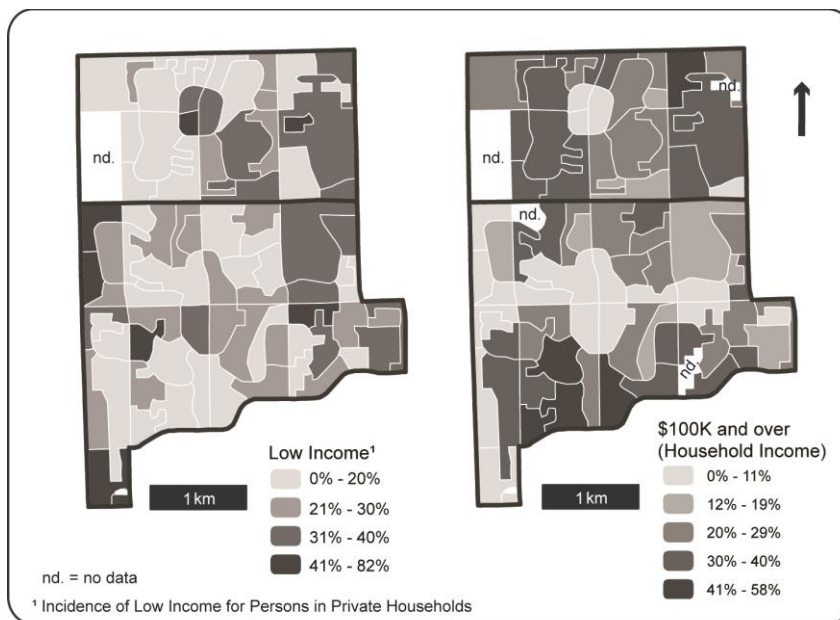


Figure 9 - L'Amoreaux and Steeles, 2006 Spatial Distribution of Low Income and Households with Income \$100,000 and over (Map created by Author). Data Sources: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada 2006, Dissemination Area data.

Glossary of Acronyms

BARC	Borough Administrative Review Committee
CMA	Census Metropolitan Area
CMHC	Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
CNR	Canadian National Railway
CORRA	Confederation of Residents and Ratepayers Associations
FHA	Federal Housing Administration (United States)
FWRS	Finch-Warden Revitalization Study
GGH	Greater Golden Horseshoe
GLA	Gross Leasable Area
GM	General Motors
GTA	Greater Toronto Area
GTHA	Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area
HEPC	Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario
ICSC	International Council of Shopping Centres
JTTPC	Joint Technical Transportation Planning Committee
LICO	Low Income Cut-off
LRT	Light Rail Transit
MP	Member of Parliament
MTTPR	Metropolitan Toronto Transportation Plan Review
NHA	National Housing Act
NIMBY	Not In My Backyard
OHC	Ontario Housing Corporation
OMB	Ontario Municipal Board
PGM	Toronto Planning and Growth Committee
QEW	Queen Elizabeth Way
SCC	Scarborough Community Council
SRT	Scarborough Rapid Transit
TAC	Toronto Area Committee
TCC	Toronto City Council
TCHC	Toronto Community Housing Corporation
TTC	Toronto Transit Commission
VA	Veterans Administration (United States)
VLA	Veterans' Land Act