

Active 18 & The West Queen West Triangle: A Case Study in the Politics of “Good Planning”

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Table of Contents

Abstract	i
Foreword	ii
Acknowledgements	iv
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
A Qualitative Approach	3
Academic Framework & Literature Review	5
What is “Good Planning” and Who Defines it?.....	6
Neoliberal Politics in Toronto – A Framework for Intensification.....	14
“Good Planning” for Whom?	15
Chapter 2: A Chronology of Redevelopment in the “West Queen West Triangle”	22
A Process of Gentrification.....	22
Redevelopment Proposals: Reaction and Evolution	27
Negotiations and OMB Ruling	30
Settlement, Finalized Agreements, and Community Input	39
Perspectives on Redevelopment in the Triangle	44
Community as a Political Actor	47
Chapter 3: Citizen Activism Meets Redevelopment.....	49
Community as a Component of Good Planning.....	50
Establishing Community Values	51
Points of Inflection.....	58
Planners and Planning as Functions of Policy	58
Evidence and Discourse at the OMB: Community and Expert Knowledge	62
Shaping and Being Shaped by Process	64
Chapter 4: Legacies of Active 18.....	67
Redefining Good Planning	67
Striving for Better Planning	83
Chapter 5: Conclusion.....	89
Appendix A: Timeline of Key Events (2005 – 2008).....	92
Appendix B: Arial Photo of Triangle for Reference.....	94
Appendix C: Full List of Potential Guiding Questions for Semi-Structured Interviews..	95
List of Interviews	97
Bibliography	98

Abstract

This paper explores the relationship between community members and planners in Toronto as notions of “good planning” are formed, and how a prevailing interpretation of “good planning” that is born from this relationship shapes Toronto’s urban landscape. The redevelopment of Toronto’s West Queen West Triangle (WQWT) from 2005-2008, with special attention to the efforts of the community organization *Active 18*, is used as a case study to explore how good planning principles are differentially informed by knowledge from community members relative to professional or expert knowledge. Two main questions guide the analysis of this case study: (1) How did the efforts of *Active 18* help define and interpret “good planning” policy, and (2) how do the material impacts of their efforts fulfill the expectations of “good planning” as set out during the WQWT’s redevelopment between 2005-2008?

Foreword

My area of concentration is titled "Community Planning and Urban Redevelopment", which is subdivided into three components: community planning, urban redevelopment, and urban governance in planning. My research on how community activism affected West Queen West Triangle (WQWT) Redevelopment that occurred between 2005 and 2008 is directly related to my plan of study components and their respective learning objectives.

RE: Community planning

The planning context of Toronto's condo boom, including redevelopment that occurred in the WQWT, is grounded in provincial policy that mandates population growth and land-use intensification occur in particular areas. An exploration of redevelopment in the WQWT, then, exemplifies a real impact of interrelated planning policies at provincial and municipal levels of government. The nature of redevelopment in the WQWT as intensified, mixed-use land designations also resonate with current popular planning principles.

Active 18, the community group that organized resistance to condo redevelopment in the WQWT, provides a unique example of well-informed and well-organized community participation in planning processes. Their activity speaks directly to my learning objectives of how community members interact with planning processes and exercise their right to political representation in channels of civic engagement that attend to interests on wider geographic scales (ex. city, region, and province). In these ways, my research relates to learning objectives 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3 which comprise my component on community planning.

RE: Urban redevelopment

The WQWT redevelopments are an applied example of urban redevelopment. Examining the area 10 years after redevelopment had been approved provides a unique opportunity to investigate whether or not the goals/intentions of the proposed changes to built form were realized -and by extension, whether or not "good planning principles" were upheld in the decision to approve redevelopments. There is potential to investigate how "good planning" may or may not have been realized based on both the parameters set out during planning policy of 10 years ago, as well as the parameters that characterize "good planning" today.

RE: Urban governance in planning

Political activism/conflict/negotiation is at the heart of my research into the WQWT redevelopments. Power relationships embedded in institutional structures (ex. appealing to the Ontario Municipal Board), city-developer-community negotiations, and planning processes were activated in the approval of redevelopment in Toronto's WQWT. Further, the extensive networks of *Active 18* make this a unique case study in that participating community members were well-versed in urban development, political procedure, and

political organization, which is quite different from the participation of lay-persons in planning processes. Yet, despite these networks, skills, and knowledge, the efforts of community were still dismissed, which strongly suggests imbalanced power relationships in play. Again, evaluating the current space as it exists today promises to provide insight into how planning as a normative endeavour serves particular interests. In this way, my research provides me with the opportunity to explore how planning processes and design techniques facilitate spatially-embedded power relationships between urban actors, and how public participation strategies may allow communities to affect the development/preservation of the spaces they inhabit.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

As cities compete for capital investment across the globe, urban planning navigates the frictions of intersecting interests within and across different scales (community, city, city-region, and nation). Urban planners, in particular, are charged with mediating these variegated interests in order to identify and maximize the public interest as human settlements change over time (Ontario Professional Planners Institute, n.d.). The notion of “public interest” in a planning context is often used to justify planning decisions, yet no consensus exists on how to derive, observe or measure the “public interest” (Day, 1997; Campbell and Marshall, 2002). I would argue that leaving this ambiguity unaddressed in planning processes is problematic for practitioners as it undermines the credibility of planning as a practice, and is also problematic for the inhabitants of space who experience the effects of planning decisions. The dominant discourse in contemporary North American planning suggests that the public interest is derived by planners who consider stakeholder input and their own expert knowledge (Congress for New Urbanism, 2013; Duany et al, 2010; OPPI, n.d.). Thus, public participation only indirectly affects planning decisions in North America, which makes their role in planning decisions less clear. Despite this ambiguity, it is evident that public participation has become an integral component of urban planning models (Day, 1997; Lane, 2005).

Professional organizations in Canadian planning argue that the public interest is defined by professional planners who balance the local needs of communities with the interests of other stakeholders (Canadian Institute of Planners, 2016; OPPI, n.d.). This distinction between professionals who shape communities and the people who inhabit

these communities is of particular importance in sites of redevelopment as redevelopment entails material and imagined change to already existing communities. The presence of an incumbent community found uniquely in redevelopment foregrounds the scrutiny of “non-expert” knowledge in planning processes, and highlights how their logic and associated narratives (both in political processes and the respective space itself) may be deemed legitimate or illegitimate, practical or impractical. In comparison, I would argue that popularized principles of planning and urban design that have become embedded in Ontario’s planning policies are not subject to the same scrutiny, taking precedent over public input simply by their association with an “expert” body of knowledge.

This paper explores political frictions in urban planning processes and the relationships that contour their resolution in the case of condo redevelopment in Toronto’s West Queen West Triangle neighbourhood. Within this case study, I ask how does public participation affect the planning and implementation of redevelopment and, by extension, contribute to an understanding of “good planning”? By examining the relationships between public participation, planners, planning processes, and other political actors, I hope to shed insight on three fronts: (1) how public participation substantively affects actualized notions of “good planning”, (2) the role of planners as (co-)generators of good planning notions, and (3) who benefits from decisions made on prevailing notions of “good planning”.

This paper is organized into five main chapters. The remainder of this chapter lays out the methodology and the academic framework for this research.

Chapter 2 reviews the recent history of the West Queen West Triangle, chronicles key events related to the planning of redevelopment from the initial proposals in 2005 to

the settlement and approval in 2008, and identifies key political actors in the planning process with an emphasis on *Active 18*.

Chapter 3 focuses on the organization and rhetoric of *Active 18* as it relates to perceptions of “good planning”; how this community perception of good planning was received by councilors and city planners; how this community vision of “good planning” affected the approved redevelopments; and what factors (e.g. skills, knowledge, connections, etc.) strengthened *Active 18*’s ability to advocate for their community vision. Here it will be made clear how different notions of “good planning” compete with one another, exemplifying the role of community member knowledge in planning processes.

Chapter 4 presents and analyzes community experiences in the space as it exists today. This chapter tackles questions such as how do the community benefits negotiated during the 2005-2008 redevelopments serve the community today? And how do these experiences align (or not) with what was purported to be good planning at the time? These questions will be considered in light of different understandings of “good planning” identified throughout the paper.

Chapter 5 concludes the paper with a commentary on this case study as it speaks to the relationship between community members, planners, and planning processes; who defines and benefits from notions of “good planning”; and how community members may be better equipped to have their values represented in the built environment and through planning processes.

A Qualitative Approach

My research takes a qualitative approach, relying on document review, site observations, and semi-structured interviews with key political actors and community

members. The document review informs a chronology of events which speaks to multiple, competing perceptions of what constitutes “good planning” and how these perceptions justify planning decisions. Events will be recounted in chronological order to demonstrate how the idea of “good planning” is realized through planning procedure. The interviews outline how community perceptions of “good planning” are formulated and how present members of the West Queen West Triangle (WQWT) are served by the community benefits negotiated during the 2005-2008 redevelopments. Interviewees in this research participated in planning processes related to the Triangle’s redevelopment and/or are present community members who would speak to the impacts of redevelopment. Interviewees were prompted for their experience with the planning processes, their relationships with other political actors, and their daily experiences in the neighbourhood before and after redevelopment as applicable to the interviewee. Information from these interviews speaks to community perspectives on notions of good planning, experiences with planning processes, and experiences with neighbourhood change.

Redevelopment in the West Queen West Triangle (WQWT) was selected as a case study of the politics of “good planning” due to the timing of applications and the strong community response. Applications to redevelop the WQWT arose at a time when applications to construct condos were numerous and frequent. In less than a year, three applications, each with different developers, sought to build condos in the WQWT. Community members were active participants in the negotiation of these applications until the eventual approval in 2008. New redevelopment applications in the neighbourhood have been initiated since then, but this cluster of applications showcases

the extensive involvement of community members in a series of events that would set the tone for future redevelopment.

As with all normative endeavours, the approved redevelopments in 2008 were made on a basis of “good planning”. If planning is understood as the act of creating and adhering to plans, then “good planning” is the set of values that are ultimately served by such acts (this is explored in further detail in the following section). In the context of Toronto, “good planning” presumes to objectively balance the interests of stakeholders who participate in planning processes, thereby ensuring that the urban development is managed in the public interest. I focus on my analysis of this case study on the term “good planning” in an attempt to unpack the seemingly paradoxical practice of maintaining objectivity in an inherently normative practice. One decade has passed since drastic neighbourhood change was allowed in the Triangle, which I assert is sufficient time for the impacts of redevelopment to be observed and compared to the “good planning” intentions in 2008. Given the controversies surrounding this redevelopment case study, planners and other decision makers should ask: did we accomplish what we set out to accomplish? Does the decision reflect “good planning” in the way stakeholders anticipated? And perhaps most importantly, whose interests are served by planning processes?

Academic Framework & Literature Review

Three key concepts inform my analysis of the West Queen West Triangle: “good planning”, neoliberal governance, and public participation in planning. Each of these concepts will be identified in turn before proceeding with the case study analysis.

(Following this literature review, the term “good planning” will no longer be enclosed in quotation marks.)

What is “Good Planning” and Who Defines it?

Urban planning is a normative endeavour and the decisions made through its practice represent a dominant rationality, indicating what is valuable or desirable as well as what is undesirable (Flyvbjerg, 2002a). The term “good planning” is used to describe planning decisions and thus reflects this dominant rationality. I would assert that contradictions emerge when dominant values present themselves as definitive representations of what is valuable to society through “good planning” decisions, while the notion of “good planning” is actually socially constructed and remains open to interpretation even after planning decisions are made. The term “good planning” is most exposed as a social construct when planning decisions are disputed, as was the case in the WQWT. During these disputes, the logic underlying planning decisions is unpacked, scrutinized, and validated, highlighting the mechanisms by which certain forms of knowledge compete with each other. This subsection briefly surveys planning statute and policy and the roles of professionals, decision makers, and community members to clarify how notions of “good planning” are constructed in Toronto.

Planning statute and law

Planning decisions in Toronto are policy-driven and closely follow the procedures and authoritative hierarchies laid out in provincial statute. The purposes of planning-related statutes such as the *Planning Act*, *City of Toronto Act*, and other acts that empower provincial plans are to assign decision-making powers and procedures, and to

define key terms of reference. Some definitions are provided in statute as terms of reference but they pertain to what can be done in planning and how it can be done, meaning there is no formal definition of “good planning” in statute nor is there a specific test for determining the validity of different perspectives. As it relates to the construction of “good planning”, planning statute is significant for its prescription of decision-making powers and procedures. Planning statute prioritizes provincial interests (through provincial policy) over municipal interests in planning decisions; lays out appeal mechanisms (explored in more detail throughout this paper); and allocates decision-making powers to councillors – who may delegate these powers to boards or committees – the OMB, and more currently the Local Planning Appeals Tribunal.

The normative visions driving the purpose of planning that are absent in statute are described in policy. At the provincial level planning policies include the *Provincial Policy Statement (PPS)*, *Growth Plan*, *Oak Ridges Moraine Plan*, and *Niagara Escarpment Plan*. However, the only mention of “good planning” in provincial planning policy is in the PPS: “The Provincial Policy Statement [...] is based on good land use planning principles that apply in communities across Ontario” (MMAH, 2014, p.4). This mention of “good planning” only extends as far as a reference, without any formalized definition. Moreover, the “land-use” qualifier in this description of “good planning” suggests that planning’s scope is limited to organizing the form and function of land. Planning within this scope is shown to be a market-driven practice where human safety and environmental health are bound up with the benefits of financially “optimal” and “efficient” use of land (MMAH, 2014, p. 4). It is possible that improvements in human and environmental health may be positively correlated with practices that maximize the

exchange value of land, but the terminology remains intensely problematic for orienting planning decisions *solely* around a space's exchange value.

Further down the hierarchy of planning policy is Toronto's Official Plan wherein the first and only verbatim mention of "good planning" is in regard to community benefits: "Zoning by-laws, pursuant to Section 37 of the *Planning Act*...[ensure that] the development must constitute good planning, be consistent with the objectives and policies of this plan, and comply with the built form policies and all applicable neighbourhood protection policies..." (City of Toronto, 2015, 5-2). Here, too, there is no explicit definition or test for "good planning". However, its use in the context of density bonusing implies that "good planning" is represented by the intentions of the policy.

By its scarcity and context in policy and statute, "good planning" is implicitly understood as adherence to the values enshrined in applicable policy. This ideally affords planning the freedom to accommodate creativity and innovation while providing some stable criteria against which urban development can be evaluated. However, achieving "good planning" through policy adherence becomes more complicated when conflicting interpretations of policy arise. Much of the orthodox work planners and other professionals do is help craft policy and manage its implementation in tandem with political authorities (OPPI, n.d.), giving them substantial influence over the prevailing or actualized definition of "good planning".

Professionals and Decision Makers

Planners construct and evaluate policy in consideration of both their own professional knowledge and non-planner input. With respect to professional knowledge, planners, architects, and urban designers have recently adopted principles that have been

popularized under the brands of smart growth and new urbanism. These two doctrines were developed as an explicit response to the economically inefficient, ecologically wasteful, and socially isolating effects of urban sprawl (CNU, 2013; Duany et al., 2010; Daniels, 2001; APA, 2012). The ideas of regionally coordinated growth, walkable and complete communities, and transit-oriented development have been theorized as a blend of urbanism and environmentalism (Calthorpe, 1993, pp. 44-45), but have promulgated as principles of planning by asserting themselves as the antithesis of sprawl. Further, Ontario's and Toronto's planning policies have been deeply influenced by these doctrines, as they recite popular mantras such as mixed land use; complete, vibrant communities; walkable, tree-lined streets; accessible community spaces and amenities; and multi-modal transit, all of which are intended to secure a sustainable and livable future for the inhabitants of Ontario (MMAH, 2014; City of Toronto, 2015). If planning policy is used to guide planning decisions and such policy draws heavily from design-based principles, then professional design-based knowledge is likely weighed more heavily against other forms of knowledge amidst conflicting interpretations of planning policy.

Beyond the substance of planning policy, professional planners in Ontario position themselves as the appropriate interpreters of planning policy. The *Ontario Professional Planners Institute* (OPPI) is a self-regulating non-profit organization that purports to “leverage member knowledge, resources, and relationships to facilitate excellence in planning by professional planners” (OPPI, 2016). While the practice of planning aims to secure “physical, economic and social efficiency, a sound environment, [and] health and well-being”, the methods or manifestations of such aims are unspecified

(*Ontario Professional Planners Institute Act, 1994, S.2(1)*). Referring to the contextual nature of place-making, OPPI does not define the substance or values of “good planning” itself, but instead identifies essential skills and qualities required to derive the public interest. OPPI states, “[a] planner’s professional opinion must be respected and recognized as independent in order to serve the public interest rather than narrow or private interests” (OPPI, 2016, p. 3). Further, “There is no universally accepted definition of what constitutes the public interest [...] Guidance as to what matters are of a dimension to affect the public interest is embedded in statutes such as the *Planning Act*...” (OPPI, 2012, pp. 5 – 6). Using their own judgement and guidance from planning statute and policy, planners are to use their discretion to uphold the public interest firstly, and the client’s interests secondly.

There are two assumptions in OPPI’s argument for professional planning that are relevant to the consideration of “good planning”. First, there is a particular body of knowledge that is required to evaluate competing interests, which stratifies the opinions participants into professionals and non-professionals with valuing the former over the latter. Differentiating the opinions of stakeholders becomes important particularly when there are conflicting interpretations of planning policy as will be exemplified by the case study presented in this paper. Second, there is assumed to be an inherent self-interest among planning participants that necessitates the intervention of a third party to facilitate collaboration and/or communication. I would assert that this assumption internalizes an individualized, competitive ethos that contradicts with the aspirations of a collaborative planning model, which trusts stakeholders to be capable of empathizing with other stakeholders (explored later in Chapter 1). Broadly speaking, according to OPPI,

planning in the public interest is only possible from an independent, professionally trained perspective.

Political authorities also exert significant influence over planning decisions. All planning decisions in Toronto must conform with provincial policies and interests as applicable, which acknowledges that the “long-term prosperity and social well-being of Ontario depends upon planning for strong, sustainable, and resilient communities...” (Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2014, p.4). Municipal councillors may vote in agreement or disagreement with the recommendations of planning staff, and may also assign planners with tasks. Councillors, then, have some influence in what constitutes “good planning” based on their decision-making authority and their ability to assign tasks to professional planners. Finally, planning-related disputes or non-decisions at council may require the OMB to determine what would constitute “good planning”. As a quasi-judicial appeal board, presiding members of an OMB case make their decisions “...based on the evidence presented at the hearing, the relevant law, provincial policies and principals of good planning” (Environment and Land Tribunals Ontario, n.d.). Like councillors, the OMB may agree or disagree with a planner’s interpretation of “good planning” principles and often hear opposing opinions from different planning professionals. However, the Board’s decision reflects an overriding interpretation of “good planning” that is ostensibly based on the merits of expert evidence.

Communities

Finally, community members affect planning decisions only through councillors and planners. Though they hold no decision-making power, their relevance to planning was advanced perhaps most effectively by modernist planning critics such as Kevin

Lynch and Jane Jacobs¹, who argued for the importance of built design that reflected daily human experiences. For Lynch,

A settlement is a valued arrangement, consciously changed and stabilized [...] So that settlement is good which enhances the continuity of a culture and the survival of its people, increases a sense of connection in time and space, and permits or spurs individual growth: development within continuity, via openness and connection. (1981, pp. 116-117)

More than just habitability, a good city is one that also fosters connection and personal/cultural growth between the users of a space. Lynch does not directly address the role of community input in his book *Good City Form*, but implies by way of design's context-sensitive nature that inhabitants of communities possess exclusive experiential knowledge that would be essential for planning and design.

Jacobs (1961, p. 418) similarly argues that the city, and therefore planning, is intrinsically about the complex daily lives of people, which makes their experiences indispensable to planning activities. A city that promotes diversity as Jacobs prescribes it is a good thing because it cultivates inspiration, creativity, and innovation that is necessary for a city to sustain itself socially and economically.

The idea of creativity and its relationship with urban vitality has evolved since Jacobs' writings such that creativity and innovation have been adapted into a narrative of remaining globally competitive rather than responding to the needs of local communities -particularly those in need. Despite piercing critiques (Peck, 2005), Florida's (2002) theory on the creative class has affected the City of Toronto's policies on urban and cultural development (City of Toronto, 2008). This theory orients urban policy to selectively benefit the producers in a knowledge economy, while sanctioning the

¹ The reception of Jacobs' writings on community-oriented planning is especially important because she herself was not a professionally trained planner or city-builder, but an urban enthusiast and political activist.

exploitation and entrenchment of the poor in order to do so (Wilson and Keil, 2008). Communication between planners and public participants under this urban agenda would follow an equivalent inflection and stakeholders representing the economically productive creative class would be prioritized over other less lucrative members of the public. In other words, under a creative city scheme public participation informs planning of the ways that community might adapt to the needs of (creative) capital interests. This is a perversion of Jacobs' work who argued that planning and urban development should adapt to the needs of communities. The rhetoric used to call for planning decisions to reflect the needs of community has since been adapted to an urban agenda that pits the needs of different communities against each other.

This brief review shows that “good planning” in Toronto is scarcely defined, only being implied by professional organizations and regulators to be adherence to existing planning policy. OPPI argues that “independent, professionally trained” planners are the appropriate interpreters of policy and thus make “good planning” decisions. Provincial statute, meanwhile, charges municipal councillors with representing their constituents and officially making planning decisions. Finally, in case of human error or unscrupulous behaviour, appeal mechanisms are built into the planning process where appointed bodies (previously the Ontario Municipal Board, and now the Local Planning Appeals Tribunal) enact potentially overriding interpretations of “good planning” policy. There are many stakeholders and a hierarchy of decision-making authorities that may dilute if not obstruct intentions to balance interests in planning decisions, making it difficult to determine whose interests are served through planning processes. Further, community input does not directly influence planning decisions, which makes their representation in planning

decisions ambiguous. The following section provides some evidence to suggest, however, that market-based interests have disproportionately benefitted from planning decisions in Toronto.

Neoliberal Politics in Toronto – A Framework for Intensification

Analysis of the politics of planning in Toronto necessitates at least a cursory introduction of the neoliberal ideology that frames the logic for redevelopment. Neoliberalism functions on the individualistic principle that allowing economic markets to operate unhindered is the optimal way for society to maximize production and, by extension, social welfare. In particular, it is commonly understood to present itself through the deregulation of market operations, rolling back of government expenditures and regulatory policies, reduction or elimination of taxes, and downloading of social/welfare programs from government to the private sector (i.e. privatization) or the non-profit sector. As an ideology, neoliberalism may also be understood as a process such that its configurations are adaptive and evolving on a global scale in order to respond to the crises that it generates (Brenner, Peck, & Theodore, 2010; Peck & Tickell, 2002). Through the course of its evolution and its pervasive presence in urban politics, neoliberal values have arguably become normalized, with its rhetoric of efficiency and competitiveness becoming embedded in movements that would oppose neoliberal policies (Keil, 2009).

In this paper, neoliberalization is of interest as a framework for urban intensification as is evident in Toronto's recent history (Boudreau, Keil & Young, 2009). Despite the alleged benefits of amalgamation, privatized public services, and more flexible (i.e. deregulated) government policy instituted over the past few decades,

concentrations of poverty and uneven economic development in Toronto have only intensified (Hulchanski, 2010). Lehrer and Wieditz (2009a) analyze provincial and municipal planning policies to highlight how the directive to concentrate growth in strategic areas without provisions to curb displacement drove Toronto's condominium boom at the expense of existing, typically lower-income populations. Another study of planning politics showed how condo development has also displaced people by encroaching on (industrial) employment lands that have historically provided stable employment for local workers (Lehrer & Wieditz, 2009b; Lehrer, 2009). Beyond displacement, Rosen and Walks (2014) show how Toronto's condo boom was also facilitated by the alignment of government policies at all levels and noted how density bonusing further reduced Toronto's ability to regulate condo development. The neoliberal conditions that guide Toronto's urban redevelopment have provided developers with a policy basis to build condos with little regard for the communities in which they build.

“Good Planning” for Whom?

The previous section problematizes the current state of planning politics as it relates to redevelopment in Toronto where the central issue is that harm has been inflicted on stakeholders of redeveloped sites and justified through planning. These decisions and any other normative decision reflect a prevailing set of values, which, in the realm of planning, are ostensibly in the public interest. Given the reasonable assumption that harmed stakeholders in redevelopment are often members of the incumbent community, there appears to be a dissonance between community interests and the public interest that is reconciled through processes of public participation. There are many ways to problematize and study public participation: who is defined as “public”, is this

representative of the community, who sets the agenda or terms of discussion, what are the barriers to participation, or what is the very purpose of public participation –the list goes on. However, the logic for absorbing incumbent community interests into a wider public interest is laid bare in the decision to allow/reject redevelopment and is dubbed as “good planning”.

The City of Toronto’s (n.d.) public consultation strategies value transparency, inclusivity, knowledge transfer, and capacity building or relationship building (between City Planning and communities), all of which suggest that planning in Toronto follows a collaborative planning model. A collaborative approach prescribes a dialogue between stakeholders where different forms of knowing are ideally exchanged to co-generate new knowledge in pursuit of strategies for resolving planning- and/or governance-related problems (Healey, 2006, p. 312). Consensus is reached when the co-generated knowledge is accepted widely enough to spur action, but positive social change through planning activities is centred around forming relationships and the stakeholders’ mutual learning through knowledge exchange (Healey, 2006, pp. 263-267). Throughout this approach planners assume the role of bringing together stakeholders and facilitating a dialogue between stakeholders, removing themselves from a directly normative stance.

Healey, among others (Innes and Booher, 2004), maintains that more robust public participation processes have the potential to reform power structures and realize equitable democratic change, but others (Bedford et al., 2002; Flyvbjerg, 2002a) contend that relationship building and communication across a widened scope of stakeholders is insufficient for such aspirations. Even after including the politically disenfranchised, practices and instruments of public participation have been found to be too rigid to

meaningfully respond to the fluid identities of marginalized groups (Barnes et al., 2003). Further, gaps in knowledge regarding substance and procedure have proven to undermine aspirations of improved trust and accessibility (Bedford et al., 2002).

Flyvbjerg (2002a) argues that planning functions within power structures including and beyond communication such as rationality and knowledge. Planning that would generate social democratic change should, he argues, strive towards a political culture that is more tolerant of conflict and difference rather than one that generates consensus. Drawing on his own planning experience, Flyvbjerg (2002b) more specifically argues that planners must explore normative planning as an exercise of power, which partly means reflecting on how knowledge is gathered, validated or discarded, and operationalized in relation to planning outcomes.

Some authors offer their own normative visions of “good planning” that would more effectively elevate equity in urban politics. A good city for Friedmann (2000, p. 471) is one that affords its inhabitants the freedom to fulfill their individual potential in the context of their wider communities; it “is an autonomous self-organizing civil society, active in making claims, resisting and struggling on behalf of the good city within a framework of democratic institutions.” Thus, the state and its agents (planners in this case) provide material and organizational support for realizing democratic, socially desirable outcomes, while assigning inhabitants a civic duty to remain engaged with such processes. While Friedmann’s good city accounts for a minimum “material base” to support civic life, he aspires towards the maximization of freedom and social reproduction through human interaction/debate rather than addressing material inequities as the latter might infringe on individual rights. As an ongoing political project, the city

should embrace difference and conflict between its inhabitants but the state still maintains a role in coordinating at the city-region scale. What does this mean for planners?

Friedmann (1987, p. 400) argues that planners carry their own ideologies and values in their application of their knowledge –including and beyond planning theory –as opposed to being objective and independent in the planning process. In this light, planners may enhance their field by actively seeking out different forms of knowledge and linking such knowledge with planning practice. Gathered knowledge is not to be validated by planners or adapted to fit planning practice, but instead the expert and/or discourse itself adapts to this new knowledge, thus reflecting the stakeholders’ effectual participation in political activities.

Amin (2006) builds off Friedmann’s (2000) work, also framing his “good city” as an ongoing political project that entails some level of civic responsibility. For Amin, the good city is one that promotes solidarity over the individualistic apathy through spatial organization technologies, welfare systems, and public space. Amin shares Friedmann’s notion that participating in urban politics is more than a right for urban dwellers, it is an obligatory duty that is enriched by difference. Unlike Friedmann, however, Amin directs the sense of civic responsibility towards consideration of the well-being of others, which is an approach that is more encouraging of material redistribution. Further, compared to Friedmann, Amin is wary of the state’s capacity to govern due to their tendency impose order on public space. Residents, rather than the state, are precisely those responsible for embodying connectedness through their claims to public space. Meanwhile, for the state to recognize and nurture these claims of solidarity Amin argues that first power needs to

be decentralized to some extent in order for citizens to reclaim control of urban governance from the influences of global capital.

While Friedmann's (2000) good city unapologetically describes ideal visions of urban politics and governance, and Amin (2006) focuses on shifting people's attitudes to one another in the context of a globalized neoliberal political climate, Fainstein (2010) seeks to affect the actual city and the policies that produce them. She envisions a just city rather than a good city as she argues for a sense of justice as the necessary approach to remediating increasingly polarized urban experiences. For her, the city-scale is insufficient to mobilize social change but is instead important for making (re)distributive decisions that can directly improve the lives of the most disadvantaged residents. In order to evaluate, and so make practical, such decisions, she proposes a capabilities approach that seeks to maximize the present opportunities for an individual's development in the context of their social networks. Under this approach, planners and other policy-makers would consider the three criteria of democracy, equity, and diversity as they shape cities while prioritizing equity. Fainstein's just city is more focused on achieving practical outcomes than either Friedmann's or Amin's good city, but she acknowledges the tensions between her three criteria that will complicate the implementation of just city policies.

Importantly, Fainstein's (2010) focus on policy actually underscores the importance of community activism despite the seeming emphasis on policy-makers (p. 181). One of the strategies that planners can use to promote equitable planning policies is to ask the question: who receives the benefits and who bears the costs? Political pressure

on policy makers to ask this question can be levied by constituents, who often have a legitimate stake in asking this question.

Fainstein, perhaps for her focus on pragmatism, is the only one among these three normative visions of urban politics to address the challenge of diversity in public participation processes. Friedmann assumes that increasing diverse participation in civic life improves the likelihood of rejecting inequitable outcomes through democratic institutions. Amin asserts that growing populations and diversity in urban settlements will make conversations about material inequities and social injustices increasingly difficult to ignore as frictions between urban inhabitants intensify. However, Fainstein anticipates the possibility that diversity can run counter to the aspirations of a good or just city as neither co-operation or solidarity is guaranteed through civic participation. She also questions the practicality of pursuing radical or idealistic social change through urban politics (as posited by Friedmann and Amin), maintaining her belief that material inequities can be addressed incrementally at the local scale.

The normative theories reviewed here each provide alternative criteria to evaluate progress in urban political discourses. Comparing each of these theories shows that there is no “correct” or “most effective” set of criteria that would assure progress towards more equitable outcomes or more meaningful public participation. They each prescribe different citizen-state relationships and place different emphasis on either the material or discursive objectives of civic participation in governance. But it is despite (or because of) these uncertainties that public participation remains indispensable to planning. The common thread linking each of these theories is a belief in the necessity and possibility of change and that such change will only be brought about through demand from the public.

Planning as a practice and the “good planning” decisions born from such practice are intensely political. “Good planning” is subject to interpretation, power structures, and knowledge; it is not something to be discovered or applied, but to be debated, negotiated, and renegotiated.

A collaborative approach to improving public participation in planning still holds promise for realizing equitable outcomes, but more than an awareness of power structures and trust in communication is needed. As planning is only one factor in building society, planners must confront the power relationship in which they operate so as to maximize the potential benefits of public participation. This confrontation need not be a bold denunciation of authoritative hierarchies; it can be as subtle as reflecting on the state of practice or on the planner’s role in committing knowledge to action. It is in this spirit of reflexivity that I begin my review of the impact of public participation on redevelopment in Toronto’s West Queen West Triangle.

Chapter 2: A Chronology of Redevelopment in the “West Queen West Triangle”

The politics of planning redevelopment in the West Queen West Triangle (WQWT) includes the gamut of potential stakeholders: community participants through *Active 18*, three separate developers, planners representing municipal policies, and provincial interests represented by the Ontario Municipal Board. Each of these participants held a stake in how the WQWT would redevelop and sought to have their interests represented in the planning process. Retracing the series of events leading up to the approval and construction of condo developments in the WQWT while highlighting the motivations of planning participants helps to demonstrate the intensely political nature of urban planning in Toronto.

A Process of Gentrification

The West Queen West Triangle is a neighbourhood approximately 6.5 hectares large and is bounded by Queen Street to the north, Dovercourt Road to the east, and a rail corridor along the south, curving northward to Queen Street, giving it its triangular shape (Figure 1). The area was an industrial site throughout the 19th century and its built form evolved in step with market fluctuations until the 1960s (as reviewed by Van Eyk, 2010, pp. 49 – 52). Onward from 1970 the area transitioned from industrial uses to arts and culture as spacious buildings were left vacant by Canada’s declining industry sector. Galleries, theatres, designers, and other arts-related enterprises comprised the majority of activity in the area as early as 1995 (Van Eyk, 2010, p. 64).



Figure 1: West Queen West Triangle (black area) Source: Google Maps

The Triangle's evolution is better understood in context with the adjacent Parkdale neighbourhood. Once a village adjacent to old Toronto in the 1800s, Parkdale was composed of large plots with spacious homes. The depression of the 1930s motivated the conversion of these large dwellings into multi-household units, counter to nuclear family values. Combined with the construction of the Gardiner expressway and the railway corridor, which cut the neighbourhood off from the waterfront, high-rise construction, and another economic downturn in the 1960s, Parkdale experienced an exodus of middle class households. Finally, deinstitutionalization in the 1970s led to the abrupt closure of nearby psychiatric care services under the belief that patients would be better served through community based-care (Slater, 2005). However, the provincial government had no policies that would provide or incentivize community-based care, which resulted in the discharged patients filling in Parkdale's large vacant dwellings and converting them into rooming houses. The influx of patients, some of whom still required some form of support service, and informal conversion of rooming houses to support single-person households largely contributed to Parkdale's reputation of being

dangerous, run-down, and edgy, setting the stage for its present-day struggle over gentrification (Slater, 2005).

The history of Parkdale is critical to understanding the story of the West Queen West Triangle as part of a larger process of westward gentrification in Toronto. Parkdale suppressed demand for residential development in the area, which helped preserve buildings that could function as sufficiently large work/live studios while also keeping rents affordable. This combination of space and affordability helped attract artists to the WQWT and signaled an increasing interest in redevelopment in the Triangle and neighbouring Parkdale (Slater, 2005). In particular, the Gladstone and the Drake Hotels would, each in their own ways, propel interest in redeveloping the area and exemplify arts-based gentrification.

Before becoming known as the flagship gentrifier in the West Queen West neighbourhood, the Drake Hotel was a “seedy” strip joint. Its multi-million dollar renovation was completed by new owner Jeff Storber in 2004 with the express intention of making it a cultural hotspot, “a place where bohemians will converge with the bourgeoisie” (Muhtadie, 2003). His aspirations of creating the epicenter of arts-based gentrification along the West Queen West stretch could only be considered a wild success, drawing the likes of Starbucks, trendy magazine accolades (Rosen, 2009), and the ire of residents (Terefenko, 2005).

The Gladstone, like the Drake, was cognizant of arts-driven gentrification, but owner/operators of the Gladstone, Margie and Christina Zeidler, sought to disrupt that process rather than propagate it. Before its renovation the Gladstone provided affordable housing for community members with low, fixed incomes (Roemer & Graham, 2007).

Building deterioration from years of landlord neglect and recent changes in ownership prompted the hotel's renovation, which included space for arts exhibitions to help generate revenue (Roemer & Graham, 2007). Owner/operators of the Gladstone Hotel, Margie and Christina Zeidler, strived to mitigate the displacement of long-time hotel tenants, recognizing that they were legitimate and valuable members of the community, but ultimately failed² to do so (Roemer & Graham, 2007). Margie Zeidler continued this struggle against the process of gentrification by providing her time, resources, and connections to support community activism in the politics of planning redevelopment in the WQWT.

From mid-2005 to January 2006, the City received three separate proposals from three different developers to construct condominiums in the West Queen West Triangle: Baywood Homes for 1171 Queen St., Verdiroc for 48 Abell St., and Landmark Properties (a part of the larger company UrbanCorp) for 150 Sudbury St. Existing building heights in the neighbourhood ranged from one to three storeys and, while in-force policies allowed for some mixed use, all the buildings were officially used for commercial or light-industry purposes. Each of the proposed developments, meanwhile, dwarfed the existing neighbourhood structures and drastically intensified residential land uses with no regard for the collective impact such redevelopment would have on the area.

In the summer of 2005 the first application received by the City was from Baywood Homes. The initial proposal was for one 10-storey building along Queen street and one 26-storey tower off of Queen St. bringing a total of 359 residential units to the area (City of Toronto, 2005a). While some space would be dedicated towards retail along

² Some of the Gladstone's long-term tenants moved out of their own will, no longer feeling welcome amidst the growing arts scene, and eventually none of the long-term tenants remained (Roemer & Graham, 2007).

Queen St., the ratio of residential to non-residential land-uses was severely disproportionate. Each of the developers would capitalize on the burgeoning identity of the WQWT as an arts cluster, but none were so egregious as Baywood Homes' dubbing their development the "Bohemian Embassy".

The second proposal put forward by Merv Hollander, owner of 48 Abell, and Verdiroc was for one 25 storey tower, one 19 storey tower for affordable housing, and a three storey building suitable for live/work studios adding up to 618 residential units (City of Toronto 2005b). In the 1970s, Hollander adapted his factory that was used for light bulb production into 85 lofts that he rented out as studio space for artists (Evans, 2005). It was an "open secret" that the tenants used the space to live as much as work while the zoning at the time only allowed for industrial or commercial uses (Evans, 2005, p. C7). Hollander had previously applied for a minor variance in 1999 to legalize the informal residential use (City of Toronto, 2005b), but developers advised him that a full redevelopment would be more cost effective than bringing the existing property up to building code standards (Evans, 2005). The inclusion of affordable housing in this redevelopment proposal was at least partly motivated by Hollander's desire to keep the neighbourhood accessible/affordable to "the art crowd" (Evans, 2005, C7).

The community response at consultation meetings was anything but favourable. These two applications on their own raised community concerns over height and density, especially for their impact on the character along Queen St.; infrastructure and traffic impacts; the loss of historic buildings –particularly 48 Abell St., which was a valuable, cherished space for local artists; the loss of lands for employment uses; and the need for affordability to keep local artists in the neighbourhood (City of Toronto, 2005c p. 6).

Relatively early in the consultation process the community insisted that the City should comprehensively evaluate all the proposals before them together rather than assess each of them as individual applications. The concern over the need for comprehensive planning magnified when it became known that yet another redevelopment proposal was being considered, this time for the vacant land on 150 Sudbury.

This third proposal presented by Landmark Developments/UrbanCorp sought to build three 5.5 storey stacked townhouses and one 16 storey tower comprising 434 residential units. The proposed redevelopment was completely for residential use, which would further contribute to the loss of employment lands in the WQWT. The public was first consulted on this proposal for 150 Sudbury during a public consultation in November 2005 on the general area study for rezoning in the WQWT, which also considered proposals for 48 Abell and 1171 Queen (City of Toronto, 2005c). The main objectives of the review were to engage in statutorily required public consultation and examine the impacts of increased residential density on local infrastructure, services and facilities, and amenity requirements such as parkland (City of Toronto, 2005c). Following the public consultation in November 2005, a group of citizens, residents, and business-owners formally mobilized as the organization *Active 18*, setting out to ensure that the change imminent to the Triangle would not proceed without input from the community.

Redevelopment Proposals: Reaction and Evolution

Active 18's founding and early supporting members were well-equipped to organize a robust response to the redevelopment proposals. Though their name referred to the ward in which they resided (Ward 18), their connections spanned well beyond the locality. Developers, architects, academics scholars, journalists, self-professed urbanists,

and residents were among the ranks of *Active 18*, each of whom lent their knowledge, connections and skills to argue for a community-based vision of “good design”. One key individual was founding member Margie Zeidler. As the co-owner of the Gladstone Hotel, she was privy to local development news and offered substantial support for *Active 18*’s activities, including the use of the Gladstone for community meetings, sponsoring design charrettes, and paying professional consulting fees related to formulating *Active 18*’s advocacy for good design (Interviewees 2 – 5). Another key individual was Jane Farrow, who was chair of *Active 18* from its incorporation until 2008. Her strong communication skills and experience working in news media helped *Active 18* respond quickly to ongoing political discussions and decisions (Interviewees 2, 4), which maintained the group’s presence in the struggle to plan redevelopment in the Triangle.

Active 18 worked quickly to produce their own vision for the Triangle. In January of 2006 they first held a brainstorming session to establish the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing the community (Active 18, 2006a). The meeting was well organized, facilitated by professional architect and designer Ken Greenberg, and involved a small group of design experts (Active 18, 2006a). The outcomes of that meeting then informed the design charrette held in March of that year, where local residents worked in groups to generate a more concrete vision and statement regarding how redevelopment should proceed (Active 18, 2006b). In a strategic move, *Active 18* held a press conference on March 30 to present their charrette proceedings alongside the launch of a sales centre for the 150 Sudbury development. According to Lehrer (2009, p. 153) the press conference was intended: “to draw attention to the developers, who were marketing the condominium units long before they had approval from the City or the

OMB; to call on a moratorium on any new development until the City had approved an Area Plan; and to present *Active 18*'s vision for a healthy redevelopment of the WQWT.”

The design charrette produced eight core ideas that would form the basis of *Active 18*'s vision of good planning:

1. Retention of 48 Abell;
2. Respect for the scale and nature of Queen Street;
3. The establishment of “truly mixed-use zoning”;
4. Streets and blocks must be introduced onto the site;
5. The need for green space;
6. A pedestrian/cycle link to areas south of the railway corridor;
7. A sustainability strategy for the precinct; and
8. A high quality of design (*Active 18*, 2006b).

Active 18 explicitly described their charrette report as a visionary document and the beginnings of an area plan that was still left unprepared by the City: “This document is not an area plan. [...] This document is, however, the perfect base for building one. After all, an area plan without broad community consultation isn’t worth the paper it’s printed on (*Active 18*, 2006b, p. 33).”

While *Active 18*'s and City Staff's recommendations were different – the former an articulation of community values and the latter an argument for policy compliance – they both agreed that the revised proposals from developers were unacceptable. City staff continued negotiations with developers to hopefully find a mutually agreeable solution, particularly regarding heights, density, and non-residential land-uses. City staff reports indicated that the maximum acceptable height should be 14 storeys (42 metres) for properties on 48 Abell and 1171 Queen, and 10 storeys (36 metres) for the property on 150 Sudbury (Table 1). Developers seemed to give little regard to staff recommendations as each of their revised proposals still exceeded the City's recommended heights and land-use proportions (**Error! Reference source not found.**). For example, the revised p

proposal for 48 Abell of two 19-storey towers more than doubled the massing recommended by the City at one 14-storey tower (Table 1). With no progress on heights or density, additional outstanding issues in both in-force and new planning policy that had not been successfully addressed by the developers' revised proposals included local street networks, parkland, community services and facilities, hard infrastructure capacity, heritage, conservation and sustainability, and impacts on employment in the area (City of Toronto, 2006b).

Site		Developers' 1st Proposals	City's Proposed Revisions	Developers' Revised Proposals
48 Abell	Residential land-use (%)	97.2%	See "no net loss" policy	94.2%
	Tallest storey per building	19 & 25	14	19 & 19
	Height (m)	60.5 & 79	42	60.5 & 60.5
1171 Queen	Residential land-use (%)	96.4%	See "no net loss" policy	Data unavailable
	Tallest storey per building	10 & 26	8 & 14	9 & 19
	Height (m)	35 & 79	24 & 42	27 & 62.5
150 Sudbury	Residential land-use (%)	100.0%	See "no net loss" policy	100%
	Tallest storey per building	5.5 & 16	8 & 10	9 & 13
	Height (m)	16.5 & 63	24 & 36	29.3 & 40

Table 1: Comparison of developer and City revisions to initial redevelopment proposals (City of Toronto, 2005a, 2005b, 2006a, 2006d, 2006e, 2006f).

Negotiations and OMB Ruling

In order to address issues on heights and density, non-residential land-use, and infrastructure and amenities the City used two noteworthy strategies³ in their negotiations with developers: a no-net-loss policy and Section 37 agreements.

No-net-loss Policy for Non-residential Land-use

As a result of the earlier zoning review, a no-net-loss policy was presented to community council on May 30th, 2006 in order to protect existing non-residential space in

³ Heritage designation is explored in Chapter 3 as it was not used to affect any developers' planning rationale.

the Triangle (which was calculated to be 40,000 m² including artist studios) (City of Toronto, 2006c). More specifically, the no-net-loss policy set out to limit residential uses on the first floor of buildings, calculate a minimum amount non-residential uses to be maintained proportionally across the three redevelopment proposals, and establish definitions of “non-residential” land-use to apply to the area (City of Toronto 2006b). This no-net-loss policy would make non-residential development a requirement in proportion to residential development instead of an option as was the case with orthodox mixed-use zoning.

Maintaining a balance between residential and non-residential land-uses was important given the proposed residential uses and the significance of the area for employment and live/work spaces. The fact that the industries reliant on employment in the area were “creative” and “cultural” industries only compounded the importance of protecting lands for employment uses because workers in the creative sector typically earn below average wages which makes them likely to be displaced by increased land values and rents (City of Toronto, 2006b, pp. 9 -10). City staff also argued that a no-net-loss policy would further benefit the City as a whole by ensuring that the Triangle remain a place for arts and culture to thrive, aligning with the City’s cultural plan (at the time) and vision for a creative city. To these ends, the no-net-loss policy was to “(1) [retain] or [replicate] studio and craft industrial space; (2) [create] gallery and performance space; and (3) [retain/create] affordable live/work units (City of Toronto, 2006b, p. 11).”

Section 37 Agreements

Section 37 agreements, available to municipalities through the *Planning Act*, 1990, allow municipalities to add conditions to zoning bylaw amendments that ensure

relaxed height restrictions still adhere to good planning and the intent of the municipality's official plan. In this context, the City aimed to secure affordable housing and live/work spaces, community spaces, the repurposing the Carnegie Library for arts-related activities, creation of a visual arts hub, and funding for parkland acquisition (beyond the statutorily required 5%) and park construction (City of Toronto, 2006b). Setting aside park-related considerations, each of these benefits sought to minimize the displacement of the existing arts community and enhance the neighbourhood for future use as an arts and culture hub.

By definition, Section 37 agreements must reflect good planning as indicated in a municipality's official plan and other policies/guidelines. The community benefits considered by the City, then, recognize the importance of long-term planning visions and community stability as elements of good planning. In this case, community preservation was grounded in making the Triangle an incubator for the arts. This narrative is enshrined in policy and thus more defensible when scrutinized at an OMB hearing, but it changes the rhetoric of protecting communities against redevelopment as a community of arts and culture producers rather than for their place-based identity that emerged over time as was articulated by *Active 18*.

Despite this nuance between *Active 18's* good planning and the good planning conveyed portrayed through community benefits, *Active 18* was still a driving force behind the Section 37 benefits that were eventually secured. Many of the benefits were the joint product of political pressure mounted by *Active 18* and the negotiation skills of City planners (Interviewees 3, 4). The ideas of protecting and retrofitting heritage buildings for cultural purposes (ex. the Carnegie Library) and developing a more

integrated street network (ex. artists mews/laneway and the Northcote St. extension) were first suggested through *Active 18*'s (2006b, p. 24) design charrette. The fact that elements of *Active 18*'s charrette were included in Section 37 benefits is significant because it represents at least some material affect on the planning outcome. However, *Active 18* had to proactively and consistently advance their vision of good planning in order to secure these minor concessions.

For example, John Sewell, who was approached by *Active 18* to help them politically organize and prepare for the OMB hearing, initially suggested to the City that they should form a working group between developers, *Active 18* and the City in an effort to negotiate a settlement and avoid a costly OMB hearing (Campbell, 2017). Through these working groups, there was some consensus generated around perceived issues facing redevelopment in the Triangle including the need for more park space, that affordable housing should be encouraged, and that the laneways south of the buildings that front Queen St. should be activated with arts-related enterprises such as galleries or live/work studio spaces (City of Toronto, 2006b). These areas of agreement generated through the working group would be reflected in the Section 37 negotiations to come.

It should be noted here that Sewell believed a smaller working group would be easier to manage and more effective for negotiation between participants, however the ward councillor opted for larger working groups that would be open for public viewing (Campbell, 2017). Campbell (2017, online) opines that “[the City’s] notion [of a working group] was not a forum to negotiate but rather a forum for public discussion.”⁴ Based on Campbell’s (2017, online) recollection of the 2006 working group, then, *Active 18* sought

⁴ This direct quote may be found in the subsection titled “The Working Group – 2006.”

to gain a more meaningful negotiating position with the City and developers through the working groups, and force developers into responding to *Active 18's* community-based vision. However, some issues such as the balance of residential and non-residential land uses as well as building heights and density proved to be irreconcilable between the City and developers during the working groups, which suggests that even if *Active 18* could have successfully captured some of the City's bargaining power, an OMB hearing would still have been a likely scenario.

Despite the working groups, the City and the developers failed to reach an agreement and the city staff had not yet completed area studies by the time council was due to make a decision. All three developers individually filed appeals with the OMB, but with the consent of all parties, the appeals were consolidated into one hearing (OMB, 2006). As they did with the City, *Active 18* requested that the Board consider the collective impact that the redevelopment proposals would have on the area, rather than just consider each individual application on its own (OMB, 2006, p. 4). However, "The Board note[d] that the only planning instruments requiring approval under the *Planning Act* relate to the individual development applications", meaning that final arguments and decisions would be considered individually and not holistically.

OMB Hearing

The OMB heard from all three developers, the City, *Active 18*⁵, and the Canadian National Railway Company over 35 days of hearings in the fall of 2006. Witness statements were provided as evidence to be considered by the Board and were classified as expert witnesses, non-expert witnesses, or participants. Expert witnesses differed from

⁵ In order to participate in the OMB hearing as a party, *Active 18* became a formal corporation. This entitled them to present their own case/evidence to the Board and cross-examine the witnesses of other participants.

the latter two statements in that they had to list their qualifications, name and address, and provide, in detail, the reasoning for the opinions (OMB, 2006). Non-expert witnesses and participants, meanwhile, were not beholden to these standards, only being required to describe their background, interest in the matter, and outline the sources they used to inform their opinions on the issues (OMB, 2006).

The use of evidence in this case was particularly important due to the complexity of the applications involved: the *Provincial Policy Statement, 2005* and *Growth Plan, 2004* spoke to land-use intensification; the New City of Toronto *Official Plan* designated the Triangle as a regeneration area, which encouraged residential land-use intensification; cultural plans and policies added importance to the role of the Triangle as part of the arts and culture industry; the (New) Garrison Common North Secondary Plan provided instruction to improve the Triangle's street network; and lastly potential heritage designation of properties on the Triangle (as both site and district) were at issue before the Board (City of Toronto, 2006b, pp. 3 – 5; OMB, 2006, pp. 17 – 20). This complex web of policies had to be interpreted in light of the three proposals to determine their viability, which undermined the perceived validity of community input through increased knowledge requirements and the differentiation of “expert” and “non-expert” knowledge as will be shown in the remainder of this section. The Board addressed three main issues: height and density, non-residential land-use, and infrastructure and street networks.

Main Issue 1: Heights and Density

It would be misleading to say that the developers secured everything they wanted from the OMB ruling, but it is certain that little of the developers' revised proposals changed. The maximum allowable height in the Triangle was argued by the City to be 45

metres, but the Board found maximum allowable heights for 48 Abell, 1171 Queen and 150 Sudbury to be 50.5, 62.5 and 48 metres respectively (OMB 2007a, 2007b, 2007c). The prevailing argument regarding heights and density was that the developers' proposal satisfied the intent of policy to transition from taller buildings away from Queen Street to shorter building fronting Queen Street so as to enhance the streetscape experience (OMB, 2007c, p. 15). Moreover, Landmark/UrbanCorp had successfully convinced the Board that the area's designation as a "regeneration area" and the not-yet-in-force Official Plan's designation as an "area in transition" signified the intentions of Provincial and Municipal Planning policy to intensify residential land-use in the area (Davidson, 2006). It is evident through the Board that resolving the matter of height and density flows purely from what is enshrined in policy, meaning it is more so an aesthetic matter of transitioning down to street level than the impact of vastly increased human activity in the neighbourhood⁶. The final decisions by the OMB ultimately supported the developers' proposed heights and densities. Other issues related to Section 37 agreements, open space, and parkland acquisition were to be determined at a later date once these building dimensions had been officially settled through a by-law amendment.

Main Issue 2: Non-residential Land-use

The other major issue to be resolved was the balance of residential and non-residential land uses. For reasons similar to height and density, the OMB ruled in favour of the developers, deeming the City's basis for disagreement was insufficiently grounded in policy for lack of precision and continuity (regarding the City's no-net-loss policy) and inconsistent methodology (for deriving the sufficient amount of live/work space) (OMB,

⁶ The importance of other built form dimensions such as setback and stepbacks are glossed over in this brief review because they are less relevant to the discourse of good planning.

2007c, p. 7). The Board found that these ambiguities undermined the City's ability to use such policies for tracking and achieving employment targets; allowing these policies to prevail would set precedent for similarly ambiguous policies in other mixed-use and regeneration designated areas in the future (OMB, 2007c, p. 7). The Board agreed with the City and the developers that the ground floor spaces along Queen should be reserved for non-residential use, which, combined with affordable live/work studios on the property of 48 Abell, would increase the non-residential land use relative to what existed previously, successfully addressing the issue of mixed-use.

Main Issue 3: Infrastructure and Street Networks

The OMB decision reports paired with the proceedings of the working group discussions reveal a selective resistance by developers on issues regarding infrastructure that speak to the prerogative of developers to maximize profit within the constraints of planning policy. The requirement of "Master Service Plans" and, to some extent, parkland provision and the extension of Sudbury street were planning matters deemed absolutely necessary for the project to be viable. Contributions towards parkland are required by planning statute and "There was no dispute of the importance of securing the future Sudbury Street extension prior to any of the three applications proceeding. While the end seems to be agreed in principle, the means of securing Sudbury was not (OMB, 2007c, p. 8)." A common thread connecting these less-disputed elements is that they pertain to connecting the space with city-wide systems –inputs and outputs of people, vehicles, resources, and waste. These can be understood to be the minimum functions that make the space physically viable and habitable.

Conversely, consideration of other matters of infrastructure such as the artist mews/laneway and the Northcote extension required the staunch insistence of *Active 18* during public consultations, council deputations, and working group meetings for them to be considered at the OMB stage. These two elements are also matters of infrastructure relating to the movement of people throughout space and were considered by the Board to contribute to the public interest and deem the proposals as good planning (OMB, 2007a, p. 13). Yet unlike the Sudbury Street extension, the mews and Northcote Street extension would not have emerged had it not been for *Active 18*. Here, I draw two interrelated implications from this discrepancy: (1) planning policy on its own does not encourage developers to generate good planning outcomes – other perspectives such as community groups and planners have valuable contributions that can help improve planning outcomes; and (2) the power to negotiate between community members, the City, and developers in planning processes favours the latter to the extent that good design elements must be leveraged from developers in exchange for the opportunity for enhanced profits.

Good Planning in Name Alone

At the time, the OMB presided over a broad range of appeals on planning matters and, as reviewed in Chapter 1 of this paper, their decision represented an overriding interpretation of good planning and the public interest. In this case study, *Active 18*'s and the City's combined advocacy on issues of non-residential land uses, heights and density, affordable housing, (funds for) on-site parkland, live/work units, gallery and workshop space, and improved street networks made no further progress at the Board. The decision only affirmed that the revisions made by developers prior to the hearing "to be

appropriate, represent good planning and be in the overall public interest of the community (OMB, 2007a, p. 13).”

Given the substantial efforts that *Active 18* had put into participating in the planning process (see Appendix A) and advocating for comprehensive planning in the Triangle, it must be questioned how the Board weighed their arguments against the different parties when determining good planning. “While the Board itself was encouraged to consider creative solutions in its deliberations, it must point out its obligation to carefully consider the evidence in the context of the existing statutory and policy framework (OMB, 2007c p. 10).” This obligation in effect limited the scope of what was considered good planning and resulted in the evaluation of the redevelopment applications on an individual basis. The OMB’s (2007a, 2007b, 2007c) decision reports on the three developments rarely explain further their criteria for decision making beyond the aforementioned prerogative to uphold planning policy and statute. Their decision reports only note how they “consider” the evidence before them or “acknowledge” the differences in opinions, serving to further obscure whose interests are served through planning processes. The OMB’s flippant use of the term “good planning” betrays the integrity of planning processes, the purpose of public consultation, and the City’s ability to control the way it develops despite having policies in place.

Settlement, Finalized Agreements, and Community Input

The City made immediate efforts following the OMB decision to salvage the months-long negotiations with the developers (Appendix A). Mayor Miller requested a Ministerial Order to overrule the OMB that was promptly denied and the City appealed to

the OMB for a rehearing under Section 43 of the *Ontario Municipal Board Act, 1990*, contending that the OMB's ruling acted outside its jurisdiction, erred on a matter of law, and provided insufficient reasoning. This, too, was dismissed by the new panel of Board judges who found no fault in the original decision (OMB, 2007d). *Active 18* pushed the City to pursue an appeal of all three decisions at Divisional Court by filing their factum of appeal before the City had filed one based on an understanding that the City would follow suit (Campbell, 2017). The City had indeed filed its own factum of appeal with the intention of appealing to Divisional Court, but following the dismissed motion for a rehearing, they decided to settle with two of three developers the evening before the Divisional Court hearing (Lehrer, 2009). Importantly, *Active 18* was not consulted on the ward councilor's decision to settle.

The remaining redevelopment application for 150 Sudbury was left unsettled and the Divisional Court granted the City leave for appeal on July 25, 2007 (Ontario Superior Court, 2007). The successful appeal application officially recognized the insufficient reasoning cited by the Board in their decision for 150 Sudbury: "Apart from a passing reference to 'the existing statutory and policy framework', there is no indication that the Board gave any consideration to these issues [of employment opportunities and intentions of provincial and municipal planning policy]. The Board reasons are devoid of any discussion of the *Planning Act*, Provincial Policy Statements and the City's Official Plan as they apply to these lands (Ontario Superior Court, 2007, p. 6)." While only one of three redevelopment proposals was granted an appeal to Divisional Court, *Active 18* and the City found themselves in a powerful bargaining position with Landmark Developments/ UrbanCorp and their president Alan Saskin (Artscape, 2011).

Until the leave for appeal for 150 Sudbury was granted, the non-profit urban development organization *Artscape* had been a watchful spectator of the urban politics unfolding in the Triangle. *Artscape*'s interest in the Triangle was based on their work as developers and managers of affordable artist spaces in Toronto. In a promotional interview for the organization, *Artscape* president Tim Jones recalls, "When the divisional court granted leave for appeal to the City [...] we [at *Artscape*] knew that Alan Saskin was stuck and needed a way to break the log jam with the planners and the divisional courts (Artscape, 2011, online)." With input from *Active 18* and the City, *Artscape* eventually struck a settlement deal with UrbanCorp that secured 68 units of affordable live/work spaces for artists, equivalent to approximately 56,000 square feet worth \$19 million. The affordable housing in this deal was intended to sustain the presence of artists in the community and the established character of the neighbourhood. This was arguably the most successful deal born out of the struggle to plan the WQWT's redevelopment between 2005-08 and *Active 18* was an essential driving force behind this deal.

Negotiations between the City and developers continued throughout the remainder of 2007 until the details of the zoning bylaw amendments were officially approved by the OMB in January of 2008 (OMB, 2008). *Active 18* proactively monitored the dialogue between the City and developers by commenting on relevant zoning amendment reports provided to Community Council and by remaining a party in the OMB-mediated agreements (Appendix A). From the finalized zoning amendments, it is clear that the primary contested elements of height, density, and (non-)residential land-use favoured the developer (City of Toronto 2009a, 2009b, 2009c) (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Picture of 1171 Queen (blue), 48 Abell (green), and 150 Sudbury (red). Base map from City of Toronto. Building heights from City of Toronto (2009a, 2009b, 2009c) zoning bylaw amendment.

The final approved zoning bylaw amendments accommodated the revised proposals of developers and articulated the terms of settlement and Section 37 agreements that justify, according to the OMB, the redevelopments. Paraphrasing the laundry list of common obligations, property owners of all three developments were to: ensure sufficient hard infrastructure would be constructed, provide for publicly accessible landscaped open space, integrate street networks and open spaces between all three sites, minimize negative environmental impacts on the developments (including soil remediation, wind mitigation, and effects coming from the adjacent rail corridor), and contribute to the development of the Triangle as an arts and culture hub (City of Toronto, 2009a; 2009b; 2009c). These common terms suggest an understanding that the approval of these developments should not have been considered in isolation and that a concerted effort between developers would be required before construction proceeded. However, this need for coordination was identified by planners upon their first receiving the

redevelopment proposals, so it is highly unlikely that public participation contributed to these common terms as an embodiment of good planning.

If there is any substantial impact of public participation on the outcomes of this planning process, it would be in the community benefits that spoke to the Triangle's identity. While the precise valuations and compensation were outside of the community's hands, the uses of such funds were in response to the community's articulated needs. For instance, the owner of the 1171 Queen Street property was required to make a monetary contribution of \$500,000 for certain capital facilities (including, but not limited to, the retrofit of the Carnegie Library and the development of live/work spaces for artists) that enhanced the Triangle's role as an arts and culture cluster (City of Toronto, 2014). The owner of the 150 Sudbury Street property was required to make a monetary contribution of \$1.25 million for local arts and community infrastructure, which unlike the contributions for 1171 Queen, could be applied to matters such as the construction of Lisgar Park or the retrofit of the Carnegie Library (City of Toronto, 2014). These specific community benefits spoke to the promotion of non-residential uses, with an emphasis on making them accessible to people living in the Triangle.

Unlike the Section 37 benefits secured by properties 1171 Queen and 150 Sudbury, which both aligned with City policies regarding economic and cultural development, the benefits secured through the redevelopment of 48 Abell flowed from community concerns over the displacement of the property's existing tenants. This suggests that these benefits were most directly a response to community concerns and would not likely have occurred without community participation. While the original redevelopment application by Verdiroc included affordable housing, the addition of

live/work units advocated by *Active 18* emerged out of the dual need of artists for affordability *and space*. For redevelopment to proceed, the applicant was obligated: to secure a minimum 190 units of affordable⁷ housing including 27 artists' live/work units, to provide up to \$110,000 in total compensation to assist with the relocation of tenants in the 20 units slated for demolition, and to agree to sell to the City six workshop spaces (totaling about 430 square metres) at a subsidized rate of \$250.00 per square foot (compared to the market rate of \$350.00 per square foot) (City of Toronto, 2014).

With all of these community benefits above secured, in addition to the *Artscape* deal with Landmark Developments/UrbanCorp, there was at least some plausible reason to believe that the condo redevelopments on some level represented good planning, served the public interest, and meaningfully addressed community concerns.

Perspectives on Redevelopment in the Triangle

Reviewing this series of events shows the complex relationships and hierarchies that affect planning decisions, and the vast requirements of time and resources to participate in these processes (Appendix A). As this case has been laid out here, it is clear that the final test for decision-making was whether or not the respective proposal complied with planning policy, and that, through this test, the redevelopment proposals reached a mutually agreeable resolution. But as is common in political conflicts, there are opposing perspectives that argue the final outcome was far from mutually agreeable.

The news media reaction to the fresh OMB ruling in 2007 condemned the decision as undemocratic and not representative of the community's interests despite the

⁷ Here, affordable housing was defined as "...no more than 1.0 times the CMHC average market rent for dwelling units of a similar type in [Toronto]..." (City of Toronto, 2009a)."

concessions from developers (Ross, 2007; Hume, 2007). The community successfully made themselves heard, but the planning process at the OMB stage completely disregarded their input (Hume, 2007). Faith in the planning process was quashed along with any belief that an appeal of the OMB decision would be worth the time or money (Moloney, 2007). The sentiment in news media was that the Triangle would turn into “an amorphous upscale bedroom community” (Foad, 2007, online), and that community-based artists would be pushed out to make room for condominiums (Whyte, 2008). The narrative from articles reviewed above suggest that the final outcomes of this years-long planning struggle represented neither good planning nor the public interest, particularly as community input had been so clearly ineffective at changing key issues of height and density.

As years passed the Triangle received new applications to redevelop and the reported narrative in the Triangle seemed to indicate the Section 37 benefits secured in 2008 were doing what they were supposed to: keeping artists in the neighbourhood (Gee, 2012; Kuitenbrouwer, 2010). Between the *Artscape* lofts and the Theatre Centre at the newly renovated Carnegie Library, “the arts [were] thriving” in the Triangle (Gee, 2012, online). One tenant of an affordable live/work space cited his appreciation for “secure, stable, suitable, well maintained and reasonably priced space”, that would otherwise be difficult to acquire if not for the benefits secured through redevelopment (Sandals, 2013, online). It seemed the worry that artists would no longer have a place in the Triangle or wider West Queen West neighbourhood was debunked and that the community benefits had some success in keeping the Triangle an area for the arts (Gee, 2012; Kuitenbrouwer, 2010; Sandals, 2013). The events of the Triangle also signaled that a community’s best

bet to have their interests represented amidst Toronto's condo boom was through Section 37 benefits (Sandals, 2013). However, in an interview with *The Toronto Star*, Michelle Gay of *Active 18* reminded other civic activists and community groups that the Section 37 benefits they helped secure were hard fought and grounded in preserving a community identity rather than leveraging the brand of an arts community (Whyte, 2015). This is a critical counterpoint to the notion that Section 37 is a channel for communities to ensure redevelopment in Toronto reflects their interests.

Underscoring the disconnect between planning and local or community interests is Van Eyk's (2010) analysis of the West Queen West Triangle redevelopments as an example of gentrification. Van Eyk (2010) re-tells the history of 48 Abell from its industrial past to its eventual demise to show the exploitation of cultural value in gentrification processes. Her account of the material, physical, and emotional cost borne by the community in redevelopment demonstrates the damage done to one Toronto community in the name of regenerative planning policy. It reflects the community's struggle against gentrification and subsequent disruption of an organic vernacular, going beyond concerns of height, massing, or balance of land-uses.

This cursory survey of competing perspectives on the story of the West Queen West Triangle speaks to how planning processes are intensely political. Though a decision had been made by the OMB, the notion that good planning had prevailed was far from settled.

Community as a Political Actor

Active 18's relentless effort to bring community input into the planning process was about more than just good design and comprehensive planning. The substance of their advocacy situated the problematic and inequitable impacts of wider socio-economic processes within the scope of planning policy (Lehrer, 2009). *Active 18*'s participation in planning exemplified the potential for grass-roots organizations to present competing perspectives of urban development, raising the uncomfortable question of who truly benefits from urban transformation, and thusly representing interests that spanned beyond the geographic boundaries of the Triangle (Lehrer, 2009).

Active 18 did not operate in a vacuum. They interacted with other stakeholders and power structures. In the same way that *Active 18* was successfully able to pressure stakeholders (ex. developers and local politicians) into responding to their politics, so too could other participants in the planning process. Whether for sustainability or (global) economic competitiveness developers successfully adopted the provincially sanctioned call for greater density to override community and already understaffed City resistance (Lehrer, 2011). Further, the planning structures that community groups must navigate limit the impact of community-generated good planning principles. In the case of the Triangle, the OMB's decision was rejected as good planning by many – tenants of 48 Abell, urbanists within the Triangle and throughout the City, the Mayor, and of course *Active 18* – and small concessions were earned, but condo towers were still built (mostly) to the desires of developers (Lehrer, 2011). Through compromise and dialogue, well-intentioned community groups risk internalizing, and becoming a part of, market-driven place-making discourses rather than changing the discourse itself.

One decade since the fight for the Triangle has passed, and there is still more to be unpacked and analyzed. Taking cues from Lehrer's (2011) work, I proceed with an examination of how the community values and efforts of *Active 18* penetrated planning processes and contributed (or not) to the prevailing notion of good planning. Among the many elements worthy of analysis, I focus on the notion of good planning as a watershed moment, a point of contact for community values and identities in urban politics through planning. How are these values transformed in planning negotiations, how do the outcomes of these negotiations affect future engagement, and how do they affect the wider urban political discourse?

Chapter 3: Citizen Activism Meets Redevelopment

Chapter 3 focuses on the organization and rhetoric of *Active 18* as it relates to perceptions of good planning and how this community perception of good planning was received by councillors and city planners, which together contribute to an understanding of how community values penetrated planning processes.

Community organization *Active 18* is the centrepiece of this analysis. As mentioned earlier, their founding members and supporters collectively held years of experience in journalism, planning, and architecture and design. Well-educated and well-connected, this group was able to speak the language of developers and tap into bureaucratic channels, reducing the knowledge barriers that community groups typically experience when participating in planning processes. In addition to the exceptional set of skills at their disposal, they presented themselves as advocates of “good design” and open to an earnest discussion among stakeholders on how development should proceed. This approach implied that the community had valuable contributions to make to the planning process that were as important as developers and city planners. Community organizations rarely possess the knowledge, time, and resources to proactively engage in a years-long planning process, but *Active 18* persisted. Their participation in planning the redevelopment of the West Queen West Triangle is examined as a case study to better understand how community knowledge and values were adapted, transformed, and/or rejected in planning processes, by whom, by what means, and to what ends.

Community as a Component of Good Planning

It is clear from *Active 18*'s slogan, "Citizens for good design – a Toronto community organization concerned about city planning" and their mandate that their primary objective was to represent citizen interests in the planning process:

Active 18 aims to be a voice to directly speak to our elected officials, the developers, their architects and land owners in the Triangle to define what residents want to see. Our purpose is to inform citizens of development in the Queen Street Triangle. We are not a collective singular voice but a forum for collective voices [...] We demand and deserve a livable city which reflects the needs of our ward and the people who use it. (Active 18, n.d., online)

Active 18's mandate spoke to their outcome-oriented approach that focused on ensuring the eventual outcome at least partially reflected community interests. Two key assumptions are that planning *should* be a democratic, inclusive process, and that, as a corollary, such a process would be receptive to community input:

Not everybody has the same narrative and desire. The thing about participatory planning and participatory design is that you're going to get an agonism; you may disagree, but we're here to talk about it... It was a dialogue, it was never a confrontational kind of community stuff going on. [...] if you've got an opinion, you can't just say it and walk away. (Interviewee 4, Active 18 Member, 18 March 2017)

...we didn't want to call ourselves a residents association, because it's a very exclusionary term... When we organized our charrette, we made sure it was known that we represented people who were renters, business owners, [because] they were people who had a right to a say in all of this... (Interviewee 6, Former Active 18 Member, 4 April 2017)

Active 18's desire to include as many community voices as possible shows their perception of planning as a legitimate opportunity for community values to be voiced, discussed, and incorporated into urban environmental change. The above interview excerpts further show that *Active 18* believed that the virtue of their work was grounded in inclusivity and negotiation, not simply as representatives of the community.

Establishing Community Values

As explained in Chapter 2, *Active 18* used the skills and resources available to them to independently construct an urban-design-centred representation of community values. Community members wanted more than a section in City staff reports and reviews of existing planning policy; they wanted to see an area-specific vision enshrined in policy that represented the community's needs. Margie Zeidler provided tremendous support to *Active 18* by opening the Gladstone as a meeting space and by connecting the group to her professional network (Interviewees 2 – 6). These resources bolstered the organization's ability to methodically and effectively galvanize community (Interviewees 2 – 6). They first began in January of 2005 with a “brainstorming session” facilitated by architect and designer Ken Greenberg in which the small group of people with expertise in different facets of development (financing, planning, architecture, etc.) identified both social and built form concerns (Active 18, 2006a). The SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis yielded standard critiques of redevelopment: the desire to be part of the planning process, ensuring a mix of housing tenure and affordability, minimizing resident displacement, respecting the character of the neighbourhood, and providing green spaces and sustainable buildings and high quality architecture (Active 18, 2006a). Little more than a month later, these values were presented to the community in a day-long design charrette where participants worked together to reify the values established in January into eight core ideas⁸ (Active 18, 2006b).

⁸ See Chapter 2, page 29 for list of eight core ideas of community-based vision.

Each idea spoke to what community members believed made the neighbourhood special, asserting that consideration of these elements would benefit new people moving to the neighbourhood as well as the existing community. This assertion was corroborated by the fact that redevelopment was driven by the area's perceived identity as a hip, artsy neighbourhood. While grounding their vernacular in urban design, they were motivated by more than aesthetics: "...many artists in the area loath the [City's] notion of the 'Queen West Arts and Design District' as well as existing promotions for the arts – they represent the ghetto-ization of the cultural sector to tourist attraction, and undermine the existing climate of the area (*Active 18*, 2006b, p. 26)." Their approach to mixed use and live/work spaces was driven by the "need to foster the 'accidental economies' that happen organically (*Active 18*, 2006b, p.23)." Maintaining the character of the area also meant providing affordable spaces for independent enterprises through "fine-grain" retail spaces as larger commercial spaces would be too expensive for the needs of such enterprises (*Active 18*, 2006b, p.19). So, while the concerns and aspirations expressed by *Active 18* were common where condo redevelopment was concerned, their values were mindful of nuanced community experiences.

These experiences and the subject of community identity in the WQWT were especially important due to the branding and commodification of the neighbourhood as an arts cluster. Marketing for the proposed redevelopments attempted to capitalize on a caricature of cultural production (Van Eyk, 2010) while flagrantly ignoring the cumulative effects that the proposals would have on the existing neighbourhood. Rather than provide common ground between all involved parties, the contest over the identity of an arts community became a point of friction. This conflict was most pronounced over

the preservation of the former factory on 48 Abell. The developers had no interest in preserving the site despite its importance to the community. The building came to symbolize *Active 18*'s overarching struggle against gentrification and was a tangible expression of the value of organically formed community:

There was a strong urge to retain the art live/work spaces as they were [...] Anyone facing eviction from their own home was going to fight to keep it somehow, and... there was something really special about [48 Abell]. Something that was very difficult to design, and it was a community that emerged anarchically over time in this post-industrial building. (Interviewee 5, Former Tenant of 48 Abell, 18 March 2017)

So this neck of the woods was hugely important for the creative community in Toronto including the 48 Abell warehouse that's no longer there. But many, many, many people [...] had a studio there, and for 40 years I'd say tons of different artists lived in that cheap space. (Interviewee 4, Active 18 Member, 18 March 2017)

The fight to save 48 Abell is more complicated than a tale of community-versus-developers. In one light, the historic John Abell Factory was a piece of Toronto history that had become a venerable mainstay for many Toronto artists and would be irreplaceable if destroyed (Rochon, 2006; Van Eyk, 2010). In another light, some observers portrayed opponents of 48 Abell's demolition as also opposing the affordable housing associated with the condo redevelopment that would take its place, making out the civic activists to be no more than NIMBYs (Metzger, 2007). In yet another light, the building's life had run its course and it would be safer for occupants if the building were to be replaced (Evans, 2005). But arguably the most compelling political narrative surrounding the site's preservation was based on its unique value to tenants and the WQWT community (Van Eyk, 2010). Artists who had made a home in the Abell lofts organized under the name *Model 48* and utilized creative tactics for demonstrating the site's importance to the neighbourhood, including neighbourhood tours, writing op-ed

articles in news media, and holding a funeral⁹ for the site following the final OMB decision (Interviewees 5 and 6).

The designation of 48 Abell was a sensitive political topic especially because a municipal election was soon due and the redevelopment proposal was bound up with affordable housing, extensive media coverage, and vocal community resistance, all of which may have staved off the full participation of council (Van Eyk, 2010, p. 134). Ultimately, proponents of the site's preservation could not gather enough political will to designate the property as a heritage building (even after getting the ward councillor on their side) or convince the OMB that it should not be demolished.

Preserving 48 Abell was only one component of *Active 18*'s vision for the Triangle, but the struggle that it provoked was critical to the discourse of good planning. Firstly, it exemplifies the dissonance that planning faces when confronting the value of informal uses of space. Community members clearly indicated the building's irreplaceable value (Interviewees 2, 4, 5), but the incapacity of planning to formalize its adapted use precluded this value from having a formative impact on discussions of good planning within planning processes (OMB, 2007a, pp. 11 – 13). And secondly, it exemplifies the importance of civic participation beyond formal planning processes. Though neither city council nor the OMB would preserve this community cornerstone, evidence of community values had been asserted through the community's civic activism, which added pressure on local politicians to dispute the OMB ruling as a representation of good planning (L., 2007).

⁹ For a modest look into the thoughts of some 48 Abell tenants, see some of the posts at: <http://48abellstreet.blogspot.ca/2006/11/funeral-for-building.html>

Counter to the NIMBY identity, *Active 18* clarified that they were not against development in the Triangle, but that the development that would occur in the Triangle had to be of good design (Interviewees 3, 4). Their rhetoric adopted the language familiar to urban design experts – “fine grain retail”, “extension of street networks”, “transitions in scale”, and so on -but they advocated for these particular design elements because they embodied the community’s interests and sense of identity; the fact that these elements were considered good design by professionals was only an auxiliary strength. *Active 18*’s work was intended to be similar to an area plan or secondary plan, a macro-level document for general guidance that was informed by community members and professional urban designers.

Distinguishing the contributions of “professionals”/ “experts” and community members with respect to good planning, particularly within a community organization like *Active 18*, is an undertaking that likely has no definitive answer but is nonetheless a relationship worth exploring. Given the political nature of planning (as shown in Chapter 2) and the continuously contested notion of good planning, it would be instructive to consider if community or lay-person opinions lend to the legitimacy of expert opinions as being in the “public interest”, or if expert opinions legitimize community contributions as being of sound logic or reasoning. In doing so, we may better understand how particular interests are elevated, erased, or neutralized in understandings of (community-based) good planning. To help inform this analysis, I asked interviewees about the facets of *Active 18* that strengthened their political advocacy.

Most of the interviewees (2 – 6) spoke to the importance of leadership. Margie Zeidler and Jane Farrow were repeatedly mentioned for their political connections and

communication skills, providing the nucleus around which community members and professionals could organize. Zeidler also provided a sufficiently large space in the Gladstone which was readily available for meetings and enabled *Active 18* to maintain a consistent effort (Interviewees 2 – 5). Their expansive social and professional networks linked the group with an array of planning- and design-related experts, but how (or if) this pre-existing relationship between participating experts and community members affected the dialogue was unaddressed during these interviews. It is possible that pre-existing relationships between “experts” and community members may reflect a more balanced power relationship between the two groups and meaningfully affect the ability for participants to work with each other. While, interviewees did not speak directly to this relationship, some did mention that knowing a fellow participant’s professional background encouraged a degree of trust in their opinion (Interviewees 3, 4).

With respect to the formation of *Active 18*’s values, interviewees mentioned how professional skills were useful for presenting their values, whether through reports, PowerPoint presentations, or written or spoken media blasts (Interviewees 2 – 4). Professional knowledge, at least in this case, served to express community values more so than affirm or validate community opinions. However it must be acknowledged that a closed group of experts (the January 2006 working group) established the terms of reference before opening the visionary exercise to the community with the design charrette. Further regarding community participation within *Active 18*, one interviewee recalls, “it had a lot to do with status in the neighbourhood for some people thinking, ‘okay we’re legit because so-and-so’s involved or this person’s involved’ (Interviewee

6).” This suggests that there is increased confidence in the group based on the reputations of its members.

Some interviewees mentioned the value of having community members participate in *Active 18*'s meetings, regardless of their professional background:

Yes, we're not experts in planning, but I think the questions we were asking as a group were good questions. How do we build smart cities, how do we make sure that the infrastructure like the Queen street car is still going to work with 10 000 new people at this stop? We studied things but we don't know everything or every zoning bylaw by heart. (Interviewee 4, Active 18 Member, 18 March 2017)

[...] everybody uses a neighbourhood and so everybody has something to bring to the table. Particularly with Active 18, it really was a powerhouse group of Activists. (Interviewee 5, Former Tenant of 48 Abell, 18 March 2017)

The importance of community voices was also in service of *Active 18*'s established mandate of being a forum for discussion open to the community (Interviewee 4, 6). But despite the open invitation, it was acknowledged that present and persistent opinions at meetings were more likely to be represented by *Active 18* as a group: “I think, frankly, that other people are quite happy that other people are doing the work. So, if you come out [to meetings] and do the work, your opinion actually starts to stick (Interviewee 4, Active 18 Member, 18 March 2017).” Further, it was acknowledged that not all community perspectives were present at the meetings held by *Active 18*: “[There was] a concerted effort of reaching out to the Portuguese neighbourhood, to quite limited success (Interviewee 6, Former Active 18 Member, 4 April 2017).”

The contributions of professionals and community members generated a clear, cohesive vision that was intended to represent community interests in discussions of good planning. However, the ample skills and resources available to *Active 18* did not exempt

it from the problems of community representation, where it was acknowledged that *Active 18*'s efforts should not give reason to believe that they speak for every individual, either within their group or within the community at-large. These problems aside, a clear vision with firm resolve is useful as a basis for engaging other political stakeholders. The following section explores how this community-based vision for the Triangle interacted with planning processes and competing notions of good planning.

Points of Inflection

Active 18 composed a clear, cohesive vision that reflected their values. This vision can be compared with the finally approved developments to understand how community input was included/excluded, but it should not be assumed that the community's values and understanding of the area had not changed throughout the series of events. *Active 18* set out to have a dialogue with all involved parties, which suggests that their interests adjusted to new relationships and information. Exploring the factors that affected such shifts –the roles of planners and councillors, and provincial policy, as examples –would contribute to a better understanding of how community input politicizes planning processes.

Planners and Planning as Functions of Policy

After public notices, planners are the next point of contact between communities and planning procedure. Community planners with the City complete several tasks: facilitate statutorily required public consultation meetings, review and recommend/reject development applications, implement area studies and other tasks as assigned by councillors, and mediate the interests of all stakeholders with respect to existing planning

policy. Because they interact with, and ideally reconcile, the interests of multiple stakeholders, their actions may not always align with a community's interests. There is an expectation that within a collaborative/dialogical planning model the interests of all stakeholders evolve as a consensus emerges (Healey, 2006, p. 312). So, the relationship between communities and their respective planners may evolve, whether it is because of dialogue or simply a change in staffing. Interviewees (3, 4) recalled that the relationship between *Active 18* and community planners was dynamic and mostly amicable, but not completely synchronized. These nuances between community interests and planners is important, especially as they coalesce in preparation for a hearing at the Ontario Municipal Board.

One of the roles planners played was to help lay-persons or non-planners understand planning procedure (Interviewees 2 – 5). Community members relied on the community planner to help them understand at what stage was the development application and what options were available to intervene in the process. In this sense, the professional knowledge of planners was instrumental for *Active 18* to interact with the planning process (Interviewees 2 – 4). However, as instruments, this communication was instructive and made no impact on *Active 18*'s vision.

In a more normative position, planners were also authors and interpreters of planning policy. *Active 18* worked closely with planners to better understand how policies and bylaws might better reflect the needs of the community (ex. the “no-net-loss policy” described in Chapter 2). Meeting this objective was less successful during public consultations as redevelopment proposals were already in place, putting planners and the

community in a reactive position (Interviewees 3, 5, 6)¹⁰. However, Interviewees (5, 6) also recognized that developers had some right to expect a level of predictability from planning regulations and not be subject to last-minute demands or restrictions.

Interviewees (2 – 4) further recalled that one factor constraining implementation of community input was whether or not it could be supported by existing policy. The community-planner relationship was more tense when policy constraints were confronted; community participants were frustrated by the seeming lack of dialogue when the lack of support in existing policy was apparent (Interviewees 3, 4). Conversely, the community-planner dialogue was relatively more productive when policy mechanisms were in place as with Toronto's cultural policy.

Toronto's cultural policy was heavily relied upon by planners to preserve the key elements of the neighbourhood that supported the existing community. At the time, this common ground between the community's and City's interests in the area appeared to be a successful means of representing the community's values. In hindsight, this was a critical turning point that distilled *Active 18's* values into matters of affordability (for artists), securing space for arts production, and maintaining a population of artists in the area (City of Toronto, 2006b, p. 9). The preservation of 48 Abell became a matter of heritage, separate from maintaining live/work spaces uniquely supporting the existing artist community; the experience along Queen Street became a matter of shadow, sunlight, and wind impacts from the proposed buildings as opposed to creating a streetscape that was interesting and fostered independent enterprise; density and the volume of new residents became a matter of maintaining employment spaces rather than

¹⁰ Following the OMB ruling, a senior City Planner at the time agreed that planning "fell behind the curve" regarding the Triangle's redevelopment (Hume, 2007).

a rapid influx of people and making space for artists unaffordable. This cultural framework was used as a policy basis to craft the no-net-loss policy (described in Chapter 2), which defended the City's interest in maintaining employment spaces. The no-net-loss policy also aligned with community concerns and thus may also be interpreted as a way for City planning to tangibly respond to community concerns while remaining grounded in policy:

...everyone in the neighbourhood kept saying, 'we need the industrial spaces, not for industrial uses, but for large format paintings, and our sculptures, and our rehearsals, and our parties.' (Interviewee 2, Planner, 9 April 2017)

The neighbourhood at the time was special because there was a lot of cool little art galleries, it had a very grass roots feel, like naturally constituted groups. At that point it was pretty sleepy part of Queen Street too, not as busy as it is now. It was somewhat I would say sketchy, but it wasn't a place like any city street, it wasn't all homogenized. (Interviewee 6, Former Active 18 Member, 4 April 2017)

Planners are a critical link between community members and the planning process. As a guide to bureaucratic procedure, they inform community members of their entitlements when participating in planning processes. As authors of policy, they directly respond to community concerns and incorporate them, in part or in whole, when crafting planning policies (ex. the no-net-loss policy). As interpreters of policy, they rely on policy as the guide to ostensibly balance competing interests (OPPI, 2012, pp. 5 – 6). When discussing policy amendments, planners face the challenge of being both author and interpreter simultaneously and must grapple with the task of managing multiple interests amidst urban transformation. In this case, community interests were lost in translation as the City brought their concerns into planning's existing policy framework. The policies may not have wholly represented *Active 18's* vision for the community, but

establishing the link between their interests and planning policy helped leverage community benefits from developers at the OMB.

Evidence and Discourse at the OMB: Community and Expert Knowledge

It is understood that the presence and structure of the OMB creates an adversarial environment in planning between developers and City staff (Greenberg, 2014) as well as communities. City staff habitually prepare for hearings at the OMB when rezoning for relaxed height limits are considered and have lawyers ready for negotiation with developers. Architect and urban design consultant Ken Greenberg (2014, video, online) comments,

The problem with this tribunal model is, the only way to express concerns about a development is to engage in highly technocratic discussions over quantifiable measures of height and density. And what this does is it puts people on the defensive. It doesn't allow them to talk about the things that interest them [...] This has become a symbol of the immaturity of a great city like Toronto, it produces highly inequitable treatment based on access to expensive lawyers, and in this litigious atmosphere of the OMB, the wrong issues get discussed. People who want to talk about qualitative issues: how development affects their neighbourhood, how it is shaped, how it integrates with the existing neighbourhood –it's not possible to do that. The only things people are allowed to talk about are very esoteric discussions about a pseudo-scientific numerology related to planning.

Given this environment, it is reasonable to expect that the OMB also changes the relationship between planners and communities. From my interviews with political stakeholders, it is clear that, despite some frustration, the dialogue between planners and community members was in good faith; *Active 18* and the City were clear on their agreements and differences on their respective visions for the Triangle. The convergence of community interests and intentions of planning policy was influenced by the impending OMB hearing where it was known that the substance of policy would be the

ultimate deciding factor. The presence of the OMB heightens the importance of *existing* policy and bylaw knowledge and establishes a realm of possibilities that is bound by policy.

Looking at the 35 site specific issues that were heard by the Board, 21 made direct reference to a planning policy or bylaw (OMB, 2006, pp. 21-23). Issues where community experiences could be most informative, such as the “appropriateness” of a design element, were also judged using primarily expert testimony who grounded their opinions in policy. The testimony of community members was acknowledged by the Board and had no effect on the decision: “Area residents...provided evidence related to the provision of park and the retention of live/work opportunities for existing artists and entrepreneurs” (OMB, 2007b, p. 5), and “...expressed concerns with the proposal including the needs of existing tenants and desire of seeing the existing building [on 48 Abell] remain” (OMB, 2007b, p. 11).

Community benefits secured through Section 37 of the Planning Act were a necessary component for justifying the OMB decision as “good planning and in the public interest.” The nature of Section 37 benefits would warrant its own research paper, but the case of the Triangle exemplifies how these Section 37 agreements can be a hollow representation of community input as a component of either good planning or the public interest. Some key community benefits were born out of *Active 18*’s charrette such as street extensions, affordable live/work spaces, and spaces for the arts, but, extending my earlier analysis of how *Active 18*’s input was reconciled with planning policy, the objectives of planning policy deviated from *Active 18*’s objectives. The two were cemented together in the OMB decision despite key differences between them and made

it at least plausible that *Active 18*'s interests were successfully accommodated in planning process. So, the OMB set precedent for more than future development in the neighbourhood, it also signaled that Section 37 was a seemingly effective channel for communities to be represented in notions of good planning. One interviewee counters this line of thinking, stating:

The OMB to me is essentially budgetary line now. [Developers] just know they have to go there, so they make sure they have a warchest for lawyers because [they] know [they] 're gonna have to fork over a million bucks to get what they want. [...]you'll have some community groups like us come along and try to make an impact, but at the end of the day the developers will get what they want, they just have to go through Section 37 or they have to go through dealing with people like us or a [councillor] ... (Interviewee 6, Former Active 18 Member, 4 April 2017)

Further, while these benefits may be of service to the community, they do not make the increased height or density more desirable for the City or community (Pantalone, 2014, pp. 95 - 96).

Shaping and Being Shaped by Process

Active 18's commitment to their vision for the Triangle remained resolute as they engaged with the initial wave of redevelopment applications in the WQWT between 2005-08. The Triangle would be redeveloped and planning was seen as an opportunity to voice the community's interests and be represented in the outcome. To do so they adopted several strategies, including participating in existing planning structures by making deputations and attending public meetings, and attempting to change planning structures by providing their own community-generated vision for the neighbourhood, but their efforts were ultimately blunted at the OMB. The approval of redevelopment applications became a turning point for *Active 18*. The sentiment within *Active 18*

following the decision was that planning was “broken”. A dissonance was felt between local-scale community interests and the wider public interest as decided through planning. The OMB decision shows how a community group adapted to existing planning structures rather than having planning structures adapt to the community:

The Section 37 stuff is what we ‘won’. You know that the OMB case just failed. They got everything they wanted. That was maddening, but that pushed us to go for these interesting community benefits. (Interviewee 4, Active 18 Member, 18 March 2017)

This change in tactics should not be mistaken for resignation.¹¹ The landscape had changed as a result of the OMB decision and many of the group’s aspirations for the Triangle had been compromised as a result. *Active 18’s* comments on the *Artscape* deal speak to the motive behind this change:

...the City abandoned its appeals against the OMB decision for the other two developments [on 1171 Queen and 48 Abell]. By doing this the City deferred to the OMB new height benchmark. What’s done is done. [...] The City and Landmark are to be congratulated for some difficult bargaining to work out the massing of the revised Landmark buildings which “works” for the new neighbourhood, given the OMB benchmark. (Active 18, 2007, p. 2, emphasis added)

One can argue that this problem was a matter of timing. If planning had anticipated interest to redevelop the area earlier and established policy (along with community consultation), then *Active 18* and the City might have had a stronger case at the OMB. However, interviews with political stakeholders noted that a sense of community emerged *in response to* the redevelopment applications (Interviewees 2 – 6). This experience suggests that proactive planning might not have tapped into the sense of community triggered by redevelopment. Moreover, if community interests were so

¹¹ As a further testimony to their resolve, Active 18 took what they learned from the 2005-08 series of events as they turned their attention to a new set of developments sprouting up northwest of the Triangle, including proposing to the City a mock secondary plan for that area with the help of FES York University graduate students (Active 18, 2009).

irreconcilable with developer interests, it may be that anticipatory policy might have deterred potential redevelopment interest.

Active 18's attempt to materialize their vision of good planning was for the most part a failure:

We had some success [in the Park and Theatre Centre]. A big part of what we were doing was try to get a better area plan. It was a total failure. We got that curved building that sits in the middle there, that shouldn't be there -it's too much. The street lay out is bad [...] The buildings are mostly ugly, and that was something we cared about and we got nowhere on the subject.
(Interviewee 3, Active 18 Member)

...if you've looked at the OMB reports, they summarized [their consideration of] all of Active 18's speeches in one sentence, saying, '[community members] expressed their concerns about the building's demolition' or something like that [for] all of us, even though we had so many things to say.
(Interviewee 5, Former Tenant of 48 Abell)

The factors that precipitated this outcome are complex, making it difficult to pin down a single or prominent cause. While causal factors cannot be teased out, it is clear that the case of the Triangle highlights the limits of community participation in affecting notions of good planning. Lehrer (2011, p. 114) comments: "With so little impact on big planning decisions, one wonders whether the 'creative activists' are not lubricating the machinery of neoliberalism instead of throwing a wrench in it." The criticism underscores the limited material success of *Active 18's* efforts, but also highlights the important ideological struggle that is at stake through public participation. In order to evaluate whether or not the community benefits in some way represented *Active 18's* values and to better understand whose interests were served by the approved redevelopments, the current state of the West Queen West Triangle needs to be examined.

Chapter 4: Legacies of *Active 18*

Using site observations¹² and interviews, this section presents the West Queen West Triangle as it exists at the time of writing to understand how *Active 18* shaped its development in both a material and discursive sense. The chapter then concludes by drawing implications from the case study of the WQWT for Planning as a practice in Toronto.

Redefining Good Planning

It's actually encouraging to see things like Lisgar square pop up, and go to the Theatre Centre as much as possible, so yeah. I guess I just believe in community participation, however much is possible should be knit into the big process. (Interviewee 4, Active 18 Member, 18 March 2017)

Redevelopment in the West Queen West Triangle has continued since 2008. Five new buildings had been constructed in and adjacent to the Triangle, and Section 37 benefits were secured for all of them. The secured benefits all followed the precedent set by the three initial redevelopments, where the developers were to provide space, funding, or both for the development of Lisgar park, facilities for arts space, the adaptive reuse of the Carnegie Library or for artist live/work spaces (City of Toronto, 2014).

The “Creative”/Artist Mews

The “creative mews” features ground-level spaces along the new 48 Abell property that were to be purchased by the City or an arts organization for a subsidized rate. The last report from the City in July 2016 indicated that the City was looking for a buyer for the spaces because the City could not afford to purchase the spaces themselves

¹² All photos in Chapter 4 are taken by the author. Further, Appendix B provides an aerial photo of the Triangle, which shows the locations of the observational photographs.

(City of Toronto, 2016). If the spaces were not sold by the end of December 2016, this portion of the agreement would lapse and the developer would be able to sell it at a market rate. At the eleventh hour, Ben Woolfitt stepped in to purchase the space marking his return to the Triangle after selling his art supply store to Curry's Art Supplies. While the mews is currently vacant (Figure 3), Woolfitt is slated to open an art museum along the mews to promote contemporary and abstract art in the late Fall of 2017.¹³



Figure 3 Creative mews (point 1)

In a deputation made at City Council, *Active 18* criticized the mews for being sandwiched between two tall street walls (Figure 4) (Active 18, 2007, p. 5). The canyon-like effect might have deterred pedestrian traffic and accordingly interest in occupying the space, despite the subsidized price. Alternatively, the mews' vacancy and the City's difficulty finding tenants might be indicative of a change in neighbourhood character where artists are no longer interested in the neighbourhood or can no longer afford the location. As the spaces have yet to be activated, it remains to be seen whether or not this area will have enough room to draw pedestrian traffic.

¹³ As advertised on Ben Woolfitt's website: <http://www.themoderntoronto.ca/> Accessed on July 19, 2017.



Figure 4 Creative mews (ground-level façade on the right side) (point 2)

Street Networks – Northcote Street Extension

Regarding the Northcote Street extension¹⁴, the developer proposed an opening on the building fronting Queen street which would lead to open space extending south to Sudbury Street but would be partially obstructed by their southern building (Figures 5 and 6). The City took issue with the fact that the de-facto extension was not continuously connected to Sudbury Street (OMB, 2007b, p. 13). *Active 18* was more concerned that the sky view was obstructed by the development (OMB, 2007b, p. 13), which destroyed its emulation of a street extension as would have been the street network vision of the in-force Garrison Common North Secondary Plan.

Between the obstructed view southward to Sudbury Street and the enclosure of the extension, one wonders whether or not the extension fulfills the intent to enhance the area's street network. Yes, the developers have beautifully landscaped the extension on the south side of the Queen Street development (Figure 6), but the view and enclosure of the extension experienced while on the north side of Queen Street (Figure 5) makes using

¹⁴ While extensions for Abell Street and Sudbury Street were also part of the politics of redevelopment, *Active 18* was less involved with bringing them to fruition.

the extension less inviting. Further, aside from the still-unoccupied mews, the lack of non-residential uses at-grade gives pedestrians little reason to travel south of Queen unless en route to one of the tower's dwellings. Each of these observations I argue, reflect the hollow representation of the policy intent allowed by the OMB, which could have been avoided had the City and *Active 18* been more closely reflected in the outcome.



Figure 5 Northcote street facing south toward the intended street extension. (Point 6)



Figure 6 Open space on Northcote extension looking south. (Point 7)

Lisgar Park & Open Space

Lisgar Park is slowly developing as a community space. The posts (“T”-shaped structures with rocks at the base, Figure 7) placed throughout the park are made from materials of the now demolished John Abell Factory and are equipped to provide electrical power. Interviewees noted that planning the design and purpose of the park mostly took place before new residents of the condos could move in. This has generated some confusion over the function and aesthetic of the park as a civic space rather than a typically imagined green space (Interviewees 1, 4). *Active 18* and the City fought adamantly for more park space. *Active 18* pushed for more parkland to accommodate new residents that would be brought to the neighbourhood by the increase in residential units (Active 18, 2007b, p. 3) and also to prevent developers from overcrowding the area with condo towers (Active 18, 2006b, pp. 27-29). The City, meanwhile, was more concerned about the location of parkland (OMB, 2007c, pp. 11-12). Like the artists’ laneway, Lisgar

Park remains incomplete which makes it difficult to determine whether or not it is sufficient for the needs of the community. However, there is an impressive volume of residential development which suggests that however much space exists, it is likely much needed (Figure 7).



Figure 7 Lisgar Park looking south (Point 4)

Further on the matter of open space, *Active 18* was critical of the placement of the lands that were wrested from Landmark/UrbanCorp. The OMB (2007c, p.12) “prefer[red] the evidence of the experts of the applicant” and ordered the open space be located more centrally as opposed to adjacent to Sudbury Street as proposed by the City. *Active 18* thought this was a poor decision by the OMB as the open space would then be enclosed by concrete, metal, and glass (Figure 8).

Like the Northcote Extension, the design and context of the space provokes the question of who is the intended user of the space. To some extent securing this open space fulfilled *Active 18*'s objectives of encouraging the separation of buildings, weaving green space into the area, and providing walkways for activity (Active 18, 2006b, p. 27). But the design of the space promotes aesthetic over function, both of which are integral to

good design. The narrow pathway promotes a particular use of the space, which diminishes the benefit of accommodating multiple uses that is typically associated with open space. Further, the OMB selected the more central location for this space so that “eyes” would monitor the park, evoking Jane Jacobs’ idea of public space (OMB, 2007c, p. 12) –yet, with the function of the space already so restricted, there would likely be little reason for either the consistent activation of the space or for eyes to be drawn to it, betraying the notion that the space would have a park-like or open space activity. Given these observations, I would argue that the open space has only a limited benefit to the community serving not much purpose beyond cosmetic green space and does not substantially respond to *Active 18’s* vision of good planning.

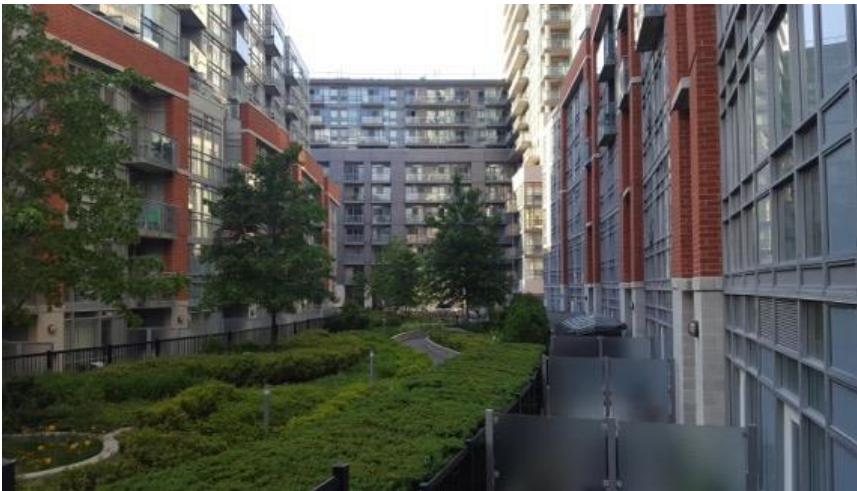


Figure 8 Open space secured from 150 Sudbury Street development (Point 5)

The Theatre Centre

Funds secured through Section 37 contributed towards the Carnegie Library’s renovation which became the new home for The Theatre Centre in 2014 (Figure 9). As a live-arts incubator with a residency program, the facility fosters creative thinking and innovation in the cultural sector. The Theatre Centre has secure funding and provides

valuable space for arts programming, and interviewees believe the space to be of value to the Triangle's arts community and beyond:

Today you can see [the Theatre Centre] has got this beautiful café, and they do tons of community events, their programming is quite varied, big craft events; they're really, really important in the community and it's a hub for sure. (Interviewee 4, Active 18 Member, 18 March 2017)

So, I think the community benefits are there and the theatre centre is an obvious one and that's great. I think it's doing better than ever it's the vision they've [the Theatre Centre] always wanted. (Interviewee 6, Former Active 18 Member, 4 April 2017)

The Theatre was terrific. There was an arts institution [the Theatre Centre] that essentially got funded out of all this, and that brought some artistic [activity] to the neighbourhood (Interviewee 3, Active 18 Member, 11 March 2017)

Active 18 certainly influenced the consideration of the old Carnegie Library as a possible site for use, but it demanded close collaboration with the City to negotiate the development.



Figure 9 Old Carnegie Library retrofitted as the Theatre Centre (Point 3)

Artscape Triangle Lofts



Figure 10 *Artscape* lofts looking southwest. (Point 8)

The *Artscape* Triangle Lofts (Figure 10), are the final secured benefit in the Triangle that most strongly reflects the advocacy of *Active 18*. At the time, successfully negotiating their construction was considered a definite “win” for the community especially given the permanence of the OMB decision. Over the years, however, the spaces have unsuccessfully maintained an inclusive arts community:

...most of the people who bought those units were cultural industry workers, not necessarily working artists, and even most of the working artists –sound engineers, painters, magazine editors –did not work from home... you know low income work space for the creative industry is one thing, but lower income condos for people who identify with the arts community and work in the arts industry, that’s more like a private club. (Interviewee 2, Planner, 9 April 2017)

The lofts are under market value, but they’re still tied to market value. It’s affordable to some people, but not everybody. And the units are tiny for the need [of some artists], so it makes a particular kind of work -if you only have this much [space], you’re only working on your computer or those types of works, so it changes the type of production that people do... (Interviewee 4, Active 18 Member, 18 March 2017)

We liked the idea that there would be some artist-types in the neighbourhood, but this was a crude generalization. Artscape wasn’t popular with the artist

types who were living in and coming out of 48 Abell...it doesn't provide space that's cheap. So, yeah, we supported it but it was mixed in terms of [how well it reflected] our values. (Interviewee 3, Active 18 Member, 11 March 2017)

I've heard about people who know people who are artists who have moved into the affordable housing and they say it's amazing. But I can't help but to feel a little bit sick about what they destroyed in order to do that. (Interviewee 5, Former Tenant of 48 Abell, 18 March 2017)

The Art Triangle Lofts, sure, could be considered a benefit, but I can argue that it became the Starbucks of arts incubation in the city too. That's a whole other issue too. I think that model is stuff that we were also looking at as examples of what we wanted to get in the use of these outlets. It can [support artists], but doesn't help out every single level of artists. (Interviewee 6, Former Active 18 Member, 4 April 2017)

The nearly unanimous observation among interviewees attests to the class-based inequities anticipated of the “creative city” mania. As a (relatively) newly packaged gentrification strategy, promotion of knowledge-based or creative economies in municipal and planning policies has been argued (Wilson and Keil, 2008) (and here, in the case of the Triangle, been demonstrated) to serve the interests of those well-positioned to benefit from these new economies while exploiting those who are already entrenched in poverty. Income and occupation appear to be the traits that differentiate artists who are able to benefit from the *Artscape* lofts. Specifically, those with higher incomes and requiring less space – a mirror image of the artists previously living in 48 Abell – appeared¹⁵ to benefit most from the *Artscape* lofts. That this contradictory model of subsidized rent-gear-to-market live/work space could successfully present itself as a community benefit to mitigate the effects of gentrification also exemplifies of how neoliberal values are internalized in urban politics (Keil, 2010).

Character of the Neighbourhood

¹⁵ Further study based on employment data would help clarify this relationship and support stronger language. The author has attempted multiple times to contact the City for historic census tract level data, but the City has been unresponsive.

Another objective of *Active 18* was to convince the planning department and OMB to consider the holistic impact that all three development proposals would have on the neighbourhood. It is unlikely that large scale redevelopments can be dropped into a neighbourhood without drastically changing the sense of community. The potential influx of residents was a concern, but the rapid increase in property values posed a greater threat to *Active 18*'s vision. Confirming what *Active 18* had anticipated, the lack of fine-grain retail has changed the streetscape along this portion of Queen Street where smaller, independent business can no longer afford residence (Figure 11):

The little independent galleries that were along Queen are gone now. They got pushed out. All the neat things that drew people here – independent book stores, business, designer this, gallery that, and they're gone -well, do I really need another dental office? That's the new incoming thing. You want the kind of texture and uniqueness and specificity of people. Like when you travel you don't want to just go to a Starbucks in Paris; if you were there, go somewhere specific to the city. (Interviewee 4, Active 18 Member, 18 March 2017)

There's cool things that happened [during the planning process], but with most things in place now I look at it and think, 'whoa, it didn't really mean anything, they got what they wanted'. We were all about densification and all that stuff, but I don't think there's a flavour anymore on that strip. It could easily just be Bloor and Avenue. It's lost its –there was a certain 'outsiderness' to the area that's not there now. That's my perspective. (Interviewee 6, Former Active 18 Member, 4 April 2017)



Figure 11 Vets, dentists, and clinics along 1171 Queen Street (Point 9)

Beyond changes in retail and commercial activities, some interviewees also noted the demographic change in the neighbourhood, specifically speaking to the displacement of incumbent community members prior to redevelopment:

I guess that's probably one of the main things we feared as residents, was that people would become priced out of the neighbourhood and that's exactly what happened. (Interviewee 5, Former Tenant of 48 Abell, 18 March 2017)

...people's lives went on and they didn't even notice. Like, "oh we got a bunch of condos up now" and stuff. Outside of the odd people I see here and there...I don't think anybody knows what [Active 18] did. (Interviewee 6, Former Active 18 Member, 4 April 2017)

Discursive Impacts of Public Participation

Good planning is a notion that is negotiated, defined, interpreted, and re-defined throughout planning processes, even with the guidance of planning policy. As chronicled in Chapter 2, despite *Active 18's* ability to pressure politicians and city staff into responding to their politics, much of their collaborative work was routed by a planning process grounded in a hierarchy of policies where provincial policies prevail over municipal policies. For example, the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* requires that certain municipalities encourage intensification in certain areas. The West Queen West Triangle happened to be one of the areas prescribed by policy to encourage growth, which was a fact that was successfully leveraged by developers to help win the OMB case (Lehrer, 2011, p. 103; Interviewee 3).

As touched upon in Chapter 3, community discontent in light of the freshly approved redevelopments fought the narrative that developers made concessions that would benefit the community. Their counter-narrative was that residents were forced into concessions that would benefit the developers: neighbourhood tours, news and online

media coverage, and the funeral mourning the loss of 48 Abell conveyed the community's stake in the neighbourhood and the non-monetary cost of redevelopment. While the decision had been made, denouncing the OMB ruling was an important challenge to the prevailing argument put forward by developers. These tactics were also intended to put pressure on the ward councillor and mayor at the time to respond to the issue (Interviewees 4 – 6) and rhetorically link the community's interest with wider public interest.

Active 18's political efforts were among the first to successfully bring the problematic and inequitable effects of rapid condo development into urban political discourse in a way that transcended the geographic boundaries of the subject site (Lehrer, 2009). Their willingness to negotiate with developers and not reject development outright debunked the possibility that their resistance to redevelopment proposals was plain, self-interested NIMBYism. They pointed to displacement of community members who were particularly vulnerable for their lower income as an undesirable and direct effect of trending urban development (via condos). In this way, *Active 18's* struggle to advance their notion of good planning was one that problematized urban development processes within which any Toronto community could be vulnerable, and also to a degree resonated with a wider class-based struggle (Lehrer, 2009).

In addition to the ideological overtone of *Active 18's* work, one interviewee recalls,

The planner was just enforcing the planning that the City had already set out on paper. But the problem was that nobody had done that before, and that's why it was so precedent setting. Nobody had actually pressured the City to stand up to developers like [the case of the Triangle]. (Interviewee 5, Former Tenant of 48 Abell, 18 March 2017)

I would argue that the extensive involvement of *Active 18* within planning processes (see Appendix A) and beyond planning processes (ex. media coverage, and arts-based activism) lent legitimacy to calls for OMB reform. The relative novelty of seeing a well-organized and articulate expression of community values have a minimal impact on the planning outcome spurred calls to reform or abolish the OMB in order to increase the weight of community input in planning processes (Hume, 2007).

Nearly a decade later, the Province of Ontario (2017) announced Bill 139, which substantially changed planning appeals processes in Ontario. First and foremost, the OMB is to be replaced by the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT). This new authority has a very specific jurisdiction, only hearing appeals for particular planning matters, from official plans to site plan control, and only regarding issues of consistency or conformity with provincial or municipal plans. Further, if an appeal is granted by the LPAT, the municipality will have a second opportunity to make a decision before the LPAT is allowed to override the municipality (if the second municipal decision is appealed).

According to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (2017, online), this tribunal's new mandate is "to give greater weight to the decisions of local communities, while ensuring that development and growth occurs in a way that is good for Ontario and its future." These initial reforms resonate with the concerns raised in 2007 regarding the OMB, suggesting that civic participation in planning the redevelopment of the WQWT at least partially provoked this discussion about OMB reform. However, while these changes sound encouraging with respect to public participation in planning, it remains to be seen how policies that follow provincially mandated intensification will allow

municipalities to control development. The influence of the province over municipal planning policies should not be underestimated:

You look at what happens at the OMB and at city hall, and time after time the source of the trouble is the provincial policies [which encourage intensification]. So I'd say they're the most important thing [for community groups] to wrestle with. (Interviewee 3, Active 18 Member, 11 March 2017).



Figure 12 Condos march on north west of the Triangle (Point 10)

The decision to allow redevelopment in the West Queen West Triangle was purportedly made on a basis of good planning (OMB, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c). Indeed, as an exercise in due process, a notion of good planning prevailed; community was consulted, professional opinions were (cross-)examined, and policy remained intact. The next question that must be asked is, who enjoyed the benefits of this decision? The information gathered through interviews, as was presented in this chapter, shows that the incumbent community received very little benefit from the actualized redevelopment. With respect to the community benefits, the Theatre Centre and Lisgar Park were

recognized by interviewees as the main testaments of *Active 18's* work (Interviewees 3, 4, 6). The Theatre Centre supports an inclusive arts community in the Triangle (Interviewees 4, 6) and Lisgar Park currently shows promise as a space for community gatherings and events (Interviewees 1, 4). Aside from these two spaces, none of the incumbent community's interests as articulated by *Active 18* were represented in the outcome. Matters of built form, street networks, non-residential land-uses, and affordable spaces live/work spaces for artists appeared to act against *Active 18's* interests. Furthermore, condos of similar form and design continued to rise westward of the Triangle as if the initial wave of condo redevelopment had gone uncontested (Figure 12).

While *Active 18's* material achievements were minor, I would argue that they made important contributions to the discourse of good planning in Toronto. The political backlash from the OMB decision, I assert, could only have been triggered by *Active 18*, whose persistent political activism raised the stakes of the decision and highlighted the possibility of an alternative, community-based vision of good planning. I linked the concerns over public participation in planning (as shown in the Hume (2007) article) with the current community-oriented changes to the OMB in order to suggest that *Active 18's* work at least partially contributed to a discussion that would shape planning process. Moreover, *Active 18's* work exposed the potential for community organizations to widen the scope of planning by linking the site-specific planning applications with with the problematic and inequitable impacts of wider urban development processes (i.e. gentrification) (Lehrer, 2009).

Striving for Better Planning

If communities are to dispute notions of good planning that do not represent their interests or actualize a prevailing notion of good planning, there is a sophisticated set of policies and legislation that must be navigated to make such efforts effective. Councillors hold the decision-making power at the municipal level, but they also consider the opinions of their constituents and city staff (Interviewees 1 – 3, 6). In the event of an appeal, authority shifts to the OMB which is strictly beholden to Provincial policy (Environment and Lands Tribunal Ontario, n.d.). Depending on the decision of the OMB, council is in charge of fulfilling the decision of the OMB. Throughout this process, planners facilitate interaction between different stakeholders, craft and interpret planning policies, and provide recommendations to political decision-makers (OPPI, n.d., online), which adds another layer of influence to the process. Here I present four insights that can be gleaned from Active18's civic activism that might help make good planning discourse more inclusive of community voices.

1. Planning as A Development-Driven Practice

Given their experiences, interviewees were disenchanted with the role of civic participation and the capacity of the City's planning department to represent community interests. In consideration of the OMB decision and reflecting on their experiences with planning processes, interviewees acknowledged the different ways in which planning is actually a development-driven process and how community interests are marginalized as a result. One manifestation of planning as a development-driven process is the lack of resources to thoroughly evaluate development applications:

I would agree in defense of the planner that sometimes it didn't matter what they did -the developer was going to win [at the OMB]. But, overall, having a secondary plan here [in the Triangle] would've been better... (Interviewee 3, Active 18 Member, 11 March 2017)

[The City was] flooded with applications and they couldn't keep up with the demand of applications and they were failing to keep up with applications in the time they promised, which basically allowed developers to go straight to the OMB. And so, the problem with the planning department at that time, and still is a problem today, is that planning is reactive instead of pre-emptive. (Interviewee 5, Former Tenant of 48 Abell, 18 March 2017)

... That's another thing about planning, there was no money for [planning] in that area. [Our community planner] was on it, but she was so overworked on that file, and the councillor was sort of a slum lord councillor on that file and if it wasn't for his [executive assistant] on that file we would've gotten nowhere. (Interviewee 6, Former Active 18 Member, 4 April 2017)

The above excerpts speak to the effects of neoliberal policy – in this case, chronically underfunded regulatory agencies. The lack of resources available to the planning department adversely affected their ability to conduct the appropriate studies in time, or put in place the appropriate area plans. These interviewees also speak about how the timelines that City staff were working around (at the time) were tight, given the volume of development applications and lack of funding, which resulted in OMB hearings becoming more common.

Interviewees also commented on how planning responds to urban development, which in turn is guided by speculative market behaviour:

[The City] just looks at condos as another way of getting more money. That's how they're looking at it. Our big fight was to get people to look beyond that, look at what's happening on the ground to the people who live here. These are the lives that you're stepping on with these decisions... (Interviewee 6, Former Active 18 Member, 4 April 2017)

...what's unfortunate about the City's heritage department is that they are grossly understaffed. They were then, they are now. And I think the hugest problem that heritage buildings are facing is the land speculation that exists

[...] It's making for a really economically precarious situation. (Interviewee 5, Former Tenant of 48 Abell, 18 March 2017)

...in Toronto most of the planners are funded by development fees and focus on development review. And that only happens in a handful of neighbourhoods across the city...mostly new private sector residential development, because that's what dominates [planning] ... (Interviewee 2, Planner, 9 April 2017)

In the case of redevelopment in the Triangle, these interviewees show: (1) how (high-density) condo residential developments are a lucrative venture for both developers and the City, (2) how planning decisions revolve around exchange/monetary values instead of use values, and (3) how market-based urban development produces inequitable spatial outcomes.

2. Systemic Barriers & Limitations to Public Participation

The strengths that enabled *Active 18's* effective political activism provided a foil that exposed how inaccessible planning processes can be for community organizations:

... If this had been 200 Carribbean moms working form their home doing their work, I don't think [their community group] would've had the same response [as Active 18]. They wouldn't have been as articulate, as organized in response, as well funded, they wouldn't have been able to get newspaper articles written about them [by request] ... (Interviewee 2, Planner, 9 April 2017)

We had money, people with media connections, but if you're a group of Somali mothers in Thorncliffe Park who want to get bedbugs out of their building or internet in their local library, those are issues they might not get support. They're going up against racial barriers, language barriers, cultural barriers... If you look at most cases in public participation meetings, the people there are most likely rich white people. (Interviewee 6, Former Active 18 Member, 4 April 2017)

Those who are likely in most need of change or representation in planning and wider political processes are those who face the greatest barriers: language, sense of belonging or entitlement, sufficient time and labour power, and different cultural values

are some examples cited above. The struggle for basic needs was also mentioned by interviewees. Building off the interview excerpt, I would extend this argument that fighting for things that may be more easily taken for granted (ex. internet or a clean living space), would have a more difficult time earning the sympathies of other groups compared to artists struggling to save a historic cultural haven.

Communities also face the reality of geographic boundaries and place-based identities that may result in communities competing with one another rather than collaborating, or induce apathy towards the plights or concerns of other communities (as acknowledged by Fainstein (2010) in Chapter 1). Moreover, once a decision has been made that would negate community interests, the fixed impacts of urban transformation would be difficult to alter. This has been the case with *Active 18* and the Triangle where their input with respect to the settlement for 150 Sudbury was at least partially undermined by the fact that the two neighbouring redevelopment applications had already been settled.

3. Dialogue and Collaboration

Most of the interviewees identified *Active 18*'s capacity to galvanize community and connect politically as their main strength, which is in contrast to their slogan that advertises a penchant for urban design. Furthering this point is that the interviewees noted the value of dialogue and collaboration between the City and community members (Interviewees 1 – 6). With the help of planners, community members learned to navigate planning processes and were brought into the negotiation of section 37 benefits (Interviewees 2 – 5). The planners' defense of municipal policy was augmented by the persistent support and local knowledge provided by *Active 18* (Interviewees 2, 4). And

councillors make the decisions in municipal politics, making them necessary collaborators for operationalizing community input (Interviewees 1 – 4, 6). A strong political will was shared between the City and a community group in response to redeveloping the Triangle, and it is this shared will that might have propelled a discussion about reforming the OMB following their decision. In this way, planning discourse was affected by the collective effort of *Active 18* and the City.

4. Politicizing Planning – Linking Material Outcomes with Value-laden Processes

Given the challenges facing community participation as highlighted in insights 1 and 2 above, it is evident that dialogue and collaboration are not enough to shift planning discourse against a status quo. Even a community group as privileged as *Active 18* accomplished limited material success. These challenges facing community participation should not devalue the fact that *Active 18*'s work still shows how the notion of good planning can be used to confront the limits of civic participation and expand the scope of planning. *Active 18* extolled the virtues of civic participation in their mandate, insisting that the legitimacy of normative planning outcomes was rooted in debate and discussion (Active 18, n.d., online).

Inspired by Friedmann's (2000) and Amin's (2006) notions of "good cities", Fainstein's (2010) notion of the "just city", and *Active 18*'s I would assert that the notion of good planning insists upon the question "to what end do we plan?". Its consideration imbues purpose in every opportunity for civic input, while also defending the freedom to reject a prevailing opinion. The community activists and *Active 18* exemplified this best when they denounced the OMB's ruling and worked to generate a counter-narrative even after intentions to appeal were settled. I would also assert that planners may refer to good

planning as the intent of planning policy to justify a more normative and proactive stance in their work. In the case of the Triangle, City planners reacted quickly to redevelopment applications in their creation of a no-net-loss policy (for non-residential land-use). While it was too late to defend this policy at the OMB, the initiative exemplifies policy creation driven by an intent to represent community interests. This argument for acknowledging planning as political should not be interpreted as an attack on evidence-based planning, rather it is intended as a reminder to reflect on how knowledge is produced through planning processes and to critically examine whose interests are served by planning processes. As facilitators of planning as a practice, (“professional”) planners are well-positioned to be leaders of positive change in their pursuit of defending the public interest. If planners seek to defend the integrity of the practice and be inclusive of community member voices, then planners must be open to accepting good planning as a socially constructed notion and recognize their active role in contributing to the ongoing negotiation of good planning.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This major paper examined the work of *Active 18* between 2005-08 as the West Queen West Triangle was subject to redevelopment. This examination sought to better understand: (1) how outputs of public participation affect notions of good planning, (2) the role of planners as (co-)generators of good planning principles, and (3) who benefits from decision made on prevailing notions of good planning.

Chapter 2, recounted redevelopment in the WQWT which showed how complicated processes can prevent community input from affecting planning outcomes. This is especially true when the community's interests oppose provincial policies. Planners, meanwhile, were intent on reconciling community interests with planning policies, but in doing so divorced the material outcomes from the underlying values of community. In these ways, good planning was shown to be socially constructed, even with the guidance of planning policies.

Chapter 3 laid out how the community-based vision constructed by *Active 18* was derived within the community and subsequently interacted with planning structures and competing notions of good planning. The chapter concluded with the argument that the community's vision of good planning was only shallowly incorporated into the notion of good planning that prevailed through the planning process.

Finally, Chapter 4 examined the material and discursive impacts of *Active 18*'s efforts in order to evaluate how the community's interests were reflected in the newly redeveloped WQWT neighbourhood. It was found that the interests of *Active 18* were almost completely ignored in the prevailing notion of good planning, save for the Theatre

Centre and Lisgar Park, altogether suggesting that public participation might be a seemingly empty endeavour.

However, despite the outcome, *Active 18*'s efforts give more reason to be optimistic rather than apathetic. Their resolve to pursue their own vision of good planning independent of the City, and take control, if only temporarily, over the narrative of space reflects the malleability and transferability of a community-based vision of good planning. City-building decisions may be relatively stable, but opportunities to intervene in urban political discourses arise on a daily basis.

This review of *Active 18*, good planning, and redevelopment in the WQWT yielded four insights into planning as a practice. First, planning in Toronto is a development-driven practice. Urban development processes in a neoliberal framework generate inequitable outcomes, and planning as a practice is complicit in generating these inequities. Second, systemic barriers related to socio-economic processes beyond the local scale limit the efficacy of public participation in Toronto planning. These systemic barriers (ex. class, gender and race) must be recognized and purposefully ameliorated if civic participation in planning is to truly be inclusive. Third, dialogue and collaboration between participants in planning processes has the potential to at least initiate conversations about institutional reform and correcting or obviating material inequities. Finally, power structures would likely prevent the inequities born from planning processes to be corrected. Planners face the task of recognizing the intensely political nature their practice if they are to honestly facilitate inclusive participation processes and defend the integrity of planning discourse.

It must be acknowledged that this analysis is not without limitations. Firstly, urban experiences will vary and community interests are not monolithic. While interviews and document analysis were conducted to evaluate whose interests were represented in this series of political events, the yielded insights may not reflect every individual in the Triangle neighbourhood, past or present. This is to say that perspectives of new residents who moved in after the Triangle redeveloped would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how residents in the WQWT benefit from the outcomes of redevelopment. Other missing perspectives that would have been useful for this analysis include those who did not participate in the planning process and remain part of the community, as well as the perspectives of other community members who have since moved away from the Triangle. Lastly, quantitative data regarding employment information and demographic change in the neighbourhood would also help clarify how the WQWT has changed since redevelopment.

Appendix A: Timeline of Key Events (2005 – 2008)

2005

- 2005 June 13 – Community consultation re: 1171 and 1171R Queen Street West
- 2005 June 14 – Toronto East York Community Council (TEYCC) preliminary report for 1171 Queen;
- 2005 August 2 – Community consultation re: 48 Abell (& 1199 Queen)
- 2005 Sept 01 – TEYCC further report for 48 Abell (& 1199 Queen, first submitted in 1999);
- **2005 Fall – First meeting of Active 18**
- 2005 November 09 – TEYCC request for direction re: rezoning review
- 2005 November 16 – Community consultation re: area study for WQWT

2006

- **2006 January – Active 18 visioning/brainstorming session (SWOT)**
- 2006 January 23 – TEYCC preliminary report for 150 Sudbury;
- **2006 March 5 – Active 18 Design Charrette;**
- **2006 March 30 – Active 18 press conference;**
- 2006 April 24, May 8, May 24 – Series of working group meetings between City, developers, and community members
- **2006 May 30 – TEYCC**
 - o Results of rezoning review presented and no-net-loss policy introduced;
 - o Further directions provided for 48 Abell and 1171 Queen redevelopments;
- 2006 June 13 – TEYCC adopts recommendations outlined on May 30.
- 2006 June 26 – TEYCC request for direction for 150 Sudbury;
- 2006 July 20 – OMB Order for Appeal delivered;
- 2006 September 25 – 27 Council meeting provides direction for identification of WQWT as area of study. Also directs for provisions of a holding bylaw in case of ZBA or OPA to for parkland acquisition and Sudbury Street extension);
- 2006 Fall – OMB Hearings over 35 days

2007

- **2007 January 10 – OMB rulings released;**
- 2007 February – Mayor Miller’s request for Ministerial Order to overrule OMB rejected;
- 2007 May 2 – Community consultation for ZBA in WQWT following OMB ruling);
- 2007 June 11 – TEYCC forwards OPA and ZBA following OMB ruling
- July 4, 2007 City open to settlement offers for 48 Abell and 1171 Queen;
- **2007 July 10 – OMB Reviews reasons for January 2007 OMB decision;**
- 2007 July 15 – City settles with developers of 1171 Queen and 48 Abell the day before hearing at Divisional Court.
- 2007 July 16, 17, 18, 19 – City Council approves OPA and ZBA as settled with developers for 48 Abell and 1171 Queen;
- **2007 July 25 – Divisional Court grants City leave for appeal regarding the 150 Sudbury Application;**

- 2007 October – City settles with Urbancorp/Landmark over 150 Sudbury application (the Artscape deal);
- 2007 December 4 and 6 – City staff reach settlement of values for park land acquisition and Sudbury Street extension, key to settlement of 150 Sudbury
- 2007 December 11, 12, 13 – City officially adopts final settlements for all 3 applications in the WQWT
- 2008 January 08 – OMB approves terms of settlement and the Official Plan Amendment and Zoning Bylaw Amendment that implement these terms.
 - o 2008 September 24 – OMB further mediates negotiation with 1171 Queen redevelopment regarding the Sudbury Street extension.

Note 1: Events in ***bolded italic*** font indicate events initiated by Active 18.

Note 2: Events in **bolded** font indicate key decision making events in planning.

Appendix B: Arial Photo of Triangle for Reference



Appendix C: Full List of Potential Guiding Questions for Semi-Structured Interviews

- How long have you resided in/around the WQWT?
- What made the WQWT special for you? Alternatively, what was it about the Triangle that spurred such a strong community response to the redevelopment applications?
- What was the sense of “community” like before the redevelopment applications were put forward?
- How did the sense of community change (if at all) after the community was notified of applications to redevelop the area?

- What motivated you to participate in the efforts of Active 18?
- In the beginning, did you have any expectations of what your, or the group’s, efforts would accomplish?
- Did you have any expectations of planners or planning procedure? Have they changed with your experiences with Active 18?
- Sometimes constituents are called “experts in their community”. Have you heard of this expression before? If so, how do you understand/interpret this expression?
- Reflecting on your experiences with Active 18, would you say that the group is “experts” in their community?
- When participating in conversations about redevelopment, do you remember if your opinions or values were challenged? If so, by whom and how?
- Conversely, when participating in conversations about redevelopment, do you remember having your opinions and values about the area affirmed?
- Did participating in planning change your perspective of the community? (ex. Discussing what it *could* become?)
- What do you think is the most effective political channel for citizens to manage change in their communities? Councillors? Planners? Queen’s Park?
- Did you experience any knowledge- or skill-based barriers to engaging in planning procedures? How about for galvanizing community members?
- Conversely, what skills or knowledge do you think strengthened Active 18’s ability to participate in planning procedures? How about for galvanizing community members?
- In your experience/opinion, how has a “YIMBY” approach affected the relationship and/or negotiations between the City, Active 18, and developers?
- The long form name of Active 18 is “Citizens for good design...a Toronto organization concerned about city planning.” In your opinion, why encapsulate the groups values in urban design? (Alternative focuses could have been planning, community, development, governance and so on...)
- Based on your experiences in planning politics, to whom, or what, do you think planning processes are accountable?
- Reflecting on your experience with Active 18, how do you think planning practically incorporates the “expert” knowledge of community members compared to the “expert” knowledge of “professionals”?

- At the time of approval, did you have any expectation of how the approved redevelopments would impact the future of the WQWT?
- Do you know if any of these expectations (if any) have materialized in the way you anticipated?
- What do you think are the strengths of the WQWT as it is today?
- Is there anything the WQWT needs to make it better?
- Do you think the Artscape Lofts, Lisgar Park, and the Theatre Centre benefit the community today? Do they benefit the City?
- How do you think these benefits compare to the strengths of the WQWT prior to redevelopment?
- What do you think is missing from planning discourse in Toronto? Or what do you think needs to improve in Toronto's planning discourse?
- What motivates your continued involvement with *Active 18*?

List of Interviews

Interviewee 1, Councillor, 2 May 2017

Interviewee 2, Planner, 9 April 2017

Interviewee 3, Active 18 Member, 11 March 2017

Interviewee 4, Active 18 Member, 18 March 2017

Interviewee 5, Former Tenant of 48 Abell, 18 March 2017

Interviewee 6, Former Active 18 Member, 4 April 2017

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