Alternative Social Planning: A Paradigm Shift Developing an Inclusive, Healthy Toronto

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Introduction

As a city, Toronto will face many planning challenges in the next decades as the population of the Greater Toronto Area continues to grow in unprecedented numbers. As cultural and ethnic diversity continue**s** to increase, planners and decision-makers will be faced with re-evaluating traditional planning structures and processes to ensure that they are able to adapt and respond to the needs of Toronto's changing communities.

The purpose of this paper is to put forth an alternative conception of social planning for the City of Toronto that seeks to create common values, principles and an inclusive process for the participatory formulation of a transformative and dynamic framework that is ultimately equitable, accountable, transparent and responsive.

Toronto's immigrant population and ethnocultural diversity are among the highest to be found in any urban centre in the world. In 2001, Census data shows that 18.4% of Canada's population was born outside of the country, this representing the highest proportion in 70 years.

In 2003, the Alternative Planning Group (APG) produced a position paper entitled "Re-defining the Urban Planning Agenda: A joint alternative community perspective". As a partnership, the primary objective of the APG and its partners (OCASI, PIN, etc.) is to create and implement collaborative strategies for inter-ethnic community planning and development. In doing so, there is a focus on maintaining a perspective that could be applied to multi-sector, social, economic and cultural boundaries. Given the increasing diversity of Toronto's ethnic composition, APG suggests that Toronto's diverse ethno-racial communities do not represent a collection of special interest groups but rather collectively represent the public interest as a whole.

Working from the premise that ethno racial diversity and shared decision-making has yet to be functionally integrated in the City's planning framework, the following discussion and exploration of literature on key elements of social planning is intended to provide some context for how inclusive social planning has been addressed in other jurisdictions and how it may be envisioned for the City of Toronto – taking APG as an evolving manifestation of that conceptualization.

The end goal is to identify gaps in existing planning structures that are creating barriers to the empowerment and active inter-ethnic participation of Toronto's varied communities in planning and decision-making and to articulate outcomes of alternative social planning for future actions to address shortcomings in the current planning system. While some of the examples focus on specific government programs (e.g. public health, budgeting, housing) many of the themes in empowering communities and creating opportunities for participation in governance have cross-sectoral relevance.

This paper will explore how alternative social planning fits into the current social planning framework through groups such as the Alternative Planning Group (APG), and how alternative social planning can be adopted as an innovative, responsive, democratic and inclusive framework that will empower communities, build capacity, challenge social inequities and fundamentally change the nature and scope of social planning and development in the City of Toronto in a groundbreaking way.

Research Methodology

The partnership responsible for the development of this paper comprised of 3 groups: the Alternative Planning Group (African Canadian Social Development Council, Chinese Canadian National Council- Toronto Chapter, Council of Agencies Serving South Asians, Hispanic Development Council), the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants and Portuguese Interagency Network. These groups came together to assist the City of Toronto in its review of the City's social planning agenda and process.

The research objectives of this paper included reviewing the current nature, structure, functions, tools and responsiveness of social planning in the City of Toronto while offering an alternative framework for conceptualizing social planning in a way that will build a more inclusive, democratic and meaningfully diverse City.

Goals & Context:
- To reconceptualise the social planning framework in the City of Toronto using an alternative social planning model;
- To contextualize social planning with regard to the significant demographic change over the last 10 years;
- To offer a greater understanding of the reality and role of the increasing stratification within society (e.g.: racialization and poverty);
- To make recommendations on how current social planning at the City must change to be more responsive to the needs of diverse communities

Scope:
- to review the planning capacity of the sector the organization serves;
- to review the community-based planning needs of the sector;
- to identify the role and relationship of the organization to other planning groups and institutions; and
- to recommend ways to improve the co-ordination and effectiveness of the sector.

Elements of work:
a. Consultation through 2 focus groups (10 participants, 6 participants) and 9 key informant interviews. The consultation focused on interviewing/conducting focus groups from an issue-based perspective regarding social planning as it relates to the settlement sector, direct service delivery, refugees, youth, employment, labour, health, umbrella organizations, etc.;
b. Review of appropriate national and international literature on community-based planning models i.e. social planning models;
c. Summary of key findings **from the** literature review;
d. Development of **a** summary of findings from consultation process.

Alternative Social Planning: A Process and Model for Effective Planning for the City of Toronto

What is Alternative Social Planning?

Alternative social planning is a social development-driven methodological, contextual, structural, and political approach to thinking about desired societal outcomes that directly involves the various demographic groups in identifying the obstacles to goal fulfillment, and enables these communities themselves to participate in devising and implementing measures to achieve the desired outcomes for themselves and/or the society as a whole. As such, it represents a critique of existing notions, forms and practices of planning. It challenges and re-defines all the fundamental questions of social planning such as why social planning is done; who does planning; what is the purpose of social planning; what are the means or mechanisms of social planning; what are the desired outcomes of planning and what are the minimum conditions of successful planning.

Our premise in undertaking alternative social planning is that planning is neither objective nor neutral. In a diverse and inequitable environment, planning necessarily needs to be cognizant of the factors of diversity/pluralism and the nature/degree of inequity within society **that** frustrate the attainment of equal outcomes for all. Thus, planning becomes a pro-active and necessarily committed political activity that must address issues of racialization, socio-economic and political marginalization and re-dressing the issue of imbalance in the sharing of resources, both monetary and power-related. Thus in our still developing practice of alternative social planning, social planning is done so as to create "the common good" that is neither homogenous nor monolithic but shared**.**

What is "the common good" in a pluralistic city like Toronto?

- It is social development of communities so that communities can build their own capacity to take action including community interventions in planning processes at the government and community levels. This contributes to the decentralization of planning and action, so that in a society as diverse as Toronto, planning and action begin to involve the plurality of the communities that make up the city's population. We believe this is beginning to foster more equitable civic and political engagement of the totality of the citizenry and, if sustained, would lead to the creation of a more meaningful democracy.
- It is internal development of social capital within and between communities to develop their own mechanisms for negotiating the differences between them in order to promote "the common good"- thus creating networks based on equity and social justice and leading to greater social cohesion.
- It is re-structuring of power relations and resources in society in order to foster and sustain the negotiated equity that results from such social planning – this ensures that existing inequities of capacity are not perpetuated into the future.
- It is designing physical spaces in an organic manner to take account of social plurality, economic differences, and the diversity of cultural preferences.

Thus, alternative social planning envisages planning as being done by communities themselves, **where community is defined as individuals who come together collectively based on commonalities of interest and principles of equity, self-determination and conscious participation. Thus, individuals can be part of multiple communities, and this facilitates a broad range of participation not limited by race, geography, or any specific predetermined parameter. Planning, therefore, is conducted by communities for the specific benefit of these various communities and,**

jointly, for the well-being of society as a whole. Our critique of existing notions and practice of planning is precisely that it is monolithic and paternalistic where planning is done "for" others, not "by" those affected by such planning and the decisions that flow therefrom. As such, be it done by the state, academia or other arms length entities, such planning is by definition partial, fractured, undemocratic and, in the final analysis, ineffective. Hence, we see democratic and effective planning to be one which:

a) Recognizes that in a diverse and inequitable society, planning is a political activity that can address the needs and desires of all only to the extent that it involves a process of engagement, empowerment, re-dress and innovation based on the differences and commonalities existing within the society;

b) Ensures that the planning process itself is laterally practiced and not top-down, so that the processes of defining and pursuing the fulfillment of needs, desires and "the common good" are actually based on the values of equity, social justice, resource and power re-distribution, and knowledge sharing from diverse points of view - and not one oppressive vision of "the common good."

What are the minimum conditions of successful planning?

The absolute minimum conditions of successful social planning include:
- the meaningful functioning of diversity;
- equity of power and resources amongst the various partners involved in the planning sector;
- a vision that governance and community planning is a shared responsibility; and
- recognition that planning done today must reasonably anticipate and address social issues arising in the future.

The guiding principles of alternative social planning are:
- transparency;
- accountability;
- equity;
- fairness.

Partnerships are formed based on:
- commonalities, where differences are negotiated;
- power is shared;
- resources are redistributed equitably;
- actors are empowered;
- the process is one of self-determination.

The paradigm of alternative social planning requires changing the urban planning order by:
- realigning social, economic and political processes;
- allowing communities to define themselves;
- communities coming together organically on points of commonality;
- communities negotiating differences and learning from one another to build collective common good.

In the Alternative Social Planning Framework, how is social planning conducted?

Alternative social planning makes the distinction between the **functions** of social planning and the **tools** used for planning purposes to result in specific **outcomes.** It defines the role

of government and other funding bodies in social planning as being one of building the capacity of communities to become self-governing planners and effective social actors, through redistribution of resources so that uneven power relations in society can be re-structured while defining the role of communities as the primary agents of social planning and change.

The **functions** of social planning in an alternative planning framework follows:

- Identification of barriers different communities face for the purpose of enabling communities to come together on issues of commonality for the purpose of constructing a negotiated and thus shared common good;

- Creation of opportunities for social development where each community defines its own social aspirations and goals; where each community defines its own needs and designs and engages in a self-governing process of community planning;

- Building the capacity of communities to meet their social aspirations and goals by appropriately allocating, redistributing and sharing resources, strategies and knowledge;

- Facilitating linkages between and among communities in a lateral way to build the common good in an inclusive manner that builds on existing knowledge within an equitable power-sharing framework;

- Policy intervention, development and analysis for the purpose of addressing social inequities and shaping the government implementation of policy;

- Advocacy for political change and redress of social inequities where advocacy is conducted for structurally shifting the parameters of power and resources in society in order to create equity. Advocacy conducted by racialized and marginalized communities individually and collectively for socio-economic and political change creates democratic capital in society;

- Forecasting for the critical purpose of not creating, perpetuating or replicating social inequities. Planning done today must reasonably anticipate and address social issues arising in the future;

- Civic engagement and active citizenship through the empowerment of communities that are recognized as contributors towards the common good and who are valued as part of a greater society external to their immediate community;

- Research as the collection and documentation of diverse information through which knowledge is legitimized, created and shared within and between communities through research participation. Dissemination thus becomes less of a technical issue and more an issue of “awareness” or “consciousness” raising. This is done in order to create new pool of knowledge and innovation which can in turn create a progressive society. Without active engagement, legitimization and awareness or consciousness, research becomes technical and sterile, incapable of enervating community action.

Another function of research in the alternative social planning paradigm is to redefine existing spatial relationships between governments, other funding bodies and community groups.

Tools of social planning facilitate the process of empowerment, equity and capacity building within and across communities for the purpose of creating inclusive social planning for the common good. This is achieved through:

- Research not as esoteric theorizing, but the documentation of community knowledge. This knowledge is used to effect relevant change, creating indicators and benchmarks for monitoring community health, physical spaces, issues of social justice, etc. Research is conducted by communities in a participatory manner so that communities progressively become the owners of the process, and the drivers of their own fate;

- Adequate investment of research dollars in communities to document and implement new and multiple methodologies and sources of knowledge that are reflective of the diverse society in which they live;

- Partnerships as a means of creating both capacity and information capital. This is different from public/community dialogue, where communities are "listened to" or "educated" as opposed to creating a space for the marginalized to exchanging knowledge for the sake of building a shared vision of the common good. In an Alternative paradigm, such partnering legitimizes plurality of knowledge, creates innovative conceptual frameworks, informs evolution of collective intellectual capacity and creates new norms on how to conduct planning in the interest of the common good;

- Alternative social planning requires resources (primarily staffing dollars) to reside within communities so they are able to utilize internal skill sets in conducting social planning activities;

- If specific skill sets are unavailable within certain communities, mobilizing resources through the sharing of knowledge and power in an equitable lateral context between and across communities will build social relationships and hence social capital (e.g.: APG);

- Active community networks require resources and commensurate access to opportunities for meaningful avenues for decision-making. For example, research forums, policy formulation debates, community coalitions, networks on specific issues, advisory committees, taskforces, etc.

- Access to relevant data, ability to generate data, resources to utilize data for the creation of flexible, transformative frameworks and communication networks within which to share information and inform public opinion;

- Advocacy as tool for mobilizing individuals and communities to collectively address social inequities, fostering civic engagement, building social capital, etc.

Outcomes of alternative social planning will include both short and long-term components.

Short-term Outcomes:

- Alternative Planning Group type partnerships as an outcome create the possibility of equal partners that come together on issues of commonality. Together they share resources, knowledge and expertise while conducting joint social planning activities that are informed by the shared experience of historical and continuing legislative, social, political and economic marginalization. This addresses a plurality of experiences both within and across communities simultaneously and assists in building an informed and evolving knowledge base grounded in an equitable, power-sharing framework.

- Participatory and action methodology for research as used by the Alternative paradigm of social planning further creates active "citizens" as a direct outcome of its process of engagement. Such participation leads to information gathering, empowerment and building of awareness or consciousness so that individuals and communities can make informed decision-making in areas of interest. This eventually translates into increased civic participation, and more specifically, voting, with a commitment to being part of something larger because one's voice is heard and included in a legitimate way, creating a reason for people to participate;

- Critical forecasting that effectively measures changing demographic trends and community needs in the future is an outcome that will create planning frameworks that are transformative, flexible, and able to respond to changing environments that ultimately leads to accountable policy development;

- Policy interventions by communities themselves to address their own needs and gaps that determines directions for the allocation and reallocation of resources;

- As an outcome of alternative social planning, there will be an impact on other spheres of social and urban planning including the creation of inclusive public spaces reflecting the plurality of the City. This would be reflected in urban design, built spaces, transportation, housing, etc. rather than enclaves of privilege and poverty, as is currently the case.

Long-term Outcomes:

- Creation of new methodologies and epistemologies of research where intellectual exercise is a product created by the communities for which the information is intended, thus becoming relevant and applicable to the social planning process and strengthening linkages between community and academia. Community participatory research is rigorous and equalizes the relationships and legitimacy of community knowledge. In fact, this "form" of research then leads directly to other desirable social outcomes like building social capital of communities, creating social cohesion, encouraging civic engagement, strengthening democracy etc. Such research and documentation also creates multiple sources of knowledge, thus enhancing the social pool of information, producing relevant innovation and creating new paradigms for social action. It also creates a new spatial relationship among structures of governance, funding bodies and communities to create a socially cohesive society;

- Accountable policy development will be an outcome as communities will be equitably resourced to have the capacity to participate in activities that result in positive social development and effective planning. This clarifies the function of government and other funding bodies as one of ensuring that accountable structural changes are effected and that the distribution of resources is, in fact, conducted in an equitable manner;

- This would lead to socially developed communities whereby groups are able to meet the evolving needs of their communities individually and collectively which will positively impact overall social planning and create the common good;

- Another long-term outcome of research, active participation, critical forecasting, accountable policy development and the creation of socially developed communities will be the creation of progressive legal frameworks in response to identified community needs for the purpose of addressing social, economic and political inequity.

Alternative Social Planning and the Alexandra Park Experiment

An interesting exercise in the practical application of alternative social planning would be to look at the recent conversion of the Alexandra Park social housing project into the Atkinson Housing Co-op. By understanding the process of conversion that took place and contrasting this experience with the hypothetical application of the alternative social planning model, some key points of focus will emerge to demonstrate the impact that changing the paradigm of planning will have in facilitating a more supportive, inclusive and democratic process. In turn, this will also highlight the importance of ongoing support and capacity building as a goal of successful social planning and development.

The Alternative Planning Group: What it is and how it Works

According to cicnews.com (Canada Immigration Newsletter, Volume 5, No.4, April 2001), on July 1, 2000, Canada's population was estimated to be 30.75 million. In 2025, Canada's population is expected to grow to 34 million to 39 million people. The growth rate will continue to decelerate in Canada. From 1886 to 2000, the population grew at an average annual rate of 0.9%. In the medium-growth scenario, this growth rate is projected to slow to 0.5% by 2026. From 2046 to 2051, the population could eventually decline at an average rate of 0.1% a year. Statistics Canada has clearly stated that immigration levels contribute heavily to the projected population growth at the national level. Toronto now has the opportunity to be proactive and develop groundbreaking innovation in social planning paradigms to respond to the needs of the City that are to this day largely unmet, given the changing demographics.

What follows is a description of the Alternative Planning Group (APG) and an outline of how APG has, within the current limitations, operationalized alternative social planning in the City of Toronto. This will demonstrate the fundamental differences in approach between the alternative model and the City's current planning process and how it impacts on the nature and scope of planning that occurs.

The Alternative Planning Group (APG) is a unique collaboration of four major planning organizations representing four of the most **populous** ethnic communities in the City of Toronto. Not representative of all ethno-racial communities, partnership is based on the

commonality of interests whose "location" is defined by their identity as ethno-racial communities, constituting immigrant and refugee populations, facing "settlement" and "integration" issues, affected by historical and continuing legislative, social, political and economic marginalization. Their respective histories yield commonalities and differences that both strengthen and inform their "partnership". The group shares a vision of joint planning through individual experience that translates into joint events that build bridges between their four communities that focus on ethno-racial issues that are firmly grounded in anti-racist strategies/methodology. This addresses a plurality of experiences, both within and across communities simultaneously. This group is unique in that it has organically evolved, coming together out of a need to do so, while negotiating differences along the way. This process itself has resulted in the emergence of theory as an outcome of practical experience that is then applied to joint planning initiatives.

What is fundamentally different in this model from traditional conceptualizations of social planning is that it recognizes the importance of the ongoing social planning activities each member agency conducts on a day-to-day basis. The partnership focuses on a process of joint planning that is informed by each community's needs and experiences as understood through the independent planning that each agency undertakes through its regular work. It does not create "silos" where planning is separate from community development, research, and direct service delivery, but rather views social planning as an ongoing process with the goal of effective social development and equity. For the purpose of this review, the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) and the Portuguese Interagency Network (PIN), also as social planners, enhance and expand the APG partnership and model by contributing the experience of their constituents with the objective of sharing an inclusive, negotiated experience that can be adopted broadly as an innovative way of informing and changing the existing paradigm of social planning (Please see Appendix 1, Summaries of Independent Social Planning Activities of APG members).

Partnership and Development

CCNC Toronto Chapter, CASSA and HDC have been working closely since 1998 right at the time that the **n**ew **City of Toronto was established out of the amalgamation of the former municipalities Etobicoke, North York, Scarborough, Toronto, York, East York and Metropolitan Toronto**. Indeed, in the same way that the vision of the new City stated "that city-building is a shared responsibility that requires a commitment to active citizenship", for our Councils that notion of citizen engagement meant unifying activities across the diversity spectrum and building common understanding on **a number of areas -** from community development to research, policy analysis and policy development. In actual terms, the collaboration resulted in building, creating and implementing collaborative strategies for inter-ethnic community planning and development, conducting integrative research and organizing joint community activities. **As mentioned above**, the purpose of this collaborative relationship is to build individual capacity for each organization and, by extension, community through sharing of resources; to create a new alternative lens for social planning that reflects the demographic, racial, cultural and linguistic diversity of the new City; and to build **the** social capital of ethno-racial communities so that they **could** emerge on the policy field as a legitimate player. Our ultimate goal is that through our partnership we **could help** redefine the notion **and practice** of social planning within the City of Toronto, **so that the shared goal of a livable, accessible, inclusive, and healthy city for all could indeed be achieved, whether in respect of the human or the built environment.**

APG Highlights

- Partnering in an integrative settlement consortium we produced a unique piece of research entitled: “Re-visioning the Newcomer Settlement Support System” in the year 2000. This research proposed a new vision regarding the service delivery model in regards to settlement services in Canada.

- Participating in the Toronto Summit Alliance by bringing to the table a perspective on matters of demographic shift and the re-visioning the role of diversity on the building of sustainable local institutions in a new globalized context.

- Consulting with diverse communities to provide input into the City’s quest to develop Social Development Strategies in the year 2000-01.

- Researching on the topic of how to make public institutions more inclusive. As part of this work, in the summer of 2004 we will complete a new study on social inclusion from the perspective of diverse communities in Canada.

- Conducting regularly joint representations on Advisory Committees to a variety of public institutions concerned with issues such as diversity, equity, access to trades and professions, economic development, racism, policy development, and community based research.

- Meeting in joint Board of Directors Strategic Planning meetings. Our first session was held on March 15, 2000 and since then we have had regular joint Board meetings. This unique initiative has served to share experiences on community governance and strengthen areas of collaboration and integrative approaches to service delivery and consolidating areas of policy interest and community based research involving all levels of our organizations.
- Conducting the Joint Community Roundtable on July 14, 2000 entitled: “Beyond Dialogue: Strategies for economic participation”. This was the first time that the South Asian, Chinese and Hispanic community members had an opportunity to come together and discuss the common issues emerging from our three research reports on the settlement needs of our three communities, namely, barriers to full and equitable economic participation of newcomer immigrants from the three communities in the Canadian economy. The joint forum focused on collaborative and specific community driven strategies addressing this issue

- Holding our joint Community Conference on Immigrant Women’s Employment and Training Issues on March 29, 2001 in partnership with the Toronto Training Board. It was a highly successful activity, which helped us to refine our individual and collective views on the topic of women’s diversity and the Canadian economy and how to improve information access and networking.

- Delivering a joint workshop in June 2001 at the National Settlement Conference in Kingston, Ontario on our integrative research project to providing an insight into the production of an alternative framework for the analysis of settlement in the Toronto Region.

- Continuing to add value to our partnership in the Toronto Alternative Planning Group. This has essentially allowed us to place an anti-racist framework within social

planning activities by organizing a Forum of experts (2002-03) where traditionally marginalized groups have been encouraged to participate in order to further redefine and reconceptualize future community social planning.

- Making joint and individual deputations to the City Council on sustaining the City support Grants programmes and on Service Harmonization of Grants Allocations.

- Organizing successfully community campaigns on City's proposed cuts to the Grants Budget (2002-2003). This was done in partnership with OCASI and CVOS. Part of this work included a community development campaign focusing on learning about municipal decision-making processes in the area of City Budgets. Participants of the diverse communities in Toronto went to class to learn about city structures, committees, and the process of budget design and implementation. The name of this project was WATCH, "We are the City's hope".

- Continuing to be involved in joint advocacy and outreach through a variety of forums e.g. Consultative Committee of the Hate Crime Unit, Coalition for Just Immigration and Refugee Policy, the National Anti-Racism Council that is focusing on giving community input to the Federal Government on its position at the UN World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, Equity Reference Group of the Toronto District School Board, Steering Committee of the Law Society Initiative called Connecting Community with Council. This increased participation has allowed our individual communities to be represented on forums hitherto inaccessible to us.

- Doing supportive advocacy, e.g. CASSA protested the treatment of members of the Hispanic community, by a Justice of Peace at the judicial interim release hearing of the OCAP demonstrators at the Provincial Court in Toronto, on Friday, June 16, 2000. CASSA also protested the detention and treatment of Chinese immigrants landing on the shore of B.C. CCNC and HDC have supported CASSA initiative in setting up the Association of International Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (AIPSO) to facilitate the entry of international medical graduates into the Ontario health sector.

- Exploring joint strategies for setting up mentorship, observership and internship programmes for new immigrant professionals to gain "Canadian Experience". To date this has been already accomplished and we can add current work in the TRIEC (Toronto Region Immigration and Employment Council) initiative as a good overarching approach to deal with individual problems in the field of international professionals access to the employment market.

- Sharing our individual expertise and knowledge to increase our collective pool of resources by giving workshops and participating at each other's community events, creating links through our websites and creating a joint database.

- Having successfully implemented a joint research strategy and associated methodologies to approach problems in the social development field. Currently we have not only produced work of analysis pertaining to specific projects, but also we have outlined areas of future independent research in line with the projected requirements of population shifts into the future.

- Presenting the work of the Alternative Planning Group in academic environments including CERIS and most recently in the Cultural Poles Conference at McMaster University in Hamilton in February 2004 on the future of culture and the contemporary city. Our presentation discussed the increasingly significant elements of diversity, citizen engagement and public policy from both, the perspective of government and emerging community views on the changing notion of the public good.

- Innovating on matters of knowledge development, methodology and research. Currently, we have several researchers associated to the work of the APG in terms of Doctoral students conducting research about the emergence of the APG in terms of its practice, impact and implications for the new diversity of the City of Toronto as a living entity. In addition, APG members, individually and collectively we are negotiating a series of community-academic research partnerships that will help to increase our capacity and leverage knowledge building capacity to challenge traditional notions of planning, policy making and public governance.

- Adding to the previous point, we are currently researching the theme of social inclusion, which includes the creation of a tool for evaluating social inclusion at the institutional level, and a most crucial piece on the role of the City of Toronto accepting Alternative Planning as a new and legitimate function within the context of the local government.

Corollary

This unique collaboration of four major planning organizations representing four of the most populace ethnic communities in the City of Toronto, has itself become an example of reconceptualizing social planning in the changing environment that defines the new City of Toronto post amalgamation. Our joint community roundtables and participation in each other's community events as well as the integrated reporting has allowed our individual communities to see the merit of this collaboration and we have worked towards building new strategies for collaboration that cut across ethnicity and public silos of decision-making process. This collaboration, although clearly limited by access to resources has been possible only by the existence of social capital accumulated trough joint work and built upon the history of our communities in the City.

What has not clearly yet expressed in this summary of activities is how the many individual projects of our organizations also contribute to enhance this partnership. It will suffice to mention that current work by each Council include areas from the grassroots level involvement in neighborhoods across de City to the most refined academic collaboration internationally with universities, non governmental institutions, and other civil society partners dedicated to the advancement of knowledge and community capacity building in many parts of the world.

Backgrounder: Social Exclusion, Healthy Urban Planning & Participatory Research

On Social Exclusion

Social exclusion emerged as an important policy concept in Europe in the 1980s in response to the growing social divides that resulted from new labour market conditions and the inadequacy of existing social welfare provisions to meet the changing needs of more diverse populations. The notion of social inclusion is a normative (value based) concept - a way of raising the bar and understanding where we want to be and how to get there. Social inclusion reflects a proactive human development approach to social wellbeing (Saloojee, 2003).

The APG 2003 paper, "Social Inclusion and the City" considers the importance of language in framing notions of race and diversity. APG suggests that we must be aware of the effects of language used to describe different power relationships in the urban community. For example, commonly used words such as "difference" and "diversity", when socially constructed from a so-called dominant norm, reflect a set of power relations in society where this norm remains universal and is hegemonic because it has the power to racialize others. Furthermore, APG questions whether the promotion of social inclusion is necessarily the answer to social exclusion experienced by their communities, particularly if it entails policy accommodations that potentially assimilate their communities into a *status quo* system of governance.

John Veit-Wilson (1998, 45) also takes a critical view of the notion of social exclusion. He is careful to distinguish between weak versions of the social exclusion discourse (which focus on changing the excluded and integrating them into society), and stronger versions of the discourse (which focus on power relations between the excluded and those doing the excluding). The former focus simply on integration of the excluded (via a state commitment to multiculturalism), while the latter take a structural approach that focuses on historical processes that continually reproduce oppression, discrimination and exclusion.

Those who recognize the salience of social exclusion as an explanatory tool must be aware of one possible unintended consequence of the analysis – the re-victimization and marginalization of the excluded. Individuals and groups who are excluded on the basis of race (or other socially constructed criteria) must create their own inclusion both in the discussions about their social conditions of existence and in the debate about the eradication of exclusion.

For social inclusion to resonate, it must provide space for a discussion of oppression and discrimination. Social inclusion has to take its rightful place not along a continuum (from exclusion to inclusion), but as emerging out of a thorough analysis of exclusion. It has to simultaneously transcend the limits of essentialism, critique hierarchies of oppression and promote a transformative agenda that links together the various, often disparate struggles against oppression, inequality and injustice. The issue is not "how" to include the excluded but rather "why" and "how" people are excluded and eradicate those conditions and structures of exclusion.

In "Immigration, Diversity and Urban Citizenship", Siemiatycki and Isin (1997) note that diversity challenges citizenship. As Sharon Zukin has observed (1995), the task confronting ethnoculturally diverse societies is "whether [they] can create an inclusive political culture".

An appreciation of the diversity of Toronto along ethnic, race, class and spatial dimensions establishes the context, and frames the relationship between municipal governments and social groups. However, to date, there has been little spatial analysis of the socio-economic dimensions of immigration and diversity in Toronto.

According to the authors, electoral representation has been regarded by immigrant communities as a necessary pre-condition of equitable urban citizenship. Following the 1997 municipal elections, the city's 57 member council was comprised of 27 members of British origin (47%), 11 Italians (19.3%), 7 visible minorities (12.3%) consisting of 4 Chinese members, 3 Blacks , 6 Jewish members and 6 of assorted other European heritage (10.5% each). Dramatically under-represented from their 31% share of the population are visible minorities, with a number of large communities such as the Korean, Vietnamese, Filipino and several from the Indian sub-continent having no members elected at all.

Following the 1997 elections and amalgamation in Toronto, a provincially-appointed Transition Team was charged with designing the new City's political and administrative structures. Six of seven municipalities collaborated in presenting a joint brief to the Task Force. Their joint brief declared, "The new City of Toronto will need to ensure that it is a sensitive, accessible and accountable entity ... To do this, the City of Toronto will have to commit itself to ensuring that its political and bureaucratic structures are actively involved in anti-racism, access and equity work, that it will work with and enable communities to participate effectively in the city's services and decision-making processes. The authors conclude that while the Team's interim report invoked values of inclusivity and equity, it committed neither institutions nor staff to their achievement.

Appadurai (2001) in a discussion on "Grassroots Globalization and the Research Imagination" notes that in the public spheres of many societies there is concern that ongoing global policy debates set the stage for life-and-death decisions for citizens around the world. Running through these debates is the sense that social exclusion is ever more tied to epistemological (information and knowledge) exclusion and concern that the discourses of expertise that are setting the rules for global transactions that exclude ordinary people from the discourse.

In response, a series of social movements has emerged to contest these developments and to create forms of knowledge transfer and social mobilization. These social forms rely on strategies, visions, and horizons for globalization on behalf of the poor that can be characterized as "grassroots globalization".

Appadurai further suggests that in discussing policy issues, we need to make a decisive shift away from "trait" geographies to what we could call "process" geographies. Much traditional thinking about "areas" has been driven by conceptions of geographical, civilizational, and cultural coherence that rely on some sort of trait list -- of values, languages, material practices, ecological adaptations, marriage patterns, and the like. These approaches tend to see "areas" as relatively immobile aggregates of traits. These assumptions have often been further filtered through contemporary U.S. security-driven images of the world and, to a lesser extent, through colonial and postcolonial conceptions of national and regional identity.

The author argues that we need tools for area or community study that are based on process geographies and sees significant areas of human organization as precipitates of various kinds of action, interaction, and motion -- trade, travel, pilgrimage, etc. Put simply, the regions that dominate our current maps for area studies are not permanent geographical facts. They are problematic heuristic devices for the study of global geographic and cultural processes. Regions are best viewed as initial contexts for themes that generate variable

geographies, rather than as fixed geographies marked by pregiven themes. These themes are equally "real," equally coherent, but are results of our interests and not their causes.

Habermas (1979) in his discussion of technology and science suggests that the monopoly of capital is now reinforced by the monopoly of information and "high-tech" solutions that has penetrated every sphere of public and private life. In our televisual democracy, for example, public life emerges from public opinion polls, whose mathematical indices are substituted in practice for "the public" itself.

The masses become a demographic construct, a statistical entity whose only traces appear in the social survey or opinion polls. The ideology of the knowledge society has at its roots a modern-day faith in science as the model of truth (Imre, 1984). The claim to truth gives rise to hierarchies of knowledge, which reinforce and legitimate the economic and social hierarchies. Today this ideology manifests itself in the deference of the people to the expert, and ultimately the subordination of their own experiences and personal meanings to expertise. Hence, the specialists dominate any debate concerning issues of public interest because ordinary people are unable to enter the scientized debate, as they lack the technical terminology and specialized language of argumentation.

In a 2003 report (Social Inclusion, Anti-Racism and Democratic Citizenship) Saloojee suggests a number of requirements for improving the wellbeing of communities normally excluded in current political and social frameworks. Universal programs and policies generally provide a stronger foundation for improving wellbeing than residual, targeted or segregated approaches. The research and anecdotal evidence for this claim is mounting from the education, child development and population health sectors. It is becoming apparent that sharing physical and social spaces to provide opportunities for interactions, if desired, and to reduce social distances between people must be a key indicator for any social planning. This includes shared public spaces such as parks and libraries; mixed income neighbourhoods and housing; and integrated schools and classrooms as well as policies that actively address issues of uneven distribution of public resources.

In 1997, the UK government set up the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) to improve Government action to reduce social exclusion by producing ‘joined-up solutions to joined-up problems’. In its work, the SEU describes ethnic social exclusion is complex and varied according to the economic, social, cultural and religious backgrounds of the particular people concerned. This complexity is not always understood or appreciated, partly because there is limited data available about different minority ethnic groups.

Research undertaken by the SEU has shown that because people from minority ethnic communities are often under-represented in formal consultative groups, specific efforts may be needed to encourage their participation and leadership.

The SEU has published six reports, including, most recently, a framework for a National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal on which it is currently consulting. It has also commissioned 18 Policy Action Teams (PATS) to publish reports on various aspects of deprived neighbourhoods. Seminars were organized in order that minority ethnic specialists could question each of the PATs about their work while it was still in progress.

The SEU and PAT reports and National Strategy framework put forward recommendations aimed specifically at tackling minority ethnic social exclusion. These fall into five types of action:

- Tackling racial discrimination;

- Ensuring mainstream services are more **relevant** to the circumstances of people from minority
- Ethnic communities monitoring outcomes and involving people from minority ethnic communities more in design and delivery;
- Implementing programs specifically targeted at minority ethnic needs;
- Tackling racist crime and harassment; and
- Improving the information available about minority ethnic communities.

Minority ethnic participation and leadership in the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal is critical to its success. The PATs and the National Strategy framework particularly emphasize the need for minority ethnic participation and leadership at the local level. Local strategic partnerships – bringing together public, private, voluntary and community sectors to agree on a common neighbourhood renewal strategy – should represent all sections of the community and make specific efforts to involve minority ethnic representatives.

Previous regeneration efforts have also demonstrated that the formal adoption of race equality policies may not be enough. It is recommended that, in order to improve the performance of policies and services in meeting the needs of people from minority ethnic communities, the government takes steps to recruit more minority ethnic staff and increase staff interchanges with minority ethnic organizations, and to ensure that more frequent and comprehensive data about minority ethnic communities is available.

Elements for Healthy Urban Planning

In 1999, the World Health Organization (WHO) produced a background document called Healthy Cities and the City Planning Process, A Background Document on Links Between Health and Urban Planning. In it the authors explore the relationship between urban planning and public health in terms of history, current issues in cities, new approaches and case studies from Canada, the US and parts of Europe.

According to the authors, new patterns are emerging, from an emphasis on *control* to *non-control*. The world is becoming more complex, and with this comes change in the planning process. More than ever before, the traditional role of urban planners overlaps that of developers, engineers and even the government. Further, more and more diversity and special interests exist. The central concerns then become the *processes* of holding the pieces together in a community. Conflict resolution and compromise become pivotal to the planning process.

The 1999 report describes urban renewal initiatives that were popular in the 1960s and 1970s among North Americans and Europeans. Between 1964 and 1974, the London County Council built 384 high towers with the intention of providing quality housing and less oppressive conditions for the economically disadvantaged. In the developing world this practice is still frequently used in squatter settlements. The results were dismal failures. In fact, some communities were found to be stronger, more vibrant and more hopeful prior to their dislocation. The authors stress that learning from mistakes made in previous efforts is another vital component of healthy planning.

Urban planning policies have led to an increased sense of fragmentation in urban communities. This is especially true in the United States, and we can look to examples from this region as a means of helping to prevent cities in Europe and elsewhere from following a similar path. Architectural and planning policies have resulted in fragmentation by emphasizing the needs of the individual over those of the community, thus making it difficult for people to develop and sustain social support networks.

"For centuries, informal gathering places helped people to find out what was on their neighbours' minds and begin to form a consensus on issues that needed to be tackled. On the basis of informal discussions, people sometimes decided how to handle problems – without requiring the involvement of government agencies and other formal institutions". In other words, informal interactions means less local government expense.

Wallace & Wallace (1997) argue that public policies and economic patterns (e.g. reduction of basic services to already marginalized communities) that increase marginalization not only further damage those areas but contribute to the diffusion of disease: "spreading disease and disorder can be interpreted as indices of the resulting social disintegration which is driven by policy". Some have coined this strategy of isolating poor neighbourhoods as "containment." Although their analysis looks specifically at public health issues in the urban context, their observations that the fundamental processes of human ecology are nested and linked can be applied in a broader sense to urban systems as a whole. Thus, architectural and planning policies that perpetuate "containment" and marginalize already disadvantaged communities are participating in creating the *unintended consequences* of increased fragmentation and disconnectedness.

According to Duhl and Sanchez (1999), healthy urban planning does not view multiculturalism and diversity as problems to be overcome but rather as rich opportunities waiting to be seized. Urban planning must be sustained by dynamic leadership styles and open to various configurations. For example, it should be:

- Open to collaborative and bottom-up actions;
- Have an infrastructure that understands the many interconnected pieces and works to put them all together;
- Evolve from existing key values, mandate shared responsibility and not strive to make everyone uniform.

According to McKnight (1997) creating healthy cities requires professionals (a) to understand the kinds of information that will enable citizens to design and solve problems, (b) to direct resources to enhance community associations, and (c) to focus on proliferating the gifts, capacities and assets of local citizens and their associations.

In other words, healthy urban planning requires a different set of leadership skills – catalytic leadership skills. Catalytic leadership is not a tool that emanates from the traditional top-down styles; it seeks to involve public officials, individuals from the private, nonprofit and education sectors, community activists and volunteers. Luke (1998) sets out four specific, interrelated tasks that he believes can together have a catalytic impact on addressing public problems and can encourage the growth of healthy cities. The four tasks are as follows.

1. Focus attention by elevating the issue to the public and policy agendas.
2. Engage people in the effort by convening the diverse set of individuals, agencies and interests needed to address the issue.
3. Stimulate multiple strategies and options for action.
4. Sustain action and maintain momentum by managing the interconnections through appropriate institutionalization and rapid information sharing and feedback.

Understanding *what* to assess is critical, but even more important is understanding *how* to make an assessment and, specifically, how this process can contribute to the health of a city. These questions require careful consideration of the types of information that are collected and of the degree of contact by planners with the community during the process.

Participatory Research and Planning

Originally designed to resist the intellectual colonialism of western social research into the third world development process, participatory research developed a methodology for involving disenfranchised people as researchers in pursuit of answers to the questions of their daily struggle and survival (Brown, 1978; Fals-Borda, 1979; Freire, 1970, 1974; Hall, 1981; Tandon, 1981). It is not new for people to raise questions about their conditions or to actively search for better ways of doing things for their own well-being and that of their community. This vision implies a new framework of political will to promote research as collective action in the struggle over power and resources, and as the generation of change-oriented social theory in the post-industrial, information-based society.

Participatory research is a means of putting research capabilities in the hands of deprived and disenfranchised people. It is a means of preventing an elite group from exclusively determining the interests of others, in effect of transferring power to those groups engaged in the production of popular knowledge (Fisher, 1994; Kling, 1995; Kieffer, 1984). According to Sohng (1995) participatory research promotes empowerment through the development of common knowledge and critical awareness, which are suppressed by the dominant knowledge system.

Ideally, this collaborative process is empowering because it:

1. Brings isolated people together around common problems and needs;
2. Validates their experiences as the foundation for understanding and critical reflection;
3. Presents the knowledge and experiences of the researchers as additional information upon which to critically reflect;
4. Contextualizes what have previously felt like "personal," individual problems or weakness; and
5. Links such personal experiences to political realities.

The result of this kind of activity is living knowledge that may get translated into action. The aim of the participatory research is to provide the catalyst for bringing forth leadership potential in the community in this manner. Field observation, archival and library research, and historical investigation using documents and personal history, narratives and story telling, as well as questionnaires and interviews, have been used in participatory research.

In an example of applied participatory action, Goldsmith (2000) describes a Brazilian initiative in Participatory Budgeting. Adopted by the city of Puerto Alegre, the process involves three parallel sets of meetings — neighborhood assemblies, “thematic” assemblies, and meetings of delegates for city-wide coordinating sessions. Events begin each year with a formal report by the city government on the previous year’s expenditures, called the Presentation of Accounts. Meetings continue all year in three series of highly organized, formal rounds. District elections add a layer of representative democracy atop the directly democratic deliberations. Delegates at the district level are clearly constrained in their votes by the neighborhood meetings, ample reporting requirements, and workable recall arrangements to keep them in line. To encourage participation, the number of delegates is roughly proportional to the number of neighbors attending the meeting where elections take place.

The district-based meetings begin with 16 Great Assemblies in public places, including union centres, gyms, churches and clubs — even a circus tent that held 2,000 people. The government reports on the previous year. The government presents its investment plan for the current year (decided in the previous year’s meetings). Then the debate starts for the year to come. The debates go on for nine months, and each district produces two sets of rankings, one set for twelve major in-district “themes,” like pavement versus school

construction versus water lines, the other for "cross-cutting" efforts that affect the entire city, like cleaning up the beaches. Allocation of the investment budget among districts is weighted by a set of weights also determined by popular debate. This year these weights are population, an index of poverty, a measure of shortages (e.g., lack of pavement), and the assigned priorities.

Through Participatory Budgeting, the leadership and design of meetings has shifted from executive-branch officials toward citizens and their elected delegates. Budget priorities have shifted in ways not anticipated by the mayors or their staff. The mayor and his staff stressed that one of the achievements of honest and effective participation is recognition that at some level allocation decisions are zero-sum games: e.g., more child care or less pavement.

Furthermore, Porto Alegre's leaders reject the competitive-city ideology and use the solidarity that has developed from widespread participation to make some unusual decisions. In spite of promises of new employment and the usual ideological pressures from the Ford Motor Company, the city turned down a proposed new auto plant, arguing that the required subsidies would be better applied against other city needs. The city also turned down a five-star hotel proposed for the site of a de-commissioned power plant, preferring to use the well-situated site as a public park, convention hall and public symbol of the city. And faced with a proposal to clear slums to make room for a large supermarket, the city imposed stiff and costly relocation requirements.

In Our Own Backyard: Traditional Planning and Alexandra Park

Built in 1968, Alexandra Park is a 410-unit public housing development in the west end downtown of Toronto – a traditional immigrant settlement area. The development includes 140 apartments in two medium-rise apartment buildings and 270 townhouses. Until recently, Alexandra Park was managed by the Metro Toronto Housing Authority (MTHA) - a local authority reporting to the provincially-owned Ontario Housing Corporation. In October 2001, Alexandra Park was transferred to the municipally-owned Toronto Community Housing Corporation.

Alexandra Park is home to a predominantly family-oriented population many of whom are mother-led. Household incomes tend to be quite low reflecting the high proportion of tenants who are not working on a full-time basis. While ethnic diversity has always been a characteristic of the neighbourhood, this diversity has become more pronounced in recent years and has resulted in many challenges to the community.[1]

There are at least 46 different ethnic groups represented in Alexandra Park. The largest groups are Chinese (21%), followed by the Vietnamese (13%), Portuguese (7%), Jamaican (6%), English (6%), Canadian (5%), French (3%) and Irish (3%). All of the remaining groups account for a small percentage of the population.[2] The majority of tenants (57%) are on family benefits or general welfare. Just over a quarter (27%) are employed and 18% are on some form of pension income.[3]

The conversion of Alexandra Park came about initially as a resident-driven initiative to improve the living conditions of residents living in the public housing development. Maintenance, security, tenant selection and maximum rent issues brought the community

[1] "Converting Alexandra Park into the Atkinson Co-operative: An Evaluation of the Process", Sousa, Jorge & LaPointe, Linda, 2002.
[2] 1996 Census, Statistics Canada
[3] MTHC Quarterly Report. March 31, 2001

together in making the decision to convert as these concerns appeared to be shared amongst the majority of residents. Their desire to have more control over their community led to the notion of a co-operative leading to the creation of the Atkinson Co-op on April 1, 2003.

The conversion process, it has been noted, was flawed in that the residents did not identify their own needs or priorities at the beginning of the process, leading to lack of clarity around specific community needs and strategies to address them. This lack of resident driven strategization (research), that would have built their own capacity to build knowledge about their particular preferences for their housing project while creating meaningful social capital amongst their diverse interests, forced the community to fit into an existing structure and model that is in effect inappropriate to their local needs rather than creating a unique, inclusive model informed by the community itself. A community development worker was hired to develop and implement a six-month outreach program which comprised of resident outreach, multilingual community information sessions, and information meetings. During this process, it became clear that these mechanisms were inadequate in obtaining true community participation and engagement in the process of conversion.

Challenges and Major Concerns in the Conversion Process

In the report entitled "Converting Alexandra Park into the Atkinson Co-op: An Evaluation of the Process" (Lapointe & Sousa, 2002), eight major issue areas are identified that have contributed to the challenges currently facing the Atkinson Co-op today. These include the following:

1. The relationship between Alexandra Park Community Centre and the Co-op:
Alexandra Park Community Centre was established in 1976 and has remained a centre for community involvement and one arena where the community has been able to exercise control over programs and services to residents in the area. Originally, the plan included integration of the community centre into the cooperative structure by merging the two Boards into one. In the summer of 2001, the community revived the defunct Alexandra Park Residents Association (APRA) Board to manage the community centre as they were critical of the hands-on management style of the Co-op Board. The newly elected APRA Board, however, lacked the experience, training opportunities and knowledge base required to run an organization, leading to the current situation with the community centre which is now experiencing severe challenges in obtaining funding for programs.

2. Ethnic and Cultural Divisions within the Community:
Differing racial backgrounds and religious and cultural differences became a serious issue in the community with the revival of the APRA Board. It was strongly perceived that block voting occurred on the two Boards along ethno-racial lines, leading many residents to disengage from the election process. Since no organic process of "negotiating differences" for mutual benefit was undertaken by the community itself and very little support was made available by the government to the community to address this issue, it continues to remain a barrier to community building today.

3. Information Dissemination:
In the absence of "meaningful negotiations" between community members, information dissemination became merely a technical function of "spreading the word" as opposed to a process of collective consciousness raising, thus, the infrequency of communications around the co-operative and conversion process became a problem in itself. Some residents felt completely out of touch with the process and expressed skepticism regarding whether the conversion would actually take place. Several community members suggested there was an unnecessary focus on the negative experiences of the conversion process.

Furthermore, misinformation circulated throughout the community that once the conversion took place, non-co-op members would be forced to move out of the community. This resulted in challenges for the Cooperative Housing Federation of Toronto (CHFT) in convincing non-co-op members to join the co-op, despite the ongoing clarification that non-co-op residents' tenure would not be at risk.

4. Board Training and Member Education:
Again since the community itself did not participate in the design and development of the training and education opportunities that were made available to all co-op members, concern was expressed around the inaccessibility of these training opportunities. As a result of this, residents have not taken advantage of these opportunities and there have been concerns expressed around how this impacts on Board members being able to manage the co-op.

5. Access to Decision-Making Process Around the Conversion:
Even though CHFT attempted, throughout the process to ensure transparent and accountable systems of governance were followed, many residents felt that there were barriers to the process such as "closed meetings" and language accessibility. CHFT made strong efforts to provide translation, but resource limitations made it impossible to meet all the language needs in the community, leading residents whose first language is not English to feel left out. Once again it is apparent that lack of resident driven participation and decision-making that would have allowed the "partners" to deal with internal plurality of needs and interests created a problem.

6. Length of the Conversion Process:
A number of reasons were cited for the delay in conversion including the lack of a plan to guide the process, impact of devolution of social housing onto municipalities, government uncertainty around community support for the conversion (which resulted in a second vote), lack of government confidence in the community's ability to manage the co-op, slow government response time to proposals, changing leadership locally, emerging community conflict and a serious lack of resources and funding. In total, the conversion took ten years to take place. It is apparent that external forces would always impinge on any community social planning process in a negative manner unless there is autonomy within the process for the participants to solicit their own "experts", chart their own course and the support of the government to facilitate that process through equitable resource allocation and accountable policy interventions.

7. Funding:
The entire initiative was under-resourced and CHFT assumed the majority of the costs and liability in the conversion process. Fundraising efforts resulted in some success in raising a little over half of the estimated $300,000.00 required for the process. This severely impacted on CHFT's capacity and the capacity of the community to effectively engage in education activities, develop a process relevant and responsive to the community and ultimately, create a model of housing that meets local community needs while providing residents with the tools to empower themselves.

It is apparent from the above- mentioned case study that "external" planning expertise cannot create community capacity or build social capital among diverse communities. In a pluralistic reality, the diverse communities themselves needed to negotiate their differences and build common good. In order for training, skills development, information generation, decision-making processes to be effective, they needed to be "internalized" by the community which would have built "active" citizens as well as socially cohesive community. However, only

empowered communities can be “active” citizens and empowerment comes from engagement not from external largesse. Residents themselves needed to identify and negotiate with the immediate stakeholders what they needed, how they needed it to be delivered, what resources would have been necessary and when. It was the role of the government to be responsive through appropriate resource allocation and policy interventions.

By disconnecting the conversion process from the community, imposing a new model not created to respond to their specific needs with the considerable challenges of under-funding, the community has not been empowered to self-govern and is having to face a number of challenges that could have been addressed earlier in the process. The community ultimately lacked the capacity to define itself. This is a very clear example of the fact that power without resources is ineffective. Empowerment requires the full support and facilitation of knowledge building in a framework that is informed by principles of equity and inclusion, and in this case, the experiment has thus far reinforced the marginalization of communities by failing to allow the organic development of tools necessary to successfully achieve self-governance.

The Anatomy of Traditional Planning In Greater Detail: City of Toronto

In 1999, the City of Toronto initiated a high-level planning process to produce a new “Official Plan”, a top-down, specialized, long–term strategic policy document which describes policies and objectives for future land use. Through a second level of planning, the new Plan also contains secondary plans for 22 areas in the city, needed to provide further direction for major growth areas and approximately 230 site- and area-specific policies. Intended to reflect a community vision for future change and development, the Official Plan was prepared with citizen input and was written by Urban Development Services staff. The efforts made to ensure that an ethno-racial perspective was included in both the process and the outcome represent a realization that this perspective has for too long been missing from the public discourse that informs social planning activities and outcomes. The realization alone, however, is insufficient in developing a civic environment with a social planning process that recognizes the factors of diversity/pluralism and inequity, and has the capacity to evolve to meet the needs of the ever-changing population that now constitutes the megacity of Toronto.

The development of a plan is to some extent based on the concept of a community whose demographics, development and needs are somewhat predictable and stable. This is not the case in Toronto, a growing city that is home to approximately one third of all newcomers to Canada and which has a high population “turnover” rate. The concept of a finite plan also implies an endpoint; the point at which a strategy has been articulated and will be applied over a given period of time. This inherent emphasis on end product does not recognize the value and necessity of using the process itself as a form of planning and civic negotiation that can actively impact change.

Who participates in social planning and how?

The urban planning framework for the City of Toronto is complex, comprising of planners including the City itself, specialized urban planners (Community Social Planning Council, academics), issues based groups (e.g. Disability Coalition) and community groups (APG, OCASI, PIN, etc.). However, in the present articulation of planning these players are assumed to be conducting different “types” of planning for different constituents. The categorization is usually articulated as being urban governance and design, geographic,

issue based and ethno-racial where the City Planning Division is primarily responsible for managing the growth and physical form of the city. It is in this context that the Alternative Planning Group (APG) has been participatory in social planning activities in the City of Toronto, considered as performing an ethno-racial planning function under the current process.

Given that almost one half of Toronto's population was born outside of Canada, more than one third are from racialized communities, and approximately one third of all newcomers to Canada make Toronto their home (2001 Census), the above mentioned **discrete** categorization of planning is at best curious and at worst problematic. **It** paints a picture that serves to reinforce difference as a form of privilege for **certain communities but not others**, **and creates a " common good" that is fractured and partial by its relegation of the racialized communities to the sidelines of social participation**.

Individual Participation

Participation of ethno-specific groups in social planning is limited also by the constraints that apply to individuals within those groups and to the organizations that represent them. In our consultation with key informants from a variety of ethno-racial and sector specific backgrounds revealed that individual participation in planning related activities is limited by but not limited to a necessary focus on "survival", a sense of being an outsider; not a part of the system and lacking the power needed to change it (please see Appendix 2: Summary of focus groups and key informant interviews). Our key informants identified the existing forms of planning as a social frame of reference that does not include the reality of Canada, and that characterizes social planning as a more abstract, academic exercise that can not directly relate to daily life and immediate needs of racialized communities. Ultimately however, individual capacity is most affected by economic and social issues that directly relate to poverty. In 1996, 41% of racialized minorities in Canada were living in poverty, often despite high levels of education and skills. This figure becomes more striking when contrasted with the 18.7% of non-racialized minorities living in poverty in the same year (Urban Poverty in Canada, Canadian Council on Social Development). As poverty rates in Toronto rise and the gap between rich and poor increases, racialized minorities are disproportionately affected, creating an ongoing source of inequality that becomes reflected both socially and politically.

The most significant barrier to individual participation by people living in "poverty" (material, capacity, resources, decision-making) in activities related to the social planning process is the social isolation that accompanies poverty. User fees, transit fares hikes, rising housing costs and the personal and social consequences of the stigma associated with poverty are among the factors that promote social isolation, which in turn leads to political isolation. Given that immigration rates and trends are unlikely to change dramatically and that the proportion of Torontonians considered racialized minorities will only increase, this relationship between racialized minorities and poverty is very troubling and requires a broad community response. Such a response is best offered through social planning mechanisms that address issues such as transportation, housing, childcare, wages, etc. The irony is that this response must include the engagement of those people that many social policies to date have effectively disengaged through contributing to their isolation.

Traditional Community Social Planning

Government Planning Arena

KEY POINTS

"Planning"means the scientific, aesthetic, and orderly disposition of land, resources, facilities and services

What Planning Is:

- Considered independent and neutral
- Resides in specialized and discreet locations – in the hands of "Planners"
- Planners develop plans for action and implement ongoing evaluations of successes and failures as part of their work
- Research considered critical to the process of planning and considered "neutral"
- Planning is sequential, but done for communities
- Top down – planners plan community services, manage cultural resources, create economic capacity, address transportation and infrastructure needs
- "Planning expertise" made available to communities
- Divided between social and physical planning
- Social planning divided into three categories: geographic, issue based, ethno racial

What Planning Does:

- Planning is done to reduce inequalities as identified
- Planning is done to build capacity for communities identified as needy
- Planning bodies make policy interventions on behalf of communities
- Planners create avenues for policy interventions by communities
- Planners advocate for communities
- Planners make interventions between government and public and private interests
- Such planning achieves "greatest" good for the "greatest number"

Role of government in this model is to fund independent planning bodies, act as specialized physical planners, address inequalities through investing in stable social infrastructure

Critique:

- "Silo-ization" approach to planning – that does not address racial and cultural plurality and uneven power relations
- Does not question its own "privilege"
- Does not/can not lead to re-distribution of resources or shifting of power relations between communities
- By definition and design "paternalistic"

Organizational Participation

The solicitation of organizations to represent ethno-racial communities (like APG, OCASI, PIN) in the planning process assumes that these organizations have the capacity to participate in a meaningful way. Like individuals, organizations are constrained by a number of factors, the most important of which is the resources they have available to them. Current funding trends and strategies are intended to increase self-sufficiency and accountability, however, in many cases they achieve the opposite effect. Lack of core funding, project-based funding and onerous reporting requirements create a sense of instability, a lack of incentive to engage in advocacy activities and an aversion to risk-taking exercises or actions that do not produce tangible outcomes (Please see Appendix 2: Summary of focus groups and key informant interviews). Furthermore, the ethno-racial groups have been given limited resources to conduct planning but, unlike traditional planners, they do not have years and years of planning "history" behind them in terms of recognition or acknowledgement of their work. This creates particular problems for their work in the existing planning framework: (a) their work is "de-legitimized" as not being professional enough; (b) their work is seen as not being capable of affecting societal issues; (c) their "alternative" work is seen as being useful only in ethno-specific enclaves; (d) their work is seen as something to be tolerated but not encouraged! APG and its partners' (OCASI, PIN) specific challenges are that in the absence of "genuine alternative" models of practice, they have constructed a partnership and a model of a relationship that is "unique" and "alternative" in its intent and content (in order to be relevant to their constituents) but that they are still being judged by "traditional" concepts of planning. This poses huge problems of accessing resources, having their work gain legitimacy, changing structural realities of society.

The current targeted approach to funding does not lend itself to social planning activities that are by nature broad and often do not produce specific, measurable results. Funders also tend to favour established organizations with well-developed infrastructures, a factor that serves to marginalize smaller groups, often those whose voice most needs to be heard. Key informant interviewees expressed frustration with what is perceived to be a double standard with respect to requirements and expectations. Though organizations funded through the city and other sources are subject to strict parameters and expectations such as operating reserves, reporting requirements, and the achievement of measurable outcomes, the city itself is not accountable for demonstrating or achieving these same requirements. The extension of an invitation to participate in social planning does not in itself represent meaningful participation, if it continues to be a top-down process and not organic.

On a practical level, the limiting factor with respect to meaningful participation in social planning activities for both individuals and organizations is resources. On a more theoretical level however, these resources represent social power. A lack of social power is ultimately what limits the participation of racialized minorities in social planning activities, and is what must be addressed by any planning process that seeks to act in the public's best interests (assuming that the public is diverse and includes racialized minorities). This translates into the need to concretely equalize the power imbalances that currently exist.

The notion of "the public good"

According to planners, the strategy for Toronto's future focuses growth where it can realize the greatest social, environmental and economic benefits i.e. the public good. Missing from this discussion is an elaboration and analysis of what in fact constitutes the public good, and who is a part of the process that creates and shapes that notion. Special interest groups, the status assigned to ethno-specific groups, have traditionally not been a part of that process. Categorization of specific population groups as special interest groups immediately puts

them outside of the norm, making them the "other" that has no place in negotiating what is in the best interests of the group i.e. society. True "common good" however, must refer to shared commonalities, be equated with diverse communities and requires an identification and negotiation process that is based on equitable power relations. This has many implications for resources related to planning.

The current notion of "public good" is problematic altogether. It suggests a quantitative analysis where it functions as the "greatest good for the greatest number" of people (Adam Smith, Wealth of Nations, 1776). The common good, by definition, is fundamentally different, creating good for a pluralistic society that is inclusive and not dependent on a majority-minority relationship. Alternative social planning considers the common good the goal of social planning and not public good for only the majority of people.

The Social Planning Process

Public input

Planners gather public input and conduct research to develop plans, regulations and projects that are intended to protect and enhance the urban environment. They also provide support for City Council and its committees as well as community-based working groups established to review specific development plans. This process of information collection and support does not provide for the ongoing engagement of different individuals and groups. Public engagement differs from public input in that it is an ongoing process (as opposed to a discrete, time-limited activity) that relies on a sense of mutual accountability. When information is used to feed into a particular regulation or policy only, it becomes obsolete once that process is complete. Participatory research is one example of a process that seeks to engage people rather than solicit information from them. Rather than information "taking", there is an information exchange, which creates a more equitable distribution of resources, in this case information.

Decision-making

Committees of Council, informed by specialized sources of planning and community consultation, discuss budget, service and administrative issues that are then passed on to Council for debate and final approval. During committee meetings, Councillors hear the opinions and concerns of citizens, business owners and community groups. Committees of Council fall into three broad categories: Community Councils, Standing Committees and Other Committees of Council. This structure again raises the fundamental issue of engagement versus consultation and input. When invited only to provide a perspective to a pre-existing decision-making process at particular points in that process rather than participate in it, ethno-racial (and other) groups are kept to the sidelines of decision-making i.e. out of a position of power. This inequitable power distribution is compounded by the disproportionately low representation of "minority" groups among those who then make the ultimate decisions and limited transparency. Limiting "input" to pre-determined points throughout a pre-existing process does not allow for the understanding, participation and organic development that characterizes a process of participatory decision-making but instead reinforces a top-down approach that does not allow for the true engagement required to create a common good reflective of all members of society.

The City of Toronto conducts planning through a number of institutionalized structures that inform the process at different levels and on different issues. These comprise of:

- ***Community Councils*** that consider the City's business of a local nature at the community level, and provide a forum for local input into Council's decision-making process;

- ***Standing Committees*** with distinct mandates in areas of public service delivery and corporate operations;

- ***Agencies, Boards and Commissions (ABCs)*** responsible for the administration of services, programs and policies in the City of Toronto, as are other special purpose bodies, each having their own relationship with City Council;

- ***Task Forces and Special Committees*** are mechanisms created to deal with particular issues in more detail, usually have narrower mandates than standing committees and operate over a limited period of time;

- ***Public and Community Participation*** through:
  a. Public/Community Dialogue
  b. Dissemination
  c. Capacity Building in Support of the Community.

The process and tools of "consultation" employed by the City assume there is true participation. By definition, consultation is a top-down, paternalistic, one-way, one-time process of seeking information and advice, and therefore one of maintaining rather than conferring control. When done explicitly in public forums rather than implicitly through a wide range of existing services and in a variety of different, often indirect and personal ways, it favours hearing the voices of those who are loudest, which are not always representative of society as a whole. It also rarely results in a process in which the results of consultation are made available to those consulted and allowed to evolve. As a mode of community participation, it limits the degree to which people are truly integrated into the process. Over time this creates consultation "fatigue" among ethno-racial communities, brought on by a sense that at a basic level, there is no reciprocal dialogue as decisions have already been made prior to a consultation process designed only to refine the details.

The dissemination process, in recognition of the ethnic diversity of Toronto, focuses on the language needs of various communities where, for example, the summary of the May 2002 Official Plan "A Citizen's Guide to Toronto's New Official Plan" was made available in the Chinese, Italian, French, Portuguese, Tamil, Polish, Tagalog, Greek, and Spanish languages. These considerable efforts, however, stop short of actively engaging people. A focus on language as the primary barrier to participation by different ethno-cultural groups obscures the fact that the roots of non-participation are to be found in more systemic inequities related to race, culture, poverty and power.

As it exists now, capacity building within Toronto's planning process requires and assumes social literacy and capacity rather than build it. Instead of negotiating diversity through equity and thereby creating opportunities for capacity-building, it seeks to manage diversity by maintaining existing structures that reinforce power inequities in society. Without explicit recognition of the construction and existence of a dominant norm from which ethno-racial communities are considered to be different, the capacity that can be fostered is limited to meager social development activities, and does not extend to meaningful and equitable participation in social planning. The assumption that practicing social inclusion will inevitably lead to increased capacity is questionable also. Inclusionary policies are based on the integration of the "different" into the existing norm, which is assumed to be fixed. Only an ongoing process that continually recognizes and addresses the need for an alternative and evolving "norm" will allow for the broader reframing that must take place if negotiations among members of society are to be equitable, that is based on participation of people operating at similar levels of capacity.

Conclusion & Summary of Key Points

Given that the end goal of alternative social planning is creating "common" and not "greatest" good, the current process is fundamentally flawed and it is for this reason that planning has been unable to respond to the complexities and needs of Toronto's evolving communities. As the existing top-down planning structures and process focus on a "silo" approach, the outcomes of such planning will, inevitably, be inequitable, paternalistic and disconnected from the very groups for whom planning is conducted. Furthermore, it will not allow self-governing communities of "planners" to develop and build meaningful partnerships with each other and the City. Yet, it is quite evident that it is critical to integrate diversity into a new conceptual paradigm so that planning can become effective, equitable, democratic and ultimately relevant to the City's reality.

Current planning is also not sustainable: It creates a fossilized, i.e., time-frozen and moribund, prioritization of allocation of resources, energy and initiative. It thus lacks the vision for the equitable distribution and re-distribution of resources, ongoing flexibility of planning, and the transformative forecasting that form core aspects of the minimum conditions for effective planning.

The City's present review is symptomatic of the above-mentioned problem of social planning today. To create a truly democratic milieu for social planning, the City must consider new ways of thinking to create innovative conceptual frameworks that operate on principles and values of shared common good. These conceptual frameworks must facilitate meaningful participation by multiple communities that **are** enabled to participate by effectively responding to current and future planning needs in a flexible, transformative manner. The demographics of our City will only continue to change, meaning that needs will continue to change- the evolving Alternative Social Planning paradigm is performing precisely that function which is required to build a healthy City for today and ensure a strong Toronto for tomorrow.

Operationalizing Alternative Social Planning In The City

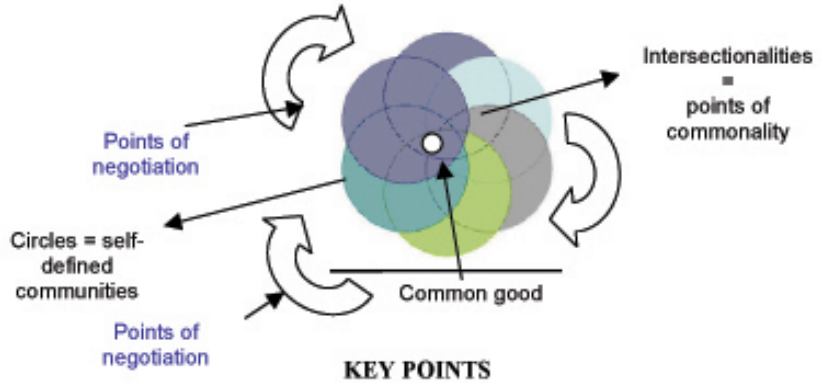
The practical introduction and implementation of the alternative social planning model will require both short-term and long-term action plans that may be phased in over time. The first phase focuses on redefining social planning, identifying the roles of stakeholders and ensuring that resources are in place to support social development and planning as defined by the alternative social planning model. The second phase focuses on the longer-term goals of social planning and speaks to the organic development and expansion of key planning bodies that will work in partnership with the City of Toronto to achieve successful social planning and forecasting in the future.

In order to operationalize the Alternative Social Planning Paradigm in a meaningful way, there are certain **principles of operation** that are already in practice that can inform this paradigm. These are:

- **That communities are self-defining and come together organically on points of commonality**:
  For example, five years ago APG was created by the Chinese, South Asian and Latin American groups as a result of a perceived need. Once the African group was formed it became a natural partner and today OCASI and PIN have formed another level of "natural and organic" partnership for the purposes of this review. Over time, these

relationships have developed through ongoing communication and collaboration. This process itself has led to knowledge building and sharing within the independent

Alternative Social Planning in Action



KEY POINTS

"Planning" means acknowledgement of pluralism and power imbalance in society; equitable, responsive and organic development of land, resources, facilities and services consistent with social plurality, economic differences, social inequities and diversity of cultural preferences

What Planning is

- Considered particular and specific to communities
- Planning functions reside in "self-defined" and conscious communities
- Multiplicity of players, autonomy and equitable resource allocation are critical to Alternative planning
- Assumes self-defined planning groups or communities are the "planners"
- Assumes community planners are autonomous thus allowing participants to solicit their own "experts", build their own capacity and chart their own course
- Evaluation of successes and failures are internally managed and articulated by communities as planners and shared with partners for building social pool of knowledge and for social action
- In a pluralistic society research must be a "tool" created, owned and used by diverse communities to document their own knowledge and preference
- Social planning is sequential, but communities are the owners and drivers of it
- Research cannot be neutral or generic but cumulative, diverse and conscious
- Negotiation and sharing of experiences contributes to problem-solving, innovation and social action
- Government partners with community planners to design , **relevant**, healthy, sustainable development, good government and economic viability
- Advocacy is a tool used by planning communities to bring about political change
- Collaborative advocacy between planning communities creates broad based social consciousness and social cohesion and solidarity
- Effective and broad- based planning and advocacy develops accountable policy frameworks

What Planning Does

- Planning allows a multiplicity of planning actors, strategies, preferences and methodologies to function equitably in society
- Communities engage in planning for their own social development
- Social development builds community capacity
- Socially developed communities build social capital between themselves and produce civic engagement
- Enhanced social and civic capital creates "active citizens"
- Active citizens build strong participatory democracy
- Accountable and participatory democracy ensures equity in society

Role of government in this model is to build the capacity of communities to engage in diverse planning and to ensure equitable distribution and re-distribution of resources between them through policy frameworks that are grounded in equity

Critique:

- Difficult to get "buy-in" from entrenched interests
- Complex and constantly evolving and changing
- Appears "non-specialized" therefore suspect

communities as well as across the broader partnerships.

- **That communities are in partnership with the City of Toronto (with the role of government being the distributor and re-distributor of resources for the purpose of addressing social inequities)**:
  It is the City's support of the APG and its partners that has resulted in the genesis of its present form. What has made this successful, however, has been the independent and organic evolution of the partnership, supported financially by the City in its role of resource management.

- **That communities are equitably resourced to conduct effective and meaningful social development and social planning**
  APG's value can be measured by the exponential increase in "recognition" of APG in the City as a model for community social planning, including the participation in this review process, but its effectiveness is limited by lack of requisite resource allocation commensurate to its "value". The point remains that the actual implementation of social development activities must take place within communities by communities themselves.

- **That the goal of social planning in a pluralistic society is to build meaningful, inclusive and equitable social capital among diverse communities in order to create a socially cohesive society**:
  APG provides the opportunity for the four largest ethno-racial communities in Toronto to work together to build their own communities while negotiating their differences for the common good. This does not preclude either their own community members or other communities to form their own planning agendas while providing opportunities for others to build partnerships with APG when and if they so desire, e.g. OCASI and PIN joining APG in this review process.

- **That the process of building social capital requires social development of communities to negotiate power differentials in society**:
  It is obvious that the APG partners have different individual capacities and histories but since their location in society vis a vis power structures is similarly marginal, they can help each other to build the capacity of their respective communities through sharing of resources while collectively building equity in society.

- **That social development and planning continue to challenge inequities in our society**:
  The experience of APG shows that collectively they have greater potential to challenge inequities in society through their joint planning activities. As communities come together to identify and develop solutions to problems, both the identification of the problem as well as the development of the solution are most effectively done by communities themselves for themselves with adequate resource allocations.

- **That there is cumulative action and interaction that builds knowledge**:
  The formulation and development of this **alternative social planning paradigm** is an example of how cumulative knowledge is built through documenting community experiences, in this case APG, and through active engagement and negotiations between partners, in this case APG/OCASI/PIN. Each partner has specific expertise

and experience that can be introduced in a common arena and shared for the benefit of the entire group.

- **That "active" citizenship is fostered in society to give meaning to democracy and build accountable governance:**
  The design and modalities of APG activities have fostered active engagement of their communities and other marginalized groups in forums hitherto inaccessible to them while making policy makers and other stakeholders accountable and responsive to the needs of diverse communities in the City, albeit in a limited manner.

Phase 1: The Building Blocks of Alternative Social Planning

Several investments need to be made in order to achieve the goals of social development and planning for the purpose of building common good and reducing social inequities. The first phase requires that communities be recognized and legitimized as social developers and planners for their own communities. Community organizations perform the functions of community development, monitoring, evaluation, facilitation of empowerment, capacity building, institution building, advocacy, community engagement, participatory knowledge production and forecasting. The current challenge for community organizations is the lack of capacity and resources to effectively perform all of these functions. This has resulted in agencies having the ability to perform some of the functions of social planning very well, and in varying degrees, other functions in a limited capacity and some not at all. Communities need to be adequately resourced to fully develop their potential and capacity to plan effectively.

Once communities are resourced to perform the functions of social planning and development, the City of Toronto will have a better understanding of the profile and needs of residents, allowing the City to make informed decisions on issues of resource allocation. Communities will have the capacity to share the types of information and data that is required to achieve these goals in a way that no arms length agency could achieve.

For this reason, phase 1 will require investment in the following:

- Strengthening local self-defined communities;
- Facilitating the independent and collective capacity of communities to advocate;
- Creating linkages for cross-sectoral interventions as required (e.g.: APG intervening when asked to do so in support of another external community);
- Supporting the organizing/mobilizing capacity of communities;
- Recognizing research as a process of documenting and creating "relevant" tools of information and application that build community capacity through sharing of knowledge;
- Supporting cross-sectoral capacity building when new emerging gaps and needs are identified;
- Recognizing and legitimizing the role and relevance of community organizations in the social development and planning for the City.

Phase 2: Realizing the Common Good through Effective Social Planning

Assuming that Phase 1 objectives are realized, phase 2 will result in the broader application of the principles, functions and tools of social planning that will occur on an ongoing basis in an organic manner. If APG and its partners (OCASI and PIN) is an example of how alternative social planning is conducted, then phase 2 will naturally result in a "constellation" of planning bodies or a network of planning groups that effectively plan independently for

their communities and come together to collectively and cumulatively achieve broader social planning goals for the entire City in an informed way. The nature of the relationship of this group with the City of Toronto will be one where the “constellation” or “network” advises the City (as a resource allocator) of the prioritized needs of the City in all aspects of planning.

By definition, this model will be:

- A partnership with the City of Toronto;
- Decentralized in structure and operations;
- Diverse and pluralistic in nature;
- Based in a fundamentally participatory and democratic power-sharing and accountable framework.

This type of infrastructure will meet the diverse planning needs of our City while actualizing our national commitment to meaningful multiculturalism and social inclusion. Given Canada’s immigration policy and the projected demographics for the country over the next few decades, the present is an opportune time to explore innovative conceptualizations for social planning that will be required nationally over time. By negotiating a new paradigm now, Toronto will be the Canadian leader for the future by supporting its own creation of a responsive and healthy city. Alternative social planning will be the way of the future if Toronto is to effectively continue to be the economic, social and political driver for the country.

Key Findings and Themes

- Healthy urban planning does not view multiculturalism and diversity as problems to be overcome (managed) but rather as opportunities waiting to be seized.
- Formal adoption of race equality policies by government is not enough to ensure the equitable participation of racialized groups in decision-making.
- Conflict resolution and compromise are pivotal to the planning process in rapidly changing systems.
- Planning policies that perpetuate “containment” and marginalize disadvantaged communities are participating in creating the *unintended consequences* of increased fragmentation and disconnectedness.
- Need to make a shift from "trait" geographies to "process" geographies
- Consider current language used in discussions of ethno-racial issues and evaluate need for reframing questions around how to address “social exclusion” in civic participation
- In order to improve the performance of policies and services in meeting the needs of people from minority ethnic communities, government must take steps to recruit more minority ethnic staff and increase staff interchanges with minority ethnic organizations.
- The information (both statistical and spatial) describing ethnic groups and their participation in civic life is limited
- There is a need for minority ethnic participation and leadership at the local level
- A key dimension to tackling the structural nature of social exclusion is in terms of capacity building and devolving both decision making and the management of service delivery to the local level.
- People from minority ethnic communities are often under-represented in formal consultative groups therefore specific efforts may be needed to encourage their participation and leadership.
- Decision-makers must recognize the importance of specific community-based action, transfer of resources and decision-making powers to communities and community representation on steering committees.
- Inclusive planning provides built-in mechanisms for ongoing, rather than one-off opportunities, for participation in governance.
- Opportunities for informal interactions means less local government expense.
- Effective planning should evolve from existing key values, mandate shared responsibility and not strive to make everyone uniform.
- Planners should use a diversity of methods to collect data to assess community needs
- When using interactive methods, it is important to empower communities by identifying not only needs but also community resources and assets.
- Good planning promotes joint decision-making, implementation as well as accountability.
- Recognize a spectrum of involvement from consultation to meaningful participation in decision-making and consider which tools on the spectrum most effectively engage communities in planning.
- Honest dialogue lends understanding to participants that at some level allocation decisions are zero-sum games: e.g., more child care or less pavement
- Rejecting traditional “competitive city” ideologies (on a mandate based in community support) can provide latitude for making unusual decisions e.g. ranking social priorities over straightforward economic development initiatives
- Learning from mistakes made in previous efforts is a vital component of healthy planning

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APPENDIX 1: Summaries of Independent Social Planning Activities of APG members

The African Canadian Social Development Council

As its name suggests, a core mandate of the African Canadian Social Development Council (ACSDC), as established by a very broad spectrum of the continental African Canadian community itself, is to work with its member agencies to facilitate social development within the continental African Canadian community. As such, social planning has been established as one of the core functions of ACSDC.

While still young, and without any funding from any sources for its social planning work, ACSDC has nevertheless already begun such work. It is doing this through ongoing consultations with its membership on service and community capacity planning issues; and, to the extent that its minuscule resources permit, it is also collaborating with other community coalitions working on issues affecting the social development needs of all, including the continental African Canadian community. It has, for instance, through a brief to the Prime Minister's Caucus on Seniors, highlighted issues with respect to the obstacles affecting the capacity of adults, including particularly African Canadian adults, to contribute to pension programs such that they could minimize the likelihood of living in poverty as seniors. It worked with appropriate organizations within its membership to raise concerns and to recommend strategies for action. Similarly, the Council is actively involved with Campaign 2000 to highlight the special plight of African Canadian children with respect to poverty.

Thus, while the current absence of funding for the social planning mandate of the Council has severely constrained the capacity of the Council to become even more engaged in contributing to social development within the city, the Council, its membership, and the broader continental African Canadian community recognize the necessity and importance of such work by the Council for the well-being of the African Canadian community specifically, and the city's population as a whole.

Chinese Canadian National Council- Toronto Chapter

PLANNING HIGHLIGHTS November 2002 to December 2003

- As a member of the Alternative Planning Group (APG), developed joint position paper with the Council of Agencies Serving South Asians and the Hispanic Development Council on the inclusion of anti-racism and anti-discrimination activities as a charitable act under the Canadian Customs and Revenue Agency. The development and conceptual planning for this included the coordination of individual research and policy representatives from the 3 respective organizations, agreement on an alternative benefits and equity based framework for the inclusion of non-discriminatory activities for the CCRA.

- Developed joint submission with the Metro Toronto Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic to the Ontario Human Rights Commission on the service barriers of the commission, as well as held 2 press conferences on the impact of racial profiling on East and Southeast Asian Canadian communities. Planning included the dissemination of cases within the Chinese and broader East and Southeast Asian communities and synthesizing key points for the commission.

- In collaboration with the Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA) and the Toronto Organization For Fair Employment (TOFFE) initiated Ethno-racial Women's Contingent Workers Project aimed at developing policy recommendations and facilitating individual advocacy and networks within Chinese and South Asian Canadian women in contingent work. The negotiation of differences within the 3 organizations and leveraging of expertise and information provided a foundation for planning of advocacy and public education models for changes to policies and practices within the area of contingent work.

- As an Executive Member of the Chinese Interagency Network (a network of over 34 Chinese serving organizations/agencies in the areas of health, employment and settlement services, etc.), CCNCTO has been acting as a Secretariat for the network in the area of planning, social and community development. Planning activities have included the development of collective media strategies on various issues, the development of a cross-sector website and directory, strategic directions for the network, infrastructure development within the various labour, mandarin-speaking and seniors committees as well as the planning and coordination of joint capacity building initiatives for front line workers and members of the broader Chinese Canadian community.

- In partnership with the Centre for Information and Community Services, Home Workers Association, Injured Workers' Legal Consultants, Metro Toronto Chinese & Southeast Asian Legal Clinic, St. Stephen's Community House, University Settlement Recreation Centre and Woodgreen Community Centre, planned and organized a mayoral forum/BBQ at Grange Park in downtown Toronto. The forum had the participation of over 100 individuals and focused on inequities faced by people of Chinese origins in the areas of employment in relation to the city's planning and policies.

- In response to the Ontario Human's Rights Commission (OHRC) to addressing all forms of racial profiling in Ontario, Toronto Chapter collaborated with the Metro Toronto Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic (MTCSALC) and the OHRC in organizing a community-wide consultation on racial profiling of East and Southeast Asian communities. The consultation included the participation of the Canadian Korean Women's Association, Kababayan Community Centre and the Vietnamese Association of Toronto in the development of a coordinated approach to racial profiling,

- Sponsored by the Mayworks Festival for the Arts and Labour, CCNCTO's Monkey King Collective spearheaded ***"Take This Job and Funk It!*** – An Asian Youth political cabaret on labour, Asian identity, anti racism, anti-globalization and youth empowerment. The foundation of planning included the participation of Chinese Canadian youth from the conceptualization, coordination to implementation. The participation of CASSA in the latter part of the project added another dimension to the process of planning whereby differences and similarities of youth issues were further negotiated and strengths were built upon to make the event a success. The event resulted in over 300 youth in attendance and became Maywork's signature youth event.

- Provided anti-racism peer support training for Young Chinese Canadian Women. Entitled ***"Training for Change"*** the intense two-day training aimed to equip Young Chinese Canadian women to carry out anti-racism action in their communities and develop networks with various progressive movements. The conceptualization and

implementation of the training was built on the premise that Young Chinese Canadian women needed a mechanism to develop change frameworks/strategies that were reflective of their realities

- Established Journey to Equity – an initiative with Hong Fook Mental Health Association, the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health and St. Michael's hospital to develop effective diversity models for organizational change, policy and planning.

- Established external ad-hoc monitoring body with members of the Community Equity Reference Group of the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) aimed at making the TDSB accountable to equity policies and practices – the planning process involved negotiating diverse intersections of inequities and a larger forum of accountability with TDSB's senior management, administrators and school trustees.

- Working with organizations such as our National Chapter, community partners and leaders, planned a joint strategy on the racialization and backlash of SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome), which included a joint press conference, interviews with local media, eats-ins at local Chinese Canadian restaurants, letter writing campaigns and meetings with local politicians.

- Spearheaded a city wide forum entitled ***"Laying the Foundations – An Equity in Education Forum"*** at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto. With over 220 delegates, the forum was a collaboration between members of the Community Equity Reference Group (Urban Alliance on Race Relations, Organization of Parents of Black Children, Toronto Federation of Chinese Parents, Metro Network for Social Justice and Coalition Against Homophobia), and focused on bringing issues of equity back into the forefront by critiquing the province's conservative policies and programming.

Council of Agencies Serving South Asians

Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA) was established in 1991 as a vehicle for advocacy, research, community development, community mobilization and coalition building with other groups in society to create an anti-racist, equitable and accessible society. It was to be a member-agency based organization but could also mobilize groups, individuals working with the South Asian community.

CASSA's overall perspective has always been informed by an anti-racist approach seeking equity and access for all South Asian groups, particularly the most marginalized, and working with other equity seeking groups with the aim to create an overall equitable society. Our anti-racism has been based on the understanding that beyond overt symbols of racial discrimination lie the larger issues of systemic barriers. It also acknowledges that an essential pre-requisite of an equitable society is to identify those systemic barriers, work towards dismantling those structures that are based on and perpetuate those barriers and create a vision, through our practice and analysis, of a society that is self-critical and inclusionary.

Another cornerstone of CASSA's overall approach has been to remain cognizant of the enormous diversity within the larger South Asian community. This has meant developing community capacity of individual member agencies but also non-member South Asian groups and individuals from the diverse communities. It also means advocating on behalf of

the most marginalized groups within to the larger South Asian community. This dual role of CASSA has been its greatest challenge and its main source of strength.

Over the years the realization has emerged that CASSA essentially has been functioning as a social planning body without being recognized as a planning body. This realization has now culminated in an on-going partnership between four ethno-racial planning bodies [namely, CASSA, Chinese Canadian National Council Toronto Chapter (CCNCTO), Hispanic Development Council (HDC) and the African Canadian Social Development Council (ACSDC)] called the Alternative Planning Group. We have been working together for the past five years and are now recognized in the City as a model for alternative equity based urban planning.

In terms of specific products, CASSA has undertaken a variety of diverse projects to fulfill the above mentioned objectives that can be roughly summarized under four broad categories: (i) Information & Education; (ii) Advocacy; and (iii) Community Social Planning:

Information & Education through a variety of mechanisms:

1. Audio-visual tools:
2. Tool kits:
3. On-line resources:
4. Training materials:
5. Other resources:
    - Hate-Crime Hotline
    - Volunteer development process
    - Training of member agencies to use on-line tools
    - Referrals & information to South Asians and those seeking information about the South Asian community

Advocacy forums:

1. Individually, with members and through coalitions on specific issues related to equity, immigration, access, social justice, anti-racism etc.
2. Committee representations
3. CASSA issue-based committees
4. Workshops/Conferences

Community Social Planning activities:

CASSA mobilizes & builds community capacity through planning engagement:

- Establishment of the Alternative Planning Group
- Establishment of immigrant professional associations to advocate for themselves, for example, doctors/engineers (www.cassa.on.ca)
- Establishment of policy roundtable of immigrant professional associations to develop policy recommendations on APT (www.cassa.on.ca)
- Building CASSA's capacity to engage youth through organizational change. Initiated structural change to the organization, developed youth capacity in the community to work with/at CASSA, built youth capacity to do advocacy, training etc. through learning skills, building leadership, actively participating in community development and making policy interventions using CASSA as an organizational tool etc.
- Building planning capacity of the South Asian service sector for coordination of services. Also documenting innovative South Asian practices to develop a model for responsive community service delivery modules on the issue of woman abuse

- Needs Assessment of the South Asian community, seniors
- Reflections on Access & Equity in funding
- Demographic Profile of the South Asian community in GTA
- Report on the settlement service gaps and needs of the newcomer South Asian youth and community as a whole
- Policy interventions on the barriers to the medical profession faced by International Medical Graduates
- An environmental scan of Access to Professions and Trades (APT) initiatives, government programmes, contacts etc.
- Submission to parliamentary standing committees on issues of concern to immigrant and refugee communities: like APT, racial profiling, changes to IRPA/Citizenship act etc.
- Mobilizing communities for deputations/submissions to different levels of government on issues like: APT, immigration law, citizenship law, race & poverty, investing in social infrastructure, housing, education, policing etc.
- Generating policy discussion and citizen engagement through training, research, community events etc.

The Hispanic Development Council: A Quarter of a Century of Community Work

Barriers of communication and accessing services as well as difficulties in adaptation to the new society and settlement have been significantly similar to all Latinos in Canada. Language bonded the community and compelled those who had arrived in the early waves of immigration to this country to try to find ways to make the adaptation for newcomers better. The late 70's and early 1980's were significant in the work of the Council as it was time for ground braking work when the Latin American community was beginning to grow and to express their need for more adequate services in their own language. In the same way that South American refugees arrived in the seventies, the 1980's were characterized by the immigration of Central Americans, mainly from El Salvador and Guatemala. Settlement and adaptation was a major aspect of the Council's work at the time.

Advocating for the needs of Latin Americans in the areas of health, settlement services, education and training, employment, mental health and financial, economic matters was a key factor of HDC's work. It was important in those early years that the community had a voice, a united voice –at least from the services perspective- that demanded appropriate, sensitive services and programs that allowed community members the right to be treated in a respectful and dignified manner regardless of their colour, culture, status, and, or beliefs. The Hispanic Council's work played an important role in the **Toronto Refugee Affairs Council** (TRAC) and members of HDC were among the founders of this organization. Members of the Refugee Committee of the HDC were active participants in the **Coalition for Just Refugee and Immigration Policy**. The **Latin American Community's Focus of Adjustment Conference** held in June 1984 looked into the specific issues surrounding Central American refugees regarding settlement, adaptation and adjustment. HDC advocated diligently for the well being and rights of Latin American refugees throughout the 1980's. **Welcome, a Newcomer's Guide** in Spanish language was published in 1987 and provided up to date information in Spanish language on topics such as: health, education, benefits, services and legal matters.

As a response to the basic question of relevance of the Hispanic Council in the social context of the end of the 1980's its membership responded with absolute clarity in direction that the Council had to become a broader community facilitator and animator. Then the organization became the Hispanic Development Council and part and parcel of this process was the

emergence of a new framework of reference for the activities of the organization based on a set of principles of community capacity building coupled with a notion of integral community based development, both anchored in strong technical notions supported by community based research.

Throughout the nineties and as a consequence of the earlier consultations, there were meetings with provincial and municipal representatives to advocate for the needs of the community in areas of women's health, education, youth, professionals, social services, immigration and settlement and employment. In 1991, the conference on **Issues of Violence Against Women** set the agenda for a decade of work on women's issues in the community while the Board of Directors reaffirmed its strong commitment to the **Community Encounters** which brought together many of the most representative sectors of the community to vision its own future. The 1990's were decisively important in the projection of the research component of the Council. Major projects included the publication of a **History of the Latin American Community in Ontario**, **Seniors Needs Assessment, Community Needs Assessment** and the **Feasibility Study for the Creation of a Latino-Hispanic Financial Institution**. In the services front, HDC began the **youth program** which has been a leading community project in its field since then, research in the field of **breast and cervical cancer from a community perspective**, a revision of **community services**; **access, equity and diversity** work in partnership with the City of Toronto and began a new era by opening the field of **alternative planning and public policy development** with our colleagues of the South Asian, Chinese and African Canadian communities.

The area of youth programs of the Hispanic Development Council in 2004 includes the **Homelessness Prevention Program**, one of the most effective projects of HDC in the support of youth and their families in helping them to remain off the streets and housed in safe environments; **Crime Prevention Strategy** focusing on areas of gang involvement prevention and community peace initiatives, and the **Mentoring Program** in which youth themselves take the leadership in talking to other youth and offer support and strategies aiming at braking the cycle of violence. In addition, the trilateral collaboratory **MEXUSCAN** with the University of Nuevo Leon, Monterrey, Mexico, and University of Michigan, United States, in the field of research on youth issues have allowed HDC to be involved internationally on the forefront of partnerships promoting understanding and solutions to youth issues that resonate in the global context as a consequence of international trade agreements, and other accords which affect the life of young people and their access to opportunities and, or marginalization.

The Social Ecology Project, although is one of the newest projects, it has taken off at a gallop and is quickly becoming an exciting experiment in community development work from an ecological perspective or vice-versa: environmental work from a social standpoint. Given this dynamic implementation, evaluation and monitoring require a process that is flexible, uninhibited and willing to go beyond systems of outreach, set up and evaluation traditionally used in community development projects. From a practical standpoint this means working hours beyond office hours and on weekends; supporting participants with transportation, childcare, translations, etc.; project success measures and indicators focus on holistic and integral improvement of both the social conditions of the participants, as well as the ecological conditions of the areas being naturalized. Examples of this work include our footprint on three of the City's major watersheds; the Don, the Humber and the Black Creek and two of the City's major parks; Eglinton Flats and Christie Pits.

Finally, the hurricane Mitch in Central America in 1998 resulted in the strong involvement of HDC as responsible for the provincial initiative to support the region through the emergency. True to its spirit, this large operation that resulted in millions of dollars channelled by

governments, the NGO sector and the community at large, led the Hispanic Development Council to its newest field in international cooperation. Among its many accomplishments, aside from the building a totally new community in Honduras in partnership with the Rotary Club, the most enduring legacy of this work is today the **Program for Young Professionals International** that allows the organization to send young people for professional internships in Latin America and Spain while we build new partnerships abroad. Finally, a newer field in which the organization has excelled is the alternative planning and policy development. On the latter, and almost as clockwork, HDC has arrived at this juncture connecting the relevance of local development, international cooperation and community enhancement in the midst of contemporary issues such as globalization and transnationalization of citizenships and loyalties.

Appendix 2: Summary of focus groups and key informant interviews

Key Points from Interviews and Focus Groups:

Q1: What kind of things would your community need to build its capacity to meaningfully engage in social planning?

Q2: What is the role to be played
a) by diverse communities, and
b) by the city?
c) by mainstream organizations like CSPCT?

Q3: What does the city need to do?

Q4: If you could recommend a planning model and process that is inclusive, facilitates participatory, meaningful planning for everyone and adheres to principles of equity, transparency, accountability and fairness, what would it look like?

Key Informant #1	
Q #1	1. Social planning as we know it not a concept known to Chinese and South Asian communities. 2. Building capacity has to start with introducing the concept and tying it in to immediate needs. 3. Time spent on civic engagement is a luxury for many.
Q #2	1. Key players in planning should truly change and integrate equity or else stay out of the way and let individual communities do their own planning. 2. City needs to think of the community as the experts. 3. Question is not what communities can contribute, but how to engage them better.
Q #3	1. Changing the process is the only way to eliminate the bias that currently pre-determines the outcomes of planning. 2. Need guidelines of checkpoints throughout planning process to ensure that there is adherence to values. 3. Urban planers should be representative of Toronto's communities.
Q #4	1. Need a shared, long-term vision of what city looks like in the future and what its position in the world will be.

Key Informant #2	
Q #1	1. Community needs to get the sense that they are truly part of the system, that the system is accountable to them & vice versa. 2. The way in which engagement is done really affects how well it works e.g. signing a letter far more likely to happen than doing a deputation, things in person far better than on-line where levels of comfort and access are variable. 3. Start by engaging people with something that affects their daily life; something they can "see", then demonstrate connection to larger picture. Barriers:

	a) 1st generation does not think that it's their responsibility to get engaged & even though live in Canada are more engaged in politics in their own countries because they feel like they are not part of the system and have little influence on it. b) 2nd generation have parents who focus on academics and unless civic engagement can be relate to academic success, it is not supported. c) Some people may still worry about how being politically active will impact on their safety: easier and safer to stay out of it. Refugee claimants will not get involved in anything remotely political.
Q #2	1. The city needs to be very clear about what they are going to do and how they will use the information – lost credibility and lack of interest when they gather information and either do not use it or use it in a way that is not transparent to everyone. (e.g. no one clear on how info from listening to Toronto will be used) 2. Bring people in at early stages and keep tying the process back to what was said at early stages. 3. Role of communities is to a) give city information on different communities at an early point in the process, 2) be active in ensuring accountability by the city and 3) identify qualified and interested individuals from the community to engage in planning.
Q #3	1. Find ways to give <u>all</u> people more power: interest is high when people are engaged - California where people get to vote on issues on their election ballot, referendums… 2. Need to engage and include people at every stage in a meaningful way and keep connecting it back to the feedback people gave at the very beginning. 3. Use the same parameters that you expect from community-based organizations re. funding e.g. reporting, requiring operating reserves, audited statements… with city processes (why are there 2 levels of accountability?).
Q #4	1. Need to think outside of the box in terms of finding ways for people to give input. 2. Decentralization has to be meaningful. 3. Need to find a way to reflect and include communities based on culture, geographics, SES, etc… in planning. There will be a lot of overlap but that's OK.

Key Informant #3	
Q #1	1. Need to adequately resource organizations to have the capacity to engage 2. Be cognizant that youth and adults (especially City bureaucracy) do not speak the same language 3. Need for youth-friendly resources and information that can be obtained through a centralized system 4. Representation is key- look who sits at tables representing youth- the disconnect between the marginalized and privileged which is, as everything else, racialized 5. Need more opportunities for young people to be involved and not token involvement
Q #2	1. Our communities need to be at the table consistently with an equal voice

	2. Our communities can plan for themselves- need the resources to do so 3. We have the expertise, the knowledge- our role should be to do the planning for our communities ourselves as equal stakeholders
Q #3	1. City needs to abandon current process and bring all people to the table – not just racialized groups since all issues are racialized anyway 2. Recruit urban planners from diverse communities 3. Revamp physical spaces as well- idea of social housing and the actual physical environment being a challenge to positive community development 4. City needs to develop a process where they can truly engage people by integrating ideas of inclusion from the outset, recognizing and respecting community knowledge, and drawing upon this knowledge in a concrete, effective way for the benefit of the City as a whole
Q #4	1. Sustainability roundtable model that the City has developed

Key Informant #4	
Q #1	1. Problem to build sustainability 2. Motivate community to participate in meetings 3. Build self-esteem 4. Lack of citizenship reduces involvement 5. Language barriers 6. Culturally sensitive workshops result in greater communication 7. Greater involvement at the local level 8. Greater involvement of local councillor
Q #2	1. Diversify the voices that are heard 2. Always issues of "interest groups" (businesses and bankers) taking control of the agenda (racialized communities are not really involved because of a lack of resources) 3. Must make choices between voices that are included in a more equal way 4. City needs to encourage people to participate 5. Review the process of the plan which is the ideal, but necessary for real democracy 6. CSPCT as Ombudsman 7. Question of morality over role (does CSPCT have the morality/ ability to choose who sits at the table 8. CSPCT can explain process to others
Q #3	1. Rethink redistribution of resources 2. Must take into account multicultural society 3. More resources needed 4. Some central body to coordinate 5. Can develop new and different criteria 6. Easy to do this process by "issues"; instead it should go by community 7. Cited alternative planning in Brazil 8. Localized planning may work better 9. Anyone living in the City should be allowed to vote….not just citizens 10. Target different communities to be part of the process- women, marginalized groups, etc. 11. Undocumented people need a reason to be participatory- local voting rights will be an incentive 12. 250,000 undocumented citizens who are aware of the issues, 15,000 refugees in the City 13. process to create citizens is too long

Q #4	No additional input

Key Informant #5	
Q #1	1. Resources to organize community 2. Community to implement independently 3. Meaningful participation in decision-making bodies 4. Government must include community outside of simply “burning issues” 5. resources for children so women can participate 6. transit costs 7. money to cover people’s expenses “nuts and bolts to civic engagement” 8. government must engage in a meaningful way 9. don’t assume all groups represent “the community” 10. not one single way to engage community 11. philosophical commitment
Q #2	1. APG is a good example 2. Important to engage community in different ways 3. Multiple voices within “the community” 4. Bring “lived reality” to the table 5. How the problem is defined is different from the state 6. Not studying people but are actually affecting those people 7. Need to sense to be doing what is wanted by and reflective of community 8. Provide them with resources beyond consultation 9. Effective process, mechanism to involve community
Q #3	1. PROMPT is specific, APG broader 2. Different models for different communities- multiple models 3. Community is already decentralized, diverse 4. How to engage with state? 5. APG exciting model 6. PROMPT example of how multiple groups can work together 7. State should encourage growth of different groups, not driven by state
Q #4	1. Really include “diversity” (beyond race) 2. City will be strengthened by investment 3. Great to see townhall meetings on budget (how to move forward towards meaningful engagement) 4. City workers should work one day a week in community 5. City disconnected from community- would facilitate reconnections to issues 6. Councillors need to work with community 7. Personal stories break down bureaucratic veneer

Key Informant #6	
Q #1	1. 45% of newcomers do not speak either official language 2. In the City, aware of the social capital needs of community 3. Adults who don’t speak English in Toronto have a lack of awareness of rights/legal redress 4. Some communities have ability to translate/explain issues (not true of African) 5. Limited participation in political activities or community involvement 6. Lack of English skills reduces participation 7. People voted without knowing how the system works 8. Breakdown of family, partially a result of inability to speak English 9. Feeling of powerlessness in community because of translation issue 10. Can’t put barrier higher, results in designer immigrants 11. Principal applicant brings families

	12. Twice as many women as men don't know English, really a women's empowerment issue 13. "designer immigrants" discriminate against men 14. cultural issues influence English classes 15. The number of issues mean that students become a support group for one another 16. No anti-racism training in international ESL. Must be part of ESL 17. TDSB Diversity Office to promote anti-racism and civic engagement. Currently don't do it because of lack of resources 18. Planning can be done through ESL classes, otherwise this group may not be reached (cited example of Parks and Rec doing outreach) 19. Sense of helplessness- haven't been here long enough, etc. 20. Use ESL classes as a resource 21. Students don't go to community meetings, meetings must come to them 22. Common need in language
Q #2	1. City used to have committees, now there are roundtables- roundtable can't deal with specifics of neighbourhoods 2. More community involvement 3. Bureaucrats should work with agencies 4. Should involve ESL classes in projects (Parks and Rec for example) 5. Diversity office 6. Toronto Adult Student Association needs core funding- can then begin to engage
Q #3	1. "Blue sky ideal" 2. developing a social and political apartheid system 3. even language spoken by leaders in communities is English… need people who can speak for themselves 4. greater say on what is on the agenda 5. ice-breaker issue- 9/10 we never hear; don't speak English
Q #4	1. Nothing to add really 2. City has flat-lined grants to agencies, agencies are needed in language training.

Key Informant #7	
Q #1	1. Access to information 2. Feelings of not making meaningful contribution 3. Lack of info re: structure 4. Overcoming lack of info by taking info to youth 5. Cited "women, power and politics" as great tool for education 6. TYC not very represented- don't trust them, no access to them (TYC) 7. Role for orgs: assess needs of community 8. Planning comes from grassroots needs, eg: local fight for community centre
Q #2	1. can go beyond the needs of the community 2. can talk about more than need, can discuss grassroots solutions 3. integrate knowledge of community needs (e.g.: transit, health, etc.)- strongest aspect 4. ideas for solution and implementation 5. diversity in the community means cooperation among racialized groups 6. issues of marginalization 7. provide resources and space, etc. 8. provide research 9. community should play the lead role 10. opening doors, providing access to structure 11. provide access to research and stats 12. have helped marginalized communities conduct research

Q #3	1. City needs to provide resources… fairly distributed 2. More equity in planning process 3. City must facilitate planning but not lead it 4. Community leaders should play a lead role 5. Formal structure to involve "those with a stake"- guidelines to ensure equity 6. Recognition and acknowledgement of diversity
Q #4	1. Current process isn't very transparent, some parts, yes, others, no 2. Greater awareness of process, structure 3. More input in community

Key Informant #8	
Q #1	1. Employment is an integral part of social planning 2. City doesn't see itself having a role in workplace conditions because labour law is provincial 3. Looking at social planning/development in a new light (beyond unionized City workers) 4. Cited current situation of racialization of poverty 5. Used WIACT (worker information and action centre of Toronto), now funding is contingent 6. Needs to engage both feds and province with employment laws/issues 7. Build capacity for communities to outreach based on work issues 8. Increase people's ability to understand issues 9. Build capacity through pressing community issue- therefore access to info means little because no ability to actually enforce rights
Q #2	1. City- funded things don't rock the boat 2. Greater focus going out to community 3. Angry with perceptions of people of colour and women as "special interest groups" 4. No integrated anti-racist perspective 5. Same organizations get brought to the table 6. Take in community by community (need greater reflection of community) 7. Need for greater inspiration and involvement 8. Cited happiness with Miller's process, but people were still left out 9. Would like to see planners listen to those involved with community 10. need for a process to ensure diversity of voice
Q #3	1. Not fall into trap of just getting umbrella groups involved, but getting community involved 2. Stressed responsibility 3. Ensure that umbrella groups are inclusive and diverse 4. Why money gets redistributed is important 5. Explore ways people get involved, process of how this gets developed 6. Neighbourhood based, race, workplace issues. "what works in different agencies" regarding involvement, flexibility is fundamental 7. Each part is different and diverse
Q #4	1. Everyone has different meaning for things like "participatory". Ie: Eds vs. service users 2. All feels very heavy… how to get people feeling excited and informed? 3. Resources are very important (easy to do top-down because easier on resources)

Key Informant #9	
Q #1	1. Resources are a huge problem- hard to deliver services to community if there is a basic lack of core funding 2. Smaller agencies have a harder time, newer agencies even harder; cannot participate in initiatives often because of staffing, etc.

Q #2	1. We know what the community needs, work with them every day- can help the City identify needs and meet them 2. Partnerships between City (funders in general) and funded groups where roles are clear but supportive. 3. Need better ways to involve community civically; not good enough now 4. Recognition of the context that many people are living to access service- need to look to strategies of engagement that make sense for them 5. Working together important in an equal relationship 6. Sharing resources among groups is difficult- in competition all the time 7. Resources should be accessible to everyone- support through research findings, facilitating exchange of information and learnings to be applied elsewhere
Q #3	1. Make information accessible 2. Facilitate supportive partnerships 3. Improve resource distribution 4. Funding to help smaller, newer organizations 5. Recognition of non-traditional ways of thinking 6. Improve role of support to agencies and collect information that is relevant- should be distributed across City, too, not just collected.
Q #4	1. New system that is informed by active participation of the groups for whom planning is being done. 2. Open to everyone to participate and City can support/facilitate 3. Maybe partnerships among multiple groups that have expertise

Focus Group #1, 10 participants	
Q #1	1. Need core funding and resources 2. Need researchers and skilled workers 3. Need for information to be accessible (issues of literacy and language accessibility) 4. Need for increased access to information 5. Respect and equal voice
Q #2	1. Need to recognize our communities do planning anyway- give us resources to do it better and more effectively 2. City needs to understand our communities- this will happen if we are at the table more; need to be more informed about the culture and challenges our communities face (e.g.: difference between Portuguese community and Portuguese-speaking community) 3. We can act as liaison between City and community- we can mobilize people better than anyone 4. City comes to the table with an agenda/framework within which ethno-specific issues need to fit. This pre-existing framework does not work for communities; a whole new model needs to be developed 5. Problem with pockets of representation; asked to identify concerns and issues – this is an accountability issue. Should be bottom-up instead of top-down 6. Equality of voices – right now CSPC-T is the voice of “everyone”
Q #3	1. Need checks and balances- this should be the City’s role of ensuring that these exist 2. Need to recognize the barriers for an inclusive process that need to be dismantled to have access to facilitating a truly inclusive process 3. Build capacity of organizations to participate 4. Problem of self-proclaimed leaders of communities

Q #4	1. Create access points for participation (e.g.: Romanow Report) 2. Build the capacity for groups to be part of a larger coalition (e.g.: Toronto Health Coalition) 3. Resource the access points adequately mobilize (no resources, less ability to mobilize) 4. Address barriers such as language by building capacity of agencies to share resources, provide translation for one another and participate in broader planning processes; also more cost effective than hiring consultants…. 5. Consolidate and integrate current resources available 6. Create a "lead team" attached to the City that would have the role of consulting communities in all aspects of planning- can also be a function within the City itself 7. People are homogenized in a system; need to be inclusive and cognizant of individual experiences and needs; recognize differences that exist from rural vs. urban vs. war-torn vs. immigrant 8. Allow communities to take ownership – all together communities know more, work well together and have collective expertise- no need for everyone to know everything, but rather create opportunities to work together to achieve common goals 9. Recognize legitimacy of community expertise, knowledge and experience

Focus Group #2, 6 participants	
Q #1	1. Social planning should lead to public good; made up of diverse community needs, differential based in common good- rethink public good. What does public good look like? Rethink notion of what public means. 2. Traditional planning as geographic, ethno-racial and issue-specific 3. Tension among differential players- common good is not homogenous, needs equity as regulator; redistribution of power and resources 4. Social planning- broad planning deals with society; within society there are groups with different needs- we need to plan with and for them as well 5. Capacity of people will increase with meeting their needs. Right now communities do not have the capacity to organize themselves, represent themselves, and research themselves- need for resources 6. Current planning: top-down, paternalistic mechanism; we are positioned as external, interest groups 7. Build social development collectively, from within 8. Not good enough to have consultative process- must be a process that is based on power-sharing, equity, fairness, accountability and transparency (equitable funding, mutual accountability)
Q #2	1. policy recommendations based on review of social policy planning process; City as an urban planner, role of City and role of groups like APG to create new process of social planning. 2. APG: Decentralized, commonality of interests, organic partnership 3. Principles and values we want to work towards- can be linked to public policy 4. Identify expertise within ourselves (e.g.: OCASI- immigrants and refugees, CASSA – South Asians, HDC- Hispanic community) 5. Organic partnerships allow for identification of strengths and ability to tap into collective resources, cuts down on competition, no pressure for everyone to know everything 6. Politics of representation- identify commonalities and organize along these lines, efficiently. Builds social capital, but needs access to "scale up" and be recognized at that level.

	7. Rise above ethnicity. Social development building is social planning – process is empowering, can act as a tool for the City 8. We are the difference from norm of CSPCT- our space is contained. Use specificity to challenge this. Mainstream space needs to be reconfigured in an equitable, legitimized space 9. Umbrella organizations as social planners already- works individually with clients, collectively with social service sector, represents externally & in partnerships 10. Cover geography, issues & ethnicity within planning process
Q #3	1. Let proliferation of planning bodies occur- City can broker this to impact on public good 2. Create megabody? Diverse, anti-racist and integrative. May need to create a new structure to include all groups- old structure won't work 3. Model must be transformative – ability to be flexible.
Q #4	1. City does larger planning for everyone; builder of social capital. We do discreet planning. Collectively, if different groups work together, the City becomes another player- one of many – role of distributor and redistributor of resources in an equitable way? Needs to be an equitable, power-sharing model

Alternative Planning: A Paradigm Shift Developing an Inclusive, Healthy Toronto

Summary

Introduction

As the population of the Greater Toronto Area continues to grow and as cultural and ethnic diversity continue to increase, planners and decision-makers will be faced with re-evaluating traditional planning structures and processes to ensure that they are able to adapt and respond to the needs of Toronto's changing communities.

Toronto's immigrant population and ethnocultural diversity are among the highest to be found in any urban centres in the world. In 2001, Census data shows that 18.4% of Canada's population was born outside of the country, this representing the highest proportion in 70 years.

This paper puts forth an alternative conception of social planning for the City of Toronto that seeks to create common values, principles and an inclusive process for the development of social planning that is equitable, accountable, transparent and responsive.

In 2003, the Alternative Planning Group (APG) produced a position paper entitled "Re-defining the Urban Planning Agenda: A joint alternative community perspective". As a partnership, the primary objective of the APG is to create and implement collaborative strategies for inter-ethnic community planning and development. The APG suggests that Toronto's diverse ethno-racial communities do not represent a collection of special interest groups but rather collectively represent the public interest as a whole.

Working from the premise that ethno racial diversity and shared decision-making has yet to be integrated in the City's planning framework, this paper provides some background on how inclusive social planning has been addressed in other jurisdictions and how it may be envisioned for the City of Toronto – taking APG as an example.

The end goals are to (a) identify gaps in existing planning structures that create barriers to the empowerment and active inter-ethnic participation of Toronto's varied communities in planning and decision-making; and (b) articulate outcomes of alternative planning for future actions to address shortcomings in the current planning system. While some of the examples focus on specific government programs (e.g. public health, budgeting, housing) many of the themes in empowering communities and creating opportunities for participation in governance have cross-sectoral relevance.

Background

Social exclusion emerged as an important policy concept in Europe in the 1980s in response to the growing social divides that resulted from new labour market conditions and the inadequacy of existing social welfare provisions to meet the changing needs of more diverse populations. In response, the concept of social inclusion has developed as a way of raising the bar and understanding where we want to be and how to get there. However, APG questions whether the promotion of social inclusion is necessarily the answer to social exclusion experienced by racialized and other marginalized communities, particularly if it entails policy accommodations that potentially assimilate these communities into a *status quo* system of governance.

Those who recognize the salience of social exclusion as an explanatory tool must be aware of one possible unintended consequence of the analysis – the re-victimization and marginalization of the excluded. Individuals and groups who are excluded on the basis of race (or other socially constructed criteria) must create their own inclusion both through discussions about their social conditions and debates about the eradication of exclusion.

For social inclusion to resonate, it must provide space for a discussion of oppression and discrimination. Social inclusion has to take its rightful place not along a continuum (from exclusion to inclusion), but as emerging out of a thorough analysis of exclusion. ***The issue is not "how" to include the excluded but rather "why" people are excluded and "how" to eradicate those conditions and structures of exclusion.***

An Approach to Alternative Planning for the City of Toronto

Broadly speaking, Alternative Planning is a social development-driven approach to identifying societal outcomes that (a) directly involves various demographic groups in pinpointing obstacles to goal fulfillment; and (b) enables these communities themselves to participate in devising and implementing measures to achieve desired outcomes. ***Alternative Planning challenges and re-defines all the fundamental questions of social planning such as why social planning is done; who does planning; what is the purpose of social planning; what are the means or mechanisms of social planning; what are the desired outcomes of planning and what are the minimum conditions of successful planning.***

Our premise in undertaking Alternative Planning is that planning is neither objective nor neutral. In a diverse and inequitable environment, planning needs to consider the factors of diversity/pluralism and the nature/degree of inequity within society that inhibit the attainment of equal outcomes for all. ***Planning should be a pro-active, committed and political activity that addresses issues of racialization, socio-economic and political marginalization and redresses the imbalance in the sharing of resources, both monetary and power-related. In our still developing practice of Alternative Planning, social planning is done to create a "common good" – not the "greatest good" – that is neither homogenous nor monolithic but shared.***

Alternative Planning sees planning as being done by communities defined as individuals who come together collectively based on commonalities of interest and principles of equity, self-determination and conscious participation. Planning, therefore, is conducted by communities for the specific benefit of these various communities and, jointly, for the well-being of society as a whole. ***Our critique of existing planning is precisely that it is monolithic and paternalistic where planning is done "for" others, not "by" those affected by such planning and the decisions that flow therefrom. Be it done by the state, academia or other arms length entities, such planning is by-definition partial, fractured, undemocratic and ineffective.***

The absolute minimum conditions of successful social planning must involve participants in discussing their differences and developing a shared sense of the common good. There must exist equity of power and resources amongst the various partners involved in the planning sector. There must be a vision that governance and community planning is a shared responsibility and recognition that planning done today must reasonably anticipate and address social issues arising in the future.

Effective social development and equity, which is ultimately the goal of social planning, requires communities to define and act for themselves. This can only take place if there exists the capacity for this to happen within communities, and that there exists opportunities for individuals and communities to come together based on commonalities rather than on

predetermined, limiting frameworks. This process allows communities to define themselves, come together organically on points of commonality, discuss differences and learn from one another to build collective common good.

Current Social Planning in Toronto

In 1999, the City of Toronto initiated a high-level planning process to produce a new "Official Plan", a top-down, specialized, long–term strategic policy document which describes policies and objectives for future land use. Through a second level of planning, the new Plan also contains secondary plans for 22 areas in the city, needed to provide further direction for major growth areas and approximately 230 site- and area-specific policies. Intended to reflect a community vision for future change and development, the Official Plan was prepared with citizen input and was written by Urban Development Services staff. The effort to ensure that an ethno-racial perspective was included in both the process and the outcome represent a realization that this perspective has for too long been missing from public discourse. The realization alone, however, is insufficient in developing a social planning process that recognizes the factors of diversity and inequity, and has the capacity to evolve to meet the needs of the ever-changing population that now constitutes the megacity of Toronto.

The development of a plan is based on the concept of a community whose demographics, development and needs are somewhat predictable and stable. This is not the case in Toronto, a growing city that is home to approximately one third of all newcomers to Canada and which has a high population "turnover" rate. The concept of a finite plan also implies an endpoint; the point at which a strategy has been articulated and will be applied over a given period of time. This inherent emphasis on end product does not recognize the value and necessity of using the process itself as a form of planning and civic negotiation that can actively impact change.

Participation of ethno-specific groups in social planning is limited by the constraints that apply to individuals within those groups and to the organizations that represent them. Our consultation with key informants from a variety of ethno-racial and sector specific backgrounds revealed that individual participation in planning related activities is limited by a necessary focus on "survival", a sense of being an outsider; not being part of the system, and lacking the power needed to change the system. Our key informants identified the existing forms of planning as a more abstract, academic exercise that can not directly relate to daily life and immediate needs of racialized communities. Ultimately however, individual capacity is most affected by economic and social issues that directly relate to poverty. In 1996, 41% of racialized minorities in Canada were living in poverty, often despite high levels of education and skills. This figure becomes more striking when contrasted with the 18.7% of non-racialized minorities living in poverty in the same year. As poverty rates in Toronto rise and the gap between rich and poor increases, racialized minorities are disproportionately affected, creating an ongoing source of inequality that becomes reflected both socially and politically.

The most significant barrier to individual participation by people living in "poverty" (material, capacity, resources, decision-making) in social planning is the social isolation that accompanies poverty. User fees, transit fares hikes, rising housing costs and the personal and social consequences of the stigma associated with poverty are among the factors that promote social isolation, which in turn leads to political isolation. Given that immigration rates and trends are unlikely to change dramatically and that the proportion of Torontonians considered racialized minorities will only increase, this relationship between racialized minorities and poverty is very troubling and requires a broad community response. Such a

response is best offered through social planning that addresses issues such as transportation, housing, childcare, wages, etc.

The solicitation of organizations to represent ethno-racial communities in the planning process assumes that these organizations have the capacity to participate in a meaningful way. Like individuals, organizations are constrained by a number of factors, the most important of which is the resources they have available to them. Current funding trends and strategies are intended to increase self-sufficiency and accountability, however in many cases they achieve the opposite effect. Lack of core funding, project-based funding and onerous reporting requirements create a sense of instability, a lack of incentive to engage in advocacy activities and an aversion to risk-taking exercises or actions that do not produce tangible outcomes.

Conclusion

1. ***Given that the end goal of Alternative Planning is creating "common" and not "greatest" good, current planning is fundamentally flawed and has been unable to respond to the complexities of evolving communities.*** As the existing top-down planning structures and process focus on a "silo" approach, the outcomes of such planning will be inequitable, paternalistic and disconnected from the very groups for whom planning is conducted. Furthermore, it will not allow self-governing communities of "planners" to develop and build meaningful partnerships with each other and the City.

2. ***Current planning is also not sustainable.*** It creates a time-limited prioritization of allocation of resources, energy and initiative without the vision for equitable distribution and re-distribution, ongoing flexibility of planning and transformative forecasting that should be the minimum condition of effective planning.

3. ***To create a truly democratic milieu for social planning, the City must consider new ways of thinking to create innovative conceptual frameworks that operate on principles and values of shared common good.*** These conceptual frameworks must facilitate meaningful participation by multiple communities that will be enabled to participate by effectively responding to current and future planning needs in a flexible, transformative manner. The evolving Alternative Social Planning paradigm is performing precisely that function.