

Racialized neighbourhoods

TAKING ACTION

By Sarah Ratchford

Many of Toronto's poorest neighbourhoods are also home to an over representative population of people who self-identify as racialized. But, according to experts, there are powerful tools the city has to address this issue.

Incomes are on a steep decline in these neighbourhoods, which comprise 40 per cent of Toronto's overall neighbourhoods. They are located in large parts of Scarborough and Etobicoke, York and East York. Neighbourhoods that are far from downtown, the waterfront, and subway lines, according to University of Toronto Cities Centre data analyst research associate **Richard Maaranen**.

Racialized groups are two to four times more likely to live in poverty, according to **Metro Toronto Chinese & Southeast Asian Legal Clinic** director **Avvy Go**.

"Interestingly, as we start to insert that conversation into the discussion around poverty, we get a lot of resistance from government and from other mainstream organizations, including some mainstream anti-poverty groups," she told *NRU*.

There are several actions the city can take to respond to this concentration of racialized populations in Toronto's lower income neighbourhoods.

Access to transit is a huge barrier in terms CONTINUED PAGE 3 >

City to revise zoning by-law

SEPARATION ANXIETY

Toronto planning and growth management committee approved Tuesday the removal of minimum distance separations between group homes from the zoning by-law.

Under the new zoning by-law, which was passed in May, group homes are defined as licensed supervised residences that are provincially or federally funded. The by-law requires a 250-metre separation between group homes. (*For more on this issue, see the March 8 edition of NRU.*)

That by-law was challenged by the **Dream Team**, a mental health advocacy group, which brought a legal challenge to the **Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario**. The group's complaint alleged that these zoning regulations, which were present in previous by-laws and would carry forward to the new one, discriminate against individuals with disabilities, and are therefore contrary to the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. The **Ontario Human Rights Commission** intervened in the case and provided comments, which supported the removal of minimum separation distances from the zoning by-law. City staff undertook a review of the separation requirements in the wake of the challenge, and commissioned a report from planning consultant Dr. **Sandeep Agrawal**, which also recommended changing the by-law.

It was clear a change was needed, said CONTINUED PAGE 4 >

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UPCOMING DATES

OCTOBER 28

Community Development and Recreation Committee, 9:30 a.m., committee room 1

OCTOBER 30

Executive Committee, 9:30 a.m., committee room 1

NOVEMBER 4

Board of Health, 1:00 p.m., committee room 1

NOVEMBER 5

Toronto Preservation Board, 2:00 p.m., committee room 4

NOVEMBER 6

Budget Committee, 9:30 a.m., committee room 1

NOVEMBER 13-14

Council, 9:30 a.m., council chambers

NOVEMBER 13

University of Waterloo Planning Alumni of Toronto Annual Dinner, 7:00 p.m., Fairmont Royal York Hotel

NOVEMBER 14

Design Review Panel, 12:00 p.m., committee room 2

NOVEMBER 18

Government Management Committee, 9:30 a.m., committee room 1

TTC Meeting

NOVEMBER 19

Etobicoke York Community Council, 9:30 a.m., Etobicoke Civic Centre

North York Community Council, 9:30 a.m., North York Civic Centre

Scarborough Community Council, 9:30 a.m., Scarborough Civic Centre

Toronto and East York Community Council, 9:30 a.m., committee room 1

NOVEMBER 20

Public Works and Infrastructure Committee, 9:30 a.m., committee room 1

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CITY OF TORONTO EDITION

Teaching the planning process

UNPLANNING

By Greg MacDonald

The minds behind a new planning and design course want to teach community leaders and advocates the ins and outs of the city's planning process.

Howard Tam (Think Fresh Group) and **Jennifer Chan (Exhibit-Change)** are looking to educate engaged Toronto residents looking to make a change, but who may not know the intricacies of the development approval process.

"I do a lot of work in community planning and community advocacy, and one of the things I recognized, is that for community groups, there was always a lack of information out there about the planning system," Tam said. "It's a large black box that people don't know how to access."

The course, which will be a weekly workshop on a series of topics, will essentially be planning 101, with special emphasis on community-based planning. While the curriculum has not been finalized, a draft includes topics such as planning law, development financing, urban activism and a design charrette.

Tam and Chan are partnering with planning experts to design the course, and would like to have guest lecturers for some of the topics. They have also partnered with **Jane's Walk Toronto** to offer some practical courses based on city neighbourhoods.

The course will also focus on "unplanning"—creative urban initiatives that are not created

through tradition planning parameters, but are a positive addition to the city.

Tam points to **Scadding Court Community Centre's** Market 707 project as a good idea that emerged outside of traditional planning process. The cargo container market, which houses pop-up commercial space in recycled shipping containers in the community centre's courtyard, has attracted lots of positive attention throughout the city. (*For more on Market 707, see the July 26 edition of NRU.*)

Scadding Court had very few formal planning approvals before it moved ahead, Tam said. But since the idea was innovative and widely praised, it was accommodated within the planning system, he added.

Tam is looking for people with similar ideas to take his course, where they can learn the traditional planning approach, as well as unplanning approaches—ways to be innovative without full participation in the process.

"[We're looking] for anyone in the public who has a great planning project in [his or her] community, be it starting a local farmer's market to re-visioning a space to include more public space and more transit," he said.

To learn more about the course, visit the Designing Toronto [website](#). Tam is also conducting a [survey](#) to gauge what topics to cover in the course. [nrucity](#)

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TAKING ACTION

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of employment, **The Wellesley Institute** economic analysis director **Sheila Block** says. Expanding transit to underserved, lower income areas could help better the situation for racialized individuals and families living in those neighbourhoods.

Racialized Torontonians earned 62.6 cents to every dollar earned by non-racialized Torontonians in 2005. Many of those people, of course, are living in neighbourhoods where residents' incomes are steadily declining and have been since 1970, according to **David Hulchanski's** report [The Three Cities Within Toronto](#).

But getting governments to address these issues is not easy. "From a government perspective, they don't want to acknowledge that their policies or economic structures have a racial impact. Because if they acknowledge it, what are they going to do about it?" Go explains. There are clear policies that can be put in place to correct the issue, but Go says the government is just starting to pay attention.

"One of the solutions we've been calling on the government to do is bring back employment equity, so as to remove those barriers."

Block agrees: The city could work on its hiring policies and make sure that they are equitable to address the disparity.

Another recommendation Go gives is to collect aggregated data. The reason it's clear that race and poverty are linked is that we've been able to look at census data to draw those conclusions, and without it, Go says, the situation may worsen.

"We might end up in a situation where there are riots, and racial tension will get worse. We want to prevent that from happening."

There are other things the city is responsible for, too, like "ghettoization," which comes down to city planning. Ensuring access to transit and ensuring that zoning allows for more diverse, mixed neighbourhoods is another initiative that could help.

"If it was equally accessible in the city, we wouldn't see poor neighbourhoods being ghettoized, where you have to take three buses to get to the subway."

In terms of fixes, though, Go says some of the problem is beyond city control. Ensuring that people have a living wage, for example, is a provincial issue.

It's not too late to reverse this trend, according to Block. But the city can't do it alone.

Block provides some numbers on income disparity between those of us who identify as racialized and those who do not. Using numbers from the 2006 census, Block found that people who identify as racialized had higher rates of unemployment than people who did not. People who identified as Chinese, South Asian, Black and Filipino all had higher unemployment rates than those who identified as non-racialized.

There is a disproportionate number of racialized people working for minimum wage in the province, too. For example—if you are a racialized person in Ontario, she says, you're 47 per cent more likely to be working for minimum wage in comparison with the general population.

"If you increase minimum wage, that will have a positive impact on racialized people, as opposed to non-racialized," she points out. **nrj**

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SEPARATION ANXIETY

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zoning and environmental planning director **Joe D'Abramo**.

"The legislative landscape has changed since the '70s and early '80s when separation distances were introduced," D'Abramo said.

Today, the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Ontario Human Rights Code* act as a lens for interpreting laws.

"We have to be concerned with equal rights and opportunities for all people" D'Abramo said. He added that land-use planning is a balancing act, because "at a very high level," it discriminates by allowing only certain uses in certain areas.

Though the removal of the separations was approved in principle, a final report and draft by-law will be prepared by planning staff for the January 13, 2014 committee meeting.

The move was supported by Agrawal, as there was no real justification for the separation. However, he did recommend that separation distances for residential care homes be maintained. While the definition for residential care homes parallels that

of group homes, they differ because they accommodate more than 10 individuals, while group homes house 10 people or less. Therefore, they are much more intense uses.

"It is the intensity of the use, and the impact of that use on its surroundings [that justifies separation distances]," Agrawal explained.

Based on the relatively higher intensity of use, and the related potential to adversely impact nearby land uses, the city is retaining separation distance requirements for residential care homes.

City staff will need to be especially careful and diligent about potential conflicts between land use regulations and human rights laws, according to Agrawal.

"We need to be more attentive and careful and diligent about [zoning by-laws], especially in this era of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Human Rights Code, which did not exist before", he said. **nru**

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**SUBMISSION DATE: WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2013
BY 12:00 PM (ET)**

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TORONTO BRIEFS

[Development review bulletin released](#)

At Tuesday’s planning and growth management committee meeting, the planning division presented a publication providing an overview of development projects received between 2008 and 2012. It also illustrates how the city has grown since the official plan came into effect in 2006 and outlines how it will evolve over time.

According to the [publication](#), entitled “How Does the City Grow,” the city received proposals for more than 148,000 residential units and 4.25-million square metres of non-residential space. Developments in the downtown account for about 40 per cent of that and for about a quarter of all office space currently under construction in Canada. The majority of development proposed is occurring in areas targeted for growth in the official plan.

[CUI Brownie Awards announced](#)

The **Canadian Urban Institute’s** Brownie Awards were presented Wednesday night at the Westin Harbour Castle. The awards signify excellence in brownfield redevelopment, and the jury

includes representatives from the **Canadian Brownfields Network**, the **Canadian Institute of Planners**, **Ontario Association of Architects**, **Ontario Professional Planners Institute**, **Association of Professional Geoscientists of Ontario**, **Federation of Canadian Municipalities**, and **ReNew Canada**.

Winners were recognized in seven categories for their efforts in building sustainable communities. These included—

Best overall project: CIBC Pan Am and Parapan Am Athlete’s Village/Canary District in Toronto.

Best large-scale project: CANMET Materials Technology Laboratory in Hamilton.

Brownfielder of the Year: Past president of the Canadian Brownfield Network **Bonnie Prior**.

Legislation, policy and program development: **From the Ground Up:** Assessing the Risks and Maximizing the Benefits of Gardening on Urban Soils, Toronto.

Financing, risk management and partnerships: Downtown/West Harbourfront Remediation Loan Pilot Program, Hamilton.

[The suburbs as global city landing spot](#)

The next chief planner roundtable will focus on the role that Toronto’s suburbs play in helping newcomers with the process of “arrival.” Journalist and *Arrival City* author **Doug Saunders** and other industry experts will be speaking at the roundtable, which is designed to broaden understanding of how well the city is functioning for newcomers. Topics of discussion will include changing notions of community, opportunities for economic development and availability of social services.

Speakers on the [agenda](#) also include social development, finance and administration executive director **Chris Brillinger**, Markham architect **Ronji Boroovah** and others.

[Lanes named for architect, former city councillor](#)

Two lanes in the city’s downtown have been named for two men who played a major part in shaping Toronto as we see it today. The first, which is located just west of Church Street, and extends south from Charles Street, is named after **Macy DuBois**, a founding member of the architectural firm **Fairfield and DuBois**. DuBois designed a number of buildings including Oxford University Press and New College at the University of Toronto.

The other lane was named for former councillor **Al Sparrow**, who was a champion for vibrancy of downtown neighbourhoods and cycling infrastructure. He was also responsible for the creation of a co-operative

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STANDING COMMITTEE AGENDAS

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

The Community Development and Recreation Committee will consider the following at its meeting on Monday, October 28 at 9:30 a.m. in committee room 1.

Expanding after school care—Report from parks, forestry and recreation general manager **Jim Hart** and children's services general manager **Elaine Baxter-Trahair** outlining implications of a multi-year, phased-in expansion of the after school recreation care program outside of priority neighbourhoods.

Fees for recreation programs—Report from Hart providing a review of user fees, the extent to which they are a barrier to participation and the financial impact of extending universal access to all recreation programming (projected to cost \$30.6-million annually).

Welcome policy review—Report from Hart recommending the welcome policy individual annual credit for children, youth, adults and seniors be indexed to match inflationary and market-based increases approved for recreation user fees.

Toronto rent bank program—Report from shelter, support and housing administration general manager **Philip Abrahams** recommending that council authorize him to enter into agreements with respect to the Toronto rent bank program, and outlining new guidelines for operating the program.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee will consider the following at its meeting on Wednesday, October 30 at 9:30 a.m. in committee room 1.

Follow-up on July 8 storm—Report from city manager **Joe Pennachetti** with recommendations for enhanced communications between the city and **Toronto Hydro** during emergencies, and outlining revised costs for the storm, which are estimated at \$65,325,842.

RFP for Casa Loma—Report from Pennachetti outlining results of the request for proposal by **Casa Loma Corporation** to operate the main house and grounds.

Putting people first—Report from Pennachetti providing a one-year status update on some of the major recommendations of the Putting People First, Transforming Toronto Community Housing report, which was prepared by the Special Housing Working Group chaired by Councillor **Ana Bailão** last year.

10-year capital financing plan for TCH—Report from Pennachetti recommending that TCH report annually on the status of its capital backlog (which was \$862-million as of December 31, 2012), the results from prior year expenditures and updates related to estimates for capital needs and funding requirements.

Restated TCH shareholder direction—Report from Pennachetti recommending adoption of an amended shareholder direction for TCH to remove outdated references, update reporting procedures, increase transparency and improve accountability of Toronto Community Housing.

Municipal contribution to OLG—Report from Pennachetti and deputy city manager and chief financial officer **Rob Rossini** recommending that council authorize execution of the municipal contribution agreement between the OLG and the city to allow the city to continue to receive a share of the gaming revenue from Woodbine Racetrack.

Continuing Toronto's bike share program—Report from transportation services manager **Stephen Buckley** recommending an as-yet confidential strategy for putting Toronto's bike share program on a solid financial footing.

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February 10-11, 2014
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STANDING COMMITTEE AGENDAS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

2014 interim estimates—Report from Rossini recommending that council approve the 2014 interim operating estimates totalling \$2.780 billion.

2014 interim levy by-law—Report from treasurer **Giuliana Carbone** requesting council authority to adopt the necessary by-law to levy interim property taxes for all property classes for 2014, and to prescribe applicable interim bill payment due dates. The 2014 interim levy will raise approximately \$1.84 billion for the city.

Paying for water infrastructure—Report from Rossini and Toronto Water general manager **Lou Di Gironimo** advising council about options to increase future capital funding for Toronto Water in order to continue with the renewal of drinking water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure.

Affordable housing pilot project for East Bayfront—Report from affordable housing office director **Sean Gadon** and city planning's strategic initiatives, policy and analysis director **Kerri Voumvakis** recommending that council approve, in principle, \$15-million in capital funding for the construction

of about 71 affordable rental homes with total costs about \$22.5-million, in the Bayside development.

Non-union employee compensation—Report from Pennachetti and human resources executive director **Bruce Anderson** providing recommendations for changing the city's current compensation plan for non-union and management employees in order to address recruitment and retention competitiveness challenges. **nru**

TORONTO BRIEFS

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building located on the lane that will be named in his honour. Sparrow served on Toronto council from 1974 until 1980. The lane named after him is east of Church Street, extending south from Charles Street to Isabella Street.

Province launches review of land use planning systems
Ontario launched a review of its land use planning and appeals and development charges systems Thursday. The goal is to ensure that the systems are predictable and cost-effective. Municipal

measures that impose development costs are also under review, such as section 37 of the *Planning Act*. The review will include consultation with municipalities, community groups, Aboriginal groups, the general public and the

building and development industry to determine whether changes to the land use planning system and the *Development Charges Act, 1997* are needed. **Regional workshops** will be held across the province in the coming weeks. **nru**

TORONTO PEOPLE

GO Transit has appointed **Greg Percy** as its new

president. Percy will take the position upon the retirement

of **Gary McNeil** next month. Previously, Percy was

GO Transit vice-president operations.